

# **QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC. ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16**



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# About the Queensland Working Women's Service Inc.

Since 1994 Queensland Working Women's Service (QWWS) has been providing free, specialist information advice and representation to vulnerable women about work related problems.

## Mission Statement

QWWS provides a service that empowers and advocates for the attainment of social justice for women in the workplace.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is for equitable and fair outcomes for Queensland women and youth in their employment. We strive to be a leading source of expertise in improving the status of women in the workplace.

## Value Statement

*We promote equality in the workplace through:*

1. challenging gender-based inequality
2. challenging the exploitation of young people in the workplace.

*Our work is characterised by:*

Working with each other and those outside our organisation in ways that are inclusive, collaborative, consultative, respectful and consistent with a feminist approach.

## QWWS Inc. Goals

- 1) QWWS Inc. has best-practice governance systems and processes for service delivery, administration and sustainable management.
- 2) QWWS Inc. makes a significant contribution to systemic advocacy about workplace equity for women and young people.
- 3) QWWS Inc. has strong networks with relevant government and non-government agencies.

## QWWS Inc. Objectives

- 4.1 The principal object for which the Association is established is the relief of poverty, suffering, distress, misfortune, disability and helplessness in the context of women in the workplace.
- 4.2 The Association pursues its principal purpose by:
  - a) Providing practical assistance to women who are suffering due to a combination of their special vulnerability and being exploited or unfairly treated in their workplace.

This may include providing information about their legal rights; supporting women to negotiate with their employer; representing women in negotiations with their employer; counseling; and referrals to other services; and

- b) Advocating for systemic social and legal change for the benefit of all women with special vulnerability who experience exploitation or unfair treatment in the workplace.

4.3 The Association may pursue such other incidental objects as may be deemed reasonably necessary or incidental to the carrying out of the principal purpose.

4.4 In this clause (a):

- a) 'Special vulnerability' means vulnerability to exploitation and unfair treatment for reasons including, but not limited to: poverty, disability, age, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander status, limited understanding of the English language, and family violence;
- b) 'Exploited or unfairly treated' includes unfair dismissal and other forms of termination prohibited by Australia's employment and industrial relations laws; sexual harassment; violence; abuse; and bullying.

QWWS particularly targets services to workers in a disadvantaged bargaining position or in low paid or insecure work who are:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- From Culturally diverse backgrounds
- Living with a disability
- From regional, rural or remote areas
- Managing family responsibilities
- Entering or reentering the workforce
- On temporary work visas

**QWWS was funded to deliver industrial relations advisory services to vulnerable women workers for the 2016 financial year by the Federal Government Fair Work Ombudsman with supplementary funding from the Queensland Office of Industrial Relations.**

## Management Committee Report - from the Chair

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It has been an uncertain and challenging year for the service and on behalf of the Management Committee of The Queensland Working Women's Service Inc., I extend my warm thanks to my fellow Committee members, to Kerriann Dear the Director and to the staff of the service. QWWS with limited resources has focused our attention and delivery of services to the most vulnerable women throughout the state. In the increasingly complex and legalistic arena of industrial relations, women, particularly the most vulnerable, report back to us that this type of access to quality advice and assistance is highly valued.

The insecurities faced by QWWS about our ongoing funding from the Commonwealth Government have dominated the attention of the Committee who have had to make difficult decisions in an ongoing effort to keep the service going until some certainty could be established. The funding concerns do not change the need for the service and QWWS continues to respond to the high volume of requests for work while ensuring a quality service to those who need it most through the Working Women Queensland program.

This year there were two significant achievements for the Committee, the first is in attaining public benevolent status (also deductible gift recipient) with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the Australian Tax Office in March 2016. This means that : **All Donations made to QWWS are now fully tax deductible.** QWWS are also able to offer salary sacrifice arrangements that improve the working conditions of staff. The Committee were grateful for the assistance of Neumann Turnour Lawyers in providing expertise in guiding the Committee through this process and contributing to a successful application. Secondly, the QWWS Enterprise Agreement was also formalized in March and continues to provide best practice conditions for staff of a not-for-profit organisation including access to paid parental leave and domestic violence leave.

In October 2015 QWWS celebrated twenty years of services to the community and this was marked by a lunch jointly supported by the Industrial Relations Society of Queensland. The event was well attended and a panel of experts explored the topic of domestic violence and work. Domestic violence is no longer considered to be a private or personal matter and Australia is leading the way in providing protections in the workplace with QWWS at the forefront of advocating for this attention. I congratulate the service on it's achievements in this area and in recognising that domestic violence is everybody's business.

QWWS expresses thanks to the Fair Work Ombudsman and the Office of Industrial Relations (QLD) for their funding and support throughout this year and we looking forward to continued funding for the 2016-17 financial year.

*Leah Mertens,* QWWS Inc. Chair

## Governance of QWWS

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QWWS is a not-for-profit organisation incorporated under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* (Qld), governed by an experienced volunteer Management Committee. QWWS programs are monitored by the Director in procedures overseen by the Committee to ensure KPI and contractual obligations of QWWS with funding bodies or under grants programs are met. QWWS complies with all requirements of the Act and is registered and compliant with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 Cth.

