



YWCA CANBERRA



YWCA CANBERRA
ANNUAL REPORT
2024-25

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

YWCA Canberra proudly recognises the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to own and control their cultures and pays our respects to these rights. YWCA Canberra acknowledges the need to respect and encourage the diversity of Indigenous cultures and to respect Indigenous worldviews, lifestyles and customary laws.

We extend our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who for thousands of years have preserved their culture and practices of their communities on Country.

This land was never surrendered, and we acknowledge that it always was and will continue to always be Aboriginal Land.



YWCA Canberra
Annual Report
2024-25



YWCA
CANBERRA

THE YWCA CANBERRA STORY



YWCA Canberra is a feminist not-for-profit organisation that has provided community services and represented women's issues in Canberra since 1929.

Our mission is 'We strengthen communities by supporting girls and women through our services and advocacy' and our vision is 'Girls and women thriving'.

We provide essential, quality services for women, girls and families in the ACT and surrounding regions. We work in the areas of children's services, community development, homelessness and affordable housing, domestic and family violence, youth services, personal and professional training, women's leadership and advocacy.

Through our national Affiliate Association with YWCA Australia, we are part of the World YWCA network, which connects over 100 countries across the globe.

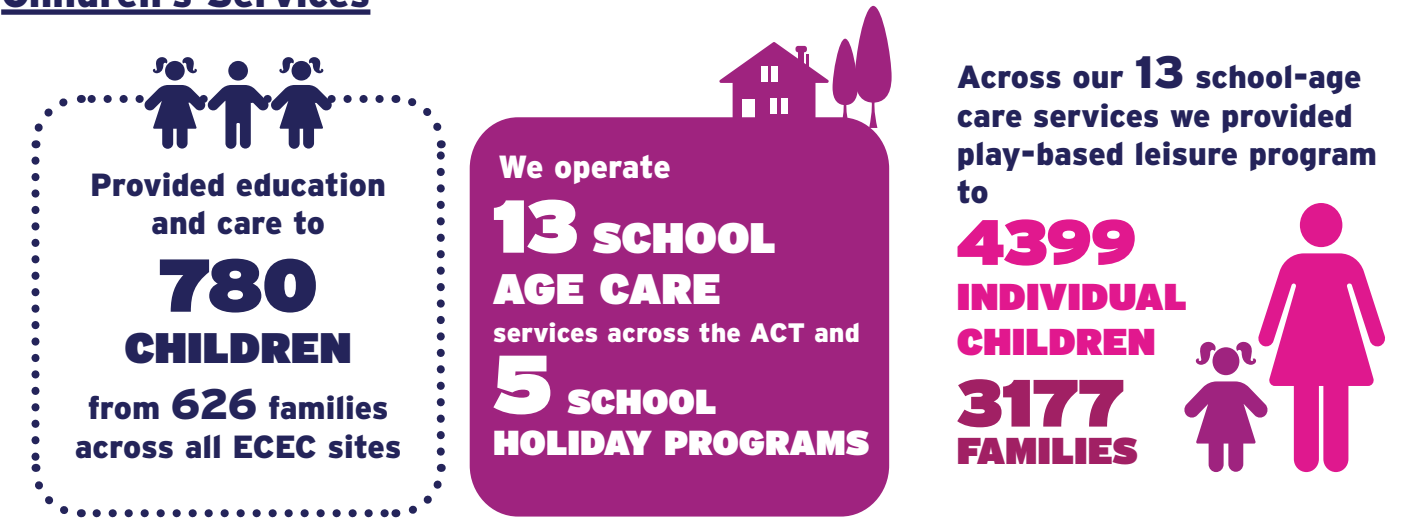
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Snapshot of our impact in the ACT

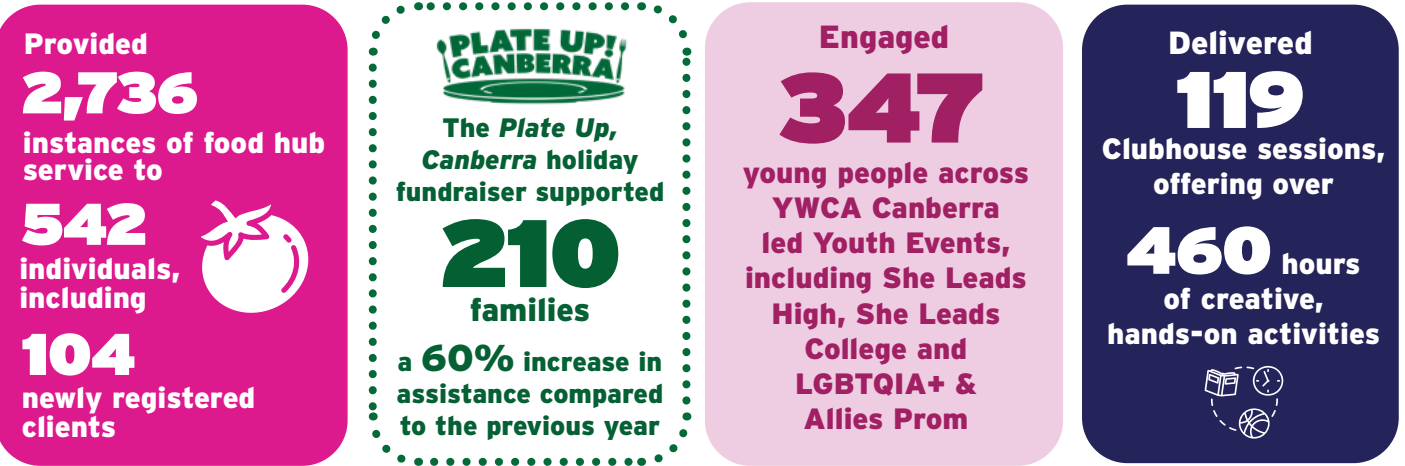
Children's Services



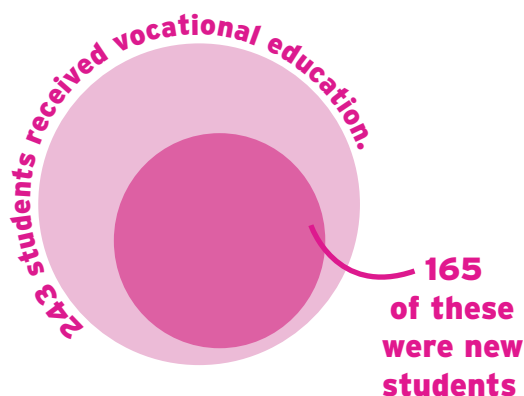
Housing Services



Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre



Education and Training Unit



She Leads



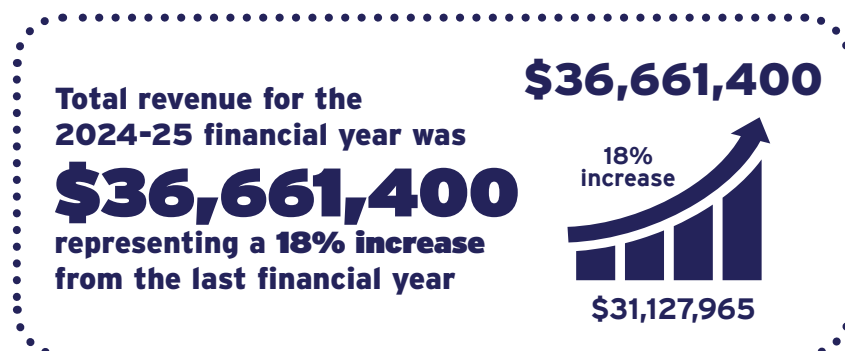
Violence Prevention Unit / DV Support Service



Supporters



Financial Sustainability



President's Report

90-years. That was the milestone YWCA Canberra was celebrating when I was elected as President 6-years ago. As we approach the end of our 96th year, I have been reflecting on the history and legacy of YWCA Canberra. One that precedes all of us. The foundation of which has been created by a shared vision and shaped by a collective effort. Each contributor a true feminist believing in the vision of creating a lasting movement of girls and women thriving and changing our community for the better.

Full of gratitude and pride, as I approach the end of my tenure as President, I reflect on the great privilege and responsibility I have had in serving in this role.

Throughout my time as President, we have had many causes for celebration, as well as some incredible challenges we have had to overcome - notably COVID-19, bushfires, hailstorms and the unfortunate challenges in having our first development opposed. However, we are nothing if not resolute and courageous in the face of adversity.

As I think back on the past 6-years, I am so proud of the many accomplishments YWCA Canberra has achieved.

In 2019, Rentwell was launched - showing what a philanthropic and supportive community can achieve with very little resourcing.

In 2021, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, we partnered with the ACT Government to deliver Ragusa, the Quarantine Support Hub.

In 2021, we were awarded the National Women's Safety Alliance, which we successfully retained and expanded to the Working With Women Alliance in 2025.

In 2022, Common Ground in Dickson opened, offering social and affordable housing where our team provides crucial support and services to residents.

In 2023, we opened our first YHomes development Daridhawara, immediately filling a need and no doubt be the first in a continuing desire to build safe, affordable housing.

We have been dynamic in our service delivery, ensuring our Children's Services are meeting the needs in our community and expanding and trialling new ways of delivering, and locations to service. Our Community Services have continued to ensure a holistic delivery and approach to supporting those we exist for. We have held numerous successful SheLeads conferences, each one somehow getting more inspiring year by year.

There have been countless behind the scenes achievements, advocacy wins and uplifting stories from women and girls who have used our services which are quietly cherished. Indeed, the messages from those whose lives have positively changed through our programs and services are what I hold most dear.

Through all of this, the organisation has not only remained sustainable but thrived, becoming stronger, ensuring a stellar reputation and ensuring that everyone knows what YWCA Canberra stands for.

None of what we do would be possible without our dedicated and passionate team - of more than 560 staff who every day put our priorities in to action. I am thankful for the productive working relationships I have had with each of the former and current Executive Directors and for all of their support. I am thankful to all of those that have served on the YWCA Canberra Board over the past 6-years, of which there are too many to name, where I have seen an amazing group of women passionate about strong governance and furthering our Strategic Plan. I am also grateful to all those that donate their time to our Committees to ensure our strong governance and management of risks.

I would also like to say a special thank you to our CEO, Frances Crimmins. The relationship between a CEO and Chair is critical to a foundation of strong governance, and I am forever grateful to Frances for all her support, the mutual trust, respect and open communication we have always had. I was pleased to attend UN Women's CSW69 with Frances earlier this year, spending time participating in sessions where we heard about gender equality at an international level and were fortunate enough to meet many of our YWCA sisters from across the globe. Being with our Y sisters was a great reminder of how vast our feminist movement is.

Despite all we have achieved, being at CSW was sobering, hearing that now more than ever we are seeing the human rights many before us worked so hard for peeled back and diluted. The future of YWCA Canberra, and our international movement, demands we are dauntless, committed and courageous in upholding our responsibility to progress gender equality, strengthen our communities and empower girls and women. With housing only this year legislated to become a human right in the ACT from 2027, there is still much for our organisation to do.

I have full confidence the remaining and new directors will see further achievements and great progress towards achieving the remaining half of our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan and with our 100th birthday only 4 short years away.

Through 3 Strategic Plans, various Boards, and one unwavering and constant CEO, it is time for me to transition out. I know that the continuing and future leaders will uphold our vision of girls and women thriving, ensuring it is at the forefront of all services and programs we provide. To those who have worked with YWCA Canberra over the past 6-years - I thank you for your support and commitment to

our vision and the movement. In numbers we are strong, we are united by purpose, and we are driven by collective feminist power.

Thank you for allowing me to serve in this role for the past 6-years.



Carina Zeccola
President

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Over the past year YWCA Canberra has made significant strides in advancing our mission to strengthen communities by supporting girls and women through our services and advocacy. We are deeply grateful for the support of our staff, board, members, partners and stakeholders, whose commitment has been integral to our success. The 2024-2025 period marks the second year of our Strategic Plan 2023-2028, which is firmly anchored in our vision of girls and women thriving and designed to ensure we remain agile and responsive amid changing regulatory, social, and political landscapes centered on gender equality and housing.

We remain proud of our sustained financial stewardship and accreditation achievements, including the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care, the National Regulatory System for Community Housing, and the Registered Training Organisations Standards. Notably, we received a commendation in QIC Health and Community Services Standards and we were recognised as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, marking over a decade of this distinguished acknowledgment and underscoring our leadership in workplace equity in Canberra.

Our commitment to reconciliation was reaffirmed with the launch of our fourth Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, reflecting stronger procurement and recruitment strategies that prioritises meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We have deepened our partnerships with the Ngunnawal community and expanded cultural awareness and inclusion across our services.

This year, YWCA Canberra received a record \$750,000 in donations, reflecting the incredible support of our community

and stakeholders. In addition, Rentwell donations surpassed \$1,000,000, helping provide affordable rental housing for Canberrans on low incomes.

We delivered our 10th She Leads Conference and are proud that She Leads has for a decade provided accessible, authentic, safe and transformative conferences, establishing itself on the Canberra event calendar.

We secured additional early learning space and maintained strong program participation and outcomes across Early Childhood and School Age Care services despite sector-wide challenges. Our homelessness and domestic violence support services have sustained growth through ten-year funding agreements, enabling us to broaden the reach of specialist services and ensure sustainable funding for the next decade.

We have continued to pursue and grow our own Y Homes properties, with new developments in the pipeline and were successful in round one, the Housing Australia funding grant.

Advocacy remains a cornerstone of our work, with tangible policy influence and community impact on a local and national level. We launched initiatives that enhanced women's safety and housing solutions, increased our media presence, and contributed to legislative and community dialogue, advancing gender equality in Canberra and beyond.

We are delighted to announce this year the appointment of Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC as our Patron. Her Excellency, a renowned advocate for gender equality and social justice, brings a wealth of experience and passion to the work of our organisation. We are elated to have her join us in our mission to empower and support the Canberra community.

This year marks the conclusion of a significant chapter with the departure of Carina Zeccola as President of YWCA Canberra. Throughout her six-year tenure, Carina provided steadfast leadership, guiding governance and championed our feminist values and strategic goals. Carina's commitment to strong governance and bold strategic vision for YWCA Canberra has been instrumental in steering YWCA Canberra through a period of substantial growth and impact.

On a personal note, I am deeply thankful to Carina for her guidance, support, and wisdom. We extend our deepest gratitude for her six years of dedicated service and leadership, which have laid a resilient foundation for the YWCA Canberra's long-term legacy in our community and globally as an active participant with our YWCA sister organisations.

Financially, YWCA Canberra continues a strong trajectory, underpinned by prudent management and diversified funding sources that secure our sustainability.

As we continue to advance our Strategic Plan 2023-2028, YWCA Canberra remains resolute in our purpose. We are committed to delivering quality, inclusive, and impactful programs, driving systemic change, and amplifying the voices of girls and women in our community.



Frances Crimmins
Chief Executive Officer
YWCA Canberra



GIRLS AND WOMEN THRIVING

Organisation Values

Our values reflect our commitment to the YWCA global movement

Courage

We are dauntless, agile, and resilient as we transform power structures. As a proudly feminist organisation, we challenge the status quo to benefit everyone. We have the passion needed to make a difference.

