



## **OUR MISSION**

WAM's mission is to assist women in their early interaction with the justice system through the provision of a formal mentoring relationship. This will provide them with a pathway to develop and use positive life skills.



## **OUR VISION**

A national, volunteer-based mentoring program for women to reduce female incarceration and recidivism and promote social inclusion.



## **OUR VALUES**

Our guiding values underpin the way we work with women:

#### 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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It is always a privilege to write

the annual report and be able to

reflect upon the year with such

pride for what we have achieved.

And when I write we, I mean the

women accessing our service,

our volunteer mentors, and our

team and Board.

in match review or match graduation meetings. During these meetings women are asked to comment on progress towards achieving their goals. In this period 141 goals were identified with goal areas around what we call our Domains of Change. These domains are linked to protective factors that are attributed to reducing the risk of offending. Of these 141 goals, 45% (63 goals) were fully or partially achieved, with Covid or a change of goal during the mentoring relationship as the reason for not fully achieving it. 51% of goals are still in progress as these women are still involved in their mentoring relationship and will continue working towards achieving their goals.

Over the course of the year, 30 women participated

Of these 30 women, many celebrated match graduations in this period. None of these women reported reoffending, all indicated 'major positive change' in their life, and in terms of court outcomes, all identified either their matters were resolved or had completed their orders. Quite a positive outcome for so many women and I'm sure they are as proud of themselves as we are of them.

As much as all women's goals are quite individual and specific to their situation, there is no doubt that the support from their mentor has assisted in women being aspirational and feeling confident to strive for their goals without fear of failure. We are ever grateful to our volunteer mentors who have contributed an estimated 3840 hours of their time to listen, guide, navigate, advocate, and laugh with another woman so that she can work towards building a more positive life.

Implementing our new case management database has been an interesting and satisfying journey this year. It has enabled us to set up our evaluation framework and embed that into our processes, with a focus on creating increased efficiencies. Being able to collect and examine data allows us the ability to see and respond to trends but also demonstrate the growth and change in the lives of the women we are working with.

The stability we have sought for so long has been realised in securing four years of State government funding in the May 2022 budget. Not only does it embed WAM into the service system to provide a gender-responsive approach to supporting women with justice system involvement, but it also gives us the opportunity to consider new approaches and partnerships, expansion into new areas, and the ability to increase our service provision.

We are delighted that a partnership with Taskforce has provided an opportunity to grow our young women's programme that supports a younger cohort from age 12 to 21. Doing the early intervention work provides an opportunity to reroute young women and girls from a pathway to the justice system, as well as strengthen their individual capacity and avoid exploitation.

Thank you to our amazing team. Although modest in scale they have continued to deliver above and beyond, navigating the complexities of the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. They have demonstrated flexibility in their approach to their work and they always ensure that the women we work with are at the heart of all our decision-making.

Lastly, our achievements and efforts would not be possible without the foresight and continued faith of the WAM Board of Directors. Their support in seeing us through these challenging times of funding uncertainty and then quickly changing speed to forge ahead with a new strategic plan demonstrates a flexibility and proficiency that we are grateful to benefit from.

It is ironic to be grateful for the things that so many of the women who are referred to WAM don't have – a safe home, financial security, stable employment, strong connections. One thing I can be sure of is that we are all working towards a more positive future, and that is what we can share with our women.

Tricia Ciampa, Executive Officer

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# **OUR PEOPLE**

## **OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Our volunteer Board of Directors continue to support the team and to help us in their various areas of expertise. We appreciate the time and effort that they contribute.

### Our Board members throughout the financial year were:



Sam Payne, Chair

Sam retired from a long career in business administration in 2005. She joined the WAM pilot program as a volunteer mentor in 2010, one of our first volunteers. Sam has mentored three women participants up to 2017. Sam joined the Board in 2014 and was elected to Chair in 2017. During 2021–22 she was a member of the Fundraising & Marketing Committee and the Nominations Committee.



Anne Rudd

Anne is a serving member of Victoria Police and over the past 19 years she has performed duties within the Bayside area, Prosecutions Division, Family Violence Command and more recently, the North West Metro Region in Melbourne and Yarra. Anne is a lawyer and an experienced prosecutor within the Magistrates' Court and Children's Court where she specialised in prosecuting sexual offences and family violence matters. Anne was previously a member of the Therapeutic Treatment Board and the Court Network Board. Anne joined the Board in 2018 and During 2021–22 she chaired both the Governance Committee and the Nominations Committee.



