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**WAM
ANNUAL REPORT
2017**

Women and Mentoring Annual Report
for the year ended 30 June 2017.



OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY

We are reliable and trustworthy. Every woman who comes to us should feel safe, emotionally and physically, with our mentors. We optimise our resources to build early intervention strategies and offer them support.

RESPECT

We operate without judgement or bias. We approach each individual with open minds and hearts full of compassion, no matter who they are or their circumstances.

BELONGING

We work closely with the community for support and referrals, in pursuit of social justice and a better, stronger community for all.

EMPOWERMENT

We don't tell women under mentorship what to do, but empower them to make the best decisions for themselves.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Ensuring that women in our community have a fair and just opportunity to thrive and live their lives as equally as others.

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REPORT FROM OUR CHAIR & EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Mary Latham
WAM Executive Officer

Hello from WAM and welcome to this year's annual report.

The 2016-17 year has been an excellent year for us. It's been a year of consolidating our existing operations, improving our processes and getting ready for further growth in the near future. We've expanded our reach into new geographic areas and a new court; going where there are women in need of help. We've moved to new premises in a shared space with some excellent like-minded organisations. Our website has been revamped, and rolled out our new image right across our operations. Thanks to the team at Cornwell for the work on our re-branding, and to Melbourne Womens' Fund who financially supported the new website.

We've had ongoing support from our current philanthropic funders, the Ian Potter Foundation and the RE Ross Trust. We've also been pleased to secure additional funding from several new sources. These new funders have provided some incredibly valuable practical support to our operations. A grant from the Victoria Law Foundation allowed us to expand our annual Law Week event and present to a much bigger audience. A grant from the REA Employee Community Grants Program allowed us to upgrade some of our out of date computer and telephone equipment. A volunteer grant from the Department of Social Services has covered some of the costs of recruiting, training and supporting our volunteers. And a grant from Yarra City Council allowed us to provide some terrific training courses for our mentors. Thanks to all our philanthropic and government funders.

And a big thanks also to the individual donors who support us. We've been working on expanding our fundraising program and have been pleased with what we've achieved this year. Funding remains a challenge for us, but is improving year on year. It's important for us to build our reserves and make our organisation more sustainable, so that we're here for the long term to help women in need.

We've also been working with partner organisations to develop a transformative community of practice model to encourage law reform and enhanced access to justice initiatives for women in Victoria. While still in its early stages, this is an exciting development for us and we look forward to working further on this with our partners.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to what WAM has achieved across 2016-17. We look forward to continuing our journey as we empower women to turn their lives around.





TRIBUTE TO ANN OUR FOUNDING CHAIR

WAM's founding chair, Ann Polis, has recently stepped down from the position of Chair. We're pleased that Ann will continue on the WAM Board and we're also pleased to announce that Sam Payne is our new Chair. Sam is well-qualified to take on the role, as a long serving Board member and mentor.

Ann has been absolutely instrumental in establishing WAM and seeing it grow to where we are today. Literally, without Ann there would be no WAM. She was involved right from day one and her vision, drive and enthusiasm have continued over many years.

And it's not only WAM who benefits from Ann's volunteer work. She is a tireless volunteer across many and varied organisations in her local Fitzroy community.

We thank Ann for all that she has done for WAM over so many years and we look forward to her continuing involvement as an important part of the WAM team.

Ann has been absolutely instrumental in establishing WAM and seeing it grow to where we are today.





INNER NORTH PROGRAM

From Gen Anderson and
Clarissa Woods (maternity leave replacement)
Inner North Program Coordinators

It has also been a year of strengthening existing relationships in the north, which has seen referrals coming in from twelve different organisations

It has been an exciting year for the WAM Inner North program. One of the most important developments is evident in the name – after seven years of operating in the City of Yarra, the program has expanded into the Heidelberg Magistrates' Court area and is now proudly called the Inner North program. We are now accepting the referral of women presenting at Heidelberg Magistrates' Court, or residing in the Banyule and Darebin areas. This has strengthened WAM's place in the inner-northern communities of Melbourne. To support this move, we have been working to build new relationships with organisations and service providers in the area. This has included networking with Preston and Heidelberg police and presenting to the Darebin Community Legal Centre.

