



*Communities living in secure
housing, free from abuse*

2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

Acknowledgement of Country

SAHSSI acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, the Dharawal Peoples of the Illawarra and the Yuin Peoples of the Shoalhaven. We pay our deep respects to Elders past and present, and we recognise the strength, resilience and enduring connection of Aboriginal People to land, waters, culture and community.

We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation and intergenerational trauma, and we commit ourselves to walking alongside Aboriginal women, children and families with respect, honesty and humility.

We honour the voices of Aboriginal people and strive to listen and learn in order to build a service that is safe, inclusive and culturally strong.



Inclusion Statement

SAHSSI is committed to inclusivity, diversity and equal opportunity. We are taking steps to ensure these values are embedded within our practices, and that all staff are trained to support inclusion and stand up to discrimination.



Cultures and language inclusion



Aboriginal inclusion



Torres Strait Islander inclusion



Sexual orientation inclusion



Capacities inclusion



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SAHSSI Overview

Operating throughout the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, SAHSSI provides safety through housing and support to women and their children who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or impacted by domestic violence.

SAHSSI also runs the Shoalhaven Homeless Hub which provides a drop-in service for anyone in the Shoalhaven region experiencing homelessness.

SAHSSI is a community housing provider, a specialist homelessness service and a registered charity. SAHSSI's accommodation includes 7 refuges providing crisis and temporary accommodation in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven, as well as 39 transitional properties in the Illawarra. We provide 24/7 response for urgent DV cases through our Domestic Violence Response Enhancement service.

At a glance

2024-25 SAHSSI Outcomes

2,033

Referrals for support received



2,491

Clients supported across our various programs



831

Accommodated individuals across



63,749

bed nights

Our Region



Dharawal Country

Yuin Country

Chair and CEO's Report

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to reflect on a year in which SAHSSI continued to deliver safety, dignity and direction for women and children across the Illawarra and Shoalhaven and a safe place for people in need through the Shoalhaven Homeless Hub.

The past year has again demonstrated the extent to which community-led, trauma-informed responses remain essential as housing stress and domestic violence continue to impact our region. In this context, SAHSSI's role is to steward resources responsibly, preserve trust, and ensure the organisation is positioned to meet demand with integrity and care.

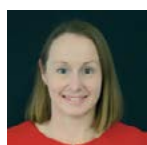
This year, the board has had a stronger focus on board renewal to ensure a balance of continuity and fresh perspective to guide SAHSSI through its next phase of growth. Moving forward into 2026, the Board will focus on strengthening systems, oversight and accountability to support SAHSSI's capital and service expansion to ensure values-aligned growth.

In the CEO's report you will read the achievements that sit behind our oversight; these are not just operational milestones, they are evidence of strategy translated into lived safety for women and children who deserve more than short-term crisis response.

While the policy and funding settings remain challenging, these systemic constraints have sharpened our resolve to invest in capacity, collaboration and advocacy in ways that are respectful, constructive and evidence-based.

To our staff, leadership team, partners and supporters: thank you. The Board deeply values the trust placed in SAHSSI, which is continually reinforced by your professionalism, your calm and capable approach in challenging circumstances, and your unwavering dedication to those whose lives are transformed through your work.

As we look to the year ahead, the Board remains focused on safeguarding culture, guiding strategic growth, and ensuring SAHSSI remains a safe, credible and courageous organisation for the communities we serve.



Lorri Field
SAHSSI Chair

As CEO, I am proud to present our 2024–25 Annual Report.

This year, we supported over 2,400 clients, provided nearly 64,000 bed nights, and responded to more than 2,000 referrals. Behind these numbers are stories of courage; women and children rebuilding their lives after trauma, young people finding stability, and communities coming together to support those in need.

We opened **Jumbulla**, our newest refuge, secured funding for new transitional housing through the **Wilga project**, and progressed renovations on our **Core and Cluster refuge**. These milestones reflect our commitment to expanding safe housing options in a region where affordability continues to decline.

Safety remained at the heart of our work: we embedded the **Safe & Together model** across our services, training all staff in DV-informed practice, and took steps to become a more inclusive and culturally safe organisation. Our **Cultural Safety Audit** guided the development of our **Cultural Framework** and **Action Plan**, and we appointed **Aboriginal Cultural Leads** to help us walk alongside our Aboriginal clients and communities with respect and humility.

Internally, we focused on becoming an **employer of choice for women**, introducing new staff benefits, expanding training, and investing in wellbeing.

