

WOMEN'S
AND GIRLS'
EMERGENCY
CENTRE

2025-2030 *Strategic Plan*



CONTENTS				
Strategic Plan	Acknowledgements	3	Strategic Goal 1: Service Equity	18
	Introduction	4	Strategic Goal 2: Sustainable Innovation	20
	Vision	6		
	Problem Statement	7	Strategic Goal 3: Community Influence	22
	Values	14		
	Core Business Safety Functions	16	Strategic Goal 4: organisational excellence	24

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and live. We recognise their enduring connection to land, waters, skies, and culture, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

WAGEC operates on the unceded lands across New South Wales. We honour the lands on which our numerous sites are located, including the unceded lands of the Gadigal, Wangal and Bidjigal people of the Eora and Darug nation and we pay respects to elder past and present.

We recognise the leadership, sovereignty, and right to safety and justice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is not a symbolic gesture; it is a structural imperative. We commit to embedding culturally safe practices, prioritising First Nations governance, and fostering trauma-informed environments that honour identity, resilience, and survival.

We acknowledge the intergenerational trauma and systemic racism that colonisation has inflicted and continues to inflict. Our strategic direction is shaped by a commitment to truth-telling, accountability, and the amplification of First Nations leadership in the movement for safety, equality, and justice.

Acknowledgment of Lived Experience

We honour the strength, wisdom, and resilience of women and children with lived experience of homelessness, incarceration, and gender-based violence.

Our approach is feminist, intersectional, and grounded in lived experience. We embed survivor voices through collaboration with lived experience advisors, ensuring our services and innovations are responsive, inclusive, and informed by those most impacted.

We recognise that systems of justice, housing, and welfare have historically failed to meet the needs of women, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, mothers, and those experiencing compounded marginalisation. Our strategy challenges these systems, centres healing, and builds pathways to long-term recovery.

We commit to listening deeply, learning continuously, and co-creating solutions that reflect real-world realities. Lived experience is not an add-on, it is the expertise that guides our strategic priorities and drives meaningful change.

Violence against women and children is a global epidemic which is widespread, persistent, and deeply entrenched in systems of inequality.

One in three women worldwide will experience physical or sexual violence in her lifetime, most often by an intimate partner (World Health Organization, 2021). These are not isolated incidents, they are the product of cultural norms, political neglect, and institutional failures. Domestic and family violence is a leading driver of women's homelessness, a barrier to education and employment, a contributor to poor health outcomes, and a key factor in cycles of intergenerational trauma.





Despite international conventions and national frameworks, many governments continue to deprioritise gender-based violence. Frontline services remain underfunded and overstretched.

In Australia, the crisis is urgent: one woman is killed every 10 days by a current or former partner. Thousands more endure daily experiences of coercion, abuse, and control. Australia ranks 8th among G20 countries for gender equality and has the 3rd highest rate of homelessness among OECD countries. Far too many women and children continue to be failed by the very systems meant to protect them.



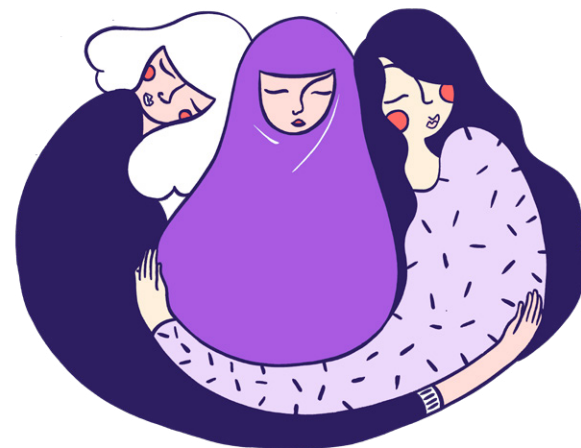
Justice, housing, health, and welfare systems are often under-resourced and ill-equipped to respond to the complexity of violence and trauma. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disabilities, migrant and refugee women, and LGBTQ+ communities, these failures are compounded by systemic racism, colonisation, ableism, discrimination, and intergenerational disadvantage.

WAGEC exists in response to this crisis.

We provide immediate safety through homelessness response, case management, therapeutic services, and holistic support for women and children experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence. But our vision goes beyond crisis care. Our work spans the full spectrum, from disrupting the drivers of gender-based violence to supporting recovery and long-term stability. Our work involves early intervention, supporting women in moments of acute danger, and remaining present as they rebuild.

Alongside these social and systemic challenges, the funding environment in Australia is also changing.

