



YWCA CANBERRA

YWCA CANBERRA ANNUAL REPORT

2020-21

Acknowledgement

YWCA Canberra proudly recognises the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to own and control their cultures and pays our respect to these rights. YWCA Canberra acknowledges the need to respect and encourage the diversity of Indigenous cultures and to respect Indigenous worldviews, lifestyles and customary laws.

We extend our respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who for thousands of years have preserved the culture and practices of their communities on country.

This land was never surrendered, and we acknowledge that it always was and will continue to always be Aboriginal land.



YWCA Canberra Annual Report

2020-21



YWCA CANBERRA



The YWCA Canberra story

YWCA Canberra is a feminist not-for-profit organisation that has provided community services and represented women's issues in Canberra since 1929.

Our mission is 'We strengthen communities by supporting girls and women through our services and advocacy' and our vision is 'Girls and women thriving'.

We provide essential, quality services for women, girls and families in the ACT and surrounding regions. We work in the areas of children's services, community development, homelessness and affordable housing, domestic and family violence, youth services, personal and professional training, women's leadership and advocacy.

Through our national Affiliate Association with YWCA Australia, we are part of the World YWCA network, which connects over 100 countries across the globe.

Contents

Snapshot of our impact in the ACT	6	Strategic priority three	44
President and Chief Executive Officer's report	8	We create change by engaging with diverse and at-risk groups and provide leadership through our partnerships, community engagement and advocacy informed by evidence-based policy and research	
Overview of our Strategic Plan 2018-23	10	Policy development and advocacy work	45
Adapting during COVID-19	12	Domestic violence support service	46
Strategic priority one	14	Strategic priority four	48
We support children, young people, women and the community through our services		We foster a movement of girls and women through our members and connection with the national YWCA organisations	
Children's services	15	Membership	49
Housing support services	18	Great Ydeas	50
Circles of Support	23	National and global YWCA movement	51
Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre	25	Strategic priority five	52
Youth programs	28	We ensure sustainable, transparent and accountable practices through our innovation, strong governance, management, service delivery and partnerships	
Tuggeranong Network Coordination	31	Governance and corporate structure	53
Strategic priority two	32	2020-21 Board Directors	54
We build capacity and connect girls and women through our training, leadership programs and networking events		Independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee	52
She Leads women's leadership pathway program	33	Organisational structure	55
Board traineeships	39	Reconciliation action plan	56
Education and training	40	Workplace gender equality	58
Preventing violence against women	43	Environmental sustainability	58
		2021 Staff survey	59
		Quality assurance	59
		Risk	59
		Financial sustainability	60
		Acknowledgements	63

Snapshot of our impact in the ACT



Our **charitable property management program, Rentwell**, had **50 properties** in its portfolio, with a total of **105 tenants**.



We helped **68 older women** at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness through our **Next Door program**.



We had **472 young people** as members of our **YWCA Canberra Clubhouse**.



Our Youth Engagement team supported **5039 young people**.

We provided quality **school age care** for



age four to 12 years at **12 locations**.



We trained **421 students** in early childhood and school education and care, leadership and management, and infection control.



The **She Leads Program** engaged over **550 women** in **professional development** activities and events.



Our Domestic Violence Support Service supported **178 women** who were impacted by domestic and family violence.



Our **Circles of Support** program supported **102 people** through trauma-informed and person-centred therapeutic **counselling and intervention**.



We provided training to help prevent and respond to violence against women to **135 people**.



Our **Lanyon Food Hub** supported **249 members** providing food on **1476 occasions**.



We provided **emergency relief assistance** to **323 people**.



Our **Early Childhood team** worked with around **1000 children** across the Canberra region.



We helped **243 people** through **crisis accommodation, family case management** and **outreach support**.

President and Chief Executive Officer's report

The past year was certainly one of adaptation and resilience, as the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to unfold. Not only was our forward planning complicated by the uncertainty of when we would again need to implement restrictions, but the wider impacts of the crisis continued to drive up demand for our community services.

However, we faced this challenge head-on by expanding our services for women experiencing domestic and family violence, bringing more homes into our housing portfolio for women experiencing homelessness, and forging ahead with our plan to build ten units on a block of land we own in Ainslie. This latter project, YHomes, is particularly exciting, as it is a bricks-and-mortar solution to the lack of social and affordable housing in Canberra.

After having to cancel many of our planned events, we were able to ramp back up from late 2020 and deliver our She Leads in-conversations, workshops and conferences to empower women's leadership, as well as bring together our community for important advocacy occasions such as International Women's Day.

Our LGBTQIA+ & Allies Prom once again provided a safe and inclusive celebration for nearly 200 young people from across Canberra and surrounding regions. This was such an important event in 2020 given the impact the COVID-19 crisis had on our young people.

Despite a challenging start to the financial year for the early childhood and school age education and care sectors due to the number of parents working from home, our services rebounded throughout the first half of 2021. This is a testament to our children's services teams' adaptability and professionalism, and the high-quality education and care they provide for children across Canberra and surrounding regions.

Our Education and Training Unit began offering accredited courses in infection control, helping customer-facing organisations across Canberra, especially those in the childhood education and care sector, with essential skills to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infections spreading.

We also delivered training on the prevention of violence against women to organisations including the Department of Home Affairs, Geoscience Australia, the ACT Public Service, CatholicCare and the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn. This training assisted customer-facing employees in public and private sector workplaces to become *active bystanders* against discrimination and harassment; focusing on responding to family violence; and educated teachers on how to deliver respectful relationship education.

Of course, advocacy remains a key element of our work. We leveraged the 2020 ACT Government election to raise awareness and support for our

longstanding priorities in the areas of safe, secure and affordable housing, preventing violence against women and valuing early childhood education.

As long-standing advocates for the introduction of Respectful Relationships Education in ACT schools, YWCA Canberra became a founding member of the Relationships and Sexuality Education Alliance along with other community stakeholders. Through this alliance, we will continue to call for comprehensive and evidence-based relationships and for sexuality education to be rolled out across all ACT schools at all age levels.

We were appointed to the Sexual Assault Prevention Working Group, which was established by the ACT Minister for Women to prevent, address, and respond to sexual violence.

We also continued our advocacy for better recognition and remuneration for the childhood education and care sector through the Children First Alliance.

As well as our public achievements, we remain equally focused on being a great place to work. We were again awarded the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, a citation we have held consistently since 2014.

As always, we would like to acknowledge our staff, board directors, partners, members, fellow

community organisations, volunteers, supporters and friends for their loyalty to the organisation and contribution to our vision for the Canberra community.

We have also been incredibly touched over the year by the many kind donations we have received through government, philanthropic and charitable giving, to support our programs. The Canberra community has not lost its compassion during this crisis and we are thankful for everyone who has enabled our essential work.

We are tremendously proud of the impact the organisation is having across our broad span of work, and hope you enjoy finding out more about YWCA Canberra's 2020-21 achievements in this year's Annual Report.



Carina Zeccola
President



Frances Crimmins
Chief Executive Officer



Overview of our Strategic Plan 2018-23

We are now in the third year of our *Strategic Plan 2018-23*. This plan is grounded in our vision of 'Girls and women thriving' and affirms our mission to 'strengthen communities by supporting girls and women through our services and advocacy'.

Our organisational values of courage, equality, respect, inclusion, reconciliation and responsibility underpin our work and reflect our commitment to the global YWCA movement. The value of courage explicitly acknowledges this connection and our proud feminist history, and our priorities are aligned to World YWCA's Envisioning 2035 goals.

The plan reflects our many successes to date. We have a long history of delivering quality services to the Canberra community, we have a strong asset base and investments, an established advocacy profile, and an engaged and committed membership base.

This is a critical and exciting time for the YWCA movement, with significant social and political

focus on gender equality and activism at local, national and international levels.

Over the five years of the plan, we must stay 'ahead of the game' in a sector that is going through a significant change process, with changing regulatory, compliance and quality assurance mechanisms. We need to ensure we can maintain an appropriate level of infrastructure, so we can deliver high-quality services and play a leadership role in the sector.

We must develop meaningful and values-based partnerships across all sectors, recognising that social change is only ever achieved through collective effort.

Finally, we need to measure, evaluate and effectively communicate the difference we make to the community.

Halfway through our strategic plan, we are making significant progress towards these objectives. We will continue to embody our values and work towards these priorities to ensure girls and women thrive in our community.

Strategic Plan 2018-23

Vision

Girls and women thriving.

Mission

We strengthen communities by supporting girls and women through our services and advocacy.

Organisation values

Our values reflect our commitment to the YWCA global movement.

Courage



We are dauntless, innovative and resilient as we transform power structures. As a proudly feminist organisation, we challenge the status quo to benefit everyone.

Inclusion



We embrace the diversity of our communities and respect differences in gender and gender expression, culture, race, religion, age, sexuality, abilities, political beliefs, socioeconomic status and lifestyles.

Equality



We value equality of opportunity, outcomes and rights. We work with communities to achieve social, cultural, economic and political participation.

Reconciliation



We support the self-determination and agency of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls and women and proactively work with communities to achieve reconciliation.

Respect



We engage with fairness and professionalism in our organisation, with our members and communities. We believe that respectful relationships are fundamental to achieving positive social change.

Responsibility



We are open, accountable and manage resources and risks to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. We are forward thinking and we value innovation so that our work results in positive outcomes for the communities that we support.

Strategic priorities

- 1 We support children, young people, women and the community through our services.
- 2 We build capacity and connect girls and women through our training, leadership programs and networking events.
- 3 We create change by engaging with diverse and at-risk groups and provide leadership through our partnerships, community engagement and advocacy informed by evidence-based policy and research.
- 4 We foster a movement of girls and women through our members and connection with the national and international YWCA organisations.
- 5 We ensure sustainable, transparent and accountable practices through our innovation, strong governance, management, service delivery and partnerships.

Adapting during COVID-19

As an organisation, we have a proud history of adapting to the changing needs of the Canberra community, to provide support where it is most needed.

The ongoing COVID-19 public health crisis has continued to impact all branches of YWCA Canberra's services.

Significant research has demonstrated the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women, with higher levels of job losses at the peak of the crisis, increased unpaid work and women being less likely to receive JobKeeper payments due to higher levels of casual employment. And although Australia's quick economic recovery has improved the outlook somewhat, women's unemployment and underemployment remain too high.

We have been disappointed to see reports by the World Economic Forum (WEF) that the COVID-19 pandemic has added 36 years to the time remaining to close the global gender gap, now estimated at 135.6 years.

Australia's ranking in the WEF Gender Gap report dropped down to 50, from 44 in 2020 and 15 in 2006. Strikingly, especially for a country that purports to have strong workplace gender equality legislation, we scored 70th out of 156 countries in the economic participation and opportunity category. This has been partly due to the structural gender inequalities in our workforce, resulting in far more women losing hours or employment during the pandemic.

Sadly, there seems to be no appetite for action to meaningfully address the increasing disparity and make Australia a more gender-equal country.

At the local level, as we had anticipated in our last report, demand for our community services rose rapidly in the 2020-21 financial year. We saw a substantial increase in women and children at risk of homelessness, experiencing domestic and family violence, and financially and economically impacted through loss of employment or a reduction in working hours.

Research by the Australian Institute of Criminology has demonstrated that many women experienced an onset or escalation of domestic violence during the pandemic. This has been compounded by increased social isolation that restricts women's ability to seek help and financial and housing insecurity, which can make it increasingly difficult for women to escape abuse.

And with the pandemic continuing to disproportionately impact people who are already on low or insecure incomes, combined with Canberra being the most expensive capital city in Australia to rent and house prices increasing by 30 per cent since the beginning

of the pandemic, we expect the number of vulnerable people needing our services to only increase in the next year.

Thankfully, we have received many contributions over this period from government, commercial and philanthropic groups that have enabled us to continue operating and provide support to the most vulnerable members of our society.

