



YWCA AUSTRALIA
IMPACT
REPORT

JUNE 2026



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

YWCA Australia wishes to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, live and play and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We recognise First Nations people as the custodians of the lands, seas and skies, with more than 60,000 years of wisdom, connection and relationship in caring for Country.



CEO FOREWORD



Meaningful accountability begins with learning, not perfection.

– Michelle Phillips, Group CEO

I am proud to introduce YWCA Australia's first Impact Report.

This report marks an important milestone for our organisation. For more than a century, YWCA has worked alongside women and gender diverse people to create safer, fairer and more equitable futures. While our purpose has always been clear, this is the first time we have brought together a national view of the difference we are making.

At YWCA, understanding our impact is grounded in our responsibility to the people we serve every day: women and gender diverse people finding safety and stability in our housing, young women building confidence and leadership through our programs, and communities strengthened by support that is practical, respectful and enduring. We want to understand what is changing for the people we support through our work and how we can support them more effectively.

I would like to thank those of you who have made this possible, our YWCA team members, volunteers, members and partners across Australia. Your commitment to the people we support and to learning, reflecting and adapting is what makes impact real.

Measuring social impact is complex, particularly across diverse communities and service models, but meaningful accountability begins with learning, not perfection. This report sets a foundation for building stronger evidence, clearer frameworks and more consistent ways of listening to the voices of those with lived experience. YWCA will continue to make a meaningful difference, now and into the future.

Michelle Phillips

GROUP CEO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

CEO Foreword	1
1. About YWCA	4
2. Our why: Theory of Change and long term outcomes	12
3. YWCA's Impact Framework	16
4. Are we making a difference through our targeted and specialist supports?	20
5. Are we making a difference through our community housing?	44
6. Are we making a difference in how we exercise influence?	56
7. How are we reflecting and learning?	60
8. Future directions for impact	68

YWCA Australia would like to thank all of the residents, clients and team members who contributed to this report, and acknowledge our partners Think Impact and Simple and Engaging, and designer Itsmi Design.



1. ABOUT YWCA

140+ years 
supporting women
and gender diverse people

200+ 
employees

19 
locations

500+ 
homes provided

27 
programs delivered

YWCA is a national not-for-profit organisation that has specialised in supporting women and gender diverse people for over 140 years. With more than 200 employees across 19 locations, YWCA provides housing, support services and leadership pathways that enable women and gender diverse people and their families to find stability and feel safe and secure, so they can build the future they want. We also operate Song Hotel, a profit-for-purpose business where proceeds are reinvested and contribute to the work of YWCA.

We are experts in gender-responsive housing and homelessness solutions.

YWCA's experienced local teams support our clients and residents to stabilise their current situation, strengthen capacity to access key supports, and progress goals for their future.

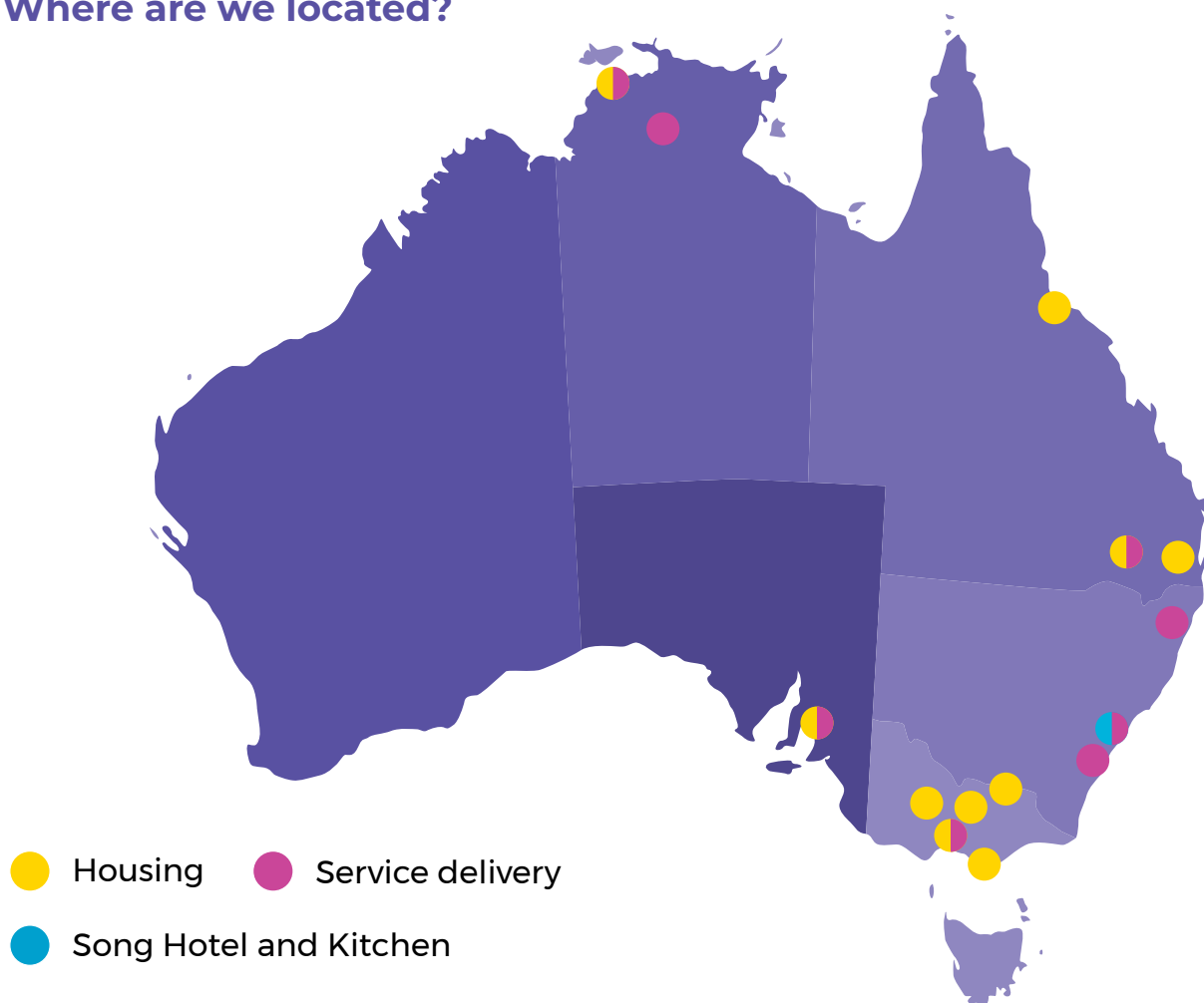
YWCA provides social and affordable housing for women and gender diverse people as well as some transitional housing. The organisation is the largest national provider of long-term affordable accommodation to women, providing more than 500 homes across Australia.

We also deliver 27 tailored specialist support programs nationally, including leadership, homelessness, sustaining tenancies, and family and domestic violence services.

YWCA offers opportunities that centre the leadership and expertise of women, gender diverse people and people with lived experience who are passionate about removing the barriers that stand in the way of women's housing security.

Together, we are working towards a future where gender equality is a reality, and every woman has a safe and secure place to call home.

Where are we located?



Northern Territory

Darwin (Palmerston) – Larrakia Country
Batchelor – Kungarakan and Warrai Country
Adelaide River – Kungarakan and Warrai Country
Katherine – Jawoyn, Dagoman and Wardaman Country

New South Wales

Northern Rivers – Bundjalung Country
Sydney – Gadigal and Wangal Country
Shoalhaven – Dharawal and Yuin Country
Wingecarribee – Gundungurra and Dharawal Country
Illawarra – Dharawal and Wodi Wodi Country

Queensland

Ipswich – Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul Country
Toowoomba – Giabal and Jarowair Country
Townsville – Gugu Badhun Country

South Australia

Adelaide/Tarntanya – Kurna Country

Victoria

Ballarat – Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung Country
Bendigo – Dja Dja Wurrung Country
Geelong – Wadawurrung Country
Melbourne/Naarm – Wurundjeri and Bunurong Country
Mooroopna – Yorta Yorta Country
Wodonga/Baranduda – No Recognised Aboriginal Party

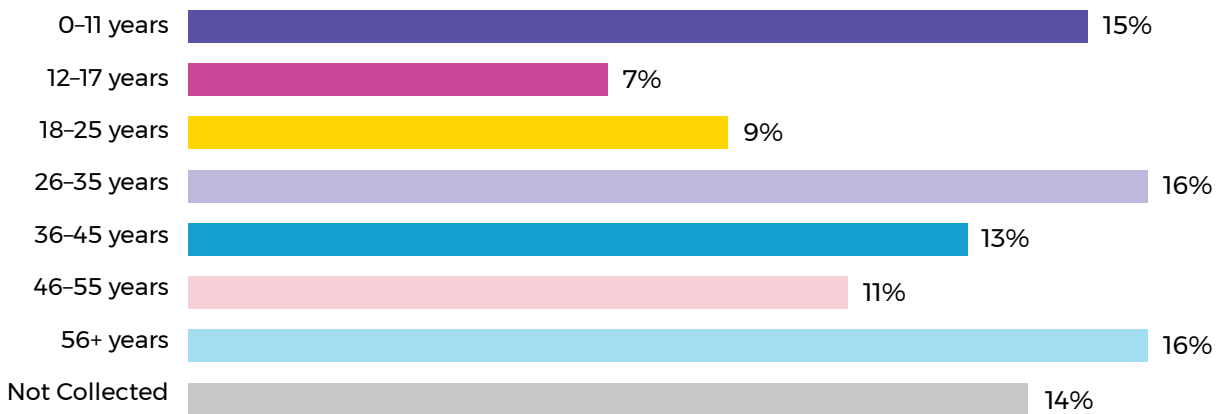
WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

6,532 

clients and residents accessed our services in 2025

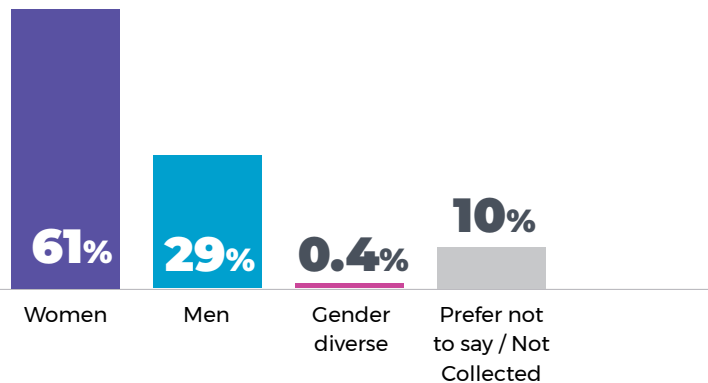
By age

Our clients and their families came from a wide range of age groups.



Data recorded for 5,638 clients

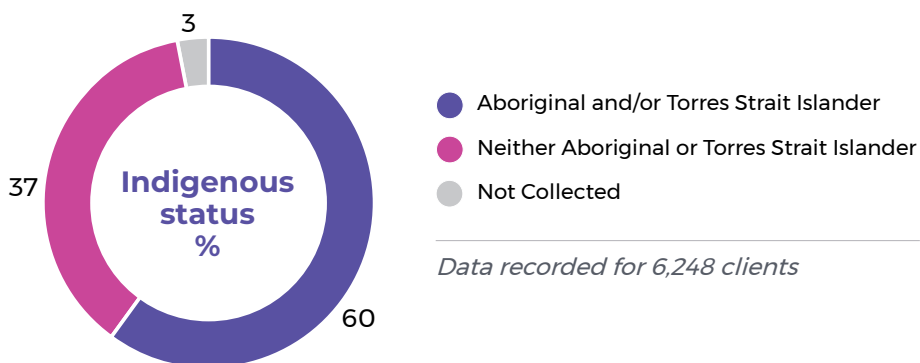
Nearly two-thirds 
of clients identified as women




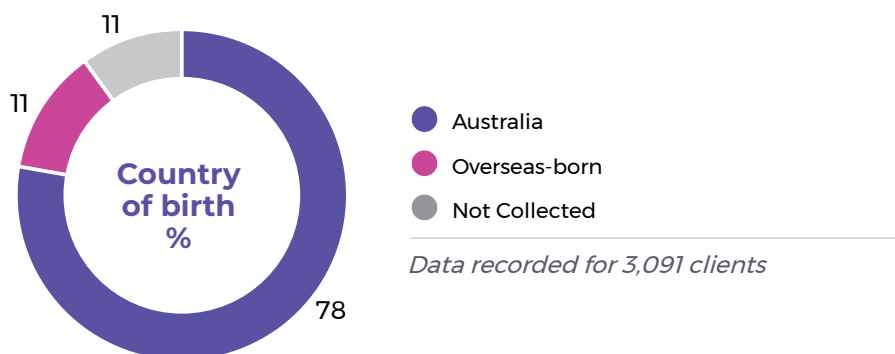
Data recorded for 6,353 clients

Of our clients and residents, around 60% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Most clients were born in Australia and spoke English as their primary language.

