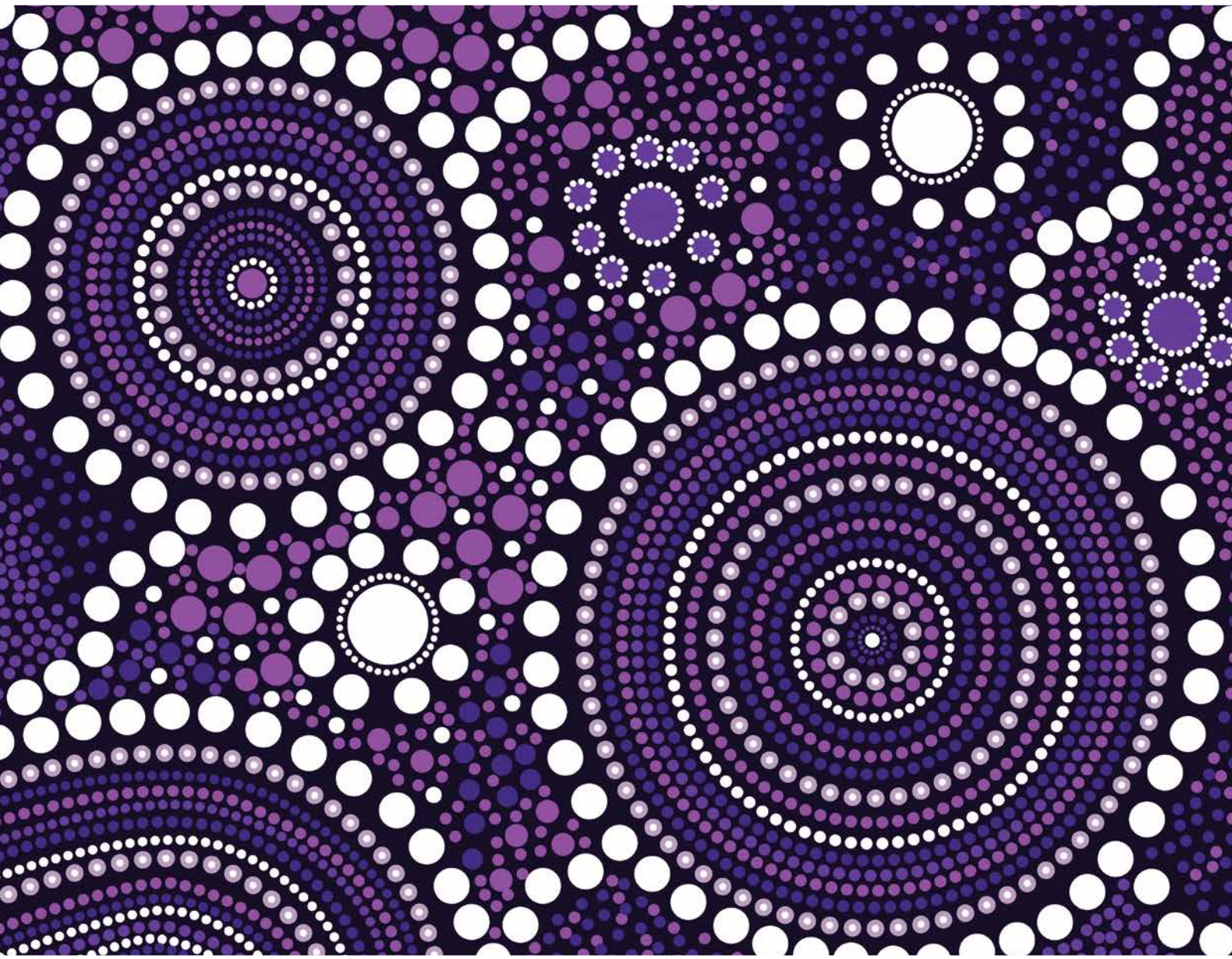


2024-25 *Annual Report*



HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS



About us

Carrie's Place began with a vision and a group of courageous women who refused to accept domestic violence as a hidden crisis.

In 1979, these local advocates came together to create a safe haven for women in Maitland, purchasing a property that became the region's first women's refuge. From that humble beginning, Carrie's Place has grown into a leading not-for-profit organisation, recognised across New South Wales for its commitment to safety, dignity, and justice.

Today, our mission remains as urgent and powerful as ever: to increase the number of families in the Maitland and Lower Hunter region who are housed, safe, and living free from abuse. We envision a community where domestic and family violence and homelessness are no longer tolerated and where every person has the opportunity to thrive.

*We are
a movement
for change!*

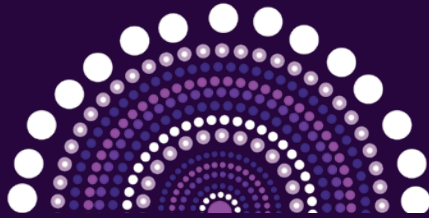


We deliver a wide range of trauma-informed, culturally appropriate services that meet people where they are and walk with them toward recovery and independence. These include:

- **Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV)** – supporting women and children to remain safely in their homes or relocate after violence.
- **Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS)** – helping individuals and families at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.
- **Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS)** – providing legal advocacy, court support, and safety planning.
- **Emergency and Transitional Accommodation** – including our Women and Children's Refuge and crisis housing partnerships.
- **Outreach** – reaching vulnerable people in Maitland, Kurri Kurri, Dungog, and Cessnock.
- **Group Work and Training Programs** – fostering healing, resilience, and connection through education and peer support.

Our work is guided by values that reflect who we are and what we stand for: growth and change, inclusion and accessibility, authenticity, social justice and safety, and teamwork. With more than 50 dedicated staff and a strong network of community partners, we are proud to be recognised as a model of best practice in the domestic violence and homelessness sectors.

Carrie's Place is more than a service provider – we are a movement for change. We honour our history, celebrate our community, and remain committed to building a future where safety is not a privilege, but a right.

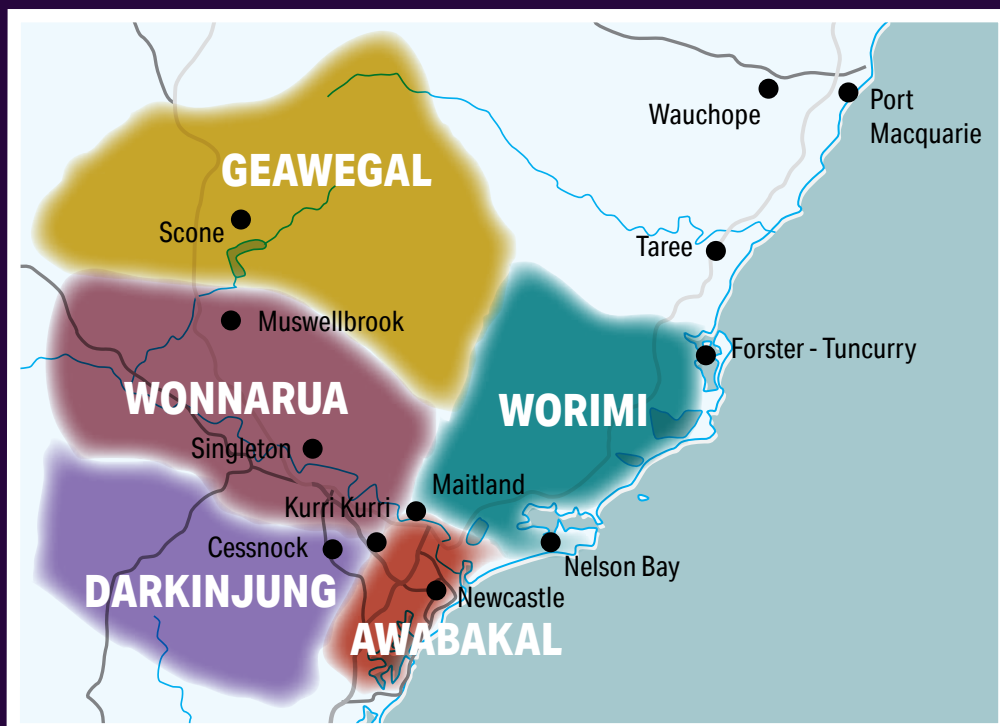


Acknowledgement of Country

Nginyany marrungku parrany wiyany Wanarruwa,
miirumalikany parra anyi parraykupa
ngaattjany nginyany marrung wiyany
Ngarrakay parranypa yurakaykal,
pangaykal ngaattjany kumpakal

'We acknowledge the Wonnarua people,
Traditional Keepers of this land,
and we pay respects to
their Elders past
present and emerging'

Acknowledgement provided by Bee Bell, HV SAM Coordinator HVWDVCAS
With permission from Aunty Sharon Edgar-Jones, Wonnarua Traditional Custodian.



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Vision, Mission & Values



OUR VISION

A community where there is zero tolerance towards domestic violence and homelessness.



OUR MISSION

To increase the number of families in the Maitland and Lower Hunter area who are housed, safe, and live free from abuse.



OUR PURPOSE

We provide person-centred, culturally appropriate programs that aim to empower vulnerable people who may have experienced domestic violence and other forms of trauma and abuse.



OUR VALUES



GROWTH & CHANGE



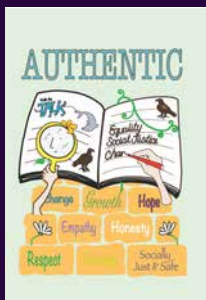
We believe in the power of learning, change and growth. We support our clients and each other through the challenges and emotions that come with change.

INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE



We respect all by creating an inclusive and accessible Organisation, based on individuals diversity of ideas, backgrounds, heritage, and experience.

AUTHENTIC



We demonstrate the courage to be authentic and invite our clients and community to walk with us in authenticity and integrity in all we do.

SOCIALLY JUST & SAFE



We recognise that safety is a human right for all, we strive to create and support safe places and behaviours.

TEAMWORK



We achieve what individuals can't by working collaboratively in an environment of mutual trust and respect.

Governance Committee Report

Welcome to the 2025 Annual Report from Carrie's Place Governance Committee.

This is my third and final annual report as my tenure as Chair of Carrie's Place Governance Committee comes to an end, and it is a pleasure to report on a year of extraordinary achievements and growth for the organisation.

Carrie's Place continues to receive enormous support from local businesses and community organisations through monetary and in-kind donations. This support is greatly appreciated and enables Carrie's Place to continue to meet the growing need for support of those people in our community experiencing domestic violence and homelessness.

In the last year, Carrie's Place has also received several generous corporate donations, from businesses based in the Hunter region and also from nationally operating organisations.

The continued focus on high-quality service delivery from Carrie's Place received further acknowledgement this year, with Carrie's Place being awarded the 2025 Hunter Region Business Excellence Award in the Not-for-Profit category. This award is well-deserved recognition of the committed and visionary leadership of our CEO Jayne Clowes, and the amazing team of employees and volunteers at Carrie's Place.

Some of the office and accommodation infrastructure owned and operated by Carrie's Place was damaged by storms through the year. This has been challenging, and the repair works are ongoing. Carrie's Place has also commenced construction of additional accommodation in the area funded by grants and donations. Carrie's Place would like to thank the local construction companies who are generously assisting in both the repair and construction of the new building.

Recently Carrie's Place was gifted further residential accommodation to support local homeless families. This incredible generosity enables Carrie's Place to expand the homelessness support available, and we thank those involved for their kindness and support.

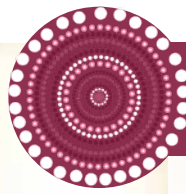
The continued achievement and community recognition of Carrie's Place is only possible due to the commitment and professionalism of the team of employees and volunteers at Carrie's Place. Since joining Carrie's Place, our CEO Jayne Clowes has been unwavering in her focus and commitment to building team capability and ensuring they can fulfil Carrie's Place mission and vision. A recent internal survey identified an extremely positive workplace culture and a team that is dedicated and highly motivated. The Governance Committee extends its heartfelt thanks to all employees at Carrie's Place for their hard work and congratulates Jayne on her professionalism and leadership.

Finally, I personally extend my thanks to the Carrie's Place Governance Committee, who have worked hard over the last year as we all develop our understanding of the organisation and focus on supporting the good work Carrie's Place performs. I have enjoyed my three years as Chair and look forward to continuing my association with Carrie's Place and witnessing its continuing successes.

Kylie Nash



Kylie Nash
Governance Committee Chair



CASE STUDY

Port Stephens – Hunter Safety Action Meeting (SAM) Case Study

A client was referred to the Port Stephens–Hunter SAM by a case manager from Carrie's Place, following her move into supported accommodation after leaving the home of her perpetrator. The client's case involved repeated breaches of a no-contact ADVO, with the perpetrator already on bail for offences against her. These breaches were raised at SAM, resulting in ADVO compliance checks being implemented and the service encouraging the client to report further incidents.

The client later chose to return to her own home, which led to additional referrals as the POI repeatedly attended the property and demanded entry, creating serious concerns for her physical safety. The case was brought to SAM again the following fortnight, during which it was reported that a Carrie's Place worker had observed the POI at the client's home during a visit. Fearful of retaliation, the client was initially reluctant to engage with police, but the service was encouraged to report the ADVO breaches. Housing services were asked to provide any information regarding the POI's possible whereabouts, as he had attempted to access temporary accommodation. Despite police efforts, the POI could not be located and was actively avoiding contact. The matter was subsequently referred to the Hunter Domestic Violence High-Risk Offender Team for further action.

The perpetrator was ultimately arrested in June, and his bail was revoked. The client has remained engaged with support services throughout the process, and the matter was removed from the SAM agenda after three meetings. WDVCS continues to provide support for court outcomes, and the Hearing Support team has been engaged in preparation for the scheduled hearing in 2025.

This case highlights the importance of coordinated, multi-agency responses and the vital role of services like Carrie's Place in supporting high-risk clients, ensuring their safety, and facilitating ongoing engagement with the justice system.



CEO Report

As we reflect on the past year, I am proud to present our Annual Report, which provides a comprehensive overview of our achievements, challenges, and growth. This year has been marked by resilience, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to our mission. Whether navigating funding demands, applications for grants, embracing new technologies, or deepening our impact in the communities we support, we have remained focused on delivering quality support for our clients.

In the pages that follow, you'll find our support statistics, strategic initiatives, and stories that highlight the dedication of our team and the trust of our supporters and sponsors. This report is not just a summary of numbers, but a narrative of purpose, collaboration, and forward momentum.

The last six months have been incredibly difficult for the team. In early January following a wild storm, our office and refuge were left out of action. The roof was badly damaged, power lost, and operations disrupted – our physical space was a mess, but our purpose remained unshaken. In the face of chaos, the team rallied and quickly adapted to working remotely. After six months our office is still out of order, which has had a severe impact on the team's connection, support, and motivation. Yet it has proved to me that we have a resilient team, striving to provide the best quality and support services for women and children impacted by family domestic sexual violence.

Carrie's Place has had some wonderful successes too. Thanks to a Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Grant and support from Glencore Australia, we will this year launch our first social enterprise where we will offer our vulnerable clients a pathway into paid employment through our coffee van.

We have been successful under the Australian Government's Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program to receive a significant amount of funding to build a brand-new residence that will house women and children escaping family and domestic violence.

Carrie's Place was also successful in receiving a grant from the Commonwealth Bank for \$120,000 towards our group work and training programs, and to continue this vital work in assisting women and children to recover from the trauma of domestic family and sexual violence. This was a "game-changer!"

I thank the Carrie's Place team for their continued dedication and commitment to our vulnerable clients, in crisis work no two days are ever the same and the team is constantly adapting and overcoming multiple challenges that come their way. They work tirelessly to make a difference to people's lives.

Thank you to our partners and supporters for their continued belief in our vision and mission.

Despite the incredible work we do, domestic and family violence remains one of the most confronting social problems we face as a society. It is a basic human right to be safe and secure.



Special thanks go out to our volunteers for their incredible help and support

We believe that change is a collective responsibility, and we remain dedicated to raising awareness and encouraging the community to help challenge negative behaviours and attitudes towards violence and gender inequities.

We continue to focus on our campaign *It Takes a Team*, which seeks partnerships with our local sporting clubs to promote zero tolerance towards violence. Our partnerships continue to increase and are proving to be incredibly successful.

Special thanks go out to our volunteers for their incredible help and support, which makes a huge difference to our community organisation.

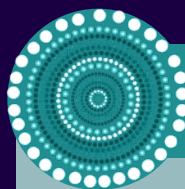
I would like to extend my appreciation to the Carrie's Place Governance Committee, for giving up their valuable time to provide support and sustainability to Carrie's Place, and for putting their trust in me as the CEO.

Finally, it was great honour to win the Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards in May in the Not-for-Profit category, our team was incredibly deserving of this Award.

Jayne Clowes



Jayne Clowes
Chief Executive Officer



CASE STUDY

Emma Reclaims Security and Independence

** Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality*

Emma has endured years of domestic and family violence. In the most recent assault, which included strangulation, she sustained a fractured eye socket, temporary vision loss, nerve damage, and extensive bruising. Emma has recently undergone facial reconstruction surgery and is currently unable to drive until medically cleared, due to her injuries.

The SHLV team contacted Emma on the same day the referral was received the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS). Emma disclosed that her home could not be locked due to structural issues; being an older elevated property, the door frames shifted with the weather. The SHLV team arranged for a locksmith to attend that day and secure all external doors.

As the person of interest had been granted bail, Emma's Intake Assessment was brought forward and completed during a home visit the next day, during which she was also provided with an mCare safety device.

Emma shared that her 7-year-old son, Brayden, had been staying with neighbours since the assault, too afraid to return home. After watching the locksmith install the new locks, Brayden returned home that same night and slept there for the first time since the incident.

The modifications had an immediate impact on Emma and Brayden's confidence in their safety and wellbeing, allowing them to begin the process of recovery and reconnection after trauma.

Major Achievements

In January 2025, Carrie's Place welcomed the commencement of a new position, Special Projects. This role was established to provide dedicated oversight and coordination across a range of current and emerging initiatives that are shaping the future of our organisation.

The Special Projects role is designed to be agile and responsive, supporting strategic priorities and fostering innovation across departments. It plays a key part in ensuring that new initiatives are thoughtfully implemented, aligned with our values, and contribute meaningfully to our mission.

Some of our key projects and major achievements managed under this new role include social enterprise and a variety of build projects.



