**JUNO
ANNUAL REPORT**

**2021-2022**

*Celebrating 20 years*

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**Acknowledgement of Country**

*Juno acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters upon which we work, live and play, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation and pay our greatest respect to Elders past and present. We recognise the Wurundjeri people’s long history on, and the care they give to this land, as they have for thousands of years. We remember this land has never been ceded. It was, is and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.*

# **About Juno**

Juno is a support and advocacy organisation working across Melbourne. We provide gender-specific services that empower women and non-binary people that have experienced homelessness, housing stress, financial stress and family violence. We advocate to raise awareness of the unique issues women face and change the systems and structures which contribute to gendered poverty, homelessness and family violence.

This year we celebrate the 20th anniversary of Juno (previously Women’s Information Support and Housing In the North). Since 2002, we have supported thousands of women and their children who have experienced homelessness and family violence to achieve stability and safety. Looking forward, Juno is working to highlight the drivers and impacts of gendered poverty, including homelessness and family violence, partner with those most affected, and pilot new approaches that create long-term opportunities for safety and economic independence.

**Vision:**
A community where all women and gender diverse people and their children
are safe, empowered and thrive.

**Mission:**
Partnering with women and gender diverse people to support their safety, increase their independence and enable them to thrive.

VALUES

**FEMINISM & INTERSECTIONALITY**
We respect the diverse experiences, identities, knowledge and strengths of women and gender diverse people and strive to empower them to realise their full potential.

**COLLABORATION & CREATIVITY**
We partner with women and gender diverse people to support them to connect to safety and independence. We recognise the inherent strength of working in partnership across the sectors and with communities to deliver our vision.

**EQUITY & JUSTICE**
We recognise the range of inequities women and gender diverse people face and actively seek to challenge and address these through our service and advocacy. We create spaces and platforms that amplify the diverse voices of those Iing gender-based poverty. We advocate for gender equity and justice.

**COURAGE & ACCOUNTABILITY**
We strive for our work to be high quality and grounded in evidence to make impactful change. We are accountable to the clients and communities we partner with. We speak up and are willing to take risks and make change.

2022 – 2024 Strategic Goals

1. Our high-quality tailored services support our clients to achieve their goals

2. Our work is effective, evidence-based and client-driven

3. We increase our impact and facilitate social change through partnerships and advocacy

# **Chair’s Message**

The past year has again been one of great progress for Juno. It marks 20 years since the organisation formed, known at the time as Women’s Information, Support and Housing in the North (WISHIN). Today, as Juno, we continue to support women and non-binary people through the crisis of experiencing homelessness and family violence. Over the past three years we have expanded our support to include early intervention and prevention programs, and new service initiatives focused on recovery and capacity building.

In the 2021-2022 financial year, Juno engaged with our clients, staff, Board and partner organisations to contribute to the development of our new three-year strategic plan. The plan outlines Juno’s ongoing commitment to highlighting the drivers and impacts of gendered poverty, including homelessness and family violence. We will continue to work in partnership with like-minded organisations to develop new approaches to creating opportunities for women and non-binary people to achieve safety and economic independence.

Our work with our clients and in the community is only possible because of the commitment and passion of our people. This year the staff of Juno continued to bring their enthusiasm, dedication, skill, respect and hope to their work. The team have remained a consistent and steady presence for the women and non-binary people who come to our service. The Board extends our gratitude and sincere thanks to our wonderful staff.

In June our CEO of 5 years, Jade Blakkarly, left Juno to take up another leadership role in the sector. On behalf of the Board, I thank Jade for her significant contribution to Juno. Under Jade’s leadership, Juno expanded our client support to include early intervention and prevention programs, new service initiatives focused on recovery and capacity building and an expansion in our advocacy work. Jade built a highly skilled, caring and committed culture within Juno, ensuring we are well placed to deliver our new strategic plan and continue to build on the success of the past 5 years.

The Juno Board thanks Kristen and Pai for stepping in to act as Co-CEOs since Jade’s departure. They have done an outstanding job in leading Juno, supporting staff and our clients over the past few months. We look forward to welcoming our newly appointed CEO who will commence with Juno in late 2022.

I also wish to acknowledge the women who volunteer on the Juno Board and thank them for their governance, knowledge, insights and skills. During the year Alexandra Fink left the Board after serving for 5 years as our Treasurer. We thank Alex for her valuable contribution over this time. This year Elizabeth McMahon joined the Board bringing a wealth of skills and experience.

