

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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Chairperson's report

2017 has been a very exciting year for the Combined Women's Refuge Group (CWRG) as in June a partnership was fostered with the CEO Challenge and an MOU signed to provide financial support for the Secretariat for the next three years. The CEO Challenge discussed other support options including supporting events, fundraising, utilizing the CEO Challenge website and project work using links with business supports. Funding has always been a significant challenge for the Association, therefore this announcement is sincerely appreciated and welcomed with open arms.

This financial year has seen the flow on effect from the "Not Now, Not Ever" report provided in early 2015. These recommendations continue to be implemented by Government and a strong focus of the CWRG. Included in these recommendations is the setup of various consultation groups which CWRG has been heavily involved to be the voice for women and children in refuge.

We have participated in the Brisbane Region DFV Crisis Accommodation Response Group which is a solution-focused group centred on providing suitable outcomes for women and children affected by Domestic and Family Violence. Several CWRG members attended regularly and provide advocacy for change in this sector.

Attendance at the Building Stronger Support Systems (BSSS) advisory group also started this year. Members are focused on identifying what areas would be considered of most priority and

with input, hope to use the meetings to develop a shared pathway forward in addressing a number of the issues identified in the BSSS final report. This group will also participate in the new practice standards process for women, young people and children.

CWRG attendance continues at the Department of Housing inter-agency working group meetings where complex cases are collected monthly from refuges and presented to the group to discuss housing options. Several successful outcomes were achieved for our most vulnerable clients through this group with the CWRG representation a pinnacle for success.

Discussion has arisen at several of these network meetings around myths and practices within refuges that are false or not current practice. CWRG members have been actively dispelling these myths and are on track to dismiss them for good. Members have also agreed to attend training days at organisations for new staff to discuss these myths in a further follow-up to stop the perpetuation of these falsehoods in the future. Another hot topic of discussion this year at the CWRG meetings and other groups has been around new technology on phones etc and the issues this is creating within the refuge sector and more importantly in attempting to keep women and children in refuge safe. CWRG members have actively sought training and information to keep abreast of the emerging technology then have provided feedback to the wider sector on the key learnings and challenges.

The Executive Committee have also been busy this year and are to be commended for their painstaking work throughout the year to finalise the Mission and Values statements and updating the Constitution to reflect the work that we do and the stance we uphold. This has involved a significant amount of work reviewing and updating the Objectives, Membership Classifications, Voting and Decision Making Processes. The proposed new Mission Statement of the organisation states "The CWRG unites Domestic and Family Violence refuges to advocate for women and children's rights to live a life free from violence". I believe this reflects the passionate focus the women or the CWRG uphold and work tirelessly to fulfil.

I would also like to thank Liz for her tireless efforts throughout the year. Liz has been the CWRG Secretariat for many years now, however her drive and commitment are unflinching. Thank you for keeping us organised and up to date, we are fortunate to have you on board.

Lastly, as per previous years, bi-monthly meetings are attended by our referral services. We appreciate their support and the opportunity to create a collaborative working environment with shared information to provide the best response for the refuge sector and for the women and children we support.

Lisa Marriage
Chairperson

2016-2017 Executive Committee

Chairperson -	Lisa Marriage Madonna House
Vice Chair -	Sue Clarke Koongoora
Secretary -	Cathy Johns Ipswich Women's Shelter
Treasurer -	Bernadette O'Byrne Windana Support Centre
General members -	Heath Truda Women's House
	Stacey Larkin Jebb & Gareema
	Denise Copcutt Gareema
	Carrie Colonna Chisholm

Combined Women's Refuge Group (SE QLD) Annual Report 2017

Our special thanks to Save the Children for our meeting space and to all our guest speakers for 2016-2017:

* Jacque Lachmund & Matt Pronger (Australia's CEO Challenge)

* Bronwyn & Rachel (Women's Legal Service)

* Linda & Andrea (Broken to Brilliant)

* Kathryn Seymour (ANROWS)

* Peta & Olivia (KPMG)

* Christine Makumba & Jan Nunan - Department of Communities

* Leone Crayden - QShelter

* Rachelle Bakker - Department of Education

* Kirsty, Marg and Sue - Department of Communities

Treasurer's report

Year ended 30th June 2017

As the Combined Women's Refuge Group approaches their 40th year of operation, members report that they are busier than ever. Domestic violence and family violence continues to be the leading cause of homelessness and homicide in women ranging from 18 to 45 years. The Counting Dead Women website lists name after name of women who have died at the hands of their intimate partner or family member. From January 1st 2017 until now, approximately 28 women have died and some of these women, like Theresa Bradford on the Gold Coast, were murdered in front of their children.

