

The background of the cover features large, overlapping circular shapes in shades of purple and teal. A thick white curved line separates the top header area from the main content area.

mackay
women's
services

ANNUAL
REPORT
2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Mackay Women's Services acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work.

We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to Elders past and present. We acknowledge and honour their connection to Country.

Mackay Women's Services also acknowledges all other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who call the region home.

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

Mackay Women's Services acknowledges and deeply respects the courage, strength, and resilience of individuals with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence.

Your voices, stories, and advocacy are vital in shaping safer communities and informing meaningful change.

We honour your journey, recognise the pain and injustice you have endured, and commit to listening, learning, and standing with you in solidarity.

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Chairperson's Report

I am pleased to present the 2024 – 2025 Annual Report for Mackay Women's Services.

This year, we have continued to focus on building and growing our service.



Karen May
Chairperson, Mackay Women's Services

The restructure has now been embedded within the organisation, and we have recruited for a number of positions to build the capacity of the team and deliver much-needed services for women, children, and men impacted by domestic and family violence.

This year has also seen a change in State Government, and we congratulate the Honourable Amanda Camm MP on her appointment as Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services, and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence.

We look forward to working with the Minister and her Department.

Key highlights for the year.

- The consolidation of the Mackay Women's Centre Inc. and Domestic Violence Resource Service (Mackay & Region) Inc. into the Domestic Violence Resource Service Ltd. has been a complex piece of work. I would like to thank Carole Cooper from Carole Cooper Consulting and Steven Grant, Special Counsel at MinterEllison, for their assistance in finalising this matter.
- In September 2024, we welcomed our new CEO, Belinda Berg. Belinda brings a wealth of knowledge, skills, and expertise in the health sector, having previously worked for Queensland Health and Mackay Private Hospital. Together with the Senior Leadership Team, Stacy Irwin, Services Manager, and Sarah Jones-Trifelly, Business Manager, she has continued to develop their teams, with most staff and team leader positions now filled.

- I would like to acknowledge and thank Carole Cooper, our interim CEO, for leading and developing our organisation during the first quarter of the financial year. Carole's extensive knowledge of building and leading teams enabled a smooth and positive handover of the organisation to our new CEO.
- Carole, Belinda, Stacy, and Sarah, together with the Board, have been working with the team to foster a positive and supportive workplace culture where every member is valued and respected.
- During the financial year, the Board were engaged with an external consultant to develop a Director Skills Matrix and undertake a comprehensive capability and governance maturity review. The Board capability rating, coupled with the developed Board governance maturity rating and the Board competency profile, reflects that the Board's leadership is enabling sound practices and strong strategic governance.
- The service continues to be represented at the Mackay Regional Council Mayor's Domestic Violence Taskforce, with this year's focus on working with young people to explore respect and what it means to them. Sharing information between the network of Domestic and Family violence service providers and the Queensland Police Service has been beneficial in building strong relationships.
- Mackay Women's Services also hosted a meeting with members of the DFV Prevention Council, who were extremely complimentary of the Board regarding our service delivery.

- This year, we conducted an Expression of Interest process to recruit new Directors. I would like to formally welcome the recently appointed Directors, A/Prof Elissa Hatherly and Shannon Roberts Gibbs, and I look forward to working with them.

The Senior Leadership Team and Board have been progressing our four-year strategic plan. Alongside this, the Board and Senior Leadership Team have been updating the organisation's policies and procedures, ensuring we are well-positioned to continue delivering vital services to our clients and community.

Our CEO has been building strong community networks and highlighting the outstanding, client-focused services delivered by our team across the Greater Whitsunday Region.

As an organisation, we are committed to enhancing the lives of women and children across our region, while also working with men and young boys to develop positive behaviours.

We could not deliver our services without the support of all levels of Government, key stakeholder groups, other not-for-profit organisations, and the broader community.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has supported the organisation over the past 12 months; your ongoing support is invaluable. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the entire team at Mackay Women's Services for your commitment and dedication to improving the lives of the many people who have accessed our services during this time.

This year has been a significant undertaking, and on behalf of the Board of Directors, I sincerely thank everyone for their contributions and congratulate you on your achievements. It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to work with you all.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Board of Directors for your continued support and active participation in ensuring our organisation is diligently governed.

