Coast Shelter

2026 Annual Report



Acknowledgement of Country



Coast Shelter acknowledges the Darkinung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and deliver services across the Central Coast.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to maintain a deep and enduring connection to Country, culture and community.

As an organisation working alongside people experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence, and disadvantage, we are committed to walking together in a spirit of respect, truth-telling and reconciliation.

Bouddi National Park, Darkinung Country, Central Coast, NSW

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ABN 46 095 999 287

Overview



For over 30 years, Coast Shelter has supported people on the Central Coast experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence. Last year alone, we helped nearly 1,000 people access crisis accommodation, providing a safe bed every night for women, children, young people, and men. We also served over 17,894 meals through our Community Centre, creating a safe, welcoming space for those in crisis.

As demand and complexity continue to grow, our focus is expanding beyond crisis response to early intervention, especially for young people, helping prevent homelessness before it starts. We're committed to building a more just community where everyone has a safe place to call home, the support to sustain it, and the opportunity to thrive.

This work is only possible thanks to the generosity of the Central Coast community. With continued support, we can reach more people and reduce the number we are forced to turn away.

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



Collaboration

We work together with purpose, building strong relationships and shared solutions to achieve the best outcomes for our clients and community.



Inclusion

We celebrate diversity in all its forms, and advocate for an inclusive society where everyone feels like they belong and are valued for who they are.



Innovation

We adapt to change and explore new ways to solve challenges and improve outcomes across our organisation and the communities we serve.



Integrity

We strive to be ethical, honest and consistent. We do the right thing, even when no one is watching, and our actions align with our words.



Safety

Safety underpins everything we do. We ensure every person we engage with is safe and feels safe, while advocating for a safer Central Coast community.

Outcomes

Homelessness and Domestic and Family Violence Services

Homelessness services provide crisis accommodation and casework support for up to three months across 10 refuges: six youth refuges, three women and children's refuges, and one men's refuge.

Domestic and family violence services provide safety planning and short-term accommodation for up to 28 days across four safe houses.

961

people received safe refuge accommodation

410

women supported

78

men supported

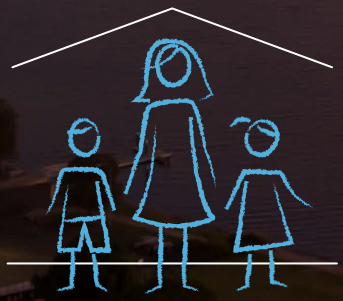


258

young people supported

215

people supported through our Domestic Violence Response Enhancement program



Brisbane Water, Darkinung Country, Central Coast NSW



Community Centre

Our Community Centre is a welcoming drop-in space providing meals, showers, laundry, identification support, practical assistance and connection to services.

17,460
visits to the Community Centre

4,984
visits by people experiencing homelessness

1,771
visits by children

17,894
meals served through the Community Centre

Community Wellbeing and Education Services

Our Community Wellbeing and Education services provide young people with employability, life skills and wellbeing workshops that build confidence, capability and pathways toward a more stable future.

101
young people took part in our Step Forward program

37
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people took part

13
high schools referred young people to the program

83%
felt supported to believe in themselves and build a brighter future

Message from the Chair



Coast Shelter has made significant progress over the past two years. Following a period of considerable organisational and financial pressure, the Board and Executive undertook a comprehensive review to strengthen the organisation's long-term sustainability. The resulting efficiencies, alongside a renewed focus on fundraising and income diversification, have enabled Coast Shelter to move from a $336,038 deficit in the previous financial year to a surplus of $3.62 million in 2025–26.

This turnaround is a significant achievement, but its importance extends well beyond the financial result. It provides a stronger and more sustainable foundation from which Coast Shelter can respond to growing community need, invest in our people and services, and increase our impact across the Central Coast.

As I commence my term as Chair, I extend my sincere thanks to outgoing Chair Paul Murnane for his warm welcome and significant contribution to Coast Shelter. Paul's leadership helped guide the organisation through an important period of change, and I am pleased that his experience and commitment will continue to benefit Coast Shelter in his roles as a Director and Chair of our inaugural Fundraising and Philanthropy Committee.

I also thank my fellow Directors for their dedication and careful stewardship. At a critical time, the Board identified the issues requiring attention and worked constructively with the Executive to implement the necessary changes. Their collective focus on Coast Shelter's long-term interests has been central to the progress achieved.

I acknowledge our CEO, Alicia Pigot, for her leadership over the past 12 months. Her early focus on rebuilding relationships, strengthening organisational culture and fostering greater connection across Coast Shelter has established a strong foundation for the organisation's next chapter.

During the year, the Board and Executive worked collaboratively to develop Coast Shelter's new organisational strategy and refreshed values. We also strengthened our risk management framework, embedding it as a practical tool to support sound decision-making and clear accountability across the organisation. Together, these foundations provide a clear direction for delivering greater impact while remaining sustainable and well governed.

Looking ahead to 2026–27, we plan to appoint three additional Directors to further strengthen the Board's skills and capacity. Guided by our new strategy, we will focus on delivering exceptional services and lasting impact; strengthening our people and culture; building sustainable funding and strategic partnerships; and ensuring that client and First Nations voices continue to inform our decisions.

While there is much to celebrate, we recognise that need across our community continues to grow. Coast Shelter's progress gives us confidence that we are well positioned to respond to this challenge while maintaining our focus on responsible stewardship, strong governance and the people who rely on our services.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our team members, volunteers, partners, donors and supporters for the contribution each of you has made to Coast Shelter's progress. Your commitment helps create safety, stability and opportunity for people across the Central Coast. We look forward to building on this momentum together.

Deborah Howe
Chair

Message from the CEO



My first year as CEO of Coast Shelter has been both a privilege and a significant responsibility. I have had the opportunity to lead an organisation with a proud history, while working alongside our team, Board and community to position Coast Shelter for the future.

This year brought progress and renewed connection, but also growing demand and complexity across the Central Coast among people facing homelessness, domestic and family violence and hardship. Behind every statistic is a person, child, family or young person seeking safety, stability, dignity and a better future.

Coast Shelter received 1,306 referrals this year but could support only 33.5 per cent. I am proud of our impact, yet these figures reveal stark unmet need in our community.

The significant over-representation of First Nations people in our services reinforces our commitment to culturally responsive support, listening to lived experience and tackling inequality and exclusion.

Strengthening our impact

This year we continued to strengthen our models of care, safeguarding and service quality.

We also maintained a strong focus on prevention and pathways. Our Step Forward program supported 101 young people and, when government funding ended, fundraising enabled us to continue the program for a further six months.

If we are serious about community safety, we must be just as serious about prevention. That means reaching young people early, addressing barriers before they lead to crisis and creating the conditions for young people to thrive.

Our people and our culture

None of our impact would be possible without our people. I am incredibly grateful to our team members and volunteers for the care, professionalism and adaptability they have demonstrated.

We invested in trauma-informed practice, crisis intervention, cultural learning and safety, while refreshing our organisational values and strengthening our Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group.

We want Coast Shelter to be a place where people feel valued and included, and where we hold ourselves accountable for delivering the best possible outcomes for the people we serve.

Building sustainability and partnerships

Coast Shelter's improved financial position provides a stronger foundation for our future, supported by stronger processes and our team's careful use of resources.

Our fundraising performance enables us to explore new opportunities, including an innovative youth initiative designed to deliver positive outcomes and a sustainable income stream. While new partnerships have expanded transitional accommodation and created a housing pathway for older women, with potential to grow as more properties become available.

Reconciliation and inclusion

Our commitment to reconciliation and cultural safety continues to deepen. We progressed our draft Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2026–2028 and strengthened our focus on listening to First Nations voices and building meaningful relationships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, First Nations leaders and communities.

Our National Reconciliation Week event provided another important opportunity to listen and strengthen our connection with community.

Looking ahead

Reflecting on my first year as CEO, I am proud of what we have achieved, but conscious of how much remains to be done.

Our new strategy guides our next chapter with a focus on impact, our people, sustainability, partnerships, and amplifying lived experience and First Nations voices.

Ahead lie opportunities to expand our housing footprint, invest in early intervention and develop new approaches to supporting young people. No community can truly thrive while its most vulnerable people are left behind. This belief guides our services, advocacy and partnerships.

To our clients who trust us, our team, volunteers, Board, partners, donors, supporters and the wider Central Coast community, thank you.

Together, we are creating pathways to safety and opportunity across the Central Coast.

Alicia Pigot
Chief Executive Officer

Strategic Priorities

PRIORITY 1

Deliver exceptional services and lasting impact

We will deliver connected person-centred evidence-informed services that improve safety, wellbeing and lasting outcomes.

PRIORITY 2

Strengthen our people and culture

We will build a safe, capable and values-led workforce where our people are supported to thrive and do their best work.

PRIORITY 3

Deliver operational excellence and financial sustainability

We will be a strong, sustainable and well-governed organisation that makes the best use of our resources for community impact.