Amanda Thornton

Amanda leads the National Partnerships team at Stroke Foundation and Co-chairs the Melbourne Women's Fund Grants Committee. She is experienced in fundraising, philanthropy and non-profit administration in the charitable and arts sectors, and holds a Master of Social Investment and Philanthropy. Amanda joined the Board in 2019 and during 2021-22 she chaired the Fundraising & Marketing Committee and was a member of the Nominations Committee.



#### **Trevor Irwin**

Trevor is an experienced accountant with a background in media, not-for-profit, the university sector, Victorian Government agencies, recycling/waste management, telecommunications, and oil and gas sectors in senior finance roles. Trevor is currently Chief Financial Officer with Australian Childhood Foundation. He is a CPA and holds a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) and has an MBA from RMIT University. Trevor joined the Board in 2019 and during 2021–22 he chaired the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and was a member of the Governance Committee.



#### **Tamsin Mildenhall**

Tamsin is an experienced criminal defence lawyer, having worked in both the private and Government sectors. Currently, she is the Manager of the Summary Crime team at Victoria Legal Aid, working with sector partners to ensure the delivery of high-quality legal services as well as a fair and efficient justice system. She is a Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) Accredited Criminal Law and Children's Law Specialist and a member of the LIV Children's Law Specialisation Advisory Committee. She also is currently undertaking a Master of Business Administration (Executive) at RMIT. Tamsin joined the Board in 2020 and during 2021–22 she was a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and the Governance Committee.



Su Robertson

Su is a social justice lawyer, academic and community radio broadcaster. She has previously worked as a community legal centre lawyer and university law lecturer, and is currently completing her PhD at the Australian National University. She has researched, published and presented on a variety of issues associated with poverty law, clinical legal education, feminism and the legal system, and her work has been tabled in Parliament. Su joined the Board in 2020 and during 2021-22 she was a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and the Fundraising & Marketing Committee.



Tracy Bayli

Tracy brings strong knowledge and many years of governance and strategic planning experience. A values-driven leader, Tracy is currently the Strategic Planning and Implementation Manager at the Australian Urban Research Infrastructure Network, an organisation aiming to increase liveability and resilience in our cities and communities and thereby improve the lives of every Australian. Tracy supported WAM as a volunteer for several years before joining the Board in 2021. During 2021–22 she was a member of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and the Governance Committee and she is also WAM's Company Secretary.



#### **Emily Porter**

Emily is an experienced barrister practising in the areas of administrative, planning and environmental law. She has prior experience as a member of the Victorian Bar Council and the Eastern Community Legal Centre Committee of Management. She is passionate about maximising opportunities for women to participate fully in society, including through mentoring. She resigned from the Board in March 2022 and during 2021–22 she was a member of the Fundraising & Marketing Committee and the Nominations Committee.

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### OTHER GOVERNANCE MATTERS

The Board has again been supported by its various sub-committees meeting regularly throughout the year:

Finance, Audit & Risk Committee
Fundraising & Marketing Committee
Governance Committee
Nominations Committee

The Board has also been working on organisational culture during the year. We recognise that our culture is an important part of who we are and how we work. We want to maintain that culture as we continue to expand our reach into new areas.



## **OUR TEAM**



#### Tricia Ciampa, Executive Office

With over twenty years in the not-for-profit sector, Tricia has expertise in program design, social impact evaluation and forging collaborative partnerships to deliver positive and life-changing outcomes for vulnerable people in our community. Tricia has very relevant experience in mentoring and the Victorian criminal justice system, including volunteering as an Independent Person providing support to young people during police interviews under the Youth Referral and Independent Persons Program.



#### Mary Latham Operations Manage

Mary has been with WAM since 2014. She is a chartered accountant who has experience in both corporate and not-for-profit roles, including professional accounting firms, financial services, disability and youth mental health. Mary has strong experience in finance, governance, project management, reporting and budget control.



#### Sarah Nyssen, Frankston Coordinator

Sarah has more than twenty years of experience in the health and community sector including international work in youth homelessness and mental health in the UK. She draws on this experience to support women in the justice space to achieve better outcomes. Sarah has a strong background of working in the early intervention and prevention space, with extensive experience including working in the women's health sector and coordinating a youth mentoring program in the south east. Sarah is responsible for the successful expansion of WAM into the Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula since 2018, working effectively with various partner agencies and stakeholders there.



