

SISTERS HOUSING ENTERPRISES INC

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



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OUR SERVICE

VISION

Sister Housing Enterprises Inc's vision is to reduce homelessness amongst women and children by empowering them to make changes in their life as they move forward, whilst valuing a woman's choices.

MISSION

Our mission it to provide safe and secure housing and practical support for women and children that are disadvantaged or homeless in a respectful and ethical environment in the Wagga Wagga & surrounding regions.

VALUES

Our values serve as a compass for our actions and are vitally important to our organisation. SHE Inc. Management and staff are will at all times uphold these values.

Compassion - We are sensitive, understanding and caring in a non-judgmental service of all people.

Integrity - We are honest, accountable and transparent in our work and relationships.

Respect - We treat people as we ourselves expect to be treated and will walk with a client on their journey.

Perseverance - We are dedicated to people and helping them overcome the challenges they face.



THE YEAR THAT WAS

Top left Wagga Rural Referral Hospital Midwives, Christmas donations.

Top Right Health Week promotion 2019

Bottom left – Team Building day (Gingerbread house decorating)

From Left to Right: Alex, Janice, Brooke, Kirrily, Tammy & Reebeka

CHAIRS REPORT

As I write this report, I ask myself how it is possible for a year to pass so quickly. Over the past year, our personal and organisational resilience has been tested, but I believe that we have accepted the challenges whilst retaining our client focus.

Last year there were some long standing board members who chose not to stand again for the Board, as a result, we commenced the year with minimal board numbers. A recruitment strategy was enacted, with the successful recruitment of three new board members, Simone Hyde, and the first men to serve on the board of Sisters Housing Enterprises, David Post and Duncan Brown. The decision of allowing men to serve on the Board of Sisters Housing reflects, not so much a shift away from the philosophy of the empowerment of women, but rather an acknowledgement that there are many men who also support women and wish to see them empowered and reach their optimum potential.

Last year we were privileged to be accepted as one of the organisations supported by Thomas Bros Wagga Wagga It Takes Two. Cassandra Nicholls was to sing on our behalf. Concurrently with this, Ange McKinnon had rallied a wonderful band of ladies who were working towards a major fundraising event "The Long Lunch". Unfortunately, all their efforts and hard work were thwarted by COVID19 and the event had to be cancelled. Despite this I extend to Ange and her committee, Cassandra and the organisers of Wagga Takes Two sincere thanks. Both events would have been great exposure for us and would have resulted in a boost to our fundraising efforts.

In addition to this, other smaller fundraisers have been arranged and run, primarily by staff. This has included Barbecues at Bernardi's and Bunnings and a very successful Trivia night. Whilst I personally believe that our staff contribute sufficient during their working hours, I commend them on their initiative. Arranging these activities has promoted the organisation to the community whilst also building some great team relationships outside of the normal workplace.

March 2020, with COVID19 was the point at which our personal and professional lives changed in ways we had never previously considered. Whilst management and staff were struggling with the implications of COVID19 in their personal lives, they were also required to develop strategies and working arrangements to continue to deliver a quality service to our clients in new and improvised ways. Staff were split into teams, with many of them working from home; The Board quickly moved to a model of on-line meetings; and a suite of policies and procedures were developed to document the new practices.

After many discussions around finding a suitable day for our Strategic Planning, this too was thrown into a new model, thanks to COVID19. Instead of the usual methods of Strategic Planning, we took our strategic



planning days to an online model. With great facilitation skills of kylie Dowell, we were able to complete our strategic plan through Zoom meetings. Our Action Plan is almost complete, working on this until the late hours when we could eventually come together and meet in person.

They do say that every cloud has a silver lining, and whilst I am not sure about it for COVID19, the requirement to keep the ladies in our crisis accommodation appropriately socially distanced, has resulted in some improvements in the facilities available to them. Televisions, tea making facilities and microwaves have been installed into every room. The kitchenette space, previously little more than a small fridge and a sink, have, been more effectively utilised. Whilst the rooms are small, this also has reduced to some extent the pressure and congestion in the shared kitchen and lounge areas.

The closure of an annual report always requires the round of thanks. Our staff have risen to the more than usual challenges that have been thrown at them this year. As usual, they have retained the mantra of being caring, compassionate and curious, above all they have remained professional in their approaches to work during the most difficult of circumstances.

I know that behind the scenes there is a small band of husbands and partners who support Sisters in many ways, and often incognito. For as long as I have been involved with Sisters, this has always been the case. I would like to acknowledge their contributions and thank them most sincerely.

In Belinda we have a manager who is caring, compassionate and curious. I have had the privilege of working with Belinda as both a staff member and as a Board member. I know the Belinda who is researching at 3.00 am to ensure that she understands a new procedure, or legislation; the Belinda who will bring in pizza to share with a client who is difficult to engage; the Belinda who will fight for the rights of both her staff and the clients of Sisters. Thank you seems inadequate.

This year we have been challenged, as individuals, as an organisation, and as the wider community. We have experienced the loss of some valuable and skilled members of the Board, with the resignation of Fleur Katsmartin, Ange McKinnon, and recently Jenny Davis. These ladies have served the Board of Sisters in varied ways, adding their individual passions and skills to the organisation. Thank you for your contributions over the years.

We have worked over the second half of the year with three new board members, who have had to learn the idiosyncrasies of our organisation. Thank you, David, Duncan and Simone, for taking on your roles with enthusiasm and commitment. And Mel Prout, thank you for years of continued support and service.

Finally, I wish each and every one of you better times ahead, may you stay healthy and grow strong through the adversities that life throws at each of us.

Ann Baker - President

MANAGERS' REPORT

As I write this report I reflect on my hopes and dreams for the service and the community that we support. In the face of these challenging and uncertain times, it is my hope that we can work together to push through the barriers and challenges that we all face.