QWWS monitors all service delivery output information through an up to date data-base recording all contacts, assessment, advisory, casework and outreach activities for clients and generating reports including number and type of activities, demographic data, outcomes achieved and referrals to and from the service. An analysis of trends and emerging issues are regularly reported to funding bodies.

The QWWS Management Committee is made up of representatives from a range of organisations and individuals, and the service relies on the volunteer efforts of this group of women who provide strategic direction, governance and support for the service. A recent addition to support the work of the Committee has been the procurement of a panel of expert advisors with specialist skills in governance, financial management, domestic violence and employment and migration law and employment. These advisors will be formally welcomed to their roles at the 2016 FY AGM.

The strategic focus of QWWS is directed to six priority areas, which are: providing access to our services, capacity, financial governance, ideas and philosophy, sector development and partnerships. Securing funding however has occupied most of the Committees attention this year.

**If current funding bids are not successful (after the termination of our core funding by the Federal Government at the end of 2016 and QWWS was forced to close, there will be no free specialist employment advice service for vulnerable women in these states, and an established voice on systemic gendered employment issues will be lost.**

## Significant Committee Activities this year

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Planning meetings conducted August 2015,

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration lunch partnering with IRSQ October 2015

Annual General Meeting November 2015

Organisational mini review March 2016

PBI Status March 2016

Enterprise Bargaining Agreement March 2016

## Elected Management Committee 2016 Financial Year

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Leah Mertens (Chair)	Individual member
Alison McClintock (Deputy-Chair)	Individual member
Nita Green	Individual member
Jan Sheppard (Treasurer)	Individual member
Anna Herzog	Australian Services Union
Rosslyn Monro (Secretary)	Women's Legal Service Inc.
Kerriann Dear	Management Representative
Rita Fitton	Staff Representative

## Director's Report

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I would like to start by thanking the staff of QWWS, without whom QWWS would not exist. Your support during this difficult year has been more than remarkable. I so warmly thank you for your commitment, insight and professionalism.

Thank you also to the skilled and generous women who are the QWWS Management Committee. Their experience and strategic foresight have kept QWWS afloat during some stormy seas and they are always on side to assist with any issue that I bring to them.

A highlight for me this year was the meeting of the four Working Women's Centres (Northern Territory, South Australia, Timor Leste and Queensland) in Dawin in July 2015 for two days of professional development and networking. With over twenty participants the group received seminars from FWO and the Fair Work Commission (thank you to Deputy President Asbury), the Services Union and presentations by each centres developing clinical skills and fostering connections between the services.

The Directors of the Working Womens' centres again convened in Darwin in June 2016 for valuable strategic planning and discussions about the funding situation facing our centres.

Despite the funding turmoil, Working Women Qld continued to deliver advisory and advocacy services to vulnerable working women during the 2016 financial year with funding from the Commonwealth provided through the Fair Work Ombudsman and in November 2015 we commenced a new funding agreement with the Queensland Office of Industrial Relations. QWWS is particularly funded to target vulnerable groups of women including: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Migrant women (including subclass 417, 457 and student Visas), culturally and linguistically diverse women (CALD), regional women; and women with disabilities as well as older women, and young women.

### **QWWS provided a proactive and supportive service for vulnerable women by:**

- **Delivering solid outcomes:** as a result of contact with our service, clients maintain their employment, receive their entitlements, maintain a positive relationship with their employer, and have disputes resolved before escalating to legal proceedings.
- **Providing a client-centered and holistic service:** clients present with complex cross-jurisdictional industrial issues that require a specialist set of skills. Client satisfaction is consistently 95-100%.
- **Filling a gap:** the clients who access QWWS services are unable to access union or legal services. No equivalent service is provided by government, legal or community agencies.



The concern for vulnerable women if QWWS services shut is that they would be left without recourse to advice, and place additional burdens on associated services such as legal services, community services, FWO and the Fair Work Commission. There would be an increase in unmeritorious claims, litigation and disputes. Fewer women would secure their rightful entitlements, with flow on effects for the ongoing economic security of female employees and their families. Many individuals and agencies, including the Fair Work Commission, have called for QWWS to remain sustainably funded as part of a national campaign run by the three Working Women's Centres.

Clients who contact QWWS for assistance are seeking information on their rights and options on courses of action available to them to redress unfairness in the workplace. QWWS clients typically reflect the level of disadvantage that women often experience in their employment while gender inequity in the workforce continues to impact on women's lives.

Women's relative disadvantage at work is well documented, and includes an 18% pay gap, a 50% superannuation gap, 1 in 4 women experiencing workplace sexual harassment, and 1 in 2 mothers experiencing workplace discrimination as a result of their pregnancy, parental leave or on returning to work. Nearly a third of Australian workers (predominantly women report having experienced domestic violence, which can impact on job security, attendance and performance and of which gender inequality is the key driver. Many women continue to retire in poverty despite a long working career because of small retirement savings and other life events such as divorce.

An overview and analysis of the frequency and issues working-women have raised with the service over the past year is contained in the QWWS Service Delivery Report.

*Kerriann Dear* QWWS Director

## QWWS Special Projects 2016 FY

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### *Domestic Violence and the workplace*

Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) is recognised as a serious problem facing Australian society. While the disproportionate burden is borne by victims, who are predominantly female, DFV damages the lives of perpetrators, families (especially children), and the communities in which we all live and work.