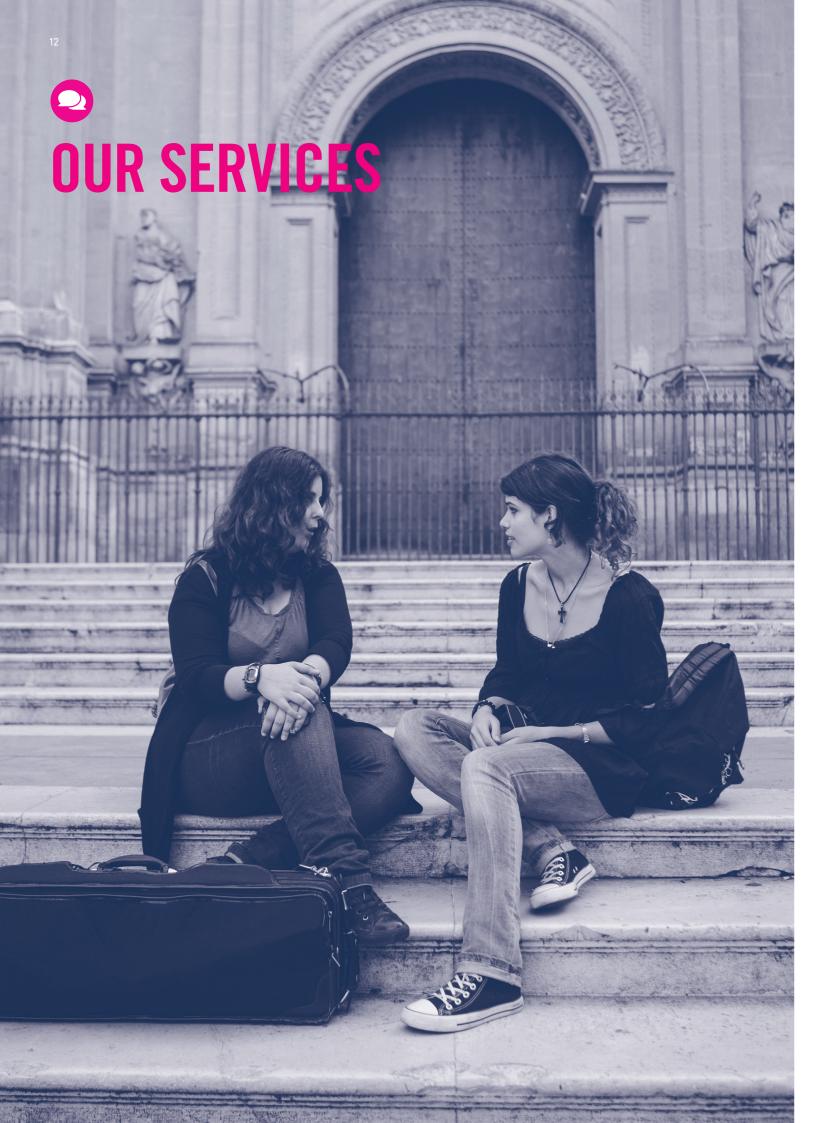
#### Joyce Sedunary, Mentor Coordinator

The majority of Joyce's employment has been with not-for-profit and community organisations, with previous roles working in youth mentoring, and volunteer recruitment and training. Joyce is a qualified counsellor and has a strong administrative background. She is passionate about supporting and empowering women through connection, building trusting relationships, and community engagement.



#### Phaedra Thain, Intake Coordinator

Phaedra has experience in the youth justice space and has qualifications in family violence and a Master of Justice and Criminology. This has informed her understanding of advocacy, empowerment and preventing violence against women. Phaedra is passionate about building inclusive and sustainable programs that promote equality. She is also a WAM mentor



# Despite the impacts of the pandemic, WAM has continued to receive referrals from varied sources that we have managed successfully, with intake and assessment occurring in a timely manner.

With the implementation of the separate Young Women's program with Living Free and building a relationship with Bayside Corrections, referrals have increased in the southeast region. We are continuing to engage and build on existing relationships with referring agencies across greater Melbourne. A Stakeholder Information Session was held in June and over 40 individuals registered to attend from a cross section of organisations.

The main source of referrals has been Community Corrections and with Court services that makes up over 50% of referrals. It is interesting to note that there is still a small proportion of women self-referring, and our location at QVWC has created more visibility and accessibility.

WAM has continued to remain flexible around the increased needs of participants who are experiencing intersections of mental health, homelessness, AOD and family violence. The rising cost of living is also having broader impacts on women's mental health and financial stress.

