



*2025*

Annual Report

# Acknowledgement of Country



Coast Shelter acknowledges First Nations people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future, and recognise their continuing connection and contribution to this land and these waters.

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# Purpose

## Mission

To deliver person-centred services to people in crisis within our community experiencing homelessness or domestic and family violence.

## Vision

A community where everyone has a safe place to call home and is empowered to thrive.

## Values



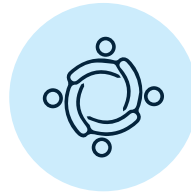
### Trust

"We strive to deepen client and stakeholder trust through the quality of our service delivery and our responsiveness and accountability in everything we do."



### Respect

"We deeply value humanity – it inspires us to be real with one another, inclusive and accepting of each other's differences."



### Connection

"We build and maintain strong connections with our clients, co-workers and the community, to expand our network of support and create a greater impact on the Central Coast."



### Innovation

"We are creative and adaptive, we explore out of the box ways to solve challenges."



# Our Year in Review



# Outcomes

July 2024 – June 2025

## SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS CLIENTS

1,159

clients were supported with  
refuge accommodation

101

Men

486

Women

309

Youth



263

individuals were supported  
through our Domestic Violence  
Response program

68.59% above target

## VOLUNTEERS IMPACT

227

volunteers supported  
our clients

7,199

volunteer hours  
were contributed



## COMMUNITY CENTRE

15,124

individuals visited the Community Centre



14,831

meals served

39%

increase in personal  
care services

78%

increase in visits  
from rough sleepers

73%

increase in visits  
by children

## WRAP AROUND SERVICES

708

clients received  
mental health care

20

trainees completed social  
enterprise placements

8,742

students, across 71 schools received  
education on healthy relationships

# Message from the Chair



Over the past 12 months and beyond, Coast Shelter has undergone significant transformation, navigated complex challenges and achieved critical milestones. Through it all, our unwavering commitment to the people of the Central Coast has guided every decision. We are proud of the impact we've made, not just in numbers, but in lives changed and futures rebuilt. This year has reminded us of the power of community, and the importance of standing strong together.

## Background

Following the dissolution of the Board in December 2023, Members appointed me as Chair to lead a caretaker Board and stabilise the organisation. This Board comprised our Company Secretary and then-CEO Lee Shearer, who was engaged for an initial three-month period after the departure of the previous CEO and several senior personnel.

This transition period placed immense pressure on the organisation, culminating in a deficit of \$1.5 million for financial year 2023–24. In response, our team worked to reduce costs, drive efficiencies, and implement a plan to ensure Coast Shelter's long-term sustainability.

In August 2024, we strengthened our governance with the appointment of five new Directors, between them bringing expertise in First Nations affairs, organisational transformation, finance, risk management, cybersecurity, and community social welfare. All are proud Central Coast residents, offering valuable local insight and a shared commitment to Coast Shelter's mission.

## Organisational Review

From the outset, this new Board has worked closely with management to stabilise the organisation and ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of our community.

A comprehensive review of operations revealed longstanding funding shortfalls and inefficiencies that were placing additional strains on resources. While our core services are grant-funded, several programs were operating solely on fundraising and grants, and financial reserves being used to fund them.

After careful consideration, we made the difficult decision to discontinue our clinical, employment, and training services. These programs, while impactful, were financially unsustainable. Their closure prompted an organisational restructure to align resources with our core services, including crisis accommodation, enhanced domestic violence response, and the provision of free meals and support through our Community Centre.

Since these changes, we have significantly improved our position, reducing the deficit to just \$330,000 in our latest year. Even more encouragingly, with a streamlined structure and efficient processes now in place, we are forecasting a positive surplus in the year ahead, a clear sign that our upward trajectory is set to continue.

## Transitioning to the Future

With the organisation on a more stable footing, Lee Shearer concluded her tenure in March 2025, after 18 months of dedicated service. Initially appointed as Interim CEO for three months, Lee extended her role to guide Coast Shelter through a time of significant transformation.

During the six-month recruitment process for her successor, Crystal Lindsay and Ashlee Gunstone served as Interim Co-Chief Executive Officers, providing strong leadership and continuity.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Alicia Pigot as our new CEO, commencing in November 2025. Alicia brings over 20 years of experience in social services and a strong track record of driving reform across New South Wales.

A proud Central Coast local, Alicia has a deep connection to the region and a clear understanding of the challenges and strengths within our community. She is committed to leading Coast Shelter with a focus on standing alongside people in need.

## In Closing

With the organisation now on an upward trajectory, we are focused on the future. As the needs of our community continue to grow, so too must our capacity to respond. Our focus now is on increasing funding to enable us to increase support for more individuals and families across the Central Coast.

Every dollar entrusted to Coast Shelter strengthens our foundation, and together, we are building a more resilient organisation that is ready to meet tomorrow's opportunities.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your continued support and belief in the vital work we do.

**Paul Murnane**  
Chair

# Message from the CEO



This year has been one of transformation and stabilisation for Coast Shelter. Under the collaborative and transformative leadership of our Acting Co-Chief Executive Officers, Crystal Lindsay and Ashlee Gunstone, the organisation not only navigated significant change, but did so with clarity and unwavering commitment to our mission of supporting people experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence.

## Acknowledging the Journey

Early in the year, Coast Shelter made the strategic decision to discontinue several programs and return its focus to Specialist Homelessness Services. While this meant farewelling valued initiatives, it was a necessary step toward sustainability. This shift strengthened our financial position and ensured that Coast Shelter's impact will endure for years to come.

Alongside these changes, the team, guided by Crystal and Ashlee, revised our strategic plan, reaffirming our purpose and positioning us for long-term impact. These decisions and the tireless actions that followed have laid a strong foundation for the future.

## Programs and Impact

In the past year, 1,159 clients were supported with refuge accommodation, a modest increase from the previous year. Notably, we saw a 10% rise in young people and a 12% rise in women seeking support, with family and domestic violence remaining the primary reason for presenting. These figures reinforce our commitment to crisis accommodation and wraparound programs that enable long-term, positive change.

Thanks to government and community grants, we continued vital initiatives such as Step Forward, a wellbeing and life skills program for disengaged youth, and maintained our Youth Mental Health Worker role with the generous support of Bendigo Bank. These prevention programs are critical to breaking the cycle of homelessness and violence on the Central Coast.

## Recognition and Engagement

This year, Coast Shelter achieved Award Level accreditation in the Australian Service Excellence Standards, placing us among the top 5% of service providers nationally—a testament to excellence in governance, service delivery, and community impact.

We also celebrated Erin Jacobs, our Community, Education and Wellbeing Manager, who was named a finalist in the Westfield Tuggerah Local Heroes program for her work in the Name. Narrate. Navigate. initiative.

Our annual Reconciliation Event was another highlight, attracting over 1,500 attendees and reinforcing our commitment to cultural humility and inclusion. Key campaigns such as Sleepout, Winter Appeal, and Christmas Appeal continued to thrive thanks to the generosity of donors, volunteers, and partners.

## Our People

Through all this change, one constant has been the strength and dedication of our team. Their resilience and passion have ensured that Coast Shelter remains a trusted and impactful organisation. We extend our deepest gratitude to every staff member, volunteer, and partner who stood with us during this pivotal year.

## Looking Ahead

As the new Chief Executive Officer, I am honoured to build on this strong foundation. My focus will be on streamlining and consolidating our operations, ensuring efficiency and sustainability, while also exploring opportunities to grow our impact across the Central Coast. This means deepening partnerships, strengthening prevention programs, and responding to emerging needs with agility and compassion.

With the continued support of our community and the unwavering commitment of our team, I am confident that Coast Shelter will not only maintain its vital services but expand its reach—creating lasting change for those who need it most.

Thank you for standing with us.

**Alicia Pigot**  
Chief Executive Officer

# Our Organisation



# About Us

For over 33 years, Coast Shelter has supported people in crisis across the Central Coast, including those experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence.

Our services are built on person-centred care, helping individuals rebuild their lives with dignity and support.

Living their best life means improving satisfaction with their standard of living, health, personal relationships, sense of safety, community connection achievements, and future security. To that end, we provide crisis accommodation alongside primary intervention initiatives that enable people to thrive.

## Crisis Accommodation

We operate ten specialist homelessness refuges, including:

- Five for young people
- Three for women and children
- One for men

This year, we also opened crisis accommodation for young people under Youth Justice supervision, supported by the Bail and Accommodation Support Service (BASS).

Further to this, we offer a Domestic Violence Response Enhancement Program, offering safety planning and short-term accommodation across four safe houses.

