

WOMENS SAFETY SERVICES  
ANNUAL REPORT  
23 / 24

## Acknowledgement of Country



Aboriginal people have made, and continue to make, a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state of South Australia.

We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the First Nations people of this country and recognise Aboriginal people as traditional owners and occupants of South Australian land and waters.

We acknowledge that the First Nations people have never ceded sovereignty, and remain strong in their enduring connection to land and culture.

Women's Safety Services SA acknowledges that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people come from their traditional lands and waters, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws that are of ongoing importance today.



# Our Values

AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE WAY WE WORK

We value and are committed to:

- o Safety
- o Diversity and Equity
- o Respect
- o Responsiveness
- o Flexibility and Innovation
- o Knowledge and Accountability
- o Community responsibility

# Our Purpose

WSSSA works with women and their children who are at risk of, or are experiencing domestic or Aboriginal family violence, by assisting them to achieve safer, connected, and supported lives.



# Our Vision

A society where women and their children live safely and thrive in communities free from all forms of violence.



# Our Board

Women's Safety Services SA is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee.

Operations are overseen by a voluntary Board of Directors made up of leaders representing a broad cross-section of the community.



Tharani Mahadeva  
Interim Chair



Kimberley Wanganeen  
Deputy Chair



Susan Crago



Jodie Stevens



Sarah Fitzharris



Alexandra Wirth



Maria Hagias  
Chief Executive Officer

## RETIRING DIRECTORS



Sarah Wendt  
(Chair) Retired  
29 July 2024



Sharon Walker-Roberts  
Retiring 22  
November 2024

# Chairs Report

2023- 2024 has been another amazing year for Women's Safety Services SA. This is the year the Royal Commission into Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Violence is being held in South Australia. The advocacy of Embolden, WSSSA and the sector were pivotal in enabling this to commence.

2024 was also a year of change for me. I became the inaugural Director for the Social Workers Registration Board; hence I am leading the implementation of registration for social workers in South Australia and advocating for national registration. As this brings change to the sector, I thought it was appropriate and ethical to resign from my position as Chair of the Board for WSSSA – which I did in July 2024.

The Committees have found their rhythm and I thank all those who participate in them to ensure good governance for WSSSA. I wish to thank each member of the Board. I thank Tharani Mahadeva for stepping in to be Chair for the remaining part of the year, Kimberley Wanganeen for her support as Deputy Chair, Susan Crago, Jodie Stevens, Sharon Walker-Roberts, Sarah Fitzharris and Alexandra Wirth.

Thank you to Maria Hagias for her leadership, advocacy, and commitment to this work, and her support to me. I also thank Jodie Sloan for her leadership and enjoyed my time working alongside her when she acted as CEO. Thank you Rebecca Codling for your partnership and exceptional support to me as Chair.

As Chair on behalf of the Board, I truly thank all staff, volunteers, students and sponsors who contribute to WSSSA – the commitment is vital as we as a society continue to understand and respond to violence against women and their children.

It is with gratitude that I close my report. Thank you WSSSA for providing me the opportunity to be on the Board as a member and the Chair. It is a highlight in my career. To contribute to enabling safety and freedom for women and children is a commitment I will forever hold.

**Professor Sarah Wendt**



*".. the commitment is vital as we as a society continue to understand and respond to violence against women and their children."*

# CEO's Report

This year we sadly lost a stalwart of the women's sector in South Australia – Helen Oxenham OAM. As we gathered to celebrate her life, we reflected on her determination to make a difference for women and children.

For many of us, it is difficult to comprehend how little existed by way of support, understanding and even compassion for the women and children Helen helped when she first arrived in Australia. Her impact has been immeasurable and the shelter she established still stands today in the Southern region, having supported thousands of women and children.

Our work continues so as to ensure that the services we provide, and the continued advocacy, will make a difference for those affected by Domestic and Family Violence.

This year witnessed the tireless effort of the sector in advocating for all to do better for those most vulnerable in our community. After a number of tragedies that resulted in the death of women, the State Government heard our calls for a Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence. We are pleased to be working collaboratively to ensure better responses that address violence against women and children. Over the next 12 months we will work in partnership with the Royal Commission and Government to support their work and recommendations.

We continue to provide early intervention and recovery pilot programs and look forward to their expansion and long-term funding. These programs have had significant impact and provided a very much needed pathway for families in their journey to be free of violence and trauma.

Representation and participation in both State and National bodies have ensured that we influence policy direction, WSSSA has a voice on the National Plan Advisory Group and as Members of Embolden, South Australia's peak body. This has been instrumental in raising the focus of DFV and Sexual Assault and the need for better responses and appropriate resourcing to meet the needs of our community.