This past year I was fortunate enough to realise my lifelong dream, and I encourage all women to reach for their dreams. My personal mantra "*I want every woman to reach her potential*", drives me to continue this vital work, encouraging women to not only gain that safe space to call home, but to reach for their dreams. As a team, the staff & I certainly hope that all women who come through our doors walk out knowing that they are in charge of their destiny. Encouraged that staff will continue to walk beside them supporting and guiding them along their life's journey. This is no more poignantly captured than in the reflections of past clients, (in words & pictures) who have shared their journeys with us, further along in the report.

As we move into recontracting of the service beyond 2021, the Board have completed the Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 and are currently finalising the Action Plan further cementing our future direction. Accreditation remains a high priority, with the Board and Management dedicating its time to complete this in readiness for the June 2023 deadline. Due to COVID19, the volunteers and fundraising efforts have been placed on hold until we are through the current pandemic. In the coming year, our service will receive additional one-off funding to support women impacted by D&FV during the COVID 19 Pandemic.

In March along with the rest of the world the service was facing a very challenging time. It seemed like life as we had known it was being thrown to the wind, and everything was about to become one continuous learning curve in how to deal with this pandemic. Sisters Housing quickly enacted its Business Continuity Plan (BCP), monitoring the situation and ensuring that all clients and staff remained safe. Quickly it became apparent that measures to ensure staff and service wellbeing was paramount to maintaining service delivery. The decision was made to close the service to all persons except a skeleton staff and residents, for Case Workers to work from home, and limiting the movement of those residing in crisis accommodation. The new norm for our service now includes, social distancing, hand sanitising and disinfecting all touch surfaces regularly. Management remain abreast of all Government recommendations and have placed signage throughout the service to enable all who work, reside and visit the service to be informed and ensure adherence to COVID 19 measures, that I believe will continue as a matter of course as our new norm for life in the future.



Throughout the year we were fortunate to have received many donations, both monetary and goods & services. This has allowed us to purchase new soft furnishings, lounges, and armchairs for the lounge room, to replace the bedside tables and connect the TV's with aerials in each of the resident's rooms. Further works planned include an upgrade of the CCTV equipment, the purchase of a large commercial refrigerator for the communal kitchen and additional storage in residents' bedrooms.

Work undertaken this year included the installation of raised garden beds, for a kitchen garden. The Sunrise Rotary club installed the garden beds and irrigation system with the Tea & Tales group planting out the beds with a mixture of flowers and vegetable seedlings. Having a constant supply of fresh produce just outside the kitchen, has been enjoyed by the clients over the summer growing months. Staff and residents are most appreciative of the work done by the Uranquinty Men's Shed to refurbish and restore two large kitchen/dining tables. A small grant from Clubs Grants enabled a shade sail to be installed over the tranquil garden in September 2019. Our thanks to Sunrise Rotary, Club Grants and Uranquinty Men's Shed for their support of our organisation.

In the latter half of 2019, Management supported a CSU Social Work placement. Our student, Beth undertook the development of the volunteer policy, this work will enable us to implement a volunteer program. Beth quickly slotted into the team and was encouraged to further her learning by attending training days and a DV conference. All too quickly her time with us ended. I sincerely thank her supervisors for guidance and support to not only Beth but myself and Tammy. I would also like to thank Tammy for her support of this placement whilst I was on extended leave, no easy feat when you are placed in the hotseat for managing the service, your own tasks, and a student.

Our first real foray into fundraising was dealt a severe blow earlier in the year, although we did manage to do a couple of small fundraisers. Sisters Housing and Wagga Family Support Staff came together for a fundraising BBQ at Bernadis in November. We also held a couple of raffles, one for Christmas and one for Easter. Both contributing a small amount to our fundraising efforts. Sisters Housing had its first entrant in the Thomas Bros Wagga Wagga "It Takes Two" (ITT) event this year with Cassandra Nicholson agreeing to be our Celebrity. Several events were planned as fundraisers for this, with only a couple being completed. These included a Bunnings BBQ in early February, on what can only be said as the hottest day of the year. Even in the extreme heat we did manage to sell about \$1000 worth of drinks and sausages, thanks to all who volunteered their time. Staff held a trivia night in March with a theme of "***Something starting with S***". it was a wonderful night with much fun and merriment being had by those who attended. At the time of writing this report our major fundraiser scheduled for March, which was postponed due to COVID 19 restrictions has now been cancelled. A team of volunteers had planned a wonderful long lunch at the Riverine Club, it is hoped that this can perhaps be resurrected next year. The Thomas Bros Wagga Wagga ITT concert was cancelled, with funds being distributed. Cassandra has offered to be our Celebrity again next year, should this event go ahead at that time.

I am but the guardian and guide for this enterprise, I endeavour to lead the team in a way that is responsive to the needs of our clients, working collaboratively and in partnership with others, as together we can achieve great things for our community. I look forward to working with our partners, Edel Quin, Vinnies, Tumut Regional Family Services, Eastern Murrumbidgee Youth Services, Young Crisis Accommodation Service and the many other community organisations and government departments with whom we interact with on a daily basis in line with the work that we do.

I take this opportunity to thank; the dedicated staff who have been with me on this journey over the past few years, to acknowledge the staff who have left, and to welcome staff who have joined our team. I sincerely appreciate your dedication and support to myself, the clients, and the work that we do.

To the three members of the Board who have stepped down this year I acknowledge and thank you for your many years of service to the organisation. Kate Salmon, served on the Board for almost 10 years, many as the Treasurer. Kate ensured that the finances were in order, her guidance and assistance was very much appreciated. Fleur Katsmartin joined the Board in 2015, her legal knowledge was invaluable to the organisation. As the Chair for several years, her support to myself in some very challenging times, was much appreciated, thank you. Last, but not least, Ange MacKinnon a board member for three years, her dedication and drive to establish fundraising, enabled us to be a part of the Thomas Bros Wagga Wagga, It Takes Two. Enabling the service to raise funds and our profile.