As we look ahead to 2025–26, we remain focused on opening new accommodation sites, embedding our new systems and frameworks, and continuing to advocate for the systemic change our clients deserve. Together, we are building a future where safety, dignity and opportunity are not just ideals—but realities for everyone we support.



Penny Dordoy
SAHSSI CEO

Our History

1976
Juno Refuge
WARILLA ESTABLISHED

Shellharbour Council donates a house and \$50 to establish the Juno refuge.



1983
Rosa Refuge
NOWRA ESTABLISHED

Shoalhaven Women's Resource Centre opens the Rosa refuge.



1985
Lottie's Place
KEIRAVILLE ESTABLISHED

Lottie Wilcock starts Lottie's Place property at Railway Street Corrimal, owned by the Coke works in Corrimal.



2010

Hon. Ryan Park MP started the Christmas toy drive, now in its 14th year. The drive collects toys and delivers to our clients so they can have an amazing Christmas.



2002



11 transitional properties in the Illawarra added to create longer-term accommodation for women and children. The properties are now known as the Ganbi, which is the traditional name for fire.

2014

25 transitional properties in the Illawarra added to create longer-term accommodation for women and children.



SAHSSI establishes our first head office in Swan Street, Wollongong.



2017

SAHSSI purchases our first 7 bedroom home in the Illawarra to create our 4th refuge, now known as Gaanda which is the traditional name for smoke.



2017

The first SAHSSI 30k walk becomes a yearly event that raises much needed funds for SAHSSI.



2014
SAHSSI
ESTABLISHED

Supported Accommodation Homelessness Services Shoalhaven Illawarra is established. Three refuges merge to become SAHSSI as part of the Going Home Staying Home reforms.

2014

CEO Kathy Colyer with Kerrie Rutherford as President led the organisation through the merge of the three refuges to become SAHSSI. Kathy continued as CEO, expanding SAHSSI's reach and impact until her retirement in 2023.



2017

SAHSSI becomes a Tier 3 Community Housing Provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers (NRSCH).



2017

SAHSSI creates our 5th refuge, a site in the Shoalhaven, now known as Duraya which is the traditional name for River.



2018



SAHSSI commences our reconciliation journey with our first Reconciliation Action Plan and working party.

The SAHSSI Aboriginal Art Competition was held, the winner was Alison Day, a Dughutti & Biripi woman who was born in Port Kembla.



2023

SAHSSI achieves The Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation.



2023

Safe Places Ulladulla opens its doors as SAHSSI's 6th refuge, now known as Miringama which is the traditional name for southern wind.

2024

SAHSSI opens our 7th refuge. A purpose-built refuge with 8 self-contained units. Now known as Jumbulla, the traditional name for Mt Kembla.



2024

7 refuges and 39 transitional homes in the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

53 domestic violence, homelessness and housing specialists including: A cultural lead and 5 Aboriginal Identified staff, 2 child and family specialists, and a mental health specialist.

493,034 nights of safe accommodation provided between 2014-2025

2020

The Homeless Hub in Nowra joins SAHSSI. The Hub is a drop-in centre for people experiencing homelessness and is now known as Biinda which is the traditional name for rise, get up, and stand up.



2017

The Start Safely pilot program moves to the SAHSSI office to pilot a co-location model. The program is now in its 8th year.



2023

CEO Penny Dordoy joins SAHSSI in 2023 and Lorri Field is elected Chair.



2022

SAHSSI outgrows our Market Street home and relocates our head office to Atchison Street known as Nanga Mai which is the traditional name for dream and hope.



2025

SAHSSI receives Federal Government funding through Housing Australia purchase Wilga, providing transitional accommodation in Wollongong.

2025

SAHSSI secures NSW Government funding to deliver a new Core and Cluster refuge in northern Illawarra.



SAHSSI Board

Lorri Field SAHSSI Chair

is a practising lawyer and director of PDC Law, a boutique property and business law firm. As an accredited specialist in commercial litigation, Lorri combines excellent technical expertise with a common-sense approach.



She values opportunities to positively contribute to the local community, particularly through her position on the SAHSSI board and as longstanding Treasurer of Squash Illawarra.

Sandra Luschwitz

was formerly chairperson and remains a long-standing board member of SAHSSI. She is a passionate advocate for women and children's safety and well-being.



Following 20 years in the community sector working in refuges and neighbourhood centres, Sandra retired in 2022 and now brings her valued experience to the SAHSSI board, ensuring and promoting good governance and optimum service delivery.

Margaret Bowen

is celebrated in the local community for her immense contribution to improving the lives of people with disabilities. In her 36-year tenure as CEO of The Disability Trust, the organisation grew from a Wollongong office with 4 staff to an employer of over 1800 delivering quality disability services across NSW and Victoria.



