ROCC FOR WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT
2025-2026

Shoalhaven Womens Resource Group Ltd
trading as ROCC for Women
ABN 94 002 660 120



ANNUAL REPORT
ROCC for Women

This report has been prepared by:
Justine O'Reilly: Board Chair
Sabrina: Acting Services Operations Manager
Maree Lawrence: Team Leader
Alistair Preston: Finance and Accounts, Booth Partners

ROCC for Women acknowledges Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and water we live and work on. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



ROCC Group Artwork 2026

Shoalhaven Womens Resource Group Ltd
trading as ROCC for Women ABN 94 002 660 120

ROCC FOR WOMEN

ROCC FOR WOMEN

ROCC offers long-term case management for women 18 years and over who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or have had contact with the criminal justice system and/or where alcohol or other drugs, mental health concerns and trauma impact negatively on their lives.

Vision of ROCC

To realise the dignity and well-being of women within their communities.

Mission

To deliver trauma-informed, strength-based supports to foster resilience in, and advocate for, women.

ROCC for Women receives funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) under the Specialist Homelessness Services, Service Support Fund.

ROCC for Women also receives support through donations and grants from various sources, which are outlined in more detail in this annual report.

Diversity
Embrace everyone's story

Feminism
Women matter

Individuality
Our own and others

Advocacy
Speak up for ourselves and others

Self-determination
The right to choose

Collaboration
Working together

Resilience
Survive and thrive

Contribution
Every voice is valued

Honesty and Integrity
Openness and good intent

Holistic
Include the whole person

Client Feedback

"Hey, I just wanted to let you know that I passed the RSA and RCG so I just have to go to the RTA when I have the money to get the card. Thank you guys so much for helping me achieve that I'm so grateful for it :)"

Contents

About ROCC 1
Values and Behaviours 2
Board of Directors 4
Board of Directors Report 2025-2026 5
Service Operations Manager & Team Leader Report 8
Organisational Structure of ROCC 11
Client Story: Sam's Story – A Journey of Hope, Healing and Reunification 12
ROCC for Women Social and Therapeutic Workshops 14
In the Spotlight The Housing Crisis Through Women's Eyes 18
ROCC Client Service Information 2025-2026 22
Referrals 33
Staff Professional Development and Training 34
Areas of Focus for 2026-2027 36

Board of Directors

Our skilled, committed and experienced Board are actively involved and passionate about our service.

Justine O'Reilly - Chair

Manager of the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery program at Legal Aid, Justine has 20 years' experience as a lawyer, mediator, and policy development officer in government and non – government organisations. She has lived in the Shoalhaven for the past 18 years and has worked as the Principal Solicitor of South Coast and County Community Law and has served on the boards of many of the local community organisations. Justine has a keen interest in project management and governance.

Kerry Wright - Deputy Chair

Kerry is a civil lawyer with Legal Aid NSW, Nowra, and has lived in the Shoalhaven for 20 years. Before beginning her legal career in 2015, she spent two decades in the community sector in the ACT and Shoalhaven, working in senior roles with organisations including Australian Red Cross ACT, YWCA ACT and NSW and Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre. Kerry has extensive experience on community-led boards and committees, including the Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre, Community Legal Centres NSW, and the Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group, which established ROCC for Women. She served on the ROCC for Women Board from 2013 to 2016 before rejoining in 2020 and continues to contribute her skills and governance experience to a range of local organisations.

Tracey Sheather

Tracey brings extensive leadership and public service experience to the ROCC for Women Board. Having lived in the Shoalhaven for more than 25 years, Tracey retired from Services Australia in May 2024 after an outstanding 40-year career in the Australian Public Service. During her career, she held numerous senior leadership roles, managing large and complex teams across customer service delivery, program management, workforce development, and recruitment. Tracey is particularly passionate about leadership development, coaching, and mentoring, and has worked closely with a broad range of government and community organisations to support positive outcomes for individuals and families. Since retiring, Tracey has remained actively involved in the community through her volunteer work with Dress for Success in Warrawong.

Kelly Stehr

Kelly brings over 20 years experience in senior management roles in Human Resources both locally and internationally. She has extensive business and operational experience across a range of industries including as the Executive Manager People & Culture with Shellharbour City Council and has previously worked with IKEA, Travelex, Rentokil Initial and the University of Wollongong.

Melissa Vine

As Principal Solicitor/Director of Burbank & Brown Lawyers and Conveyancers, Melissa manages the daily operations of the Law Practice, people and staffing, regulatory compliance, client and public relations, staff budgets KPI performance targets, debtors and maintenance of financial reports.

Board of Directors Report

2025-2026

It is with great pleasure that I present this report on behalf of the Board of ROCC for Women for the 2025-2026 financial year.

This year has been one of continued growth, collaboration and achievement as we have remained focused on delivering dignity-driven, wrap-around support to women in our community. Guided by our mission, vision and values, the Board has worked closely with staff, clients and stakeholders to ensure that ROCC for Women remains responsive to the needs of women experiencing homelessness and disadvantage.

As Chair, I would like to acknowledge and recognise the significant contributions of Tessa Barnett, our previous Chair of the Board. Tessa's leadership has made a lasting impact on ROCC for Women and has helped guide the organisation through a period of change and development. Her dedication, expertise and unwavering commitment to the organisation have strengthened our governance and positioned ROCC for Women for future success. On behalf of the Board, staff and the women we support, I extend our sincere gratitude to Tessa for her outstanding service and leadership.

This year we also farewelled our Services Operations Manager, Suzette Laird. Suzette has made an invaluable contribution to ROCC for Women, demonstrating exceptional commitment to the women we serve, our staff and the broader community. Her leadership and advocacy have helped shape many of our achievements, and we thank her for the significant impact she has made during her time with the organisation.

I would like to welcome and acknowledge Sabrina Hissey, who stepped into the role of Services Operations Manager in April 2026. We are grateful for her leadership and enthusiasm as she takes on this important position. I also extend my thanks to Maree Lawrence, who has continued in her role as Team Leader, providing guidance and support to our three dedicated caseworkers. Together, they have formed a strong leadership team that supports our organisational goals and our commitment to women-centred service delivery.

I would like to welcome our newest Board Member, Tracey Sheather, to the Board of Directors. Tracey brings valuable experience from Services Australia and is currently a volunteer with Dress for

Success. We are pleased to have her join the Board and look forward to her contributions.

During 2025-2026, ROCC for Women provided services to 130 women, significantly exceeding the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Key Performance Indicator target of 98 women. This outstanding result reflects both the decision to employ an additional caseworker and the unwavering commitment, professionalism and compassion of our staff team. Their efforts ensure that women receive the support they need to achieve greater safety, stability and wellbeing.



Homeless Day event at the Shoalhaven Homelessness Hub

Strengthening partnerships and working collaboratively across the sector has remained a key focus throughout the year. Our staff have actively participated in a range of local networks and committees, including Homelessness Interagency meetings, the Family and Domestic Violence Committee, Community Corrections, Safety Action Meetings and LIAAC, among others. Staff also participated in NAIDOC Week celebrations and Homelessness Week events, demonstrating our commitment to community engagement and advocacy. We acknowledge Suzette's involvement in the committee responsible for organising the launch of Homelessness NSW's campaign, "A Place to Call Home and the Support to Keep It", held at the Entertainment Centre and attended by many sector representatives and supporters.

All of our activities during the year have been guided by the ROCC for Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025. At the same time, staff and Board members have been actively engaged in the development of a new Strategic Plan that places the voices and experiences of our clients at the centre of future planning and decision-making. Throughout this process, Board decisions have continued to be informed by our mission, vision and values.

With 38.5% of ROCC for Women clients identifying as Aboriginal women, cultural safety remains a significant priority for our organisation. During the year, staff and Board members participated in a cultural immersion experience in Jervis Bay, guided by Aunty Lisa, which provided valuable opportunities for learning, reflection and connection. Through our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), we continue to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders by celebrating National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, while ensuring that reconciliation is embedded within our policies, practices and workplace culture.

I am also pleased to acknowledge that DCJ has confirmed ROCC for Women will continue to receive funding as a Specialist Homelessness Service for the period 2026-2031. This funding commitment provides

stability and confidence as we continue to deliver critical services to women across our region.