This has been my last year as Chair of Juno as I will be stepping off the Board in November at the end of my Board tenure. It has been my privilege to serve on the Board and as Chair of this remarkable organisation for 6 years. I have enjoyed working with such dedicated and knowledgeable women on the Board and Juno staff, and I feel proud to have contributed to Juno’s achievements over this time.

Looking ahead, 2023 will be another exciting year for Juno as we welcome a new CEO and commence implementation of our new strategic plan to progress our vision of a community where all women and non-binary people and their children are safe, empowered and thrive.

Melissa Clarkson
Chair

# **Co-Acting CEO’s Report**

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of our staff, peer educators, Board and funders in supporting women and non-binary people experiencing homelessness and family violence. As our communities have experienced the ongoing impact of the pandemic, you have shown resilience and strength and your support has not wavered.

As we start to move out of the pandemic, we would like to reflect on what it meant during that time for people struggling to have higher income safety nets, more rental security, and housing-first approaches. These supports should not be disappearing on the other side of the pandemic.

Alongside our traditional and critical case management, providing homelessness and specialist family violence support, we have also been working with individuals experiencing early signs of being at risk of homelessness and women working on long-term goals for economic independence. In the 2021-2022 financial year we grew these new programs, receiving additional funding to expand the number of women and non-binary people we support.

Our early intervention and prevention programs include Powering Future Choices, a peer education program that aims to prevent older women living on low incomes from experiencing homelessness by equipping them with the knowledge and resources to seek help early before they reach a homelessness crisis.

This year we continued to run the Rapid Response Clinic with the goal of preventing women from becoming homeless. The weekly drop-in clinic offers information and support to low-income women who need short-term assistance with tenancy rights, accessing private rental, navigating Centrelink, applying for public housing, and managing bills and debts.

Juno’s EMPower program takes a new approach to supporting women to recover from the impacts of trauma and build a strong, economically secure and thriving future for themselves and their families. EMPower works in partnership with women who have experienced homelessness to set and reach goals across life domains including family, housing, health and wellbeing, finances, career and employment.

We also successfully completed our accreditation. This was a time-consuming process for the team, but overall, a great success. The process was very helpful in identifying all of Juno’s processes and procedures and confirming the excellent service we provide, as well as focusing our continuous improvement work for the future. The Juno staffing team came together to provide the considerable evidence required for accreditation, with incredible work and effort, particularly by Imelda and Jade.

*Specific thanks to Jade Blakkarly and our Chair Melissa Clarkson*

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Jade Blakkarly, who was our leader for the past five years. Jade has recently moved to a new role as CEO of WIRE, and we wish her every success in her new role. We feel grateful to have worked alongside Jade and wanted to take this opportunity to acknowledge her significant impact during her time as CEO.

A huge thank you also to our outgoing chair Melissa Clarkson who has chaired the WISHIN and Juno Board for the past five years. During this time, the Board has provided strong governance and a clear strategic vision that has focused us on the gendered drivers of homelessness and family violence and built our evidence base and capacity to respond. The support of the Board over the pandemic in particular enabled Juno not only to deliver our core services but grow in innovation.

Kristen Dearricott and Pai Rittichai
Co-Acting CEOs

# **Board Members 2021-2022**

Chair: Melissa Clarkson

Deputy Chair: Kirra Johnson

Secretary: Nayanisha Samarkoon

Treasurer: Alexandra Fink [resigned April 2022], Geeta Kulkarni

Members: Elizabeth McMahon, Judit Brown, Marquita Nolan

A huge thank you to Alexandra Fink who resigned as Treasurer this year for her generous time and skillful contribution to the Board.

# **Staff 2021-22**

Chief Executive Officer: Jade Blakkarly

Strategic Service Manager: Tanya McColl

Finance Manager: Muthuni Fernando

Quality and Compliance Advisor: Imelda Rennick

Partnerships and Development Lead: Kristen Dearricott

Program Manager Hume Merri-bek: Shannon Hollick

Program Manager NEMA and EMPower: Pai Rittichai

EMPower Coaches: Tessa Douglas, Shazia Syed

Communications and Project Coordinator: Alice Chambers

Community Projects and Connections Worker: Natalie Armstrong

Admin and Accounts Officer: Monica Ter Huurne

Admin and Finance Officer: Carmen Agius

Homelessness Team: Anushia, Akansha, Jodie, Rachel K, Rachel O, Tess, Zoe

Family Violence Team: Jacinta, Louella, Steph

# **2021-2022 Snapshot**

During 2021-22 financial year Juno supported:

* 311 support periods for women and non-binary people
* 261 children and youth (up to 25)

Support periods reflect the number of times Juno works with individual clients (some clients need more than one period of support).

