

# St Francis Social Services Annual Report

2023



ST Francis  
Social Services



# Our vision, purpose and values

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## Vision

Our vision is for a society which recognises the dignity, equality, human rights and humanity of all people.

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## Purpose

We provide the supports and advocacy that build the agency and dignity of each person by enabling them to achieve wellbeing and independence and to thrive into the future.

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## Values



### Welcome

With warmth, kindness and generosity, we welcome, respect and empower all those we work with, regardless of age, ability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, faith, race or social circumstances.



### Respect

We honour the uniqueness and dignity of each person, upholding their right to be treated equally and valued for their difference.



### Empower

We provide supports that create opportunities for people to determine and achieve their goals and have their voices heard and acted upon.

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## Pillars

We will achieve our purpose by focusing on three pillars over the next three years:

### Our clients

Helping to shape a positive future for our clients is at the forefront of all we do. We will actively listen to what our clients tell us they require to thrive. We are committed to evidence-based service delivery to assist our clients to achieve their goals.

### Systemic change

We advocate for the systemic changes needed to build a society where our clients and those facing similar challenges live with dignity and respect, and participate in and contribute to the community.

### Organisational excellence

To achieve the outcomes we seek with our clients, and for others with whom we work, we strive for and maintain the highest possible standards of integrity and practice across all areas of our organisation.

## Our services

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### **Centre 360** Youth and Family Service

#### **Centre 360**

Centre 360 Youth and Family Service is committed to providing a host of evidence-based and accessible options to meet the needs of at-risk 12 to 24 year olds and their families.



#### **House of Welcome**

House of Welcome (HoW) is passionate about providing opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum that enable their self-determination, empowerment and participation in the community.



### **CATERING**

#### **House of Welcome Catering**

House of Welcome Catering is a social enterprise, creating employment pathways through fusion-inspired cuisine. It offers a delicious range of menu items, lovingly made by refugees and people seeking asylum.

Names changed \*The names of clients throughout this report have been changed to protect the identities of individuals.





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## **Acknowledgement of Country**

St Francis Social Services acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay our respects to them, their customs, their culture and to Elders past and present.

# Our team

## Board of Directors

For more information about our board, see [stfrancis.org.au/#our-board](https://stfrancis.org.au/#our-board).

Peter Hennessy, Chair  
Nicholas Carney  
Anna Coroneo  
Carol Dettmann  
Laurie Ferguson  
David Hardie  
Thuy Huynh  
Sr Libby Rogerson, IBVM  
Fr Anthony Selvaraj, OFM  
Chris Sidoti

## Staff

### St Francis Social Services

Dr Angela Argent, CEO  
Deborah Cooke, Communications and Digital Marketing Manager  
Gary Stocks, Office Manager  
Ben Taylor, Grants and Engagement Manager

### Centre 360 Youth and Family Service

Emily Morrissey, Operations and Programs Manager  
Etheon Parkes, Clinical Manager  
Natalie Mackenzie, Consultant  
Leon Ari, Adolescent and Family Counsellor  
Sarah Bays, Adolescent and Family Counsellor  
Charmaine Grey, Art Psychotherapist  
Scarlett Harrod, Adolescent and Family Counsellor  
Paula Parmakellis, Adolescent and Family Counsellor  
Chloe Thielemans, Adolescent and Family Counsellor  
Reece Venema, Adolescent and Family Counsellor

### House of Welcome

Miriam Pellicano, Executive Manager  
Leonie Dyer, Community Engagement and Partnership Manager  
Hoorieh Hosseini, Caseworker  
Kaydee Jakosalem, Caseworker  
Ruth Lesmana, Casework Manager  
Andreina Lugo, Work & Welcome Project Officer  
Anne Moran, Catering Business Development Manager/Admin Officer  
Sayed Musavie, Caseworker  
Lumka Liwela Power, Volunteer Program Manager  
Maryanne Sneddon, Housing Settlement Services Co-ordinator  
Marie Tupaea, Housing Client Services Manager

### House of Welcome Catering

Abbey McDonald, Head Chef  
Ivan Alurac, Chef de Partie  
Avedes (Avo) Yebramian, Chef de Partie

## CEO and Board Chair letter

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Peter Hennessy, Board Chair



Dr Angela Argent, CEO

For those of you I haven't had the privilege of meeting yet, I'd like to introduce myself as the CEO of SFSS. Back in July, new to the role, I started out by listening and being curious about all that the team at SFSS does and how it engages with the clients and communities we serve.

Over the course of the year in Paddington and Granville, I've had the pleasure of starting to get to know our team and many of our clients and partners. I'm delighted to see how invested the team is in welcoming, respecting and empowering clients. I value the team's compassion and tenacity, as well as their passion for impact.

The SFSS Dinner on 14 October – made possible by our generous hosts, Herbert Smith Freehills – was attended by 100 guests and provided a great opportunity to meet many long-term and newer partners and collaborators. The event showcased the strengths and resilience of our clients, some of the opportunities SFSS clients have accessed through working with us, as well as the incredible work the team does in collaboration with clients to create meaningful pathways and opportunities.

That same weekend, the team from House of Welcome, Peter Hennessy and I participated in the Spring Cycle, a ride through the city, to continue with our fund-raising efforts. We rode across the Harbour Bridge on a beautiful blue-sky day, the Aboriginal flag flying high.

Later in October, the team, Peter and the board celebrated St Francis Day in Strathfield with the theme "Coming Together". Our guest speakers were Nathan Moran, CEO of Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, and Fr Anthony Selvaraj, board member and Parish Priest at St Francis of Assisi Paddington and St Joseph's Edgecliff.

David Hardie and Thuy Huynh joined the SFSS board in October, bringing new skills, expertise and a wealth of ideas. We farewelled and thanked >

Sr Libby Rogerson for her enormous contribution to SFSS over the past decade. The board has generously welcomed me, not just by guiding good governance across the organisation but also in actively and enthusiastically supporting all that we do to grow our capacity as a team as well as our impact.

The Centre 360/Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) Scholarship Night in November provided a great opportunity to celebrate the successes of 10 young clients graduating from the HSF mentoring program and the positive mentoring relationships fostered by the program.

At Centre 360, we recently convened a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) so that our clients have a say in all that we do. Guided by the YAC, C360 opened its doors during Youth Week on 20 April, welcoming Allegra Spender MP and a panel of impressive young women to address the young people and service partners gathered in the refurbished Centre 360 Hall. The dynamic panel demonstrated the importance and value of listening and including young people in the discussions and decisions that impact them.

A member of the panel said that the centre was literally a lifesaver. The panel advocated for better access for free and timely mental health support and counselling, greater recognition of gender equality and diversity, as well as more opportunities for First Nation's and women's voices in film, culture and politics.

House of Welcome's Community Lunches similarly provide people seeking asylum and refugees with an important opportunity to connect with each other and the team, as well as a range of service providers and political representatives, including Dr Andrew Charlton, the Member for Parramatta. HW Catering provides the delicious food for these events.

HoW's ongoing engagement with local government, political representatives and the sector means it is well placed to work with supporters and allies as it seeks new funding



A House of Welcome team lunch.



The SFSS team planning day.

because Emergency Relief COVID-19 assistance from Multicultural NSW was not renewed at the end of the financial year.

In June, following extensive team consultation, we launched our Strategic Plan to guide our work over the next three years. The plan puts clients at the centre of all that we do by enabling the SFSS team to actively listen to what clients tell us they require to thrive and achieve their goals. It enables us to value lived experiences and to advocate for systemic changes needed to build a society where our clients and those facing similar challenges live with dignity and respect, and contribute to the community.

The plan commits us to achieving the outcomes we seek with our clients, and for others with whom we work, by striving for and maintaining the highest possible standards of integrity and





The Spring Cycle in October.



Angela with board member Anna Coroneo at the 2022 Dinner.

practice. It's a plan that's both ambitious and achievable, and an important asset to guide the critical and person-centred thinking of our experienced and dynamic team and board.

We are grateful to the Franciscan Provincial Council for their ongoing generous assistance. To all our partners, donors and supporters, on behalf of the clients, team and board at SFSS, we thank you. Your assistance enables us to continue to update our thinking, programs and ways of engaging our clients so that we remain skilled and committed collaborators able to meet clients' changing needs.

With you in our corner, we will continue to provide the supports and advocacy that build the agency and dignity of each of our clients, by enabling them to achieve wellbeing and independence and to thrive into the future.

## Our theory of change

Over 45 years of service, St Francis Social Services (SFSS) has learned that fundamental personal and societal change comes when those who experience significant challenges in achieving their social and economic goals are supported by skilled and committed collaborators.

SFSS has extensive experience working closely with and supporting children, young people, families, people seeking asylum and refugees who face obstacles to achieving their social and economic goals.

We use our skill and expertise to advocate for the systemic changes that will enable our clients to achieve their goals and thrive into the future. We provide the supports that enable those we work with to build the confidence and the skills they need to become active and contributing members of the community, and to achieve the dignity and the respect that is the right of every person.

Some key outcomes that we achieve in partnership with clients include:

- employment that builds and strengthens financial independence and self-confidence
- attainment of educational goals
- improvement in overall mental and physical health and wellbeing
- safe, appropriate and secure housing
- strong and supportive social connections and engagement, and
- effective advocacy for positive systematic change.



# Centre 360

We meet young people  
where they are.

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**Centre 360**  
Youth and Family Service

Centre 360 Youth and Family Service provides free, accessible and flexible individual counselling and group work programs for children, young people and their families. Centre 360 provides counselling for as long as a young person needs support, reviewing progress and encouraging young people to make the decision to end counselling when things are going well for them.

Young people are assigned one counsellor, which means they don't have to repeat their story, and can develop a trusting therapeutic relationship.

Our service works with financially disadvantaged young people aged between 12 and 24 in Sydney's eastern and south-eastern suburbs. At the heart of our work, we believe in meeting young people where they are, and in empowering them to reach their potential.

We serve youth and families from diverse backgrounds, gender and sexual identities, habits, family dynamics, personalities, communication styles and lifestyle preferences. We welcome and embrace the uniqueness of each young person and their family, and respect their circumstances, working alongside them to meet their needs.

Young people come to us, at our centre in Oxford Street in Paddington, and we go to them – meeting them in their community, at school or at home.

In the 2022-23 financial year, we provided 151 young people with individual counselling and case management. We provided material aid to 65 individual clients, which included help with phone bills, internet, groceries, household furniture and supplies, public transport cards,

## Our impact

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37

young people received intensive/specialist support counselling

72

young people participated in our group programs

151

young people received one-on-one counselling

47

parents/carers received parenting support

177

young people were referred to our service

65

young people received material aid

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educational equipment and clothes. Supporting young people to help meet their basic needs reduces financial stress and barriers to engaging with the community.