ROCC for Women has also been fortunate to receive generous support from The Coolaroo Foundation, Freemasons and the Zonta Club. We sincerely thank these organisations, along with all of our funding partners and supporters, whose contributions enable us to provide dignity-driven support, therapeutic workshops and practical assistance that empower women to build safer and more independent futures.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to our staff team. Their compassion, professionalism and dedication are at the heart of everything we achieve. I thank them for their tireless commitment and have every confidence in their ability to continue delivering outstanding outcomes for the women who access our services.

I also extend my sincere thanks to my fellow Board members for their governance, expertise and commitment throughout the year. Their generosity of time and dedication to ROCC for Women's mission ensures that the organisation continues to thrive and make a meaningful difference in our community.

Together, we remain committed to creating opportunities for women to achieve safety, stability and wellbeing, and we look forward to building on our achievements in the years ahead.

Justine O'Reilly
Chair, Board of Directors



We extend our sincere thanks to Suzette Laird and Tessa Barnett for their dedication, commitment, and valued contributions throughout the year.

Their hard work, leadership, and unwavering support have played an important role in advancing our mission and strengthening the services we provide to women and families in our community. We are grateful for their contribution and the positive impact they continue to make on our organisation.

Service Operations Manager & Team Leader Report

The 2025-2026 financial year has been one of growth, achievement, and significant organisational development for ROCC for Women.

This year marked the conclusion of our funding contract as a Specialist Homelessness Service through the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ). We are delighted to report that ROCC for Women was successfully offered a new five-year funding contract, commencing in the new financial year. This outcome reflects the quality of our services and the positive impact we continue to make in the lives of women experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

Throughout the financial year, ROCC for Women provided support to 130 women, significantly exceeding our funded Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of 98 clients and surpassing the previous year's result of 109 clients. This achievement demonstrates both the increasing demand for our services and our team's commitment to responding effectively to the needs of women in our community.

We were also fortunate to receive additional funding support from the Freemasons Foundation and the Coolaroo Foundation. These valuable contributions enabled us to enhance our service delivery and provide a range of client-focused workshops designed to build confidence, independence, wellbeing, and resilience. Across the funding period, we delivered 13 workshops covering a broad range of topics, including wellbeing and self-care, healthy sleep, financial literacy and budgeting, cooking nutritious meals on a budget, healing and connecting on Country, employment readiness and job-seeking skills, creative arts



Client Christmas party.

for healing and self-expression, trauma-informed yoga, emotional wellbeing through journalling, and confidence-building initiatives such as Dress for Success. These workshops provided opportunities for participants to develop practical life skills, strengthen social connections, and support their personal growth and recovery.

A significant milestone this year was the implementation of new operational systems led by Services Operations Manager, Suzette Laird. Suzette developed and introduced a comprehensive client tracking system that has transformed how referrals are triaged and allocated across the team. This system ensures clients are assessed according to their level of need while supporting a balanced distribution of case complexity among caseworkers. As a result, service delivery has become more responsive and staff wellbeing better supported.

Suzette also represented ROCC for Women as a member of the committee responsible for the launch of the Homelessness NSW campaign "*A place to call home and the Support to keep It*" at the Entertainment Centre. The event was well attended and successfully raised awareness of the challenges facing people experiencing homelessness across New South Wales. To further strengthen organisational knowledge and sector engagement, Suzette attended the Homelessness NSW Conference in March.

This year also saw ROCC for Women commence participation in a new outreach program alongside community partners. Our caseworkers have been attending regular community barbecues at two Southern Cross Housing sites, creating opportunities to connect with residents, build trust, and increase awareness of available support services.



Suzette Laird (second from left) with fellow supporters at the launch of Homelessness NSW's *A Place to Call Home and the Support to Keep It* campaign at the Entertainment Centre.

Strategic planning was another key focus. A new Strategic Plan was developed through consultation with Board members and staff, ensuring a shared vision for the future of the organisation. This collaborative process has strengthened our foundations and positioned ROCC for Women to continue meeting the evolving needs of women in our community.

38.5% of ROCC for Women's clients identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Creating a culturally safe service and embedding reconciliation into casework practice, policies, and procedures remains a major priority for ROCC for Women.

We are proud to celebrate the completion of the organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) under Maree's leadership. Key achievements included a cultural immersion day for staff and Board members with Aunty Lisa, strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal organisations, and active participation in community events such as NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Maree also commenced research and planning to support the development of ROCC for Women's next Innovate RAP, which will guide and strengthen the organisation's ongoing commitment to reconciliation in the coming financial year.

In April 2026, we farewelled Suzette Laird and thank her sincerely for her dedication, leadership, and the lasting impact she has made on ROCC for Women. Her contributions have strengthened our systems, improved service delivery, and left a valuable legacy for the organisation.

Following Suzette's departure, Maree continued in her role as Team Leader while I assumed the position of Acting Services Operations Manager. Together, we have ensured continuity of leadership and maintained the high standard of support provided to clients.

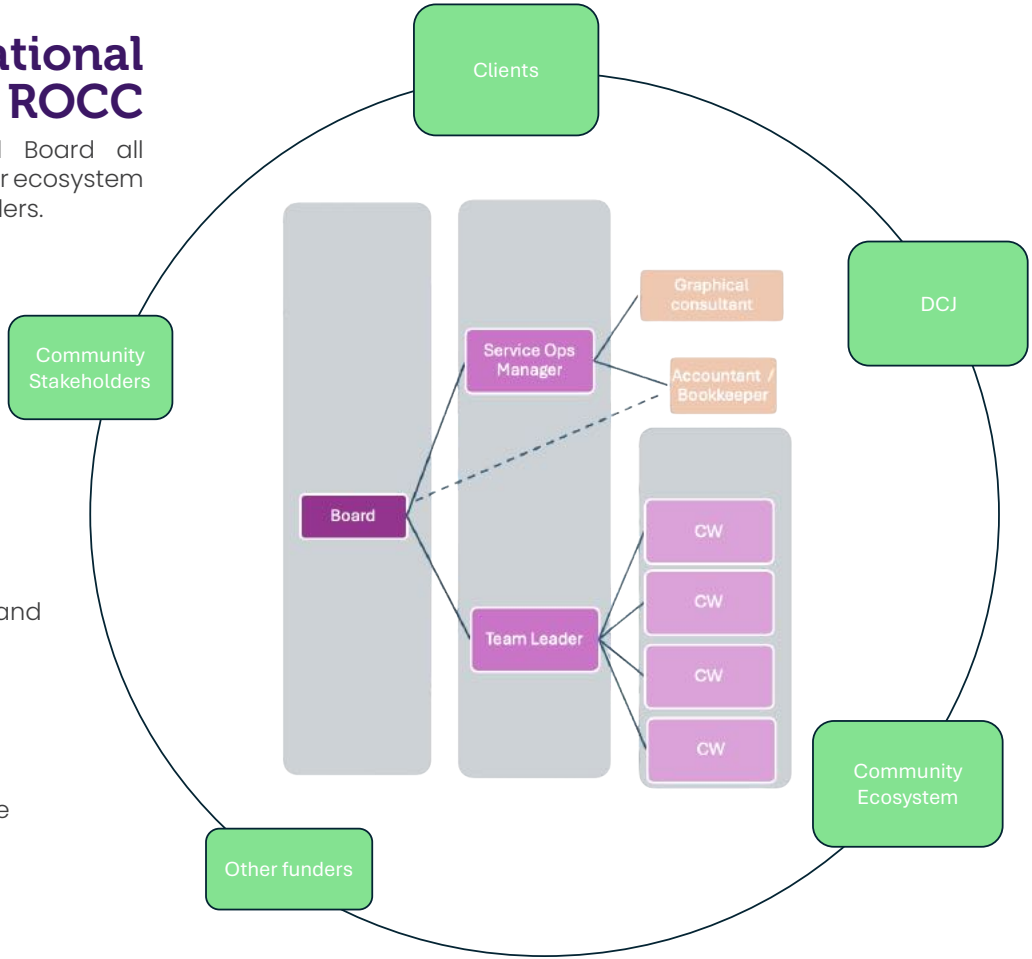
On behalf of the management team, I would like to thank our dedicated staff, volunteers, community partners, funders, and Board members for their unwavering commitment and support throughout the year. Their passion, expertise, and leadership continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the women we serve.

