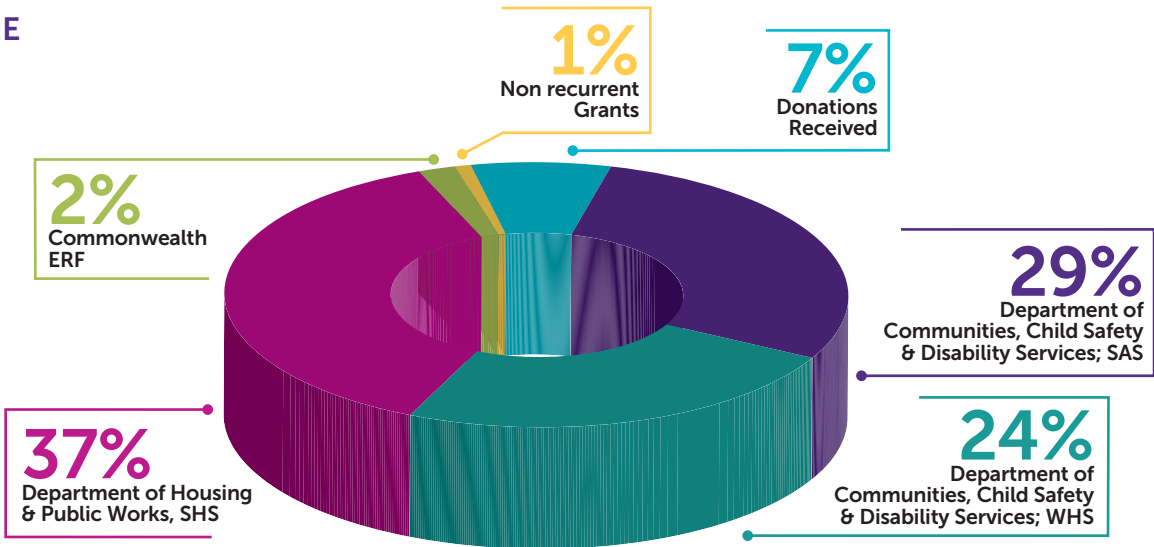


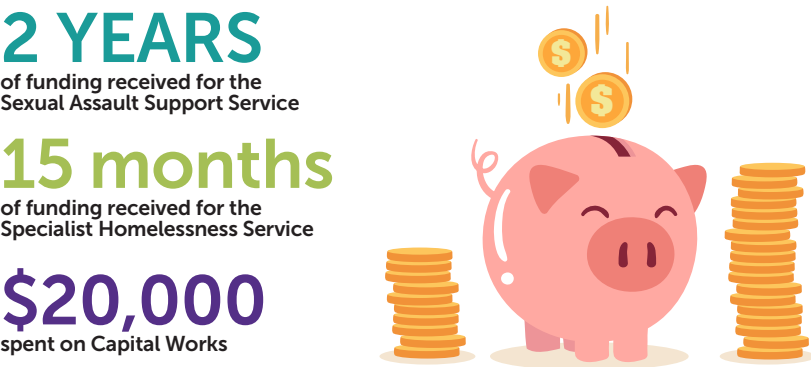
Treasurer’s Report

INCOME



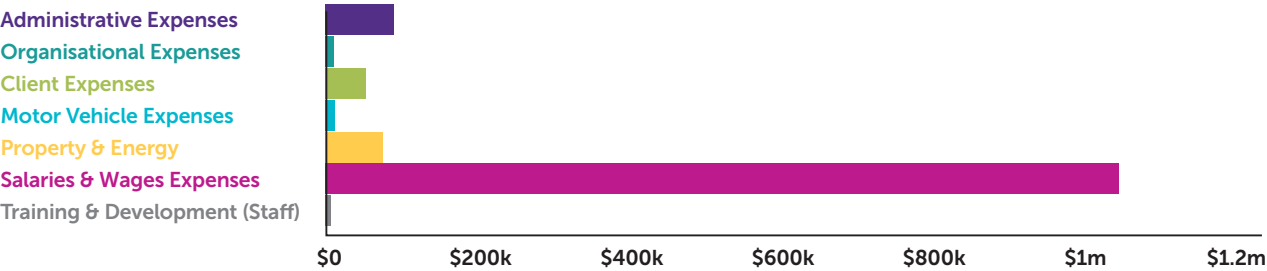
This year has been an interesting one for the Women’s Centre. After independently funding participation as a collaborative partner of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) in 2016, a successful business case submission meant that the Sexual Assault Support Service received funding for two years to continue the 24 hour joint service with the Sexual Crimes Unit, Forensic Medical Services and Townsville Hospital to support sexual assault victims. Successful outcomes for women experiencing homelessness achieved an additional 15 months of funding for the Specialist Homelessness Service commencing April 1, 2017.