Finally, thank you to all the current Board. Ann, Mel, and Jenny, you are the stable guiding hands who will support the new members of the Board. Simone, David and Duncan, welcome and thank you for your enthusiasm and ongoing commitment and support to the service and myself. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

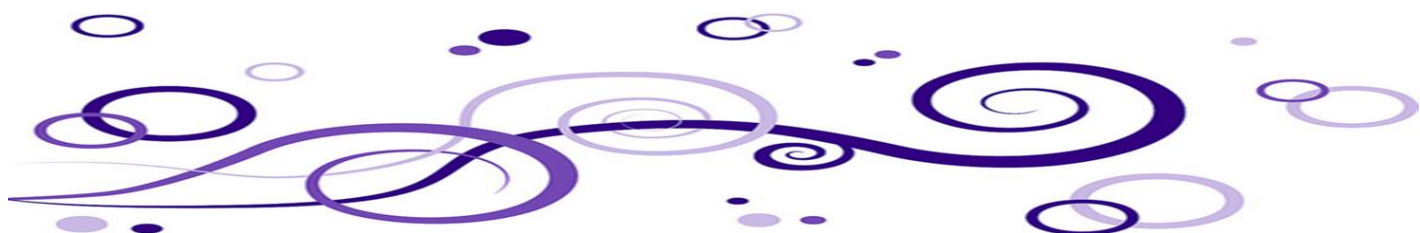
***Belinda McMahon - Bbus(Acc) JP
Manager***



The Team on a lunch date –

***Back row L to R Tammy, Brooke, Belinda,
Bek, Norma, Beth.***

Front L to R Kirrily, Alex & Janice



OUR PEOPLE

The Board of Directors 2019-2020

Fleur Katsmartin – **Chair** (Resigned Mar 2020) appointed at AGM

Anginette MacKinnon - **Vice Chair** (Resigned Feb 2020) appointed at AGM

Melanie Prout – **Secretary** appointed at AGM

Ann Baker – **Treasurer** appointed at AGM **Chair** appointed Mar 2020

David Post – **Ordinary Board member** appointed Jan 2020

Simone Hyde - **Ordinary Board member** appointed Jan 2020

Duncan Brown - **Ordinary Board member** appointed Feb 2020

Jenny Davis – **Ordinary Board member** reappointed Apr 2020



Retiring Board October 2019 L to R Mel, Ann, Kate, Fleur & Ange (absent Jenny)



*Ann Baker – Grad Dip (Community)
Assoc Degree Health Science*

Ann has over 25 years' experience in the community sector working at all levels from direct care work to management. Over these years Ann has worked across homelessness, disabilities, and residential and community aged care. Ann holds a Grad Diploma in Community Management as well as an Associate Degree in Health Science. Ann has previously worked as Team Leader at Sisters Housing Enterprises and following a break returned to the organisation serving as a board member



Mel Prout – RN, RM

Melanie (Mel) is a registered nurse and midwife and has been a Board Member of Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. for more than 10 years. Mel's passion for women and children's welfare is a perfect meld for the work that Sisters Housing do.



Jenny Davis

Jenny has served on the Board of Sisters Housing since June 2019. Jenny has had a varied work life and is currently working with Mission Australia, having undertaken studies in Community Service. Jenny's passion, commitment, and drive to support survivors of D&FV lead her to establish "Liberty from Violence" an NFP, dedicated to raising awareness and assistance for women and children.



*AGM 2019 – Fleur Katsmartin (Chair), Dr
Joe McGirr (Local MP) & Belinda (Manager)*



NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Duncan Brown – Bcom(Acc) MBA

Duncan has spent over 20 years in financial services and is now following his passion to help build community capacity toward an inclusive society that embraces and values equality. Having grown up in South Africa during apartheid, he has experienced the devastating impacts of a society based on inequality and where *empowerment, respect and human dignity are not valued. Driven by his focus in people, he is currently deepening his knowledge by completing a Master of Social and Organizational Leadership and a Master of Ethics and Legal Studies.*



Simone Hyde

Simone is a degree qualified human resources and coaching professional with industry experience. She is passionate and committed to making the world a better place, by helping others succeed. Outside of the boardroom, she delivers affordable job help through her business Simone Maree Consulting. An accredited Mental Health First Aider, Simone is a current member of:

- *Australian Human Resource Institute*
- *Career Development Association of Australia*
- *Veterans Community Business Chamber*
- *Writing NSW*



David Post - BA, BSW, JP

David is a trained professional – Relationship, Personal & Family Counsellor. Bush born and bred with a massive passion for regional Australia. He has worked for many years in the field of relationship and family counselling so has a deep understanding of how mental ill-health manifests in the bush. Witnessing rural mental health funding drying up and with an understanding of the need for ongoing outreach counselling for rural families and communities. **Rural Outreach Counselling Inc. (ROC)** a not-for-profit, community funded mental health counselling support service was established. Working with rural and remote communities, to reduce suicide, the impact of depression and anxiety.

ELIGIBILITY & ATTENDANCE BY BOARD MEMBERS

The Board met regularly with nine (9) Ordinary Meetings, and the AGM this financial year. Since our last AGM, several Board members have stepped down, due to work or personal commitments, with three new members being appointed in the second half of the year. We welcome all new members and look forward to their input and working with them.