We value our partnerships working with organisations and individuals to collectively make a difference, and this has ensured positive outcomes for families. Over the year we worked closely with SAPOL in the establishment of the Northern Hub, an integrated model supporting families to address risk and safety management in the Northern metropolitan region of Adelaide. Legal Services Commission are also based at the Hub, and we have visiting services such as Centrelink and Neami. Over the coming year we will be expanding services and look forward to partnering with other government and non-government organisations.





## CEO's Report

WSSSA has undertaken and participated in a number of key projects and activities which build on our vision and capability, these have included:

- Completion and success in achieving Australian Service Excellence Standards
- Cultural Capability training for the whole workforce and development of ongoing capacity building
- Participation in Respectful Club Environments co- Design workshop – RAISE
- Staff participation in the Power of Her Conference - building leadership and advocacy
- Commencing the work to develop the next iteration of our Strategic Plan

It has been a busy and challenging year, which has witnessed increases in demand. This doesn't deter our staff as they continue to meet the challenges with commitment and heart. We are thankful for their tireless work in making a difference to families accessing our services.

The Board continues their commitment in developing and implementing the framework that ensures strong foundations for WSSSA. Over the year they have worked to ensure sound governance and compliance structures are in place and explore ways in which the Boards capability is strengthened to represent the community as a whole.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Board for their support, guidance and wisdom in leading WSSSA, their commitment is outstanding and has ensured that we continue to do the valuable work we do for the community.

**Maria Hagias**



*"Over the next 12 months we will work in partnership with the Royal Commission and Government to support their work and recommendations."*



As of 30 June 2024, WSSSA had 121 staff members including staff on parental, unpaid leave or return to work.

# Our People

Our team embodies passion, resilience, and mutual respect. We continue to provide vital services in the domestic, family, and sexual violence sector across South Australia. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our staff for their dedication, empathy, and ongoing support as we navigate the growth of our organisation.

## STAFF TESTIMONIAL

*“Over the past 14 months, since the launch of the Earlier Access to Supports and Engagement (EASE) program, I have had the privilege of working alongside an incredibly passionate and dedicated team. Their unwavering commitment has not only inspired me but has also ignited my own passion for addressing the gaps within the sector.*



*I am grateful to be part of a team that not only shares a vision but is also committed to turning that vision into reality through hard work and compassion”*

**Tayla, EASE**

## Our Staff

### SERVICE MILESTONES

We are so proud to have Kathy Lilis (Eastern Adelaide DV Service) Tiffany King (Southern DV Service) and Reshmi Thomas (Migrant Women’s Support Program) achieve milestone work anniversaries. We truly appreciate their dedicated service and thank them for choosing to stay with WSSSA and inspire us all with their commitment to our mission.



Kathy Lilis  
25 years



Tiffany King  
17 years



Reshmi Thomas  
10 years



WSSSA had 22 students complete their placements in the 23-24 financial year, 5 of whom we subsequently employed (22.7% employment rate)

## Our Students

Flinders University social work students undertaking placements with WSSSA gain valuable practice experience and professional development. They receive in-depth training on domestic and family violence and have opportunities to apply social work theories in real-world settings.

## STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

*“I undertook a joint placement with WSSSA and Embolden on developing a lived experience roadmap for the DFSV sector. As a placement student I felt respected and valued by WSSSA staff and was provided with opportunities to learn from skilled and experienced DFV practitioners. The training on relational approaches to risk assessment and safety planning was a particular highlight! I have since transitioned to a paid policy role with Embolden thanks to the support provided by WSSSA”*



**Roshni, Senior Policy Officer, Embolden**



# Our People

## Our Volunteers



We thank all our volunteers who generously provide their time and invaluable support to WSSSA. Our volunteers have supported the organisation in a variety of ways, from packing Mother's Day and Christmas gifts for our clients to providing transport for appointments. This support is invaluable to the WSSSA team. Our services would not be the same without their involvement and we thank them for all that they do.

### VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIAL



*"Volunteering at the EADVS has brought joy into my life. It may seem counterintuitive when the women who are living there have had so much pain and trauma, but the centre is a happy place. As I drive in, I feel a sense of peace.*

*I feel privileged to be able to give back or pay it forward as I pack food donated by OzHarvest, deliver food packages to women who are in motels, sort clothes in the donation sheds, ferry women to appointments, run errands for those who can't, pack Christmas and Mother's Day gifts and a myriad of other small but significant tasks."*

**Wendy, Volunteer (Eastern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service)**



Community Development through volunteers. The Boutique was built by Influencers Church (now Futures Church) and is maintained by the wonderful Zonta Club of Adelaide.