Together, we remain committed to empowering women to achieve dignity, wellbeing, safety, and the opportunity to reach their goals and create positive futures for themselves and their families.

Sabrina Hissey
Acting Service Operations Manager

Organisational Structure of ROCC

ROCC, employees and Board all operate within the greater ecosystem of their various stakeholders.



KEY

Purple boxes within grey boxes = employee roles and reporting lines

Orange boxes = external consultants working with ROCC

Green boxes = key stakeholders to whom we are all accountable

Client Story: Sam's Story

A Journey of Hope, Healing and Reunification

Sam's journey has been one of extraordinary resilience, determination, and transformation.

More than ten years ago, Sam's life took a difficult turn when she became involved with substance use following an introduction to heroin through someone in her local community. At the time, she was a young mother, and her eldest child was just two years old. As her dependence grew, child protection services became involved and her first child was placed permanently in the care of Sam's mother.

Following this loss, Sam experienced a period of instability marked by unhealthy relationships, substance use, and involvement with the justice system. She spent several months in custody and, upon release, worked hard to rebuild her life. Although she achieved periods of abstinence from heroin, she continued to struggle with methamphetamine use and the challenges that often accompany addiction.

Over the following years, Sam experienced significant personal hardship. She navigated unstable living arrangements, the loss of a pregnancy, and relationships impacted by substance use. Despite these challenges, Sam demonstrated a deep commitment to her children. During her pregnancies with her two daughters, she worked to reduce and cease her drug use, prioritising the health and wellbeing of her unborn children.

Her journey, however, was far from straightforward. Sam experienced significant domestic and family violence, which ultimately led to further child protection involvement and the removal of her two youngest daughters. This period was one of the most devastating times in her life. Faced with the loss of her children and struggling with her own mental health, Sam returned to substance use and found herself at a crossroads.

Recognising the need for change, Sam made the courageous decision to seek help.

She engaged with counselling, commenced mental health treatment, and began addressing the underlying challenges that had contributed to her substance use. Determined to create a

better future for herself and her children, she connected with Legal Aid to pursue family restoration and was referred to ROCC for additional support.

Over the next three years, Sam demonstrated unwavering commitment to her recovery and reunification goals. Throughout a lengthy court process that involved extensive alcohol and other drug testing, she remained focused on creating lasting change.

With support from ROCC and other services, Sam achieved every goal within her case plan. She actively engaged in counselling and mental health support, maintained her medication and health plans, attended Narcotics Anonymous meetings, addressed outstanding debts, secured safer and more stable housing, and consistently demonstrated her commitment to sobriety and personal growth.

Her dedication did not go unnoticed. During court proceedings, the Children's Court Judge commended Sam for her engagement with support services and her determination to make positive changes for herself and her family.

Today, Sam has been substance-free for more than three and a half years.

She has final court orders in place and is steadily progressing through a restoration pathway with her daughters. Following successful supervised contact visits, she is moving toward increased and unsupervised time with her children, with a clear pathway to shared parental care if current progress continues.

Alongside her recovery journey, Sam has also built a stable and supportive relationship with a partner who understands her past and continues to support her future. Together, they have recently welcomed a baby boy into their family, marking a new chapter filled with hope, stability, and possibility.

Sam's story is a powerful reminder that recovery is achievable, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. Through courage, perseverance, and the right support, she has transformed her life, rebuilt relationships, and created a strong foundation for her family's future.

Today, Sam stands as an example of what can be achieved when determination is met with compassionate support, proving that change is possible and that families can heal.

Client Feedback

"Thank you for your help. Thanks for all you've done and the support, Have a lovely afternoon. Take care, we'll catch up soon."

ROCC for Women Social and Therapeutic Workshops

Art of Healing:
"It was amazing and would definitely like to learn more about healing, teas, more about art."



During 2025-2026, ROCC for Women delivered a series of therapeutic and educational workshops funded through the generous support of the Coolaroo Foundation. Designed to complement ROCC's long-term case management model, these workshops provided women experiencing homelessness, housing instability, disadvantage, and social isolation with opportunities to build confidence, strengthen wellbeing, develop practical life skills, and foster meaningful social connections.

Thirteen workshops were delivered across the funding period, covering topics including wellbeing and healthy sleep, financial literacy, cooking nutritious meals on a budget, healing and connecting on Country, goal setting and employment readiness, artistic expression, trauma-informed yoga, Dress for Success, journalling, healthy relationships, navigating digital services, and therapeutic candle making. The workshops were delivered in partnership with local community organisations, facilitators, and Aboriginal cultural leaders, ensuring participants received diverse, engaging, and culturally responsive learning experiences.

A key strength of the program was its trauma-informed approach. Recognising the complex experiences many participants have faced, workshops were designed to create safe, welcoming environments where women could learn, connect, and participate at their own pace. Feedback consistently highlighted the importance of the supportive

Candle Making
"Safe space with other women who have been through hard times. Comeraderie and chatting."

and non-judgemental atmosphere, with participants reporting increased confidence, reduced stress, greater emotional awareness, and stronger connections with others in their community.

Creative and wellbeing-focused workshops proved particularly powerful. The Art for Healing and Expression and Expressing Your Emotions Through Art and Journalling sessions provided opportunities for women to explore their emotions through creativity, reflection, and self-expression. Participants described feeling calmer, more connected to themselves, and surprised by their own creative abilities. Many reported improvements in their overall wellbeing following the workshops and expressed a desire for further opportunities to participate in similar activities.

Healthy Meals on a Budget

"Amazing. Doing the class in person taught me new techniques that you can't just learn in a recipe. For example how to not break the rice paper"

Healthy Relationships

"Healthy relationships- "I feel more confident about what I want and need in relationships."

Cultural healing also played an important role in the program. The Healing and Connecting on Country workshop, facilitated in partnership with Aboriginal cultural leaders, provided participants with opportunities for reflection, grounding, and connection to Country. Women reported feeling a strong sense of wellbeing, cultural connection, and belonging, highlighting the value of culturally safe and place-based healing experiences.

Practical life skills workshops equipped participants with tools to support greater independence and stability. Sessions on financial wellbeing, budgeting, healthy cooking, digital literacy, employment readiness, and goal setting helped women develop confidence in managing daily challenges and planning for the future. One participant who attended the resume and job readiness workshops successfully





completed qualifications required for employment and moved closer to securing work, demonstrating the positive impact these workshops can have on long-term outcomes.

Yoga

"Yoga and facilitator very calming."

The trauma-informed yoga workshops offered participants a gentle and accessible way to reduce stress, increase body awareness, and support emotional regulation. Participants described the sessions as calming and restorative, reinforcing the importance of holistic wellbeing approaches within support services.

Across all workshops, women consistently reported gaining new



knowledge, confidence, and practical skills while developing valuable social connections with other participants. The program demonstrated that therapeutic and educational group activities can play a significant role in supporting recovery, reducing isolation, increasing self-determination, and strengthening pathways toward housing stability, employment, and community participation.

The success of these workshops reflects ROCC for Women's commitment to delivering holistic, trauma-informed support that empowers women to realise their dignity, wellbeing, and potential. Through partnership, creativity, cultural connection, and practical learning, the program has created opportunities for women to build resilience, rediscover their strengths, and take positive steps toward achieving their goals.

Journaling
"Doing my own journal, connecting with myself, and relaxing."







IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Housing Crisis Through Women's Eyes

Client Feedback:
"Client stated she feels like a different person now compared to when she first started with ROCC."