Philanthropy is growing, with giving reaching over \$14 billion in 2024–25 (Workplace Giving Australia, 2025), and Philanthropy Australia setting a goal to double that figure by 2030 (Philanthropy Australia, 2025).



Giving patterns are shifting toward trust-based, long-term partnerships, greater support for First Nations-led initiatives, and stronger expectations around transparency and evidence of impact. While government, philanthropic and corporate giving are currently strong, they are vulnerable to economic shifts, creating both opportunities and risks for organisations like WAGEC. This strategy recognises these dynamics and commits to adapting with them, ensuring our funding model remains resilient and sustainable over the next five years.

Our approach is feminist, intersectional, and grounded in lived experience.



We centre the voices of survivors and advocate for long-term, systemic change. We believe that to end gender-based violence, we must challenge the systems that uphold it, and that doing so requires collaboration, and collective power.

In a global and national context where gender-based violence is both normalised and under-responded to, WAGEC meets urgent needs and actively disrupting the conditions that create them.

FEMINIST
INTERSECTIONAL
and
GROUNDED
in LIVED
EXPERIENCE

TO BUILD A COMMUNITY *free from* GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

*by harnessing collective power
and shaping a safer future for
generations to come.*





Marginalised women and children are trapped in cycles of violence, poverty, and homelessness.

The systems intended to support them perpetuate inequality and lack a focus on healing and long-term recovery which results in intergenerational trauma and victimisation.





Our values are how we show up - with passion, purpose, and allyship.

They remind us of who we are, what we stand for, and how we walk alongside women, children, and all people building safer futures.

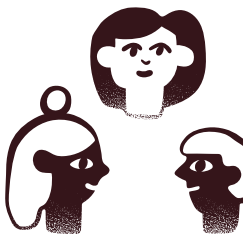
Our values also reflect our commitment to walk respectfully alongside all communities, listening deeply, learning continuously, and acting in solidarity. We know this means strengthening what already exists - not replicating community-led services - and always working toward justice, self-determination, and healing.

All WAGEC staff will bring these values to life - in how we work, how we support, and how we lead.



RESPECT

Every person matters - honour every person's worth, listen deeply, and let lived experience guide what we do. At WAGEC, respect means recognising the inherent dignity of all people. We listen with intent, act with care, and make space for women, children, and communities to shape the programs, advocacy, and environments that affect their lives. Respect guides how we communicate, make decisions, and create safety in both our services and work environment.



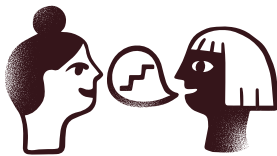
COLLABORATION

Change happens together - real change happens when we work together - survivors, communities, and allies building solutions side by side. We believe real change is collective. Collaboration means working in partnership with clients, colleagues, communities, sectors and allies to build stronger systems and safer futures. We go where we're needed, partner with those already leading, and act with transparency and trust.



SOCIAL JUSTICE

Dismantle injustice, build what's fair - violence is a systemic problem that needs systemic solutions. We name injustice and work to challenge the structures that enable it. Social justice is our compass and our call to action. We name violence and homelessness as systemic issues, not personal failures, and work to shift the structures that uphold them. We advocate for fairness, inclusion, and equality in every space we occupy.



ADAPTABILITY

Unlearn, relearn, grow - we learn from communities, from mistakes, and from each other to keep improving our practice. The world around us is shifting and so are the needs of the people we support. Adaptability means meeting change with optimism, creativity, and reflection. It's about challenging our own biases, learning from experience and evolving how we work so WAGEC remains responsive, resilient, and future-focused.

At WAGEC, our business-as-usual functions are foundational to how we live our values every day.

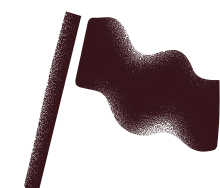
These core practices reflect our commitment to building an organisation that is ethical, inclusive, and future-focused.



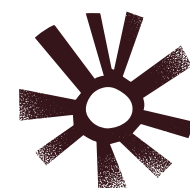
Our Board governance ensures organisational safety by overseeing strategic direction, risk management, and compliance with ethical and legal standards.



Our diversity policy and procedures and regular cultural reviews ensure that our work is grounded in intersectionality and led by the communities we serve.



We embed ethical reflexivity into safety practices through our Ethical Stance Framework for decision-making, ensuring that safety measures uphold dignity, resist paternalism, and promote self-determination for women and children.



Through our commitment to a diverse workforce, we challenge structural inequality and embed feminist leadership across every level of the organisation.



We prioritise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, not as a token gesture, but as a structural imperative – recognising their leadership, sovereignty, and right to safety and justice.



