



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Land where the Women's Centre is situated, the Wulgurukaba people of Gurambilbarra and the neighbouring Countries of Yunbenun, Bindal, Gugu Badhun, and Nywaigi, as the Traditional Owners of the Land. We pay our respects to their cultures, their ancestors and their Elders, past, present, and all future generations and particularly acknowledge the achievements, challenges and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. It is an honour to share and continue to learn from the oldest continuing living culture on earth.

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President's Report

This year there were great achievements for The Women's Centre. It was the resolute employees and volunteers who paved the way for meaningful change.

During the year, an opportunity arose to sponsor Korissa Johnson, a Torres Strait Islander woman, to attend the World Strength Games in Utah, USA. We congratulate Korissa on her personal success in her sport. The management committee have decided to continue with this type of support to Korissa.

This year has been challenging with many struggles with the ongoing temporary funding resulting in unpredictable changes to staff numbers creating uncertainty. However, despite the struggles there was sound planning and confident strategies put in place. We are now beginning to see employee growth and stability. This is a positive step and maintains our future commitment to the local and statewide community.

There was significant growth in presentations across all services. The increased demand for services placed a strain on the capacity of the organisation however, women were housed, and crisis accommodation was found. A range of services including counselling to support mental and physical health, personal development programs, social inclusion initiatives, employment support, and access to other professional services such as legal and healthcare, collectively contribute to the well-being of women in Townsville.

The centre continues to support student placements and other training opportunities. The support groups and programs designed to create change and balance in the lives of women and children, are well attended. Networks and relationships with all our partners remains a priority of the organisation and enriches the work we do with women.

The Management Committee acknowledge the significant contribution of long-standing employees who this year decided to embark on greater endeavours. Di Plumb's retirement is well deserved. Her contribution to The Women's Centre of 17 years created change and made better the lives of women and children across North Queensland.

The Management Committee thank Erin Costello for her contribution to the centre in her role as Acting Coordinator whilst Cathy Crawford took her annual leave from July – December 2024.

The Management Committee acknowledges the guidance from Cathy Crawford and her tireless efforts to ensure women have access to services. Her influence and advocacy contributes to major change and improves services for women. The Women's Centre's Management Committee thank her for her leadership. Thank you to all the employees for their dedicated commitment to women.

I acknowledge the Management Committee members for their good advice, participation in discussions and sound decision making. I also acknowledge the executive members and members of various subcommittees. This year a newly created executive position of Vice President was filled by Jessica Naunton. I thank her for her support and assistance.

- **Diana Falcomer**, President





Coordinator's Report

It is a pleasure to present this year's annual report. I will start by acknowledging Erin Costello's contribution over the last year. Erin acted as the coordinator for six months and I appreciate all the work that was required and the enormous effort Erin made to ensure the Women's Centre continued to thrive in a very fast-paced environment. This was a challenging time with many government consultations, forums and surveys. Throughout this time Erin ensured there was training and opportunities for staff to provide feedback and plan ahead.

I returned to work in January energised and rested, ready to continue my role. I wish to thank the management for this time off and their ongoing support to myself and the organisation.

The ongoing growth of the service, the restructuring and the many new staff members joining the team means that for much of the year there was constant and considerable change. Di Plumb our Senior Counsellor who I worked with for more than 17 years retired. I miss her ongoing calm consideration, wisdom and support. Di is missed for her feisty feminist strength and her unwavering contribution to the women at prison, the supervision and support to staff, and to the decisions made at the Women's Centre. Like many have said her legacy will continue to shape the Women's Centre for many years.

This year we also said goodbye to other long-standing staff; Rell McKenzie, our twice receptionist for over 5 years and Sallie Kearnan, the Team Leader of the Homelessness team for over 7 years. Their joint contribution to practice, advocacy, innovation and support to women and staff was enormous in so many ways. They are dearly missed but still feel very much a part of the Centre.

The floods in Ingham had a significant impact on women and families to the north of Townsville and our work there. With the support of the Soroptimists, we were able to provide resources to assist children who were affected by the flood.

This year I was appointed to the Sexual Violence Review Board. The Sexual Violence Review Board is independent to government. It is responsible for reviewing systemic issues relating to the reporting, investigation, and prosecution of sexual offences. The 9 members reflect the diversity of Queensland and represent a broad cross-section of relevant knowledge and experience. I represent Townsville's Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS), the 24-hour Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) and provide regional representation.

I continued my work on Forensic Services Queensland Advisory Council born out of the Forensic Services Queensland Interim board which was developed because of the Commission of Inquiry into Forensic Services Queensland.

I also remained on the management committee of the Queensland Sexual Assault Network. My work on these three groups ensures this service remains relevant, engaged and able to influence systemic change that improve pathways for victim/survivors of sexual assault in Queensland.

Housing and Homelessness Area Network continued its advocacy work for more housing and support for homelessness and at risk of homelessness people. As a member of Queensland Women's Health Alliance, I actively advocated for increased funding to enhance vital emotional and well-being support services for women.

The number of women presenting to The Women's Centre increased in all programme areas presenting many challenges. The challenges led to changing practices and often significant struggles with our ability to provide support to all the women who sought counselling or accommodation. Despite the pressure of this work, we actively engaged in events. This year events included Candlelight Ceremony, NAIDOC, Deadly Day Out, Sexual Violence Awareness Month activities, Reclaim the Night and International Women's Day. Many women attended the new and ongoing groups at the Women's Centre. A very exciting new group is the First Nations Art Group that Karen Doolan has developed. I would also like to say farewell to Sonia Ward who contributed enormously to the art and craft programmes at the Centre over many years.

As always, I wish to acknowledge the dedicated and tireless work of the staff at the Women's Centre. The knowledge, strategies, insights and advocacy staff bring to their work, they do with women is phenomenal. This work is evident through another successfully completed audit under the Human Service Quality Framework. Well done women.