It has also been a year of strengthening existing relationships in the north, which has seen referrals coming in from twelve different organisations, including financial counsellors and Community Corrections at the Neighbourhood Justice Centre. During 2016/17, fourteen new referrals were made to the Inner North program. This referral process has been greatly developed this year, with the creation of a new referral form and a tightening of our referral criteria. This is just one of the changes WAM has undertaken this year to develop and ground the work that we do.

Work was undertaken by WAM staff to improve the forms, policies and procedures used day to day, including the development of a Program Coordinator Manual to support best practice, and improved Assessment and Relationship Closure forms to better understand the women that engage with WAM. To complement this, our data collection and analysis systems were overhauled, with support from an external pro-bono evaluation. This data is vital to understanding the lives and experiences of the women we work with, and measuring our successes and areas for improvement.

As well as consolidating the work of WAM, we have been busy developing and strengthening the skills of our volunteer mentors. The mentor training was reworked and improved to better prepare the volunteers for their mentoring role. This training was utilised again this year, with a new group of volunteers joining the ranks in March. Twelve women volunteered their time in the Inner North program as mentors throughout the year, and had the opportunity to develop their skills through group supervision, presentations from guest speakers, external training and individual support.

14

New referrals were made to the Inner North program

The Inner North mentors are a dedicated and dynamic group of women, with the eagerness of some just beginning their first mentoring relationship, and the wisdom and experience of others moving on to their second or third match. There is a strong willingness to learn within the group, and with the help of a City of Yarra grant, we were able to provide two external training opportunities to the mentors. ASIST suicide prevention training, across two days, equipped mentors to assist those at risk of suicide to keep safe and to access further support. The second training undertaken was Other Ways of Knowing cultural competence training. This examined Aboriginal ways of being, and communication and engagement styles, to better understand the cultural identity, spirituality and complex trauma of Aboriginal people, and how to support them from a culturally appropriate framework. These training sessions have greatly enhanced the skills and capabilities of the volunteers in their mentoring, and we look forward to providing more training opportunities in the future.

The women that access our program are a diverse group with a myriad of different life experiences, stories and strengths. However, through examining our data we highlighted a startling commonality: every woman who participated in the WAM Inner North program in 2016/17 had either experienced, or was currently experiencing, family violence. Whilst this was not entirely surprising, given that we know one in four Australian women will experience physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, it could not be ignored. This violence has had real and lasting impacts upon the women that WAM works with. For instance, in the case of Ahn*, one of WAM's participants, the occurrences of her offending were directly linked to incidences of physical violence that she experienced.

This knowledge of the prevalence of family violence amongst our program participants has encouraged the undertaking of multiple family violence trainings by both the Program Coordinator and the mentors, and the planned inclusion of a family violence module in the mentor training.

A key goal of WAM is to empower the women who participate in the program. We train our mentors not to direct or push the participants into making changes. Instead, we equip them to walk alongside their mentee, offering encouragement and support, and empowering their choices. One such example this year has been a participant Kelly*, who is close to completing her study. Her mentor has assisted her in ways such as talking through assessment criteria together, managing deadlines, and advocating for financial assistance to undertake a unit of study. Kelly now must decide between joining the workforce or pursuing further study; a choice that so many of us have taken for granted. This is an exciting moment for her, a moment she has reached with the support and encouragement of her mentor.

As WAM grows in size and reputation across Melbourne, it is vital that we remain current in our knowledge, professional in our work, and competent in our skills. This past year's key focus has been the consolidation and development of our work as we expand and grow. The tireless work of our staff and volunteers has prepared us perfectly to look forward to next year with hope and optimism.





WESTERN SUBURBS PROGRAM

Sharlene Farrugia
Western Suburbs Program Coordinator

07

New mentors were
trained to work on the
WAM program in the West

26

Additional referrals
were made

08

Mentor matches
were undertaken

Now in its second year of operations, in 2016-17 the Western Suburbs program has grown, consolidated its processes, and developed its program integrity.