Attendance at Board Meetings

Board Member	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Apology
Fleur Katsmartin	5	5	
Anginette MacKinnon	5	5	
Melanie Prout	9	5	4
Kate Salmon	2	2	
Ann Baker	9	9	
David Post	5	3	2
Simone Hyde	5	3	2
Duncan Brown	4	4	
Jenny Davis	5	4	1

THE STAFF

Belinda McMahon – Manager

Tammy Marks - Senior Case Worker

Kirrily Shaw – Case Worker

Alex Quarmby – Case Worker

Reebeka Button – Case Worker (Maternity leave May 2020)

Brooke Kerin – Accommodation Support Worker

Janice Dixon – Receptionist/Administration Assistant

Casual workers

Norma Halse – Case Worker (casual Jul – Nov 2019)

Greta Regan – Case Worker (recruited to fill Maternity leave position - May 2020)





Belinda - Manager



Tammy - Senior Case Worker



Janice – Admin Officer



Alex – Case Worker



Kirrily – Case Worker



Brooke – Accommodation Support



Reebeka – Case Worker



Norma – Casual Case Worker



Greta – Casual Case Worker

OUR WORK

SENIOR CASE WORKERS REPORT

Great things in business are never done by one person, they are done by a team of people – and what a team we are!

The past 12 months have seen new, casual, and temp/contract Case Workers as well as Student Placement share the office, and our team transitioned beautifully with each change.

Reebeka (Bek) joined Alex and Kirrily in the 9-5 grind of Case Management and fitted in perfectly, her calm approach proving to be an invaluable asset to the team. These 3 girls are smashing goals!

Norma joined us for a few months as a Casual Case Worker, keen to establish her roots in the industry and bringing to our team a “motherly” warmth that was very welcomed and embraced by both staff and clients.

At the same time, we welcomed Bethany, a CSU Student who was wrapping up some hours as part of her student placement. It was an honour and a first for SHE Inc to open the doors to a student in the Social Work field. Bethany taught us a few things and our team certainly opened Beth’s eyes to the wholistic case management we pride ourselves on.

I was given the honour of filling Belinda’s shoes late in 2019, spreading my wings into Management whilst maintaining team leadership of case workers – another transition and change that the team navigated beautifully.

Recently, Bek became a mum again to a beautiful and healthy baby girl, opening the doors for new graduate Greta to fill Bek’s chair while she bonded with her newborn. Greta has shared with the team her passion for social work and she has embraced the practical side of Case Management with gusto!

Not only do we assess, coordinate, case plan and support our clients, we also squeeze in attendance at meetings and service launches/events, run women’s groups on Fridays (Tea & Tales), support the accommodation support worker, participate in fundraising opportunities for SHE Inc and attend multiple training opportunities – busy bees!

Change can often see a workplace unravel, but it is with pride I can share that our team always works together in a supportive and respectful manner, stepping in and up as needed – sharing and learning together as we work with the women and their children in our community at their greatest time of need.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

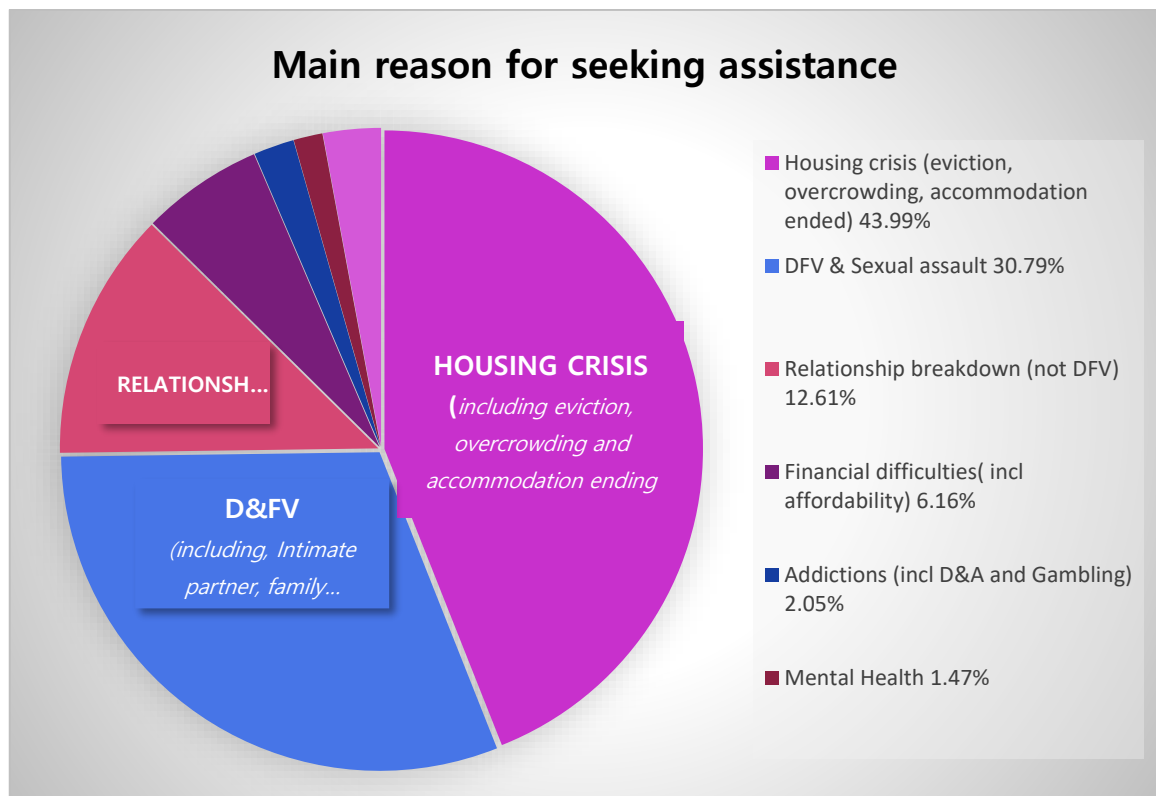
Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. supports continuous learning and professional development of its staff. Throughout the year staff attended training both face to face and virtually. A focus for the service this year has been in building skills and knowledge in Domestic & Family Violence.