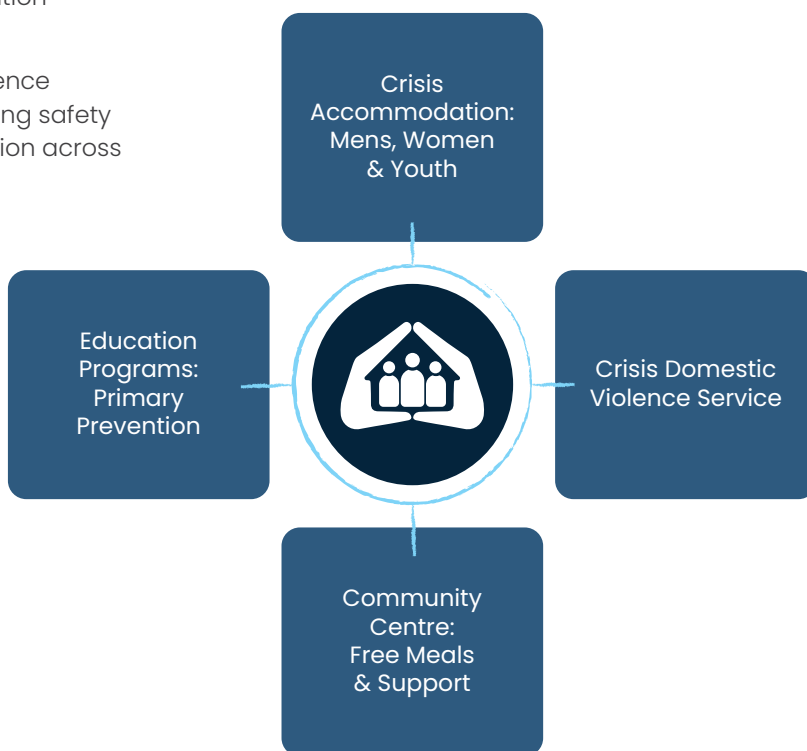
## Community Centre

Our Community Centre in Gosford provides free meals and access to financial, medical, and personal support services for those in need. Meanwhile, The Retreat delivers education and wellbeing programs focused on prevention and breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

## Education Programs

In addition, our Education and Wellbeing Programs include employability and life skills workshops, empowering people to move forward with confidence and capability.

**Together, these services reflect our unwavering commitment to creating a safer, more inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.**



# Strategic Priorities

Our strategic priorities reflect commitment to enhancing client outcomes, strengthening relationships, consolidating operations, investing in our people, and ensuring robust governance.



## Clients

Elevating Care and Advocacy

- Meet all contractual obligations with excellence.
- Strengthen care governance frameworks to enhance safety and quality.
- Facilitate client engagement and amplify client voices to drive continuous improvement and advocacy.



## Relationships

Strengthening Strategic Connections

- Implement a relationship management strategy to deepen engagement and collaboration across our ecosystem.
- Build purposeful partnerships that align with our mission and amplify impact.
- Maintain regular, meaningful contact with stakeholders to foster shared value.



## People

Empowering Our Workforce

- Position Coast Shelter as an employer of choice.
- Invest in our people to foster an inclusive, values-driven culture grounded in continuous improvement.
- Enhance capability through targeted skills development.



## Operations

Embedding Efficiency and Sustainability

- Drive efficiency across systems and processes.
- Embed a robust compliance framework and risk management culture.
- Strengthen our balance sheet through disciplined financial management.
- Enhance fundraising to support unfunded services and strategic growth.



## Governance

Enabling Strategic Oversight

- Review and update the board skills matrix to reflect future needs and recruit two new directors to strengthen the board.
- Ensure clear and transparent engagement with the Board to support informed decision-making.
- Implement a robust performance monitoring framework for organisational and Board effectiveness.

## Our Clients



# Client Experience

To better understand the experiences and needs of our clients, Coast Shelter participated in an independent client satisfaction survey conducted by the Community Housing Industry Association NSW (CHIA NSW) on behalf of Homelessness NSW.

This research aimed to:

- Assess the wellbeing and lived experiences of service users
- Benchmark Coast Shelter's performance against other service providers
- Inform future improvements in service delivery

The survey was open from 1 July to 16 August 2024 and was entirely voluntary. Coast Shelter was one of 38 services involved in the study, with results benchmarked against the average across participating providers.

The findings offer valuable insights into the challenges faced by our clients and highlight opportunities to strengthen our support and impact.

## Survey Finding: Reasons for Seeking Support

The results indicated that clients sought support from Coast Shelter for a range of reasons, with financial difficulties being the most common at 21%, followed by domestic and family violence or sexual abuse at 17%.

Prior to accessing support, the most common housing situation was sleeping rough or having no fixed address at 44%, followed by temporary accommodation such as motels or hotels at 26%.

## Survey Finding: Quality of Support Provided

The following table summarises Coast Shelter's performance across the areas assessed in the client satisfaction survey, comparing our results to the sector benchmark.

Of note, our service exceeded the benchmark in 95% of the areas assessed, performing above average in 20 out of 21 key indicators of client satisfaction. This result reflects our commitment to delivering safe, respectful, and impactful support to people experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence.



	Coast Shelter	Benchmark	Difference
Financial situation improved	86%	60%	26
Connection with others improved	86%	61%	25
Security of accommodation into the future	86%	63%	23
Educational opportunities improved	72%	52%	20
Cost of my current accommodation	97%	77%	20
Connection with the community improved	82%	63%	19
Satisfaction with current accommodation	97%	78%	19
Safety of my current accommodation	100%	82%	18
Confidence in dealing with changes improved	86%	78%	8
Emotional state improved	90%	82%	8
Staff explained how to make a complaint against this organisation	93%	86%	7
Privacy in my current accommodation	83%	76%	7
Staff referred me to other services to support my other needs	96%	91%	5
Overall satisfaction with services provided	97%	92%	5
Your employment opportunities improved	56%	52%	4
Staff told me about my accommodation options	96%	93%	3
Staff understood my needs	100%	97%	3
Staff have made me feel accepted for who I am	100%	97%	3
Staff treated me with respect	100%	98%	2
I have participated in setting my case plan goals	93%	93%	0
Staff sensitive to ethnic and cultural background	86%	91%	-5

## Personal Wellbeing Index

Clients were also asked to respond to a series of questions relating to individual aspects of wellbeing, including personal safety, life satisfaction, and health, which together form the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI). These questions offer valuable insight into how clients perceive their overall wellbeing.

Coast Shelter's overall PWI score was 73.3, significantly higher than the sector benchmark of 60.9, indicating strong outcomes in client wellbeing across multiple dimensions.



## Client Testimonials

"My time here [in a Coast Shelter refuge] was the **safest** I've ever felt. I've come so far, and now I'm building a life where I feel **proud** of who I am."

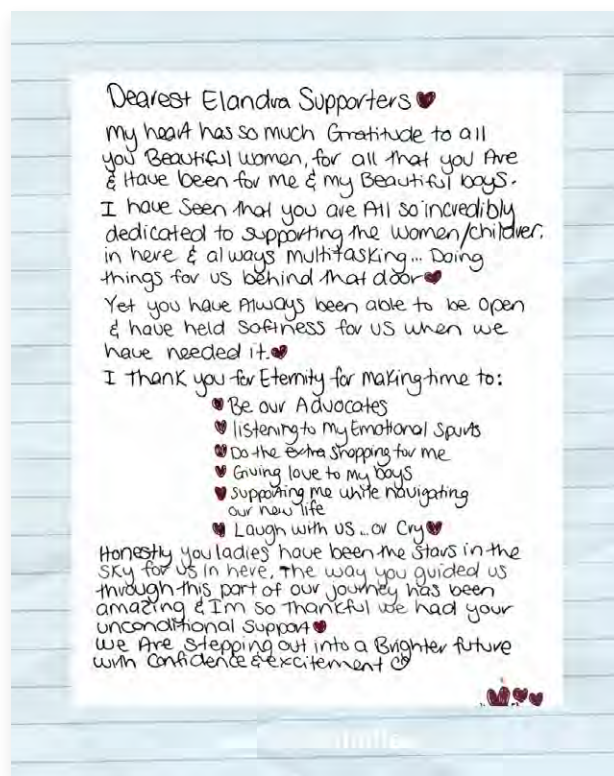
"Being here [in a Coast Shelter refuge] helped me realise how much better life can be when you're safe and supported. I finally feel like I'm **moving forward**."

"I never thought I'd be here [facing homelessness]. There were times I felt like giving up, but having someone **believe** in me made all the difference. Now, I have a **home**—and a chance to be a father again."

"I didn't realise how important it was to speak up about **respect** in relationships. Now I know it's okay to have boundaries and to **ask for help** when I need it."

"I came to Reflect and Respect unsure of myself, but I left with a new sense of **confidence**. The mindfulness exercises helped me manage stress, and I now feel **stronger** in setting boundaries."

"This program [Respect and Reflect] gave me **tools** I can use every day — and the **confidence** to put myself first."



"Thank you for everything. I'll never be able to fully express my gratitude for what you've done. It was a pleasure getting to know you. We'll miss you. We're never going back to what we left — our time is now, and we're **building a beautiful life**. I couldn't have hoped for this without you and Coast Shelter. I'll be forever **grateful**."

"Thank you so much! I'm so grateful for your **support** and Coast Shelter's help. I know how hard you're working to support us. The meals from the Community Centre you dropped off yesterday will definitely help us get through the week — they're amazing. Thank you, thank you!"

