



Annual
Report

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WACOSS respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and to elders both past and present. We acknowledge the land on which we live and work is, and always will be, Aboriginal land. Sovereignty was never ceded.

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 **WACouncilofSocialService**

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About WACOSS

The Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) is the **peak body for the community services sector** and works to create an inclusive, just and equitable society. We are committed to genuine engagement, authentic collaboration, and building trusted relationships with members, communities and governments.

We represent more than

240 & 500

community
service
organisations

organisations
involved in the
provision of
community services
to the people of
Western Australia.

We are one of nine peak councils of social service collaborating across Australia to bolster the united strength and weight of the work of each peak body, working collectively on campaigns of national significance.

We tackle difficult issues, systems, behaviours and attitudes that contribute to inequality and exclusion.



Our Vision, Purpose and Values

Our Vision

Inclusive, just and equitable society.

Our Purpose

We drive social change with communities, through collective action and policy formulation, strengthening community services and influencing decision makers to ensure justice and equity.

Our Values



Heart

Our work is grounded in care and compassion for a fairer world



Curiosity

We seek bold and empowering ideas and solutions to issues our communities face



Integrity

Our approaches reflect and respect human rights and our practices are ethical and inclusive



Tenacity

We have the courage to persevere for transformative and positive change



The WACOSS 'Why'

As the peak body for the Western Australian community service sector, we believe that communities flourish where people are given the opportunity to contribute and create. We are committed to enabling and leading change that supports healthy, active and inclusive communities.

We need people to care about one another, and understand that poverty is a systemic issue that is not the fault of the individual. Fundamentally we need to foster mutual empathy and work with communities to build their capability and vitality. It is essential that WACOSS remains grounded in community and holds a membership base that aligns with our vision.

To create equitable and empowered communities there must be a strong peak body voice that works with its members to advocate with and on behalf of those who are the furthest from levers of power and influence, to amplify their concerns and seek justice, to create a society that genuinely works for the benefit of all.



How We Drive Change

To build an inclusive, just and equitable society we want to make change, and to do that we want to collectivise and listen deeply, engage, broker, and bring together, strengthen existing and facilitate new partnerships and collaboration.

We need to convince, represent and speak with a united voice, and amplify the perspectives of vulnerable people, to challenge and change.

Lastly, we are going to create and problem solve, co-create pathways, pursue systemic change, and provide alternative solutions.

Our plan is bold in its ambition, challenging belief structures and cultural norms, and building community empathy.

Letter from the President and CEO

Dear Friends of WACOSS

We are pleased to present the Annual Report for the Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS) for the year 2022-23. As we reflect on the past year, we are reminded that our commitment to our community and its wellbeing is more vital than ever. Over the last year, in the face of ongoing challenges, WACOSS has continued to stand as a beacon of hope and a driving force for positive change in the community services sector.

For many Western Australians – such as people on low incomes and with insecure work, recently arrived refugees, those with pre-existing health concerns and other forms of disadvantage and marginalisation – the pressures associated with rising costs and shrinking public safety nets are hitting hard.

The widening gap between those with and those without underscores the importance behind campaigns such as Raise the Rate, and we are unwavering in our advocacy for fair and equitable support systems for those who need it most.

Just as structural inequities weaken and undermine the communities our sector serves, similar structural issues present an ongoing struggle within the sector. Community organisations strive to model and represent workplace conditions that can lift Western Australians out of poverty and provide a better life. Community organisations are often unable to provide the job security or the pay and conditions they wish for their staff – and the continuity and long-term planning they wish for programs and communities – because of insecure and short-term funding. WACOSS will continue to work with government on this issue, to advocate for the needs of our sector and by extension, all Western Australians.

In a watershed moment, in February, our Board unanimously agreed to support the 'Yes' campaign for constitutional recognition for First Nations Peoples. We believe the opportunity presented before us – a Voice to Parliament – is key to addressing the historical impacts of colonialisation

and to improving the lives of Aboriginal people across the country. WACOSS will always walk beside First Nations communities, and overwhelmingly our members and partners asked us to support 'Yes'. Our hope is that all Australians realise this opportunity we have to enable First Nations peoples to shape their own future, have a say in decisions that affect them, and address the systemic issues that have persisted for far too long.

In 2022, WACOSS proudly became a founding member of The Equity Project. This collaborative initiative was born out of the shared determination of passionate community service organisations to combat poverty collectively. The Equity Project seeks to achieve public policy and systemic changes that promote fairness and economic justice in WA, and we do this as a collective. As a project that resonates deeply with our purpose and our strategic priorities, it is already working to amplify the voices of those with lived experiences and to promote solutions that create a fair and economically just society.

Our role as peak body of the community sector is to unite the sector for collaboration, and we do this across many of our projects and programs. Our Community Relief and Resilience Project continues to support services and charities across the state providing emergency relief to people who are severely struggling to make ends meet.

The WA Digital Inclusion Project is now working with more than 30 partners from the community sector and industry, to bridge the digital divide in the sector and with clients. The Children's Policy and Advisory Council (CPAC) is at the forefront of inclusive and safe policy development with a range of committed providers that support children to thrive, and is making considerable headway in preparing organisations to be child safe. We know that we are stronger together, and collaborative policy development and advocacy are at the heart of what we do.



As important are our relationships with the sector and lived experience, we place immense importance on partnering and collaborating with the State Government, and have been playing a strong role with the Department of Health on the Sustainable Health Review and the State Commissioning Plan. These are just some areas of our collaboration and advocacy with government that is leading to positive, lasting change.

Our advocacy across the year has been focused on a number of campaigns which raise awareness, create impact and drive systematic change. At the core of this work has been the Make Renting Fair Campaign, our work on establishing a Rent Relief Scheme, the Voice to Parliament, support for Social Reinvestment WA and reform of Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services. While we are involved in many other campaigns, these in particular are at the heart of our 'why' for equitable, empowered communities.

WACOSS continues to work with the State Government and our members to progress the goal of a wellbeing economy for Western Australians: one which is free from poverty, is supplied with adequate housing and healthcare, and other vital community connections are the ultimate indices of our society's success.

As always, in the ongoing conduct of this work, the strength, resilience and capability of our members sustains us; as does the commitment of the WACOSS team and WACOSS Board. Special thanks go to Michael Piu for his six years of exemplary service and to Fiona Beermier, who retired in May, for their remarkable contributions to the Board.

The year has been one that has tested us, and has been one of significant growth. Our commitment to the community remains unshaken. We look forward to new challenges and opportunities, proud of our efforts, but knowing there will always be work to do, to drive real positive change in our communities, and to strive for a better tomorrow for all Western Australians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "L Giolitto".

Louise Giolitto
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "M Glasson".

Mark Glasson
President

Our Board



Mark Glasson
President
CEO Anglicare WA



Fiona Beermier
Vice President (until
April 2023)
CEO Ngala



Emma Jarvis
Vice President (from
May 2023)
CEO Palmerston

Ordinary Board Members



David Cain
Executive Director Strategy
and Growth Communicare



Daniel Morrison
CEO Wungening (until
October 2022)



Gordon Trewern
Group CEO PeopleKind
Group



Jo Sadler
CEO Wanslea



Justine Colyer
CEO Rise Network



Laurel Sellers
CEO Yorgum Healing Services



Michael Piu
CEO St Patrick's Community
Support Centre Limited



Renna Gayde
Lived Experience Advocate,
Social Service Individual
Member (from October 2022)



Vicki-Tree Stephens
CEO Youth Involvement
Council



Lyn-Lee Teh
Board Trainee
HR Lead Avivo

Finance Committee members

Emma Jarvis – Chair

Allison Leonard – Additional
Member

Justin Clarke – Additional
Member

Vicki-Tree Stephens

Graham Donnelly – Additional
Member

David Cain

Governance and Risk Committee members

Michael Piu – Chair

Jo Sadler

Renna Gayde

Gordon Trewern

Justine Colyer

Fiona Beermier (until April 2023)

Our Team

Management

Louise Giolitto, Chief Executive Officer

Alenka Jeram, Corporate Services Executive Manager

Jackie Bosen, Executive Assistant and Office Coordinator

Rachel Siewert, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Chris Twomey, Research and Policy Development Lead

