

nova
for women and children
WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

Annual Report
2024





Acknowledgment of Country

Nova for Women and Children acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land across the different services where Nova staff work, The Awabakal and Worimi people. We honour and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We pay our respects to the people, their cultures and Elders past and present

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About Nova

Nova's History

Three women's services operated independently from each other in Newcastle for approximately 25 years, until Eva's Project and Lower Hunter Women's housing services amalgamated in July 2008. In 2014 Eastlakes Women's and Children's Refuge joined Nova, following the Specialist Homeless Services reforms.

Eva's Project originated through the women's refuge movement that turns 50 this year. It was identified that domestic violence was a major contributor to homelessness for women with dependent children. Domestic and family violence is still the leading cause of women's homelessness today.

Lower Hunter Women's Housing was an initiative of Housing NSW that considered women, with or without dependent children, who were homeless or at risk of homelessness with complex needs, required supported transitional accommodation.

Eastlakes Women's and Children's Refuge started as a volunteer organisation. Government funding was secured through the women's refuge movement and indicated recognition of the validity of the organisation in delivering domestic violence and homelessness services. Over time the service secured two purpose built premises in the Lake Macquarie region for crisis services.

The services brought together a rich history of working with women who have been homeless or at risk of homelessness and/or escaping family and domestic violence, and a strong grounding in the feminist principles of the refuge movement.

Our Vision

A world where women and children live a life that is safe, independent, valued, respected and free from violence.

Our Values

Are built upon the foundations that women and children matter. Underpinning this we:

- Act with good intent
- Focus on strengths
- Promote collaborative, innovative and inclusive practice
- Respect and embrace diversity
- Appreciate and value cultural diversity
- Work respectfully

Our Purpose

To prevent or end homelessness, confront injustice and advocate for the right of women and their children to be safe.

Our Why

A world where women and children matter.

Our Service Area



Lake Macquarie foreshore

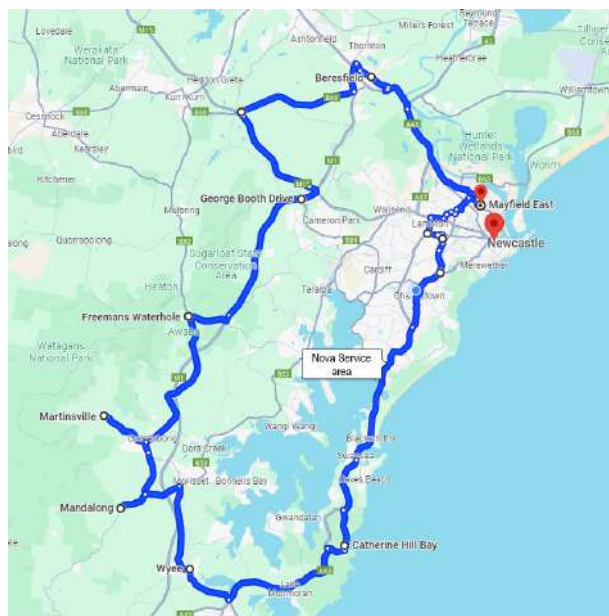
Nova is one of the largest service providers in our area and we cover a large geographical area.

In the Newcastle area, we start from Mayfield East, go up north to Beresfield, then out west as far as the Black Hill area.

In Lake Macquarie, we cover down the West side of the Lake to Mandalong and Wyee areas, then come across to the East side of the Lake to Catherine Hill Bay. We then come back through the Eastlakes side of Lake Macquarie into the Newcastle region and cover most suburbs in between.



This huge catchment is over 160kms round trip, and would take us around 2hrs 45 minutes to drive