As a greater understanding about the gendered nature of DFV has evolved, much has been done to dispel the myths and stereotypes that surround the issue and data has been able to show the prevalence and the devastating impact of DFV.

Through evidence based research and experience it is ascertained that a coordinated community response tackling the multiple levels of structures and processes that produce and perpetuate DFV is the best way to protect victims of abuse and to hold their perpetrators accountable for the behaviors. This includes addressing the issue of gender inequality.

Organisations such as workplaces can have a significant role in being proactive and responsive to DFV. This is primarily through awareness raising and by referring and assisting victims to access the support they need to be safer and to address the violence.

The business case for workplaces to respond to domestic violence as it impacts on their employees is well established and more than one million employees in Australia now have access to leave entitlements related to DFV. Many employers have begun to treat DFV with the same priority as other issues that impact on the safety of staff, their performance at work and the reputation of the workplace.

As this is a highly specialised field of intervention and evidence based practice has yet to be extensively documented, workplaces must be well informed about approaches to safety and support. This calls for workplaces to have access to trained practitioners, skilled to recognise the signs of possible DFV and equipped to make appropriate referrals for advice and support and take appropriate measures within the workplace maintaining safety as a priority.

QWWS, supports calls from the ACTU and Unions for legislated minimum statutory entitlements for domestic violence leave and has long promoted the implementation of workplace DFV policies.

**However at the same time we have identified through extensive experience in working with victims of DFV in relation to their employment that female victims feel comfortable requesting her entitlements or raising the issue of DFV in her workplace only where there exists a relationship of trust, where she feels she will not be victimised or punished further, where she is confident she can receive appropriate support and where her confidentiality will be assured.**

Many women have indicated to us that they will not raise the issue of their DFV at work if they do not have this confidence and our experience has told us that even the best intentions from employers can result in significant experiences of re-traumatisation, shame and fear at times leading to loss of employment.

QWWS has identified a gap in the provision of specialist expertise and support for working women attempting to address the domestic violence in their lives while maintaining their employment. This is largely because of deficits of skills and understanding in workplaces with industrial and human resource management expertise about the prevalence and impact of DFV as well as the more crisis intervention approach (through necessity) of specialist DFV services where women typically seek assistance.

In response to the need for a specialist workplace response, the *DV Work Aware Initiative* has been established as a collaborative project of women's, industrial and domestic violence front line service providers, industry groups, unions, research institutes, business and community groups in Brisbane and aims to have state-wide and possibly national relevance and reach. Initially it will operate under the auspice of the Qld Working Women's Service Inc.

A Steering Committee has been formed and is comprised of representatives from the following agencies; Queensland Working Women's Service Inc, National Retailers Association, The Services Union, DV Connect (Men's Line), Brisbane Domestic Violence Advocacy Service, Ipswich Domestic Violence Action Centre and Women's Legal Service

QWWS will lead the project under guidance of the Steering Committee with the objectives to achieve the following over a twelve month pilot period and express their thanks to Queensland Government for supporting the project with funding in the coming 12 months.

### ***Policy and Legislation contributions***

Through our membership of the National Working Women's Centres (NWWC) and Economic Security 4 Women (eS4W) QWWS have a policy and systems advocacy presence with a national focus on gender and employment.

During early 2015 NWWC made a submission to the Productivity Commission Workplace Relations Framework Enquiry. The submission highlighted some of the significant issues for Working Women's Centres client groups with the structures and processes of the key industrial relations regulator in Australia. NWWC subsequently responded to Productivity Commissions: Workplace Relations Framework Enquiry Draft Report, highlighting how some of the recommendations would impact on our particular client groups in September 2015.

NWWC along with other women's associations and unions continue to also highlight the need and potential for reform to one of the principal pieces of legislation under the Fair Work Act - General Protections or Adverse Action legislation for inclusion of FDV as a protected attribute and supports calls from the ACTU and Unions for legislated minimum statutory entitlements for domestic violence leave. Submissions can be found at [www.wwc.org.au](http://www.wwc.org.au)

QWWS also provided a submission to the Queensland Industrial Relations Legislation Review supporting the introduction of paid domestic leave for Queensland Public Sector employees and the implementation of anti-bullying legislations similar to what currently exists in the Fair Work Jurisdiction.

### *Economic Security 4Women*

QWWS is a long-term and active member of the National Women's Alliance (Economic Security 4Women), and through this alliance we network and share information with women around Australia as well as the Office for Women and national policy makers.

## QWWS Service Delivery Programs

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### *Working Women Queensland*

In mid 2015 QWWS commenced providing services to women under the trading banner "Working Women Queensland (WWQ)". The WWQ built on the work done by QWWS over 21 years with a special focus on the most vulnerable women. This meant that our assessment process examined for key vulnerability factors in identifying women most in need of support and those least able to clients understand workplace rights and responsibilities, and to negotiate favorable employment arrangements for themselves..

During this twelve-month period, the WWQ program assisted over 1550 women to access information, advice and advocacy in relation to their employment matters or concerns, providing over 4224 advisory sessions in total. Many women request and require ongoing assistance to resolve their matters and once they become a client of the service are provided with easier access to advisors so they do not have to remain on hold. Of these women seeking our services, the service has capacity to provide around 16% of women with intensive casework or representational services. Our established methods of service delivery include telephone, face to face and web based access. QWWS maintains the WWQ website: [www.wwq.org.au](http://www.wwq.org.au) in addition to a site maintained by the National Working Women's Centres (NWWC): [www.wwc.org.au](http://www.wwc.org.au).