PRIORITY 4

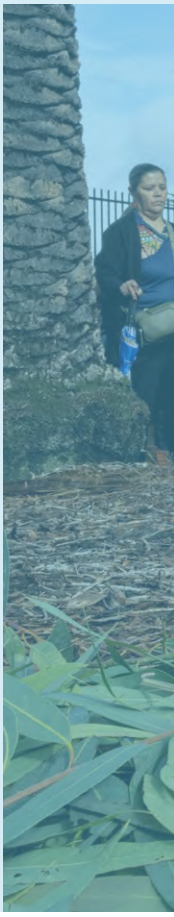
Advance sector leadership, partnerships and sustainable funding

We will use our voice, partnerships and resources to influence change, strengthen the sector and grow sustainable support for our mission.

PRIORITY 5

Elevate voice, reconciliation and influence

We will elevate First Nations and lived experience voices, strengthen partnerships and use our influence to drive lasting change.



First Nations Strategy

Coast Shelter's First Nations Strategy reflects our commitment to reconciliation, cultural safety and meaningful action. With up to 33% of Coast Shelter clients identifying as First Nations, this work remains central to our commitment to safe, inclusive and culturally responsive services.

During the year, we continued to embed First Nations perspectives across our workplace, partnerships and decision-making, while strengthening cultural capability across our team. Guided by our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the strategy focuses on:

- recruitment and retention
- onboarding and learning
- cultural safety
- community engagement and partnerships
- governance and accountability

Key highlights this year included delivering Effects of Racism Training for team members, completing the Australian Human Rights Commission Workplace Cultural Diversity Tool to guide future RAP priorities, and continuing to build strong partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and First Nations leaders across the Central Coast.

We also participated in several First Nations-focused events, including hosting our own National Reconciliation Week event, now recognised as the largest in the region.



Looking ahead, Coast Shelter will continue to strengthen cultural learning across the organisation, including through Cultural Immersion Training designed to deepen understanding of Aboriginal cultures, traditions and connection to Country.

Our Clients



Why Our Clients Seek Help

People come to Coast Shelter facing different circumstances, but each is seeking the same thing: safety, stability and a way forward.

Domestic and family violence was the leading reason for women, averaging **68.8%** of monthly presentations. For men, financial hardship was the primary reason, averaging **40.6%** each month.

68.8% of women presented due to domestic and family violence.

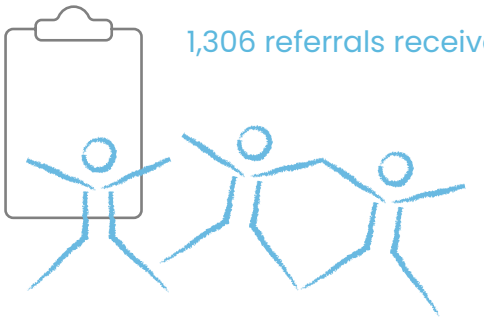
Among young people aged 16–25, family breakdown remained the leading reason at **39.7%**, while domestic and family violence accounted for **21.8%.**

These patterns reinforce that domestic and family violence remains a primary driver of homelessness, including among young people. For this reason, a key focus for Coast Shelter in the year ahead is growing philanthropic support for programs that prioritise prevention, early intervention and breaking the cycle of homelessness. With the right support at the right time, more people can move from crisis toward safety and stability.

Demand, Capacity and the Opportunity to Help

The need is significant, but with greater support, more people can be helped.

Across all services, Coast Shelter received **1,306 referrals**. We supported **33.5%**, while **66.5%** could not be accommodated. Put simply, for every referral supported, almost two could not be. This gap reflects current service capacity, not a lack of solutions. Additional funding can help us provide more safe accommodation, specialist support and pathways toward long-term stability for individuals and families.



1,306 referrals received.

Capacity varied significantly by program. Youth Services supported **66.1%** of referrals, the strongest result across our programs. Men's Services supported **15.1%**, not because of a gap in service delivery, but because Coast Shelter has only one men's refuge to meet demand across an approximately 800-kilometre corridor from north of Sydney to Tweed Heads. Investment in additional accommodation and support capacity would allow more men to access safety, practical assistance and a pathway out of homelessness.

Current capacity allowed us to accommodate 33.5%. With greater support we can help more people.

Client Demographics

Age Groups

Children and young people aged 0–17 represented an average of **53%** of clients in our Women's Services and Domestic Violence program. This underscores the family-based nature of demand and the importance of child-aware, trauma-informed support. New funding agreements with the Department of Communities and Justice now include a standalone contract for Specialist Workers for Children and Young People—an important step toward ensuring children receive support designed for their needs.

In Youth Services, clients aged 18 and over were the largest group at **51.4%**, narrowly ahead of those aged 16–17 at **48.3%**.

Men's Services showed a different profile. Men aged 56 and over were the largest cohort, averaging **28.7%** of presentations, followed by those aged 18–35 at **26.5%**. This mix highlights the needs of both older men and working-age adults.

Cultural Profile

First Nations peoples represented a significant proportion of clients across our programs, ranging from approximately **30% to 40%**, with the strongest representation in Youth Services. These results reinforce the importance of culturally safe, trauma-informed and community-connected responses, particularly for young people.

Culturally and linguistically diverse clients were also an important cohort, particularly in Women's Services, where they represented an average of **18.3%** of monthly clients. This highlights the value of accessible communication, culturally responsive practice, and strong partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and multicultural services.

Up to 40% of clients across programs were First Nations.



"Thank You for the Shelter"

Yeah. This one's for every worker who stood by my side, through the hardest days, through the longest nights. The refuge wasn't just a roof over my head - It became a chapter I'll carry with me instead.

I walked through those doors with a heart full of pain. Didn't know what tomorrow would bring or contain. But you welcomed me in when I needed a place. Gave me kindness, gave me hope, gave me space.

You listened when I needed somebody to hear. You stood beside me through the doubt and the fear. And now I'm looking back at the road that I travelled, thinking 'bout the moments, every problem we handled.

And I know I gotta leave, there's another road ahead. But a part of me will stay, in every word you said.

So, thank you for the shelter. Thank you for the care. Thank you for reminding me that somebody was there. I'll carry every memory, wherever I may go, and even when I'm miles away, I hope you always know - you changed my life in ways you'll never see, and I'll never forget what you did for me.

To every worker who checked in and asked, "You alright?" Every little conversation that brightened up the night. Every laugh, every lesson, every moment you gave. You helped me find the strength I needed to be brave.

You weren't just workers doing what you had to do. You were people who genuinely cared, and I knew. When everything around me felt uncertain and strange, you gave me somewhere safe while I figured out change.

And yeah, I'll miss you. More than these words can explain. I'll miss the familiar faces; I'll miss hearing your names. But goodbye doesn't mean that the memories disappear - I'll take them with me into every coming year.

So, thank you for the shelter. Thank you for the light. For helping me keep moving. When I couldn't see the fight. This chapter's closing now, but the story carries on, and I'll remember all of you, long after I've gone.

So, here's my final thank you, from the bottom of my heart. You helped me through a chapter, when I didn't know where to start.

I'll miss this place.

Adrian

Client Testimonials

FROM WOMEN AND CHILDREN

"My brain was not working and is slowly coming back after a lot of trauma, but like I said, you did all the thinking for me and all the organisational work. It's not a situation which I ever want to be in again – but having your support has been a life-saving service. When I'm back on my feet, I'm never going to forget everything you ladies have done for me."

"I honestly believe you are truly in my corner. It does help in really dark times. If I live to 100, I'll never forget the kindness and support you showed when I was a broken mess who landed on your doorstep. I don't think you can ever be appreciated enough for what you do and whatever motivated you to go into an industry helping traumatised women and children I'm very grateful that you are there."



FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

"I'm proud of how far I've come and excited for what's ahead."

"I want to keep learning and build a better future."

"Step Forward gave me the chance to learn, to reset and to believe I could do something different. I'm not going back to that life. I'm building something better for myself."

"The staff treat everyone the same and give everyone a fair chance. Step Forward helped me build confidence and believe I can change my life."

"My future is mine to discover and own. I've found parts of myself I want to be proud of."

"My vision for the next 12 months is to find full-time work, enrol in TAFE and start saving for a better future."

Our Programs



Supporting Women

Across our three women's refuges, we supported 410 clients through 426 support periods in 2025–26, including 198 adults and 212 children and young people. Of those supported, 37% identified as Aboriginal and 13% were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, reinforcing the importance of culturally responsive, trauma-informed and inclusive services.

Supporting Every Child

Women and children entering refuge often have complex and changing needs. As more children arrived with their mothers, our specialist child and youth program continued to prioritise support for every child, carefully managing workloads so each child's safety, wellbeing and individual needs could be recognised and addressed.

Safer, More Supportive Spaces

The refuges also navigated significant operational changes. One property underwent major renovations, including a substantial roof replacement, while another received new front fencing to strengthen security. A purpose-designed space was also created so the Primary Care Outreach multidisciplinary team could provide general practice, nursing and speech pathology services in a private and appropriate setting. Throughout these changes, services continued across multiple refuge locations, supported by clear communication and coordination to maintain consistent care for women and children.

Pathways to Stable Housing

Strong relationships with Homes NSW and local Community Housing Providers continued to create housing pathways that may otherwise have been unavailable. Additional transitional properties became available for client nominations during the year, reflecting the trust built through professional practice, effective client management and strong advocacy. These partnerships helped more women and children move from refuge towards greater safety, stability and independence.