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

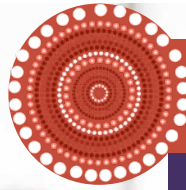
Carrie's Place Mobile Coffee Van

Carrie's Place were successful in securing a grant from the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation, which enabled the purchase of a mobile coffee van to commence a social enterprise initiative, designed to support women on their journey toward employment and independence.

To lead this initiative, a Hospitality Manager has been appointed to oversee daily operations and provide mentoring to program participants. This position is funded by a successful grant application to the Glencore Community Investment Major Projects round, which supports the role for the first 12 months of operation.

Participants, women who have accessed support through our Domestic Violence and Homelessness Programs, will receive trauma-informed training through a partnership with Atwea College. Atwea has developed a tailored curriculum to meet the individual needs of each participant. In addition to training, participants will gain paid work experience as the coffee van attends local events, generating income and raising awareness of our services. All profits will be reinvested into the program to support continued training and employment opportunities, creating a sustainable cycle of empowerment and growth.

“All profits will be reinvested into the program”



CASE STUDY

Dungog Outreach Case Study: Supporting a Family Toward Stability

Carrie's Place has been supporting a 32-year-old Indigenous mother and her three children who have been couch surfing in an isolated location outside of Dungog. After leaving a domestic violence relationship, the family found themselves in an overcrowded living situation, eight people in a two-bedroom home which significantly impacted their mental health and overall wellbeing.

Each of the children in the family faces a range of complex needs. The eldest, aged 13, has been diagnosed with ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and asthma. The middle child, aged 9, also lives with ADHD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder, along with a speech delay and a learning disorder. The youngest, aged 5, has ADHD. Recognising the urgency and complexity of the family's situation, a Case Manager from Carrie's Place stepped in to provide consistent support through fortnightly outreach appointments. The Case Manager also advocated on the family's behalf with housing providers and assisted them in applying for Aboriginal housing, ensuring their needs were addressed with care and cultural sensitivity.

Thanks to this collaborative effort, the family has now been offered a four-bedroom property and signed their lease, a major step toward stability, safety, and improved wellbeing.

Major Achievements

BUILD PROJECTS

Core and Cluster: A New Model for Safe Housing

Carrie's Place, in collaboration with Housing Plus, was successful in securing funding from the Department of Communities and Justice to establish a Core and Cluster facility in the Maitland Local Government Area. This innovative model of crisis accommodation combines independent living with intensive on-site support, offering a safe and empowering environment for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

The facility will include a central Core building that houses staff offices, meeting rooms, and spaces for group programs. Surrounding this are eight Cluster units, each designed as one or two-bedroom self-contained homes that provide privacy and autonomy, while ensuring access to support services.

This project reflects a commitment to trauma-informed care and long-term recovery. With land acquisition complete, architectural plans finalised, and council approval granted, Housing Plus is now managing the construction tender process as the project moves into its next phase.

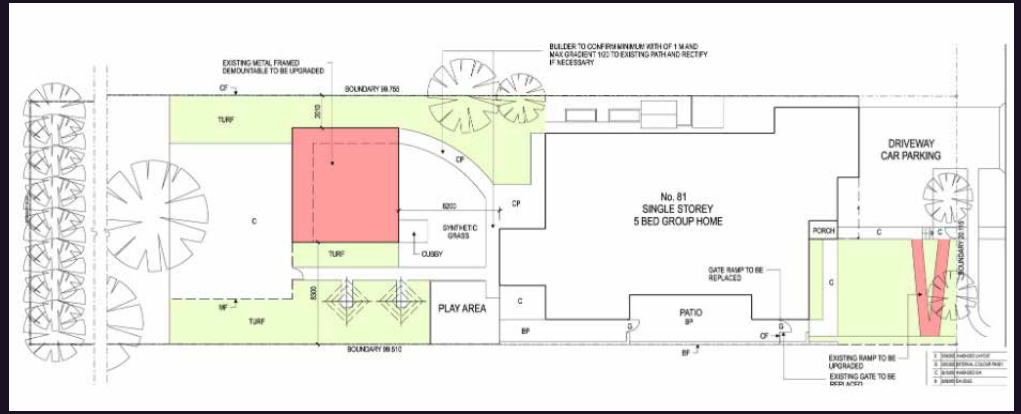
Transitional Homes for Safer Futures

Carrie's Place was honoured to be one of only two successful recipients in Newcastle and the Hunter region awarded a Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program grant by the Department of Social Services. This funding will support the development of a dual occupancy property that will provide transitional housing for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

The project is designed to prioritise recovery in a safe, purpose built, and trauma-informed environment, offering stability and support during a critical time in their lives. Construction is scheduled to begin in August 2025, marking a significant step forward in expanding access to secure and supportive housing in our region.

*safe, purpose
built, & trauma-
informed environment*





WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S REFUGE PROJECTS

Accessible Accommodation for Families with Complex Needs

With funding from the NSW Government's COVID-19 Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Infrastructure Grant Program, and contributions from Carrie's Place fundraising efforts, we are renovating an existing demountable building on-site at our Women and Children's Refuge.

The renovated space will become an accessible family unit offering independent accommodation for families with complex needs; particularly families with children experiencing neurodiverse, behavioural, physical or mental health challenges. The unit will offer privacy, stability, and intensive on-site support in a trauma-informed environment. Renovations are expected to be completed by December 2025.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of the trades and suppliers who have contributed to this project, including Penders Construction, CMC Foundation, JFC Plumbing, Mitre 10 Rutherford, Lysaght Cardiff, Alstra Lighting, Highgrove Bathrooms, DSA Kitchens, Renovators Discount Depot, Corinthian Doors, Rheem, DAB Air and Electrical, Budget Toilet Hire, the Men's Shed, Zonta International, The Good Guys Maitland, and Bunnings Maitland.

Outdoor Space for Connection and Wellbeing

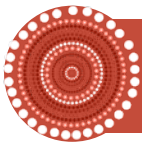
Thanks to a Stronger Country Communities Fund grant from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Carrie's Place will develop a dedicated outdoor activity and exercise space designed for teenagers and their families. This inclusive and engaging area will promote physical wellbeing, social interaction, and cultural connection.

The space will feature a basketball court, play equipment, seating areas, a yarning circle, and native plantings, creating a welcoming environment that encourages movement, conversation, and reflection. Construction will commence following the completion of the accessible family unit, further enhancing the refuge's capacity to support families in a trauma-informed and holistic way.

“will promote physical wellbeing, social interaction, and cultural connection.”

Successful Grants

In the 2024–2025 financial year, Carrie's Place demonstrated a strong commitment to growth and innovation through the submission of 62 grant and tender applications. Through these efforts, the organisation secured a total of \$1.738 million in grant funding. This vital support has enabled the expansion of services, the development of new infrastructure, and the delivery of targeted programs that directly benefit women, children, and families across our region.



MAJOR GRANT SUCCESSES



Aboriginal Community Safety Grant

\$73,940+GST NSW Government DCJ, Wellbeing Sista's groupwork.

COAL ASSETS AUSTRALIA

GLENCORE

Glencore Major Grants Round

\$45,450 Salary support for coffee van project.



CommBank Staff Foundation

CommBank Staff Foundation Award

\$120,000 \$20,000 provision of child-care for groupwork; additional \$100k gifted for purpose of our choice.

NEWCASTLE PERMANENT CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation Grant

\$110,000 Carrie's Place Coffee Van.



DFSV Healing and Recovery Grants: PHN

\$150,000+GST To support trauma-informed, recovery-focused initiatives. CP will hire a social worker or psychologist to work alongside SHLV and SHS staff and provider wellbeing services to clients.

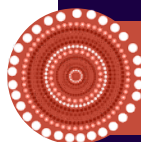


Australian Government

Department of Social Services

Housing Australia Future Fund - Crisis and TA Program (Federal Government)

\$1,019,750 Following the purchase of land in Rutherford, this application covers the capital build of a dual-key property in Rutherford.



SMALLER GRANT WINS

- **Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards**
Winner, Not-For-Profit category.
- **ClubGrant Singleton Diggers**
\$5,200 to contribute to the BeyondBank Double donation campaign for groupwork.
- **NAIDOC event grant**
\$1,650 to support the launch event for Carrie's Place second RAP plan launch.
- **Maitland City Council Community Celebrations Grant**
\$3,860 to It Takes A Team Campaign to support the purchase of CP branded balls.
- **Maitland City Council Community**
\$4000 to support school holiday activities Maitland LGA.
- **Transgrid**
\$3,975 to support school holiday activities Muswellbrook LGA.
- **Glencore General grants program**
\$2500 to support Wellbeing Sista's groupwork program.
- **Glencore United Wambo Joint Venture**
\$5,000 for whitegoods for refuge.
- **Glencore Ravensworth**
\$5,000 for Starter kits for clients.
- **Cessnock City Council Community Grants Program**
\$2,436 support for client removal and storage costs.
- **ClubGrants - Cessnock LGA and East Cessnock Bowling Club**
\$8,000 Cessnock and Kurri Kurri outreach.
- **ClubGrants - East Maitland Bowling Club**
\$2,500 to support Maitland outreach
- **Port Stephens Council Community Grant**
\$4,000 to support CP staff Leadership Dare to Lead training workshop.
- **Australian Communities Foundation**
\$656 to support client's removals and storage costs.

Groupwork

Group programs continue to be a vital part of the support offered by Carrie's Place, playing a key role in recovery and wellbeing for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. These programs foster social connection, reduce isolation, build relational autonomy, and promote empowerment in a safe and supportive environment.

Last year Carrie's Place delivered 17 group programs in collaboration with 9 external service providers. These programs were attended by 188 women, representing a 100 percent increase from the previous year. To improve accessibility for mothers, Carrie's Place partnered with Tilly's Play and Development Centre to provide two dedicated childcare workers at each session. Over a six-month period, Tilly's supported 23 children, allowing mothers to fully engage in the programs with peace of mind, knowing their children were in safe and nurturing care.

This growth reflects the increasing demand for group-based support and the effectiveness of collaborative, trauma-informed approaches in fostering long-term healing and resilience.



WELLBEING SISTAS

Wellbeing Sistas is a culturally safe group program developed in partnership with Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation, designed to strengthen social connection and support among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The program provides education around identifying unhealthy relationships and understanding tenancy and parental rights. It also offers creative expression through activities such as jewellery making and weaving.

During the 2024–2025 financial year, four Wellbeing Sistas programs were delivered in Cessnock, with 24 women participating in each term. A formal evaluation of the program is planned for late 2025 to assess its outcomes and inform future delivery.

SHARK CAGE®

Shark Cage® is an eight-week program developed by psychologist Ursula Benstead that explores common forms of abuse through a human rights framework. The program supports women to build awareness of healthy and unhealthy relationship patterns, assert boundaries, and strengthen communication skills in a safe and supportive group setting.

During the 2024–2025 financial year, Carrie's Place, in collaboration with Maitland Family Support and Samaritans, delivered two Shark Cage programs in the Maitland area. Sixteen women successfully completed the program, gaining valuable tools to support their recovery and personal empowerment. To ensure accessibility for mothers, Tilly's Play and Development Centre provided childcare support for eight children during the sessions, allowing participants to engage fully in the program.



PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS

"Thank you again for taking me on to complete the shark cage program. You're doing an awesome thing and from all of us who have been through or going through DV thank you for being someone we can turn to"

When asked what they liked most about the sessions, one participant wrote

"knowing that i'm not alone in my experience."

At the commencement of the Shark Cage® program, 57 percent of participants reported difficulty recognising abusive or exploitative behaviours. By the end of the program, 100% reported feeling confident in identifying these behaviours. This outcome highlights the program's effectiveness in building awareness, strengthening personal boundaries, and empowering women through education and support.

57%

of participants reported difficulty recognising abusive or exploitative behaviours

By the end of the program

100%

reported feeling confident in identifying these behaviours



RENT IT KEEP IT (RIKI)

RIKI is a one-day workshop designed to support individuals at risk of homelessness or tenancy loss. The program enhances participants' understanding of tenancy rights and responsibilities, while also connecting them with real estate agents, housing providers, advocates, and financial counsellors to strengthen their housing stability.

In the 2024–2025 financial year, Carrie's Place partnered with Hume Housing to deliver four RIKI sessions in the Maitland area. A total of 29 people completed the program, gaining practical knowledge and access to vital support networks. To ensure parents could participate fully, Woodberry Schools as Communities staff provided care and support for 10 children during the sessions.

Outcomes:

- Pre-session: 79% of participants rated their tenancy knowledge as average or below
- Post-session: 98% rated their knowledge as good or above

Participant feedback:

"Confirmed a lot of info I'd heard over the years, introduced a few different companies and programs, and what the limitations and opportunities are when applying... (the facilitators) have passion for it and it honestly makes a noticeable impact on how the day flowed and felt genuine in the aim to help us."



BLACK BOX

Black Box is a five-week group program designed for parents and carers who have experienced abuse, neglect, or violence. The program supports participants to better understand trauma responses and develop reparative parenting practices. It also explores key topics such as child brain development, attachment, remorse, and the importance of making meaningful apologies.

In the 2024–2025 financial year, Black Box was delivered in Maitland with eight participants completing the program. To support accessibility for parents, Tilly's Play and Development Centre provided childcare for five children during the sessions, allowing participants to engage fully in a safe and supportive environment.

All participants agreed or strongly agreed:

"After doing this group, I feel more hopeful that I can be the parent/carer I want to be."

"This group has increased my understanding of myself, my child and our relationships."

Participant insight:

When asked what they liked most about the program, one participant stated,

"group discussions, having a booklet, talking about the context of my experiences to get a better understanding of them."

"I feel more hopeful that I can be the parent/carer I want to be."



■ YOUR STORY IS YOUR SUPERPOWER

- with Jas Rawlinson

Led by bestselling author and domestic and family violence survivor Jas Rawlinson, this workshop explored storytelling as a powerful tool for healing, empowerment, and self-discovery. Participants received personalised guidance and coaching to begin their writing journey in a safe and supportive environment.

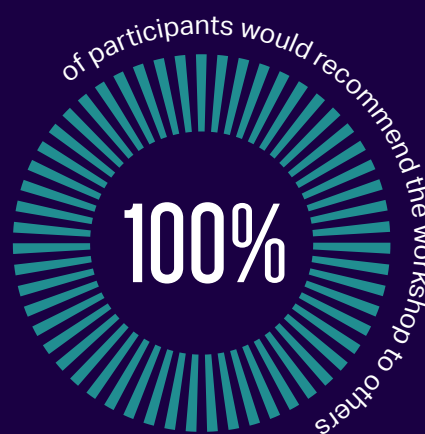
Last year Carrie's Place hosted staff and clients the opportunity to express themselves in a creative and safe environment.

Participant feedback:

When asked what they enjoyed most about the group one participant said,

"the simplicity of where to begin when thinking of how to start a book - questions that inspire and provoke thinking."

100% of participants would recommend the workshop to others.



BRINGING UP GREAT KIDS (BUGK)

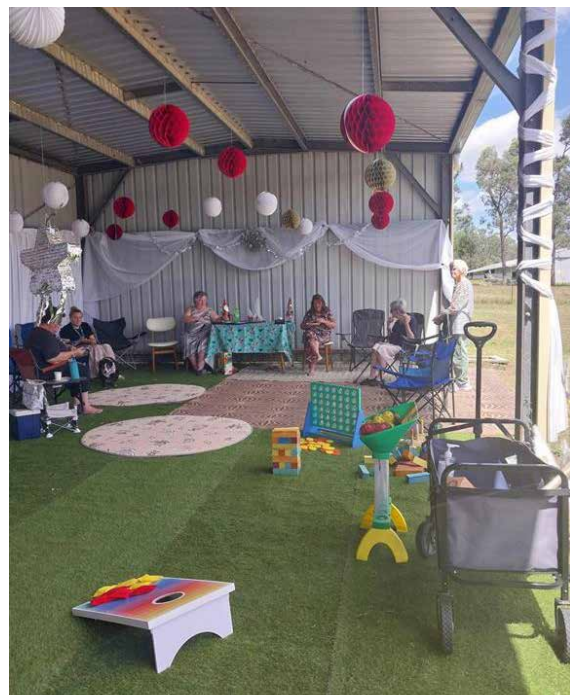
BUGK is a six-week parenting program that encourages reflection on parenting styles, fosters positive parent-child communication, and supports a deeper understanding of child development and behaviour. The program also addresses common parenting challenges and promotes the importance of self-care for caregivers.

In the 2024–2025 financial year, Carrie's Place partnered with Cessnock Family Support and Samaritans to deliver one BUGK program in Cessnock. Seven women completed the program, gaining valuable insights and practical strategies to support their parenting journey. To ensure accessibility, six children were cared for by Tilly's Play and Development Centre staff during the sessions, allowing participants to engage fully in a supportive and focused environment.

LOVE BITES

Love Bites is a one-day respectful relationships program designed for young people aged 15–17. It provides a safe and inclusive space to explore critical topics such as domestic and family violence, sex, consent, and the dynamics of healthy versus unhealthy relationships. The program also empowers youth to challenge harmful gender stereotypes through creative, youth-led campaigns.

In 2024–2025, Carrie's Place proudly co-facilitated Love Bites in six high schools across Aberdeen, Muswellbrook, Maitland, Cessnock, and Kurri Kurri, in collaboration with local service partners. This initiative reflects our ongoing commitment to early intervention and education that promotes respectful relationships and community safety.





CASE STUDY

SHS Case Study: Mary's Journey to Safety and Independence

** Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality*

Mary was referred to Carrie's Place by WDVCS after fleeing a domestic violence relationship with her three young children under 5. She arrived in the area with no belongings, no support network, and was couch surfing with a friend unknown to the perpetrator, fearing he would locate her.

Mary disclosed experiencing:

- Financial abuse (restricted from working)
- Reproductive coercion (denied access to birth control)
- Social isolation (cut off from friends and family)
- Sexual abuse (forced into non-consensual acts)
- A history of child abuse

Mary was in urgent need of housing. An Initial Assessment was completed by Carrie's Place Outreach Case Manager (CM), who invited Mary to an appointment at Samaritans Information and Neighbourhood Centre (SINC) in Cessnock.

During the appointment, Mary demonstrated strong motivation and independence. She had already visited Centrelink to organise her payments and had begun applying for properties. Although she had a positive rental history prior, her most recent home was owned solely by the perpetrator, leaving her without a current rental reference.

The Outreach CM discussed housing support options and submitted a Rent Choice Start Safely application with a detailed support letter, as Mary did not have an AVO to use as evidence. The Outreach CM also assisted Mary in applying for the Escaping Violence Payment, helping her prepare to furnish her new home and provide essentials for her children.