During the 2016 financial year WWQ negotiated directly over \$770,000 by way of settlements or compensation payments for clients. WWQ are cost effective for our clients as the services it provides with our funding are free. The services comprehensive understanding of workplace relations and discrimination legislation and the client-centered support offered facilitates a hands on approach to redressing injustices. WWQ are also adept at reality checking clients when there is not a legal case to answer or a cause for financial compensation but instead work with the client to achieve a better outcome (i.e. a letter of reference, or dismissal characterised as a resignation).

Outside of this WWQ prepare a number of clients each week for self-representation. Women report often a high level of satisfaction in personally addressing the issues that have concerned them. Being able to support these women by empowering them to deal with their matters is a satisfying experience for staff.

Many times WWQ negotiate settlements prior to conciliation conferences that save the time and money of the Commissions and we also conduct post conference negotiations for matters that may otherwise have proceeded to formal hearing for determination.

A significant component of WWQ work involves advising on wages and conditions of employment breaches and assisting women to achieve compliance. Negotiated settlements for underpaid wages are a common feature of other claims in the above-mentioned jurisdictions. WWQ also assists clients who have accessed FWO to prepare their claims and to participate in alternative dispute resolution processes such as mediation.

### *Strengths and Feedback from Clients*

Client evaluations for specialist advice and casework indicate a 95% to 100% high satisfaction rate from our clients and many have provided testimonials available on the WWQ website.

A key strength of the WWQ program is in supporting women in taking action to resolve workplace conflicts or difficulties before they escalate to more formal actions. In working with women the intake and interview processes are structured to build understanding about the information received and to assess the most appropriate courses of action, the timeliness of taking action and the possible outcomes of that action. Women have informed WWQ that they find this approach very empowering versus feeling rescued or band-aiding the situation.

QWWS conducted regular client evaluations of specialist advice, casework clients and education/information sessions. 99% of the casework clients who responded indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the assistance they have received from QWWS during this period.

Much of the positive feedback that we receive from clients reinforces the women's perceptions of the warmth and approachability of the services in our capacity to deliver and to validate the women's fears and concerns and support the choices she makes.

#### *Visa Workers Employment Advisory Service (VEAS)*

Over the past few years increasing numbers of clients employed on s.c 457 (temporary skilled labor) and s.c 417 (working holiday) visas, particularly young workers with low English language skills, have presented to QWWS reporting poor treatment including:

- underpayment or non payment of wages or entitlements,
- bullying and sexual harassment
- deception about working conditions in Australia;
- dangerous working condition or little or no control over working conditions;
- do control over place of work or hours of work;
- threats of deportation or violence.
- dependency on employers not paying proper wages.
- being required to repay employer visa sponsorship costs

VEAS is an initiative of the Queensland Working Women's Service and being trialed between August and November 2016.

VEAS will provide advice on all aspects of employment and discrimination legislation for temporary visa holders but is not a migration advice service.



## QWWS Inc. Staff

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QWWS has historically attracted and been served by an amazing quality of employee. This year is no exception and through some challenging uncertainty the team have remained committed and dedicated to service delivery and QWWS service objectives. The Industrial Team for this financial year has consisted of Lee Matahaere, Rita Fitton and Jayne Carter, Monica Cullinan, Sarah Mangan, Jessica Mitchell. Linda Gong has continued as our Finance/Administration Officer. We were very sad to farewell two long term staff members this year - Jessie Westaway and Kate Flynn who were both missed greatly. Also a special mention of the work by Monica Cullinan and Zara Ward, talented staff members whom wrote an article "Does it pay to be a woman" for the IRSQ IR Advocate in March.

We have also had two fantastic ongoing volunteers Arthur Dowdle and Ashley Chandler both are final semester law students from University of Queensland and were selected for placement by the TC Bierne Law School pro bono division. Both have taken on their roles as support and intake officers with enthusiasm and are a positive addition to the Industrial team.

Throughout the year the team has also included a group of excellent and committed volunteers from Griffith University (Law and Business Schools) and the Queensland University of Technology who have managed to successfully scan and organise all QWWS client files as far back as 2013. The volunteers also undertook advisory activities, ran workshops and skills development for clients and generally added abundant enthusiasm and support for QWWS work.

Our warmest thanks to those who have volunteered with QWWS this year:

- Abbey John (Griffith University)
- Zara Ward (Griffith University)
- Jas Rawlinson (Communications specialist who also performed some contract work)
- Deborah Ramsay
- Jade Fitton
- Purnima Nandy (Monash University)
- Amy Lai (Queensland University of Technology)
- Kate Van Der Heydon (Queensland University of Technology)
- Rebecca Kate (Griffith University)
- Alicia Wood (Griffith University)
- Elise Maree (Griffith University)
- Lexie Murrs

### *Specialist and pro bono services to QWWS*

The quality and accuracy and the development of QWWS staff has been enhanced through the efforts of a number of specialist experts who have provided support, training and ongoing contact for the industrial advisory team. This year we were fortunate to have access to training and resources as well as referrals for our clients from Barrister Peter Bridgeman, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Hall Payne Lawyers, Clayton Utz Lawyers (Heddie Cray), HWL Ebsworth (Heinz Lepahe and Bianca Mendelson), Australian Workplace Lawyers.