All the staff are now accommodated in 50 Patrick Street and, as the staff numbers have grown, renovations to accommodate them have had to be done leading to approximately \$20,000 of capital works. We continue to get great support for our building fund from the Sky Foundation and Payce Foundation but the search for a new home for the centre has so far been frustrating as some promising options had to be taken off the table due to council regulations and requirements.



“There is no Sexual Assault Response Team if there is no funded Sexual Assault Support Service”

EXPENDITURE



Partnerships/Alliance/Networks

- » ACOSS
- » Althea Projects
- » ANROWS
- » ATSIWLS
- » BSSS
- » Children by Choice
- » Clinical Forensic Medical Unit
- » Coalition on Criminal Assault in the Home
- » Coast to Country Housing Company
- » DOVETAIL
- » EVAWQ (Committee Member)
- » Homelessness Australia
- » Housing & Homelessness Area Network (chair)
- » Housing Connections
- » James Cook University
- » Law Right
- » MENTER
- » NASASV
- » Northern Australia Primary Health Ltd
- » NQ Alliance for Mental Health
- » NQWLS
- » NQWSN
- » QCROSS
- » QSAN
- » Queensland Police Service
- » Queensland Women’s Health Alliance
- » Red Cross Australia
- » Red Rose Project
- » SARRG
- » SART
- » SASP
- » Scrap 8 Stamp
- » Sera’s Women’s Shelter
- » Sharehouse
- » Sky Foundation
- » Sexual Crimes Unit
- » The Townsville Hospital
- » Townsville Aboriginal & Islander Health Services
- » Townsville City Council
- » Townsville Family Support Alliance
- » Townsville Multicultural Support Group
- » Townsville Suicide Prevention Network
- » Townsville Women’s Correctional Centre
- » Townsville Youth Justice Centre
- » Victims Assist Old
- » WESNET
- » Yumba-Meta

Thank you, fundraisers & supporters

- » Aaron Harper - local member
- » AECOM
- » Andrea Heyward
- » Anglican Church of the Ascension
- » Business in Heels
- » Charles Fisher Bank of Queensland
- » Coralie O’Rourke – local member
- » Dave and Kirsten Lyon
- » Platinum Electricians
- » Escape Travel
- » JCU Bake Sale
- » Lions Club - World Festival of Magic
- » Lorraine
- » Monica- Bunnings Ltd
- » Morgans Foundation Ltd
- » Mundingburra Police
- » PAYCE Foundation
- » Rotary Club Port of Townsville
- » Share the Dignity Ltd
- » Sky Foundation
- » St Margaret Mary’s College
- » St Peter’s Anglican Church
- » Suzy May Bank Australia
- » Townsville Northern Suburbs Lions Club
- » Townsville Game Fishing Club Inc
- » Willows Presbyterian Church
- » Zoe Harris Commonwealth Bank Australia

the women’s centre

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Funded by Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
Funded by Department of Housing & Public Works

Management Committee

President
Diana Falcomer

Secretary
Theresa Petray

Treasurer
Jenny Sebba

Vice President
Suzanne Johnston
Committee Members
Skye Jerome
Santina Winterkorn
Kierra-lee Schmiedel