Throughout the support period, Mary remained engaged and proactive, promptly following up on all tasks. With Mary's consent, the Outreach CM reached out to a Tenancy Facilitation Officer (TFO) to advocate for her housing needs. The Outreach CM highlighted Mary's readiness to maintain a tenancy and her upcoming employment opportunity with a local business - pending stable housing.

The TFO liaised with local real estate, who had a suitable property available. Through strong advocacy and coordination, Mary's application was submitted, viewed, and approved.

The Outreach CM then supported Mary with:

- Applying for the Rentstart Bond Loan
- Accessing Rent Choice Start Safely Brokerage to purchase essential whitegoods

Mary's case reflects her resilience, determination, and capacity to rebuild after trauma. With stable housing, financial support and employment on the horizon, Mary is now positioned to create a safe and secure future for herself and her children.

WORKPLACE DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AWARENESS TRAINING

Earlier this year, Carrie's Place launched its Workplace Domestic Violence Awareness Training in response to research showing that approximately 55–70% of women experiencing domestic and family violence are also part of the workforce. This training is designed to build awareness of domestic, family, and sexual violence within workplace settings, challenge harmful gender stereotypes, and support effective responses to disclosures. It also incorporates real-world case studies, practical tools, and referral strategies to help organisations create safer and more supportive environments.

The first session was delivered in February 2025 to 22 staff members from Cessnock City Council, including rangers, librarians, customer service representatives, and wellbeing officers. All proceeds from the training are reinvested into the delivery and sustainability of group programs at Carrie's Place, ensuring continued support for those impacted by domestic and family violence.

55-70%

of women experiencing domestic and family violence are also part of the workforce



FOR MORE INFORMATION

groupprograms@carriesplace.org.au





■ INNER STRENGTHS

Inner Strengths is a six-week group program designed to support women who have experienced domestic and family violence. The program explores gender stereotypes and myths, the impact of abuse on children, and the importance of mental wellbeing, reflection, and self-care. It provides a safe and supportive space for participants to build resilience, deepen self-awareness, and strengthen their parenting and personal relationships.

In the 2024–2025 financial year, Carrie's Place facilitated four Inner Strengths programs across the region. One program was delivered in Muswellbrook in partnership with Upper Hunter Homelessness Support, with six participants. Two programs were held in Cessnock, one in collaboration with Cessnock Family Support, engaging a total of twelve participants. A fourth program was delivered in Maitland, attended by nine participants, with childcare support provided for three children by Tilly's Play and Development Centre.

Participant reflections:

When asked what they enjoyed most about the group one participant said,

"meeting new people, hearing how our stories all relate and making change and progress in my life for my future"

When asked if they had any comments or feedback, one participant said,

"Thank you to Carrie's Place for everything including opening my eyes and realising what I've been through is DV."

Our Reach



Brokerage



At Carrie's Place, brokerage funds play a vital role in case management, helping clients access essential goods and services that support their goals and ensure their safety. The types of items that can be funded are often determined by the specific funding sources available to us.

We rely heavily on donations and grant funding to support this service. Thanks to this support, Carrie's Place was able to provide \$202,000 in brokerage assistance over the past year. These funds helped clients purchase household goods, cover removalist costs, and access other essential services and items.

This impact highlights the importance of flexible funding and the generosity of our community and partners. Every contribution helps us continue to meet the diverse needs of those we support.

in brokerage assistance
\$202,000



every contribution helps

Thank you

PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Carrie's Place extends heartfelt thanks to the many organisations and community groups that have supported our work over the past year. We are also deeply grateful to the individual donors and community members who generously contribute funds and in-kind items. Your support enables us to provide vital assistance to our clients when they need it most.

FUNDING PARTNERS



Communities
& Justice

Legal Aid
NEW SOUTH WALES

HOUSING PARTNERS



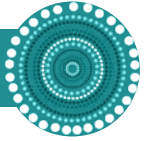
Home
in Place



COMMUNITY SPORTING PARTNERSHIPS



SPONSORSHIPS - FINANCIAL, IN-KIND + EVENTS

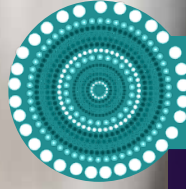




Thank you

FUNDRAISERS, DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

2303 Hair Design	HCB Rural and Land Management	Readers Café and Larder
Alestre Pilates	Hills Solicitors	Recycle Central Group - Central Waste Station
All Four x 4 Spares	Holy Family Church, Largs	Rotary Club of Greenhills-Maitland
AM's on Church	Hunter Podiatry Services	Rotary Club of Kurri Kurri
Artefact Heritage and Environment	Hunter Region Street Machine Inc	Rotary Club of Maitland
Aurizon	Hunter Valley Grammar School	Rotary Club of Maitland Sunrise
Australian Communities Foundation	Hunter Workers Women's Committee	Rutherford Dental
Australian Filter Sales	IGA Rutherford	Rutherford Technology High School
Australian Property Finance	Interact Club - Kurri Kurri High School	Rydges Resort Hunter Valley
Baker & Farrow	ITAR E- waste Recycling	Seventh Day Adventist Church
Beresfield Ladies Golf Club	Jenny Aitchison	Sexton Bus Company
Bill's Ballroom	Jims Laundry Service	Shimmy Mob Productions inc.
Blooms The Chemist Maitland	John Millburn	Singleton Diggers
Blue and Gold Training Pty Ltd	Kumiai Ryu Martial Arts	Singleton Markets
Bolearra-Largs Rural Fire Service	Life & Style @Lorn	Singleton Mazda
Bowers	Living Hope Church	South Pacific Welding Group Pty Ltd
Brightwell Health	Lochinvar Football Club	Stockland Greenhills
Cattle Dog Cafe and Florist	Lodge Hunter United - Freemasons Association	Story House Early Learning
CBA CSD Call Centre Newcastle	Maitland Baptist Church Child Care Limited	Susan Roskell Toy and Gift Drive
Centrelink Maitland	Maitland City Council	Sustaining NSW Families-Maitland/Hunter Valley.
Cessnock City Council	Maitland District Netball Association	Telarah MBC OOSH
Cessnock Clinic	Maitland Grossmann High School	Telarah Public School
Cessnock High School	Maitland Hospital	The Bloomfield Group Foundation
Chemist Discount Centre, Thornton	Maitland Junior Football Club	The McNally Foundation
Chris Cole-Clark Interior Designer	Maitland Kids Early Learning Preschool	The Mutual Bank East Maitland Branch
CMC Foundation Limited	Maitland Triathlon Club	The Order of the Eastern Star Home Fund Committee
CommBank Staff Foundation Limited	Margaret Johnson Foundation	Thornton Discount Drug Store
Commonwealth Bank Cessnock	MCG Quantity Surveyors	Tillys Play & Development Centre, Bolwarra
CoreStaff	Morgan Engineering NSW Pty Limited	Tillys Play & Development Centre, Gillieston Heights
CR Epiroc CSR Committee	My Discount Chemist	TME Support Services
Creightons Funeral Service	MyChoice Conveyancing	Transformational Institute
CWA NSW - Dungog-Clarence Town Branch	Nationwide Tyres	Transgrid
CWA NSW - Merriwa Branch	Newcastle Knights	Tranter Lawyers
CWA NSW - Singleton Branch	Newcastle Land Rover Club Inc.	Valley Lifting & Maintenance
Drill Adams Plant Repairs & Maintenance	Newcastle Nurserymans Association	WaterWorx Swim Centre
East Maitland Uniting Church	Oakwood Village Gillieston Heights	Westrac Pty Ltd
FCM Meeting and Events	Paterson Valley Community Preschool	Woolworths Green Hills
First National Real Estate Maitland	PEOPLEFUSION	Woolworths Rutherford
Flick Newcastle	Pillow Talk Rutherford	Your Discount Chemist
FUCHS Lubricants (Australiasia)	Pink Automotive	Zeal Futures
Gillieston Heights Discount Drug Store	Pitcher Partners	Zebra Equities
Grossmann High School	PRP Newcastle & Central Coast	Zoetis
Harpers Legal	Railtrain Holdings Group	Zonta Club of Hunter Newcastle



CASE STUDY

SHS Case Study: Jen's Journey to Independence

** Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality*

Jen self-referred to Carrie's Place in October 2023, alongside her mother, after receiving a Notice of Termination at the end of their fixed-term lease. Both were anxious about their housing future and sought support to navigate their next steps. Initially, Jen worked with the intake team to ensure her social housing application was current. During this time, Jen and her mother decided to pursue separate living arrangements, and their cases were managed accordingly.

Jen was introduced to her Case Manager in January 2024, and over the following ten and a half months, they worked together to address her concerns around homelessness, safety and domestic violence, employment and financial hardship.

Key Outcomes:

- Secured private rental accommodation
- Approved for the Rent Choice Start Safely subsidy
- Received the Escaping Violence Payment to safely and comfortably set up her new home
- Gained employment
- Explored safety concerns and DV experiences, empowering Jen to make informed decisions about reporting

Though initially nervous about moving into her new home, Jen's confidence grew significantly through her exit plan. Her mental health has improved and she now feels secure and excited about her future. In one of her final meetings with her Case Manager, Jen shared that she feels a wave of excitement every time she locks her front door, a symbol of safety and independence.

Jen has been a motivated, compassionate, and resilient client, always striving to create a better life for herself and her children. Her case is now ready for closure, marking a successful transition into stable housing and employment.



STAYING HOME LEAVING VIOLENCE (SHLV)

The Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) program, funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, supports women and children who have experienced domestic violence to either remain safely in their own home or relocate to a safe home of their choosing. The program delivers tailored support focused on safety and stability, including comprehensive safety planning, home security assessments, and property upgrades where needed. SHLV also provides up to two years of case management to assist women and children as they recover and rebuild their lives.



Maitland, Cessnock, Dungog, Singleton

This year, the SHLV team participated in several community engagement activities across the region. In September staff attended the "Network Your Wellbeing" morning tea hosted by Singleton Family Support Services. The event brought together local service providers for creative activities, breathwork, and connection over morning tea. On 25 November 2024, the team hosted a White Ribbon Day stall at Singleton Shopping Mall in partnership with Singleton Neighbourhood Centre and the Upper Hunter Homelessness Service, offering information, resources, and support to community members. On 3 December 2024, SHLV staff attended the Hunter Domestic and Family Violence Forum, with one team member contributing as part of the organising committee. The forum featured sessions on domestic and family violence in the context of disability, acquired brain injury, and worker wellbeing.

Upper Hunter

The SHLV team in the Upper Hunter region saw a significant increase in referrals this year, reflecting stronger local partnerships and growing awareness of the program. Earlier in the year, staff facilitated an information session at Muswellbrook UHCS, attended by 26 representatives from various local agencies. The session covered SHLV's services, case management approach, and brokerage supports, followed by a Q&A and informal networking.

Later, the Team Leader and Case Manager visited the Upper Hunter Homelessness Service to strengthen collaborative responses and conduct a joint Serious Threat appointment with a client. Toward the end of the year, SHLV partnered with UHHS to host White Ribbon Day stalls at both Muswellbrook shopping malls, providing resources and support to the local community throughout the day.

SHLV Statistics

Safety Audits

- 115 safety audits were completed in 2024–2025.

Maitland Cessnock Dungog Singleton

- 706 incoming referrals, representing a 5% increase from last year (671) and a 56% increase over two years.
- 282 women were supported through SHLV.
- 224 children were listed as clients in their own right.
- 449 children were associated with adult clients (not including the 224 listed above).
- \$62,635.86 in brokerage payments was made to clients.
- 24% of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 4% of clients identified as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD).
- 4,139 hours and 40 minutes of direct client work were recorded.

Upper Hunter

- 104 incoming referrals, reflecting a 21% increase from last year (86) and a 235% increase over two years.
- 52 women received SHLV support.
- 30 children were listed as clients in their own right.
- 88 children were associated with adult clients (not including the 30 listed above).
- \$18,534.50 in brokerage payments was provided—a 246% increase from two years ago.
- 26% of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 3% identified as CALD.
- 723 hours and 11 minutes of client work were recorded.

Maitland Cessnock Dungog Singleton SHLV

282
women

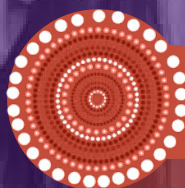
were supported
through SHLV.

224
children

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own right.

449
children

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with adult clients



CASE STUDY

Sarah's Journey to Safety and a Fresh Start

* Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality

Sarah was referred to SHLV following a sexual assault by her ex-partner, after years of unreported abuse during their marriage.

She had previously worked with Carrie's Specialist Homelessness Services. At the time, Sarah was homeless and living in her car with her dog. Sarah was housed in a unit in Maitland through Hume Housing. However, the property was known to the perpetrator, and she felt unsafe and avoided staying there whenever possible.

With SHLV support, a safety plan was developed, and a housing transfer was requested. Coordination with her Sexual Assault Counsellor and Victims Services ensured she accessed the supports she needed.

Through continued advocacy, Sarah was granted a housing transfer and moved into a safer, over-55s unit in a location unknown to the perpetrator, coincidentally near her best friend. Sarah's perpetrator has since been arrested and is awaiting trial. This move marked the beginning of the fresh start she had long hoped for.

SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICES (SHS)

The Lower Hunter Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS), funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, provides support to people of all genders who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless. Operating across the Maitland, Cessnock, and Dungog Local Government Areas, the service delivers tailored assistance to help clients secure safe, affordable housing or maintain an existing tenancy. The SHS Intake Team serves as the first point of contact for new referrals; offering information, advice and connections to appropriate support services based on each client's individual needs.

During the reporting period, the most common reasons clients sought assistance were domestic and family violence and housing crisis, such as eviction. Domestic and family violence accounted for 24.7% of presenting reasons, up from 19.8% the previous year. Housing crisis represented 24.2% of presentations, an increase from 18.1%. Other contributing factors included inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions (15.4%) and housing affordability stress (14.7%).

Over \$63K in brokerage support was provided to clients. Of this, 30.2% was used to establish or maintain tenancies, including advance rent payments and bonds. 2.9% supported emergency accommodation for women escaping domestic violence, while 1.1% covered access to specialist appointments. The remaining 65.8% funded essential needs such as household items, removalist services, skip bins, and property clean-up costs.

Mental health remained a significant concern, with 48% of clients presenting with a mental health condition. However, only 23% were engaged with a formal mental health service at the time of referral.

In the month prior to seeking support, almost 30% of SHS clients were sleeping rough or living in non-conventional accommodation—an increase from 25% the previous year. For 8% of clients, it had been over a year since they last had a permanent address, whilst an additional 13% had been without stable housing for more than six months. Between January and June 2025, the service successfully supported 50 clients into permanent housing, marking a significant step toward long-term stability and safety.

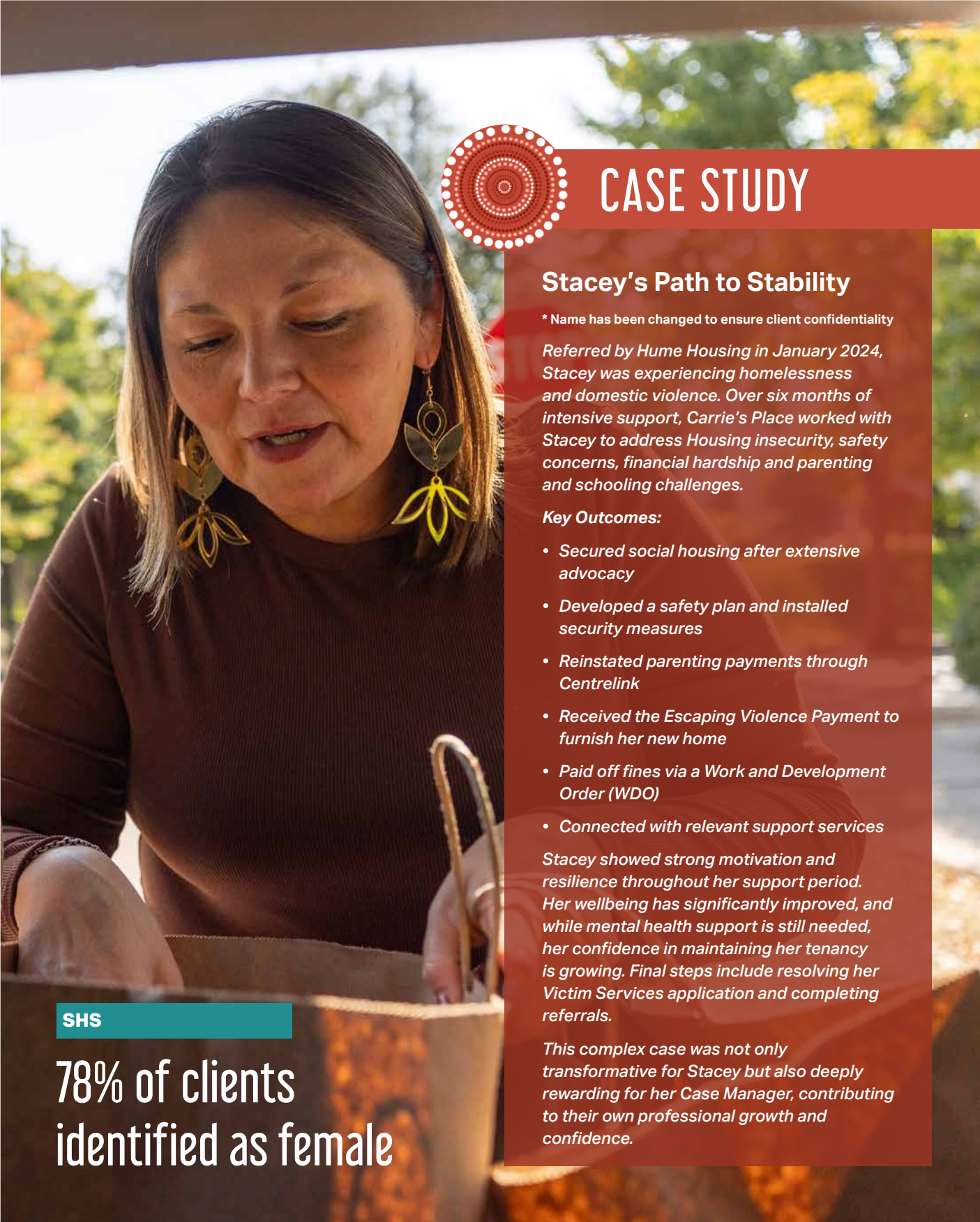
SHS Statistics

Service Overview

- New referrals: 513
- Total clients provided with a service: 624
- At the time of intake, 69% of clients were homeless and 30% were at risk of homelessness
- 78% of clients identified as female
- 4% of clients were aged over 65
- 29.2% of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (unchanged from last year)
- 1.6% of clients identified as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)
- 35.1% of clients presented as lone persons
- 47.7% of clients presented as families
- 2.1% of clients presented as a couple without children

Service Delivery

- SHS staff spent a total of 399 hours travelling to see clients
- SHS staff provided 7,553 hours and 49 minutes of direct client support
- 43.3% of clients required case management for between 2 and 13 weeks (unchanged from last year)
- 34% of clients required case management for more than 13 weeks
- 3.2% of clients required case management for more than 52 weeks, a reduction from 7.3% last year



CASE STUDY

Stacey's Path to Stability

** Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality*

Referred by Hume Housing in January 2024, Stacey was experiencing homelessness and domestic violence. Over six months of intensive support, Carrie's Place worked with Stacey to address Housing insecurity, safety concerns, financial hardship and parenting and schooling challenges.

