

Annual Report
2020-2021

our vision

A community where everyone has a safe place to live and flourish

our mission

We walk together with people impacted by homelessness and domestic and family violence. We provide support to improve their skills, well-being and safety using a feminist framework and advocate for social change in the broader community.

acknowledgement of country

We acknowledge to the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the **Yuin Nation**. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge sovereignty was never ceded. Always was, always will be First Peoples land.

our values

Our values define who we are. They are the **fundamental beliefs** of our organisation. They **guide** our actions and behaviour. They **influence** the way we work with each other – and the way we serve our **clients** and **engage** with our communities, funding bodies and partners.

dignity we will treat all of our clients with dignity and respect.

inclusiveness we work with everyone with a spirit of openness, acknowledging our common humanity.

integrity we will be honest, sincere and committed in everything we do.

accountable we will be accountable for all our activities and services to our clients, community and funding bodies.

collaborative we will work collaboratively with our clients, funding bodies, partners and each other.

social justice SEWACS is underpinned by the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights.



we do magic

Community Industry Group, the peak body for community organisations in Southern NSW, awarded SEWACS the

Transformation and Reinvention

award for our efforts in adapting, overcoming and enhancing its services to match the challenges faced from October 2019 - February 2021.

who we are

staff

Regional Manager	Caroline
Office Manager	Sylvia
SHLV Program Manager	Jenna
SHLV Caseworker	Tahnee
BV Youth Program Manager	Kylie
BV Youth Caseworker	Mahlia
Relief	Kass
Eurobodalla Program Manager	Zoe
Acting PM/Caseworker	Liz
Caseworkers	Holly Lyla Naomi
Outreach (Aboriginal)	Jay
Child Support	Sara-Jane
Male Outreach	Tony
Evening Caseworkers	Sam Vicky Sarah Kylie Joanne
Relief	Elizabeth Rachel Kim

management committee

Chairperson	Marjorie McKnight
Secretary	Ange McKechnie
Treasurer	Stephanie Rayment
Members	Brianna Van Leeuwen Danya Thompson Catriona Thomson Jen Van Gorder Ann France

what we do

SEWACS provides a range of **services** and **support** mechanisms through its various programs operating in the **Bega Valley** and **Eurobodalla Shires**. This is provided across an intervention continuum which includes:

- Integrated Case Management
- Intensive Intervention
- Crisis Accommodation/Transitional Accommodation
- Primary Prevention/Education/Community Awareness
- Early Intervention
- Post Crisis/Outreach/Follow-up
- Outreach Support
- Support Groups
- Child & Adolescent Support
- Men's outreach



Communities
& Justice

our programs

SEWACS managed three programs funded by the NSW Government

Department of Communities and Justice:

Staying Home Leaving Violence

Bega Valley Youth Homelessness Support Service

Eurobodalla Domestic and Family Violence Homelessness Support Service

thank you

Social Justice Advocates
 Share the Dignity
 Bearded Villans
 CWA Pambula Merimbula
 David and Cora Num
 Wendy Hall
 Paul's Data and Cables
 Micro Energy/SHASA
 St Bernards Church Craft Group
 Eden Uniting Church
 Viva Pilates
 Petra Palmer

memberships

Community Housing Industry Assoc NSW
 Community Industry Group
 Domestic Violence NSW
 Jobs Australia
 Local Community Services Assoc
 NCOSS
 WESNET
 Yfoundations
 Youth Action and Policy Association



training

Training and professional development for staff remains vitally important to SEWACS. One positive of COVID lockdowns has been the free and accessible training available online.

We were fortunate enough to host the face to face 4-day course - **Practical skills in responding to people who experience domestic and family violence** which was run and facilitated by Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) and held in Bega.

SEWACS also hosted an inhouse **Cultural Awareness** training. Trisha Ellis, a local Elder, local language teacher and author ran this workshop which was informative and educational.

WOO days

SEWACS u g n g w m
 g r r WOO y r **Whole of Organisation**
 T y r w m u n g day n
 N r m w r w g y n



Communities in Control

The conference. The movement.

Eight staff across each sector of the organisation attended an inspiring two-day conference in Melbourne.

