

Wellington Women's Refuge



Annual Report
1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

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Photo from front page: Wellington Women's Refuge Team Members welcome new team member Dorothee with an Einstead tradition

Organisational Overview

This is our 47th year providing services to women and children in the Wellington Community. We work alongside our sister Māori Women's Refuge, Te Whare Rokiroki who provide services to Māori women and children. Our services are confidential and we support women whether they choose to leave or stay in a relationship. We work in a holistic way with survivors of domestic violence, walking alongside and empowering them to make safe decisions for their future.

Vision: *All women & children living free from fear and violence.*

Mission: *Intervention, Prevention and Advocacy for all women and children experiencing domestic violence.*

Who: We work with women and their children who have experienced or who are experiencing domestic violence. Domestic violence involves one person dominating and controlling another person in a relationship. This can include a range of power and control tactics and may not always involve physical violence; the abuse

does not have to be physical violence for someone to access our service. The women we work with are from a range of ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Where: The area we cover is Wellington city and surrounding suburbs including Newlands/Johnsonville, north of which are covered by Porirua Refuges. Petone north is covered by Hutt Refuges.

How: Wellington Women's Refuge provides support, information and advocacy to survivors of domestic violence; walking alongside and empowering them to make safe decisions for their future. We believe in women making their own decisions and don't put pressure on them to take steps they are not ready to or don't want to take. We will refer to other agencies as required and advocate with services such as police, lawyers, courts, housing, Oranga Tamariki or Work & Income. We provide women and their children with the option of a safe place to stay, and also support women and their children within the community. We operate a community office and a 24 hour

crisis telephone line assisted by a roster of volunteers responding to the crisis line outside working hours.

Structure: We operate under a governance board, currently made up of six members; some came on board as experienced crisis-line volunteers with our organisation and others new to the organisation, were invited on for their skills and experience. Day-to-day operations are coordinated by our manager; we have a team of 7 paid staff ensuring comprehensive services are available to clients and around 12 dedicated volunteers who support the organisation including filling the crucial role of answering the crisis-line outside of working hours.

How to refer: We are a free and accessible service; we don't have waiting lists for our crisis and social work support services. We take self-referrals as well as those that come from other people such as agencies, police, family and friends. A referral is as simple as a call to the crisis line or office.

From the Manager

Reflecting on the last year I am proud of the work that has been achieved and positive about what we can accomplish going forward. Our positive achievements have been progressed through the dedicated work of our staff, volunteers and the support of our governance group.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated team of staff and volunteers who all contributed to our vital services of 24-hour crisis support and social work support and advocacy. I am privileged to manage a team with such dedication and passion for providing an empathetic and respectful environment for all who walk through our doors seeking support.

I would also like to thank our Governance Group for their solid oversight and support over the past year guiding us through and being available, responsive, and supportive.

This year we extended our boundary to include Newlands and Johnsonville this was in response to women reaching out to us for support after another Refuge service that had covered those suburbs was closed down.

A very heartfelt thank you to our Wellington community for your ongoing generosity in the form of donations, fundraisers and the like. From business & workplaces through to families & individuals. Your kindness not only supports our work but reminds us we have a community behind us.

We are pleased to see the results of increased awareness of domestic violence evident in responsive communities. However, on the ground, we still see the realities of systems that could be improved to prioritise safety and wellbeing for those experiencing domestic violence and we are passionate about continuing to advocate for the women and children we support.

As we look towards the year ahead we are committed to developing our team and our innovative specialist services to support women and children to live lives free from fear and violence. Moving forward we are well placed to navigate a path through whatever future challenges we encounter.

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi



Philippa McAtee

Chair's Report

It is my pleasure to present the annual report for Wellington Women's Refuge (WWR) 2024-2025. WWR has had another consistent year, with 121 women and 90 children receiving support as community or safe-house clients.

We are pleased to say we have had no staff resignations but have been able to recruit a new social worker into our team to build on our workforce to ensure a quality service is available to support women and children experiencing domestic violence.

The Governing Group is grateful to manager Philippa, the diligent team of staff and our committed volunteers for their continued dedication. WWR staff are based at our community office, open weekdays from 9-5. Our five Governing Group Members have not changed this year, providing valuable expertise and stability to the organisation.