# Our Programs



# Homelessness Services

## Youth Program

Coast Shelter's Youth Program provides safe, stable environments for young people facing complex challenges. Across our refuges and transitional services, team members delivered trauma-informed care tailored to individual's needs, fostering resilience, independence, and hope.

### Sector and Community Collaboration

Our work is strengthened by partnerships with services such as Youth Justice, Justice Health, Services Australia, Victim Services NSW, disability services, and local schools and universities. These collaborations ensure wraparound support and continuity of care for young people navigating complex systems.

Generous contributions from partners like Bunnings, Zonta, and Lions Club have enabled us to provide essential items, start-up kits, and additional resources that support young people transitioning into independence.

### Pathways to Independence

Programs like our Step Forward initiative have offered young people practical tools for employment and daily living. Through structured routines, participants have completed White Card and First Aid certifications, engaged in mock interviews, and developed job-readiness and social skills that support long-term wellbeing.

While referrals to programs such as Odyssey House have supported young people in their recovery journeys, with some progressing to peer mentorship roles. These pathways reflect the transformative impact of long-term, integrated support.



## Good News Story

For many young people, accessing the right support can be the turning point between crisis and stability. This year, Coast Shelter's youth programs have helped young people like Ellis\*, Tom\*, and Ben\* build foundations for a brighter future.

**Ellis** came to Coast Shelter facing multiple mental health and developmental diagnoses. With no identification or income, Ellis was at risk of falling through the cracks. The team quickly coordinated care, connected Ellis with disability support services, and helped them enrol in school, access healthcare, and transition into supported independent living. Ellis left the refuge with stability, confidence, and a renewed sense of independence.

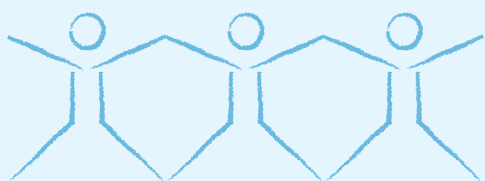
**Tom** had been living in a tent in his parents' backyard, disconnected and unsure of how to ask for help. With support from Coast Shelter and clinical partners, Tom received a formal diagnosis and secured a personalised support plan. He completed vocational training, began work placement, and rebuilt his relationship with his family. Tom now feels confident reaching out for help and is thriving.

**Ben** came to Coast Shelter through a short-term program and quickly engaged with support services. A formal diagnosis enabled him to access tailored disability support, and he successfully transitioned into private rental housing. Ben is maintaining his tenancy and building a future filled with opportunity.

These stories reflect how early intervention can enable young people to succeed.



\*Names changed for privacy



# Homelessness Services

## Women and Children's Program

During the 2024–25 financial year, our Women's Refuges and the Specialist Child and Youth Team have delivered vital support to women and children experiencing homelessness and hardship. Despite increasing complexity in client needs, including mental health concerns, parenting difficulties, citizenship issues, and disability-related matters, our teams have maintained their commitment to trauma-informed, client-centred care.

Delivering high-quality services has not been without its challenges. Team members have navigated ongoing infrastructure issues such as temporary office arrangements, bathroom closures, and prolonged heating problems. Their ability to maintain consistent care under these conditions is a testament to their professionalism.

### Strengthening Health Partnerships

A highlight this year has been the strengthening of our partnership with the Primary Health Network. This collaboration has enabled us to extend our reach and achieve exceptional outcomes for clients. It has also laid the foundation for improved pathways to longer-term medical and mental health care for those transitioning out of refuge.

### Paediatric Clinic Development

One of the most exciting developments is the completion of a dedicated paediatric clinic, made possible through the commitment of local specialists and our shared vision to support children within refuge settings.

**“Our Women's Refuges and the Specialist Child and Youth Team have delivered vital support to women and children experiencing homelessness and hardship.”**



## Good News Story

For many women, the path to safety and healing begins with the courage to ask for help. At Coast Shelter, we have witnessed extraordinary transformations, none more powerful than those of Eugenie\* and Kelly\*.

**Eugenie**, in her 60s, arrived at refuge after escaping 10 years of domestic violence perpetuated by her partner. Overwhelmed and tearful during intake, she repeatedly expressed that she didn't deserve support. With consistent care and encouragement, Eugenie accessed financial assistance, rebuilt her confidence, and secured transitional housing. Today, she proudly shares her op-shop finds and speaks of rediscovering herself, grateful for the refuge that helped her believe she was worthy of dignity.

In 2021, 34-year-old **Kelly** came to Coast Shelter after leaving an ongoing pattern of domestic abuse. She was battling long-term addiction, unstable housing, and separation from her children. With support, she completed detox, joined a treatment program, and discovered a passion for cooking. Her recovery led to stable housing, sobriety, and reconnection with her daughter. Now 38, Kelly's working part-time, maintaining her tenancy, and moving toward full-time custody.

These stories demonstrate how with the right support, women can reclaim their lives.

\*Names changed for privacy



# Homelessness Services

## Men's Program

The past year has been one of adaptability for the team at our Men's Refuge. Amid ongoing infrastructure challenges, including restricted access to parts of the site pending rectification works, the team has remained committed to providing safe, stable, and responsive support to men in crisis.

Their ability to navigate change, maintain service continuity, and advocate for clients under pressure reflects the strength and professionalism of the program. Looking ahead, the team continues to embrace innovation and collaboration, ensuring the refuge remains a place of safety, dignity, and opportunity.

### Sector Collaboration and Practice Development

The Central Coast Men's Community of Practice has continued to grow, bringing together services and professionals working with men in hardship. This initiative has enabled sector-wide discussions and deepened understanding of the issues facing men in crisis.

### Improving Access to Mental Health Support

Recognising the financial barriers many clients face, particularly in accessing mental health care, the team has taken proactive steps to address funding gaps. Through local fundraising and donor engagement, we successfully secured a grant to remove cost-related obstacles and improve access to mental health specialists. This initiative has had a direct and meaningful impact on client wellbeing.

### Conclusion of Together Homes

This year marks the conclusion of the Together Homes program, a highly successful initiative that provided critical support to some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community. While we celebrate the program's achievements, its closure highlights the ongoing need for long-term support systems for people experiencing homelessness.

**"We successfully secured a grant to remove cost-related obstacles and improve access to mental health specialists."**





## Housing Pathways and Partnerships

Our partnerships with local social housing providers remain central to our work, offering clients pathways out of crisis and into long-term housing security. These relationships enable us to provide integrated support networks that promote independence.

## Team Member's Farewell

A particularly poignant moment this year was the retirement of one of our longest-serving and most respected team members. We extend our heartfelt thanks for their years of service and the lasting impact they've made.



## Good News Story

Dan's\* life has been shaped by deep trauma and long-term mental health challenges. Raised in a highly dysfunctional household, he endured emotional, physical and sexual abuse during childhood.

Over the years, Dan was diagnosed with multiple complex conditions including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance use disorder, alongside physical complications from axonal peripheral neuropathy.

After a mental health crisis led to separation from his family and loss of stable housing, Dan reached out to Coast Shelter. Shortly after, he was involved in a serious motorcycle accident, spending eight days in ICU with multiple fractures and post-concussive syndrome.

Despite these setbacks, Dan embraced the support offered through Coast Shelter's Men's Program. He engaged with a psychologist, worked closely with a social worker to rebuild relationships with his children, and gradually returned to work while undergoing physiotherapy.



Dan has now exited the program with renewed stability. He has re-established a co-parenting relationship, returned to part-time work as a physiotherapist, and secured long-term housing. His mental health is stronger than it has been in years.

Dan's story is a testament to the life-changing impact of compassionate, trauma-informed support.

\*Name changed for privacy

# Domestic Violence Response Enhancement

Over the past year, the Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE) team worked tirelessly to deliver responsive, crisis-driven case management. The team focused on meeting the immediate and often urgent needs of individuals and families affected by domestic violence, while maintaining a strong commitment to team member wellbeing and safety.

## Community Engagement and Collective Action

In addition to direct service delivery, the DVRE team actively engaged the broader community through impactful initiatives. Awareness campaigns, local fundraising efforts, and outreach activities helped raise visibility around domestic and family violence.

Partnerships with local supermarkets enabled product drives that directly supported clients in crisis, while collaborations with community groups led to meaningful contributions and increased public awareness.

Team members also participated in local events, reinforcing the message that domestic violence is a whole-of-community issue that requires collective action.

## Youth-Focused Prevention

With a growing number of youth referrals presenting with domestic violence-related issues, the DVRE team is preparing to broaden its impact. In the coming year, they will support and educate youth-focused teams within Coast Shelter, sharing expertise to foster resilience, build awareness, and promote early intervention for young people affected by or experiencing domestic and family violence.

Coast Shelter team members at the Walk Against Domestic Violence organised by the Central Coast Domestic Violence Committee.



## *Honouring a Legacy*

At the time of writing this report, Coast Shelter was marked by deep personal loss with the sudden passing of the DVRE team's inspirational leader, Felicity Flanagan.

In the face of this tragedy, the team demonstrated remarkable unity and strength, choosing to honour Felicity's legacy by continuing their vital advocacy and support work.