We provided intensive specialist support to vulnerable young people via our Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills Group, and through our early intervention work with Redfern Jarjum College Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island primary school children and their families. >



Our long-standing, evidence-based Strength Through Resilience, Identity, Validation and Empowerment (STRIVE) group program was run throughout the year in local schools. This program has increased student reported self-determination, supported participation in education and boosted a sense of belonging in their communities.

We also offered Tuning in to Teens (TinT) – a program aimed at supporting the parents and carers of teenagers – as well as art therapy, both one-on-one and in group settings. The Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) Social Mentoring Program provided another group of 10 young people with mentoring relationships and educational scholarships.

When we reflect on the year that's been, the feedback we received from the young people who come to us showed that they feel supported and accepted...

*"In my time with [counsellor name], I have made*

**"Talking to someone makes me more aware of my situation, and the counsellor has given me advice and options without telling me what to do. It helps slow things down and I get a good idea of what is going on" – Centre 360 client**

*a strong bond and relationship. I feel happy and safe to talk to her about most things."*

*"[I've been] using the sessions to talk about the issues and work through personal life stuff that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do otherwise."*

*"I have the space to share interests, I have someone listening to me and someone to help me understand my life and my issues."*

## What our clients tell us

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There's no-one better equipped to talk about the impact of our work than the young people who come to Centre 360.

In 2022-23, they reported that:

*"I feel listened to and my issues understood": 4.1/5 average*

*"I would recommend Centre 360 to other people": 4.4/5 average*

Young people told us that the things which have helped them most, or been most useful, during their time with us have included:

- *Consistent and long-term therapy.*
- *Being able to talk every week.*
- *Having a good counsellor to get me through my tough times.*
- *Spending time with the counsellor outside class, thinking about my life.*
- *Talking to someone makes me more aware of my situation. The counsellor has given me advice and options without telling me what to do. It helps slow things down and get a good idea of what is going on.*
- *Art therapy has been very helpful. I now feel like drawing and letting everything out.*
- *Having a space to talk, working on new skills.*
- *Learning new ways to cope.*
- *Being listened to and not feeling like I'm being judged.*
- *Getting my feelings out.*
- *Putting things in perspective. Feeling seen and heard.*
- *Making me calmer.*
- *Having someone who doesn't just agree with me and challenges me about things.*
- *Helping to recognise patterns and connections I didn't see before.*
- *Having consistency and reliability.*
- *Getting to know the parts of myself better and learning how to be less anxious.*
- *Got better control of my anger.*



## Individual counselling

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At Centre 360, we pride ourselves on our point of difference. We offer specialised, medium-term, free counselling for young people experiencing significant financial and social barriers.

We stay with the young person and walk alongside them, supporting them as they navigate their pathway to better mental health, increased capacity, and improved quality of life and wellness decision-making.

We are not just a one-hour session in a counselling room. When our clients need wrap-around support, we go further, advocating for them in the health and court systems, with the NDIS, Centrelink and Housing NSW.

We support our clients in complex family relationship challenges and systems-based barriers, which often infringe upon a young person's autonomy and dignity to take charge, get ahead in life and reach for their goals and dreams.

This year, we supported more than 300 young people and their families. We received consistently positive feedback about why young people come to us and stay with our service:

*"I like how I'm not surveyed or evaluated all the time, unlike other places I have been."*

*"I come here because I'm not pathologised or labelled and this makes me feel safe and understood, so I can be honest and really work on my problems."*

*"I am not rushed to work through my issues and this helps so much."*

Some young people and families attend the centre for a short period of time to work on a specific challenge or navigate a life shift, while others access counselling support from adolescence into young adulthood.

Counselling is client focused and person centred. It's conducted in ways that are supportive, non-judgemental, respectful and enable self-determination for the young person. We provide individually tailored treatment options, utilising each young person's inner strengths to problem solve together. We reach agreed goals by incorporating evidence-based modalities, best fitted to the young person's biopsychosocial, cultural, gender, identity and spiritual needs.

A trauma-informed care framework underscores our counselling program. We recognise that many young people have experienced trauma which impacts their mental health and wellbeing. We ensure that counselling sessions foster a sense of safety, empowerment and choice.

Our team is composed of seven counsellors (part-time and full-time) from a range of disciplines, including clinical social work, psychotherapy and arts therapy.

**"I'm treated like I matter and everything about me is understood, not just the issues" – Centre 360 client**

## School-based counselling programs

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Our team of counsellors provide an outreach program to three schools in our community – JJ Cahill Memorial High School in Mascot, Matraville Sports High School and Redfern Jarjum College (see separate entry, opposite).

A significant proportion of school-aged young people experience mental health challenges, however many do not access mental health services during this vulnerable developmental



stage. Schools provide a good opportunity to promote wellbeing and identify and intervene with children and young people struggling with their mental health.

Centre 360 provides one-on-one individual counselling in schools, family capacity building and the Strength Through Resilience, Identity, Validation and Empowerment (STRIVE) group program.

By taking a partnership approach with the schools, we are able to recognise that there are often barriers to young people accessing mental health support.

Centre 360 is able to meet the needs of young people where they are.

## Redfern Jarjum College partnership

Centre 360 provides clinical student wellbeing support to Redfern Jarjum College, a First Nations-focused primary school.

Children and young people tell us that sometimes structured counselling is just not the right fit in schools. Young people have said that they would rather catch up on the go, or come to us to set an okay time to connect and work together.

At Jarjum, the children like their session times to be dynamic and flexible. They use a range of art supplies and therapeutic clay/sand play to communicate thoughts and feelings about their social world, potential ways to problem-solve, and to find ways to put plans into action.

Because the counsellor moves between private session spaces, student break times and classrooms, the children report that they get to know the counsellor “as a real person”, hence they build trust and feel safe to engage with the >

## Impact story: Megan\*

“I first came to Centre 360 because I was feeling pretty depressed and anxious and was about to start year 12. My dad passed away really suddenly two years before I started coming and I really hadn’t come to terms with it.

During our work together, we looked at lots of coping strategies to deal with the HSC – there had been two years of lockdown and online learning, and I had a lot of anxiety around performing well and adjusting to being back in a school setting.

We also spent time talking about my dad and how I could keep his memory alive. One of the things was preparing me for difficult milestones by creating a box with notes. Each note had a task such as, ‘Make a banana cake today’ or, ‘Go to the movies’ – things that Dad and I would do together.

I completed my HSC and got accepted into university. Centre 360 helped me to move out of home and linked me up with Options Youth Support accommodation.

In the two years that I went there, I really felt like Centre 360 equipped me to navigate university and adult life, helping me to learn coping strategies and skills, and processing my grief around my dad.”



counsellor faster. Clients say they can talk about their challenges “easier and sooner” in this type of flexible therapeutic relationship.

Teachers and teachers’ aides have reported that students who connect with the Centre 360 counsellor exhibited the following:

- Increased focus on classroom work.
- Improved emotional, communication and behavioural self-regulation.
- Increased abilities to mend interpersonal relationships independently, such as with their siblings, other family members and co-students.
- Increased awareness and skills to prevent or reduce interpersonal relationship conflicts.
- Increased wellness decision-making.
- Increased positivity and clearer future goal-setting.

Such changes have an impact on overall student learning outcomes, an increased positive attachment to the school experience and sense of belonging.

The counsellor supports the immediate and medium-term needs of students week by week, via a self-determination lens. Narrative therapy, clinical and anti-oppressive social work theories, First Nations-informed practice, systemic family therapy, strengths-based interpersonal psychotherapy, and First Nations trauma-informed wellbeing practice are all central frameworks in the work we do with the young people, staff and family members at the school.



Two artworks produced in this year's art therapy.

## Art therapy

This year, Centre 360 expanded its art therapy programs, creating new opportunities for creativity and connection. Individual sessions at the centre continued and an art therapy program began at Matraville Sports High School.

Nine students participated and explored issues such as bullying, academic pressure and family dynamics.

Students reported that art-making and reflection helped develop their skills in emotional regulation, creating a sense of calm in a sometimes chaotic school environment: “I feel super relaxed and chill here and like that I can actually be myself”; “It is relaxing and calms me down”; and “Doing art calms me down and helps me to express my emotions.”

We also ran an art therapy group for 19 to 24 year olds in the freshly renovated Centre 360 Hall in Paddington. The group provided a safe, supportive environment for young people to meet and be creative together. In addition to art, new insights and friendships were formed.

When participants were asked what they enjoyed about the group sessions, Francesca\* said, “I enjoyed the process of making some of my artworks ... I found it very healing and also found it taught me a lot about myself.” James\* liked “the acceptance that everybody shows” and Nikki\* appreciated “the time of peace and moments of group laughter”.





## Impact story: Olivia\*

"I first heard about Centre 360 from my caseworker at Options, which is a youth housing service. I started coming in March 2022, once a fortnight [for counselling] – but really only because my Options caseworker implied that it was necessary for me to attend.

Then I started doing art therapy with the counsellor and that felt a bit more comfortable for me because I'm not really very good at words.

I really like it ... it's a moment where I can just not think about anything else but that. Sometimes I feel like I need a break, even if it's a small break ... a break from everything in general. I feel like it's given me, I don't know, space ... space to breathe.

I also joined the art therapy group, and I like hearing other peoples' thoughts on what we're doing. Working with different materials is a good experience as well because I don't usually get to use those tools or tempera and other materials.

It's not for everyone, I think, but if you really like it, it gives you some peace of mind."

*Olivia is also now a participant in our Herbert Smith Freehills Mentoring Program (right).*

## HSF Mentoring Program

The goal of the Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF) and Centre 360 Mentoring Program is to empower young people to strive towards attaining their personal, academic and professional goals.

This year, the program was undertaken by 10 young people aged between 18 and 22. Each was paired with an HSF mentor volunteer for eight months. Centre 360 trains the mentors and supports both mentors and mentees throughout the program to develop safe and trusting connections.

Laura, one of this year's mentors, said it offered a great opportunity to understand other people's circumstances: "It teaches you more about patience, kindness and resilience."

The mentee and mentor met monthly to enjoy planned social activities, including a teppanyaki dining experience, an art class, an escape room and a "MasterChef" cooking class.

For Cameron, 19, it was an "amazing" experience: "It helped me get out of my comfort zone and meet new people. I also got to try things I never imagined I would do, like the escape room!"