Staff Team

Coordinator
Cathy Crawford

Senior Counsellor
Di Plumb

Administrator
Rose Alexander

Sexual Assault Counsellors
Belinda Vincent
Karen Rowan

Women’s Health/Sexual Assault Counsellors
Erin Costello
Alison Thorburn

Sexual Assault Strategic Partnership Project
Trudi Contarino

Women’s Homelessness Workers
Tiffany Goodman
Emily Hellyer
Chantelle Whitehead
Jill Sutcliffe
Donna Newman

Reception/ Support Worker
Toni Lilley

Playgroup Facilitator
Hayley Plumb

Relief Workers
Rechelle Louk
Mary Wheeler

Art & Craft Group Facilitator
Virginia Hurst

Yoga Tutor
Meredith Starck



The Women’s Centre
Annual Report 2017

Quality through diversity

President Report 2016 - 2017

Looking back over the last twelve months, the challenging case work and the number of women and children seeking assistance from The Women's Centre led a pathway for staff to develop opportunities in their specialised areas.

The Women's Centre delivered in 2016 / 2017 and remained strongly committed to the integrated service delivery model of the Women's Health Service, Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service and the Specialist Homelessness Service. Additional funding has enabled the Women's Centre's Homelessness team to assist more women, with safe referral to crisis accommodation or short term tenancies, housing crisis support and sustaining tenancies.

Each of the Women's Health and Sexual Assault Counsellors see on average five women per day for free sexual assault, domestic violence and relationship counselling. This level of service delivery could not have been sustained with the organisation continuing a daily drop-in facility.

Last year we introduced a change to the service model, following the work undertaken by the Sexual Assault Strategic Partnership, in identification of inadequacies in referral pathway systems and support for victims of Sexual Assault. The Sexual Assault Response Team was established in collaboration with the Sexual Crimes Unit, Clinical Forensic Medical Unit and The Townsville Hospital. This has been a successful partnership which commenced without additional financial support. We are pleased that our efforts as a part of the Sexual Assault Response Team have achieved funding for the next two years, which ensures continued improvement to early responses for survivors of sexual assault.

The Women's Health Service therapy groups have continued in high demand. The benefits to women and children in having access to art, craft and yoga workshops, playgroups and support groups are paramount to their wellbeing and a balanced life.

The network and effective relationships developed with our community health partners is greatly appreciated. In consultation with Northern Australia Primary Health the service has continued to promote a barrier free access point for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women to receive confidential counselling from their Counsellor.

In April 2017 an audit for Human Service Quality Standards achieved certification for The Women's Centre to be an accredited organisation. This evaluation and review is critical for the continuous improvement of our organisation as a whole, as well as the individual services we provide. It also facilitates opportunity for feedback, compliments and complaints from our service users and stakeholders, to ensure quality at all levels.

The long term building plans remain unresolved for 50 Patrick Street, and development plans for alternate building elsewhere and/or a rebuild have not progressed as far as we would have hoped. Significant donations were received this year through the ongoing support and fundraising of the Sky Foundation, and these remain in a dedicated building fund. We are extremely grateful to Wingate Property and the Payce Foundation for their pledge to contribute \$50,000 each year for five years starting in 2016. This financial support would not have happened without the support and fundraising of the Sky Foundation.

We would also like to thank our departing committee members Skye Jerome and Suzanne Johnson who made considerable contribution to The Women's Centre Management Committee.

Lastly, a thank you for the leadership and direction of The Women's Centre by the Coordinator, Cathy, and her advice and guidance to the Management Committee, to provide and support a better future in the lives of many women and children.

Diana Falcomer, President

Coordinators Report 2016-2017

The Women's Centre made many significant changes to service delivery and responses to women this year. Great outcomes were achieved by the Townsville Sexual Assault Service, the Women's Health Service and the Specialist Homelessness Service. The year began with a move, 52 Patrick St moved into 50 Patrick St., and two became one. Then in May there was a service expansion and more renovations were completed. Oh what a squash! Thanks Rose for all your work.