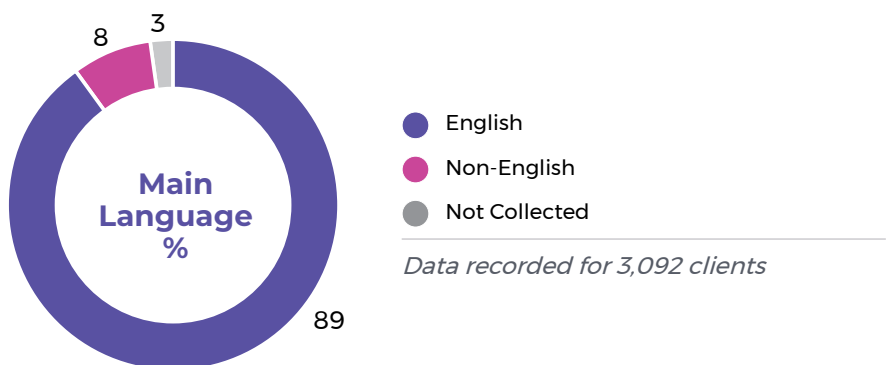
60% 
 identified as Aboriginal
 and/or Torres Strait
 Islander



78% 
 were born in Australia

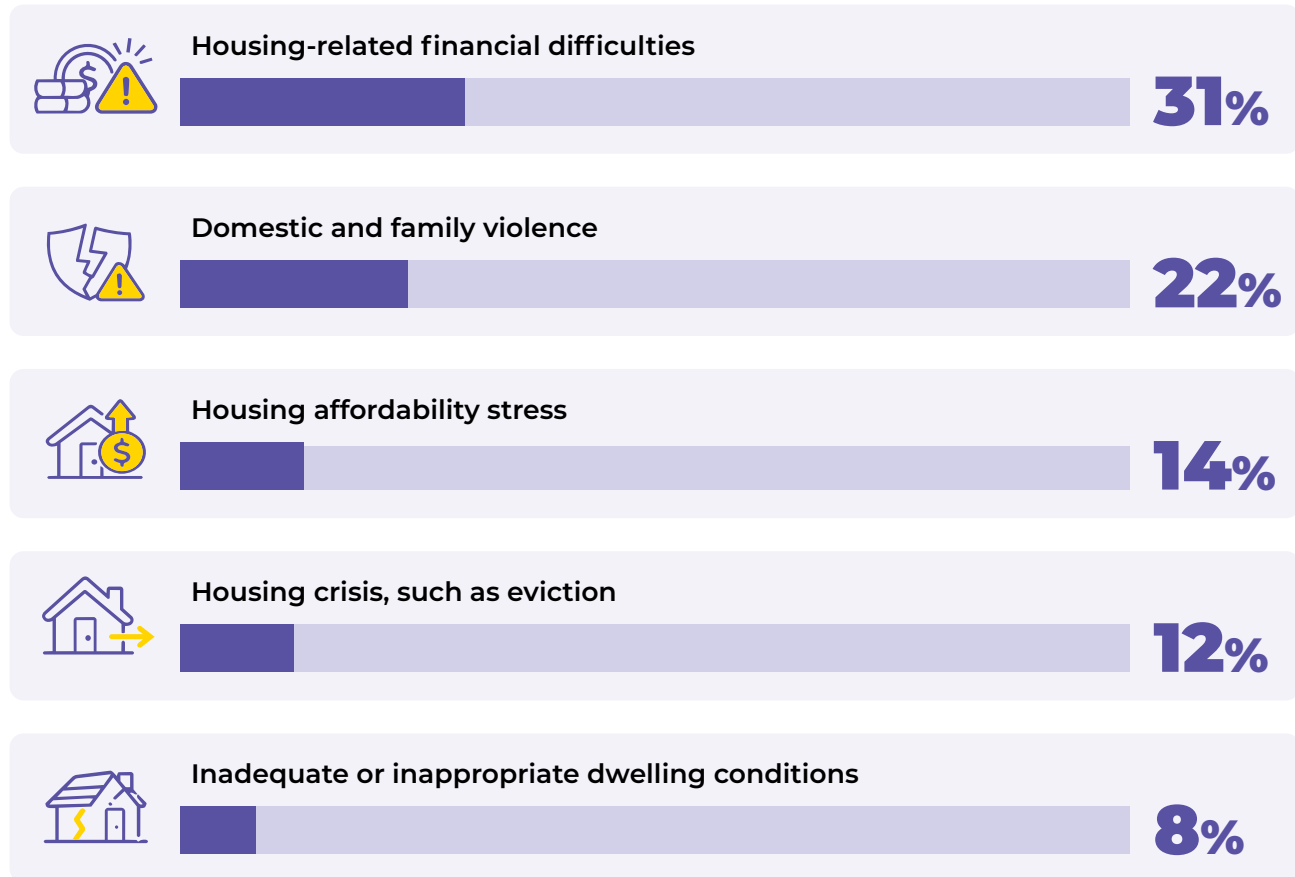


89% 
 spoke English as their
 primary language



Why clients and residents came to us

People accessed our housing and services for a range of reasons, according to specific needs. In our specialist homelessness services, the main presenting issues were:



It should be noted that the key driver of housing insecurity and homelessness among women is family, domestic and sexual violence. This is often not disclosed as the main presenting issue upon initial contact. It is more likely to be identified subsequently.

Data recorded for 1147 clients across Specialist Homelessness Services programs.

Other issues were also recorded for some clients, including problematic drug or substance use, problematic gambling, disengagement from education or training, and transition from custodial or care arrangements.

Our members

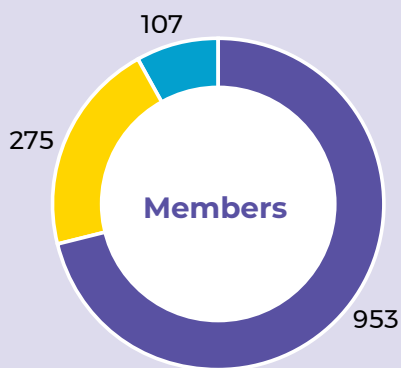
YWCA is supported by our members across Australia.

In 2025, our members included:

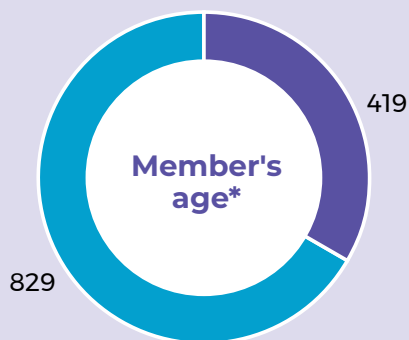
1,525 

members across YWCA's national network

Nearly 2 in 3 members were aged 30 and under



- Ordinary Members, including 190 Digital Activist Community members
- Associate Members
- Life Members



- 30 and under
- Over 30

** not all members give their age or DOB.*



How do we advocate for change?

YWCA has a long history of advocacy, with a key focus on systems change towards a future where gender equality is a reality. Our advocacy is informed by credible research and evidence, and the voices and lived experiences of women and gender diverse people experiencing gender-based violence, housing insecurity and risk of homelessness. This ensures our calls for change are grounded, practical and solutions focussed.

YWCA advocacy includes evidence-based submissions, direct engagement with decision-makers, and national campaigns. We advocate directly and in partnership with allies to spotlight key issues, maximise focus, and identify opportunities for positive change.

Our advocacy is strengthened by the leadership of our Young Women’s Council and Digital Activist Member Community, whose insights and lived experiences shape our messaging, campaigns and research. Through targeted training, mentorship and leadership development, we are building a national movement of young advocates equipped to influence policy and systems change.

Our advocacy is inherently relational and cumulative. In 2025, it has strengthened YWCA’s access to decision-makers, increased our influence at key policy and funding decision points, and positioned the organisation as a trusted partner. Advocacy has contributed to housing expansion, supported successful bids, and influenced the inclusion of key cohorts within national funding frameworks, including the National Housing Infrastructure Facility and Housing Australia Future Fund.

Delivered the **Safe Homes, Equal Futures** Federal Election campaign



SAFE HOMES EQUAL FUTURES

Engaged the **Digital Activist Community** through national campaigns, including participation in initiatives, supporting young people to engage in advocacy and public discourse




Commissioned national polling on the housing security of young women and gender-diverse people



Secured the **South Australian Premier and four Cabinet Ministers** at the Adelaide Affordable Housing launch



Secured a **youth representative position on the NSW Women's Advisory Council**, embedding young women's voices into formal policy processes



60+
targeted letters
to Ministers, MPs, Senators and key decision-makers issued



15 **formal submissions**
delivered, including Federal and State budget bids, aligned to key funding and policy decision points

Delivered **YWCA-led advocacy delegations to Canberra**, including direct engagement between young leaders and federal decision-makers





Presented on gender-responsive housing at the **2025 AHURI National Housing Conference**



50+
high-level meetings across Commonwealth, State and Territory governments



Delivered **lived experience storytelling and advocacy training**, building capability for safe, effective and sustained participation in policy and systems advocacy



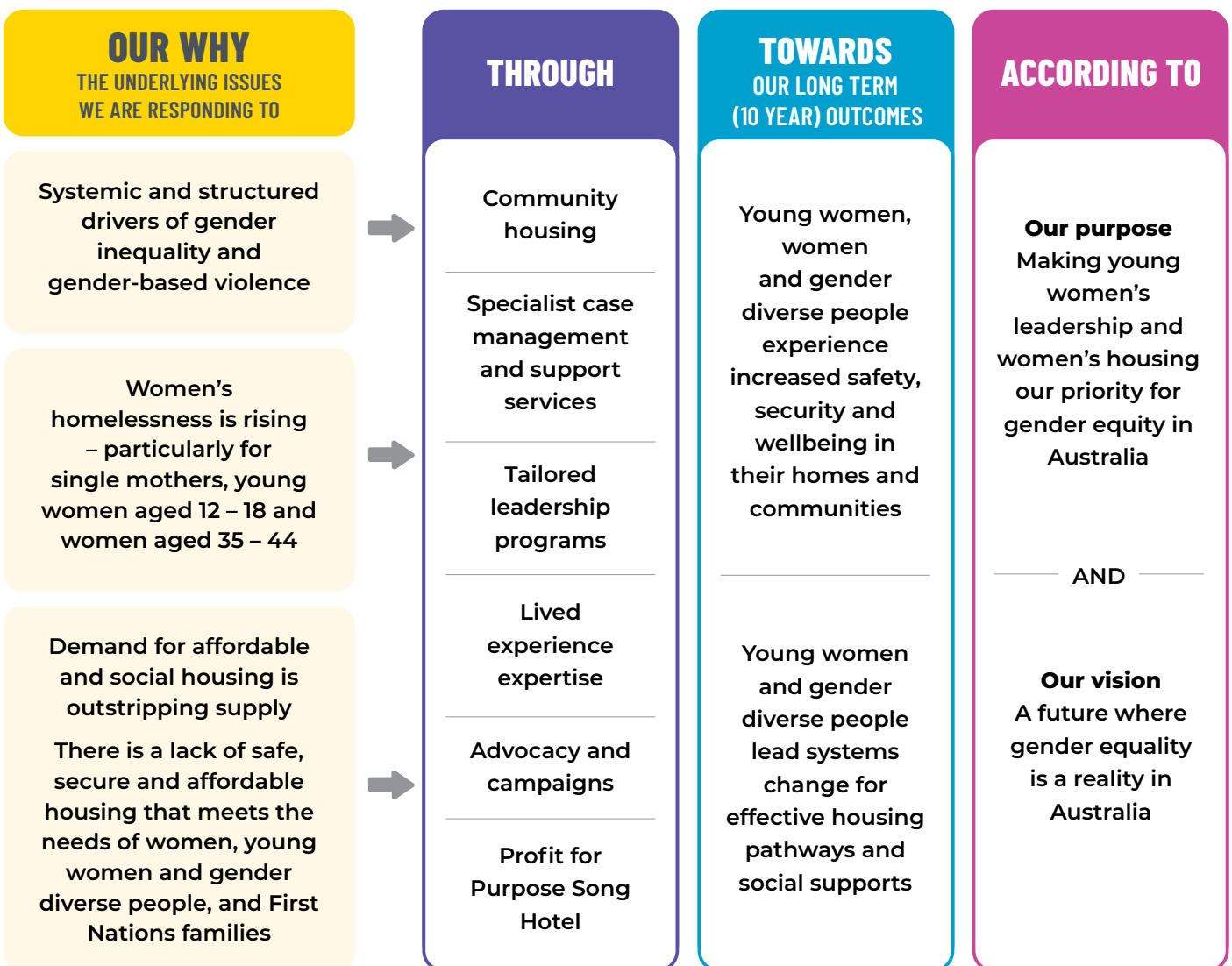
Held the **YWCA Young Women's Council in-person Summit**, strengthening national leadership, policy capability and peer networks

2. OUR WHY: THEORY OF CHANGE AND LONG TERM OUTCOMES

YWCA is clearly focussed on achieving change and contributing to positive social impact. Our Theory of Change defines our why (the problem we are addressing), our role, and the change we want to achieve. The Theory of Change is big picture, future-focussed, and sets up the how (our Strategic Plan), guided by short, medium and long-term outcomes for impact.

Why is our Theory of Change important?

- It defines our vision and purpose
- It supports clarity of focus and effort
- It defines the high-level outcomes we want to work towards
- It succinctly outlines our organisational 'why', for us and our stakeholders.



What is the problem we are responding to?

Housing access and pathways are gendered and intersectional, due to the systemic and structural drivers of gender inequality and family and domestic violence.

79%

of one-parent families are led by single mothers

single mothers 18-35

are more likely to experience housing precarity than single fathers

30%

of retired women rely on partner income vs 9% of retired men

1 in 4 Women

have experienced violence from an intimate partner compared with 1 in 14 men

40%

of homelessness service clients accessed support due to family and domestic violence

- Women are more likely to be raising a child on their own – 79% of one parent families are led by single mothers, and they are less likely to be employed than single fathers.¹
- Single mothers aged 18 – 35 years are more likely to be in housing precarity than single fathers (The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey), and they are over-represented in social housing, particularly those aged 15 – 34 years.²
- Women experience structural disadvantage - unequal employment, the 12% gender pay gap and fragmented work lives due to caring responsibilities shape women's experiences and access to affordable rental housing. In 2024, women's median superannuation balance on retirement was 25% lower than for men.³
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 14 men have experienced violence from an intimate partner since the age of 15.⁴
- 1 in 6 women and about 1 in 18 men have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a current or previous partner since the age of 15.⁵
- Family and domestic violence is a key driver of homelessness – making up 40% of all clients accessing specialist homelessness services in 2024-25.⁶
- Clients who had experienced family and domestic violence were most likely to be women and children, nearly half living in single parent families.⁷
- The challenges are compounded for First Nations women, women with disability, migrants and asylum seekers, and gender diverse people, due to institutional and structural discrimination, social and economic inequity, and lack of appropriate housing and supports.

1. ABS Labour Force Status of Families, June 2025

2. AHURI report, Gendered housing matters: toward gender responsive data and policy making, Feb 2024

3. An update on superannuation account balances Sept 2024, The Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia Ltd

4. ABS Personal Safety Survey 2021-22

5. ABS Personal Safety Survey 2021-22

6. AIHW, Specialist homelessness services annual report 2024-25

7. AIHW, Specialist homelessness services annual report 2024-25

Homelessness among women is rising, and most particularly among younger women.

10% increase in homelessness among women vs 2% among men

18% increase in homelessness among young women aged 12–18

20% increase in homelessness among women aged 35–44

Rates of homelessness among women grew 10% from 2016 to 2021, compared to 2% for men. The number of homeless young women aged 12 – 18 increased by nearly 18% over this period. The number of homeless women aged 35 to 44 increased by 20%.

(ABS, Homelessness; having financial security and access to housing, 2025).

Homelessness among women is often invisible in homelessness data. Women may not identify as homeless, manage it differently to men, and avoid rough sleeping so may not be represented in street counts.

(AHURI report, Gendered housing matters: toward gender responsive data and policy making, Feb 2024).

Insecure and temporary tenure, overcrowding, an unsafe environment and lack of choice and control over living conditions, may all render a woman effectively homeless.

There is a lack of safe, secure and affordable housing that meets the needs of young women, women and gender diverse people.