However, the impacts are wider than increased demands for our community services. Since the onset of COVID-19, there has been a significant decline in the number of applicants seeking employment in the early childhood education and care sector. It has become increasingly difficult to employ suitable applicants with both experience and qualifications. Early Childhood Teachers are particularly hard to recruit and retain due to competing with schools that offer competitive terms and conditions and higher salaries. If this trend continues, we are concerned about the impact of limited childcare availability on women's workforce participation.

On a more positive note, we were able to move some of our events, such as our She Leads workshops and our Annual General Meeting, to be virtual events. And in late 2020 we were able to re-open our program of in-person events, starting with our She Leads High Conference in November. However, the additional COVID-19 restrictions and uncertainty around whether events will go ahead continue to impact our event planning.

At our 2021 International Women's Day event, we screened a short documentary featuring three women of different ages as they shared their stories of housing affordability, the impact of COVID-19, and homelessness. This was a sobering reminder of how close too many Canberrans are to homelessness, especially in these difficult times.

Throughout all this change and uncertainty, we have been incredibly proud of our staff for their continued support, resilience and commitment to the organisation and our community. Although this pandemic is having a major impact on progress towards gender equality, our staff are still moving forward to ensure we deliver on our vision of 'Girls and women thriving'.

More information on the impact and opportunities that the COVID-19 crisis presented in each of our priority areas is included throughout this report.

Strategic priority one

We support children, young people, women and the community through our services



Early childhood services

At YWCA Canberra, we provide quality education and care for children in the Canberra and Murrumbateman region. We cater for children from a range of backgrounds and this is reflected in the unique location of each service.

In 2020-21, we provided early childhood education and care to around 1000 children. This includes providing much-needed support, stability, and education and care to 43 vulnerable children through a funded placement. At least two of our early childhood services have seen significant increases in their support of vulnerable children within the local communities.



We understand that the experience of childhood is a unique journey. We value education as important in the present, as well as providing the foundation for all future learning and development. We aim to provide children and families with a sense of belonging through ensuring a safe, supportive, respectful and inclusive environment.

Our role is to develop and create rich, engaging play-based learning environments that reflect children's interests and allow for exploration. We ensure this by providing children with the skills and experiences needed to develop as lifelong learners and to become competent, active and informed individuals.

Our educators uphold the professional standards and values of the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics, as well as the principles and practices of the National Quality Framework.

We design our educational programs to promote children's holistic development while reflecting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Our services are fully licensed and are assessed and rated by the ACT Government's regulatory body, the Children's Education and Care Assurance (CECA).

In February 2021, CECA assessed our Spence Children's Cottage Service and found it was

meeting the National Quality Standards in all quality areas. We also upgraded the kitchen at the Cottage and now provide meals throughout the day, which has been well received by children and families.

Our Fairley Early Childhood Service has seen significant growth and changes over the last year. In the latter part of the 2020-21 financial year, the occupancy increased significantly and we opened another learning space to accommodate the additional children. Throughout the year, the Fairley service upgraded the learning environments and resources thanks to funding received through the Start Strong grant and Quality Learning grant.

Our Winyu Early Childhood Service continued its focus on multiculturalism to meet the needs of its community. The service celebrated significant cultural events from around the world, with strong participation from the families of children in attendance. This focus on multiculturalism also extends to reconciliation. The Winyu team developed an Acknowledgement of Country song with the children during Reconciliation Week, which the staff sang during a visit by Leanne Castley MLA.

At the end of the financial year, our Conder Early Childhood Service started undergoing significant upgrades to the building. The ACT Property Group is replacing all heating and air conditioning units throughout the service and painting the interior.

Campbell Cottage received a small grant for yard upgrades, which will take place in late 2021. The service continues to grow and has a healthy waitlist for future enrolments.



Four of our services received tulips from the ACT Government Floriade Community Participate Funding so the community could share in the Floriade experience. This was well received by educators, children and families, and provided links back to the community. We look forward to the bulbs flowering in spring.

In the first half of the reporting period, parents working from home impacted occupancy across the services. The second half of the year has seen occupancy rebuild considerably, with the most significant growth in our nursery and infant spaces. As more parents start to return to the office, we are slowly seeing an increase in occupancy across all services.

However, as noted earlier in this report, recruitment remains our greatest challenge in running our services. We acknowledge this is a sector-wide challenge made increasingly more difficult by international and state borders remaining closed.

"The staff at this service are supportive and informative and their dedication to the kids is exceptional."

- Parent, YWCA Canberra early childhood service



"Spence Cottage is a wonderful centre with dedicated, caring staff. They go above and beyond. I feel so assured that my children are safe, happy and learning with the beautiful staff here!"

- Parent, YWCA Canberra early childhood service

School age care and school holiday programs

We provide a mix of before school, after school and school holiday programs for school-age children. Our focus and primary goal is to provide high-quality education and care to all children through inclusive, holistic, and stimulating educational programs, practices, and pedagogies.

This year, our school age care programs engaged 2652 children aged four to 12, at 12 locations across the ACT and four school holiday programs. This is significantly higher than last year, as enrolments have rebounded after the COVID-19 pandemic led to lower enrolment rates.

Over the last year, our school age care team has participated in professional development and training. Learning topics have included the quality improvement process, how to go above the National Quality Standards, educational programming and practice, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices into services, performance management, the importance of environments for children, and teaching emotional regulation skills.

A focus over the last year has been embedding aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures into our services and supporting children to extend upon their understanding of the cultures of our First Nations people. We greatly respect and value the partnerships we have developed and maintain with the local and wider Aboriginal communities. We will continue to increase staff awareness and knowledge of the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions and protocols.

We also implemented a wide variety of community and multicultural events into our services for children to engage in, such as National Thank a Cop Day, School's Tree Day, Science Week, International Day of Friendship, Diwali, Holi, International Day of World's Indigenous Peoples and NAIDOC Week. These events allow children to participate in the

wider community and learn about diversity and multiculturalism.

We have continued to implement sustainable practices into our services to enhance children's understanding of how to care for the natural environment and conservation of the earth and wildlife.

During 2020 ACT Children's Week, the Director of our Majura Primary School Age Care service, Damian Miles, was awarded an ACT Children's Week Award for Significant Support. This annual award recognises individuals, groups, and organisations whose contributions significantly improve opportunities for children and/or young people to learn and grow.

Four of our school age care services underwent the assessment from the regulator in late 2020, with all meeting the National Quality Standards. Throughout the first half of 2021, several of our services participated in COVID-19 audits conducted by ACT Health to monitor food and hygiene practices within our services during a pandemic.

Family day care

Our family day care program provides flexible, professional and supervised care for children from birth to 12 years of age in the private homes of qualified and professional family day care educators.

The nature of the family day care service, along with the practices at educators' homes, caters for a diverse cultural community, and



the educators employed at the service reflect this. Working collaboratively with families, the educators work to support children to connect with and retain their cultural identity and home language. Families often build strong connections with educators, with all siblings often attending the same educator's home for education and care.

We have 12 registered educators, who cared for 66 children in 2020-21. All of our educators hold a minimum of Certificate III in Children's Services and some hold and/or are working towards their Diploma.

Over the year, our family day care educators focused on nature-based play and using natural materials within the home for learning experiences and a more sustainable approach to everyday practice.

After the COVID-19 restrictions eased, our educators resumed weekly meetings for a playgroup. This is a wonderful way for educators and the children in their care to share learning experiences and build the children's social and emotional skills through play. With children age one to six years, activities at the playgroup included dancing, art and craft, and outdoor play.

To improve the quality of our services, we have also been working with our educators on their home learning environments. The educators have made some impressive adjustments to their home setups to increase learning opportunities for the children.



Housing support services

We have provided housing support to women and the broader Canberra community for nearly 80 years, commencing with the opening of Leave House on Mort St by Lady Gowrie in 1942.

Today we provide supported accommodation services on behalf of the ACT Government and we are a registered community housing provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing.

We provide specialist support to women and children in the Canberra region who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to find secure, safe and affordable long-term housing and address any underlying causes of homelessness. Domestic and family violence remain a leading cause of homelessness for women and children in Canberra.

We help families access housing, information, resources and social supports to build capacity, prevent homelessness and empower families to maintain their tenancy.

Rentwell

Rentwell is YWCA Canberra's property management service that provides affordable rental properties to people on moderate incomes who find it difficult to secure and maintain tenancies in the mainstream market.

YWCA Canberra provides a full-service property management service to owners who rent their properties at 74.9 per cent or lower of market rent, and sources and matches eligible tenants. Property owners receive a tax exemption from the ACT Government, and YWCA Canberra provides a charitable tax deductible receipt for the difference between market rent and affordable rent.

At the end of the 2020-21 financial year, YWCA Canberra had secured and tenanted properties in the Rentwell program, with a total of 105 tenants.



Next Door

Our Next Door program empowers women aged 50, and over and Aboriginal women age 45 and over to secure and maintain affordable, appropriate and safe homes where they can age in place.

Through Next Door, we provide holistic support tailored to the woman's individual situation. This could include:

- finding them a safe, secure and affordable home in the private market or social housing
- providing essential household goods
- helping them maintain their existing tenancy
- helping them engage with health, legal and financial services
- supporting them with employment and training opportunities
- helping them engage with their community.

In the 2020-21 reporting period, we helped 68 women through the Next Door program.

The majority of these women were aged 60 to 80 years old, with 19 from non-English speaking backgrounds. Over half were on the aged pension or other allowance and were experiencing housing insecurity because of low rental affordability in Canberra.

We responded to increased feelings of isolation in our Next Door clients due to the COVID-19 pandemic by organising a series of social events, including visits to the National Gallery, Arboretum and National Botanical Gardens and many coffee mornings.

Case study

Ann* was referred to Next Door by Legal Aid after leaving a long-term abusive relationship nearly a year beforehand.

Although Ann had owned her home before the relationship, her husband's name was added to the deed during their relationship, and he was verbally and emotionally abusive and financially controlling.

After escaping the abuse, Ann applied for a divorce and property settlement. Although she had no money or safe place to live, she was ineligible for social housing because of her home asset and ended up housesitting as she had nowhere permanent to live.

In addition, she had recently been made redundant from her job in the public sector and was struggling to find any work while barely surviving on the JobSeeker payment.

The Next Door team helped Ann explore

her housing options, such as house shares and community and affordable housing. They secured her a room in one of YWCA Canberra's affordable share houses for older women.

The Next Door team also provided assistance, support and referral to employment and recruitment agencies and undertook coaching and mentoring around writing job applications and interview techniques. Ann was successful in gaining a contract position.

Supported by her Next Door case manager and Legal Aid, Ann was awarded a reasonable settlement and has been able to purchase a small property in a surrounding rural location. She is also studying for her Community Services Certificate and aims to begin working soon.

*Not the client's real name.



This year, a concerning trend was the significant increase in women engaging in our services because of housing insecurity after exiting relationships whilst awaiting a property settlement. With property settlements often taking over a year, these women did not have sufficient income to rent privately but were ineligible for social or community housing programs due to their assets.

"I'm so much happier in my life now, and in myself.

I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for YWCA Canberra giving me my life back."

- Next Door client

Transitional and affordable housing

We support women with children and single women who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or escaping domestic and family violence, with safe and affordable transitional housing.

We advocate for long-term safe, secure and affordable housing solutions and collaborate with other local services to help our service users stabilise their lives, reach their individual goals and move forward as a family group to live their best lives.

This year we provided crisis accommodation, family case management and outreach support to 243 clients, of which 150 were 18 years old or younger.

We also provide safe and affordable accommodation for older women in four homes that we own and one that we lease from Housing ACT.

This year, we provided affordable housing to 16 older single women on low incomes.

The combination of the COVID-19 crisis and plummeting housing affordability in Canberra has led to an increased number of women with children at risk of homelessness.