We are committed to maintaining high-quality support for those experiencing family violence and appreciate the ongoing positive feedback from women we assist.

Looking ahead, preserving our independence and ability to tailor our services to best meet the needs of our Wellington community is a key priority so that we can keep offering specialist family violence services. As in previous years, continued community support, along with government funding and grants, has ensured that we can continue to offer quality services to our community.



Cara Thorburn



Community Services: Social work support and advocacy



*WWR Social Work Team from left:
Doro, Caitlin, Regan and
Maani, safe-house coordinator (front).*

Our community office based at 44 Wigan Street is open 9-5 weekdays. The office is easily accessible to clients and is a base for enquiries from the public, support work with clients, meetings, education and provision of our programmes.

Over the past year, Wellington Women's Refuge has supported **104 women and 82 children as community clients**. This is a 20% increase on the number of women supported the previous year.

Our community clients may be seeking support to leave an abusive relationship, have somewhere safe to stay, be rebuilding their lives after moving out of the safe-house, or the focus may be on remaining safe in their homes. While not needing to reside in our safehouse, community clients are still very much in need of crucial ongoing support and advocacy.

The service provided to these clients includes a non-judgmental and confidential listening ear, information, referrals and safety planning. Also provided is crucial emotional support and advocacy with other agencies such as police, lawyers, housing, Work & Income, Oranga Tamariki and support through court processes.

The families we work with represent a diverse group of women and children from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, ages and identities. These families show immense bravery and strength during a stressful and often traumatic time in their lives. The majority of families who access Wellington Women's Refuge do so through self-referrals and many are reaching out for the first time.

Community Client feedback 2024/25:

'You are amazing....I wish we would not need you but we do, keep up the amazing work.'

'I was scared and nervous but the social worker put me at ease and was very kind and supportive. She made me feel like I was in the right place for help.'

'So much help was provided, so much care and respect.'

'The time given to me and experienced staff with great empathy has been amazing.'

'Great platform for empowering women when they need it the most.'

Safe-house Support

The Wellington Women's Refuge safe-house is a residential home at a confidential location where women and their children who are escaping domestic violence can be safe while they plan for their future. Coming into the safe-house is a courageous step, however women can feel safe in the knowledge that their safety is our top priority and that their choices regarding their future will be listened to and respected.

Over the past year we supported **17 women and 8 children** in our safe-house. This is a decrease on the previous year with the safehouse quieter than previous years. We remain committed to not turning away women needing safe-house accommodation for safety from domestic violence.

The average stay was **28 nights per family** this average includes women who may stay for one or two nights during a crisis and those who may stay a few months or longer due to the need to ensure ongoing safety and also waiting for long term housing to become available.

Access to housing is very much an issue for our clients with both affordable private rentals and social housing very difficult to access in Wellington.

We provide information, support, and advocacy to all families during their stay with us and this support carries on once the family returns to the community for as long as it is required. Thanks to generous donations from the public we are often able to assist families with furniture, bedding and other household items for their new home. This can make a significant difference to a family that may have had to leave their home with few belongings.



'the safehouse was tidy and fully equipped.'

'(the safehouse coordinator) took me from scared to even speak to getting to the Refuge safe-house, getting a protection order, filing charges...saving my life.'

'It's not just a shelter I've been given but hope and dignity, now I'm on the right track preparing for studying. Thank you from the bottom of heart.'

- Feedback from safe-house residents 2024/25

Counselling



Rachel Kiel-Taylor

'I feel a lot more balanced and empowered after the amazing counselling.'

'Since seeing Rachel I've noticed massive improvements in my thoughts and how I view what happened.'

'The counselling sessions with Rachel were so valuable. Rachel is excellent and I am very grateful.'

-Feedback from counselling clients.

We contract a counsellor to provide an in-house specialist counselling service. This service is made available to those clients who need, in addition to our social work services, some professional counselling to provide extra therapeutic support at a difficult time in their lives.

We are privileged to have Rachel providing this service she comes to this role as a registered counsellor with a counselling degree, as a qualified teacher and with 20 years' experience in the field of domestic violence.

We find it is of huge benefit for our clients to be able to access a specialist domestic violence counselling service with no wait list and available in our community office, which they are already familiar with and comfortable in.