Equality

We value equality of opportunity, outcomes and rights for women, girls and non-binary people. We work with communities to achieve social, cultural, economic and political participation and prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalised.

Respect

We engage with fairness and professionalism in our organisation, with our supporters and communities. We believe that respectful relationships are fundamental to achieving positive social change.

We recognise that gender is a social construct, encompassing one's gender identity, experience, and expression - often linked to societal norms of masculinity, femininity and/or androgyny. We contribute to furthering gender equality for women and non-binary people.

Inclusion

We embrace the diversity of our communities and adopt an intersectional approach that respects differences including in gender and gender expression, culture, race, spirituality, age, sexuality, abilities, political beliefs and socioeconomic status.

Reconciliation

We support the self-determination and agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and women and proactively work with communities to achieve reconciliation.

Responsibility

We are innovative, accountable and manage resources and risks to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. We are forward thinking and curious. We value collaboration and systems leadership so that our work results in positive outcomes for the change we want to see in our communities.

Mission

Gender equity by strengthening communities and empowering girls and women through our services and advocacy

Goal

Progress towards gender equality in the Canberra region and beyond

Strategic Priorities

1

Children's & Community Services

Our services educate and empower children and young people in order to embed gender equity norms, strengthen communities and empower women to have economic agency.

2

Housing Services

Our housing services are safe, appropriate and affordable, with priority access for women experiencing violence and older women. We're contributing towards ending homelessness for women.

3

Training & Networking

Our training and networking programs promote agency for women's participation in the Canberra region and across Australia.

4

Advocacy

Our advocacy transforms power structures, enabling women and children to thrive.

5

Sustainable Organisation

Our transparent and inclusive practices through strong governance, management, service delivery and partnerships enable us to have a sustainable organisation.

Reconciliation Action Plan

YWCA Canberra remains deeply committed to reconciliation, recognising it as a journey of strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community. In 2024, we proudly launched our fourth Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), reaffirming our commitment to embedding reconciliation across all areas of our organisation. Guided by our CEO and RAP Working Group, we continue to monitor progress, reflect on impact, and report on outcomes that benefit our community.

Across the 2024-2025 reporting period, we made important strides in integrating reconciliation into our core operations. This included procurement tracking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vendors, giving us the ability to monitor and grow targeted expenditure. We also strengthened recruitment and training pathways to deepen cultural competence across our services and staff.

At Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre, reconciliation is lived through community-led programs such as walks on Country, cultural immersion activities, and partnerships with the Ngunnawal Bush Healing Farm. These initiatives encourage trust, cultural exchange, and stronger relationships with First Nations communities in Tuggeranong and beyond.

We released Australia as a Blak History in Simplified Chinese, Arabic, Farsi and Tamil, broadening access and supporting cross-cultural understanding of First Nations perspectives.

Reconciliation is embedded across our housing and children's services. At Common Ground Dickson, an Aboriginal women-led art group fosters creativity and connection among tenants and their children. In early learning services, reconciliation is woven into practice through storytelling, play, and collaboration with Elders.

Our representation on the Reconciliation Committee for Early Childhood Australia also enables us to contribute to sector-wide improvements and learn from services nationwide.

These actions ensure reconciliation is not only a strategic priority but part of everyday life for the children, families, staff, and communities we serve.





STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Children's & Community Services

Our services educate and empower children and young people in order to embed gender equity norms, strengthen communities and empower women to have economic agency.

Overview of our Strategic plan 2023 -2028

As we conclude the second year of our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, we are proud to reflect on the tangible progress we've made toward our vision of 'girls and women thriving'. Our work has remained firmly aligned with our five strategic priorities, each reinforcing YWCA Canberra's mission to strengthen communities through services and advocacy.

YWCA Canberra's values of courage, equality, respect, inclusion, reconciliation and responsibility underpin our efforts and demonstrate our dedication to the global YWCA movement. The value of courage reflects our proud feminist legacy and strengthens our connection to the World YWCA's Envisioning Goal 2035, guiding our priorities with purpose and conviction.

Our Children's Services provided secure learning and growth for 5,119 children, while our youth programs engaged 436 young people in leadership, wellbeing and community activities. The Lanyon Food Hub provided 210 emergency food hampers to families experiencing hardship during the holiday season.

Our housing programs continued to tackle a pressing community need, providing safe, affordable housing options for over 800 women, children and families. This included the completion of two four bedroom new units (in an undisclosed location), expanding our capacity to support women and their families fleeing domestic violence or those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We advanced with our Pathways Program, a specialist homelessness service supporting people with uncertain immigration status, including asylum seekers without income or work rights in Australia, providing accommodation and wrap around support.

Through our She Leads suite of programs, we empowered 513 women and girls across Canberra and the region to build leadership skills, strengthen their confidence and pursue new opportunities. Highlights included the She Leads Conference hosting 300 attendees, the Diploma graduating 21 women, and the She Leads High & College Conference engaging 213 secondary school students.

We amplified the voices of women and girls through 11 advocacy submissions, seven media stories and launched targeted campaigns such as the commencement of Our Lives Women's Survey. These efforts challenged systemic barriers and informed local and national policy on housing, gender equality and community service delivery.

As we look ahead, we remain motivated by the momentum we've built and the collective impact of our work. Our Strategic Plan continues to guide us with clarity and purpose, ensuring that every action we take contributes to a more equitable future for girls and women in our community.

Early Childhood and Education Centres

Our Children's Services represent a significant portion of both our workforce and our clientele at YWCA Canberra. With seven Early Childhood and Education Centres (ECEC) our mission is to provide high quality educational programs and care for children aged 0-5 years in the ACT and surrounding areas.

Over the past 12 months, Children's Services transitioned from the leadership of Bernadette Cartin to our new Executive Director, Katherine Hellwig. Guided by our vision, we have built a stronger, collaborative service by bringing together Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and School Age Care (SAC) into one unified team.

This integrated approach has already delivered significant outcomes for children, families, and our staff. Conder ECEC expanded from 46 to 66 places through an internal upgrade, increasing capacity for local families in need of quality education and care. At Reid Early Childhood Service, the completion of a major yard redevelopment has created a safer and more engaging space for children to learn and play. Meanwhile, Winyu Early Childhood Service achieved an Exceeding Rating across all Seven Quality Areas in its national Assessment and Rating process, a testament to the commitment and expertise of our educators.

Together, these milestones show how investment in our services strengthens outcomes for children while ensuring our programs remain at the forefront of quality practice.

Over the past year, the Children's Services team has made significant progress in strengthening the Children's Services Framework and enhancing safeguarding measures. This updated blueprint establishes clear guidelines, direction and expectations, and has shaped how we work together. Through targeted policy updates, compliance actions, and a renewed set of shared working principles, the Framework has been embedded across the team through a program of workshops and training sessions, equipping all staff to deliver consistent, high-quality services.

Our continued commitment to the universal 3-year-old preschool program reflects both our focus on quality outcomes for children and careful consideration of long-term financial sustainability for families and staff alike.

Recognising the importance of connection, January 2025 saw the launch of dedicated social media channels for Children's Services on Instagram and Facebook. These platforms provide families with centralised access to key information and updates, while also sharing resources, celebrating milestones and creating opportunities for service users to connect as a community.

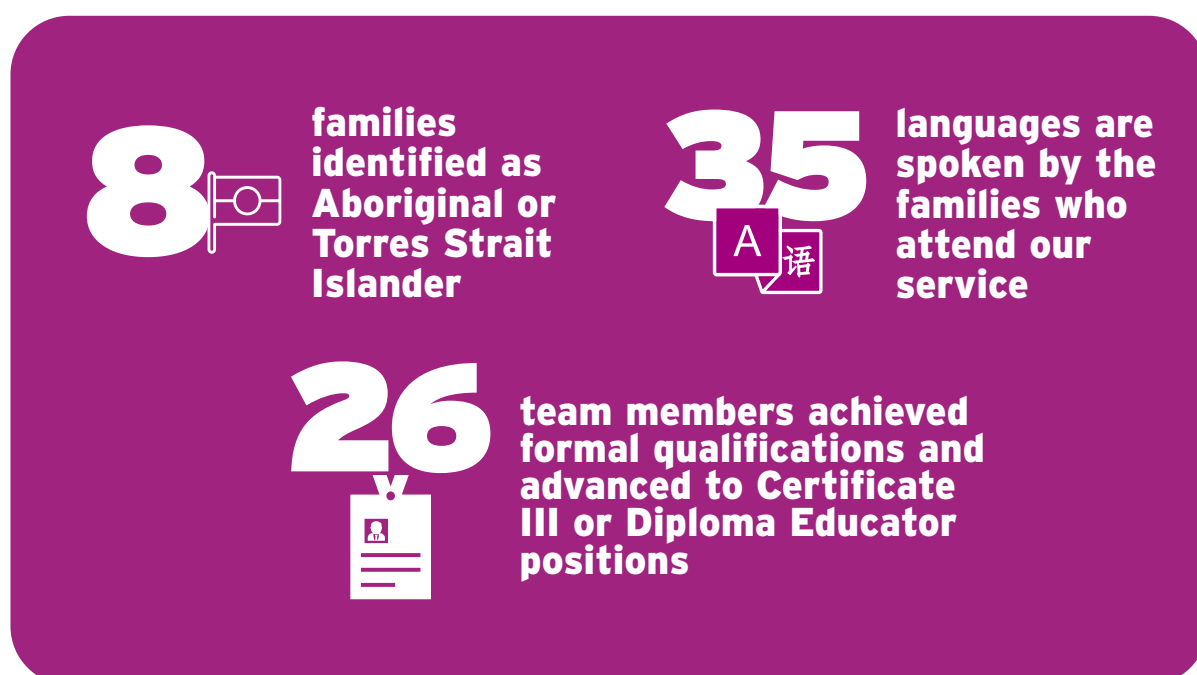
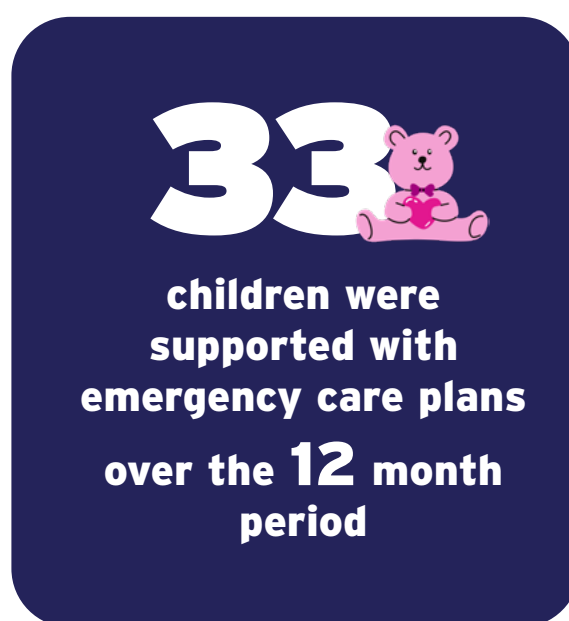
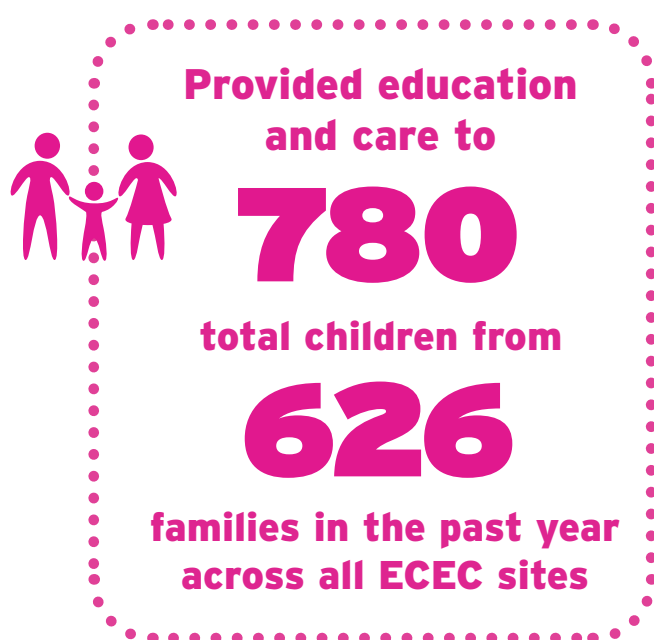
Together, these developments highlight a year of growth, careful decision-making and a clear focus on quality and connection for the families we serve.

Policies and procedures were thoroughly reviewed and amended to align with updated regulatory requirements and the National Quality Framework. Staff, families and stakeholders actively engaged with each update, reflecting strong adaptability and reflective practice.

During the reporting period, we received six compliance visits and underwent one full Assessment and Rating Audit by the Children's Services Regulator (CECA). In preparation, our internal Quality and Compliance Team conducted mock audits across all sites, helping to identify risks and maintaining consistent standards.

The audited site retained its Exceeding rating across all seven quality areas, an achievement that highlights our staff's professionalism and commitment to continuous improvement.

Our Children's Support Unit (CSU) refreshed the Children's Services Framework and introduced a Family Code of Conduct, strengthening partnerships and fostering a respectful, collaborative environment for children and families.



3



employees attended a **Semann & Slattery conference** focused on educational practice, pedagogy, leadership, and documentation in ECEC

12



employees completed training with the **Australian Institute of Management**, exploring coaching models to enhance workplace practice and quality across all levels

5



staff attended a cultural awareness and pedagogy session led by **Aaron Chatfield**, focusing on integrating Aboriginal perspectives into early childhood education through native plants

23



staff participated in a cultural competence and Aboriginal crafts workshop with **Ronnie Jordan**, focusing on authentic cultural crafting and its integration into early childhood programs

"The Winyu Early Childhood Services offers a variety of programs and activities designed to meet the individual needs of each child and the atmosphere is warm and inviting. I highly recommend this childcare facility to any families living in the Canberra area."

- ECEC Client Testimonial



School Age Care Programs

YWCA Canberra's Children's Services operate **13 School Age Care (SAC) services and 5 school holiday programs** across the ACT. These programs are designed to be integral to schools and the broader community. We provide families with enriching social and recreational options for their children before and after school hours and during holidays. Our goal is to create safe and welcoming environments for all participants.



We currently employ

126

educators in the school age care programs unit

We provided school age programs to

4339

individual children from

3177

individual families across all school age care services



Staff-to-child ratios:

1:11 during term time and school holiday programs

1:8 during excursions

1:5 around water



5
1

structured activities including STEM, art, sport and more are scheduled each day

in house workshop and excursion each week

Most popular activities based on child feedback:

Flip out | DJ Dennis | Water based activities

The Before and After School Care portfolio saw an expansion of one service in the inner south of Canberra, allowing for increased capacity and improved access for families in the area. The Children's Support team put in tremendous effort to prepare the program swiftly for its second term roll-out. The feedback from the school and community has been very positive with an increase in occupancy.

All of YWCA Canberra's social and outside school hour programs are provided by National Regulations and the My Time Our Place 2.0 Framework.

