



# **Aboriginal Women & Children's Crisis Service**

**Strategic Plan  
2020 - 2023**

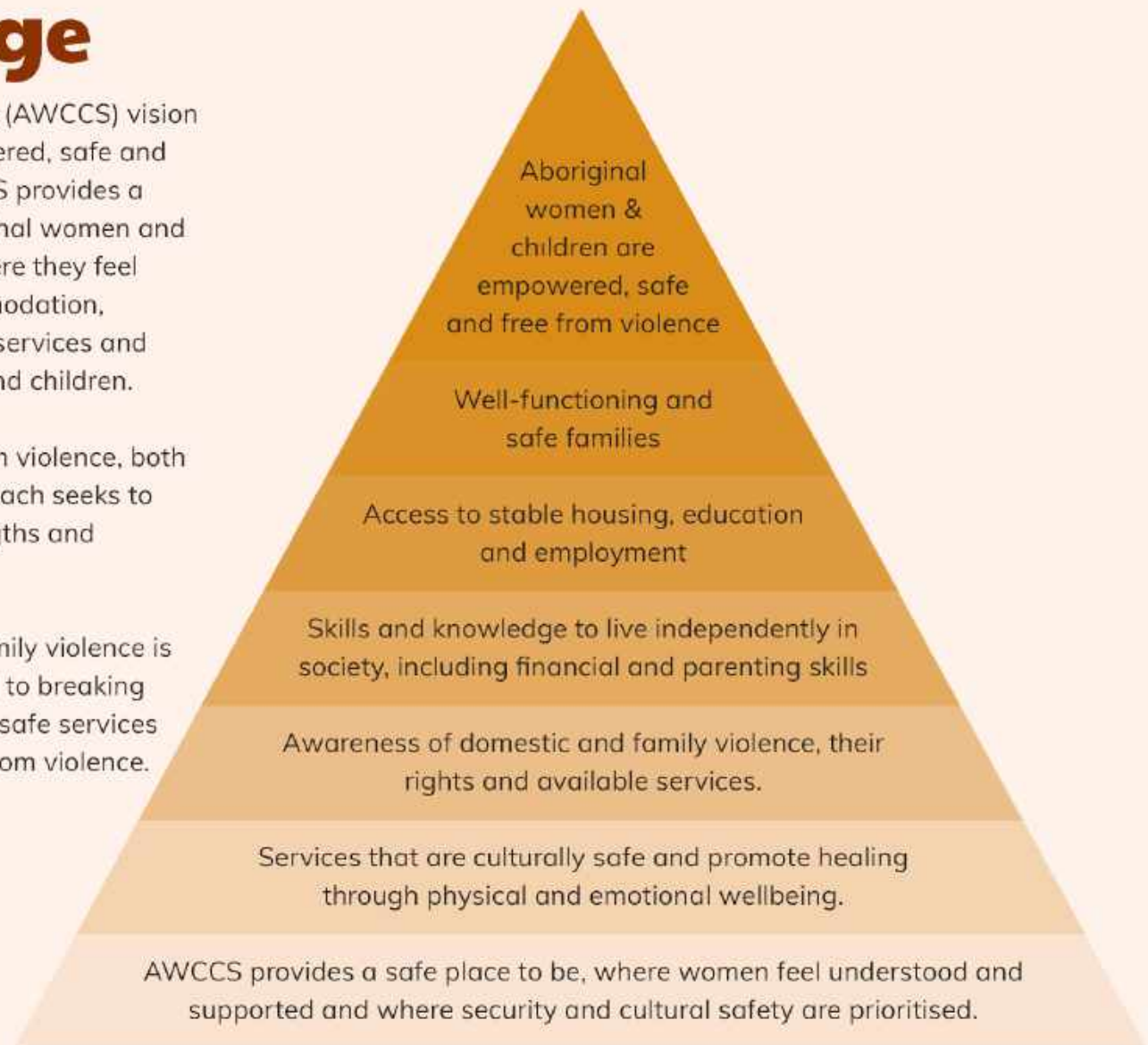


# Theory of Change

The Aboriginal Women and Children's Crisis Service's (AWCCS) vision is that all Aboriginal women and children are empowered, safe and free from violence. To contribute to this vision, AWCCS provides a culturally safe and physically secure place for Aboriginal women and children experiencing family or domestic violence where they feel understood and supported. We provide crisis accommodation, wellbeing support for children and parents, outreach services and advocate for a better system for Aboriginal women and children.