We centre children as rights-holders in their own lives, designing programs and policies that honour their agency and wellbeing.



Internally, we uphold financial transparency and environmental responsibility as non-negotiable pillars of integrity.



We recognise the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the critical importance of cybersecurity in safeguarding women, children, and communities.

As technology evolves, so do the risks – particularly for those experiencing violence. WAGEC embeds technology safety into our core functions by proactively addressing digital threats, ensuring secure data practices, and collaborating with experts to strengthen our systems. We acknowledge the potential misuse of AI and publicly available platforms, and we respond by aligning our practices with principle that prioritise data sovereignty, transparency, and survivor-led safety. Internally, we embed safety into organisational

systems by designing and maintaining internal communications, IT infrastructure, training programs, and automation tools that proactively supports safety across all levels of the organisation. These functions are not add-ons, they are the daily deliberate actions that make WAGEC a resilient, values-driven organisation capable of leading systemic change.

SERVICE *Equity*

Equity in practice, safety in action

At WAGEC, service equity and safety are foundational to our work. We refuse to accept environments where harm is normalised, where systems fail to protect, and where marginalised women and children are left behind.



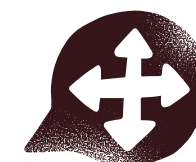
Safety is not just physical, it is emotional, cultural, digital, and economical. It is about restoring dignity, building trust, and creating spaces where healing is possible. From the frontline to the boardroom, safety is everyone's responsibility, and we will not compromise on it.

We also recognise that housing is more than shelter – it is a critical safety intervention. Our advocacy efforts aim to influence housing policy, expand access to safe and affordable housing, and ensure that the voices of women and children are heard in systems that too often exclude them.



Ensure the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of clients and staff by embedding trauma-informed, person-centred practices across all services, including homelessness response, therapeutic support, and holistic case management.

1.1



Centre lived experience and digital inclusion by embedding the voices of survivors through collaboration with lived experience advisors and centring children and young people to ensure our services are accessible, responsive, and informed by those most impacted.

1.2



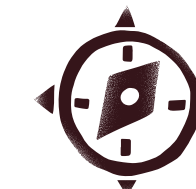
Create culturally safe and inclusive environments by prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance, implementing cultural reviews, and fostering spaces that are trauma-informed, welcoming, and respectful of all identities.

1.3



Hold systems, partners, and funders accountable, challenging power imbalances and resisting pressures that compromise our ethics, while demanding that collaboration aligns with our feminist values and the needs of our communities.

1.4



Lead the sector in evidence-based, whole-of-community service delivery, using data to drive sector advocacy, improve outcomes, and model therapeutic, inclusive care that engages all people (including men and boys) in the movement to end violence.

1.5

SUSTAINABLE *Innovation*

We grow sustainably and ethically

Innovation at WAGEC is a commitment to do better for the people we serve. We are building a culture of experimentation, iteration, and learning across all areas of our work.



Whether it is piloting new service models, trialling virtual delivery options, refining how we communicate our impact, or embedding client and community feedback into everything from program design to fundraising and brand storytelling, we test ideas with intention and adapt based on what works.

Our statewide presence, virtual capabilities, and deep listening to lived experience allow us to respond creatively and effectively to entrenched problems. Growth for us is not about expansion for its own sake, it is about deepening impact and doing so in ways that are financially, ethically, and socially sustainable.



Design and test replicable models by identifying service gaps, piloting responses, and evaluating impact to ensure every innovation delivers real outcomes for women and children.

2.1



Expand virtual service delivery to increase accessibility across NSW, including therapeutic supports and education programs that reach young people, regional communities, and those recovering long-term.

2.2



Embed lived experience into the innovation cycle, listening deeply to our clients and communities to ensure solutions are grounded in their realities, aspirations, and strengths.

2.3



Build sustainable funding streams by deepening philanthropic partnerships and exploring innovative funding models, while staying ahead of emerging funding trends and shifts in the philanthropic landscape to ensure long-term resilience.

2.4



Develop transformative service partnerships with institutions across justice, housing, and reintegration systems that challenge systemic barriers, influence policy, and co-create solutions that meet people where they are.

2.5

COMMUNITY *Influence*

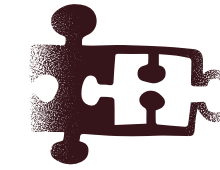
We partner with communities to influence change and shift systems that do harm

WAGEC has a long history of standing with women and communities impacted by vulnerability and challenging the systems that harm them.