In 2026, demand is continuing to outstrip supply, particularly in relation to affordable and social housing available to low-income households.

Existing supply is often limited by traditional typologies that do not cater to the needs of women and gender diverse people, and may not be appropriately located with connections to community and required social supports.

The lack of safe, secure, accessible and affordable housing is a key issue in blocking exits from crisis and temporary accommodation and specialist homelessness assistance.



3. YWCA'S IMPACT FRAMEWORK

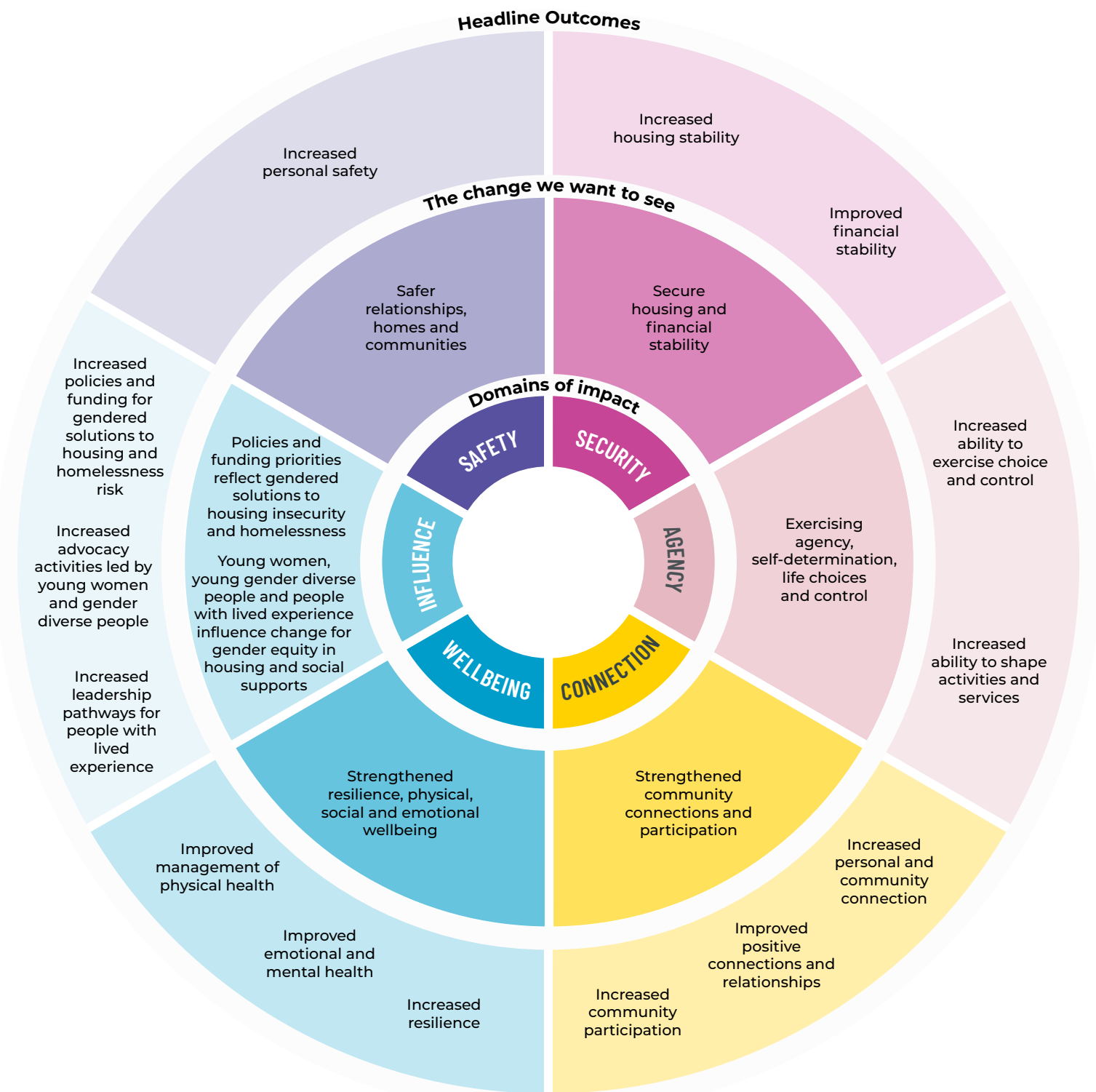
Our Impact Framework enables us to track change according to our long term (10 year) outcomes.

It was informed by consultations with clients, residents and team members, and assessed against key research and outcomes frameworks. The Framework was developed, piloted and refined in partnership with teams and Think Impact, specialists in social impact measurement.

The Framework asks 'are we making a difference' across our housing, service delivery and advocacy activities.

It is framed around key domains of impact, headline outcomes and measures of change. Five domains of impact relate to client and resident outcomes according to Safety, Security, Agency, Connection and Wellbeing. The sixth domain of Influence relates to systems change for gendered housing solutions and homelessness supports.

<p>SAFETY</p>	<p>... is a core aspect of gender equality, where women, young women and gender diverse people are safe, respected and valued in their homes, relationships and communities.</p> <p>We enable improved personal safety, whilst advocating for primary prevention in gender-based violence. We provide targeted supports, housing and advocacy opportunities to address the impacts of gender-based violence.</p>
<p>SECURITY</p>	<p>... is supported by stable housing and financial resources.</p> <p>We enable people to access housing that is stable, affordable and appropriate, and supports financial stability. We provide targeted supports and housing for a stable and secure future.</p>
<p>AGENCY</p>	<p>... the power of self-determination, choice and control.</p> <p>We enable agency by respecting and valuing individual strengths, abilities and lived expertise. We provide opportunities for people to determine their own priorities and pathways, and to help shape our housing and services.</p>
<p>CONNECTION</p>	<p>... builds belonging, participation and support.</p> <p>We enable people to connect with community, supports and interests. We provide assistance through support planning to build continuing connections according to needs, interests and aspirations.</p>
<p>WELLBEING</p>	<p>... relates to social and emotional health, optimism, resilience and physical wellbeing.</p> <p>We enable people to navigate challenges, strengthen resilience and hope for the future. We provide supports that address critical needs and help people plan for their future wellbeing.</p>
<p>INFLUENCE</p>	<p>... is about systems change to support intersectional and gendered solutions to housing insecurity and homelessness.</p> <p>We amplify the voices of young women and gender diverse people to drive systems change. We provide opportunities for lived experience advocates to inform decision-makers and lead change.</p>



We assess our impact through client and resident impact surveys every 18 months, to measure change in relation to safety, security, agency, connection and wellbeing. The surveys are conducted at a point in time, self-completed or with assistance if requested, and offered in online and paper formats.

We have recently piloted an approach to measuring impact according to the domain of influence and will be building on this further in the coming year.



ANDREA'S STORY

Andrea, a healthcare professional in Melbourne, was inspired to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged young people after seeing the positive impact of foster carers through her work. Unable to foster herself but still wanting to make a difference, Andrea came across the Asista Mentoring Program and thought it was the perfect fit.

"I know the research says all you need is one person in your life that believes in you to guide you, no matter how bad your situation is. I wanted to be that person for someone", shared Andrea.

After applying to be a mentor and going through mentor training, Andrea was matched with Matilda, a young woman in Melbourne's outer suburbs entering grade 9 at a local high school.

When they first met, Matilda was quiet and withdrawn, and took a little time to connect with Andrea. After discovering a shared interest in science and musical theatre, a friendship began to blossom.

“She asked me what I did for work, and I told her I have a background in science. She got this big smile on her face, and tells me how much she loves science. I could see she was thinking ‘this person can help me get where I want to go’”.

Over the last few years, Andrea and Matilda have attended a variety of musical theatre shows, undertaken craft classes, gone to art shows and explored other creative pursuits. Matilda always finds interesting and unexpected activities she wants to do, and Andrea is happy to accommodate.

“The Asista Mentoring Program is great because it gives these girls someone from outside of their life who is happy to do things they might not have the opportunity to do otherwise.”

Matilda is now in her final year of school, and looking ahead to her future. She asked Andrea to come with her to an upcoming university open day to learn more about her study options and courses.

“I think if the young women in the program are encouraged to go beyond year 12 and have a dream to be able to do something, it gives them a lot more opportunity, freedom and choice in life.”

The Asista Mentoring Program utilises the power of role models to positively impact girls aged 12-18 in the child protection system on their journey to become strong, resilient adults.

Through a range of social and recreational activities, ‘matches’ develop genuine and reciprocal relationships that build self-esteem, resilience and confidence. All volunteer mentors are provided with ongoing support, training and supervision.



I really enjoy spending the time with Matilda and have seen her confidence and self-esteem grow,”

– Andrea

4. ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH OUR TARGETED AND SPECIALIST SUPPORTS?

In 2025

The following represents headline data from across our services and programs. Our programs include specialist homelessness services, case management and tenancy supports, mentoring and leadership programs, and specialist family and domestic violence services.

SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% clients feel safer • 89% feel supported when it comes to their personal safety • For over 1 in 5 clients (22%) presenting to specialist homelessness services, the main presenting issue was identified as domestic and family violence <p><i>'My life is much more stable in a safe home' – YWCA client</i></p>
SECURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78% clients feel their housing situation is more stable • 69% decrease in clients sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation • 31% decrease in clients in short-term or emergency accommodation • 52% increase in clients in stable housing by the end of support
AGENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88% clients feel they make positive choices for themselves • 88% clients feel encouraged to make suggestions about YWCA services • 61% of actions in case plans were mostly or fully achieved <p><i>'YWCA support has helped my confidence to access the services to help me and my family.' – YWCA Client</i></p>
CONNECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93% clients feel better connected with the supports they need • 81% clients are participating more in activities they enjoy • Clients in our specialist homelessness services were assisted to connect with services and supports more than 7,000 times
WELLBEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 88% clients are better able to look after their emotional wellbeing • 85% clients feel more optimistic about the future



Having a case manager who genuinely cared made all the difference — it helped me feel more confident, more stable, and more hopeful about the future for both me and my daughter... there are still people and organisations out there who truly want to help women rebuild their lives with dignity and strength."

– YWCA Client

Domains of impact

Safety

Safety was an important area of impact in 2025.

In 2025, as a result of our services and support:

85%
of clients felt
safer

89%
felt supported when it comes
to their personal safety



Safety is a critical area of impact

Client responses show that when safety improves, change is significant. Feedback described positive changes including feeling safer, leaving violent or unsafe relationships and moving into safer home environments.

These outcomes reflect different ways safety can improve, from reducing immediate risk to creating safer and more stable living environments.

Support helped clients move into safer situations and stabilise their lives

Several client responses showed how practical support such as housing and case worker support contributed to these changes. For some clients this meant finally having a safe place to live or no longer being in a violent household.

Safety was also connected with other areas of change, particularly agency, security and connection. This suggests that feeling safer was rarely an isolated outcome, but part of a broader shift towards stability and recovery.

Safety is complex and multifaceted. For some clients, improvements involve leaving violence and unsafe situations, which can also bring new challenges. For others, it means remaining in their home but with increased safety measures and support. This highlights that safety is not always a single outcome at a point in time. In the context of family and domestic violence, it can shift and change with continuing risks, effects and trauma.

Clients were less likely to reflect on safety issues in responses to open survey questions. However, those who did highlighted meaningful change in relation to significant risk.



I can see my life getting better now and not in the vicious cycle of a domestic violence household.” – YWCA Client



The placement I’m in now is the safest I’ve ever felt in my life and I can see it’s really allowed my [child] and I to thrive so well.”
– YWCA Client



I’ve had access to a safe place. I have been able to grow my savings and work on myself.”
– YWCA Client

Security

Security was a key area of impact in 2025, most clearly reflected through improvements in housing stability.

In 2025, as a result of our services and support:



78%
of clients felt their housing situation was more stable

74%
felt their housing had what they need

69%
decrease in clients sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation

52%
increase in clients in stable housing by the end of support

31%
decrease in clients in short-term or emergency accommodation

Housing security improved, creating stability and a foundation for daily life

Client feedback showed that housing security went beyond simply having a place to stay. For many, it meant moving out of homelessness or unstable situations, accessing longer-term housing, and having a space that was safe, suitable and able to support daily life.

This included having a stable home for themselves and their children, being able to maintain a home environment and having the security to focus on other parts of life. For some clients, this stability reduced stress and created the conditions to focus on work, education and family wellbeing.

Support helped build practical and financial stability

Security was also shaped by the practical support clients received to make their housing and finances more manageable. This included help to access housing, navigate systems, secure access to social security supports and obtain essential items such as groceries, furniture and household goods.

Around two thirds of client responses reported being able to meet their everyday needs, indicating a level of financial stability that allowed them to manage day-to-day life. However, many did not have money left over to save and some continued to experience cost pressures or debt, suggesting longer-term financial security is still developing.

|| *It has had a very positive effect on my life allowing me to study and work whilst having a roof over my head.*
– YWCA Client

|| *YWCA has expanded my housing options and have fought on my behalf to help me with my housing needs.* – YWCA Client

|| *It's given me the opportunity to connect with the help I need without worrying about finances.* – YWCA Client

|| *YWCA have been extremely helpful and have got me on my feet from helping me with my housing, being very supportive through the struggles I have been dealing with and also helping me apply for a job that I am still currently in, my case worker has been amazing!* – YWCA Client

Agency

Agency was a strong area of impact in 2025, reflecting increased confidence, choice and ability to move forward.

In 2025, as a result of our services and support:

88%
felt they make positive choices
for themselves

87%
of clients felt they had positive
relationships in their life

Confidence and self-belief increased

Client responses show that agency was most often experienced through increased confidence and self-belief. Many clients described feeling more capable, more hopeful and better able to manage their lives.

Others described gaining confidence in specific areas, such as parenting, relationships and daily decision-making.

This increase in confidence often reflected a shift from feeling overwhelmed or uncertain to feeling more in control and able to take positive steps forward.

Clients felt more able to make choices and move forward

Alongside increased confidence, clients described building the skills and capability to make decisions and take action. This was often supported by guidance, encouragement and practical assistance. This is reflected in service data showing 61% of actions in client plans were mostly or fully achieved.

They described pursuing education, finding work, planning for the future and navigating services more independently.

These changes point to support that helps clients not only feel more confident, but also act on that confidence by making choices, setting goals and moving towards greater independence.



88%
felt encouraged to make
suggestions about services

61%
of actions in case plans were
mostly or fully achieved

“My ability to function as a person has gone up dramatically since starting this program. Before the program I...struggled leaving the house.” – YWCA Client

“YWCA support has helped my confidence... I have become more able to seek out services and learn about things I wouldn't have usually had the opportunity to.” – YWCA Client

“Socially I feel a bit more confident and more motivated.” – YWCA Client

“I was encouraged to find and pursue what I want to work in.” – YWCA Client

Connection

Connection was a consistently strong area of impact across 2025.