Felicity's influence remains deeply embedded in the team's values and daily practice, guiding their commitment to safety, empowerment, and change.



## *Good News Story*

When Stacey\* first engaged with Coast Shelter, she was 32 weeks pregnant, experiencing long-term homelessness, and caring for her older child while navigating domestic violence and child protection involvement.

With intensive, wrap-around assistance from DVRE and child and youth case workers, Stacey accessed crisis funding, secured stable housing, enrolled her older child in school. She engaged in domestic violence education, improved her financial stability, and ensured her children received regular paediatric care.

Today, Stacey lives in safe, stable housing and has the confidence and tools to provide a nurturing environment for her children. Her journey is an example of the life-changing impact of coordinated, trauma-informed support for women and children facing domestic violence and homelessness.



\*Name changed for privacy

# Community Centre

During the 2024-25 financial year, our Community Centre continued to provide essential support to individuals and families experiencing financial hardship, homelessness, and social exclusion. Services included:

- Distribution of meals and food hampers
- Prescription support and medication access
- Financial assistance and general support

## Food Recovery and Partnerships

The food recovery program was strengthened through generous partnerships with local businesses, and these contributions, alongside support from individuals, remain critical to our ability to serve those in need.

- Woolworths Gosford, Woolworths Lisarow, and Aldi Wyoming provided regular food donations that formed the backbone of our daily meal service.
- B&M Quality Meats and Hewitt Meats supplied fresh meat, enabling the Community Centre to deliver a consistent and nutritious menu.
- Sanitarium's Healthy Kitchen Program supported the Community Centre in securing a reliable supply of fresh, seasonal vegetables from local growers and producers on a weekly basis, enhancing the quality and nutritional value of meals served.



## Health and Wellbeing Services

Through strategic partnerships, health offerings were expanded to improve access to essential care.

- Services Australia provided on-site support assisting clients with urgent needs.
- Health on the Streets delivered mobile health checks.
- Central Coast Eyecare provided prescription glasses to clients receiving full Centrelink benefits.
- Central Coast Local Health District and local medical centres partnered to provide COVID-19, flu, and Hepatitis C vaccinations.

## Therapeutic Programs and Community Engagement

Creative programs and outreach initiatives strengthened social connection and community engagement.

- Art Therapy sessions provided women with tools to reduce stress and build confidence.
- The Sewing Group supported social connection, skill development, and emotional wellbeing among participants.
- The Maritime Initiative supported individuals living on boats by connecting them with local services.

In 2026, Coast Shelter will focus on expanding Community Centre services to meet growing demand and ensure more people can access practical, timely support.



## Good News Story

Joseph\*, a 73-year-old man, first came to the Community Centre seeking meals, showers, and laundry facilities. Quiet and reserved, he slowly built trust with our team and shared that he had been living in his van, managing independently despite ongoing health challenges.

When an accident left his van unroadworthy, Joseph's situation became precarious. Our team responded quickly to secure short-term accommodation for Joseph.

With continued support, he was offered, and gratefully accepted, long-term housing through Homes NSW.

Joseph's journey reflects the power of persistence and partnership. It's a reminder that even small acts of support can lead to life-changing outcomes.



\*Name changed for privacy



# Wrap Around Services

## Education Programs

At Coast Shelter, we believe that every safe relationship and stable future begins with education. For this reason, we rely on donations and grants to deliver programs that teach essential life skills and empower individuals to break cycles of disadvantage.

### Love Bites: Empowering Young People Through Respectful Relationships

During the 2024-25 financial year, we continued to offer the Love Bites program, making a powerful impact across the Central Coast, reaching 6,639 students in 30 schools. The program provides essential education on respectful relationships and consent.

While Love Bites became a trusted part of the school calendar, the funding for the program ceased in June 2025. Securing sustainable funding is a priority to ensure this vital program continues. The loss of funding has raised concern among schools and community partners, who strongly advocate for its continuation.

### Step Forward: Building Skills and Confidence

Launched in June 2025, Step Forward is a new initiative aimed at disengaged youth, focusing on employability and life skills. With 35 students enrolled through word of mouth alone, the program has quickly gained community support.

Early outcomes include transitions into VET education and work experience placements. More than a skills program, Step Forward offers a safe, welcoming space where young people feel respected and supported.

### Reflect and Respect: Empowering Women

Reflect and Respect is a women's program that blends respectful relationship education with empowerment and wellbeing strategies. Drawing on the Shark Cage model and Love Bites principles, it offers a safe space for women to explore relationships, build confidence, and engage in mindfulness practices.

### RAGE: Supporting Emotional Regulation in Schools

In late 2025 we will be launching the RAGE program (Re-Navigating Anger and Guilt Emotions) in schools. Designed for small groups of students struggling with anger and violence, RAGE provides practical tools to help young people understand their emotions and make positive choices.

**“Programs like our Step Forward initiative have offered young people practical tools for employment and daily living.”**

## How Students Rate Love Bites

### Fostering Norms

98%

of students felt confident that they know when a relationship is unhealthy and abusive after completing the program.

### Building capacity

96%

of the students expressed confidence in knowing where to seek help for a relationship issue after finishing the program.

### Engaged participants

10/10

students awarded the program the highest possible rating for overall experience.

## Mental Health Programs

During the reporting period, Coast Shelter delivered clinical care addressing mental health, substance use, domestic and family violence, trauma, and housing instability.

Support was provided to clients with complex needs, including First Nations, culturally diverse, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, facing challenges such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, emotional regulation, and homelessness. Several clients required suicide prevention planning or had prior hospitalisations.

### Key Achievements

- Strengthened partnerships to provide wraparound support
- Increased capacity in play therapy and group interventions
- Advocated for priority housing and financial stability
- Secured brokerage funding to help clients overcome barriers to support



### Youth Mental Health Support

Thanks to funding from **Bendigo Bank Ettalong and Bendigo Bank CollabFunds (East Gosford, Lisarow, Kincumber)**, Coast Shelter's dedicated Youth Mental Health Worker provided tailored clinical support to 56 young people across our services.

While a unique art therapy initiative engaged 45 participants, supporting them to develop emotional regulation through creative expression.

## Employment Programs

Over the past three years, Coast Shelter's Social Enterprise program supported clients in building job readiness, gaining hands-on experience, and transitioning into meaningful employment. Through practical training and wraparound support, the program has helped individuals overcome barriers to work.

### Three Years of Impact

The Social Enterprise program ran successfully for three years, creating life-changing opportunities for individuals who faced significant barriers to work. Highlights include:

- Employed 41 young people in traineeships, with 28 moving into permanent roles and 9 continuing into further education.
- Developed the Job Skills Program with Sanitarium to build interview confidence and workforce readiness.
- Partnered with employers to secure ongoing employment after traineeships.
- Operated Coasties on the Move, collecting furniture from over 1,000 homes, supporting 800+ individuals and families, and completing 100+ house removals.
- Engaged the community through CS Espresso, attending over 100 events to raise awareness and funds.
- Created paid employment opportunities for refuge clients facing barriers such as limited experience, confidence, or behavioural challenges.

# Our Supporters



# Grant Partnerships and Strategic Funding

During the 2024–25 financial year, we received vital funding from government and philanthropic partners, enabling us to expand our impact and respond to growing community needs.

## Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)

Coast Shelter's Specialist Homelessness Services continued to be supported through core funding from DCJ, allowing us to provide crisis accommodation, case management, and wraparound support to individuals and families experiencing homelessness across the Central Coast.

## Strong and Resilient Communities Grant

Coast Shelter was awarded \$440,000 to deliver the Step Forward program, focused on education, wellbeing, and community connection. The program will run for the duration of the 2025–26 financial year, marking a significant step forward in our long-term impact strategy.

## Bendigo Bank

With support from Bendigo Bank Ettalong and Bendigo Bank CollabFunds (East Gosford, Lisarow, Kincumber), Coast Shelter's dedicated Youth Mental Health Worker provided clinical support to 56 young people, while a unique art therapy initiative helped 45 participants build emotional regulation through creative expression.



## ClubGRANTS

Coast Shelter's Love Bites program was awarded \$47,000 through the ClubGRANTS scheme. The team had the honour of attending the annual ClubGRANTS presentation, where \$1.2 million was distributed to over 60 local organisations. We are deeply grateful to The Ary Toukley, The Entrance Leagues Club, The Doylo, and Gosford RSL for their generous support of this vital youth education initiative.

## Commonwealth Bank (CBA) Staff Foundation Grant

Coast Shelter received \$20,000 through the CBA Staff Foundation, thanks to a nomination by volunteer Natasha McInnes. Throughout the year, this grant supported the Community Centre, counselling team, and education team.

## Central Coast Council Grant

Coast Shelter was delighted to receive \$20,000 from Central Coast Council to support the Triple Purpose Videography Project. Partnering with local videographer Trent Brailey of Forrest Creative, the project will produce three key videos: one to reduce anxiety and destigmatise the experience of entering refuge for women, children, young people, and men; one to grow our supporter base; and one to enhance volunteer onboarding.



