

## Kelly's Message

This has been an extremely difficult year for women and children. During Covid 19 a lot of women and children were trapped in domestic violence situations. Lockdown saw perpetrators no longer at work but at home and women's usual access to services was prone with extreme risk. The sector needed to be creative and utilise alternative methods to reach out.

Women and children who were able to escape domestic and family violence found themselves confined to a motel room, not only traumatised but unable to alleviate the stress of being overcrowded.

Domestic and Family Violence Services were at capacity and were unable to resolve housing issues. Essentially we had a bottleneck in terms of crisis/interim shelter and support, and the need to extend our services to provide support to those either trapped or stuck in motels.

Since 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (16 days of Activism) and up until the beginning of this years 16 days period, 983 women and children presented to our service due to domestic violence.

Nova for Women and Children exceeded our contracted targets for 2019/20 by approximately 400 women and children, **providing support to 1746 women and children**, and we are just one service. I believe that other services have similar stories.

I long for the day, that I won't have to attend events protesting women's right to safety, I long for the day that remembering the women murdered by perpetrators of violence will not be necessary, I long for the day that Nova does not have the horrifying numbers we have.

I long for the day that women and children truly matter and are able to live free from violence. I long for the day of gender equality and a culture free of Domestic and Family Violence. **#16DaysOfActivism2020 #NoToViolence**



## In This Issue

- From Kelly's Desk
- NEW Charlestown Hub
- Nova Client Focus Group
- Staff Movements
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Anti-Poverty Week
- Recognition in Parliament
- Christmas Trading Hours
- Our Values
- Contact Us

# Additional Nova Service

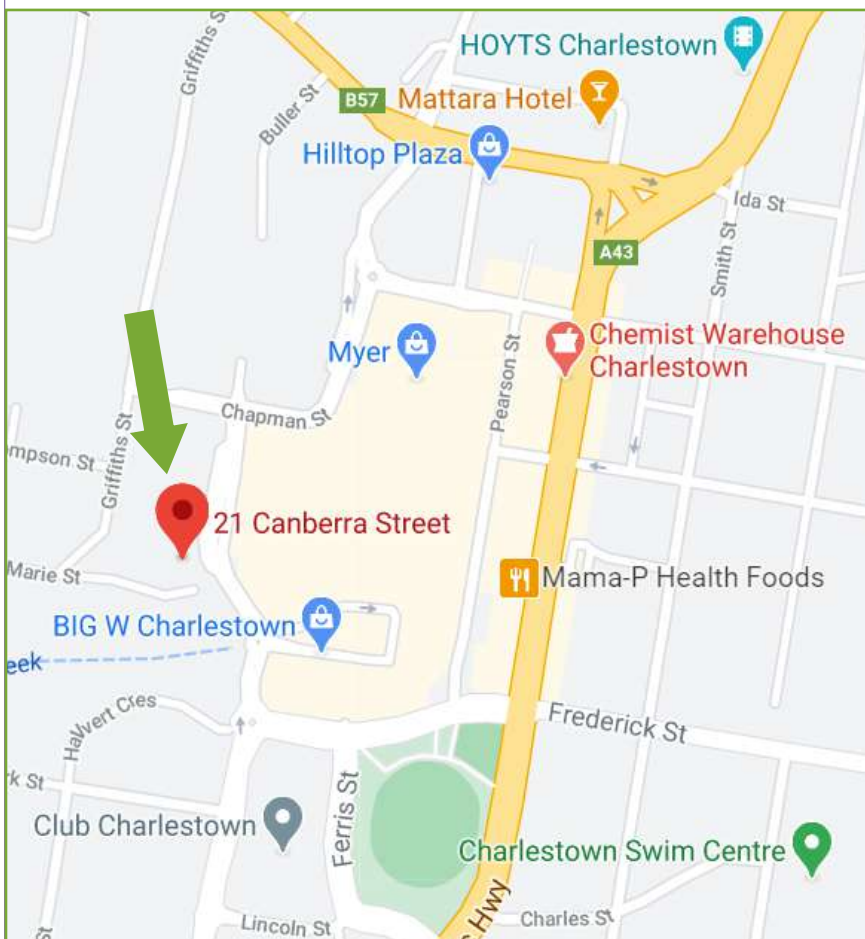
*We're open, just behind Charlestown Square!*

Our new 'drop-in' hub for women and children has now officially opened at Charlestown, just behind the square. We've been well aware for quite some time that the Lake Macquarie area has been under resourced and that services tend to be "Newcastle centric", so we've expanded our service delivery with a new Charlestown Hub.