At the end of the program, mentees received a \$1,400 scholarship to put towards a personal, academic or professional pursuit.

*(See next page for a mentee's personal story.)*



The HSF mentees at their graduation.



## HSF impact story: Hayley\*

"I signed up to the mentoring program because I wanted to experience new challenges and grow connections with people while working towards a goal.

My mentor was perfectly chosen and really created a safe and non-judgemental space for me. She was really attentive but most of all fun to be around. I would say she became a good friend and supporter.

There was a lot I liked about the program but I really loved the community that naturally developed from seeing each other once a month with new activities and food.

Probably the most memorable things we did were the ocean walk and the painting workshop. I felt really at home at those two events.

Overall, the program allowed me to have a new understanding of who I am and therefore made me more comfortable in myself. It was a very warm and nurturing atmosphere.

The scholarship money was a lovely bonus. I used it to pay for my studies in women's womb health, to provide services in a holistic way. It's opened up an entirely new world and interest and an opportunity to help women."

## Dialectical Behaviour Therapy Skills Group

Over the year, we ran three 10-week online Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) groups with 16 to 24 year olds. The aim of the DBT Skills Group is to provide young people with the opportunity not only to learn and practise useful skills, but to feel really supported while they learn these new strategies and techniques.

These were the issues we focused on in the groups:

- managing strong emotions in a healthy way
- improving emotional regulation
- building self-soothing skills
- increasing tolerance to distress
- practising mindfulness
- improving interpersonal effectiveness to create and maintain healthy relationships
- developing a toolkit of coping skills.

Every young person who went through the program said that they found it helpful and said they would recommend it to others struggling with self-regulation, anxiety, stress and other mental health challenges.

They also reported an increase in mindfulness strategies and felt that they were better able to manage difficult emotions.

**"I'm so grateful for the opportunity to do the DBT group. It taught me to slow down and challenge my destructive thinking. I learnt mindfulness and coping skills that help me face tough situations and difficult emotions" – 22-year-old DBT group participant**



## STRIVE

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The Strength Through Resilience, Identity, Validation and Empowerment (STRIVE) program was developed in response to increased mental health presentations in schools. Higher mental health stressors often impacted relationships and school grades. These issues were often caused or exacerbated by bullying and relationship breakdowns.

Young people said that they often felt isolated and had difficulty regulating their emotions and forming secure attachments. STRIVE works alongside students and teachers to build resilience and help them access their own potential.

The program involved six weekly sessions. Each session began with a check-in and warm-up activity to build trust and rapport. Participants then did a range of activities including team-building to develop core skills and strengthen supportive relationships.

Each of the six weeks focused on different themes that build on one another to offer a cohesive program which gives everyone a well-rounded set of skills to handle anything that life throws at them.

When our clients first started STRIVE, they were often withdrawn and disconnected from themselves and others. During the six weeks, they were challenged to step out of their comfort zone and be vulnerable.

Slowly, clients started to develop the skills and emotional intelligence to self-regulate and form healthy and sustainable relationships. By the end, they felt happier, more confident and more able to engage in the world effectively. "It really helped me to express myself," said Angie\*, one of the participants.

The young people said they felt grateful for the program, with the most common feedback

being about building confidence and a sense of wellbeing. Jordan\* said, "It was fun and made me feel happy", while Caitlin\* reported, "It helped me understand my feelings."

## Tuning in to Teens

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Twelve parents/carers of teenagers took part in our Tuning in to Teens (TinT) program during the year. The program aims to provide parents and carers with helpful ways of supporting their teenagers by providing skills to develop their emotional intelligence. We held two programs – one in term 4 of 2022 and one in term 2 of 2023 – meeting once a week over six weeks on Zoom, facilitated by two counsellors.

While TinT offers a lot of useful information about adolescent brain development, it's also a supportive space for parents to reflect. Parents are encouraged to consider different parenting styles and how they might have developed.

Diana\* appreciated "the insight into different parenting styles and how our own childhood or upbringing can affect us". While Sam\* told us that "understanding and being more empathetic to the problems children and teens face in this day and age" was the most helpful aspect of the program.

By practising skills in "emotion coaching" as a group, parents said they felt better equipped to recognise, understand and respond to their adolescents' emotions in accepting and supportive ways.

When asked about any changes they'd noticed in their families, Kathryn\* said, "I feel that my teenagers are coming to me more for help or wanting to talk to me and tell me things." Diana added, "I saw a change in myself. I was more understanding of my teens' needs right after the first day, so I'm forever grateful."

*(see TinT impact story, next page.)*

## TinT impact story: Tim\*

*(Tim completed the Tuning in to Teens program in term 2, 2023)*

"I had done Tuning in to Kids and I found it to be good ... I was keen to get the teens tweak. Also, this [kind of communicating] isn't necessarily what I had grown up with and it hadn't been modelled to me, so doing a repeater/refresher was important.

Having a soon-to-be-teenager in the house who's seeing me as target practice and is cranky about everything was something I was grappling with, too.

There's a lot I picked up in the program. One of the things that really stuck is saying 'bids for connections' rather than saying 'seeking attention' as a negative thing. That it's normal for your kids to want attention from you and that's a positive thing.

I've tried to be more attentive at looking for 'low-level emotions'. Trying to be conscious of that, and to approach things with curiosity and care.

Emotion coaching was also very helpful. You can employ emotion coaching any time with anybody ... it's about trying to be empathetic and getting out of problem-solve fixer mode and responding to the emotional content – which is not my default. I'm trying to spend more time responding that way.

It's always great to hear what it's like for other people and their different perspectives. Doing role plays was really important – just saying it out loud and having to think about it.

TinT is in-depth; it takes you through step by step; it's concrete; and the emotion coaching works and gives you a chance to parent in a much more enjoyable and effective way."

## Youth Week and Centre 360 hall opening

National Youth Week is the annual celebration of young people and the contribution they make to our community. Centre 360 collaborated with three young women and clients of the centre, Hayley, Lizzie and Yvonne, to co-ordinate a Youth Week celebration and Centre 360 newly refurbished hall opening event on 20 April. The event was attended by Allegra Spender, Federal MP for Wentworth.

Craft stations, nail polish art and games tables (all suggested by young people) were set up to welcome political leaders and youth to connect, enjoy and engage meaningfully with each other.

Yvonne, a talented musician and key collaborator of the event, also performed with enormous charisma and charm. The delicious food was supplied by HW Catering, the House of Welcome's social enterprise.

Thread Together generously provided clothing and accessory donations to the young people in attendance, and youth support services raised awareness of their programs.

The centrepiece of the event was an interview panel with the three young women collaborators. As Yvonne said, "Youth Week is about bringing together youth and raising awareness on issues in youth communities as well as giving space for youth to have their voices heard."

The three young women shared their opinions on issues that matter to them, such as the need for better access to free and timely mental health support and counselling, greater recognition of gender equality and diversity, and more opportunities for First Nations and young women's voices to be seen and heard in film, culture and politics.

Their impressive panel responses reiterated the

importance of supporting our young people to flourish and ignite as community leaders.

With funding from the City of Sydney, we are now able to continue to collaborate with young leaders in the Centre 360 Youth Advisory Council (YAC). The YAC vision is to have youth and young adult voices included and valued in all we do at Centre 360 Youth and Family Service, as well as the wider community.

**“Youth Week is about bringing young people together and raising awareness on issues as well as giving space for youth to have their voices heard”**  
– Yvonne, Youth Week organiser



From left: Centre 360's Etheon Parkes and Emily Morrissey, Federal Member for Wentworth Allegra Spender, Yvonne, St Francis Social Services CEO Dr Angela Argent, and Lizzie and Hayley.



Lizzie, Yvonne and Hayley address the gathering.



Members of the C360 team on the cultural walk.

## Redfern Cultural Walk

In February, the Centre 360 team visited Redfern to participate in a Redfern Cultural Walk with Auntie Donna from Tribal Warrior (tribalwarrior.org). The day provided staff with an opportunity to spend time together and reflect on truth telling.

The walk was very helpful for the team in expanding their understanding of the history of Redfern. Given some of our First Nations clients live, work and thrive in the Redfern and City of Sydney areas, the walk took on additional meaning, helping us understand client-lived experiences more deeply, and made us curious about how we position our clinical work with First Nations young people, their families and extended support systems.



# House of Welcome

We believe in creating a safe community for forcibly displaced peoples to thrive and belong.

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House of Welcome (HoW) is passionate about providing opportunities for refugees and people seeking asylum that enable self-determination, empowerment and participation in the community. HoW finds positive solutions to overcoming barriers for refugees and people seeking asylum by delivering employment, housing, skills building and community development programs.

HoW's wrap-around supports – to enable self-efficacy – include the provision of safety and security through accommodation, financial and food distributions, medical support and casework.

## KEY

<b>DFV</b>	Domestic and family violence
<b>MNSW</b>	Multicultural NSW
<b>STARTTS</b>	NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors
<b>SHEV</b>	Safe Haven Enterprise Visa
<b>SRSS</b>	Status Resolution Support Services
<b>TPV</b>	Temporary Protection Visa
<b>WSAP</b>	Women's Supported Accommodation Project
<b>WSTH</b>	Welcome Start Transitional Housing

## The year that was

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HoW welcomed the Federal Government's announcement to grant permanent visas to the 19,000 recognised refugees on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs). However, the decision failed to find a permanent solution for the 12,000 people seeking asylum who arrived by boat nearly 10 years ago.

HoW continues to support this cohort, who face ongoing challenges including no work rights and no access to Medicare or Federal Government services, pushing clients into situations of acute distress. HoW works closely with these clients to manage their mental health and provides financial support through the HoW emergency living program. We assist those who obtain work rights to secure both employment and stable housing.

Huge cuts to the Federal Government Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) program has put enormous pressure on charities to support clients. Currently about 1,854 people receive SRSS support nationwide, 1,653 of whom receive financial assistance. Since 2016, when the program supported about 29,000 people, SRSS funding has been reduced by 95%.

This reduction in funding has had wide-reaching impacts on the charity sector, to which people seeking asylum living in the community are turning. Furthermore, the contraction of the program often means vulnerable women remain

**HoW frontline staff supported clients who had been pushed into a position of having to choose between either paying their rent or buying food**

shut out of supports that can provide critical stability and safety.

NSW State Government funding, distributed through Multicultural NSW (MNSW), provided COVID-19 emergency relief grants to distribute financial assistance to people on temporary visas, allowing HoW to provide 1,675 financial distributions this financial year. This supported both new clients and returning clients unable to pay for rent increases and subsequently falling into arrears.

