



**SYDNEY  
WOMEN'S  
FUND**



**A voice  
for women  
a force  
for change**



A sub-fund of  
**SYDNEY  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**





#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land that we now call Sydney. We define Greater Sydney as the Sydney Metropolitan Area. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. This includes the Gadigal people of the Eora nation on the southern harbour shores and extends from Campbelltown, Dharawal people, in the south to the Northern Suburbs, Garigal and Caregal people, to Gosford and the Central Coast, the Darkinjung people and to Penrith in the west, Darug people. East to west it extends from the coast to the Blue Mountains, the Dharug and Gundungurra people, and north to south from the Hawkesbury River, Darug and Darkinjung people, and to the Illawarra Escarpment, the Dharawal people.

#### GEORGINA'S FOREWARD



## Supporting women, strengthening communities

**“Empowering and investing in women and families not only benefits individuals, but is essential for building strong communities.”**

As Chair of the Sydney Women's Fund Advisory Council, I have seen first-hand the life-changing impact we make when we collaborate with and support local grassroots charities that are focused on improving women's access to education and employment, reducing domestic and family violence, and increasing the inclusion and wellbeing of everyone who identifies and lives as a woman.

The Fund's most recent *Portrait V Women of Greater Sydney Research*, commissioned by Sydney Women's Fund and undertaken by leading Australian social researchers Dr. Rebecca Huntley and Kate Whelan, paints a vivid and concerning picture of the financial vulnerability experienced by a significant and growing number of Sydney women.

These struggles are underpinned by an inequity that compels women into caregiving roles, often sacrificing work and financial stability, despite their education and career aspirations.

Our aim is to ensure every woman has access to education, work, independence and belonging so they can have agency over their own lives and be free to make their own choices. By identifying and funding the programs needed, we aim to ensure all women and families can share equitably in all that Sydney has to offer.

We believe in a Sydney community where women and families can thrive and feel equally valued and safe. Where gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and socio-economic status don't determine our fate.

If you're passionate about advancing the lives of women and families in your city, the Sydney Women's Fund is for you. By working together, we can create real change.

**Georgina Byron AM**  
CHAIR, SYDNEY WOMEN'S  
FUND ADVISORY COUNCIL  
DEPUTY CHAIR, SYDNEY  
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



## OUR VISION

# Creating equity for women and families

**Sydney Women's Fund is dedicated to improving the lives of Sydney women and families. The Fund identifies, co-designs and funds innovative grassroots interventions to increase women's and girls' ability to determine their own futures.**

Established in 2008 as a key impact Fund of Sydney Community Foundation, the Fund's aim is to increase gender equity and opportunity. It works with local communities to create positive change, and has invested more than \$12m to help improve the lives of Sydneysiders, with a focus on women and families.

The Sydney Women Fund's Advisory Council and team work together with expert researchers, community leaders, and those with lived experience to identify the most pressing issues facing Sydney women and families.

The Fund advocates for change and invests in local people and organisations working to create real and lasting change in our communities.

We believe those who are closest to community issues are most qualified to solve them. This is why we listen to community leaders, and empower women and families in need.

Our aim is for every woman to have access to education, work, independence and belonging, to be free from violence and discrimination. We advocate for every woman to be able to participate fully in community life and achieve equity in all areas.

We work collaboratively with our partners to provide women with education scholarships, supported learning in safe spaces, job skills, training, work pathways and employment scholarships. We fund shelter for victims of domestic violence, personalised casework, referrals to specialists for physical and mental health care, and fund holistic trauma recovery programs.

We help newly arrived women to navigate the Australian settlement system, work and recruitment processes.

By providing funding and support to organisations that work towards gender equity, Sydney Women's Fund helps to create a stronger, more equal and fairer community for everyone.