From Safety to Recovery

Looking ahead, we will continue embedding a trauma recovery lens across our women and children's service. While immediate safety and housing remain critical, recovery from domestic and family violence takes time. By strengthening refuge environments, support approaches and partnerships, we can help more women and children move beyond crisis, rebuild stability and create safer, more hopeful futures.

GOOD NEWS STORY

A Safe Home and a Fresh Start

After fleeing serious domestic and family violence interstate, Emily and her three young children arrived on the Central Coast and received support through Coast Shelter's domestic violence and refuge services. Together, they began rebuilding their lives in safety.

During her two months in refuge, Emily actively engaged in case management to overcome barriers to stability. Advocacy helped remove her location from her AHPRA record so she could return to work, while her children were enrolled in school and connected with NDIS support.

With a Start Safely subsidy through Homes NSW, Emily secured a private rental suited to her family's needs. This safe home gave them a stable foundation for the next stage of their recovery.

Since leaving refuge, Emily has begun reclaiming her independence, including buying a road bike, something she had not previously been allowed to do. She is receiving psychological support, and her children are accessing counselling through Victims Services.

Although legal proceedings and safety concerns continue, stable housing has enabled Emily to face these challenges from a place of greater security and continue building a safer future for her family.

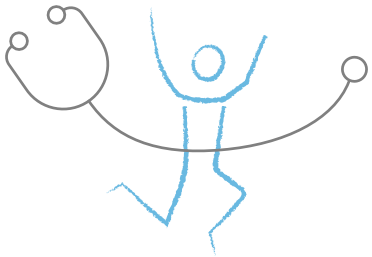
* Names changed for privacy

Supporting Children that Present with Women

Building on the support provided through our Women and Children's Program, Coast Shelter partnered with the Primary Health Network to improve access to healthcare for families living in crisis accommodation.

Closing a Gap in Care

Working together, the Specialist Worker Child and Youth Program and Primary Care Outreach Team identified that some children needed more comprehensive assessment and diagnosis than could usually be completed during a refuge stay. In response, Coast Shelter worked with local paediatric services to establish a monthly multidisciplinary clinic.



Opening Pathways to Long-Term Support

Before each clinic, the teams gather relevant records and developmental history to support timely assessment, diagnosis and recommendations. A formal diagnosis can open pathways to education, health and NDIS support, creating potentially life-changing outcomes for children and their families. As the first initiative of its kind in the local area, the clinic demonstrates the value of early intervention and coordinated care.

GOOD NEWS STORY

A Family Rebuilding Together

A mother and her two children entered refuge after escaping domestic and family violence. The family had also experienced homelessness, and the children were recovering from a serious car accident. Caseworkers focused first on building trust, understanding each family member's needs and creating the safety and stability needed to begin rebuilding their lives.

Through a trauma-informed, wraparound response, the children accessed medical reviews, paediatric assessment, audiology, speech therapy and occupational therapy. The resulting diagnoses and supporting evidence helped secure their ongoing NDIS access, while advocacy connected the family with a support coordinator and assistance with medication costs.

The children were enrolled in a supportive school, where they received counselling and tailored wellbeing support. The team also helped the family obtain birth certificates and essential household and school items, and supported the mother to gain her driver's licence and establish their new tenancy.

Today, the family is living independently in a stable home. The children are attending school, connected with local services and receiving the health and NDIS supports they need. With stronger routines and ongoing domestic violence education, the mother feels more confident making decisions for her family and creating a safer, more hopeful future for her children.

* Names changed for privacy

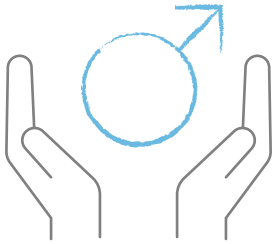
Supporting Men

Throughout 2025–26, our Men's Program supported 78 men across 83 support periods, providing responsive housing assistance and practical support to people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. Of those supported, 21% identified as Aboriginal and 10% were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Responding to Reduced Housing Capacity

The service faced a significant reduction in accommodation options during the year when eight medium-term transitional housing units, accessed through Homes NSW for more than 15 years, became unavailable due to redevelopment. These properties provided a vital pathway from crisis refuge into longer-term housing, helping men move forward and freeing one of our four refuge beds for someone else in urgent need. Their loss placed further pressure on Coast Shelter's only men's refuge, which responds to demand across an approximately 800-kilometre corridor from north of Sydney to Tweed Heads.

The closure of the Together Homes program removed another important pathway into housing and support. In response, the team strengthened relationships with local Community Housing Providers to access opportunities beyond funded capacity and expanded outreach support so men could remain connected when accommodation was unavailable.



Our Men's Program supported 78 men across 83 support periods.





Adapting Services and Strengthening the Sector

A significant safety risk associated with a retaining wall adjoining the refuge restricted access to communal outdoor areas during the year. In response, the team adapted service delivery and found alternative ways to maintain support while access to shared spaces and onsite facilities remained limited.

The Men's Program continued to lead the Central Coast Men's Community of Practice, bringing local organisations together to share knowledge, respond to emerging issues and reduce service silos. Participation in domestic and family violence forums and community events further strengthened the service's contribution to prevention and coordinated responses. Through advocacy, collaboration and flexible outreach, the team continued to support as many men as possible despite the significant loss of accommodation options.

GOOD NEWS STORY

From Survival to Independence

Caleb was 22 years old when he entered the Men's Program, after a childhood marked by foster care and parents who moved in and out of his life. Without the stable support many young people rely on, he became homeless at 16 and spent the following years moving between couch surfing, refuges, parks, his car, trains and hospital waiting areas.

When Caleb arrived at Coast Shelter, he was underweight, unmedicated and experiencing significant depression. He had limited life skills, few supports and more than $8,000 in fines. After years of surviving day to day, he had little hope that life could be different.

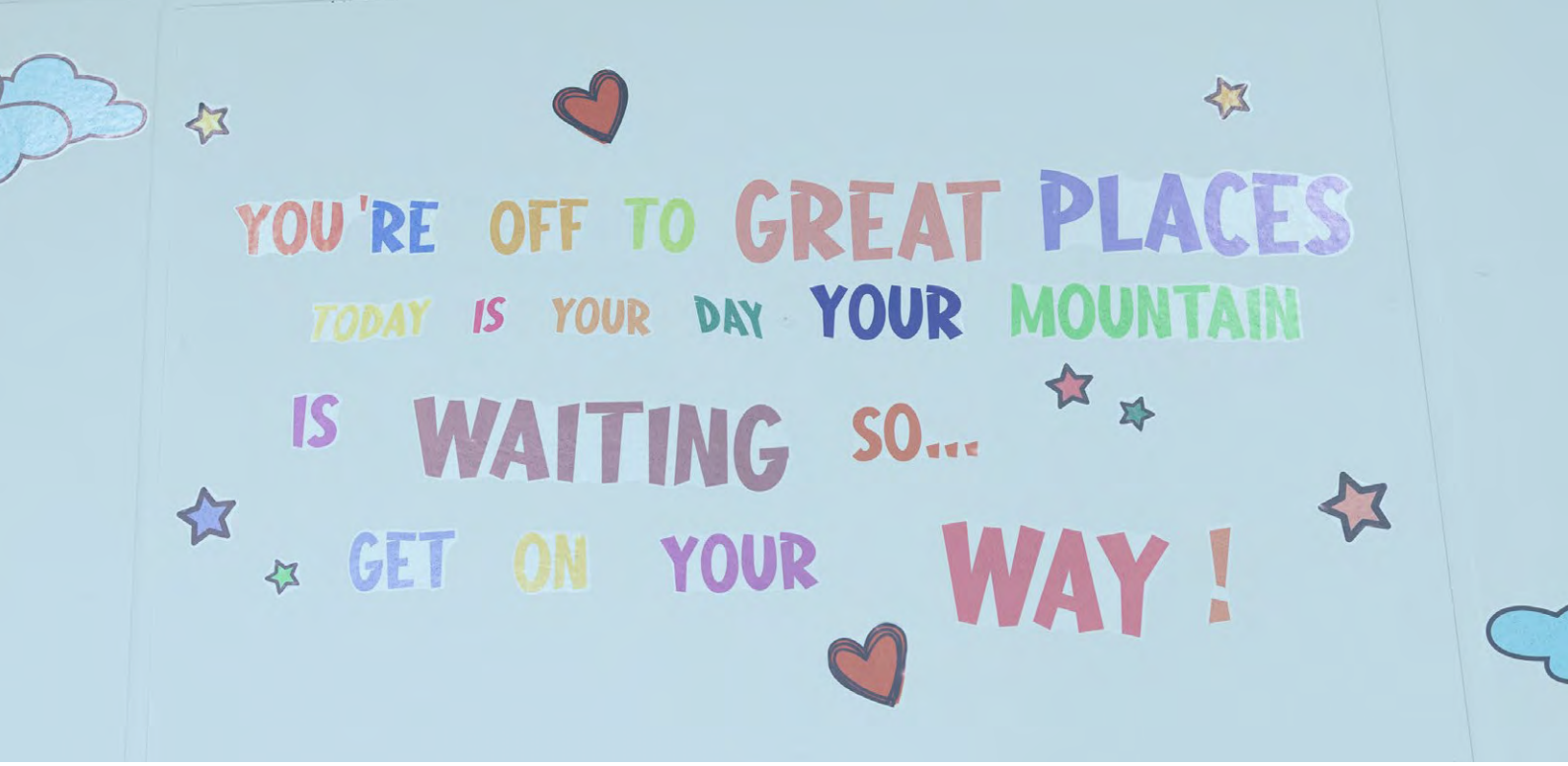
Building trust took time, patience and persistence. With support from the team, Caleb began addressing past trauma, engaged with a psychologist, psychiatrist and general practitioner, received formal diagnoses and found the right medication.