Our Newcastle 'drop-in' hub has grown so much over the last few, but from now women and children no longer have to travel all the way into Newcastle to receive support, reach safety, use our amenities and resolve any housing crisis. Centrally located, close to essential services such as Centrelink, NDIS, transport connections and more, women needing help can pop down the road behind Charlestown Square to see our friendly team.



**You'll find us at:** 21 Canberra Street Charlestown 2290



## Opening Hours, Services and Contact Details

### We're open:

Monday - Friday  
9.00am - 4.30pm

### Drop in to see us if you:

Are currently, or may soon be at risk of homelessness and need help, support and guidance.

Are experiencing, or needing to escape from family or domestic violence.

We have experienced case workers on hand every day to help you.

**nova**  
for women and children  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

# Nova Client Focus Group

## “Like being submerged, swimming to the surface”

At Nova for Women and Children we believe in working in partnership with the women who are our clients and former clients who have lived experience of homelessness and/or domestic and family violence. We believe their knowledge and insights can improve our service.

Our inaugural Focus Group was held in September 2020. We created a warm and inviting space (despite physical distancing and other Covid-19 protocols) in our interview room where our Admin Team Leader, Operations Manager and Admin Assistant were privileged to get to know some of our former clients and hear their stories. When these women share their stories of survival, resilience and how they found a pathway through to a place where they are now thriving, it's no exaggeration to say it is a sacred moment and we deeply respect them for their bravery in sharing.

## “I was a disciplined person and then I was derailed.”

These former clients have shown an enthusiasm to be involved in Nova in a new and on-going way as consultants. We envisage them joining our board, participating in Team Days, strategic planning and policy reviews. We also see them as honoured guests at our International Women's Day events, rally's and other meetings.

### **We seek their advice on a range of issues including:**

- how we can improve our service
- how specialist homelessness services as a whole can improve i.e. what was your experience?  
How could it have been better? What would have helped?
- our Strategic Plan and Client Charter
- our policies and procedures
- how our service is perceived in the community
- new projects and ideas

So far their feedback on their journey's with Nova have been very positive, with statements about the Intake process like “It was respectful”, “I was no longer embarrassed”, “I gained information and a plan for moving forward”, “Like being submerged, swimming to the surface”. Their experience of interim accommodation included statements such as “the rooms were beautiful and you didn't feel locked in, just like you had parameters.” And,

## “Lovely room, the gift pack of toiletries was overwhelming”

We have held two Focus Groups so far this year, with another one planned for mid December.

We look forward to many more throughout 2021 and beyond and are always seeking to welcome new participants.

If you, or someone you know (as a current, or former client) would like to join our Focus Group, please contact Fiona Edwards on Mob: 0412 539 556 or email: [fionae@novawomen.org.au](mailto:fionae@novawomen.org.au)



# Staff Movements

## Welcome to new staff, farewell to others



It is with pleasure (and some relief!) we welcome Rhonda Miller as our Quality, Risk and Compliance Officer.

This is a brand new 12 month position at Nova. Rhonda's role will entail assisting us with our Accreditation process which is a long and arduous journey and why we feel some relief at Rhonda's appointment. Rhonda will also be responsible for overseeing the full investigation, assessment and management of risk and compliance for Nova and the development and review of policies. Rhonda's long professional experience across the community services sector in the areas of planning, development and implementation of projects within frameworks of quality, risk and compliance make her ideal for this role and we

look forward, as an organisation, to working with Rhonda.