Having retired as CEO in early 2023, Margaret remains driven to make a positive contribution through her passion for social justice and desire to make the world a little fairer.

Diana Petlikovski

is the Out of Home Care Manager for the Illawarra and Shoalhaven areas at Southern Youth and Family Services with extensive experience and training in Developmental Trauma. She is also the elected representative for the Social and Community Services Industry Division of the Australian Services Union.



Diana has worked in the community services sector for over 25 years bringing with her strong advocacy skills, and a passion for social justice. She contributes a wealth of industry knowledge and experience to the board and her position as Secretary.

Peter Rostirolla

is the Chief Operating Officer of Kollaras Trading and a Certified Practising Accountant. His commercial acumen and strong financial background are displayed in Peter's contribution to the SAHSSI board and his role on SAHSSI's Finance and Risk Committee.



Holly Howell

is a highly driven, creative, and analytical retail marketing professional with over 17 years of experience in multi-channel marketing for leading brands in Australia and the UK. As Campaign Manager for QIC, she develops marketing campaigns for 19 retail assets across NSW, VIC, and QLD.



Beyond her role, she is committed to equal opportunities and effecting meaningful change in the community through her role with SAHSSI, The Property Council of Australia, and The International Women's Day Illawarra Committee.

Leisa Sadler

has more than 25 years' experience as a senior executive providing leadership within the not-for-profit and corporate sectors. Leisa was CEO of Dress for Success, General Manager/Vice President for Walt Disney's Branded Media Content business in Australia and New Zealand and has held executive roles at the Viacom group in Australia and New Zealand. In addition to SAHSSI, Leisa is a Board Director of ArtSpace Pty Ltd (Visual Arts).



She is a graduate and member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Institute of Chartered Accountants; holds a Master of Business Administration from Macquarie School of Graduate Management and a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Wollongong.

Lewis McLeod

is a current Director of the Illaroo Co-operative Aboriginal Corporation and Chairperson of the Dharawal Aboriginal Corporation Community Association. He has worked with community organisations such as Youth Off the Streets, St Vincent de Paul, and Services Our Way to deliver social outcomes for vulnerable people in Southern NSW.

Diane Manns

has had a 30-year career in family and children's services, and brings extensive leadership and policy development experience. She served as the CEO of Sutherland Family Services Inc, where she led impactful initiatives that strengthened community support systems.



Following this, Diane was the Senior Advisor on Domestic and Sexual Violence to the NSW Attorney General, playing a crucial role in shaping high-level policy. Her contributions to the community sector have been widely recognised and Diane is deeply committed to improving outcomes for families, children, and women.

David Blackett

GAICD is a Partner at BM+G, a leading Building Code & Access consultancy firm, and an accomplished Building Certifier with more than 30 years industry experience. Through his career, he has worked closely with not-for-profit organisations, including the support for delivery of safe and sustainable housing models for vulnerable communities.



With over a decade of board experience and a strong background in statutory planning and built environment compliance, David brings both technical expertise and a values-driven perspective to SAHSSI.

2024-2027 Strategic Plan

Professional, connected services delivered by people just like you.

SAFETY

We will deliver services that are physically, emotionally, mentally and culturally safe.

Safe physical buildings.

Safe work practices.

Trauma informed care.

Culturally informed staff.

HOUSING

We will provide accommodation that is designed for women and children.

Accommodation that is purpose built for our clients.

Homes that are safe, secure and affordable.

THE PRINCIPLES WE WORK BY: PROFESSIONAL,

PROFESSIONAL

- Strong governance
- Robust processes
- Trusted Government partners
- Qualified skilled staff

PERSONAL

- Our community, our families
- Lived and diverse experience
- Inclusive, tailored support
- Healing

ADVOCACY

We will advocate for structural changes and for the needs of our clients.

Systems advocacy.

Practical client support and advocacy.

Building independence.

PERSONAL AND CONNECTED

CONNECTED

- Nothing in isolation
- Connected communities
- Connected to country
- Pathways to recovery



Safety

Context

Women's safety continues to be an issue of major concern in NSW and more specifically in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions.

Domestic violence assault rates increased in 2024-25 compared to previous years, according to BOCSAR, and domestic violence continues to be the leading cause of homelessness for women. SAHSSI sees the pointy end of this as we work to support women as they recover from the trauma of DV and rebuild their lives.

Safe and Together

Over four intensive days, all SAHSSI staff completed the Safe & Together Model Core training, a child-centred, strengths-based approach to supporting clients impacted by domestic violence.