Staff Members

Alex Hughes, Project Manager, 100 Families WA (until September 2022)

Fernanda Monteiro Soares da Silva, Graphic Design Coordinator

Milan Vojnovic, Capability and Sustainability Lead, WA Digital Inclusion Project

Ashleigh Gregory, Community Relief and Resilience Coordinator

Graham Hansen, Senior Policy Officer

Richard Hayes, Executive Manager, WA Digital Inclusion Project

Ben Fahrner, CORE Engagement Officer (until July 2022)

Jaime Castilla Riasco, DropIn Project Officer

Rose Barton, Acting Pilbara Manager (until September 2022), Senior Policy Officer, Pilbara (from October 2022)

Celeste Stephens, Senior Manager Pilbara

Kim Robinson, Program Support Officer

Salil Koonja, Finance Coordinator

Dawn Fenton, Office and Administration Support

Kris Harris, Training Specialist, WA Digital Inclusion Project (from November 2022)

Shammy Bajinath, Project Officer (until August 2022)

Dylan Green, Program Support Officer and Executive Assistant (from May 2023)

Laurene Collier, Communications Officer

Shelby Robinson, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Community Resilience Projects Officer

Emma Hardy Rosa, Project Support Officer, WA Digital Inclusion Project

Leela James, National Disaster Risk Reduction Manager

Tim Oliver, Media Officer, WACOSS | Communications and Stakeholder Engagement, WA Digital Inclusion Project

Emily Hull, Senior Policy and Projects Officer (from April 2023)

Lily Newbury-Freeman, Conference Coordinator (until May 2023) | Senior Project Officer, WA Digital Inclusion Project (from May 2023)

Eva Perroni, Senior Policy Officer (until February 2023)

Lucy Morrison, Advocacy Lead (from August 2022)

Vikas Kumar Singh, Technology Officer

McCusker Interns

Liam O'Brian

Neha Menon

Arjun Kang

Matt Little

Thomas McLean

Meghan Page

Media Statements

Emergency and crisis relief support welcomed by community services sector

Consumer Price Index: WACOSS calls for more reforms to address cost of living pressures

Research shows struggling Western Australians skipping meals to pay utility bills

Community Services Excellence Awards 2023 finalists announced

Indexation rise a win for community services, but doesn't go far enough

WACOSS secures \$1 million grant to map heat vulnerability

State Budget Response: Temporary cost of living relief is welcome, but much larger challenges remain

Is this the right time to be banking a \$6 billion surplus?

More State and Federal Government support is needed to curb rising financial hardship amid record inflation

Outstanding Community Service Organisations Recognised in CSEA Awards

State Budget Submission: Creating a stronger future for WA

Anti-Poverty Week 2022: We can all do something about poverty

Lowest-paid Western Australian workers need a 7% pay rise

State Wage increase does not go far enough

Events

Early Child Development
Disadvantage and
Wellbeing in WA

New Year Sector Breakfast

Tough Times and the
Caring Workforce Webinar

Applying for funding
to reduce disaster
risk and prepare
for disasters in WA
Webinar

State Budget
Submission
Conversations and
Consultations

Planning for
Partnership Workshop

State Budget Briefing

State Budget
Submission
Launch

WA Digital Inclusion
Project Co-Design
Workshops

WA Digital Inclusion
Project Online Launch

WACOSS Conference

Pilbara Family
Domestic Violence
Conference

Community Services
Excellence Awards

Community Relief & Resilience
Utility Hardship Forum

Reports and Publications

Planning for
Partnership
Framework

Cost of Living
Report 2022

Sustainable
Funding Survey
Report

Understanding
Utility Hardship

State Budget
Submission
2023-24

Conference and Community Services Excellence Awards



In May 2023, we hosted our biennial Conference, *Resilient, Strong, Brave: Collective Power of Community*, and the Community Service Excellence Awards (CSEA). The events took place at the beautiful Optus Stadium on the banks of Derbal Yerrigan, a place of significant connection for many Noongar people. A record number of delegates were welcomed by WACOSS Elders Aunty Millie Penny and Aunty Charmaine Pell, and attended across the three days.

The Conference was made possible thanks to our major supporters including Lotterywest, the Department of Communities and Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and our generous community sector and industry sponsors.

We administered subsidies to ensure wide attendance from delegates with lived experience and expertise, people on low incomes and students, and for people who live and work regionally.

The Honourable Sabine Winton opened the Conference and we heard from powerful speakers such as June Oscar AO, Rick Morton, Dr Katherine Trebeck and Dr Elise Klein OAM, amongst many others.

A strong and diverse program resulted in extremely positive feedback on both the Conference and the Awards, and we look forward to holding these events again in the year to come.



The third day of the Conference was a workshop held in partnership with Danjoo Koorliny which focused on Closing the Gap, Self-Determination and Walking Together. The day started with the keynote address from Pat Turner AM, followed by Vicki O'Donnell, and Professor Cheryl Kickett-Tucker and Quinton Tucker. The Yarning Circle, facilitated by Dr Richard Wally OAM was a particularly notable highlight from the day.

The feedback from one of the delegates encapsulated the day perfectly:

"Just the way that we, as Noongar people, were honoured, by the asking of us all to stand up, so we can be recognised as fellow welcomers to the land on that last day, was magic and no one has ever done that before, but it should be something that becomes common practice. Your conference is leading the way in awareness of Aboriginal issues and ways to work with us, it just really touched me. The honesty of all presenters was definitely appreciated and well done to everyone involved in the event."

The Community Services Excellence Awards, a partnership between the Department of Communities and WACOSS, supported by Lotterywest and event sponsors, continued to be an opportunity for the sector to reflect on its achievements and honour the finalists and winners, selected by panels out of over 100 nominations. Congratulations to the 2023 Community Services Excellence Awards Winners:

- **Man Up WA** - Small organisation providing collaborative, innovative or creative programs or services
- **Starick** - Medium organisation providing collaborative, innovative or creative programs or services
- **Gumala Aboriginal Corporation** – Large organisation providing collaborative, innovative or creative programs or services
- **Busselton Hospice Care** - Regional Organisation providing collaborative, innovative, or creative programs or services
- **Social Reinvestment WA** - Outstanding community-led collaboration leading to better community outcomes
- **Derbarl Yerrigan Health** - Outstanding achievement by an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (leading to better community outcomes)
- **Winnie Hayward** - Above and Beyond
- **Elena Petrici** - Excellence in Leadership

All individual finalists have been nominated for the 2024 Australian of the Year Awards (WA) in partnership with Auspire - Australia Day Council (WA).

We wish the nominees all the very best of luck.



Collaborating with communities and people with lived experience



Children's Policy Advisory Council (CPAC)

The Children's Policy Advisory Council brings together WACOSS members who support children, young people and families to ensure a cohesive whole-of-sector response on children's policy and the development, and implementation and evaluation of child, youth and family services.

CPAC members are highly engaged, as child and family services plan and act collectively to have a greater impact on issues that make a real difference to children and families in WA. Bi-monthly meetings are guided by the Independent Chair, Kim Brooklyn, CEO Parkerville and include updates from government agencies and guest speakers on emerging issues.

CPAC co-hosted an Early Child Development, Disadvantage and Wellbeing Forum on 25 July 2022 with the WA Social Research Network and the Life Course Centre at Parkerville in Midland. The event featured guest speakers Professor Fiona Stanley, Children's Commissioner Jacqueline McGowan Jones, Dr Rosemary Cahill and Gail Clarke.

Key issues on CPAC's agenda throughout the year included the implementation of National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in WA; engagement with the newly created role of Minister for Early Childhood Education, The Hon. Sabine Winton and the Department of Education on preschool funding reform; and supporting services and the Department of Communities in the co-design process for the commissioning of Out of Home Care services, Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services and Indigenous Healing Services. Significant challenges to service sustainability arose, which required multiple advocacy letters and meetings to keep critical services open and viable in the interim.

Physical and sexual assault insurance remains an ongoing problem at both the national and state level, and we continue to work with Community Employers WA (CEWA) and Child and Family Alliance WA to advocate for an ongoing solution and to keep the sector informed of the issues. Problems accessing insurance threaten to spread from out-of-home care and youth homeless services to other areas of child and youth service provision.