Key Outcomes:

- Secured social housing after extensive advocacy
- Developed a safety plan and installed security measures
- Reinstated parenting payments through Centrelink
- Received the Escaping Violence Payment to furnish her new home
- Paid off fines via a Work and Development Order (WDO)
- Connected with relevant support services

Stacey showed strong motivation and resilience throughout her support period. Her wellbeing has significantly improved, and while mental health support is still needed, her confidence in maintaining her tenancy is growing. Final steps include resolving her Victim Services application and completing referrals.

This complex case was not only transformative for Stacey but also deeply rewarding for her Case Manager, contributing to their own professional growth and confidence.

SHS

78% of clients
identified as female

■ ACCOMMODATION

During the 2024–25 financial year, Carrie's Place provided supported accommodation to a significant number of individuals and families through a range of housing programs. A total of 21 people were accommodated in transitional properties, while 25 individuals received support through Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE) properties. The refuge service provided safe shelter to 39 people, including 11 families and four single women. The Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) program assisted between six and 18 people each month, with an average of 12 people accommodated monthly throughout the year.

A key highlight was the partnership with The Bloomfield Group, which enabled temporary use of two properties. This arrangement allowed Carrie's Place to accommodate six people from two families during a period of high demand.

The year also brought several challenges. Extensive storm damage and a break-in led to the temporary closure of the refuge for six months. During this time, five families were relocated following a flood emergency.



Staff continued to provide outreach support, ensuring families were safely accommodated, whether with extended family, in temporary housing, or within STA as vacancies became available. Each client received ongoing support until they transitioned into stable housing.

The STA program also experienced a temporary closure, affecting the service's capacity to house clients during that period. In February 2025, Carrie's Place lost access to the Branxton Salvation Army transitional property, as the landlord required its return, resulting in a reduction in available transitional housing. Additionally, the Cessnock DVRE property was unavailable for most of the year and only became operational again in May 2025.

Despite these challenges, Carrie's Place remains committed to expanding safe accommodation options and looks forward to a new year filled with strengthened partnerships, increased capacity, and continued support for those in need.

■ POST CRISIS TENANCY OFFICER – TRAINEE

Thanks to new funding, Carrie's Place was able to introduce a Trainee into the Accommodation Team, creating a valuable opportunity to develop case management skills while supporting clients in maintaining their tenancies. Once a client is housed, they receive 6–8 weeks of intensive support. The Trainee's role extends this support for up to 12 months, offering continued guidance during the early stages of tenancy.

Throughout the year, the Trainee was mentored by experienced staff across both the Accommodation and Outreach Teams, gaining practical experience in working with individuals facing a range of homelessness-related challenges. During this time, the Trainee supported 132 clients, making meaningful contributions to client outcomes while strengthening their professional capabilities.



THE REFUGE SERVICE
provided safe shelter to

39 PEOPLE

including 11 families and
four single women

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON SPECIALIST WORKER

In 2024–25, Carrie's Place welcomed the introduction of a dedicated Children and Young Person Specialist Worker (CYPSW) to strengthen support for families impacted by domestic and family violence. Funded through targeted government investment, this role has significantly enhanced our capacity to deliver trauma-informed, child-centred care to families living in refuge and transitional accommodation.

The CYPSW works directly with children in both the Refuge and, more recently, in Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA), using a tailored and culturally safe approach. Central to this work is assessing the individual needs of each child and young person, providing practical support, and connecting families with mainstream and specialist services.

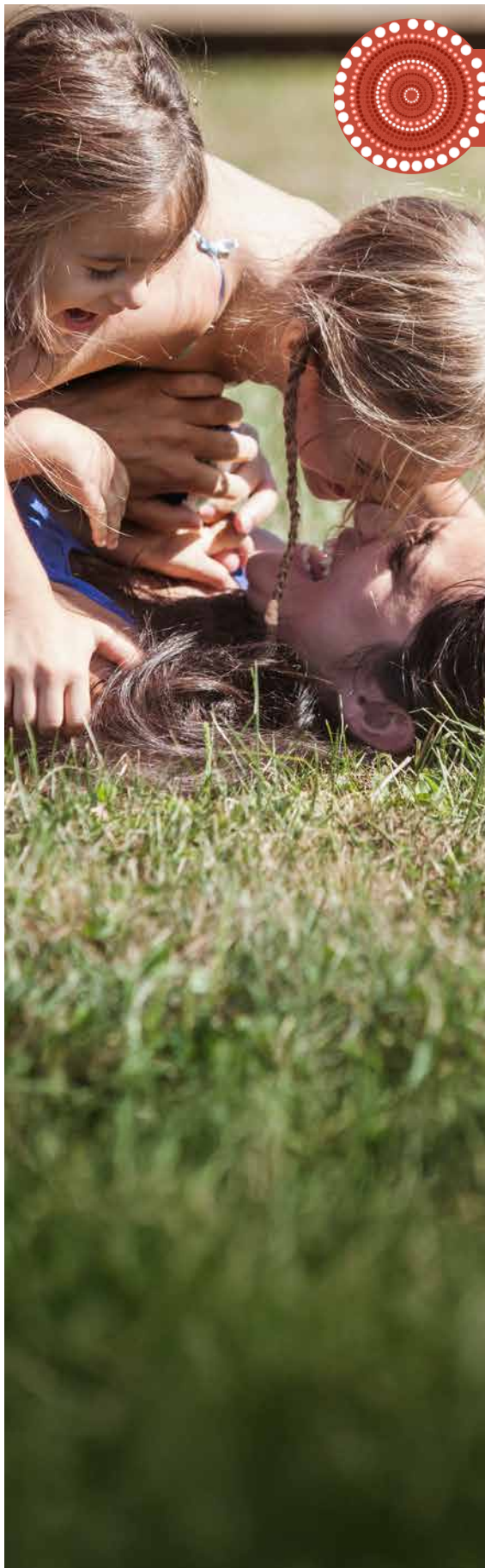
At Carrie's Place, we recognise that children experiencing homelessness or escaping domestic and family violence need more than just a safe place to stay—they need opportunities to feel like kids again.

In both our Refuge and Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) settings, the Children and Young Person Specialist Worker (CYPSW), alongside available Case Managers, facilitates a range of activities designed to bring joy, routine, and connection to children and their parents. Craft afternoons offer a creative outlet and a chance for children to bond with their parent in a relaxed, supportive environment. Cooking sessions provide fun, hands-on experiences that build life skills and strengthen family relationships. The highlight of the week is Breakfast Club, held every Friday morning, where families come together to enjoy a warm meal, usually pancakes, before starting their day. These activities not only support emotional wellbeing and restore a sense of normalcy, but also play a vital role in early intervention, helping staff identify emerging needs, build trust, and provide timely, targeted support to children and families.

The following case study highlights the impact of this role.



*they need
opportunities to feel
like kids again*



CASE STUDY

Shaye Builds Stability and Confidence for Her Family

** Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality*

Shaye, a young mother, presented to refuge following a separation from her partner due to domestic and family violence. At the time of entry, she had been couch surfing with her children at the home of her ex-partner's extended family. This environment was also unsafe, with additional incidents of family violence. Shaye expressed significant distress about her parenting, acknowledging that her children were mirroring the yelling and chaotic behaviour they had become accustomed to. She described feeling overwhelmed, overstimulated, and disconnected from her children, struggling to regulate her own emotions or meet their need for affection and calm.

Her three-year-old son, Charlie, was displaying heightened behaviours including sleep disturbances, which were difficult to manage in a shared living environment. Both children demonstrated emotional dysregulation, and Shaye often interpreted their behaviour as intentional defiance, rather than an expression of unmet needs. Through ongoing engagement with the CYPSW, Shaye was supported to explore these behaviours more deeply, recognising her own childhood experiences and how they shaped her responses as a parent.

The CYPSW introduced Shaye to resources such as Gottman's Emotion Coaching framework and facilitated discussions about parenting with intention and consistency now that she was in a safer environment. Practical tools like custom-made "Emotion Memory" cards supported Shaye in building her children's emotional literacy through play, helping them name and understand feelings during calm moments.

In addition to emotional support, the CYPSW worked with Shaye to build her parenting confidence and connected her with services for potential developmental assessment of her children. Shaye was also supported to access the Additional Child Care Subsidy, allowing her to increase her children's childcare hours to prioritise her wellbeing and work towards long-term goals, including stable housing.

Shaye received information about local support services, including early intervention and NDIS pathways, and was encouraged to explore parenting programs such as Circle of Security. She also accessed financial and material assistance including food vouchers, donated Christmas gifts, and tickets to a local petting zoo to create positive family memories. During the Christmas period, she and her children participated in activities hosted at the refuge, strengthening their bond and community connection.

Upon securing long-term housing, Shaye exited the service with a referral to an early intervention family support program, ensuring continuity of support for her parenting journey and family wellbeing.

OUTREACH

Assertive outreach remains a cornerstone of Carrie's Place's commitment to delivering inclusive and accessible support to those who may be unable or unwilling to engage with mainstream services. This proactive approach allows our team to meet people where they are, both geographically and in terms of their readiness to seek support, fostering trust, connection, and opportunities for early intervention.

Our outreach work is made possible through the generous support of grants and community contributions. In particular, funding from Cessnock LGA Clubs Grant, Easts Club Grant, and CMC Foundation donation. This support has been instrumental in sustaining and expanding this service. We are also deeply grateful for the many monetary and non-monetary donations received from individuals and community groups, which enables us to provide essential items and flexible support to those in need.

Cessnock Outreach

Cessnock Outreach operates three times per week at the Samaritans Information and Neighbourhood Centre (SINC). This location has enabled strong collaboration and cross-referral with other services co-located in the building. Since September 2024, 318 clients have been supported through Cessnock Outreach, including 91 drop-ins who may not have otherwise engaged with Carrie's Place. In addition to the regular outreach at SINC, staff from Carrie's Place also attend Soupz On over several months, further extending their reach into the community. During this time, three clients received tailored information and advice, and two individuals were successfully linked into ongoing support through the Cessnock Outreach service. Carrie's Place will continue to maintain a presence at Soupz On, ensuring that vulnerable community members have access to timely assistance and pathways to longer-term support.

Dungog Outreach

Dungog Outreach operates fortnightly and supported 10 clients during the 2024-25 financial year. Most were experiencing homelessness and were couch surfing with family or friends, reflecting the hidden nature of housing insecurity in rural communities. According to research (DCJ 2022, FACSIAR Summary), while the number of clients appears low, this may be attributed to several factors common in regional areas, including limited public transport, low service visibility, and stigma or reluctance to seek formal support. Additionally, individuals in rural communities often rely on informal networks such as family and friends, which can delay engagement with homelessness services until a crisis point is reached. These insights reinforce the importance of maintaining a consistent outreach presence in Dungog to build trust, raise awareness, and support early intervention.

Kurri Kurri Outreach

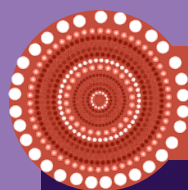
Kurri Kurri Outreach operates weekly, with growing connections to other local services. So far, three families have been assisted, with a further three identified for support, demonstrating the program's expanding reach and responsiveness.

Maitland - MUNCH

Carrie's Place staff attended MUNCH weekly for most of the last financial year, assisting with meal services and engaging with attendees in an informal, welcoming environment. This setting helped build rapport and trust with community members. As a result, seven people were supported to connect with Carrie's Place, including individuals sleeping rough, residing in boarding houses, or living in temporary accommodation. Additionally, two women received information and advice about domestic and family violence.



*build trust,
raise
awareness,
and support
early
intervention.*



CASE STUDY

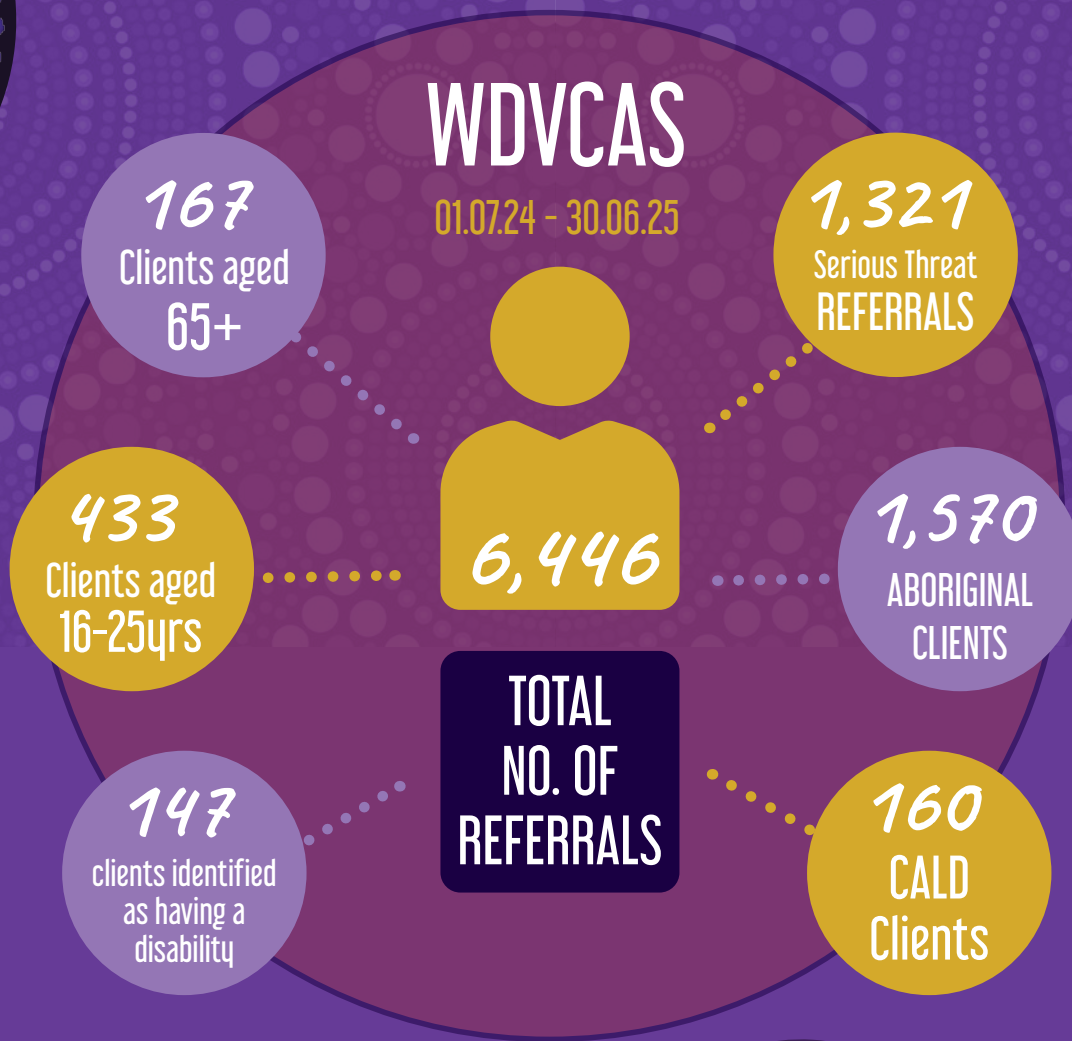
Supporting Dignity Through Clean Clothes: A Community Effort

Carrie's Place would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the Maitland Uniting Church and Maitland Men's Shed for their generous support in making washer/dryers available to clients attending the Munch Program. These machines provide a vital service, allowing individuals sleeping rough to wash their clothes at no cost, restoring dignity and offering a small but meaningful comfort.

We also gratefully acknowledge Glencore managed United Wambo Joint Venture for their financial contribution, which made the purchase of the whitegoods possible.

Since the facility began operating, we've seen up to four people using the machines daily. Clients have expressed deep appreciation, not only for the ability to wash their clothes, but also for the opportunity to enjoy a cuppa and connect with others, helping to break through the social isolation that often accompanies homelessness.

CARRIE'S PLACE IN NUMBERS



OUTREACH

Cessnock

Since the beginning of September 2024, 318 clients have been supported through this outreach. This includes 91 people who were 'drop ins' and otherwise may not have connected with Carrie's Place. There were also appointments offered to a further 93 people who did not attend.

318 clients
have been supported

Soupz On

Soupz On was attended by staff for several months with 3 clients provided with information and advice and two clients linked in to the SINC outreach for ongoing support.

Dungog

Dungog outreach occurs once per fortnight with ten clients being assisted this FY. Most clients supported were couch surfing with family or friends.