We're also proud to announce the promotion of Eleanor Flanagan who will fill the vacant Lake Macquarie Senior Case Worker position. El's experience within Nova and in previous roles saw her as the successful applicant. Congratulations to Eleanor! We're confident she will be fantastic in this role and know she will be well supported.

We are also very happy to see Dee Rushford back at Nova as a Case Worker at our Westlakes Site. Dee has a wealth of knowledge from working within this sector for a number of years, as well as a great sense of humour which is a joy to work with.

On a sadder note, there are a few staff we have said farewell to of late, that have moved onto other positions, are taking a break from the sector or spending time with family. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

## Staff Training

In the last few weeks, 9 of our Case Workers from various sites participated in an accredited KidSafe training program: 'Provide Information and Advice on Correct Child Care Restraint Use'. This means our staff are now accredited to install child car restraints which helps us when assisting the women we are supporting with children. We thank the trainers for their great practical training, as well as the staff for their keen involvement.

*"The training was informative, extremely thorough and really well presented"*

*El - one of our Senior Case Workers installing a new car seat.*



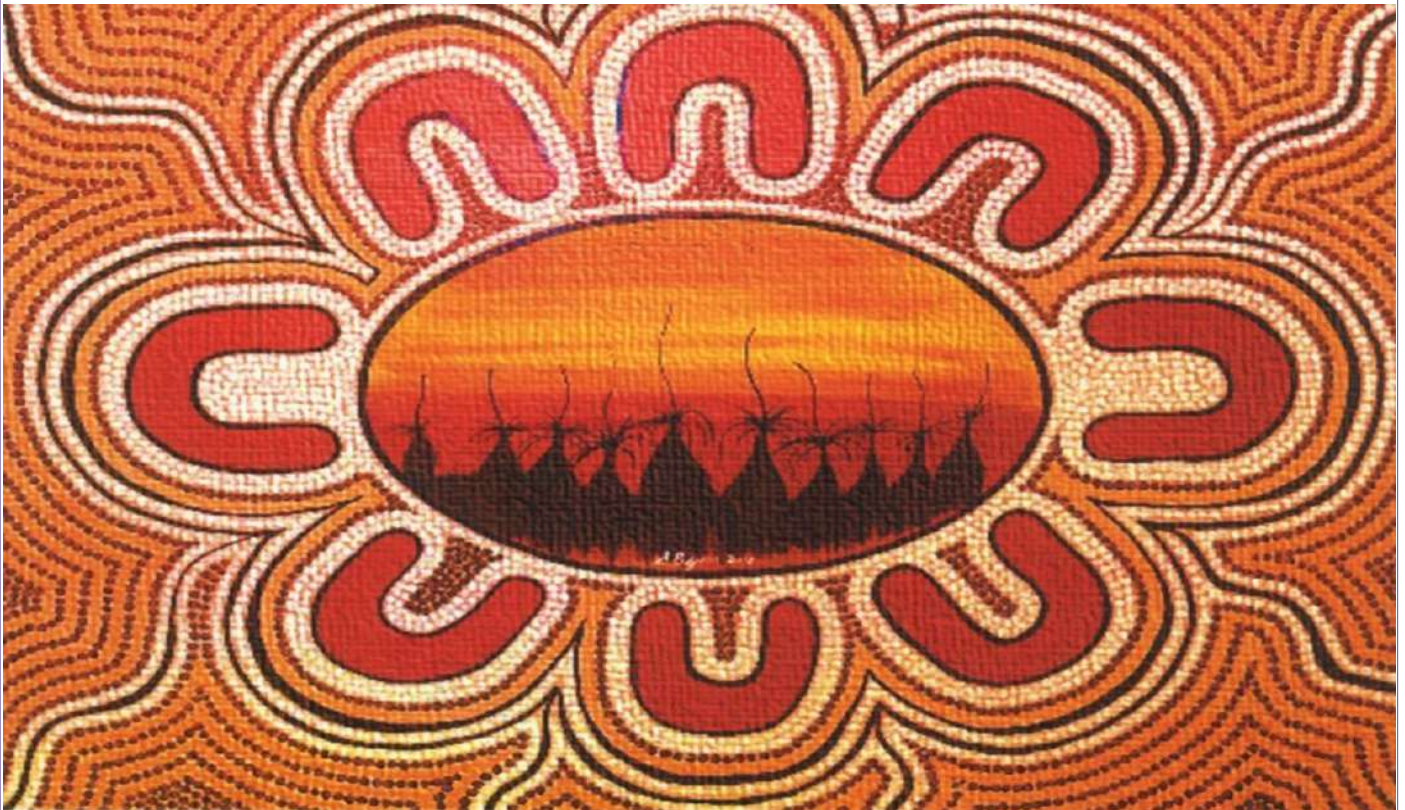
# Reconciliation Action Plan

Nova for Women and Children is developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to provide a framework for our organisation to be inclusive in our service delivery and so that we can contribute to national reconciliation.

We intend for our RAP to support us in building strong, collaborative relationships with both the women who need our support, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services who we can work with in supporting them.

We also intend for our RAP to assist us to create a culturally safe organisation for the women and children we support as well as for our staff.

So it is with excitement that we announce a milestone achievement in the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan: we have been given conditional endorsement of our draft plan by Reconciliation Australia. This means we are only a few short steps away from submitting our final draft for full endorsement of our plan.



**The Artwork used through our RAP is by Sharon Byers,** and is also proudly on display at our Head Office in Newcastle West.

Sharon describes her painting as representing people of all nationalities gathering together for any event, in this case, to watch the sunset.

It celebrates the coming together of indigenous and non-indigenous cultures and the way we all can appreciate the beauty of a sunset together.