When we think of homelessness, many of us picture someone sleeping rough on the street. Yet for many women, homelessness is far less visible. It can look like sleeping on a friend's couch, living in an overcrowded home, staying in a car, moving between temporary accommodation, or remaining in an unsafe relationship because there is nowhere else to go. Women's homelessness is often hidden from public view, but it is a growing reality across Australia. ***(AIHW. Homelessness Services)[1], (Australian Bureau of Statistics)[2]***

The 2021 Australian Census estimated that 122,494 people were experiencing homelessness on Census night. Women accounted for 53,974 of those people, representing 44.1% of all Australians experiencing homelessness. While men continue to experience homelessness at higher rates overall, women accounted for more than 80% of the increase in homelessness between 2016 and 2021, highlighting a concerning trend of growing housing insecurity among women. *(Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023)[3]*

One of the most significant drivers of women's homelessness is family and domestic violence. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) identifies family and domestic violence as the leading reason women and children leave their homes. For many women, the decision to leave is not simply about finding a new place to live. It is about finding safety. *(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2026)[4], (see Reference 1)*

The link between violence and homelessness is reflected in national homelessness data. In 2024-25, around 117,000

people assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services had experienced family and domestic violence, representing 40% of all clients accessing homelessness services. Nine in ten of these clients were women and children. *(see Reference 4)*

Despite seeking support, many women continue to face significant barriers to securing safe and stable housing. Recent national reporting shows that thousands of women and children affected by family violence continue to experience persistent homelessness, often cycling between temporary accommodation, crisis services, and unstable housing situations. *(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2026)*[5]

The housing crisis has intensified these challenges. Analysis by Homelessness Australia found that 45% of women and girls seeking homelessness assistance did so because of family and domestic violence. The organisation also reported that the number of women and children sleeping rough or in cars after receiving homelessness support more than doubled over the past decade, illustrating the growing pressure on housing and support systems across the country. *(Homelessness Australia)*[6]

Older women are also facing acute housing insecurity. The Australian Council of Trade Unions *(ACTU, 2026)*[7] notes that women aged 55 and over are among the fastest growing groups experiencing homelessness, driven by lower lifetime earnings, the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, caring responsibilities and lower retirement savings. These structural inequalities can leave older women particularly vulnerable to housing stress following relationship breakdown, loss of employment, ill health, or increases in housing costs, often with limited financial resources to secure alternative accommodation *(see Reference 7)*.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience homelessness at disproportionately high rates and often face unique and compounding challenges. While First Nations people comprise only around 3.8% of the Australian population, they represented approximately 29% of all clients accessing Specialist Homelessness Services in 2024-25 *(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2025)*[8]. Historical and ongoing impacts of colonisation, dispossession, intergenerational trauma, racism, poverty and systemic barriers to housing continue to contribute to this overrepresentation. Overcrowding, which is recognised as a form of homelessness, is also significantly more common among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, reflecting ongoing inequities in access to safe, secure and appropriate housing *AIHW (2025)*[9], *(AIHW, 2022)*[10]

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are disproportionately affected by homelessness, many of the challenges that accompany homelessness are shared by women across the community. Family and domestic violence remains the leading reason women and children leave their homes in Australia, and housing instability is frequently accompanied by trauma, mental health challenges, financial hardship, social isolation and, for some women, alcohol and other drug concerns **(see Reference 4)**. Research consistently

highlights that homelessness is rarely caused by a single factor. Instead, women often experience a complex interplay of housing insecurity, violence, poor mental health, financial disadvantage and disrupted support networks. Effective responses therefore require more than housing alone, incorporating trauma-informed support, access to healthcare, social connection and opportunities for long-term economic security (*AIHW, 2025*[11]; *Mental Health Commission of NSW & AHURI, 2014*[12]).

While these are national trends, their impact is being felt acutely in regional communities such as the Shoalhaven.

The Shoalhaven has been identified as one of the regions experiencing significant housing pressure. A statewide housing needs assessment found increasing rental stress across the region, particularly among low-income households. The Shoalhaven was rated 9 out of 10 for housing-related financial stress and 10 out of 10 for social housing waiting list pressures, reflecting the growing difficulty many residents face in securing affordable accommodation. *(Shoalhaven City Council)*[13]

Local housing data paints a similarly concerning picture. Shoalhaven City Council's Affordable Housing Strategy reports that more than 4,000 households in the region are experiencing housing stress, while around 2,000 households require affordable housing. Additional estimates suggest that more than 2,100 households have an unmet need for affordable housing opportunities. *(Shoalhaven City Council 2024)*[14], *(Shoalhaven City Council: Document Library)*[15], *(ID Community)*[16]

For women, these pressures are often compounded by caring responsibilities, lower lifetime earnings, financial impacts following separation, and the need to find accommodation that is safe for both themselves and their children. When affordable housing is scarce, pathways out of homelessness become increasingly difficult to access. **(see References 1 & 4)**

At ROCC for Women, we see these realities every day. Behind every statistic is a woman navigating complex challenges and making difficult decisions to protect herself and her family. Our role extends beyond advocating for emergency accommodation and long term housing. We support women to access safety, rebuild confidence, navigate housing systems, connect with community services, and work towards long-term stability.

The client story featured in this report reminds us that homelessness is not always visible, but its impact is profound. It also reminds us of the resilience, strength, and determination shown by the women we support. As housing pressures continue across the Shoalhaven, the need for specialist services remains critical. Together, with the support of our community, partners, and funders, we can continue to ensure that women experiencing homelessness are not unseen, unheard, or unsupported.

Sabrina Hissey,
Acting Service Operations Manager.

References and Further Reading

1 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Homelessness Services: Clients Experiencing Family and Domestic Violence. AIHW, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/health-welfare-services/homelessness-services/shs-client-groups/o-clients-experiencing-family-and-domestic-violence* **[web link]**

2 **Australian Bureau of Statistics: Information for people experiencing homelessness** Available at: *https://info.census.abs.gov.au/help/information-people-experiencing-homelessness* **[web link]**

3 **Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). Estimating Homelessness: Census 2021. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/housing/estimating-homelessness-census/latest-release* **[web link]**

4 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2026). Housing - Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence. AIHW, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/responses-and-outcomes/housing* **[web link]**

5 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2026). Women and Children Affected by Family Violence Experiencing Persistent Homelessness. AIHW, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/resources/national-plan-outcomes/women-are-safe-respected-and-equal/women-and-children-affected-by-family-violence-experiencing-persistent-homelessness* **[web link]**

6 **Homelessness Australia (2024). Homelessness and Domestic and Family Violence: State of Response Report.** Available via Homelessness Australia media release, 8 March 2024. **[web link]**

7 **Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) (2026)**. ACTU Housing Plan (August 2026). Australian Council of Trade Unions, Melbourne, p. 4.

8 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025). Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report 2024–25: Clients, Services and Outcomes. AIHW, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/clients-services-and-outcomes* **[web link]**

9 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025). Housing Circumstances of First Nations People. AIHW, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/indigenous-housing* **[web link]**

10 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022). Indigenous Mental Health, Housing and Homelessness. AIHW, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-mental-health-suicide-prevention/indigenous-mental-health-housing-and-homelessness/notes* **[web link]**

11 **Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025). Housing & Homelessness: Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Clearinghouse. AIHW, Canberra.** Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-mental-health-suicide-prevention/housing-homelessness* **[web link]**

12 **Mental Health Commission of New South Wales and Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (2014). Mental Health and Homelessness Report. Mental Health Commission of NSW, Sydney.** Available at: *https://www.nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/content/mental-health-and-homelessness-report* **[web link]**

13 **Shoalhaven City Council (2023). Statewide Report Identifies Shoalhaven is in Housing Crisis.** Available at: *https://www.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/News-and-feedback/News-and-media/News/Statewide-report-identifies-Shoalhaven-housing-crisis* **[web link]**

14 **Shoalhaven City Council (2024). Shoalhaven Affordable Housing Strategy.** Available at: *https://getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/draft-affordable-housing-strategy* **[web link]**

15 **Shoalhaven City Council (2024). Shoalhaven Affordable Housing Strategy.** Available at: *https://getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/draft-affordable-housing-strategy/widgets/435330/documents* [**web link**]

16 **.id Community / Shoalhaven Housing Monitor (2021). Affordable Housing Need, Shoalhaven.** Available at: *https://housing.id.com.au/shoalhaven/affordable-housing-need/* **[web link]**

Additional Reading

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2019). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People: A Focus Report on Housing and Homelessness. AIHW, Canberra. Available at: *https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/indigenous-people-focus-housing-homelessness/contents/at-a-glance* **[web link]**

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025). Experiences of Alcohol and Other Drugs Among People Experiencing Homelessness. AIHW, Canberra. *https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol/alcohol-drugs-homelessness* **[web link]**

Homelessness Australia (2025). Scale of Domestic and Family Violence's Role in Homelessness Revealed. *https://homelessnessaustralia.org.au/scale-of-domestic-and-family-violences-role-in-homelessness-revealed-world-homeless-day/* **[web link]**

ROCC Client Service Information 2025-2026

130 (KPI is 98)
Total Clients seen in the year.