Think Bigger: Fix Everything

Communities in Control had a host of inspirational speakers from across the country.

Eurobodalla Domestic & Family Violence Homelessness Support Service

who we supported

263 women
65 men
48 children

We provided **2 718** bed nights in
crisis accommodation and
1 822 bed nights in
transitional accommodation

we promoted

Love Bites respectful relationships program was delivered to Batemans Bay High school Moruya High school and St Peters High school

Cut It Out was delivered to second year hairdressing students at Moruya Tafe

16 days of activism against violence on **World Human Rights day**—this years' theme was **Orange the World**

feedback

"Thankyou for supporting me. I hope you know that you're making a positive difference. Much appreciated."

"I'm extremely grateful to you for helping me and the children to get through the toughest situation of our lives. Domestic violence is incredibly challenging, dangerous and it takes a lot of support to get out of it and you have been the support we needed to make it out in a safe manner, I'm forever grateful to you for your help and support."

"My needs have been met very well. My caseworker is on the ball and amazing at her job."



Our therapeutic art groups on **Relationships Communication and Healing** and **Building Self Esteem** provided fantastic support to our clients

Our DVRE team delivered **cooking groups** with refuge residents to create **healthy and economical** meals

crisis accommodation

Our Moruya refuge offers crisis accommodation in family rooms with communal living areas an outdoor play area equipped with a basketball ring backboard and swing as well as a designated playroom a client computer and a library

transitional accommodation

Our transitional houses provide a stable home for three families The aim is to provide accommodation for families for three to twelve months while assisting them to attain long term permanent accommodation We are a registered **Community Housing provider** Unfortunately one of the transitional tenants had a house fire and the house is now unable to be occupied but thankfully no one was hurt



Eurobodalla Domestic & Family Violence Homelessness Support Service

who helped us

We worked with community organisation **SHASA** to have a 6.3kw **solar power system** installed at the refuge for women and children in Moruya. **SHASA's** key focus is to highlight and support action to mitigate climate change for our region.

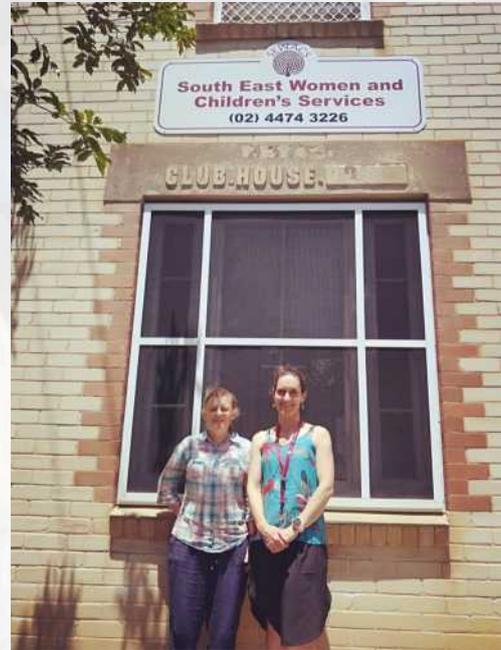
We installed a **nest swing** for adults and children to use during their stay at the refuge. This was funded by generous donations.



Moruya Woolworths provides a space for our non-perishable food items **donation basket** for members of the community to make donations for us to distribute to the people we serve.

We continue to receive and distribute free mobile phones and phone credit as part of the **WESNET** and **Telstra safe Connections program**. The **mobile phones** are specifically for women leaving domestic violence and have been a benefit to the service while providing a valuable service to our client base.

Emergency relief supports are also available to clients experiencing hardship. This may include **supermarket** and **fuel** vouchers, **household costs** such as linen and furniture, and hampers. This year we also supported women to purchase **security cameras** and solar panels with the use of the COVID-19 funding from DCJ.



Families at risk of homelessness were given computers from **South Coast Adult Education Center** in Batemans Bay, coupled with mini modems purchased with COVID-19 funding through SEWACS.



Share the dignity provides regular donations of **handbags** packed with sanitary and hygiene products for **women**.



