

Aboriginal
Women &
Children's
Crisis Service

STRATEGIC PLAN

2025 - 2026



Warranha Inaar (Strong Woman)

Cover artwork by Tiahna.

“The strong woman symbol represents the strength and resilience of women in Aboriginal culture. Standing tall and proud, it honours those who have conquered their mountains – like me, the women who came before us, and those who continue to climb, finding strength in perseverance.”

Our Vision

For Aboriginal women and children to feel 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 to feel understood and supported.

We provide crisis accommodation, wellbeing support for children and mothers, 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-centered 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.



Aboriginal Philosophy and approach

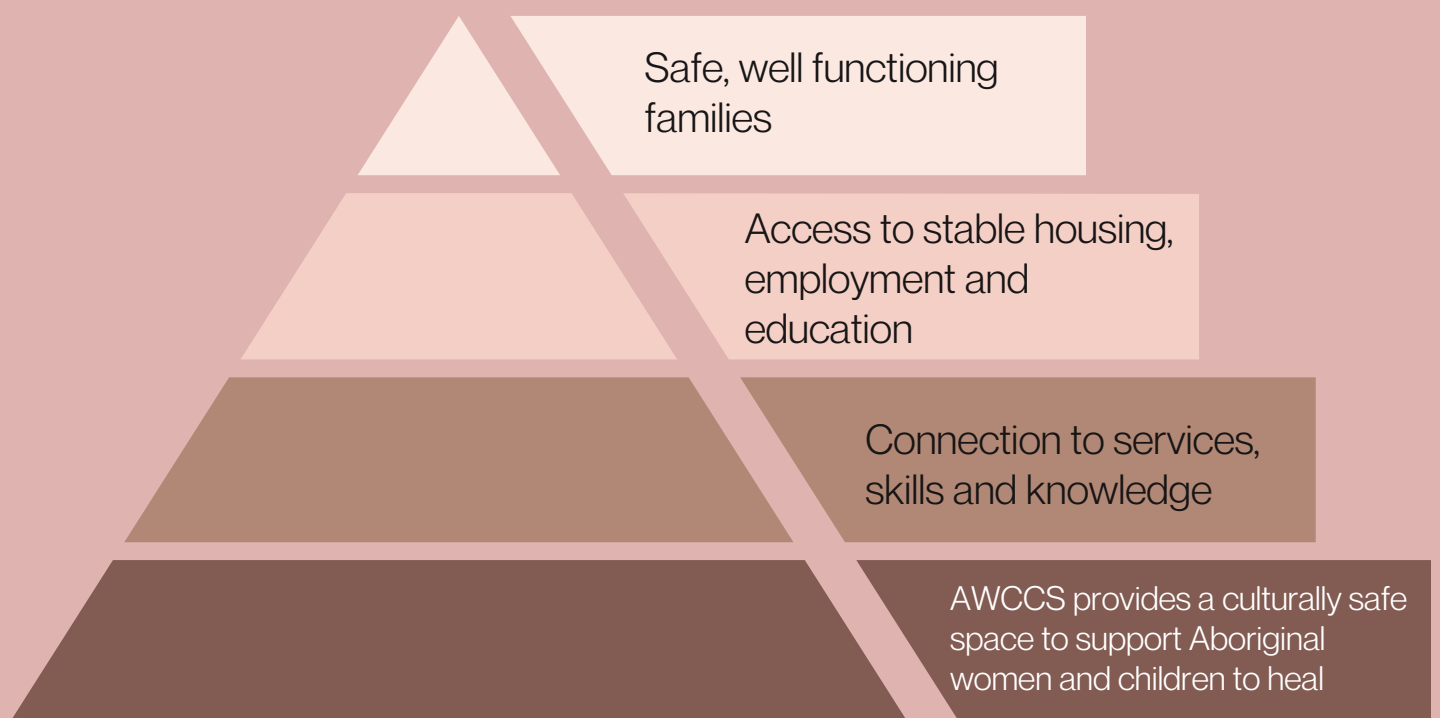
We fundamentally believe in, value and respect the rights of Aboriginal women and children to a life free of violence and oppression.

Our service acknowledges the emotional, social, physical, and psychological effects of violence and of intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal women and children.

Empowering Aboriginal women and children is the cornerstone of AWCCS's identity. AWCCS recognises the importance of the organisation being led by Aboriginal women at all levels of governance and is committed to transitioning to becoming an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation.

The Strategic Plan incorporates this goal at 5.6 and recognises this process as a journey to be undertaken alongside our other aims.