Developed by the Safe & Together Institute, this internationally-recognised model ensures that our conversations and documentation are DV-informed rather than DV-destructive. It holds perpetrators accountable for their actions while recognising and reinforcing the strengths of the non-offending parent.

In enacting our commitment to ensuring our practice is DV-informed, SAHSSI has developed ongoing implementation and training plans to ensure the Safe & Together model constitutes a key pillar of our practice.

SWCYP Program

Our crisis refuges in Illawarra and Shoalhaven became a short-term home for 95 people aged under 18 in 2024-25. SAHSSI employs two specialist workers for children and young people to provide support for these young clients. These services include brief intervention counselling, psychoeducation, parenting support, referral support and advocacy.

Our specialist workers also ran over 55 events for children and youth living in our crisis refuges in 2024-25, ranging from cooking sessions to playground excursions.

Stats

1,583
clients or

64%
of clients

seeking support from SAHSSI in 2024-25 listed 'domestic and family violence' as the primary reason for seeking help.

4%
of clients

listed 'non-family violence' as the primary reason for seeking support.





SWCYP Symbio Visit



Christmas at Nowra Refuge

Start Safely Pilot

97

clients receiving housing
subsidies through Start Safely.

SAHSSI continued to work with Homes NSW to deliver Rent Choice Start Safely assistance in 2024-25. 164 clients were received through the joint program, with 97 clients safely housed and in receipt of rental subsidies.

The program delivered great outcomes for clients via co-location of Homes NSW within the SAHSSI head office, and trauma-informed practices.

Following a review of a range of programs offered by Homes NSW and given the current fiscal environment, Homes NSW decided to end the Start Safely pilot program effective from 30 June 2025.

Homes NSW will continue to deliver Start Safely and SAHSSI will continue to work collaboratively with Homes NSW to deliver the best possible outcomes and support to our clients.

Interagency Collaborations

SAHSSI continues to be an active member of many local interagency groups focused on women and children's safety, collaborating actively with our peers and partner agencies to ensure women's safety in our region. These collaborations include:

- Safety Action Meetings with local agencies to discuss high risk DV cases
- Illawarra and Shoalhaven Local Implementation and Coordination Committee for housing and mental health
- Shoalhaven Child and Family Interagency
- Illawarra Committee against domestic and family violence.

Red Flags Prevention

While SAHSSI primarily responds to violence after the fact by supporting women impacted by violence, SAHSSI is also taking an active role in preventing DV from occurring, delivering healthy relationships programs to local youth through our Red Flags program.

In 2024-25, SAHSSI delivered Red Flags to hundreds of students at local schools including Edmund Rice and St Mary's Star of the Sea College.

Housing

Context

The Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions, like much of NSW, have seen housing affordability decline year-on-year.

Housing prices have risen by about 8% per year in the Illawarra region for the last five years. Rents are at a record high; rents grew 39% in the past 4 years. Rental vacancies in this region are less than 1%, and fewer than 0.5% of rentals available are affordable for someone on income support.

These factors are creating housing affordability issues for all people; but they are especially pronounced for women impacted by domestic violence, single mothers, and single older women, who collectively constitute the majority of SAHSSI's client base.

Our Housing

SAHSSI provides housing and outreach support to women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Our accommodation includes:

- 2 crisis refuges in the Illawarra
- 1 crisis refuge in the Shoalhaven
- 2 temporary accommodation sites in the Illawarra
- 39 transitional housing properties in the Illawarra and
- 2 temporary accommodation sites in the Shoalhaven.

Our aim is to support women and their children into housing that is safe, secure and affordable.

Stats

36%

of clients

in 2024-25 listed housing issues, such as affordability stress, eviction or lack of options as their primary reason for seeking support.

67%

of clients

stayed in short-term or emergency accommodation in the month prior to seeking support, due to lack of other options.

Stats

179

women and children stayed in our **crisis refuges**, for a total of

14,527

bed nights.

167

women and children stayed in our **transitional housing**, for a total of

33,962

bed nights.

485

people stayed in our **temporary accommodation**, for a total of

15,260

bed nights. **29 nights** was the average stay.



Jumbulla opening with Alison Byrne MP



Jumbulla Safe Places

In October 2024, SAHSSI proudly opened Jumbulla, an 8-unit refuge providing temporary accommodation for women and their children leaving domestic violence.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services' Safe Places Emergency Accommodation Program, Jumbulla provides dignity and security in self-contained housing units with on-site case management support. Since opening, Jumbulla has housed 96 women and their children.

