



Meet the Finalists

Our finalists are transforming the lives of women and families in Melbourne. This document contains summaries of the following finalists and their work:

Capacity Building Grant

\$80,000

- United Housing Co-operative
- Wellsprings for Women
- WomenCAN

Enabling Grant

\$45,000

- Meals with Impact
- PartnerSPEAK
- Women's Circus

The runner-up organisations in each category will receive a Spotlight Award of \$10,000.

2024 Changemaker Grants Expo

6:00 to 8:00pm - Thursday 24th October
101 Collins Street Melbourne

Be part of something bigger - the Changemaker Grants Expo your gateway to learn how every contribution forms part of a larger, impactful community of support.

Meet our extraordinary changemakers in person. You will hear their stories, learn about their missions and experience how your involvement can drive change.

[Buy Tickets Now!](#)

Members' Voting

- Members will receive voting instructions by email.
- Voting will be open online from Monday 21 October until 7:40pm on Thursday 24 October 2024.
- Results will be announced and presented at the Changemaker Grants Expo.

Keep reading to find about each finalist and their work ...



Capacity Building Grant Finalist



Mission United Housing Co-operative provides secure and affordable rental housing in Melbourne's western and north-western regions. Their mission is to offer sustainable housing solutions, ensuring residents have access to safe and affordable living spaces.

<https://www.unitedhousing.org.au>

Project seeking support The Footscray Lions Co-operative Village project will provide 49 apartments, specifically designed for women over 55 who are homeless or at serious risk of homelessness.

The need for this project This project addresses the critical housing crisis faced by older women in Australia, the fastest-growing group experiencing homelessness. It offers a community-oriented, secure and affordable housing solution specifically tailored to their needs, providing safety, stability and a sense of control over their environment.

This approach supports positive aging in place and serves as a replicable model for addressing housing challenges faced by older women nationwide. The long-term impacts include increased housing security, enhanced well-being, and a sustainable solution to the homelessness crisis affecting older women.

Project beneficiaries Women over 55 years of age

Grant use The grant would pay for contract extension / delay costs.

Focus areas Disability, Economic empowerment, Family Violence, Homelessness

Project budget

Total Cost	\$ 31,545,200
Secured	\$ 30,519,000 (Vic Gov Homes Victoria Grant \$17.3m, UHC earnings \$5m, Treasury & Finance Loan \$3.5m, Lions Club Footscray \$4.3m, LMCF \$150k, Northcote RHC \$50k, Vanraay, Wanless & Hargraves's family funds \$119k)
Unsecured	\$ 976,200 (Melbourne Women's Foundation Capacity Building Grant, Philanthropic, Dept Treasury & Finance Loan 2 \$896k)
In Kind	\$ 50,000 (Moores Legal pro bono, UHC Board members)

Annual revenue \$ 2,428,635 (actual June 2024)



Capacity Building Grant Finalist



Mission Wellsprings for Women is committed to providing services in a safe and welcoming environment, empowering women to thrive and addressing their diverse needs.

<https://www.wellspringsforwomen.com>

Project seeking support

Improving Service Responses to Forced Marriage

The project will enhance community awareness and service responses to forced marriage, recognised as a form of family violence in Victoria.

Wellsprings aims to develop culturally sensitive, community-led approaches to prevent forced marriages, ensuring that responses to this issue are appropriate and meet the specific needs of women and girls.

The need for this project

This project tackles forced marriage through a human rights and gender equality lens, ensuring that women and girls receive tailored support and that community attitudes shift toward prevention.

Additionally, it strengthens Wellsprings' capacity to meet the unique needs of victim-survivors, offering a best-practice continuum of care from prevention to recovery.

Project beneficiaries

Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, mothers, women between 18-54 years

Grant use

The grant would pay for a Project Officer (leading co-design activities involving women and lived experience), education, evaluation and marketing materials.