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Meet our Nova Board



Rozyta Englert
Chairperson



Sue Hellier
Secretary



Brodie O'Sullivan
Treasurer



Murette Gale
Vice Chairperson



Katy Mooney
Public Officer



Samantha Smith
Board Member

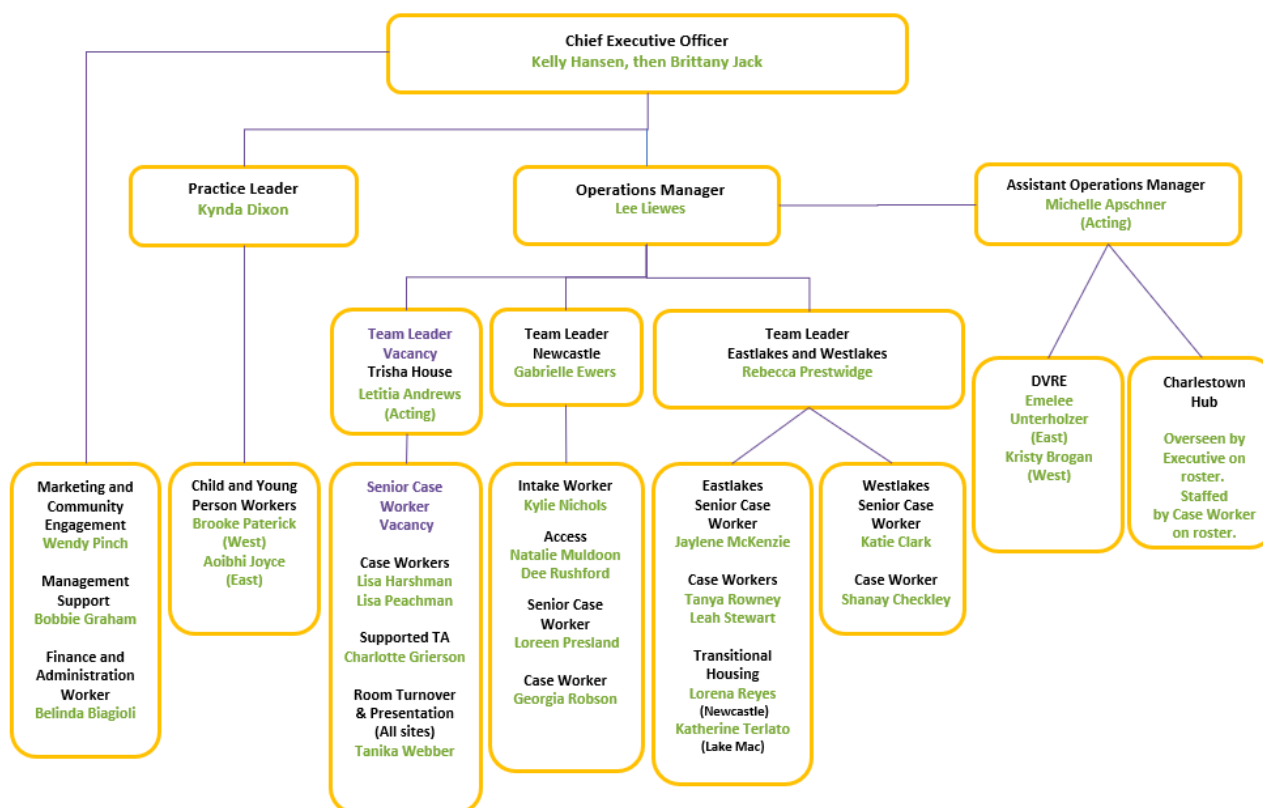


Natalie Oliver
Board Member



Kellen Evans
Board Member

Organisational Structure



We asked our staff what they enjoy about working at Nova. These are some of their answers:

“The fact that I have the opportunity to be the supportive person that I needed in my past”

“I get to make a difference in my community, and I get to do it with a fierce, feminist, extraordinary group of colleagues”

Meet the Chair



Rozyta Englert - Chair

This year was the end of an era as Nova said goodbye to Kelly Hansen, who retired in June. Kelly's impact over the last 33 years has been extraordinary. It includes ensuring that the practice standards at Nova are high, setting up a new model of supported temporary accommodation with community support at Trisha House, and continuous advocacy for women and children for 23 years. The board is grateful for her leadership.

The board has been working to do the impossible to replace Kelly, but also to ensure Nova is ready for the coming challenges.

We welcomed new CEO Brittany Jack at the end of the 2024 year.

The board has completed an external review of the organization, and strengthened governance with board training and a planning day in November 2023. We also introduced a Compliance, Audit and Risk subcommittee.

With our new CEO we are reviewing our structure and ensuring we have the right combination of vision and skills to continue to serve the women and children of our region, with a focus on growth, partnerships and relationships, risk management and nurturing leadership that reflects the organization's values.

Demand for Nova's services continue to escalate, and it's critical that we have a strong and stable structure to grow to meet this demand, as well as continuing to advocate for the funding for our work to match the actual demand. All this needs to be done while supporting our staff to manage significant change, on top of already very demanding roles.