# Community and Corporate Partners

## With Thanks to Our Community and Corporate Partners

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of our community and corporate partners. Your contributions, both financial and in-kind, have made a meaningful difference in the lives of people facing crisis.

Thanks to your partnership, we've been able to provide safe shelter, essential resources, and compassionate care. Your donations have brought comfort, dignity, and hope, while helping us strengthen services where they are needed most.

Your support is more than a gift; it's a lifeline. We look forward to continuing these impactful partnerships.

## Partnership Highlights

The following highlights showcase the impact our partners have made throughout the year, demonstrating how generosity and collaboration can transform lives.

### Sanitarium

- \$40,000 financial donation and \$5,000+ in product donations.
- Delivered a Job Ready Skills Program for vulnerable young people, including resume writing, interview practice, and workplace communication.
- Provided healthy breakfasts to community members and refugees.
- Enabled the rollout of the Healthy Kitchen Program across the Community Centre and refuges.
- Funded Christmas celebrations including decorations, festive meals, gifts, and social inclusion outings for 199 refuge residents.
- Created 160 Christmas Hampers and supported gift wrapping at Erina Fair.

### Moov Modular

- \$25,000 Major Sponsor of the Coast Shelter Sleepout.

### Eastcoast Beverages

- \$3,000 Beanie Sponsor for the Sleepout and \$10,000+ in product donations.
- Provided fresh juices and produce to nourish individuals and families in hardship.
- Strengthened our food programs across the Community Centre and refuges.

### Mars Food

- \$5,000 Dinner Sponsor for the Sleepout.
- \$5,000 in product donations.
- Hosted a Dolmio Cook-Off, producing 500 meals with 400kg of donated mince

### Alliance Distribution Services, Actual Rehab

- Provided generous in-kind support that helped us deliver essential services and comfort to those in need.

### Looking Ahead: New and Upcoming Partnerships

- The Agency – Auction for Impact
- Worthington Lexus of Central Coast – Charity Golf Day at Kooindah Waters
- Brentwood Village, Rotary, Probus, Queen of Cleans, Mercure Kooindah Waters Resort
- University of Newcastle – Social Work Conference

## Partners



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Proudly supported by East Gosford, Ettalong, Kincumber, Lisarow and Wyong **Community Bank®** branches  
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## Major Gift Partners

# *Thank you* to Our Generous Supporters!

Our work would not be possible without the incredible generosity of our donors and supporters. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the philanthropists who have championed our mission this year. Whether named here or giving quietly behind the scenes, your support has made a meaningful difference in the lives of people experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence.

### Major Donors

Linda Allen

Barry Frost

Lodge Morisset

Stephen Allan

Elizabeth Frost

National Club Ltd

Dr Ajay Chennamchetty

Dr Padma Korremula

Swampies Social Golf Club

Christine Cook

Kathryn Paul

Francis Cook

Katie Thomson (Actual Rehab)



# Volunteers

Coast Shelter's valued team of **227 volunteers** contributed an incredible **7,199 hours** of service during the 2024-25 financial year, an achievement that speaks volumes about the compassion and commitment of this unique group of people.

## Volunteer Roles and Contributions

Our volunteers are as diverse as the roles they perform. In our Community Centre, they rescue food, serve warm meals, and facilitate essential activities. They support refuge team members and clients, serve on our Board, assist at fundraising events, and contribute to our Community Wellbeing and Education Team. Many are everyday advocates for Coast Shelter, spreading awareness and inspiring others to get involved.

They include school teachers and students, corporate teams, university students, working parents, business owners, and retirees. We have also benefited from dedicated professional volunteers, who have generously shared their skills to support our marketing efforts, enhance our community presence, and provide essential IT support.

## Recognising Excellence

This year, we were proud to see our award-winning volunteers Paul and Lucy recognised in the wider community for their long-term support and selflessness, a testament to the calibre of people who choose to stand beside us.

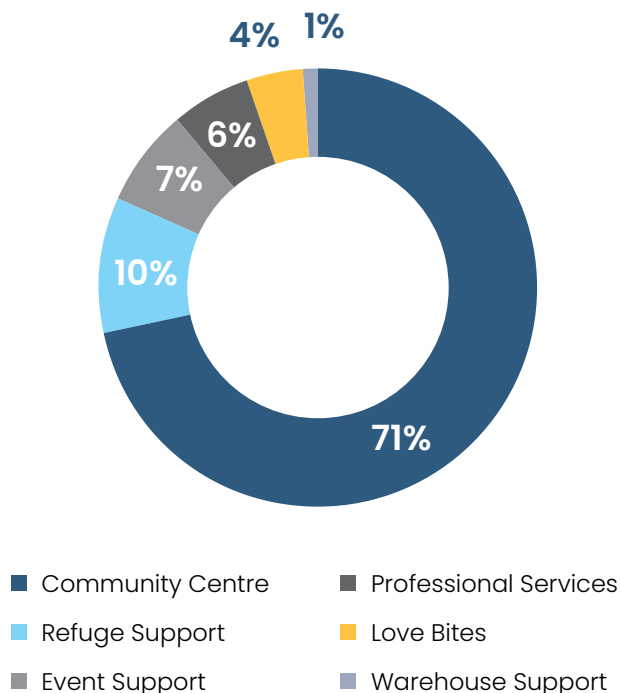
## The Value of Giving Time

According to the Centre for Volunteering, the financial value of volunteer contributions can be measured and based on their rate, our team has added an estimated \$311,500 in value to Coast Shelter's operations.

## A message from Volunteer Ambassador Michael Olivieri

"Being part of Coast Shelter provides me with great fulfillment and allows me to make a positive impact in the community. I enjoy speaking with businesses and individuals looking to make a difference and the different ways they can get involved with Coast Shelter. Even in the current economic climate where most people are feeling the cost of living pinch, there are still so many willing to help others in whatever way they can."

## Volunteer Hours



## Our Reach



## Digital Reach

**12k**  
**Facebook followers**

**Follows increased**

**200%**

**Content Interaction increased**

**107.3%**

**Link clicks increased by**

**103.2%**

**2k**

**LinkedIn followers**

**3,816**

**Instagram followers**



## Campaigns

During the 2024–25 financial year, Coast Shelter launched two major campaigns to support vulnerable individuals and families across the Central Coast: the **Christmas Appeal** and the **Winter Campaign**. Both aimed to raise awareness and encourage community action in response to rising demand for support services—as we faced the reality of only being able to assist 1 in 3 people seeking help.

### **Christmas Appeal – Spreading Cheer and Hope**

The Christmas Appeal invited the community to help make the festive season brighter for those doing it tough. Supporters contributed through donations, food hampers, gift drives, and workplace Wishing Trees. Coast Shelter also partnered with Erina Fair for gift collection and wrapping services, helping restore dignity and joy during a challenging time.

### **Winter Campaign – Out from the Cold**

Launched in June, the Winter Campaign called on the community to support Coasties facing crisis during the colder months. With demand surging and resources stretched, the campaign highlighted the urgent need for support and encouraged donations, volunteering, and advocacy to ensure no one was left out in the cold.

Fundraising efforts throughout May and June 2025 included a series of social media videos featuring Coast Shelter team members. These heartfelt stories were shared across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, reaching more than 300,000 people and amplifying awareness of the challenges faced by those in crisis.

Together, these efforts demonstrated the power of community and Coast Shelter's commitment to providing safety, care, and hope to those who need it most.



## Coast Shelter Sleepout 02.08.24

coastsheltersleepout.com.au

Brave the night.  
Change a life.



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## Events

### Coast Shelter Sleepout

August 2024

Coast Shelter hosted its annual Sleepout at Industree Group Stadium, bringing together over 120 participants, including business leaders, community members, staff, and volunteers, to stand in solidarity against homelessness and domestic and family violence.

The event created a powerful space for reflection and connection, with participants hearing firsthand stories from individuals who have accessed Coast Shelter's services. These personal accounts highlighted the realities of homelessness and the transformative impact of community support.

**“ The event created a powerful space for reflection and connection, with participants hearing firsthand stories from individuals who have accessed Coast Shelter’s services. ”**

### National Reconciliation Week Event

May 2025

Coast Shelter's annual Reconciliation Event is now acknowledged as the largest Reconciliation event in the region. Held during National Reconciliation Week, the event is a key commitment within Coast Shelter's Reconciliation Action Plan, reflecting our deep respect for First Nations peoples and cultures.

This year's event brought together over 1,500 attendees, including community members, partner organisations, and cultural leaders. The day featured a community march and performances of song, dance, and Yidaki (didgeridoo), celebrating connection, culture, and community spirit.

With up to 33% of Coast Shelter clients identifying as First Nations, this event holds particular significance, reinforcing our commitment to reconciliation, cultural safety, and inclusive service delivery.

# 33%

**of Coast Shelter  
clients identify  
as First Nations**



## The Retreat Launch

June 2025

Coast Shelter proudly launched The Retreat, a purpose-built wellbeing studio designed to support individuals experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence, and trauma. Funded by the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund, The Retreat offers targeted programs that promote resilience, wellbeing, and pathways to education and employment.