Over the past 12 months, the Board has worked tirelessly to position the organisation for a successful transition to a company limited by guarantee.

I extend my sincere thanks to Director / Treasurer Geoff O'Connor, Director / Secretary Amanda Lavarack, and Director Stacey Kreyts for your ongoing commitment and support. The work you have undertaken over the past year is greatly appreciated.

I also wish the incoming Board every success in the year ahead.

Karen May
Chairperson
Mackay Women's Services



MACKAY WOMEN'S SERVICES

STRATEGIC PILLARS
2023 - 2027

VISION

To enhance the lives of women, children and future generations.



1

OUR SERVICES

Grow our operational capacity and expand our services, ensuring a holistic response to community need.



2

OUR PEOPLE

Cultivate a thriving culture, lead inclusively, prioritise team well-being, and foster continuous learning.



3

OUR PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen partnerships, engage with diverse communities, and promote continuous learning and advocacy.



4

OUR COMMUNITY

Advocate for lasting change, partnering with key stakeholders, and listening to feedback to address emerging needs.

Our Values

- Holistic
- Ethical
- Respectful
- Socially Just

Our Approach

We hear and value the voices of women, children and men.

Our Purpose

Actively respond, support and educate through specialised services to meet individual and community needs.



CEO's Report

I am proud to present the 2024 – 2025 CEO Report for Mackay Women's Services.



Belinda Berg
CEO, Mackay Women's Services

As the new CEO, I take my responsibility to lead and deliver our services to the community incredibly seriously. The past 12 months have been some of the most rewarding of my career.

As this first year at the helm comes to a close, I look ahead to 2026 with optimism and pause to reflect on a new era for our service. Continuing the strong foundations laid by our former Interim CEO, Carole Cooper, our singular focus remained: maintaining a supportive and empowering environment for victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence, as well as for our dedicated team.

It has been a privilege to lead this team and collaborate with a diverse range of partners across sectors, working together to help as many women and children across Mackay, Whitsundays, and Isaac regions as possible.

We all understand how deeply DFV impacts our community - many in the community have a story that is close to home. At Mackay Women's Services, we pride ourselves on our collaborative approach, sharing knowledge and resources to improve outcomes for all adults and children affected. This year, our focus on community engagement – through in-person events, social media, networking, and revitalised outreach – has seen our visibility and service usage grow.

Notable Highlights in 2025

- Reached our goal of building a qualified, experienced team of clinicians
- Expanded with a new professional space to support clinical work and essential business operations
- Received an abundance of support from our community

Our People

Following a significant period of transformation, this year has brought the stability needed to cement our cultural and structural changes. We achieved our structural goal of building a strong, qualified team of 20 clinicians, supported by a well-curated business team. With all key leadership roles now filled, we have a robust leadership team guiding daily operations and strategic growth.

We continue to prioritise listening to our staff and acting on their feedback, reflected in a steady improvement in our employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS), maintaining a score of 31.

Our Clients

This year, we focused on improving operational efficiency and client experience, resulting in better support for victim-survivors. We are committed to ongoing investment in real-time service access and innovative delivery methods, including the use of technology platforms.

While the challenges our team face are often complex and confronting, we remain energised and focused on delivering client-centred services that meet people where they are - with empathy, innovation, and resilience.

Our Governance

Supported by a committed Board and a focused Leadership Team, we've made a measurable difference in the lives of hundreds of people to date. I'm proud to work alongside such a passionate and dedicated group. Together, we continuously review our operations to ensure our programs remain current, sustainable, and impactful.

Our Future

We are pleased to report a strong year of financial growth, including a number of successful grants. As we look ahead, our focus is on expanding our reach and offering but the continued support from business partners and donors is key to making this possible.

Our partnerships make the life-changing work we do possible. Without your support, we would not be able to provide safety, hope, and opportunity for so many. We are deeply grateful to our corporate partners, philanthropists, and donors who help us sustain and grow our services.

Note of Thanks

Whether through donations, time, or raising awareness, your support ensures that Mackay Women's Services is there for victim-survivors. We take seriously our responsibility to steward your contributions with care.

