

Sydney Women's Fund

Investing in women and children to build a better community

Inaugural projects 2011



Welcome

More women than men live in poverty in Sydney, at risk of homelessness and fearing for their personal safety. However, their plight is hidden. Many struggle in difficult and often life-threatening situations in isolation and with little or no support.

Women, and in turn their children, are consequently caught in a cycle of disadvantage because they lack financial independence and access to education and healthcare services.

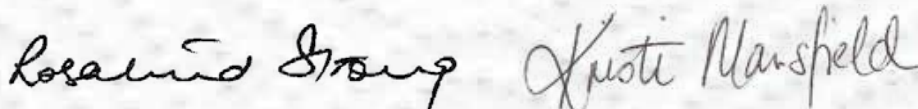
The Sydney Women's Fund was founded as a subfund of the Sydney Community Foundation (SCF) by Patrons Wendy McCarthy AO and Lucy Brogden in response to the urgent needs of women in Greater Sydney. It is the only philanthropic fund in Greater Sydney that focuses solely on women and their children.

The Sydney Women's Fund is determined to build a better community for all by investing in women. We are an advocate for, supporter of, and grantmaker to women's organisations and programs that address the significant and often hidden areas of disadvantage for the most vulnerable women of Sydney.

For the first time the Fund is recommending a shortlist of projects, outlined in this booklet, that will make an immediate and lasting difference. Our inaugural projects were chosen by a specialist Advisory Council from a long list of potential projects identified by the Sydney Community Foundation. Due diligence has been conducted to assess each of the organisations and the people involved in these projects by the grantmaking experts at the Sydney Community Foundation.

Investing in our inaugural projects is a first step in improving the lives of women in Sydney. We invite you to join in the work of the Sydney Women's Fund as we enact our vision of a better city for women which will also benefit the entire community.

Yours sincerely,



Rosalind Strong
Chair
Sydney Community Foundation

Kristi Mansfield
Project Director
Sydney Women's Fund


Who are we?

The Sydney Women's Fund works for a community where all women and girls achieve their potential, live safely without fear of discrimination or disadvantage, and enjoy the full benefits of life in Sydney. The Sydney Women's Fund is a subfund of the Sydney Community Foundation.

The projects

The Sydney Women's Fund Advisory Council recommends seven priority projects for funding.

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- 1 Housing for the long term**
\$9,450 to support women and their children who have recently moved into independent housing after being homeless.
 - 2 Caring for children of prisoners**
\$10,500 to run peer support groups for children of parents who are incarcerated.
 - 3 Enterprising women of Sierra Leone**
\$12,600 to create an enterprise based on skills in dyeing and woven technique for recent refugees from Sierra Leone.
 - 4 Ending the cycle of domestic violence**
\$10,500 to educate Aboriginal women to become trainers or advocates in their communities and break the cycle of domestic violence.
 - 5 Parenting support for vulnerable mothers**
\$6,300 to conduct a child abuse prevention program to improve practical parenting skills of mothers.
 - 6 Caring for carers of disabled children**
\$7,700 to provide weekend respite for 20 mothers of children with disabilities.
 - 7 Breaking down barriers to mental health**
\$12,600 for a perinatal mental health project in Blacktown.



“ Rather than wait until there is a crisis and risk a woman becoming homeless again, this project will focus on prevention and early intervention ”



Housing for the long term

Women who have been homeless and move into independent housing need support. Often, mental health issues and many years of homelessness lead to the breakdown of tenancies.

The Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) provides an outreach service to help women sustain long-term housing and prevent a return to homelessness. Helen Williams from WAGEC says the organisation currently doesn't have enough skilled personnel on call to help those in need.

"We can never predict how many people will need our services from one day to the next – often we don't have the staff to meet the demand," she says.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Funding will help WAGEC expand its outreach service, which was trialled in 2009. A part-time outreach worker will be employed

\$9,450
to support women and their children who have recently moved into independent housing after being homeless.

for 12 months to support women when they first move into independent housing.