Although his NDIS application was declined several times, he kept going until it was approved, giving him access to the ongoing support he needed.

Today, Caleb lives in Supported Independent Living through the NDIS. He receives appropriate treatment, has strengthened his independence and life skills, reconnected with his aunty, and remains connected with friends. He has moved from more than $8,000 in debt to being debt-free with over $16,000 in savings and is now taking driving lessons.

In Caleb's own words, he is "the happiest" he has ever been. Most importantly, his days of homelessness are over, and he now has the stability and support to keep building a bright future of his own.

* Names changed for privacy



Homelessness Services

Supporting Young People

Throughout 2025–26, we supported 258 young people. Clients were almost evenly divided between those aged 16–17 and those aged 18 and over. First Nations young people represented an average of 30.8% of clients, reinforcing the importance of culturally safe and trauma-informed support.

Responsive Support at Critical Times

Young people arrived with diverse and often complex needs, including family violence, homelessness, disability, disrupted education, pregnancy and caring responsibilities. The team prioritised trust, safety and stability, then worked alongside each young person to identify the practical and specialist support that would make the greatest difference.

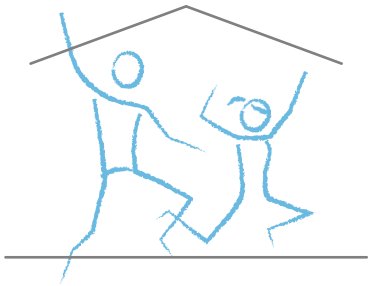
The program combined safe accommodation with practical assistance, advocacy and coordinated support tailored to each young person's circumstances and goals. This individualised approach helped young people move from crisis towards greater safety, stability and independence.

Creating a Pathway Forward

Once immediate needs were addressed, support focused on helping young people build the skills, connections and opportunities needed for greater independence. This included access to education, training, employment, parenting, health, disability, NDIS and income support, alongside practical skills such as budgeting, cooking, household routines and driving.

Strong advocacy and collaboration also created pathways into transitional, shared and private housing, with ongoing outreach helping young people sustain their tenancies and continue working towards their goals.





The program combined safe accommodation with practical assistance, advocacy and coordinated support tailored to each young person's circumstances and goals.

GOOD NEWS STORY

Together on the Path to Independence

A brother and sister entered our youth refuge after escaping family violence. The young man lived with a significant disability, while his sister had taken on a caring role alongside managing her own experiences of trauma. From the beginning, their shared goal was clear: to stay together and build a stable future.

The team created a safe and supportive environment while planning for long-term stability. The young man's NDIS funding was reactivated to coordinate specialist support, seek an urgent Change of Circumstances review and begin an application for Supported Independent Living. Both siblings were also supported to access income assistance and strengthen the skills needed to live more independently.

During their stay, the siblings embraced daily refuge life, cooking with team members, learning to budget through grocery shopping and building confidence through household routines and responsibilities.

Finding a home where they could remain together was difficult, with several referrals declined because of the complexity of their combined needs. Through persistent advocacy and collaboration, suitable shared accommodation was secured while the young man awaits a permanent Supported Independent Living placement.

Today, the siblings are living together in a stable home, supported through ongoing outreach to maintain their tenancy and continue building independence. Their journey shows what is possible when person-centred support, strong advocacy and persistence protect the relationships that matter most.

*Names changed for privacy

Domestic and Family Violence Services

Throughout 2025–26, our Domestic Violence Response Team supported 215 people across 223 support periods, helping adults and children experiencing domestic and family violence move towards safety and stability. During the year, 80 women and children stayed in Coast Shelter safe houses for a total of 2,164 bed nights. Aboriginal victim-survivors accounted for 37.6% of support periods, while 14% involved people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Safe Accommodation and Support

The team provided immediate, specialist and trauma-informed support to women and children experiencing housing instability due to domestic and family violence, helping victim-survivors reduce immediate safety risks and move towards safety and stability.

Safe accommodation, risk assessment, safety planning and coordinated support helped women and children respond to immediate danger and begin rebuilding stability. The proportion of Aboriginal and culturally diverse victim-survivors highlights the importance of culturally safe, responsive and inclusive practice.

Sector Coordination and Development

Partnerships with local refuges, Homes NSW, NSW Police, legal services and specialist domestic and family violence providers strengthened coordinated responses for victim-survivors. The team also supported three student placements, while one team member was nominated for an AbSec Award as part of the 2026 NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Awards.

Community Awareness and Advocacy

The team strengthened community awareness and sector practice by participating in the Domestic Violence Community Forum, speaking with a local women's community group about the impacts of domestic and family violence, and contributing frontline expertise to *Shaping the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Sector Induction Program: Practitioner Consultations.*

Strengthening Pathways to Safety

In the year ahead, the service will strengthen pathways into safe and sustainable housing and continue advocating for improved access to financial assistance, legal support and specialist services. Professional development, reflective practice, sector engagement and student placements will support continued trauma-informed, culturally responsive and evidence-informed practice.



In the year ahead, the service will strengthen pathways into safe and sustainable housing and continue advocating for improved access to financial assistance, legal support and specialist services.



GOOD NEWS STORY

A Courageous Path to Safety

Jenny and her two children were referred to Coast Shelter for support to escape domestic and family violence. When she first contacted the service using her father's phone, the family was still living at home and her partner was closely controlling her movements, including timing her travel to and from work.

Jenny courageously packed her children's bags, sent them to school as usual and left home at her normal time. After collecting the children, she met with a Coast Shelter caseworker, who arranged immediate confidential accommodation in one of our safe houses. Jenny was then supported to report the violence to police and obtain a protective order, giving the family the safety and distance needed to begin rebuilding their lives.

During their stay, Jenny and her children received food and toiletries vouchers and specialist support for the children. Jenny also accessed the Leaving Violence Program and Victims Services, including an Immediate Needs Support Package that helped furnish the family's new home.

Jenny enrolled her children in a new school and secured a private rental with support from the Homes NSW Start Safely subsidy. The family is now safely settled in a home of their own, where they can begin creating new routines and happier memories. Jenny continues counselling and domestic violence education programs as she and her children look ahead with greater confidence, security and hope.

*Names changed for privacy

Community Centre

Our Community Centre provides practical support for individuals and families experiencing homelessness, financial hardship and crisis. Clients accessed meals, food hampers, essential financial assistance, referrals, showers and laundry facilities, helping them meet immediate needs and maintain dignity and wellbeing. For clients with urgent housing needs, team members provided practical support to contact Link2home, explore emergency and temporary accommodation, and prepare and submit applications to Homes NSW.

Partnerships

Food and Essential Goods

The dedication of our volunteers, together with generous donations from individuals, community groups and businesses, made it possible for the Community Centre to serve 17,894 meals and provide food, clothing and other essential goods to people when they needed practical support most.

This support was strengthened by Woolworths Gosford, Woolworths Lisarow and ALDI Wyoming, which generously provided fresh produce, bread and other essential food items. We are also deeply grateful to longstanding partners MARS and Sanitarium for their continued and valued support throughout the year.

Pets are also an important source of comfort and companionship for many clients. With support from the STAY Foundation, we provided pet food, blankets, collars and leads to help people care for their valued companions during difficult times.

Services Australia

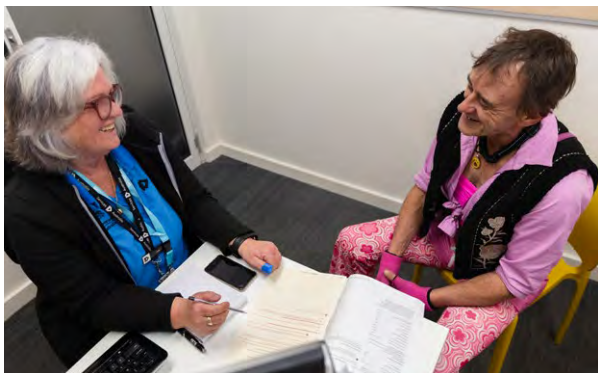
We are fortunate to have a Services Australia Community Partnership Specialist Officer working directly from the Community Centre, helping clients access Centrelink services, navigate complex matters and obtain timely support. Having this expertise on site improved accessibility, reduced barriers and strengthened the coordinated assistance available to clients.

Legal Services

Access to a lawyer strengthened the support available through the Community Centre. Clients could receive professional legal advice and guidance through individual consultations. This helped clients navigate complex legal matters and make informed decisions.