I remain committed to working with our team to ensure the sustainability and future growth of our organisation. While I hope for a future where services like ours are no longer needed, until that day comes, we will continue reaching further than ever before, removing barriers and walking alongside people impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence.

Belinda Berg
CEO
Mackay Women's Services

Our Impact



3,648

EPIISODES OF CARE



26,553 HOURS

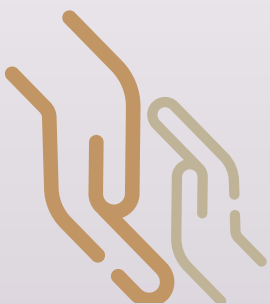
DIRECT CLIENT SUPPORT

This includes counselling and case management supports



132 MALES

ENGAGED WITH MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM



246 CHILDREN

Aged under 17 supported with DFV Counselling

COURT BASED SERVICES

799

PEOPLE SUPPORTED

WOMEN'S DFV COUNSELLING

Counselling and case management for female victim-survivors of DFV

CHILD & ADOLESCENT COUNSELLING

Therapeutic supports for children and young people who have experienced DFV

WELLBEING & RECOVERY SUPPORTS

Therapeutic groups, counselling and case management focused on improving wellbeing after an experience of DFV

HIGH RISK TEAM

Co-ordinated integrated service system responses to high-risk cases of DFV

COURT BASED SERVICES

Assisting community members with information about DFV matters at Magistrates Courts across our region

SEXUAL VIOLENCE COUNSELLING

Therapeutic case management and counselling for women and young women who have experienced sexual violence



KEY TRENDS

Significant increase in homelessness as a result of DFV or SV impacting upon safety of victim-survivor.

Cost of living is negatively impacting upon outcomes for victim-survivors and contributing to the prevalence of DFV in our community.

Rise in adult victim-survivors of child sexual assault seeking support.

Our People

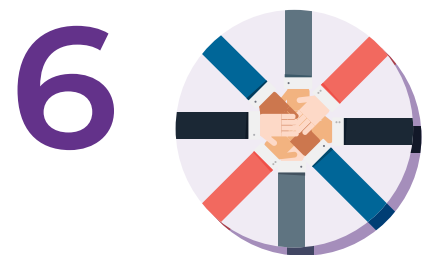
Our People, Our Team At the heart of everything we achieved this year is our team: passionate, skilled, and deeply committed to the communities we serve.

By prioritising the wellbeing, development, and safety of our people, we've created the foundation for high-impact, sustainable service delivery.

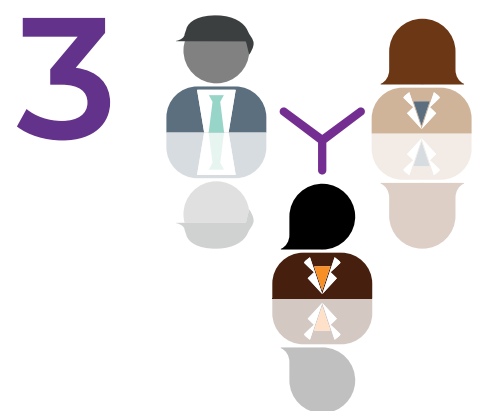
Qualified Counsellors & Case Managers



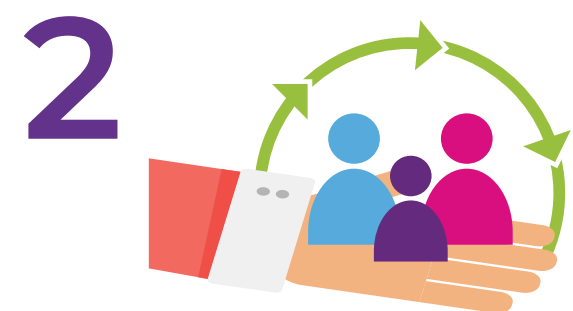
Business Team



Senior Leadership Team



Client Care Administrators



Recruitment Highlights

We recruited multiple roles during the year, strengthening our service capacity and expanding into new areas. Notably, we introduced several new roles, including:

Marketing & Community Engagement Coordinator to support targeted outreach and foster strong relationships with the community.

Client Care Administration team to coordinate emergency relief stock including food hampers, vouchers, and security devices and assist with reporting as it relates to provision of items to clients.