As we end this year there has been a renewed sense of calm within the workforce. Thank you to management, staff and volunteers for your ongoing support of The Women's Centre. I look forward to working with you all in the future.

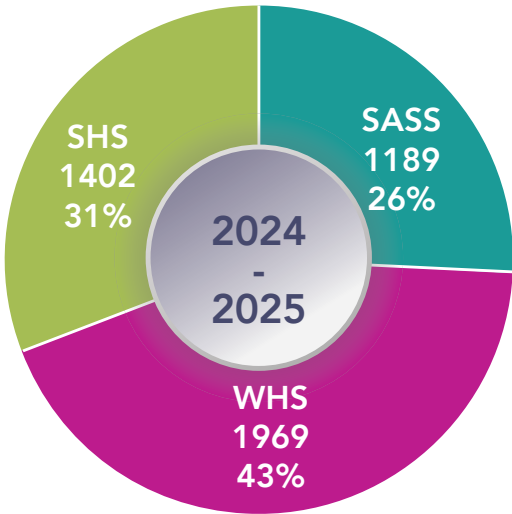
- Cathy Crawford, Coordinator

Services Provided

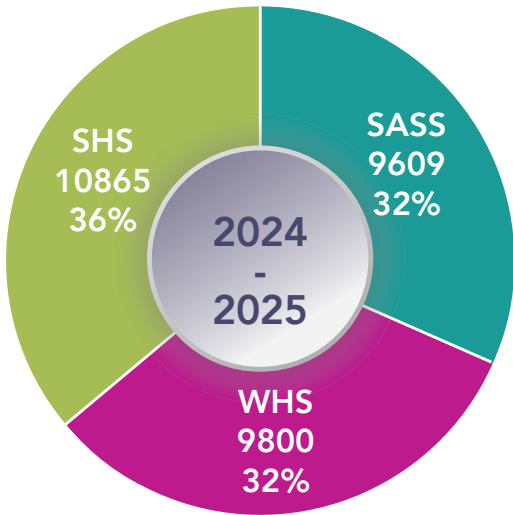


Artwork by Sonia Ward

NUMBER OF CONTACTS PER SERVICE



NUMBER OF WOMEN ACROSS SERVICES



Sexual Assault Support Service Women's Health Service

Specialist Homelessness Service



Sexual Assault Response Team Report

The Townsville Region Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is a multidisciplinary, interagency group of professionals, established to work collaboratively alongside victim-survivors of sexual violence, and to provide a trauma informed response that is immediate, specialist, integrated and sustained. The team comprises representatives from the Sexual Assault Support Service, Child Abuse and Sexual Crimes Unit, Hospital and Health Service, and Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Established for over nine years now, the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) continues to work to develop a best practice model, that is responsive to the needs of victim-survivors within our community. This past year, the ability of SART to extend our reach to community, has significantly been aided by dedicated funding received from the Townsville Hospital and Health Service (THHS) to support the Sexual Assault Support Service to better meet the needs of victim-survivors within the rural areas of Ingham, Ayr and Charters Towers. Such funding offers a meaningful demonstration of the ways in which the SART model is valued across our pivotal organisations, and challenges the siloing of government and non-government institutions that has for too long stunted the development of best practice.

The SART team's commitment to trauma and violence informed care, has this year further emphasised the critical importance of establishing safety in the context of the physical organisational spaces in which we work. The relocation of the Clinical Forensic Medicine Unit at the THHS, and the redevelopment of existing interview suites at the Child Abuse and Sexual Crimes Unit, provided timely opportunities for SART to contribute to the trauma informed design of these spaces in which forensic examinations and police interviews take place. The dedicated SART rooms at The Women's Centre have continued to provide a safe space for victim-survivors to be supported in many contexts, including reporting to police, and significantly for the very first time this past year, giving evidence via video link to Magistrate and District courts.

In addition to responding to victim-survivors of sexual violence 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, SART representatives continue to meet monthly to ensure the model remains