QWWS are enormously grateful for the work of our industrial team, volunteers, students and the experts in the field who so kindly support our work.

## WWQ Service Delivery Report

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### *1. Provision of a telephone advice "advisory-line" for women on employment matters*

During the reporting period, WWQ provided a telephone advisory service between 9am and 1pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. WWQ receives a consistently high volume of requests for assistance and prioritises these through our triage/intake system. During this period the program provided approximately 4224 advisory services to clients by way of phone, email or face to face contact to 1515 individual clients.

### *2. Casework assistance*

This includes assistance with responding to workplace issues, advice on contracts, negotiating conditions of employment or leave, mediation and dispute resolution as well as individual advocacy and representation in relevant industrial relations commissions where a claim is accepted.

WWQ assisted 255 clients with casework, including representation, during the period. This is comparable to 230 for the same period last year. Through this service over \$770,000 was recovered from employers for women by way of entitlements or compensation for unfair dismissal, underpayment of wages or compensation for claims of discrimination. Reinstatement, apologies and the provision of positive references were also sought and achieved for many clients.

### *3. Referrals for clients*

During the period, WWQ maintained and developed a number of referral partnerships to assist women with matters that could not be progressed by WWQ. This included clients who wished to take their complaints to a tribunal hearing, those who needed higher-level legal advice or callers who fell outside our target groups. Referrals are also necessary for clients identifying non-industrial issues such as family and domestic violence, family law, or mental health needs or access to government agencies for enquiries about welfare, taxation, superannuation or migration or referrals to community legal centers for legal advice.

### *4. Community outreach to women on workplace issues*

QWWS delivers workshops and information sessions to groups of women in the community aimed at increasing awareness of workplace issues, preparing for and re-entering work and developing negotiating skills in the workplace. During the period four presentations on domestic violence and work were delivered and four workshops for CALD women on resume writing and preparing to reenter the workforce.

### *5. Client statistics*

From 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016, QWWS fulfilled 4224 requests for assistance. These included:

- 1515 new specialised assistance clients
- 255 new casework clients and
- 112 general enquiry clients.

### *6. Client demographics*

- 2.4% of clients identified as being from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
- 10.5 % of clients identified as being from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



- 34% of clients were in the age group over 45 years.
- 64% of client queries came from outside the Brisbane metropolitan area
- 18.5% of clients were employed on a casual basis.
- 7% identified as having a disability
- 3% of clients informed us they were working under a temporary visa

### *7. Issues for clients*

During the past year, the majority of enquiries 42% concerned dismissal (unfair, unlawful or invalid). Discrimination (28%) and workplace harassment (25%) also represented a high proportion of enquiries. WWQ clients often present with multiple and complex concerns in relation to their employment.

The most common industries represented by clients during the period were health and community services (18%) and the retail and wholesale sectors (14%). These have consistently been the most common industries employing QWWS clients over the past eight years.

Consistent with previous years, 49% of our callers were permanent full-time employees, with 18.5% casual and 17.5% permanent part-time employees.

The majority of clients were referred from a federal government agency (54%) followed by state government agency (9%) and 31% of clients were referred by non-government, community or personal contacts.

### *8. Service development activities*

The service engaged media and promotional activities this year, including:

#### *Facebook*

Through the Facebook advertising we have been able to reach our community through posts and advertising. We currently have 973 likes of our Working Women Queensland page. Using the insights tool on Facebook we are able to see how many people we are reaching. Some of our posts reach between 2000-3000 people.

Through Facebook we were able to get out into our community the campaign to save our working women centres. Through targeting women ages 16-65 in Queensland who are interested in the following terms: feminism, politics, social justice, community we were able to reach over 3,000 people with our posts. We have continuously posted relevant information regarding women in the workplace and continue to get page engagement everyday.

#### *Migration law training*

For the new program Visa-workers Employment Advisory Service 2 of our staff members went down to Adelaide for training. The 2 staff members were Rita Fitton (Senior Industrial Officer) and Lee Matahaere (Team Leader).

The course was called "Immigration Essentials for Lawyers" which was held over 3 intensive days. The course was designed to be a crash course of all the basics in immigration law. This was a highly useful course and both staff members have brought back invaluable information regarding how the immigration system works. There is such a high risk for those on visas with work rights to make a complaint for fear of their employer making a complaint to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection. This information has brought an understanding on how vulnerable these clients are and the sensitivities around assistance and advice.

### International Women's Day Breakfast

As a service we attended the UN Women's International Women's Day breakfast on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2016.

The QWWS staff agreed that the best panellist was Mr Tura Lewai is a Fiji national, an activist for women's rights and the only representative from Oceania who is a member of the UN Secretary Generals Network of Male Leaders. Tura works actively to address men and boys attitudes that perpetuate violence against women and works with the UN's Partners for Prevention (P4P) program that provides new knowledge and technical support to prevent gender-based violence in the region.