Health Services

Health on the Streets (HOTS) and NSW Health attended regularly, providing accessible healthcare and medical support to people who may otherwise face barriers to seeking or receiving treatment. We also deeply appreciate the art therapist who provided fortnightly sessions for women at the Community Centre. These sessions created a safe and supportive space for women to express their thoughts and feelings, strengthen emotional wellbeing and build resilience.



In Memory

Sadly, during the reporting period, we farewelled two much-loved members of our Community Centre family, Tony Causley and Lorna Higley. Their loss was deeply felt by clients, team members and all who knew them. We remember them with great fondness and extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and friends.



A New Vehicle, Driving Greater Impact

With support from ClubGRANTS, our food rescue vehicle received a bold new branded wrap. It helps us collect more donated food for nutritious meals and practical support at the Community Centre.

On the road, it also raises awareness of Coast Shelter's work and our commitment to reducing food waste. We are grateful to ClubGRANTS for helping make this greater impact possible.



GOOD NEWS STORY

A Pathway to Support

Faye had been visiting the Community Centre for some time but had always kept her personal circumstances private. After an encounter with Transit Police resulted in a warning, she decided the time was right to explain her situation and ask Coast Shelter team members for help.

In a supportive, non-judgmental environment, Faye felt able to share concerns she had not previously disclosed. Team members listened, acknowledged her circumstances and worked with her to identify practical options.

We connected Faye with Coast Shelter's Community Partnership Specialist Officer to explore her eligibility for a Centrelink payment. During this process, it became clear that she could not access essential services because she had no identification documents, including a birth certificate.

Because Faye was born in Darwin, team members helped her contact the Northern Territory Registrar-General's Office, navigate the application process and provide the limited information available. Through persistence and practical support, her birth certificate was successfully obtained.

Receiving her birth certificate was a significant milestone. With identification in place, Faye can now progress her Centrelink application and access services that were previously out of reach.

What began with a conversation has opened a pathway toward greater stability and positive change.

*Names changed for privacy

Community Wellbeing and Education

Throughout 2025–26, 101 young people took part in the Step Forward pilot program. Thirty per cent identified as First Nations and 80% were aged 15–20. Step Forward provides a bridge for young people who are not yet ready to move directly into mainstream education, training or employment.



Responding to Local Need

Young people on the Central Coast are experiencing higher levels of disengagement than across NSW. In 2021, 11.6% of local 15 to 24-year-olds were disengaged from education, employment or training, compared with 9.5% statewide. For many, this is compounded by housing instability, domestic and family violence, mental health concerns, substance use and barriers to accessing coordinated, youth-friendly support.

In response to this crisis, Step Forward offers young people a safe, integrated space to access trauma-informed wellbeing support, practical skills development and positive community connection. By intervening early, the program aims to reduce longer-term demand on homelessness, health, justice and income-support systems while improving life trajectories for young people.



11.6% of local 15 to 24-year-olds were disengaged from education and employment. Step Forward creates a safe, supportive pathway to wellbeing, skills and community connection.

What Step Forward Provides

- Practical qualifications including First Aid, CPR and White Card
- Employability, interview and job-readiness skills
- Life skills, wellbeing and confidence building
- Trusted adult relationships and individual support
- Pathways into education, training and work

Why Acting Early Matters

Step Forward works at the point where disengagement can either deepen or begin to reverse. Flexible, rolling enrolment means support can begin when a young person is ready, while Coast Shelter can connect housing, wellbeing and other support needs.

GOOD NEWS STORY

From Survival to a Future of His Own

Geremy came to Coast Shelter after leaving an unsafe home and spending eight months sleeping rough. Each day centred on survival, finding somewhere to sleep and a place to charge his phone so he could stay connected. When he first engaged with Step Forward, he was highly anxious, found it difficult to trust others and felt that "the world was against me."

Through consistent, trauma-informed support, Geremy began rebuilding trust, confidence and a stronger sense of identity. Improving his mental health became central to breaking the cycle of rough sleeping. Program activities, particularly time in nature, helped him find calm and begin seeing his surroundings as a place of possibility rather than threat.

Geremy completed First Aid and White Card training, began developing a resume and took his first steps into job searching. He also strengthened his emotional regulation and self-awareness and began moving from crisis accommodation towards longer-term housing.

Today, Geremy feels he is "on the right track" and looks ahead with a new sense of ownership: "My future is mine to discover and own." His journey shows how holistic, person-centred support can help a young person move from survival towards stability, opportunity and independence.

*Names changed for privacy

Our Supporters



Strong partnerships and targeted investment enabled Coast Shelter to strengthen services, respond to emerging needs and create new pathways to safety and stability during 2025–26.

Government Investment

Department of Communities and Justice

During 2025–26, Coast Shelter successfully completed the recommissioning process for our Specialist Homelessness Services and secured new five-year contracts with the Department of Communities and Justice. This longer-term funding provides greater certainty for service planning and helps sustain essential homelessness support across the Central Coast.

Grants and Community Funding

Bendigo Bank

Support from Bendigo Bank helped fund a dedicated Youth Mental Health Worker, extending specialist support across the Step Forward early intervention program and our youth refuges.

CommBank Community Grant

A $100,000 CommBank Super Grant strengthened the practical support available through our Community Centre. The funding helps us respond to growing demand by providing hot meals, showers, laundry facilities and connections to support, preserving dignity while helping people take their next steps toward stability.

ClubGRANTS

ClubGRANTS funding from Gosford RSL and Davistown RSL supported the Community Centre's unfunded services and gave our food rescue vehicle a bold new branded wrap. The vehicle helps collect donated food for nutritious meals and practical assistance, while increasing awareness of the service as it travels across the Central Coast.

Housing Partnerships

A shortage of affordable housing remains one of the greatest barriers for people ready to move on from crisis accommodation. Rising rents and cost-of-living pressures mean people often remain in refuge longer because there is nowhere suitable for them to go. During the year, we pursued new partnerships to increase transitional housing options and create stronger pathways toward permanent accommodation.

Habitat for Humanity

A new partnership with Habitat for Humanity secured a transitional property at approximately 50% of market rent. Coast Shelter refers suitable clients and provides ongoing support, while Habitat acts as landlord and funds cyclical maintenance. This arrangement expands transitional housing capacity with minimal cost to Coast Shelter.

Rotary Club of Woy Woy Pilot

Coast Shelter progressed a pilot partnership with the Rotary Club of Woy Woy and Transitional Community Housing Ltd to support older women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Rotary will source and secure suitable accommodation, cover rental gaps and furnish the property, while Coast Shelter will undertake client assessment and provide casework support. The pilot will initially support one or two women, with potential to develop into a longer-term program.

Innovative Partnerships

Monti's Mission

Concern for a pet's safety can be a significant barrier for people needing to enter crisis accommodation. Through Monti's Mission, Coast Shelter, Janarlee Lodge and The STAY Foundation have partnered to provide temporary animal care and veterinary support, helping people seek safety without having to surrender a much-loved companion.

Corporate and Community Partners

The generosity of our corporate and community supporters brought practical help, dignity and hope to people across the Central Coast. From major gifts and event sponsorships to food, essential goods and professional expertise, every partnership strengthened our ability to respond when people needed us most.

Partnership Stories

Sanitarium: Investing in spaces that bring people together

Longstanding partner Sanitarium contributed $42,000 to help us provide healthy food for clients, plus a further $15,000 for a covered garden dining area at The Retreat. This support is helping create welcoming spaces where people can share meals, connect with others and participate in the Step Forward program.



Good Rehab: Backing programs where funding is needed most

A $50,000 contribution supported unfunded programs, including the Community Centre and Step Forward. This flexible investment allows Coast Shelter to direct resources to practical assistance, early intervention and opportunities that help people move toward greater stability.

Pearl Beach Social Club: Creating Christmas memories

Pearl Beach Social Club raised $20,000 through its Santa on the Beach initiative, with all proceeds supporting Coast Shelter. The Club also provided complimentary Santa photos for families in refuge, creating a special Christmas experience during a difficult time.

MARS Food Group: Nourishing people and community

MARS Food Group continued its valued product support, donating approximately $8,000 in food during the year. As dinner sponsor for the Coast Shelter Sleepout, the team also helped bring supporters together around our shared commitment to ending homelessness.

The Agency: Turning event partnership into impact

The Agency supported the Coast Shelter Sleepout as beanie sponsor and contributed a further $5,000 to Auction for Impact. Their support helped create memorable fundraising experiences while generating vital funding for services that receive no government support.

Community Centre donors: Keeping essential support within reach

The Community Centre relies on regular donations of food and essential goods to provide meals and practical support every day. We gratefully acknowledge Woolworths, ALDI, B&M Meats, Hewitts Food Group, Cordina Chicken, Singo's Meats, Tumbi Meats, IGA Umina, Brentwood Village and Aloki, whose ongoing generosity helped ensure people in crisis could access nutritious food and everyday essentials.

These stories represent part of a much broader community of businesses, clubs and organisations whose financial support, donated goods, expertise and event sponsorship strengthened Coast Shelter's work throughout the year. We proudly acknowledge all our supporters on the following page.