Client Testimonial:

"I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation for the wonderful team at YWCA Canberra Turner School Age Care for creating such an inclusive environment for both staff and children. Collectively, they have demonstrated not just teamwork but also a strong dedication to providing opportunities for children with special needs to thrive. It's incredibly reassuring to see that all children, regardless of their backgrounds or needs, receive such loving attention and care from your team. The diverse, supportive group beautifully reflects the values of inclusivity and excellence. The level of compassion that goes far beyond what's expected. We are deeply grateful."

This year in Term 2, the School Age Care Unit proudly welcomed **Covenant Christian School** as the 13th service in our growing portfolio. This exciting addition has not only expanded our reach but also created valuable professional growth opportunities for our emerging leaders and educators across our sites. The transition into the Covenant Christian School community has been smooth, thanks to the collaborative efforts of our dedicated team and the warm reception from the school and its families.



ECEC Testimonials

"All good things to say about YWCA Canberra Fairley! Since being a family at the centre since 2020, I have watched a lot of great things happen for my children and others."

- Fairley Early Childhood Service Parent

"It's a very caring and supportive centre that helps bring the sense of community. The centre director has made a safe and welcoming space for families and educators."

- Fairley Early Childhood Service Parent

"I very much enjoy hearing all about my boy's day there as they are given great resources and opportunities to grow and learn."

- Fairley Early Childhood Service Parent

"I enjoy working with my team and have an excellent relationship with my manager. She is supportive and takes my professional development as a priority."

- Children's Services Manager

"The childcare facility boasts a team of highly trained and experienced staff who are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for children."

- Conder Early Childhood Service Parent

"We love this centre. The educator takes extremely good care of our baby girl. We have tried other childcare centres the rest are more commercial but this one you can feel the love and passion. My husband said he will only trust this centre. Highly recommend."

- Conder Early Childhood Service Parent

"The centre offers a variety of programs and activities designed to meet the individual needs of each child and the atmosphere is warm and inviting. I highly recommend this childcare facility to any families living in the Canberra area."

- Conder Early Childhood Service Parent

Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre

The Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre (MLYCC), with Mura meaning “Pathway” in the Ngunnawal language, continues to grow and develop as an important space for people of all ages in the Lanyon Valley to connect, access services, and find support and a sense of belonging.

Over the past year, the Mura Lanyon Youth Community Centre (MLYCC) has remained a vital support for the Tuggeranong community, acting as a central hub for gatherings and place-based services. It has brought together individuals, groups, and organisations to strengthen networks and foster collaboration.

Co-located services have included Care Financial, Services Australia, Directions Health (T25 Clinic), Menslink, Canberra PCYC, Feros Care, and Marymead Catholic Care’s Mindmap program. Playgroups ACT, Hepatitis ACT, and Capital Region Community Services have also operated on-site. Additionally, outreach visits by Woden Community Services, Conflict Resolution Services, the Australian Childhood Foundation, and Spark Speech Pathology have extended the Centre’s reach across the region.



In our recent members survey

75% of clients identified

FRIENDLY STAFF



as one of the main reasons they attended our centre

This was closely followed by:

 **LOCATION** at **67%**

and

 **VARIETY OF PRODUCTS** at **48%**

The Mura Lanyon Youth Community Centre (MLYCC) continues to be a sought-after site for student work placements across a range of community-focused qualifications.

8  successfully completed their placements at MLYCC contributing a total of **students**

 **1350** hours

of hands-on experience and support.

Volunteers

The MLYCC has continued to thrive thanks to the generous support of volunteers who contribute their time across a range of activities. Their efforts include collecting and delivering bread to the food hub, restocking shelves and packing items, maintaining the community garden, participating in working bees and assisting with events.

A standout example of this dedication is Peter Gilligan, who was nominated for Senior Volunteer of the Year at the 2025 Volunteering ACT Volunteer Awards and received a highly commended recognition for his leadership in volunteering.



Lanyon Food Hub

The Lanyon Food Hub located at MLYCC provides free emergency relief, ongoing food support and material aid to vulnerable individuals and families across the Tuggeranong region. Assistance is available through one-off emergency support and a free annual membership, which gives eligible residents fortnightly access to food and essentials. Membership is open to Tuggeranong residents aged 16 and over who can demonstrate financial hardship, with one membership permitted per household. In response to the rising cost of living and strong community demand, the Lanyon Food Hub expanded its operations to open every day, ensuring greater access to support when it is needed most. Our Food Hub offers a diverse range of fresh and non-perishable food items, made possible through funding from the Department of Social Services and Rotary Tuggeranong, and partnerships with Oz Harvest, Baker's Delight Lanyon, Share the Dignity, and Food Bank NSW & ACT.

Volunteer support is central to Lanyon Food Hub's operations, with generous contributions from Rotary Tuggeranong, Volunteering ACT's Inclusive Volunteering Program and members of the local community. Rotary Tuggeranong's monthly donation of \$250 has enabled the purchase of additional fresh produce from Woolworths and Aldi during times when Oz Harvest supply is limited. Further support has come through food donation drives led by the ACT Human Rights Commission, Explore and Develop Early Learning Centre, and the Conder Craft Group.

The majority of Food Hub clients this financial year were mothers aged 30 to 50 years, with pensioners representing the second largest group. Demand for support has never been higher, a stark reminder of the growing pressures facing our community.





104
new clients
registered



43
clients supported
with one-time
emergency relief



2845
instances of service
provided at Lanyon
Food Hub



236
average
service
instances
per month

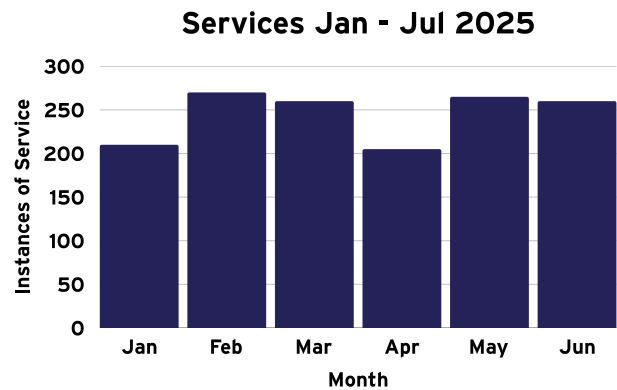
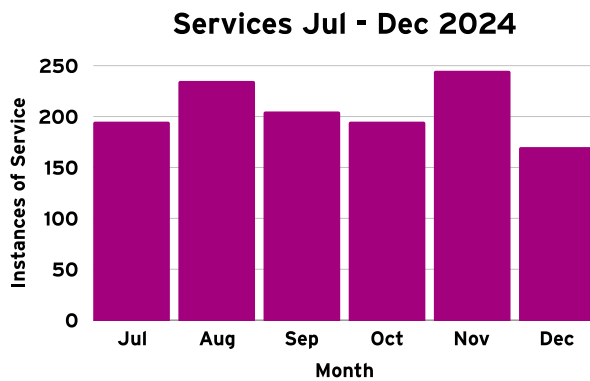


61 clients
visited the
Food Hub
each week

On 20 February 2025, the Lanyon Food Hub
recorded its highest number of visits,
with **80 people** accessing support, including
members and those seeking emergency relief



Instances of Service:



The Lanyon Food Hub continues to be a vital resource for the Tuggeranong community, responding to rising demand with genuine compassion and efficiency. As cost-of-living pressures intensify, the Lanyon Food Hub's adaptability and commitment to serve a diverse and growing community underscores its essential role in promoting food security, dignity, and community support.

Client Snapshot:



73.4% of our clients identify as female



25.9% of our clients identify as male



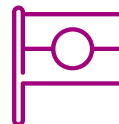
0.7% of our clients identify as other



28.75% of our clients identify as having a disability



19.4% of our clients identify as being from a culturally or linguistically diverse background



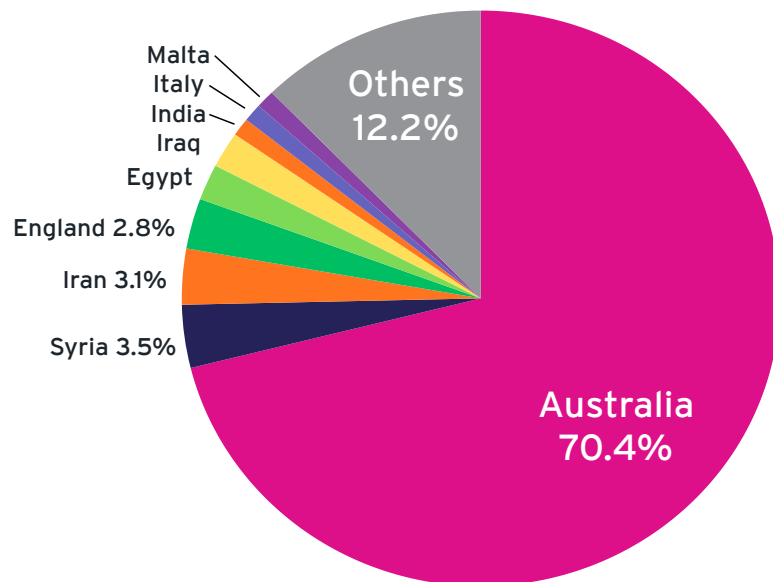
18.95% of our clients identify as being from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

Most requested items:



We continue to see an increase in recent refugees and asylum seekers accessing our service

Individual clients and support persons by country of birth Top10



Youth Engagement Team

The MLYCC is central to the operation of the Youth Engagement Team to support young people aged 10-25 years, providing case work, group work, drop-in and school holiday programs.

In 2024 - 2025, the Youth Engagement Team have:



YWCA Canberra proudly hosted Creativity Con 2025 at the MLYCC during Youth Week, building on the success of the previous year. The event welcomed young people aged 10 to 25 and featured youth-led market stalls, live music, and interactive activities including jewellery making, mural spray painting, and wood-fired pizza. Six community organisations took part, sharing resources and promoting local services. With over 50 attendees, the event celebrated creativity, inclusion, and connection, providing a vibrant platform for young people to showcase their talents and engage with their community.

The Y Basketball program, delivered across Namadgi School, Lake Tuggeranong College, and Charles Conder Primary School engaged 83 students in a curriculum focused on basketball skills, teamwork, behavioural management and fitness. The program promoted healthy lifestyles and reinforced the importance of education through sport. One Year 6 participant diagnosed with ADHD and a history of school refusal, showed marked improvement in classroom engagement and behaviour during the program. He shared, *"I wish we could do basketball every day - it helps me focus."*

Coombs Community Centre

Operated by YWCA Canberra since 2022, the Coombs Community Centre is a flexible and fully accessible space available for venue hire at affordable rates. Equipped with modern amenities and accommodating up to 150 people, the Coombs Community Centre has become a popular venue in the Molonglo Valley, hosting a diverse range of community events, from workshops to celebrations.

62

**one off events
(including single day
or part day hires)
were held at CCC
this financial year**

450+

**hours of long
term/weekly hall
hires across 6
users**

The Snow Foundation Bus remains a highly valued civic resource, serving multiple community groups and schools. It is used for various purposes, including casework, school holiday programs, and providing transportation for local students to attend school. Clients include Charles Conder School, Faith City and Samoan Methodist Youth Group.

120

separate hires

600+

**hours of
transportation**



Clubhouse

The Clubhouse is a lifeline for vulnerable young people, operating from YWCA Canberra's Richardson site and MLYCC to provide a safe, free, and transformative out-of-school space. With the guidance of mentors and staff, young people harness technology to turn ideas into reality, discover their strengths, and gain the confidence and skills to thrive well beyond the classroom.



What is The Clubhouse?

Now in its 32nd year and headquartered at MIT, The Clubhouse Network (TCN) operates 150 sites across 20 countries, supporting young people from low-income communities to access technology, expand their skills, and build confidence. Each Clubhouse provides free, mentor-supported learning outside of school hours. YWCA Canberra runs the Clubhouse twice a week at Richardson Primary School, making it a key youth engagement program for Tuggeranong. The local model is part of, and guided by, this proven international network.

MLYCC delivers two weekly Drop-In sessions during school terms, providing free, open-access spaces where young people can connect, explore interests and engage in informal learning. These sessions form a core part of our youth engagement approach, offering a welcoming environment that supports creativity and social connection. Alongside Drop-In, the A-Z Group meets weekly at MLYCC, offering a structured program focused on skill development, confidence building and personal growth.

119 Clubhouse sessions
were delivered, offering
a diverse mix of creative
and hands-on activities
for young people

These sessions totaled
over 460 hours
designed to spark
curiosity and encourage
self-expression

73 young people
participated over the
reporting period

In 2024-2025, the Clubhouse expanded its impact by securing vital grants and partnerships that strengthened program delivery. The Snow Foundation and Hands Across Canberra Collaborative Grant provided essential operational support, while AARNET played a game-changing role by equipping the Clubhouse with reliable, high-speed, and customised internet connectivity. This support ensures young people have uninterrupted access to the digital tools and opportunities they need to learn, create, and thrive. The Clubhouse Network funded participation in the international Teen Summit. Similarly, the Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE), Questacon and Metaphysica supported various creative and educational activities throughout the year.

During the January 2025 school holidays, the Youth Engagement Team partnered with Metaphysica Tuggeranong to deliver Code Crafters, a three-day game development program funded through the ACT Government's Disability Inclusion Grant. Designed to increase access to mainstream activities for young people with disabilities, the program offered hands-on experience in digital design and STEM skills within a safe, supportive environment. Participants' games were showcased in a custom arcade machine, now installed at MLYCC to allow other young people to explore their creations. Beyond digital literacy, the program fostered confidence, creativity, and collaboration.

YWCA Canberra Clubhouse demonstrated its ongoing commitment to cultural awareness and reconciliation through an Aboriginal art activity aligned with the 2025 Reconciliation Week theme, "Bridging Now to Next." This initiative gave young people the opportunity to explore and express their personal stories using Aboriginal art and symbolism.

The popularity of the autumn school holiday Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) sessions led to the development of Quest Masters, a program designed to upskill young players to become confident Dungeon/Game Masters. Supported by a volunteer expert, participants learned campaign development, behaviour management, and leadership skills. Upon conclusion, all participants expressed readiness to lead their own campaigns, presenting an exciting prospect for future holiday sessions.





The LGBTQIA+ & Allies Prom is a free annual event for young people aged 12-18 across the ACT. It is designed to offer a safe, inclusive space for connection, celebration, and self-expression. Led by a youth-driven Prom Committee, this year's sold-out celebration welcomed attendees to embrace a vibrant Fantasy theme. The evening featured dynamic drag performances by Phish and Phreak, a live set from youth band Spit the Dummy, lively dancing, delicious catering and designated quiet zones for those seeking a break. The prom continues to foster a strong sense of belonging, creativity, and joy for LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies.



134

**young people attended,
experiencing a night of
acceptance and joy**



36

**performers showcased
over the years**



1600

**attendees welcomed
over the years**



Attendees raved about the immersive photobooth and standout performances by Phish and Phreak, a beloved local drag collective, bringing flair and celebration to the evening. The youth band Spit the Dummy also drew enthusiastic praise for their high-energy set, adding to the electric atmosphere! More than just a night of entertainment, the event became a powerful expression of community spirit fostering genuine support, visibility and inclusion within the queer community and beyond.

This year, awards were presented across three distinct categories, each recognising both a winner and a runner-up for their outstanding contributions.