In 2025, as a result of our services and support:

93%
of clients felt better connected to the supports they need

81%
participated more in activities they enjoy

76%
felt better connected to those close to them

73%
felt more connected to their community

79%
had better access to activities they enjoy



Connection starts with access to support

Client feedback reflects this too. Just over half of survey respondents (55%) described positive changes in connection. The majority of these responses focussed on access to practical supports such as counselling, housing, childcare, health services and advocacy. This showed access to support was a central part of the way many clients experienced change, often enabled through trusted relationships with case workers.

Connection grows over time through participation and belonging

Clients described connection differently depending on how long they had been working with YWCA. More recent clients often focussed on accessing support, while longer-term clients also reflected participation, relationships and community connection.

Around one in six responses (17%) referred to making friends, attending activities and becoming more engaged in their communities. Others described pathways into education, employment and stronger family relationships.

This emerging pattern suggests connection can progress from immediate support towards longer-term inclusion.

Connection underpins broader change

Connection was also identified as a key enabler of improved agency, wellbeing and security.

Service data reflects this pattern. Connection-related support was the most common form of support provided, regardless of the primary need identified. This shows that connection was often closely linked with other positive changes in clients' lives.



My case manager provides valuable advice and helpful contacts in each area where I need support. This guidance is instrumental in assisting me on my journey.” – YWCA Client



I was able to access accessible activity...I also had a community who included me and adjusted activities for that to happen.” – YWCA Client



YWCA helped me get cheap access to gyms and now I go approx 4 times per week and that helps my mental wellbeing.” – YWCA Client

Wellbeing

Wellbeing was a strong area of impact in 2025, reflecting improvements in emotional wellbeing, optimism and ability to cope with challenges.

In 2025, as a result of our services and support:

88%

of clients were better able to look after their emotional wellbeing

85%

felt more optimistic about the future

Emotional wellbeing improved, with clients feeling supported and cared for

Client responses show that wellbeing was most often experienced through improvements in emotional wellbeing. Many clients described feeling more positive, less overwhelmed and better able to manage their mental health.

A strong theme was also feeling supported and less alone. Clients described having someone to talk to, feeling understood and receiving reassurance during difficult times.

These experiences contributed to a greater sense of emotional stability and wellbeing.

Clients felt more optimistic and better able to cope with challenges

Alongside improvements in emotional wellbeing, clients described a more positive outlook on the future and an increased ability to cope with challenges.

Some described reduced stress and anxiety, while others described feeling stronger, more resilient and better able to manage difficult situations.

These changes point to improvements in wellbeing that were not only about how clients felt, but also how they were able to respond to life's challenges and move forward.



87%

were better able to deal with life's challenges

81%

were better able to look after their physical health



My mental health has improved and I've been more motivated and productive." – YWCA Client



[He] is a massive support regarding my mental health too. He truly goes above and beyond to make my time less difficult. He has also gotten me mental health support. He truly is the best case worker I have ever had in my homeless journey." – YWCA Client



Having someone walk alongside me during such a stressful time meant a lot." – YWCA Client



I wouldn't be here today and able to continue being a mum to my children without all the help and support I've received and continue to receive." – YWCA Client



[I have] been able to focus on the future and not being so worried about what might happen." – YWCA Client

HANNAH AND LARA

"Hannah seems to be in a really good place at the moment and TAFE seems to be helping a lot, giving her a reason to get out of the house and learn and socialise."

"We had already previously spoken about how grateful we are for our friendship that we've formed through Youth Frontiers and that we would both love to stay in contact moving forward. I wrote her a nice card expressing this which she was really touched by."

"We spoke about how it's sometimes difficult to line up our busy schedules but despite this, we know how much we both care for each other and will try to make time to see each other when we can."

** Name changed, Youth Frontiers Mentor*



We talked the whole time covering all the big topics: boys, TAFE, work, mum, dad, uni, politics, mental health, self-care, friends etc. "

– Youth Frontiers Mentor



Inner City Rapid Response Homelessness Service (Sydney)

In 2025:

355

clients were supported

25,812

support days were provided

12,905

accommodation bed nights were provided

\$74,628

direct financial assistance to clients was provided

53%

fewer clients were sleeping rough

66%

of actions in case plans were mostly or fully achieved

The Inner-City Rapid Response Homelessness Service supports young people, single women, single men, and families who are experiencing homelessness in Sydney. The service is delivered in partnership with Haymarket Foundation.

The program provides holistic case management support, including the use of brokerage, to support clients to exit homelessness into safe, affordable and sustainable accommodation.

The program also has a number of transitional housing properties which provide subsidised rent and supported tenancies for up to 18 months, while case managers support residents to secure long term housing and work towards their identified goals.

Clients moved into more stable housing during the year

The program successfully supported clients to move away from homelessness and crisis accommodation into more stable housing in 2025. The number of clients recorded as sleeping rough fell by 53% (from 100 to 47), while the number in more stable housing more than doubled (93 to 213).

There were also broader signs of housing stability. More clients were living in a house, townhouse or flat (+27%), public housing placements more than doubled, and the number formally named on a lease increased by 41%. Couch surfing also fell by 32%.

Clients told us these changes often improved other parts of life, including mental health, safety, finances and hope for the future.

Support extended beyond immediate needs to sustain housing

The program supported clients to access and maintain housing. This included 12,905 accommodation bed nights, with most (74%) in transitional accommodation.

Financial assistance also supported tenancies, with 62% of the \$74,600+ provided used to help clients establish or maintain housing.

41%

increase in clients formally named on a lease



[My] physical and mental wellbeing has improved almost 90 percent and my memory has improved, I'm not as forgetful, I deal with stress much better and have a safe home."

– YWCA Client



I'm housed in a beautiful place and it's because of the support and persistence of my YWCA worker."

– YWCA Client



Clients took steps towards greater stability

Clients came to the program with high housing needs, and many took practical steps towards greater stability during support.

The program provides a wide range of practical supports, including advice and information, advocacy, transport, living skills support, financial aid/support, specialised services, and help to sustain tenancy or prevent eviction.

Overall, 66% of actions in client plans were mostly or fully achieved - 61% were fully achieved.

This progress was also reflected for clients exiting support, with 64% of exits recorded because immediate needs had been met or goals were achieved.

Opportunities to strengthen the service experience

There are ongoing gaps in access to housing, particularly for long-term, transitional and emergency accommodation. Over half of unmet need was due to no accommodation being available. This highlights systemic barriers and the need to increase housing supply, strengthen pathways into longer-term housing and improve access to stable accommodation.

Reflecting and acting on data

The Rapid Response program reflects on data and feedback in different ways. The Client Impact Survey is identified as an opportunity to hear from clients about changes in their lives, as a result of accessing services and supports.

The team also receive feedback in other ways. Recently, clients living in transitional accommodation highlighted the negative effects of living in small units at close quarters, and with limited social contact. As a result, the team have introduced community engagement activities such as visits to the movies and local cafes. The events have been received positively, helping people to get to know one another, build trust with the team, and participate in activities that may not usually be accessible due to cost.

These figures draw on different program data sources collected across 2025, so they are not all based on the same unit. Some reflect unique clients, while others reflect support delivered, accommodation provided, progress against client plans, or outcomes at the end of support.

66%

of actions in client plans were mostly or fully achieved

64%

of clients exited support after immediate needs or goals were met

||

I am able to speak up for myself better and get things done. I have gotten more confidence also"

– YWCA Client

||

"... from the impact survey, we definitely learn from the many clients who feel like what you're doing has an impact on their lives. A lot of the time... you're not asking those questions because you're looking to find things to help them with and support them with. That survey really showed that most people that you've been working with, you know, on a regular basis are getting something valuable out of it." – Team member

Shoalhaven Family and Domestic Violence Programs



In 2025:

97%
of clients reported
improvements across key
areas of their lives

3.5/5
average outcome scores
increased from 1.5 to 3.5
out of 5

100%
said staff treated them
with respect

100%
were happy with the
support they received

97%
said the service helped
them feel safer

100%
of respondents with children
said their children were safer

The Shoalhaven Family and Domestic Violence Programs support people who have experienced family and domestic violence and their children in the Shoalhaven region. The programs provide tailored support to address immediate needs regarding personal and family safety and reduce risks from perpetrators. Supports include case management, safety planning, help with security upgrades, advocacy, referrals to legal and counselling services, and links to other community supports. The Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service also offers case coordination and multi-stakeholder planning through the Safety Action Meeting, co-support with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program, safety planning, and liaison with the Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer.

Clients experienced strong improvement and felt supported

Clients reported improvements in relation to immediate crisis, safety, wellbeing, knowledge, housing and connection to support. Average outcome scores increased through the program from 1.5 to 3.5 out of 5 (see table below).

OUTCOME AREA	AVERAGE AT THE START	AVERAGE LATER ON	AVERAGE CHANGE
Changed impact of immediate crisis	1.25	5.00	3.75
Changed knowledge and access to information	1.69	4.50	2.81
Community participation & networks	1.33	3.78	2.44
Financial resilience	1.00	3.00	2.00
Housing	2.00	4.00	2.00
Mental health, wellbeing & self-care	1.50	3.50	2.00
Changed behaviours	1.38	3.25	1.88
Empowerment, choice and control to make own decisions	1.25	3.13	1.88
Personal & family safety	1.54	3.42	1.88
Material well-being and basic necessities	1.20	2.60	1.40
Engagement with relevant support services	2.00	3.20	1.20
Family functioning	2.00	3.00	1.00
Overall	1.52	3.52	2.00

Client satisfaction surveys highlighted positive client experiences of the program. All respondents said staff treated them with respect, were happy with the support they received, and were assisted to access other supports as required.

Clients felt safer and were able to move forward

Almost 97% of clients said the service helped them feel safer. Among respondents with children, all said their children were safer.

Clients also reported strong improvements in dealing with immediate crisis, understanding their options, and improving personal and family safety. This suggests the program helped clients respond to immediate risk whilst also supporting steps towards long term safety.

Support was practical, tailored and holistic

The program offered additional practical support, helping clients improve their mental health and wellbeing, confidence to make decisions, connection to services, and ability to take positive next steps. Clients also described being more able to share their feelings, seek advice, and reach out when they need help.

Opportunities to strengthen the service experience

While client outcomes demonstrate positive improvements across several areas, there is a future opportunity to strengthen supports for longer-term stability, particularly in relation to family functioning, material wellbeing, and ongoing connections to support.

Reflecting and acting on data

The Shoalhaven Family and Domestic Violence Team are currently exploring options to build more specific trauma-informed supports around parenting, family functioning, mental health and wellbeing. This includes potential group-based supports which offer informal peer support alongside structured groupwork to build knowledge, agency and positive pathways to achieving identified goals.

The team is also proposing a structured approach to regularly share and review program-level data as a team, reflect on what is working well, what can be done differently, and any emerging issues and needs.

These figures draw on different program data sources collected across 2025, including participant surveys and pre/post outcome measures. Matched pre and post scores were available for a subset of clients.



They have helped in every way possible. By phoning me every few days in the beginning to check in on me, to offering advice and always caring.” – YWCA Client



While this has been one of the worst times in my life, it is social workers like [her] that made my life a lot less frightening and continually reminded me that I had made the best decision I could have, for my own safety and wellbeing.” – YWCA Client



[Their] support has been the difference in me feeling like I couldn't go on and wouldn't be able to afford to live, to now having some confidence back that soon everything will get better.” – YWCA Client



Having [her] explain all the assistance that is available that I had no idea about and then manage the applications for financial assistance on my behalf was critical for me ...” – YWCA Client

Youth Frontiers (Wollongong)

In 2025:

123

mentees and 100 mentors participated in the Youth Mentors Program

100%

of mentees said they were treated with respect

100%

said their mentor listened to them and understood their issues

10 in 10

mentees felt more optimistic about the future

10 in 10

felt better connected with the supports they need

10 in 10

said they were participating more in activities they enjoy

95%

said they were getting what they wanted from the program



Youth Frontiers is a mentoring program in Wollongong for young women and gender diverse people aged 10 to 17 who are in contact with the youth justice and child protection systems. The program matches young people with trained adult volunteer mentors based on personality, shared interests and location. Mentors and mentees aim to meet once a fortnight to spend time together doing things they both enjoy. They are also invited to engage in monthly group activities that help build connection and community.

The Youth Frontiers team supports each mentoring relationship and helps connect young people with other services when needed.

Mentees built trusted relationships through mentoring

At the heart of the program is the relationship between each mentee and their mentor. Feedback on these relationships was very positive, with mentee responses indicating that all mentees felt respected, listened to and understood.

This highlights the importance of having a trusted person who mentees can trust, talk to and spend time with regularly.

Mentor feedback broadly echoed this, with most mentors reporting mentees were making progress towards their goals.

Mentees felt more connected

Mentees described feeling more connected across different areas of their lives, including access to support, relationships, and participation in activities.

Mentees felt safer, more confident and hopeful

The program was also linked to improvements in safety, wellbeing and confidence. Most mentees reported feeling supported in relation to their personal safety, along with stronger emotional wellbeing and ability to cope with challenges.

There were also clear signs of growing confidence and agency, with mentees reporting they were making positive choices and felt encouraged to share their views.

All mentees said they felt more optimistic about the future, suggesting the program helped build both confidence and a sense of direction.

Opportunities to strengthen the service experience

Most mentees spoke very positively about the program and said they would not change anything. Where they did identify ways to strengthen the experience, they most often asked for more outings and group activities, along with clearer and more consistent communication, especially when mentors were busy or the program was coming to an end.

Reflecting and acting on data

The Youth Frontiers Program reviews structured feedback and survey responses to understand mentee and mentor experiences of the program, any key issues to explore directly with a support worker, and to identify potential program improvements. The program coordinator brings positive feedback and any suggested improvements to team meetings for discussion. For example, the program has used feedback to review information provided to mentors at the beginning of their involvement, implemented clearer documentation of mentee needs and requirements, and included a paid mentor to support engagement and offer practical assistance to attend events, if a volunteer mentor is unable to attend. The program also amended the scheduling of activities to align with preferences and availability, and strengthened exit planning for mentees as they transition out of the program. New resources were also developed for mentees preparing to exit the program, in response to needs identified in feedback.

These figures draw on different feedback and impact measures collected across 2025. Not every result is based on the same number of responses.