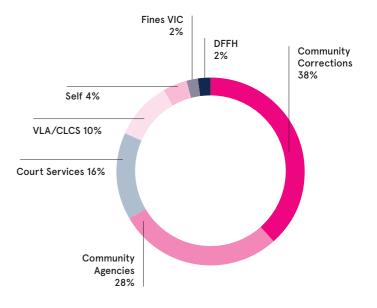
It should be noted that with the increased complexity and presentations in the women referred to WAM in the last two years, it has been more difficult to work towards establishing matches straight away. Greater challenges were seen from referral stage, from making initial contact to completing assessments, communicating with participants referred, gauging readiness and suitability, and then coordinating times between mentor and participant for match meetings. There was much work involved behind the scenes to connect with participants, at a time when many people were struggling and not motivated to engage in new things or communicate remotely. Some women reported increasing social anxiety which impacted

on their ability to engage in mentoring. Some women were identified as needing robust professional supports that had dropped off throughout covid or were no longer meeting their needs remotely. Some participants we worked with for months, slowly gaining trust and engagement, completing our work along the way, only to see the participant disengage, due to changing circumstances or not wanting to be involved or a lack in the capacity/stability to do so. Several match meetings were planned however they did not eventuate for quite some time.

However, across the year we have supported 48 women in mentoring relationships. Many women have reported engaging successfully with support services, and progressively working towards their goals. It was a good year for match graduations, with 21 women leaving the program with their goals achieved and with aspirations for a brighter future. Some achievements for women include positive court outcomes, including receiving diversions, good behaviour bonds and dismissal of charges.

In a partnership with Bayside Corrections, additional funding packages were provided to six women. This funding package is helpful to matches as the participant will be able to access and engage in community programs with a cost attached, or purchase items to assist them in meeting their goals that previously without the funding package would not be possible. Often a lack of funds is a barrier to women participating in activities with their mentor. This year we have purchased prescription glasses, a laptop, paid for tools and art materials, as well as transport costs to ensure women in the program can participate in community activities.

#### Source of Referrals



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# **OUR MENTORS**

Our mentors this year had access to a wide range of professional development opportunities including Mental Health First Aid, professional boundaries, Dealing with Difficult Calls (WIRE); Responding to disclosures of sexual assault (St Kilda Gatehouse); and Suicide prevention (Living Works). Apart from regular peer supervision, our mentors also had access to the VLA's online training modules on Client Safety framework and a presentation from Magistrate Liz Langdon about her approach in alternative/therapeutic court settings.

Through feedback from our mentors, we know that they strongly believe in WAM's mentoring program.

Their values align with the organisation, and they are enthusiastic and proactive in their volunteering role.

The retention rate of Mentors is approximately 46% and we are striving to build in more volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition activities now that the pandemic restrictions have eased.

Mentors who leave, usually due to changing life circumstances, state that WAM is a wonderful, worthwhile, and necessary program. We are thankful for the many who adapted so well to the ongoing Covid challenges. However, we acknowledge that this has added extra stress at times for the Mentors.

Mentors walking alongside participants can take its toll in any climate but within the last two "covid" years there is increased frustrations around systems not supporting or letting down participants. However, we have also seen the mentors come together for social gatherings and face-to-face supervision, providing great support and sustenance to each other.

Thank you to our mentoring matches who participated in some media opportunities throughout the year to raise awareness of our work and outcomes for women.



# **OUR ADVOCACY**

During the year we prepared a written submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Victoria's Criminal Justice System, and we were also invited to provide evidence at a public hearing. This was a great opportunity for WAM to be recognised as a contributor to the sector, and also a positive experience for one of our Peer Advisory Group to participate and self-advocate.

We also provided a response to the Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System, which has invited feedback from women with lived experience of a custodial sentence to provide insights into the rights, safety and wellbeing of women.

MP Clifford Hayes spoke in Parliament about WAM, thanking the Minister for the recent one-off grant but also calling for us to be funded in future.

Cheryl & Michelle on ABC's The Chat Room with Virginia Trioli and a follow up news article: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-10-28/mentoring-program-getting-women-back-on-track/100571544

Victoria & Temel who participated in an interview for TV, radio and an online article:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-04-02/mentoring-program-keeping-women-out-of-prison-funding-crisis/100961164



# NEW OFFICE SPACE AT QVWC



After the grind of COVID lockdowns and working remotely for so many months, we were excited to move into our new office space in early November 2021. We are now working in the Queen Victoria Women's Centre, a beautiful heritage building in Lonsdale St. It began life in 1848 as the original Melbourne Hospital and in 1946 became the Queen Victoria hospital – one of only three hospitals in the world founded, managed and staffed by women. In 1994, the Victorian parliament dedicated the land and building to services and facilities for women and today it houses a community of tenants all working to help women. With its motto of "For Women By Women" the building has exactly the vibe we want.