Core and Cluster Refuge, Illawarra

In 2024, SAHSSI successfully secured a grant from the NSW Government's Core and Cluster Program to create a women's refuge in northern Illawarra. SAHSSI acquired a property in late 2024 and is currently undertaking renovations, with the property to be tenable by early 2026.

Wilga Transitional Accommodation

SAHSSI was also successful in securing funding from Housing Australia's Crisis and Transitional Accommodation Program to provide additional 6 units of transitional housing in the Illawarra, both for women and children impacted by DV and for older women facing homelessness. SAHSSI acquired the property in 2025 and is currently undertaking renovations.

Tenancy Team

Following an evaluation of a pilot, SAHSSI created a new Tenancy Team in 2024-25. This team, headed by our Housing and Asset Manager, is responsible for case management and tenancy management across all of SAHSSI's transitional properties. This shift towards more specialised case management is resulting in efficiencies and better outcomes for clients.

Advocacy

A key pillar of SAHSSI's mission is to advocate for changes that will improve the lives of our clients. In 2024-25, we ramped up our efforts to advocate for policy and systems change to deliver the kinds of services and funding our clients need to help them establish safe, secure and affordable homes.

Policy Submissions

SAHSSI submitted policy submissions to a range of agencies, including:

- The NSW Audit Office's investigation into social housing applications and approvals
- Homes NSW's Draft Homelessness Plan
- The Homes for NSW Plan.

SAHSSI also advocated for funding increases to vital services and been actively involved in policy development and input through peak bodies including DVNSW and CHIA.

Partnerships and Interagencies

SAHSSI has been actively involved in local interagencies and partnerships relating to housing and homelessness, domestic violence and community service provision. These have included:

- Illawarra and Shoalhaven Local Implementation and Coordination Committees for the Housing and Mental Health agreement
- Safety Action Meetings to discuss high risk DV cases
- Illawarra Committee Against Domestic and Family Violence
- Shoalhaven DV Sub-committee
- Illawarra Aboriginal Community based working group.

In 2024-25, SAHSSI also solidified its many working relationships with local service providers, including Waminda, Healthy Cities, Watershed, Illawarra Aboriginal Corporation, and the Co-ordinator Public Health Network.

Mardi Gras

In 2025, SAHSSI proudly marched in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras for the first time. Over 30 staff and family members marched in solidarity with LGBTQIA+ rights and to celebrate Australia's wonderfully diverse queer community. Long-term SAHSSI supporters Ellie Maye Belly Dance marched with us and choreographed our routine.





DVNSW Conference

DVNSW Conference: 50 Years

SAHSSI staff members attended the DVNSW Conference celebrating 50 years of action and advocacy on women's safety in NSW. The Conference attendance kicked off a major focus on learning and staff development throughout 2024-25.

SAHSSI a finalist: Illawarra Women in Business awards

As an emerging leader in the space of women's housing services, SAHSSI was recognised as a finalist in the Illawarra Women in Business awards in 2025.

We were thrilled to be recognised among an incredible cohort of peers doing great charitable work in the region.



Key Projects

Create and Connect

SAHSSI piloted an art therapy program for clients impacted by DV in 2024-25. 9 clients participated in the pilot, led by a qualified art therapist.

Participants learned new skills, created artworks and developed social connections in a safe environment. The program culminated in an exhibition in Port Kembla of participants' work in May 2025.



"Thank you for opening the door for me for art therapy, and for providing me with this much needed (and now treasured) tool in my toolbox"

**SAHSSI client and
Create and Connect participant**

Solar, Air-con and Wifi for our Refuges

In 2024-25, SAHSSI was successful in securing funding to help us install solar panels, air conditioning and wifi for our crisis refuges.

Through the NSW Government's Community Housing Energy Performance Grant, SAHSSI secured funding for solar panels for the Bana, Gadhu and Jeera refuges, as well as air conditioning for private rooms in Gadhu and common rooms in Jeera.

These installations are now complete, and will both improve thermal comfort for families in our crisis accommodation as well as reduce the operational cost of

these refuges for SAHSSI, allowing us to divert savings to client support.

We were also successful through the NSW Government's Community Building Partnership for funding for solar panels at our new Jumbulla refuge, a parent education space at our Bana refuge, and wifi for our Gadhu refuge.

Wifi for our Jeera refuge was funded by the Lendlease Community Grants. Wifi will provide important connectivity to support children doing homework, mothers with housing and employment applications, and reducing living costs for women staying in our refuges.

Rent Choice Youth

SAHSSI partners with Homes NSW to deliver Rent Choice Youth, a program for people aged between 16 and 24 requiring medium-term support because they are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

19 clients were supported to sustain their private rental properties, 16 of these participating in either employment or training/education.