It is very helpful and reassuring that someone is there for you and they will listen to you, it's like having a best friend but they are older." – YWCA Client



I think it has made me want to live again and experience life." – YWCA Client



The aim is to give really good customer service and make sure that young people are getting what they want out of the program. Also supporting volunteers so they feel like they're heard and that they have a space to be supported and give their feedback. I would hope that both the mentees and mentors benefit. But I think we benefit as well ...when people come up with these suggestions and we implement them, it helps us do our job better as well." – Program Coordinator

CASY House (Darwin)



In 2025:

36

clients were supported

2,030

support days were provided

1,985

accommodation bed nights were provided

80%

fewer clients were sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation

80%

of actions in case plans were mostly or fully achieved

CASY House is a 24/7 youth crisis accommodation program for young people aged 15–18 who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Greater Darwin region.

With capacity for up to eight clients at a time, the program provides a safe place to stay alongside onsite case management, help to navigate other services, and practical support to build independence and confidence for the future. This includes support with referrals, advocacy, daily living skills, and planning for more stable longer-term accommodation.

The program provides a safe place to stay at a critical time

Clients were often supported at a point where home was unsafe, relationships had broken down, or they had nowhere stable to stay. The most common situations included domestic and family violence, relationship or family breakdown, and time out from family or another situation.

Across 2025, the program provided 1,985 nights of accommodation, with most stays lasting longer than a few days, and nearly two-thirds (66%) lasting between 2 and 26 weeks.

Clients moved away from the most acute forms of homelessness

There was a shift in recorded housing circumstances for clients before and after support between entry to CASY House, and closure of the support period. The number of clients recorded as sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation fell 80% (from 15 to 3), while those with no stable place to stay fell 70% (from 20 to 6). This shows that many clients were moving to more stable accommodation after CASY House.



Been a lot less stressed out, been able to save much more money. Happy that I have a roof over my head."

– YWCA Client

Practical support helped build independence and progress

Alongside accommodation, clients were supported with practical case management and day-to-day support. This included advice and information, transport, connections to health and mental health services, education support, and family and relationship assistance.



My outlook on my future (education, family relationships, career goals) has improved drastically."

– YWCA Client

Clients were supported to build everyday life skills such as budgeting, cooking, cleaning and speaking up for themselves, helping them feel more confident and able to live more independently.

Many clients made strong progress during support. Overall, nearly 80% of actions in case plans were mostly or fully achieved, with 60% fully achieved.

Feedback from clients also reflected this progress. Of the 13 survey responses received:

- 100% agreed or strongly agreed they were getting the help they wanted when they first contacted the service
- 85% agreed or strongly agreed they were making progress towards their goals.

Opportunities to strengthen the service experience

Some improvements were identified around the shared living environment and day-to-day experience, including clearer expectations, managing peer dynamics, and practical elements such as Wi-Fi, food options, maintenance, and more group activities or support with routines.

Reflecting and acting on data

A review was conducted in 2025 to assess the introduction of specialist case management and domestic and family violence risk assessment and management framework (RAMF) at CASY House. Feedback from young people highlighted the effectiveness of specialist case management, and this is now integrated as a continuing role. The review also received feedback regarding the value of domestic and family violence RAMF training and screening young people in a youth friendly way. This has resulted in screening changes to align with age-appropriate requirements.

These figures draw on different program data sources collected across 2025. They are based on different units, including unique clients, support delivered, accommodation provided, progress against client plans, or outcomes at the end of support.

Domestic and Family Violence Centre (Northern Territory)



In 2025:

193
clients were supported

18,751
support days were provided

5,911
accommodation bed nights were provided

\$65,209
in financial assistance was provided

100%
fewer clients were sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation

84%
of clients finished support after getting the help they needed

The Domestic and Family Violence Centre Northern Territory provides support to women and gender diverse people and their children, who are experiencing or have experienced family and domestic violence in the Greater Darwin region. The program works proactively with women and children to protect them from the violence of men, navigate services and access safe short-term and long-term accommodation where needed. The program includes five individual Safe Houses for families, offering case management to women and gender diverse people and specialist support to children. The average length of stay is aimed at three months. However, due to the lack of available housing, the average length of stay is actually 9 to 18 months.

Specialist support at a time of risk

Clients were supported at a time when they were facing significant safety risks due to violence from men, alongside housing, financial, legal and emotional pressures.

Support was often intensive and sustained, with more than 18,700 days of support provided across the year and clients receiving support for an average of 129 days.

Clients moved into safer situations during support

By the end of support, no clients were sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation. More clients were instead staying in short-term or emergency accommodation, reflecting movement into safer environments.

The program provided 5,911 bed nights, with stays ranging from short-term to extended periods:

- 21% lasting more than 13 to 26 weeks
- 15% lasting more than 26 to 52 weeks
- 8% lasting more than 52 weeks

This shows the program was able to respond flexibly, addressing immediate safety issues and longer-term needs where identified.

Support helped clients navigate multiple needs

Clients were supported across safety, recovery and practical next steps. This included family and domestic violence services, trauma support, advocacy, legal services, court support, financial information and referrals to other specialist services. Practical support was also provided, including brokerage, transport, health service connections and help to access accommodation. More than \$65,000 in financial assistance was provided, helping clients meet urgent needs and put safety plans into action.

Together, this support helped clients navigate complex systems and build the support they needed to move forward.



[I am] not feeling alone and homeless. Knowing help in almost any direction is available through my case worker. It's immensely relieving."

– YWCA Client



I feel like my caseworker opened up a door for me and my kids! With her support, we grew each week, and today, we are stronger together."

– YWCA Client



I am now confident in the person and mother I am" – YWCA Client

Opportunities to strengthen the service experience

Program data highlighted the need for support and practical pathways beyond immediate crisis, particularly regarding access to longer-term housing options, where more clients were identified as needing this help than were able to access it. Unmet housing needs are exacerbated by the severe housing crisis and lack of supply across social and affordable private rentals in the Northern Territory.

Reflecting and acting on data

The domestic and family violence programs in the Northern Territory have embedded data reflections, insights and actions across their practice. There is an established cycle of reviewing client feedback in team meetings every 6 weeks. Confidential complaints and issues are separately considered by the Program Manager, and key reflections and learnings shared with the team.

Funder reports are also reviewed by the team every six months, with a focus on what the data is highlighting, why it is required, how it can be used in advocacy, and acted on in practice. The team have recently revised their approach to collecting data on unmet need, so there is greater consistency and clarity about how this data is structured, reported and used to effectively advocate for expanded services that respond to need.

This approach values data and feedback in all of its forms, most particularly as a basis for learning, acting, and increasing transparency and accountability to clients.

These figures draw on different program data sources collected across 2025, so they are not all based on the same unit. Some reflect unique clients, while others reflect support delivered, accommodation provided, financial assistance, or outcomes at the end of support.



We need to, if we get women's voices, we need to action that fairly and within the realms we can, but make sure we're putting weight to women's voices and not abusing our power within that."

"... if women give feedback and it goes nowhere, what is the point of getting feedback? ... Feedback from the staff has been they feel really well informed ... they understand what's happening, that I'm being really transparent, and I feel like we collectively use the information."

– Program Manager



Medical Accommodation Program (Darwin)



In 2025:

2,547
guests were supported

22,886
bed nights were provided

81%
of available beds were used

92%
of guests said they felt listened to and respected

The Medical Accommodation Program provides comfortable accommodation for patients and their carers travelling to Darwin for medical appointments and treatment.

The program includes two styles of accommodation. The first provides accommodation and meals for patients and their carers travelling to Darwin for appointments and treatment. Team members are available on-site 24/7. The second offers a home-like place to stay in sole-use rooms with shared facilities near the Royal Darwin Hospital and Darwin Private Hospital.

The program supported people travelling long distances for care

Clients predominantly identified as Aboriginal (90%) and came from across the Northern Territory, primarily remote and very remote communities.

The largest numbers of clients came from places such as Nhulunbuy, Galiwinku, Katherine, Maningrida and Gapuwiyak, with many others travelling from communities across the Territory.

The program also supported many carers travelling with clients, who made up more than one-third of all stays.

A safe and practical place to stay during medical travel

For many clients, the program provided more than a bed. It offered a safe, welcoming and reliable place to stay while away from home for medical care.

In 2025, the program supported 2,547 clients and provided 22,886 bed nights. Most stays were short, with clients staying for an average of nine nights.

Clients stayed for many different reasons, including travel with carers or escorts for cancer treatment, hospital discharge, outpatient appointments, surgery and renal care.

Clients felt safe, respected and well supported

Client feedback shows people felt safe, comfortable and well supported during what is often a stressful time.

- 100% said their room was clean and comfortable
- 93% said their bed was comfortable
- 92% said staff were friendly and helpful
- 92% said staff responded quickly to requests
- 92% said they felt listened to and respected

Feedback was also positive about cleanliness, shared spaces and day-to-day comfort. Staff were described as respectful, flexible and aware of people's needs.



[If] there was a 5-star rating, I'd give it 5 stars. They give you coffee, a fridge, you can get into town easily, the hospital bus comes and gets you. They let you know when your appointment is."

– YWCA Client



I feel safe here. I'm always grateful to get a bed here." – YWCA Client

Opportunities to strengthen the service experience

At the same time, clients identified practical ways the service could be improved, particularly around food, including requests for hot lunches and more culturally preferred meal options. There were some additional concerns regarding safety and some visitor behaviours.

Reflecting and acting on data

The Medical Accommodation Program has adopted a flexible and culturally informed approach to inviting feedback and suggestions from guests. Client feedback was initially invited through a very brief written survey shared with guests and available around the premises. This format was not appropriate given diverse languages and concerns about responding to a formal survey. The team subsequently used the questions in casual conversations with people, with a focus on suggestions for any improvements or things we can do differently.

The team meets regularly to share guest feedback, team observations, and suggestions. Data and feedback are used hand in hand to improve areas of guest comfort, which plays an often-underestimated role in guest ability to attend medical appointments and ongoing treatments. Room and bedding configurations have been made more flexible to accommodate larger family groups and couples with newborn children.

More recently, the team commissioned research into why people may leave the Medical Accommodation Program prematurely, and explored necessary service supports for guests to remain in the Medical Accommodation Program for the duration of their medical care. The researchers had significant experience of engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and explored key questions through semi-structured yarns with guests, to supplement staff and stakeholder interviews. The engagement and insights gained were significant and led to action on suggested improvements to food, outdoor and communal spaces, and available activities. It is proposed that this may be revisited on an annual or bi-annual basis, to support continuing conversations and improvements.

This research also identified security and safety as one of the most important issues with accommodation. Incident data indicated that antisocial behaviour occurred primarily overnight, so YWCA increased overnight staff levels. This has reduced the number of incidents, and guests and staff have noted feeling safer.

At properties where staff aren't present overnight, couples and mixed gendered groups are no longer accommodated. This has greatly reduced the number of domestic violence incidents, guests have reported feeling much safer, and staff have reported less abandonment of accommodation in these houses.

Ongoing feedback from guests and patient travel officers suggests these improvements are making a difference, with guests expressing a preference to Aboriginal Liaison Officers and community clinic staff to be accommodated at the Medical Accommodation properties rather than other hostel accommodation. This is further demonstrated in the number of return visits.

These figures draw on different program data sources collected across 2025, including service data, guest feedback, and findings from the review of the Medical Accommodation Program Northern Territory. Not every result is based on the same number of responses. Feedback was gathered using a range of culturally appropriate approaches. Formal survey responses were limited, so additional methods were used to better reflect client experiences.



5. ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH OUR COMMUNITY HOUSING?

YWCA is a Tier 2 Community Housing Provider. We currently own or manage more than 500 social and affordable homes across Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, with a rapidly expanding footprint. We build, buy, and manage housing properties, and implement gendered housing solutions.



KIRSTY'S STORY

As a single Mum and carer to Jessie and Scarlett, Kirsty spent 17 years in the private rental market in homes that never quite met her needs and always felt tenuous.

"I was just stuck having to rent privately as I wasn't eligible for any housing with my income, even though I was always on Centrelink. I worked here and there as a teachers' aide, but as the kids' medical needs escalated, I really needed to be at home," said Kirsty.

Kirsty kept advocating for housing support, with the Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service, occupational therapists, and eventually her local MP, who recognised how urgent and exceptional their needs were. Her own advocacy and determination got her onto the social housing list.

However, getting onto the list was just the first step, as they needed a home that was accessible and accommodated for both Jessie and Scarlett's needs. Accessibility requirements, sufficient storage space for mobility aids and incontinence supplies and a location within the catchment zone for Scarlett's school were all essential but hard to come by. Turning down offers was painful for Kirsty but she knew they weren't suitable.

"We saw places that had ramps but doorways too narrow for wheelchairs. Or nowhere to store equipment. Or they weren't in Scarlett's school zone and with her autism and trauma history, changing schools just wasn't an option."

"I'd cry. Every time it felt like something slipped through our fingers again."

In July 2025, Kirsty received a call from Barb at YWCA that felt unreal.

"Her voice was just calming, supportive... you could hear her kindness. If she said something, you trusted it."

The home sounded too good to be true.



The next day Barb rang and said, 'I'll put you out of your misery, you've got the house!'" – Kirsty

"A brand new home in Ripley. Wheelchair accessible. Internal garage access. Air-conditioning. Close to Scarlett's school. I honestly didn't believe it at first."

Kirsty cried through the interview process, exhausted from years of instability and hope that had often led to disappointment. Jessie happened to have a seizure during the visit, which helped the team understand the reality of their day-to-day life.

For Kirsty, it felt like winning the lotto or an early Christmas present. Within two weeks, they were moving in, and since then life has transformed.

The accessible layout means the family can seamlessly transfer from the car easily into the home without ramps, stairs, or risks.

"I remember in our old rental just getting from the garage to the door was a huge challenge because it was a highset house with lots of stairs - it made us reluctant to leave home because it's so hard just to get back in."

"The mental strain has just... lifted."

"Ripley's lovely, it's got everything, we can still access things we had before to keep it familiar for Jessie's mental health as well as positive changes for Scarlett, and with the extra freedom of not worrying about stairs getting back in."

"Scarlett has been able to keep going to the same school, and loves the nearby water park and the modern Rocket Park and they suit her developmental needs."

For Kirsty, the biggest gift is security.

"With no end of lease date, we can settle in. I am not living in fear that the place will be sold. No wondering if we'll still have a home next year. That kind of stability... it changes everything."