Of those we supported:

* 65% had children or young people with them
* 33% were without children
* 2% were in other family groups

Demographic features:

* 30% were aged over 45
* 24% of the children we supported were under 5
* 9% of the women we worked with identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
* 17% were born overseas
* 56 women identified as culturally and linguistically diverse. They came to Australia from 30 different countries. England, Iran, Iraq, Philippines and USA were the most common countries clients migrated from.
* 20 different languages were spoken at home

Women and their children become homeless for many reasons and often there is more than one issue significantly impacting their situation.

Juno works across the seven local government areas that make up Melbourne’s northern suburbs:

* Hume: 38%
* Merri-bek: 17%
* Whittlesea: 11%
* Nillumbik: 8%
* Banyule: 6%
* Darebin: 18%
* Yarra: 2%

We also worked with 72 people outside of these regions due to the Coronavirus pandemic and support provided through the Homeless Engagement Assessment Response Team (HEART) initiative.

Reasons for homelessness:

- Family violence: 78%. 55% of women said family violence was the main reason.
- Lack of affordable housing: 41%
- Financial difficulties: 39%
- Housing crisis: 41%
- Impacted by no family or community support: 6%

When clients first started working with Juno

* Homeless/without permanent address for more than 6 months: 16%
* In short term/ emergency accommodation: 45%
* Sleeping rough/ or in nonconventional housing: 18%

# **Celebrating 20 years: Our History**

Juno’s story began in 2002, when four women’s organisations came together to form Women’s Information, Support and Housing in the North, known to many as WISHIN. CHAIN Youth Housing (which began back in the early 1980s); Young Women’s Housing Shopfront; Single Women In Supportive Housing Options; and Safe Place for Women. These organisations brought together expertise in mental health, homelessness, and family violence.

So even though we’ve only been officially in existence since 2002, our history of supporting and advocating for women who’ve experienced homelessness, family violence, sexual abuse, and mental illness stretches back more than 35 years.

*Since our inception, we have been empowering women to achieve stable housing, safety and independence whilst continuing to evolve as an organisation, led by many women committed to our mission, vision and values.*

For 18 years Juno operated as WISHIN, supporting women facing the most complex and multifaceted challenges. We are proud of our long history and the many women who have worked with WISHIN over the years. We are also proud of the women who have trusted us to support them and shared their stories and lives with us, often when they were at their most vulnerable.

*We acknowledge the resilience and resistance of victim survivors and women and non-binary people who have faced homelessness, who have always and continue to inspire and drive us to speak out and advocate for change.*

**Path forward**

In 2020, we embarked on a new era in the life of the organisation, rebranding as Juno to better reflect the organisation we became and are becoming. As Juno, we continue this legacy, supporting women and non-binary people with the most complex and challenging issues including homelessness, poverty, family violence, mental ill-health, trauma, and involvement with the justice system.

Today we are working with more than 350 women and non-binary people and their children annually through our unique, gender-specific and trauma-informed programs and services. We primarily support those in crisis to find secure accommodation and access resources. We also support women and non-binary people to find and move into housing, access other specialised supports, recover from trauma, increase their financial independence, and connect to their communities.

*A lot has changed since 2002, but our focus of supporting and empowering women and non-binary people has not.*

We are engaging in new and creative ways to empower women and non-binary people experiencing or at risk of family violence and homelessness to build personal, household and economic security. In 2020, we launched a pilot of the EMPower program, coaching women to identify barriers to employment and achieve financial independence. In 2021-2022 we ran Powering Future Choices, a peer-education program that builds the capacity of older women at risk of homelessness to access support early in order to avert future housing crises. We also launched our Rapid Response Clinic, which provides early intervention support to women and non-binary people experiencing housing or financial stress.

*20 years of service is worth celebrating - Established two decades ago to support women at risk of or experiencing homelessness and family violence, today Juno is the only gender-specific, non-faith-based homelessness service in Melbourne’s northern region.*

With the housing affordability crisis in Australia and shockingly high rates of family and domestic violence, our work is needed now more than ever. Going forward, we are committed to ongoing advocacy, alongside our services and programs, to raise awareness of the unique issues women face and change the systems and structures that contribute to gendered poverty, homelessness and family violence.

“It is a delight to be witnessing WISHIN’s (now Juno) 20th anniversary. The support and services provided by WISHIN have always been of a high standard, and it’s been a delight to watch it continue to grow, expand its offerings to vulnerable women and witness the work it has achieved of building women’s capacity in so many areas. Congratulations Juno, may you continue to grow and prosper further to meet the ongoing need to address the gender inequality we face in our society through the new and innovative programs you continue to implement and provide.”
- Jeanette Large, WISHIN CEO from 2001 - 2005

**Juno Timeline 2002 – 2022

2001 – 2005**
Jeanette Large leads WISHIN as the CEO.