"I found the Rent Choice Youth program really helpful and can't speak highly enough of the program. I am thankful for the program as it helped me to get solid ground under my feet to achieve stability."

I don't think I could have achieved stability without help from Rent Choice Youth program and SAHSSI CM during the past 30 months."

"During my time on the program, I engaged in Domestic Violence Counselling, Drug and Alcohol Counselling, completed a Healthy Relationship course, completed ADHD Course and attended required medical appointments.

I have secured a part-time contract at work and have saved enough money to purchase my first car.

I now have a POSITIVE rental history – and have secured Long Term Housing. I have learnt skills to live a meaningful life reliant on myself."

Rent Choice Youth client

Pets in our Refuges

Many women attempting to leave domestic violence are forced to leave behind pets, due to barriers faced in finding support while accompanied by a pet.

SAHSSI has sought to address these barriers by ensuring that our refuges are pet-friendly, allowing clients to bring their furry family members when they stay in our crisis accommodation.



Shoalhaven Homeless Hub

SAHSSI's Shoalhaven Homeless Hub provides a critical drop-in service for anyone in the Shoalhaven experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

734

clients served at The Hub in 2024-25.

The Hub is able to support our clients thanks in large part to the dedication of our volunteers, as well as UOW and Tafe Student Placements. The hub is very fortunate to work in a lovely community that continually donates to allow our service to provide items such as basic food essentials, toiletries and many other items.

Breakfast Program

Thanks to the generous support of The Bakehouse Nowra (Huskisson Bakery), the Homeless Hub serves fresh hot pies and cakes every day from 10am to 1pm.

For many of our clients who are sleeping rough, this simple act of kindness provides not just a meal, but comfort, warmth, and a reminder that our community cares.



*Street Side Medics
Launch at The Hub*

Street Side Medics Partnership

People experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience poor health than others in our community; they are also less likely to access appropriate health services. The Homeless Hub recently launched a partnership with Street Side Medics, a mobile medical service dedicated to people experiencing homelessness. Each Tuesday, the Street Side Medics van pulls up at the Homeless Hub, providing free primary healthcare services to clients.

Events at the Hub

Each year, with the assistance of our community donations, we have a special event for all our clients of the hub with a beautiful Christmas Day Lunch. The day is filled with a hot Christmas lunch, live music and Santa playing a major role in giving out gifts to our clients and families. This year the lunch was provided by Unions Shoalhaven who also assisted in serving this delicious lunch and the majority of presents were donated by Nowra Bowling Club and local members Fiona Phillips MP and Liza Butler MP.

The Hub hosted Homelessness Week on a beautiful day without rain, with many clients in attendance alongside a wide representation of many local Shoalhaven services. The day consisted of live music, free hot lunch for everyone, haircuts, free clothing and items plus food hampers and toiletries.

South Coast Correctional Centre

The Hub partners with the South Coast Correctional Centre, which donates items made by the Centre's inmates from recycled materials to the Hub. The Hub often plays an important role in supporting inmates as they reintegrate back into the community following their release.

Services at the Hub

The Hub hosts local services to assist clients in accessing essential services for health and dignity. These services include:

- Legal Aid
- Street Side Medics
- Hep C Testing
- Flu vaccinations
- Free hair cuts by Renae
- Energy Accounts Payment Assistance vouchers administrator.

Lockers for Clients

A key challenge for people experiencing homelessness is safely and securing storing their belongings. We are incredibly grateful to Matt Buckley and his family for kindly donating lockers to the Homeless Hub.

These lockers are a vital resource for our rough sleepers, giving them a safe place to store their belongings, especially important in our ever-changing weather conditions. This generous act helps bring dignity, security, and peace of mind to many in our community.



Cultural Safety

32%

of the clients we supported in 2024-25 identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.

Lowitja Institute Cultural Safety Audit

In 2024, the SAHSSI Leadership Team undertook an organisational Cultural Safety Audit, to assess SAHSSI's capacity to deliver culturally safe services to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. Results identified that SAHSSI's Cultural Safety practices are 'minimal', reflecting that we are at the early stages of our cultural safety journey.

Key actions to move us towards a more advanced rating include formally embedding cultural safety across key areas of the organisation; we have begun this process by employing Cultural Leads, preparing a Cultural Framework and a Cultural Safety Action Plan, undertaking organisation-wide Cultural Safety training, and more.

SAHSSI will revisit the audit every second year to ensure we are progressing towards the 'Developed' rating.