Nova has a skills based board, with a great mix of financial, legal, practice, change management, cultural and specialist knowledge.

I thank the board for their contributions, especially Brodie O'Sullivan for her work as Treasurer and Sue Hellier for her work as Secretary and with our cultural uplift project.

As Chair I also extend my thanks to the Nova leadership team, and all our staff who work so hard to deliver an empowering service for women and children. Lastly, sincere thanks to our funders, donors and supporters who continue to make our work possible.

"Empowering the women we support, and seeing them identify and reach goals"

Nova Staff Member, on why they like working for Nova

Meet the CEO



Brittany Jack - CEO

How can I follow a leader like Kelly Hansen? Kelly has fearlessly advocated for women and children in the Hunter for 23 years at the helm of Nova. In the last few years she oversaw a service that has been stretched to its limits by increasing demand in a post COVID world. I want to thank her for her fearlessness, her passion, and acknowledge the incredible impact she has had on our local community and beyond.

In 2019, Nova supported 1,213 women and children.

In 2024, we supported 1,677

That's a 38% increase in demand.

Our funding in that time increased by just 9%. There's a reason frontline homelessness and domestic violence services are reporting exhaustion and overwhelm right across the country.

Despite this, the team achieved so much. Our team face the unthinkable daily. This year the team managed two critical incidents involving the deaths of one adult and one child. Our team

responded with compassion, dignity and resilience. We honour the memories of these clients.

The team have engaged in practice improvement workshops and devoted time and energy to refreshing the skills that allow them to support women and children every day. There has also been a pattern of team members stepping up into leadership roles – formally and informally. We will benefit from this in the coming year as people move up to fill new roles in our structure.

My priorities as a new CEO are clear. Nova has had a huge period of change in our leadership. Our executive and board are working to create a structure for Nova that optimises the skills we have – and to bring in some specialist skills so our operational teams can focus on what they do best. We are doing this with the safety and sanity of our team as a guiding star – because anyone facing that level of demand, hearing the stories they do, and fighting against a system that wasn't designed to support victim survivors, needs to have the very best support to keep doing their very skilled job. We are continuing to advocate fiercely at an individual and a systems level for our clients, because women and children matter.

As the year closes we have had news of much needed roles focused on post DFV incident support, specialist attention for children and young people, and our first Aboriginal Specialist roles to serve the 1 in 4 clients who are Aboriginal.

But here's the thing: in FY24 we assisted 3 people for every 2 we were funded for. If demand stays the same, with our new roles, we will help 3 people for every 2.5 we are funded for. But we do not expect demand to stay the same, we expect it to grow.

As Nova's new CEO I won't rest until every woman that needs our help can access it. I thank our team for stepping up to meet this challenge. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

Our Impact

During the last financial year:

1677 People
Supported
in the last financial year

54,296

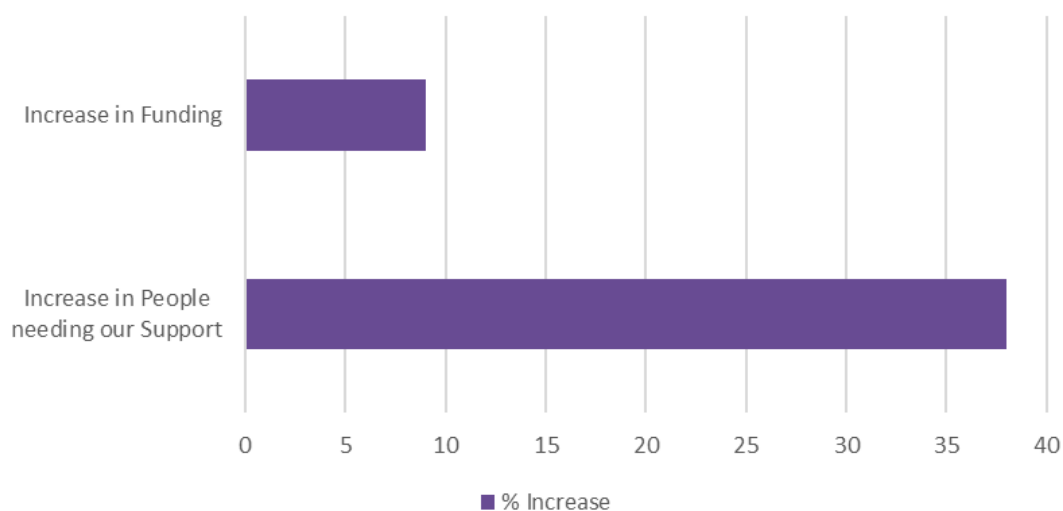
Days of support were provided
to Women and Children

Trends

Demand for our services has grown at a rate that far exceeds our growth in funding:

Since 2019 (pre COVID), the number of women and children Nova has supported has increased 38%. However, our revenue in that time has only increased 9%.