Our housing team responded by securing funding through the OneLink Client Support Fund to help an additional 40 women, some with children, and secure fourteen more short-term transitional properties.

We continued providing essential services to our housing clients during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensured that everyone had access to essential food and household items, sanitiser, emergency financial relief, material aid, health care and up-to-date information, particularly our more vulnerable older women and those service users who lost work and were not eligible for income support.

Through the support of Hands Across Canberra and generous donations by the Canberra community, we delivered special food hampers, movie and gift vouchers and toys to the families at Christmas time.

For Families Week 2021, we arranged an excursion for our Housing families to go apple picking at Tanbella Orchard in Pialligo. Eight families came along with their children to pick apples and have a morning in the sun. We purchased apples for each family and spoke to the children about healthy eating and growing food.



Case study

Sara* is a single mother who has had ongoing mental health issues since she was 14. Soon after giving birth to her child at age 17, her relationship became violent and broke down. However, Sarah persevered, finished a business diploma and gained employment in the public service.

In early 2020, Sara started experiencing bullying by her manager, then her fiancé started abusing her financially and controlling who she could see and when. Combined with her pre-existing mental health issues, this resulted in Sara attempting suicide. When she was discharged from hospital, she left her fiancé and moved home with her parents, even though there wasn't much room for Sara and her child in their two-bedroom townhouse.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and Sara's parents started working from home, they asked her to move out. YWCA Canberra found Sara and her daughter a vacancy in one of our transitional housing properties. Still, the experiences had left Sara in a fragile state that made it hard to engage and connect with services and supports.

In the depths of her illness, Sara began

doubting her ability to parent her now ten-year-old child, and Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS) became involved. Our family case manager worked closely with Sara and CYPS to support her in her mental health recuperation and regain her confidence in parenting again. The case manager also supported Sara's child through this process, who has been incredibly resilient and supportive of her mother.

Unfortunately, the side effects of Sara's medication to treat her mental health issues sometimes left her unable to drive, impacting her daughter's school attendance and CYPS became involved again. Our case manager liaised with OneLink to organise funding for transport to and from school when Sara cannot drive. CYPS was happy with this creative solution and closed the matter.

We continue to help Sara maintain her home and access NDIS to help with medical costs and house cleaning. The case manager has also worked closely with Sara to help her regain her self-confidence and capacity to function in her daily world. Sara is now working towards re-entering the workforce part-time.

*not the client's real name

Supported Tenancy Services

The Supportive Tenancy Service (STS) provides support, advocacy and referral for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or living in unsatisfactory housing. It is a consortium of YWCA Canberra, Woden Community Services and Capital Region Community Services.

The service uses a strengths-based approach in a trauma-informed and person-centred framework to bring about positive outcomes for its clients.

This year, the service assisted over 400 clients across the three consortium members.

STS is funded under the National Affordable Housing Agreement and the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, which are jointly funded by the ACT and Australian Governments.



Case study

Jane* is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mother of two. She had recently ended a long-term relationship with an abusive partner, who had moved out. She was on a joint lease with her ex-partner, which was about to end, and Jane could not afford to stay in the property independently.

She struggled with finding an affordable home in Canberra but was eventually able to find one. However, it was not available until a week after Jane's current lease ended.

When Jane first contacted STS, she had only had two days before her current lease ended. She was desperate for a place for her and her children to live during the gap between leases.

STS liaised with Jane's current real estate agent to try to arrange a one-week extension to the lease. Although the agent was very

supportive and understanding of Jane's situation, they advised that the next tenants had already arranged to move from Sydney in a few days.

STS proposed a novel solution: that Jane could share with the new tenants for one week. The real estate agent was happy with this idea and organised the agreement from new tenants. The real estate agent also agreed to reduce the rent for that week to support Jane.

STS arranged with Jane to pay off rental arrears by entering an affordable payment plan with the real estate agent. The team also organised a referral to Care Inc for additional financial support for Jane. Once she settled into her new home with her children, Jane returned to her role in the workforce and can now pay her rent and support her family.

*not the client's real name

YHomes

YHomes marks a new milestone in delivering on our vision and contributing to the supply of affordable housing in Canberra.

Older women remain the fastest growing cohort experiencing homelessness, and domestic and family violence remains one of the key drivers of women's homelessness. In response, YHomes will build ten independent and quality supported housing dwellings for women in a convenient location in Ainslie. Once completed, these will provide safe and affordable homes to older women in housing crisis or women escaping domestic violence.

Our Development Application, submitted towards the end of 2020, was supported by independent members of the community and members of YWCA Canberra. It was approved by the ACT planning authority (EPSDD) on 15 April 2021.

The ACT and Australian governments have also recognised the social value of this important building project. Community fundraising for the project has met some success, starting with the launch of YHomes at our Innovation Breakfast in April 2021. YHomes was also successful in securing support from the Homes for Homes philanthropic fund, and from PwC's Foundation Trust 10x10 Community Grants program.



Circles of Support

Circles of Support is a counselling service providing individual therapeutic support for families with children and young people age five to 15 years. This service offers long-term support to parents, children and young people and aims to strengthen family relationships and improve wellbeing.

Over the 2020-21 period, Circles of Support provided services to 102 clients through person-centred, trauma-focused therapy.

Of those:

- 64 per cent were single-parent families, although there was an increase in couples in the first half of 2021
- 86 per cent were women or girls
- 69 per cent were parents aged between 26 and 55
- 17 per cent were from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background
- 7 per cent were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

The Circles of Support team supports many families with issues related to autism spectrum disorder. While the counsellors do not directly work with children with autism, the team are trained in screening for it and support families to seek a diagnosis and engage in their relationships, especially for parents with autistic children.

"The guidance I have been provided has been invaluable. It has allowed me to understand and work on the why and how I parent. Learning to understand myself and my child has brought on so many positive tangible changes. We still have hurdles ahead to overcome but knowing I am supported certainly makes them seem less overwhelming."

- Circles of Support client

Case study one

Helen* is a young child who was referred to Circles of Support via court orders as her father was unwilling for her to get support. Helen's parents both had a history of substance abuse and legal issues and had separated. Her mother had made fundamental changes to her life while the father continued to have difficulties.

The initial reason for obtaining counselling services was to support Helen around difficulties transitioning between the two houses and the impact of exposure to the family violence her mother had endured.

The counsellor employed play therapy to give Helen the freedom to express her inner experience and work through her challenges in a safe space. Helen built a strong rapport with her counsellor and embraced the therapy quickly.

During her sessions, Helen explored her feelings around school, particularly engagements with teachers and her relationships with her parents now they were separated. She has been able to better express herself to her mother, including her fears

linked to visiting her father and her desires for a future, including being a teacher when she grows up. She has been calmer at home and better able to manage going between homes since beginning therapy.

To supplement this work, another counsellor has been supporting Helen's mother, Jenny*. Through this work, Jenny has been able to explore her own trauma caused by her mother, who she suspects may have untreated complex mental health challenges, and her experience of previous relationships which involved high-end family violence. Jenny has recognised the impact these experiences have had on her, learned to manage herself in interactions with her parents, and developed capabilities to therapeutically parent her daughter.

Through this joint approach, Circles of Support counsellors have been able to give both Helen and Jenny the space to process their challenges while at the same time supporting the gains made in the therapy undertaken by the other counsellor.

*not the client's real name

Case study two

Sue* has been a long-term client of Circles of Support. She has a history of sexual abuse as a child, domestic violence in a previous relationship, and challenges around her daughter, who has been diagnosed with multiple challenges including autism, ADHD, cognitive delay and epilepsy.

The counsellor worked with Sue around her concerns for her daughter, including developing approaches to engage and support her, and empowering Sue to advocate for her daughter's needs. The counsellor helped Sue in obtaining an autism assessment for her daughter and engaging additional supports. Through exploring her daughter's challenges, Sue developed a better understanding of the daughter's needs and increased empathy for her.

Sue and her counsellor have also explored the impact of Sue's relationship with her

ex-partner, who has ongoing substance abuse issues. Sue realised she had been trying to 'save' him and take responsibility for his addiction issues. With help from her counsellor, she has identified the impact her own history played in attempting to do this and is now setting clearer boundaries with him.

As the therapy developed, Sue started to engage with her traumatic past and the impact it has had on her and her relationships throughout her life. She can now identify patterns in those relationships, including being drawn to people with addictions like her father as she grew up. Sue is able to make better choices around what relationships to engage in and more able to identify her emotional responses and engage healthier coping strategies.

*not the client's real name



"The support I have received has definitely kept me and my family from falling apart. I really don't know where I would be without this support."

- Circles of Support client

Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre

Located in Lanyon in the south of Tuggeranong and funded by the ACT Government, YWCA Canberra's Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre (MLYCC) plays an important role in providing opportunities for the community to engage in social, cultural, recreational and educational activities.

YWCA Canberra was fortunate to receive several small grants throughout the year from the ACT Government and the Snow Foundation to contribute to the development of the MLYCC. This enabled the centre to upgrade technology, including installing a ceiling-mounted projector and sound system in the community hall, install a retractable hose for the garden, and repair the barista coffee machine. The improvements have allowed MLYCC to further engage with the local community, including helping community members develop computer literacy and barista skills.

There was a swell of activities taking place at MLYCC over the reporting period. In 2021, the MLYCC celebrated 20 years of providing services, support and a safe space to community members. We celebrated this along with National Reconciliation Week on 25 May 2021 with a community event attended by Members of Legislative Assembly, local Elders and their families, and local school children.

On average, the MLYCC had 502 visitors per month.



MLYCC has a range of spaces that are also used by individuals, groups, organisations and commercial businesses to deliver activities and events. In the reporting period, these were used to provide community services by the Marymead KAYAKS program, CatholicCare Next Step program, Care Inc, Saver Plus, Relationships Australia Gambling Support, Warehouse Circus and the Tuggeranong Art Centre Messengers program.

Tax HELP remains a staple at the centre. This free tax program helps people earning \$60,000 or less to lodge their tax return online.

MLYCC's spaces have also been used for dance/exercise classes, art and craft groups, a STEM playgroup, wellbeing sessions, and meetings by a range of not-for-profit and social groups.

In October 2020, the centre welcomed 15 ADFA Training Officers for a full day of volunteering as part of the Weary Dunlop program to contribute time to their community and learn about how services support our community.

The 15 Training Officers took on a tremendous amount of work around the centre, including repainting the youth centre and community hall, replacing the sand in the sandpit and making repairs, clearing the yard of green waste and debris and clearing out unused furniture. The improvement to the site was quite incredible!

Well-known street artist and mural creator Bjarni Wark from Happy Decay co-created an amazing mural for the skate park at the front of the MLYCC .

Young people age eight to 12 involved in our transition to high school program also created a stunning new look MLYCC.



Lanyon Food Hub

The Lanyon Food Hub, run from the MLYCC, provides both emergency relief and regular food relief support, Telstra Bill Assistance Program and material aid. It provides a wide variety of fresh and non-perishable food through funding from the Department of Social Services, our relationships with Oz Harvest, Baker's Delight Lanyon, and Food Bank NSW & ACT and the support of ACT Government which funds the refrigerated transport of food from Foodbank NSW.

With many people losing work or experiencing a reduction in income due to the COVID-19 crisis pandemic, the Food Hub had numerous new members seeking emergency relief support for the first time.



This short-term support has enabled many individuals and families to get through challenging times, and we have been heartened to see members being able to return to work or find new opportunities. Our community has demonstrated not only their resilience but also their willingness to give back, with many members donating back to the Food Hub when they are able.

In 2020-21, the Lanyon Food Hub supported 249 members, providing food on 1476 occasions (including 135 Christmas hampers). Of our members:

- 13.3 per cent are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people
- 29.7 per cent are people with a disability
- 7.6 per cent are culturally and/or linguistically diverse, with Arabic the main language group represented.