We're particularly pleased to have a welcoming space in the CBD where program participants can come and meet with their mentor or with team members. We've set up a small room especially for this purpose and we look forward to seeing more of our participants there in the future.



# FINALIST FOR 2021 VOLUNTEERING AWARDS



We were excited to be a finalist in the 2021 Volunteering Awards in the category of COVID-19 Resilience. We nominated our amazing mentors for the way that they continued to support our program participants remotely throughout the many lockdown and social distancing restrictions. We attended the award ceremony in March, hosted by the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria. While we didn't win, it was a great acknowledgement of the work that our volunteers do, and especially what they did under the challenging pandemic conditions.



# CASE STUDY: ANDREA & CLAIRE MENTORING DURING COVID

Andrea (mentor) and Claire (participant) were matched right at the start of COVID 19 lockdowns in Melbourne. Therefore their 12-month mentoring match was a combination of remote support through phone calls, text message and face to face meetings where possible

Claire was 39 years old when she was referred to WAM. She was mid way through completing a Community Corrections Order, with a criminal history dating back to 1998. Claire has served 3 custodial sentences. She has a trauma history, which includes family violence, mental health concerns and substance addiction. Her relationships with her children and 3-year-old granddaughter were a central focus for Claire. She wanted to improve her family relationships and be a better num and grandma. Claire also wanted to regain employment, and to improve her fitness and be more active.

At the time of matching, Claire had been clean of any substance use for 6 months. She felt like she should be feeling great with what she had achieved, however she felt this intense low feeling, a lack of motivation, a feeling of being stuck in her own head without any direction of how to get out in order to achieve some sense of happiness.

A few months into the match, Claire lapsed and needed support around her substance use. Andrea supported Claire to identify detox and rehab options, and to work through the best-suited options. Claire attended detox and rehab, however she was unable to sustain the long stay and separation from her family and pet cat. Claire decided to leave rehab, preferring to give an in-home rehab program a go, which she successfully completed. Throughout this time, Andrea remained in contact, encouraging Claire and letting her know that she was there to support her with whatever choices she made. Andrea didn't always receive a reply from Claire, but the important thing was that Claire knew Andrea was always there to provide support, to have a conversation and to listen, whenever she needed that.

Six months into the match, Claire began having significant struggles with her mental health. She reached out to Andrea, who made the difficult decision to phone the mental health team and get Claire the professional support she needed. This changed everything for Claire. Claire said the fact that Andrea was brave enough and followed through with making the call changed everything for the better. Claire had a medication review, and received daily in home support for a month to improve her mental health. Claire now has stability with her mental health and in ceasing substance use.

Claire has secured two jobs in the 12 months she was matched. One of her jobs was working in a bakery, the other as a kitchen hand at a café. Claire has rebuilt her relationship with her daughter and granddaughter. She has stayed free of drug use and feels a sense of achievement about what she has done over the last year.

Claire said mentoring taught her to reach out when she needed support, that it was ok to ask for help and that she was deserving of support. Claire said she now feels as though she has the confidence to do this for herself, to seek support and voice her needs. Claire said Andrea instilled confidence in her, and taught her that she can do anything that she wants to. Claire said her whole life had changed in 12 months: she completed her Community Corrections Order, she had self care and goals to work towards again, and she had pride in herself. Claire got her licence back and is still working. Claire is now interested in study, and is looking into a hairdressing course and studying mental health.

Although this mentoring match had some challenges created by lockdowns, and the inability to meet up face to face for much of the match, what was so important and fundamental to a successful mentoring relationship, is the consistent approach and positive genuine regard that Andrea had for Claire. Even when things were not going well for Claire, Andrea remained supportive, present, available and understood things needed to happen at Claire's pace. Claire said the most valued and important thing Andrea did for her as her mentor was to be firm, persistent, to follow up and remember things that were discussed.

When we first met Claire, she carried so much shame. When we met for the match closure meeting 12 months later, it was like meeting a content and happy version of Claire. She had found her self confidence, through gaining employment and improved family relationships. She worked hard to stabilise her mental health and cease her substance use, and continues to work on her health. She has goals and plans, together with the belief that she will fulfill those plans and meet her goals. Claire now understands how to seek out support and assistance when needed, and the importance to her health and wellbeing in doing so.