The **Creative Contributions Award** recognises an individual whose exceptional creativity has amplified the stories, culture, and expressions of the LGBTQIA+ community through impactful artistic or performance-based work.



The **Community Contributions Award** honours an individual who has shown exceptional dedication to a cause through advocacy, support, and volunteer efforts that uplift and empower those around them.



The **Empowerment Award** celebrates an individual who has turned adversity into opportunity, showing remarkable resilience and inspiring others through innovation, leadership, and personal growth.



Testimonial

"I loved being able to hang out with queer people like me and forgetting about the stress of the world amongst the music and dancing."

Tuggeranong Network Coordination

YWCA Canberra's Tuggeranong Network Coordination program identifies unmet needs and service delivery gaps impacting vulnerable children, young people, and families across Tuggeranong and the broader ACT. Through fostering collaboration among local organisations, the program works to develop coordinated responses that address these critical gaps in support.

The Southside Initiative continued to build strong connections by collaborating with southside schools, community organisations, and the local government to respond to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data. A key milestone was the inaugural Child First Forum, held in partnership with Families ACT. The event drew strong participation, establishing a shared direction for future efforts.

In collaboration with EACH and the NSW/ACT Inclusion Agency, the Southside Initiative hosted six community of practice workshops for early childhood educators, encouraging shared learning and professional development. During this period, the Initiative partnered with researchers from the Australian National University's Crawford School of Public Policy to support the rollout of the 'More for Children' research project. This initiative focused on deepening understanding of how poverty affects early childhood development.

Through the Southside Initiative, a speech pathologist has recently joined Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre (MLYCC) as one of the newest colocators. The speech pathologist is supporting families at the Centre through programs such as GymbaROO and is working in collaboration with the Southside Initiative to improve access to speech pathology services for families in Tuggeranong. Her role also entails supporting the delivery of the PERKS Parenting Workshops and strengthening connections with local schools.

GymbaROO continues to support vulnerable families at MLYCC alongside culturally and linguistically diverse families in Coombs. The program has also created opportunities to provide wraparound support for MLYCC families who may benefit from additional community services.

Healthy Schools Network ACT

The Healthy Schools Network ACT website received over 56,000 pageviews from more than 11,000 users, nearly double the traffic from the previous year. The website has played a key role in the success of the Southside Initiative by enabling collaboration among local not-for-profits that promote health and mental wellbeing in ACT schools and early childhood settings. It also provides educators with access to training, resources, recognised programs and professional learning.

Tuggeranong Network Coordinator

The Tuggeranong Network Coordinator successfully referred 25 children to the Every Chance program, helping families cover the cost of sports registration. An additional five children were referred to the Vikings - Kids Into Sports program.



25 children referred

PERKS 0-8

The Southside Initiative delivered 16 PERKS Parenting Workshops, directly engaging around 220 parents and carers and catering for 78 children. Held across various Southside schools, the workshops received positive feedback, with participants reporting they gained valuable knowledge and strategies to support their parenting.



220 parents and carers

78 children attended

Healthy Schools Network ACT website page received

over
56,000
pageviews

11,000 users

Testimonial

"Thanks to David (Network Co-ordinator of the Tuggeranong Region) for being such a connector in the community and rolling up your sleeves to help with whatever is asked. You have been such an invaluable networker for us to find the right people to make these (Game On Pop Ups) happen."

- Physical Activity Foundation

Warm Connections

Warm Connections is a YWCA Canberra counselling service that provides therapeutic support to parents and carers of children and adolescents aged zero to 15 years. The service also offers individual counselling to children and adolescents aged 9 to 15 years.

Warm Connections provides ongoing counselling to parents, caregivers, children and adolescents, creating a safe space to explore the challenges that bring them to the service.

Warm Connections collaborates with other YWCA Canberra services when necessary, including the Housing Support Unit and the Domestic Violence Support Service team.

Offering both face-to-face and telehealth sessions, Warm Connections builds trust and rapport with clients to unravel the complexities of familial dynamics and life challenges. This occurs in depth and over a prolonged period with the purpose of encouraging self-reflection, emotional expression, learning and ultimately cultivating positive change.

100%

**of service users reported
significant improvement in
their familial relationships
after accessing Warm
Connections**

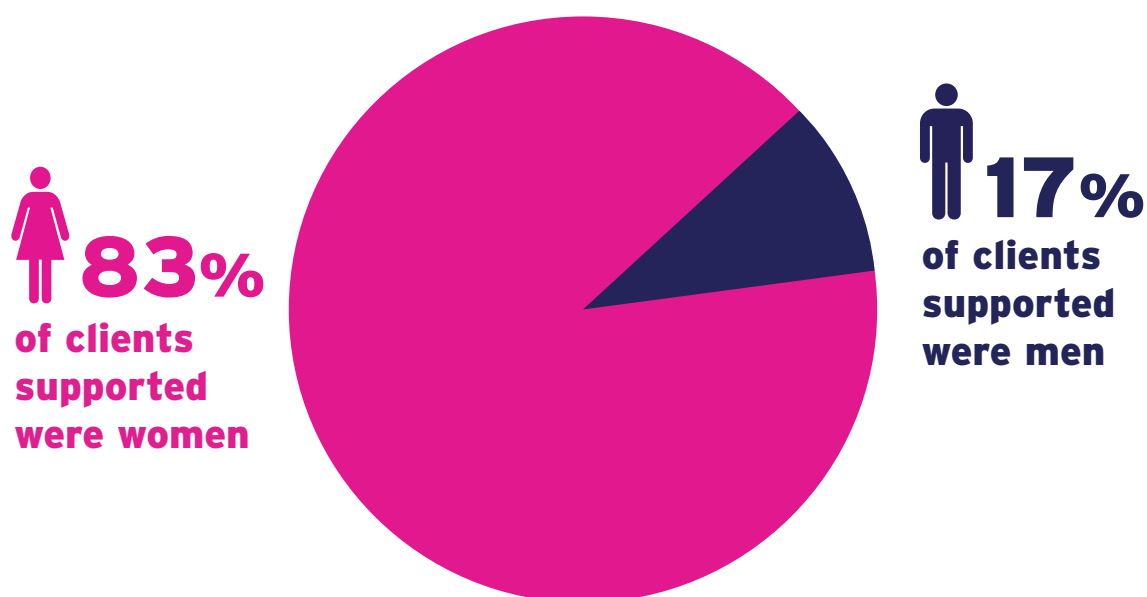
100%

**of service users reported
personal improvement after
accessing Warm Connections**

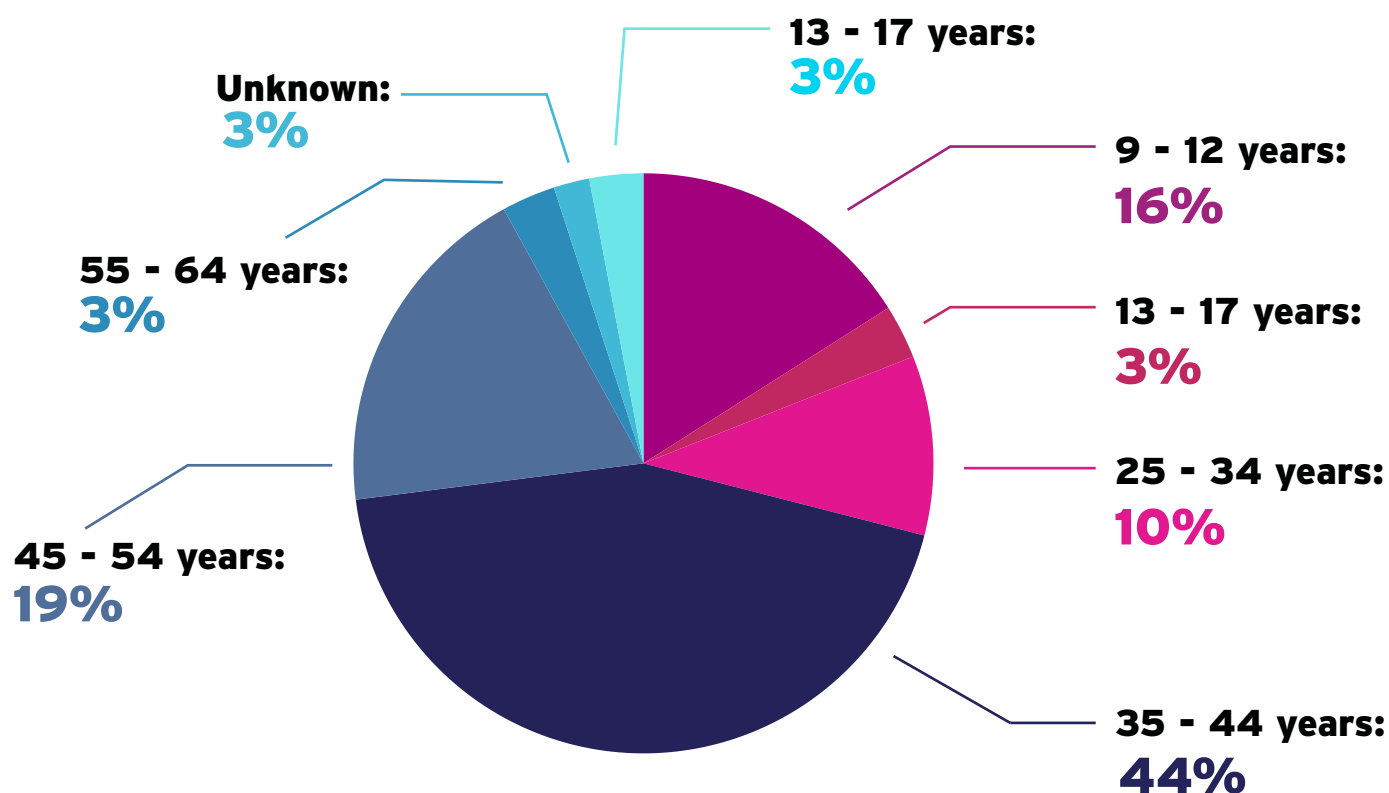


Client testimonial | de-identified

"This is the only program over many years that I fully trust and has saved my children and I. We lead a complex life and have suffered domestic and family violence and other traumas. There are so many intersections in our lives. But this program and my therapist, continue to support me in my parenting to be the best I can be. It allows me a space to vent, unpack, learn and grow all in a trauma-informed, non-judgement and compassionate way. My children are the beneficiaries, and I can see what a difference it makes to them to have their mum willing to learn and in tune with their needs. Thank you so much!"



Age breakdown of clients:



***Warm Connections indirectly supports a number of non-binary young people through therapeutic services with their parents or carers.*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Housing Services

Our housing services are safe, appropriate and affordable, with priority access for women experiencing violence and older women. We're contributing towards ending homelessness for women.

Housing Services Overview

For almost 85 years, YWCA Canberra has been a pillar of support for women and the broader Canberra community. Our journey began in 1942 with the establishment of a temporary weatherboard hostel called Leave House on Mort Street by Lady Gowrie, which provided accommodation for over 18,000 women during World War II. Since then, we have continued to evolve, delivering supported accommodation services on behalf of the ACT Government and operating as a registered community housing provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing.

Domestic and family violence remains one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children in Canberra. Our housing services are committed to helping families secure safe housing, access essential information and resources and connect with vital social support. Through this work, we strive to build resilience, prevent homelessness and empower families to maintain long-term housing stability.

Rentwell is YWCA Canberra's affordable housing initiative, supporting individuals on low to moderate incomes who are unable to access the private rental market.

The program offers comprehensive property management services to owners, including tenant selection, bill management, and property maintenance. Properties are leased from private investors at **74.9% or less of market rent, bridging the gap between social housing and the private rental sector.** In return, owners receive an ACT Government land tax exemption and a charitable tax-deductible receipt for the difference between market and affordable rent.

Rentwell, now in its sixth year, has continued to grow, reaching 155 properties by the end of the financial year, the program's largest expansion to date. This growth strengthened our capacity to provide more safe and affordable homes for the community.

Additionally, we are proud to share a significant success story from this year: two of our tenants successfully transitioned out of the program and purchased their own home! This milestone reflects the program's enduring positive impact and reinforces our commitment to supporting long-term, sustainable outcomes for our clients.

2024-2025

155

Properties

179

Leases

76

women and children
were supported during
this period

36

families were
supported during
this period

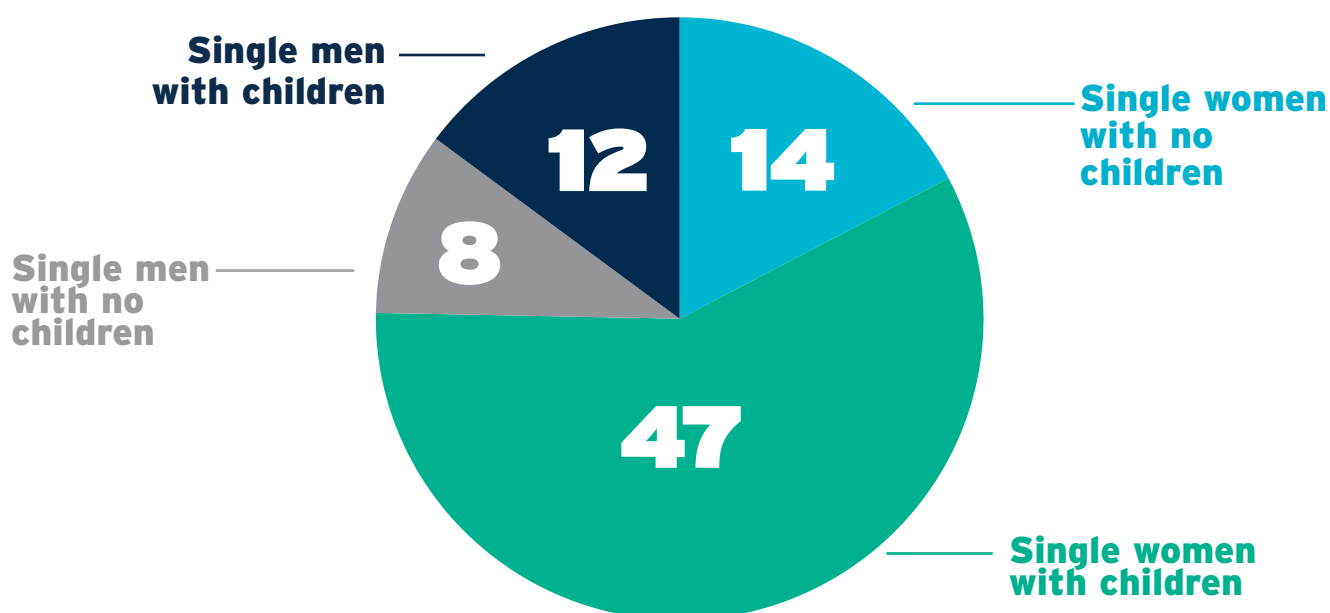
15

senior women aged
50 and over received
support during this
period

21

couples with no
children were supported
during this period

Grouped Statistics:



Total single women:

61

Total single men:

20

Case Study / Testimonial:

"I had recently left Perth with my 2 children, 5 suitcases and 1 car seat. I had left a bad relationship with nothing to my name. I had no idea how I was going to provide for my children and give them the life they deserve.