Cultural Leads

SAHSSI has begun employing two Aboriginal Cultural Leads, one based in the Shoalhaven (Yuin Country) and one in the Illawarra (Dharawal Country). These roles provide leadership, guidance, and support across the organisation, ensuring continual growth in our cultural competency.

Cultural Safety Action Plan

In 2024-25, SAHSSI developed our first Cultural Safety Action Plan, the actions of which correspond directly to key areas in the Lowitja Institute's audit process. The Action Plan represents the first major steps for SAHSSI in formally embedding cultural safety throughout the entire organisation, with actions for staff at all levels.

Cultural Framework

In 2024-25, SAHSSI developed a Cultural Framework setting out SAHSSI's commitment to cultural inclusion, reconciliation, and continuous development, both as an organisation and as individuals within it. It outlines our values, responsibilities and strategies to create a culturally safe and responsive service for Aboriginal clients, staff, and communities. The Framework sets a path for us to follow towards becoming a truly culturally safe organisation.

Step Up Training and Cultural Immersion

As part of our commitment to cultural safety and anti-racism, all SAHSSI staff this year participated in cultural learning, including Cultural Immersion training, decolonisation training, and Step Up training to challenge racism and inequality. This training is now considered core training and will be refreshed regularly.

Aboriginal-Identified Positions

In 2024-25, SAHSSI recruited 3 Aboriginal staff for identified positions. SAHSSI aims to increase the representation of Aboriginal people on our staff; we also hope to eventually have an Aboriginal-identified staff member at each of our locations. We are thrilled to welcome our new staff on board and have enjoyed their contributions to the organisation so far.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (Harmony Week)



Our People and Systems



Becoming an Employer of Choice for Women

This year, SAHSSI prioritised becoming an employer of choice for women. Recognising that our sector, being female-dominated, has been historically underfunded and underpaid, we have taken steps to ensure our staff receive the employment benefits they require and deserve to support them in supporting others.

New benefits announced this year for SAHSSI staff include:

- Paid maternity leave, bringing us closer to industry standard (two weeks paid leave)
- Wellbeing days replacing rostered days off, recognising the need to provide additional leave for staff given the challenging nature of our work (12 per year pro rata)
- External supervision, providing trauma-informed support for staff and coaching our leadership to effectively support their staff.

SAHSSI continues to review and refine our benefits to ensure that we position ourselves as an employer of choice for women into the future.

Awards

SAHSSI was delighted to see three of our staff recognised in regional awards in 2024-25.

Shoalhaven Homeless Hub Team Leader Julie Bugden was Highly Commended for Shoalhaven Citizen of the Year, in recognition of her tireless advocacy for those experiencing homelessness in the Shoalhaven.

Our Illawarra Outreach Team Leader, Mellanie Smede, who this year celebrated 27 years of service with SAHSSI, was a finalist for the Wollongong Citizen of the Year award. Mellanie was recognised for her ongoing contributions to service and care for vulnerable women in the Illawarra.

SAHSSI Cultural Lead Evie Rankmore won the 2025 Auntie Mary Davis International Women's Day Scholarship, awarded by the Illawarra International Women's Day Committee. The award recognises Evie's longstanding commitment to justice and opportunity for Aboriginal women in our region.



Mellanie Smede
Citizen of Year Ceremony

Mental Health Matters

SAHSSI engaged local organisation Mental Health Matters to guide us on our journey toward becoming a truly psychologically safe organisation. Through surveys, group work and an organisational audit, we identified what matters most in supporting the health and wellbeing of our staff.

Recognising that our people are our greatest assets, we explored the changes needed to strengthen workplace culture and safety. This investment in our teams directly enhances the safety and support we provide to the women and children who rely on our services. Many of the benefits that now position SAHSSI as an employer of choice arose directly from the Psychological Safety Survey.

Training

SAHSSI has doubled our training budget and committed to providing staff with the skills required to do their job safely and professionally, in line with SAHSSI's strategic plan priorities. This year, staff undertook a number of key training programs, including:

- Trauma-informed leadership: a multi-day course for the leadership team, focused on supporting and supervising staff who work in trauma-exposed roles;
 - Safe and Together training: a four-day course for caseworkers focused on establishing DV-informed practice;
 - Step Up training: a full-day course focused on equipping staff to stand up to racism and discrimination; and
 - Cultural Immersions: full-day training sessions focused on understanding cultural safety and the racist legacies of colonialism endured by Indigenous Australians.
-

Our Systems

SAHSSI is committed to becoming a more flexible workforce and has begun replacing desktop computers with laptops across the organisation, to enable more flexible working arrangements for staff.