Our Theory of Change



Our Aims:

1

Service

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

2

Children

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

3

Housing

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

4

Community

Our community presence builds awareness and increases pathways for assistance for Aboriginal women and children experiencing family and domestic violence

5

Organisation

Our organisational strength and focus on becoming an Aboriginal led centre of excellence enables us to deliver impact for Aboriginal women and children



Service

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



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">• Ensure our services are child safe, culturally safe and trauma informed• Treat children as clients and seek their input and feedback• Involve children in goal setting for case plans and planning activities• Build the capacity of our staff to work with children with special needs• Have specific supports and activities for high school age children
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">• Encourage children to set goals about education in their case plans• Support children to enrol and attend school and early learning• Ensure our playroom programs incorporate trauma informed best practice and support children's engagement in education
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">• Regular visits from Aboriginal Education Officer to share information and provide support to mothers and children• Mothers participate in child support program and learn to support their children through education and play• Provide in-house or external parenting programs for mothers, to help them develop skills to best support their children



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">• Ensure adequate brokerage funding by maintaining relationships and agreements with our government and community housing partners• Explore new funding avenues to ensure adequate brokerage funding• Maintain the number of transitional properties allocated to AWCCS clients under the DVRE program
3.2 AWCCS clients obtain long-term housing solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work closely with Homes NSW and community housing organisations to advocate for our clients to obtain long-term housing• Maintain and expand our relationships with community housing organisations• Leverage our existing community housing relationships within the DVRE program to access long-term housing opportunities
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">• Train and update staff on NSW Aboriginal housing policy• Regularly engage with Aboriginal Housing Specialist from Homes NSW• Work with community housing partners to increase their understanding and implementation of Aboriginal housing policy• Advocate to Homes NSW and community housing organisations to increase understanding of cultural factors that impact on Aboriginal women accessing and maintaining housing



Community

Our community presence builds awareness and increases access to help for women and children experiencing family and domestic 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">• Represent the issues our clients are facing at relevant sector meetings• Advocate to government and other services to raise the client voice and improve outcomes for our clients• Transition to becoming an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation
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">• Increase the service's representation at local culturally specific events by working with aligned local partners, especially Marrickville Council• Educate women about domestic and family violence and the supports available through outreach services
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">• Continue to build our strong network of relationships with key stakeholders• Engage regularly with key government focal points, for instance with Centrelink and Homes NSW• Participate in active information sharing with partner organisations informally and through sector meetings• Build new relationships with Inner West organisations to grow our network

Goals	Strategies
4.4 Celebrate our 50th anniversary in April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrange events, exhibition and media opportunities to:• Honour the achievements of the women and children assisted by the refuge• Celebrate staff, clients, supporters, and our shared connections• Unite past, present, and future• Use the event to support future success



5

Organisation

Our organisational strength and focus on becoming an Aboriginal led centre of excellence enables us to deliver impact for Aboriginal women and children

Goals	Strategies
5.1 Demonstrate the quality of our services outcomes we achieve for clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a continuous quality improvement process• Maintain Australian Service Excellence Standards accreditation• Improve our ability to understand and communicate our impact
5.2 Our organisation is sustainably resourced to deliver impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secure recurrent funding that aligns with our capacity needs• Explore opportunities to seek new and sustainable funding sources to increase the impact of our work
5.3 Attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure AWCCS' staff recruitment process prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates• Maintain above-award conditions, including wage and additional leave, to attract quality Aboriginal staff• Prioritise the wellbeing of staff through the provision of ongoing training and support• Ensure a culturally safe and supportive workplace• Promote AWCSS to universities and TAFES for Aboriginal students seeking social or community work placements

Goals	Strategies
5.4 We have a committed board that effectively supports our mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure AWCCS' recruitment process for board members prioritises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates • Identify relevant skill gaps on the board when considering new board members • Attract and retain engaged board members
5.5 Our people are committed and equipped with the skills and support to succeed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a range of supports are available to staff to manage both the everyday and extraordinary challenges of their role • Ensure flexible, family-friendly arrangements are in place so that staff can meet their personal and professional obligations • Organise cultural healing as appropriate and needed • Organise occasional team building activities, with a focus on self-care and wellbeing • Support and encourage staff to continue to build their skills and knowledge
5.6 AWCCS transitions to becoming an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the control and operation of AWCCS by Aboriginal women • Work to achieve a board that is majority Aboriginal women • Work with other stakeholders to understand the identity of AWCCS as an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation • Ensure clients are brought on the journey and understand the identity of AWCCS as an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation



Artwork by Tiahna, 2025.

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