Our services support women and children to heal from violence, both physically and emotionally. Our person-centred approach seeks to understand each individual and family's needs, strengths and ambitions and helps them on their journey.

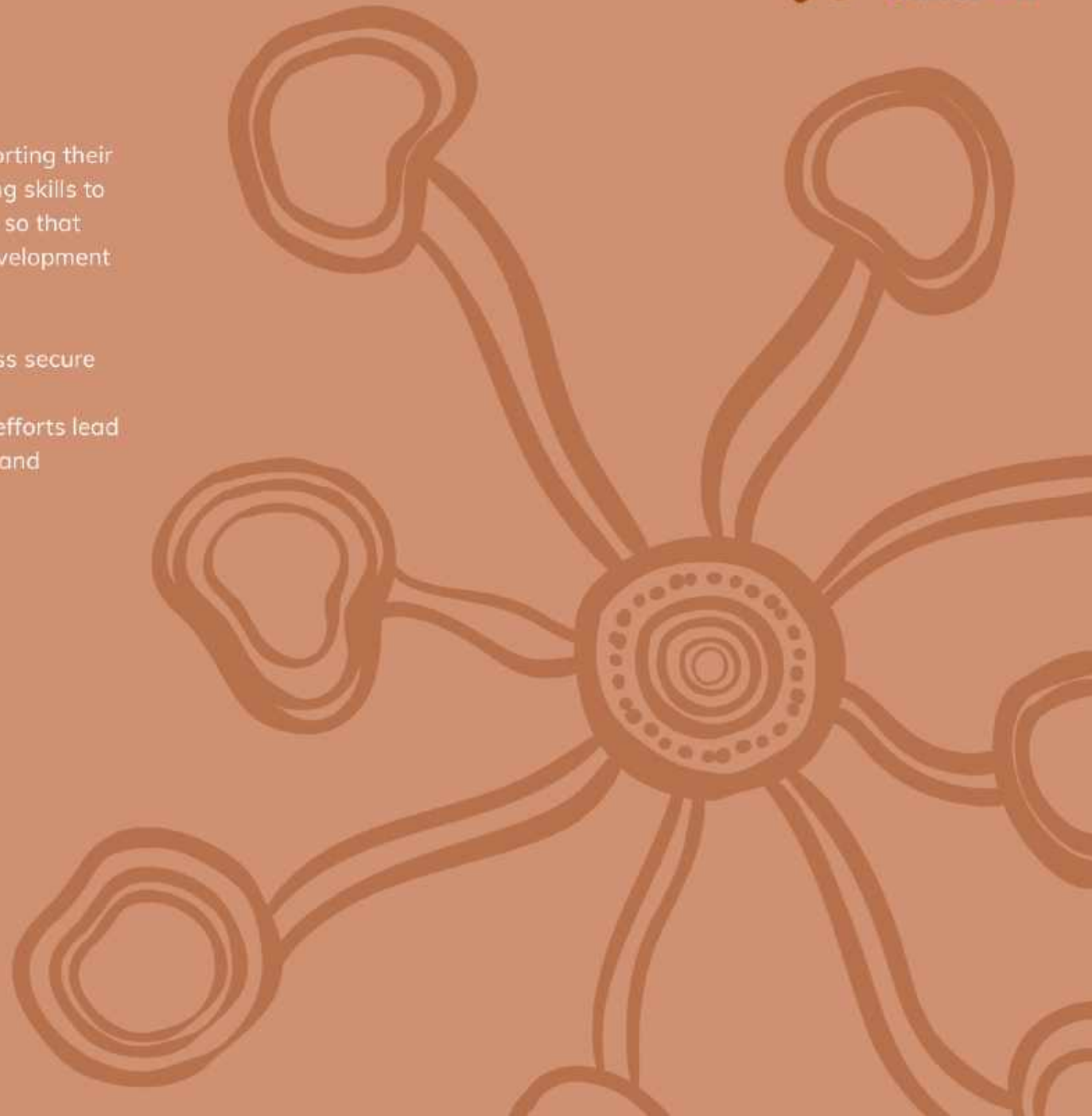
Building greater awareness of what domestic and family violence is and how a woman can exercise her rights is essential to breaking the cycle. We connect women to a range of culturally safe services that can support them and their children to live free from violence.