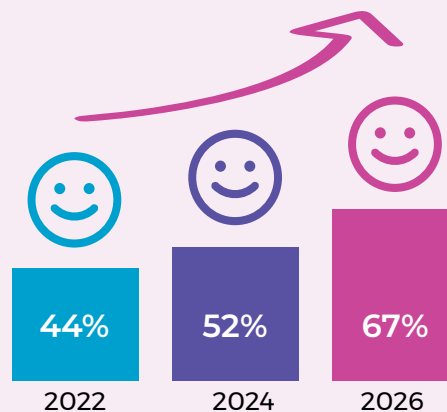
Impact headlines

YWCA has been measuring our impact in community housing over several years. Our fifth and most recent Residents Impact and Satisfaction Survey identified the following impact headlines:

SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% feel supported when it comes to their personal safety • 73% of residents feel safer
SECURITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% residents feel their housing situation is more stable • 73% feel their housing has what they need
AGENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% of residents feel they make positive choices for themselves • 78% feel they have positive relationships in their lives • 71% feel encouraged to make suggestions about YWCA services
CONNECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% feel better connected with those closest to them • 68% have better access to activities that they enjoy • 67% feel better connected to their community • 65% feel better connected with the supports they need • 64% of residents are participating more in activities that they enjoy
WELLBEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82% are better able to look after their physical health • 77% are better able to look after their emotional wellbeing • 74% of residents are better able to deal with life's challenges • 72% feel more optimistic about the future

One of the clearest positive shifts is reflected in levels of satisfaction with how YWCA listens to residents' views and acts on them.

Satisfaction has increased from 44% in 2022, to 52% in 2024 and 67% in 2026.



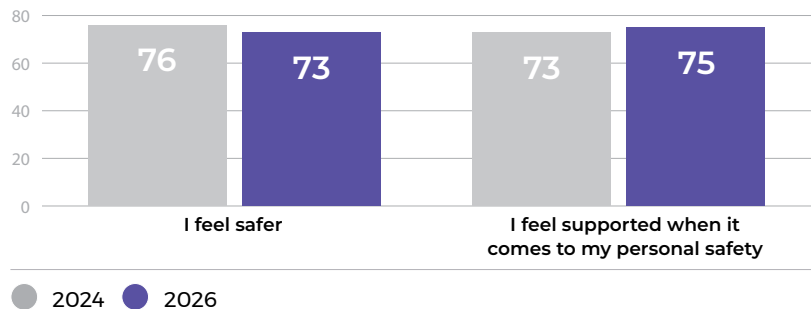
Safety

Most residents said they felt safer and supported

Safety results were positive overall in 2026. Most respondents said they felt safer and most also said they felt supported when it came to their personal safety. This was broadly consistent with 2024, with no clear year-on-year shift in safety outcomes.



Safety (Strongly Agree and Agree %)



75%

feel supported when it comes to their personal safety

73%

of residents feel safer

Housing contributes to a greater sense of safety and stability

Many residents provided feedback describing feeling safer in their current housing, particularly compared to previous living situations. Some residents referred to earlier situations where they did not feel safe, or described what their circumstances may have been without access to housing.

Having a stable place to live, with more control over their environment, was often associated with feeling safer in day-to-day life.

Safety is shaped by day to day living conditions, including the home, shared spaces and how these are managed.

While many residents felt safer overall, some described concerns about safety in their home or shared spaces. These were most often related to building access, shared areas and physical areas of the home that affect everyday safety, and how these issues are managed.

Residents were also clear about what would help strengthen safety further. These responses focussed on practical improvements such as better lighting, secure access points, security features and clearer enforcement of rules in shared spaces.

These responses suggest that while safety has improved for many residents, it continues to be shaped by the quality of the home, shared spaces, and how issues are managed day to day.



I had no home for my son and myself after leaving an abusive marriage so my son and I finally felt safe and it has given us a place to grow and heal and gave my son the environment to be a successful adult."

– YWCA Client



I now feel safe. I can care for my child with special needs in a house that accommodates them and all the equipment to care for them and prevent injury. Our lives have changed in so many ways and all positively."

– YWCA Resident

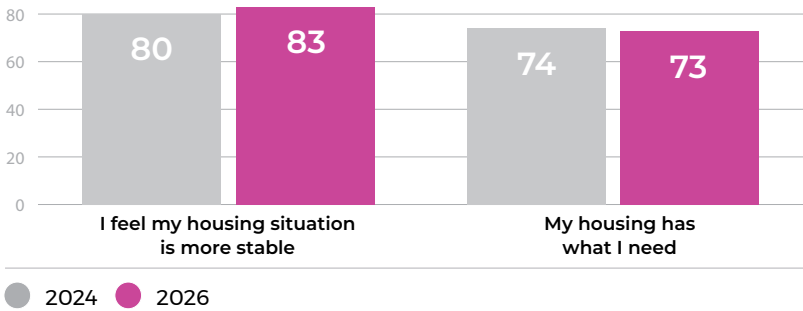
Security

Housing has provided a strong foundation of stability

Security was a clear area of strength in 2026, consistent with 2024. Responses were stronger on housing stability, with 8 out of 10 residents agreeing they were in a more stable housing situation. Around 3 out of 4 felt their housing had the features they needed.



Security (Strongly Agree and Agree %)



83% residents feel their housing situation is more stable

73% feel their housing has what they need

Many residents are now living in more stable and secure housing

Many residents described clear improvements in housing stability. This included moving into longer-term housing, having a consistent place to live and no longer needing to move between temporary or insecure accommodation.

Some residents also described improvements in having their own space, living in a location that better suited their needs, or being able to settle into daily routines.

Stability does not always mean housing fully meets people’s needs

While many residents described improved stability, some reported that their housing does not fully meet their needs.

These responses were most often related to:

- housing quality and condition
- space, layout, or privacy
- location and access to services
- maintenance or repair issues
- financial pressure and affordability

Across responses, residents were often very specific about what would improve their housing. This included requests for better maintenance, improved facilities, more space and more suitable housing options.

Affordability and suitability shape how secure housing feels

Some residents described ongoing financial pressure, particularly in relation to rent and cost of living. While many residents are able to meet their basic expenses, fewer report having money left over, suggesting that housing is stable but not always financially comfortable.

While housing is providing strong stability, factors such as affordability, space, and day-to-day living conditions continue to shape how secure and sustainable that housing feels. For women and gender diverse people, financial security is shaped by structural factors such as gender inequality, the gender pay gap, caring responsibilities, and the impacts of family and domestic violence.

“ I now have a stable home for myself and am able to work on trying to improve my health and overall well-being. I no longer have to worry about where I am going to sleep at night.”
– YWCA resident

“ I am certainly in a better situation financially than if I wasn't here but it is still a struggle. I still live with a fear of losing my accommodation.”
– YWCA resident

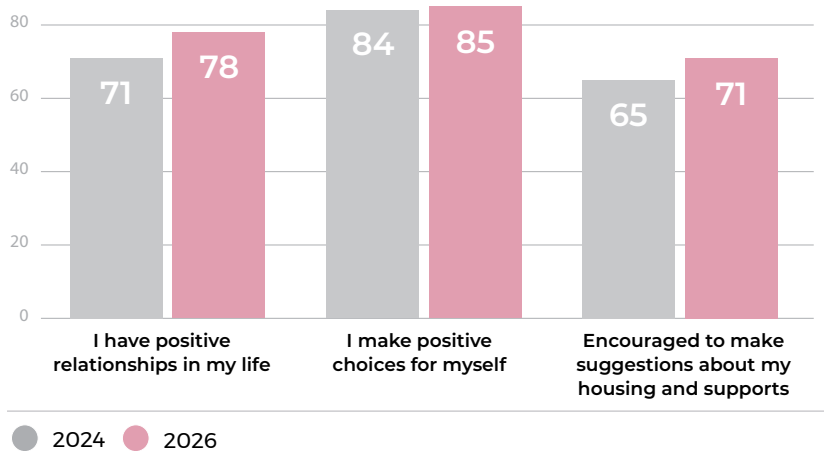
Agency

Many residents reported increased agency, choice and control

Agency was one of the strongest outcome areas in 2026. Most respondents gave positive responses to questions about making positive choices, having positive relationships and being encouraged to make suggestions about housing and supports. This suggests that many residents feel more able to make decisions, manage their day-to-day lives and have a say in what affects them.

Looking across 2024 to 2026, agency has improved over time.

Agency (Strongly Agree and Agree %)



85% of residents feel they make positive choices for themselves

78% feel they have positive relationships in their lives

71% feel encouraged to make suggestions about YWCA services

Greater independence and progress

Many residents described increased independence and a greater sense of control over their lives. This included living independently, making decisions for themselves and having the space to focus on their own goals.

As a result of stable housing, residents reported their top three areas of focus include:

- looking after my health and wellbeing
- caring for my family, and
- participating in a course, education or training.

Some residents also described building confidence, developing skills, or working toward future plans such as employment, study, or personal goals.

More residents feel heard, though experiences are not yet consistent

While most residents feel able to make suggestions and influence services, a smaller number identified challenges, including difficulty making suggestions or expressing needs, feeling that feedback is not always acted on and lower confidence in influencing decisions. A smaller number of responses also highlighted that residents are unsure what they can ask for. This suggests there are continuing opportunities to support resident confidence in speaking out and raising issues.

|| *I have stability, independence making my own decisions and knowing that I have a roof over my head and a bed to lie in every day and night.*
– YWCA resident

|| *Having my own space has allowed me to spend more time getting to know myself and better understand who I am and what I want in life.*
– YWCA resident

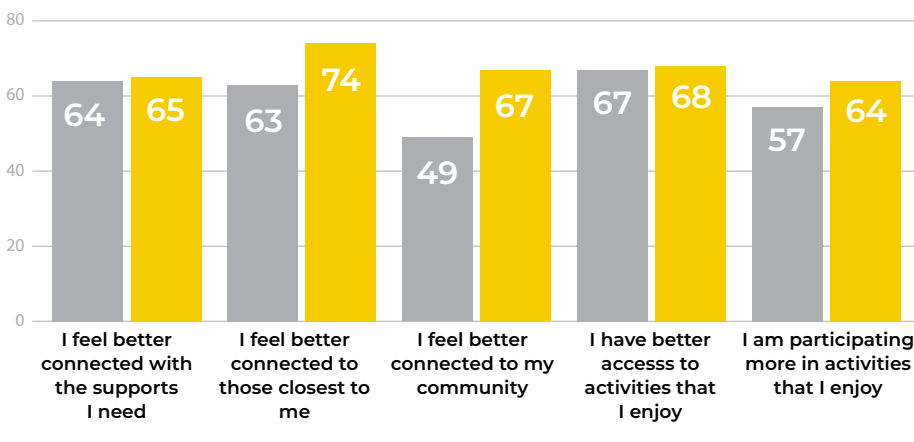
Connection

Residents are building stronger connections, with opportunities to strengthen support and engagement

Most respondents gave positive responses in connection, including feeling more connected to the people, supports and activities that matter to them.

Measures of connection have improved over time. Compared with 2024, positive responses for feeling better connected to those closest to them increased from 63% to 74%, while feeling better connected to their community increased from 49% to 67%.*

Connection (Strongly Agree and Agree %)



● 2024 ● 2026 * These differences over time were statistically significant.

Residents are building stronger connections

Many residents described improvements in their connection to supports, relationships and activities. This included being more engaged in their community, participating in activities they enjoy and having better access to services and support.

Some residents also described stronger connections with people close to them, including family and friends.

Residents identified ways to strengthen connection and support

While many residents are experiencing stronger connection in some areas, this domain scored lower than others. Some residents described ongoing challenges with social connection and participation, including feeling isolated, having limited opportunities to engage with others, or finding it difficult to build connections within their community.

Suggestions to further support connection included:

- more opportunities for social activities and community events
- easier access to support and services
- clearer communication about available supports
- more opportunities to connect with staff or other residents



74%
feel better connected with those closest to them

68%
have better access to activities that they enjoy

67%
feel better connected to their community

65%
feel better connected with the supports they need

64%
of residents are participating more in activities that they enjoy

“My community connections & health has changed to the better.”
– YWCA resident

“More outings, once a month would be great. Helps promote cohesive community & helps people with disabilities both physical & mentally to improve quality of life while here.” – YWCA resident



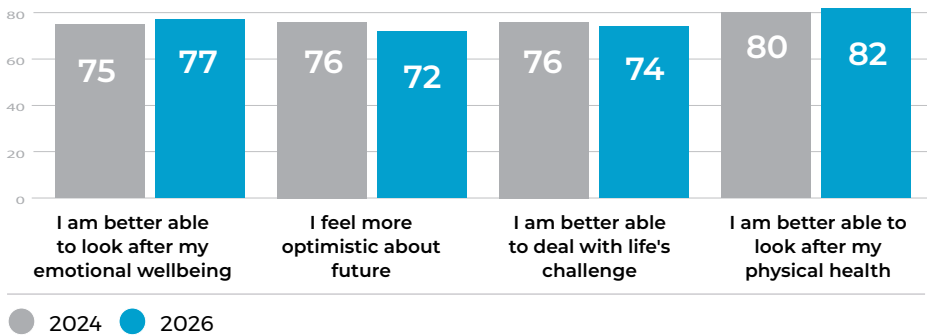
Wellbeing

Many residents described reduced stress and improved day to day wellbeing

Wellbeing was another strong domain in 2026, with results also broadly consistent with 2024. Most respondents gave positive responses about emotional wellbeing, physical health, optimism and dealing with life's challenges.

The impact of housing support goes beyond shelter. For many residents, it was also linked to how they felt, coped and managed in everyday life.

Wellbeing (Strongly Agree and Agree %)



82% are better able to look after their physical health

77% are better able to look after their emotional wellbeing

74% of residents are better able to deal with life's challenges

72% feel more optimistic about the future

Many residents reported reduced stress and increased ability to cope

A common theme across responses was a reduction in stress and pressure. Many residents described feeling calmer, more settled, or better able to manage their mental health.

For some, this was directly linked to no longer worrying about housing instability, finances, or daily survival. Others described having the space to focus on their health, routines and recovery.

Some residents also described improvements in physical health or daily functioning, including being able to get out more, manage health conditions, or establish routines that support their wellbeing.

Housing is helping to create the conditions for recovery and stability

For many residents, housing provided a base that made it possible to focus on being able to work on healing or long-term health needs. Some residents described this as a turning point, where they could begin to rebuild after periods of instability, trauma or stress.

This is reinforced by responses describing what life would be like without housing, where many residents anticipated significantly higher stress, anxiety and declining mental health.

Wellbeing outcomes vary depending on individual circumstances

While many residents described improvements, others highlighted ongoing challenges with emotional or physical health. These were often linked to:

- existing health conditions or mental health challenges
- living environment factors (e.g. noise, shared spaces)
- complex personal or family situations.