The release of the Australian Child Maltreatment Study in May 2023 has been of critical importance to the sector, exposing that the prevalence of child sexual abuse is much higher in our population than previously thought. The findings highlight the impacts of the harm caused by early experiences of maltreatment persist through the life course.



Collaboration with Peaks

WACOSS continues to play a leading role in bringing together the leaders of Peak organisations.

The Peak's Forum is a supportive network of influential leaders and experts representing an informed and unified voice for the community sector, providing high-level insights and directions to the State Government and other stakeholders. The Peak's critical role is also respected for its independence, reach and ability to ensure key players work together to enhance the wellbeing and improve the outcomes for all Western Australians.

Over the past 12 months, ongoing areas of discussion and coordination amongst the Peaks have included indexation, implementation of the State Commissioning Strategy, agency commissioning strategies, Delivering Community Services in Partnership, the Make Renting Fair Campaign and the Independent Review of the Governance of the Health Act.

The forum has also been briefed on, and discussed, issues such as the joint WACOSS and CEWA State Sustainable Funding Survey, youth justice, evicting children from public housing into homelessness, accessibility standards and workforce issues.

Senior representatives from the Department of Communities, Department of Finance, Department Training and Workforce Development, LotteryWest and Department of the Premier and Cabinet provide comprehensive updates to the monthly meetings. These updates provide valuable opportunities for the sector to engage with government agencies on policies and initiatives relevant to the sector.

Pilbara Connection and Representation

In 2020, the Pilbara community invited WACOSS to convene the [Pilbara Family and Domestic Violence Network](#) (PFDVN) in response to pressing community needs. The forums are a critical means



to connect social services, government, community, industry and peak bodies across the region. Over the past 12 months, the Network has continued to address systemic inequalities with innovative, localised solutions. This has helped to design and propose new ways of responding to food insecurity and the Pilbara housing crisis, design and operate a men's behaviour change program, develop a region-wide primary prevention strategy, rollout of localised bystander training, run capacity building training and deliver an annual FDV conference, bringing experts to the region.

[The Pilbara Project](#), which is proudly supported by BHP, has highlighted how the persistent regional housing crisis is contributing to multiple social problems in the regions, including family violence. People living in low socio-economic conditions are stuck in cycles of poverty and homelessness when they cannot access affordable or appropriate accommodation (crisis and long term). Social service staff are placed under enormous pressure with limited resources to meet growing demand and effectively support clients. The Project is developing a social investment framework for supporting children and families in the home, in an effort to break intergenerational cycles of entrenched disadvantage. The framework highlights the first 2,000 days of a child's life as a critical window of opportunity to positively intervene to improve the health and wellbeing of children throughout the life course.

Influential Research and Policy



Sustainable Health Review

The WA Department of Health continues to value and welcome our support on the Sustainable Health Review (SHR). WACOSS is pleased to provide connections, bring key players to the table to give valuable feedback and develop integrated policy advice that looks beyond the health system.

Following a reset period, the SHR program has identified six focus recommendations and WACOSS is actively working to ensure the needs of people experiencing hardship or who are marginalised, are embedded in the reform. Specifically, the SHR Program is currently working to improve equity in health and mental health outcomes; improve access to outpatient services; implement models of care in the community for people with complex conditions; implement new funding models; digitise WA health; create a workforce culture of innovation and accountability; and build workforce capability.

WA Digital Inclusion Project

Following its launch in 2022, the WA Digital Inclusion Project gained substantial momentum as it transitioned to an implementation phase this year, whilst along the way attracting more than 30 partner organisations to the ground-breaking initiative, and this number continues to grow.

A collaboration with the WA Office of Digital Government (within the Department of Premier and Cabinet) also resulted in WACOSS being one of the first to be invited to join the WA Government's Digital Inclusion Accord, as part of our commitment to share information to improve digital inclusion outcomes throughout Western Australia.

WACOSS has established a Strategic Reference Group and Project Partner Network to ensure member organisations are engaged in co-design and have a say in key decision-making processes to ensure the Project is nimble and able to meet the ever-changing – and growing – global digital landscape.

Co-design activities with project partners and community members with lived experience informed the final design of initiatives and subsequent commencement of implementation this year. The Train the Trainer Program, one of the key initiatives of the Project, is underway.

The WA Digital Inclusion Project website launched in May, and offers a complete suite of free resources, tools and learning modules to help educate users across the State and provide them with direct pathways to access online services such as Medicare, online banking and job applications.

In July, the Project's digital partner WorkVentures commenced distribution of up to 500 laptop devices,



together with a 12-month NBN internet plan at no cost to the recipient, as part of the Access and Affordability Pilot.

The initiative seeks to equip those most vulnerable in our communities with access to these basic tools that have become the basis for developing a digital fingerprint, as sought-after by employers.

With these devices, successful applicants are able to get online, grow their digital skills, develop their resumes and apply for jobs.

WACOSS, along with the Project partners, are extremely grateful for Lotterywest's contribution of \$3.9 million over 3 years as the major supporter of this Project, and for the in-kind support of all of our community service project partners, together with the support of digital partners NBN Co and WorkVentures, the Financial Counsellors' Association of WA, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Office of Digital Government, the Department of Communities and, as announced subsequent to the end of the reporting period, the University of Western Australia's Centre for Social Impact as its provider of monitoring and evaluation services.

Child Safe Organisations

WACOSS and CPAC continued to work closely with the Royal Commission team within the WA Department of Communities during 2022/23 to progress pathways to proactively action the recommendations that came out of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Ensuring the capacity-building needs of smaller metropolitan and regional service providers has been front-of-mind throughout the process of

extending requirements for child safe policies and practices and mandatory reporting.

Our active participation in child safe campaign and advisory committees and working groups led us to jointly develop a proposal with Department of Communities in early 2023 to develop and fund an education and outreach project to provide workshops, one-on-one advice, and tools and guidelines for the practical implementation of existing child safe resources and policies.

Named the WA Child Safe Project, it will focus on the needs of smaller and regional community service organisations delivering child, youth and family services, and will also include other services where children are not direct service recipients but may be present and at risk.

The WA Child Safe Project commences in July 2023.

Emergency Relief and Food

Fair Food WA

Fair Food WA (FFWA) leads collective advocacy to influence food security policy in Western Australia. FFWA membership comprises representatives from government, academia, indirect and direct food providers, with WACOSS as the coordinating organisation.

The value of this work has been well recognised by the State Government across multiple areas of food policy. FFWA was referenced in the Department of Communities' submission to the inquiry addressing food insecurity for children and young people and was also invited to participate on the State Shipping and Supply Chain Taskforce Reference Group to represent the charity food sector.

Community Relief and Resilience Project

WACOSS is proudly funded by Lotterywest to deliver the Community Relief and Resilience (CRR) program, which leads policy and sector support for the more than 300 agencies and their individual outlets in providing emergency relief across the State. Given the diversity of the emergency relief sector in Western Australia, coordinating a collaborative and

integrated response to issues impacting the sector is integral for ensuring that people accessing relief services are able to have their needs met and are empowered to live fulfilled lives.

One of the key activities under the CRR Program is the monthly CRR Forum, which supports networking and information sharing for frontline staff and volunteers. The Forum hosts a monthly presentation whereby attendees are given the opportunity to hear from subject matter experts, innovative services, government-led initiatives, and other organisations that assist them in the support they provide to the community.

The CRR Program also hosts events and webinars to build the capacity of the emergency relief sector. In May 2023, WACOSS hosted the Utility Hardship Forum for the WA Community Relief and Resilience Sector. The event included presentations from Water Corporation, Horizon Power, Kleenheat, Synergy and Alinta on their respective hardship programs. Around 80 participants registered for this online webinar which was then made available in the online CRR Sector Hub as a permanent resource. The event evaluation showed that 100 per cent of respondents agreed that the content was useful to their role and that the tools provided could be incorporated into their work.

WA Connect

The WACONnect service directory is Western Australia's most comprehensive directory for locating community services. Community members and frontline workers can use the platform to search for emergency relief and other support services by geographical location. The user is provided with a list of service outlets matching their needs, including an agency's location, opening hours, contact information and any eligibility requirements. This platform serves to streamline access to emergency relief by making it easier for community members to locate their nearest service, and improves pathways for agencies who are supporting individuals with an assessment and referral.