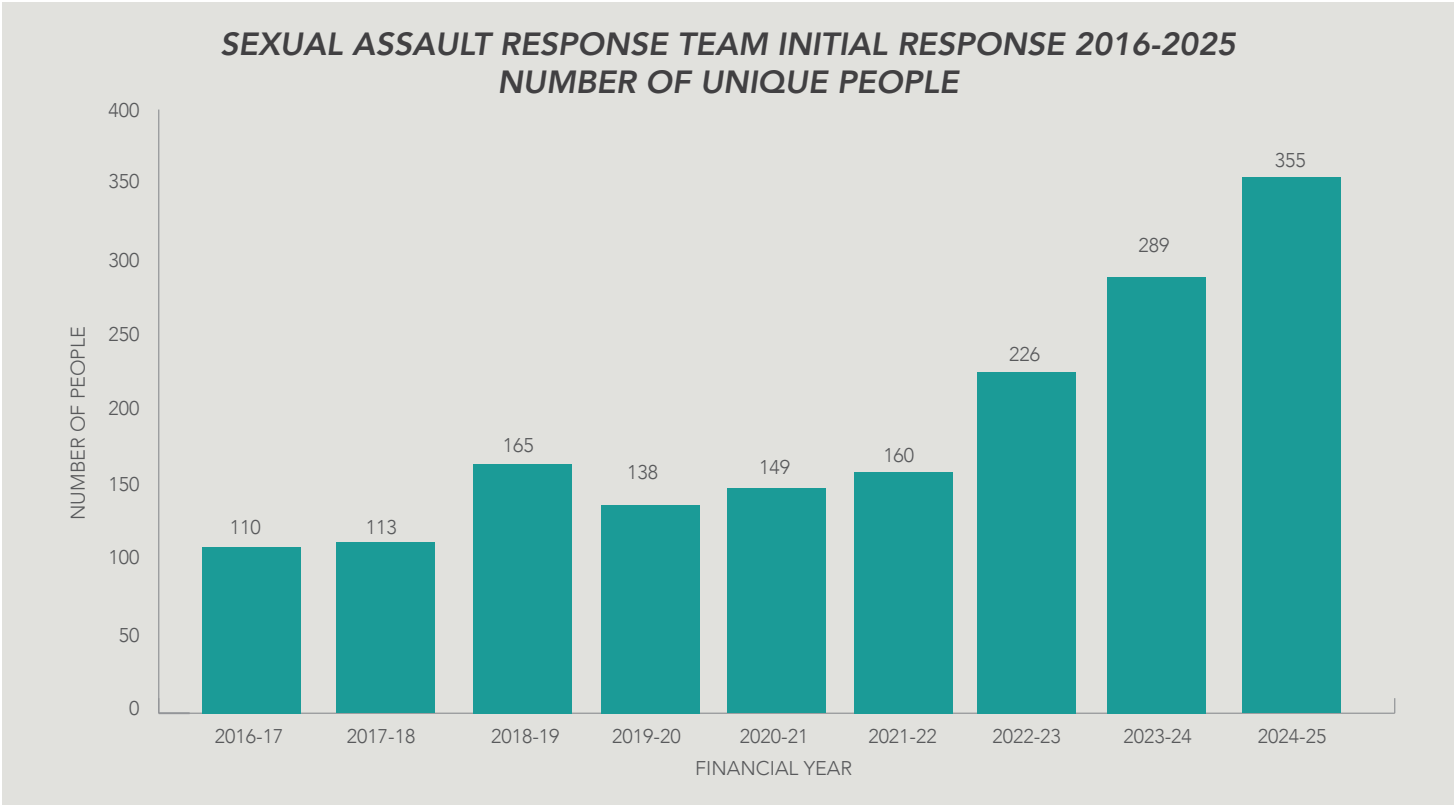
steadfast to collaborative governance principles, and the ongoing development of best practice. This year, in recognition of the significant growth of the work of the team, regular Reflective Practice Review Meetings and dedicated Working Groups spanning SART Resources and Documents, Education, Data, and our approaching 10 Year Anniversary, have also been established.

In these contexts, Reflective Practice has remained foundational to our work as we seek to identify issues and facilitate change. Resources have been developed, and many day-to-day practices have now been formally documented to strengthen our integrated response and further embed the SART model within our pivotal organisations. SART education has increasingly been prioritised, both within and between our respective organisations, and in the context of the broader community. The data has continued to evidence an increase in reported rates of sexual crimes, completed

forensic medical examinations, and referrals to the Sexual Assault Support Service. And finally, as we approach the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the SART model, there has been shared acknowledgement by the team, that such a significant milestone should rightly be celebrated.

Amidst the progression of SART and the expansion of our work together for another year, continued interest remains across the state and nationally, with numerous, ongoing consultations planned. Such interest is only likely to grow as we look towards acknowledging a decade of work, and all that has been achieved within our community. So much has been accomplished, over so many years. So much more is yet to be accomplished, as we continue the critical work of developing a best practice response to victim-survivors of sexual violence.

- Dr Trudi Contarino, SART Interagency Coordinator



Specialist Homelessness Service Report



“The Specialist Homelessness Service continues to face significant challenges due to the ongoing housing crisis. Its impact has been felt across the board both at the individual level, where women and families struggle to secure safe housing, and at the broader systemic level, where demand for affordable housing far outweighs supply.”

Housing Program

This year, our Housing Program continued to provide wrap-around support for women and children experiencing homelessness, family violence, and housing insecurity; to access and maintain safe and stable accommodation. The program remains a vital pathway out of crisis and towards long-term stability.

Big Picture

The housing crisis has placed enormous pressure on both clients and staff. Rising rents and a lack of affordable housing mean women leaving our program often struggle to secure a permanent home. At the same time, many women are also coping with trauma, financial hardship, and the impacts of family violence.

Despite these challenges, the team worked tirelessly to secure social and community housing as well as private rentals. It has been a difficult year—staff are often the “face of the system” and carry the responsibility of answering women’s questions when solutions are limited. This has tested morale, with the team at times feeling overwhelmed by the demand. Still, they have continued to “hold space” for women, even when hope was running low, and have done their best to balance the tension between quality of support and the sheer number of women seeking help.

Impact & Outcomes

The private rental market has been especially difficult. Many women with strong rental histories and tenancy readiness are still unable to return to the market, as they cannot compete with couples or families on higher incomes. Single mothers, older women, and women living alone remain a steady part of our client group.

Partnerships & Service Delivery

We have continued to advocate strongly with the Department of Housing and Public Works and community housing providers including FEAT and Regional Housing. Our close work with the Townsville Homelessness Integration Response Group (THIRG), a care coordination platform of community and government agencies, has allowed us to contribute to joint problem-solving and referrals.

Additional brokerage through Domestic Violence Tenancy funding enabled us to fill critical gaps and provide flexible responses. We have also continued to foster our relationship with the Domestic and Family Violence Service providers in Townsville, including Yumba Meta, Seras and DVNQ.

Future Focus

Looking ahead, our focus will be on:

- Prioritising quality over quantity of support
- Strengthening relationships with real estate and housing stakeholders
- Exploring creative ways to manage demand
- Supporting tenancy sustainment so women can remain securely housed
- Rebuilding hope and resilience within the team so they can continue their vital work.

Our Team

This year brought changes within the SHS team. We farewelled our Team Leader and welcomed three new staff, including two team leaders to oversee our ever-expanding team, a second dedicated administrative worker, and a part-time case worker bringing new skills and energy to the program. With these additions, the team is well-placed to focus on tenancy sustainment and to continue adapting to the challenges of the housing landscape.



SHS Staff Accepting Christmas Donations

Our Impact

16,181 nights of crisis accommodation were provided for women and their children.