The Sky Foundation has continued to work tirelessly with fundraising for a new building for the Women's Centre and will continue their work into the new year. This extraordinary effort and work is greatly appreciated and it is recognised how hard their job is and how hard the women work.

In July 2016 we also closed our traditional drop in centre and ceased to manage food and donations. We no longer had the space or the staff to manage the large unfunded workload. The number of women accessing the Centre has decreased and this has allowed each team to focus on specific service provision related to their funding streams.



Our group programs have been many and diverse this year and continue to grow with many different partners. I will take the opportunity to acknowledge our partners, particularly members of Housing Connections, Seras, La Luna, and Legal Services including Law Right, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's' Legal Services and NQ Women's Legal Services, and all those lawyers who gave their time to providing services to women.

We have participated in local, regional and state forums, workshops, advisory bodies and networks this year. We continue to remain abreast of relevant political and social issues often providing leadership across the community and the state.

Finally, I would like to thank staff and management for their support and dedication throughout this changing, exciting and challenging year.

Sexual Assault Support Service Report

With great optimism, enthusiasm and commitment, in July 2016, Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service launched into a partnership with a newly formed Sexual Crimes Unit (part of Queensland Police Service), the Townsville Hospital and Health Service and the Clinical Forensic Medicine Unit.

Emerging from an environment of rigorous inquiry, informed by the voices of victims and our own escalating concerns about victims' needs, rights and access to appropriate services, the Sexual Assault Support Service saw this as an opportunity to proactively work towards a genuine shift in policy and practice. Victims are placed central in this multi-agency wrap around response, which reflects best practice standards, as described in The Queensland Government Interagency Guidelines for Responding to People who have Experienced Sexual Assault.

The Sexual Assault Response Team was thus established and all counselling and case management workers at The Women's Centre began to participate on a 24 hour / 7 day a week roster for immediate crisis support to a victim of sexual assault who presented to police or the hospital.

Behind the scenes, a significant body of work was undertaken which then resulted in successfully securing funding to continue to respond and contribute to an integrated SART approach; ie responding to victims and contributing to the development of a best practice evidence based model of care which by its very nature, challenges the systems and institutions which silence and disempower victims.

We continue to work together strengthening relationships across the four interagency partners, as we reflect, grow and strive towards ensuring a robust, holistic and truly collaborative response to victims whose needs, rights and choices are unequivocally central to this process.

In addition to this innovative shift in service delivery, the Sexual Assault Support Service continued to engage women for ongoing counselling, supporting and validating women as they insightfully explored the aftermath of their experiences of sexual violence, and continued to build belief in and connection with themselves as they recovered from the personal devastation caused by sexual violence.

Number of Contacts to The Women's Centre

10462
Women

5141

5320

1229
Children

151

1078

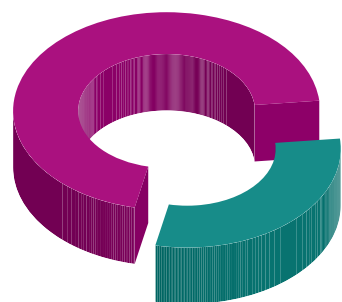
11691
Total

5292

6398

At the Women's Centre 1,186 women engaged in ongoing Women's Health and Sexual Assault Support Service counselling,

30% were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women.



From the inception of the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) this year the Townsville Sexual Assault Support Service supported 101 people and provided support at the hospital or police station on 137 occasions. There was at least 1 SART response every three days. Of the 101 people 5 were male and 96 were female.



Specialist Homelessness Service Report

During the last twelve months the Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) team consisted of three case managers, who provided specialised homelessness support to women and children in the Townsville region. The Specialist Homelessness Service offers both centre-based and mobile responses prioritising safety, with a strong focus on support for emotional need, stability and security of housing.

Our holistic case management style of service delivery is offered to women and children who are experiencing homelessness, or who are at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness. By working from evidence-based practice we are able to provide a flexible service that is tailored to the many diverse and specific needs of vulnerable women and children.