“Living in YWCA housing has made my life more stable and secure. I feel less stressed about housing and finances and daily responsibilities. Overall, my mental health and sense of safety have improved!” – YWCA resident

“My children and I have our own home and safety and can heal” – YWCA resident

Reflecting and acting on housing impact insights

Across 2024 to 2026, the overall picture is one of strong outcomes and broad satisfaction. Most measures remained broadly stable over time, but there were some clear statistically significant shifts. In particular:

2 in 3

residents feel better connected with their community

↑18 percentage points since 2024

3 in 4

feel better connected with the people who matter to them

↑11 percentage points since 2024

2 in 3

residents are fairly or very satisfied with how we listen and respond to their views

↑15 percentage points since 2024

56%

were satisfied with complaints handling

↑25 percentage points since 2024

Our impact and satisfaction survey has highlighted significant improvements in resident satisfaction year on year. These shifts are aligned with key operational areas of focus, including:

- improved allocation processes to assess fit and needs
- review of our approach to repairs and maintenance
- consistency of our communications and responsiveness
- new tenant engagement processes
- investments in professional development and training.

Day-to-day service delivery continues to shape how housing is experienced by our residents, and a continuing focus is required regarding:

- The quality of repairs and maintenance
- Cleanliness and management of shared spaces in rooming houses
- Consistency and responsiveness of communications
- Security of building access, visitor management and behaviours in rooming house communal spaces
- Information and access to relevant supports and services
- Housing choice and affordability, in a highly constrained housing environment.

Acting on evidence

Survey results and insights are reviewed in structured 'learning loops' with team members and residents. Results are explored and assessed in team workshops, with a focus on 'so what does that mean we need to understand, plan and do?' Results and proposed responses are also shared in workshops with residents, with a focus on 'what else do we need to understand, and how can we share this with others?' Team and resident reflections have been reviewed to develop an action plan for implementation over the coming year.



WREN'S STORY

Wren* is a Community Housing Resident studying a Masters of Social Policy with the goal to work towards a PHD, and is stepping back into yoga at their local studio.

Though the future is looking bright, the journey to get here hasn't been easy.

For Wren, coming out as non-binary made an already unsafe home situation even more unsafe. After beginning hormone replacement therapy in 2019, Wren was no longer safe in their family home.

Unfortunately for Wren, it would be a long time before they would find safe, secure and affordable accommodation again.

"With no affordable rentals, and no social housing, I had to go back home. I built an improvised dwelling in the backyard of my parents' house. It wasn't fun living there, but it was a roof over my head and felt safer than the house."

When that was no longer a safe or viable option either, Wren searched for alternatives. Between 2020 and December 2023 when Wren finally moved into their YWCA apartment, they moved numerous times.

Wren lived in private rentals that bordered on unaffordable, several different student accommodation at the university campuses where they were undertaking study, and in share houses.

Their on-going complex mental health struggles made maintaining their living situations extremely difficult.

After their last private rental became unaffordable, Wren sought out the help of Unison Housing, where they completed a Victorian Housing Register application and was referred onto YWCA.

"59 per cent of my Disability Support Pension was going towards my rent when I was in the private rental market."

YWCA Australia had a self-contained apartment vacancy that was appropriate and Wren was able to move in shortly after.

"My rent is now taken out of my Centrelink, I don't have to worry about it. It's just one less thing to think about."

For Wren, their YWCA property meets many of their needs. It's close to the train station, which is accessible for them when they need to use their electric wheelchair. It's close to a local theatre, local shops and market, and most importantly – is safe, secure and affordable.

No longer worrying about finding a secure home, Wren has their sights set on their next goal: finding a property to buy.

**Name changed for privacy reasons.*



***Now that I am here,
I can focus on my mental
health recovery. I can also
start saving." – Wren***



***I had a friend who had somewhere I could
stay with for only a short time – but I was
essentially homeless. I tried to get social
housing, but they said it was a seven to
ten year wait." – Wren***

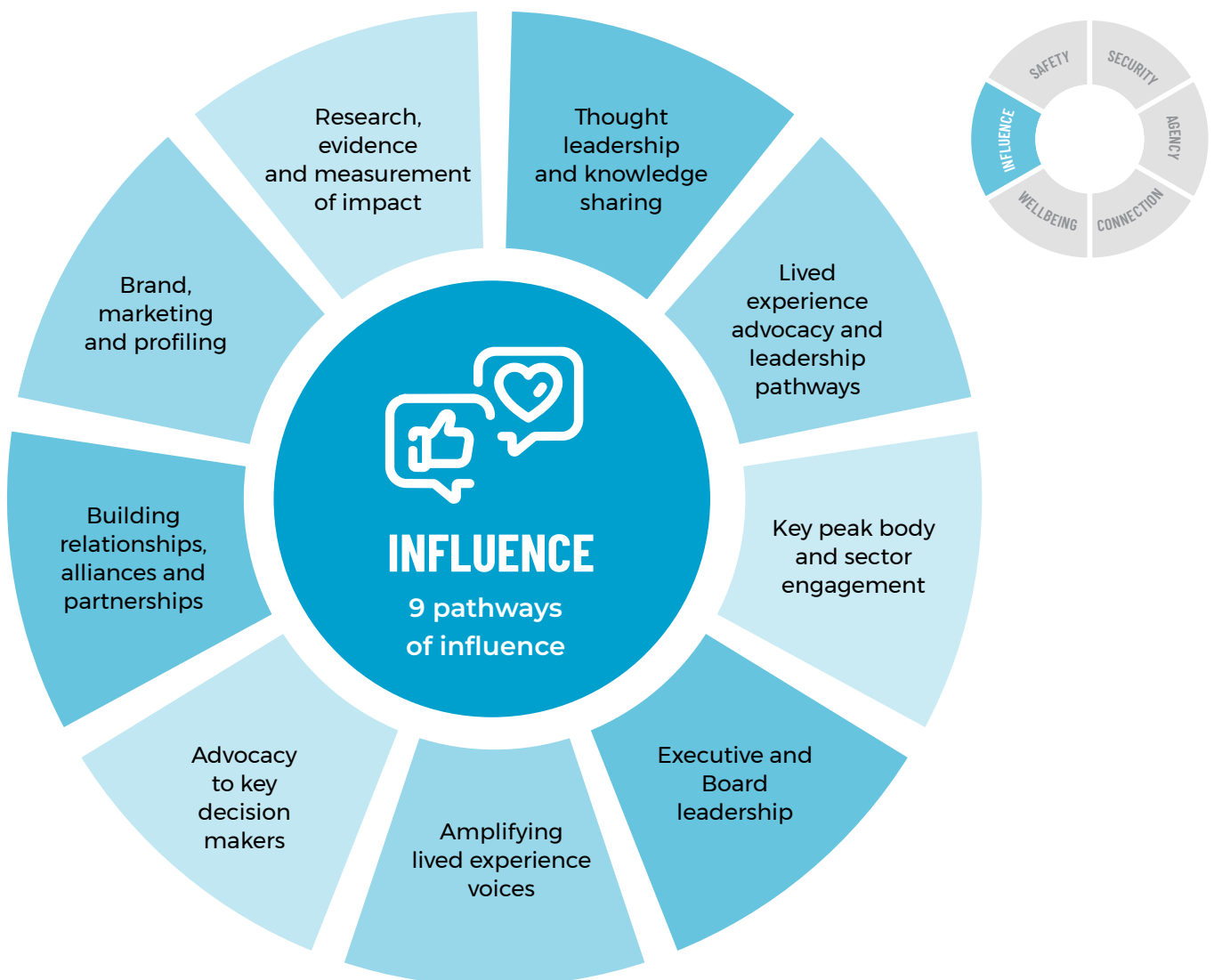
6. ARE WE MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN HOW WE EXERCISE INFLUENCE?

Understanding our influence

Our YWCA Impact Framework includes Influence as one of our six domains of impact.

We advocate for systems change to support intersectional and gendered solutions to housing insecurity, homelessness and gender-based violence. We amplify the voices of young women, gender diverse people and people with lived experience and expertise to inform decision-makers and lead change.

In 2025, we conducted a pilot to assess how we measure our impact and influence, in partnership with Think Impact, social impact specialists. The pilot was exploratory, testing existing data to inform a future measurement cycle. The pilot identified a range of ways the YWCA seeks to influence as an organisation, including:



Key factors in enhancing influence and impact included:

- Impactful research – ‘We’ve Been Robbed’ Research Report (2024)
- Our advocacy is clearly focussed and sustained over time
- The role of the Young Women’s Council and Digital Activist Community, in informing policy positions and influencing activities
- The value of the Young Women’s Council in building connection, confidence and the ability to advocate for change
- Effective positioning, around unique perspectives that address key gaps
- Complementary and mutually reinforcing activities
- A relational approach prioritising collaboration and contribution, building trust with allies, partners and decision-makers
- A pragmatic focus on building momentum towards longer term change.

Key external stakeholders described the YWCA's approaches to government engagement as informed, sophisticated and expert. They referred to a growing reputation for trusted thought leadership, based on credible data and evidence, innovative ideas, and authentic centring of the voices of young women, gender diverse people and lived experience.

We are developing an Influence program logic and data framework to support how we measure our contribution and influence over time. This will evidence future independent assessment.

Evidence-informed advocacy

YWCA brings practical evidence-informed insights to government to support stronger policy design, more effective investment and equitable housing outcomes. Our evidence includes front-line delivery, lived experience perspectives, and commissioned research.

Our recent research includes a landmark report, *Housing That Pays Back - Why Investing In Housing For Women And Families Delivers Measurable Economic Returns*, produced in partnership with the Per Capita Centre for Equitable Housing.

The research highlights that access to safe and equitable housing is a gendered issue. Systemic inequities, including the 13 percent gender pay gap and the fact that women are three times more likely to experience intimate partner violence, create distinct and dangerous pathways into housing precarity. For too long, “gender-neutral” policy frameworks have failed to account for these realities, inadvertently leaving women and gender-diverse people behind.

This is not just a moral argument – it is also an economic one. By applying a conservative Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) to YWCA’s national housing portfolio, we have demonstrated that gender-responsive housing is not a cost to be managed, but a high-yield social investment that delivers a measurable dividend to the taxpayer.

The research found:

- The YWCA community housing portfolio achieves an average Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.02. This means that every \$1 invested in our housing generates \$2.02 in measureable public benefit.
- YWCA's housing portfolio BCR of 2.02 exceeds the public value benchmarks of major infrastructure projects such as roads, rail and flood mitigation. Such projects are typically considered to have strong public value if they achieve a BCR between 1.5 and 2.0.
- These figures present real-world reductions in government expenditure. Specifically, our housing results in \$3.5 million in avoided annual health system costs and \$2.8 million in avoided justice system costs across our residents.
- In critical scenarios, such as family reunification from out-of-home-care, return on investment increases to \$4.66 for every dollar spent.
- This "prevention premium" highlights the extraordinary fiscal efficiency of providing a stable home. When a woman is safely housed, costly "service cycling" through emergency departments, police call-outs, and crisis refuges is broken. This allows for increased workforce participation and ensures that children remain in school, building the skills and productivity potential of the next generation.
- Fiscal savings alone do not capture the full value of housing stability to the people who experience it. Stable housing generates real and measurable improvements in subjective wellbeing for residents, with tenants reporting greater feelings of safety, autonomy, social connection and capacity to plan for the future.
- The implied annual wellbeing value per tenant is \$7,337 per person per year (\$5.4 million per year across 731 residents). This wellbeing value is conservatively embedded in the fiscal BCR calculations, meaning the BCR of 2.02 likely underestimates savings. Including a full apportionment of wellbeing benefits would increase the reported BCR further.

\$2.02
generated for every \$1
invested in YWCA housing

\$6.3M
combined annual savings to
health and justice systems
(\$3.5M + \$2.8M)

Up to \$4.66
return for critical family
reunification outcomes

\$7,337
annual wellbeing value
per tenant, per year

Housing designed for women's needs is not a niche programmatic addition, but essential social infrastructure that delivers measurable returns to government and the community while advancing gender equality and long-term social resilience.

The report offers Treasury and government decision-makers rigorous evidence to inform future policy and funding gender-responsive housing solutions that deliver savings, reduce pressure on public institutions, and address social inequity.



7. HOW ARE WE REFLECTING AND LEARNING?



Lived Experience and Client Participation

In 2025, YWCA continued to deepen our commitment to embedding lived experience across our work. This year marked a shift from establishment to capability building, strengthening the structures, skills and confidence across our network to meaningfully centre the voices of young women and gender diverse people.

Internal capability was supported through the Lived Experience Champions Group, which brought together team members from across YWCA to share practice, explore approaches, and promote lived experience and client participation as part of service design, advocacy and organisational decision-making.

YWCA also supported learning through a series of externally facilitated sessions. Facilitators and contributors included Morgan Cataldo, Dr Emma Blomkamp, Professor Robyn Martin and lived experience advocate Helen Matthews. These sessions provided opportunities for reflection and discussion on topics including trauma-aware engagement, systemic barriers, power, and ethical storytelling, contributing to a shared organisational language and understanding.

Recognising the importance of young women's leadership, we delivered tailored lived experience training for our Young Women's Council and Youth Advocates Group. These sessions focussed on building confidence, understanding rights and boundaries, and equipping participants to engage safely and effectively in advocacy and governance spaces. Supporting young leaders to use their lived experience on their own terms remains a key priority.

The Amplifying Voices program in Darwin continued in 2025 as a central initiative supporting women with lived experience to contribute to advocacy and public conversations, with a focus on culturally safe and supported participation.

Together, these efforts represent meaningful progress, but not an end point. In 2025, YWCA strengthened the foundations of a lived experience approach that is intentional, ethical and embedded. As we look ahead, we remain committed to building on this journey, listening, learning, and evolving alongside the people we serve.

Transforming Relationships Process Review

About Transforming Relationships

Transforming Relationships is a sector capacity building initiative developed as part of the Communities for Children program in Northern NSW. Emerging in the recovery phase of the 2022 floods, Transforming Relationships built on the collective response of services during that crisis.

Transforming Relationships was grounded in a shared commitment to improving outcomes for children, families, and communities. It aimed to foster deeper collaboration, sector leadership, and culturally safe approaches to practice. A key partnership with MurriMatters helped shape a strengths-based, relational foundation for this work.

Nine organisations formed the Transforming Relationships Collective, including health, early childhood education and care and child and family support services. Phase 1 of the project focussed on laying the groundwork for long-term systems change through three strategic objectives:

1. Supporting self-determination for First Nations peoples
2. Strengthening sector leadership and capacity, and
3. Embedding evidence-based approaches.

Process Review

A Process Review was conducted during 2025, to document the process, assess emerging outcomes for individuals, organisations and the Transforming Relationships Collective, and support the continuing work of the Collective. Conducted internally by the YWCA Research and Evaluation Specialist, assisted by Emily Goldstein and the Communities for Children Team Leader, the review was informed by participant evaluations, interviews and workshops.