68 women and their children were supported into sustainable housing.



Reconciliation Action Plan Report

Our Reconciliation Journey and Reconciliation Action Plan

In the past twelve months, The Women's Centre has continued our commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, with staff and Management Committee guided and supported by our first and existing Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) (written at the Reflect Level) and endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

The implementation of the Reflect RAP has enabled strategies, policies, and actions related to reconciliation to be achieved or progressed through our sphere of influence i.e. the services, programs and activities delivered by The Women's Centre and generally our interactions with women and their children, our partner agencies and the community.

A major priority has been our commitment to improve the Centre and services as accessible, welcoming and culturally safe spaces and experiences for First Nations women.

In 2024 – 2025 39% of the women accessing services at The Women's Centre identified as First Nations women. In the same year there was an average of 7 staff identifying as First Nations women working at the Centre.

Examples of Achievements and Highlights of the current RAP:

- Our RAP Working Group membership was refreshed with membership from staff and management committee and inclusive of First Nations representatives.
- A RAP champion position was established.
- The artwork of a local First Nations artist was commissioned for the first RAP and has been used around the centre environment and as the foundation design for all communication and

promotion methods.

- Participation in annual NAIDOC Week Activities in community. Attendance at other significant events supported e.g. Survival Day.
- First Nations art group began.
- A Wulgurukaba Traditional Owner Elder invited to perform the Welcome to Country at significant events held at The Women's Centre in Townsville e.g. the Candlelight Ceremony.
- Annual Cultural Awareness/Cultural Competency Training for staff.
- Cultural leave provisions are included in the Remuneration Policy for staff.

Initiating the drafting of our next "Innovate" RAP

A simple evaluation of our first "Reflect" type RAP (existing since 2020) found that the actions and deliverables had either been achieved, established as ongoing, or were progressing well beyond the purpose of a Reflect RAP (to "Build Strong Foundations" by preparing the organisation for future RAPs and reconciliation initiatives).

The decision was then made to write the next RAP for The Women's Centre, as an "Innovate" type RAP (to "Implement Change" - to embed reconciliation initiatives into the organisation and use our sphere of influence to drive reconciliation).

Registration with Reconciliation Australia (RA) has occurred and a local mentor found to guide the RAP Working Group's drafting of the new RAP. Consultation with Staff and Management Committee will occur at key points while drafting the actions and deliverables under the pillars of Respect, Relationships, Opportunities and Governance.

Drafting of our next RAP has begun!!





Women's Health Service and Sexual Support Service Report

This year, our dedicated team of counsellors, social workers, and a psychologist continued to offer vital support to women across Far North Queensland. We work from an intersectionality lens, recognising that experiences of racism, ableism, classism, homophobia, and gender-based violence often overlap and intensify the challenges women face. These frameworks guide everything we do from counselling to advocacy, ensuring our services are inclusive, culturally safe, and responsive to each woman's unique story.

Our outreach sexual assault counselling services in Ingham, Charters Towers, and Ayr remained a lifeline for women who might otherwise struggle to access support. These trauma-informed services are shaped by our commitment to listening deeply, honouring women's choices, and prioritising their safety.

Referrals from Queensland Police Service, community organisations, and health services have increased significantly, particularly in relation to sexual assault and domestic and family violence. A reflection of both the urgent need for trauma-informed care and the trust placed in our service. This growing demand has stretched our team and led to longer waitlists, highlighting the need for more resources to meet the community's needs.

Our team brings a rich mix of skills in trauma recovery, mental health, care coordination, and advocacy. We continue to invest in staff wellbeing, with regular supervision and reflective practice built into our work. This year's training focused on deepening our trauma-informed and feminist approaches, with sessions on responding to sexual violence, managing vicarious trauma, advancing women's health, strengthening cultural capability, and expanding therapeutic tools.