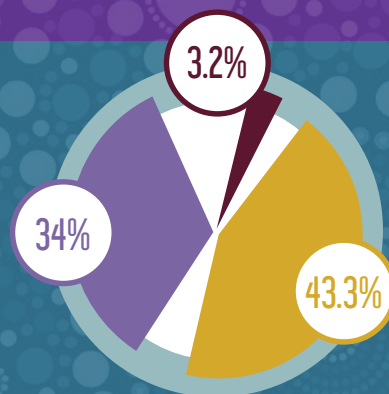
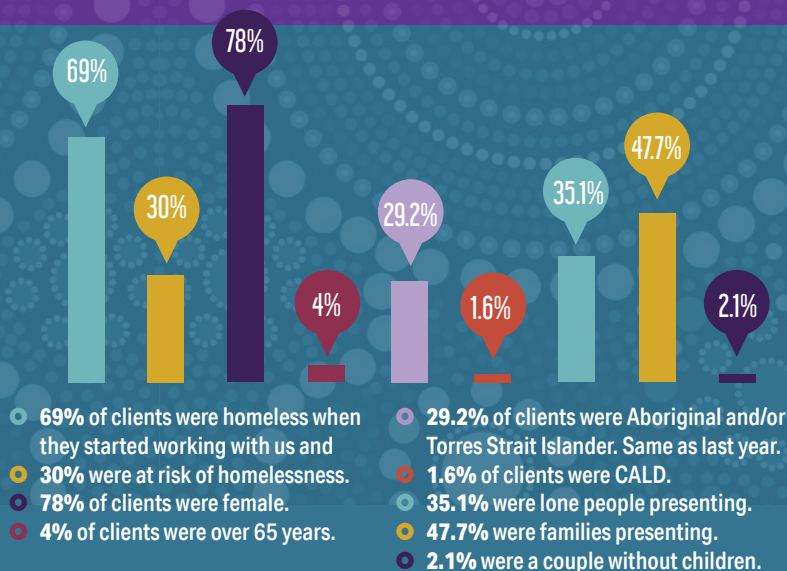
Maitland

Staff attend MUNCH once a week for most of the FY, helping serve meals and taking the opportunity to chat with the people attending and get to know them. This has supported 7 people connect with Carrie's Place who probably otherwise would not. This has included people sleeping rough, people residing in boarding houses and in temporary accommodation. In addition two women have been supported with information and advice about domestic violence.

SHS

New Referrals: 513

Total Clients provided with a service: 624



- 43.3% of clients needed case management for 2-13 weeks. Same as last year
- 34% of client needed case management for longer than 13 weeks.
- 3.2% of clients needed case management for more than 52 weeks which is a reduction from 7.3% of clients needing this length of case management last year.

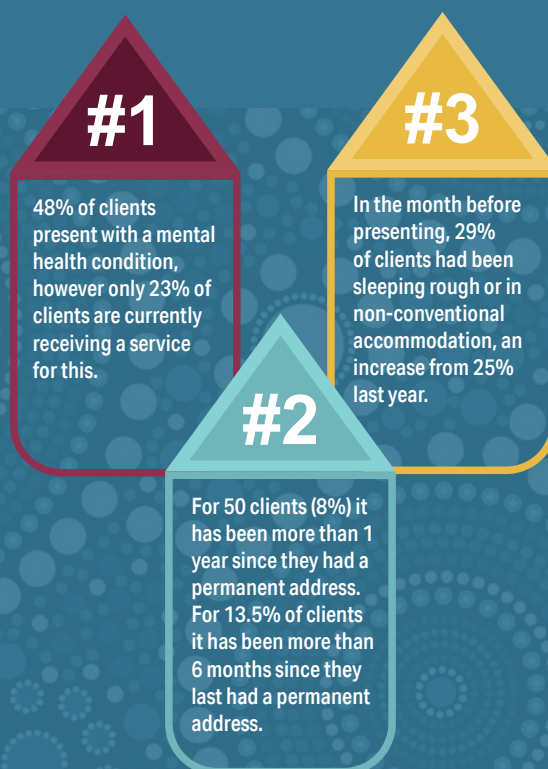
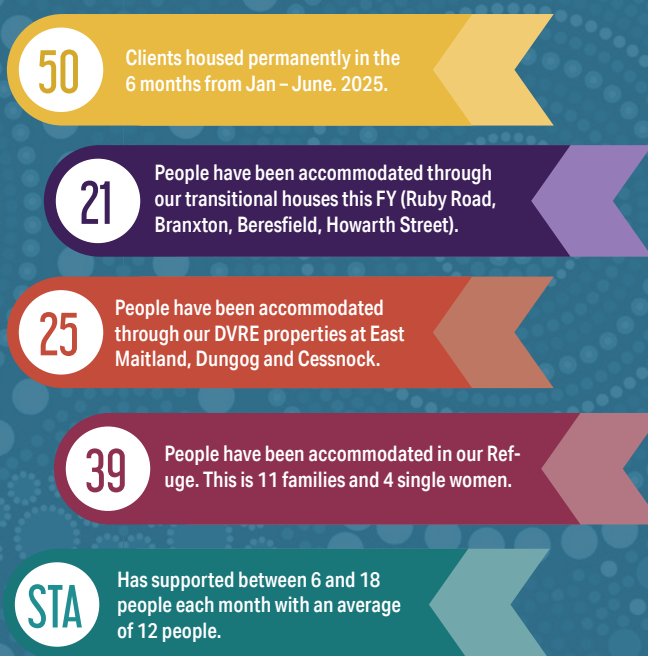
The main reason clients gave for seeking assistance:

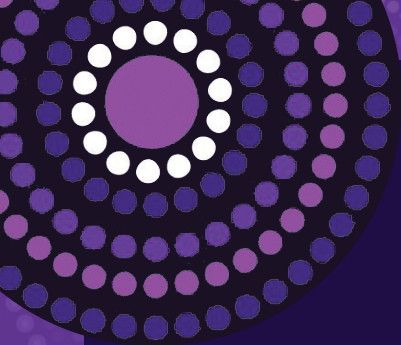


SHS staff spent



\$19,164.08 was directly spent towards establishing / maintaining a tenancy (paying advance rent, bonds, etc) and 65% was spent on providing basic necessities, removalists, skip bins for cleaning up, etc.





Maitland Cessnock Dungog Singleton

Number of incoming referrals: 706 - a 5% increase on last years 671 and a 56% increase from 2 years ago.

Number of women provided with support **282**

Number of children also listed as clients **224**

Number of children associated with the adult client (does not include the 224 children above). **449**

Total payments made to clients: **\$62,635.86**

24% of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

4% of clients identified as CALD.

4139hrs 40min were recorded as time working with clients

SHLV

Upper Hunter

Number of incoming referrals: 104 - a 21% increase on last years 86 and a 235% increase from 2 years ago.

Number of women provided with support **52**

Number of children also listed as clients **30**

Number of children associated with the adult client (does not include the 30 children above). **88**

Total payments made to clients: **\$18,534.50**
(246% increase from 2 years ago)

26% of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

3% of clients identified as CALD.

723hrs 11min were recorded as time working with clients

SHLV SAFETY AUDITS - 2024-2025
Safety Stats

115 audits completed.

HR Specialist

Carrie's Place introduced the People at Work (PAW) Survey in 2025 to assess psychological health and safety in line with legislative requirements.

100%

believe their work is personally meaningful

100%

believe their work contributes to meaningful change

100%

are proud to work with Carrie's Place

96%

would recommend Carrie's Place as a great place to work

85%

see themselves still working at Carrie's Place in two years

83%

trust their peers to produce high-quality work

79%

receive regular feedback and development from their line manager

PHN Local Linker

Number of meaningful GP visits provided

60

GROUP WORK



Throughout the **2024-2025** financial year, Carrie's Place delivered

Workplace Domestic Violence Awareness Training

In February 2025, Carrie's Place facilitated the first of these sessions to 22 rangers, librarian, front desk staff and wellbeing officers from Cessnock City Council.

Wellbeing Sistas

In 2024-2025, Carrie's Place, in collaboration with Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation, ran four Wellbeing Sistas programs in the Cessnock area. 24 women actively attended this program each term.

17
group
PROGRAMS

in partnership with nine external services. These programs were attended by 188 women-representing a 100% increase compared to the previous financial year.

Love Bites

In 2024-2025, Carrie's Place, in collaboration with multiple other service providers around the area, co-facilitated Love Bites in six different high schools across Aberdeen, Muswellbrook, Maitland, Cessnock and Kurri Kurri.

Rent it keep it

In 2024-2025, Carrie's Place, in collaboration with Hume Housing, ran four Rent It Keep It sessions in the Maitland area. 29 participants completed this program. 10 children were also provided with supervision by the Woodberry Schools as Communities staff. Before attending RIKI, 79% of participants rated their knowledge of their tenancy rights and responsibilities as 'average,' or below' Following the session, 98% of participants rated their knowledge as 'good'

Place also partnered with Tilly's Play and Development Centre to enhance program accessibility by providing two dedicated and experienced child workers at each group session. This arrangement enabled mothers to fully participate in the programs, confident that their children were receiving appropriate care and support. Over this six-month period, Tilly's provided care for 23 children.

Shark Cage

In 2024-2025, Carrie's Place, in collaboration with Maitland Family Support and Samaritans, ran two Shark Cage programs in the Maitland area. 16 women completed this program. Eight children were also provided with supervision by our Tilly's childcare workers across the two blocks.

Jas Rawlinson

Over the past 12 months, Jas held one workshop with Carrie's Place in the Maitland area which was attended by two clients and one member of staff.

Group attendance per region (Adults)

Cessnock 62%
Maitland 35%
Muswellbrook 3%

Inner Strengths

In 2024-2025, Carrie's Place: Co-facilitated one Inner Strengths program in collaboration with Upper Hunter Homelessness Support in the Muswellbrook area. Six women completed this program. Ran two Inner Strengths programs in the Cessnock area, one of which was in collaboration with Cessnock Family Support. 12 women completed this program. Delivered one Inner Strengths program in the Maitland area. Nine women completed this program. Three children were also provided with supervision by Tilly's childcare.

Black Box

In 2024-2025, Carrie's Place ran Black Box in the Maitland area. Eight women completed this program. Five children were also provided with supervision by our Tilly's childcare workers. 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that 'after doing this group, I feel more hopeful that I can be the parent/carer I want to be.' 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that 'doing this group has increased my understanding of myself, my child and our relationships.'

Group Attendance per region (Children)

Cessnock 23%
Maitland 77%
Muswellbrook 0%

BUGK

In 2024-2025, Carrie's Place, in collaboration with Cessnock Family Support and Samaritans, ran Bringing Up Great Kids in the Cessnock area. Seven women completed this program. Six children were also provided with supervision by our Tilly's childcare workers.

CARRIE'S PLACE IN NUMBERS

HUNTER VALLEY WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT ADVOCACY SERVICES (WDVCAS)

The Hunter Valley WDVCAS supports women experiencing domestic and family violence across the Hunter Valley and Port Stephens regions. The team provides trauma-informed, client-centred advocacy and support, with a strong focus on safety, justice, and empowerment.

A key function of WDVCAS is the coordination of Safety Action Meetings (SAMs). These meetings bring together government and non-government agencies to share critical information and develop collaborative safety action plans for clients assessed as being at serious threat.

The WDVCAS team delivers a comprehensive range of supports tailored to the diverse needs of women and children. This includes immediate safety planning and brokerage assistance to address urgent risks. Clients are supported through the court process, including both criminal and family law matters, with advocacy provided to ensure their voices are heard and their rights upheld. The team works closely with NSW Police, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), courts, and Corrections to advocate for client safety and wellbeing.

Housing support is a critical component of the service, with assistance provided for emergency accommodation, relocation, and tenancy advocacy. WDVCAS also helps clients access financial support through grants, scholarships, and subsidies; and supports applications for Victims Services and the Escaping Violence Payment. Transport to court and other essential appointments is arranged through taxis, Uber Safe Rides, Opal cards, and work vehicles.

Clients are connected with counselling, wellbeing programs, and financial counselling to support their recovery and independence. The service provides culturally safe support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Where relevant, assistance is also provided with visa and immigration matters.

WDVCAS coordinates group programs with childcare provisions and delivers domestic and family violence education through literature and workshops. Safety is further enhanced through home safety upgrades and personalised safety planning. Clients are also provided with safe phones, laptops, and other essential resources to support their independence and security.

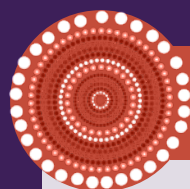
Additional supports include access to the Rebuilding Smiles dental restoration program, back-to-school packs, and early childhood education support. The team empowers clients to work toward self-determination and sustainable, violence-free futures. In some cases, specialised assistance is provided, such as restoring a family heirloom with cultural significance. WDVCAS works collaboratively with other services to ensure wraparound, trauma-informed support that meets the holistic needs of each client.

Program Highlight

In June 2025, the WDVCAS team attended the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) Forum in Sydney. Themed Strength, Resilience, Courage; the Forum opened with a Welcome to Country, smoking ceremony, and didgeridoo performance, setting a powerful tone for the event.

Keynote speaker Jelena Dokic, former world No. 4 tennis player, shared her moving story of survival and strength. Other speakers included Grace Tame, advocate and former Australian of the Year, and Acting Inspector Jacinta Pannowitz.

The Forum featured presentations on a range of critical topics, including the use of technology and AI in domestic and family violence contexts, supporting older women and women with disability, and addressing the unique experiences of LGBTQIA+ people experiencing gendered violence. Sessions also explored women's financial safety and shared the latest data and emerging themes from the Domestic Violence Death Review Team.



CASE STUDY

The event was a valuable opportunity for Carrie's Place staff professional development, connection, and renewed commitment to the safety and wellbeing of women and children.



Case Management

The Hunter Valley WDV CAS Case Management team consists of two full-time and one part-time Case Managers who provide flexible, client-centred support to women experiencing domestic and family violence. Our approach is grounded in meeting clients where they feel safest and most comfortable—whether that's in their home, at our office, at court, or in community settings. Ensuring the safety of both clients and staff is a top priority, with initial home visits conducted in pairs wherever possible.

In January 2025, our office sustained significant storm damage, forcing the team to work remotely for several months. Despite these challenges, staff continued to deliver consistent and responsive support. A temporary office space was secured in April 2025, allowing for a partial return to in-person service delivery, although space remains limited.

As of this reporting period, the Case Management team is actively supporting 21 clients through open cases. Each case is approached with care, flexibility, and a commitment to empowering women to navigate complex systems and build safer, more stable futures.

WDV CAS Case Management: Mary

** Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality*

Mary was referred to Hunter Valley WDV CAS by NSW Police, with a safety assessment categorised as "Serious Threat." Her relationship with the Person Of Interest (POI) spanned more than 20 years and was marked by physical, psychological, emotional, coercive, and financial abuse, none of which had previously been reported. The most recent assault involved attempted choking, prompting NSW Police to secure an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) and laying charges against the POI.

Fleeing with her two teenage daughters, Mary faced significant financial hardship while trying to establish a new home. Over a period of 16 months, our case management team provided sustained wraparound support to help Mary rebuild her life. This included linking her with a financial counsellor to address debt and improve her credit rating, supporting her through court proceedings, and liaising with Police and their Domestic Violence Liaison Officer.

Mary was assisted in securing a Rent Choice Start Safely subsidy, enabling her to maintain stable housing. She also accessed Victims Services packages, counselling, and recognition payment, along with the Escaping Violence Payment to further support her transition to independence.

Brokerage support was provided for essentials such as food, fuel, and household items, and a laptop was arranged for her daughters to support their education. The family also received Christmas hampers, and Mary was connected with Rebuilding Smiles to access restorative dental care.

In addition, our team coordinated with the DCJ to address child protection concerns and ensure appropriate supports were in place.

Mary has now established a safe, independent life with her daughters, maintaining positive changes and ongoing safety. Her story reflects the power of sustained, coordinated support in helping victim-survivors move from crisis to stability and long-term wellbeing.

SAFETY ACTIONS MEETINGS (SAMs)

Carrie's Place plays a key role in the delivery of Safety Action Meetings (SAMs), a core component of NSW Government's Safer Pathway initiative. These fortnightly, multi-agency meetings chaired by NSW Police, bring together domestic and family violence support services, government departments, and community organisations to share relevant information and develop coordinated Safety Action Plans for individuals at serious risk of harm.

Through our active participation in SAMs, Carrie's Place ensures that women and children accessing our services receive timely, coordinated, and tailored support. This includes safety planning, housing assistance, counselling, and access to practical resources. Our frontline insights help shape effective responses that reduce risk, prevent repeat violence, and improve long-term safety outcomes.

In addition to participating in SAMs, Carrie's Place is responsible for coordinating meetings for the Hunter Valley and Port Stephens/Hunter Local Coordination Points (LCPs). LCPs are specialist services funded by the NSW Government to support high-risk domestic and family violence cases. They serve as central hubs for risk assessment, referrals, and interagency collaboration.

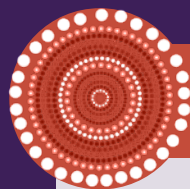
By leading the coordination of SAMs, Carrie's Place strengthens the region's collective response to domestic and family violence, ensuring that those most at risk receive informed, collaborative, and effective support.

Carrie's Place strengthens the region's collective response to domestic and family violence



SAM's Statistics

In the past year, a total of 6,398 referrals were recorded across the Hunter Valley and Port Stephens-Hunter Safety Action Meeting (SAM) sites. Of these, 2,454 referrals were received in the Hunter Valley, with 19% assessed as Serious Threat, while 3,893 referrals were recorded in Port Stephens-Hunter, with 22% assessed as Serious Threat. Overall, 21% of all referrals were classified as Serious Threat, highlighting the ongoing need for timely, coordinated, and multi-agency responses to protect those at the highest risk of domestic and family violence.



CASE STUDY

Hunter Valley Safety Action Meeting (SAM)

Following a Serious Threat referral, agencies demonstrated exceptional collaboration in supporting a young mother with significant vulnerabilities who was experiencing domestic violence. The case required a coordinated response due to concerns for her safety, her children, and the perpetrator's elderly mother, who was living with dementia. Health services promptly arranged a home visit to assess the elderly mother's wellbeing, ensuring she was protected in her own environment. This timely intervention reflects the dedication of all involved agencies to safeguard vulnerable individuals at risk of domestic abuse.

This complex, high-risk case required a comprehensive, multi-agency response involving NSW Police, the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), Health Services, Education, a local support service, Sexual Health and Legal Violence (SHLV), and the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS). Due to the severity and complexity of the situation, the case remained a standing agenda item for 14 weeks, spanning 7 Safety Action Meetings (SAMs). Over this period, a total of 19 coordinated actions were allocated across agencies to address the safety, legal, health, and support needs of the client and affected family members.

Several challenges were encountered throughout the process. The client's initial reluctance to engage, driven by fear of the perpetrator, along with the perpetrator's mother's dementia, presented significant difficulties in assessing risk and ensuring effective communication. Coordination among multiple agencies, each with different protocols and priorities, occasionally caused delays in decision-making and service delivery. The client's vulnerabilities and complex family dynamics required careful balancing of confidentiality with information sharing to maintain a consistent and safe response. Limited availability of specialist resources for older victims of domestic violence also complicated timely intervention.