Several staff maintain professional membership with the Case Management Society of Australia. Along with some staff enrolling in higher education or currently undertaking tertiary studies.

Name of training	No. of Staff
Grief & Loss working with adults	7
Safe Talk – Suicide prevention training	7
D&FV Toolkit – Family Aware Practice	4
Tangentyere FV prevention program	4
Complex needs in Homelessness	3
D&FV – Understanding the impact on children	3
DV Safety Planning	3
Motivational interviewing – Helping people change	3
CIMS Foundation Training	2
Change Management & Collaboration	2
DV Alert – Complex forms of violence	2
Mental Health First Aid	1
Managing aggressive & violent behaviours	1
Legal Aid – Work Development orders	1
Double Whammy – Co-occurring Mental Health & Alcohol or Other Drugs	1
Trauma Informed Practice	1

SERVICE DELIVERY – STATISTICS

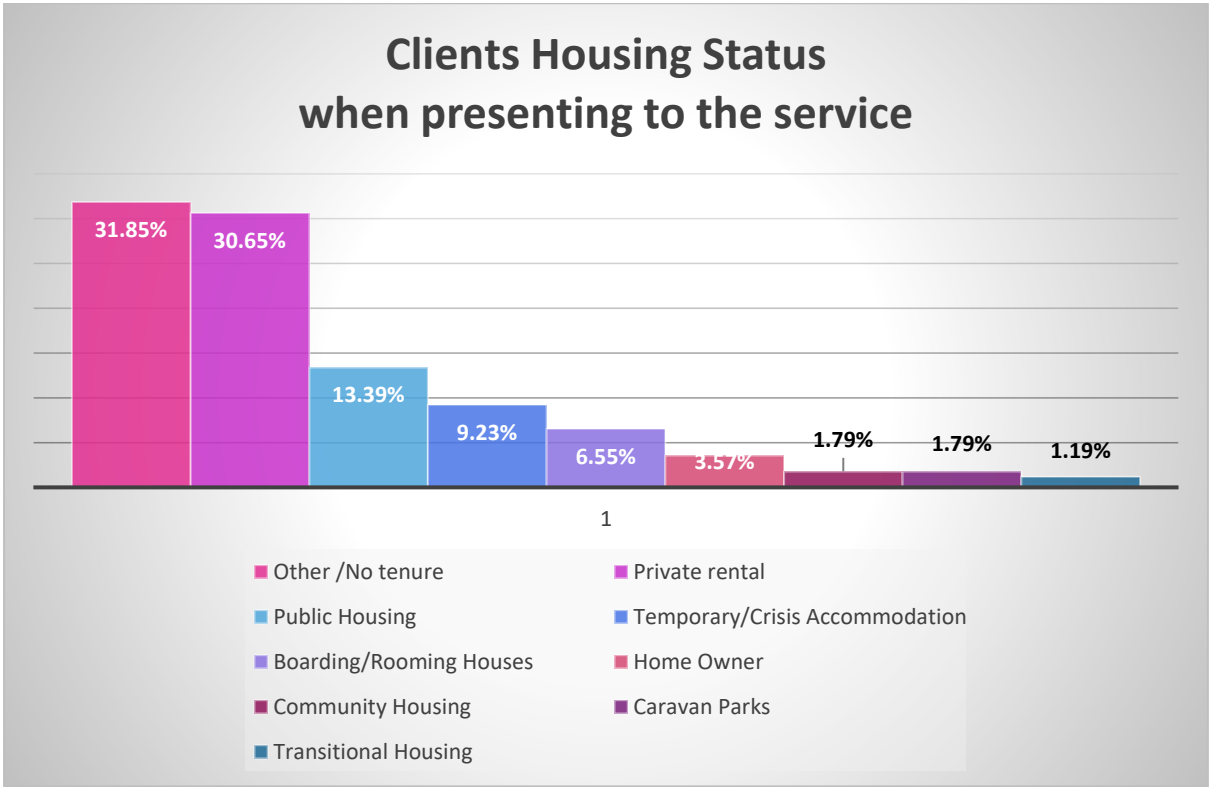
The service is funded to support and assist women and children who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. This year three hundred and nineteen women and children were supported. Many women who were supported sought assistance due to facing a housing crisis. Below is a selection of statistic that I hope you will find of interest. Women identify their reasons for seeking assistance which are recorded as below.



The above chart indicates the main presenting issues that have been identified on assessment as the cause of the client's homelessness. Groupings have been made to illustrate the major three areas, small numbers of clients have identified: unemployment, non-family violence, or leaving institutional settings such as incarceration, mental health facilities or out of home care.

Women presenting with D&FV also experience a higher rate of addiction and mental health and may present these as the primary issue for seeking SHS services. Whilst addiction and mental health account for approximately 3.5% of the primary cause for seeking assistance the impact of DV on a woman can significantly increase her use or abuse of substances, whilst also impacting on her mental health. Both of which can severely limit her ability to sustain a stable tenancy for herself and her children.

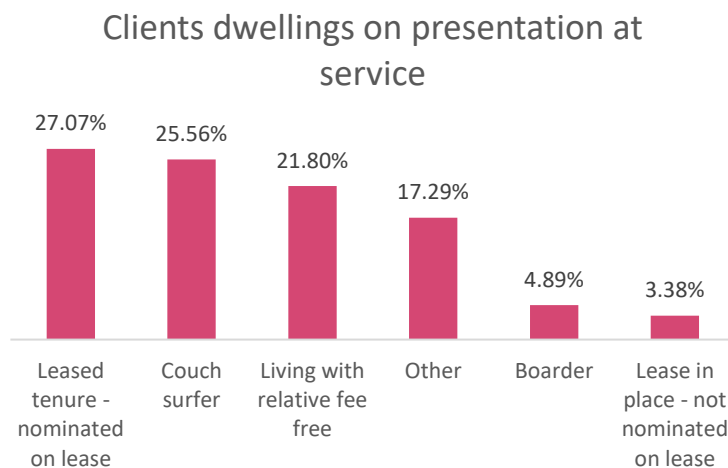
Almost a third of women who identified housing crisis, were faced with eviction. Women were not only facing eviction from private rentals, but also community and social housing. With a number of these evictions due to rental arrears, property care issues or damage to properties.