The value of WACONnect is represented across both platform data analytics and anecdotal evidence from the community service sector. WACONnect



is being used regularly by many services when connecting community members with information and referrals, and has been promoted by specialist services and government departments.

The platform has also been used as a tool to support sector services mapping. Due to the geolocation of listings on the platform, this data can be used to identify where services exist across the state and potential gaps in services available. WACONnect is an important tool enabling WACOSS to access data towards our policy and advocacy activities and has also been used by State Government departments to strengthen communication and funding, including after disaster impacts.

NDRR Heat Mapping and Food Project

WACOSS has been successful in two funding rounds of National Disaster Risk Reduction grants to strengthen Western Australia's preparedness for disasters; the Disaster Resilience and Emergency Planning Strategy for Food Security Project and the Heat and Vulnerability Mapping Project.

Disaster Resilience and Emergency Planning Strategy for Food Security Project

Over several years, WACOSS has continued to advocate for more coordinated, healthy and affordable emergency food relief for our communities. Following the development of the Food Relief Framework in 2019 and in combination with the work of Fair Food WA and the increasing frequency of extreme and concurrent weather events, a successful grant application was made to respond to the common emergency food coordination challenges experienced by communities during times of disasters.

This Project worked with an outer-Perth-metro and a regional WA pilot site to develop comprehensive community and organisation emergency food security planning templates and activation processes. WACOSS is extremely pleased that the Project was successful in delivering the following outputs:

- Development of the Guide to Food Security Planning
- Creation of a template for Local Emergency Management Committee scenario testing
- Customisation of the Community Organised Resource Exchange
- Updating of the Food Stress Index to include 2021 census data
- The development of a Food Stress Index Handbook and tutorial video
- Identification and promotion of a consent to share tool
- An independent and comprehensive project evaluation

All outputs will continue to be socialised, advocated and incorporated into relevant WACOSS work.

Heat and Vulnerability Mapping Project

The two-year Heat and Vulnerability Mapping Project began in February 2023 and is being delivered in partnership with the WA Department of Health's Sustainable Development Unit and the Department of Communities.

The purpose of this Project is to map regions impacted by high temperatures against vulnerable populations across WA, and develop targeted strategies, actions and resources to enable communities to better prepare for high heat-related consequences to their health and wellbeing.

The Project will produce two main outputs; a geo-spatial interactive online heat and vulnerability map, and co-designed community-owned safety plans and heat action plans with three diverse pilot sites across WA.

Cost of Living Report

In December 2022, WACOSS released its annual *Cost of Living* report. The WACOSS household modelling for the 2021-2022 financial year shone a harsh light on the pressures that these factors are having on low income households in our state. Each of the modelled household types saw a deterioration in their financial position, with single parent families and renting age pensioners pushed to the absolute brink, while unemployed singles are past the point where their income is sufficient to cover their basic living costs.

Substantial growth in expenditure, particularly for rental and transport costs, has significantly increased financial pressure on the model households. Living costs increased in every category, while the cessation of the Coronavirus Supplement and Economic Support Payments resulted in the income of the model households seeing little growth or declining.

This is reflective of the experiences being reported by our member organisations working directly with clients.

State Budget Analysis

The 2023-2024 WA State Budget was handed down on 11 May 2023 and included key measures to address cost of living pressures, build more social housing, expand family and domestic violence support, and to advance decarbonisation and climate change initiatives. However, we were disappointed that there was a clear lack of investment allocated for community service organisations to provide the ongoing assistance households will need as the cost of living crisis perseveres, with a lack of support for renters particularly notable.

WACOSS collaborated with Social Reinvestment WA, the Youth Affairs Council of WA, the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing and Shelter WA to analyse the budget measures and prepare factsheets to be provided to the community services sector the day after the Budget was handed down. WACOSS hosted its Budget Briefing Webinar on 12 May, supported by those aforementioned organisations. The webinar also featured presentations from key Treasury officials.

Powerful Movement for Social and Economic Justice



Voice to Parliament

On 24 February 2023, the WACOSS Board unanimously agreed to support the 'Yes' campaign for constitutional recognition for First Nations Australians through a Voice to Parliament.

As community service organisations we are privileged to work alongside First Nations peoples in the community sector, and much of our work is guided by their cultural knowledge and community connection.

WACOSS took this opportunity to play a role in not just supporting the Voice to Parliament, but also advocating and teaching other organisations and members of our building.

This involvement was led by staff who were eager to do as much as they could during this historic point in Australian history. WACOSS formed a working group which met weekly to discuss WACOSS's involvement and stay up to date on key moments and opportunities.

WACOSS produced a Special Bulletin on The Voice which provided appropriate resources to assist organisations to combat misinformation. The newsletter was originally sent every three weeks before being ramped up to fortnightly and weekly, right before the Referendum.

WACOSS also utilised the unique campaigning skills of some staff in the office to conduct our own persuasion conversation training. This training was also extended to Volunteering WA and Peaks Forum. We also hosted a morning tea

for our building. This was an opportunity for the building to engage in conversation and ask questions in a non-judgemental forum.

WACOSS, along with Anglicare, was a key leader in funding an ad campaign. Anglicare was approached by Wildling Creative with a unique idea for a radio advertisement in language. This ad aimed to dispel the myth that First Nations people don't support The Voice. Wildlings and other creatives donated their time pro bono for this project, but there was still the cost of the ads.

Anglicare and WACOSS called on the sector and 19 organisations responded, raising \$43,000, for which we were incredibly grateful. This, on top of a \$20,000 Peaks Capacity Building Grant, enabled these ads to be heard on Commercial Radio, Digital Radio and Spotify.

Social Reinvestment WA

WACOSS is very proud to be a founding member of Social Reinvestment WA (SRWA) and continues to be an active participant on the Executive Committee and working groups. The aims of Social



Reinvestment have not faulted, they continue to advocate for healthy families, smart justice, and safe communities.

Over the past year, the SRWA influence, impact, supporters and the size of the team continues to grow with support from Lotterywest and philanthropic funding. The project has got the attention of State Government and continues to meet with Politicians to galvanise support.

Banksia Hill and Unit 18

The Banksia Hill Juvenile Detention Centre has become a topic of major scrutiny in the last 12 months following revelations of human rights abuses inside detention. SRWA has coordinated a sustained digital campaign exposing conditions in detention, presented on Raise the Age and the state of youth justice, and launched major policy recommendations and requests in response to developments.

The culmination of this work resulted in more than 160 unique media instances across major broadcasters, and while the campaign is ongoing, major wins were seen, including through the announcement of a review into the Young Offenders Act, banning of 'figure four restraints', development of a new model-of-care, and the enabling of Aboriginal organisations, mentors, and mental health services to enter inside detention.

Raising the Age of Criminal Responsibility

SRWA has continued to lead the Raise the Age campaign for WA, which is seeking to lift the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years of age, which is in line with medical evidence and global standards. Campaigning has seen more than 13,000 Western Australians sign petitions to Raise the Age, while important conversations on this matter have been documented throughout the media landscape, including through the release of the third season of the podcast series 'Stories from the Inside', media attention through major WA publications, and presentations on the campaign through the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Reconciliation WA webinar 'the Puzzle Reintegration Conference', to name a few.

Youth Justice Reform

A significant highlight in August 2022 for SRWA was the launch its *Blueprint for a Better Future, Paving the Way for Youth Justice Reform in WA*. The Blueprint is a comprehensive evidence-based document outlining a vision for a more effective, and connected youth justice system in Western Australia. A whole-of-system approach that responds to the underlying causes of offending to reduce crime, ensures the wellbeing of children and young people, and delivers safer and better futures for our most disadvantaged communities.

The Blueprint serves as a comprehensive document for policy makers, and was endorsed by the Office of the Inspector of Custodial Services and the WA Children's Commissioner at its launch event.