**Materials:** ochre coloured acrylic paints on canvas.

Sharon's Awabakal ancestors used ochre based colours made from sandstone ground down into powder and mixed with water and/or saliva to make a paint paste. Different coloured rocks made different coloured paints.

# Anti-Poverty Week #APW2020

## Sunday 11 - Saturday 17 October 2020

Each year, the **Newcastle Poverty Action Alliance**, of which Nova is part, stage a major public event during Anti-Poverty Week, but this year of global pandemic craziness meant a public event was not possible. So the Alliance put their collective heads together and came up with the idea of a podcast series.

In this **Know your Rights** Anti-Poverty week series, our host Dan Cox, Broadcast Journalist with the ABC based in Newcastle Australia, spoke with three eminent Australians regarding Poverty in Australia, and what actions we can take to reduce poverty in our society and communities.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Elder Laurie Perry, CEO of the Wonnarua National Aboriginal Corporation based in Singleton, provided insights regarding how First Nations peoples are experiencing Poverty; Emma Dawson, Executive Director of public policy think tank Per Capita and was a senior policy adviser in the Rudd and Gillard Governments, expanded our understanding of gendered poverty; and Father Rod Bower, Anglican priest, the Rector of Gosford, where he has served for 19 years, Archdeacon for Justice Ministries and Chaplaincy in the Diocese of Newcastle, Ambassador for the Refugee Council of Australia and on the board of The Samaritans, provided insights into roads to reducing poverty and building connection. Father Rod is a passionate advocate for a number of social justice and human rights issues. He uses his massive social media following, as well as the infamous roadside sign out the front of his church, to raise questions, spark debate, promote love.

**It is a fascinating series so look out for the podcasts here:**

<https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/library/experience/digital-programs/library-podcasts> and scroll down to

### Series Three: Anti-Poverty Week

In **Episode One**: Join Elder Laurie Perry, as he provides insights regarding how First Nations peoples are experiencing Poverty.

In **Episode Two**: Emma Dawson expands our understanding of gendered poverty.

**Episode Three**: Father Rod Bower gives his insights into roads to reducing poverty and building connection.

For more great podcasts, check out Newcastle Libraries REAL here:

<https://omny.fm/shows/newcastlelibrariesreal>



**Thank you to everyone involved in helping create this series!**



# Recognition in Parliament

This year Nova was privileged to be mentioned in the Legislative Assembly and grateful that the issues of homelessness were raised in the House of Representatives.