IMAGE Dress for Success



## OUR PEOPLE

**“Sometimes I feel a bit stifled, a bit stuck ... I am working full time, balancing school activities and running to the supermarket to get milk and the essentials, then running back. There's not much time for me.”**

MICHELLE, 51, HARRIS PARK

# Why change is needed



## 41% OF WOMEN

Earn less than \$34K pa & 12% earn over \$100K pa

## MORE THAN A THIRD



Of women in Greater Sydney want to work more than they currently do. 42% have taken an action that has impacted their work to care for others



## 47% OF WOMEN

Are concerned about their personal safety. This number rises to 60% for women who rent and live alone



IMAGE The Warrior Woman Foundation



## 78% OF WOMEN

Say the cost of living is their top concern, this has risen from 63% in 2021



IMAGE Plate It Forward



## MORE THAN HALF

Are not sure or don't believe they will have enough to live comfortably when they retire

## 48% OF WOMEN



Have hybrid work arrangements, with the majority saying they have greater flexibility and less stress



IMAGE Women's & Girls' Emergency Centre



## SIX IN TEN WOMEN

Are somewhat or very concerned about housing affordability. 42% are in housing stress, an increase of 6% since 2021



## 39% OF WOMEN

Have experienced intolerance over the last 12 months, with sexism, racism and ageism being the most common



IMAGE The Social Outfit





**“If you are interested in changing the fate of girls and women who are less fortunate than yourself, please invest in the Sydney Women’s Fund.**

Your donation, big or small, will change the life of a girl or woman in our city who will go on to change the lives of their family, their community and in many cases become leaders that build a better city for all Sydneysiders.

Lots of drops make oceans, and so it is with giving. If every person gives what they can, collectively we can raise enough to create opportunity and equity for all women.”

**Wendy McCarthy**

CO-FOUNDER AND PATRON SYDNEY WOMEN’S FUND





## OUR FOCUS AREAS

# Inclusion and wellbeing

**A sense of belonging is essential to our wellbeing. Sydney Women's Fund believes that all women should feel welcomed, safe, and free to express themselves and thrive in Sydney.**

Community cohesion is the lifeblood of our society, however in recent decades we have become increasingly disconnected. *The Sydney Women's Fund Portrait V Women of Greater Sydney Research* shows that 63 per cent of women are concerned about their personal health and wellbeing.

Despite being mostly satisfied with their community and where they live, only a third of Sydney women (34%) feel like a valued member of their community.

This is why Sydney Women's Fund invests in programs to promote inclusion,

wellbeing and belonging for vulnerable women and families; single mothers, older women, Indigenous women and girls, migrant, refugee and asylum seeker women and families, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

We achieve our goals through funding and supporting welcoming neighbourhood and community centres, cultural initiatives and bespoke programs that bring women and families together.

The programs we fund range from the creation of shared gardens within older women's community housing projects, to culturally appropriate healing circles for women displaced by war and conflict. We offer employment opportunities in social enterprises where women can share and express their unique cultural talents, and provide women with mentoring to help them become leaders and changemakers in their communities.

Sydney Women's Fund aims to provide connection opportunities for all women in Greater Sydney, especially those at risk of social isolation



IMAGE Refugee Advice & Casework Service



## OUR PEOPLE



**“When I came to the centre, I saw the women sewing and I knew that I wanted to be a part of this group. It just touched my heart.**

Before I joined this group, I was at home looking after my family and grandkids. I didn't go out much except for things like shopping. It is really nice being part of a group of women you connect with and have the same interests, learning new things together. This is a good way to learn because you feel supported and you are not afraid to make mistakes. It is so nice to be a part of a group of women from different cultural backgrounds like me. We learn from each other and share stories about our different cultures and we share food.”

CSS SEWING GROUP PARTICIPANT



 OUR PEOPLE

“The client we referred was a mother of three small children and victim-survivor of domestic violence.

They were transferred into a new house with nothing but clothes and a few mattresses. Through the work of this charity and the generosity of their donors, she now has a full house of furniture and a safe, comfortable home that she and her children are proud of.”