EADVS held two group Morning Teas in July 2023 to celebrate the work of our amazing Zonta volunteers.



# Our Activities

## Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence

The State's Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence (DFSV) sector, came together and successfully called for a Royal Commission into domestic, family, and sexual violence in South Australia. A Royal Commission is necessary to thoroughly investigate and develop comprehensive, sustainable solutions to urgent systemic issues, based on the specialised services we provide, and the experiences shared by victim-survivors in South Australia.

WSSSA Staff pictured - Belinda Baker (left) Melanie Mehuys (front left)





# Our Activities

## Northern Multi Agency Hub

The Northern Multi-Agency Hub (Northern Hub) in partnership with SAPOL, officially launched on May 22, 2024.

The Northern Hub will be accessible to clients through sector referral only, and offer a collaborative response from early intervention to recovery.

We express our sincere gratitude to our local community stakeholders for their ongoing support and commitment to our clients.



Below: Ross Wait (Power Community Ltd), Belinda Baker and Tessa Langhans (WSSSA), Mary Leaker (Embalden) Jake Battifuoco (Power Community Ltd)

Above: L-R – John Fulbrook MP, Member for Playford, Rhiannon Pearce MP, Member for King, Prof Sarah Wendt, Chair, WSSSA Board,, Jodie Sloan, Acting CEO, WSSSA, Hon Katrine Hildyard MP, Police Commissioner Grant Stevens APM LEM, Lee Odenwalder MP, Member for Elizabeth

## Working Across the Continuum for Domestic and Family Violence forum

In June of this year, our Earlier Access to Support and Engagement (EASE) team, in collaboration with Power Community Ltd, successfully hosted the 'Working Across the Continuum for Domestic and Family Violence' forum. This full-day event brought together service providers and leaders from the domestic and family violence (DFV) sector, fostering connection and collaboration among attendees from both Eastern and Western metro Adelaide.





# Our Learning

WSSSA's Learning and Education program saw significant growth in the number of training sessions delivered to learners across the state in 2023-2024. Learning and Education delivered a total of 184 opportunities for professional development for the domestic and family violence sector and wider responders from a range of different sectors and organisations throughout South Australia.

Learning and Education created growth of 170% for training delivery and a 220% increase for income earned this financial year. This impressive growth reflects the multiple income sources we have created as well as the strong reputation we are developing as the leading provider of domestic and family violence response training in South Australia.

Some highlights from the Learning and Education activities for this year include:

- The development and delivery of specialist workshops on the Family Safety Framework.
- The operationalising of our learning platform to be able to offer our 'Understanding Coercive Control' course in e-learning format.
- The opportunity to work with 21 different organisations to deliver workforce development to enhance responses to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.

*"A really engaging, thorough training with the right amount of activities, reflection and knowledge/resource sharing. Thank you!"*

Some lovely feedback from our satisfied learners. Here's what a few of them had to say after attending one of our courses:

*"Facilitator was great! Very engaging but not forceful with participation which supported open, safe conversations".*

*"I can respond more confidently and with a better view from the victim's perspective. I also feel more empowered to challenge outdated mindsets and organisational policies when supporting victims of violence"*

*"A tough topic but handled with respect and care. I feel more equipped to handle disclosures in the workplace"*



*Presentation to Carers SA counsellors on Coercive Control, alongside Mary Leaker (Embolden) Kelly Barrett, WSSSA, and Justin Houston from South Australia Police*



# Our Donors

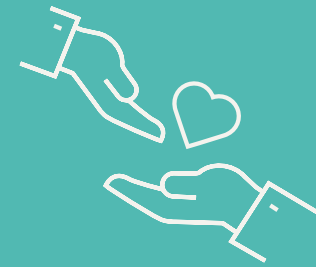
## Thank you

*We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many individuals, community groups, and companies who have supported our work through generous donations and fundraising activities.*

*These contributions have allowed us to provide vital services and programs that empower survivors of domestic violence and their children.*

*We are incredibly grateful for the partnership and commitment to creating a safer future for all.*

137 in-kind donations



Cash donations  
\$69,873.44

## Bequests

In December 2023, the SA Government announced a donation of \$100,000 in memory of Brevet Sergeant Jason Doig, who was killed in the line of duty.

This was in response to a request by his family to donate to WSSSA in his memory, a beautiful gesture amidst such a difficult time for them.

In negotiation with the government, WSSSA proposed this donation be distributed via the Domestic and Family Violence Alliance, noting that Sgt Doig was a regional officer, with strong ties to regional services, as well as the ongoing financial pressures faced by all crisis DFV services.