Exacerbated by cost-of-living pressures, people seeking asylum remain in financial distress. Referrals to HoW were 55% higher than pre-COVID figures, with 565 referrals (1,110 individuals) made in the past financial year. Requests for assistance were sought predominantly to maintain tenancies, for crisis accommodation, financial assistance, food security and health care.

HoW frontline staff supported clients who had been pushed into a position of having to choose between either paying their rent or buying food. Some clients didn't have funds to top up their phones, leaving them without the means to contact essential services such as doctors, lawyers or their caseworker at HoW.

From July to September, HoW saw a 50% increase in referrals for single males, primarily from social work departments in local hospitals and crisis accommodation providers. Some 90% of these men presented with complex physical and mental health needs, exacerbating barriers to securing employment.

HoW worked with the sector in support of families and individuals released from community detention. They were eligible for 12 weeks of SRSS payments and were placed in crisis accommodation. Within those 12 weeks, they needed to engage with a caseworker and find private rental accommodation and employment. This put further pressure and demand on the resources of the charity sector.





# Our services



## Impact story: Nala\*

Nala is a young single female who was referred to House of Welcome by another asylum seeker agency when she was experiencing homelessness.

Before presenting to HoW, she was living interstate and completing her education when she experienced domestic and family violence (DFV). She had no other choice but to abruptly move to Sydney – where she had no family or support – for her safety.

Nala initially stayed with members of her community and, when this option was exhausted, was supported with temporary accommodation through Link2Home with the help of another asylum seeker agency. It was at this stage that Nala was referred to HoW.

Nala was eligible for support through HoW's Women's Supported Accommodation Project (WSAP) and moved into secure, safe housing. She then engaged with legal support to apply for a Protection Visa, began to access mental health support through the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), and could then pursue employment opportunities.

A couple of months later, Nala started a paid work placement through HoW's Work & Welcome employment program, where she gained skills and adjusted to the Australian workplace. Soon after, she got a full-time job and moved into a private rental.

Nala's journey showcases the role of wrap-around support and its effectiveness in enabling her to access her own strength, resilience and self-determination.

# Housing

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We provide safe and stable accommodation to clients, with wrap-around support to help them thrive in all aspects of their lives and be informed of their rights under the Residential Tenancies Act.

The Welcome Start Transitional Housing (WSTH) program is a structured 12-month program for people seeking asylum, particularly those who have no access to traditional government and non-government supports such as emergency, social, public and affordable housing. The program delivers an intensive and integrated model of support for clients as their protection claims are processed.

WSTH delivers tailored wrap-around supports that include:

- stable transitional accommodation for a fixed term
- client-led, co-designed case plans
- support to address barriers to achieving identified goals
- mentoring to build knowledge and awareness of Australian tenancy rights and responsibilities
- support to explore pathways to financial and housing independence.

Clients work closely with the housing, casework and employment teams who assist with warm referrals to services related to legal, health, employment and education; employment mentoring, work placements and job-ready preparation; and a transition to future housing and accommodation.

## The year that was

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Sydney's housing crisis continued to impact acutely on clients, driving a substantial increase in the number of people seeking assistance with rent and bond. HoW spent more than \$232,500 on rental assistance to allow hundreds of people to remain in their accommodation and avoid, or at least defer, homelessness. Of this amount, about \$19,000 was allocated to crisis accommodation for individuals and families who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, including access to DFV refuge accommodation.

HoW was able to support a number of clients with rental assistance, however the service experienced a spike in people re-presenting post-COVID-19 as cost-of-living increases continued throughout the year. Families experienced persistent and acute stress to maintain their housing. Even when HoW was able to provide one family with financial assistance to clear four weeks of rental arrears, they returned within a month, not having found employment, and still unable to pay rent. Many families and individuals were in this position across the year, requiring HoW to provide crisis accommodation to clients at risk of rough sleeping.

The moratorium on evictions, introduced during COVID-19, was lifted in early 2022 and the team saw an almost immediate effect. Funding distributed through the MNSW Emergency Relief Grants provided a critical financial safety net that enabled clients to avoid homelessness by paying their rental arrears or to have the financial means to ensure food security.

HoW joined the Non-Residents Experiencing Homelessness Community of Practice as part of a coalition of services advocating to change the prohibitive policies that exclude people on temporary visas from accessing safe and stable accommodation.

### Our impact

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511

individuals supported with rent and maintaining tenancies

20

women who have experienced DFV participated in the WSTH program

104

individuals supported per night in WSTH program

18

properties managed in WSTH program

31

individuals assisted with crisis accommodation

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## Women's Supported Accommodation Project

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The Women's Supported Accommodation Project (WSAP) provides a safe and secure home and wrap-around support for vulnerable women who are seeking asylum, and who would otherwise be at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

The project provides targeted support for women to help them develop a pathway to

financial independence and entry into the private rental market.

Over the past financial year, House of Welcome received 166 referrals (366 individuals) for housing, financial and food security to support vulnerable women from refugee backgrounds and their dependents, many with a DFV background. HoW currently supports 32 women and dependents in the WSAP.

The Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) identified that women's housing insecurity following DFV is tied to economic insecurity. Women from asylum seeker backgrounds without access to financial assistance often have little control over where they live.

WSAP directly addresses these barriers by delivering intensive, wrap-around supports that provide 12 to 18 months of safe and stable housing to enable women to identify barriers to economic independence and develop goals to overcome these barriers.

In the past year, 10 women stayed in the shared women's accommodation, and two single mothers and four children stayed in houses. Two of the women took part in the Work & Welcome program. One client had her placement renewed within a school, and the school has committed to providing her part-time work as she completes her TAFE course in terms 3 and 4.

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### WSAP: our impact

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100%

of clients completed their casework plan

89%

of clients reported an increase in confidence towards achieving their life goals

89%

of clients reported an increase in personal safety and wellbeing

## Housing stock

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Securing safe and stable housing continues to be one of the most pressing needs for HoW clients. With 18 properties currently leased from religious orders and community groups, HoW is able to provide accommodation for both families and single people.

This accommodation includes two large properties that operate as share houses – one for single women in Surry Hills (with eight bedrooms) and one for single men in Liverpool (five bedrooms).

HoW is incredibly grateful to a community member who reached out and offered an apartment in Belmore. HoW plans to use the apartment as a bridge between the WSTH program and clients transitioning into private rental accommodation.

“We see it as a kind of stepping-stone for our clients,” says Maria Tupaea, HoW’s Housing Client Services Manager. “They will be paying more rent than they do in WSTH and will be responsible for paying for all of their utilities.

“Often, our clients haven’t been in the country for very long and they don’t really know what it’s like to rent in the private market,” she says.

“By providing this kind of accommodation, it’s giving them a better opportunity to equip themselves for moving into a private rental.

“It’s aimed at clients who have better capacity than someone who’s in a bit more of a crisis ... someone who’s working part or full time, who’s doing really well and who’s been engaged in accessing wrap-around support.

“One of the clients that we are considering supporting is a single woman who’s currently in one of our houses.

“She came to Sydney, escaping a DFV



relationship, and has engaged really well in our case management and employment program.

“She’s now working full-time and we’re talking with her about transitioning into the Belmore unit for six months.”

## New partnerships

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HoW’s Housing Client Services Manager joined three working groups this year: the Auburn Housing Working Group, Cumberland DFV Community of Practice and the Non-Resident People Experiencing Homelessness Community of Practice.

With sector expertise, HoW can influence policy and decision-making within mainstream services to amplify client needs and solutions.

“We join meetings, share information, discuss updates on housing programs and trends in the sector,” Marie says. “We work to see how we can best collaborate with each other.”



## Josephite Action Group (JAG)

The Josephite Action Group (JAG) are an invaluable ally of the housing program. Whenever one of HoW's properties needs to be made ready for a new family or single person, a JAG team heads over and spruces up the house, cleaning, setting up furniture and getting the property ready to welcome clients.

JAG also volunteer at HoW's community lunches and were an invaluable help at the Christmas party. Most of the JAG volunteers are young people who work or study full time and they often give up their weekends to help.



JAG in action at a HoW house during the year.

## Impact story: Diya\*

Diya immigrated to Australia with her husband. Here, she began to experience DFV and fled the relationship, ending up in a women's refuge with her young children. That's when she was referred to House of Welcome. She entered HoW's WSTH program, and a two-bedroom unit became home to her and her children.

Throughout the program, Diya accessed wrap-around support at HoW. Through the casework team, she was able to begin counselling and, after five months of advocacy, was approved for the SRSS program, allowing her to access a financial safety net. In collaboration with the Sydney Alliance Early Childhood Education and Care working group, Diya's caseworker was able to advocate for her and secure free childcare for her young children.

Through HoW's employment team, Diya completed a training course that enabled her to begin a part-time role while her children are in childcare. As a trained professional in her home country, she is trying to obtain registration to allow her to practice in Australia.

Diya says that without the WSTH program, she wouldn't have been able to achieve all the things she has achieved in the past year.

She's now almost ready to exit the program and is looking to enter the private rental market to find a longer-term home.

"Without the housing support from HoW, I wouldn't be where I am today," she says. "I always feel very supported. Thanks for not giving up on us."

# Employment

We build employment confidence to empower clients to access the labour market through skills development, job-ready foundational support and work experience opportunities. Support is delivered through the Work & Welcome and Empowered to Work programs.

HoW's employment programs provide job-ready support, pathways to education and training, and focused employment opportunities for our clients. Each program is designed to address the unique challenges facing individuals and families and overcome barriers through specialised service delivery.

Pathways to Employment is delivered weekly by a team of talented and experienced volunteers, and supports clients to access intensive employment support, tailored to their

needs. Working closely with Welcome Start Transitional Housing clients, the team has had great success assisting clients to reach their education and employment goals this year.

Work & Welcome, one of HoW's flagship programs, provides paid work experience opportunities for clients in host organisations across Sydney. This year, 93% of Work & Welcome participants went on to secure employment within three months of completing their placements.



## The year that was

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This year saw many clients returning to the workforce following heavy job losses throughout the pandemic. Many clients also resumed education and training opportunities to take up new roles in aged and disability care, hospitality, construction and warehousing.

With compassion and persistence, the employment program volunteers expanded the program, providing suitable and sustainable job opportunities with employment partners.

With the support of Cumberland City Council, the program offered vocational training support for the first time and assisted 18 clients to obtain valuable licences for work and safety training.

Work & Welcome continued to grow and provide fully supported, meaningful paid work experience for a number of clients in host schools.