Focus areas

Family Violence, Legal and Justice, Sexual exploitation

Project budget

Total Cost	\$ 88,696
Secured	\$ 8,696 (Wellsprings contribution)
Unsecured	\$ 80,000 (Melbourne Women's Foundation Capacity Building Grant)

Annual revenue

\$ 2,637,879 (estimated June 2024)



Capacity Building Grant Finalist



Mission	<p>WomenCAN Australia’s mission is to assist women experiencing disadvantaged to reconnect with the workforce through a peer-led support framework, guiding them from vocational education into sustainable employment.</p> <p>WomenCAN help women rebuild their confidence, connections, and work capability, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, asylum seekers and refugees, victims of domestic violence and other social or economic disadvantage.</p> <p>https://www.womencanaustralia.org</p>						
Project seeking support	<p><i>Driving to Employment</i> aims to assist 20 women in obtaining a heavy rigid license, enabling them to secure employment as truck and bus drivers.</p> <p>Given the high demand for drivers in Victoria, this project offers women access to clean, well-paid and portable employment in a traditionally male-dominated field. The program also partners with vetted transport providers to ensure appropriate working conditions and female-friendly facilities at depots.</p>						
The need for this project	<p>This project empowers women to break into a male-dominated industry, providing them with stable, long-term employment.</p> <p>WomenCAN’s track record of transitioning over 1,000 women into sustainable jobs ensures the initiative will significantly impact the participants' lives and their families' futures by promoting financial independence and stability.</p>						
Project beneficiaries	Women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, mothers, women 18 -54 years						
Grant use	The grant would pay the salary for a Project Lead.						
Focus areas	Family Violence, Mental Health, Education, Employment, Economic empowerment						
Project budget	<table><tr><td>Total Cost</td><td>\$ 120,000</td></tr><tr><td>Secured</td><td>\$ 40,000 (WomenCAN contribution)</td></tr><tr><td>Unsecured</td><td>\$ 80,000 (Melbourne Women’s Foundation Capacity Building Grant)</td></tr></table>	Total Cost	\$ 120,000	Secured	\$ 40,000 (WomenCAN contribution)	Unsecured	\$ 80,000 (Melbourne Women’s Foundation Capacity Building Grant)
Total Cost	\$ 120,000						
Secured	\$ 40,000 (WomenCAN contribution)						
Unsecured	\$ 80,000 (Melbourne Women’s Foundation Capacity Building Grant)						
Annual revenue	\$ 2,475,382 (Dec 2023)						



Enabling Grant Finalist



Mission	<p>To provide work-integrated training and supported employment pathways in hospitality for marginalised women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.</p> <p>https://mealswithimpact.com.au</p>						
Project seeking support	<p>The <i>Her Future: 'Ready-to-Work' Program</i> will deliver four six-week work-integrated training programs over 12 months, providing practical skills development and employment pathways for migrant and refugee women in hospitality.</p>						
The need for this project	<p>The program will address the barriers faced by Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women, such as unemployment, underemployment, and social exclusion, by offering targeted support that includes hands-on training and soft skills development.</p> <p>Due to factors such as race, gender, language, and visa status, these women experience higher rates of unemployment and exclusion from the workforce. The <i>Ready-to-Work program</i> aims to equip participants with the necessary skills and confidence to overcome these challenges, improving their employment prospects and fostering long-term social and economic inclusion, promoting financial independence and improved quality of life.</p>						
Project beneficiaries	<p>Women between 24 and 54 years of age, mothers, women from Indigenous or CALD backgrounds</p>						
Grant use	<p>The grant will fund program delivery costs, including salaries for a part-time project manager and trainer, kitchen rental and administration.</p>						
Focus areas	<p>Education, Employment, Economic Empowerment</p>						
Project budget	<table><tr><td>Total Cost</td><td>\$ 142,512</td></tr><tr><td>Unsecured</td><td>\$ 70,000 (\$45k Melbourne Women's Foundation Enabling Grant, Bennelong Foundation \$25k)</td></tr><tr><td>In Kind</td><td>\$ 72,512 (William Angliss Inst. \$52.5k, MWI \$14k, Minter Ellison Law \$6k)</td></tr></table>	Total Cost	\$ 142,512	Unsecured	\$ 70,000 (\$45k Melbourne Women's Foundation Enabling Grant, Bennelong Foundation \$25k)	In Kind	\$ 72,512 (William Angliss Inst. \$52.5k, MWI \$14k, Minter Ellison Law \$6k)
Total Cost	\$ 142,512						
Unsecured	\$ 70,000 (\$45k Melbourne Women's Foundation Enabling Grant, Bennelong Foundation \$25k)						
In Kind	\$ 72,512 (William Angliss Inst. \$52.5k, MWI \$14k, Minter Ellison Law \$6k)						
Annual revenue	<p>\$ 1,267,456 (Dec 2023)</p>						