Despite these challenges, the persistence and commitment of all agencies were instrumental in achieving coordinated outcomes. This case underscores the importance of ongoing interagency cooperation, adaptability, and tailored strategies when supporting vulnerable populations. It highlights the critical role of sustained, multi-agency action in effectively addressing domestic violence and safeguarding at-risk individuals.

6,398
referrals



ABORIGINAL FOCUS WORKER (AFW) SUPPORT

The Hunter Valley WDVCS Aboriginal Focus Worker (AFW) plays a vital role in ensuring culturally safe and effective service delivery for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients. The AFW provides regular support and guidance to WDVCS staff on engaging respectfully and effectively with Aboriginal clients, including in court settings. This support is provided both in person and by telephone, ensuring timely advice and culturally appropriate responses.

To strengthen team capability, the AFW delivers regular updates during staff meetings, sharing key developments in the community, emerging trends, changes to referral pathways, available service providers, and client feedback. These updates help ensure the team remains aligned with best-practice, culturally safe approaches and responsive service delivery.

Last year, our AFW launched the Wellbeing Sista's Group in Cessnock in partnership with Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation. The group continues to run successfully, providing a culturally safe space for women to connect, share, and access support. Discussions are currently underway to expand the program into other areas.

The AFW has actively built and maintained strong relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and services across the Hunter Valley and Port Stephens regions, prioritising culturally informed collaboration and client support. These connections have strengthened service integration, improved referral pathways, and enhanced the ability of WDVCS to respond effectively to the needs of Aboriginal clients.



CASE STUDY

Trust, Culture and Collaboration: A Pathway to Safety: Kim

** Name has been changed to ensure client confidentiality*

Carrie's Place Aboriginal Focus Worker (AFW) received a referral for Kim due to concerns about domestic and family violence (DFV) and potential child protection risks. Initially, Kim was unresponsive, making it challenging for services to provide meaningful support. Recognising the need for a culturally responsive and relationship-based approach, the AFW initiated targeted outreach.

Drawing on community networks and knowledge of Kim's background, the AFW connected with trusted contacts in the Mid North Coast region, where Kim had previously engaged with support services and had existing relationships. These community-led connections were instrumental in breaking down barriers to trust.

Following this, a trusted service provider reached out to Kim and introduced the AFW as a safe and culturally appropriate support person. This reassurance led Kim to re-engage with services and accept support, marking a significant turning point in her journey.

Once engaged, Kim received comprehensive wraparound assistance, including:

- Safe accommodation via referral to Warlga Ngurra Refuge, allowing her to stabilise her immediate circumstances.
- Emotional and practical support to make further police statements about previously unreported or under-documented serious assaults, contributing to legal action and the Person of Interest (POI) being refused bail.
- Financial assistance through the Escaping Violence Payment (EVP), supporting her transition to safety and independence.
- Recovery and legal support via referral to Victims Services for counselling, financial assistance, and legal advice.
- Child safety interventions through coordinated engagement with the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), ensuring Kim and her son were connected to appropriate supports.

Kim's case powerfully illustrated the importance of culturally safe, trauma-informed practice and the critical role that Aboriginal-specific workers play in navigating complex community dynamics. It also demonstrates how community networks can be instrumental in re-engaging clients who are otherwise hard to reach, and how persistent, coordinated interagency collaboration can lead to meaningful outcomes in high-risk domestic and family violence cases.

Kim's journey underscores the transformative impact of trust-based engagement and integrated service delivery, particularly for Aboriginal clients who may feel disconnected from mainstream services due to past trauma or negative experiences.



HEARING SUPPORT PILOT PROGRAM

Hunter Valley WDV CAS and Carrie's Place welcomed the announcement that funding for the Hearing Support Pilot Program will continue until at least 30 June 2027. This program plays a vital role in improving the court experience for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.

The program is designed to enhance victim engagement with the court process, reduce the stress and trauma associated with legal proceedings, and minimise the risk of disengagement before a hearing. It also supports victims in giving accurate and confident evidence and assists in securing Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs) with appropriate safety conditions.

As part of the program, clients are invited to attend the Police Prosecutor's Clinic prior to their hearing date. These clinics provide an opportunity for clients to receive clear information about court processes and engage in open discussions with legal professionals. On hearing days, WDV CAS staff offer additional support in Court Safe Rooms, accompany clients while they give evidence, and communicate outcomes to those who choose to leave the courthouse immediately after their matter is heard.

This program continues to make a meaningful difference in reducing barriers to justice and ensuring that victim-survivors feel supported, informed, and empowered throughout the legal process.

"Her presence makes the court process safer and more manageable..."





Client Feedback:

"Ms M not only accompanies me to my court appearances, offering vital emotional and practical support, but she is also consistently informed of upcoming court matters. Before and during court dates, she provides me with the necessary information to guarantee that I am well-prepared and knowledgeable about all relevant aspects. Her presence makes the court process safer and more manageable, helping me navigate an overwhelming experience.

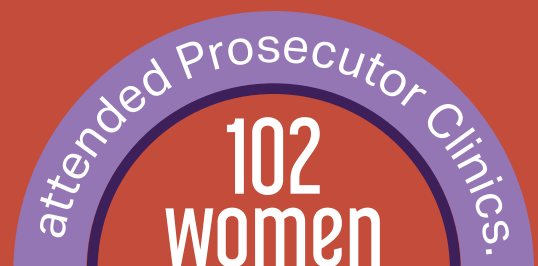
In addition to providing emotional support, Ms M also advocates for me and facilitates communication with the Police Prosecutors, the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (DVLO), and police detectives, ensuring my voice is heard in the legal process. Moreover, Ms M prioritises my safety. She has been instrumental in planning and maintaining my safety by, for instance, meeting at the Police Station before court appearances and ensuring I am safe in the courtroom and in my home. Her commitment to ensuring my comfort and safety in court is exceptional."

"My client (X) attended an ADVO hearing and was supported by Ms S. I spoke with X's mother last week, and they stated that the support provided by Ms S was amazing. X expressed she was extremely grateful for Ms S's presence, and Ms S was significant in helping her and X to remain grounded throughout the process.

Thank you and your service for the work that you do. I greatly appreciate the support Ms S provided to X, and how important your service is for our clients accessing the justice system. I hope to work with your service again in the future."

Hearing Support Statistics 2024-2025:

- 23 Prosecutor Clinics conducted across Raymond Terrace, Cessnock, Singleton, Maitland, and Muswellbrook.
- 102 women attended Prosecutor Clinics.
- 358 women supported by Hunter Valley WDV CAS at court hearings.



PRIMARY HEALTH NETWORK (PHN)

GP Pilot Program

The Local Link Program, delivered through the Primary Health Network (PHN) is a targeted initiative designed to support primary care providers in responding to patients impacted by domestic, family, and sexual violence. This streamlined referral pathway connects the patient and healthcare professionals with a Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Worker, known as the Local Linker, who provides tailored safety planning, risk assessments, and direct referrals to appropriate services.

The Local Linker also offers secondary consultations and expert advice to clinicians, embedding trauma-informed care within primary health settings. Feedback on referral outcomes is shared with referring clinicians to support continuity of care and strengthen collaborative responses.

Over the past financial year, the Local Linker role has expanded to accept referrals for a broader range of issues, including sexual violence experienced by both adults and children, marking a significant extension beyond the program's original scope. A total of 60 meaningful GP visits were completed during this reporting period.

To strengthen local capacity and foster collaboration, two Continuing Professional Development (CPD) dinners were held for general practitioners across the region.

The first dinner brought together nine GPs from practices in Scone, Muswellbrook, and Denman, encouraging open dialogue around available supports for victim-survivors. The second event, held in Singleton, welcomed a broader group of 15 attendees and featured a panel of four local services, including the Local Linker, who shared insights into how their services assist victim-survivors within the community.

The pilot has proven particularly effective in reaching women who have not reported their experiences to Police, highlighting its value in engaging individuals who may never access traditional DFV services. Earlier this year, the Local Linker also represented Carrie's Place at the PHN Agents of Change Conference, hosting an information stall and engaging participants in conversations about the program and broader service offerings.

Targeted GP training sessions were also delivered in Raymond Terrace and Tenambit, focusing on domestic and family violence, sexual violence, and child sexual assault. These sessions have played a key role in increasing referrals from GPs to the Local Linker, enhancing early intervention and support for victim-survivors within primary care settings.

A key challenge remains with limited availability of GP trainers in the Hunter region, which continues to restrict the number of training opportunities for local practices. Despite this constraint, the program has made significant strides in building strong partnerships with primary care providers and enhancing access to early intervention and support for victim-survivors.

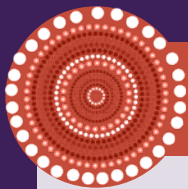
a targeted initiative designed to support primary care providers in responding to patients impacted by domestic, family, and sexual violence



Healing and Recovery Grant

Funded through the Primary Health Network (PHN), the Healing and Recovery Grant has enabled Carrie's Place to employ an accredited Mental Health Social Worker to support women and children following crisis intervention. Once a CP Case Manager has assisted a woman in achieving stability in areas such as safety, accommodation, and financial security, the Mental Health Social Worker is engaged to develop a personalised wellbeing plan for her and her children.

This role provides individual and family appointments, delivering trauma-informed, recovery-focused mental health services including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), mindfulness, and supportive counselling. The goal is to promote wellbeing as an achievable outcome, helping clients understand the benefits of engaging with mental health services and facilitating a warm transition to longer-term care tailored to their needs and aspirations.



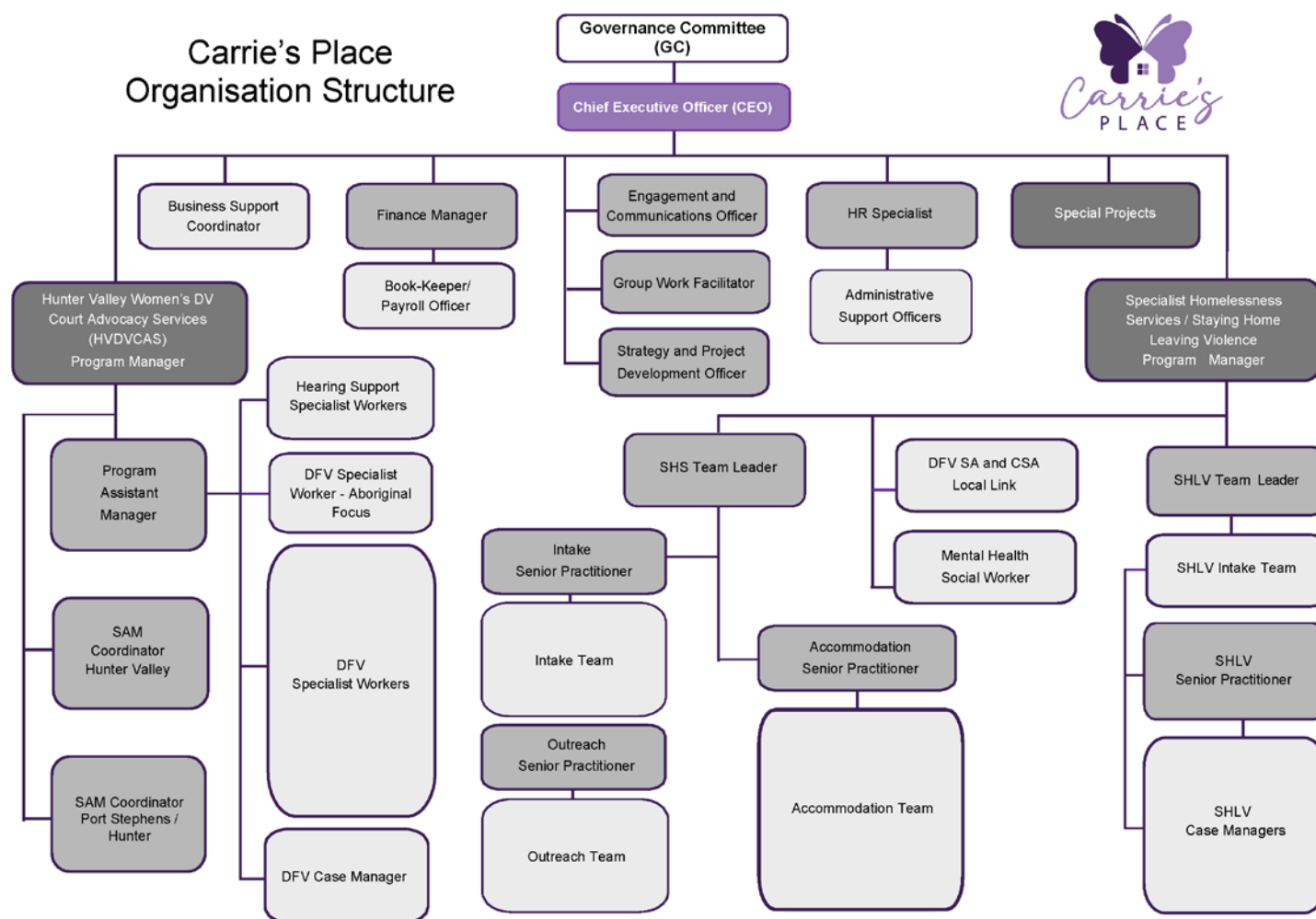
CASE STUDY

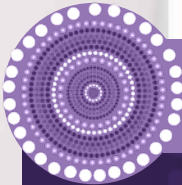
Local Linker Case Study: Linking Clients to a Safety Net

After receiving a referral from a local GP, the Local Linker made several unsuccessful attempts to contact the client. The GP was advised of these attempts, and the Linker requested that the GP pass on their contact details to the client at their next appointment, if possible. The client later reached out via SMS, nominating a specific date and time for a return call the following week. During that initial conversation, the client indicated they did not require any support. However, during a subsequent follow-up, the Local Linker was able to identify unmet needs and successfully referred the client to the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS) for court support. This included linking the client with the Domestic Violence Duty Solicitor and the Domestic Violence Liaison Police Officer in relation to a pending court matter. The duty solicitor agreed to take on the client's case.

The Linker also assisted the client by completing an Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) application and a Victim Services counselling application. A referral was made to the Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) program for an urgent safety audit of the client's new property. Additional legal advice and information were arranged through an urgent appointment with the Hunter Community Legal Centre (HCLC) concerning family law and property settlement matters.

Deidentified Structure Chart





CASE STUDY

SHS Intake Case Study: Donna's Path to Safe Housing

In October 2024, Carrie's Place received a referral for Donna from Home In Place, as she was residing in Temporary Accommodation in the Cessnock area. Donna, who was pregnant and also had a toddler, had fled domestic violence in regional NSW, perpetrated by her son's father.

Donna was actively applying for private rentals and during intake, the Outreach Case Manager (CM) reviewed her online rental profiles, which were well presented. However, a conversation with her previous real estate revealed they had no tenancy notes on file and were unable to provide a reference, creating a significant barrier to securing housing.

Despite the Outreach CM writing a support letter to accompany Donna's applications, she remained unsuccessful due to limited affordability, age and single-parent status and lack of employment and rental references.

The Outreach CM discussed housing options with Donna, including the Rent Choice Start Safely subsidy. With an AVO and a strong support letter, Donna was approved for the subsidy, strengthening her rental applications.

Soon after, the Tenancy Facilitation Officer (TFO) was contacted by Real Estate about a 2-bedroom unit in the local area. The outreach CM advocated strongly for Donna, highlighting her motivation and readiness to maintain a tenancy after three months in temporary accommodation.

The TFO liaised with the Outreach CM and the real estate agent to fast-track Donna's application and viewing. Donna was approved and accepted the property.

The Outreach CM then supported Donna to:

- Apply for the Rentstart Bond Loan
- Enrol in the Rent It Keep It tenancy education session
- Receive a referral to the Post Crisis Case Manager for ongoing tenancy support

Donna has shown strong motivation to sustain her tenancy and avoid returning to crisis. Her journey reflects the power of advocacy, collaboration, and tailored support in overcoming housing barriers.

Inclusive Practice Groups Overview

At Carrie's Place, our Inclusive Practice Groups are central to embedding equity, representation, and community connection throughout the organisation. Each group reflects a unique focus area and a shared commitment to fostering safer, more inclusive environments for clients, staff, and the broader community.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP) GROUP

The RAP Working Group has experienced a significant and transformative year, highlighted by the formal endorsement of Carrie's Place's Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan. This milestone was celebrated with an official launch on 5 August 2025, made achievable through a NAIDOC event grant provided by the NSW Government. The event reflected our deepening commitment to truth-telling, cultural safety, and reconciliation.

One of the most impactful workplace changes was the introduction of a public holiday substitution, allowing staff to work on Australia Day and instead take leave for Harmony Day. This initiative acknowledges the

intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Many staff embraced this change, with plans to continue the substitution in 2026 and beyond.

Responding to staff interest in a culturally inclusive work uniform, Carrie's Place partnered with local Aboriginal artist Jess Hopcroft from Dhiyaan Arts to develop a purple design symbolising domestic violence awareness. This artwork now features on staff uniforms worn at community events and in the office, fostering pride and connection to culture. The artwork has also been incorporated into Carrie's Place branding, including business cards and email signatures.

To further support Aboriginal staff, cultural peer supervision was introduced, offering an opportunity for culturally appropriate supervision that respects cultural understanding. Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive.

In 2024, Carrie's Place entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation, strengthening our commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women facing challenges such as domestic and family violence, mental health issues, homelessness, and isolation.



Our Aboriginal Focus Worker collaborates with the Chair of Kiray Putjung to facilitate the weekly Wellbeing Sista's Group, providing vital support.

The RAP Working Group participated in four NAIDOC Week events across multiple local government areas, engaging hundreds of community members and local organisations. A National Reconciliation Week event held at our office raised almost \$250 for the Wear It Yellow campaign, demonstrating our staff's commitment to reconciliation initiatives.

Yarn Ups were introduced as safe spaces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to connect, share culture, and build a supportive workplace community.

A highlight of the year was the staff NAIDOC Week event held in Bulga, which saw widespread participation. The event featured Aboriginal art, jewellery making, and weaving workshops, along with dance performances by students from a local high school. Staff were invited to learn and participate in the dances, receiving positive feedback on the learning experience and enjoyment. Building on this success, the RAP Working Group plans to seek grants to ensure future events of this nature.