Staying Home Leaving Violence

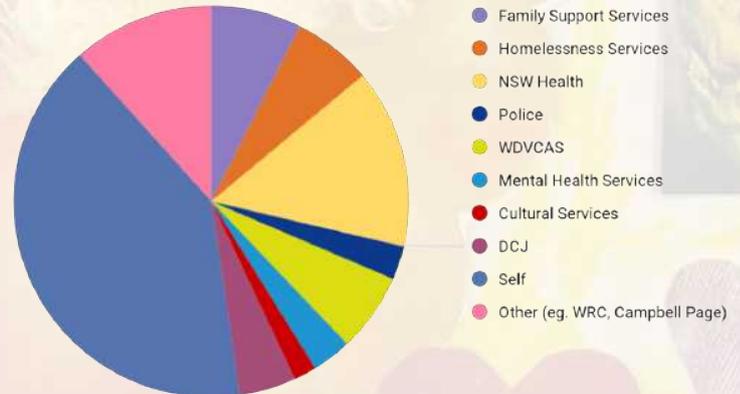
who we supported

We had **222** referrals for the year

We **case managed 63** clients and **case coordinated 37** clients and supported **16** children

First Nations women represented **37/222** of referrals **15** of whom received case managed support

referrals



what we did

Security equipment and safety upgrades are an important part of the program. When combined with **safety planning** and **ongoing support**, this equipment has a significant impact in increasing client's feelings of safety. We work closely with women to tailor the most appropriate safety plan for their circumstances.

Extra funding from the federal government has allowed us to focus on purchasing **security cameras** and focus on **IT security**. We are grateful to the federal government for this initiative.

We provided **38** technological security upgrades including dashcams, video surveillance, wifi dongles and mobile phones, and **65** home security upgrades including security doors, locks, personal alarms, torches, dowel and sensor lights.

We provided **emergency relief supports** to clients experiencing **hardship**. This may include supermarket and fuel vouchers, as well as emergency bill payments such as greenslips, car registrations and household costs.

We have seen an increase in emergency relief distributions this year, most likely due to the ongoing impact of the **COVID-19** pandemic and financial hardship. Arguably, it is also a symptom of a long-term trend of **higher costs of living** against

we promoted

Building networks and having a strong presence in the **wider community** is a crucial component of the SHLV program.

We continue to conduct **prevention** work throughout the community and advocate for **stronger protections** for women and their children experiencing DFV.

Presentation to **NSW Health team** at South East Regional Hospital

Presentation to **CWA Pambula and Playability staff**

March4Justice protest in Bega

Market stall for **International Day of Non-Violence**

Lovebites to Year 10 students from Eden High School and Bega High School

Three separate **SE ABC Radio** interviews commenting on coercive control legislation and the additional funding announced for SHLV.

Staying Home Leaving Violence

client feedback

75% they feel safer as a result of our service

81% have improved knowledge of domestic and family violence

88% feel that the service helped them find access to other services/supports

*"I wanted to say thank you for all of your help. Feeling so much less stressed and the **kids are really happy**"*

*"Without this service my life would still be in danger and I wouldn't have **gained the confidence I needed** to be a single mother and battle my ex on court"*

*"I felt the safest in the house I have since moving in. The locks made an **incredible difference**. Thankyou"*

*"I just want to say a big **thankyou** to everyone at HomeLeavingViolence. You are all amazing and do an **awesome** job with so much **trust and support**"*

*"I just want to say thank you, and to tell you that you are a true inspiration. Because of your words, I **now believe in myself and my worth.**"*

safety planning

The **Safety Planning** booklet is available for services to purchase or is given to each new client of the program

The information in the booklet is also available through the free app '**Safe Around Me**'

Both are useful resources for services and clients



highlights

We supported numerous women to secure **stable housing** for themselves and their **children**. There were two cases where women were facing eviction when they were referred to us but with SHLV's support they were able to remain in their **home**.

Other women were able to secure private rentals with the **Start Safely** subsidy and establish a **safe** and stable environment for their children. One woman was pre-approved for a mortgage after finding a new job and could buy-out her ex-partner for their shared property.