Justice Reinvestment

SRWA is the key supporting body for justice reinvestment throughout WA, helping communities, leaders and systems to explore local community-led approaches that shift the focus of the justice system from reactive and punitive, to preventive and community building. With greatly appreciated support from the Paul Ramsay Foundation and Lotterywest, SRWA has been working with communities including Halls Creek, Geraldton, Carnarvon and Port Hedland, and guiding justice reinvestment efforts across the state.

SRWA has been advising the grant process for the Federal Justice Reinvestment Program, including designing grant opportunity guidelines to ensure the process is accessible to Western Australian communities.

Campaigns WACOSS Actively Supports

- Raise the Rate WA
- Social Reinvestment WA
- Make Renting Fair WA
- Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Yes 23



- Raise the Age, National Campaign
- Valuing Children Initiative
- WA for a Human Rights Act
- Anti-Poverty Week
- Everybody's Home

Equity Project

The Equity Project was conceived by a group of passionate Community Service Organisations, developed with the primary goal of working together to harness the collective voice and mobilise communities to fight against poverty.

The Equity Project aims to:

- Achieve public policy and systemic change to increase fairness and economic justice in WA
- Strengthen public support, and enable citizen-led action, to increase fairness, economic justice, and compassion
- Amplify the voice of people with lived experience of poverty
- Promote solutions and policies that work towards achieving a fair and economically just society

The Project was seed funded by seven organisations, being Anglicare WA, Centrecare, Communicare, Mission Australia (WA Branch), Ruah Community Services, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation and WACOSS. This year, that membership expanded to include PeopleKind Group, Relationships Australia WA and St Pat's Community Centre as project sponsors.

Key achievements for the Equity Project this year included:

- Establishing advocacy goals and objectives
- Building a website and creating a style guide
- Launching sub groups that utilised skills from each seed funder and sponsor organisation
- Creating a campaign plan and budget for the 2023/24 financial year
- Contributing to the Senate Inquiry into the extent and nature of poverty in Australia and the Federal Measuring What Matters Framework

The next steps of the project are to hire paid staff and to officially launch the campaign in the lead-up to the 2025 State and Federal elections.

Submissions

- Submission to the Economic Regulation Authority on the additional AA5 tariff structure and reference services information
- Submission to the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime on legislative responses to coercive control in Western Australia

- Submission to Department of Training and Workforce Development on Delivering a Skilled Workforce for Western Australia
- Submission to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee's inquiry into the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Repeal of Cashless Debit Card and Other Measures) Bill 2022
- Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Work and Care
- Submission to Energy Policy WA on the *Renewable Hydrogen Target for Electricity Generation in the South West Interconnected System* consultation paper
- Fair Food WA submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People Inquiry into the most effective ways for Western Australia to address food insecurity for children and young people affected by poverty
- Fair Food WA submission to the House Standing Committee on Agriculture's inquiry into Food Security in Australia
- Submission to the Senate Select Committee on the Cost of Living
- Submission to Energy Policy WA on the State Electricity Objective
- Submission to Energy Policy WA on the Electricity Industry (Alternative Electricity Services) Amendment Bill 2023
- Submission to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission for the 2023 State Wage Case
- Submission to the Economic Regulation Authority on the 2023 Review of the *Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2018*
- Submission to Energy Policy WA on the consultation draft of the *Voluntary Embedded Networks Code of Practice*

State Budget Submission

Our State Budget Submission 2023-2024, *Creating A Stronger Future*, focused on the new strategies and measures needed to ensure that nobody is left behind in the face of escalating inflation and living costs, rising interest rates, lack of affordable housing and workforce shortages. WACOSS recommended investment in public infrastructure to address the inherent inequality in our economy and to assist those struggling to get by.

Over 120 organisations were consulted in workshops across the state. The Submission outlined 31 recommendations in four categories: Ensuring a Growing State Can Thrive; Community Resilience and Wellbeing; Keeping the Essentials Affordable for All; and Safe Communities.

Recommendations included establishing a \$1 billion affordable housing future fund; re-introduction of a rent relief scheme; developing a child and family wellbeing strategy; funding of emergency and transitional accommodation services; creation of a gender responsive budget unit in WA Treasury; implementing the Blueprint for a Better Future: paving the way for youth justice reform in WA; establishing a WA stolen generation reparations scheme; and training for both new and existing workers in the community sector.

Following the launch of the State Budget Submission, WACOSS representatives met with Ministers and senior government officials to discuss implementation of our recommendations.



Elevating the Community Sector's Value in Western Australia



Funding and Indexation

Sustainable funding and indexation remained a key priority area for WACOSS, and we continued to advocate in partnership with CEWA, with support from Peaks, the Australian Services Union and Unions WA throughout the year. Fair Work Australia decisions have resulted in significant increases in labour costs for community services, and rightfully so, but when combined with the Superannuation Guarantee increase, and inflation, without proper indexation services are struggling to continue providing services, especially at a time when there is unprecedented demand.

In the 2022-2023 financial year, our ongoing advocacy to the State Government was met with a one-off increase to indexation for all state contracts by 0.98%. In September of 2023, we achieved a second win when the Cook Government committed to increasing current and future indexation rates for Non-Government Human Services to account for increases to the superannuation guarantee. This was a welcomed relief for the sector, after a period of sustained advocacy by WACOSS and CEWA.

The increase in indexation of 0.4%, from 4.11% to 4.51% for the 2023-2024 year, represents the full 0.5% increase in superannuation guarantee applied to the 80% of the current NGHSS formula relating to wage costs. This increase will also be carried forward for the next three years as the superannuation guarantee rises each year to 12% by 2025.

While this increase does not account for the ongoing under-indexation of contracts in prior years, or account for the true cost of delivering community services in the current year, it is a welcome step forward and a step in the right direction.

To support our advocacy, WACOSS led a survey to provide solid evidence on the impact this is having on services, with support from many peak bodies, and Professor David Gilchrist of UWA independently analysed the results. 40% of respondents reported that they had reduced their operations in order to survive in 2022, thereby reducing services at a time of increased demand. 78% of respondents reported staff burnout, and inadequate funding over successive years has driven the social services sector into unsustainability.

These results were used in continued advocacy, and after seven years of raising the issue, the Cook Government agreed to a mid-June review of the WA Government Non-Government Human Services Sector Indexation Policy.

After championing for so long, this is a victory for the sector, and we are looking forward to providing solutions for a new indexation methodology to Treasury, which Premier Cook noted will be subject to a Budget process.





This approach does not guarantee an outcome, however this is a significantly different response, after the culmination of advocacy efforts for several years. This would not have been achieved without the support of sector peak bodies continuing to raise this as an issue with their relevant Ministers. Thanks also goes to Professor David Gilchrist and Clare Feenan at the UWA Business School for their commitment to this issue, and to Unions WA and the Australian Services Union WA for their sustained advocacy and partnership through this process.

State Commissioning Strategy

During the year WACOSS worked closely with the WA Department of Finance on the development of the State Commissioning Strategy and Implementation Plan, and alongside the sector is supportive of the Strategy. We look forward to the holistic improvement to the services and service delivery that will emerge during the implementation process.

The scale and complexity of this work is something that has not yet been attempted in Western Australia, so it is a monumental step and gives us an opportunity to develop an evidence-based and collaborative process for resolving difficult issues, and reduces the risk of sustainable funding becoming contested and political.

Peak bodies have responsibilities outlined in the implementation plan and are uniquely positioned with a particular expertise, connectivity and technical experience to help government understand what is 'good' and what represents value for money.

Our deep knowledge has contributed positively, and our involvement has ensured the intellectual property and experience developed over time is retained and leveraged, rather than lost through demographic change.

WACOSS will continue to represent our sector's perspective and facilitate insight from frontline practice that is independent of the commercial interests of any one provider.

We will continue to work in collaboration with central State Government line agencies, departments and the community service sector to ensure genuine consultation and improve the current governance structures and accountability.

Advocacy Wins

Tranche 1 of reforms for the Residential Tenancies Act

This past financial year, the campaign on renters' rights took a larger focus for WACOSS as part of our role as a foundational member of the Make Renting Fair alliance. During this time, the campaign met with Ministers and members of Parliament and engaged a strong social media and media campaign on the importance of implementing Tenancy Ten in full. The Tenancy Ten is a list of ten reforms Make Renting Fair would like to see made to the Residential Tenancies Act (1987).