Looking ahead, the RAP Working Group is focused on developing a cultural training package to be incorporated into the staff onboarding process, ensuring all employees are culturally aware and competent. The group aims to strengthen partnerships with local Aboriginal organisations and plans to host a community exhibition showcasing artwork created by participants of the Wellbeing Sista's Group by the end of 2025. In collaboration with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Carrie's Place will deliver the Triple P Positive Parenting Program.

Additionally, the group is committed to developing and implementing a recruitment, retention, and professional development strategy specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff. Opportunities will be provided for RAP Working Group members and Leadership Team members to engage in formal and structured cultural learning. There is also a strong focus on supporting non-Indigenous staff to build confidence and knowledge in delivering a meaningful Acknowledgement of Country.



Inclusive Practice Groups Overview

LGBTQIA+ GROUP

The LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Practice Group has continued to advance important initiatives that promote inclusivity and affirmation at Carrie's Place.

Some of the key achievements since the formation of the group have been, amending Carrie's Place's referral and intake forms to include questions about gender identity, sexuality, and pronouns, ensuring respectful and affirming client engagement. The group also successfully advocated for the addition of pronouns on staff name badges and email signatures, helping to normalise inclusive practices across the organisation.

Staff development remains a priority, building on previous whole-of-organisation LGBTQIA+ training sessions.

Pride Month celebrations were a highlight. In June 2025, the group organised Taste the Rainbow, a vibrant, creative event where staff designed cakes inspired by Pride flags. This event provided a valuable opportunity for learning and reflection, with staff sharing insights about their designs and how the experience deepened their understanding of the LGBTQIA+ community. The event also offered practical tips on allyship, raising awareness in an inclusive and enjoyable way.

Looking ahead, the group are looking for opportunities to attend community events to create visibility and awareness that Carrie's Place is a 'Safe Place for All'. They will be developing Pride-themed merchandise, including a rainbow teardrop banner, brochures, and branded merchandise to promote connection at LGBTQIA+ events.

Ongoing goals include organising another whole-of-organisation LGBTQIA+ training session, facilitated face-to-face by ACON, and maintaining regular attendance at LGBTQIA+ domestic and family violence interagency meetings.



They are also exploring funding opportunities to support Carrie's Place's participation in Newcastle Pride Fair Day. They aim to secure funding to support the production of Pride banners and brochures tailored to the LGBTQIA+ community, providing information about mental health support services, and distributing wellbeing packs. These packs will include resources such as rainbow mindfulness tools, pampering and stress-management items, and information to support those engaging in discussions about their situation or mental health.



CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) GROUP

Over the past year, the CALD Inclusive Practice Group has been actively engaged in strengthening community connections and cultural celebration. Members regularly attended Multicultural Action Group (MAG) meetings and supported the facilitation of Harmony Day celebrations at Gillieston Heights Community Centre.

A highlight of the year was the group's facilitation of the May All-Team Meeting, where a staff member shared her Thai culture, including a traditional Songkran blessing in which the team participated. The group also led a collaborative rock art activity, inviting team members to illustrate something meaningful from their cultural heritage or personal identity. These simple yet impactful experiences celebrated the rich diversity within our team and deepened mutual understanding.

Looking ahead, the group plans to continue holding face-to-face meetings at culturally diverse eateries, supporting local businesses while encouraging cultural connection. The CALD group is also preparing to lead Harmony Day 2026 celebrations, with hopes that the reopening of the office will allow staff to share culturally significant meals together.

Additionally, the group looks forward to continuing the rock artwork project started in May, with plans to feature the completed pieces as a permanent display in the new office space.



Inclusive Practice Groups Overview

DISABILITY GROUP

Over the past 12 months, the Disability Inclusive Practice Group has led several meaningful initiatives, hosting three key events that engaged both staff at Carrie's Place and the broader Maitland community.

In October, to mark World Mental Health Day, the group facilitated an informal Paint and Sip session for staff. This event encouraged mindfulness through creative expression, with each participant decorating a butterfly, a symbol of transformation and individuality, and an emblem of Carrie's Place. Staff also contributed written messages of hope to a collaborative artwork, which will be displayed in the office. The session was well attended and received positive feedback, with many staff reflecting on the value of taking time for quiet creativity and connection.

Later that month, group members represented Carrie's Place at the World Mental Health Day event at Maitland Park, in collaboration with other local service providers. Staff promoted Carrie's Place programs and facilitated inclusive mindfulness activities such as mandala drawing and worry doll making. While the event was impacted by poor weather, the team provided a welcoming and calming presence for those who attended.

In December, to mark the International Day of People with Disability, the group hosted an informative staff event featuring guest speakers. Presentations explored a range of topics including the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), the intersection of disability, homelessness and domestic violence, and strategies for accessing relevant local services. The event was well received and contributed to strengthening staff understanding and awareness of key issues facing people with disability in our community.

Looking ahead, the group has set several goals for the next 12 months. These include participating in the Woodberry Public School Schools as Community parent support program, attending the Disability Expo at the Newcastle Entertainment Centre, and launching an internal Disability Services Directory to support staff in navigating referrals and service pathways. The group also plans to continue marking World Mental Health Day and International Day of People with Disability through inclusive, engaging activities that promote reflection, connection, and awareness across staff and community settings.



YPOP (YOUNG PEOPLE, OLDER PEOPLE) GROUP

A highlight of the past year has been the establishment of the Young People, Older People (YPOP) Inclusive Practice Group, which brings fresh energy and purpose to our inclusive practice space. This newly formed group is made up of committed and motivated members who are focused on addressing the gaps in resources and support for children, young people, and older adults affected by domestic and family violence.

The group held its inaugural meeting on 6 May 2025, followed by a second meeting in July 2025. As a new initiative, the group is currently developing its internal Terms of Reference, mapping relevant referral pathways, and identifying opportunities to build partnerships with services and community support networks.

A key focus for the year ahead is developing a calendar of relevant community events, with potential participation in the International Day of the Older Person (October 2025), Youth Week (April 2026), and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 2026). These events present important opportunities to raise awareness, promote inclusion, and foster connection across generations.

The group is also exploring the idea of hosting a bespoke intergenerational event to bring together young and older people to celebrate their lives, strengths, and shared experiences. Planning is underway to seek funding through a grant to support this initiative, which aims to highlight the diversity and value of intergenerational connections in our community.



Employee Growth and Capacity Building

STAFF WELLBEING AND DEVELOPMENT

This year, Carrie's Place reaffirmed our commitment to supporting staff wellbeing and professional growth by incorporating external group supervision sessions, facilitated by Michelle Heaton Psychology & Consulting. Three sessions were held during January and June 2025, providing a safe and structured space for reflective practice, sharing of challenges, and development of process strategies. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 94% of attendees indicating they would participate in future sessions and felt comfortable sharing with their peers. We are excited to continue external group supervision for all Carrie's Place client-facing staff, in the 2025-26 financial year.

In February, Carrie's Place leaders and management participated in a two-day Dare to Lead workshop facilitated by Collective Courage. The workshop strengthened leadership capabilities and embedding courage-building skills into our workplace culture. Dare to Lead incorporates Dr Brené Brown's Leadership skills, offering an in-depth look into personal strengths and vulnerabilities. Through structured sessions, participants developed tools to foster a trusting and courageous culture, grounded in honest communication.

This initiative was partially funded by Port Stephens Council, whose support helped make this valuable professional development opportunity possible.



VALUES IN ACTION

In alignment with our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), this year Carrie's Place trialed an alternative date to the observed Australia Day national public holiday, in recognition and respect of the history and values of our Indigenous colleagues. The initiative was met with strong support across the team, with 81% formally endorsing the change. While many embraced the opportunity, we acknowledge that some staff faced challenges due to family or other external commitments. We worked closely with all team members to ensure individual arrangements reflected our commitment to fairness, flexibility, and inclusion.

Given the positive response and alignment with our RAP commitments, Carrie's Place will continue this initiative in 2026. We are cognisant that individual circumstances may again affect some team members' ability to participate, and we remain committed to working with each person to find flexible, respectful solutions that uphold the spirit of inclusion and understanding at the heart of this change.



Employee Growth and Capacity Building

WORKFORCE GROWTH

Since July 2024, the Carrie's Place team has continued to grow, with the addition of key roles across both service delivery and corporate support, including:

- Administration Trainee
- Bookkeeper
- Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Workers
- HR Specialist
- Mental Health Social Worker
- SHS Refuge Trainee
- Young Person Specialist Case Manager (maternity relief)
- Hospitality Manager

We were also very excited to support internal career progression through transfers and promotions in the following roles:

- Domestic and Family Violence Specialist and SAM Proxy
- Safety Action Management Coordinator
- SHS Outreach Case Manager
- SHS Senior Practitioner

STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND SATISFACTION

In addition to our triennial Culture Survey, Carrie's Place implemented the People at Work (PAW) Survey, designed to provide insight into psychological health and safety in the workplace to help us meet our legislative obligations. Both surveys revealed outstanding results across key areas of staff engagement and organisational purpose, including:

- 100% of staff believed their work is personally meaningful
- 100% of staff believed their work contributes meaningful change
- 100% of staff are proud to work with Carrie's Place
- 96% of staff would recommend Carrie's Place as a great place to work
- 85% of staff envision still working with Carrie's Place in the next two years
- 83% of staff trust their peers to produce high-quality work
- 79% of staff receive regular feedback and development from their line manager





These outcomes reinforce our values-led culture, where growth and change, inclusivity and accessibility, authenticity, social justice, safety, and teamwork form the foundation of our workplace.

SUPPORTER ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Carrie's Place is committed to developing and promoting engagement and fundraising initiatives that encourage collective community support. These efforts not only sustain our current service delivery but also drive innovation—expanding our capacity to meet emerging needs.

Our strategic focus ensures that every initiative is aligned with building long-term sustainability and strengthening our ability to support those experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness. Through collaboration and innovation, we continue to grow our impact and deepen our connection with the community.

Carrie's Place is committed to strengthening our presence and impact through purposeful engagement and communication strategies. Our focus includes:

- Expanding and developing strategic brand activations that build awareness, foster meaningful community connections, and position Carrie's Place as a leading voice in our region.
- Seeking new and nurturing existing partnerships by enhancing communication, deepening relationships, and sharing the tangible impact of our work.
- Embedding our core values—growth and change, inclusion, and teamwork—into every aspect of our engagement and communications, ensuring that we authentically live our mission and purpose.

These priorities guide our efforts to build a resilient, connected, and empowered community response to domestic and family violence and homelessness. By fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all, we embody the very approach we advocate—a community-driven response to domestic violence and homelessness. Through collaboration and teamwork, we amplify our impact far beyond what individuals can achieve alone.

Our team-based approach builds trust, inspires commitment, and strengthens positive connections within the community. Together, we are not only responding to immediate needs but also laying the foundation for long-term change.

*laying the foundation
for long-term change*

■ IT TAKES A TEAM

The It Takes A Team campaign continued to grow in 2025, leveraging the power of sport and community to raise awareness and support for individuals impacted by domestic and family violence and homelessness. The initiative unites local sporting clubs, volunteers, and donors in a shared mission to promote safety, inclusion, and healing.

Key Milestones

The digital campaign officially launched on 6 April 2025, aligning with the UN International Day of Sport for Development and Peace. This strategic timing coincided with support from the Maitland City Council Community Celebrations Grant, which enhanced the campaign's visibility and enabled the purchase of branded sports merchandise. As part of the marketing and outreach efforts, the campaign underwent a refresh of its branding and digital assets, including an improved landing page designed to boost user engagement.

Targeted social media content was also developed to raise awareness and encourage donations. Additionally, a structured donation drive was implemented to collect non-perishable food and personal care items, aimed at supporting clients through the winter months.

Community and club engagement saw strong participation from both returning and new sports clubs. Maitland Netball Association and Maitland Junior Football Club reaffirmed their support with full-season commitments, continuing their valuable involvement. New partnerships included Maitland Rugby Union, with a focus on their Indigenous Charity Round has provided branding and activation opportunities. Additionally, the East Maitland Griffins joined the initiative by signing up to participate in a single round, however wet weather led to cancellation. Talks are continuing with Maitland Basketball to further scale this initiative.

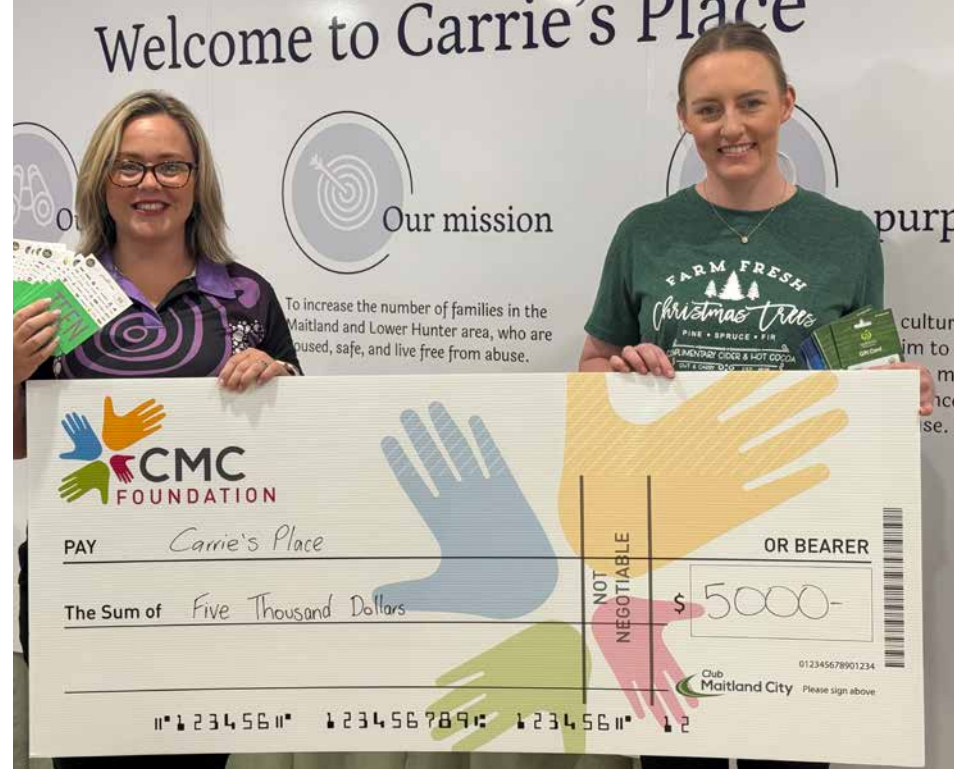
Establishment of branded merchandise – brand and cause awareness – raise funds to support CP services.

■ ACKNOWLEDGING OVER A DECADE OF SUPPORT FROM EASTS

Carrie's Place proudly acknowledges over eleven years of incredible support from Easts (EMBC). Through this enduring housing partnership, we have been able to utilise the East Maitland DVRE property to provide crisis accommodation for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence. During their stay, families work intensively with our specialist staff to secure longer-term housing solutions.

Over the past 12 months alone, this partnership has supported four families, including ten children, with two clients successfully transitioning into social housing and one client exiting to receive more intensive support.

We also gratefully acknowledge EMBC's ongoing contributions, including their most recent donation to support the Beyond Bank Double Donation campaign. Their continued generosity and commitment have made a meaningful difference in the lives of many, and we are deeply thankful for their partnership.



RECOGNISING THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF CLUB MAITLAND CITY FOUNDATION

We gratefully acknowledge the substantive commitment and contributions from Club Maitland City (CMC) Foundation, not only to Carrie's Place, but to the broader Maitland community. Their ongoing financial support for domestic and family violence and homelessness services enables us to respond to urgent requests, deliver outreach programs, and provide essential items such as food and personal care through donation drives.

This partnership plays a vital role in ensuring financial stability and allows us to expand services and support that are not government-funded. It is through relationships like this that we can continue to grow our impact and meet the evolving needs of our community.

COMMBANK STAFF FOUNDATION COMMUNITY GRANT

This year, Carrie's Place received a transformative \$120,000 Staff Foundation Community Grant from the Commonwealth Bank, far exceeding our initial \$20,000 application. This funding is dedicated to supporting women engaged in our group support programs by funding professional childcare. Through a new partnership with Tilly's Play and Development, Carrie's Place can offer trusted childminding services over the next three years, ensuring mothers can fully participate in healing-focused group work without the barrier of finding childcare.

In addition to this incredible financial support, Commonwealth Bank staff have generously volunteered their time for our annual Christmas Appeal, helping to sort and pack food and gifts hampers for local families. They also actively supported our Winter Appeal, collecting and donating essential items for clients in crisis. Their hands-on involvement reflects a genuine and ongoing commitment to community impact and has made a real difference in the lives of those we support.

BEYOND BANK DOUBLE DONATION CAMPAIGN

Carrie's Place launched a highly successful fundraising initiative in partnership with Beyond Bank through their Double Donation Campaign. This campaign offered donors the opportunity to double the impact of their contributions, with Beyond Bank matching donations dollar-for-dollar up to \$10,000.

To maximise reach and engagement, a comprehensive digital marketing strategy was deployed. This included a multi-channel digital strategy supported the campaign, including a dedicated landing page, targeted social media content, email marketing (EDMs and supporter updates), direct outreach to stakeholders, advertising (radio and Meta) and a media release distributed to local and online outlets.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters and the strength of the campaign, we successfully raised \$36,118.50. These funds directly support our programs and services for individuals and families affected by domestic and family violence.

This campaign not only generated vital funding but also increased community awareness and engagement, reinforcing the power of collective action in creating safer futures.



CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2024

The 2024 Christmas Appeal was a resounding success, with Carrie's Place delivering food hampers, as well as gift and toy hampers, to all clients in need during the festive season. Planning for the Appeal began ten weeks prior to Christmas and involved a detailed and coordinated approach to manage the many moving parts of the initiative. This year, we adopted a strategic framework to proactively address external challenges, including the rising demand for support and the potential decline in donations due to ongoing economic pressures.

To enhance efficiency and responsiveness, we invested in digital solutions that streamlined operations and improved transparency. Key digital innovations included a virtual launch event, a regularly updated campaign webpage, CRM integration via the Supporter Hub, digital marketing toolkits for consistent branding, and active social media engagement to connect with the community.

Engagement and Impact

Throughout November and December, Carrie's Place maintained strong engagement with our online community, resulting in increased content reach and interaction. We also had a physical presence at the Singleton Markets, promoting both our services and the Christmas Appeal and for the second consecutive year, we partnered with Stockland Green Hills for the Gift Giving Tree initiative, an effort that significantly raised awareness and connected us with individuals and families in need.