We are very grateful to have Rachel back providing this valuable service after a couple of years hiatus to focus on health matters.

In this period 9 clients have completed counselling with Rachel. Counselling is usually for around 10 sessions; however, this can be flexible to meet need.

Outcomes for clients include; support with healing trauma, gaining clarity, enabling them with making choices, opening up new ways of thinking about things and relating to people, understanding, trusting, and valuing themselves.

Crisis line volunteers

Wellington Women's Refuge operates a 24/7 crisis line which received 779 calls in the last year, an increase on the previous year. This is a vital service as accessibility is a must for women experiencing domestic violence who may have limited opportunity to ring or are in need of crisis support outside of our office hours.



We would like to take this opportunity to express how much Women's Refuge and our clients benefit from the time, energy and dedication of our volunteers, a heartfelt thank you to you all.

Our after-hours crisis line volunteers work from their homes, with an answering service connecting the phone calls through to their own mobile phone. We are dependent on the huge number of hours donated by these volunteers. Our crisis line offers a 'non-judgmental listening ear' for women experiencing domestic violence and also offers support, information & advocacy.

In addition to providing support over the phone, if needed crisis-line advocates go out to meet women at places such as the hospital, police station or safe places close to where women are calling from and will admit women and their children into the safehouse if required. As valued members of our organisation we appreciate their enthusiasm and the range of skills they bring, crisis-line volunteers also contribute to the organisation in other areas.



This year two new staff and two new volunteers completed our induction training and were welcomed on as members.

Feedback for crisis-line service 2024/25:

'I was very nervous about my situation, but my first contact via, crisis line was positive and supportive.'

'It was hard to ask for help from friends and family and others, but it felt ok asking Women's Refuge.'

'Very positive, very sympathetic. Met me where I was at, not ready to leave.'

Tamariki Programme

The Tamariki Programme is a 10-session programme for school age children, coordinated by members of our social work team. This year Maani and Caitlin have been facilitating the programme. The programme increases understanding on what abuse is, keeping safe, and involving parents in developing positive communication skills for understanding and sharing feelings.

It is incredibly rewarding to see children flourish in the programme and the success of the programme is evident in the positive changes reported by parents.

Nine children completed the Tamariki programme in the 2024/2025 year. This is the same number as last year with two programmes run during the year.

Quotes from Parent's for Children's Programme 2024/25:

'She learnt to figure out her emotions and understand the reasons for them'

'I found it very helpful when the advocates picked up my son from school and then dropped him off afterwards. After the very first session I could see the difference in my son's way of seeing and making sense of our situation.'

'I have noticed increased confidence and less parroting of derogatory behaviour etc.'

Our Children's Programme space



Women's Programme: Hope, revive, flourish

Our women's programme Hope, Revive, Flourish is a valuable part of our service, providing longer term education and therapeutic support for women rebuilding their lives after domestic violence. This year we ran two 12-week programmes over the course of the year **with 18 women participating in the programme.**

The group is facilitated by our Women's Programme Coordinator Rita Harris alongside Ange Chaney from Te Whare Rokioki, Māori Women's Refuge. Rita and Ange are both qualified social workers with many years' experience in the specialised field of domestic violence.

The programme is responsive to a wide range of women. The work done in this space enhances ongoing safety and empowerment. Supporting women to better understand the impact their experience has had and empowering them to move forward in their lives with confidence and purpose.

Feedback from Women's Programme attendees 2024/25:

'I feel I have become myself again.'

'My self-esteem has improved and I have the tools to be stronger and more resilient.'

'I have learnt so many things to better my well-being and help me with my children who were affected by domestic violence.'

'This programme empowered me and strengthened the skills I have, it blessed me by reminding me of my worth and value as a wahine Māori, as a mum, a daughter and grandchild. It gave me the understanding of the importance of healthy boundaries.'

'Really appreciated being able to finally rely on people/an organisation that could understand me..... I am left feeling that I am worthy and deserving of good healthy and sane treatment by others.'



Community Education

Community education remains a focus for Wellington Women's Refuge as our commitment to preventative work in the field of domestic violence. This year we delivered training to **9 organisations**.

Trainings were delivered on request to organisations who requested domestic violence training specific to their workplace or group.