### QWWS Inc. 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations with IRSQ

The annual Women in Industrial Relations event in October 2015 brought together many of the women (and some men) who are at the front line of industrial relations practice in Queensland. The event a special collaboration with QWWS to celebrate twenty years of community based industrial relations advocacy to vulnerable female workers in Queensland.

With a special focus on examining the issue of domestic violence and its intersection with the workplace, four expert panellists shared their experience, research and policy responses with the audience.

Rosslyn Monroe from the QWWS Management Committee and CEO of Women's Legal service, spoke about the gendered nature and the patterns and nature of domestic violence emphasising the reality that domestic violence seldom ceases at the point of relationship separation for a woman and emphasised that in fact this can be the most dangerous time for a women. Ros spoke of the particular implications for the workplace can relate to the duration of the violence, ongoing behaviours such as stalking and threats as well as the use of workplace resources such as email and mobile phones to continue coercive control. She spoke about the proactive and supportive role workplaces can provide.

When Dr Catherine Demosthenos from the Research Crowd (an indigenous research enterprise) spoke about the experiences of domestic violence for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women she spoke with integrity, deep understanding and passion about the devastation of domestic violence causes and the need for evidence based research. The audience was stunned and silent as Dr Demosthenos recounted tragic stories of abuse and displacement of our indigenous people in Australia.

Senator Claire Moore, a long time advocate for support for working women and gender equality spoke about the long history, more than thirty years of community and policy advocates attempts to bring the issue of domestic violence into the spot light to receive the attention and resourcing it needs to stop its destructive social, familial and individual impact in Australia.

Terri Butler MP who was a familiar face and long term member at QWWS and IRSQ as a former high profile industrial relations practitioner also spoke of her continued involvement for social and political reform and the scope for further protections by way of entitlements and workplace practices that support victims of violence. Terri paid acknowledgement to long term IRSQ member Cath Rafferty who started the Working Women's Centre twenty years ago and her recollections of the humble beginnings of the centre in a shack of a building where the valuable work of QWWS first began to reach out to vulnerable women workers in 1995.

The lunch was delicious and much feedback about the event indicated that it exceeded the expectations of the day for many of the participants. It was definitely food for thought about how individuals and organisations might resource workplaces to tackle this persisting problem of domestic violence.

Special QWWS especially thanks the IRSQ organising committee and to Cameron Armstrong from Essential Experiences and to the many individuals and organisations who donated prizes for the raffle and all the participants, to make our celebration such a memorable event.



## Emerging issues for QWWS clients

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### *Industry issues*

This year, as similar to past periods, clients working in health and community services, personal service, wholesale or retail and hospitality/accommodation represented roughly 40% of those seeking assistance. These industries are typically Award based and all have high rates of complaints about discrimination and dismissal, with high numbers of calls relating to workplace harassment. These industries are also highly casualised and part time and characterised many of the issues faced by women more broadly in their employment. Often women's employment in these areas is reasonably short term and for those who lose employment there can be long waits between jobs. This increases risks of a sustainable lifestyle and many women report that they are facing homelessness or having to move in with friends and family to get them through these periods.

For temporary workers on 457 or 417 visas, issues there continue to be growing reports of exploitation and underpayment of wages and while many of these jobs are in regional areas women face the concerns of limited support, housing and access to assistance with language difficulties. This year we assisted 45 women with identified employment issues who have identified they have been working on a temporary visa.

### *Annual complaint comparisons*

Over the past five years (since 2009), pregnancy discrimination increased alarmingly from 2% to 3.5% to 5.7% and 5.65% to 6.3% (last year) but fell slightly this year to 5.9% of specialist advice activities. Unfair dismissal complaints have risen over three years from 33% to 42% since 2012 and enquiries about redundancy are consistent with last year being 10% of specialist advice activities and 12.5% of casework this past year.

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**25% of the clients in this financial year have contacted QWWS about workplace bullying and 9% about sexual harassment at work.**

## Casework and case studies

During the twelve-month period, QWWS negotiated over \$770,000 in settlements for clients. This reflects the conciliatory nature of our work as none of these amounts were achieved through decisions made at hearing or in court. The most common matters that QWWS undertook casework and representation on behalf of clients were, unfair dismissal (52%), discrimination matters (38%) including pregnancy discrimination (9%), sexual harassment (9%). Other matters involved workplace harassment (25%) and General Protections Disputes (29%).

Below are some scenarios faced by our clients with names and identifying information changed.

### Tomi

Tomi was employed on a 457 visa and had worked for her employer for just over a year, when she was made redundant and then saw the position advertised. A restraint of trade clause in her employment contract made finding another sponsor incredibly difficult within her 90 day time limit. WWQ assisted the Tomi to lodge an unfair dismissal but the employer refused to conciliate. hearing. Tomi was then assisted through a successful QWWS pro bono based referral to a law firm and the matter was resolved with a significant compensation payment.

### Jane

Jane was a long term but casual artistic designer when she informed her employer that she was pregnant. Two weeks later Jane was dismissed. The reason for termination was based on a shortage of hours, no other staff was affected by the so-called shortage of hours. Jane subsequently miscarried and was seeking to just have access to her portfolio of work for future employment applications and contacted our service for help.

Jane filed an Unfair Dismissal and WWQ assisted in successfully negotiating, a financial settlement including a positive reference and access to her portfolio for future employment and the UFD was discontinued.