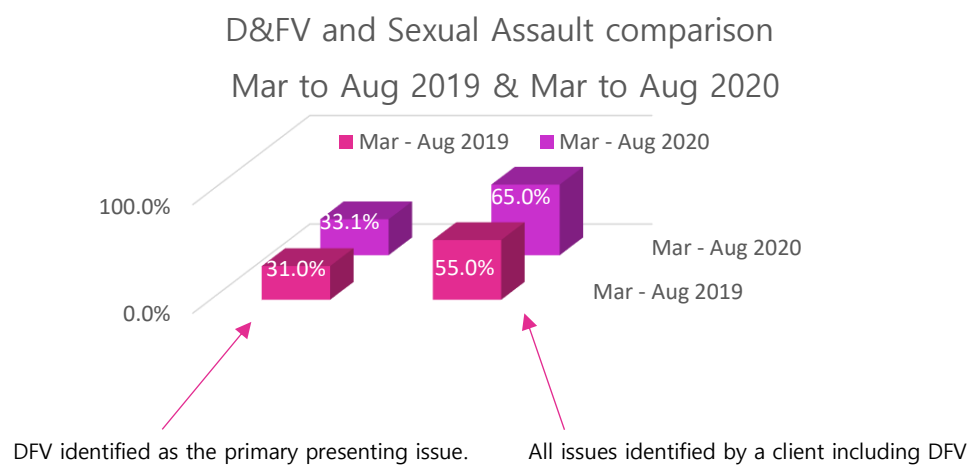
The above graph indicates the status of a client's tenure when presenting for service, with the largest cohort having no safe space to live. Included in this category are those clients who are couch surfing or sleeping rough. Clients in private rentals account for almost one third of the work done by staff. Work in this area includes support and advocacy to Real Estate agents and NCAT tribunal, with staff supporting several clients through tribunal. Women may receive an eviction notice due to rent arrears, nuisance/noise complaints, damage to property or poor property care. There is no distinction between private or public tenancies when it comes to clients receiving an eviction notice.

With more than thirty percent of women identifying that they have no tenure, advocacy is undertaken to assist them to gain housing within the private rental or social housing market. Support is also provided to clients when acknowledging or negotiating repayment of large debts either with private, social or community housing providers. Whilst clients may be listed with social housing as unsatisfactory staff work closely with Housing NSW (social housing) on the client's behalf to resolve these issues and their homelessness. The graph below

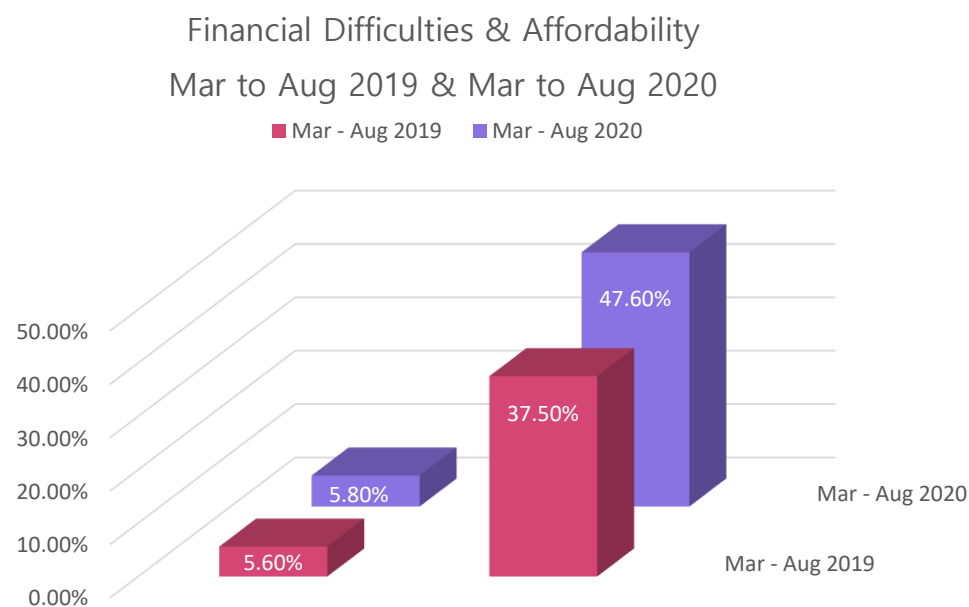
indicates what a client's tenure looked like when presenting to service. An almost even presentation between clients having a lease or couch surfing represented just over half of the clients. Closely followed by 21% living with relatives rent free. Inferences can be made from these statistics that women are placed at greater disadvantage due to low income.



COVID-19 statistics



An increase of 2.1% was witnessed for women experiencing D&FV seeking support between March and August 2020 in comparison with the same period last year. Overall, a 10% increase in demand has been identified for women identifying several issues upon seeking services. It is noted that upon initial presentation to the service women may identify other issues as the primary reason for seeking service, but as their situations are unpacked D&FV becomes a part of their story and an impact on their situation. Below the graph indicates the primary presenting issue for the same period as the previous graph, showing financial difficulties and affordability.



Cupcake sales outside of WWFSS offices



Staff Xmas Party – Under the vines

WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

VISITING PRACTITIONERS

During the first half of the year service providers attended the service with clients in house or in transitional properties able to access appointments for.