As the treasurer of the Combined Women's Refuge Group I can report that we struggled this financial year to pay the wages of our Secretariat. Our wages bill came to \$8412.64 and our memberships raised \$5150. We hosted two market days, one at Rocklea and the other at Caboolture and sold

second hand items. This raised a total of \$1422.55. We were also lucky enough to receive a donation of \$1589.45 from Quota through their Buckets of Love program.

We were very excited to learn that Australia's CEO Challenge has agreed to fund the wages of our secretariat. This means that we won't have to struggle each quarter to fund the funds. The memberships used to cover the cost of the Secretariat but memberships haven't increased in line with wage rises over the years and we have been relying on donations and fundraising to meet the shortfall.

This year we decided to change the bank that the CWRG does their financial transactions with. We were advised by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia that they would hold some fundraising activities for the CWRG so we switched from Suncorp to the CBA. The

fundraising activities are still in progress so hopefully, we can look forward to this in the 2017/2018 year.

In Appreciation

I would like to express my appreciation to all those organisation and individuals who raised money and collected donations to assist our women and children. Without these, refuges would find it difficult to meet the needs of our clients.

I would like to thank Share the Dignity for organisation and distributing hand bags and toiletries for women. They were a lovely and useful idea. I would also like to acknowledge the refuge workers who gave up their time to help out at the two market stalls. Getting up incredibly early, setting up the stall and giving up your Sunday was much appreciated.

I would like to acknowledge Liz, our Secretariat. Without you the CWRG would not have achieved as much as they have in the past few years. You have the unenviable job of answering and forwarding on emails, contacting refuges, organising meetings and writing up minutes. The CWRG would be lost without your contribution.

Last but not least I would like to thank the members of the Executive Committee. They have worked hard to ensure that the CWRG remains a viable and strong organisation that can continue to support women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Treasurer's Certification

I hereby certify that the Combined Women's Refuge Group (SE QLD) keeps financial records in a way to properly record the association's income and expenditure and dealings with its assets and liabilities.

Bernadette O'Byrne
Treasurer

Statement of Income

For the Year Ended 30th June 2017

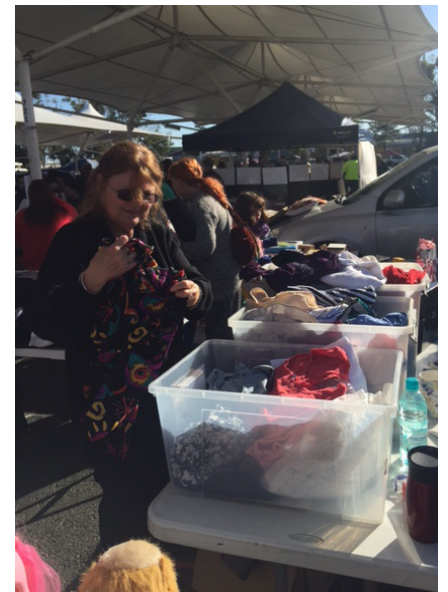
Income	
Donations	\$1,589.45
Fundraising	\$1,422.55
Memberships	\$5,150.00
Bank Interest	\$0.12
Total Income	\$8,162.12
Expenses	
Bank Fees	\$92.34
Consultant's fees	\$0.00
Fees and charges	\$0.00
Wages and salaries	\$8,412.64
Total Expenses	\$8,504.98
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	-\$342.86

2016-2017 highlights

Australia's
CEO
Challenge
partnership



Rocklea &
Caboolture
markets



2016 AGM
panel
discussion



Our mission:

“The Combined Women’s Refuge Group unites Domestic and Family Violence refuges to advocate for women and children’s right to live a life free from violence.”