### Mary

Mary worked full time as a pharmacist assistant since 2006. There was a transfer of business and her status was changed to casual. WWQ assisted Mary to lodge an Unfair Dismissal to recover a redundancy package. The employer responded in their F3 acknowledging redundancy and agreed to pay their termination pay, long service leave and annual leave thus averting further action.

### Mrs Nguyen

Mrs Nguyen worked as a casual employee in a gift shop in a major tourist hub and was underpaid significantly for more than seven years. When Mrs Nguyen sought information about her wages and long service leave entitlements from the Fair Work Ombudsman and informed her employer she was terminated without notice. WWQ worked with Mrs Nguyen's husband and with Mrs Nguyen as she had limited English to work out her entitlements and support her claim to FWO. Mrs Nguyen also filed

an application for unfair dismissal and was successful with WWQ representation in obtaining the majority of her unpaid wages and compensation for the dismissal.

### Buki

Buki is from a non-English speaking background and worked as chef at an education institution for 4.5 years. Buki went on parental leave but when she was due to return Buki was advised her employer was considering restructuring which would involve Buki losing her weekend shifts to her detriment of losing significant income.

While Buki was on parental leave the two other male chefs were given promotions and pay rises and upgraded to the positions of co-managers - Buki was not offered one of these roles. Buki sought assistance from WWQ while the restructure was in the 'consultation' stage and was advised to write an email and challenging the work place changes and the perceived discrimination she experienced

Without Prejudice the WWQ industrial officer entered into negotiations and a successful outcome including compensation was reached.

### - Helensvale, 2016 -



There are so many women out there that need WWQ

### - Seventeen Mile Rocks, 2016 -



The women who work at WWQ are amazing, being able to talk about these issues with insightful women has made the difference to me.

### - Brighton, 2016 -



I had a really positive experience, the staff are excellent.

### - Brisbane, 2016 -



"thank you all so much from the bottom of my heart, knowing you all definitely is one the best thing of my life during my stay in Australia and I am glad I am finally able to put the whole thing behind, without your help I can not kept fighting and made it to the end, thank you for stick up with my case I would be forever grateful and continue to do what is right".



## Thank You

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QWWS would not have achieved over twenty years of sustained advocacy for women and vulnerable people in the workplace without the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment of many people. QWWS thank you all for your work and commitment ensuring free access to our specialist services:

Senator Claire Moore  
 Senator Larissa Waters  
 Terri Butler MP  
 Teresa Gambaro MP  
 Parliamentary Friendship Group - Women  
 Former Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick  
 Kate Jenkins, Sex Discrimination Commissioner  
 Kevin Cox Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commissioner  
 Deputy President Asbury - Fair Work Commission  
 Staff at Anti Discrimination Commission Qld  
 Staff at Australian Human Rights Commission  
 Sandra Dann (SA) and Rachael Uebergang & Anna Davis (NT) Working Women's Centres  
 The Services Union staff and secretaries  
 Barrister at Law Peter Bridgeman  
 Maurice Blackburn Lawyers  
 Hall Payne Lawyers  
 Clayton Utz Lawyers  
 HWL Ebsworth Lawyers  
 Dibbs Barker Lawyers  
 Australian Workplace Lawyers  
 Neumann Turnour Lawyers  
 James Farrell - Community Legal Centres Qld  
 Economic Security 4 Women  
 National Foundation of Australian Women  
 Karyn Walsh - CEO Micah Projects  
 Dominique Lamb- CEO National Retailers Association  
 Rebecca Shearman -Ipswich Centre against Domestic Violence  
 DV Work Aware Steering Committee  
 TC Beirne Law School University of Queensland  
 School of Social Work - University of Queensland  
 Business and Law Schools - Griffith University  
 Industrial Relations Society Qld  
 Professor Janis Bailey  
 Professor Paula Macdonald  
 Associate Professor Joanna Howe  
 Workplace Express  
 Queensland Law Society  
 Immigrant Women's Support Service  
 Legal Aid Queensland  
 The Queensland Government - Office of Industrial Relations for funding support  
 The Federal Government - Fair Work Ombudsman for funding support  
 Staff at the Fair Work Ombudsman  
 Baida` Poultry





**QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S  
SERVICE INC.**

**FINANCIAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30 JUNE 2016**

1.

**QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC.**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

	<b><u>2016</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
<b><u>Funding</u></b>		
Workplace Ombudsman	512,141.17	519,967.91
Office of Industrial Relations	190,909.09	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	703,050.26	519,967.91
<b><u>Other</u></b>		
Donations	2,525.00	10,140.90
Interest Received	20,458.21	22,315.31
Membership Fees	256.35	339.09
Other Income	826.00	5,351.44
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	24,065.56	38,146.74
<b><u>TOTAL INCOME</u></b>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	727,115.82	558,114.65
<b><u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Total Expenditure (Schedule Attached)	704,749.83	613,340.06
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR</u></b>	\$22,365.99	\$(55,225.41)
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC.**  
**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

