

From Kelly's desk

Welcome everyone to our Winter Newsletter.

It has been a difficult time as we navigate our new normal and the impact of COVID-19. Nova continues to support women and women with children who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and/or domestic and family violence, exacerbated by the economic downturn and cold winter weather. Added to this, staff are learning to work with physical distancing and new technology.

Certainly here at the service we needed to address isolation for our team members working from home. Technology was not always our friend but we remained determined and persevered. If we felt isolated and at times lost when in lock-down, I couldn't help but wonder just how difficult it would be navigating the system if you were homeless, trapped at home in domestic violence or isolated in a hotel room. Women and children were forced into a resilience that would have required a strong inner strength.

"What has come to light during this time is the impact of the pandemic on women"

In an economic downturn, those already disadvantaged and struggling, may find their situation worsens and at a faster rate than those with more secure employment, more secure housing and more assets.

The data shows that women, already not on a level playing field, have lost their jobs at a greater rate than men and when working on a casual basis (which more women than men are forced to do) have been unable to access the Job-keeper payment. Child Care workers, who are predominantly women were the first workers to lose the Job-Keeper payment after the first wave of the Coronavirus eased and this payment has so far not been returned to them. Women have outnumbered men in the drawing down on superannuation funds which places them in a more perilous predicament as they age. We know that women carry the greater child-care burden in the home and while working from home, women have had to juggle the extra workload of home schooling their children more often than their partners.

On the flip-side there have been economic benefits for women eligible for Job-Seeker payments who now receive a larger and fairer payment. Also those women eligible for Job-Keeper payments have in some cases received more money than usual. Certainly some women have reported an improved economic well-being that has led to a stronger sense of security and stability. The question now is: how do we ensure the improved Job-Seeker payment is maintained into the future and how do we make the policies more inclusive?

The Living Income for Everyone Campaign (L.I.F.E) is one way. In this edition of the newsletter there will be information on what L.I.F.E. stands for and how you can join. We also will have information on the Everybody's Home Campaign. This is the time to advocate for social change, we cannot go back to pre-COVID conditions with growing poverty and homelessness. A fairer wealth distribution and a poverty and gendered focus on our social policies is essential to create a fairer society. This is our chance to make a difference.....together we can!

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Exciting News!

We're expanding further into Lake Mac!

Nova has established a 'drop-in' hub for women and children in Charlestown. The organisation has been aware for a long time that Lake Macquarie has been under resourced and that services tend to be "Newcastle centric". It is with pride that Nova has now expanded its services to address a gap in service delivery in Lake Macquarie.

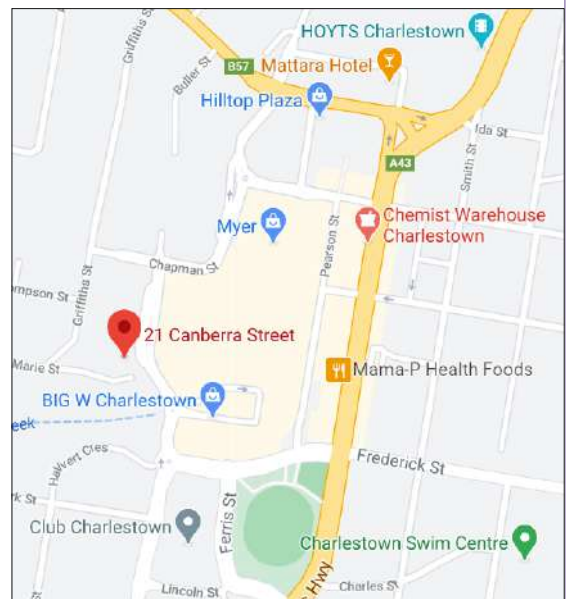
The need for an additional hub similar to our Newcastle 'drop-in' hub has been growing over the last couple years. Women and children no longer will have to travel into Newcastle to receive support, reach safety, use our amenities and resolve any housing crisis. This is now available at our Charlestown 'drop-in' Hub.

We had been searching for the right property, in that right location, - a welcoming house, rather than a formal office, and we've finally found it—conveniently located just behind Charlestown Square. Somewhere that is easy to find, centrally located, closer to a number of the essential services such as Centrelink, NDIS, better transport connections and more.

The Hub will be staffed by a team of experienced case workers that will make sure women and their children receive the best possible assistance to avoid becoming homeless or, if they are homeless, or experiencing domestic and family violence, to access safe, affordable and secure housing.

While the official opening will be in October during Anti-Poverty week, we will soon be holding some community information days at Charlestown Square, but in the meantime we are set up and all ready to go!