State member for Charlestown, Ms Jodie Harrison, raised the issue of homelessness during Homelessness Week (2 – 8 August) and how,

during a global pandemic, many people in Australia had nowhere to 'lockdown', or were unsafe locked in their own homes with domestic violence perpetrators.

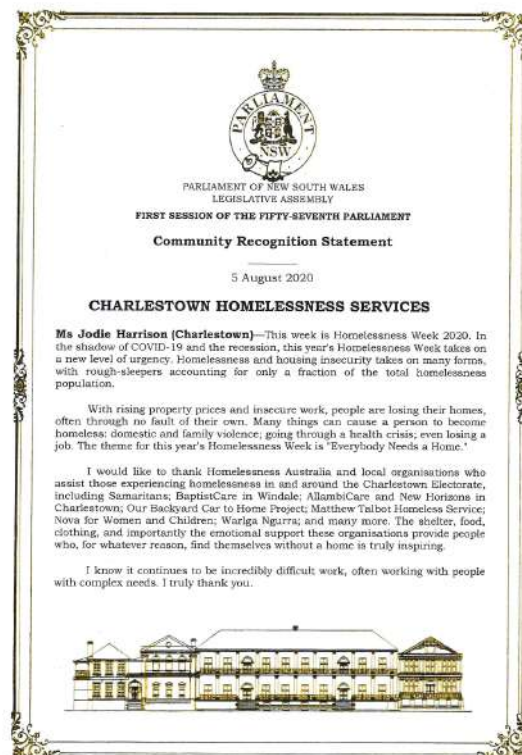
Minister Harrison spoke of the double effect of the pandemic and the recession, rising property prices and insecure work and people unable to pay their rent or mortgages.

Ms Harrison thanked Homelessness Australia and a number of local organisations including Nova for Women and Children for the shelter, food, clothing and emotional support we provide to women and children who find themselves without a home.

Sharon Claydon, MP, Federal member for Newcastle, also spoke during Homelessness Week and moved that the House of Representatives note that more than 140,000 Australians were on the social housing waitlists as of June 2018; that there is a shortfall of social housing dwellings; that much of Australia's existing social housing stock is in dire need of repair. She urged the government to invest in social housing as a means of protecting Australia's economy from the economic impacts of Covid-19 and to invest in the repair of the existing social housing.

Labor is prepared to invest \$5 billion to build 20,000 new social housing dwellings and renovate a further 80,000 as a key economic stimulus measure during this recession, the deepest recession in a century.

Nova is deeply grateful to both members for their efforts on behalf of the homeless women and children we assist every day. As we know, in the 2020 budget, handed down after these impassioned speeches were made, the Liberal government did not address the issue of homelessness and domestic violence in a way commensurate with the impacts of the pandemic and the recession and did not spend any money on social housing.



**#NovaForWomen**

**#WomenAndChildrenMatter**

# Christmas Hours



With Christmas just around the corner, we would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Safe and Healthy New Year.

We will be open right up until Christmas Eve the week leading up to Christmas, then as follows:

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Thursday 24 December 2020                    | Open until 12 noon |
| Friday 25 Dec 2020 until Sunday 3rd Jan 2021 | <b>CLOSED</b>      |
| Monday 4 January 2021                        | Re-open from 9am   |



## Holiday Recycling

Don't forget over the Christmas holidays, the summer, or anytime at all, - you can help **fundraise for Nova** and the women and children we support by recycling your bottles, can and containers.

Just take a photo of the image to the right, scan the barcode at any machine and your money comes directly to us to go towards extra programmes we run.



## 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.*

## CONTACT US

### Newcastle Hub:

558 Hunter Street  
Newcastle West NSW 2302

### Charlestown Hub:

21 Canberra Street  
Charlestown NSW 2290

### Intake Phone:

1800 769 654

### Office Phone:

02 4023 5620

### Email:

[nova@novawomen.org.au](mailto:nova@novawomen.org.au)

### Website:

[www.novawomen.org.au](http://www.novawomen.org.au)

### Facebook:

@novawomen

### Twitter:

Novawomen1

## AFTER HOURS

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

**Phone: 1800 656 463**