Andrea said it was an honour to share a year of Claire's life, and to see Claire smash so many of her goals throughout a difficult year. Andrea said Claire's resilience is amazing, and the fact she just keeps getting back up after a set back is awesome.

Claire asked for a mentor who is outgoing, someone she can feed off with high energy, someone to get her going and who is funny. Claire especially wanted a mentor who she could be herself with. Andrea met Claire's needs. Andrea was a consistent person who was there for Claire to check in with for 12 months, providing a listening ear and a person that Claire said she felt accountable to. In a year where there were many changes and challenges for Claire, Andrea was the constant, available for support when needed. Mentors don't need to have all the answers, they just need to care, have empathy no matter what is going on, to be flexible and patient, to follow up and to offer hope and belief to another woman regardless of where she is on her journey of recovery, reunification, reintegration. This approach is what enabled Claire to rebuild her life, taking steps both forwards and backwards and to the side, but always on the way to a healthier and happier self.



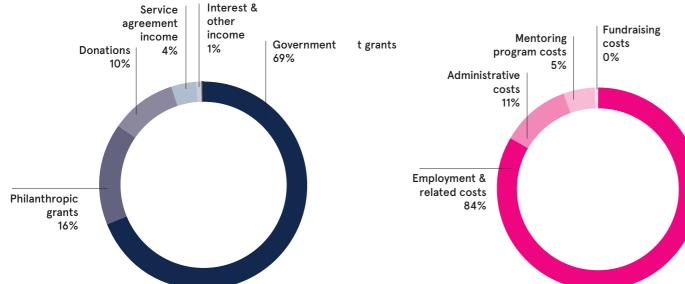
# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Our financial results for 2021/22 were partially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown conditions in Melbourne. We continued working from home until November when we moved into the Queen Victoria Women's Centre. And we continued to move our mentoring program from online to face-to-face and back to online as needed.

Our total revenue from philanthropic sources increased, and we were again pleased to receive grants from new philanthropic donors. Our Government grant revenue increased, including new funding relationships with the Department of Justice & Community Safety and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. And this will continue for us as the May state budget included an announcement that we will receive multi-year funding from the Department of Justice & Community Safety, commencing in July 2022. We also entered into a new service level agreement with Taskforce Community Agency to provide mentors to their Living Free project which helps girls and young women in the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula region.

#### **OUR REVENUE**

Government grants	\$274,000
Philanthropic grants	\$62,982
Donations	\$40,798
Service agreement income	\$15,357
Interest & other income	\$2,643
Fundraising events	\$818
Covid-19 Gov assistance	\$0

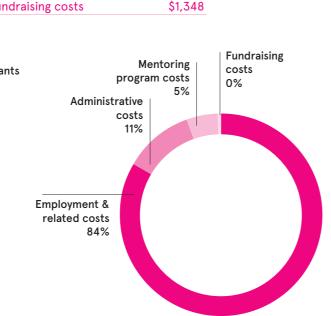


Once again we experienced our most successful year ever for donation revenue and we thank all of our generous donors. In August we were the recipients of a matched donation campaign with Ethical Jobs. They matched gifts from our donors with an extra \$5k. In October we received donations from an online event hosted by Justitia Connect. And in March, the East Melbourne Group held an event and collected donations for us. Thanks to all of those organisations for their support. And it was exciting to be able to hold fundraising events again after the previous social distancing and lockdown restrictions. In March we got together at the Kino cinema for a movie night with our supporters. It was so good to be able to see people in person again.

The result for the year was a deficit of \$41k, as we spent grant funds carried forward unspent from the previous year. Our expenditure continued to vary from month to month as we continued to switch from working online to in person. Our administrative costs have increased as we are now back in an office. We continued to spend on supporting our program participants and mentors and we remain focussed on using our funding as effectively as we can to support the women in the program. We supported 48 women throughout the year at a cost of only \$8k per woman supported.

#### **OUR EXPENDITURE**

Employment & related costs	\$317,958
Administrative costs	\$39,974
Mentoring program costs	\$17,989
Fundraising costs	\$1,348





# **OUR THANKS**

#### **GRANTS & FUNDING**













#### **OUR SUPPORTERS**

MinterEllison.





AND OUR GENEROUS INDIVIDUAL DONORS