Our values:

1. Stand against DFV: The CWRG acknowledge that no level of violence against women and children is acceptable. We support the right for women and children to have immediate access to safe and supported accommodation to escape domestic violence, as well as the range of other specialist women’s services that exist when refuge is not required.

2. Advocate for women & children, and refuges/services: The CWRG advocates for social justice, for the interests of women and children escaping domestic and family violence, and for the services which provide them with information, referral, accommodation and support, so that women and children can live free from violence.

3. Best practice: The CWRG is used as a platform to encourage best practice and aims to provide a space to encourage, innovate and share ideas, to ensure that women and children accessing services can be assured to receiving the same level of service provision no matter which service they access.

4. Inclusive access: We support inclusive access for all women and children escaping domestic and family violence and do not discriminate. We also recognise the vital need for specialised support for particularly vulnerable women and children escaping violence including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, CALD clients - particularly those further disadvantaged by lack of access to income, women and children in rural areas, and women and children with disabilities.

5. Have a voice: For CWRG to have a strong voice in the community and with key stakeholders, working together towards our ultimate aim - for women and children to live a life free of violence.

Our history:

* The CWRG provides a forum for women's refuges in the South East QLD region to meet, share information, and discuss and respond to emerging issues in the sector.

CWRG Herstory:

* The existence of women's refuges as a service response to DV in QLD predates the first regional DV service by around a decade.

* The first meeting of CWRG in SE QLD can be traced back to 1978. Women's Refuges state conferences held in 1979 and 1980 discussed topics including the Housing Commission, child care, rape counselling, self help, health care, volunteers and "where are we going?"

* By 1980 the CWRG had 12 operating refuges on its contact list including refuges for alcohol and drug dependent women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and women with mental health care problems. Issues regularly discussed at meetings included: the need for child care workers at all refuges, relations with police, migrant women, child protection, housing and school enrolments.

* Minutes from a CWRG meeting in Dec 1993 reveal that there seemed to be general agreement that the accommodation program SAAP was not the best fit in terms of a funding program for refuges as our core business was to provide women and children escaping violence with support and safety rather than accommodation. This is an ongoing issue and was identified by the Not Now, Not Ever DV taskforce report in 2015.

* CWRG has identified a concern regarding the inability of service funding to cope with Award pay rates. Services have had to reduce staff numbers and hours of work to cope with this. Meanwhile across Australia, on average, one woman is killed every week by a violent partner or ex-partner. This has got to stop!

* DV refuges have a proud legacy and wealth of experience and skills in working with women and children who have experienced violence and abuse.

* In addition to advocating on behalf of individuals, women's refuges have a strong tradition of lobbying and campaigning for law reform and improved institutional responses to DV as well as providing community education. From their activism and inspiration, other specialist DV services have emerged, laws have been established and lives have been saved.