We regularly attend speaking engagements, utilising the opportunity to educate our community about our services, the work we do and how to support victims of domestic violence.

Much of our training is delivered alongside Te Whare Rokiroki, Māori Women's Refuge reflecting our parallel development model.

WWR manager speaks at Wellington Quilters guild AGM about Refuge services.



We have had a longstanding relationship with Wellington Quilters Guild. The annual gifting of beautiful handmade patchwork quilts to our service goes back over 30 years.

Collaboration

We endeavour to establish strong working relationships with relevant agencies and organisations to ensure the best possible outcomes for the women and children we work with.

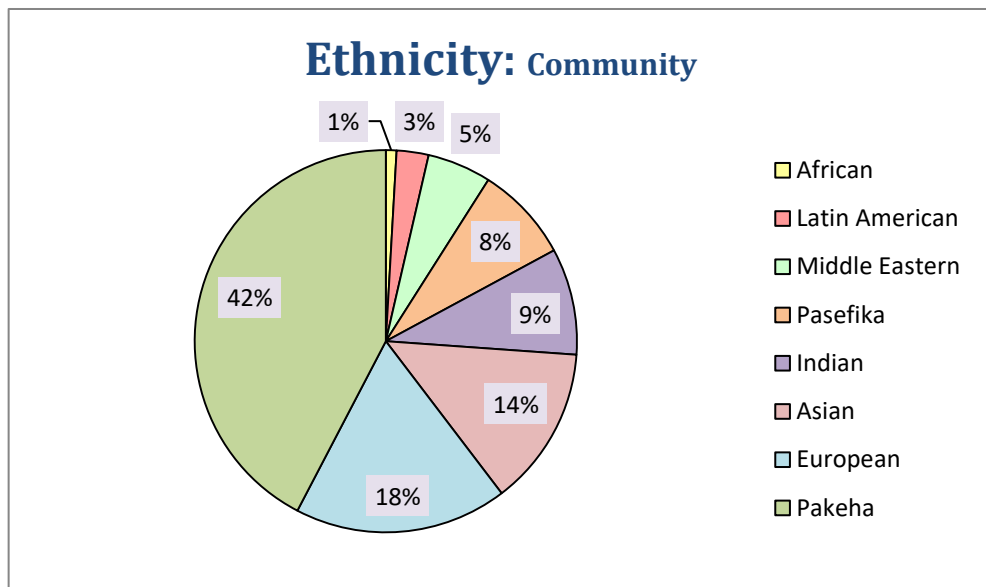
Police interagency response

Collaboration with the police enables us to contact women after police 111 call-outs to family violence incidents to offer victims of these incidents support from Wellington Women's Refuge. For many women this is a time of crisis; when they are looking at their options and in need of information, support with safety and a confidential listening ear.

Next to self-referrals, our largest numbers of referrals come from the police. Over the past year we have received **862 family violence reports (polFVR)** from police, this is an increase from the previous year.

We attend weekly case management meetings with Police, Courts, Probation, Oranga Tamariki, W&I MSD, social housing providers and other services to ensure that families are receiving appropriate follow up and support and to identify when further collaborative support may be needed.

Statistics



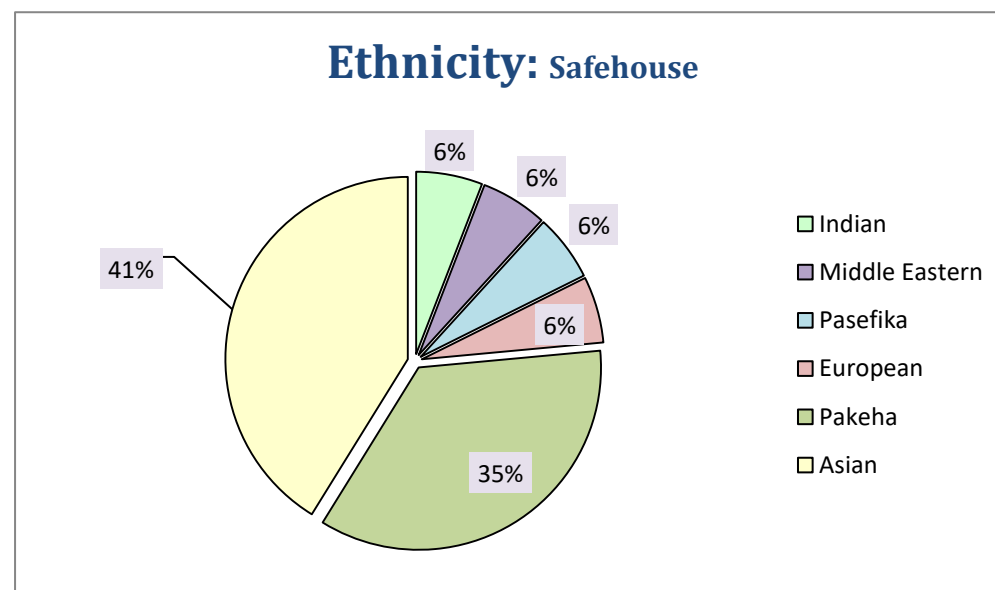
The above graph reflects ethnicity of women coming into our community services within the period.