The launch event was attended by community members and dignitaries, including The Honourable Emma McBride, Federal Member for Dobell and Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention; Ms Liesl Tesch, Member for Gosford and Parliamentary Secretary; Mr David Mehan Member for the Entrance; and Adam Crouch Member for Terrigal – highlighting strong support across all levels of government.



# Our People



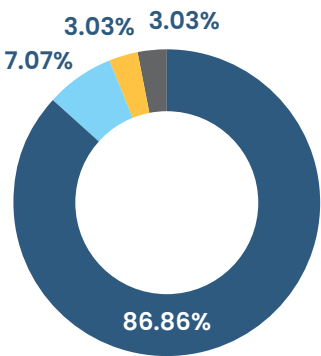
# Workforce Diversity

At Coast Shelter, we are proud to foster a diverse and inclusive workforce where every team member is treated with dignity, respect, and consideration, guided by our core values of Respect, Connection, Trust, and Innovation.

As at 30 June 2025, we employed 99 team members, represented across the following diversity groups:

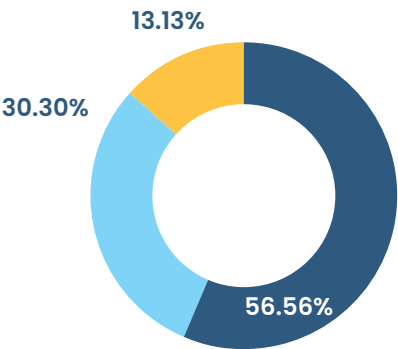


Employees by Functional area



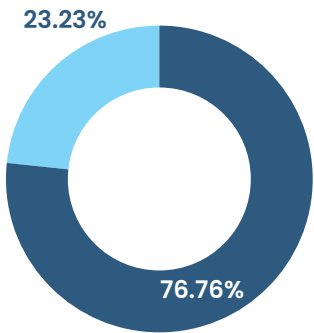
■ People & Programs  
■ Corporate Services  
■ Finance  
■ Executive

Employees by Employment Type



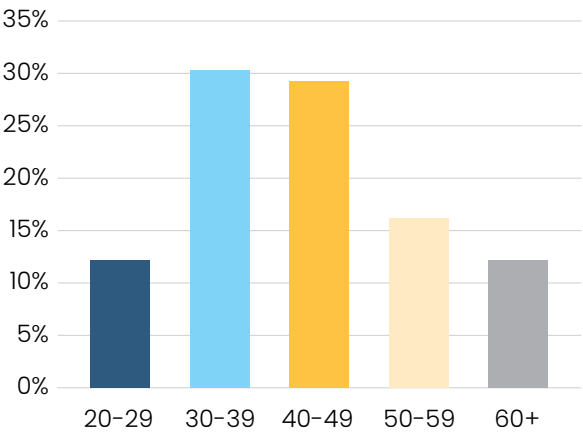
■ Casual   ■ Part Time   ■ Full Time

Employee by Gender

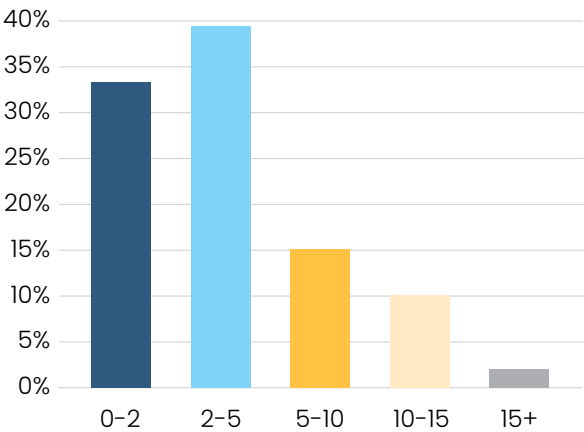


■ Female   ■ Male

Employees by Age



Employees by Length of Service



# Working Groups

During the 2024–25 financial year we updated our Dignity, Respect and Anti-Discrimination Policy and public Diversity Statement to reflect our broadened commitment to inclusivity.

**“ At Coast Shelter, we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples, traditional owners and custodians of the land. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We are committed to inclusivity and celebrate diversity in all its forms, supporting LGBTQIA+ communities, people living with disability, neurodiverse individuals, and culturally diverse communities. ”**



## Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group

In 2024, Coast Shelter refreshed its LGBTQIA+ Advisory Group to become the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group, reflecting broader community representation. The group now focuses on:

- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)
- LGBTQIA+
- Neurodiverse
- People Living with Disability

This group provides strategic advice and supports initiatives that promote inclusion across Coast Shelter.

## Highlights from the year include:

- Celebrations for International Women’s Day and Harmony Week
- Awareness campaigns for:
  - ADHD Awareness Month
  - Mardi Gras Month
  - Neurodiversity Celebration Week
  - LGBTQIA+ Domestic Violence Awareness Day
  - World Pride Month
  - Wear It Purple Day
- Participation in Coastal Twist Festival, winning Best Decorated Stall
- Employee training including:
  - Creating a Neuroaffirming Workplace webinar
  - ACON-led training for the Adults program team

Looking ahead, the group will be representing Coast Shelter at the Central Coast Multicultural Interagency Multicultural Expo and Coastie Carnie Fair Day, and celebrating Inclusion at Work Week.

## Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

At Coast Shelter our vision for reconciliation is a community where all people connected to culture are free from domestic and family violence. To support this, we have developed an **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)** to strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, promote reconciliation, and enhance service delivery.



## Highlights from the year include:

- Hosting stalls at the Central Coast Community NAIDOC event
- Leading the largest National Reconciliation Week event in the region, in partnership with:
  - Gudjagang Ngara li-dhi Aboriginal Corporation
  - Girri Girra Aboriginal Experiences
  - The Glen Group
  - Supported by: Barang Regional Alliance, Blakworks, Bungree Aboriginal Association, Darkinjung Aboriginal Land Council, Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services, Garawa Aboriginal Corporation, Mingaletta, Murray Ceremonies, and Nunyara Aboriginal Health Unit

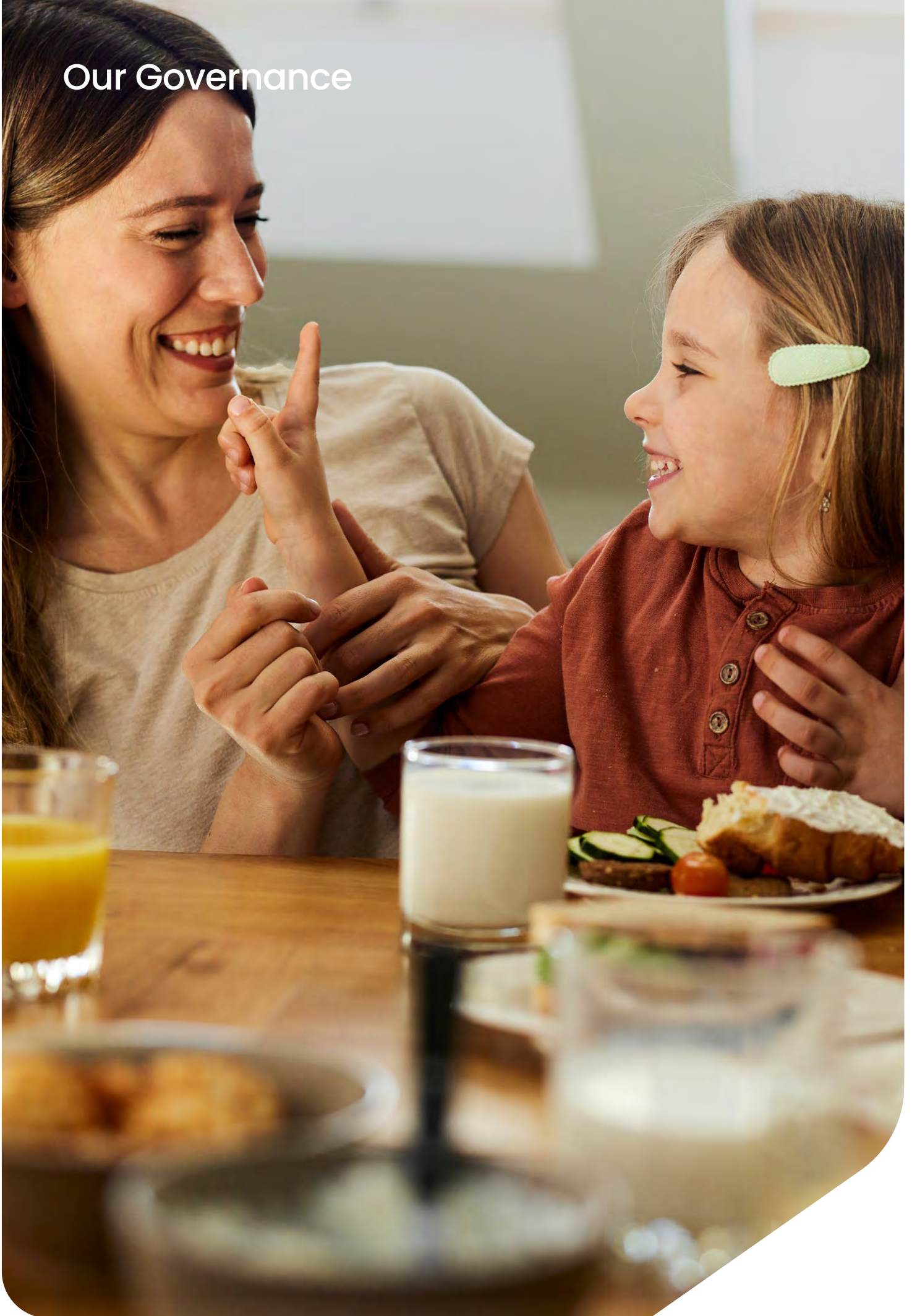
We also delivered Effects of Racism Training for our team members and launched our First Nations Engagement and Learning Strategy to activate RAP commitments.