## Variety Grant

WSSSA were this year the grateful recipients of a \$70,000 grant from Variety SA, for the purchase of a range of toys, therapeutic aids and play equipment for our youngest clients. These ranged from sensory toys right through to a brand-new cubby house for our Eastern Adelaide site.

We can't thank Variety enough for their incredible support they have provided to the children who use WSSSA's services.



*Jordan (Just Cubbies) with the new cubby house for our Eastern Adelaide site.*





# Our Donors

## Futures Church

Futures Church is committed to supporting women and children experiencing domestic and family violence through WSSSA.

Over the financial year, Futures Church have donated financial support and assistance to the following WSSSA Services:

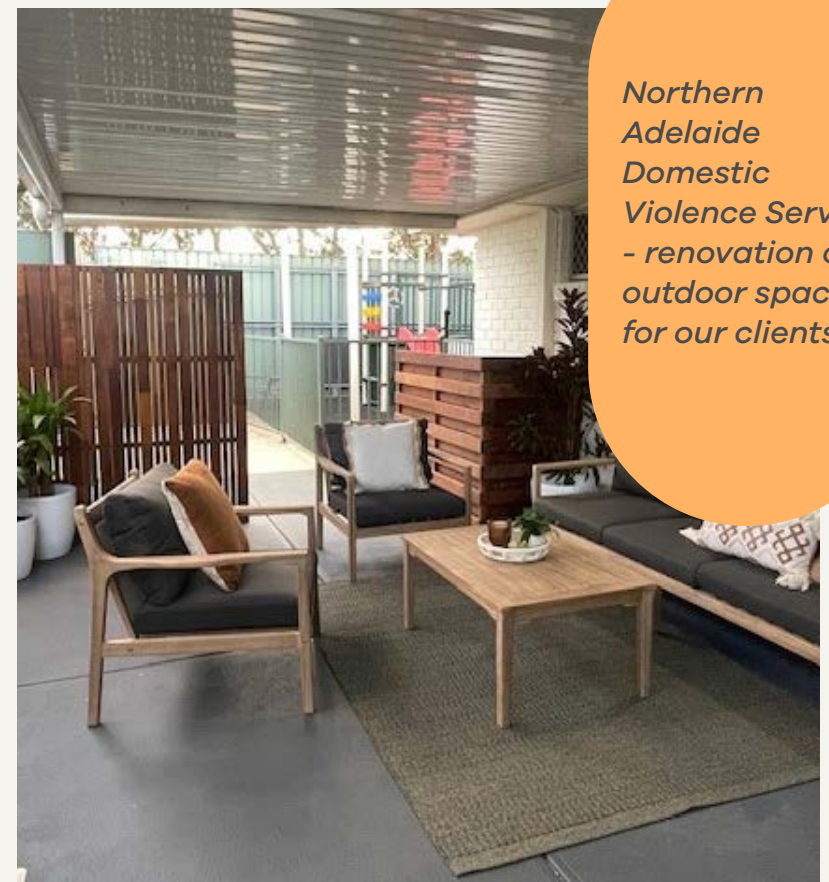
- Eastern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service (EADVS)
- Northern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service (NADVS)
- Southern Domestic Violence Service (SADVS)



Every December for the last 12 years, Futures Church has been supporting EADVS with Christmas gifts for the children of the service.



Area at NADVS prior to the transformation to an outdoor area that is now functional and a welcoming space.



Northern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service - renovation of outdoor space for our clients.



Area at SADVS prior to renovation to a new pergola sitting area for clients and staff.



Futures church re-imagined an old carport and driveway into a beautiful pergola sitting area and garden beds at Southern Domestic Violence Service.



Northern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service plaque.



# Our Services

## New Program Highlights

The National Partnership on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2021-27 supports service providers to deliver critical family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) services. The National Partnership enables WSSSA to deliver two key pilot programs in the eastern and western metropolitan regions of Adelaide. The National Partnership funding also supported the recruitment of direct service delivery staff through the federal government commitment of 500 frontline FDSV workers nationally. As a result, the following positions are now in place:

- WSSSA Women's Safety Contact Program – additional 1 FTE
- WSSSA Multi-Agency Hub (northern region) staff – 2 FTE
- WSSSA Integrated Programs (flexible) – 1 FTE
- WSSSA Migrant Women's Safety Program – additional 1.7 FTE
- WSSSA MAPS representative – additional 0.6 FTE

## Earlier Access to Supports and Engagement (EASE)

The EASE program works with people in an outreach capacity who are at risk of DFV but do not require crisis accommodation at the time of referral. EASE also works directly with CALD communities to provide information about DFV and services available creating additional referral pathways. EASE commenced service in August 2023 and is accessed via self or third-party referral via the DV Crisis Line or the WSSSA Website.