The largest portion being Pakeha New Zealanders, followed by European, Asian and Indian. This is fairly similar to the previous year.

European and Asian incorporate a wide range of ethnicities meaning those clients not from New Zealand are in fact relatively evenly spread out among a wide range of countries.

The below graph indicates the ethnicity of women coming into our safehouse within the period.

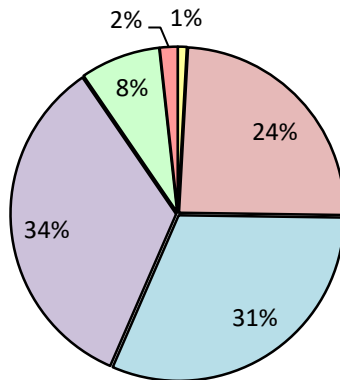
Women staying in the safehouse of Asian descent have increased by 10% from last year. With a decrease in those of Pakeha ethnicity Asian make up the largest portion of safehouse clients in the period. In much smaller amounts we have a spread of European, Pasefika, Middle Eastern and Indian.



Statistics

Age: Community

16-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 60+

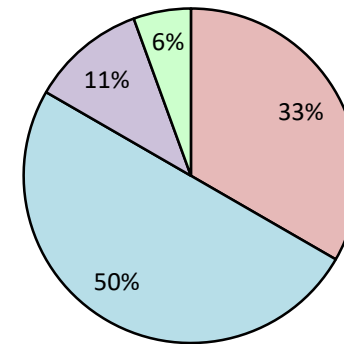


The above graph shows the age groups of women receiving support as community clients. Within the period we had clients ranging from age 20 to 63.

As per last year the largest group was in the 41-50 age bracket followed by the 31 to 40 age group.

Age: Safehouse

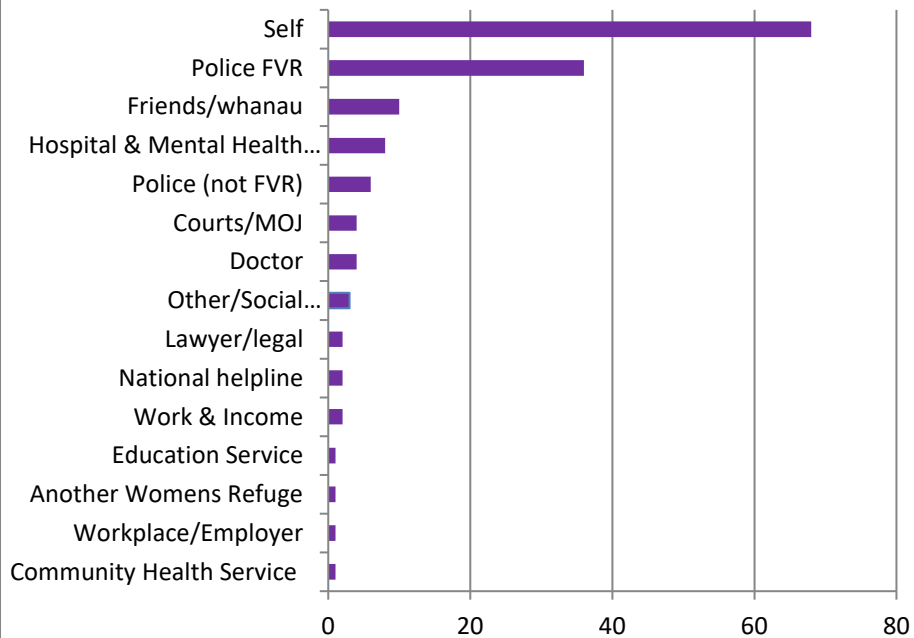
21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60