3946
Total number of contacts.

2210
Total number of hours working with clients.

The majority of clients come from Nowra, North Nowra and Bomaderry. We have some clients in the Bay and Basin and Ulladulla areas.

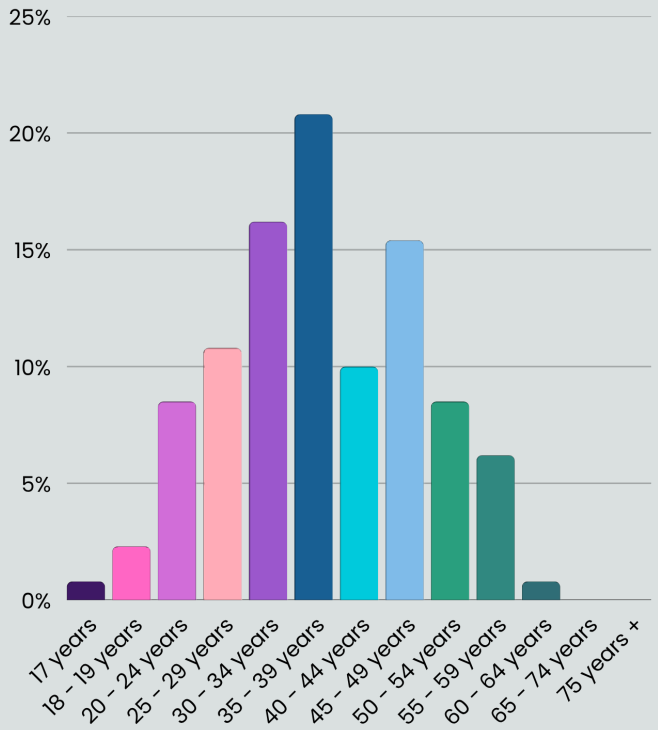
At the end of the period, 59 people had an active case plan and were regularly being seen by a case manager. 49 of these clients were not homeless.

Client Feedback

"Yes it is I'll let you know what the police have to say thanks for listening it does help me to share this awful situation"

The following statistics are sourced through the Client Information System

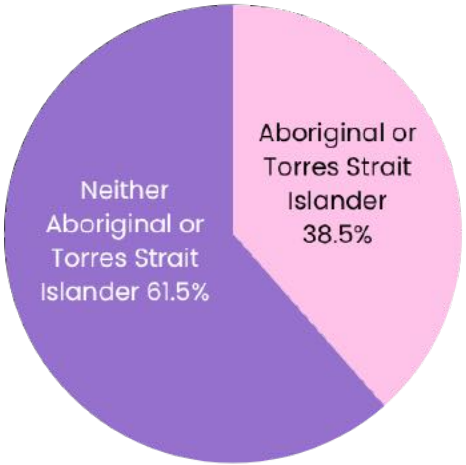
Age ranges



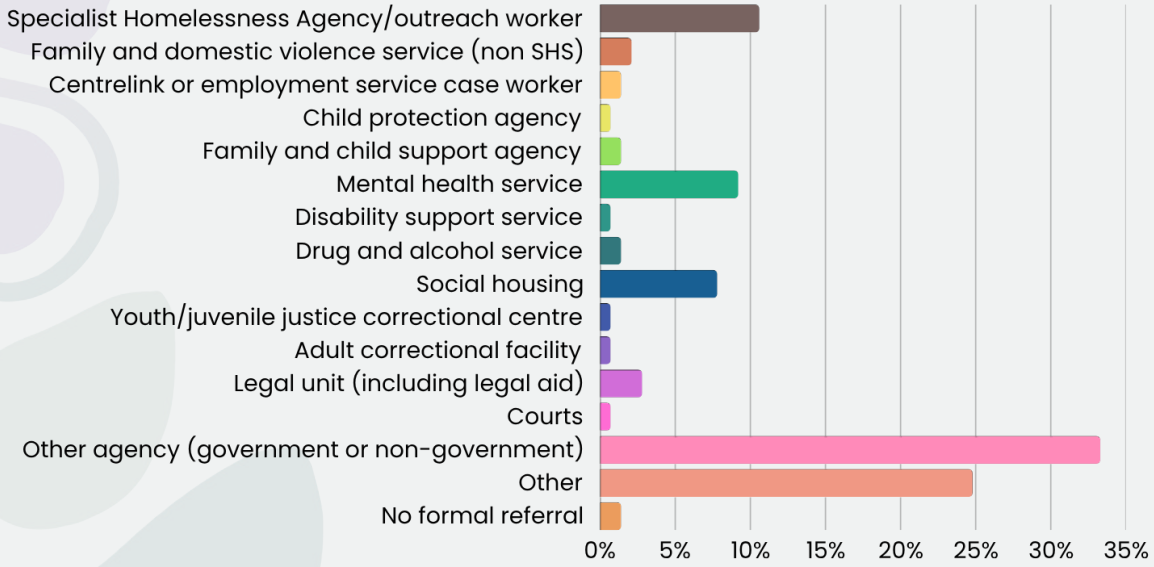
Age calculated from beginning of Support Period

130 Total Clients

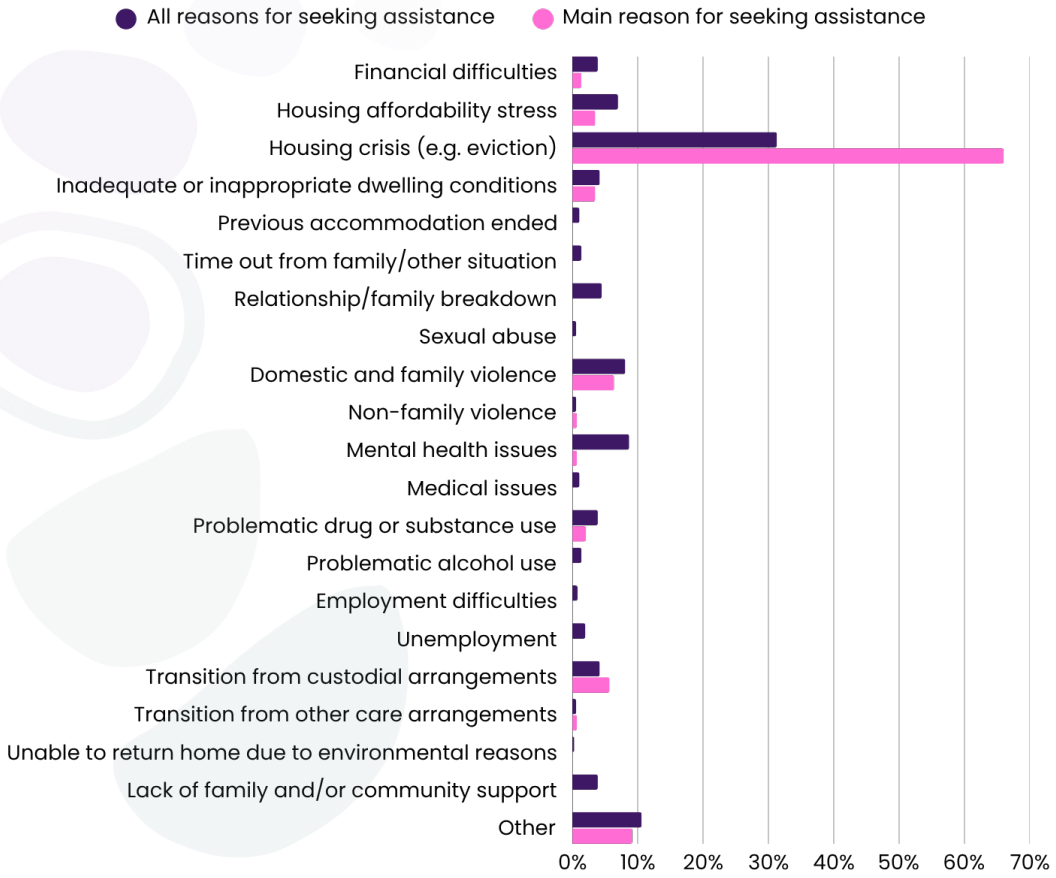
Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander

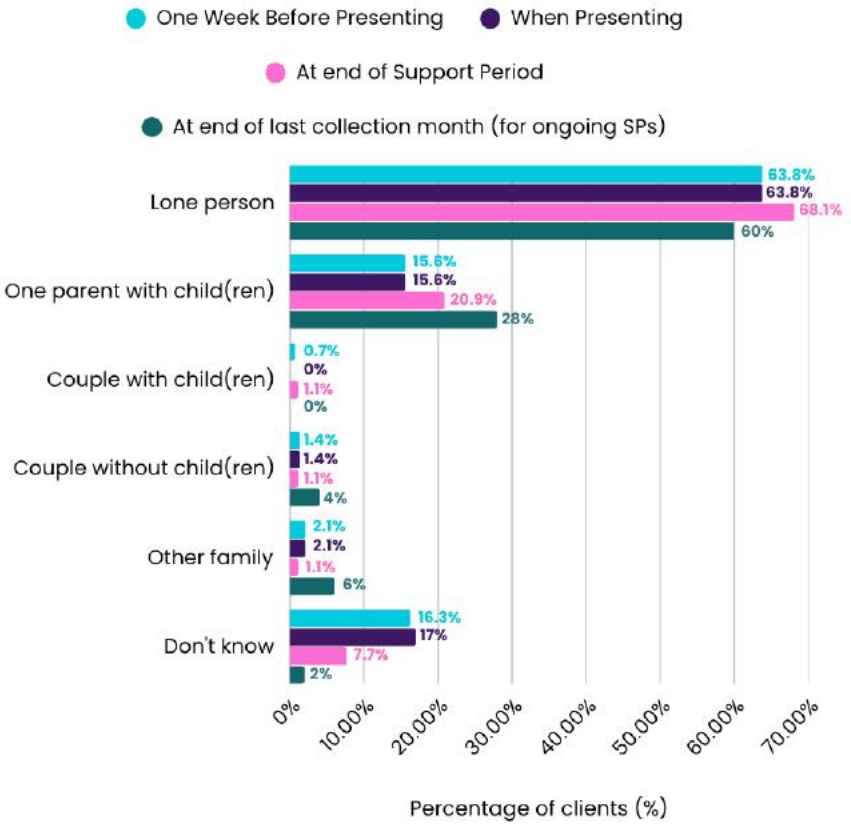


Source of Referral

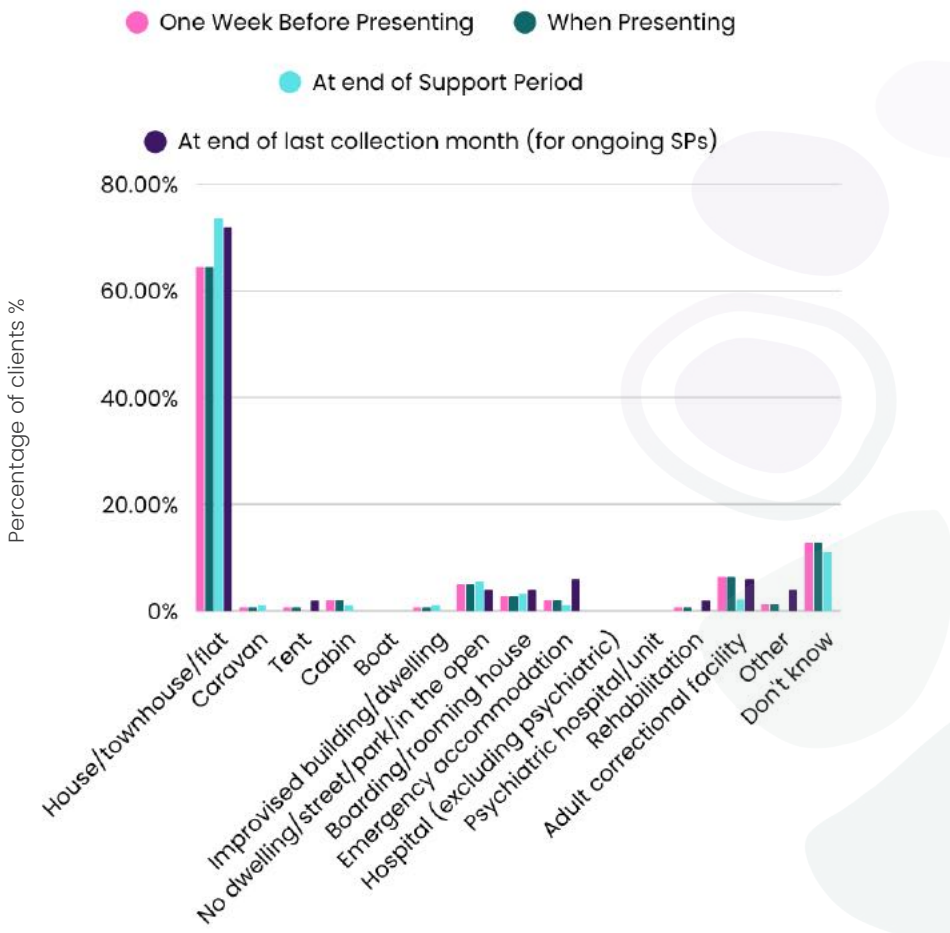


Reasons for Seeking Assistance

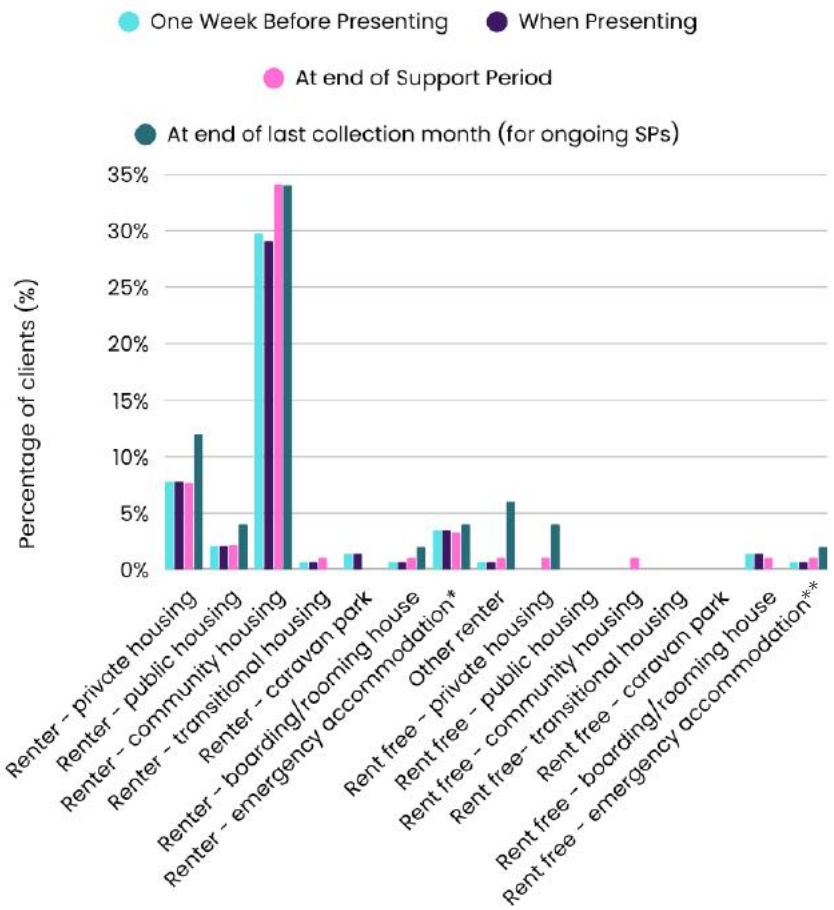



One Week Before Presenting
When Presenting
At end of Support Period
At end of last collection month (for ongoing SPs)
Lone person
63.8%
63.8%
68.1%
60%
One parent with child(ren)
15.6%
15.6%
20.9%
28%
Couple with child(ren)
0.7%
0%
1.1%
0%
Couple without child(ren)
1.4%
1.4%
1.1%
4%
Other family
2.1%
2.1%
1.1%
6%
Don't know
16.3%
17%
7.7%
2%
0%
10.00%
20.00%
30.00%
40.00%
50.00%
60.00%
70.00%
Percentage of clients (%)