- Financial Counselling (Anglicare)
- Centrelink services

We look forward to the return of services to our building in the near future, which will enable all women who are working with the service to access these vital services.

MEETINGS & SERVICE VISITS

The service engages with & works collaboratively with its Alliance partners and other Government and Non-Government agencies to meet the needs of clients and include:

- Edel Quinn Homeless Service (Alliance partner)
- Tumut Regional Family Services (Alliance partner)
- Eastern Murrumbidgee Youth Services – EMYS (Alliance partner)
- Young Crisis Accommodation Services (Alliance partner)
- Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ)
- Child Protection & support services - NGO services
- Wagga Wagga Family Support Service (WWFSS)
- Wagga Women's Health Centre (WWHC)
- Domestic Violence Services, including the NSW Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO)
- Services Australia (Centrelink)
- Social & Community Housing providers
- Drug & Alcohol - Government & NGO services
- Mental Health - Government & NGO services
- Relationships Australia
- Family Referral Service
- Safer Pathways (D&FV Pilot program)
- Community groups such as CWA & Innerwheel

Staff attend and participate in a range of meetings, these include:

- Fortnightly Safety Action Meetings
- Monthly EMA Brokerage Coordination
- Monthly DVLC
- Quarterly Alliance Governance Meetings
- Quarterly Triple H Meetings
- Homelessness Sector Network Meetings

One off meeting, service visits & presentations enable staff to remain up to date with the wider network of services which their clients may be eligible to access: Staff have visited, had visits from or attended the following

Housing NSW – Housing products available to clients

Centrelink – updates on income support payments

Centacare – groups and services available.

Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) - Community engagement

Safer Pathways – pilot program for women at serious risk of harm due to D&FV

Media interviews – Staff continue to promote both domestic violence and homelessness with media interviews both on radio and TV. An interview with ABC radio promoted the journaling workshop. This workshop was funded by the Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) as a part of their mental health initiative.

Interview panels – Requests for senior staff to assist with interview panels continues to be undertaken as and when staff are available. A member of staff was available to support WWFSS for their recruitment during the 2019/20 financial year.

Meetings –Local Member Dr Joe McGirr MP meet with Belinda, to discuss funding and the services provided by Sisters Housing. In February, Belinda, Jenna Roberts, Director Wagga Family Support Service, Penny Sharpe MLC, and Trish Doyle MP, meet to discuss funding, issues for women's services and D&FV.

Photo to the right

Belinda McMahon - Manager

Penny Sharpe - MLC (Legislative Council)
Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the
Legislative Council

Trish Doyle - MP (Legislative Assembly)



SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVES

What a mixed bag it has been this past financial year for participating in social action. Whilst most of us have wanted to hunker down, we did manage to raise community awareness of D&FV during the 16 days of Activism. In partnership with Wagga Wagga Family Support Service, a sticker was developed and several local coffee shops in Wagga, the suburbs and the outlying village of Uranquinty were approached to participate in disseminating this important message. This took the form of a small sticker being placed on top of coffee cups. In total 400 stickers were distributed. We sincerely thank the business houses who worked with us to promote services for those experiencing D&FV.



We also participated in Health Week, with a stand at the LikeMind health promotion in Baylis street, this was a great chance for staff to not only promote the service to the community but was a bonding opportunity with staff from Like Mind.

As part of Premier, Gladys Berejiklian's priority to halve street sleepers by 2025, Tammy & Belinda participated in the biannual street sleep count in February, just prior to the COVID pandemic. At that time there was only one person found to be sleeping rough, that is not to say that there is not a greater presence in our community, teams who went out just did not find them on that night. Due to COVID 19 the second scheduled count for this year has been postponed until February 2021.



With the devastating fires early in 2020 it was most heartening to watch the women in crisis accommodation come together to do something for others. Clients along with staff put together care packs using toiletries and other essential items which had been donated for their use. These packs were then taken to the distribution centre ready to go out to those in need. A true sentiment and testament to the Australian spirit of helping a mate. Each little pack had a message of hope and encouragement from the women.



Thanks to the women for their support to victims of the Bush fires 2020

Staff and clients participated in the RSPCA's "**Cupcake day**" making and decorating cupcakes. A fabulous time was had by all, with staff taking the remaining cupcakes out to sell to businesses houses. I must make mention that most of the cakes went to the fabulous staff at Wagga Family Support. A donation of \$199.05 was made to the RSPCA. Once again, a time of giving back to the community, it really does show that great spirit, even in their own adversity they have a sense of wanting to help others



RSPCA cupcake day - Staff & Clients decorating cupcakes



Cupcakes ready for sale

OUR CLIENTS

TEA & TALES

Teas & Tales continues to give women an opportunity to connect socially with other women in the community, all women who attend groups have also been assisted & supported by Sisters Housing

Activities throughout the year have ranged from service provider visits, (LikeMind, Salvation Army. and The Smith Family) Bingo, Basket weaving, Mindfulness, Self-care session – *"I am Fabulous"*, Melbourne Cup celebrations, Xmas Craft workshop, Pilates, Gears workshop, Bingo, games days, RSPCA cupcake day and Self-care packages for the bush fire victims.

With groups continuing until March 2020, meeting on Fridays with a different activity each week.

Food & Coffee also plays a big part in the groups with morning teas of freshly baked scones or delicious lunches that were warm, and hearty being had after groups, giving women the opportunity to continue to build social connections.