To guide our next RAP, we completed the Australian Human Rights Commission Workplace Cultural Diversity Tool, helping us assess progress and shape future goals.



National Reconciliation Week Partners and Supporters

# Our Governance



# Our Governance

## Board Committees

To support its governance responsibilities, the Board is supported by four specialised subcommittees. Each committee provides targeted oversight and strategic advice across critical areas of the organisation, driving performance, accountability, and continuous improvement.

### Care Governance Committee (CGC)

Provides strategic oversight of care delivery to ensure services are safe, effective, and aligned with best practice. Key responsibilities include:

- Advising on models of care and clinical risk
- Monitoring client outcomes and service performance
- Supporting audits, training, and compliance
- Promoting a culture of humility, learning, and accountability

### Finance and Audit Committee (FAC)

Supports the Board in overseeing financial health, audit processes, and compliance. Key responsibilities include:

- Reviewing financial reports, budgets, and forecasts
- Monitoring financial performance and risk
- Overseeing annual audits and auditor independence
- Managing investments, reserves, and insurance
- Ensuring regulatory and legal compliance

### People and Culture Committee (PCC)

Provides strategic guidance on workforce matters aligned with Coast Shelter's People Strategy. Focus areas include:

- Organisational culture and staff engagement
- Remuneration and benefits
- Recruitment and succession planning for key roles

### Risk Committee (RC)

Assists the Board in identifying, assessing, and managing organisational risks. Responsibilities include:

- Advising on risk assessment and mitigation strategies
- Monitoring risks related to performance, safety, compliance, reputation, and legal obligations
- Supporting governance through independent review and recommendations



# Our Governance

## Board of Directors



Paul Murnane AM



Michael Blanchflower



Kevin Bush

### Our Board provides strategic oversight of Coast Shelter's financial management and governance.

It is responsible for ensuring strong corporate governance, setting and monitoring policies, and guiding the organisation in alignment with our mission and values.

#### Paul Murnane AM, Chair

BEC, MBA, FAICD, F FINSIA

Paul is a corporate advisor and director with over 35 years of experience in investment banking, financial services, consulting, and management in Australia and internationally.

He has served as a director for major investment banks, including Citibank and Goldman Sachs, and currently advises public companies and government boards on strategy, governance, and leadership.

Paul also has extensive experience in the not-for-profit sector, having revitalized organisations and built social enterprises. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics and a Master's degree in Business Administration.

*"Coast Shelter's commitment to building a safe, caring and connected Central Coast community strongly resonates with my personal values, and supporting this mission as a board director is a privilege"*

#### Michael Blanchflower

B Com, DipFS, GDipAppFin (FINSIA), DipCouns GAICD

Michael is an accomplished entrepreneur and governance professional with a strong background in financial services, vocational education, and adventure tourism.

He grew a specialised financial services business before its acquisition by Macquarie Group and has extensive experience as a Non-Executive Director in the not-for-profit and private sectors.

Michael brings a deep commitment to social impact and governance, including the mental health sector working as an Alcohol and Other Drugs addiction coach supporting participants at Dooralong Transformation Centre, and volunteering as a facilitator with the Mankind Project Australia.

Michael has also spent time volunteering in the Coast Shelter kitchen over the years.

*"I first engaged with Coast Shelter volunteering in the Gosford kitchen with my wife back in 2017. As a Director I am able to use more of my skills and expertise to support this crucial safety net for our most at-risk community members."*

#### Kevin Bush

Kevin is an accomplished business professional with a career spanning both senior executive and CEO roles across several sectors, including consumer food, tourism, nutrition, disability services and professional accounting services, in Australia and Asia.

His expertise includes sales, marketing, brand development, complex stakeholder management and cross-cultural organisations.

His board experience includes NFP, commercial and ASX listed company boards and Kevin has a proven record of delivering transformation and growth, building brands and digital marketing

Kevin holds a Bachelor's degree in Business (Finance and Accounting) and he is a member (CA) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

*Kevin is currently on approved leave of absence.*

#### Waverney Innes

BA (Hons), Dip Ed, M. Clin Psych

Waverney is a Clinical Psychologist with over 20 years of experience, specialising in children and families. She is a Senior Clinical Psychologist and Deputy Director at Central Coast Local Health District's Psychology Department.

Waverney completed the Clinical Leadership Program with the Clinical Excellence Commission and is a member of the Australian Clinical Psychology Association.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology and Education, a Diploma of Education, and a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology.

*"The support Coast Shelter receives from Central Coast residents to help people in crisis in our community has always been inspirational so the opportunity to contribute to the Coast Shelter Board has been a privilege".*



Adam McEwen



Lavinia Rarinca



Lyndelle Taylor

## Adam McEwen

B App Sc, MPH

Adam is an experienced professional in environmental and public health, with over 20 years as a senior environmental health officer at NSW Health.

Currently, he serves as Chairperson of Bungree Aboriginal Association, overseeing nearly 30 programs across the Central Coast.

Adam is also a board member at Central Coast Sports College and has a strong background in sports coaching. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Applied Science (Environmental Health) and Public Health.

*Adam resigned on 13 October 2025, due to other professional and personal commitments. This decision was made thoughtfully and with deep respect for the organisation and its mission.*

## Deborah Howe

Deborah Howe is the Manager of the Mental Health Network at the Agency for Clinical Innovation (ACI), where she works alongside inspiring system leaders to drive meaningful reform in mental health services across NSW.

With a strong foundation in research and evaluation, Deb has authored numerous peer-reviewed publications that reflect her deep commitment to evidence-informed practice and lasting, person-centred reform. Her leadership has guided the development of transformative frameworks such as the *NSW Suicide Care Pathway* and the *Trauma-Informed Care Framework for Change*, both of which are helping to strengthen and humanise mental health care across the state.

Deb is a passionate advocate for a population health approach to mental health, one that focuses on promotion, prevention, and early intervention, and places people, families, and communities at the centre of care. She is especially dedicated to improving mental health outcomes for Aboriginal communities, ensuring that services are culturally safe, compassionate, and inclusive.

Through her leadership, Deb continues to bring people together, shaping policy, building partnerships, and fostering a shared vision for a mentally healthier, more connected, and more caring NSW.

*"Working in mental health for such a long time it has taught me that housing, safety, and connection are the foundations of wellbeing, that's what drew me to Coast Shelter."*

## Lavinia Rarinca

MBA GAICD

Lavinia is an experienced management consultant with a strong background in technology transformation, having worked across Australia, Europe, and the USA.

She has successfully led business performance improvements across sectors such as banking, manufacturing, and pharmaceuticals. Previously, she held senior roles at Westpac, including Head of Transformation Excellence.

Lavinia is passionate about supporting purpose driven organisations and holds degrees in Engineering (Computer Science), Technology (Advanced Control Systems), and an MBA.

*"I am motivated to serve as a Non-Executive Director of Coast Shelter to give back to the local community and help create a better future for the Central Coast. She is proud to contribute to an organisation that is well-known and deeply respected for its long-standing commitment to supporting disadvantaged people."*

## Lyndelle Taylor, Company Secretary

Dip.Law (LPAB), GDLP, AGIA, GAICD

Lyndelle Taylor is a lawyer, admitted to the Supreme Court of NSW and the High Court of Australia in 2008. With over 15 years of experience consulting not-for-profit boards on governance, compliance, and legal matters, she became Coast Shelter's Company Secretary in May 2023.

Lyndelle is also a member of the NSW Law Society and holds qualifications from the Governance Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

# Our Governance

## Meeting Attendance

	Michael Blanchflower	Kevin Bush	Dale Cleaver	Joe Coyte	Deborah Howe	Waverney Innes	Adam McEwen	Paul Murnane	Lavinia Rarinca
05-07-24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
16-07-24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A
20-08-24	1	1	1	1	N/A	1	1	1	1
17-09-24	1	1	1	1	N/A	1	1	1	1
22-10-24	1	1	1	LOA*	N/A	1	1	1	1
19-11-24	1	1	1	LOA*	N/A	1	1	1	1
21-11-24	1	1	1	LOA*	N/A	1	Apology	1	1
28-01-25	1	1	1	N/A	1	1	Apology	1	1
11-02-25	1	1	1	N/A	Apology	1	1	1	1
14-02-25	Apology	1	1	N/A	Apology	1	1	1	Apology
21-02-25	1	1	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1	1
25-03-25	Apology	1	N/A	N/A	Apology	1	1	1	1
01-04-25	1	1	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1	1
11-04-25	Apology	1	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1	1
19-05-25	1	LOA*	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1	1
24-06-25	1	LOA*	N/A	N/A	Apology	1	1	1	1

\* Leave of Absence (LOA)

During the 2024-25 financial year, our organisation was also supported by the following Directors:

- Joseph (Joe) Coyte – Appointed 22 July 2024, resigned 26 November 2024.
- Dale Cleaver – Appointed on 22 July 2024; resigned on 18 February 2025.