Key Findings:

The Process Review found that Phase 1 had fostered trust, connection and shared purpose across the Collective. It was effective in establishing the foundations and conditions for new ways of working together, and a shared vision and framework to guide collective action according to four priority areas.

Phase 1 of Transforming Relationships demonstrated a model that is relational, collaborative, evidence-informed, and built capability.

The Process Review found that Phase 1:

- Built participant knowledge, creating a strong foundation for future work
- Made progress towards deepening collaborative practice, through new ways of working together and embedding learnings within individual organisations
- Highlighted early indications of strengthened cross-sector collaboration.

Phase 1 also highlighted that relational and collaborative sector leadership requires:

- Helping services become comfortable with an uncertain and emergent process of shared discovery and agreement
- Executive leadership endorsement and support, including visible relational leadership, strategic alignment with organisational strategies and planning cycles, and an authorising environment that enables staff participation in partnership building, systems thinking and reflective practice
- Overcoming traditional fundings and organisational incentives that promote competition and working in isolation.

To truly work in relational and cross-sector ways, services need flexibility in how they use resources and a mandate to prioritise collective outcomes. This includes:

- **Shifting from competition to collaboration:** Encouraging joint funding models, shared reporting frameworks, and collaborative outcome measurement
- **Embedding collective impact in funding agreements:** Incentivising services to invest time in shared governance, reflection, and relationship-building
- **Creating safe spaces to share power and risk:** Supporting organisations to move away from 'proving impact alone' toward 'improving impact together.'

This way of working means challenging deeply embedded structures and shifting the focus from short-term service delivery metrics to long-term systemic change.

The Process Review concluded that Transforming Relationships demonstrates a model that builds towards transformational change, with learnings that may be applied more broadly by sector stakeholders, funders and decision makers.

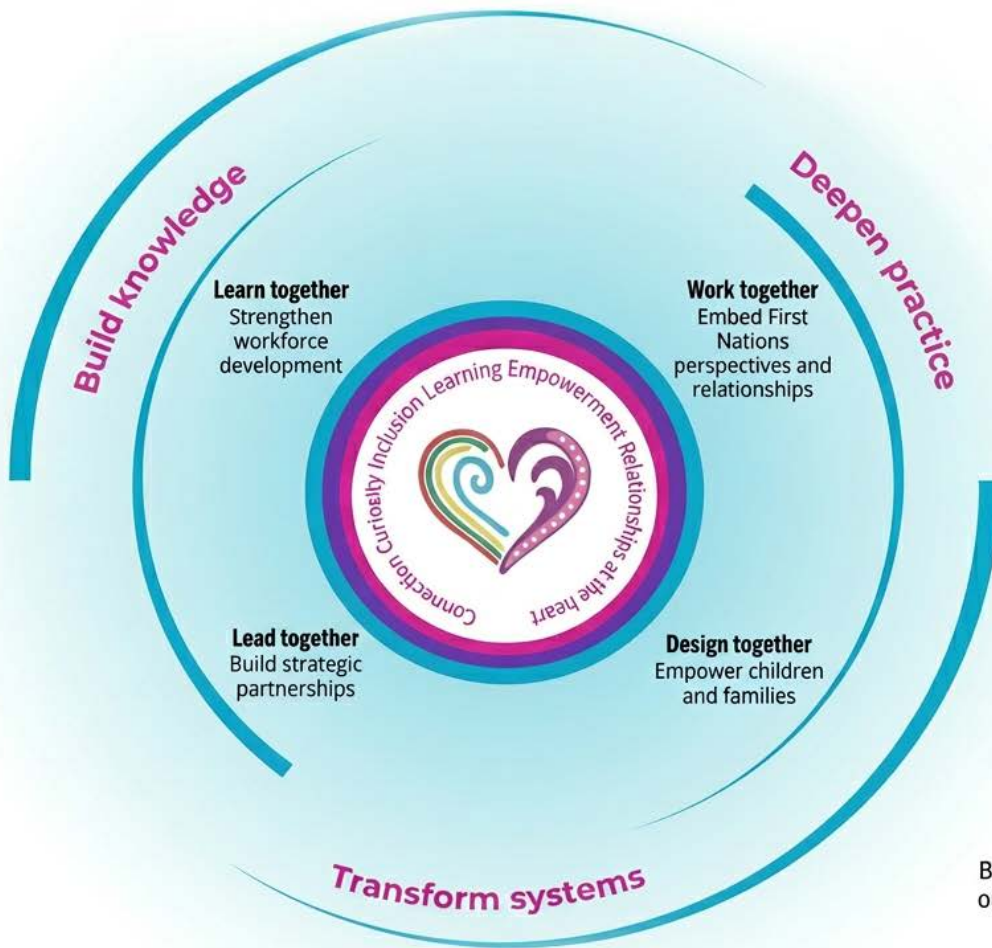
OUR VISION

A quality, culturally safe and inclusive early years sector that grows and develops together to be more responsive to the holistic needs of children, families and community

TRANSFORMING RELATIONSHIPS

MODEL OF CHANGE

WORKING TOGETHER TO



Connect children, families, community and services

Understand our strengths and support our wellbeing

Advocate for self-determination, safety and equity for children, families and community

Provide services that empower children, families and community

Build respectful and inclusive partnerships based on trust, transparency, and open communication



Amplifying Voices Program Review

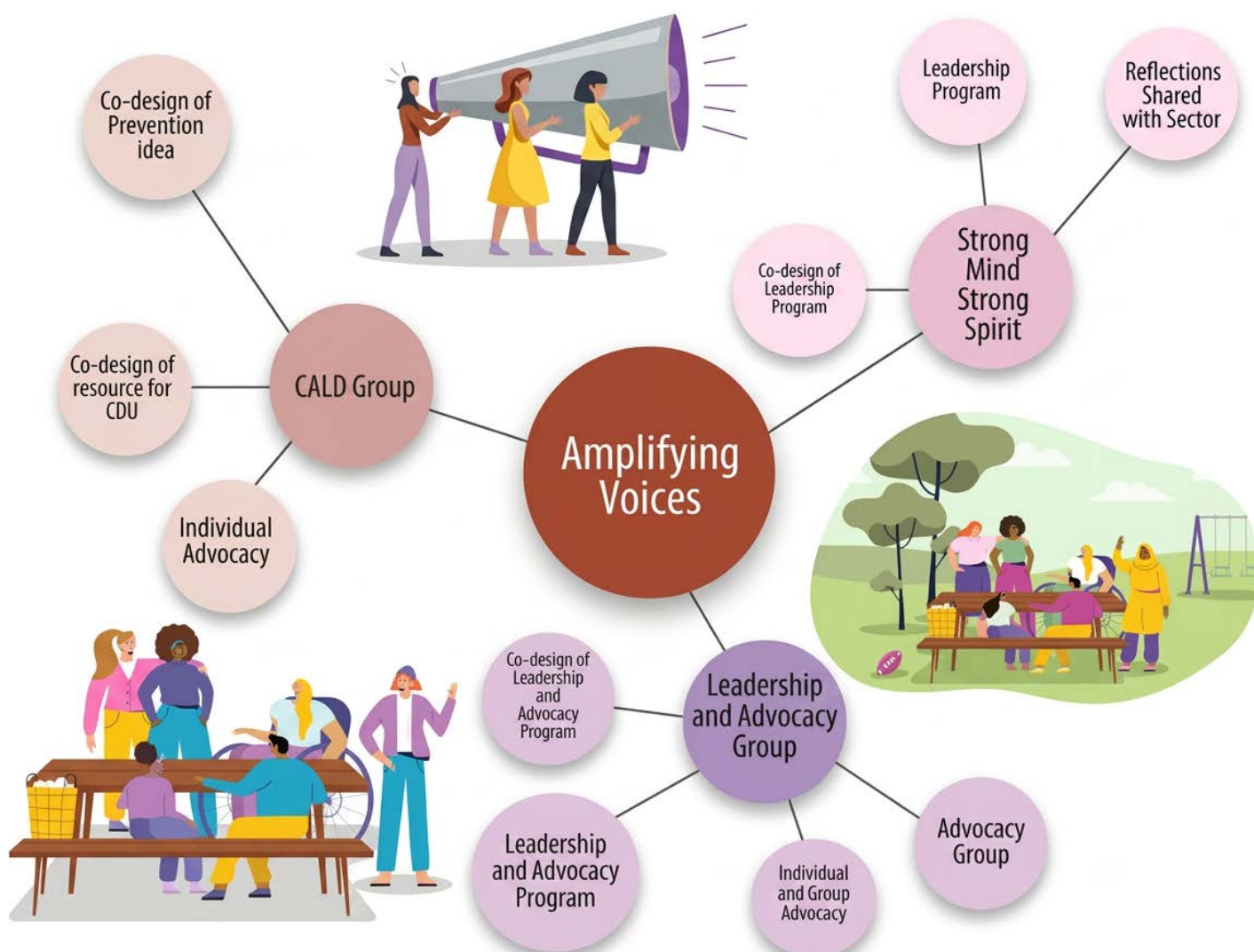
About Amplifying Voices

The **Amplifying Voices Program** is an advocacy and leadership program delivered by YWCA in the Darwin and Palmerston region, Northern Territory. It was funded in 2022 by the Northern Territory Government as part of the Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Grants Program. The Program centres the voices of women and gender diverse people with lived experience of family and domestic violence in co-designed primary prevention activities, advocacy and leadership pathways.

The Program applied a highly intentional and carefully structured approach across three distinct streams:

1. Leadership and Advocacy Program
2. CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) Stream
3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Stream – Strong Mind Strong Spirit.

Overview of Amplifying Voices



Program Review

In 2025, YWCA conducted a review of the Program. The Review aimed to document the model, learn from participant and stakeholder perspectives, assess key achievements and outcomes, and inform future directions. The review was conducted internally by the Amplifying Voices project team and the YWCA Research and Evaluation Specialist. The draft report was peer reviewed by Dr Gretchen Ennis, prior to the final report.

Key findings:

The Review found that Amplifying Voices was a highly valued and innovative lived expertise and advocacy program.



“We acknowledge the individual and collective expertise of those with a living or lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, and homelessness.

We stand together as proud survivors with diverse experiences that reflect the resilience, compassion, creativity and bravery of other women and children who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence and homelessness.

We understand the complexity of each survivor’s journey and the value of exchanging the knowledge from our experiences to lead and advocate for meaningful change.

Together we can be the most powerful agents for preventing and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence, and homelessness. Because personal is political and our personal commitment is to end violence, by ending our silence.” – Acknowledgment of Living and Lived Experience of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence and Homelessness, as created by Amplifying Voices participants

Key insights from participants and stakeholders include:

- The Program was described as strengths-based, powerful and transformational
- Program achievements included the approach to design and development, stakeholder engagement and support, and sector learning and development
- Program influence was enhanced by co-designed activities and advocacy, that prioritised participant agency, choice and control
- Participant advocacy to the Northern Territory Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence informed a subsequent announcement to explore the feasibility of a new Domestic and Family Violence Service Hub to be co-designed with lived experience and sector representatives.

Program outcomes include:

- Increased participant knowledge and understanding of the structural and systemic drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence
- Increased participant confidence and skills in lived expertise, advocacy and leadership
- Positive impacts for participants regarding personal safety, connection, agency and wellbeing
- Increased stakeholder knowledge, understanding and awareness
- Informed service design and planning
- A suite of co-designed tools and resources for continuing use
- Identified significant personal and professional change for participants and stakeholders.

The Program suggests the following practice insights:

- Design takes time, research and support – one size does not fit all
- Relationships are key
- An integrated focus on participant strengths, agency and power, underpinned by feminist and trauma informed ways of working
- These ways of working require key staff supports
- Participant engagement is supported by embedded practices that enhance connection, safety, clarity, trust, respect, healing, and action.

The Program reflects key principles from published research and evidence, and an applied model that contributes further to knowledge and practice.

Shaped and informed by Territory lived experience perspectives and sector requirements, the Program offers significant knowledge and expertise that highlights Territory leadership and impact, for application more broadly across other jurisdictions and contexts.

Learnings from Amplifying Voices are informing the design and development of the YWCA Lived Experience and Advocacy Program, which includes the delivery of the inaugural Northern Territory Lived Experience Advisory Group on Homelessness.



It was a legitimising experience ... [I could] make some kind of sense of all that had happened and use it for a better purpose."

– Participant



My living experience will always be a part of my identity. However, it has become a superpower that I draw upon to influence change."

– Participant

8. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR IMPACT

Our focus on outcomes, impact and action

This is our first Impact Report, and it marks our deep commitment to understanding not just what we do, but the difference we make.

Our Impact Framework asks **“are we making a difference”** across our services, housing and advocacy activities, towards our long term (10 year) outcomes. We are committed to embedding outcomes and impact measurement, and building our evidence to inform our practice, decision-making, strategic directions and advocacy.

As an intersectional feminist organisation, we hold ourselves accountable for how we engage, invite, challenge and learn, across diverse and intersectional perspectives. We seek to learn, act and continuously improve, for the benefit of women and gender diverse people experiencing housing insecurity, homelessness and gender-based violence.

Looking forward, our focus is on building our data and measurement infrastructure across YWCA and strengthening data-driven decision-making. We will implement a new measurement framework to better understand and demonstrate our organisational influence, and to drive lasting systems change through more informed practice, strategy and collective action.

This commitment to robust impact measurement and evidence is directly connected to our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) commitments.

Climate impacts, economic exclusion, housing insecurity and governance decisions disproportionately affect women and gender diverse people, particularly those experiencing multiple and overlapping forms of disadvantage.

To guide this work, YWCA has established an ESG Roadmap that provides a clear and practical framework for action. The Roadmap outlines priority areas, milestones and accountabilities, supporting the progressive integration of ESG considerations into organisational strategy, decision-making and culture.

YWCA is in the early stages of our ESG work but is committed to a learning-led approach, recognising that ESG maturity develops over time and requires reflection, adaptation and continuous improvement.

Our ESG roadmap provides an additional strategic lens to build our Impact work beyond social outcomes. We recognise that lasting social change requires addressing the interconnected systems of inequality that shape people’s lives, alongside environmental sustainability and strong governance.

With clearer evidence and a shared commitment to learning, we are hopeful and confident in our ability to contribute to lasting progress and to a future where women and gender diverse people have safety, security and opportunity now and into the future.



CONNECT WITH US



info@ywca.org.au



ywca.org.au



[YWCAAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/YWCAAustralia)



[YWCAAustralia](https://www.instagram.com/YWCAAustralia)



[ywca-australia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ywca-australia)