We hosted nine hamper packing events, including five for food hampers and four for gift hampers. These events brought together 35 volunteers from organisations such as Pitcher Partners, Commonwealth Bank, Rotary Club of Green Hills – Maitland, Jennings Print, as well as community members, staff, and their families.

Their collective efforts were instrumental in the success of the Appeal of local families. A total of 200 food hampers -with a total of 5,800 items—covering breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks, dessert, and festive treats were packed for the first time. And over 170 toy and gift hampers were thoughtfully tailored to family needs, including age-appropriate toys, gift cards, and back-to-school supplies.

Staff demonstrated exceptional commitment, working collaboratively to meet the increased demand for deliveries. Together, these efforts brought joy, dignity, and hope to families across the community during the holiday season.

Client Feedback

"Firstly, I would like to say a very big thank you so much for the hamper and the gifts, absolutely beautiful, so kind and caring. It brought tears to both my daughter and myself. My daughter would like to say a big thank you herself to the kind, caring people who donated the gifts. It has touched her heart, and she said she will be forever grateful. So I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Once again, thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

Challenges

Despite the Appeal's success, key challenges included handling gift card donations, managing food hamper logistics and costs, and meeting the rising need for staff support during deliveries.

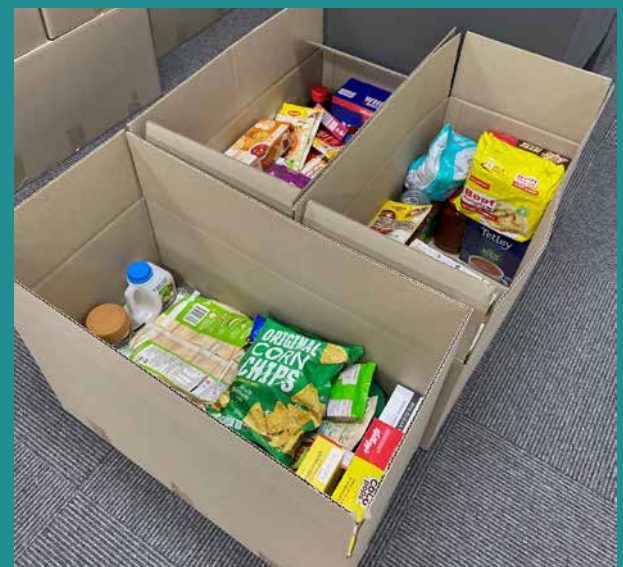


PRINT WITH PURPOSE: JENNINGS PRINT'S IN-KIND IMPACT

We gratefully acknowledge our in-kind partnership with Jennings Print, whose generous support has significantly reduced operational costs, allowing us to redirect vital funds toward client services. Jennings Print provides high-quality printing for key business assets, including our Annual Report, brochures, business cards, and signage. Their commitment to our mission extends beyond print, during our Christmas Appeal, the owner personally volunteered and coordinated sponsorship of Christmas puddings through Pudding Lane, adding a heartfelt touch to our seasonal outreach. We deeply value their ongoing contribution to our work and community.

KIS CREATIVE

Carrie's Place has enjoyed a long-standing and collaborative partnership with KIS Creative, whose ongoing support has been instrumental in advancing our communications and engagement efforts. Over the years, KIS Creative has worked closely with us to deliver high-quality asset design, manage impactful social media content, enhance our website, and drive successful fundraising campaigns. Their deep understanding of our organisational needs and the sensitive nature of our work has consistently informed their approach, ensuring alignment with our values and mission. Their flexibility, agility, and professionalism have made them a trusted and responsive partner, and their contributions continue to be a real asset to Carrie's Place.



Special Mentions

THE BLOOMFIELD GROUP FOUNDATION

The Bloomfield Group Foundation has been a steadfast supporter of Carrie's Place for over a decade. Their commitment has been demonstrated through generous financial contributions, event fundraising, provision of short stay accommodation, and internal staff donation drives. This ongoing support has played a vital role in sustaining key initiatives, including our annual Christmas Appeal and safety innovations totalling \$21,500 this year.

We deeply value the Bloomfield Group's continued dedication to our mission and the tangible impact they help us deliver to the community.



50:50 CHARITY RAFFLE – KNIGHTS GAME PARTNERSHIP

On Sunday 8 September 2024, Carrie's Place proudly partnered with Jenny's Place for the Newcastle Knights' 50:50 Charity Round — a standout event in our fundraising calendar. With 10 dedicated staff from Carrie's Place volunteering their time at the game, the event achieved a record-breaking total of \$33,145.00 in tickets sold — the highest ever recorded at a Knights match. Both charities received an equal share of the proceeds, with \$6,630.65 going to Carrie's Place. This successful collaboration not only raised vital funds but also amplified awareness of our work within the broader community.

This outstanding result was made possible through strong volunteer engagement, energetic fan interaction, and a visible presence on game day. We are incredibly proud of our team's dedication and grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Jenny's Place and the Newcastle Knights. This achievement highlights the power of community partnerships in driving meaningful impact.



Special Mentions

■ COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION SINGLETON – DV AWARENESS EVENT

Following the 2024 CWA of NSW State Conference and its strong stance on domestic and family violence, the Hunter Region took proactive steps to raise awareness at the local level. In response, the Country Women's Association Dungog/Clarence Town branch donated \$1,000.

In addition Singleton branch organised a dedicated Domestic Violence Awareness event on Wednesday, 18 September 2024, aimed at continuing the conversation and highlighting the urgency of addressing domestic and family violence within the community.

Carrie's Place was honoured to be invited to present at the event. Our staff shared insights into the realities of domestic and family violence, the support services available, and the importance of early intervention. Presentations focused on debunking persistent myths, challenging stigma, and encouraging open dialogue.

The event was a well-executed and impactful initiative that brought attention to the issue of domestic and family violence in our region. We are especially grateful for the generous catering, the collection of non-perishable pantry items, the raffle prize donation, and \$450 funds raised to support local families.

Carrie's Place is proud to promote the work of the CWA and welcomes future collaboration, including use of our venue for community events. The event fostered a strong sense of community responsibility and strengthened local partnerships, reinforcing the message that ending domestic and family violence requires collective action.

■ POWERING POSSIBILITIES: ITAR'S SUPPORT IN EVERY DEVICE

We extend our sincere thanks to Wes Whitworth and the team at ITAR for their ongoing support and generosity. Through their commitment to sustainability and community impact, ITAR has provided refurbished IT equipment to Carrie's Place, enabling us to pass these vital resources on to clients who need them most. This partnership not only reduces electronic waste but also empowers individuals and families by improving access to technology, education, and connection. We are deeply grateful for ITAR's dedication to giving devices a second life and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we support.

■ APPRECIATING THE SUPPORT OF PITCHER PARTNERS MAITLAND

We would like to sincerely acknowledge the generous financial contributions made by Pitcher Partners Maitland over the past two years, and their outstanding commitment to supporting local charities. We are especially grateful to their dedicated staff who once again volunteered their time for our Christmas Hamper packing days last year. Their regular financial support continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients, helping us deliver essential services and support to those in need.



Special Mentions



PEER-TO-PEER CAMPAIGN SUMMARY: EMMA FORD'S MARATHON FOR A CAUSE

Carrie's Place proudly launched its first peer-to-peer fundraising campaign in June 2024, led by the inspiring Emma Ford. With a mission to raise awareness and funds for those experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness, Emma became the first individual to use our new peer-to-peer fundraising portal—an initiative designed to empower community members to create personal campaigns in support of our work.

Emma's campaign was tied to her incredible journey to compete in the 2024 Bank of America Chicago Marathon. On October 13th, she completed the 42.195km race in an impressive 4:21:38, demonstrating remarkable endurance, resilience, and determination.

Her efforts extended far beyond the finish line. Through her personal networks and tireless advocacy, Emma raised a phenomenal \$5,487.99 from generous donors. These funds were directed to brokerage support within our Specialised Homelessness Services program, helping clients access essential goods and services critical to their safety and well-being. In a challenging housing market, this support has been vital in establishing and restoring tenancies for vulnerable individuals and families.

Emma's campaign not only raised vital funds but also set a powerful example of how individual action can drive meaningful change. We are deeply grateful to Emma and to every donor who supported her journey.

*Emma raised a phenomenal
\$5,487.99 from generous donors.*



STRENGTHENING SUPPORT THROUGH GLENCORE'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Glencore Australia has continued to be a generous and committed supporter of Carrie's Place, providing multiple grants and selecting us as one of the beneficiary charities for their annual Ravensworth Golf Day. Their financial contributions have enabled us to deliver essential starter kits for clients transitioning into new homes, supply food and gifts for our Christmas Appeal, and purchase a washer and dryer for our Maitland outreach program — offering vital facilities for clients experiencing homelessness and attending Munch. The 2024 Ravensworth Golf Day alone raised \$8,500 in support of our Christmas Appeal, demonstrating Glencore's ongoing dedication to creating meaningful impact in our community.

MAJOR DONATIONS DRIVING IMPACT

Carrie's Place received two generous major donations this year that significantly strengthened our programs. Zebra Equities contributed \$17,000, including matched funding for group work and a substantial donation to support our social enterprise coffee van initiative. Recycle Central donated \$15,000, originally allocated to the Christmas Appeal. Thanks to the overwhelming success of the appeal, these funds were thoughtfully reallocated to enhance our outreach services, ensuring continued support for clients in crisis.

These contributions have enabled us to respond flexibly to community needs and expand our impact where it's needed most.

Special Mentions

COLLECTIVE IMPACT: ROTARY CLUB PARTNERSHIPS

Carrie's Place is proud to acknowledge the ongoing support and advocacy of our local Rotary Clubs, whose contributions have made a meaningful difference across several key initiatives. Through financial donations, hands-on volunteering, and public advocacy, Rotary has played a vital role in advancing our mission.

This year, Rotary Clubs collectively contributed \$3,500, with generous donations from Greenhills-Maitland (\$2,000) and Maitland Sunrise (\$1,500). Their members also volunteered their time to assist with our Christmas Appeal hamper packing, helping bring joy and relief to families during the holiday season. Additionally, Rotary's active involvement in the 16 Days of Activism campaign helped raise awareness and promote community action against gender-based violence.

We are deeply grateful for their continued partnership and commitment to creating lasting change in our community.

PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS SUPPORTING CHANGE

Carrie's Place is deeply grateful for the ongoing support of philanthropic foundations whose generosity continues to make a profound impact on the lives of women and families experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness. In 2024, the Margaret Johnson Foundation, Australian Communities Foundation, and The McNally Foundation collectively contributed \$13,500 in financial support. These funds have enabled us to deliver critical services, provide safe pathways for recovery, and strengthen our outreach to those most in need. Their commitment to social change and community wellbeing is a powerful force behind our work.

GRATITUDE FOR MEANINGFUL DONATIONS

Carrie's Place is sincerely grateful for the generous support received from a number of donors throughout the year. Their contributions have helped us continue delivering vital services to individuals and families in need, particularly during times of increasing financial and social pressure. We acknowledge Fuchs, Bill's Ballroom and the Newcastle Nurseryman's Association, whose donations supported our Christmas Appeal, helping us provide food, gifts, and emergency pantry items to families doing it tough. Oakwood Village contributed \$3,012.50, while Peter O'Connor and Sally Keir each donated \$5,000. We also thank the Uniting Church East Maitland for their donation of \$1,020 and hundreds of meals, offering both financial and practical support. A one-off donation from the Beresfield Ladies Golf Club also contributed to our emergency relief efforts. These acts of generosity have made a meaningful impact on our work, especially as we respond to the growing cost-of-living pressures and rising cases of domestic and family violence.

THE POWER OF ONGOING SUPPORT: OUR REGULAR DONORS

Regular donors play a vital role in sustaining the work of Carrie's Place, providing reliable and consistent support that enables us to plan ahead, respond swiftly to emerging needs, and maintain essential services for women and families experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness. Their ongoing generosity helps us stock emergency pantry items, deliver practical assistance, and offer stability during times of crisis, especially as cost-of-living pressures and demand for support continue to rise.

Thanks to recent innovations in our CRM systems, we've seen a notable increase in recurring donations, strengthening our ability to build long-term impact and deepen community engagement.

We gratefully acknowledge the continued support of our regular donors, including IGA Rutherford, Tranter Lawyers, D. Lawrence, Newcastle Land Rover Club Inc., M. Bartlett, M. Pittman, D. Pattra, J. Alock, J. Pace, N. McDermott, Z. Burford, and C. Smithers. Their commitment to our mission ensures we can be there for those who need us most. Not just today, but every day.

OTHER IN-KIND DONATIONS

Carrie's Place gratefully acknowledges the generous in-kind support received from our community partners, which has significantly strengthened our capacity to deliver vital services. Penders Pty Ltd provided a transitional accommodation unit valued at \$24,960 per annum, offering safe and stable housing for clients in crisis. CIBIS donated technology services valued at \$110,000, enhancing our digital infrastructure and service delivery. Newcastle Commercial Vehicles supported our Coffee Van Project by offering a discounted LDV van, valued at \$14,100, helping us launch a social enterprise initiative that empowers clients through employment and community engagement. We deeply appreciate their commitment to our mission and the meaningful impact of their support.



NAIDOC WEEK 2024 AT CARRIE'S PLACE

Carrie's Place proudly participated in NAIDOC Week 2024, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, history, and achievements. Staff attended and supported a range of community events across the region; including Kiray Putjung Aboriginal Corporation NAIDOC Family Fun Day, Singleton NAIDOC Family Fun Day, Barkuma Neighbourhood Centre NAIDOC Family Fun Day, Dungog Shire NAIDOC BBQ and NAIDOC Women's Dinner. These events provided valuable opportunities to engage with children, families, and community members through interactive activities and conversations that honoured the spirit of NAIDOC Week.

In addition to in-person participation, Carrie's Place ran a social media campaign throughout the week to raise awareness of Aboriginal culture and observe significant days. The campaign aimed to educate, celebrate, and promote respect and inclusion across our broader community. Carrie's Place remains committed to supporting Aboriginal communities and strengthening relationships through meaningful engagement and cultural recognition.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The 16 Days of Activism campaign, held annually from November 25 to December 10, is a significant time for Carrie's Place to advocate for the elimination of gender-based violence. This global initiative promotes respect, equality, and safety for women and girls.

Carrie's Place staff participated in community events across Cessnock, Dungog, Maitland, Port Stephens, Muswellbrook, and Singleton, delivering presentations and engaging with local communities. Social media messaging focused on raising awareness, challenging misconceptions, and encouraging those affected by domestic and family violence to seek support.

A key highlight was the Maitland DV Walk organised by Maitland Rotary and NSW Police, which concluded at Maitland City Council with presentations from leading organisations, including Carrie's Place's CEO Jayne Clowes. This event exemplified the power of collaboration in driving change and amplifying the voices of those working to end gender-based violence.





16

DAYS of activism
15 NOVEMBER - 30 NOVEMBER

Myth Belonging to a culture means the same thing for everyone. Fact Everyone experiences culture in a different way.	Myth Cultures do not change. Fact Change is essential to culture! History is the story of cultures changing both dramatically and gradually, both by choice and by force.	Myth Preventing violence against women and gender equality is a Western concept. Fact Throughout time, people all over the world, especially women, have actively challenged gender inequality, violence and oppression.
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#carriesplaceinc

#16DaysOfActivism2024

#mythbuster



HUNTER HOMELESS CONNECT DAY 2024

Carrie's Place proudly participated in the Hunter Homeless Connect Day, where over 2,000 guests—500 more than the previous year—came through the gates to access **vital homelessness support services**. With 10 staff members in attendance, we responded to four direct requests for support and embraced the opportunity to connect face-to-face with other service providers, strengthening collaboration and cross-referral pathways.

We distributed 200 purple bags filled with essential items including toiletries, food packs, beanies or socks, and service information. These were generously donated by knitting groups, foundations, and individuals through our Winter Appeal and the *It Takes A Team* campaign.

The event was a rewarding experience for our team, offering a chance to engage meaningfully with the community and discover new services. Being part of a collective effort to support those experiencing homelessness reaffirmed our commitment to compassionate, community-driven care.

COALFACE COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

In 2025, Carrie's Place was honoured to be featured in The Coalface magazine as a recipient of the Coalface and Complete Parts \$500 Community Gift. The article, "Providing a Basic Human Right, a Safe Life," recognised our long-standing commitment to supporting women and children experiencing domestic and family violence and homelessness across the Hunter region.

The feature highlighted the breadth of our services, including WDVCA, Staying Home Leaving Violence, and our Specialist Homelessness Services. It also acknowledged our impact in delivering emergency assistance, supporting over 700 individuals last year, and providing nearly \$49,000 in brokerage to meet urgent needs. Importantly, the article shared the growing demand for our services due to rising domestic violence rates, and celebrated initiatives like It Takes a Team, which partners with local sporting clubs to strengthen community understanding and prevention.

This recognition affirms the vital work of Carrie's Place and the dedication of our team, volunteers, and community partners.



"Providing a Basic Human Right, a Safe Life"

■ MOTHER'S DAY RAFFLE

In the lead-up to Mother's Day 2025, Carrie's Place launched a targeted fundraising campaign through a community raffle. Initiated just 10 days before Mother's Day, the raffle secured an impressive \$1,873 worth of prizes thanks to the generous sponsorship of Smeg Australia, Pure Essence, Willow & Zac, Donarch Fine Chocolates, Dhiiyaan Art, and the Newcastle Knights.

The raffle was hosted on the Supporter Hub's digital platform, which allowed us to pilot the raffle and draw functionality while enhancing our digital fundraising capabilities. A targeted social media campaign launched one week prior to the draw helped boost visibility and ticket sales.

This initiative not only raised funds to support women and children experiencing domestic and family violence but also fostered community awareness and corporate engagement around Mother's Day.



A graphic listing the prizes for the Mother's Day Raffle. At the top is the Carrie's Place logo and the text 'mother's day RAFFLE'. Below this is the heading '1ST PRIZE:'. A list of prizes follows, each with a small circular image of the item: Smeg Australia High Performance Blender, Pure Essence Singleton DeStress Treatment voucher, Willow & Zac Harmony pouch - silver sparkle, Donarch Fine Chocolates \$50 Gift voucher, Circa Mother's Day Relax & Unwind Set, and Boydell's Wines Bottle or Sparkling Verdelho & Rose. At the bottom, it states 'PRIZE VALUED AT \$1,123'.