Our partners:

- Nunga Mi:Minar – Northern Regional Aboriginal Family Violence Service
- Centacare Catholic Family Services – Limestone Coast
- Australian Refugee Association

## CSR (Connection, Strength and Recovery)

The CSR Program focuses on therapeutic groups in the east and west regions. The Program collaborates with these teams to explore potential case management processes that could support our client's transition from crisis case management to long term independence and DFV trauma recovery. CSR provides therapeutic, trauma informed DFV education and support groups in the east and west regions, and supports clients with recovery planning, and reconnection to their communities of choice. CSR commenced service delivery in September 2023 and is accessed via internal referral only, or by negotiation with key stakeholders.

Our partners:

- Centacare Catholic Family Services – Limestone Coast
- Centacare Catholic Country SA – Ceduna

*"I found who I am, and how strong I can be"*

*"the EASE program saved my life and helped me stay afloat and remain strong in my decision to leave the relationship".*

*"So safe and comfortable to express myself and begin healing thanks to facilitators and also members of group"*

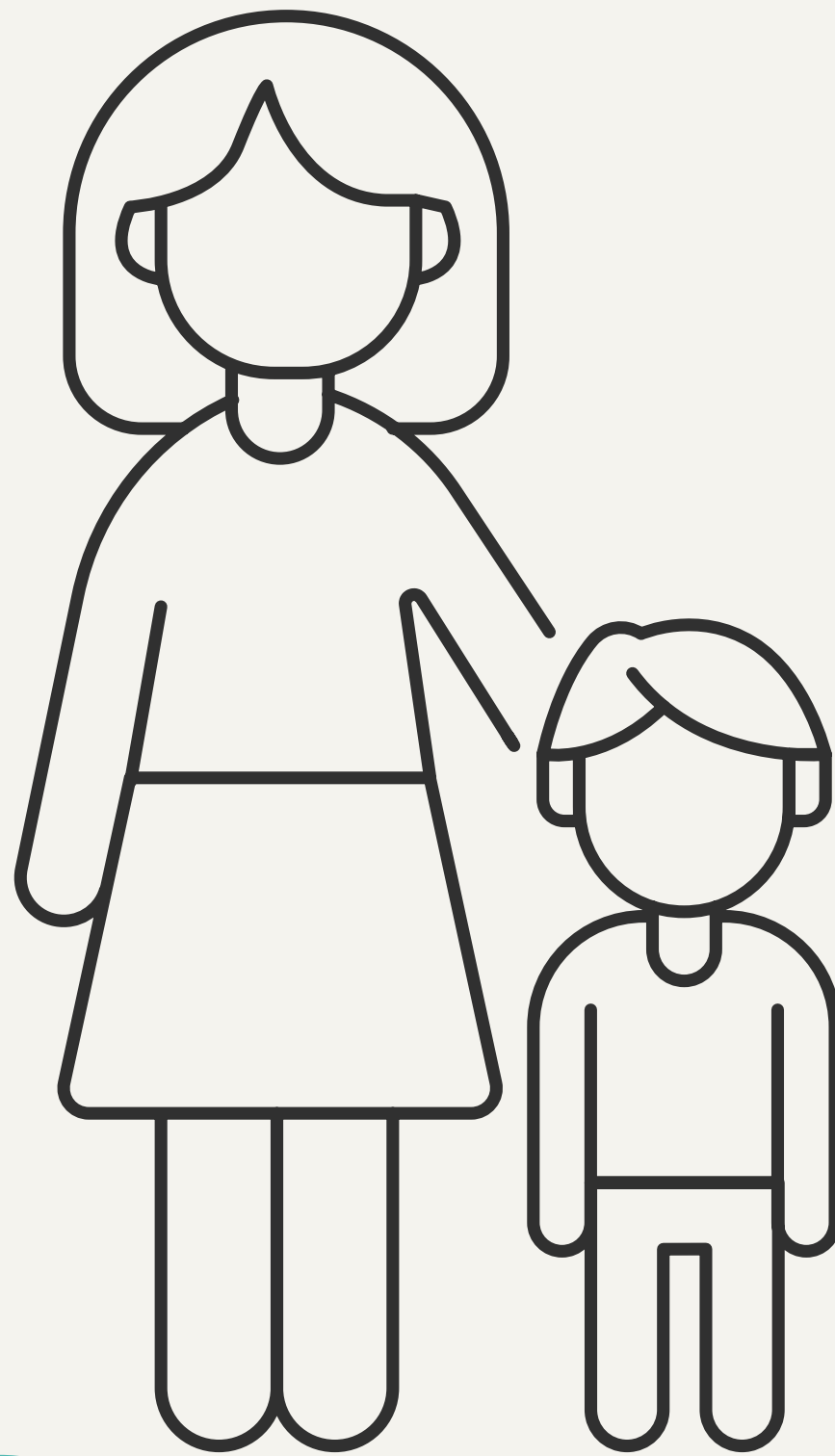
*"Even after a short conversation about red flags I'm going to hold off moving in with him"*