Thank you to those who delivered groups throughout the year:

- Mindfulness - Tammy
- *"I am Fabulous"* oils workshop – Tania (*Sharing Oils with Tania & Co*)
- Pilates – Vanessa (*Movement Remedies*)
- Weaving Workshop – Wagga Weavers
- Saver Plus Financial Literacy - Leanne (*The Smith Family*)



Staff and participants inspecting their handy work



Lunch after a group

THE YEAR IN PICTURES



Brooke & Simone – Bunnings BBQ Feb 2020



*Top right - Xmas donation Wagga Rural Referral Hospital
Midwives with Brooke*



Middle left – Raised Garden Beds



Bottom Left – Trivia Night 2020



Our Groups



"I am Fabulous" workshop with Tania



Miss Heather – Gear Workshop Feb 2020



Client's Xmas party



Tea & Tales cooking class



CLIENT REFLECTIONS

Each year we invite clients to contribute to our Annual report, this year a past client has put pen to paper, it is with much pleasure that I include Vanessa's experience, in her own words. It was also an absolute honor and privilege for a staff member to be invited to witness a previous client receive her Australian Citizenship. It is most humbling to witness our clients move forward in their journey knowing that we have played a small part in it. Congratulations and well done to both women. We look forward to sharing many more successes.

VANESSA'S EXPERIENCE

"I just would like to start by thanking all the staff at sisters housing especially Tammy who was assigned to me when I first arrived in 2017 I was a mess I felt like I was stripped bare after a tumultuous (sic) relationship I was completely broken. Between all the staff at sisters housing they slowly encourage me to come out of my room they empowered me and gave me encouraging words to lift my confidence to keep moving forward, while I have some bad days I had lots of moments I succeeded. As well as some courses I engaged in which was eye opening, such as the Calvary dv course. I also got my driving license done, at that point without Tammy and Kirralys (sic) words of encouragement I don't think I would of had the confidence to do this at the time. The ladies at sisters stood by me though (sic) thick and thin, through a break down, adverse reactions to medications to legal issues. They provided classes in house in which I enjoyed very much. I couldn't feel more supported, to see me from then until now is a huge change, I still have days I struggle but I continue to move forward, back then I felt like I was in a dark place now I can see a light at the end of the tunnel. I would like to say a big thank you to Tammy, Kirraly, (sic) Brook, Janice, Belinda and the rest of the team at sisters housing, I can't thank you all enough for the support and the continuing support. "

"Remember ladies there is no shame about asking for help, it's about moving forward and growing into the best you that you can be. "

Your sincerely Vanessa

ELSABE'S CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY



An "Aussie" at last. Well Done



Belinda with Elsa

OUR FINANCES

FUNDRAISING

Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. would like to acknowledge and thanks all donors, large and small, who have contributed to the service. Donations throughout 2019/20 were received from the following groups, organisations & individuals. Without the generous support, grants, and donations it receives, Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. would not be able to offer clients that extra level of support.

Wagga & Oura CWA

Hore & Davies

Inner Wheel Club

Koorinal High School

Opening Doors

OzHarvest

Smiles- Treats & Treasures

The Grange

The Old Convent

Wollundry Rotary

S Buckman

H Boetto

N&R Fisher

and the various community donations made through PayPal giving or anonymously.



*Thomas Bros Group Wagga Wagga It Takes Two launch
Celebrities, Casandra, & Bill, Belinda, Tammy and Ange*

The Fundraising Report Long Lunch

The Associate members of Sisters Housing and Long Lunch Committee would like to thank Sisters for their ongoing support of Women in crisis. Together with the Thomas Brothers, Wagga Wagga Takes 2 committee and Sisters representative Cassandra Nicolson we decided to bring awareness of our organization to the local community.

To do this we used the high-profile Wagga Wagga takes 2 to share our profile. This involved an amount of fundraising across the community, the associate members decided to hold a long lunch to raise money for Sisters.

The long lunch was proposed for the 29th of March but as we are all aware Covid-19 happened. The Lunch was postponed, and a September/October date was to be considered. Those who had paid for the lunch were asked if they would like to leave their payment for a later date or donate. They were also asked if they would like a refund. The reality is that Covid-19 is still here, and we felt that it would be a risk to the community to consider holding any event.

The decision was made early September to cancel the event and make plans for 2021. The invited guests have been notified and a further offer of a refund has been given, we will not know the final figure of donations for a few weeks. Currently we have \$450.00 in donations, \$3780 in un refunded tickets and refunds of \$1260 already processed. To this point there is \$4230.00 in the tri booking account.

I would like to thank the Associate Long Lunch Committee for all their work in the prep for this event. The time they gave for meetings and the flair and inspiration they offered to make this event special. Special thanks too Brooke Summerfield for the admin involved and continuing until we finalise all refunds. Here's to Cassandra Nicholson (our little songbird) who offered her precious time to be our front person for Thomas Bros, Wagga Wagga Takes 2. Fingers crossed we will see Cassandra on the stage in 2021.

On behalf of the Associates of Sisters Housing I would like to thank the Wagga Wagga community and local business for their support.

Regards,

Angie MacKinnon

FINANCIAL REPORT

Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. Income Statement

For the year ended 30th June 2020

SHE Inc.	
Total Income	\$838,145
Total Expenses	\$798,115
Net Surplus/Deficit	\$40,030

Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. Balance Sheet as of 30th June 2020

Total Assets	\$520,744
Total Liabilities	\$135,723
Net Assets	\$385,021
Total Members Funds	

SHE Inc. receives funding from DCJ as member of the Murrumbidgee Housing Alliance. These SHS funds are provided to enable work to be undertaken in Wagga Wagga, Junee, Lockhart & Coolamon.

A full set of Audited Financial Statements are available on request.



Staff Christmas party December 2019 from Left – Bek, Brooke, Belinda, Janice, Alex Beth (student) Tam & Kirrily

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Board@sistershousing.org.au

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Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. holds an authority to fundraising undersection 13A of the Charitable Fundraising Act 1991 - CFN 24157



OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sisters Housing Enterprises Inc. acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land and pay our respect to Elders, both past and present and extend our acknowledgment to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