	<b><u>2016</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Audit & Accountancy	3,000.00	3,000.00
Bank Charges	201.28	622.56
Cleaning	3,096.82	2,256.30
Computer Expenses	3,085.50	3,312.79
Depreciation	7,160.69	4,763.00
Insurance	5,188.00	5,044.55
Legal Expenses	4,210.00	-
Networking	1,360.91	1,278.19
Office Consumables	3,292.97	3,052.07
Office Equipment	4,393.28	4,417.70
Postage & Stationery	3,372.25	2,952.74
Printing	125.96	280.51
Project Expenses	14,892.06	15,118.22
Publicity & Marketing	1,308.04	350.00
Rent	58,091.63	57,327.39
Staff Training	5,503.47	5,644.74
Subscriptions	2,771.19	4,216.16
Sundry Expenses	384.14	210.70
Superannuation	56,935.83	45,058.08
Telephone & Fax	15,107.38	15,443.08
Travel & Accommodation	1,671.10	1,363.46
Wages & Salaries	506,950.99	429,086.79
Website Expenses	59.70	6,761.12
Workers Compensation	2,586.64	1,779.91
<b><u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u></b>	<b><u>\$704,749.83</u></b>	<b><u>\$613,340.06</u></b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## 3.

**QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC.**  
**ASSETS AND LIABILITIES STATEMENT**  
**AS AT 30 JUNE 2016**

	<b><u>2016</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>
<b><u>CURRENT ASSETS</u></b>		
Cash at Bank - On Hand (Note 2)	736,616.54	681,103.01
Debtors & Prepayments	400.00	1,110.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	737,016.54	682,213.01
<b><u>FIXED ASSETS</u></b> (Note 3)	6,808.00	10,879.69
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>TOTAL ASSETS</u></b>	743,824.54	693,092.70
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u></b>		
Creditors	8,890.39	14,311.34
Employee Provisions (Note 4)	281,013.77	247,226.97
Grant in Advance	12,375.38	12,375.38
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u></b>	302,279.54	273,913.69
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>NET ASSETS</u></b>	\$441,545.00	\$419,179.01
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>MEMBERS FUNDS</u></b>		
Balance at 1 July 2015	419,179.01	474,404.42
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	22,365.99	(55,225.41)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b><u>TOTAL MEMBERS FUND</u></b>	\$441,545.00	\$419,179.01
	<hr/>	<hr/>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC.**  
**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

**1. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirement of the Corporations Act 2001. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The report is also prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

**(a) Fixed Assets - Depreciation**

Depreciation is charged on all Fixed Assets on the Prime Cost Method and is brought to account over the estimated economic lives of all Assets.

**(b) Comparative Figures**

Comparative figures, where necessary, have been reclassified in order to comply with the presentation adopted in the figures reported for the current financial year.

**(c) Employee Entitlements**

Liabilities for Wages & Salaries and Annual Leave are recognised and are measured as the amount unpaid at the reporting date at current pay rates in respect of employees' services up to that date. Other employee entitlements payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those entitlements.

Contributions are made by the association to an employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

**(d) Income Tax**

The Association is exempted from tax under section 50-10 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

**(e) Economic Dependence**

The Queensland Working Women's Service Inc. is dependant on government funding to operate. As at the date of the report the committee has no reason to believe the government will not continue to support the organisation

**QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC.**  
**NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016**

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
<b>2. CASH AT BANK AND ON HAND</b>		
Cash on Hand	1,512.72	1,136.72
Community Access Account	213,333.31	102,847.24
Community Access Account	521,770.51	507,942.18
Operating Cheque Account	-	3,789.53
Cash Management Account	-	7,413.20
Staff Entitlements	-	8,415.96
Business Online Saving Account	-	49,558.18
	<u>\$736,616.54</u>	<u>\$681,103.01</u>
<b>3. FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Computer Equipment - at Cost	121,015.06	117,926.06
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>118,157.06</u>	<u>113,314.58</u>
	2,858.00	4,611.48
Office Furniture & Equipment at Cost	64,845.19	64,845.19
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>60,895.19</u>	<u>58,576.98</u>
	3,950.00	6,268.21
	<u>\$6,808.00</u>	<u>\$10,879.69</u>
<b>4. EMPLOYEE PROVISIONS</b>		
Provision for Annual Leave	24,984.46	23,847.75
Provision for Long Service Leave	47,353.31	45,622.62
Provision for Redundancy	208,676.00	177,756.60
	<u>\$281,013.77</u>	<u>\$247,226.97</u>
<b>5. AUDITORS REMUNERATION</b>		

Apart from the remuneration disclosed, the Auditor's received no other benefits.

**QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC.****STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 8:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Queensland Working Women's Service Inc. as at 30 June 2016 and its performance for the year ended of that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Queensland Working Women's Service Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

President L. Muthu

Treasurer J. Shppard

Dated this 28 October 2016

7.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF  
QUEENSLAND WORKING WOMEN'S SERVICE INC.**

**Report on the Financial Report**

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Queensland Working Women's Service Inc. which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2016, and the income and expenditure statement, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

*Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report*

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act (Qld) and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibilities also include designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

*Auditor's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.



The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the committee's financial reporting under the Associations Incorporation Act. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

*Independence*

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

*Auditor's Opinion*

In our opinion, the financial report of Queensland Working Women's Service Inc. presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of Queensland Working Women's Service Inc. as of 30 June 2016 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.



HAYWARDS CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



PETER GESCH - PARTNER

28 OCTOBER 2016  
BRISBANE