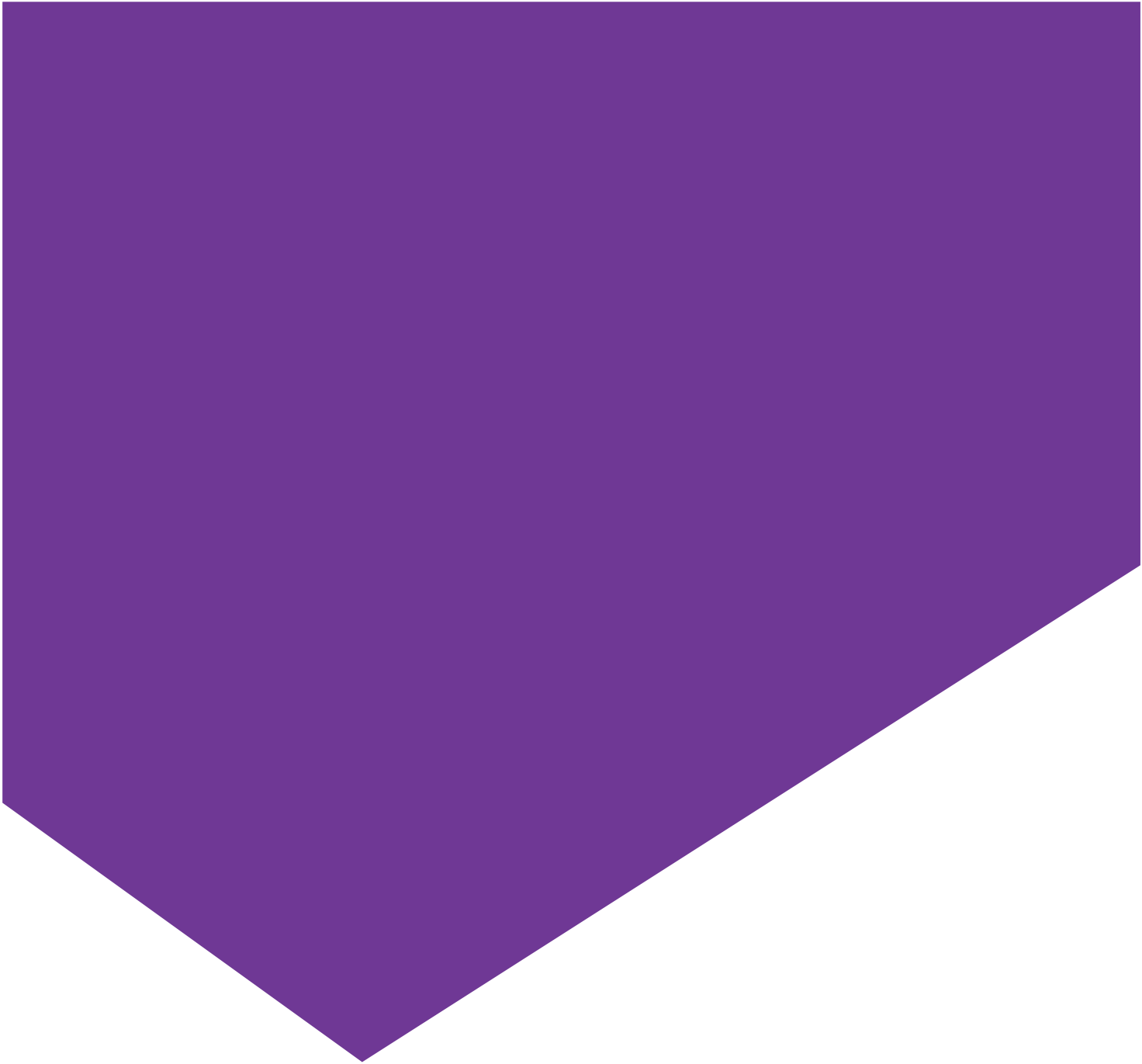
About us:

The Combined Women's Refuge Group in South East QLD (CWRG) is a peak body representing the interests and concerns of the domestic and family violence refuge sector in South East Queensland. Our main aim is to continue to support women and children who are the victims of violence. Domestic and family violence continues to be a serious issue in our community.

In Queensland alone, approximately 23 women are killed by their intimate partner each year (Queensland State Coroner cited in DVConnect 2013). Between 80 and 100 Australian women die at the hands of their male partners every year – and a woman in Australia is more likely to be killed in her own home by her male partner than anywhere else or by anyone else. (ABS Personal Safety Survey 2006 cited in DV Connect 2013) In the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey, over one third of women who had a current or former intimate partner reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence since the age of sixteen. (Mouzos & Makkai 2004, p. 44).

As a peak body, the CWRG aims to provide a platform for refuges to have their concerns raised and action taken to bring these issues to the public's attention. The CWRG is vital to ensuring the refuges and the women and children we support continue to have a voice and to ensure that the issues they face are raised in the public arena, as well as providing a forum for encouraging best practice and collaboration to ensure a high standard of service delivery and improved pathways for women escaping violence.

The CWRG relies on our annual membership fees and donations to operate. These funds go towards costs of: monthly meetings, training, statewide and local meetings, updating resources, payment of secretarial wages and other administrative costs. The CWRG membership is made up of domestic violence refuges and specialist domestic and family violence services. All Executive Committee members are voluntary and the CWRG employs a secretariat to assist in the administration of the CWRG.



www.cwrg.org