"Rather than wait until there is a crisis and risk a woman becoming homeless again, this project will focus on prevention and early intervention."



wagec.org.au



Jane's story

For Jane, the family home was an environment of extreme abuse. As an adult, she found herself in an abusive relationship and struggled to cope with daily life. After fleeing the relationship she became homeless.

Jane moved between friends' homes, sleeping on couches. At times she would sleep with a man so that she would have a bed for the night. She accessed WAGEC for a safe place to go, food and emotional support.

WAGEC helped her obtain long-term housing and provided outreach support on a regular basis. She is now attending counselling, and staff members are also working with her to access other mental health services.



Peer support for children of prisoners

There are strong links between childhood experiences of parental incarceration and later criminal offence. In 1999 the NSW Corrections Health Service conducted a study that found, on any given day, there are 14,500 children in the state who have a parent in prison. These children are five times more likely than other kids to commit a criminal offence.

Ninety five per cent of the children Victor Ma from SHINE for Kids works with have a father in the criminal justice system. This leaves the mother under significant stress as she tries to deal with the situation and support the family alone. SHINE for Kids helps alleviate this burden by supporting children so they don't follow the path of their incarcerated parent.

"We focus on early intervention, supporting children to build resilience, confidence and self-esteem," says Victor.

\$10,500
to run peer support groups for children of mothers who are supporting a family where the father is incarcerated.

by providing ongoing support that addresses the immediate emotional, social and educational needs of children, and relieves stress for the parent, most commonly the mother.

"Funding will help sustain and grow our programs so that more children can participate," says Victor.



shineforkids.org.au

ABOUT THE PROJECT

SHINE for Kids will run two peer support groups over a nine-week period. The project will provide a supportive peer experience while responding to the multiple needs of each child's family. The objective is to reduce distress

THERE ARE
14,500
CHILDREN IN THE STATE WHO HAVE A PARENT IN PRISON ON ANY GIVEN DAY

Nancy's story

Nancy was a mother of four children: Ben (10), Mia (9), Emily (8) and a newborn when she received the news that her husband would be imprisoned for five years. With little family support, Nancy's life became extremely difficult as she struggled to meet the needs of her children, both financially and emotionally.

Her three eldest children suffered from a loss of trust in adults and had problems communicating with others and a deep sense of shame as they tried to keep their dad's incarceration a secret.

Nancy and her family were at risk of being completely overwhelmed by their circumstances until she contacted SHINE for Kids.

The image features two pairs of white, long-fingered gloves laid out on a background of horizontal stripes in shades of brown, tan, and beige. The gloves are positioned in the upper and lower halves of the frame. The lower pair is more spread out, while the upper pair is more compact. The text is overlaid on the lower pair of gloves.

**“ Funding will
allow these
women to create
the business
case for their
enterprise ”**



Enterprising women of Sierra Leone

Around 700 women from Sierra Leone have settled in western and south-western Sydney with their children. A large number are widows or supporting families without their husbands in Australia.

A number of women in this community are skilled in the art of hand dyeing, or gara, as the technique is traditionally called. Women's Health at Work (WHAW), in partnership with the Sierra Leonean Wanword Association, hopes to build a business where the women can continue their tradition to produce cloth for sale to African immigrant communities in Sydney and potentially elsewhere in Australia.

Vivienne Strong from WHAW says: "Funding will allow these women to create the business case for their enterprise."

ABOUT THE PROJECT

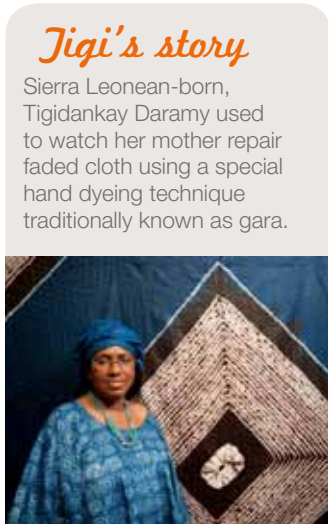
A part-time project coordinator will be employed for six months to contribute hours of project guidance and management. Funding would be used to:

- conduct a feasibility study for the establishment of an enterprise which would eventually be profitable
- work with women artists, the community and project

APPROXIMATELY
700
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FROM SIERRA LEONE
HAVE SETTLED IN
WESTERN AND SOUTH
WESTERN SYDNEY WITH
THEIR CHILDREN

\$12,600
to create an enterprise based on skills in dyeing and woven technique for Sierra Leonean refugees.