### Pathways to Employment: our impact

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91

new clients assisted with job readiness and employment

181

job-ready employment appointments

4

volunteers provided mentoring

18

participants received forklift licences and other construction and warehousing certificates

3

job fairs delivered

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### Impact story: Sara\*

Sara, fleeing DFV, left her interstate home abruptly and came to Sydney with very little. She did not connect with her community in Sydney for fear of compromising her safety.

With no contacts or accommodation, she presented to another agency that provided temporary accommodation. It is difficult for people on bridging visas to access temporary accommodation in a refuge, and Sara was exited the day after her referral to HoW. HoW paid for some additional crisis accommodation until she was able to join the WSAP.

Once in stable housing, Sara met with her caseworker to co-design her case plan and identify her goals across the 12-month program. Sara disclosed that she was attending counselling and experienced nightmares.

In her second review, Sara reported that she was feeling more confident and happier because she had access to stable housing and ongoing mental health support.

This stability enabled Sara to participate in the HoW employment program, which saw her complete a placement through the Work & Welcome program – a 10-week work placement with a school. At the end of her placement, she found full-time employment.

## Work & Welcome

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Five Work & Welcome placements were completed at esteemed Sydney Catholic schools, including St Patrick's College Strathfield and Loreto Normanhurst. Participants were welcomed into roles in administration, IT and events co-ordination. The 10-week placements provided fully supported, paid work experience and assisted in overcoming future barriers to employment.

The Work & Welcome team engaged with three additional schools, two businesses and one university for program information workshops and fund-raising ahead of their placements next year.

The team developed and delivered specialised pre-employment training to ensure participants were given every chance to succeed. All five participants engaged in employment or further education following their placement this year.

## Forklift training

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Eighteen clients participated in vocational training with partner organisation DLI Training, thanks to a generous grant from Cumberland City Council.

Clients secured valuable forklift licenses, first-aid certificates, white cards and other construction and warehousing certificates. Participants were fully supported by the Pathways to Employment program which assisted with information sessions, enrolment and post-training employment pathway options.

"These courses and training opportunities aren't available through the [NSW Government] Smart and Skilled program and so our clients often miss out due to the cost," says Leonie Dyer, HoW's Community Engagement and Partnership Manager. "This partnership with Cumberland

## Work & Welcome: our impact

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**100%**  
of participants agree their understanding of the Australian workplace culture has increased

**93%**  
of participants secured further employment post-program

**100%**  
of participants agree the placement improved their mental wellbeing

**5**  
Work & Welcome job placements

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City Council and DLI Training in Auburn has provided local clients with a new range of employment opportunities as the job market continues to open up after COVID-19."

It's been hugely beneficial to House of Welcome clients. "I want to thank you on behalf of my son and myself for letting us attend the course through your kindness," Samir told the team. "We have attended the course and we both achieved [our certificates] and now we have been able to apply at many workplaces."





The team from Tip Top at the HoW job fair in May.

## Job fairs

This year, the employment team hosted several job fairs with sector and employment partners. At each event, clients attended workshops about the Australian workplace and information sessions about employment partners, and had the opportunity to apply for jobs on the spot.

Volunteers from the Pathways to Employment program were on hand to assist with resumés, cover letters and online application processes.

“The whole idea behind the fairs was to get clients face to face with potential employers,” says Leonie. “It gives them plenty of experience as well as an opportunity to actually apply for a job.”

Sixteen employers and service providers attended the fairs, including Opal Healthcare, Dress for Success, Australia Post, Harris Farm,

City East College, Red Cross and the GROW Program. More than 100 clients from HoW, Jesuit Refugee Service and the Asylum Seekers Centre had the opportunity to meet with them.

“Harris Farm were amazing,” says Leonie. “They hired seven people on the spot and also organised visits to their warehouse facilities for interested candidates. Opal Healthcare took down 35 registrations and agreed to match candidates up with suitable jobs and locations. Australia Post also employed several clients in forklift and driving roles.”

Almost 40 clients attended a separate event with HoW partner Tip Top to connect with employment opportunities in Western Sydney, receiving advice and guidance on applying for jobs at the company. Participants could apply directly for roles through a QR code provided by Tip Top and/or complete expressions of interest forms for future positions via a second code. Three clients were offered roles at Tip Top following the fair.

# Casework

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We provide trauma-informed casework to assist clients to access resources and community supports, and we build networks of referral pathways for highly vulnerable clients. Clients co-design a case plan with staff and work towards goals that lead to participation and social, economic and financial independence.

HoW caseworkers assist people seeking asylum to access support services (including education, health, accommodation and legal).

Casework is offered to individuals and families seeking asylum. The process involved in seeking protection can be daunting. Casework clients often have multiple or complex needs, and may not know where to access support and relevant services. HoW caseworkers link clients to a range of activities, advocate on their behalf for their entitlements and connect them to other specialist services. Caseworkers journey alongside clients and provide stability and cultural safety for clients whose worlds are often changing and unstable.

The casework program focuses on:

- providing complex support to assist people in crisis and clients in the WSTH program
- preparing individualised case plans to identify areas of need and enabling clients to access support to meet their needs
- delivering an Emergency Living Program that connects clients with financial and food assistance
- advocating for clients when liaising with other organisations to assist with health services, legal support, accommodation, education and employment.

## The year that was

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In 2022-23, the HoW casework team experienced an unprecedented influx of referrals, which resulted in the creation of a five-week waitlist for new clients.

Referrals, from external agencies as well as client self-presentations, included a mix of individuals and families accessing the service for the first time, as well as returning clients. From these referrals, a pattern of issues emerged, including food and housing insecurity, homelessness or imminent risk of homelessness, inability to afford medication and other necessary medical expenses, mental health deterioration, and physical loss of visa and/or other identification documentation.

This influx reflected the fact that clients were unable to cope with growing cost-of-living pressures. Households were constantly presenting to request support with food expenses, utility bills, rental arrears and medication costs. Of these presentations, many were families. Parents struggled to purchase essential school items for their children, and parents with younger children often reported that they could not afford essential baby items.

For some clients, their financial circumstances were exacerbated due to visa restrictions. Many clients did not have the legal right to work, did not have access to Medicare, and households with younger children were ineligible to apply for Federal Government initiatives that aim to address challenges to accessing early childhood education and care (such as the Child Care Subsidy).

However, the influx of presentations highlighted that even with protective factors – such as having the legal right to work, access to Medicare and having one or multiple income-earners in the family – these were not enough to enable clients to comfortably manage everyday living expenses.

That was the case with Rose\*, who was referred to HoW by Westmead Hospital for financial assistance. After giving birth, she was unable to work. Although her husband was working, his income was not enough to cover their expenses.

Rose was deeply distressed when she presented to the casework team, as the family had accrued rental arrears and were in danger of becoming homeless. Rose was supported with rental payments through HoW's 13-week financial assistance program.

In the interim, Rose remained active in her search for employment and was eventually able to source affordable childcare, which ultimately allowed her to return to her previous employment. "We are so grateful for the assistance HoW gave us," she said.

## The Afghanistan crisis

August 15, 2022 marked a year since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Throughout this period, HoW engaged with various individuals and families who had fled the country and were seeking financial assistance

## Casework: our impact

3,967

new clients assisted with job readiness and employment

10,027

foodbank engagements

\$151,000

spent on food parcels, food vouchers and payments for food and other essential household items

\$19,000

distributed to 128 individuals to provide medications and GP access for clients ineligible for Medicare

84

clients with DFV background supported with intensive casework support

416

individuals supported with intensive casework support

\$15,000

distributed to 62 individuals to support phone and internet data costs

500

people assisted with Opal Card concession applications

\$263,000

distributed to 511 individuals to support rent and maintain tenancies

\$19,000

distributed to 31 individuals to access crisis accommodation

to start their new lives in Australia. Using funds generously provided by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, these individuals and families were assisted to safely resettle in the country. Just under \$25,000 was spent to support 90 individuals with rental payments, utility bills and medication expenses.

## Domestic and family violence

Women who are seeking asylum in Australia often experience DFV in complex ways. A woman's visa status is frequently used as a tool of coercion by those perpetrating violence and simultaneously functions as a barrier to being able to access comprehensive and culturally safe support. Many mainstream services with a specific focus on supporting victim-survivors require clients to hold Australian citizenship or permanent residency to be eligible. HoW supported 181 victim-survivors of DFV this year with financial assistance to access safe and secure accommodation. A portion of HoW's spend of \$19,000 on crisis accommodation for those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness included support for women to access DFV refuge accommodation.

## Legal assistance

Housing and financial instability is exceptionally hard to address for clients who don't have identification. This year, HoW caseworkers provided many referrals to legal services on behalf of clients who presented without any physical visa and/or identification documents.

The majority of clients who reported having lost their visa and/or identification documents were single males who also experienced chronic homelessness. Without these documents, these men struggled to access services and obtain adequate support.

HoW continues to explore how best to support clients who have lost or misplaced their legal documents, particularly those who experience



### Meet Hoorieh

Hoorieh is our Intake Caseworker. She is the first person to receive emails from agencies, women's shelters, hospitals and other government agencies that seek financial assistance and housing for clients, including people seeking asylum who have applied for protection visas and people on TPVs.

Hoorieh speaks Persian and Dari, and this has been a huge asset when communicating with clients. Clients have reported that while interpreters can assist them to communicate

in English, speaking with Hoorieh allows them to feel understood. She is able to understand their feelings and the depth of their complex challenges. Clients also feel more relaxed when Hoorieh conducts intake assessments using their common language, which helps to build rapport.

Her own lived experience as a refugee has also given her a greater understanding of how difficult it is for our clients to navigate the various systems in Australia, including having access to the financial assistance required for them to secure stable housing.

Before coming to Australia, Hoorieh had been working in a school for Afghani refugees in Iran and "when I came here, I was thinking that I would like to work with refugees again". After she completed her student placement with HoW (she studied a Bachelor of Social Work), she was offered a job as an Intake Caseworker in 2021. "I was so lucky because it was my dream job to work with refugees and people seeking asylum," she says.

chronic homelessness, those with complex physical and/or mental health diagnoses, and victim-survivors of DFV.

## Foodbank

Demand for food assistance soared in 2022-23 as increasing cost-of-living expenses continued to hit refugees and people seeking asylum hard. HoW saw a 38% increase in the number of referrals for food security assistance.

The foodbank continued to receive incredible support from schools, community organisations, parishes, services and individuals. There are few more welcome sights than people arriving in the driveway with a car, trailer or ute loaded up with supplies from their food drives.