Type of Residence or Dwelling

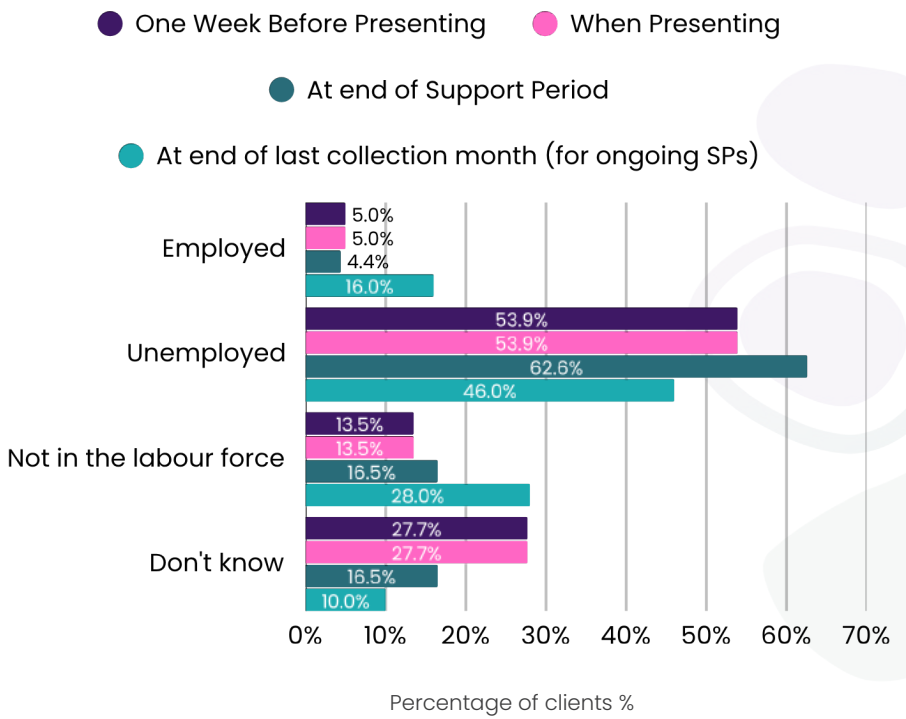


Best description of the client's tenure



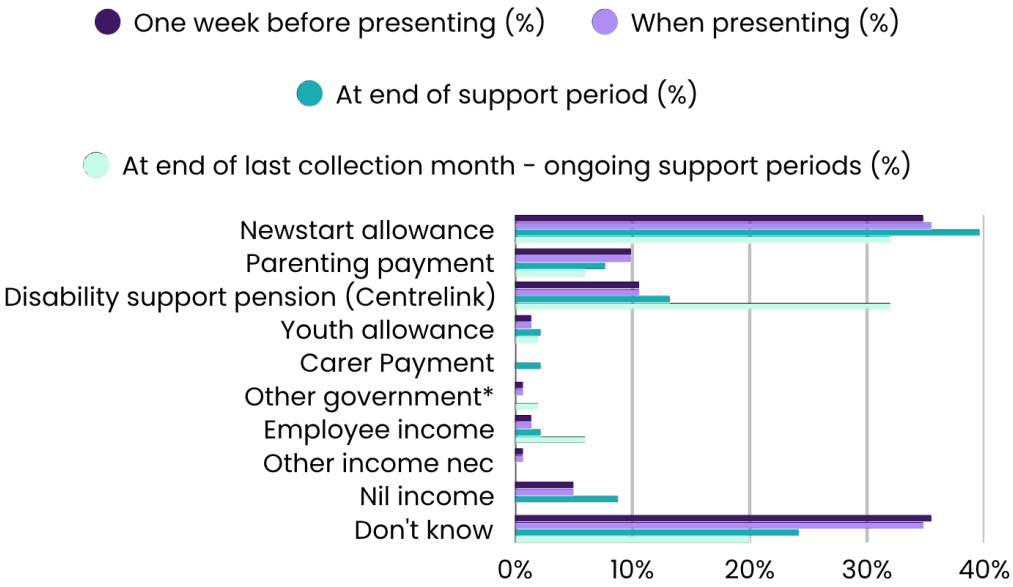
* Renter - emergency accommodation/night shelter/women's refuge/ youth shelter where rent is charged

** Rent free - emergency accommodation/night shelter/women's refuge/ youth shelter where rent is not charged



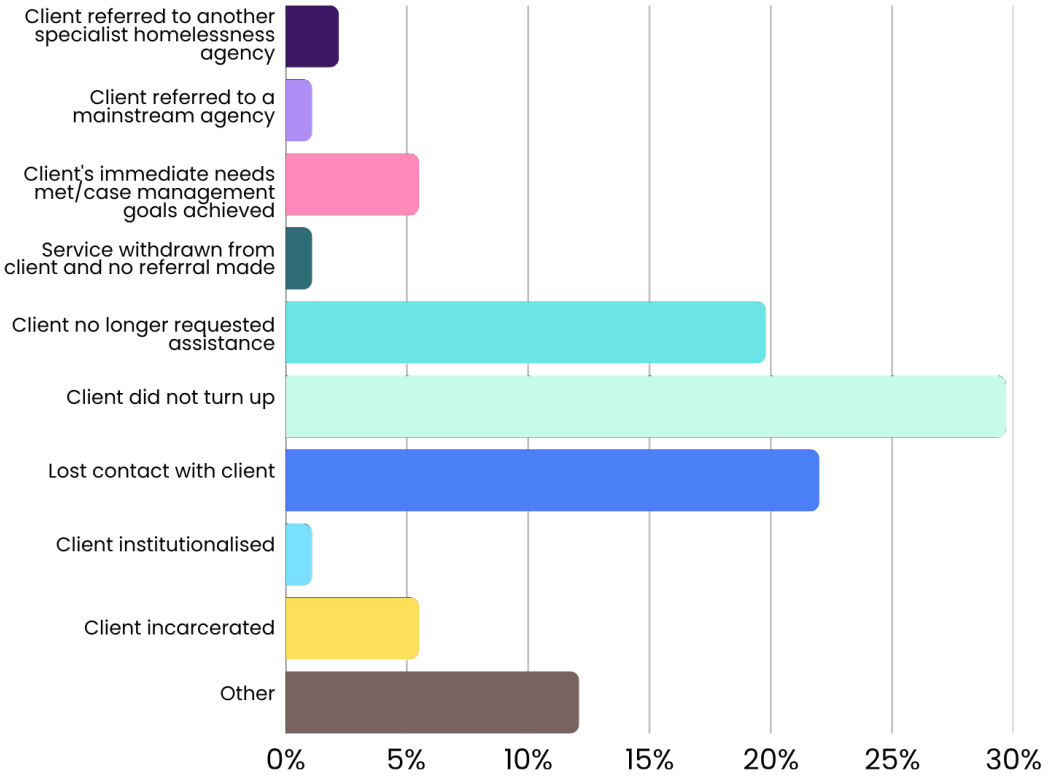
Labour force status for clients under 15 will generally be not applicable

Main source of income (Percentage)

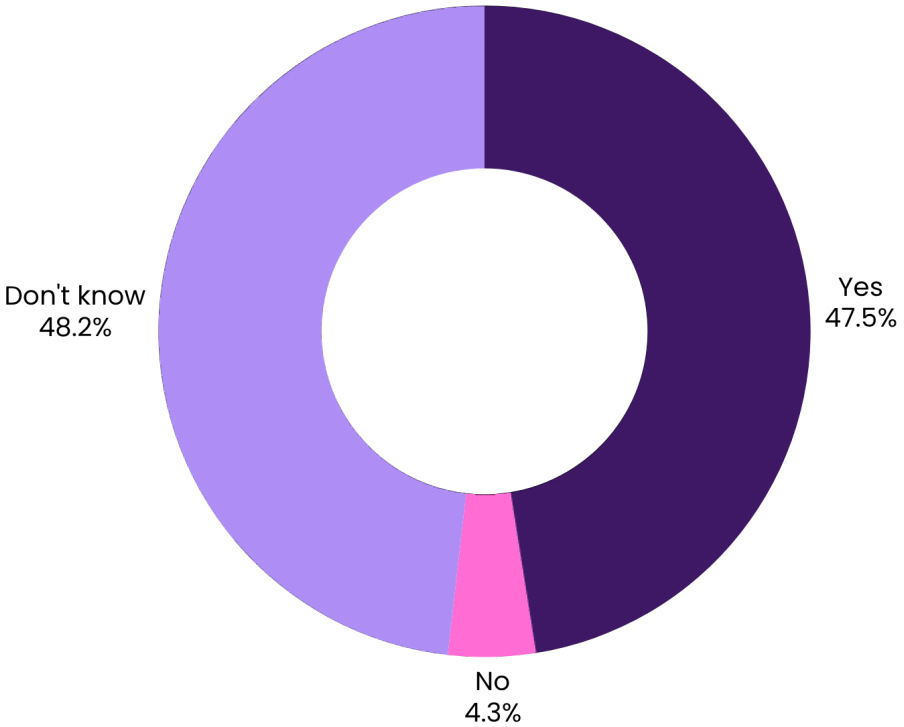


* Other government pensions and allowances nec

Reason for Closing Support (Percentage)