Throughout the year, strategic collaboration with the Inner North program ensured that processes and procedures were reviewed and modified to enhance WAM program integrity across the two locations. Specifically, all documentation and program participant forms were revised and a full review of the information collected on each form was also undertaken to improve data collection processes for program evaluation and funding acquittals. This was complemented by the redevelopment of the organisation's database in both the West and Inner North.

Collaboration between the two programs also involved redesigning the mentor training to provide more in-depth, evidence-based practice methods that are responsive to the issues that present within the program. The training is now inclusive of such issues as Family Violence, Alcohol and Other Drugs, Suicidal Ideation, and Mental Health. The presentation of these issues in the program training is now underpinned by theoretical frameworks and specialised knowledge which aligns with those used across the Justice and Social Sectors. Not only has this improved the knowledge base of WAM mentors, but it addresses integrative practice approaches encouraged between programs and services across sectors. The training redevelopment also includes practical exercises undertaken by mentors to enhance listening and critical reflection skills, which have been identified as core to the mentoring role.

Another key project targeted our process for recruitment of mentors, and included the development of a mentor information session. This session is offered to potential mentors prior to undertaking the WAM mentor training, and was introduced as a means of informing potential mentors of the expectations and requirements of the role. After the implementation of this process, training and retention rates of mentors have increased. Thorough assessment of training participation, and post-training interviews have also been integrated into the recruitment process which has also contributed to mentor retention.

The program growth in 2016/17 is evidenced within program statistics that reflect mentor and participant intake and program referrals. During this period:

- 7 new mentors were trained to work on the WAM program in the West
- 26 additional referrals were made
- 8 mentor matches were undertaken

Collaboration between the two programs also involved redesigning the mentor training to provide more in-depth, evidence-based practice methods that are responsive to the issues that present within the program.

Mentors were given further professional development opportunities across the year through peer supervision meetings which included guest speakers presenting from organisations working in the West to address health and justice issues for women. These organisations included: Victims of Crime Assistance Program, Womens Housing Limited and Women's Property Initiatives, Legal Aid, and Family Law expert- Judy Hogg. The mentors also participated in internal Transformative Justice training facilitated by the Program Coordinator.

The program has developed some significant community partnerships and relationships during 2016-2017. Partnerships include; Melbourne University Law Students' Society (MULSS), Western Integrated Family Violence Committee, and Brimbank Social Justice Coalition.

The MULSS, partnership has involved the development of statistical evidence drawn from the Justice sector which underpins the causal relationship between women's offending and the intersecting factors of health, alcohol and other drugs, housing, and gender equality justice. The information resourced by the MULSS committee was developed into a brochure which we used to raise awareness of the issues facing women in the justice system at our 2017 Law week event. And we continue to also use it in our mentor training.

MULSS also hosted a professional expo for Law students which brought together several women's agencies. Law students were given the opportunity to engage with these agencies to understand more about the agency and the potential of volunteering. WAM received several volunteering applications of interest from this event.

Partnership with the Western Family Violence Committee has involved participation in a community Family Violence awareness event in November 2016, and ongoing collaboration and information sharing with key core services in the Western Suburbs including; housing, family violence, family services DHHS, Courts, Women's health, police, and legal services. This collaboration provides the mentors with professional development opportunities and sector knowledge, which aims to develop the professional practice of mentors when engaging with participants.

The Social Justice Coalition partnership has provided opportunities to engage in advocacy work for residents in the Western Suburbs and Brimbank. The Coalition disseminates information about social issues specifically affecting and implicating residents within the Western Suburbs.

The Program Coordinator participated in several significant meetings over 2016-17, which enriched broader networks and partnerships between WAM and justice and funding organisations. A key event was hosted by the Reichstein Foundation with a guest appearance by Baroness Corston from the UK. Baroness Corston shared the work she had achieved in justice reform for women in the UK, which was contributed through the 'Corston report'. A key learning point was the suggestions for lobbying mechanisms as advocacy agents for change.