This underscores the pressure all frontline domestic violence and homeless nationwide are experiencing.



Our Impact Con't

What drives women to reach out for our support?

- Domestic and Family Violence – 586
- Housing Crisis – 263
- Inappropriate and Inadequate dwellings – 181
- Housing Affordability Stress - 179



Our homelessness contract in FY2024 ran at 148% of its funded capacity.

Our DVRE program that supports women who have had a recent incident of domestic and family violence ran at 423% of its funded capacity.

Women's Stories

Meet Belinda

Trisha House is a community project, where Nova leases a large building.

There are 13 rooms – 5 are permanently allocated to Supported Temporary Accommodation (STA) for single women, and 8 are available for stays of up to 3 months for single women and families, and case managed by partners including Nova, Jenny's Place, Wandiyali, Samaritans and Warlga Ngarra. This is made possible by organisations working together and pooling SHS case work resource with STA funding to good effect. The project is grounded in community, and high quality supports are delivered on site by a network of SHS professionals.

Belinda (*not her real name*) has been supported by Nova since 2021 and has stayed in Supported Temporary Accommodation twice, in Lake Macquarie and then in our STA project Trisha House. Belinda has complex physical and mental health barriers. In 2019 Belinda was involved in a car accident where she broke close to every bone in her body and acquired a brain injury. Belinda is a survivor of domestic violence. With support, it's been a year since she has used drugs and alcohol.

In January 2024 Belinda was staying at Trisha house and accessing case management support from one of our partners. There were some increasing complexities with her physical and mental health. Belinda was doing all that she needed to do: attending all appointments with the brain injury clinic, counselling, methadone clinic and her local GP, but it was apparent further intensive support was needed. Belinda was offered a placement at a psychiatric hospital. The plan was to strip back all her medication and start from scratch: getting a diagnosis and having the correct medication prescribed. During Belinda's stay at the hospital, her caseworker kept in contact with Belinda to



allow support to be offered pending her release from the hospital.

Belinda benefited greatly from the hospital stay and has come out a different person. The improvement in her physical and mental health has given Belinda back her quality of life and an opportunity to build a quality relationship with her sons. Her caseworker was lucky enough to advocate for a vacancy in supported temporary accommodation pending Belinda's exit from hospital and she has now been staying back in Trisha house for the past month.

The amazing outcome that Belinda has been able to achieve is that she has now been successful with an application for a private rental and is stepping back into employment.

The difference from January to now is unrecognizable. Previously Belinda had been daunted by the thought of a job and lacked confidence in her ability to be able to manage day-to-day duties. Seeing Belinda now, it is remarkable to see how far she has come. All the hard work and determination that she has put in has resulted in the outcome that she has strived for: a safe home and setting up a life where she can continue to build on her relationships with her sons.

Women's Stories

Sade's Story

Nova received an urgent referral for Sade (*not her real name*) and her 3 children from another local service. The family arrived in Australia several years ago, and after separating from her husband 2 years ago, Sade relocated to Newcastle.

Currently on a visa due to expire, she sought assistance from a local service in Newcastle for help to extend her visa and continue living in Australia. Sade and her children faced serious threats and risk of violence from her ex-husband after separation.

**Despite being employed part time and renting privately,
Sade felt unsafe remaining in her home because
of the significant threats to her and the children's safety.**

Although Nova assisted Sade to secure a place for the family at one of our Crisis Accommodation sites, the distance and the unavailability of a car made it difficult for her to access the accommodation. Instead, Sade and her children stayed with a friend temporarily before securing a rental property in Newcastle.

Nova provided financial assistance to help cover the bond and initial rent payments for the new property. Additionally, the Nova Case Worker helped connect Sade to the Red Cross to assist Sade to help set up her start over.

The family continues to receive support from a local service in the area, with intensive plans in place to ensure the well-being of the children.