We had moved into my parent's home which was a blessing but also quite hard. I knew I was going to have to move out but with my low income, I didn't know that I could actually afford to or if I could, it would be a really run down property.

Living in a Rentwell property gave me hope that I was going to be able to provide for my children. It enabled me to take time, recover and find myself again. I was able to help my children navigate this enormous change in a lovely and safe environment.

I don't know if the landlords know, but their leasing of this property through you has been such a blessing. It saved me and gave me the strength I needed to recover and thrive. I have often thought that I don't know where I'd be if it wasn't for Rentwell and the landlords!

Thank you from the bottom of my heart."



Next Door has been delivering tailored support for six years to women aged 50 and over, and Aboriginal women aged 45 and over, helping them secure long-term, safe and stable housing. Through a holistic, wrap-around approach, the program not only provides housing solutions but also addresses the underlying factors contributing to housing insecurity. Working in partnership with health professionals, legal and financial services, as well as domestic violence support providers, Next Door ensures that women receive the comprehensive support they deserve.

Our Next Door program provided

103

support periods

97

service users helped navigate complex housing and wellbeing challenges

Of the 58 cases closed this financial year:

40

clients successfully exited the program after securing tenure on their own property



20

clients reported achieving all of their goals, with a further 8 achieving half or more



93%

of clients felt their lives had improved

Next Door's community development programs have also played a vital role in enhancing social connection and wellbeing. This year, 36 clients participated in activities, with the End of Year celebration drawing the largest turnout. Programs were designed around the ACT Wellbeing Framework's 12 domains, including:

- **Chair Yoga and Chair Zumba**
- **A Love Scams and Financial Safety session with ACT Policing**
- **Older Women's Health Matters, covering breast cancer awareness, cervical screening, and post-menopausal health.**
- **A cooking class in collaboration with Cafe Stepping Stone, where air fryers were distributed through the Canberra Women's Giving Circle Grant to support climate-conscious cooking!**

Next Door clients also enjoyed regular outings to museums and nature walks in Canberra's gardens, helping build social capacity and community connections.

Client Snapshot



5 clients identify as First Nations people (4.85%)



35 clients were born overseas (33.95%)



35 clients speak a different language at home (33.95%)



26 clients living with a disability (25.22%)

26 - 52 weeks

average duration of support provided per client

Reflections

"I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the support provided by Jasmina and Rebecca at Next Door. After successfully helping secure housing for my mother, they continued to maintain regular communication with us to ensure she had the necessary support in place. Their dedication and expertise have been invaluable, often going above and beyond what was expected. Their service has truly made a positive impact."

- Daughter of a Next Door client

Hands Across Canberra

YWCA Canberra partnered with Hands Across Canberra for the Canberra Day Appeal to strengthen our homelessness services. The campaign focused on equipping women moving from homelessness into permanent housing with essential whitegoods that support daily living. By ensuring women leave with the basics they need, we help restore dignity, safety, and independence.

Through the generosity of the community, the fundraiser directly supported women and families in transition, providing them with practical tools that foster stability and self-reliance.

In addition, Hands Across Canberra connected YWCA Canberra with the Canberra Women's Giving Circle, which awarded a \$10,000 grant to support vulnerable older women, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families. This funding, channelled through YWCA Canberra's Next Door program and YHomes initiative, is helping participants reduce energy costs making it cost effective and environmentally friendly.



Housing Support Unit

YWCA Canberra's Housing Support Unit (HSU) provides safe and affordable transitional housing for women with children experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, or seeking safety from domestic and family violence in the ACT. We offer gender responsive support through a person-centred, trauma-informed approach, helping our service users and their children reconnect with the community.

We advocate for long-term, safe, secure and affordable housing solutions through collaboration with local services to assist individuals and families in finding stability, achieving their personal goals and progressing towards their best possible future.

HSU offers assistance through case management and referrals to other services, guiding families as they transition into temporary housing, often with only the belongings they can carry. We aid them in sourcing the essential items needed to settle into their transitional housing and then provide ongoing support to help them secure long-term accommodation after thorough exploration of options to ensure the safest, quickest, and most suitable solution.

In 2024-25, HSU expanded its inclusive approach by welcoming single fathers into the program, reflecting a commitment to supporting families in all their diversity. The team delivered Circle of Security and Tuning into Teens parenting programs to both housed and outreach clients across HSU, Domestic Violence Support Service and Rentwell. Additionally, the team secured 15 new properties, increasing our capacity to support more families.

This year, HSU supported:



 **276**
clients identified
as female

 **197**
clients identified
as male

 **6**
clients identified
as non-binary or
gender diverse

295



**were children
under 18**

184



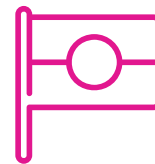
were adults

106



**identified as culturally
or linguistically diverse**

97



**identified as First
Nations people**

Over the financial year, the team delivered **18,876 hours** of one-on-one support to clients across HSU.

Through our holistic approach, we work closely with childcare providers and schools to facilitate access to funding, helping ensure children can participate in formal education. We also support families in connecting with sports and extracurricular activities, so children don't miss out on the opportunities their peers enjoy.

Client Testimonial:

"My Case Manager is positive, intelligent, easy to contact, reliable and has the capacity to answer any query that I may have. She has helped me transition into this phase of my life with enthusiasm and a great attitude, and I am very grateful to have had her support."

- HSU Client Feedback

Pathways Program

The Pathways Program is a specialist homelessness service that supports individuals and families, including asylum seekers, facing uncertainty regarding their visa status and limited access to employment, healthcare, and income support. These individuals represent some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The program is designed to provide tailored, wrap-around support to help them build stability and connection.

Our team works closely with each client to coordinate access to healthcare, legal assistance, education, employment services and social integration resources. This holistic approach ensures that support is responsive to each person's unique circumstances.

Pathways recently celebrated its first year of operation. Over the past 12 months, the program has focused on embedding its services and building trust with new service users. In alignment with this effort, three shared houses were successfully upgraded to more suitable properties, ensuring residents had access to safe and appropriate accommodation.

A second Pathways case manager also joined the team, dedicated to supporting single men in the program. This specialised role was instrumental in developing individualised case plans and supporting participants as they worked toward personal goals and community integration.

Additionally, Common Ground Dickson has extended its OzHarvest food deliveries to Pathways families, helping to share this limited resource with some of Canberra's most vulnerable community members.



Program Snapshot

13

**families supported
through tenancy and
case work**

33

**single men
housed in shared
accommodation**

7

**individuals receiving
outreach or
post-support services**

12

**men have secured
permanent residency
or transitioned out
of the program**

"I just want to say how thankful I am for all your help and support. Thank you for rescuing me and my innocent kids from all the abuse we faced daily."

- Pathways Client

Common Ground Dickson

Common Ground Dickson (CGD) represents YWCA Canberra's housing-first model, offering long-term social and affordable housing. In partnership with CHC, who provide tenancy management, YWCA Canberra provides support services and community development programs. We are proud of the strong, quality partnership with CHC.

**40 units divided into
20 social and 20 affordable**

This year, CGD has supported

51 tenancies across
49 active service users.



33 service users
identified as female



15 service users
identified as male,
including one Trans man



21 service users were
children or young people
under the age of 18



15 service users
identified as culturally
or linguistically diverse



8 service users
identified as First
Nations people

91.7% reported
improvement in
of respondents their wellbeing

In the last 6 months,
54 warm referrals were made
for residents and their children to a
diverse range of support services to
provide further assistance

Now three years into our partnership with CHC, delivering support and community development at Common Ground Dickson, the current residents have settled in and report feeling secure in their tenancies. With this foundation in place, the team has begun to focus on Social and Community Inclusion; one of the eight Housing First principles that underpin our approach.

Social and community inclusion is a vital component of support, enabling individuals to rebuild a sense of identity and connection with others. This sense of belonging serves as a protective factor for sustaining tenancy, promoting improved health and overall well-being.

To foster inclusion, CGD has extended its school holiday program to families supported by YWCA Canberra Housing and Domestic Violence Support Service, providing respite for parents while children and young people engage in enriching activities during the break.

Client Testimonial:

"Love living here at Common Ground Dickson, we were so lucky, we now have a home and appreciate the services too."

**- Common Ground Dickson
and CHC Client**



YHomes is YWCA Canberra's visionary housing initiative, working toward a future where every woman, regardless of her age, has access to safe, secure, and long-term accommodation.

Our properties range from permanent affordable housing to crisis accommodation.

With a particular focus on housing older women—who are among the fastest-growing cohort of people experiencing homelessness in Australia—the YHomes Housing Development provides safe homes for women who are victim-survivors of domestic violence, as well as those experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness due to economic hardship, age-related vulnerabilities, or systemic disadvantage.

Through this strategic goal, women are empowered to live independently and with dignity, supported by tailored services that reflect their diverse experiences. In addition to long-term housing, YWCA Canberra operates short- to medium-term crisis units for women and children fleeing violence, offering specialist wrap-around support including safety planning, therapeutic care, and pathways to stability.

Since opening a secondary location in October 2024, we have expanded our housing portfolio with two additional four-bedroom properties, broadening the range of housing options available for women with larger families escaping domestic and family violence in our region.

9349

total nights
YHomes provided

19

number of
properties
we own

93.2%

occupancy

15

women

& 27

children

have been supported in
just 2024-25

3704

nights
of emergency accommodation
has been provided

15

single
mothers

have received support by
YHomes services

14

women over
the age of 50

have been supported by
YHomes services

De-identified client testimonial

I feel supported and thankful for all the advice. I cannot share what I am going through with family or friends but I can share that with my YHomes caseworker. I was able to talk things through and feel safe that this support is not going to go anywhere. I feel I am not alone anymore.

- YHomes Client

Domestic Violence Support Service

YWCA Canberra's Domestic Violence Support Service (DVSS) provides free, confidential and non-judgmental case management for women and children affected by domestic and family violence in the ACT and surrounding regions, if they have a connection to Canberra such as work, school, or legal matters. Through early intervention and personalised support, we assist families manage their safety and ensure access to essential resources during times of crisis.

In October 2024, we expanded our service by launching two additional Safe Place Inclusion accommodation units, in addition to our existing three domestic violence units as a part of our YHomes initiative. These new units are specifically designed to support families escaping violence who have three or more children and identify as First Nations, come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or include family members with disability.

**From July 2024 to June 2025,
our Domestic Violence
Support Service received**

399

new referrals

33

**new referrals per
month on average**

**Over this period, the service assisted
583 individuals
in total, including
307 primary clients,
women impacted by domestic and family violence,
and 276 dependents**

227 women received more than one hour of support, along with their children

An additional **80** women received one-off support

January saw the highest number of referrals to the service, with a total of **43**

Our service has experienced consistent high demand, receiving referrals from Supportlink, Onelink, Victims Support ACT, Family Violence Safety Action Program of ACT, Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Women's Legal Centre, Housing ACT, and other sources, as well as self-referrals. Our top referral source is self-referrals.

During the reporting period,
157 women
accessed DVSS through self-referral

These figures reflect the critical role YWCA Canberra's Domestic Violence Support Service plays in the ACT. By offering early intervention, personalised safety planning and access to secure accommodation, the service not only supports women and children in crisis, but it also actively reduces the risk of homelessness and helps families rebuild their lives with dignity and stability. The high rate of self-referrals also demonstrates the trust and visibility the service has built within the community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Training and Networking

Our training and networking programs promote agency for women's participation in the Canberra region and across Australia.





Sheleads



She Leads is YWCA Canberra's signature leadership program for women and non-binary people.

The program equips the next generation of women and non-binary leaders, from all sectors and industries, with the skills and confidence they need to reach their leadership potential.

The program includes:

-  **She Leads Diploma of Leadership and Management**
-  **She Leads Conference**
-  **She Leads College Conference - for years 11 and 12**
-  **She Leads High Conference - for years 9 and 10**





Since its launch in 2012, the She Leads Diploma program has empowered over

 **250**
graduates

with a nationally accredited Diploma of Leadership and Management

 **21**

students graduated with a She Leads Diploma during this financial year



students are actively completing their diploma

6 

YWCA Canberra Staff were sponsored to undertake the Diploma

The She Leads Diploma is a nationally accredited qualification, BSB50420 Diploma of Leadership and Management (RTO 1373), designed to provide a tailored leadership pathway for women and non-binary people. This program is crafted to support participants in exploring and developing their leadership potential through a gender-responsive lens. Delivered over 12 months, the Diploma combines formal learning with practical insights to foster confidence, capability, and career progression.

72

hours of face-to-face workshops per students

93.1%

of Diploma students were satisfied with the course

Employer overall satisfaction score was

91.7%

Client Testimonial

"Having worked in both the Philippines and Australia and changed careers several times, the She Leads Diploma taught me modern leadership skills and how to navigate workplace policies effectively. I really value the practical approach, especially guest speakers and learning about different workplace cultures. The workplace tasks helped me overcome shyness and build confidence."

-She Leads Diploma Graduate 2024



YWCA Canberra's annual She Leads Conference brings together women and non-binary people at all stages of their leadership journey to learn from some of Australia's most inspiring and accomplished leaders. The program highlights diverse perspectives and practical insights that support participants to grow their skills, confidence and influence.

Hosted at the Canberra Rex Hotel, we celebrated a decade of impact at our 10th Annual She Leads Conference under the powerful theme 'RISE UP.' The Conference highlighted how women and people are standing up across activism, corporate leadership, and workforce equity by sharing compelling stories and strategies for overcoming barriers, asserting authority, and driving meaningful change.

An incredible lineup of speakers including Jess Hill, Kath Ebbs, Pauline Nguyen, Teela Reid, Juanita Phillips, Dr Clara Tuck Meng Soo, Louise Ellery and many others enriched the conversation with diverse perspectives and lived experiences, making this milestone event truly memorable!

23
Speakers



96%

**of attendees
enjoyed the
selection of
panel/seminar
sessions**

95%

**of attendees
said they would
be likely to
attend She Leads
Conference again**

97%

**of attendees
agreed the
conference
delivered great
value for money**



3 Panels:



**Rising Voices:
Women Leading
Community
Activism**



**Rising Up in
Corporate: Women
Driving Change
and Leading with
Authority**



**Rising Against
Gender Barriers
in the Workforce**

3 Seminars:



**Empowerment
in Action: How
to Rise Up when
Pushed Down**



**Rise Up: Unveiling
Ageism - Embrace
Your Voice at Any
Stage**



**Mastering Balance
and Setting Clear
Boundaries for Rising
Leadership Success**

"I love the keynote speakers and how engaging their presentations were, I don't think I have ever been that engaged in a conference in my life. I don't think I have ever cried that hard at a conference either, listening to the speaker's personal stories of overcoming adversity. I truly felt that I was meant to be there and was proud to be part of something that was inspiring."

- She Leads Conference delegate 2024





The She Leads High Conference is a one-day leadership event specifically designed for young women and nonbinary students in Years 9 and 10.

In 2024, She Leads embraced the theme of RISE UP as its guiding focus for the year, with the 7th annual She Leads High Conference held at the Canberra Rex Hotel in September.