Over this period, we refined the Food Hub systems for efficiency, data collection, improved customer service and COVID safety. Our new electronic sign-in system for Food Hub members not only allows us to meet COVID requirements but has increased efficiency in the flow of members, resulting in wait times being close to eliminated. This has allowed us to take a more person-centred approach to the service.

We have also been providing additional services for our Food Hub members. Our volunteer barista provides freshly-made coffee and teaches barista skills, enabling opportunities for social connections and learning.

In addition to this we **supported 42 young people who were financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic** to obtain brokerage funding via the OneLink Young People COVID-19 Client Support Fund for various services and activities, including swimming lessons, laptops, uniforms, driving lessons and barista courses.

"It was suggested that I reach out to your service due to my long-standing serious health issues and resulting financial hardship. It was my pleasure to meet with [the YWCA Canberra representative]. She was understanding, helpful and empathetic. I had no issue disclosing my sensitive circumstances to her as she made me feel at ease as soon as we met."

I am truly grateful for the support she has provided and the kindness she has offered me. It is not easy to find the courage to admit when one needs a hand in life and I believe [the YWCA Canberra representative] treated me with genuine dignity and respect."

- MLYCC Emergency Relief client

Emergency relief

YWCA Canberra was provided with additional Emergency Relief funding from the Department of Social Services during the year to support community members who were impacted by COVID-19 or the bushfires. This funding allowed us to provide vouchers, material aid and utility payment support. MLYCC became the central point of assessment and distribution for this funding, with people able to access supports and referrals from the MLYCC.

Over the reporting period, we provided emergency relief assistance to 323 people.



Youth programs

Our youth programs support young people age 10 to 25 years who live, work or play in the Tuggeranong region. Working with young people from as young as age ten has allowed us to build stronger relationships with local primary schools and deliver psychosocial programs, supports and casework.

Our Youth Engagement team at the MLYCC and the YWCA Canberra Clubhouse work collaboratively to deliver innovative and engaging activities to help reduce the risk of young people disengaging from education and employment. These activities build resilience, social and personal awareness, problem-solving and complex reasoning skills, communication and interpersonal skills. In our programs, young people can explore their interests and be their authentic selves.

The Tuggeranong Youth Engagement program is funded by the ACT Government, and the YWCA Canberra Clubhouse receives philanthropic support through partnerships and donations.

In the 2020-21 reporting period, we supported 5039 young people through our youth engagement programs.

In addition, we supported 13 young people through referral pathways to engage in community services and tertiary services, and provided one-off support to ten young people to meet their short-term immediate needs.



Through the Youth Engagement team, we provide drop-in services for young people five days a week across the two sites. We support young people using a strength-based model to develop collaborative, individualised support plans.

During the reporting period, we became aware of a lack of local services for sexuality and gender diverse young age ten to 12. In response, we reduced the membership age of the existing A-Z Sexuality and Gender Diverse social-emotional group and worked with young people and their families to provide information and referrals to additional supports where required.

Our Youth Engagement team worked with groups at local schools during the reporting period, including:

- facilitating a Transition to High School program with Charles Conder Primary School and Lanyon High School
- supporting Richardson School's Interests and Passions Program to participate in the Schools reconciliation challenge
- supporting drop-in art sessions at Charles Conder Primary School
- assisting in LGBTQIA+ groups and events at several schools.

The team also provided support at or facilitated a range of local community events.

The hard work, dedication and professionalism of the Youth Engagement team was recognised at the 2020 Youth Coalition of the ACT Yogie Awards. Youth Worker Annie Rowley was selected as the 2020 Outstanding Youth Worker. The team was Highly Commended in the Outstanding Achievement in Youth Engagement category for their participation in the Schools Reconciliation Challenge.

LGBTQIA+ & Allies Prom

Our 2020 LGBTQIA+ & Allies Prom brought together nearly 200 young people age 12 to 25 from across Canberra and surrounds.

This was our fifth annual Prom. It was particularly important for young people after the disruptive school year they had experienced due to COVID-19, which had resulted in several formals being cancelled and impacted social cohesion for the students. This event was brought together within six weeks following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.



As always, the Prom was an opportunity for LGBTQIA+ young people and their allies to dance the night away as their authentic selves.

"Now in its 5th year I can say with pride that I have been a part of the LGBTQIA+ & Allies Prom for four years, both as an attendee and on the committee for the prom. I have seen it grow and only become more and more amazing every year despite, after every prom, thinking how could this get better? The amount of care and consideration that goes into the event both by the staff who volunteer to run it and by the young people themselves never fails to impress me."

- Prom attendee

YWCA Canberra Clubhouse

YWCA Canberra Clubhouse is a free, out-of-school learning space that provides young people age 10 to 18 in the Tuggeranong region with access to the latest technology, as well as mentoring and support to grow their skills in science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, and music (STEAMM).

The YWCA Canberra Clubhouse is part of the Clubhouse Network, a global community of 100 Clubhouses in 20 countries.

The program exists to deliver better socio-economic outcomes for the Tuggeranong community and better STEAMM employment outcomes for women and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally diverse backgrounds. With the essential support from our cross-sector partners, volunteers, Tuggeranong community, and our dedicated staff, our members have access to cutting-edge technology, industry mentors and a supportive environment that fosters their creativity and independent learning almost every week of the year.

We had 472 young people as Clubhouse members this year. Of those members, 62 per cent are in primary school, 29 per cent are girls, and eight per cent are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander young people.

The Clubhouse welcomed new members and created opportunities to explore technology in a creative and innovative space.

During the reporting period, the Clubhouse organised for a member of the United Nations Information Centre Canberra to visit a year six class at St Francis of Assisi Primary School and talk about the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2021. Clubhouse member Peta, who attends the school, demonstrated a fruit & vegetables 'synthesiser', a musical keyboard that triggers dance beats based on the colour of the fruits and vegetables. Peta constructed and coded the synthesiser at the Clubhouse to help promote the UN 2021 Year of Fruits and Vegetables.

The YWCA Canberra Clubhouse team was a finalist in the Re@ch Media Festival held annually by the Global Clubhouse Network, which encourages young people from around the world to express themselves about issues that are important to them.

The Clubhouse received a significant donation from MTP Services during the reporting period, which purchased and donated our entire wishlist of software and hardware. This enabled the team to significantly expand their audio and music recording capabilities, coding tools and graphic design printing options. MTP Services is now providing monthly support to enable a 'mobile' Clubhouse to operate out of MLYCC twice a week, allowing us to extend the reach of the program to more young people in the Tuggeranong region.

"I love working with [the YWCA Clubhouse Coordinator] to plan, record and make audiobooks with sound effects. I'm happy, and I feel good about myself."

- Clubhouse participant

Y-Aspire

Y-Aspire is a free eight-week young women's leadership program for girls and non-binary students in years 7 and 8. Through a series of two-hour workshops that combine knowledge-



based and interactive activities, the participants identify and build on their existing skills. They explore topics such as identity, body confidence, respectful relationships, self-care, creativity, resilience and leadership to achieve their potential at school and beyond.

In 2020-21, we delivered four-part series of Y-Aspire training to 35 girls and non-binary people, at Namadgi High School, Calwell High School, Lanyon High School and Caroline Chisholm High School.



"Y-Aspire taught me loving myself and learning about self-respect is important."

I have learnt about my body and learnt to love it."

I found out I can do it and never give up - keep doing it until you get it!"

- Y-Aspire participant

Tuggeranong Network Coordination

Tuggeranong Network Coordination identifies areas of unmet need and gaps in service delivery needs that impact upon children, young people and families living within the Tuggeranong region. The program also fosters a collaborative approach across organisations to address these gaps.

Throughout the 2020-21 financial year, the Tuggeranong Network Coordinator adapted their activities to respond to the changing needs of the local community due to the pandemic, and respond to service gaps, particularly concerning the increase in vulnerable people requiring emergency food and financial assistance.



Thanks to funding from the Australian Early Development Census, the Network Coordinator provided targeted assistance to families with young children within the region. This included:

- providing a tailored online resource covering early childhood development and milestones
- providing two free information sessions for parents and carers of children in ADHD in February 2021, and engaging Attention Deficit Disorder, ACT and Marymead's Autism Centre to provide a full-day training package to upskill early childhood educators on ADD and autism
- scoping needs of playgroups in the Tuggeranong region and providing additional supports to the Isabella Plains Backyard Rangers playgroup to assist children and families with transitioning to school in 2021
- working with Cool Little Kids program to organise support for Tuggeranong families with children exhibiting excessive shyness or anxiety.

Throughout the period, the Tuggeranong Network Coordinator also developed relationships with key stakeholders in the region and produced a comprehensive, functional map of services within the Tuggeranong region, which will streamline service access for clients, especially those with complex needs.

Strategic priority two

We build capacity and connect girls and women through our training, leadership programs and networking events



She Leads women's leadership pathway program

She Leads is our flagship leadership program for women and non-binary people. The program equips the next generation of women and non-binary leaders, from all sectors and industries, with the skills and confidence they need to reach their leadership potential.

The program includes:

- She Leads Diploma of Leadership and Management
- She Leads Conference
- She Leads College Conference (for girls in years 11 and 12)
- She Leads High Conference (for girls in years nine and ten)
- She Leads In-Conversation series
- She Leads Workshops.





She Leads Diploma of Leadership and Management

YWCA Canberra recognises that there is no one way of leading. People from diverse backgrounds lead differently, and this helps organisations grow and consider a broad spectrum of ideas, experiences, and opinions. However, too often diverse voices are left out of the conversation and their leadership potential ignored in the workplace.

The She Leads Diploma of Leadership and Management is at the cutting-edge of women's leadership development. It builds upon a traditional Diploma of Leadership and Management (previously BSB51918, now BSB50420) by acknowledging and addressing the perspectives, challenges and opportunities for women and non-binary people in leadership. It includes additions specifically for diverse leaders, considering intersectional issues and a range of leadership styles.

Through the course, students have the opportunity to gain the best-practice skills, theoretical knowledge, and networks to accelerate their leadership journey, in a safe and supportive environment.

This year, 19 students graduated with a She Leads Diploma of Leadership and Management. There are 37 students currently working towards completing the qualification.

We secured scholarships for four students: two from the Snow Foundation for women with limited or no access to professional development opportunities through their employer, and two for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students thanks to funding from the ACT Government's Community Services Directorate.

Students also have access to YWCA Canberra's wrap-around services.

This year, our Education and Training Unit worked to prepare the new Diploma of Leadership and Management training package (BSB50420) in time for the August 2021 intake.

With our experience running the She Leads Diploma of Leadership and Management for women and non-binary people, we were proud to launch Diversity Leads. This is a leadership program for people of any gender who are from a diverse background on the basis of their sex, gender, race, sexual orientation, cultural background, disability or other form of diversity.

Students appreciated the stronger emphasis on intersectional diversity.

"Acknowledging my relative privilege in society has deepened my 'why' as I realise that participating in leadership enables me to proactively contribute to ensuring that the diversity within leadership becomes increasingly representative of the society we live in."

"It is imperative that all staff feel included in the workplace which can be achieved by creating a workplace where staff feel valued, respected and treated equally and fairly despite their diverse background. I will be reflecting on this knowledge while performing my role as a manager."



She Leads Conference

The She Leads Conference brings emerging and established women leaders and non-binary people, together with some of Australia's most inspiring, diverse and accomplished women leaders.

Sadly, we had to cancel the She Leads Conference in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it was back in July 2021 with the theme of *Power: Have it. Own it. Challenge it.* This theme was chosen in response to the need for a new approach to power and leadership in our 'new normal'.

We will provide full details in our next annual report, but some key highlights of the 2021 She Leads Conference were:

- The conference sold out in record time, reaching our COVID-safe cap of 400 attendees with a strong waitlist.
- We rapidly adapted to the COVID-19 outbreak by developing a mix of virtual and in-person activities.
- Feedback demonstrates that attendees considered it a high quality, cohesive and engaging program that deconstructed and explored the theme of Power.
- We successfully raised the voices of diverse women through our keynotes, panels and seminars, which was appreciated by the attendees.