# Our Governance

## Executive Team



### Alicia Pigot

#### Chief Executive Officer

Alicia is a values-driven leader with over 20 years' experience in social services, child and family welfare, and community development. Known for her inclusive leadership and commitment to social justice, she has driven reform and innovation across senior roles at Life Without Barriers, NSW Department of Communities and Justice, The Benevolent Society and CatholicCare.

Having grown up, raised a family, and built her career on the Central Coast, Alicia brings a deep local insight and connection to her work.

As CEO of Coast Shelter, Alicia leads with purpose, championing hope, opportunity and belonging across the Central Coast. She holds a Master of Social Work and a Bachelor of Social Science.



### Ashlee Gunstone

#### Chief People and Programs Officer

Ashlee is a passionate People and Culture leader who believes in performance through people. With experience across FMCG and For-Purpose sectors, she brings a strong focus on coaching, purpose-driven leadership, and creating exceptional employment experiences that support organisational success.

At Coast Shelter, Ashlee oversees Client Programs, including specialist homelessness services, the community centre, and education programs, ensuring trauma-informed care and meaningful support for those in need. Ashlee also leads the People and Culture team, including the Diversity and Inclusion Committee and Reconciliation Action Plan working group, championing inclusive practices and continuous improvement.

Ashlee holds a Bachelor of Human Resource Management from Macquarie University.



### Jason Haynes

#### Chief Financial Officer

Jason brings extensive financial expertise from the public sector and is a proud Central Coast local. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and is a Member of Chartered Accountants ANZ.

Since joining Coast Shelter in 2019, Jason has been committed to driving financial sustainability and identifying opportunities to grow the organisation's impact. His leadership ensures sound stewardship, strategic growth, and alignment with Coast Shelter's mission and values. Jason plays a key role in strengthening financial governance, enhancing reporting frameworks, and supporting long-term organisational resilience.



### Crystal Lindsay

#### Chief Operating Officer

Crystal is an executive leader with a background in corporate affairs, compliance and strategic growth. She has experience across both the private and public sectors, and has successfully guided organisations through amalgamations and government reform, developing expertise in change management and process improvement.

At Coast Shelter, Crystal leads Engagement, Communications, Fundraising, and Corporate Services, including Compliance, IT, and Facilities. Under her leadership, Coast Shelter achieved Award-Level accreditation in the Australian Service Excellence Standards, placing the organisation in the top 5% of service providers nationally.

Crystal holds a Bachelor of Information Technology and Marketing, and qualifications in Stakeholder Engagement and Community Development.

# Our Financial Report



# Financial Summary

The 2024–25 financial year was one of significant progress and strengthened stability for Coast Shelter.

After navigating several years of financial pressure across the community services sector, we are proud to report a substantial improvement in our financial position and clear momentum toward long-term sustainability.

Through prudent financial management, improved operational efficiency and continued funding support, Coast Shelter reduced its deficit by over \$1.17 million compared to the prior year. While the organisation recorded an operating deficit of \$336,038 during this reporting period, this represents a major turnaround from the \$1.51 million deficit in the 2023–24 financial year.

**Key achievements included:**

- Growth in total revenue to \$13.13 million, an increase of up \$1.43 million (12.2%) from the previous year.
- Expense control and targeted investment, with total expenditure rising by just 1.9%, despite sector-wide cost pressures.
- Strengthened cash position, with reserves more than doubling to \$2.38 million, ensuring a more resilient liquidity base.
- Improved financial sustainability, driven by operational restructuring, stronger partnerships, and increased grant diversification.

**\$1.17 million**

Reduced annual operating deficit

**12.2%**

Increase in total revenue

**\$336,038**

Current operating deficit

**1.9%**

Total expenditure increase

**\$13.13 million**

Total revenue

**\$2.38 million**

Cash reserves balance

This turnaround reflects the dedication of our team members, the trust of our partners, and a renewed focus on ensuring every dollar delivers maximum community impact.

# Financial Summary

## Strategic Actions Driving the Turnaround

To achieve these outcomes, Coast Shelter implemented a series of deliberate and strategic initiatives throughout the 2024–25 financial year to strengthen our financial position and operational resilience.

### Key initiatives included:

- Enhanced financial oversight and reporting, enabling more informed decision-making and greater accountability across the organisation.
- Diversification of income streams, with increased revenue from government contracts, philanthropic partnerships, and community fundraising.
- Streamlined service delivery, ensuring resources were aligned with areas of greatest community need and impact.

These initiatives laid the foundation for a more agile, efficient, and sustainable organisation, better equipped to meet the evolving needs of our community. The following table summarises Coast Shelter’s strengthened financial position, showcasing that while we continue to operate in a challenging funding environment, the organisation is on a path to sustainability.



Year-on-Year Financial Overview			
Key Indicator	FY 2025	FY 2024	Difference
Total Revenue	\$13,126,778	\$11,698,105	+\$1,428,673
Total Expenses	\$13,462,816	\$13,208,703	+\$254,113
Operating Result	-\$336,038 (Deficit)	-\$1,510,598 (Deficit)	Improved \$1,174,560
Cash Reserves	\$2,378,575	\$929,507	+\$1,449,068

# Financial Summary

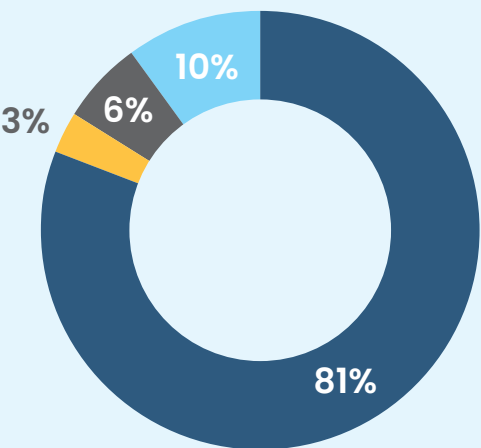
## Strategic Use of Funds

At Coast Shelter, we are deeply committed to using every dollar efficiently to deliver high-impact programs for our communities, now and into the future. Our improved financial health enables us to focus on our core purpose: supporting people in need on the Central Coast.

With strong foundations, transparent governance, and a clear financial strategy, Coast Shelter is well placed to continue its mission of providing hope, safety, and opportunity for everyone who relies on our services.

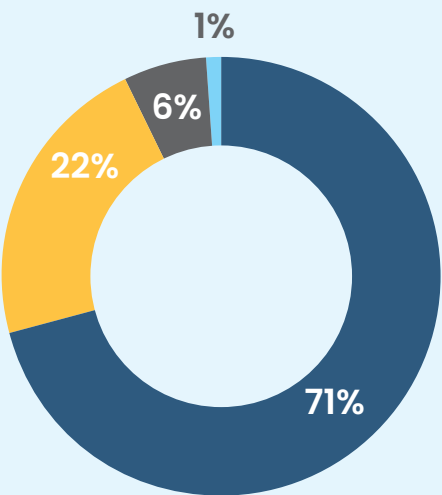
### Where our funding comes from

Government Grants	81%
Philanthropic Grants	3%
Fundraising Income	6%
Service and Other Income	10%



### How our funding is invested

Program Delivery	71%
Administration and Fundraising	22%
Property and Utilities	6%
Other Expenses	1%





**Looking ahead with hope.**

**Coast Shelter's journey is shaped by the people we serve and the people who support us. As we continue to grow, innovate, and advocate, we remain grounded in our purpose: to end homelessness and domestic violence on the Central Coast.**

**What makes us unique is our deep connection to this place—we are a Coast organisation, built by and for our community. Every step we take is focused on creating a safer, more inclusive Central Coast for everyone.**

**Thank you for being part of the solution.**



# Help Create a Central Coast Where Everyone Has a Safe Place to Call Home

## Make a Donation

One-off or monthly gifts help us provide safe housing, trauma-informed care, education, and social inclusion.

## Partner With Us

Join us in creating pathways out of crisis and into stability, dignity, and hope.

## Fundraise for Us

Organise an event or activity to make an impact while having fun.

## Volunteer With Us

Donate your time and talent to improve lives in our community.

346 Mann Street  
North Gosford  
New South Wales 2250

**P** 02 4325 3540

**E** [admin@coastshelter.org.au](mailto:admin@coastshelter.org.au)

 [facebook.com/coastshelter](https://facebook.com/coastshelter)

 [instagram.com/coastshelter/](https://instagram.com/coastshelter/)

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