Client has previously been diagnosed with a mental health condition by a health professional



Referrals

In the 2025-2026 financial year we received referrals from the following

- Self
- SASSI
- Legal Aid
- Nowra Community Mental Health
- SALT
- ARBIAS
- Community Corrections
- Southern Cross Community Housing
- Family Services Australia
- Anglicare
- South Coast Medical Service Aboriginal Corp
- Waminda
- My Recovery
- Shoalhaven Mental Health Hub
- Shoalhaven Drug and Alcohol Service
- Wellways
- One Door
- St Vincent's De Paul
- The Watershed
- Links2Home

Staff Professional Development and Training

Training / Professional Development	Provider
Annual Accountability Training	DCJ
Bail Centralisation	Legal Aid
Board Governance Training	CI Group
Board NFP Training	Institute of Community Directors (ICD)
Breaking the Cycle: Treating Co-occurring Anxiety and Substance Use	Co-morbidity Guidelines
Brief Intervention for Hoarding (Trash or Treasure)	CIG
Building a Resilient Team Webinar	Highwire ASES Team
Co-occurring Mental Health and AOD Conditions	CCWT / MTS
Coercive Control: Working with Aboriginal People	DCJ / CCWT
Complex Trauma and Mental Health	CCWT / ACWA / DCJ
Conflict of Interest Training / Webinar	DCJ
Demystifying DGR	Institute of Community Directors / Breakthrough Office
Disability and Inclusion Related Training	Various Providers
Drinking, Drugs and Driving Webinar	South Coast and Country Community Law
Drug and Alcohol First Aid	South Coast First Aid
Fabulous Finances	CIG
First Aid, CPR and Basic Emergency Life Support	South Coast First Aid / All Events Medical
IT Cyber Security and Security Awareness Training	Showelltech / Corrective Services NSW
It Left No Marks	Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre
Keeping Calm When Emotions Run High	ACWA / CCWT
LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice and Service Delivery	Twenty10 / CCWT
Listening Without Fixing Webinar	Mental Health First Aid Australia
Measuring Social Impact Data	UNSW Centre for Social Impact
Mentally Healthy Workplaces and Psychosocial Obligations	icare
Motivational Interviewing	ACWA / CCWT / DCJ
Navigating the NDIS	NDIS

Opportunity for a NSW Human Rights Act Webinar	Homelessness NSW
Psychosocial Obligations and Insurance Savings	icare
Quality Auditing Qualification	Swinburne University of Technology
Questions Your Board Should Be Asking	Institute of Community Directors
Recognise and Respond Suicide Prevention	Black Dog Institute
Rent It, Keep It (Modules 1-3)	Homes NSW
Safety Action Meeting (SAM) Training	WDVCAS
Security Awareness Training	Corrective Services NSW
Service Provider Cyber Security Briefing	DCJ
SHS Eviction and Withdrawal Webinar	DCJ
SHS Induction	Centre for Training in Social Housing
Small Business Savings	icare
Stigma, Substances and Healthcare Webinar	NSW Health
Subpoena Webinar	Legal Aid
Therapeutics of Trauma-Informed Care and Management	ACWA / CCWT / DCJ
Trauma and Drug Dependence	MTS
Trauma-Informed Support for Adults Experiencing Domestic Violence	CCWT
Understanding Aboriginal Cultural Awareness	ACWA
Understanding ADVOs	South Coast and Country Community Law
Understanding and Responding to Domestic Violence	CCWT / ACWA / DCJ
Understanding and Working with Voices	Stride
Understanding DFV in CALD Communities	MTS
Unpacking the Complexity of Hoarding Disorder and Severe Domestic Squalor	ACWA / CCWT
Using AI in Fundraising	Institute of Community Directors
Vicarious Trauma	CCWT
Victims Support / Victims Crime Application Training	South Coast and Country Community Law
WDO Training and Updated Guidelines	DCJ / State Revenue / Legal Aid

Areas of Focus for 2026-2027

We are looking forward to the year ahead as we continue working alongside women in our community and expanding the impact of ROCC for Women. With a strong foundation of service delivery, strategic planning, and community partnerships, we are well positioned to strengthen our support for women experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence, and other complex challenges.

A significant achievement for the coming year is the successful securing of Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) Specialist Homelessness Services funding. This funding provides important organisational security and ensures ROCC for Women can continue delivering long-term, client-centred case management to a minimum of 98 women each year. This stability allows us to maintain our commitment to supporting women to achieve safer, more secure, and independent futures.

Continuous improvement remains a key priority. During 2026-2027, we will implement a Client Satisfaction Survey to gather valuable feedback from the women we support. The survey will help us identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, ensuring our services remain responsive, effective, and aligned with best practice.

We are also excited to commence a new peer support program made possible through the generous support of the Coolaroo Foundation. Funding for a dedicated Peer Support Worker will enable the delivery of therapeutic and educational workshops that foster connection, wellbeing, empowerment, and personal growth for women accessing our services.

The Board has been actively consulting on a proposed organisational restructure designed to provide greater workforce stability and support the organisation's long-term service delivery objectives. This work reflects our commitment to ensuring ROCC for Women remains sustainable, resilient, and well positioned to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Another major focus for the year ahead is the finalisation and implementation of the new ROCC for Women Strategic Plan. Developed with the commitment and input of staff and Board members, the Strategic Plan provides a clear vision for the future and will guide the organisation's growth, impact, and priorities over the coming years. Staff and Board members are excited by

the opportunities it presents and the meaningful work ahead.

ROCC for Women is also preparing for ASES accreditation, which is due in mid-November. Staff are working diligently to ensure all service delivery, governance, and operational requirements meet accreditation standards. In preparation for re-accreditation in late 2026, Suzette will lead a comprehensive review and update of policies and procedures to ensure alignment with ASES standards while strengthening governance, compliance, and best practice across the organisation.

Building and maintaining strong partnerships will remain a key area of focus throughout 2026-2027. We will continue strengthening relationships locally while connecting with organisations nationally and internationally that undertake similar work. These connections provide valuable opportunities to share knowledge, exchange ideas, and learn from emerging practices that can enhance outcomes for the women we support.

We also remain committed to advancing reconciliation through the ongoing implementation of our Reconciliation Action Plan. This includes deepening engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, strengthening culturally safe practice, and ensuring reconciliation remains embedded across our services, policies, and organisational culture.

As responsible stewards of our resources, we will continue reviewing organisational expenditure to identify efficiencies and maximise value. This work will help ensure that as much of our funding and resources as possible are directed towards achieving meaningful outcomes for women in our community.

As we move into the next financial year, we remain committed to delivering high-quality services, strengthening our organisational capacity, and creating meaningful opportunities for women to thrive. We are excited by the opportunities ahead and look forward to continuing our work with women, partners, funders, and the wider community to create lasting positive impact.

Shoalhaven Womens Resource Group Ltd trading as ROCC for Women

Address: PO Box 449
Tel: 02 4444 1103
www.roccforwomen.org.au

ROCC for Women is a not-for-profit Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) with funding provided by NSW Department of Communities and Justice

This Annual Report was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) tools.
All content has been reviewed and checked by ROCC for Women management to ensure its accuracy and appropriateness prior to publication.

Design and layout by WebDesign Solutions NSW webdesignnsw.com.au

All Content & Images © **Copyright ROCC for Women 2026**