She Leads College Conference

She Leads College is a one-day leadership event specifically targeted at young women and non-binary people in years 11 and 12.

It provides a unique out-of-school opportunity to explore and solidify their leadership identity and values, and reflect on their experiences, strengths, values, and goals. Featuring young, dynamic presenters and interactive workshops, the conference provides a safe space for attendees to be inspired by young women leaders and gain the confidence and practical skills to kickstart their leadership journeys.

The 2021 She Leads College Conference, held at the Kambri Cultural Centre at ANU, involved nearly 100 young women from colleges across the Canberra region and rural NSW.

Feedback from attendees was positive with 92 per cent agreeing that they have a greater understanding of leadership, and 94 per cent saying they are more motivated to pursue their leadership goals.

Feedback from the teachers was also positive, with 100 per cent agreeing that the conference offered a safe space for their students to discuss leadership.



The theme this year was *Wild* and we programmed a series of keynotes, panels, workshops and other interactive activities to help students identify the correlation between adversity, resilience and leadership. This was a success, with 95 per cent of students agreeing that they had a greater understanding of the relationship between resilience and leadership following the conference.

She Leads High Conference

She Leads High Conference is a one-day leadership event specifically targeted at young women and non-binary people in years nine and ten.

This event aims to provide attendees with an understanding of the fundamentals of leadership and explores topics such as social and emotional development, peer relationships and pressures, self-esteem, and body image. Upon completion, attendees are empowered to start defining and developing their leadership pathway.

The 2020 She Leads High Conference, held at the Kambri Cultural Centre at ANU, brought together 100 young women from schools across the Canberra region. This attendance rate was lower than previous years due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Feedback from the attendees was positive with 88 per cent saying they now saw themselves as a leader, and 100 per cent of teachers saying they would recommend the conference to other teachers and students.

The event was designed to provide a safe space for students in years 9 and 10 to be inspired by young women leaders in their communities and gain confidence, knowledge and practical skills to kick-start their leadership journeys.

The theme *Unstoppable* was derived from the 2019 International Day of the Girl Child theme. Our programming was designed to help students identify the factors that may prevent them from achieving leadership roles and encourage them to work together to build skills to strengthen both individual and collective power to overcome adversity.

She Leads In-Conversation series

She Leads In-Conversation events are quarterly evening events that provide Canberrans with the opportunity to hear from women and non-binary people, who are leaders from different backgrounds and industries. They are held in a conversational format, followed by a live Q&A session and networking with drinks and canapes.

The series provides a platform for a range of diverse women leaders to share their often-unconventional experiences and pathways to leadership and explores topics such as gender equality, leadership, feminism, and social change.

Although COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 reduced our event program, we were able to hold an In-Conversation event with the Honourable Dame Annette King and Hannah Birdsey late in the year. As one of New Zealand's longest serving politicians and now NZ High Commissioner to Australia, Dame King shared her experiences of and journey to leadership. During this wide-ranging discussion, Dame King and Hannah Birdsey, Assistant Secretary at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), also discussed the importance of diversity and provided advice for aspiring women leaders today to the 56 people in attendance.

In 2021, we resumed these events as normal. Our first 2021 in-conversation event featured Dr

Clara Tuck Meng Soo and Issy Mudford. Dr Soo has a 30+ year history of providing accessible healthcare to some of the most marginalised communities in Canberra. As a trans woman, she has personally observed the differences in leadership barriers between men and women. This experience provided a fascinating discussion with Isabel Mudford, Chair of the LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council and Advisor of the ACT Greens, on issues of gender, culture and what it is like to work with vulnerable and marginalised groups in the community. We had 72 people attend this event.

This was followed by Yumiko Kadota in discussion with Rasi Gupta on the topic of toxic workplace cultures. Yumiko recently released her memoir, *Emotional Female*, about her journey as an Asian-Australian woman working towards her dream of becoming a plastic surgeon in the Australian medical system, which eventually led to her resignation after months of burnout. This discussion reframed burnout from being a personal weakness to being a failure of the system, and presented methods of changing workplaces to prevent it. Yumiko provided advice not only on how to identify early signs of burnout and avoid it, but how to stand up to the system to instigate change. Our 71 attendees were heavily inspired by her story.





She Leads Workshops

She Leads Workshops are designed to develop women's skills and confidence to take on leadership roles within their community, and promote our goal of women influencing, leading and deciding.

Tailored to the specific needs of women and non-binary people, workshops are run throughout the year by accomplished women from diverse industries and areas of expertise.

These skills-based sessions address the under-representation of women in leadership roles, by building the capacity and confidence of women who strive to contribute to community leadership, especially through board and committee membership.

We ran ten She Leads workshops over the 2020-21 financial year. Our staple workshops of board governance and public speaking continue to prove popular, with two additional board workshops run in the 2020-21 period to match demand. Over the year, we also added workshops on resilience and mental agility, navigating difficult conversations, mastering self-doubt, creating your strategic vision, and a class on getting ready for tax time.

Although most of these were presented in-person, we did run some workshops virtually so that we could continue women's professional development during COVID-19 restrictions.

Across the year:

- 98 per cent of attendees said their workshop was either good or excellent.
- 98 per cent of attendees said their facilitator was either good or excellent.

Other highlights:

- 100 per cent of people who attended Tips and tricks for navigating difficult conversations with Vanessa Vanderhoek either agreed or strongly agreed that they are more motivated to pursue their leadership goals.
- 100 per cent of people who attended Creating your strategic vision with Trish Bergin agreed that participating in the workshop had inspired them to grow their idea and/or cause in a sustainable way.
- 100 per cent of people who attended Resilience and mental agility in a time of COVID-19 with Heidi Prowse either agreed or strongly agreed that they had developed a greater understanding of managing and lowering stress levels.
- 95 per cent of people who attended Building Confidence in Public Speaking with Catherine McGrath agreed that they felt more confident after completing the workshop.

Board traineeships

Our Board Traineeship Program began in 2002 and is an integral part of our commitment to building leadership pathways for young women and non-binary people. The program provides our members with the opportunity to actively participate on our Board, without the financial or legal responsibilities of being Directors.

The program is underpinned by our commitment to quotas, with 30 per cent of our board positions being held by young women age 30 years or under. This ensures that we maintain a culture of diversity on our board and foster an intergenerational dialogue that guides the work we do.

Since its inception, 72 women have participated in the program, many of whom have subsequently served on the YWCA Canberra Board as Directors. This year, four women participated: Jazmeen Payne, Josey Janssen, Camille Schloeffel and Elsie Adamo.

This program is an innovative approach to addressing the lack of women on boards. We actively work to inspire other organisations to view this challenge as an opportunity to foster a diverse pool of board candidates and make a positive contribution to gender equality.

"YWCA Canberra's Board Traineeship is a crucial program that allows young, diverse women and non-binary people to gain skills in board governance, strategy and finance. The program is one-of-a-kind, providing trainees with hands-on experience in the field and access to impressive, generous, and inspiring networks within the board. I was able to not only gain crucial skills, however I felt as though my voice was both heard and platformed within the board forum. Having the ability to join subcommittees, participate in planning days and access to mentors were all very beneficial to my experience. Upon finishing the traineeship I'm excited to see what opportunities I will have access to, having been a participant of the program."

- Board trainee



Education and training

YWCA Canberra is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO National Number 1373) through which we provide consulting, training and facilitation services for individuals, government agencies, private businesses and community organisations.

YWCA Canberra offers courses through fee-for-service, work-based traineeships and programs such as the ACT and Federal Government's Skilled Capital funded training initiative, which encourages learners to pursue qualifications in specific areas of need.

Our skilled and qualified trainers use an individualised learning support approach, including one-on-one mentoring sessions and online support. As a result, we achieve high rates of learner and employer satisfaction.

Our RTO is renowned for inclusion and the support we provide to our students. This year, more than 80 per cent of our students identified as coming from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background.

During the 2020-21 financial year, we delivered training in early childhood education and care, leadership and management, infection control and business administration.

We also delivered non-accredited training in preventing and responding to violence against women.

Our courses have become more popular this year, with:

- 421 students receiving training
- 210 new students across all qualifications
- 214 students graduating with a nationally recognised qualification
- 50 students receiving a statement of attainment in first aid
- 68 students receiving a statement of attainment in Cross-Sector Infection Control
- 38 funded student places via Skilled Capital*
- 25 User Choice trainees engaged under the national funding policy for Australian Apprenticeships**
- 21 of these students were self-funded
- a 92 per cent satisfaction rate from students
- an 80 per cent satisfaction rate from employers of YWCA Canberra's students.

*Skilled Capital is an ACT Government Training initiative, funded by the ACT and Australian Governments

** Australian apprenticeships in the ACT are funded by the ACT and Australian Governments



"I was very fortunate to have [my trainer] guide and support me through my Diploma at YWCA Canberra. She was extremely helpful and went above and beyond to ensure I was confident and capable when putting theory into practice in the classrooms. With face-to-face check ins and constant communication through emails, my trainer was always there when you needed to ask a quick question or quiz her brain on her previous experience in early childhood and education settings."

- Graduate feedback

Childhood education and care

We are passionate about providing quality professional development to people who are entering or currently working in the early childhood or school age education and care sector.

Our students gain a nationally recognised qualification through face-to-face group training, mentoring sessions, workplace training and practical placements.

This year we delivered:

- Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC30113), an entry-level qualification for people who are interested in pursuing a career in early childhood education and care, or who are currently working in this industry with no formal qualification
- Certificate IV in School Age Educate and Care (CHC40113), a temporary offering no longer being offered to new students, for people who are interested in pursuing a career in school age childhood education and care, or who are currently working in this industry with no formal qualification
- Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (CHC50113) for workers who are responsible for planning, implementing and managing programs in early childhood

services, in accordance with licensing, accreditation and duty of care requirements.

This year:

- 48 students graduated with a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care, with an additional 45 students working towards completion.
- 30 students graduating with a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, with an additional 57 students working towards completion.
- 13 students graduating with a Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care, with an additional six students working towards completion.
- 85 per cent of our graduating students gained employment in the childhood education and care industry.

"THANK YOU SO MUCH! I can't even begin to express how grateful I am to of had you as my trainer throughout this process and how much work and effort you put in to supporting me in reaching this goal. It actually means the absolute world to me that you believed in me the whole time and encouraged me to succeed the entire way through."

- Graduate feedback



Educate Inspire Excel Program (EIE)

In July 2020, YWCA Canberra launched Educate, Inspire, Excel, an innovative new program to train people to work in Canberra's early childhood education and care sector.

This program will not only help trainees gain long-term careers, but will set up a pipeline for educators in the childhood and education and care sector, an industry that the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated is vital to our community and our economy.

Along with the usual elements of a traineeship, our qualified trainers provide support in the workplace to help trainees gain their qualifications. The EIE team also provides individual, tailored support to ensure trainees' other life needs are met through our community services and linkages to the Canberra community sector.

As part of the EIE program, we offer job-readiness training to equip trainees with the skills, knowledge and understanding that underpin successful employment in the children's services sector.

During the first year of the program, the EIE team:

- contacted 122 childhood education and care centres about the opportunity to be part of EIE program by employing trainees
- organised job opportunities for EIE trainees in 20 early childhood education and care centres
- received enquiries from 142 participants
- engaged 86 participants with EIE program including helping them attend meetings, get documents and seek employment
- secured trainee positions and provided training for 34 people and worked with another 15 people to find them positions.
- delivered four job-readiness training sessions.

EIE is funded through the Future Skills for Future Jobs Grants Program, an ACT Government initiative.

"I was affected by an unfortunate situation, but I would like to channel my positive personality traits to something that I can do, such as caring for others. Moreover, I would like to be part of the Australian community, to be accepted and contribute to it."

