

For this issue of the Newsletter, I thought I would share the speech I gave at the Poverty in the Hunter Rally on the 18th of October. I am left wondering what will it take to effect change, are we so immune to the issues of others? Over the last five years homelessness has increased in NSW by 37%.

Poverty is the Absence of All Human Rights.

We are at National crisis level of the impact of poverty on women, and women with children. Women experiencing Homelessness has increased by 9.5% nationally. This means there are over 49,000 women with no shelter, and a large portion of those women are over 55 years of age.



In the last financial year Nova has worked with 1213 clients.

Domestic violence was the main presenting reason for 505 clients, with 462 (a close second) citing poverty. We're just one service of four similar services in the Newcastle/Lake Macquarie Regions and statistics would be very similar across those other services. The government has known since 2010 that older women are becoming the face of homelessness and poverty, yet they've done nothing.

For Nova, in the 2018/2019 financial year, we worked with 100 women of who are aged 55 and over. Women who are sleeping rough or living in their cars. What kind of society are we? Women and children stay trapped in Domestic Violence relationships, having no choice. For them their only option would be if leaving is poverty and the real risk of homelessness.

We know from the Anglicare Rental Affordability snapshot that there are no rentals affordable nationally for people on Newstart, older single women in the ages prior to pension age fall into this category. With no prospect for work. 23% increase of Newstart recipients – aged between 55 and 64. We know that there are only 0.8% rentals affordable for sole parents on Centrelink. When did we stop caring?

This is the outcome of long-term gender inequality, we are currently at 14 % gendered wage gap. Let me remind you that it is 2019!

Domestic violence = gender inequality. Gender inequality = gendered poverty
When did we stop talking about a standard of living?
Everybody deserves shelter, safety and a standard of living.
Shame on you Australia!

We can afford it, I am happy not to go to Mars! We cannot afford to do nothing. We need government to address the growing inequality and national poverty crisis. We need to alleviate the structural barriers. They need to apply a gendered and poverty lens to all social welfare policies. They need to work from a Human Rights Framework. They need to remember to listen to the community, they represent us! How dare we accept that there are 731,000 children living in poverty. How dare we accept that by the time single women reach 60 at least 34% will be living in poverty. How dare we keep women and children trapped in domestic violence relationships. Let Me Repeat – Poverty is the Absence of All Human Rights and that is just unacceptable. **By Kelly Hansen - CEO**

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Grants and Sponsorships

Stronger Communities

With the help of Pat Conroy's Office

Earlier this year Nova were recipients of a Stronger Communities Grant via MP Pat Conroy's office at Belmont. This grant allowed us to convert all the lighting in our Eastlakes Refuge to brand new energy efficient lighting, which not only drastically enhanced the look of the property, but has already shown a 40% reduction in our energy bills. The ongoing savings from this grant will be a significant cost savings for us, and allow us to better use those funds. Big thanks to Pat Conroy's Office for their support and assistance with this grant.



Orica - Kooragang

Community Investment Program

With thanks to Orica's Community Investment Program, Nova have received a grant for \$10,000 to add a beautiful new shade structure over the children's playground at Trisha House.

This is a joint project with Shade to Order at Gateshead who have been an amazing help financially, along with Complete Planning Solutions at Kurri Kurri have helped with the drawings, engineering services and all those council details to make it safe and compliant. The project is nearly finished and will be great for summer, allowing children to play outside and be protected from the sun.

Local Clubs Grants

Helping Women Relocate

Nova are extremely grateful to three of local clubs: The Wests Group, Belmont 16's, and Toronto Workers and have each contributed towards a grant totaling \$26,000, to provide removalist services for women and children needing to move furniture and their belongings when starting over in fresh accommodation. Removalist's are a costly exercise, and when women often don't have access to a car, doing it themselves is an impossible task. So far, this grant has enabled us to assist 16 adults and 14 children move their furniture and belongings into their new homes. Thank you so much to all three clubs, this is such a needed service and a fantastic help!



A Wall of Broken Hearts

October 2018

was a nightmare month that saw nine (9) women murdered by men. Seven (7) of those women were murdered in the context of domestic violence by a current or former partner. There was no public outcry, the media and politicians remained silent. We at Nova were outraged!

We wanted to make everyone aware what was happening to women and children in our society, we wanted to honour these women and children, we wanted to make others as angry as we were (still are) and we very much wanted **WOMEN** and **CHILDREN**'s lives to **MATTER**...and so became the broken hearts display.

Respecting cultural backgrounds and privacy of the women and children and their families while honouring them was a major consideration and is the reason no names are on the hearts.