People & Culture Coordinator to lead initiatives across recruitment, onboarding, employee engagement, and wellbeing, enhancing the employee experience and supporting a positive workplace culture.

Financial Controller to oversee the finance department, ensuring financial health through accurate reporting, budgeting, and compliance.

Six Team Leaders responsible for providing high quality supervision, support and leadership for each of our program area's.

Front Office Team Leader: Leads and supports frontline service delivery, ensuring responsive client engagement and smooth operational coordination.

These roles reflect our evolving strategic priorities and commitment to innovation in service delivery.



Retention and Development

We continue to invest in our people through targeted professional development and retention strategies.

The Services Team area revamp was driven by our growing workforce and the need to create a space that supports both our current and future team members.

As our team continues to expand, we recognised the importance of ensuring the physical environment remains welcoming, functional, and reflective of our culture. The revamped space now features an open, fresh layout designed to foster collaboration, improve workflow, and uplift morale.



Workplace Health and Safety

Creating a psychologically safe and physically healthy workplace remains a top priority.

This year, we developed and implemented a Psychosocial Safety Action Plan to proactively address key risks impacting staff wellbeing. The plan is grounded in evidence-based strategies and tailored to the unique demands of our work.

Emotional Demands

The inherent nature of our work involves emotionally taxing situations, high levels of involvement, and frequent exposure to distress.

Our goal: To reduce the emotional impact of work on employees and strengthen coping mechanisms through structured support, supervision, and wellness strategies.

This action plan forms part of our broader commitment to workplace health and safety and is supported by our wellbeing initiatives, EAP access, and leadership engagement at all levels.

These initiatives were designed not only to build capability but also to reinforce our commitment to a workplace culture where staff feel valued and supported.

Key Projects



Embedded Police Officer

Mackay Women's Services in partnership with the Queensland Police Service (QPS), remains committed to strengthening integrated responses to domestic and family violence (DFV) across the Mackay, Whitsunday, and Isaac regions. We recognise that high-risk victim-survivors of DFV often carry the impacts of significant trauma, which can affect many aspects of their lives.

To address this, Mackay Women's Services partnered with QPS' Domestic Family Violence and Vulnerable Persons Unit (DFVVPVU) to embed a DFV Specialist Police Officer within our service. This initiative ensures that individuals accessing this service receive timely, trauma-informed support and accurate information about their rights and available options. By working collaboratively, we aim to create a safer, more accessible pathway for victim-survivors to engage with police and receive care and advocacy.



Mackay Women's Services x North Queensland Women's Legal Service (NQWLS)

This year we celebrated a year of collaboration to positively impact women experiencing domestic and family violence in the region. What began as community legal education sessions delivered by North Queensland Women's Legal Services to support the Mackay Women's Services team in their service delivery to women, quickly developed into monthly free legal advice clinics for women who live in the area.

NQWLS has been offering community legal information sessions to the team at Mackay Women's Services since March 2024. These sessions cover topics such as legal processes, legal issues around domestic and family violence and recent changes to legislation or policy. The sessions are designed to support women in the community and equip frontline workers with relevant legal knowledge to be able to refer to women's legal services when necessary.

Grants



Grants

Mackay Women's Services was fortunate to secure several grants throughout the year, with support from the Mackay Regional Council's Community Impact Grant, the Mackay Community Foundation, and the Community Bank Sarina.

These contributions have been instrumental in strengthening our programs and services.

The Mackay Regional Council grant enabled the development of a new Mackay Women's Services website, improving accessibility to those seeking support.

Support from the Mackay Community Foundation funded the purchase of a new vehicle and brought specialised Tech-Facilitated Abuse training, delivered by Concentric Concepts, to our region.

In addition, the Community Bank Sarina provided funding for our Sarina Women's Group, allowing us to deliver professionally facilitated sessions for local women.



Community Engagement

This year, Mackay Women's Services committed to expanding our reach, strengthening community partnerships, and engaging with industries and individuals not traditionally connected to our services – but still impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence.

Over the past 12 months, we've significantly elevated our community engagement through a multi-channel approach that includes digital outreach, media, strategic partnerships, and event participation.

Our focus has been on increasing visibility, building trust, and fostering cross-sector collaboration.