*"I don't know where I would be without your support, there would be no other services that I would be eligible for and I am so grateful for the knowledge and empowerment that was provided".*



# Our Services


**Total People**  
**7,998** accessing our programs\*




**DVCL**  
 total calls answered =  
**25,444**



**Training**  
**184** training sessions delivered  
**1,173** learners


**Safe at Home**  
**417** women referred to program  
**252** women provided with home security audits and upgrades




**Safe & Well Kids**  
**109** women  
**240** children



**MAPS**  
**673** matters mapped  
**595** matters contributed by WSSSA

**1,059** Culturally and linguistically diverse clients\*



**1,167** Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander clients\*



**DFV**  
**1,766** women and children in supported accommodation

\* Please note: clients may have received a service from one or more WSSSA programs.



# Our Financials

## Overview

Women's Safety Services (SA) Ltd continues to have a strong financial position and this is evident in the high level of cash held and increase in net equity. The net profit has increased when compared to prior year due to higher earned income including donations, interest and movement in market valuation. The organisation has remained stable throughout the year and is backed by a strong and experienced leadership. WSSSA is the Lead sector participant in the SA DFV Alliance, which commenced on 1 July 2021. The Finance and Audit Committee in conjunction with PKF who provide financial guidance and support, have worked tirelessly to ensure our financial viability.

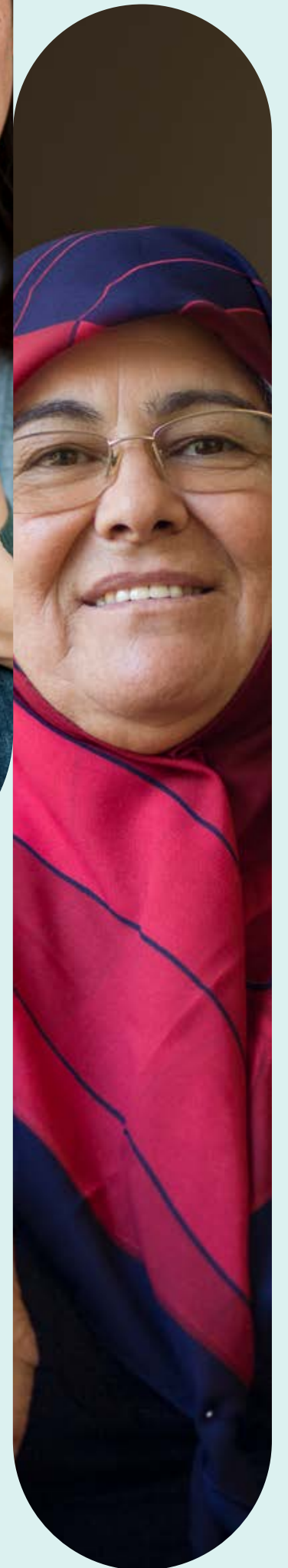
For the financial year ended 30 June 2024, WSSSA has reported a surplus of \$362,007 compared to a surplus of \$113,076 for the same period in the previous financial year.

The increase in revenue is mainly due to new grant funded programs, investment earned income and fundraising. Employee benefits increased as a result of wage award rate and Super Guarantee increases, at a rate higher than State and Federal funding indexation. Client expenses are lower compared to prior year, due to completion of the Individual Support Safety Packages (ISSP) funding, provided during COVID 19.

The increase in current and non-current assets is due to cash reserves and revaluation of right of use assets respectively.

The increase in current and non-current liabilities is due to revaluation of lease liabilities and higher employee provisions.

Copies of the full set of audited financial reports will be available upon request by emailing [contact@womenssafety.com.au](mailto:contact@womenssafety.com.au) or by visiting the ACNC website.