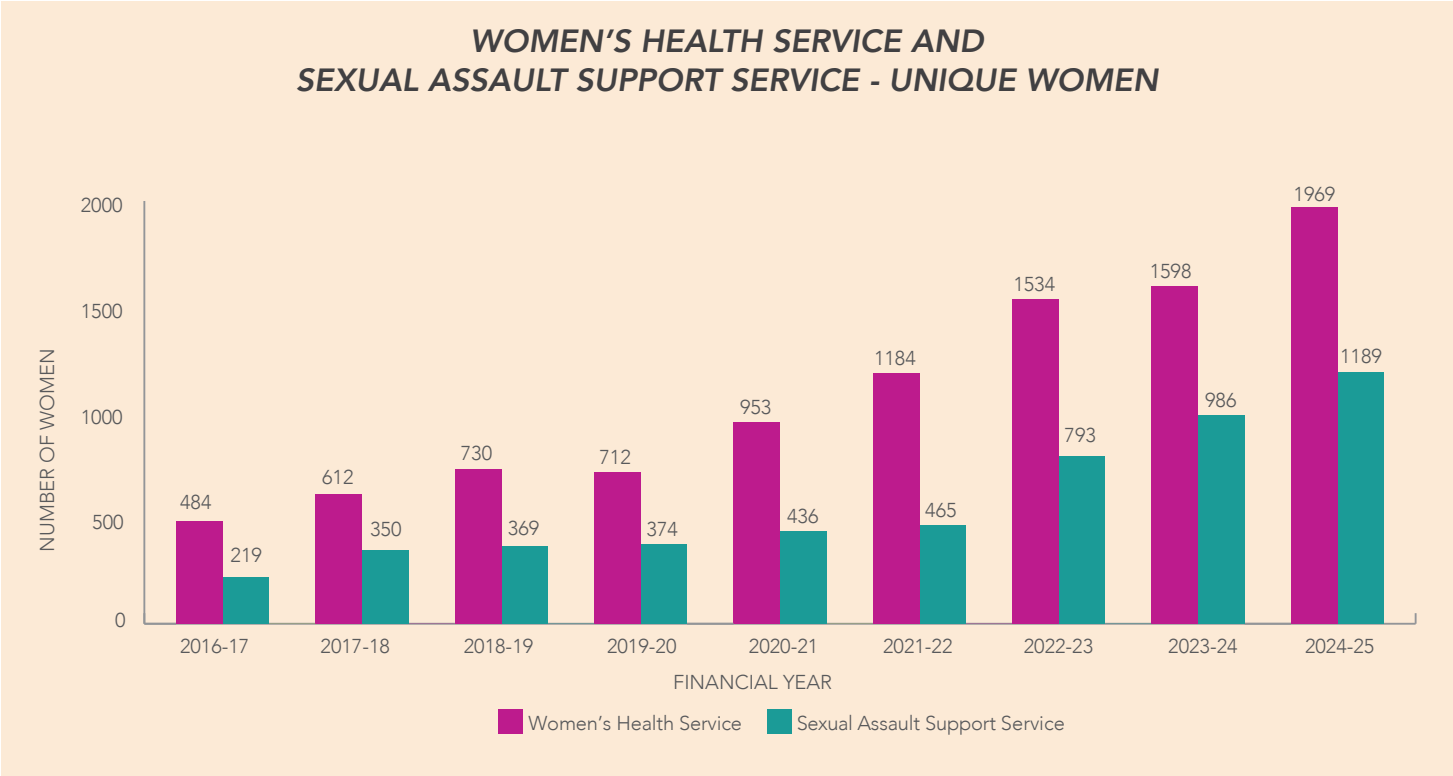
Domestic and family violence referrals often reveal complex layers of disadvantage, housing insecurity, disability, cultural disconnection, and systemic discrimination. These intersecting issues compound trauma and demand holistic, culturally safe responses. We've actively contributed to regional forums and advocated for integrated service models that address these realities.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening our trauma-informed, intersectional practice and pushing for change. Our priorities include securing sustainable funding and continuing to provide safe, inclusive, and empowering support for women across the region.

Our Impact

1969 women were supported by our Women's Health Service

1189 victim-survivors were supported by our Sexual Assault Support Service



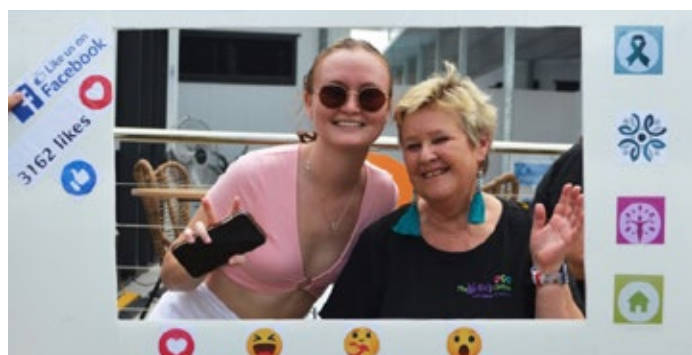
Thank you Di...



- When I think of feminism, my thoughts always revert to Di. She is a **passionate** and staunch feminist, deeply committed to empowering women both within the organisation and the wider community. Her **dedication** to gender equality consistently inspires me.
- Her legacy as a feminist leader is one who has reshaped opportunities for generations to come at The Women's Centre. It is feminists like Di who pave the way forward for the next generation of workers to proceed with **fierce advocacy**. She leaves behind not just a career, but a legacy of courage, resistance and a beacon of hope for women accessing The Women's Centre for years to come. She has shown me and colleagues at The Women's Centre that feminism is not just a theory, but a daily practice of **courage, defiance and solidarity**.
- In the privilege of working with Di, I have profoundly valued the **kindness**, humour, consistency, and dedication she has shown in her support and encouragement for me at The Women's Centre. Di has been an incredibly **inspirational**, encouraging, and motivating mentor, supporter and advocate to me, and has demonstrated fierce and **unwavering feminism** in a way I will never forget! I'm not sure I will ever be able to capture in words the significance of the contribution Di has had in my life, and my feminism. Di, I feel so incredibly lucky to have crossed paths with you in this way. With profound admiration and appreciation for you Di, always, I'll just say... thank you, for everything.
- After close to two decades of unwavering dedication, **compassion**, and feminist advocacy, I would like to say farewell to a truly extraordinary Senior Counsellor, valued and much-loved former work colleague, and remarkable woman whose **legacy** will continue to shape The Women's Centre long after retirement.
- Di's work has been a cornerstone of this service, providing not only deep, **transformative** support to the women who walked through the doors of The Women's Centre, but also **steadfast guidance** to staff and leadership alike. You've held space for healing, offered **wisdom** in moments of challenge, and uplifted others with a quiet strength that never asked for recognition but always deserved it. You've helped build a culture promoting care, equity, and resilience. Whether mentoring new staff, supporting leadership through change, or walking alongside women

in their most vulnerable moments, your presence has been a source of grounding and **hope**. We honour your legacy with deep gratitude. Though your daily footsteps may no longer be heard through our halls, the impact of your work will continue in the lives you've touched, the values you've upheld, and the community you've helped. Thank you for everything Di. The **impact** you have had on me personally is something I will forever cherish. May this next chapter bring you the same peace, joy, and fulfillment that you've so generously given to others. It's an understatement to say that the world is a better place with you in it Di.