The Human Rights Law Centre hosted the launch of the report: "Over represented and Overlooked: the crisis of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's over-imprisonment". Participation in this launch allowed our Program Coordinators to be briefed on this material and the issues arising within it, at both policy and practice level.

As WAM in the West continues to consolidate, we look forward to continuing to grow and expand and engage with more women in this vibrant part of Melbourne.



WHO ARE WE?

We've been pleased to appoint two new Board members this year; Stacey Zuluaga and Virginia Murdoch. This completes our director recruitment process and brings our Board up to its maximum of seven. Collectively, the Board have a wide range of skills to support WAM in its work and their commitment and enthusiasm for WAM is incredible. A big thank you to all of them; and to our patron Carmel Benjamin.



Stacey Zuluaga

Stacey is an accountant with over 11 years' experience in public practice. She is a CPA and holds a Bachelor of Business and Commerce (Accounting and Management) and a Diploma of Financial Planning. Stacey is the Chair of the women's committee at CPA, she chairs the CPA Mums and Bubs discussion group and she writes material for a CPA education product. Stacey brings to the board of WAM accounting experience across a range of industries, a broad understanding of the issues women can face, especially financial, and a passion for empowering others.



Dean McWhirter

Dean is currently the Assistant Commissioner, Family Violence Command, Victoria Police. In 2007, he was the manager of the Yarra Police Service Area (Richmond, Collingwood and Fitzroy). Whilst working at Yarra he was involved in the initial development and implementation of the Women and Mentoring program. Dean's other roles with Victoria Police have included Superintendent of the Road Policing Enforcement Division responsible for the Road Safety Camera Program and Superintendent, People Development Command responsible for the oversight of foundation training for police recruits and protective security officers.



Keren Murray

Keren was Principal Lawyer of Legal Policy at the Law Institute of Victoria. Keren previously worked in criminal law reform at the Department of Justice, Victoria and at law reform commissions in England and Victoria. She has experience working as a solicitor for a large commercial firm and in family law at the Women's Legal Service Victoria. She has previously been a member of the Board of the YWCA Victoria. Keren brings legal experience to the board of WAM, and a broad understanding of the criminal justice system and its impact on women.



Sally Dobell

Sally is the CEO of a Creative Agency, Cornwell which is renowned as one of Australia's most innovative and respected brand experts.

With nearly 20 years of experience, Sally is a passionate and dedicated business person who also sits on the board of Open House Melbourne.



Sam Payne

Sam Payne retired from a long career in Business Administration in 2005. She joined the WAM pilot program as a Volunteer Mentor in 2010, one of the first volunteers. Sam has mentored three women participants in WAM and continues as a Volunteer. She joined the WAM Board in 2014.



Ann Polis

Ann Polis has played a significant role in the establishment and development of WAM from 2008. Ann has been active in her local community including as a board member of the Wellington Inc, a council member of the Fitzroy Primary School, an executive member of the Fitzroy Residents' Association and a community member of the Neighbourhood Justice Centre in many facets of its work. From 2000, Ann worked as a volunteer mentor with the VACRO program for women leaving prison. Ann has previously worked as a trainer with the Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA) and was the founding editor of The Melbourne Times newspaper.



Virginia Murdoch

Virginia is currently Product Manager at Culture Amp, where she works with a cross-functional team of engineers and designers, focused on turning large amounts of data into actionable insights. She has previously worked in professional development, learning and distribution platforms, both in Australia and overseas, and has also been responsible for operational aspects of the businesses she has worked in. Virginia has previously been the Deputy Chair of the board of Writers Victoria.



WHO WE HELP

“Sometimes you just need someone to talk to. Not a counsellor, not a family member, just another woman who gets it.”

Some of the significant outcomes achieved for women in the WAM program during 2016–2017 included:

Story One

Sandra*, a mother of three, had experienced extremely severe domestic violence and her children were removed from her care. She now has a reunification order from the children’s court for her children to return to her care. She has secured housing for their return, is engaged well in counselling and therapy, and the majority of the charges against her have been dropped by the court. She also negotiated that an intervention order against her be dropped, which was particularly significant given the safety and justice issues that present for women in these situations.