# Our Financials

## Income Statement

	2024	2023
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Donations	160,522	78,659
Grants	15,085,606	14,427,527
Other revenue	3,256,307	2,583,731
	<b>18,502,435</b>	<b>17,089,917</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Client expenses	962,474	1,205,584
Donation expenses	136,593	33,207
Program expenses	241,169	172,757
Salaries & on-costs	12,816,866	11,873,936
Financial services	2,030,195	1,973,488
Depreciation expenses	439,090	257,419
Property expenses	281,367	216,537
Other expenses	1,232,674	1,243,913
	<b>18,140,428</b>	<b>16,976,841</b>
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	<b>362,007</b>	<b>113,076</b>

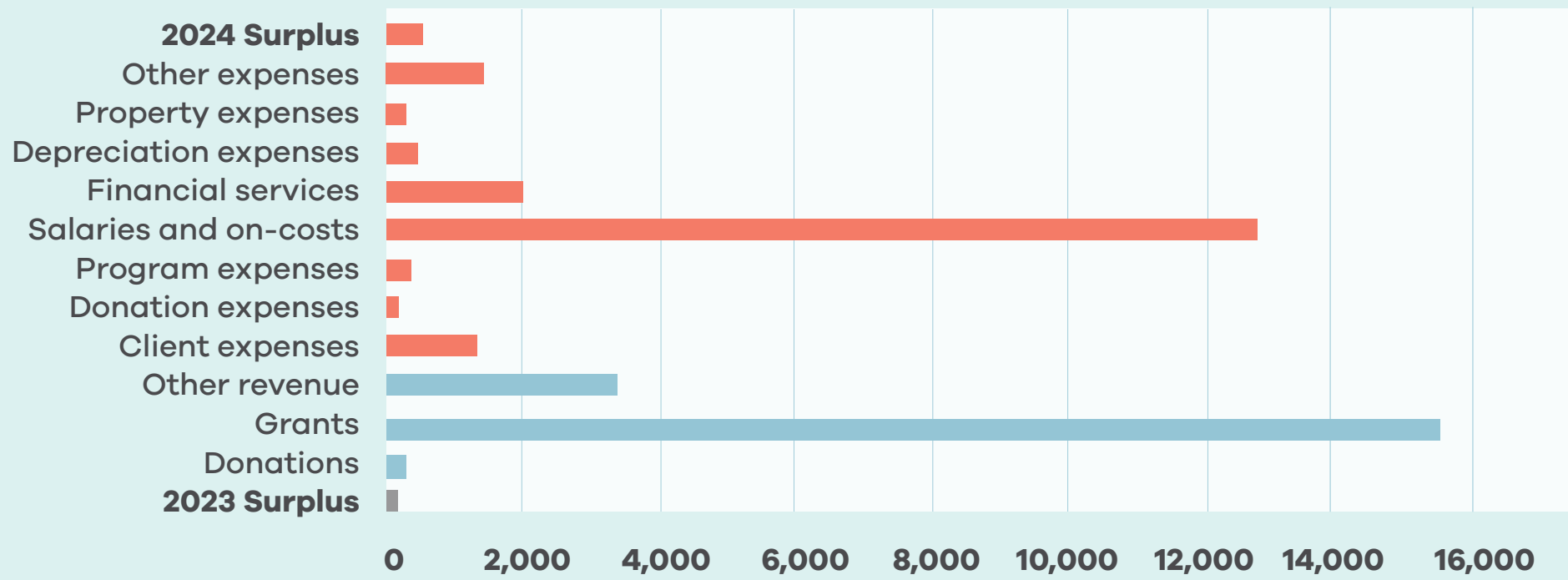
## Financial Position

	2024	2023
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	6,371,069	5,583,164
Trade and other receivables	45,666	6,479
Other	114,907	106,713
Total current assets	<b>6,531,642</b>	<b>5,696,356</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Property, plant and equipment	1,154,371	535,546
Right-of-use assets	1,522,370	700,693
Total non-current assets	<b>2,676,741</b>	<b>1,236,239</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>9,208,383</b>	<b>6,932,595</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	997,572	1,126,329
Employee benefits	1,824,897	1,503,508
Grants and income received in advance	1,342,748	1,189,082
Lease liabilities	405,909	87,589
Total current liabilities	<b>4,571,126</b>	<b>3,906,508</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Employee benefits	290,547	256,853
Other	109,320	68,315
Lease liabilities	1,220,386	697,487
Total non-current liabilities	<b>1,620,253</b>	<b>1,022,655</b>
Total Liabilities	<b>6,191,379</b>	<b>4,929,163</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>3,017,004</b>	<b>2,003,432</b>
<b>Net Equity</b>	<b>3,017,004</b>	<b>2,003,432</b>