- partners in establishing the enterprise to the point where it develops strong indicators of success
- identify a market for sale of the cloth in African immigrant communities in Australia.



Tigi's story
Sierra Leonean-born, Tigidankay Daramy used to watch her mother repair faded cloth using a special hand dyeing technique traditionally known as gara. Tigi was forced to leave her country and all her belongings, including her precious gara cloth, when she fled Sierra Leone at the outbreak of civil war. Years after the war, Tigi was able to return to her country and find some of her cloth including this installation which was recently exhibited at the Blacktown Arts Centre.



Breaking the cycle of domestic violence

Joan Harrison Support Services for Women has been working to provide safe, secure and supported accommodation to women who are escaping domestic violence or are homeless.

"The current housing shortage has made it extremely difficult for women escaping violence to find either social housing or private rentals," says Tracy Phillips, Manager of Joan Harrison Support Services for Women.

\$10,500
to educate Aboriginal women to become trainers or advocates in their communities and break the cycle of violence.

THE PROGRAM WILL EDUCATE
ABORIGINAL WOMEN
TO BECOME FUTURE
TRAINERS OR ADVOCATES
IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES

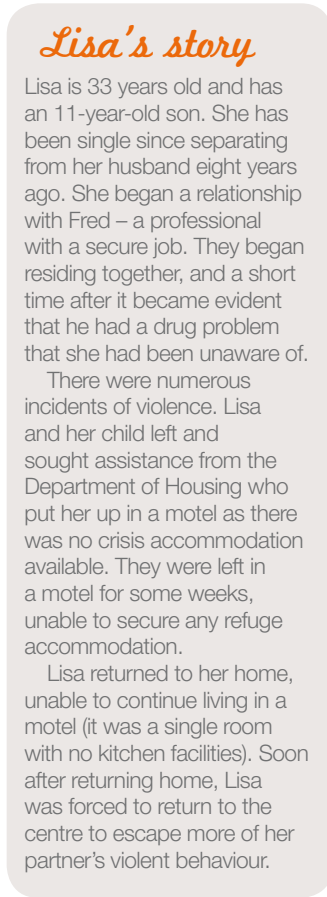
ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Aboriginal Women Against Violence (AWAV) project will continue work already undertaken to conduct a series of education programs specifically designed for Aboriginal women.

The programs will educate Aboriginal women to become future trainers or advocates in their own communities.

"The training will enable us to establish another group of Aboriginal women who would undertake training, get their first aid certificate and incorporate them into the network of women who have already been trained," says Tracy. "It is envisaged that like the previous groups, they will learn about the effects of domestic violence, where they can get help and which services they feel comfortable using

and recommending to other community members." The aim is to reduce the incidence of violence and increase the capacity of the community to deal with violence against women and children.



Lisa's story
Lisa is 33 years old and has an 11-year-old son. She has been single since separating from her husband eight years ago. She began a relationship with Fred – a professional with a secure job. They began residing together, and a short time after it became evident that he had a drug problem that she had been unaware of. There were numerous incidents of violence. Lisa and her child left and sought assistance from the Department of Housing who put her up in a motel as there was no crisis accommodation available. They were left in a motel for some weeks, unable to secure any refuge accommodation. Lisa returned to her home, unable to continue living in a motel (it was a single room with no kitchen facilities). Soon after returning home, Lisa was forced to return to the centre to escape more of her partner's violent behaviour.



“ It is wonderful to watch the energy and smiles returning to their faces during the weekend ”



Parenting support for vulnerable mothers

A change in NSW legislation has meant the Department of Community Services (DOCS) will only deal with children at risk of “significant” harm. The addition of this one word has placed pressure on community groups such as the Child Abuse Prevention Service (CAPS), which is taking up the cases DOCS turns away.