Today we are harnessing our legacy of activism and solidarity to build collective power, shift public attitudes, influence policy, and embed advocacy into every layer of our work. We aim to use our frontline experience, organisational platforms, and trusted relationships to amplify truth and demand gender and racial justice.

We aim to prevent violence through long-term cultural and structural change, not just respond after it happens. As allies, we amplify and resource existing community leadership to build sustainable, self-determined movements capable of systemic transformation.



Develop relational partnerships that are reciprocal, grounded in two-way learning, and responsive to the unique needs and wisdom of local communities. This includes respect for cultural protocols, Elders and Knowledge Holders, and local traditions. Our work in community is based on resource-sharing and a commitment to data sovereignty.

3.1



Leverage our organisational history, networks, and brand to influence public attitudes and policies that affect women, children and communities impacted by violence and inequality.

3.2



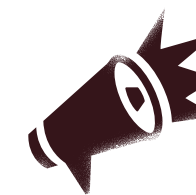
Drive connection and activate our supporters, corporate partners, and all levels of government to create a shared agenda for systemic change and resource the long-term solutions our communities deserve.

3.3



Develop and share educational tools, impact campaigns, and resources that inform, engage, and activate our communities in the movement to end gender-based violence.

3.4



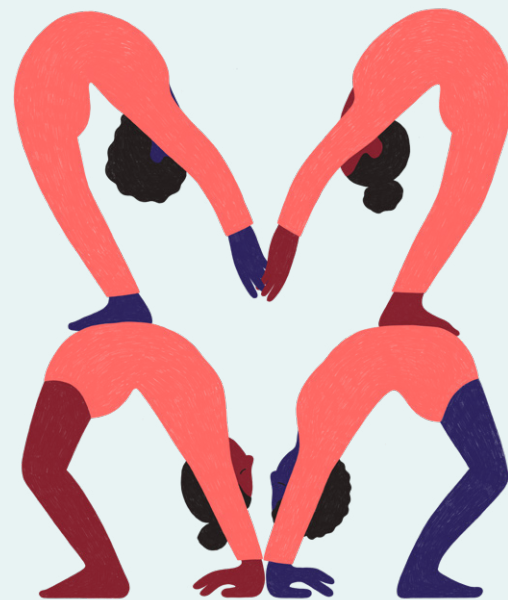
Advance systemic change through government relations by advocating for a reimagining of homelessness systems, leveraging our relationships with government partners to influence policy reform aligned with WAGEC's priorities.

3.5

ORGANISATIONAL *Excellence*

We are building a resilient, reliable, and high-performance organisation

Organisational excellence is about more than systems and structures; it is about living our values in every part of our work. We believe that a resilient, ethical, and inclusive organisation is essential to creating safe futures.



We are committed to building a workplace where feminist leadership thrives, staff are supported to grow, and our operations reflect care, integrity, and purpose.

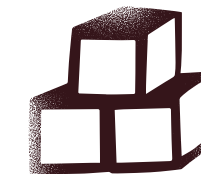
Organisational excellence is not passive; it is an act of resistance against broken systems. We build excellence by investing in our people, demanding integrity in our governance, and refusing to settle for outdated ways of working. Our infrastructure and decision-making processes are not just built to withstand pressure, they are designed to challenge it, disrupt it, and drive the transformation our communities deserve.



4.1 Strengthen governance with purpose by continuously reviewing our Constitution, Board structure, and governance practices to ensure they reflect our feminist ethics, respond to the realities of our sector, and support bold, values-led decision-making.



4.2 Ensure our governance, leadership, and workforce development strategies uphold child safety as a core responsibility, supported by cross-departmental leadership through our child safe policies and procedures, continuous training, and a whole-of-organisation commitment to the NSW Child Safe Standards.



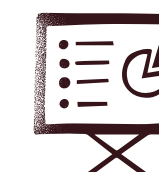
4.3 Build leadership and workforce capability through targeted professional development, succession planning, and leadership pathways that prioritise wellbeing, flexibility, and growth ensuring our people are equipped to lead change, not just manage it.



4.4 Embed collaboration and care in how we work, by co-creating policies with staff, listening deeply to lived experience, supporting flexible and safe work environments, and fostering a culture where safety, transparency, and mutual respect are non-negotiable.



4.5 Modernise our infrastructure and systems to streamline operations, improve service delivery, and ensure our organisation remains agile, efficient, and ready to meet the demands of a growing and increasingly complex landscape.



4.6 Ensure long-term sustainability and impact, by strengthening financial governance, diversifying income streams, and embedding impact measurement that goes beyond outputs to reflect the real change we create in people's lives.



wagec.org.au