The above graph shows the age groups of women receiving support as safe-house clients. The age range was smaller than community clients with safehouse clients ranging from age 23 to 55. In comparison with Community clients the largest group was by far the 31 to 40 age group followed by the 21 to 30 age group.

Statistics

Client referral Source



The graph on the left shows referral pathways into both our residential and safehouse service, illustrating that by far the largest number of women come into our service via self-referrals. Although categorised as self-referrals we are aware some of these women are encouraged to access our services by supportive people in their lives.

After self-referrals the next highest number of referrals come from Police. In smaller amounts, clients come to us via MOJ, Doctor, hospital, other social services, family or friends etc.

Treasurers Report

As the figures on the following pages show Wellington Women's Refuge recorded a total income of \$1,456,378 for the financial year beginning 1st of April 2024 through to 31st of March 2025. The total expenditure was \$1,004,978. The resulting balance is a surplus of \$451,500.

This surplus is a result of increased government contracted funding along with generous support from our Wellington community which means once again we were able to close this financial year with a healthy balance. Grant funding was successful again this year due to the great work from our Manager.

We are extremely grateful for the following bequests:

Alison Mary Thurlow 1,000.

Margaret Ann Tibbles 4,340.

Our Women's Programmes, Children's Programme and Strengthening Safety Services continued to provide steady funding streams through funded referrals from MOJ with whom we are contracted to provide these services. Alongside the MSD contract that comes through our National Office these are valuable contracted services for WWR.



Sonya Reid

Wellington Women's Refuge Group Incorporated (Group)
Statement of Financial
Performance
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Group 2024	Group 2023
Revenue			
Donations, fundraising and other similar revenue	1	301,210	314,070
Revenue from providing goods or services	1	894,626	833,201
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue	1	156,362	39,635
Other Revenue	1	58,667	58,667
Total Revenue		1,410,865	1,245,573
Expenses			
Expenses related to fundraising	2	2,275	3,327
Volunteer and employee related costs	2	587,333	527,059
Costs related to providing goods or services	2	29,465	36,738
Other expenses	2	247,138	252,039
Total Expenses		866,211	819,163
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year		544,654	426,410

This financial information is extracted from the full financial statements which are available on request

Wellington Women's Refuge Group Incorporated (Group)
Statement of Financial Position
As at 31 March 2024

	Note	Group 2024	Group 2023
Assets			
Current Assets			
Bank accounts and cash	3	251,182	660,563
BNZ Term Deposit	3	1,898,296	1,340,373
Debtors and prepayments	3	525,436	16,552
GST Receivable		-	2,142
Total Current Assets		2,674,914	2,019,630
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	5	77,519	116,069
Investments	3	290,649	252,007
Total Non-Current Assets		368,168	368,076
Total Assets		3,043,082	2,387,706
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors and accrued expenses	4	10,634	40,446
Employee costs payable	4	51,202	46,956
GST Payable		13,870	-
Funds belonging to another Organisation		-	-
Grants received in advance		98,974	14,056
Total Current Liabilities		174,680	101,458
Total Liabilities		174,680	101,458
Total Assets less Total Liabilities (Net Assets)		2,868,402	2,286,248
Accumulated Funds			
Accumulated Funds Surplus Reserve	6	2,868,402	2,286,248
Total Accumulated Funds		2,868,402	2,286,248

This financial information is extracted from the full financial statements which are available on request

Changes in Accumulated Funds
This Year 2024

Description		Accumulated Surpluses or (Deficits)
Opening Balance		2,286,248
Plus Prior period adjustment	Note 14	37,500
Restated Opening Balance		<u>2,323,748</u>
Surplus/(Deficit)		544,654
Transfer (to)/from Reserves		-
Closing Balance		<u>2,868,402</u>

Last Year 2023

Description		Accumulated Surpluses or (Deficits)
Opening Balance		1,859,838
Surplus/(Deficit)		426,410
Transfer (to)/from Reserves		-
Closing Balance		<u>2,286,248</u>

*This financial information is extracted from the full financial statements
which are available on request*

Fundraising

In the challenging economic environment, we continue to put a lot of thought and energy into seeking funding. While two thirds of our operating costs are now funded by government we face the challenge to meet the remainder of our operating costs of crisis and social work services, maintaining the autonomy to meet the individual needs of our clients and including a preventative element to our work.