Ten recognition payments were distributed to clients from **Victims Services NSW**. These payments range from **\$1 500-\$10 000** and not only make a **significant impact** on clients for easing financial hardship but they also represent a **tangible acknowledgement** for what happened to them.



exiting the program

22 women remained safely in the home where the DFV occurred. **12** were housed in private rentals, **7** in other long term rentals, **4** lived in their own property and **6** lived in social housing. **1** client remained homeless while **3** women's housing status remained unknown.

South East Youth Accommodation Service

who we supported

SEYAS supported **115** young people aged **16-25** years in the Bega Valley

32.3% of the clients assisted by the SEYAS program were **Indigenous** or **Torres Strait Islander** descent
83% were “new” service users and the remaining **17%** people returned for repeat service



skillbot app

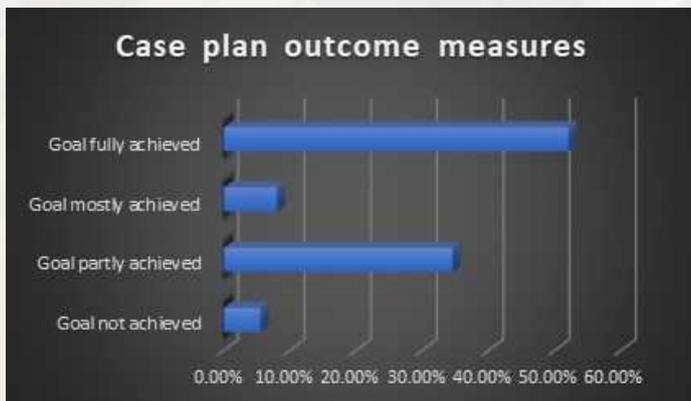
Skillbot updates are ongoing and we continue to promote and share the “**Youth Worker in an app**” which was devised by Kylie YFoundations continues to promote this app through their newsletters

our impact

261 case plans were created and actioned to address the many complex needs of clients

95% of clients has client lead case plans while **5%** of clients had a service episode too short for a plan

We use **best practice** to ensure we manage data to record all relevant information and build comprehensive client lead case plans



52% of people fully achieved all their goals 94.5% worked towards goals

feedback

“Cheers, catch ya around, **appreciate the help massively**”

“Wow, that’s **awesome** thank you, that’s helping a lot”

“Hey, it’s been really helpful that you came around, thank you. It feels like I’m **going to be able to make and keep some changes**”

“Aww you’re a **bloody legend**, thank you so much”

“That just blows me away, I’m a wreck and yes to all you said. Thanks you so much, from one mum to another, it sux to feel like a failure but your support has really helped”



South East Youth Accommodation Service

who helped us

Social Justice Advocates of the Sapphire Coast have supported us by providing accommodation in caravans and their unit as well as furniture and white goods for clients in need. **Share the Dignity** has continued to donate personal hygiene packs which have been greatly appreciated by the young women from our program. The **Sapphire Community Pantry** provided frozen meals from Two Good Co and HelloFresh meal kits. The **Bearded Villains** generously donated the proceeds of their toy drive to SEWACS Bega services. Our clients and their children were very happy to receive the Villan's fantastic generosity at Christmas (photo with permission)



community

SEYAS has strengthened ties with charities and service providers in all towns across the shire. The combined knowledge and **support** of SEYAS staff has been regularly requested by various government and **community** organisations within the sector.



highlights

Community engagement

Various **radio interviews** to highlight the impacts of homelessness on young people in the Bega Valley.

A plea to the community to consider young people as **share tenants** or for users of vacant **granny flats** lead to a variety of generous offers from members of the wider community.

A **donation of a used car** to a young person which resulted in them expanding their range of accommodation options and is now housed.

Rent Choice Youth

The RCY subsidy has been utilised to assist **seven** young people from the SEYAS program to secure accommodation.

barriers

The main barrier to assisting young people in **housing crisis** or at risk of homelessness in the Bega Valley remains the short supply of youth designated public or community housing properties and **no crisis accommodation**.

Private rental properties in the valley have continued to show extreme **increases in rental rates** with higher than normal demand from the general public to secure these properties. This **increased** competition for available properties has been further exacerbated by the movement of people from cities and the **bush fires of 2020**.