**Nova remains a key
support system,
providing the resources
needed for Sade
and her family
to rebuild their
lives in safety.**



Women's Stories



Meet Violet

Nova assisted Violet (*not her real name*), a **76-year-old woman**, a long-term tenant, who was **evicted after 28 years of tenancy** due to a \$200 rent increase when her property changed ownership.

Although the new owners offered to temporarily reduce the rent, Violet was simply unable to afford the full amount on her age pension and struggled to find a new rental due to various barriers and the current competitive rental market. As a result, she depleted her savings while searching for alternative housing. This story is a common one with rents currently escalating out of proportion to the pension.

With Nova's support, Violet was placed on the high-priority housing list.

She was eventually offered a property in a new estate in her preferred area, with affordable, subsidised rent through a community housing program.

Nova also provided emotional and practical support as Violet downsized from a three-bedroom home to a one bedroom unit, a difficult but necessary transition.

Today, Violet is settled, living closer to her children and grandchildren, and is relieved to no longer worry about her housing situation. She is content and secure in her new home.

Women's Stories

Meet Sally

Sally, a 55-year-old woman was referred to Nova by her Homes NSW Case Support Officer (CSO) after experiencing long term housing insecurity. For much of that time, Sally lived in temporary accommodation with her beloved dog. When the motel style arrangement broke down, she began couch surfing between family and friends, continuing to access temporary accommodation when possible, always ensuring she could keep her dog by her side.

The presence of her dog made it challenging for Sally to access supported housing options, including transitional housing or refuges. When she was assigned a Nova outreach Case Worker, she disclosed that she had disengaged from other support services but maintained a strong connection with her family, particularly her daughter, who was her strongest advocate and informal carer.

With the guidance of her Case Worker, Sally set goals and strategies to address her homelessness and find safe, affordable housing. A key component of her case plan was an assessment for priority housing based on her long-term homelessness, financial challenges, and the difficulty of securing private rentals with a large companion dog. Homes NSW required a medical assessment to support her application, and she revealed that she had not seen a doctor or accessed healthcare for over 20 years. With assistance from Nova and her daughter, she was connected with a GP who bulk-billed. During her first visit to the doctor, she opened up about her struggles with debilitating anxiety and began addressing her overall health. She has since continued working with this GP and is now in the process of being assessed for the Disability Support Pension.

Another goal Sally identified was regaining her driver's license, which had been disqualified for many years. Nova helped her establish a Work and Development Order to resolve her issues with Service NSW, and through Nova's Driving Grant, she was funded to re-sit her Driver Knowledge Test (L's), which she passed. The grant also covered a package of professional driving lessons, boosting her confidence to pass her full driving test. Although still without stable housing at that time, she managed to purchase a cheap car, providing her with a new sense of freedom.

With strong advocacy from her Case Worker, Sally was eventually approved for priority housing. Throughout this period, she stayed in regular contact with Nova, demonstrating remarkable resilience, patience, and optimism despite the many challenges she faced.

In early August, she received the life-changing news that she had been offered a long-term community housing property in an over 55's complex where she could keep her dog and remain close to her family. Over the past few weeks, she has transitioned into her new home and expressed deep gratitude for Nova's support, including the material assistance provided to set up her home with essential items.

Now settled, her next goal is to pursue paid employment and spend more time with her grandchildren, who can finally have sleepovers at her home.

Our Team



Our Nova team is made up of a group of experienced, passionate, extremely caring women, who [collectively] have 111 years' experience working at Nova, and 250+ years' experience in the sector.

Our qualifications include;

- Bachelor of Laws,
- Bachelor of Social Work,
- Bachelor of Psychology,
- Master of Counseling,
- Master of Social Work,
- Diploma Community Services Mental Health,
- Diploma Drug and Alcohol,
- Diploma in Leadership and Management,
- Associate Diploma in Financial Services,
- Public Relations and Marketing,
- Graphic Design,
- Cert IV Accounting and Bookkeeping,
- Core Behavior Support Practitioner and more.

Our Diversity;

- 6% of our team are Aboriginal
- 12% are LGBTQI+
- 12% have a Disability
- 18% were born overseas

65% of our staff
have lived experience
of Homelessness or Family
and Domestic Violence.

Our Team

In a recent staff survey, we asked our team:

Q: What is the best thing about working at Nova?

Some of their responses were:

- ◆ *The women I work alongside - the support we provide each other in at times very difficult role*
- ◆ *Being there for a woman who needs support and a shoulder. Offering a kind word, a smile or sometimes no words at all. Just being there can make a huge difference.*
- ◆ *I love that I can be flexible to support the families that need my time when they need my support, without worrying about how much this will cost them.*

Q: What works when you support women who are experiencing DFV and homelessness?