Within a month [of contacting the EIE team], they updated me that I had to prepare for an interview."

- EIE trainee

"The EIE team has been a dream to work with, organising [my trainee's] interview and coming out frequently to visit; it's made the whole process of having a trainee a lot smoother."

- EIE trainee employer

Preventing violence against women

YWCA Canberra delivers a range of training and education programs that help prevent and respond to violence against women in the community and our workplaces.

During the 2020-21 reporting period, we provided training to help prevent and respond to violence against women to 135 people.

This included delivering:

- a reviewed and updated Teaching Respect Ed course, a professional learning program accredited by the Teacher Quality Institute that equips educators to implement Respectful Relationships Education in their schools
- a new program to educators of teenagers on preventing violence and supporting safety and consent
- training on being an active bystander in private and public sector workplaces
- training to ACT public service managers on responding to family violence.

We also developed an online module for our active bystander training for community members.

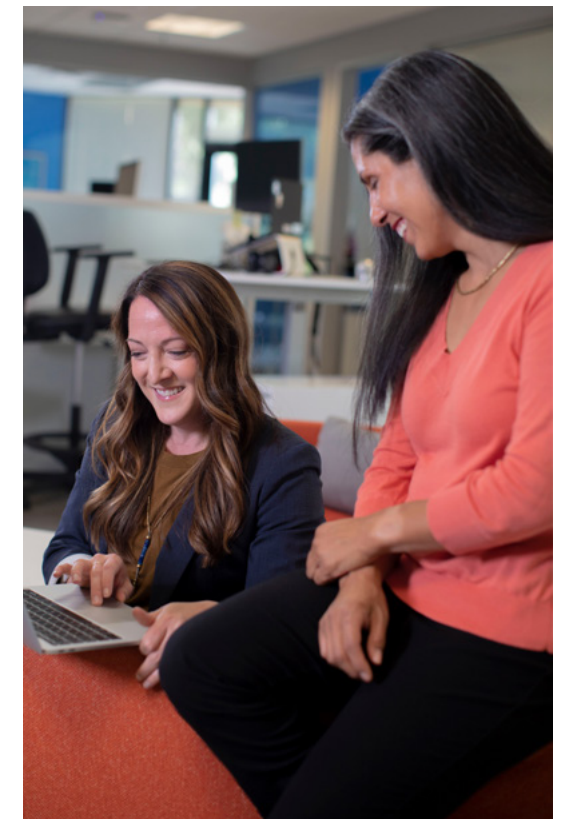
Participants have consistently evaluated our training programs as being 'Excellent' or 'Good'. They have reported that the training programs strengthened their foundational knowledge, such as the gendered drivers of violence and the link between power imbalances and violence. They also improved participants' confidence in taking action to contribute to violence prevention.

"Very comprehensive course, valuable learning outcomes and think this is something all workplaces should do."

"The sessions provided great material that is so necessary in supporting young people."

"This professional development was engaging, enjoyable, informative and evidence-based."

- Participants



Strategic priority three

We create change by engaging with diverse and at-risk groups and provide leadership through our partnerships, community engagement and advocacy informed by evidence-based policy and research



Policy development and advocacy work

Advocacy is at the heart of the work we do at YWCA Canberra. Our advocacy agenda is directly informed by our service delivery across the ACT and surrounding regions.

In the lead-up to the 2020 ACT election, we released our election platform, *Towards 2024*, outlining an achievable vision for a gender-equal Canberra to be progressed in the next term of government. *Towards 2024* reflected YWCA Canberra's longstanding priorities in the areas of safe, secure and affordable housing, preventing violence against women and valuing early childhood education. It was informed by quantitative research, the needs of YWCA Canberra's clients, members and supporters, and the insights gained from our 2019 research report *Our Lives: Women in the ACT*.

As part of our election advocacy, we also hosted a Meet the Candidate event to enable locals to get to know and put questions to female candidates from across the political spectrum.

Our advocacy work continues to achieve some important firsts. For the first time, YWCA Canberra made a submission to the review of the Australian Curriculum (Foundation to year 10), where we drew attention to the need for embedded respectful relationships and sexuality education from early childhood as well as a consistent and best-practice approach to teacher guidance and instruction.

Our 2021 International Women's Day event included a digital storytelling project featuring three women of different ages as they shared their stories of housing affordability, the impact of COVID-19, and homelessness. The event also featured an expert panel who discussed some of the broader themes connected to housing insecurity among women, including retirement insecurity, the wage gap, and the household distribution of labour.



We were pleased to see the ACT Legislative Assembly take progressive steps in addressing workplace sexual harassment, including a proposal to recognise the harm of psychosocial hazards. This follows long-standing advocacy by YWCA Canberra on the rates of workplace sexual harassment experienced by young women.

We were also appointed to the Sexual Assault Prevention Working Group, which was established by the ACT Government Minister for Women to prevent, address, and respond to sexual violence in the ACT. This follows a drop in the prosecution of sexual assaults in the ACT despite an increase in formal police complaints.

As long-standing advocates for the introduction of Respectful Relationships Education in ACT schools and progressive law reform, we have been actively participating in the development of a draft strategy to prevent sexual violence and ensure that prevention strategies are intersectional, collaborative with the sector and embedded at an early age. We have also used the forum to advocate for improved resourcing for protective mechanisms such as the Working with Vulnerable People Card.

With time to pause and reflect on the pandemic, we also launched the second iteration of our survey of Canberra women, *Our lives: women in the ACT*. We will provide a report on the survey results towards the end of 2021 and will use this to inform our advocacy agenda.



Domestic Violence Support Service

Our Domestic Violence Support Service supported 178 women, along with their families, who were impacted by domestic and family violence in the 2020-21 reporting year.

In the first half of 2021, we had a significant increase in demand, with 15 to 18 new referrals each month. As such, the Domestic Violence Support Service has been continually operating at or above capacity.

We received referrals from a wide range of community service and law enforcement organisations, as well as government departments. We have also had an increase in self-referrals to the service, enabling us to provide critical pre-crisis support to women and children who would likely have otherwise 'fallen through the cracks', especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main objective of the service is to ensure the client's safety and wellbeing. We have also been able to significantly reduce the risk of homelessness by providing specialist domestic violence support and case coordination, and have secured a significant number of safe housing options for our clients. At the end of the support period, many of our clients have exited into transitional housing, refuges and private rentals. They have the support in place to re-establish their lives away from domestic and family violence.

The service was partially funded through time-limited Commonwealth-ACT Government funds and OneLink Client Support Fund. Securing ongoing funding will be critical for the sustainability of this service.

Case study

Sarah* was referred to the Domestic Violence Support Service by OneLink in December 2020 while living in a Housing ACT property with six of her children. She is a victim-survivor of domestic violence perpetrated by her ex-partner, the father of her youngest daughter.

Sarah's ex-partner continued to breach conditions of the Family Violence Order. Although she reported this to police, no action was taken.

Once she engaged our service, YWCA Canberra advocated on Sarah's behalf to the AFP, the Family Violence Unit and the Family Violence Safety Action Pilot of Victims Support ACT, and supported her to provide a victim impact statement to police.

Her ex-partner was subsequently summoned to court and charged. Since that time, he has been complying with the requirements of the Family Violence Order.

Our Domestic Violence Support Service also advocated on Sarah's behalf to Housing ACT, as she felt unsafe living in a property known to her ex-partner. In June 2021, Sarah and her children were moved to another property where they now feel safe and secure.

*Not the client's real name



Strategic priority four

We foster a movement of girls and women through our members and connection with the national YWCA organisations



Membership

We continue to foster an engaged membership through meaningful participation opportunities and continuous improvement strategies. In early 2021, we returned to conducting a survey of members to gauge their experience with our organisation. We decided to use the survey as a tool to engage our broader network of supporters as well as the paid membership base, to gauge their level of understanding of our work, what they value from their participation and what awareness they have of our services and programs.

The survey responses indicated that our members have a strong interest in following and participating in our advocacy work. Through the survey, we were able to gain a better understanding of member's awareness of our suite of programs. We were also able to identify opportunities to promote the breadth of our work and began a process of using our advocacy work as a lever to meaningfully engage members in our work and share our expertise to promote community advocacy more broadly.

We continued our tradition of engaging the membership through our Great Ydeas Small Grants program, which is only available to members, and hosting free, high-quality International Women's Day events for the community and membership to attend.

And despite the uncertainty presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, we were fortunate to be able to host an end-of-year member function in 2020, which was well attended by members, supporters and elected representatives.

Great Ydeas

Our Great Ydeas Small Grants Program provides funds to support local women, girls and non-binary people to pursue their passions and improve our community. Priority is given to projects that empower women in our local community, and that have the potential to grow beyond the initial funding provided.

The program was launched in 2010 in celebration of our 80th anniversary. Since then, Great Ydeas grants have helped more than 60 local women and girls to progress projects including establishing a podcast, launching a public awareness campaign, running empowering programs for girls, attending a conference and launching a social enterprise.

On our 90th anniversary in 2019, the YWCA Canberra Board committed to funding Great Ydeas for another ten years. However, we could not run the program in 2020 due to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We were proud to offer Great Ydeas grants again in early 2021. With support from this year's Great Ydeas partners Beyond Bank, the Canberra Innovation Network and Sustineo, we offered a pool of \$16000 to nine projects by Canberra women, girls and non-binary people.

This included projects in the categories of small business, community development, the arts, diversity and inclusion, sustainability, support to victims of sexual violence, financial literacy and professional development.

We are proud to have demonstrated the collective social impact we can make when corporate, philanthropic and community organisations work together.

We announced the recipients of this year's grants at our annual Innovation Breakfast. The annual fundraising event also provided an opportunity for members, supporters and partners to come together to show their support for our housing initiatives and to celebrate World YWCA Day. This year, our breakfast was especially important, as we launched our YHomes housing program. All money raised from the event went directly towards funding this project.

The breakfast included an address from 2019 Great Ydeas recipient Kate Crowhurst. Kate spoke about how her project, a financial literacy podcast for women, stemmed from a desire to address inequality by helping girls and women learn about money in an easier, more accessible way.



National and global YWCA involvement

YWCA Canberra continues to engage with YWCA Australia in our efforts to foster an intersectional, global movement for gender equality. We connected with members from YWCA Australia at the 2021 #March4Justice rally, which galvanised women, non-binary people and their allies across Australia, and participated in recorded interviews that were later distributed on social media.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Commission for the Status of Women was held online in 2021. With delegations effectively uncapped, more YWCA Canberra members could participate in the forum than previously.

Our members took advantage of this unique setting by participating in YWCA Australia's induction session and overview of the work and program of CSW.

We continue to contribute creatively to the World YWCA movement and, in early 2021, our CEO delivered a message of solidarity and support on behalf of YWCA Canberra to the global YWCA movement as we collectively struggled with the pandemic, climate change and gender inequality.

Strategic priority five

We ensure sustainable, transparent and accountable practices through our innovation, strong governance, management, service delivery and partnerships



Governance and corporate structure

We operate under a strong governance model and are governed by a board of up to 12 company directors who define the strategic goals of the organisation.

Our Board of Directors operates according to a Code of Ethics and Proper Practice. A governance manual guides the work of the Directors and establishes the relationship between the Board and the Chief Executive Officer.

Our Constitution guides our work and sets out the fundamental principles under which our organisation is governed. It was last amended at the Extraordinary General Meeting on 16 May 2018.

Our Executive Management Team takes a whole-of-organisation perspective, making key decisions about strategic directions, accountability frameworks, organisational development, policy and quality assurance. The team comprises the Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Executive Director of Community Services, Executive Director of Children's Services, Executive Director of Communication, Advocacy and Engagement, and Executive Director of Business Development.

The Chief Executive Officer, as the sole employee of the Board, is accountable for the day-to-day management of the organisation.