Annual Appeal: this is run jointly with Te Whare Rokiroki, Māori Women's Refuge, with the total being shared between the two Refuges. This year our annual appeal achieved

a total of \$76, 000.

This was a record-breaking total for us and we are extremely grateful for the wonderful support we receive from our community without which we could not continue the vital work we do in the Wellington area. We would like to thank the dedicated collectors and site managers who braved the cold weather to collect for us, and the Refuge managers who co-ordinated the joint appeal she putting in a huge amount of to help make the event a success.



Extra fundraisers such as the above pictured Ernst Young



Island Bay United Football Club collected all day for our street appeal.

Acknowledgements

Funders and Supporters: We are hugely appreciative of our funders who help keep our service going by providing funds for salaries, rent, client support and general operating costs. We also get a wonderful amount of support from our community in the form of bequests, regular donations, payroll giving and one-off cash donations from individuals, businesses, community organisations and education institutions. These make up a significant portion of our income and are vital to our operation.

As a charitable organisation we depend upon donations and grants to fund our work. We would like to acknowledge the following funders for their support for which we are hugely grateful.

Funder	Purpose	Amount
Lotteries Community Funding	Towards the salary of our manager and an advocate	\$120, 000
Wellington City Council (WCC)	We have a 3-year partner contract with the WCC to deliver services to our community.	\$40,000
BettyCampbell Grant via WCC	Funding towards community office rent	\$10,000
COGS - Community Organisation Grants	This funding was granted towards a Women's Advocate salary.	\$4,000
Contact Power	Free power for office and safehouse	\$11,611
Jack Jeff's Trust	Operating costs for services in the Wellington area	\$15,750
Guardian Trust	Donation on behalf of Jane Kettles Family Trust	\$2,000
Bowen Trust	In support of our service	\$17,500
Graeme Eskrigge Charitable Trust	For the charitable purposes of our organisation	\$1,300
The Good Registry	Donations from Good Gift Cards	\$1, 948

Businesses, Individuals & Community Organisations who Support Wellington Women's Refuge

We really appreciate the generous support we receive from our community. There are so many people who have assisted, supported, offered skills or resources or stood alongside us in our work.

We would like to take this opportunity to offer our sincere admiration, respect and thanks to them all, including the following:

- ♀ Our dedicated, motivated, inspirational volunteers, our crisis-line volunteers take on a big responsibility and they give to this cause with so much energy and aroha. We are very grateful for everything you bring and the support given supporting women and children to safety.
- ♀ Good Bitches Baking, for the delectable baking delivered on a weekly basis for our clients.
- ♀ Khandallah New World for hosting a food collection bin for our safe-house.
- ♀ The Wellington police, particularly the Family Harm team, who we can rely on when we need their support.
- ♀ Karen who donates weekly, lovely homemade frozen meals for our safehouse.
- ♀ Jethro Carr our unsung IT hero who always makes himself available when needed to give us free I.T. support.
- ♀ Wellington Quilters Guild- for their ongoing annual donation of beautiful handmade quilts.
- ♀ Our sister Refuge Te Whare Rokiroki who provide Refuge services for Māori women in the Wellington community and moral and collaborative support for Wellington Women's Refuge.
- ♀ The many Wellington individuals, businesses, workplaces, agencies, schools, individuals and government departments who supported us with fundraisers, Christmas collections and other donations.
- ♀ Hazel and Izzy from @TheCarewellProject who have donated regular toiletry donations throughout the year, undertaking fundraising projects to put together these packages.

Our final tribute goes to the women and children with whom we have worked, and learnt from over the last year. Your strength, dignity and spirit are a constant source of courage and inspiration for us all.