SAHSSI has also moved to a new workforce and payroll management system, Definitiv. This system makes managing leave and payroll more accessible for staff and integrates a number of older systems for our accounting staff.

Our commitment to safety has also been reflected in a new focus on cyber security. SAHSSI undertook a cyber security audit and adopted recommendations that have seen us move to Maturity Level 1.

Our Supporters

SAHSSI's ongoing impact is made possible in large part due to the generosity of our supporters. We are grateful for the support of our donors in 2024-25:

2ST	Horizon Bank	Wollongong
Awaken Church	Huskisson Sports Club	SAHSSI 30
BaiMed Physiotherapy	Illawarra Quilters	Saltwater Gardens
Bakehouse Delights	Jervis Bay District Branch Country Women's Association	Seven Day Adventist Church
Bakehouse Espresso Group	La Mason Quilting	Share the Dignity
Bay and Basin Amnesty	Latitude South Coast	Shoalhaven City Council
Berry District Garden Club	Legal Aid NSW	Shoalhaven Family Law
Berry Lions Club	LJ Hooker Sanctuary Point & Vincentia	South Coast Correctional Centre – Recycling Plant inmates
Booderee National Park	Mal from Kiama Sleeping Bags	South Coast Correctional Facility
Bunnings	Matt & Mel Buckley	Staff at Shoalhaven Ex Servos Club
Care Essentials - Kiama	Need a Feed	St Georges Basins Lions Club
Country Women's Association (Jervis Bay and Nowra)	Nowra Bowling Club	The Nappy Collective
Culburra Beach, Callala & Currarong Anglican Church	Nowra Private Hospital	Two Good Co
Culburra Bowling Club	Oak Flats Bowling Club	Unions Shoalhaven
Department of Corrections (Inmate Program)	Office of Responsible Gambling	View Club, St Georges Basin
Edmond Rice College	Power 94.9 FM	West's Illawarra
Ellie Maye Belly Dance	Professional Holiday Homes	Wollongong Dolls Club
Harbourside Villains	Raine and Horne Helensburgh	Woolworths – Nowra
Heart Centre	Ray White Culburra & Callala	Zonta Berry
Helensburgh Lions Club	Red Berries Quilting Group	
HMAS Albatross	Rotary Club of West	

SAHSSI would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to the MPs who coordinate community support to SAHSSI each year.

Alison Byrnes MP
Anna Watson MP
Fiona Phillips MP
Liza Butler MP
Paul Scully MP
Ryan Park MP





Financials

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2025.

ASSETS	2025	2024
CURRENT ASSETS	\$	\$
Cash and cash equivalents	2,850,016	5,751,468
Trade and other receivables	1,565,012	23,978
Grants receivable	3,604,064	-
Other assets	261,001	145,078
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	8,280,093	5,920,524
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Financial assets	298,183	430,709
Property, plant and equipment	13,351,945	5,473,822
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	13,650,128	5,904,531
TOTAL ASSETS	21,930,221	11,825,055
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	666,544	191,525
Borrowings	396,501	771,226
Provisions	6,744,715	1,564,861
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	7,807,760	2,527,612
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	1,038,822	950,870
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,038,822	950,870
TOTAL LIABILITIES	8,846,582	3,478,482
NET ASSETS	13,083,639	8,346,573
EQUITY		
Reserves	2,282,402	2,282,343
Retained earnings	10,801,237	6,064,230
TOTAL EQUITY	13,083,639	8,346,573

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025.

	2025	2024
	\$	\$
Revenue	17,077,748	9,861,874
Other income	55,146	14,556
Employee benefits expense	(5,357,491)	(4,573,112)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	(135,432)	(94,282)
Finance costs	(6,007)	(10,610)
Other expenses	(6,896,958)	(4,803,810)
Profit before income tax	4,737,006	394,616
Tax expense	-	-
Profit for the year	4,737,006	394,616



Ambitions for the Year Ahead

SAHSSI looks forward to continuing the changes and improvements we have embarked upon in 2024-25 in the coming year. Our particular emphasis will be on:



Opening our new accommodation sites



Releasing and implementing our Practice Framework, our Cultural Framework and our Staff Support Framework



Rolling out and reviewing the new program of staff benefits



Solidifying new partnerships, including with the Co-ordinator Primary Health Network, who will deliver health care to Shoalhaven clients by co-locating staff in our Nowra refuge and



Following through on our training program by embedding new ways of working.

SAHSSI is committed to becoming the best organisation we can be for our staff, our community and our clients. We look forward to broadening and deepening our impact in 2025-26.



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