2020-21 Board Directors



Frances Crimmins
Chief Executive Officer



Carina Zeccola*
President



Ashleigh Streeter*
Vice President



Katie Whitehead
Treasurer



Julie Lean
Board Member



Kristin Blume
Board Member



Georgina Carnell*
Board Member



Vivian Chan*
Board Member



Anita Vardanega
Board Member



Di Bakon
Board Member



Maree Harman
Board Member

* Denotes young women (aged 30 years or under) at time of appointment.

YWCA Canberra maintains a commitment to ensuring that 30% of all leadership positions and decision-making bodies are held by young women.

Independent members of the Audit and Risk Committee

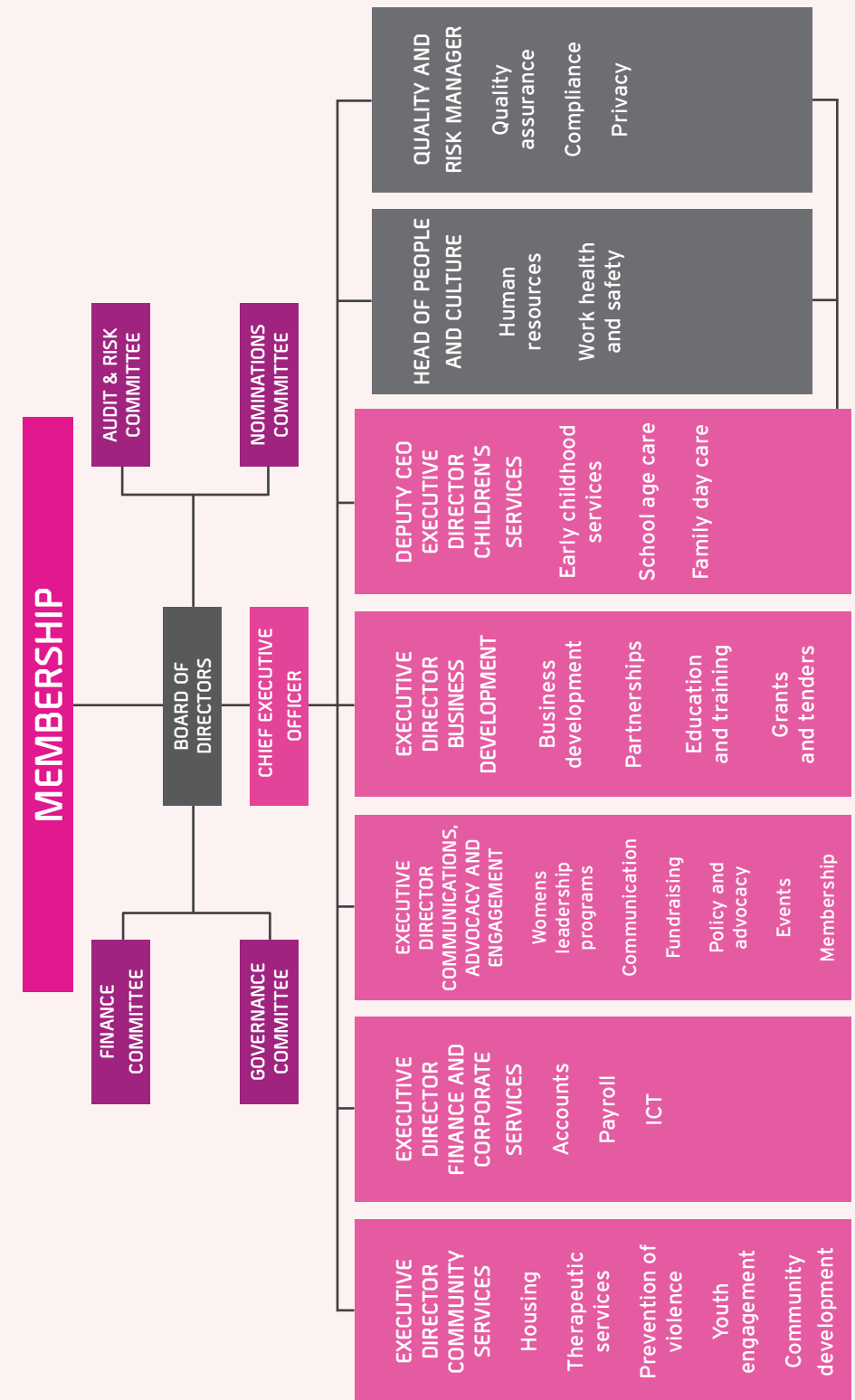


Bridget Browne
Chair



Victoria Oakden
Deputy Chair

Organisational structure





Reconciliation action plan

YWCA Canberra's vision for reconciliation is one where the culture, stories, languages and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is celebrated, respected and provided meaningful opportunity to contribute to the vibrancy of Canberra and our work.

Since the launch of our latest Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-23 (RAP), all service arms of our organisation have continued to embed approaches to reconciliation with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Active engagement from the RAP Working Group and the Executive Management Team, including the Chief Executive Officer, who is the champion of our RAP, is fundamental to the RAP's success and progress.

We are conscious of the need to reflect on the cultural safety and accessibility of our services. YWCA Canberra has engaged with members of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body about ways to continuously improve our services.

MLYCC has played a pivotal role in connecting with the community during nationally significant events, including participating in the 2021

NAIDOC week organising committee and hosting a successful community event for National Reconciliation Week 2021. As well as being opportunities to celebrate, these events have provided important links with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

During National Reconciliation Week, MLYCC hosted an all-day event attended by Elders and their families, local elected representatives, and other community members. The day featured native plantings for a bush tucker garden, the creation of totem-poles, yarning circles and musical participation from local school children. The totem-poles were later erected in the reconciliation garden during the NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Our children's services continue to deliver creative and engaging ways of connecting the community to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and reconciliation. Staff at our Winyu Early Childhood Service have created an Acknowledgement of Country song and plaque that can be enjoyed by parents and children as they enter the service.

Our early childhood services took great pride in celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day. With the theme 'We are the elders of tomorrow, hear our voice', services explored and celebrated First Nations cultures through song, dance and art, where the children were encouraged to learn about the various Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices and traditions. Our Currawong service delivered a day of activities, including inviting children to create symbolic artworks from their handprints using the colours of the Aboriginal flag. Children and staff at the Conder Early Childhood Service established a reflection corner dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, histories, books and pictures.

We continue positive and ongoing relationships with local Elders who regularly attend our children's services to introduce children to the culture, practices, languages and art of Aboriginal peoples.

In school age care, our services have made progress against the goals of our RAP to boost the amount of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reading material in the libraries. They frequently experiment with natural materials and ochre in engaging students in art to reflect traditional practices.

Staff in our central office celebrated National Reconciliation Week 2021 with a morning tea and screening of a short film on the development of the Statement from the Heart. The morning tea was well attended by staff in the office, and some based remotely.



Staff were also invited to share what reconciliation meant to them in their lives and the workplace.

With the return to our She Leads programs, we continued our rich tradition of showcasing the stories and expertise of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women through our She Leads College and High conference.

These events featured panellists and keynotes from young First Nations women who had established careers and leadership positions in education, firefighting and as activists and cultural representatives for their communities.

Our commitment to reconciliation and our work in the community means we are always searching for ways to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and be innovative in how we embed reconciliation into our everyday operations and services.



Workplace gender equality

YWCA Canberra again received the prestigious citation as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equity (EOCGE) from the Workplace Gender Equity Agency (WGEA). We have held this citation consistently since 2014. We are one of 136 organisations across the country to receive the citation for 2021 and, for the second year in a row, we are the only ACT-based organisation to be recognised.

This citation is designed to encourage, recognise and promote active commitment to achieving gender equality in Australian workplaces. It sends a strong message to employers from all sectors about the importance of equal opportunity and equal pay for all staff, regardless of their gender.

The criteria for EOCGE is rigorous and became more so this year, with changes to the requirements. However, with our strong commitment to gender equality practices, we overcame the organisational hurdles from the COVID-19 pandemic to once again qualify for this recognition.

The WGEA citation also recognises our deep commitment to gender equality and recognises our impressive parental leave options and provision of paid domestic violence leave in our Enterprise Agreement. We have seen an increased uptake in flexible working arrangements to better support our staff and help them balance their work and personal lives.

YWCA Canberra was once again recognised as a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace by the Australian Breastfeeding Association. This annual accreditation recognises our demonstrated commitment to supporting our breastfeeding employees in the workforce so they can meet both their work and family commitments.

We were pleased this year that staff resoundingly accepted a variation to our Enterprise Agreement. This allowed us to give pay rate rises to staff above and beyond the relevant Awards, with a focus on increasing the children's services equivalent rate and enabling more equity in our pay rates across the organisation.

As an added commitment to workplace gender equality, our CEO Frances Crimmins is a Pay Equity Ambassador and has pledged to help create change by:

- playing a leadership role in the business community and to the broader public
- reinforcing her commitment to pay equity
- profiling and promoting her approach to pay equity.

Frances is also proud to be a Flexible Work Ambassador and is committed to increasing flexible working options.

Environmental sustainability

This year we continued our commitment to environmental sustainability across the organisation. Our central office practices recycling and organic waste collection, and we continue to be an ACTSmart Accredited Workplace.

We have reduced our paper usage, increased our general recycling program, and continued our soft plastics recycling and organic waste practices.

Our Children's Services and Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre continue their exceptional environmental sustainability practices. Our sites:

- re-purpose furniture
- use recycled items and loose parts for craft activities
- participate in Earth Hour
- use natural items from the environment for craft instead of purchasing resources
- use refillable drink bottles
- post information about waste programs and use of electricity and water usage
- have vegetable gardens
- use kitchen waste (food scraps) to give to parents who have chickens, or we have a company that picks up our food waste for composting or a worm farm.

These practices of waste reduction, recycling, re-usage, up-cycling and a sharing economy help in the communities' zero waste practices.



2021 Staff survey

This year we conducted our fifth Best Practice Australia Analytics all staff survey.

We had the highest participation rate since conducting the first survey in 2010, with 84 per cent of staff responding. Our employee engagement remained steady with an overall outcome of a culture of ambition and the culture rated high with benchmarked organisations.

The survey indicated that 33 per cent of respondents have been with the organisation for less than one year and their level of engagement overall was 72 per cent, demonstrating that YWCA Canberra makes a good first impression.

Our highest scoring attribute in the survey was freedom from unreasonable behaviours such as bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment. Coupled with high ratings in gender equality, it is wonderful to see that our staff live up to our values of Equality, Respect and Inclusion.

Quality assurance

This year we passed our mid-cycle assessment for the three-year externally accredited Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health and Community Service Standards (7th Edition). We have made good progress on projects identified in our QIC Quality Improvement Plan. Our projects included:

- enacting a Business Continuity plan and providing laptops to staff to ensure continuity of client service
- improving our digital information management systems through the use of Sharepoint and intranet to ensure staff are connected in real time to policies, procedures and organisational news

- strengthening our cross-organisational Work Health Safety Committee to lead our COVID response
- publishing our Diversity and Inclusion policy and our paid parental leave policy for all genders.

We have engaged Aurion as our Payroll Recruitment and HR solution and are in the process of migrating our data and processes. This will help corporate services staff manage these functions in one modern system and help employees to manage their personal details.

In addition to the QIC standards, we are accredited against the following external client-related service standards for our key areas of work:

- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care
- National Regulatory System for Community Housing
- Registered Training Organisations Standards
- Suitable entity under the Children and Young People Act 2008.

Risk

We provide the Audit and Risk Committee with regular reports on internal audits, external audits, high-risk events, and any matters that require expert advice. The Chair of the committee is independent to YWCA Canberra.

This year, reporting to the committee was streamlined so that the committee could see a high-level risk dashboard across the organisation as well as regular reports.