We empower women to live independently by supporting their education in areas such as financial literacy, including skills to manage debt, pay rent and bills and parenting skills so that mothers can be positively involved in their child's development and education.

We enable women who come to our service to access secure and stable housing and realise their education and employment aspirations. Together, these combined efforts lead to well-functioning and safe families where women and children can live empowered and safe lives.



# Aims



## SERVICES

We support Aboriginal women and children escaping violence by providing culturally sensitive, safe and responsive services



## CHILDREN

We create a supportive environment for children to find stability and engage in their education



## HOUSING

We increase the access of Aboriginal women and children to long-term, safe and stable housing



## COMMUNITY

Our community presence builds awareness and increases access to help for women and children experiencing violence



## ORGANISATION

Our organisational strength enables us to deliver impact for Aboriginal women and children

# Aim 1: Services

**WE SUPPORT ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN ESCAPING VIOLENCE BY PROVIDING CULTURALLY SENSITIVE, SAFE AND RESPONSIVE SERVICES**

GOALS	STRATEGIES
1.1 We are responsive to the needs of our clients and are continuously seeking to learn and improve our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seek feedback from our clients in a prompt and effective manner and use the feedback to make improvements</li></ul>
1.2 Our service empowers women and children experiencing violence to create positive futures for themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply a strengths-based practice model with our clients</li><li>• Support women and children to find stability, identify goals and pursue their aspirations for the future through our case management</li><li>• Provide ongoing follow-up support to our clients to ensure positive, long-term outcomes</li></ul>
1.3 We provide safe and culturally sensitive support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure all staff have undertaken and regularly update high quality cultural sensitivity training</li><li>• Ensure appropriate risk assessment processes for people accessing our service</li><li>• Ensure our premises are physically secure</li></ul>

# Aim 2: Children

## WE CREATE A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN TO FIND STABILITY AND ENGAGE IN THEIR EDUCATION

GOALS	STRATEGIES
2.1 Children feel safe, understood and empowered at AWCCS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure our services are child safe and trauma informed</li><li>• Treat children as clients and seek their input and feedback</li><li>• Involve children in goal setting for case plans and planning activities</li><li>• Build the capacity of our staff to work with children with special needs</li><li>• Have specific supports and activities for high school age children</li></ul>
2.2 Children accessing our services regularly attend school and are engaged in their education and our in-house playroom programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage children to set goals about education in their case plans</li><li>• Support children to enrol and attend school and early learning</li><li>• Ensure our playroom programs incorporate trauma informed best practice and support children's engagement in education</li></ul>
2.3 Mothers accessing our services have the skills and support to create a safe and nurturing environment for their children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular visits from Aboriginal Education Officer to share information and provide support to mothers and children</li><li>• Mothers participate in child support program and learn to support their children through education and play</li><li>• Provide in-house or external parenting programs for mothers, to help them develop skills to best support their children</li></ul>

# Aim 3: Housing

**WE INCREASE THE ACCESS OF ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN TO LONG-TERM, SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING**