“The problem keeps getting bigger – there are more families calling our service for help, more substantiated reports of abuse and more people on our waiting lists for services than ever before,” says Karen Craig from CAPS.

THERE HAS BEEN A
38%
INCREASE IN CALLS FOR HELP TO THE
CAPS 24-HOUR HOTLINE
IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

ABOUT THE PROJECT
CAPS will support vulnerable mothers with evidence-based parent education sessions, face-to-face counselling and the provision of support groups.

This group-oriented initiative targets culturally and linguistically diverse mothers, young mothers in supported accommodation, mothers who are escaping family violence and those with mental illness. The aim is to improve the parenting confidence and capacity of mothers; increase their ability to parent; and give them a forum to openly and safely discuss challenges and strategies for change.

\$9,450
to conduct a child abuse prevention program to improve practical parenting skills of mothers.



childabuseprevention.com.au

Rachel's story
Rachel is a 27-year-old Indigenous woman with three young children. She escaped years of domestic violence by her partner – a drug-user and gambler who abused Rachel and her children. In 2010, she put her three children in a shopping trolley and took shelter under an awning at a local church.
When the church contacted CAPS, Rachel was in danger of losing her children – she was highly traumatised and did not have the infrastructure in place to support her children. CAPS put Rachel into a support group and connected her children with counsellors and some external therapy.
Ongoing case management and Rachel's willingness to participate in parenting programs have kept the family together. Rachel moved into secure housing and was also given job training opportunities. She now works part-time and attends supported playgroups with her youngest child.



Caring for carers of disabled children

St Anthony's Family Care provides a unique opportunity for mothers of children with disabilities to connect with each other at a weekend away. “Friends and family do not understand the many and varied facets of having a child with a disability – you are the day to day carer, you're planning, you're advocating, you're trying to get a balance,” says Vanessa Corbridge from St Anthony's Family Care.

The weekend allows them to have a break from their challenging routine and spend time relaxing and focusing on their own needs. The mothers share common experiences and provide emotional support, breaking down the social isolation that they experience as a carer.

\$7,700
to provide weekend respite for 20 mothers of children with disabilities.

The restful weekend increases the capacity of the mothers to care for their child with a disability, engage more with family and friends and cope with the stressful situations that frequently arise when raising a child with a disability.

THE AIM IS TO GIVE THE MOTHERS A BREAK FROM THE DAILY CHALLENGES OF CARING FOR A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY




safc.org.au

Sam's story
Sam accesses St Anthony's Flexible Respite and Family Support services to help her with the challenges of raising her daughter Kimberly. At 14 years old Kimberly has a severe intellectual disability, more than 15 medical conditions and takes more than 10 daily medications which impact her weight, vision, hearing, mobility, attention, behaviour and sleep.
She experiences seizure patterns and is hospitalised on average at least once a week. Sam is Kimberly's sole parent and carer. She is socially isolated, her own physical and mental health is suffering as a result of the impacts of caring for Kimberly. “Attending the Mothers' Weekend Away has been fabulous. I feel rejuvenated and I now know there are other people who understand what it is like to lead a life like mine.”

While Family Support Workers currently assist individual families, other challenges are better met through group activities such as the Mothers' Weekend Away.

“It is wonderful to watch the energy and smiles returning to their faces during the weekend,” says Vanessa.

ABOUT THE PROJECT
The two-night stay at Kincumber South, NSW includes a private room, dinner at a restaurant, a massage, yoga or group therapy sessions. Activities are organised to teach mothers relaxation techniques that can be used when they return home, as well as to introduce them to something new and fun.



“ This service would provide direct access to specialist perinatal mental health services that would otherwise be inaccessible ”



Bringing down barriers to mental health

St John of God Health Care recently opened a Raphael Centre in Blacktown to offer information, support and intervention services to mothers affected by anxiety or depression during pregnancy and in the four years following childbirth.