- Di has been **integral** in so many of our journeys in learning, understanding and living feminism. It is difficult to put into words the lifelong impact Di has had on me as a social worker and a woman. A legacy that I will pass along to my own daughter. Thank you Di for your **unwavering feminist fire!**
- I've learnt so much from working with Di, both professionally and personally. Di's insight, **integrity** and the way she led by example have been incredibly **inspiring**. Di helped me to understand what feminism truly means – not just as a concept but as a practice of equity, respect, and empowerment in everyday life. Di wasn't just a colleague; she is a true **friend**. Thanks for everything Di!
- I am privileged and honoured to be able to share my gratitude with Di Plumb, who is retiring from professional practice after many years of dedicated service. A fierce advocate and **proud feminist**, Di has made a profound and lasting impact on the lives of countless women and children. Her **unwavering commitment** to equity, compassion, and social justice has not only shaped services in our community but also deeply influenced those lucky enough to have worked alongside her. I count myself among them – the best parts of my professional practice are thanks to Di's **guidance**, wisdom, patience and example. Di's legacy will continue in all of us who were privileged enough to learn from and work with her.
- Di was not only a kind, **caring** and empowering team leader, but she was an **inspirational** mentor. I felt so comfortable to go and speak to Di about anything and everything, I felt that I was always heard and she always made time for me. I feel that so much of who I am as a counsellor today, is a result of being mentored by Di.





Treasurer's Report

The past 12 months have been another significant year for the Townsville Women's Centre. We've navigated staff changes, responded to the continued rise in community need, and managed the complexities of shifting funding arrangements and budget allocations.

The Management Committee extends its sincere thanks to our financial supporters, both large and small. We also acknowledge the critical contributions of government at all levels, whose funding enables the Centre's vital work to continue and evolve.

Growing demand and service delivery

Demand for the Women's Centre's services continued to increase, with more women and children seeking assistance than ever before. Rising service delivery costs and workforce shortages have made meeting this demand more complex, but the commitment of our staff and the ongoing support of our community partners have allowed us to provide essential services despite these pressures.

Strengthening financial management

In 2024, the Centre engaged an external accounting firm to support financial management. While the majority of tasks continue to be handled in-house by our Business Administration team, this added oversight has strengthened accountability and provided assurance that reporting and ATO obligations are met on time. With income and turnover continuing to grow year on year, this additional rigour has been both timely and valuable.

Income and funding

Overall income for 2024–2025 reached more than \$7.7 million – a 78% increase on the previous year. This growth reflects both recurring and non-recurring grant income and demonstrates the increasing recognition of the Centre's role in the community. At the same time, it highlights the scale of need within our region and the administrative work required to manage and deliver expanded services.

Donations to the Centre decreased further this year. However, as government funding has long formed the core of our financial base, this trend was expected and does not present a concern.

Budget challenges

The most significant budget challenge in 2025 – and likely into 2026 – is the level of unspent funds. Recruitment constraints, along with physical space and service capacity limitations, continue to make it difficult to scale up service delivery at the same pace as funding growth. Addressing these barriers will remain a priority moving forward for both senior staff and members of the management committee.

Expenditure

Salaries and wages remain the largest expenditure, reflecting the people-centred nature of our work. Additional investment was made this year into strengthening cybersecurity, ensuring the protection of sensitive client and organisational data.

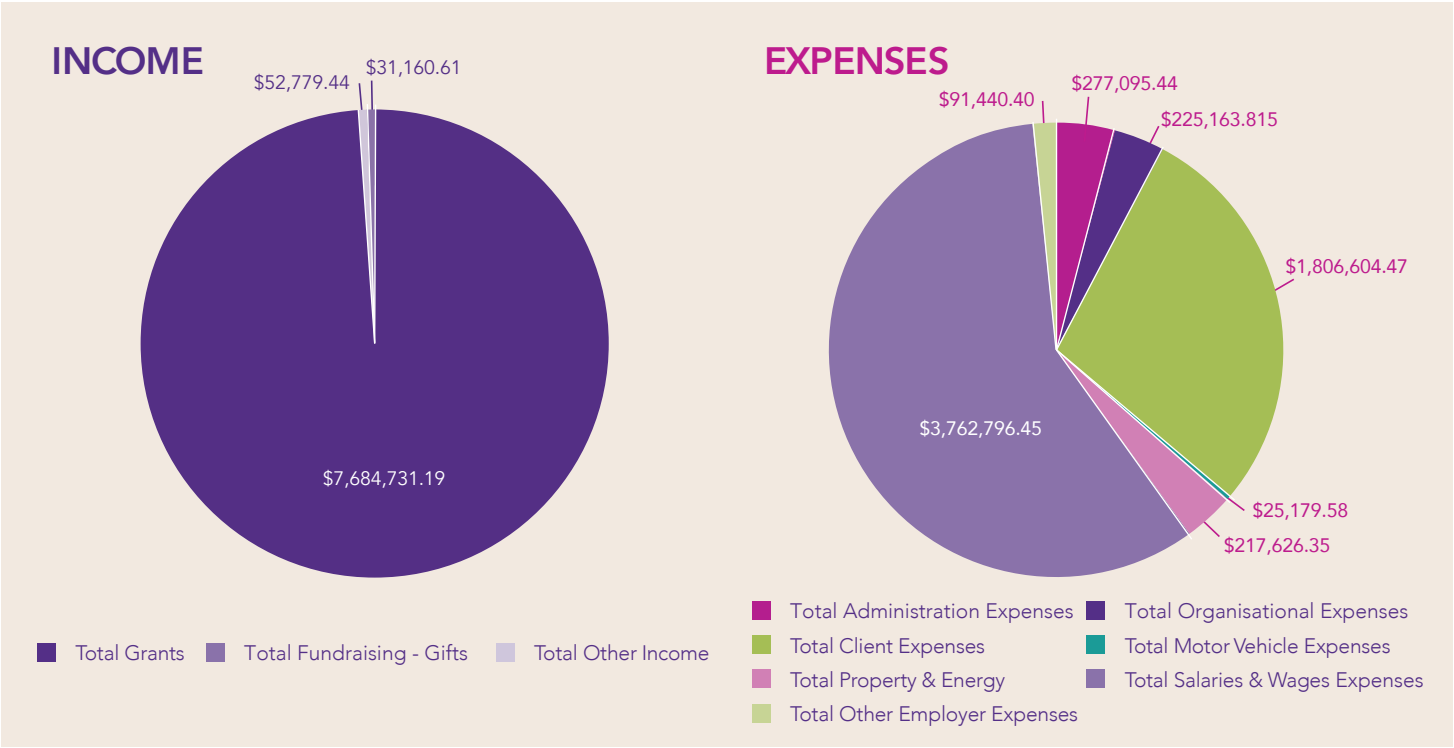
Another major and growing expense has been emergency accommodation and breakage costs for women and families in crisis. The Centre continues to explore long-term strategies to address this challenge while maintaining immediate, practical support to those most in need.