Partners


aap Finance Brokers
able+
ALDI
alliance DISTRIBUTION SERVICES A division of Hachette Australia
ALOKI
ALLWORKS BATHROOMS
B&M QUALITY MEATS
Proudly supported by Community Bank East Gosford, Ettalong Beach, Kincumber, Lisarow and Wyong Bendigo Bank
Brentwood Village
BRIGHT SIDE COMMUNICATIONS
CCTS
CENTRAL COAST BUYERS AGENT
COASTIES MAGAZINE
COASTWIDE THERAPY SERVICES
COFFEE KINGS "THE KINGS OF THE BREW"
Commonwealth Bank
CORDINA FARMS SINCE 1945
CROWNE PLAZA AN IHG HOTEL TERRIGAL PACIFIC
COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION N.S.W.
Donaldson
eastcoast KULNURA
eve ELECTRICAL & COMMUNICATIONS
georgebrand
Good Rehab
GOSFORD RSL
Grill'd
HARRIS FARM MARKETS
Hewitt Creating Sustainable Foods
IGA
Tanarlee Lodge
KEFI
KOOINDAH WATERS GOLF CLUB
KwikKopy GOSFORD
Little Miss
MARS Food & Nutrition
MITRE 10
moov.modular
NEWCASTLE PERMANENT Here for good.
north BUILDING WITH TRUST
Pearl Beach Social Club
THE PARTY HIRE COMPANY
polytec stadium
Rarekind
rrt RAPID RELIEF TEAM
Rotary Club of Gosford North
Rotary Club of Woy Woy District 9685
Sanitarium The Health Food Company
SINGO'S WHOLESALE MEATS
SOUL ON THE CENTRAL COAST
[STAY]
TECHNINE MSP
THE AGENCY
THE BOX
THE PARTY HIRE COMPANY
TUMBI MEATS
UMINA BEACH BOOK NOOK
Westfield Tuggerah
Woodturners Club
WISEBERRY
wolfewise CREATIVE
Woolworths The fresh food people
WMG WORTHINGTON MOTOR GROUP
YOUR STORY

Major Gift Partners

Our major gift partners are an important part of Coast Shelter's community of support. Some have stood alongside us for many years, while others have joined us more recently, bringing new energy and belief in our work.

We are deeply grateful for the trust each partner places in Coast Shelter and for the generosity that helps us respond to urgent need, strengthen unfunded programs and create lasting pathways to safety and stability. We also acknowledge those who choose to give privately. Every major gift makes a meaningful difference.

Stephen and Linda Allan

Dr Ajay Chennamchetty

Francis and Christine Cook

Barry and Elizabeth Frost

Ray and Robyn Hare and family

Tim and Joan Hoyle

Robert and Catharine Kench

Dr Padma Korremula

Vivienne Court Trading Pty Ltd (VivCourt)

Thank you

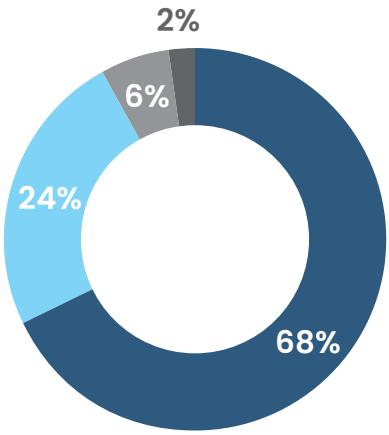
To each of our major gift partners, thank you for standing with Coast Shelter and sharing our belief that everyone deserves safety, dignity and the opportunity to thrive.



In 2025–26, 204 volunteers shared their time, skills and care across every part of Coast Shelter, making an extraordinary contribution to our work and community.

Together, our volunteers contributed **6,645 hours,** the equivalent of more than three full-time roles and an estimated **$346,802.55** in donated time. This value, based on the Centre for Volunteering's recognised replacement-cost methodology, helps show the scale of support volunteers bring to Coast Shelter.

Volunteers by Program



- Community Centre
- Event Support
- Professional Support
- Refuge and Education Support



Volunteer Highlights

The five volunteers who contributed the most hours supported across all areas of the business, including the Community Centre kitchen, Professional Services, Event Support, Refuge support, and Education. This reflects the growing diversity of roles volunteers perform across Coast Shelter.

Volunteers again demonstrated their commitment as ambassadors, fundraisers and practical supporters of Coast Shelter by:

- donating to and attending Auction for Impact
- supporting our Christmas Appeal
- helping secure Commonwealth Bank grants
- assisting at events, including forming the largest volunteer teams at our National Reconciliation Week event and Coast Shelter Sleepout
- appearing in videos supporting our Reconciliation Action Plan
- providing in-kind expertise in information technology, videography and photography to strengthen our events and fundraising initiatives

Volunteer Recognition

National Volunteer Week in May 2026 was our major annual opportunity to recognise and thank volunteers.

Every current volunteer received a personally written thank-you card and a gift-wrapped Volunteering Australia pin. Program-based morning and afternoon teas were held for our kitchen crews, supported by onsite displays, and volunteer team photos were shared through social media to acknowledge their contribution.

Following the Coast Shelter Sleepout, merchandise packs, including a Sleepout hoodie, were provided to the record number of volunteers who helped deliver the event. This included students and teachers from Narara Valley High School, whose assistance with the extensive event set-up was greatly appreciated.

Our Engagement



Digital Reach

Our digital presence strengthens connections with our community and raises awareness of our work through engagement across LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

Our community online

1,872
LinkedIn followers

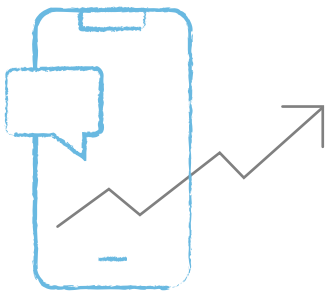
4,137
Instagram followers

12,871
Facebook followers

Engagement in the spotlight

+34.2%
Facebook link clicks
Increase in Facebook link clicks

82.5%
Facebook engagement rate



Events

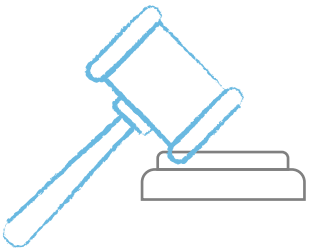
Our signature events brought the community together to raise awareness of homelessness and domestic and family violence, celebrate culture and connection, and generate vital funds for Coast Shelter's unfunded programs.

Auction for Impact

October 2025

Held in collaboration with The Agency, the inaugural Auction for Impact raised vital funds for the unfunded Community Centre and other essential support services. Local businesses and supporters contributed auction items, sponsorship and attendance, creating an evening of connection, storytelling and generosity. Building on the success of the first event, we plan to continue Auction for Impact in future years.

Guests bid on donated accommodation, dining and wellness experiences, sporting memorabilia, artworks, books and family activities. Proceeds supported programs promoting education, employment, mental health, healthcare, social connection and inclusion.





National Reconciliation Week Event

May 2026

Coast Shelter's annual National Reconciliation Week event, now recognised as the largest reconciliation event in the region, reflected a key commitment in our Reconciliation Action Plan and our deep respect for First Nations peoples and cultures. The day celebrated culture, connection and community spirit.

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



The event was delivered in partnership with Gudjagang Ngara li-dhi Aboriginal Corporation, Girri Girra Aboriginal Experiences and The Glen Group, with support from Bara Barang Corporation Ltd, Barang Regional Alliance, Bungree Aboriginal Association, Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council, Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services, and Mingaletta.



Coast Shelter Sleepout

June 2026

The 2026 Coast Shelter Sleepout introduced a refreshed, more inclusive format, combining the traditional overnight sleepout with an evening-only program for people who wanted to participate without staying overnight. A new youth option also enabled young people to sleep out with a responsible adult, making the event more accessible to families and people of different ages.





The expanded program featured an obstacle course, scavenger hunt, community art, circus activities, football with the Central Coast Mariners, live entertainment and storytelling, creating a welcoming community night centred on connection and awareness.

The new format contributed to strong growth in participation and corporate engagement. A total of 174 people attended, compared with 86 in 2025, including 78 who slept out overnight. Sponsorship grew from five partners in 2025 to 13, and the event achieved a $100,000 surplus for Coast Shelter's unfunded Community Centre and education programs.

Our People


Sanitarium
Weet-Bix BITES
WILD BERRY
12 x 500g
So Good
Almond
So Good
Soy
So Good
Almond
I'M IN

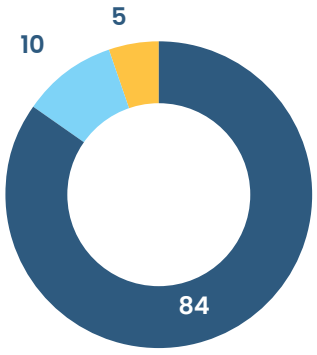
Workforce Diversity



Our workforce brings together a broad mix of experience, perspectives and backgrounds, strengthening how we work and support our community.