As we were leading into the 16 days of activism against gender based violence we decided to make the display a part of the 16 days, however it soon became apparent that the display should be permanent as it was drawing the attention we were hoping for. Over the past 12 months countless people have stopped to look, read the ages on each heart and to take photos. Staff use these opportunities to engage with the public to provide information, further raise awareness and at times to listen to their own experiences.

You can't not see the display when passing Nova and it is confronting to people when they realise each broken heart represents a woman or child who has been murdered.

It is our hope that this display continues to grow community awareness about domestic and family violence, and maybe just maybe, the community will be increasingly vocal and insist on the changes needed that will ensure **WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER!** *By Lee Liewes—Operations Manager*



The 16 Days of Activism

This year for the 16 Days of Activism, we again continued with the hearts theme and Nova staff hosted a morning tea for the women and children that we support. Each person attending took time to decorate an orange heart and write messages of inspiration. Many local services have also shared in this experience as well. The hearts will become part of an installation at Nova's main office at 558 Hunter Street, Newcastle West.

Our aim was to
“ORANGE THE WORLD”
in line with the overall
theme of the campaign.



Helping a

Mother and Son

get mobile

Neri was born with a rare bone condition in her feet, that over the years had progressed to the point that it severely affected her mobility.

By the time we met Neri she was virtually incapacitated and even a walk to the local shops was absolute agony for her. It impacted her life in so many ways, and with a young and active son, it now restricted his life too. Unlike many mums,

Neri could barely walk her son to school, a trip to the beach was out of the question, as was fishing or a trip to the movies, without lots of assistance and severe pain. Shopping was virtually impossible too, as without a car of her own, Neri was unable to walk home carrying bags of groceries. The day to day things, not just the necessary ones, but also those for enjoyment, were just too difficult for her to manage.



When Nova put the call out for a mobility scooter to help Neri on our Wish List Wednesday Facebook Post, it came to the attention of Dale, the Manager at Local Mobility at Cardiff. Dale had a reconditioned scooter in stock and jumped at the chance to help out. With a quick overhaul, Neri's scooter was ready to be delivered and to say she was over the moon is an understatement. On delivery day, we met Neri at her local park where there were pathways for her to practice on, and after a quick lesson from Dale, Neri and her son were soon zipping along beaming with happiness. Neri tells us the scooter has given her a new lease on life, she's been to the Museum, Art Exhibitions, the Beach and now even finds shopping enjoyable.

*"I can roam the aisles at my own pace,
see what's available, and easily take it all
home in the front basket" Neri says*

With the help from transport staff, Neri's even been on the train, something that before was almost impossible for her to do. We can't thank the team at Local Mobility at Cardiff enough for all their help and assistance with this fantastic gift, with their generosity and assistance, it's been lovely to be able to help someone get their lives back the way this has helped Neri and her son.

*Dale from Local Mobility shows
Neri the ropes on her new scooter*



*Domestic Violence
is not always from a
spouse or partner,
sadly sometimes it's
from an adult child
towards a parent.*

*Many women flee
with nothing more
than the clothes on
their backs, just to
get out safely.
It then costs on
average, \$18,000
for a woman to
re-establish herself,
set up and start over.*

Ref: Australian Council of Trade



A cosy and fresh new bedroom set up in the sanctuary, completed by the Newcastle Friends with Dignity team, has really helped Donna start over.

Starting Over

after Family and Domestic Violence

Donna was referred to Nova from the Hunter Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, as she had been experiencing Family and Domestic Violence at the hands of one of her adult children. Donna was able to be supported to implement the new tenancy laws using a Domestic Violence Tenancy Notice to vacate her property, and was able to stay with family temporarily whilst being supported by Nova.

Donna was initially declined priority housing, however after an extensive letter of support outlining the full extent of her past trauma, her current family and domestic violence situation and her health and medical conditions, was submitted by her case worker, Donna was given a priority within the week.

With the help of Friends with Dignity a sanctuary package was created for Donna, as she had fled her previous tenancy with nothing.

This meant Donna was able to move into her new home knowing it was beautifully furnished, giving her a safe new haven to finally start living free from family and domestic violence.

Donna was supported by her case worker to implement safety plans around her new home, as well as education on the warning signs of domestic and family violence in addition to her housing.

Donna continues to work hard towards healing from her past trauma and we are happy to know that she is going really well.



Supercars Event 2019

This year Nova for Women and Children were chosen to be one of the joint charity partners for the City of Newcastle VIP Supercars Event at Fort Scratchley. This was a great opportunity for us to raise some well needed funds for the numerous women and children we support.

We had a fantastic array of prizes for up for raffle, silent and live auctions on the day, which were very generously donated to us by numerous people and businesses in the community. It was a fabulous day, where we got to meet a whole new group of people, talk to them about the work we do and they generously dug deep to help us raise over \$11,600 for women and children.