On May 26 of this year, the State Government announced its first of two tranches of reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act. The reforms included limiting rent increases to once a year, tenants being able to have pets, and allowances for minor modifications to the property. This announcement was seen as a win for the campaign; however, the sector was disappointed to see that no-grounds evictions remain in the Act. Credit to this win also goes to Anglicare WA, Shelter WA, Circle Green and the other 22 members of the alliance.

The campaign will continue to advocate for the remainder of the Tenancy Ten to be included in tranche 2, including the removal of no-grounds eviction.

Reviewing bond assistance to better support people on a low income to secure a private rental

WACOSS identified that community members were becoming ineligible for bond assistance due to the rising costs of private rentals. This emerging issue was escalated to SERC, where members confirmed that many low-income households were now becoming ineligible for Bond Assistance due to the high cost of rent exceeding what the policy deemed to be the threshold portion of their income that should be allocated to rent.

The advocacy activities undertaken by SERC were previously reported on and this issue was taken on notice by the State Government representative. During this reporting period, the State Government announced a revised Policy on bond assistance, to include new weekly income limits and an increase to maximum bond loan amounts which will enable more people on a low income to secure a private rental.

Changes to HUGS

During the reporting period, we were pleased to see an increase to the Hardship Utility Grant (HUGS) limits by 10 per cent in the 2023-2024 State Budget. HUGS payment limits had remained static since 2017-2018, not keeping pace with increases in energy and water costs. This increase provides better support for those households experiencing difficulties with their utility bills.

Commitment from the State Government to ban LGBTQIA+ conversion practices and protect against conversion ideology

WACOSS has been advocating to an end to harmful conversion practices for many years. It is a regular ask of State Government in our annual State Budget Submission and WACOSS is represented on the Ending Conversion Practices WA Committee.

WACOSS was thrilled to see the State Government commit to banning LGBTQIA+ conversion practices in Western Australia and protect against conversion ideology.

Indexation: An increase to 4.51% and a review to the formula

WACOSS was pleased to see the State Government recognise the need to increase the indexation rate in August 2022 but noted it was not high enough to reflect the costs being felt by the community service organisations to maintain essential services. While an increase is a small win, what is most needed is a review to the formula that indexation is based.

Advocacy around a review to the formula was a large focus for WACOSS, CEWA and ASU throughout this financial year. We worked with Ministers and ministerial staff, and took the opportunity to ask for this as one of our two key requests when meeting with the new Premier and Treasurer. We are pleased to say Premier Cook has agreed to an indexation review and has asked for our input in the process. This is a huge win for the sector and one we share with CEWA and the ASU.



Increasing in Housing

In March, WACOSS and Shelter WA wrote to the Premier requesting an urgent meeting to discuss what was needed in the State Budget to address the alarming rates of homelessness as found in the recent Census data.

One of our asks was a significant increase in funding for social housing. WACOSS was pleased to see an extra \$450 million investment in the existing Social Housing Investment Fund in the State Budget. The funding will increase the total number of social houses to be added to 4,000 to the market. This win is shared with Shelter WA who have been doing incredible work in this space.

Abolishment of Parents Next

After many years and numerous submissions, WACOSS is extremely pleased to see Parents Next abolished and a voluntary system to replace it.

Additional resources for organisations during COVID, Cleaning reimbursement scheme

WACOSS continued to administer the COVID-19 Cleaning Reimbursement Scheme.

In early 2022, funding was secured from the Western Australian State Government to support community service organisations impacted by increased costs of additional cleaning, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following consultation with the sector and conversations with the State Government, WACOSS continued to offer cleaning reimbursement to community service organisations, with revised criteria.

Community organisations could claim reimbursement for preventative cleaning and the purchase of air purifiers.

These reimbursements could be backdated from January 14, 2022.



Electricity Code of Conduct reforms

Through its submissions and engagement on the Economic Regulation Authority's Electricity Code Consultative Committee, WACOSS secured the most substantial changes ever made to the customer protections for electricity customers in Western Australia. These changes included extending assistance in managing payments to all customers who request it, including payment extensions and instalment plans; setting a minimum bill debt of \$300 before a residential customer can be disconnected for non-payment; and dedicated support for electricity customers who are experiencing family and domestic violence. These changes came into effect on 20 February 2023.



Additional resources to support organisations to become child safe

Over the past year, WACOSS has worked with the Department of Communities to establish a Child Safe Organisation capacity building project.

The aim of the Project is to provide tailored advice and support to assist community service organisations to implement child safe policies and practices – based on the ten Child Safe Principles arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. Going forward, all organisations where children are present will be required to be child safe and this will be built into funding contracts once legislation for independent oversight is in place.

Our Project is particularly concerned with assisting those smaller and regional community service providers where children are present in-service settings. The aim is to promote and support the adaptation and use of existing child safe resources into organisational policies and practices – closing the gap to practical implementation, so that all services can demonstrate their commitment to keeping children safe.

The grant was secured in this financial year and will be delivered during 2023/24.

Understanding Utility Hardship

In December 2022, WACOSS and Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre released the *Understanding Utility Hardship Report*, funded by an Energy Policy WA grant and the Water Corporation. The report utilised a mixed methods approach that included qualitative focus group and interview data of financial counsellors, quantitative survey data of Water Corporation customers, and quantitative data sets provided by the Financial Counselling Network. It examined patterns and trends for different groups of households to better identify the risk factors and early signs of hardship, whether current safeguards are providing appropriate support to consumers and key factors that contribute to effective hardship policy and practice. It then outlined solutions that could provide early assistance to consumers to reduce hardship and avoid debt.

State Wage Case

WACOSS provided its written submission to the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission on 17 May 2023 and appeared before the Commission to provide an oral submission on 24 May 2023. WACOSS argued that an increase to the State Minimum Wage rate of 7 per cent is essential to meet the needs of low paid workers and to contribute to improved living standards for employees.

Principally, the argument centred on the significant and sustained price increases experienced by Western Australians, which have eroded the purchasing power of workers earning the state minimum wage. Unfortunately, the Commission chose to only award a 5.3 per cent increase, falling short of what was necessary to maintain relativity with the national minimum wage decision of 8.6 per cent, as well as to keep up with rising living costs for workers.

State Emergency Relief Committee

The State Emergency Relief Committee (SERC) is focused on emergency relief policy and system reform with management level representation

from place-based and state-wide emergency relief providers in Western Australia. There are 37 member organisations and their individual agencies represented on SERC.

This Committee is a mechanism for WACOSS to escalate advocacy issues that are often shared at the grassroots level in local emergency relief networks or through the monthly CRR Forum. Members are invited to share their experience of trends and provide data to support the groups' advocacy. The strength of SERC's shared approach to advocacy has generated significant impact this year, leading to the revision of the state's bond assistance policy, increasing access to utility hardship programs and advocacy for improved concessions across vehicle registration.

Kimberley Flood Recovery

In response to the Kimberley floods in January, WACOSS provided sector support to emergency relief and food providers supplied information about displaced people and impacted communities. Local emergency relief providers across the Kimberley region saw an influx of demand for support.

WACOSS convened several special meetings of the emergency relief and food providers from the SERC and FFWA committees. The sessions included representation from the Department of Communities Emergency Relief Support Directorate, and other government departments, which helped

the sector to better understand the scale of the impact, where community organisations could assist, and any gaps in coordination that could streamline support for impacted people. WACOSS was also invited to participate in the Legal Assistance sector flood response weekly meetings being convened by Department of Justice and provide two-way communication and updates with the ER sector.

WACOSS, through the State Emergency Relief Committee, developed a one-page information sheet highlighting referral pathways and information relevant to flood related assistance that would be accessible for displaced people across WA. The resource was supported by the ERSD and published within the State Welfare Operations communique and via WACOSS member networks and committees. This resource can be adapted to support the sector in any future disaster events that may arise.

WACOSS is a member of the State Recovery Coordination Group, Social Recovery Sub-Committee whose purpose is to coordinate activities and implement initiatives and programs across government to support communities, businesses and non-profit organisations recover from the impacts of the Kimberley floods and build resilience, specifically in relation to social recovery. The sub-committee meets fortnightly receiving regular updates on recovery process.