Some of those responses were:

- ◆ *Providing a safe space and time for them to build trust and rapport with you*
- ◆ *Having an understanding that every woman is unique and so are her circumstances.*
- ◆ *A person centered and trauma informed approach. The women we support are the experts and it's important we are guided by them.*
- ◆ *Believing them. Not judging them. Working to give as many choices as you can to them so that the path is set to re-empowerment.*
- ◆ *Empathy, Listening, Understanding NO judgment*



Our Quality

At Nova, continuously improving the quality of our service is every-day business.

Over the last year, we have been working on:

Case Management Essentials

- **Case plans:** Robust Case Plans improve outcomes and timeframes. They ensure that staff are being purposeful and targeted in their work, staying within scope and working collaboratively with other services.
- **Personal Wellbeing Indexes:** we use a standardised tool to capture progress made.
- **Structured Case Note Framework:** A set framework for case notes ensures consistency, saving time and energy, provides evidence of professional judgment, and meets ASES standards.

Supervision

- **Structured supervision template and agreement:** This agreement provides clear expectations and boundaries for a supervision session. Supervision keeps staff and clients safe and supported. It drives reflective practices and accountability.
- **Group supervision for the Team Leaders:** This process supports the Team Leaders to have a dedicated space to reflect, connect, learn and engage in their leadership.

Enhanced practice

Quarterly half day workshops have shifted and re-aligned the dynamics and culture of Nova towards a more practice-centric, reflection-focused and growth mindset. Topics included trauma informed practice, experiential upskilling in regulating techniques, communication, safety planning, motivational interviewing, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Interventions and guided imagery.

Capability Framework

The People Capability Framework has been developed to outline the specific capabilities of different roles within Nova, and to complement our core values and behaviours. It guides our employees to understand how to be successful in their roles. The Framework will help inform workforce planning and career development, recruitment, performance review and coaching.

Cultural Uplift

Following Aboriginal Cultural Awareness for Workplaces training, this project aims to improve the attraction and retention of Aboriginal employees and the experience Aboriginal women and children have when accessing Nova services.

Our ultimate goal is improving outcomes for Aboriginal women and children. Things we have been working on include language, our local community profile, our staff profile, and how we signal cultural safety to Aboriginal clients.

Given that 1 in 4 women who access our service are Aboriginal, this will remain a priority for Nova.

We'd like to thank Lindsay Stanford from Blakworks for guiding us through this project.

1 in 4

Women who access Nova's service identify as Aboriginal



Source: CIMS Data

Our Partners

Nova deeply understands that the work we do cannot be done alone.

We seek out and nurture partnerships that deliver more than the sum of their parts, and that are authentic.

Our gratitude goes out to the following organisations who work alongside us every day:

At our Supported Temporary accommodation facility Trisha House, Nova oversees a collaborative model where some rooms are set aside to be filled by women who are working with other services. Thanks to our partners who fill Trisha House and help us deliver extraordinary outcomes – because we need to deliver not just a safe place to sleep, but wraparound support that helps women take those sometimes wobbly, terrifying steps towards their goals.

- Warlga Ngarra
- Samaritans
- Wandiyali
- Jenny's Place

We also thank our Community Housing partners who manage our crisis and transitional properties:

- Home In Place,
- Womens' Housing Company,
- Amelie Housing, and
- Pacific Link.

The majority of our funding is administered by Department Of Communities and Justice and Homes NSW. We thank them for supporting us and connecting us with other funded services



Our Donors

The simple fact is, a service such as ours would not be able to provide anywhere near the amount of wrap around support we do without the amazing assistance we receive from the greater community, and for that we are truly thankful.

This support goes beyond crisis accommodation and case management. It enables people to survive and thrive in their new community, with the dignity and confidence to start over. This help is not government funded, and we could not provide it without some truly caring people.



We'd like to thank and acknowledge the ongoing support we've received from the **Orica Kooragang** Community

Investment Program over many years. This year, their grant for Emergency Accommodation enabled us to provide women and/or families with a safe place to stay when Housing declined assistance. Thank you Orica, for your invaluable community support.