Story Two

Lydia*, another mother of three, appealed her community corrections order. She raised the funds to pay for private representation at the court and was successful. She is now engaged in counselling and has paid a large amount of her debts off through strict money management and support from integrated services. She has also secured new housing in Sunshine which is closer to her family so she is less isolated and is closer to the hospital where she has frequent visits due to her epilepsy.

*Names of participants have been changed to protect their privacy.



OUR 2016-17 HIGHLIGHTS

Law Week

Our 2017 Law Week event was held in May and this year's topic was "Why do Women Commit Crime?" "Discover Why Women Are Committing Crime" is available to download from our website.

Inspirational Women of Yarra Awards

We were pleased to nominate our Chair Ann Polis in the 2017 Inspirational Women of Yarra awards. Here's Ann at the awards ceremony, receiving her award from Yarra Mayor, Councillor Amanda Stone.

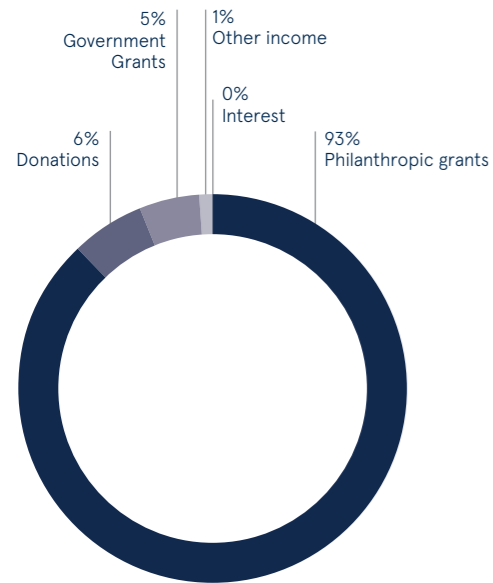




FINANCIAL SUMMARY

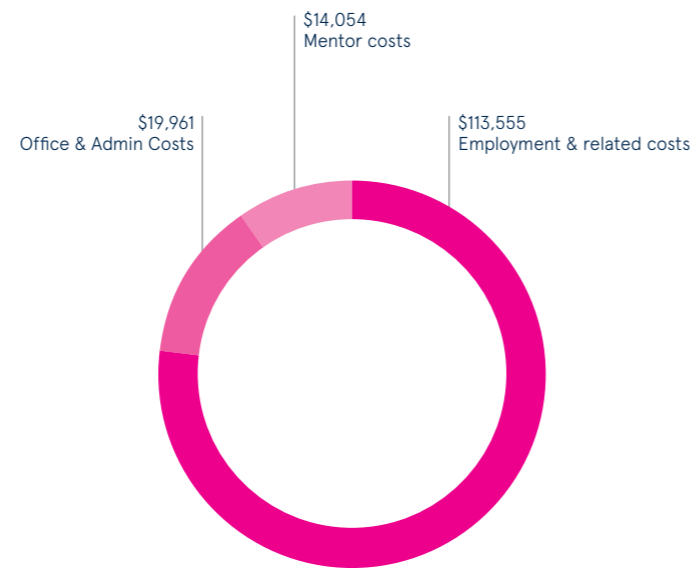
TOTAL FUNDS RAISED FOR 2016

\$171,096



OUR REVENUE

- 88% Philanthropic grants
- 6% Donations
- 5% Government grants
- 1% Other income
- 0% Interest



OUR EXPENDITURE

- \$113,555 Employment costs
- \$19,961 Office & Administration costs
- \$14,054 Mentor costs



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

2016-17 FUNDERS



We would also like to thank Australian Centre for Leadership for Women, REA Employee Community Grants Program, Department of Social Services, Yarra City Council and Court Fund.

2016-17 PRO-BONO SUPPORTERS



2016-17 VOLUNTEERS

Adam, Andra, Bernadette, Connie, Cheryl, Fran, Gwenda, Hasna, Hilary B, Hilary M, Jane, Jenny, Jule, Margaret, Maria, Mary, Melissa, Nesrine, Nikki, Patricia, Prue, Rodna, Sam, Silvia, Thuy, Tracy, Wendy

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