We can't thank all the donors and supporters enough, and would especially like to acknowledge:

- The City Of Newcastle Council
- The Newcastle Jets and GEMA Group Catering
- Outdoor Elegance Bennett's Green
- Sydney Motorsport Park - Eastern Creek
- Tullochs Wines
- Moonshadow Cruises
- Nova Cruises
- Hunter Valley Zoo
- Entertainment Book
- Newcastle Float Centre Wallsend
- Serenity Lodge Day Spa
- Unreal VR Charlestown
- Strike Bowling Charlestown
- Dullboys Social Co, Warners Bay
- Rachel Ray Beauty Therapy
- Kiwi Waffle and Ice Cream Warners Bay
- Grill'd The Junction
- NuStrength Bennetts Green

Below are some pictures from the day!



Nova Staff Profile

Meet Fiona



How long have you been at Nova? I've been at Nova four and a half years. I worked at Westlake's for a year, then came into Newcastle where I worked as a case worker for six months. After a discussion with Lee (Operations Manager) I began my current position as Executive Assistant to Kelly Hansen (CEO) three years ago.

A little about my work history: Having done a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Sociology I started work as a casual case worker in 2010 with a program called Reaching Home which was a homelessness service pilot project which was to last for three years. It ended up lasting for four years. During those four years I became permanent part-time, completed my Cert IV in Community Services, then commenced full time, then, in the last year, I became Team Leader of the Outreach Team. When the pilot project came to an end I joined Baptist care as a case worker. I worked in their community centre at Hanbury Street, Mayfield and then became the joint coordinator of their community centre at Windale. After a year I applied for a position at Nova. The rest is history.

Who/What inspires you? I have a vocation and that is to work with women. In whatever capacity. I am drawn to helping other women as I believe life can be hard and we should all help each other and no one understands a woman like another woman. Success stories inspire me. Women who have overcome tragedy and hardship and mindfully put themselves back together (including accepting all the help they can get) and are paying it forward, helping other women.

My hobbies/interests outside of work. Hanging out with my family and my friends makes me happy. I love a good series on Netflix/Apple. Love a good podcast. Music. Good conversations where you go beneath the surface. My little garden. A good book. The ocean. The bible.

My favourite Movies: Some of the oldies like 'It's A Wonderful Life', 'The Apartment', 'The Women'

Music: So hard to whittle this down. Here are a few: Amy Winehouse, Sara Groves, Bee Gees, Carly Simon, Carole King, Duffy, Fleetwood Mac, Kanye West, Lady Gaga, Linda Ronstadt, Pretenders

Artists: Monet

Books: Little Women, all the romances by Georgette Heyer, Silver Brumby

TV shows: Friends

Food: Chocolate

Family: One husband of 31 years, daughter Grace, 28 and daughter Sarah, 26.

Something you may not know about me: I've written a novel. Never published, but still.

Something I'm looking forward to: The family being together for Christmas.

'I believe life can be hard, we should all help each other, and no one understands a woman like another woman'

Our Street Library

gets a makeover

With thanks to a few student's at the Cooks Hill Campus, the recycled fridge that was kindly donated some months back, has had an artistic makeover and been turned into a community book library. Packed with a variety of donated books, there is bound to be something that will appeal to all ages.



People are welcome to come along during our opening hours, to borrow a book free of charge to read for as long as they like.

If you love it that much, you're also welcome to keep it. You'll find the Book Library on the front verandah at our Newcastle office at:

558 Hunter St, Newcastle West



Our donated fridge has had a makeover and now been recycled into a book library.

Our Values

Nova for women and children is based upon a feminist philosophy and is guided by the principles of social justice that are;

- Act with good intent
- Focus on strengths
- Promote collaborative, innovative and inclusive practice
- Embrace diversity
- Work respectfully

We will work with you to make sure you receive the best possible assistance to avoid becoming homeless or, if you are homeless, to access safe, affordable and secure housing.

We are committed to working with you in a respectful way that protects your dignity, is fair, and does not discriminate. **#WomenAndChildrenMatter**

OPENING HOURS

General Office Hours:

9am to 4.30pm
Monday to Friday

We are closed on weekends and public holidays.

Please Note:

The Newcastle office is closed to the public on Tuesdays, except for pre-booked appointments.

Christmas Trading Hours:

Nova Offices will close from: 12noon 24 December 2019 and will re-open at 9.00am Thursday 2 January 2020

CONTACT US

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AFTER HOURS

If you are a woman escaping domestic violence, requiring after hours assistance please

Phone: 1800 656 463