Building stronger organisation

Strategic Catalyst

5

WACOSS Member Survey

The annual WACOSS Members Survey was conducted in August 2022.

Member respondents were inspired to join WACOSS for its work as an advocacy leader, collective impact, connections with the social services sector and the quality of work it does. Many stated they want to be part of the 'movement' and collective voice.

About 94% engage with WACOSS through sector news and special bulletins and more than half via event participation. 42% follow or engage with WACOSS on social media. 69% stated that WACOSS events are informative, engaging and inspiring. 69% also stated they have applied what they learned from attending an event. Respondents noted they would like to see WACOSS organising more collaborative forums, webinars and policy briefings, followed by more campaign work and conferences. 85% either strongly agree or agree they trust WACOSS advocacy on behalf of the sector and 81% stated that WACOSS's work has enhanced their organisation's understanding of important sector issues.

When asked if WACOSS research provides high-quality and evidence-based policy advice to stakeholders, 82% strongly agreed or agreed. There was strong support for WACOSS's role as a collaborator and provider of policy insight with 78% strongly agreeing or agreeing. 83% believe WACOSS maintains a high profile and responds to media.

The survey also asked questions related to WACOSS' support to the sector during COVID crisis. A large majority (74%) stated that the support WACOSS provided was valuable and 83% found the resources and newsletters WACOSS shared useful.

Overall, the survey findings are overwhelmingly positive. WACOSS will need to work on strengthening its engagement in regional WA, producing resources that are inclusive of people of all abilities and increasing engagement on social media.

Governance

In the past year, we significantly strengthened our governance under the guidance of the Governance and Risk Committee. We reviewed and updated our existing governance processes and policies and implemented new ones to remain compliant with all ACNC rules.



Professional Development

The WACOSS team was fortunate to host the *Looking Forward Moving Forward Project* members who presented the project outcomes and findings alongside the Elder co-researcher group.

The team attended *Empower Disability Awareness: Access and Inclusion* training and later in the year got behind the Yes Campaign. Some team members attended the ADHD Conference which will help inform how we can make our workplace good place to work for neurodiverse people.

Ashleigh Gregory graduated from the Rising Leadership program run by Leadership WA and Kris Harris commenced her Certificate 4 in Training and Assessment.

Through professional development opportunities provided by Institute of Public Administration Australia WA, our team members upskilled in Intelligent Influence, Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation amongst others.

Finally, our CEO Louise Giolitto was accepted to the Social Impact Leadership Australia program for CEO's of for-purpose organisations. This leadership program aims to advance the capability of leaders, organisations, and ecosystems for a better civil society.

DropIN Solutions

Our DropIN Solutions team, WACOSS's very own social enterprise, completed a total of 101 projects during the 2022-2023 Financial year. The projects varied from new logo and branding designs, to large scale website developments and strategic marketing guidance. Whilst the team completed 10 fewer projects this year than in the 2021-2022 financial year, the value of the projects delivered was substantially higher, closing 2022-2023 with a \$17,000 surplus, making it the social enterprise's most profitable year ever.

One of the highlights of the year for the DropIN team was expanding their national presence by delivering projects to their very first clients in New South Wales (Community Legal Centres Australia, website development) and Queensland (Australian Women's Health Alliance, website development). The team

also strengthened their presence in regional WA by providing creative services to three more clients when compared to the previous financial year. DropIN is now becoming the agency of choice for organisations up north, such as Yaandina (graphic design and website development), and down south, such as Harvey Community Resource Centre (website development) and Escare (graphic design and website development).

Additionally, the team delivered a website development project for the Northern Territory Youth Voice project and directory. These new connections have helped DropIN start conversations with potential clients and community service organisations in the NT, NSW and the ACT, which are looking to outsource their website and graphic design needs.

To conclude, the DropIN Solutions team finished the financial year securing exciting projects such as the new website development for SWOP (Sydney, NSW), the new website design for Connect Groups and GRAI (GLBTQI rights in Ageing Inc), and the new branding design for the Domestic Abuse Resource Training Group (DART).

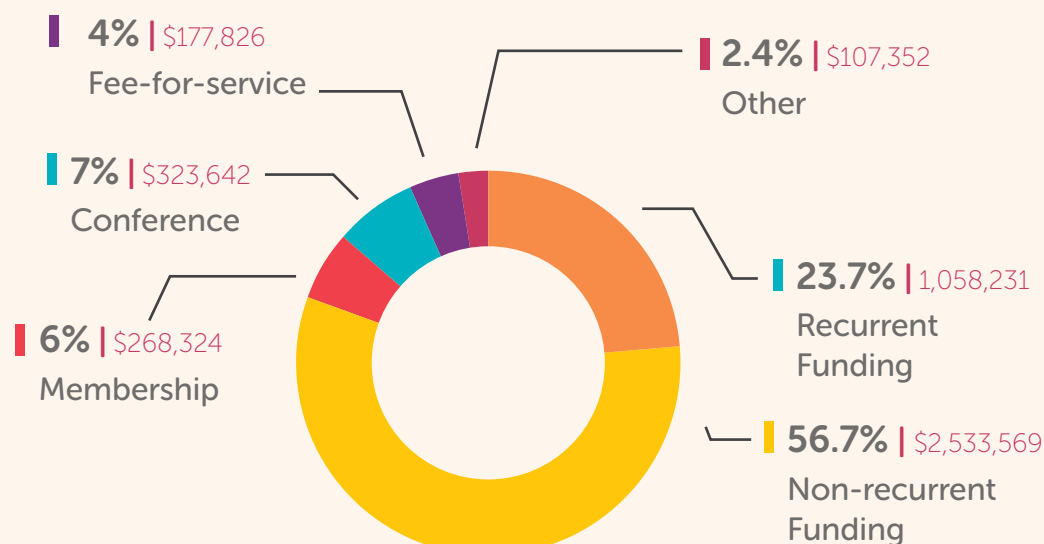






Financial Summary

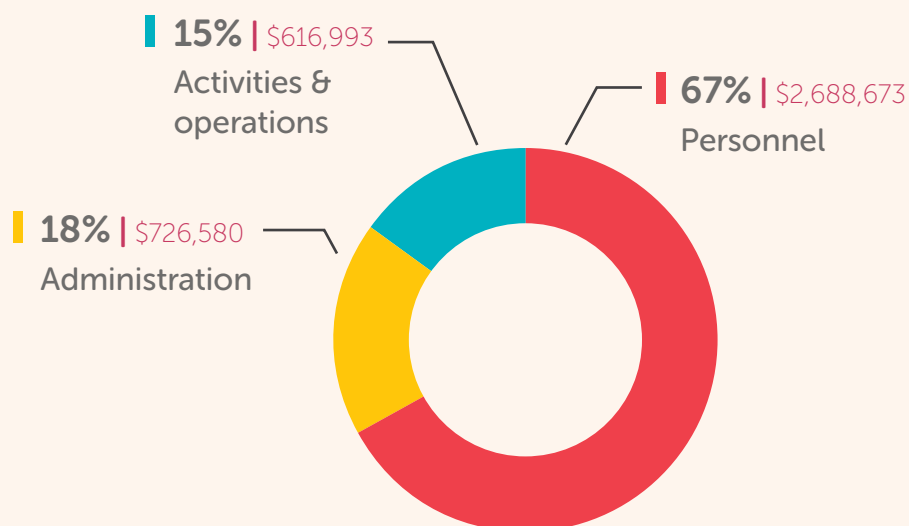
The financial position of WACOSS remains stable with net assets of \$1,920,695, an increase of \$436,698 on the previous financial year.



Graphic 1: Income by type

INCOME

Total income for the financial year was \$4,468,944. Government and other funding remains the primary source of revenue (80%), together with membership fees (6%) and fee-for-service (4%). This year was a Conference year which contributed an additional 7% in income.



Graphic 2: Expenditure by type

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure for the financial year was \$4,032,246. Personnel remained the largest expense (67%), followed by Administration (18%) and Operations (15%).

It should be recognised that the nature of our activities are such that individual projects and major events have the capacity to materially alter specific areas of income and expenditure year-on-year.