We'd also like to thank the crew at **Street Smart**, who provided us with a grant to top up our Removalist and Whitegoods Program. This program assists people moving on and starting over after experiencing Homelessness or DFV. We also acknowledge an array of sheets and towels donated via the Sleep



Safe partnership they have with **Sheridan**. Thank you so much for supporting two very practical projects.

There are just too many people to be able to thank each person, church, community group, or business individually, who has assisted us in so many ways throughout the year, but we really are thankful to you each and every one of you for all you do, and

for simply thinking of others in need.

We have been fortunate to receive items such as: blankets, beanies and scarves, personal care items, gift cards, linen, phones, food, cleaning products and homewares and so much more.

Thank to the Toronto Anglican Church who generously run our ongoing Pillow Project, as well as provide us with an ongoing supply of toiletries and more. The items are generously gifted by their parishioners and local businesses.



Glenrock Anglican Church are also incredible supporters who collect and donate a huge supply of personal care items from various Eastlakes businesses. Their Easter Egg and Hot Cross Bun drive this year once again made Easter come alive for every family we were supporting.



Christmas is always a big time of year for us, and can be a difficult one for families. We could not do Christmas without the ongoing support from the people at AVEO Retirement Village, Junction Fair Shopping Centre, Paragon Building and Sky Residence, GO Kindy, Zonta, Housing Office at Charlestown, Dept' of Employment and Workplace Relations, Glover St Surgery Belmont, Julie and Russ Triggs, the Lions Club of Charlestown and Wangi, Glenrock Anglican Church and more.

Thank you all so very much for bringing the joy of Christmas to the faces of so many children, and the relief to many of the women and families we support during this very busy time.

Donations and Fundraisers

We also thank the numerous people who have held various fundraisers for us this past year.

Thanks for the Annual Golf Days, Bike Runs, running through Kosciusko, Curry Nights, 50/50 Charity Raffle at the Newcastle Knights, Trivia Nights, Domestic Violence Lunches, Team Fundraising Events, Art Shows, Choir Performances and Christmas Gift Wrapping. Thanks also to all those people who generously tapped to donate at the Happy Wombat, or made an online donation via our web portal. We understand the hard work and coordination that goes into the organisation of these events to support the women and children of our area. Please remember:

100% of all these donations go directly into projects to assist the women and children we support, and that's something we are very proud of.



Fundraising and Donations assist us with a range of support programs such as:



Wellbeing My Way



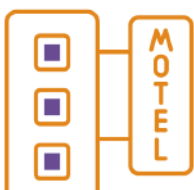
Pet Support



School Support



Entertainment



Emergency Accommodation



Car Repairs



Removal Assistance



Whitegoods

Events

During the year, our Nova team are proudly involved in a range of community events that highlight the severity of the homelessness and domestic violence in our area, the cultural diversity of our town, the overall safety of women and of course the celebration of women's achievements.

Events such as;

- ◆ International Women's Day,
- ◆ Reclaim the Night,
- ◆ Hunter Homeless Connect,
- ◆ Reconciliation and NAIDOC Week
- ◆ Homelessness Week
- ◆ Anti-Poverty Week
- ◆ 16 Days of Activism,
- ◆ Walk a Mile Koori Style (WAMKS)
- ◆ Newcastle Multicultural Expo
- ◆ Christmas Gift Wrapping at Charlestown Square and more



Financial Report

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Revenue from continuing operations	3,940,836	3,999,418
Other income	99,404	162,730
Administration expenses	(558,966)	(528,292)
Depreciation	(78,061)	(22,574)
Employment costs	(2,980,819)	(2,603,671)
Finance expense	(2,988)	(3,190)
Occupancy costs	(43,566)	(48,322)
Program costs	(316,180)	(332,976)
Profit / (loss) before income tax	(3,980,580)	(3,539,025)
Income tax expense	59,660	623,123
Profit / (loss) for the year	59,660	623,123
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income / (loss) for the year	59,660	623,123

Statement of financial position

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	610,363	536,183
Trade receivables	5,450	13,491
Financial assets at amortised cost	2,080,333	2,038,533
Other assets	190,698	136,037
Total current assets	2,886,844	2,724,244
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	289,147	329,973
Lease assets	87,151	93,660
Total non-current assets	376,298	423,633
Total assets	3,263,142	3,147,877
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	242,713	129,122
Provisions	331,169	242,868
Other liabilities	106,319	234,189
Lease liabilities	10,883	9,973
Total current liabilities	691,084	616,152
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	18,756	31,731
Lease liabilities	79,488	85,840
Total non-current liabilities	98,244	117,571
Total liabilities	789,328	733,723
Net assets	2,473,814	2,414,154
MEMBERS FUNDS		
Retained profits	2,473,814	2,414,154
Total members funds	2,473,814	2,414,154

Our Challenge

Domestic and Family Violence is the leading cause of homelessness not just for women, but also youth.