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



Opening Hours and Contact Details

Charlestown Hub will be open:
Monday - Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm

If you or someone you know needs assistance, please drop in to see one of our friendly team during the above times.

nova
for women and children
WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER

Everybody's Home Campaign

The Coronavirus pandemic causing shut-downs and economic crisis has shone a spotlight on Australia's existing housing crisis, with more people losing their jobs pushed into, or on the brink of, homelessness.

At Nova we encounter the problems created because of the lack of social and affordable rental housing on a daily basis. Therefore we have joined with the Everybody's Home campaign to address the current jobs crisis, as well as the endemic issue of the lack of social housing and increasing homelessness.

With almost a million people being stood down or losing their jobs or having to close their businesses because of the pandemic, many people can no longer afford their housing costs. The current national shortfall of social housing of more than 433,000 properties means that people who can't afford rents in the private market can't get into social housing and many become homeless. The same lack of social housing makes it very difficult to escape homelessness.

Everybody's Home has also developed the **SHARP Proposal: Social Housing Acceleration and Renovation Program**. This program would deliver 30,000 urgently needed new jobs over three years and provide a boost in social housing availability.

Starting in Homelessness Week, 3 August 2020, Nova is proud to be joining hundreds of organisations under the Everybody's Home campaign umbrella in calling on our local Federal Parliament members, Pat Conroy, Sharon Claydon and Joel Fitzgibbon, to join the Pledge of Support for the campaign. Minister Pat Conroy has already responded, keen to meet with Kelly Hansen, Nova's CEO, to discuss his support.



Grant Thank You's!

Westpac's Drive

Thank you to Evan Reid (Manager of Westpac Hamilton) and Westpac Bank. Through the generosity of their grant program we are now able to assist some of the women we support to obtain or regain their drivers licence.

What great sports too, right in the middle of COVID, we hand sanitized, donned the gloves and kept our 1.5 mtrs apart while they presented us with this gigantic cheque! Thank you so much to all involved, it's heartening to know that in tough times, Westpac are still thinking of ways to help others.



Immediate Help

Once again Orica Kooragang have been a great help to us. This time during the COVID lockdown period, Orica awarded us with a grant via their Community Investment Program to assist with vouchers for Shopping, Phone/Data Top Ups, and Opal Cards. Thank you Orica, this is a life saver and provides immediate help for many of the women and children we support. You can watch the Orica Community Investment Program video here: <https://youtu.be/5UTu82adF08>

Practical Support

The generosity of the Lake Mac City Council COVID-19 Grant, helps us assist the women and children we are supporting with the cost of a removalist, enabling them to move any of their belongings they were able to retain when starting over after domestic violence. This grant also provided \$2000 worth of necessary food and transport cards allowing us to provide immediate assistance to those in need. Thank you to all at Lake Mac Council for this generous and very practical grant.



Staying Connected

Big thanks to the City of Newcastle for providing us with a Boost your Community Grant to assist women and families in numerous ways. Firstly with Shopping, Phone, and Transport vouchers, but a major part of this grant was to supply people with the technology they need to keep them connected during the COVID-19 restrictions. Staying connected during these times is paramount, and Nova are able to assist families needing small home computers or electronic tablets to maintain their Tele-health appointments, Home Schooling, Case Management and more. Without technology, it's impossible to stay connected and this will really enable people to do that.

Our Last Financial Year



1454 PEOPLE
were assisted by
Nova for Women and Children



85 WOMEN
presenting for assistance
were aged 56 and over

323 WOMEN AND CHILDREN
Identified as Aboriginal or
Torres Strait Islander



222 PEOPLE
17 years and under were
assisted by Nova



It's been another busy year for Nova, one where we have seen an increase in many areas, as well as our overall levels of support.

This year we've had a 19% increase in the number of clients we have assisted compared to last year. From 1213 for the financial year ending 2019, to 1454 year ending 2020, and of those, 85 women were over 56 years of age.

***Sadly in 2019, women over 55 were the fastest growing group of homeless people in Australia.**

From the 1454 Nova have supported, 491 persons (almost 34%) reported their main reason for presenting to Nova was due to Domestic and Family Violence. We've also had a 15% increase of persons reporting Housing Crisis, rising from 258 in 2018-2019, to 298 in the FYE 2020.

**Mental health conditions have also risen
by over 26% in the last year.**

Mental health conditions have also risen by over 26% in the last year. This year alone, 833 of our clients have presented with a previously diagnosed mental health condition, whereas last year it was 660. This alone brings an extra level of experience needed to Nova, and to combat this, we are currently recruiting for a mental health practitioner. This person will support Nova to work within a recovery framework, as well as assist our staff to gain the skills and knowledge to work effectively and appropriately with clients living with mental illness.