For a number of women, the stress of homelessness is often exacerbated by other past and current traumatic experiences, such as sexual assault, relationship breakdown, financial hardship and grief and loss. However, it is evident, that domestic and family violence continues to be the leading cause of homelessness.

During the past year, the Specialist Homelessness Service team has assisted 401 women to access a range of accommodation options including crisis, transitional and long-term housing or received support to sustain their tenancy.

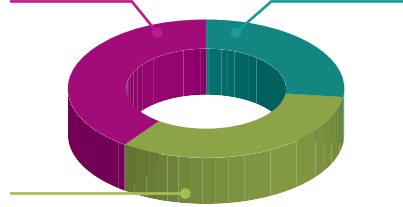
In the last financial year, some difficult but necessary decisions were made in relation to The Women's Centre services and we were no longer able to provide a drop in option, with emergency relief, or accept donations of food and household items. This decision affected the women we work with, however the Specialist Homelessness Service team was able to distribute emergency relief in a more effective way and improve on the quality of service through intensive case management strategies.

In addition, working partnerships developed with external stakeholders; Housing Connections, Department of Housing & Public Works, Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service and local emergency housing providers, enable the Specialist Homelessness Service to advocate for collaborative solutions to resolve homelessness for women in our region.

Percentage of women's initial access to funded services

40%
Womens Health Service

27%
Sexual Assault Support Service

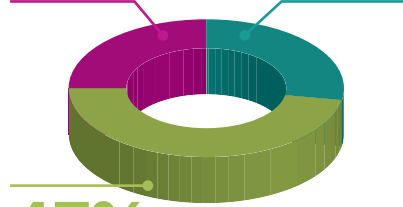


33%
Specialist Homelessness Service

Percentage of ongoing contacts with women per service

25%
Womens Health Service

28%
Sexual Assault Support Service



47%
Specialist Homelessness Service

Women's Health Service Report

The Women's Health Service has continued to provide a counselling service to women throughout 2016/2017. The service has provided counselling to 294 women throughout the period. The main presenting issue throughout this period has been Other Wellbeing issue followed closely by Domestic and Family Violence. Often Other Wellbeing issue is recognised by counsellors at the time of the initial contact as women may not yet be disclosing or identifying issues, however through working with a counsellor this becomes clearer as a counselling plan is developed.

The Women's Health Service has continued to offer a range of groups to women throughout 2016/2017. Balancing Life, Keeping the Sharks at Bay, Yoga, Art, Craft, Playgroup and a weaving group ran throughout 2016/2017. In addition an extra craft group was offered to mothers of pre-school aged children whilst their children participated in circus experiences with La Luna Youth Arts. Groups continued to be well attended.

NQCWS Inc. hosted a professional development luncheon for International Women's Day 2017 focusing on the topic of Strangulation. Strangulation was the chosen topic due to the recent passing of Queensland Government legislation that choking, suffocation or strangulation in a domestic setting is now a criminal offence. Further to this two staff had attended Specialist Strangulation Training in Brisbane hosted by the Red Rose Foundation earlier this year. This event allowed the staff to share their learnings with their colleagues and the sector. Through hosting both a lunch and professional development the sector was provided with an opportunity to network along with hearing information to further develop and strengthen local practice. 42 people attended the luncheon, including the Honorable Coralee O'Rourke - Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Seniors and Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland. Attendees consisted of community advocates against Domestic Violence, Queensland Health staff, Queensland

Police staff, specialist Domestic Violence services, Drug and Alcohol services, Family Support services, Mental Health practitioners and staff and management members from NQCWS Inc.

The professional development explored Strangulation from three different perspectives. Dr. Julia De Boos an Emergency Physician volunteered her time to discuss the medical aspects. Townsville Child Protection Investigation Unit Detective Sergeant Liesan Van Der Heijden provided information to attendees on the legislation and Women's Centre staff Di Plumb and Alison Thorburn spoke of trauma informed practice and supporting women who have experienced a non-fatal strangulation.

The afternoon was a success with attendees reporting that they were more informed of the signs and symptoms to look for in relation to strangulation and questions and strategies to include in intake assessment/visit.