Domestic and Family Violence is the single biggest risk factor contributing to the disease burden of women aged 18-44. It's a bigger risk factor than drinking, smoking or obesity.

Domestic and Family Violence costs us \$26 billion a year.

We must invest at a scale we have not yet contemplated to address. The benefits, if we do, will be enormous.

At the time of writing in August, **52 women had been murdered in Australia so far in 2024** – a massive increase on the previous year. We must take this threat deadly seriously.



40%

of police time is estimated by NSW police to be spent on domestic violence



26%

of all resolved local court cases last year were domestic violence related

It's core business to manage the aftermath of this violence for all government services, but also for businesses like banks, insurance and real estate companies.

This is not a Nova problem. It's not a women's problem. It's a whole of government, whole of business, whole of community problem. That's when we will move the dial.

24/7 Call **1800 737 732**

1800RESPECT
NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC
FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE

Online via website www.1800respect.org.au

Our Future Plans



Nova is ready to navigate a period where the work we do is not only in more demand than ever before, but is occupying a very high profile in our society. Our board and executive are developing a new strategic plan to suit this changing context.

In 2024 we assisted approximately 3 women for every 2 we were funded for. We will have new funds reach the front line in 2025 – but even if the demand remains the same, it will mean we are seeing 3 women for every 2.5 we are funded for.

But we don't anticipate demand will stay the same.

Coercive control laws came into force on July 1 2024.

This follows the UK and other countries that are now including a pattern of behavior designed to intimidate or control in their criminal codes. It's welcome that the lived experience of women has driven this change. We expect the courts and police to take some time to adjust to this. We also expect the additional attention given to aspects of domestic and family violence like financial abuse and isolation to increase demand on services

The housing crisis is deepening.

According to SQM Research who track weekly rent data, in the Hunter a 2 bedroom unit has gone up 5.1% to \$479 per week in the last 12 months to August 2024 – but a 3 bedroom house has gone up 8.7% to \$597 a week in the last 12 months. The average stay in our crisis refuges has extended for a very simple reason: there are simply no affordable places to move a family into.

Over the next year we will tackle:

- Responding to growth opportunities to meet demand – and securing support from our community
- Continuing to improve our practice – especially our capability to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and to move from crisis response into transition to change
- Embedding our new team: supporting new staff to thrive and staff who have been promoted to shine
- Adjusting our structure so we can more effectively serve women and their children

We will be continuing to fiercely advocate for change so that women can live and participate in our community safely, and make choices in their own lives.

What needs to happen?

We asked our team what they think needs to happen to reduce and end DFV.

- The simple answer is that every potential perpetrator makes the decision not to commit violence. The not simple answer is that in order for that to happen every single one of us needs to help reform our systems, our institutions and our community to address the root causes of DFV - which include gender inequality, mental health, economic inequality, intergenerational trauma and more.
- More affordable housing
- More men's change behavior programs
- Review of Bail conditions
- Dismantle patriarchy
- Additional funding for DFV services
- Stronger legal consequences for offenders.
- More social and affordable housing!!!
- Continued Improvement in Police response to DFV incidents.
- Preventative programs for children and young people.
- More access to mental health services across the board.
- More affordable homes and after-hours support.
- Crisis centers
- Education in primary schools on what healthy relationships are from when they're young so they can recognise when DFV is happening (as perpetrator or victim) and know where and how to get help.
- changing the focus and narrative (along with the funds) towards the people using violence rather than those experiencing it.
- More education about where to reach out for support and about stigma and shame to encourage women to come forward earlier at the beginning of the cycle.
- More courses for offending men to attend to rehabilitate and change behaviours, (perhaps even mandatory attendance after any initial offence)
- Ankle Bracelets to track offenders and keep women/children safer
- Men being better role models to other men and younger males, calling other men out on their bad behaviour
- Better protection for victims to keep them safe
- Focus on reducing the impact of intergenerational trauma for youth to address the cycle of DFV



Specialist Homelessness and Domestic Violence Service

*Supporting Women and Children
in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area
for over 40 years*

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