The conference brought youth leadership to the forefront, highlighting bold ideas and authentic storytelling. A powerful lineup of keynote speakers, including Australian climate activist Anjali Sharma and young entrepreneur and content creator Ebony May, shared inspiring insights with students. The event was emceed by educator and advocate Han Worsley and also featured compelling contributions from panellists Zev Aviv and Emma English, facilitated by YWCA Canberra Communications Officer Eva Barnes.

"Being led by amazing women and non-binary people really helped me feel confident in stepping outside of my comfort zone and giving the activities a go. 'You can't be what you can't see' is one of my favorite quotes and this conference was a great reminder of that. There was something for everyone. I felt like every box was ticked."

- She Leads High attendee 2024



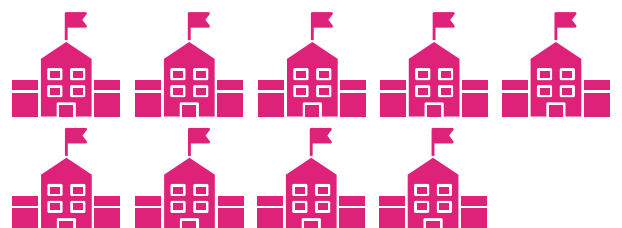
96 Students



11 Teachers



9 Schools





The She Leads College Conference is a one-day leadership event specifically designed for young women and nonbinary people in years 11 and 12.

In 2025, She Leads embraced UNITE as the guiding theme for the year and our 12th annual She Leads College conference was held at the Canberra Rex Hotel in April.

The conference was a vibrant celebration of youth leadership, featuring keynote speeches from Remy Tucker, founder of the menstrual equity social enterprise On the House, and Satara Uthayakumaran, Australia's 2025 Youth Representative to the United Nations. Emceed by She Shapes History's Sita Sargeant, the event also showcased powerful contributions from panellists such as Alannah Newell, Maddalena Easterbrook, Rin Rin Ly and Emma English, facilitated by YWCA Canberra Communications Officer, Eva Barnes.

Testimonials

"This stuff you guys are doing is awesome by the way!! Thank you for providing this opportunity for all us women."

"That was absolutely incredible, massively better than last year's."

"Was very lovely and explored a range of topics applicable to women, young women, and women in leadership."

"It was a great experience for someone who didn't really know what it would be about and didn't know if I would like it."

117 Students

26 Teachers

Across 16 ACT and regional NSW schools

2 Workshops

The **'Unite & Ignite'** and **'Agree to Disagree'** workshops offered engaging, hands-on experiences that built skills in communication and advocacy. The conference fostered a supportive space for connection, collaboration and shared learning.



Education and Training Unit

YWCA Canberra's Registered Training Organisation (RTO 1373) proudly marks its 29th year of delivering high-quality, nationally accredited training. Our programs continue to focus on early childhood education and care as well as leadership and management, supporting learners to build meaningful careers.

We are actively aligning our policies, procedures, and practices with the 2025 Registered Training Organisation Standards, ensuring our operations remain current, compliant and learning-oriented.

This year we delivered nationally accredited training in CHC30121 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, CHC50121 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and BSB50420 Diploma of Leadership and Management RTO 1373.

As part of our commitment to inclusive education, we are delivering customised training to a cohort of First Nations women, supporting them to complete modules of the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care within a culturally supportive environment.

In addition to accredited programs, we have offered a range of non-accredited training this year, including Cultivating Staff Wellbeing through team-building strategies and building resilience workshops. We also provided Online Complaints Handling training and delivered the 2024 Audrey Fagan Boad Mentor Program.

Our Education and Training Unit has refined its systems to align with updated Registered Training Organisations Standards, placing stronger emphasis on student outcomes, improving assessment practices and enhancing digital integration.

During 2024-2025 the Education and Training Unit remained focused on strengthening operational excellence in areas of:

- **Student support and mentoring, assuring all students' academic needs and abilities are met.**
- **Excelling in areas of quality improvement and assurance evident in the Learner and Employer satisfaction through Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF).**

We use the following strategies to ensure risk management.

- **Compliance and continuous improvement.**
- **Risk identification in areas of industry and policy changes and market trends.**
- **Stakeholder engagement.**
- **Innovations in emerging digital literacy.**

In September 2024, two of the three She Leads Diploma students nominated for individual categories in the 2024 ACT Training Awards were recognised for their outstanding achievements: **Ariah Holmes** was awarded ACT Vocational Student of the Year, and **Philippa Northam** was named runner-up for ACT Trainee of the Year

243 Students received training



165

of these were new students



137

students are currently completing training



Received a statement of attainment in first aid

45 of those students were self-funded

73

student places were funded via Skilled Capital*

*Skilled Capital is an ACT Government training initiative, funded by the ACT and Australian Governments.

113

User Choice trainees were engaged under the national funding for Australian Apprenticeships

The satisfaction rate for students was

93.1%

The satisfaction rate for employers of YWCA Canberra's students was

91.7%

Client Testimonial

Every teacher has their own unique way of teaching, sharing knowledge, interacting, and connecting with students to make learning engaging. My trainer was the perfect combination of all these qualities and more, and I am confident that everyone in my group would agree! She was spontaneous in answering and addressing every query, demonstrating her deep knowledge of the early childhood field. Her lessons were designed to spark active participation, while her teaching style accommodated every student's preferred way of learning. She effectively incorporated auditory, visual, and kinesthetic approaches, ensuring there was never a dull moment. Humble, approachable, and always ready to help, she created an environment where students felt valued and supported.

- CHC50121 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care student

Violence Prevention Unit

YWCA Canberra's Violence Prevention Unit researches, develops and delivers a diverse array of programs, including training and educational opportunities aimed at preventing and addressing violence against women in both community settings and workplaces.

In December 2024, we successfully completed the Women's Safety Grant project titled *Preventive Safety Planning and Risk Management Approaches for Women Experiencing Family and Domestic Violence: Action Research Pilot Project*. This initiative comprehensively reviewed existing safety planning and risk management strategies both domestically and abroad, with a focus on advancing innovative, evidence-based approaches tailored to survivors of domestic and family violence in the ACT. Project findings were also presented by Tulika Saxena, Director for Prevention of Violence and Domestic Violence Responses, at the Stop Domestic Violence Conference in Adelaide in November 2024, contributing valuable insights to the national conversation on preventive safety planning.

Training and Programs

The Violence Prevention Unit delivered a range of impactful training programs, including collaborations with community services and professional organisations.

The **Confidence, Clarity, Care (CCC)** training program, part of a two-year ACE Grant project, supported **66 participants** in total. In this reporting period alone, **21 women** completed eight weekly sessions, contributing to a total of **14 sessions** and approximately **38 hours of training**.

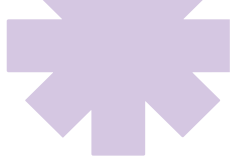
The Trauma-Informed Support Training reached **59 participants** across five sessions, with an estimated total of **177 participant training hours**. Sessions were delivered to a diverse group of professionals, including staff from **Griffin Legal, Farrar Gesini Dunn, Capital Chemist, MV Law and Hartley Lifecare**.

These programs reflect the Unit's commitment to building capacity in trauma-informed practice and empowering women through targeted, evidence-based training.

Testimonial

"The trainer's knowledge and expertise on the subject was excellent and the content was incredibly engaging. Three hours went by quickly!"

- Participant from Trauma Informed Support Training



W*RK RESPECT

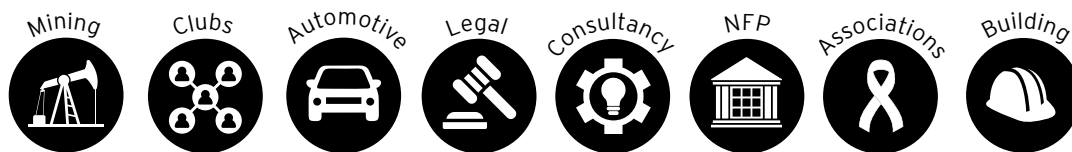
Launched in February 2024, Work Respect is a social enterprise developed by YWCA Canberra. The online training toolkit is designed to provide employers with evidence-based advice and practical tips to understand, implement and sustain organisational change to prevent and effectively respond to workplace sexual harassment.

Legal Compliance & Support

By helping employers meet their Positive Duty obligations, Work Respect supports legal compliance and is aligned with the recommendations outlined in the Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect@Work) Act 2022 (Cth) strategic framework.

Market Engagement

Since its launch, Work Respect has seen uptake across varied industries including mining, clubs, automotive, legal, consultancy, NFP, associations and building.



Trauma-Informed Support Training

The Work Respect brand is growing and it now includes our powerful Trauma-Informed Support Training, a three-hour workshop created by leading gender and trauma specialists. The training can be delivered both in person and online.

Trauma-Informed Support Training is designed to equip individuals and organisations with the knowledge and skills needed to support victims of sexual harassment or discrimination. Key learnings of the workshop include the ability to recognise and appropriately respond to incidents of harassment while providing comprehensive support that addresses the broader needs of the individual.

6
sessions
with over 7
industries

59
attendees
engaged with
the program

177
hours of
training

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Advocacy

Our advocacy transforms power structures, enabling women and children to thrive.

Our ACT Policy and Local Advocacy

YWCA Canberra continues to lead from the front by driving positive change in Canberra and holding government and policy makers accountable.

The last 12 months have seen us achieve significant policy and advocacy wins for women including greater transparency on the Family Safety Levy, progress towards criminalisation of coercive control, funding to support two new children's specialist workers in our Domestic Violence Support Service and the launch of the fourth Our Lives: Women in the ACT Survey.

We have made seven public submissions during the reporting period, capturing a range of legislative reform proposals relating to planning, family violence and child safety. This excludes our contribution to government roundtables and consultations within our sphere of influence.

Prior to the 2024 ACT Election, we again hosted our popular Meet the Candidate event and were thrilled to see some of our invited speakers achieve success in their campaign. We continue to maintain positive relationships and influence them in their roles as Members of the Legislative Assembly.

We provided evidence to the ACT Assembly Inquiry into the Planning Amendment Bill 2025 in support of reforms to exempt public housing from third party appeals and to extend the exemption to community housing where the main deliverable is social housing. Our evidence was supported by various community welfare organisations including Greater Canberra and Community Housing Canberra.

The Director of Policy and Advocacy was invited to participate in the ACT Government's consultation regarding the design of the affirmative consent campaign. The focus group panel was a select team of sector experts, further reflecting our position as a respected partner in the domestic, family, and sexual violence policy space.

We also welcomed the ACT Assembly's progress towards the potential criminalisation of coercive control. This has been a significant advocacy priority for YWCA Canberra, and we have worked with partners interstate and with the Working with Women Alliance to develop a considered and informed position.

Significantly, we launched the fourth wave of the Our Lives: Women in the ACT Survey in May 2025. Within 3 weeks of the survey launching, we had already exceeded the number of responses received over the course of the 2023 survey campaign. This is our fourth iteration of the survey and this would not be possible without the support of Sustineo, our thoughtful and data-driven partners, whose passion for evidence-based insights and commitment to projects like Our Lives continue to shape a more informed, inclusive, and equitable community.



National Women's Safety Alliance

Our National Policy

Since 2021, The National Women's Safety Alliance (NWSA) has united individuals with lived experience and women's organisations to shape national reform through policy advice, shared expertise and advocacy on women's safety and is operated by YWCA Canberra with support from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's Office for Women. NWSA played a key role in influencing government policy and driving legislative change through collaboration with other National Women's Alliances, the NWSA co-authored joint public statements and policy positions, amplifying a coordinated national voice for women's safety.

The NWSA continued its high-level work right to the end of its contract in November 2024, delivering:

3

member forums,
with over
400
attendees

11

submissions including
justice reform, survivor
advocacy, digital
safety, and systemic
support for women
across legal, health,
and caregiving domains

NWSA is a
member of

9

(external)
government
consultation and
expert reference
groups

- NWSA also met with 8 Federal Government members, providing briefings and advocacy on behalf of members
- The NWSA participated in:

4

National
Roundtables

The evaluation
panel for
Leaving Violence
program with
the Department
of Social
Services

5

sector events,
including panels
and conferences

- Engaged with over **800** individual and organisational members
- NWSA partnered with major national bodies such as ANROWS, Our Watch, ESafety Commission, Lifeline Australia (DV-alert) and No to Violence amongst many others



Following four successful years, the NWSA dissolved upon the completion of its initial grant period in November 2024. In recognition of YWCA Canberra's leadership in the sector, the Office for Women awarded a new grant to establish the Working with Women Alliance (WwWA) from December 2024. This transition saw the NWSA become a dedicated portfolio within WwWA, integrating its expertise in gender-based violence within a broader, intersectional framework for women's advocacy.

Operating in close partnership with the Office for Women, five National Alliances provide evidence-based, intersectional gender equality advice to influence priority areas under Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality. The National Women's Alliances serve as a key mechanism through which the Australian Government ensures that the voices of diverse women inform national policy development.

WwWA plays a central role in ensuring women's voices remain at the heart of policy development. By recognising the interdependence of safety, equality and leadership, the WwWA drive coordinated national action for systemic change.

YWCA Canberra now leads two national portfolios under WwWA:



**Reached a total membership of 900 across both
Working with Women Alliance portfolios**

To support this work, each portfolio has established a Policy Advocacy and Advisory Committee (PAAC) alongside working groups in Reproductive Care, Gender-Based Violence and Economic Equality. These structures provide greater functionality by enhancing policy capability and fostering deeper engagement with national members. They create consistent channels for collaboration, enable timely input on emerging issues, and support meaningful consultation with those bringing frontline experience, academic insight and lived expertise.

Hosted
3
member forums,
drawing nearly
180
attendees

Collected
122
responses to the
Working with Women
Alliance Pre-Budget
Survey

Conducted
3
membership consultations
for the Pre-Budget Survey,
attended by over
77
members

Delivered
29
email campaigns to WwWA
members, including bi-weekly
newsletters, forum invitations,
media releases, and member
opportunities





The National Women's Safety (NWS) portfolio is committed to ending gender-based violence and building a culture of respect, safety and equity for women across Australia. Through strategic advocacy, collaboration, and evidence-based approaches, the portfolio works with communities and policymakers to drive systemic reform, empower survivors and create lasting positive change. With a strong focus on prevention, justice reform and accessibility to support services, the portfolio ensures that the voices of women's voices with lived experience are thoroughly considered when shaping policy and practice. The NWS' vision is a nation where every woman lives free from harm, empowered with dignity and confidence.

NWS contributed 6 formal submissions and published policy positions, reinforcing its role in shaping Australia's national prevention agenda

 **1,596**
Instagram Followers

27.8% increase
since November 2024 (1,249)

91.8% increase
since January 2025 (832)

 **2,576**
LinkedIn Followers

21.2% increase
since November 2024 (2,126)

From December 2024 - June 2025,
we have posted a total of **30** times on
LinkedIn generating **298** reactions



The National Women's Equality (NWE) portfolio focusses on driving systemic and sustainable progress toward gender equality in Australia by maintaining its commitment to eliminating barriers that hinder women's complete participation in society. Through advocacy, policy leadership and strategic collaboration with government, communities, and civil society, NWE works to ensure that every woman, regardless of background, can thrive in safe, inclusive, and equitable environments.