A new partnership with Tip Top saw the Western Sydney-based business donating bread twice weekly. The Tip Top team also lent a hand with corporate volunteering at the Refugee Week community lunch, providing pallet loads of crumpets and pancakes for clients.

House of Welcome's wonderful volunteers are the welcoming face at the window at the foodbank and the HoW team are incredibly grateful for their faithful commitment.

## Food drive video

HoW featured in a video produced by the Diocese of Parramatta called "Food Drives in the Diocese of Parramatta", which highlighted the HoW and Jesuit Refugee Service's foodbanks.

HoW caseworker Kaydee Jakosalem was featured in the video, along with one of HoW's clients, Aneesh, who related how he came to HoW every week to collect food.

Bishop of the Diocese of Parramatta, the Most



Some of HoW's generous foodbank supporters.

Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen, highlighted HoW's work in providing food essentials to the poorest of families. You can learn more, and watch the video, at [parracatholic.org/fooddrive](http://parracatholic.org/fooddrive).

## Dental clinic

In past years, HoW has been deeply fortunate that Sydney dentist Dr Jalal Khan was able to bring his "dental truck" to Granville to provide free dental services to clients for a fortnight. This year saw a change in the delivery model, and Dr Khan generously offered free dental appointments for HoW clients for a one-week period in his dental clinic.

HoW volunteers accompanied clients to North Sydney for their appointments, providing logistical assistance and supporting them to feel comfortable and at ease.

# Volunteers

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Over the past 12 months, HoW welcomed our long-term volunteers and a wonderful group of new supporters with open arms. The volunteer team have played a critical role in delivering employment, foodbank, housing and administration support.

With generous funding from Dooleys and Resilience NSW, HoW also provided 16 community lunch events, Christmas and Refugee Week gatherings. HoW's welcoming and practical volunteers always ensured that these events ran like clockwork.

Due to the incredible contribution of volunteers, HoW caseworkers were able to concentrate on providing support for clients experiencing complex difficulties, provide outreach visits and engage in planning and advocate on behalf of clients.

## Volunteer training

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HoW engages volunteers in further training to build skills and ensure that they are provided with information that is trauma informed and safe. In partnership with STARTTS, HoW delivered training on Working Effectively with People Seeking Asylum and Impact of Persecution, Torture and Refugee Trauma.



### Volunteers: our impact

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**89%**  
of volunteers reported increased knowledge of the issues faced by people seeking asylum

**89%**  
of volunteers reported increased confidence to advocate on behalf of people seeking asylum

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## Meet Remko

*One of our hardest-working volunteers is Remko Ten Bruggencate, a former electrical engineer (now retired) originally from The Netherlands, who we know as the man who can fix anything. Here's a little of his story...*

"I first came to HoW when a friend – who was a client and then worked in the employment program – told me that the housing program needed a volunteer and suggested it would suit me. And it did.

I started volunteering in February 2016, so more than seven years. It's quite a while ... they even gave me long service leave in 2022!

My role has changed a lot over the years, but currently I am the handyman for the properties in the HoW housing program, and also I collect and install furniture and whitegoods that have been donated by kind people.

As a handyman, I fix everything from leaking taps, kitchen cupboard doors and household appliances to doors and door locks, and I do some painting as well ... the list is long.

So, it's a very wide scale of activities, but that makes it interesting. Whatever needs repairing or replacing, I will look at it and fix it, if possible. So I am a jack of all trades, master of none. My engineering mindset helps me a lot.

If I can't do something, I'll tell HoW to arrange a tradesman to help out. But HoW is a charity and money is in very short supply so it's important to be creative and flexible.

I love working for HoW. It's a really amazing organisation with incredible staff and volunteers who are super committed to bettering the lot of refugees and people seeking asylum. Despite the often-hard life experiences, we have lots of laughs. For me personally, my volunteer role allows me to give something back to our society, to people who need it.



Meeting with refugees in their homes is a very nice experience. They are very grateful for the work you do for them. Sometimes they offer you some of their food which can be fantastic. I fixed the stove at one of the houses a few weeks ago so they could cook again, and they had big smiles on their faces.

It is often simple things that make a big impact. I remember delivering and assembling a cot for an Eritrean lady with a two year old so he was able to sleep in his own bed. She was very happy.

I have made some great long-term friends at HoW over the years and I've met some amazing people. When I first started, I spent a lot of time on the delivery truck [collecting donated furniture] with Brother Joe, a devout Catholic. I am an atheist, so we had some very interesting discussions. But we respected each other and we worked together very well.

Another strong memory was sharing breakfast with a Pakistani family when I did repairs in their home. It was very special."

# Community connections

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We deliver programs based on community-identified needs to build connections, reduce social isolation and increase clients' sense of wellbeing.

Providing opportunities for community connections creates spaces to build networks, friendships, skills and overcome social isolation. Reflecting on the COVID-19 periods, where face-to-face events weren't possible, clients have regularly spoken with the team about how difficult these periods of isolation were. With generous funding from Dooley's ClubGRANTS and Resilience NSW, HoW was able to host a range of activities and community lunches across the year.

## Truth be Told

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The Truth be Told program provides a platform to develop community leaders and team members with lived expertise to share their personal journeys and real-life experiences in schools, community spaces and workplaces. A key form of advocacy (education with lived experience is at the heart of the program), Truth be Told provides an opportunity for the community to learn, become empathetic and address misconceptions about refugee journeys.

The program was delivered across a number of schools at their social justice workshops and assemblies, as well as through community

**“Hearing about how our speaker stood up for what she believed was right but was persecuted for it had a big impact on me”**

– St Aloysius student

### Truth be Told: our impact

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**100%**  
of audience strongly agreed/agreed that the presentations increased their understanding of why people seek asylum

**100%**  
of audience strongly agreed/agreed that the presentations increased their awareness of Australian policies concerning refugees and people seeking asylum

**8**  
presentations

**293**  
audience participants

---

events. Participants report that making these presentations builds their confidence and understanding to be able to talk to others about the experience of seeking asylum.





The Refugee Week lunch featured an acrobatic performance and delectable food prepared by HW Catering trainees.

## Refugee Week Lunch

The theme of this year’s Refugee Week was Finding Freedom and it provided an opportunity to contribute to the national dialogue around this critical issue, particularly at a time when the refugee crisis has never been so dire.

About 100 clients, volunteers, partners, supporters and community members attended the lunch, which was lovingly created by trainee chefs at House of Welcome Catering. An African acrobatic performance, delicious Pakistani food, a “Kindness Heart” sewing circle and henna hand painting were all part of the celebration.

The sewing circle was run by The Social Outfit, an ethical fashion social enterprise celebrating creativity and diversity, and employing and

training people from refugee and new migrant communities ([thesocialoutfit.org](http://thesocialoutfit.org)). They’re supporters of 1000 Hearts, a global kindness community offering people a symbol of compassion and care through handmade pocket hearts. Guests bonded over sewing at the 1000 Hearts table, creating a bowl of hearts that were definitely made with love.

One of House of Welcome’s corporate partners, Tip Top, generously donated foodbank items as well as new shoes, while St Madeleine’s Primary School in Kenthurst arrived with a trailer-load of groceries.

## Afghan Women’s Sewing Circle

HoW was very excited in 2022-23 to partner with The Social Outfit to provide an opportunity for Afghan women to connect and learn valuable sewing and English skills.

Across the year, four eight-week courses were run with new groups of Afghan women, with the aim of learning new industrial sewing skills and, together, creating new opportunities for jobs and study pathways.



## Children's Fun Day

Nothing beats a sunny day outside, playing games, eating pizza and making new friends! Thanks to Resilience NSW, HoW clients and their children had a wonderful outing at the Children's Fun Day in October.

HW Catering provided delicious goodies, including colourful cupcakes, while kids enjoyed creating art, playing on a giant chess board and trying their hand at badminton.

## Christmas party

HoW hosted its inaugural Christmas party post-COVID-19 lockdowns. In attendance were about 150 clients, 15 volunteers and 11 staff to deliver a day full of food and activities. Santa arrived to hand out lollies, a magician entertained children and professional face painters unleashed their artistry. HoW set up a volunteer-led beauty corner and an arts and craft table for the children.

With so many clients separated from their families, the event provided a welcoming space for people to relax and connect.



Dr Andrew Charlton (middle, at back) with HW Catering staff and trainees at the April community lunch.



Alfresco activities at the Children's Fun Day.

## Community lunches

Throughout the year, HoW hosted clients, partners and friends at monthly community lunches, which provided a wonderful way to come together and celebrate, with amazing food by HW Catering.

In April, it was a pleasure to welcome Dr Andrew Charlton MP, Julia Finn MP, Lynda Voltz MP, Mayor Lisa Lake and Councillor Glenn Elmore from Cumberland City Council, and Zaki Haidari, Campaigner, Refugee Rights Amnesty International Australia to the lunch.

Posting on Facebook, Dr Charlton said: "Since 2001, House of Welcome has been an active part of the local community and does great work in supporting refugees and asylum seekers, helping them gain skills and work experience through their catering service."

It was a privilege to welcome local, state and federal representatives to witness the work HoW does, and the people we do it with.

## World Day of Migrants and Refugees

HoW participated in the World Day of Migrants and Refugees event, hosted by the Diocese of Parramatta and the All Saints of Africa Centre community.

HoW, along with other services and agencies such as Vinnies, Jesuit Refugee Service, CatholicCare and the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, provided a wonderful Sunday afternoon of reflection, music, dance and food.

It was a joyful and encouraging day that demonstrated the valuable connections within our communities of migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum.

## Spring Cycle

On Sunday 16 October, a very excited House of Welcome team joined more than 8,000 riders for the 2022 Spring Cycle event.



The World Day of Migrants and Refugees event.

Sydney turned on her best weather for the day and the route was incredibly beautiful ... starting at St Leonards Park, taking us across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and through the CBD, ending up in Tumbalong Park at Darling Harbour (10km) or Sydney Olympic Park (50km).

We are so proud of all our House of Welcome participants, including 11 staff members and three volunteers who completed either the 10km or 50km ride.

Our team raised \$8,742.55 for House of Welcome, a mighty effort. Thank you to all our generous donors and supporters.



The Spring Cycle adventure in October.

# Advocacy

We are committed to community engagement and advocacy to bring an understanding of refugee journeys to the wider community and to meet with elected representatives to drive policy change.

HoW campaigns for change. Working first-hand with refugees and people seeking asylum, the team understands that their journeys have been impacted by broken systems and uninformed policy. Advocacy campaigns are targeted and built around listening to the voices of people with lived experience, driven by community leaders to influence policy and achieve systemic change.