“Breaking down barriers to mental health services for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is one of our greatest challenges,” says Michelle Haling from St John of God Health Care.

Blacktown has a culturally and linguistically diverse community, with more than 184 countries and 156 languages represented.

APPROXIMATELY
9%
OF WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA EXPERIENCE **DEPRESSION** ANTENATALLY WHICH INCREASES TO ALMOST **16%** POSTNATALLY

ABOUT THE PROJECT

St John of God Health Care would pilot an outreach position for six months through the Blacktown Hospital antenatal clinic.

“This service would provide direct access to specialist perinatal mental health services that would otherwise be inaccessible,” says Michelle. “The program will link women at risk to mental health professionals and ethnic liaison workers.”

\$12,600

for a perinatal mental health project in Blacktown.



sjog.org.au

Saliya's story

At 19 years of age, Saliya was pregnant with her second child. Her husband, Hasam, was concerned that she was not eating, rarely smiled, scarcely slept and no longer looked after their 11-month-old son, Salim.

When Saliya was referred to the Raphael Centre she was depressed. She explained that Hasam believed she needed support when the new baby arrived and arranged for his mother to come from overseas and live with them.

Saliya's relationship with her mother-in-law was poor; she felt intimidated and had been physically abused by her in the past. She was afraid to tell her husband.

The clinic arranged respectful consultation with the couple and Hasam agreed that Saliya's older sister would be invited to live with them instead. Saliya was astonished at this outcome and her depression lifted. Further work over the subsequent year was required to enhance communication, mutual respect and parenting skills in the family.

How to donate

Your donation will be made to the Sydney Women's Fund of the SCF Tax Deductible Fund – a registered deductible gift recipient charitable foundation. Direct your donation to a specific project or to help build and strengthen the work of the fund.

Gifts of \$2.00 or more are deductible for Australian taxpayers only. This form must be returned to Sydney Community Foundation to enable your tax receipt to be issued.

Please note that as the Sydney Community Foundation Tax Deductible Fund is a public ancillary fund, it cannot accept gifts from Private Ancillary Funds (PAFs).

Step 1

I would like to donate \$_____ as a gift. I would like this donation to be directed to _____ (project name) or to the Sydney Women's Fund.

OR Please accept a regular donation of \$_____, which should be debited at the same time each fortnight / month. This authority will remain valid until revoked in writing by me.

Step 2

My personal details

Title:_____ Given name:_____

Family name:_____

Organisation:_____

(if donating on behalf of an organisation)

Postal address:_____

Suburb:_____ State:_____ Postcode:_____

Preferred phone number:_____

Email address:_____

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Please tick this box if you wish to remain anonymous.

Step 3

Please tick your preferred payment option

I would like to donate by EFT to the following bank account:

Account Name: SCF Tax Deductible Fund

Bank: Community Sector Banking

BSB: 633-000 **Account Number:** 133 487 835

Customer Reference (your family name):_____

My cheque is enclosed

(made out to Sydney Community Foundation Tax Deductible Fund)

Please charge my credit card (Mastercard or Visa)

Card number:_____

3 digit security number (usually found on back): _____

Name on card:_____

Expiry date:_____ Cardholder's signature:_____

The Tax Receipt issued is conditional upon the credit card payment not being revoked.

Step 4

Please return this form and your donation to:

Sydney Women's Fund, Sydney Community Foundation
PO Box R454
Royal Exchange NSW 1225

Thank you for your support

INFORMATION AND PRIVACY POLICY

Your information will be used by Sydney Community Foundation for the purpose of data processing, receipting of donations and to keep you informed of SCF's programs and services. Sydney Community Foundation only collects, handles, uses and discloses your personal information in accordance with its Privacy policy. The Privacy Policy is accessible over the internet at www.sydneycommunityfoundation.org.au, or can be obtained using our contact details below. If you would like to access any personal information we hold about you or obtain more information about the way in which we manage personal information please contact Sydney Community

With thanks to the
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A Portrait of Women & Girls in Greater Sydney
will be the first and only comprehensive look
at the status of women and girls in our region.
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Barclays Capital.



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