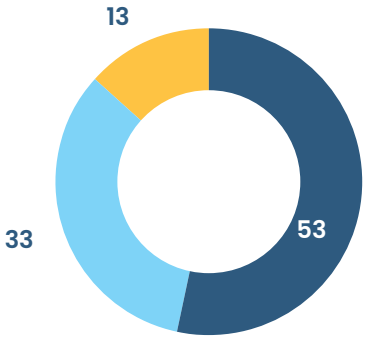
At 30 June 2026, Coast Shelter employed 99 team members across our services and corporate functions, as outlined below:

Employees by Functional area



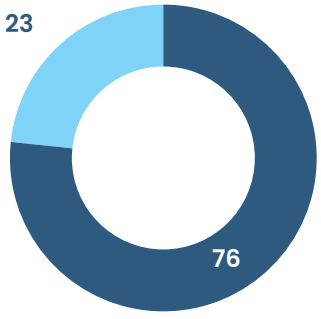
- Client Programs
- Executive
- Corporate Services (Finance, People and Culture, Operations)

Employees by Employment Type



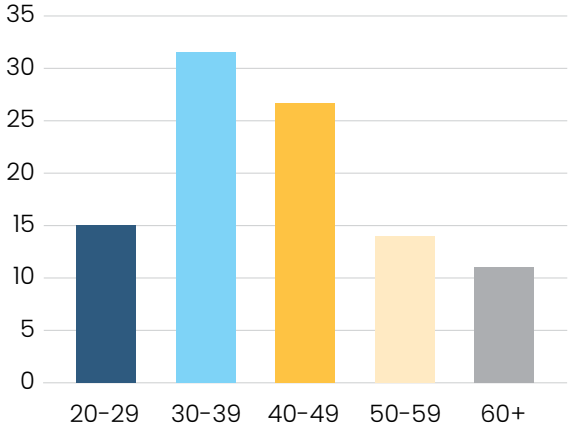
- Part Time
- Full Time
- Casual

Employees by Gender

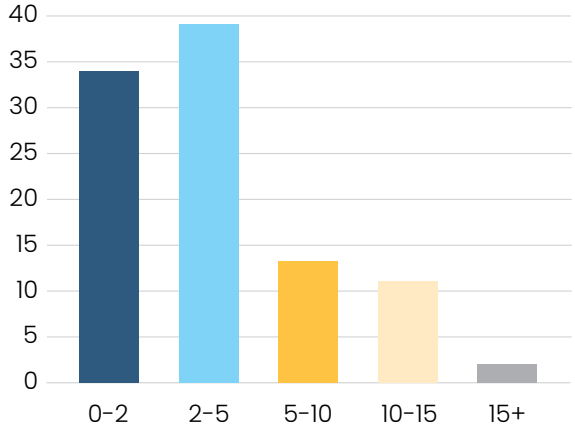


- Female
- Male

Employees by Age



Employees by Length of Service



Diversity and Inclusion

Coast Shelter is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace and delivering services where diversity is respected, barriers are addressed and every person feels valued and able to belong.

Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group

Our Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group continued to provide practical advice and shape initiatives that strengthen inclusion, accessibility and belonging across Coast Shelter. Its work reflects the experiences of LGBTQIA+ communities, neurodivergent people, people with disability, culturally diverse communities and people experiencing mental health challenges.

Highlights from the year included:

- bringing team members together for a Harmony Day afternoon tea
- recognising colleagues through gratitude cards for International Women's Day
- launching an internal Diversity and Inclusion Survey and introducing Personal User Manuals during Inclusion at Work Week
- connecting with the community as a stallholder at Coastie Carnie Fair Day during the Coastal Twist Festival

We also used key dates across our internal and social media channels to build awareness, encourage learning and celebrate inclusion. These included IDAHOBIT, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Mardi Gras, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Participation in the Rainbow Inclusion Network and Multicultural Interagency kept Coast Shelter connected to local knowledge, lived experience and opportunities for collaboration.

A dedicated Strategy Day brought these insights together and identified priorities for the year ahead, supporting our continued work to build a more inclusive organisation for team members, clients and the wider community.

Development and Recognition

Building the capability, confidence and wellbeing of our people remained an important focus throughout the year.

Team members participated in a broad range of learning opportunities designed to strengthen professional practice and support safe, high-quality services.

Key initiatives included Trauma-Informed Practice training and refresher sessions, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, First Aid and CPR, cultural learning and immersion opportunities, and targeted workplace health and safety training.

Together, these opportunities strengthened trauma-informed and person-centred practice, cultural capability, workplace safety, crisis response and suicide intervention and prevention.

We also supported individual development through external training, further education and study aligned with team members' roles and career goals.

Recognising Our Values in Action

Coast Shelter's Values Awards recognise the individuals and teams who brought our organisational values to life through their everyday work during 2025–26. These awards reflect the values in place during the reporting year, before our refreshed values were introduced.

Across the year, individuals and teams were recognised for bringing Coast Shelter's values to life through exceptional client-centred practice, teamwork, advocacy, innovation and commitment.

As part of our new organisational strategy and focus on building strong foundations for the future, the Board and Executive led a refresh of Coast Shelter's values. Developed through employee and team workshops, our new values of Collaboration, Inclusion, Innovation, Integrity and Safety, reflect what matters most to our people and the way we want to work together. These values will guide our culture, decisions and service delivery in the year ahead.

Our Governance



Board of Directors



Deborah Howe



Michael Blanchflower



Kevin Bush

Deborah Howe, Chair

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.

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.

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.



Paul Murnane AM



Lavinia Rarinca



Lyndelle Taylor

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.

Paul Murnane AM

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.

Lavinia Rarinca

MBA GAICD

Lavinia is an accomplished executive leader and non-executive director with extensive experience driving technology and business transformation across Australia, Europe, and the USA. She has a proven record of delivering performance improvement and organisational change across sectors including banking, manufacturing, and professional services.

Currently, Lavinia serves as an executive leader at a national financial services organisation. Previously, she had a successful career in management consulting, and she held senior leadership roles at Westpac, including Head of Transformation Excellence, guiding major improvement programs.

Passionate about supporting purpose-driven organisations, Lavinia applies her expertise to help boards and executive teams define long-term strategies, strengthen governance, and build organisational capability. She holds an engineering degree in Computer Science, a master degree in advanced Control Systems and an MBA.

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.

Committees

Coast Shelter's Board committees strengthen governance by providing focused oversight, informed advice and strategic support across key areas of the organisation. They assist the Board and Executive to monitor performance, manage risk and drive ongoing improvement.

Care Governance Committee

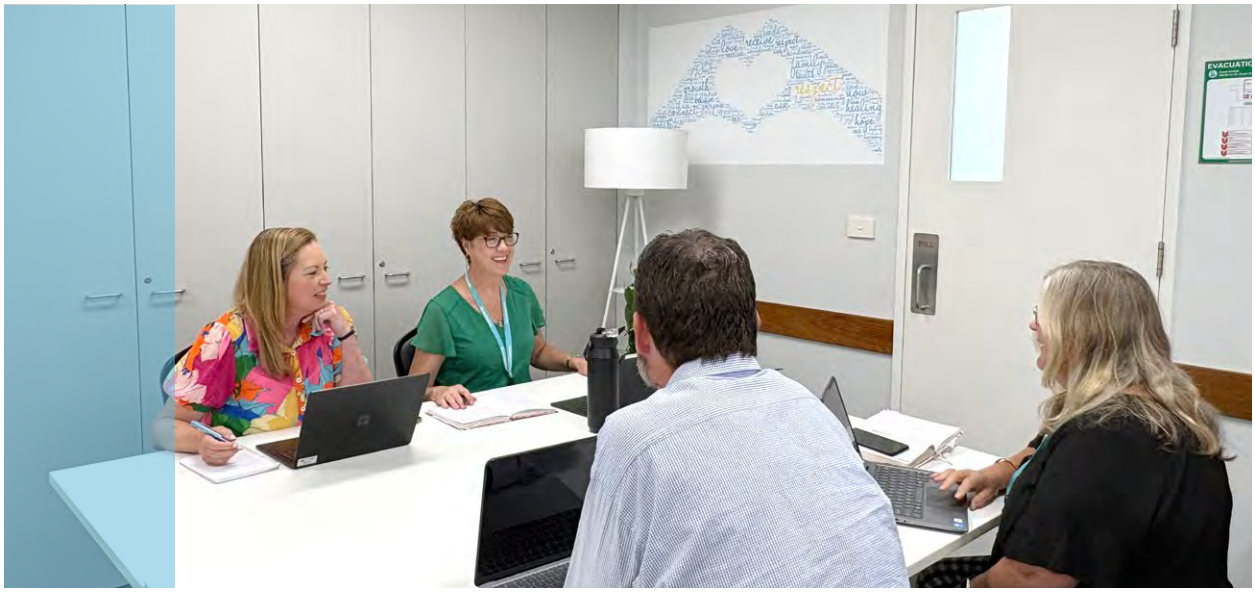
The Care Governance Committee oversees the quality and safety of Coast Shelter's care and services, helping ensure practice remains effective, evidence-informed and responsive to client needs. Its responsibilities include:

- guiding models of care and the management of clinical risk
- reviewing client outcomes, service quality and performance
- overseeing audit, workforce capability and compliance activities
- strengthening a culture of safety, accountability and continuous learning

Finance and Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee assists the Board to maintain strong financial stewardship, transparent reporting and effective assurance processes. Its responsibilities include:

- examining financial reports, budgets and forward forecasts
- tracking financial performance, sustainability and emerging risks
- providing oversight of external audits and auditor independence
- reviewing investments, reserves and insurance arrangements
- maintaining oversight of relevant legal and regulatory obligations



Fundraising and Philanthropy Committee

The Fundraising and Philanthropy Committee helps guide Coast Shelter's approach to generating sustainable income, building supporter relationships and growing philanthropic impact. Its responsibilities include:

- shaping fundraising, philanthropy and income diversification priorities
- reviewing fundraising results, supporter engagement and stewardship
- advancing major gifts, grants, partnerships and community fundraising
- promoting fundraising practice that reflect legal responsibilities

Risk Committee

The Risk Committee supports the Board to understand, oversee and respond to risks that may affect Coast Shelter's people, services and strategic objectives. Its responsibilities include:

- reviewing risk identification, assessment and mitigation approaches
- monitoring risks relating to service delivery, safety, compliance, reputation and organisational performance
- providing independent scrutiny and recommendations to strengthen governance



Executive Team



Alicia Pigot

Chief Executive Officer

MSW, BSocSc

Alicia is a values-driven leader with over 25 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 deep local insight and connection to her work. A qualified Social Worker, she has led statewide service delivery, policy implementation and practice reform across domestic, family and sexual violence, child protection, health, homelessness and out-of-home care.

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.



Sarah Begg

Chief People and Programs Officer

MBusCom (HR/IR)

Sarah is an experienced people and culture leader with more than 17 years' experience across telecommunications, FMCG, mining, infrastructure and construction. She has a strong track record of aligning people strategies with organisational goals, strengthening workforce engagement and leading complex organisational change, including contract mobilisations, acquisitions and large-scale resourcing initiatives.

As Chief People and Programs Officer at Coast Shelter, Sarah leads Client Programs and People and Culture, supporting trauma-informed services, workforce capability and a safe, values-led workplace. She brings a strong focus on connecting quality client outcomes with engaged, capable teams and effective organisational systems.

Sarah's broad operational expertise spans the employee lifecycle, payroll, budgeting, Board engagement and workforce planning. She holds a Master of Business and Commerce in Human Resources and Industrial Relations.



Jason Haynes

Chief Financial Officer

BCom, CA

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, informed decision-making and strategic growth aligned with Coast Shelter's mission and values.

He also works closely with the Executive and Board to strengthen financial governance, enhance reporting frameworks and ensure financial insights support organisational planning. Through this focus, Jason helps Coast Shelter balance responsible financial management with the investment needed to respond to growing community need.



Crystal Lindsay

Chief Operating Officer

BAppIT (Marketing), GAICD

Crystal is an experienced executive leader with expertise in corporate affairs, compliance and strategic growth across private and public sectors, including complex and highly regulated environments. She has guided organisations through amalgamations and government reform, building strong capability in change management, risk mitigation and process improvement.

As Chief Operating Officer at Coast Shelter, Crystal leads engagement, communications, fundraising, governance, compliance and information technology. As RAP Champion, she leads the organisation's commitment to reconciliation and inclusive practice. Under her leadership, Coast Shelter achieved Award-Level accreditation under the Australian Service Excellence Standards, placing it among the top 5% of service providers nationally.

Crystal holds a Bachelor of Information Technology and Marketing, is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and holds qualifications in stakeholder engagement and community development.

During the 2025–26 financial year, Coast Shelter was also supported by Ashlee Gunstone in her role as Chief People and Programs Officer. Ashlee is currently on maternity leave.

Our Financials



Financial Summary

Coast Shelter significantly strengthened its financial position in 2025–26, building on the financial and operational changes of recent years. The organisation recorded a surplus of $3.62 million, compared with a deficit of $336,038 in the previous reporting period. Revenue increased to $15.2 million, while expenditure decreased to $11.59 million.

This result reflects continued financial discipline, stronger revenue performance and generous community support. Donations increased to approximately $2.48 million, including approximately $939,000 received through estates and bequests. We are grateful to the individuals, families and supporters whose generosity helps Coast Shelter support people experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence and financial hardship across the Central Coast.

At 30 June 2026, Coast Shelter held approximately $4.99 million in cash and term deposits, while net assets increased from $2.66 million to $6.27 million. This stronger balance sheet enhances the organisation's financial resilience and capacity to respond to emerging community needs. It also provides a foundation for considering strategic investment in services, infrastructure and housing initiatives that support our long-term purpose.

New five-year funding agreements with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for key Specialist Homelessness Services provided greater certainty for future service delivery. Together with our strengthened financial position, these agreements support responsible investment in our people, services and assets, while helping to sustain our work over the long term.

As we move into 2026–27, responsible stewardship remains central to our approach. We recognise that this year's result includes income that may not recur at the same level in future years. Our priorities are to maintain disciplined financial management and appropriate reserves, strengthen sustainable revenue streams and direct resources where they can make the greatest difference for the people and communities we serve.

$3.62 million
Operating surplus

15.8%
Increase in total revenue

$15.2 million
Total revenue

$1.88 million
Reduced total expenditure

$4.99 million
Cash and term deposits

$6.27 million
Net assets

Financial Summary

Key achievements included:

The following highlights summarise Coast Shelter's financial performance and year-end position, alongside funding commitments that support future service delivery.

- Recorded an operating surplus of $3.62 million, compared with a deficit of $336,038 in the previous financial year.
- Increased total revenue to $15.2 million, up $2.08 million, or approximately 15.8%, on the previous financial year.
- Reduced total expenditure by $1.88 million.
- Increased net assets to $6.27 million, compared with $2.66 million at 30 June 2025.
- Held $4.99 million in cash and term deposits at year-end, comprising $1.58 million in cash and cash equivalents and $3.41 million in term deposits.
- Strengthened long-term funding certainty through new five-year agreements with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice for key Specialist Homelessness Services.



Year-on-Year Financial Overview

Key Indicator	FY 2026	FY 2025	Difference
Total Revenue	$15,202,768	$13,126,778	**+$2,075,990**
Total Expenses	$11,585,059	$13,462,816	**-$1,877,757**
Operating Result	**$3,617,709 surplus**	**$336,038 deficit**	**+$3,953,747**
Cash + Term Deposits	$4,993,827	$2,378,575	**+$2,615,252**
Net Assets	$6,273,631	$2,655,922	**+$3,617,709**

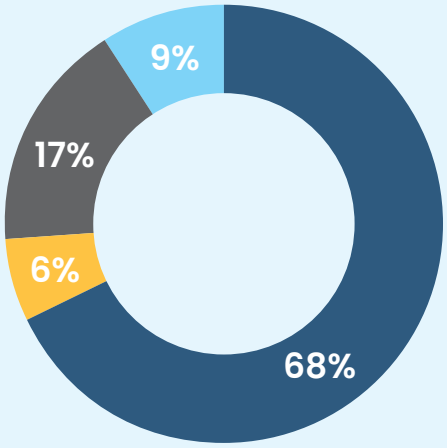
Financial Summary

Responsible Stewardship

Strong financial stewardship allows us to direct resources where they matter most: supporting people experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence and disadvantage.
By managing our resources responsibly, we can continue delivering essential services while strengthening our capacity to meet growing community need.

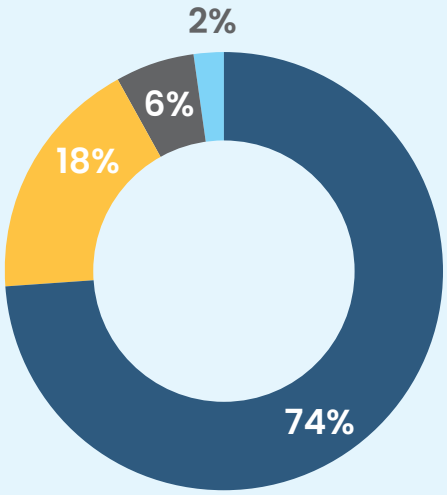
Where our funding comes from

Government Grants	68%
Government Fee for Service	6%
Fundraising Income	17%
Service and Other Income	9%



How our funding is invested

Program Delivery	74%
Administration and Fundraising	18%
Property and Utilities	6%
Other Expenses	2%



Looking Ahead

This year has been one of progress, partnership and renewed momentum. Together, we have strengthened our foundations, refreshed our strategy and values, and positioned Coast Shelter to create even greater impact in the years ahead.

While the challenges facing our community continue to grow, so too does our determination to respond. Guided by our purpose and supported by our community, we will continue to create opportunities for safety, stability and belonging across the Central Coast.

Thank you to every client, team member, volunteer, donor, partner and supporter who is part of this journey. Together, we are building a stronger future for our community.



Somersby Falls, Darkinung Country, Central Coast NSW



There are many ways to help create safety and stability across the Central Coast

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.

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instagram.com/coastshelter/
linkedin.com/company/coast-shelter/

Coast Shelter is a company limited by guarantee and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, the independent national regulator of charities. We are independently accredited against the Australian Service Excellence Standards, demonstrating our commitment to excellence in governance, service delivery and continuous improvement.

ABN 46 095 999 287