## Advocacy in action: the campaign for Emergency Relief renewal

The 2023 Emergency Relief Renewal campaign advocated for the renewal of Multicultural NSW (MNSW) emergency relief funding for temporary visa holders from the NSW Government. This funding, although branded “emergency relief”, in truth provided the resources to meet the basic everyday needs of vulnerable people seeking asylum, including financial assistance, medical support, housing support and the costs of day-to-day living.

HoW understood the funding from the NSW Government was a temporary measure, started

as COVID-19 relief in mid-2020. HoW is moving campaign activity to lobby the Commonwealth in the long term. We need an accessible safety net to continue to support this vulnerable population, who rely solely on charity assistance.

HoW joined a delegation to NSW Parliament to deliver a briefing on cuts to both the State and Federal financial safety net, with sector partners Jesuit Refugee Service, Asylum Seekers Centre, STARTTS and the Refugee Council of Australia. HoW met with several members of NSW Parliament, including ministers, with advocacy efforts and will continue throughout the year.

Our delegations targeted representatives in several identified categories:

- location of electorate in proximity to the crisis
- location of electorate in proximity to HoW service delivery
- parliamentary responsibilities
- personal connections
- expressed values and issues of support.

HoW advocates met with the following NSW Parliamentarians in 2022-23:

- Julia Finn (Granville)
- Lynda Voltz (Auburn; see box, right)

- Mark Coure (Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, Shadow Minister for Jobs, Industry, Innovation, Science and Technology, and Shadow Minister for South-Western Sydney – Oatley)
- Kylie Wilkinson (East Hills)
- The Hon Anoulack Chanthivong (Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections – Macquarie Fields)
- Sarah Kaine MLC (see box, right)
- Mark Buttigieg MLC
- The Hon Kate Washington [with Catholic Social Services] (Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion – Port Stephens).

Frontline HoW staff – particularly those with lived experience – communicated the urgency of the crisis.



Casework Manager Ruth (left) and Caseworker Hoorieh with The Hon Anoulack Chanthivong.



Ruth and Housing Client Services Manager Marie in NSW Parliament House to meet with Dr Sarah Kaine.

## Parliamentarians advocate for HoW

In May, Lynda Voltz, the Member for Auburn, made an important statement to the NSW Parliament, expressing the necessity of continued funding for organisations working with refugees and people seeking asylum – and made special mention of HoW.

“There are currently only 1,500 people on the Federal Status Resolution Support Services program nationwide, whereas the organisations that offer support to those people within our electorates service about four times that number,” she told Parliament.

“Those organisations include ... the fantastic House of Welcome in Granville... Over 4,500 people have received special casework and emergency relief from the Jesuit Refugee Service, the House of Welcome and the Asylum Seekers Centre. That is in comparison with the 1,500 who are being supported by the Federal Government, following the significant cuts that saw the numbers fall from 23,000.”

The team then met with The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine MLC in June to talk about HoW's work and the impact of Multicultural NSW funding ending. Dr Kaine followed up this visit by delivering a speech to mark Refugee Week, sharing the incredible impact HoW's staff have in their work with refugees and people seeking asylum.

She said: “Last week I met with Marie and Ruth, two frontline workers from the House of Welcome, who support and advocate on behalf of vulnerable refugees and people seeking asylum. It was disappointing to hear about the number of vulnerable people on temporary and bridging visas who are not eligible to apply for government support, including Centrelink, social housing or crisis accommodation.”

## Co-Creating Cumberland's Future Forum

The Co-Creating Cumberland's Future Forum was co-chaired by House of Welcome and Sydney Alliance to provide an opportunity for deeper community conversations following the candidates' forum last year.

Members of Cumberland City Council, including Mayor Lisa Lake, were present to discuss council's progress in five key areas of community concern. Participants also had an opportunity to discuss emerging local issues, join action groups and speak directly with service providers and councillors.



At the Co-Creating Cumberland's Future Forum.

## The Diocesan Journey

HoW is honoured to be part of the Diocese of Parramatta's The Diocesan Journey: Walking with Refugees and People Seeking Protection.

In the past year, HoW contributed to the planning and organisation of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees event in September; participated in regular committee meetings for a diocesan food drive, including production of a video campaign (see Food drive video, page 37); and contributed to the advocacy actions established by the Diocese of Parramatta Peace, Justice and Ecology facilitators (campaigning with political and religious leaders).

## Justice for Refugees Rally

HoW was part of a massive community of people who attended the 2022 Justice for Refugees Rally in the Sydney CBD in July.

The demands put forward at the rally included freedom for those in detention, an end to offshore processing, and permanent visas and family reunion for all refugees.

Speakers called on the Federal Government to end detention; free the Medevac refugees; introduce permanent visas; and to take action on Afghanistan by issuing 20,000 extra visas.

## Palm Sunday Rally for Refugees

Rain (plenty), hail or shine, HoW shows up to support the community effort for refugees to bring about change.

In April, members of the HoW team attended the



HoW team members at the Palm Sunday rally.

Palm Sunday Rally for Refugees in Sydney to lend our voice to the call for permanent visas for all refugees.

The rally was organised by a broad group including Sydney Peace & Justice Coalition, Refugee Action Coalition, unions, church groups and other refugee rights groups. HoW was honoured to join with their voices.

## Sydney Alliance

HoW is proud to be a member of Sydney Alliance, a non-party-political grassroots organisation that brings together diverse community organisations, unions, religious organisations and schools to advance the common good and achieve a fair, just and sustainable city. Nine staff members completed the Sydney Alliance Foundations training in July, building their skills in community organising and advocacy work.

Throughout the year, HoW connected and joined forces with Sydney Alliance on issues involving refugees and people seeking asylum, as well as clean, affordable energy solutions for everyone.

At a Voices for Power event in Parramatta in November, team members joined 200 Alliance members to raise issues of concern with politicians across the divide. The NSW Treasurer and Energy Minister Matt Kean committed to holding an assembly prior to the NSW elections to enable Alliance members to raise concerns about pressing issues and to hold politicians accountable to commitments to instigate change.

HoW participated in a pre-election assembly in February. With 900 members in attendance, the assembly sought commitments from the political parties. During the event, people shared stories, acted in solidarity and built relational power. The HoW team are on track to connect, develop a strategy and raise the pressing issues with state and federal politicians.

The HoW team are on track to connect, develop a strategy and raise the pressing issues with state and federal politicians



At the Sydney Alliance convention in August (top) and the Voices for Power event in November.

# HW Catering

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House of Welcome Catering (HW Catering) is a social enterprise that uses the power of food to connect communities and to empower people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds to participate in employment opportunities and pathways.

Public and political awareness of social enterprises, and House of Welcome Catering particularly, is growing and continues to make a real impact on the lives of people seeking asylum and refugees in employment.

At HW Catering, we are proud to have offered thousands of hours of paid work to our kitchen staff over the past 12 months.

We are all about achieving real social impact for people seeking asylum and refugees, who face tremendous barriers to employment. We're delighted with the amount of support we have received during the year through catering orders and our generous donors. The future looks exciting and busy as we focus our efforts on solid growth and increasing our trainee program numbers.

## The year that was

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HW Catering continued its growth trajectory, exceeding all expectations, more than doubling revenue this year.

With COVID-19 in the rear-view mirror, we benefited from many businesses returning

to the office and needing in-house catering, resulting in increased orders, including boardroom morning teas, lunches and afternoon teas, cocktail parties and private events.

Customers from all sectors of the community ordered from us for the first time, and a number have now become return customers, with multiple orders placed across the year. Our menu continues to expand thanks to the generous contribution of new recipes from our latest trainees, who share and promote their cultural heritage through food.

Part of our appeal has been the diversity of dietary options we offer, including vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free foods. Expanding these options will become an area of focus in the next 12 months.

**“All staff, from our first email communication to the delivery of the food, were friendly, helpful and professional. And the food was delicious”**

– HW Catering customer



## Our trainees

With the commercial kitchen in its second year of operation, the training program continued to thrive and deliver great results. Trainees complete in-house training modules to build their knowledge and skill-set within the commercial kitchen context.

Four new trainees completed their six-month paid placements with HW Catering and, with consumer confidence growing, HW Catering aims to offer five placements in the upcoming year. Typical of their experience, trainees always start out with some level of trepidation, but by the end of the six months, they are “hungry” for further employment, their English improves through the immersive employment program and, above everything, they feel like they belong to the House of Welcome family.

Head Chef Abbey McDonald says: “It’s incredible to observe trainees’ individual journeys and be part of helping them to succeed in whatever future employment they choose.”

## Snack packs

In the 2022-23 financial year, HW Catering partnered with the Sisters of Charity and Turbans 4 Australia (T4A) in a local initiative to provide food hampers to the Cumberland community and provide employment for people seeking asylum. It was an incredibly successful venture, with 2,880 packs prepared in our kitchen and distributed by T4A as part of their weekly food hamper deliveries. About 17,000 eggless brownies rolled out of HW Catering to provide weekly treats for T4A to distribute to the Sikh and wider community.

“It was a really great initiative and a wonderful way for charities to support each other,” says Anne Moran, Catering Business Development Manager. “I felt like we were paying it forward.” >



“It was also a really good opportunity for the trainees to learn how to make brownies and to know that the food they were cooking was going to families who needed food support.”

## Cooking class

Our Chef de Partie, Avedes (see his story, opposite), had an opportunity to share his Syrian and Armenian culture and heritage at a cooking class at Mount St Benedict College in north-western Sydney in September.

The Festive Friday class, held in the college’s impressive home economics room, was enjoyed by participants who were guided by Avo in creating a dazzling and delicious menu.

They created Syrian za’atar twists, Armenian manti (a golden pastry filled with minced beef or potato, onion and peas), an Armenian bamia vegetarian stew with okra, a harissa chicken dish, and an Armenian apple chunk cake.

Participants not only got to take home recipes for everything they created, but were also given a tea towel featuring a recipe for Persian brownies (one of HW Catering’s biggest hits).

## Christmas cakes

For the festive season, our chefs got very busy making 70-plus Middle Eastern-flavoured Christmas cakes that were eagerly bought up (and hugely enjoyed) by our supporters.

Head chef Abbey created the recipe for the cake using fruit and nuts with a gentle infusion of rosewater, and it was proudly made by our client cooks in our Granville kitchen.

“When I got the inspiration for the Christmas cakes, I was working with [former trainee] Aliyeh, who is Persian,” Abbey recalls. “So we came up

## HW Catering: our impact

**19,787**  
people enjoyed our food

**4**  
new trainees completed the program

**281**  
individual orders were created

**178%**  
growth in trade revenue from previous year



Avo leads the cooking class, and the delectable-looking Syrian za’atar twists.