Enabling Grant Finalist



Mission PartnerSPEAK provides advocacy and support for the non-offending partners and family members of perpetrators of child sexual abuse and child exploitation material. Their work focuses on reducing isolation and offering trauma-informed support for those affected.

<https://www.partnerspeak.org.au/>

Project seeking support Support for *Women Traumatized by Child Sexual Abuse in Their Families* project seeks to provide immediate peer support to women when they first discover their intimate partner's offending against children.

PartnerSPEAK will place a peer support worker within the Joint Anti Child Exploitation Team (AFP/Vic Pol) for 12 hours per week over six months.

The need for this project This project addresses a critical and often overlooked need: the trauma experienced by non-offending partners when discovering their loved one's crimes. By providing timely and specialised peer support, PartnerSPEAK helps reduce severe mental health outcomes such as PTSD, self-harm and suicide.

The lived experience of the peer-support workers ensures a compassionate, non-judgmental approach, offering these women much-needed comfort and community. Additionally, the project's focus on upskilling law enforcement ensures a more trauma-informed response for future cases.

Project beneficiaries Women over 55 years of age, women aged between 18 - 54 years

Grant use The grant would pay for part-time salary and oncosts for a Peer Support Worker.

Focus areas Mental health, Family Violence, Sexual exploitation, Legal & Justice

Project budget

Total Cost	\$ 45,000
Unsecured	\$ 45,000 (Melbourne Women's Foundation Enabling Grant)

Annual revenue \$ 438,729 (June 2024)



Enabling Grant Finalist

women*circus

Mission Women's Circus works to empower people of marginalised genders to shape community and culture through circus arts.

<https://www.womenscircus.org.au/>

Project seeking Support The project seeks to employ a *Community Engagement Manager* to develop partnerships and deliver programs that support the mental health of marginalised women through inclusive, social circus programs in Melbourne's West.

The need for this project The project targets mental health challenges faced by marginalised women in Melbourne's West, particularly those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ communities and with disabilities. These women often experience isolation and barriers to participation in community activities, contributing to poor mental health, low self-confidence and diminished sense of belonging.

By expanding Women's Circus Programs, the initiative aims to create safe spaces for meaningful activities that enhance wellbeing and build social connections. Recruitment of a community engagement expert and partnerships with local organisations will help ensure accessibility and relevance of programs. The goal is to foster long-term positive changes, improving mental health and participation in physical activities while promoting a sense of belonging.

Project beneficiaries Women over 55 years of age, women aged between 18 - 54 years

Grant use The grant would pay for half the salary for a Community Engagement Officer over 2 years.

Focus areas Mental health

Project budget

Total Cost	\$ 90,281
Secured	\$ 45,281 (\$600 from the organisation, \$44.6k government funding)
Unsecured	\$45,000 (Melbourne Women's Foundation Enabling Grant)

Annual revenue \$ 734,245 (Dec 2023)