In the latter half of the financial year, we developed and reviewed incident notification procedures for client-facing services, developed a whistleblower policy and developed our occupational violence policy.

Financial sustainability

As with the broader economy, the financial year 2020/21 continued to be a challenging year. However, YWCA Canberra's strong financial performance and governance, healthy balance sheet and prudent strategic decisions have allowed us to meet these challenges and continue to deliver our vision and mission.

YWCA Canberra achieved a positive financial outcome for the 2020/21 financial year with a surplus of \$1,806,228 (2019/20: \$1,872,832). This is a positive result given that we are in the second year of COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence of the pandemic, we were able to access additional financial support from the Australian Government in the first half of the financial year. The financial assistance enabled us to continue to support and meet our service delivery in the community.

Financial position

As at 30 June 2021, the YWCA Canberra's net assets were \$11,626,698 (2019/20: \$9,285,426), representing an increase of \$2,341,272 (25.2%).

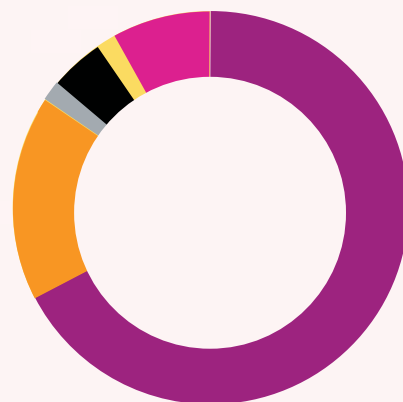
Cash and Cash Equivalents increased by \$742,417 (16.9%) from \$4,383,965 in 2019/20 to \$5,126,382. The increase primarily reflects growth in operating cash flow. This adequately meets our short-term financial needs.

Total financial assets increased by \$2,405,932 (52%) to \$7,033,763 (2019/20: \$4,627,831). The increase mainly relates to an increased allocation in listed equities and fixed securities. It is also driven by improved market conditions as at 30 June 2021.

YWCA Canberra continues to demonstrate financial security through a disciplined focus and commitment in our stewardship and responsibility in managing our resources and risks to ensure the organisation's long-term sustainability. As we move into 2021/22 the financial outlook for YWCA Canberra remains positive.

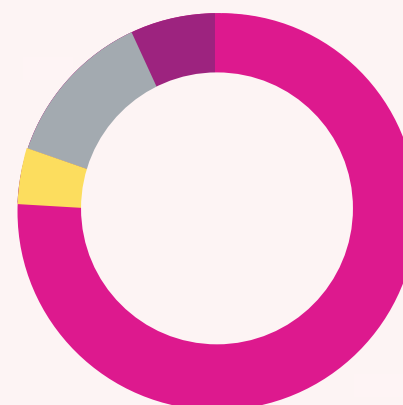
Our audited financial statements for the 2020/21 financial year are available online at www.ywca-canberra.org.au

YWCA Canberra income sources
Year ended 30 June 2021



- Children's services: 68%
- Government funding: 17%
- Donation income: 2%
- Investment income: 4%
- Training: 2%
- Other income: 8%

YWCA Canberra expenses
Year ended 30 June 2021



- Staffing expenses: 76%
- Services and utilities expenses: 4%
- Admin and operational expenses: 13%
- Equipment expenses: 7%

Our security as at 30 June

	2019/20	2020/21
Cash reserves	\$4.38m	\$5.13m
Property, plant and equipment	*\$3.86m	*\$3.92m
Investment portfolio	\$4.63m	\$7.03m

*Revaluation of property takes place every three years and was last performed in June 2020.

Where did our income come from?

	2019/20	2020/21
Community services	\$3.41m	\$4.06m
Children's services	\$11.59m	\$13.71m
Managed fund investment	\$0.16m	\$0.23m
Affordable housing rental income owned by YWCA Canberra	\$0.15m	\$0.34m
Training and education services	\$0.51m	\$0.74m
Other services	\$0.58m	\$0.04m
Government COVID-19 financial relief	\$4.14m	\$2.66m
TOTAL	\$20.54m	\$21.78m

Past two years operational and reportable results

	2019/20	2020/21
Operational result	\$1,946,325	\$1,860,148
Board strategic allocation	(\$73,493)	(\$53,920)
Reportable bottom line	\$1,872,832	\$1,806,228



Acknowledgements

Partners and supporters

We work collaboratively with like-minded organisations, schools, businesses, all levels of government and leaders in the community to ensure that our collective resources make the biggest possible impact for the people we serve. We would like to thank the following organisations for contributing to our work:

A Gender Agenda
 Academy of Interactive Entertainment
 ACT Child and Family Centres
 ACT Community Services Directorate
 ACTCOSS
 ACT Education Directorate
 ACT Emergency Services
 ACT Government
 ACT Nannies Group
 ACT Office for LGBTIQ Affairs
 ACT Office for Women
 ACT Property Group
 ACT Shelter
 ACTEW AGL
 Ainslie Football Club
 Allhomes
 Anglicare | NSW South, NSW West & ACT
 ANU Gender Institute
 Attention Deficit Disorder, ACT
 Australian Catholic University
 Australian Early Development Census
 Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA)
 Baker's Delight Lanyon
 Baringa Early Learning Centre
 Barnardos
 Bellchambers Barrett

Beryl Women Inc.
 Beyond Bank
 Calwell High School
 Canberra Institute of Technology
 Capital Chemist
 Capital Region Community Services
 Care Inc.
 Caroline Chisholm High School
 CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn
 CBR Innovation Network
 Charles Conder Primary School
 Children's First Alliance
 Communities@Work
 Community Services #1
 Country to Canberra
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Department of Social Services
 Domestic Violence Crisis Service
 Doris Women's Refuge
 Equality Rights Alliance
 Erindale College
 Everyman
 Food Bank NSW & ACT
 Gilmore Primary School
 GIVIT
 Goodstart Early Learning
 Gordon Community Centre
 Gordon Neighbourhood Watch
 Gordon Primary School
 Griffin Legal
 Griffith University
 Gungahlin Child and Family Centre
 Hands Across Canberra
 Hawker Primary School
 HerCanberra
 HESTA
 Icon Water
 Kambri at ANU

Katrina Marson
 Kingsford Smith School
 Lake Tuggeranong College
 Lanyon High School
 Lifeline Canberra
 Lightbulb Improv
 Lyneham Primary School
 Macquarie Primary School
 Majura Primary School
 Marymead
 Men's Link
 Mercy Foundation
 Meridian
 Microsoft
 MTP Services
 Namadgi High School
 Northside Community Service
 NSW Reconciliation Council
 O'Connor Cooperative School
 OneLink
 Our Watch
 Oz Harvest
 Prinstant
 PwC
 Relationships Australia
 Richardson Primary School
 Roundabout Canberra
 Rowdy Digital
 Rubik3
 Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT
 Share the Dignity
 Singed Sisters
 Snow Foundation
 St Bede's Primary School
 St Vincent De Paul Society
 Sustineo
 The Smith Family
 The Stop Campaign
 Toora Women Inc.
 Transport Canberra and City Services
 Tuggeranong Arts Centre

Tuggeranong Community Council
 Turner Primary School
 United Nations Information Centre Canberra
 Warehouse Circus
 Woden Community Service
 Women with Disabilities ACT
 Women's Agenda
 Women's Health Matters
 Women's Legal Centre ACT
 Wonderschool Conder
 World YWCA
 Yarralumla Primary School
 YMCA Canberra
 Youth Coalition of the ACT
 YWCA Australia
 Zonta Club of Canberra

Donors

We are grateful for all the donations we received, big and small, from members and supporters throughout the year. We would like to acknowledge the following donors for their financial contributions:

Organisational donors

ACTEWAGL
 Amnesty International
 Capital Chemist
 EY
 Findex
 Hands Across Canberra
 Horizon One Recruitment
 JB Were
 Lavender Lane Conder
 MTP
 National Australia Bank
 Rowdy Inc
 South Woden Uniting Church

Individual donors

Adelina La Vita
 Alastair MacCallum
 Alix Foley
 Alyson Williams
 Amy Kingham
 Andrea Conti
 Angel Hellyer
 Angela Ford
 Angela Trevithick
 Angie Ford
 Ann Lee
 Barbara Podger
 Betty Ferguson
 Blair Williams
 Bohdana Palecek
 Bridget Browne
 Carly Snowdon
 Caroline Le Couteur
 Carys Atkinson
 Cathi Moore
 Celia Vuckovic
 Chris Ellis
 Christine Goode
 Clare Gunning
 Claudia Cresswell
 Colin Hauff
 Colleen Duff
 Craig Perrott
 Cristel Matthews
 Danielle Harmer
 David Anderson
 David Pearce
 David Rothschild
 Delfina Dimoski
 Elizabeth McAllister
 Elizabeth Kentwell
 Emma Banyer
 Fiona Jenkins
 Fiona Tonkin
 Fleur Taylor-Lumb
 Frances Corkhill

Geoffrey Rutledge
 Georgia Pike-Rowney
 Georgina Carnell
 Geraldine Manser
 Gordana Morphet
 Hedda Murray
 Heidi Prowse
 Hilda Strathdee
 Hollie Bell
 Isabel Mudford
 Ivonne Sanchez
 J Brady
 Jacqui Burrows
 Janelle Weissman
 Jazmeen Payne
 Jenessa O'Connell
 Ji Shi
 Jill Smith
 Joanna Le
 Johnathan Davis
 Jordanna Davis
 Josephine Huynh
 Jude Burger
 Judy Waters
 Julia Burns
 Julia Faragher
 Julie Kidd
 Julie Lean
 Karen Downing
 Kate Gardiner
 Kate Stewart
 Kayla Reay
 Keanna Costa
 Kelly T
 Kemiso Matlho
 Kenyon Neal
 Kerusha Ganess
 Khin Kha
 Kimberley Collins
 Lachlan Blain
 Leanne Shrapnel
 Linh Vu
 Leo Kasim

Lorraine Tomlins
 Louise Crossman
 Lynn Beresford
 Maree Harman
 Margaret Bailey
 Margaret Sainsbury
 Marie Bennett
 Marie-Louise Ayres
 Marion Reilly
 Mark Lonsdale
 Martin Fisk
 Matt Fenwick
 Meg Everard
 Megan O'Farrell
 Mei Yi Leow
 Mel Edwards
 Meredith Edwards
 Merissa Little
 Natalie Raffenet
 Nick Neal
 Nicky Thatcher
 Nicole Cabello
 Nicole Deen
 Nicole Short
 Paula Laws
 Penelope Gibbons
 Penny Gibbons
 Peter Cain
 Peter Lee
 Pia Rowe
 Rebecca McFarland
 Renaye Watchirs
 Renee Tattersall
 Rod Tier
 Roslyn Dundas
 Sabrina Britt
 Samantha Palmer
 Sandra Fisk
 Sarah Everett
 Sarah McBride
 Shaun Doss
 Sonia Buckley
 Sophie Fisher
 Stephanie Lyndon
 Susan Wald

Talulah Gaunt
 Tasman Vaughan
 Tom Markham
 Toni Millar
 Tracey Hinchley
 Travis Gilbert
 Trude Salat
 Zoya Patel

Volunteers

Abbie Turner
 Australian Catholic University social work students
 Alexis Dowie
 Alice Turner
 Ben Flintoft
 Denis Boutcher
 Purwanti Govier
 Ray Huang
 Thea Dowie
 VolunteeringACT ADFA Weary Dunlop Project volunteers





YWCA CANBERRA

Level 2, 71 Northbourne Ave, Canberra ACT 2601

Ph 02 6185 2000

E canberra@ywca-canberra.org.au

www.ywca-canberra.org.au



facebook.com/YWCACanberra



[@YWCACanberra](https://twitter.com/YWCACanberra)



[@YWCACanberra](https://www.instagram.com/YWCACanberra)



au.linkedin.com/company/ywca-of-canberra



youtube.com/YWCACANBERRA