**“I walk into work every day feeling proud and excited to learn, gain knowledge and overall to feel like I have a purpose” – Avo, Chef de Partie**

with a basic Christmas cake but then made it gluten free and added Iranian spices to make it our own. Each cake was topped with dried fruit that I sourced from an Iranian grocer.”

Abbey says it was a wonderful experience for the catering team.

“Everyone enjoyed making the cakes because it showed what we make for Christmas dessert in Australia, but we added their culture too, so that we combined two different cultures into one amazing cake.”



Our mouthwatering, Middle Eastern-influenced Christmas cake.



## Impact story: Avedes (Avo)

Growing up in Syria, Avedes was on track to complete his medical degree and pursue a career in medicine. He faced challenges in his journey seeking asylum in Australia, and while his passion had always been to become a doctor, there was no clear pathway to making his aspiration a reality in his new home.

This led him into the hospitality industry, where he fell in love with cooking and creating new dishes. He takes enormous pride sharing his cultural cuisine and the joy it brings to people.

While his love of cooking flourished, several bad experiences left Avo disheartened about the sector. Things finally changed when he attended the HoW Pathways to Employment

program where he was encouraged to apply for a traineeship with HW Catering. With assurances that HW Catering would assist with finding him work in a different sector if the traineeship didn't work, he jumped straight in.

Avo started with HW Catering in late 2021 where his passion, drive and commitment demonstrated leadership potential. He gained experience and knowledge in the commercial kitchen that allowed him to work independently and supervise junior trainees in the absence of the Head Chef.

After completing the six-month traineeship, Avo was offered a full-time position as Senior Client Cook. He shared his ambition to attend TAFE to attain his Certificate III and IV in commercial cookery and, because of the flexible, supportive approach of the team, he was able to start in February 2023. This has provided the pathway for him to step into the Chef de Partie role.

“Since being at HW Catering, I have been able to set goals that allow me to have a brighter future,” Avo says. “I walk into work every day feeling proud and excited to learn, gain knowledge and overall to feel like I have a purpose. [Head Chef] Abbey has helped me every single step, to give me confidence ... she encouraged me every day. I'm excited to see what my next chapter with HW will bring.”

# Statement of Financial Position

St Francis Social Services (as at 30 June 2023)

	30 Jun 2023	30 Jun 2022
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,547,348	1,585,993
Trade and other receivables	37,659	52,321
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>1,585,007</b>	<b>1,638,313</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Investments	423,595	398,271
Property, plant and equipment	1,341,245	1,373,811
Total non-current assets	<b>1,764,840</b>	1,772,082
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>3,349,847</b>	<b>3,410,395</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	797,348	905,901
Provisions	156,247	132,583
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>953,596</b>	<b>1,038,484</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	26,039	36,791
Total non-current liabilities	<b>26,039</b>	<b>36,791</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>979,635</b>	<b>1,075,275</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>2,370,212</b>	<b>2,335,120</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained earnings	998,212	963,120
Reserves	1,372,000	1,372,000
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>2,370,212</b>	<b>2,335,120</b>

# Statement of Comprehensive Income

St Francis Social Services (for the year ended 30 June 2023)

	2023	2022
<b>Income</b>		
Church body donations	596,639	569,636
Donations	422,745	646,509
Fundraising income	106,779	
Government grants	1,356,261	1,461,561
Non-Government grants	412,504	459,798
Operating activities	498,281	221,129
Other income	164,815	134,776
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,558,023</b>	<b>3,493,410</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Building maintenance	292,296	282,626
Client support services	620,552	849,579
Financial costs	108,290	187,330
General expenses	73,596	44,788
Insurance	17,244	15,662
IT costs	136,009	119,330
Membership fees	13,704	5,858
Motor vehicle expenses	29,377	24,200
Staff costs	2,225,640	1,901,397
Volunteer costs	6,223	1,410
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,522,930</b>	<b>3,432,180</b>
<b>Current Year Profit/(Loss) Before Income Tax</b>	<b>35,093</b>	<b>61,229</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Year</b>	<b>35,093</b>	<b>61,229</b>

Independently audited by Pascoe & Co.  
pascoeco.com.au

## Our supporters

We are deeply grateful to these partners and supporters for their generous assistance throughout 2022-23. We would also like to acknowledge those donors who wish to remain anonymous, and the many people who make small donations. Thank you, too, to those who support our social enterprise, House of Welcome Catering. We couldn't do the work we do without you.

- Abu Hussein Fruit Market
- Addison Road Community Organisation
- Amélie Housing
- Amnesty International
- ANZ Bank Sydney
- Arab Council Australia
- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- Asylum Seekers Centre
- Auburn Centre for Community
- Australia Post
- Australian Online Giving Foundation Benevity Community
- Australian Employer Network for Refugee Inclusion
- Australian Muslim Women's Association
- Australian Red Cross
- Baker McKenzie
- Beauticate
- Bennelong Foundation
- Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group
- Bosco Knitting Group (St John Bosco Parish Engadine)
- Braidwood Rural Australians for Refugees
- Brigidine Sisters Maroubra
- The Buck Foundation
- Catherine McAuley Westmead
- Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney
- Catholic Church Insurance Giving
- Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
- Catholic Education Foundation
- Cerdon College Merrylands
- City of Sydney
- Clancy Catholic College
- Commonwealth Bank Auburn
- Community Builders program
- Cumberland City Council
- Cumberland City Council ClubGRANTS
- Dandelion Support Network
- Democracy in Colour
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Department of Communities and Justice Community Building Partnership Program
- Department of Communities and Justice Support Grant
- Department of Social Services Community Hub Grant
- DLI Training
- Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia and Solomon Islands
- Domremy College Five Dock
- Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club
- Eastern Suburbs Youth Network
- Franciscan Friars Australia
- The Good Shepherd Parish Plumpton
- Granville East Public School
- Grill'd Parramatta
- Harris Farm
- Headspace Bondi
- Herbert Smith Freehills (HSF)
- Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School Carnes Hill
- Homebush Boys High School
- House of Sadaqa
- International Committee of the Red Cross
- Investing for Charity
- Jahie Pty Ltd (Alex Liddy)
- James Ruse Agricultural High School Ruse Farm
- Jesuit Refugee Service Australia
- JJ Cahill Memorial High School
- Josephite Action Group
- Josephite Justice Network
- Keady Investment Trust
- Dr Jalal Khan
- Kim's Magic Blankets
- The Lewis Foundation
- Life Without Barriers
- Little Company of Mary Sisters
- Loreto Normanhurst
- Loreto Sisters
- Macquarie University PACE Program
- The Marian & E.H. Flack Trust
- Marist Sisters
- Mary Immaculate Parish Waverley
- Mary Ward International Australia
- Matraville Sports High School
- The Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit (HSMS)
- Mount St Benedict College Pennant Hills
- Multicultural NSW Crisis and Emergency Services
- Multicultural NSW Emergency Relief and NGO Support Grant
- Mums for Refugees
- The Nappy Collective
- National Council of Churches Australia



- NSW Reconstruction Authority COVID-19 Community Connection and Wellbeing Program
- NSW Refugee Health
- NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS)
- North Sydney Community Centre
- Opal HealthCare
- Our Lady of the Nativity Parish Lawson
- OzHarvest
- PAYCE Foundation
- Paynter Dixon
- Pendle Hill High School
- Presentation Sisters
- Primo Foods
- Randwick Girls' High School
- Redfern Jarjum College
- Refugee Advice and Casework Service
- Refugee Council of Australia
- Refugees Welcome
- Rose Bay Secondary College
- Roseville Uniting Church Refugee Support Group
- Rotary Club of Granville
- Sacred Heart Parish Blackheath
- Sacred Heart Parish Cabramatta
- St Alban's Anglican Church Epping
- St Andrew The Apostle Parish Marayong
- St Aloysius College

- St Bernadette's Parish Castle Hill
- St Brendan's Catholic Primary School Bankstown
- St Clare Region Secular Franciscan Order
- St Columba's Parish Leichhardt North
- St Columba's Catholic Primary School Leichhardt North
- St Francis of Assisi Parish Paddington
- St George Community Housing
- St Gertrude's Catholic Primary School Smithfield
- St James Catholic Primary School Glebe
- St John Bosco Catholic Primary School Engadine
- St Joseph's Parish Edgecliff
- St Madeleine's Primary School Kenthurst
- St Mary's Primary School Georges Hall
- St Mary Queen of Heaven Parish George's Hall
- St Michael's Catholic Primary School Lane Cove
- St Michael's Catholic Primary School Meadowbank
- St Paul the Apostle Primary School Winston Hills
- St Michael's Parish Lane Cove
- St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta
- St Patrick's College Strathfield

- St Thomas Aquinas Parish Springwood
- St Vincent de Paul Paddington and Edgecliff
- St Vincent's Hospital Homeless Health Service
- SCEGGS Darlinghurst
- Scully Foundation
- Services Australia Multicultural and Community Engagement Teams
- Settlement Services International
- Share the Dignity
- Shelter NSW
- Sisters of Charity Australia
- Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
- Sisters of St Joseph
- The Sisters of The Good Samaritan
- Slingsby Foundation
- The Social Outfit
- StreetSmart
- Sydney Alliance
- Sydney Community Forum
- Sydney Shakti Temple
- Thread Together
- Tip Top
- Trustees of Sisters of St Dominic
- United Workers Union
- University of Sydney
- Ursuline Community
- VivCourt Trading
- Western Sydney Local Health District
- Wrap with Love

## St Francis Social Services

461-463 Oxford Street  
PO Box 39  
Paddington NSW 2021  
(02) 9331 2691; enquiries@stfrancis.org.au  
stfrancis.org.au

## Centre 360 Youth and Family Service

461-463 Oxford St  
PO Box 39  
Paddington NSW 2021  
(02) 9331 2691 Freecall 1800 249 740  
enquiries@centre360.org.au  
centre360.org.au

## House of Welcome

197 The Trongate  
PO Box 10  
Granville NSW 2142  
(02) 9727 9290; office@houseofwelcome.org.au  
houseofwelcome.org.au

## House of Welcome Catering

197 The Trongate  
PO Box 10  
Granville NSW 2142  
(02) 9727 9290; catering@houseofwelcome.org.au  
howcatering.org.au

## Donate

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To donate please visit:

<https://www.stfrancis.org.au/#donate>



St Francis Social Services is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.  
ABN 67 064 978 347.

All donations above \$2 are tax deductible.