Looking ahead

The 2025–2026 financial year is expected to see similar turnover levels to 2024–2025, with an emphasis on reallocating unspent funds to areas of greatest impact. The Management Committee is also working to deepen our understanding of the grants and acquittals process so we can better support the Centre’s strategic planning and ensure sustainability.

We are immensely proud of the dedication shown by our staff, who continue to deliver high-quality support and care to women and children across our community. Together, with our supporters and partners, we are confident the Townsville Women’s Centre will remain a cornerstone of assistance and advocacy for the region well into the future.

- Eleanor Roberts, Treasurer



Administration Report



Our reception staff are the welcoming face of The Women's Centre, and their presence in every interaction helps guide and support a woman's journey through the service, offering consistency, care, and connection. The administration team aim to embody the values of the organisation by displaying respect, inclusivity and integrity in a manner that builds trust and shows that The Women's Centre is indeed a safe space for women.

The Administration team has also seen significant and purposeful growth to best respond to the needs of women and their children who access the service via in-person, phone and digital presentations. To continue to provide proactive and timely responses during unprecedented increased demand across services, the role of Initial Response Worker was introduced. Initial Response Workers play a pivotal role in ensuring quality service delivery directly to women by prioritising women-focused, trauma informed, non-judgmental and culturally appropriate initial assessments and referrals, followed by initial practical supports that are holistic, safe, and timely.

Behind the scenes, the Administration Team has focused on strengthening foundational systems to support the core work being undertaken at The Women's Centre. A key achievement was the successful implementation of a new human resource management system, which has modernised and streamlined our human resource functions and payroll. The transition and implementation has been a significant undertaking and moving forward, we will continue to develop our processes to maximise our use of this system. Alongside this, we have maintained a strong focus on compliance, conducting policy and procedure reviews to ensure alignment with all regulations, standards and legislative requirements.

The Administration team continue to work together to engage with the community, stakeholders, donors, and inter-agency collaborators, whilst completing necessary data entry and recordkeeping. The team's dedication, flexibility, and commitment to delivering high standard essential services is a large part of what makes The Women's Centre able to continue to provide impactful programs and services to women and their children in our community.

Community Education Report



In 2024-2025 the SART education team (with representatives from TUH, QPS and SASS) presented three times at Townsville University Hospital to ED registrars. Each time about 25 individuals attended and lively discussion ensued which facilitated the linking of theory with practice and the clarification of aspects of the SA pathway. Additionally, a number of SART education sessions were delivered to health service providers in rural areas including Hughenden, Richmond and Ayr.

During the same reporting period there were three formal engagements with the Military – two presentations to Military personnel (including Military Police, Chaplains and others involved in responses to SA) and one site visit by selected personnel to The Women's Centre. The relationship between SART and the Military was significantly strengthened through these presentations and interactions, and understanding of SART was enhanced.



Cowboys Corner (DFV Prevention Month)

Funders

- Department of Housing and Public Works
- Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety
- Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism
- Department of Social Services
- Queensland Corrective Services
- Townsville Hospital and Health Service



Rowes Bay Golf Club Women's Committee

Supporters

- Absolutely Dental
- Alisana Artistry and Sensational Girls Network
- Baby Give Back
- Bamboo Chiropractic
- Brothers League Club
- Calvary Care
- City Women NQ
- Clayton Utz
- Councillor Vera Dirou
- Cowboys Community Foundation
- DV Safe Phone
- Givit
- Hash House Harriers Inc.
- Jean Fleming & Gwen Usher
- Jeni Alexander & Katy Hewett
- Kate's Campaign for Change
- Mclean Partners
- Michael Murray
- North Queensland Customs Services
- Robyn Glancy
- Rowes Bay Golf Club Women's Committee
- Sleepsafe
- Soroptimist International
- Townsville Breakwater
- Suited to Success
- The RAAF Base
- Thread Together
- Totally Smiles Dentist - Staff
- Townsville City Council
- Townsville City Woolworths
- Vincent Village Woolworths
- Westnet
- Zephyr Education
- Zonta Club of Townsville Inc.



Groups, Activities and Events

Groups

- Art and Craft
- Art with Karen
- Art Workshop for First Nations Women
- Book Club (JCU Research Project)
- Experimental Drawing Class
- Girl Talk - QPASST
- Keeping the Sharks at Bay
- MINDS-W Group
- Music Group
- Scrap and Stamp
- Senior Women's Group
- Tasty Time
- Townsville Women's Feminist Collective
- Trauma Informed Yoga
- Writing Group
- Yoga

Visiting Agencies

- ADA Australia
- Community Gro
- Department of Housing
- Feros Care
- First Nations Women's Legal Service
- Form Filling Service
- North Queensland Women's Legal Service
- QShelter
- Queensland Health Midwife Clinic
- Queensland Health Physiotherapy
- Services Australia
- Tenancy Skills Institution
- Townsville Community Law

A letter, from the women who have completed Keeping the Sharks at Bay Group to the next group of women embarking on the journey:

To the Courageous Women who are about to begin this journey,

We are the women from the group before you — the ones who sat in the same chairs, felt the same uncertainty, and asked the same quiet, painful questions that may be running through your minds now. We want you to know from our hearts: we are so incredibly proud of you for being here.