GOALS	STRATEGIES
3.1 AWCCS supports women to access transitional housing solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure adequate brokerage funding by maintaining relationships and agreements with our government and community housing partners</li><li>• Maintain the number of transitional properties allocated to AWCCS clients under the DVRE program</li></ul>
3.2 AWCCS clients obtain long-term housing solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work closely with Housing NSW and community housing organisations to advocate for our clients to obtain long-term housing</li><li>• Maintain and expand our relationships with community housing organisations</li><li>• Leverage our relationship with Bridge Housing through the DVRE program to access long-term housing opportunities</li></ul>
3.3 We use and influence NSW Aboriginal housing policy to increase access to housing for Aboriginal women and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Train and update staff on NSW Aboriginal housing policy</li><li>• Regularly engage with Aboriginal Housing Specialist from Housing NSW</li><li>• Work with community housing partners to increase their understanding and implementation of Aboriginal housing policy</li><li>• Advocate to Housing NSW and community housing organisations to increase understanding of cultural factors that impact on Aboriginal women accessing and maintaining housing</li></ul>



# Aim 4: Community

## OUR COMMUNITY PRESENCE BUILDS AWARENESS AND INCREASES ACCESS TO HELP FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE

GOALS	STRATEGIES
4.1 We are a trusted voice in Sydney's inner west, representing the interests of Aboriginal women and children experiencing violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Represent the issues our clients are facing at relevant sector meetings</li><li>• Advocate to DCJ and other services to raise the client voice and improve outcomes for our clients</li></ul>
4.2 We encourage help-seeking behaviour by Aboriginal women in the inner west by building community awareness of domestic and family violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the service's representation at local culturally specific events by working with aligned local partners, especially Marrickville Council</li><li>• Educate women about domestic and family violence and the supports available through outreach services</li></ul>
4.3 We collaborate effectively with other organisations supporting Aboriginal women and children experiencing violence in the inner west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to build our strong network of relationships with key stakeholders</li><li>• Engage regularly with key government focal points, for instance in Centrelink, Housing NSW and Department of Communities and Justice</li><li>• Participate in active information sharing with partner organisations informally and through sector meetings</li></ul>

# Aim 5: Organisation

## OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH ENABLES US TO DELIVER IMPACT FOR ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN

GOALS	STRATEGIES
5.1 We can demonstrate the quality of our services and the outcomes we achieve for clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement a continuous quality improvement process</li><li>• Gain accreditation against the Australian Service Excellence Standards</li><li>• Improve our ability to understand and communicate our impact</li></ul>
5.2 Our organisation is sustainably resourced to deliver impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Secure recurrent funding from the Department of Communities and Justice by 2023, that aligns with our capacity needs</li><li>• Explore opportunities to seek new and sustainable funding sources to increase the impact of our work</li></ul>
5.3 We attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure AWCCS' staff recruitment process prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates</li><li>• Maintain above-award conditions, including wage and additional stress leave, to attract quality Aboriginal staff</li><li>• Ensure a culturally safe and supportive workplace</li><li>• Promote AWCCS to universities and TAFES for Aboriginal students seeking social or community work placements</li></ul>

# Aim 5: Organisation

## OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH ENABLES US TO DELIVER IMPACT FOR ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN

GOALS	STRATEGIES
5.4 We have a committed board that effectively supports our mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure AWCCS' recruitment process for board members prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates</li><li>• Consider appointing a board member with skills and experience in fundraising</li><li>• Attract and retain engaged board members</li></ul>
5.5 Our people are committed and equipped with the skills and support to succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure a range of supports are available to staff to manage both the everyday and extraordinary challenges of their role</li><li>• Ensure flexible, family-friendly arrangements are in place so that staff can meet their personal and professional obligations</li><li>• Organise cultural healing as appropriate and needed</li><li>• Organise occasional team building activities, with a focus on self-care and wellbeing</li><li>• Support and encourage staff to continue to build their skills and knowledge</li></ul>