Sponsors and funders

Funders

Department of Communities

BHP

Rio Tinto

Department of the Premier
and Cabinet

Water Corporation

WA Energy Policy

Department of Health

Australian Government
National Recovery and
Resilience Agency

Woodside

Lotterywest

Sponsors

In-Kind Supporters

Wildlings Creative

Conference Major Supporters

Lotterywest

Department of Communities

Department of the Premier
and Cabinet

Kaya Wandjoo

Ngala kaaditj Noongar Whadjuk moort keyen kaadak nidja boodja

We acknowledge the Whadjuk Noongar people as the original owners of this land in which this office is located. We value the oldest continuing culture in the world and our respect to the First People of this land and their past and present throughout Australia.



Conference Sponsors

ACCAN	Hope Community Services	St Pat's Community Support Centre
Anglicare WA	MercyCare	Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman
Beyond Bank Australia	Mission Australia	The Salvation Army
Carers WA	Palmerston	WAAC
Centrecare	PeopleKind Group	Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH)
Communicare	Relationships Australia Western Australia	Yorgum Healing Services
Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWA)	Ruah	
Elder Rights WA	Social Reinvestment WA	
Helping Minds		

Conference Partners

Reconciliation WA
Danjoo Koorliny

Community Services Excellence Awards Partner

Department of Communities

Community Services Excellence Awards Supporter

Lotterywest

Community Services Excellence Awards Sponsors

Anglicare WA
Beyond Bank
HESTA
WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA)

Community Services Excellence Awards Partners

Auspire – Australia Day Council (WA)

Our Members

Honorary Life Members

Peter Sirr

Brenda Harper-Nelson

Moira Rainer

Sue Ash AO

Anne Sinclair

Associate Organisation Members

City Of Fremantle

Evolve Events and Training

DART Group

UWA - Division of Social
Work & Social Policy

City of Nedlands

Social Service Organisation Members

54 Reasons

Albany Community Legal
Centre Inc

Australian Association of
Social Workers WA Branch

55 Central Inc

Allambee Counselling

Australian Red Cross

Aboriginal Health Council of
WA

Amity Health

Bloodwood Tree Association

AccordWest

Anglicare WA

Blue Dot Army

Adoption Research &
Counselling Service Inc

ASeTTs

Brightwater Care Group

Advocare Inc

Auspire

Broome C.I.R.C.L.E. Inc

Cancer Council Western Australia	Coolabaroo (t/a Moorditch Gurlongga Assoc. Inc.)	Hope Community Services Inc
Carnarvon Family Support Service WA Ltd.	Desert Blue Connect	Housing Choices
Catholic Outreach	Doubleview House	In Town Centre Inc
Centacare Family Services Geraldton	EON Foundation Inc	Indigo Junction
Centacare Kimberley Association Inc	Escare Inc	Injury Matters
Central Agecare Inc	Esperance Care Services	Invisible Illnesses Inc. (Fibro & Us)
Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees	Facilitatrix	Joondalup Family Centre
Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing	Family Inclusion Network of Western Australia Inc	Just Home Margaret River Inc
Centrecare Inc	Financial Counsellors Association WA Inc	Justice, Ecology and Development Office, Catholic Archdiocese
CEOs for Gender Equity	Foodbank WA	Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa
Child Australia	Foundation Housing Ltd	Katanning Regional Emergency Accommodation Centre Inc
Circle Green Community Legal	Fremantle Women's Health Centre	Key Assets
Citizens Advice Bureau of WA Inc	Goldfields Women Health Care Centre	KEYS
CoMHWA	Goodstart Early Learning	Kidsafe WA Inc
Communicare Inc	GRAI	Kilfinan Australia
Community Employers WA	Haemophilia Foundation WA Inc	Koordoormitj Institute
Community Legal WA	Harvey Community Resource Centre Inc	Lamp Incorporated
ConnectGroups - Support Groups Association WA Inc	Hedland Well Women Centre Inc.	Langford Aboriginal Association
Consumer Credit Legal Service	Hedland Women's Refuge	Life Without Barriers
	HelpingMinds	Linkwest Inc
		Living Proud Inc

Local Drug Action Groups Inc	Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation	Relationships Australia Western Australia Inc
MacKillop Family Services	No Limits Perth	Rise Network Inc
Margaret River Community Pantry Inc.	Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre	Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth – Catholic Social Services WA
Margaret River Community Resource Centre Inc	National Resource Centre for Migrant Empowerment	Rostrata Family Centre Inc
Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre	Orana House Inc	Ruah Community Services
Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation	OVIS Community Service (Pat Thomas House Inc)	Sandalwood Family Centre
Men's Health and Wellbeing WA Inc	Palmerston Association Inc	SECCA
Mens Outreach Service Aboriginal Corporation	Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc	Sexual Health Quarters -The Family Planning Association of WA Inc
Men's Shed of WA	Patricia Giles Centre Inc	Shelter WA
Mercy Community Services Ltd	Peel Community Development Group	Social Ventures Australia Ltd
Milligan Community Learning and Resource Centre Inc	Peel Youth Services Inc	South Coastal Health & Community Services
Mission Australia	People with Disabilities WA Inc	South Lake Ottey Family & Neighbourhood Centre Inc
Moorditjabiny Aboriginal Corporation	PeopleKind Group	South Perth Senior Citizens Centre
Multicultural Futures	Perth Asian Community Centre	South West Counselling Inc
Nardine Wimmin's Refuge Inc	Perth Inner City Youth Service	South West Refuge Inc
Neami National	Pivot Support Services	Southcare Inc
Newman Women's Shelter	Playgroup WA Inc	St Bartholomew's House Inc
Ngala Community Services	Police & Community Youth Centres Inc.	St John of God Outreach Services
Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation	Reconciliation WA	St Patrick's Community Support Centre
	Regional Alliance West Inc	

St. Vincent de Paul Society WA Inc	Umbrellas & Footprints	Women's Legal Service WA
Starick	Uniting Church	World Vision Australia
Sussex Street Community Law Service Inc	Uniting WA	Wungening Aboriginal Corporation
Swan City Youth Service Inc	Valued Lives	Yaandina Family Centre Limited
Tender Funerals Perth	Volunteering WA	YMCA WA
The Claddagh Association of Western Australia	WA AIDS Council	Yorganop Association Incorporated
The People Place Busselton Inc	WA Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies	Yorgum Healing Services Aboriginal Corporation
The Salvation Army WA Social Program	Wanslea Family Services	Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
The Shopfront	Waratah Support Centre SW Inc	Youth Futures WA Inc
The Smith Family	Waroona Community Resource Centre Inc	Youth Involment Council Inc
The Spiers Centre Inc	Western Urban Associates (WA) Inc (Street Chaplains)	Youth Work WA
Tom Price Youth Support Association Inc	Wheatbelt Agcare Community Support Services Inc	Zonta House Refuge Association Inc
Tuart Place	Women's Health and Family Services	

Social Service Individual Members

Angie Paskevicius	Clare Mullen	Ian Pereira
Ann White	Donna Quinn	James Paxman
Anna Presser	Francis Lynch	Janet Boateng
Brian Cooper	Gary Steadman	Jennie Gray
Brodie Lewis	Helen Creed	Jennifer Monaghan
Carissa Gautam	Helen Liedel	Joe Calleja

Joss Morgan	Michael Berry	Stephanie Boyd
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Kylie Hansen	Noel Harding	Vicki Hamersley
Lorraine Keane	Nyssa Millington	Vida Corbett
Louise Lamont	Philippa Boldy	Wendy Simpson
Maria Harries	Renna Gayde	Yhana Lucas
Marleen Roch	Rochelle Brown	
Matthew Wilson	Sarah McCabe	

Associate Individual Member

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Amanda Prestipino	Janine Freeman	Nandita R Naroth
Anabelle May	Janine Gerard	Rhonda Balzan Bastow
Angela Lemon	Jonathan Seth	Stephen Dawson
Carina Becker	Kadambari Leon	Stuart Reid
Carol Wakely	Katie Hunt	Sue Lines
Chrissie Fearon	Krishan Shah	Tara Roopra
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We advocate for social change to improve the wellbeing of Western Australians and to strengthen the community services sector that supports them.

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