The NWE strategically collaborates with key stakeholders such as the government, communities and civil society to foster a safe and inclusive environment for all women through advocacy and policy leadership.

Since its inception, the NWEA portfolio has made significant progress, delivering several key outputs and submissions that have contributed meaningfully to national conversations and policy reforms.

Six formal submissions and policy positions in its first reporting period:

Establishment of a Reproductive Justice Working Group

Publication of the Artificial Intelligence, Gender, and Economic Equality Policy Brief

Release of the ECEC Worker Retention Payments Policy Brief

Targeted advocacy during the Gender Undervaluation Priority Review - Provision Decision process, supporting better pay for women across undervalued sectors

Participation in two major Productivity Commission inquiries including Delivering Quality Care More Efficiently and Building a Skilled and Adaptable Workforce

Convening of the Gender Compass: Stage Two Members Forum

A vital component of the NWEA portfolio's impact lies in its ability to connect strategy with the public narrative. Since launching its digital presence in December 2024, NWE has made significant strides in building public awareness and engagement through social media.

Looking Ahead

As NWE continues to embed itself within the national ecosystem for gender equality, its coordinated work across policy, advocacy, and public engagement is already making a difference. By influencing key reform processes and nurturing public awareness, the portfolio is laying a strong foundation for a future where all women can contribute fully, safely, and equally to society.



118

Instagram Followers



329

LinkedIn Followers

Our Patron

YWCA Canberra is proud to announce the appointment of Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC as our new Patron. A renowned advocate for gender equality and social justice, Her Excellency brings extensive experience and passion to our organisation. We are honoured to have her support in our mission to empower and uplift our work in the Canberra community.

Her Excellency follows in the distinguished footsteps of our former Patron, the Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, whose contribution and support were deeply valued by YWCA Canberra.

"Her Excellency's lifelong commitment to gender equality and social justice aligns perfectly with our values and mission. We look forward to her patronage as we continue striving toward a community where girls and women thrive."

- Frances Crimmins, YWCA Canberra CEO

With more than 96 years of service in the ACT, YWCA Canberra has long been at the forefront of advocating for gender equality and delivering essential services to the community. Under the patronage of Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC, we are confident in our ability to continue advancing our vision and creating lasting change.

YWCA Canberra also proudly launched the Working with Women Alliance at a dedicated morning tea hosted by Her Excellency at Government House in May 2025.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Sustainable Organisation

Our transparent and inclusive practices through strong governance, management, service delivery and partnerships enable us to have a sustainable organisation.

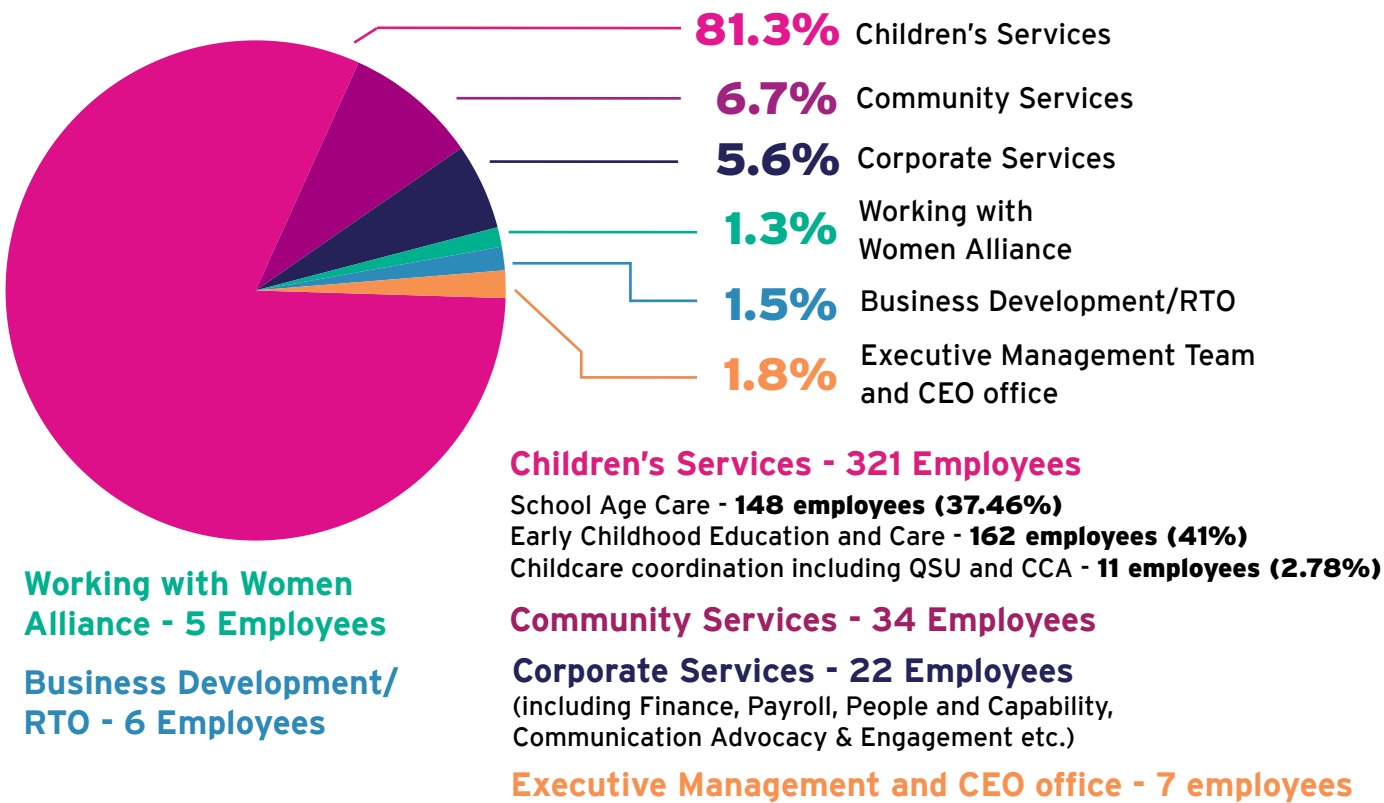
Our Workforce

We believe in creating a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported. We know that when people from different backgrounds come together, their unique experiences enrich our community and help us learn and grow. Our team reflects this diversity, and we are proud to foster an environment where all voices are heard and everyone has the chance to thrive.

400 total staff were employed during the 2024-2025 Financial Year.



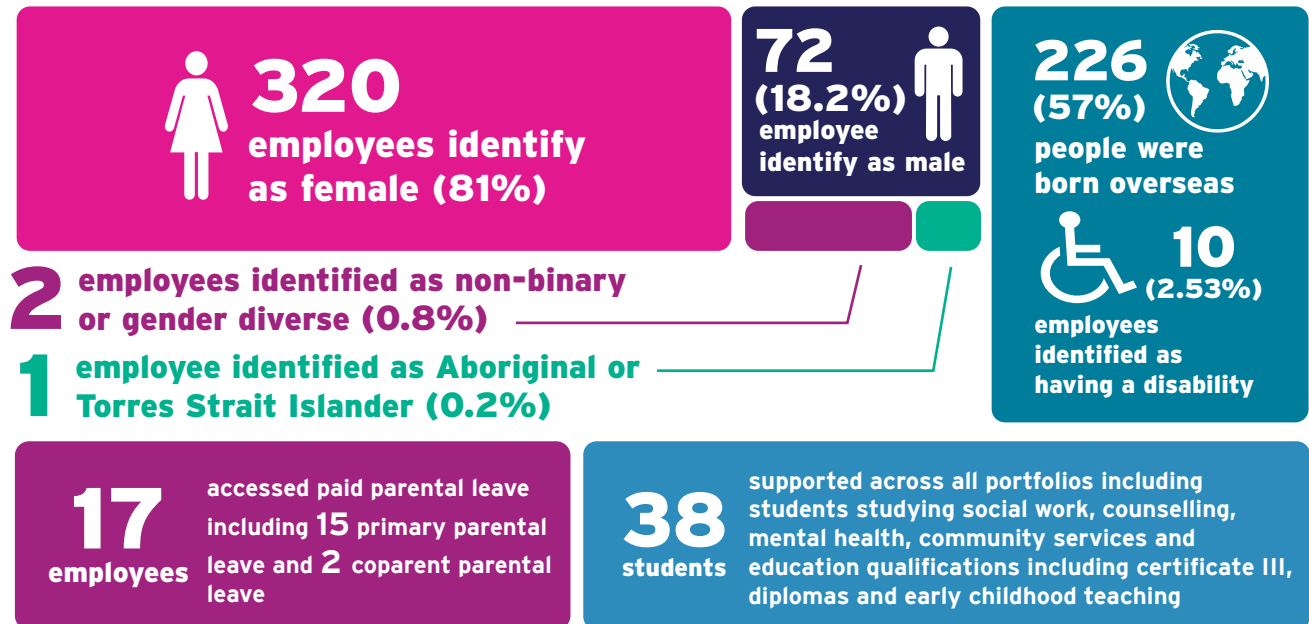
Division of people within the organisational structure:



141 new employees were recruited in 2024-25

57 casual **31** part-time **53** full-time

About us:



Age distribution:



Long-standing employees:



177 employees do not have English as their first language (44.8%)

Hindi, Filipino or Chinese is spoken by 37 employees or 9.4%

Bengali, Indonesian, Tagalog, Urdu, Portuguese or Spanish is spoken by 38 employees or 9.6%

Arabic, Burmese, Cantonese, Swahili, Marathi, Sinhala, Vietnamese, Tamil or Farsi is spoken by 41 employees or 10.4%

Finnish, French, German, Gujarati, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Russian, Thai, Torres Strait Island Languages or Ukrainian is spoken by 77 employees or 4.1%

Top Languages by Number of Speakers



Governance and Corporate Structure

YWCA Canberra operates under a robust governance model, overseen by a board of up to 12 directors who define the organisation's strategic goals. The Board of Directors adheres to a Code of Ethics and Proper Practice, and their work is guided by a comprehensive governance manual, which outlines the relationship between the Board and the Chief Executive Officer. Our Constitution sets forth the fundamental principles governing our organisation and was last amended at the Extraordinary General Meeting on May 16, 2018.

Our Executive Management Team adopts a holistic organisational approach, guiding pivotal decisions on strategic directions, accountability frameworks, organisational development, policy formulation and quality assurance. The team includes the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Executive Director of Children's Services, Executive Director of Communication, Advocacy and Engagement and Executive Director of People and Capability. As the sole employee of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer bears responsibility for YWCA Canberra's day-to-day management.



2024 - 2025 Board Directors



Frances Crimmins
Chief Executive Officer



Carina Zeccola*
President



Kristin Blume
Vice President
Resigned 10/02/2025



Natalie Hyde
Treasurer



Julie Lean
Board Member



Maree Harman
Board Member



Renee Mastrolembo*
Board Member



Lauren Hassall
Board Member
Resigned 19/05/2025



Fern Denton-McDermott*
Board Member



Caroline Khalil
Board Member



Jacqui Dowling*
Board Member



Kirsty Martin*
Board Member
Resigned 04/11/2024



Tahlia Burgoyne-Thorek*
Board Member



Joy Burch
Board Member

The Audit and Risk Committee, chaired by an independent member of the Board, continued to oversee internal and external audits, advise on emerging risks and support strategic planning for new community initiatives



Bridget Browne
Chair



Victoria Oakden
Deputy Chair

* Denotes young women (aged 30 years or under) at time of appointment. YWCA Canberra maintains a commitment to ensuring that 30% of all leadership positions and decision-making bodies are held by young women.

Board Traineeship Program

Launched in 2002, our Board Traineeship Program reflects our commitment to cultivating leadership pathways for young women and non-binary people. The program offers participants meaningful engagement with our board without the financial or legal obligations of full directorship.

As part of our broader diversity strategy, the program reserves 30 percent of board positions for women aged 30 and under, fostering a dynamic, intergenerational culture that strengthens our governance and deepens our impact.

This year, we welcomed **Anne-Marie Ruiz Ferrandiz** to the YWCA Canberra Board. During her traineeship, she contributed to discussions on housing affordability and budgeting and gained first-hand insight into organisational decision-making. She had the opportunity to learn directly from accomplished women leaders on our Board, whose skills span law, finance, community services, and public policy. Marie-Anne also participated in the Board Planning Day on 8 February, gaining valuable exposure to strategic discussions and leadership development in action. The experience allowed her to see how strategy is shaped at the highest level, while building their own confidence as a future leader.

Board Trainee Testimonial

"The YWCA Canberra's Board Traineeship has given me an unparalleled opportunity to learn from highly experienced women who are leaders in their respective fields. A highly engaged board with a clear values-driven mission, that welcomes dialogue and debate is essential to an agile and well-governed organisation, especially one deeply engaged in the community through social services.

I was proud to represent the organisation at events throughout the year, including the Great Ideas Breakfast, the launch of the Working with Women Alliance at Government House, and at the She Leads Conference in August 2025.

I highly recommend this 12-month program to young women seeking to develop their knowledge of organisational management and governance."

- Anne-Marie Ruiz Ferrandiz

Great Ydeas

YWCA Canberra's Great Ydeas Small Grants Program empowers local women, girls and non-binary individuals by offering financial support to help them pursue their passions and make a positive impact in the community.

Established in 2010 to celebrate our 80th anniversary, the program has awarded individual grants of up to \$2,500. To date, it has supported over 100 innovative and impactful initiatives, including public awareness campaigns, podcasts, empowerment programs, social enterprises, financial literacy workshops for young women and toolkits designed to support victims and survivors of sexual violence. Initiatives that empower the local community and have potential for growth beyond the initial funding are prioritised.

In 2025, YWCA Canberra is proud to have fully financed the program, distributing a dedicated pool of \$9,000 to support impactful projects across the Canberra region.

This year's grant recipients reflect the creativity, compassion and drive of Canberra's changemakers. Among them is Isabel Richards, whose *Sci_Burst Podcast* blends science, entertainment and community in an inclusive and engaging format. We also supported Angelina Inthavong's *Sexual Health and Reproductive Equity (SHARE) Campaign*, a bold grassroots movement led by young women and gender-diverse individuals, advocating for universal access to contraception across Australia.

Another standout project was Otgondalai Byambasuren's *Dancing Queen Project*, a powerful initiative that brings Mongolian women in Canberra together through the joy of traditional dance, fostering connection and community support. Finally, we were thrilled to support Kate Buerckner's *Weaving Wonders*, a beautiful collection of basket-woven animals designed to support traditional and Dreamtime storytelling in rural preschools, kindergartens and early learning centres throughout Australia.

From empowering young changemakers and amplifying underrepresented voices in science, to celebrating cultural heritage and fostering inclusive community connections, these projects embody the spirit of innovation, equity and transformation.



World YWCA Day

YWCA Canberra proudly marked World YWCA Day under the theme of International Leadership, celebrating the strength found in shared power, knowledge, resources and accountability. Although the day is traditionally observed on April 24, our celebration took place on April 29 during the Great Ydeas Innovation Breakfast, an event that reflected our commitment to fostering intergenerational leadership and recognising those driving human rights advocacy and meaningful community change.