*Older Women's Network of NSW



15% INCREASE
of persons reporting
a Housing Crisis



19% INCREASE
in persons supported by
Nova in last financial year



26% INCREASE
rise in diagnosed
mental health condition

Meet Our Board Member



Introducing Louise Rak

How long have you been on the Nova Board?

I've been privileged to be part of the Nova Board for five years.

A little about your work history:

I've worked in the social service industry for 15 years, in housing and homelessness, youth services, disability services, family counselling, out of home care and DFV. I've been fortunate to work alongside fantastic people - both accessing and working in the services I've been a part of.

Who/What inspires you?

Nova women! Nova women are hard workers and show up time and time again despite being (at times) tired both physically and emotionally, of the work, the violence perpetrated against women and children and the systems that sometimes add to the

workload. Nova women brush themselves off and show up to keep advocating and pushing for change.

My hobbies/interests outside of work.

I'd like to say something very interesting here but like everyone I have little free time so I'm pretty boring! When I can, I do like to run, play soccer, spend time with my family and friends.

My favourite's:

Movie/s:

Any kind of large animal attacking movies - like Rouge or Deep Blue Sea. They are terrible but I love the bad dialogue and CGI.

Music:

Paul Kelly to cook to, 90's/00's hip hop and RnB to run to, Dolly Parton to bust out dance moves to.

Artists:

Gloria Petyarre is an Australian Aboriginal artist whose work I could spend hours staring at.

Books/TV shows:

Ruth Park's A Harp in the South is my all-time favourite book.

Food:

All

Family:

Two little kids- Violet and Hilde, one husband- Daniel and two Schnauzers (the little dogs who look like they have beards) Frankie and Nelly.

Something people may not know about me:

I went shark cage diving last year in Hawaii.

Something I'm looking forward to:

Christmas - I know it is months away, and who knows what it will look like this year with CV-19, but I love Christmas time with my two little ones, our whole extended family and friends, it is a special time to be together.

New Campaign

Living Incomes for Everyone

(L.I.F.E.) Campaign

The L.I.F.E Campaign is gaining momentum. It is a grass roots campaign that called for action during the week of 17-24 September, 2020.

We all know that during this pandemic, the most disadvantaged are also the most vulnerable.



We know that self-isolation cannot occur if you do not have a home; we know that unemployment has dramatically increased; we know that in the past, the Job Seeker payment could not provide a decent standard of living; we know that the cost of rent and living expenses has created a working poor and we know that people on visas were left behind in the measures to ease the economic impact of the pandemic.

We cannot turn back, we must seize this opportunity to
bring about a more just, equitable and equal society.
The lessons have been learned.

The L.I.F.E Campaign calls for the following:

Keep the Rate!

- NO cuts to Job Seeker and Job Keeper payments.
- Job Keeper direct to workers.

No-One Left Behind!

- Raise all other allowance payments and pensions (Aged Pension, Disability Support Pension, Youth Allowance and Carers Pension) to a minimum \$1100.00 per fortnight.
- Extend the Job Seeker and Job Keeper allowances to recent migrants, overseas workers and international students.
- Increase the minimum wage.
- Keep free childcare.
- Make massive new investment in public and affordable housing part of the economic recovery plan.

End Harassment! Social Security with Dignity.

- Abolish Mutual Obligation. End the Community Development Program (remote Work for the Dole) and forced income management provisions such as the Cashless Welfare Card and Basics Card.
- No return to Robo-debts.
- Stop harassment by dodgy Job Providers.
- Public ownership and control of Social Security and Employment Services.

Find out more about the campaign or subscribe to their news here: <https://www.livingincomes.org.au/resources/>

Help us fundraise!

Nova have partnered with TOMRA and are proudly participating in the Return and Earn Container recycling scheme. That means you can help us fundraise when recycling your containers. Just take a photo of the image below and scan the barcode at the machine to make a donation. Large or small, every bit helps!

You can help others when recycling your bottles and containers...



Your donation will help the hundreds of Women & Children in our town who are Homeless or escaping Domestic Violence



Thank's for supporting Nova for Women and Children!

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

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nova@novawomen.org.au

Website:

www.novawomen.org.au

Facebook:

[@novawomen](https://www.facebook.com/novawomen)

Twitter:

[Novawomen1](https://twitter.com/Novawomen1)

AFTER HOURS

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

Phone: 1800 656 463