Just showing up is a huge step — maybe one of the hardest you'll ever take — and it takes strength beyond words. It takes courage to walk through the fear, to look at your truth, and to say, "I deserve more than this. I deserve safety, peace, and healing." You've already begun that process by choosing to be part of this group.

We remember how it felt walking through those doors for the first time, not knowing what to expect. What we discovered was a space that felt comforting and safe — a space where we were met with kindness instead of judgment, and where our stories were held with care, not shame. This group became a place where we could breathe, sometimes for the first time in a long time.

When we first started, many of us were unsure how this would work — especially knowing we wouldn't be sharing the full details of what we had experienced in our relationships. At first, that felt strange. But over time, we came to understand the value in it. It helped us see each other for who we really are — not just what we've been through. It has been freeing and healing not to carry the heaviness of other people's trauma alongside our own, and instead focus on our shared strength, growth, and resilience. We learned that connection doesn't always require the whole story — just a willingness to show up and be real.

Some of us came to the group already aware that something was missing — that we lacked the relationship skills we needed to keep ourselves safe and respected. Some of us didn't even have a "shark cage" to speak of — no sense

of boundaries, no tools to filter out danger. We knew deep down that something wasn't right, but we couldn't understand why the same painful patterns kept repeating.

Coming into this group helped mold and educate us in ways we hadn't expected. For some of us, it was the first time we realised we had spent our whole lives in the role of serving others — putting everyone else's needs, emotions, and safety before our own. We thought that was love. We thought that was normal. But here, we began to understand that we are allowed to take up space. We are allowed to have boundaries. We are allowed to matter.

The help and support from the group has transformed us — not just individually, but together. We came in as strangers, each carrying our own pain and confusion, but we soon realised we were not alone. We were all walking the same path, often blindly, into the unknown. That shared experience created a bond that reminded us of our strength and our worth. We want to encourage you to trust the process. The change won't happen overnight. Healing is slow, and some days it may feel like nothing is shifting — but it is. Little by little, you will start to notice it in how you think, how you speak, and how you feel about yourself.

We really enjoyed the explicit, skills-based content of the group. It gave us practical tools — things we could actually try in real life. And when we practiced what we learned, we started seeing results straight away. Boundaries started making sense. Red flags became clearer. It helped us respond differently, more confidently. For some of us, like one woman who had never finished something she'd started before, sticking with this group felt like a huge personal victory. And that speaks volumes about the impact this work can have.

We've also learned something fundamental: we are all equal. Through our time together, we developed a shared understanding of equal human rights — that we all deserve safety, respect, and freedom, no matter what we've been through. That knowledge has changed the way we see ourselves and each other. And now, we are so excited to watch one another go out and put those truths into practice in our daily lives — knowing our worth, speaking up, setting boundaries, and standing tall.

Healing takes time. It doesn't always look or feel the way we expect. But what we've learned is that in this space, it's okay to be exactly where you are. You don't have to have the answers. You don't have to explain everything. Just showing up — like you did today — is more than enough.

You are welcome here. You are believed here. And above all, you are safe here.

With warmth, hope, and solidarity,

The Women who walked before you



Angeleen, One of the Keeping the Sharks at Bay Facilitators

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Jessica Naunton	Vice President
Eleanor Roberts	Treasurer
Caitlin Berryman	Secretary
Diana Falcomer	Committee member
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Linda Forscutt	Gardening
Meredith Starck	Yoga Instructor
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Sonia Ward	Art & Craft Group Facilitator
Vivienne Salu	Active Nutrition, Tasty Time Group Facilitator
Viki Trevanion	Music Group Facilitator
Wendy Burton	Form Filling
Kate Pemberton	Kate's Campaign for Change
Margie Paul	AAA Triarda Cleaning



Staff Teams

Coordinator

Catherine Crawford

SHS Team Leader

Sallie Kearnan

SHS Caseworkers

Anagi Gunasekara
Dominique Gilmore
Hannah Billington
Kelly Maidens
Laura Stokes
Maree La Spina
Rachel Cahill
Stephanie Penman
Summah McCarthy

SHS Administration

Natasha James
Zahra Rush

Senior Counsellor

Di Plumb

SART Interagency Coordinator & Sexual Assault Counsellor

Trudi Contarino

Women's Health Service & Sexual Assault Support Service Team Leaders

Erin Costello
Megan Johnson

Women's Health & Sexual Assault Support Service Counsellors

Angeleen Connolly
Arsha Sajan
Celine Wood
Dina Saheb
Hamidat Balogun
Jessica Timms
Kelsey Whalley-Lombardo
Laura Hill
Melanie Lotfali
Moana Viliamu
Natasha Seawright
Ruvi Balasuriya

Community Education

Julie Watson

Projects, Practice and Administration Team Leader

Kat Buchta

Reception/ Response Workers

Aline Neres Conceicao
Brooke Mitchell
Celena O'Brien
Kellie Lynam
Tania Nyburg
Torri Laakso
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Business Administrator

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HR & Finance Officer

Tanya Jones

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Administration

Marata Neal

Students

Kirsti Philpott
Natasha Lay
Rachel Sunil

Staff We Farewelled

Reception

Korissa Johnson
Narelle Mackenzie

Women's Health Service & Sexual Assault Support Service Counsellors

Anu Kurian
Behnaz Khosravi
Daisy Jebichii
Georgia Sartor
Kritika Srivastava
Nihan Demircan Baser
Rainbow Brooks

Specialist Homelessness Service Caseworkers

Purity Ruita

Administration

Donna Gleeson
Emily Scott
Jane Edwards
Kaitlyn Close





The **Women's** Centre
safe space for women

Gurambilbarra

Phone 07 4775 7555

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