CASEWORKER FROM WIRRINGA BAIYA ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE, RELOVE PARTNER

OUR FOCUS AREAS

## Safety and crisis

**Sydney Women's Fund supports programs that provide the essentials women and their children need to rebuild their lives after trauma. Domestic violence can take many forms. It can include physical and emotional harm, sexual and financial abuse, exclusion and isolation.**

Of the women who participated in our *Portrait V Women of Greater Sydney Research* survey, 34 per cent said that family violence is one of the most pressing issues that need to be addressed, and 39 per cent of women had experienced some form of intolerance in the past 12 months; sexism, ageism and racism being the most common.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 25% of women in NSW have experienced violence, emotional abuse, or economic abuse by a cohabiting partner since the age of 15.

An absence of housing, basic amenities, a safe environment and food insecurity expose women and children to a cycle of disadvantage.

Projects we fund give women in crisis a safe place to stay, appliances and furnishings, food, financial support and access to services that can help them recover from abuse and plan for the future.

We focus on early intervention programs to reduce violence, working with young men and women, helping them learn about respectful relationships.

Our charity partners assist women on their journey from leaving a violent home situation and formulating a safe way to leave, to find new accommodation, as well as free legal advice and relocation services. We support healing and rehabilitative retreats for domestic violence survivors.

Our programs provide holistic support to vulnerable women and children, helping them to rebuild their lives in safety.





## OUR FOCUS AREAS

# Education and employment

**Education empowers women and girls to make informed decisions about their lives, to develop the skills and knowledge needed to become independent, active and engaged members of their community. Education also means better employment opportunities, improved health outcomes and reduced gender inequity.**

The women who participated in our *Portrait V Women of Greater Sydney Research* expressed the need to balance a decent income with the kind of flexibility they need to care for children, parents and family, and themselves.

More than three in 10 Sydney women (34%) want to work more than they currently do, and 42% of women have taken an action that has impacted their work to care for others, such as resigning or reducing work hours.

At Sydney Women's Fund, our education and employment programs focus on providing supported learning in safe spaces, academic scholarships for gifted young women, job skills, training, mentoring and employment scholarships, and work pathways for women exiting prison.

For many years we have been funding access to education and employment pathways for disadvantaged and culturally diverse women living in some of the most disadvantaged pockets of South Western Sydney. Programs that provide childcare are prioritised, so these women can enter the workforce more easily, sometimes as the first in their family to do so.

We support the development of local social enterprises - low-risk, safe environments - that offer work experience and increase women's future employability, while most importantly building skills and confidence.

We focus on funding programs and interventions that remove common barriers to work participation.

Education and employment projects supported by Sydney Women's Fund donors can break the cycle of intergenerational poverty and empower women and girls to take control of their lives. Taking part in these programs changes the lives of women, their families and future generations.



IMAGE Plate It Forward



### OUR PEOPLE

**“The Sydney Women’s Fund Future Changemaker Scholarship has been enormously helpful over the past two years for my schooling life. I use the laptop almost every day. The pre-paid Mastercard has allowed me to buy school necessities such as stationery, books, uniform, excursions and a printer for our home.”**

MAXINE, YEAR 11

IMAGE Harding Miller Education Foundation





**SYDNEY  
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FUND**

By Sydney  
Community  
Foundation

**Since 2008, Sydney  
Women's Fund has provided  
vital and life-changing  
support to vulnerable women  
and families in our communities,  
but we need your help.**

We offer simple and effective tax-deductible giving by individuals, families, companies and sporting and cultural groups. Consider leaving a legacy, your gift has the potential to change the lives of women and families for generations to come. Speak to our team who can help you give well locally.

**Contact: [hello@sydneywomensfund.org.au](mailto:hello@sydneywomensfund.org.au)  
(02) 8030 7050**



[sydneywomensfund.org.au](https://sydneywomensfund.org.au)