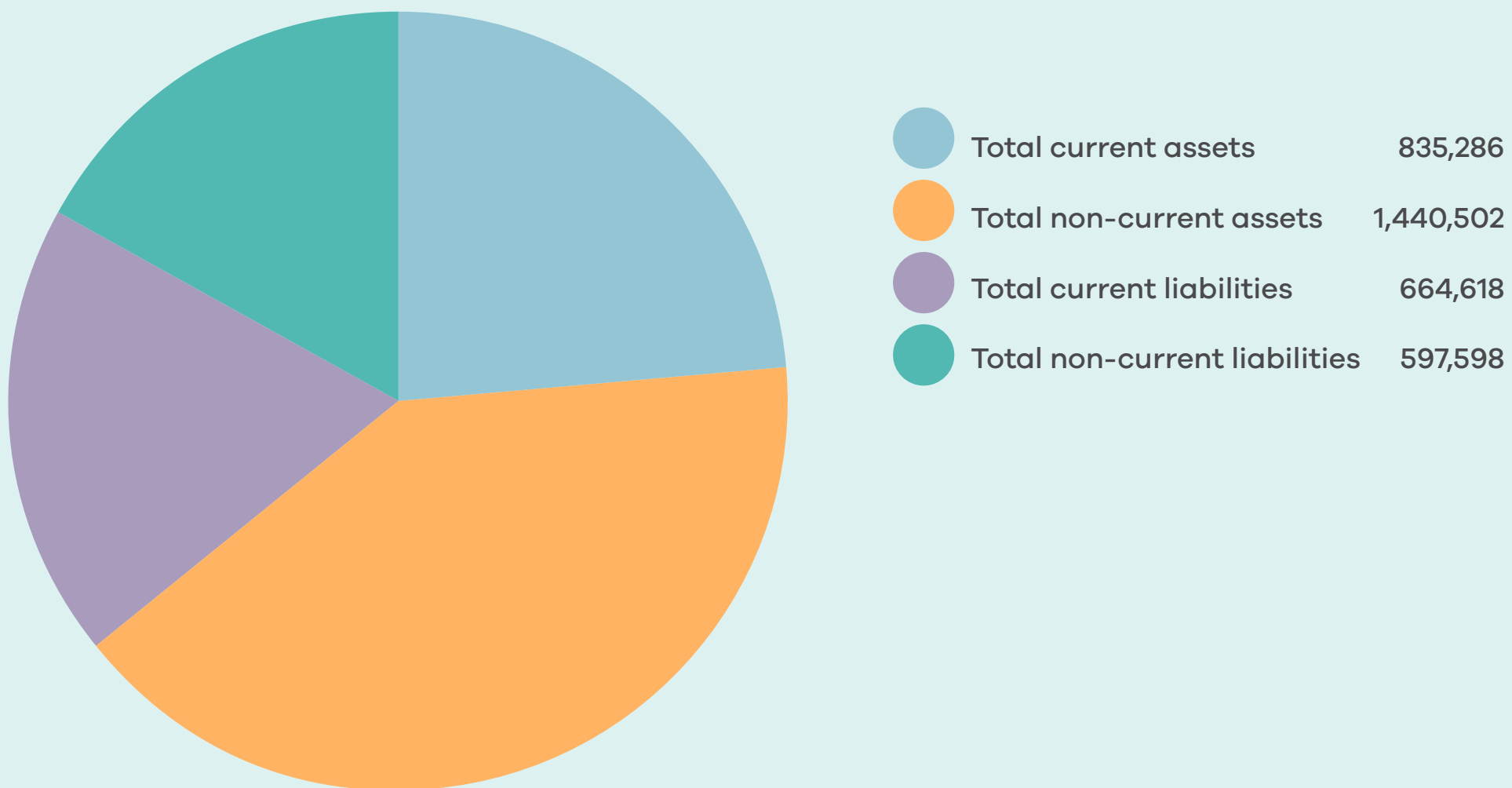
# Our Financials

## Income Statement (\$A,000s)



## Assets and Liabilities

### Increase / Decrease from 2023 to 2024





# Contact us




**DV Crisis Line**  
1800 800 098

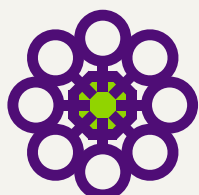
**Corporate office line**  
(08) 8152 9200

**Email**  
[contact@womenssafetyervices.com.au](mailto:contact@womenssafetyervices.com.au)

**Website**  
[womenssafetyervices.com.au](http://womenssafetyervices.com.au)

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-  [womenssafetyervicesa/](https://www.instagram.com/womenssafetyervicesa/)



**Women's Safety Services SA**

Providing support, services and advocacy to enable women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence to claim their right to live free from violence within respectful relationships and in safe communities.