Key Community Events and Participation

MWS actively participated in local and industry events including:

- Red Rose Rally
- Reclaim the Night
- Rotary Club of Mackay DFV Prevention Events
- Zonta High Tea
- Together for Shelter Expo
- Resource Industry Network Industry Lunch & International Women's Day High Tea
- Reconcile Life Goodway's Campaign

Key major initiatives included:

Christmas Hamper Campaign – 66 local contributors supported 168 families with essential items and gifts. Helping victim-survivors have a better Christmas.

Education is Power (International Women's Day) – over 50 attendees connected through sessions on financial literacy, employment, and housing, empowering women with knowledge and confidence.

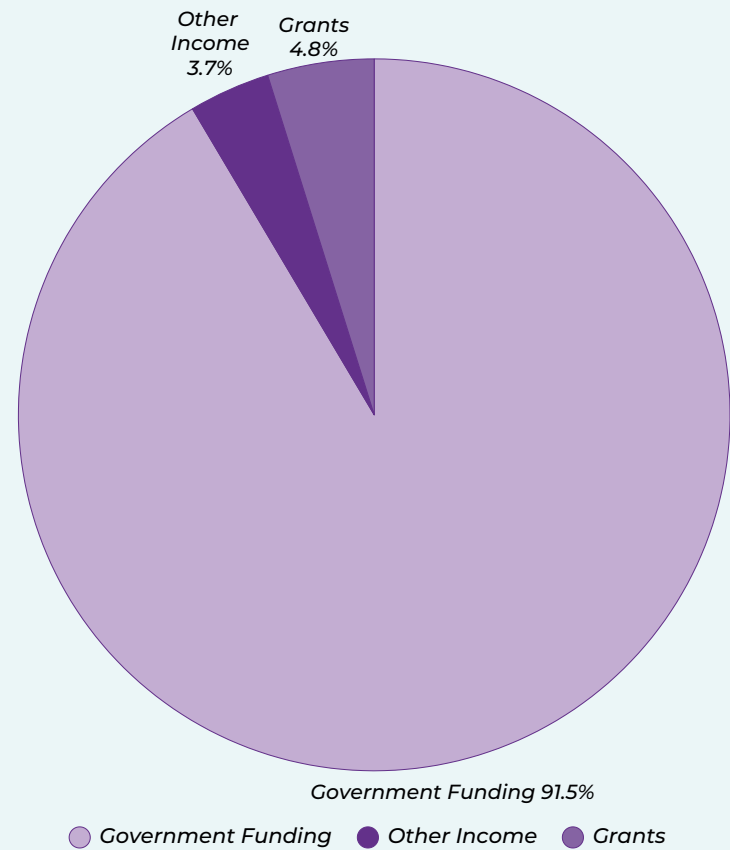
Annual Candlelight Ceremony – more than 50 people gathered to honour lives lost to DFV.

“Community engagement remains central to our mission.”