Since 1929, YWCA Canberra has remained at the forefront of community leadership and advocacy for women's rights. Throughout the year, we continued to champion housing as a human right, deliver essential services and create empowering spaces where girls and women could thrive.

In the face of growing challenges to personal agency and civic space, our community remained united in purpose and action.



WorldYWCA



Supporters

Over the past financial year, YWCA Canberra launched two dedicated social media platforms on Instagram and Facebook specifically for our Children's Services. They provide timely updates, event reminders, and offer a window into the enriching activities children enjoy each day. Feedback from educators and parents has been positive, highlighting these platforms as a valuable communication tool.

Our ongoing leadership opportunities, including the Great Ydeas Small Grants Program, Board Traineeships, and flagship events like the She Leads Conference, continue to attract and empower women from diverse backgrounds. To maintain accessibility, \$5 YWCA Canberra memberships are offered to all She Leads Conference attendees, supporting a broad and inclusive community.

Our e-newsletter remains a key engagement tool, reaching **8,820 total subscribers** with updates, opportunities, and stories that inspire connection and action within our network.

In media advocacy, YWCA Canberra continued strong engagement this year through appearances and features on ABC Radio, 2CC and The Canberra Times amplifying our voice on critical community issues.

Looking forward, we aim to build on this momentum by expanding our digital platforms and leadership pathways, strengthening our reach and impact across YWCA Canberra.

Overall, we expanded our online community to **26,170 followers and supporters.**

This growth has fostered an active and vibrant community that positively engages with our posts, celebrating the impactful work we do.

Through our communication channels, subscribers receive monthly updates on leadership events, community news, services, and advocacy initiatives. We're proud to see our online community thriving, with a growing base of supporters who are actively engaging with and mobilising around our work.



Affiliated Channels

1,444 Followers on the She Leads Facebook Page

606 Followers on the She Leads LinkedIn Page

685 Followers on the YWCA Canberra Clubhouse Facebook Page

893 followers on the YWCA Canberra Youth Engagement Team Instagram

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Promoting and improving gender equality in the workplace is key to our mission, and YWCA Canberra proudly reports our progress in this regard to the Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency. We remain the only Employer of Choice for Gender Equality in the ACT. While this citation recognises our work and commitment to advancing gender equality within our sphere of influence, it is time for other employers to step up and join us in achieving this recognition. Achieving workplace gender equality will require all of us to put words into action. We've held this citation since 2014, keeping pace with reforms and best practice employment policies, reflecting the agility of our reporting nous and long-standing commitment to advancing gender equality across our organisation.

Our current Enterprise Agreement (2023-2027) reinforces this commitment by embedding fair pay, flexible work arrangements, and generous paid parental leave. These policies are designed to support all staff, particularly women, in thriving professionally while maintaining career progression and work-life balance.



Median Gender Pay Gap
- 13.1%
Average total remuneration gap
- 10.5%

A direct result of our sustained efforts to eliminate systemic bias and promote workplace equity

Our Gender Equality and Equity Strategy (2024-2028) sets ambitious goals, including a minimum of 50% women in senior leadership roles, a target already met, with our entire Executive Team comprising women during the WGEA reporting period. We actively encourage men to work in traditionally female-dominated sectors, such as Early Childhood Education and Care, to help address occupational segregation and drive broader cultural change. We continue to support pay equality throughout our workforce including our early educators, a highly feminised industry. Securing a stronger award setting for this workforce recognises the value and skill of their profession and the contribution of their labour to Australia's future workforce.

As a feminist organisation with a 96-year legacy in Canberra, YWCA Canberra uses its voice to advocate for systemic change, including improved industrial and award settings for the community and early education sectors.

Flexible work options available to staff include:

9-day
fortnight

4-day
compressed
work week

Paid
parental leave
on commencement

"As the only Employer of Choice in the ACT, we take immense pride in leading by example and continuously call on others to join us in this important mission."

– Frances Crimmins, YWCA Canberra CEO

Quality Assurance

YWCA Canberra has successfully completed the full cycle review for the QIC Health and Community Services Standards (7th Edition), meeting all five requirements and receiving a highly affirming report. We were rated compliant across all criteria, reflecting our commitment to safe, inclusive, and high-quality services. This outstanding result is a true team achievement, with an official commendation for our commitment to Workplace Gender Equality.



YWCA Canberra remains accredited against the following external standards:

- **Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission**
- **National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care**
- **National Regulatory System for Community Housing**
- **Registered Training Organisations Standards**
- **Suitable entity under the Children and Young People Act 2008**

Risk Management

YWCA Canberra has continued to strengthen organisation-wide systems and processes, building on the successful implementation of the cloud-based Quality and Risk Management System (Beakon). This platform now supports consistent and transparent management of:

- **Incident and hazard reporting**
- **Compliments, complaints and feedback**
- **Work Health and Safety**



We expanded Beakon's implementation across additional service areas and refined workflows to improve data quality and responsiveness. Staff training sessions were delivered to ensure consistent use and understanding of the system.

ICT

We continued to strengthen our ICT infrastructure in partnership with our Managed Service Provider, mcrIT, enhancing our cyber security capacity to align with the Australian Government's Essential Eight Maturity Model. We also developed a Cyber Incident Response Plan to ensure we can respond swiftly and effectively to any cyber security incidents.



Work Health and Safety

The WHS Committee played a central role in supporting workplace safety by coordinating WHS audits and overseeing the completion of follow-up actions. This contributed to maintaining compliance and driving continuous improvement in safety standards across all sites.

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) were instrumental in strengthening WHS governance by acting as a bridge between workers and management. Through regular communication and consultation with HSRs and teams, the Committee improved the flow of safety-related information, fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration, and shared responsibility for health and safety.

Committee Meetings

The WHS Committee meets every two months, with five meetings held during the 2024-25 financial year.

Training and Development

Manual handling training was delivered to all Early Learning staff to raise awareness of everyday workplace risks and promote safe lifting techniques. These sessions aim to reduce the risk of injury by equipping employees with practical strategies for safe manual handling in their daily roles.

Strong WHS Governance

Committee-Led Audits: Supported site audits and ensured follow-up actions were completed to maintain compliance and enhance safety standards.

HSR Consultation: Health and Safety Representatives acted as a communication link between staff and management, strengthening consultation processes.

Donations and Fundraising

We had a record year of donations, with YWCA Canberra receiving a total of \$750,000 in community donations, fundraising campaigns and private donors and this our most successful year of donations to date.

Our End of Financial Year appeal alone raised \$35,773, including a generous \$10,000 contribution from The Tall Foundation. We also extend a huge thank you to the Order of Lazarus for the mega concert held at Wesley Uniting Church in support of our Next Door program for women.

Our LGBTQIA+ Allies Prom Fundraiser raised \$7,350 and saw 150 youth attend prom for free!

Plate Up Canberra! Brought in \$5,500 and continues to be one of our most meaningful community fundraising events, supporting families in our services. Each year, funds raised enable us to purchase gift cards that provide families with dignity and freedom of choice.

Betty Ferguson, a dedicated life member of YWCA Canberra handcrafted a stunning queen size quilt which brought in \$1,000 raised for our Domestic Violence Support Service through a silent auction.

Our Buy a Brick fundraiser supports our next YHomes Housing Development initiative, with each donation symbolically representing a brick in a future housing development. These contributions help us expand our portfolio of purpose-built homes that provide safety, dignity, and stability for women rebuilding their lives. Thanks to generous community support, we raised over \$13,000 for this initiative and secured additional private donations that will contribute directly to our next housing development.

In addition to generous private donors, the support is helping us turn our vision for bricks-and-mortar solutions into reality, funding the construction of more purpose-built homes for women and children. This commitment to building secure, long-term housing plays a vital role in creating stability, safety, and a foundation for rebuilding lives.

\$750,000
in community donations

**End of Financial Year
appeal raised
\$35,773**



\$7,350
raised



\$5,500
raised

YHomes
Buy a Brick
\$13,000
raised

Financial Sustainability

YWCA Canberra ended the 2024-2025 financial year as a period of both opportunity and challenge. The organisation continued to strengthen its role as a trusted provider of community services, childcare, registered training unit and housing initiatives, while navigating a dynamic funding environment and rising cost pressures. Despite these challenges, YWCA Canberra remained focused on delivering quality services, advancing gender equality, and ensuring financial sustainability to support the long-term needs of the community.

Through sound financial stewardship and a commitment to sustainability, YWCA Canberra strengthened its financial standing while strategically investing in initiatives designed for long-term impact. The organisation remains well equipped to address future challenges and capitalise on opportunities that advance its mission of promoting equity and inclusion for women, families, and communities throughout the ACT.

YWCA Canberra ended the 2024-25 financial year with a surplus of **\$3,678,578 (2023-24: \$1,529,977)**

Financial Performance

Revenue:

Total revenue for the 2024 - 25 financial year was **\$36,661,400**, representing a **18% increase** from the last financial year. (2023-24: \$31,127,965).

The growth was primarily driven by:

(41%)

Increase in grant funding from government agencies

(65%)

Increase in transitional and affordable housing income

(35%)

Surge in Rentwell DGR donation income

(30%)

Growth in investment portfolio income from dividends and interest

(8%)

Expansion in children's services portfolio and improved occupancy

Our ability to diversify funding sources has strengthened our financial position and reduced reliance on any single funding stream.

Expenses:

Total expenses for the 2024 - 25 financial year amounted to **\$32,982,822**, representing a **11% increase** from the last financial year. (2023-24: \$29,597,988)

The increase in expenses was lower than the 18% rise in income, demonstrating prudent cost management despite ongoing economic challenges.

The majority of expenditures were directed towards program services, enabling the delivery of vital activities and support within the community.

The breakdown of the expenses is as follows:

Administrative Expenditure:
\$4,525,637 (14%)

Equipment Expenditure:
\$2,499,392 (8%)

Staffing Expenditure:
\$25,051,775 (76%)

Services and
Utilities Expenditure:
\$906,019 (3%)

Financial Position

YWCA Canberra concluded the financial year in a strong financial position, reporting net assets of **\$20,479,575** as at 30 June 2025 (2023-24: \$16,410,169), representing an increase of **\$4,069,406** or 25% compared to the previous year. Cash reserves and liquid assets remain at healthy levels, highlighting our ability to maintain ongoing operations and advance strategic objectives.

The ongoing expansion of our housing property portfolio continues to support service delivery and ensure long-term stability. Our liabilities remain moderate, primarily comprising lease obligations and payables, all of which are effectively managed in accordance with agreed terms.

Overall, the organisation's balance sheet demonstrates stability, resilience, and readiness to support both short-term operations and long-term strategic growth.

YWCA Canberra reported a cash flow position of **\$6,771,852** for the 2024-2025 financial year (2023-24: \$5,072,628), representing an increase of **\$1,699,224** or 33% compared to the previous year. Operating cash flows were sufficient to meet day-to-day obligations, while also enabling continued investment in key programs and community services. The organisation remains well placed to manage future commitments and to support sustainable service delivery.

Outlook and Sustainability

YWCA Canberra is committed to building long-term sustainability through prudent financial management, investment in workforce capability, and strong governance. We continue to diversify our income streams and strengthen reserves, ensuring we can adapt to future challenges and deliver meaningful outcomes.

Acknowledgements

Community Partners or Sponsors

- ACT Government
- A Gender Agenda
- ACT Child and Family Centres
- ACTCOSS
- Barnardos
- Berryl Women
- Cafe Steppingstone
- Canberra Rex Hotel
- Canberra Women's Giving Circle
- Capital Chemist Isabella Plains
- Capital Region Community Services
- Care Financial
- CHC
- Communities @ Work
- Community Services#1
- Companion House
- Conflict Resolution Services
- COTA ACT
- Department of Social Services
- Directions Health
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Doris
- Families ACT
- Federal Office for Women
- Foodbank of NSW and ACT
- GIVIT
- Gordon Community Centre
- Gymparoo Canberra
- Hands Across Canberra
- Havlock House
- Human Rights Commission of the ACT
- Lions Club of Tuggeranong
- MARSS
- Marymead CatholicCare Canberra Goulburn
- MEIACT
- Menslink
- Mental Health Coalition of the ACT
- MHub
- Modern Teaching Aids
- National Women's Alliances
- Order of St Lazarus ACT
- Oz Harvest
- Pams Pantry
- PCYC Canberra
- Playgroups ACT
- Reconciliation Australia
- Rotary Club of Tuggeranong
- Roundabout ACT
- Senator Katy Gallagher's Office
- Services Australia Tuggeranong Office
- Share the Dignity
- SHFPACT
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Talk About Menopause

- The Street Theatre
- The Tall Foundation
- Toora Women Inc.
- Woden Community Services
- Women's Health Matters
- Youth Coalition
- YWCA Australia
- YWCA Hunter Valley

Organisational Sponsors

- Australian Federal Police
- AARNET
- Allhomes
- Baker's Delight
- Big Barber Conder
- Branded Graphics
- Emma Brown Legal
- Farrar Gesini Dunn
- FUSE Magazine
- Gallagher
- Griffin Legal
- Hayman Partners
- HESTA
- M&K Meats
- MTP Service
- Opteon
- Parker Coles Curtis
- Phish and Phreak
- Prinstant
- Pulse8 Strategies

- Snow Foundation
- Spark Therapy
- Sustineo
- Wok it up Conder
- Woolworths at Work
- Woolworths Group

Donations

- Andrew Langford
- Anita Agett
- Betty Ferguson
- Brigitte Curnow
- Colin Hauff
- David and Emma Pocock
- Deborah Burr ridge
- Desi Connors
- Diana Exon
- Elizabeth and David Teather
- Ella Dilkes-Frayne
- Fiona Jenkins
- Fiona Morris
- Greg Tannahill
- Hala Batainah
- Howard Maclean
- Jackie Pratt
- James House
- Jane Wilson
- Jennifer Granger
- Jude Burger
- Karen McKernan
- Kristin Blume
- Lachlan Blain
- Liz Holcombe

- Lorraine Tomlins
- Margaret Gordon
- Meredith Edwards
- Miriam Blackburn
- Nicole van Zomeren
- Pamela M Mcdougall
- Peggy Daroesman
- Peter Lee
- Rohan Brunskill
- Squeaky Clean
- Thomas Boulton
- Vicky Miller
- Virginia French
- Wal Collins
- Yiding Yang
- Yuko Kinoshita

Volunteers

- Abbie Turner
- Adrijana Sarcevic
- Alex Williams
- Alice Turner
- Annette Maunsell
- Arian Holmes
- Brian Harris Mays
- Denis Boutcher
- Gillian Harris May
- Grace Marshall
- Hayden Whitfield
- Jerry Qian
- Jess Jaing
- Joe Winterbottom

- Lions Club of Tuggeranong
- Lynda Curry
- Massimo Cobuccio
- Oliver Peppermint
- Peter Curtis
- Peter Gilligan
- Preet Kamar Kuar
- Rotary Club of Tuggeranong
- Sangay Ong
- Thy O'Donnell

YWCA CANBERRA

Level 2, 71 Northbourne Ave, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph 02 6185 2000

E canberra@ywca-canberra.org.au

www.ywca-canberra.org.au



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