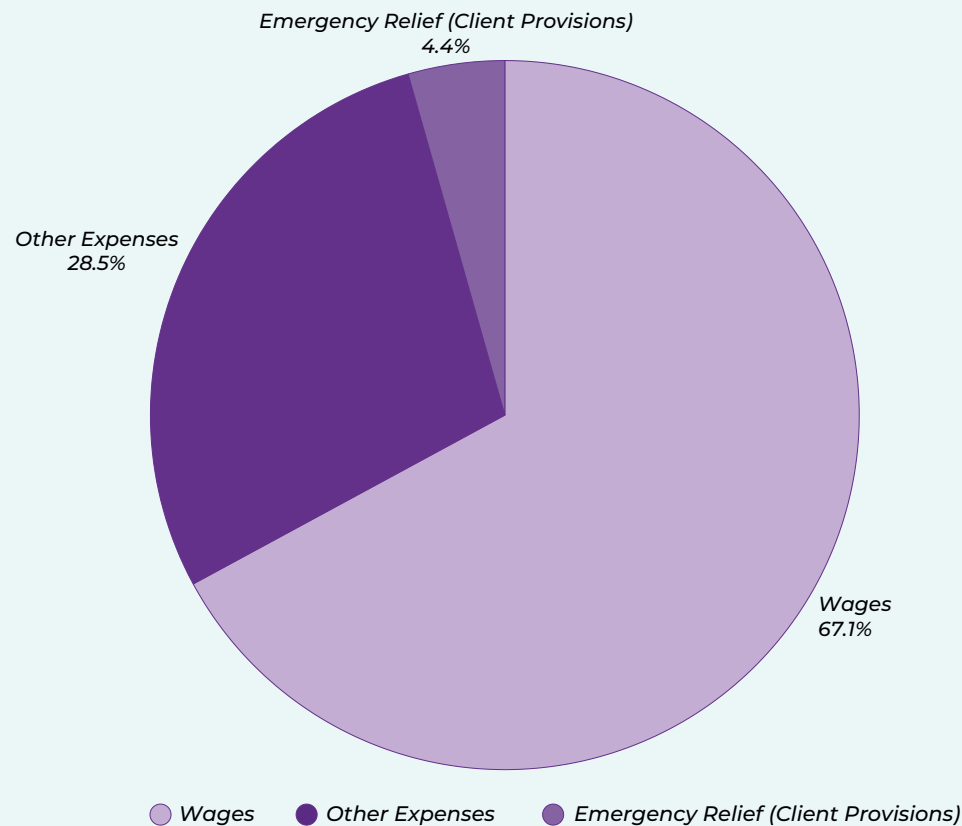


Financials

Income



Expenses



\$658,027.00

REGIONAL SUPPORT

Delivering services to the Whitsunday and Isaac regions



\$173,389.42

EMERGENCY RELIEF (Client Provisions + Security Upgrades)

Including accommodation, vouchers and food support



\$27,550.41

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing to invest in development and learning

Victim-Survivor Experience:

“**Because of this service, I finally started talking about what really happened to me.**

“*I was ashamed to go at first. I am glad they are helping me to deal with it all.*

“**I tried many other services, but never went to sessions because I had to wait for weeks. Here I was seen a few days after I called them.**

“*Very professional service. My children go to each session, I can see the difference in them.*

Employee Experience:

“**I feel like I have so much to give, even on the busiest days. Everyone wants to learn and support each other.**

“*I am so excited with the growth that MWS is going through, everything is organised and I feel confident doing my job.*

“*I love coming to work, the difference we make is really rewarding.*

Thank You

We are grateful to the Mackay, Whitsunday, and Isaac regions for their continued support, and extend our thanks to all who contributed through donations, sponsorships, and partnerships over the past year.



Plans for the Future

Mackay Women’s Services is pleased to be gaining momentum and are actively pursuing opportunities for innovation, growth and development.

In addition to continuing our delivery of high-quality services to more clients, more often, and with better outcomes, we are committed to ensuring our team are well supported with sufficient and comfortable workspaces, and consultation areas that are welcoming, warm and safe for our clients.

Optimising our current location with the active pursuit of additional space is a high priority for Mackay Women’s Services as we continue to build and grow our services, our team, and presence within the region.

Mackay Women’s Services will plan to also diversify its mode of delivery for our Men’s Behaviour Change Programs. Recognising the present barriers to engagement of these services and programs, particularly for remote regions, Mackay Women’s Services is leading the sector in developing a hybrid program to be delivered over the phone, in person and online.

This innovation creates opportunities for more clients to engage more frequently with better outcomes.



Our third major area of plans include developing and strengthening relationships with the corporate and business community.

We recognise that statistically, the business and corporate community are working with people directly impacted by domestic, family, and sexual violence.

We wish to seek opportunities to support, train, and educate our corporate and business partners for the safety and security of their team. We will also seek to establish formal partnerships with our business and corporate community for mutual gain and advancement.

2026 will be great.

MACKAY WOMEN'S SERVICES
ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRADITIONAL
OWNERS OF THE LAND ON WHICH WE
LIVE AND WORK. WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER
PEOPLES, AND TO ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT.



WE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA
ISLANDER COMMUNITY, RECOGNISING THEIR UNIQUE HISTORY,
CULTURE, AND ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR REGION.



WE ACKNOWLEDGE, CELEBRATE, AND STAND ALONGSIDE
LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITIES. WE ARE COMMITTED TO FOSTERING A
SAFE, RESPECTFUL, AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT.



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