**2002**
Women’s Information Support and Housing in the North (WISHIN) formed as CHAIN Youth Housing (which began back in the early 1980s); Young Women’s Housing Shopfront; Single Women In Supportive Housing Options; and Safe Place for Women joined together.

**2003**
Young Women’s Housing Shopfront: First young women’s housing organisation transitional housing programs for 15 – 25 year olds launched.

**2006 -2009**
Deborah Di Natalie governs WISHIN as Executive Officer.

**2007**
The Quilt Project, funded through R.E. Ross Trust: Opportunity for women to express their feelings in relation to their experiences of homelessness through creating colourful houses sewn onto quilt.

**2008**
Groundbreaking Going it Alone: Single, Low Needs Women and Hidden Homelessness Report Launched revealing the need for a gendered approach to housing and shone light on single, over 55 women’s experiences of homelessness.

**2010 - 2016**
Trish O’Donohue heads WISHIN as CEO.

**2010**
First WISHIN Women’s Car Sleepout held in Brunswick. The Sleepout followed the launch of the Going it Alone report and aimed to raise awareness of increasing number of women experiencing homelessness.

**2013**
Innovative program logic for service model of delivery developed for delivering homelessness services to women.

**2015**
Joint submission into Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. WISHIN joined with EDVOS, Safe Futures Foundation, Safe Steps and the Victorian Women’s Trust to present solutions to address system gaps in Victoria’s family violence response. Trish O’Donohue (CEO) and Ange O’Brien (Operations Manager) gave a witness statement at the Hearing.

**2016**
WISHIN hosts ‘Lady in the Van’ film fundraiser, in partnership with Women’s Property Initiatives, to raise funds for WISHIN’s ‘For an End to Domestic Violence’ brokerage program, which helped women retain their housing amid hardship and unexpected bills.

Supported the Love Bites Program:
A domestic violence and sexual assault prevention program for high school students across Australia.

**2017**
WISHIN participated in the A New Approach to Single Households (ANASH) Panel along with partner agencies and a consumer representative focused on providing flexible, innovative and creative approaches in challenging systems barriers, providing assertive outreach support and prioritising keeping people safe and housed with long term support.

**2017 - 2022**
Jade Blakkarly employed as CEO to develop and grow WISHIN.

**2019**
Crisis in Crisis Report launched by Northern and Western Homelessness Networks. Report into the state of short-term accommodation for people who are homeless, highlighting the particular dangers of this kind of accommodation to the safety of women and their children.

Moved from Glenroy to Preston as services expanded.

**2020**
WISHIN makes a submission to the Inquiry into Homelessness. The submission spotlighted women and children’s unique experiences of homelessness, calling for it to be considered in future policy and funding. Juno was also formally invited to give evidence to the Inquiry’s Committee.

**2021**
WISHIN rebrands as Juno to reflect the organisation we have become and are becoming as we expand to work with individuals experiencing early signs of being at risk of homelessness and women working on long-term goals for economic independence, alongside our traditional case management.

**2021**
Juno brings Economic Mobility Pathways model to Australia. Having partnered with Boston-based global Economic Mobility Pathways network to adapt and pilot an integrated response, Juno launches EMPower, an intensive economic mobility coaching program that gives women the skills and confidence to thrive and achieve greater economic freedom.

# **Early Intervention Support**

## **Rapid Response Clinic**

Specialist Homelessness Services support people in immediate housing crises or those experiencing homelessness. However, the system does not have the capacity to assist people experiencing housing stress before a crisis occurs. Launched in April 2021, Juno’s Rapid Response Clinic aims to provide early and brief intervention to women and non-binary people experiencing early housing or financial stress to prevent future homelessness.

Our weekly drop-in centre and helpline connects low-income women and non-binary people who need short-term assistance with key information and practical support on housing and financial relief. This can include support to understand tenancy rights, rental coaching and advice, information on financial assistance, accessing material aid, applying for public housing, or connection to other support services.

“Rapid Response Clinic gave me all the contacts I needed to get me back on my feet.”
- Service User

*Anglicare’s Rental Affordability Snapshot demonstrates less than 1% of housing is affordable for single mothers on parenting payment, retirees on the aged pension and people living on disability support pensions. Increased income support during the pandemic temporarily reduced housing stress, however as supplements were slashed, more women are rapidly falling into rental stress and crisis. Juno calls for urgent investment in more affordable housing and greater rental affordability, especially for victim survivors, so they are not forced to make the impossible choice between violence or homelessness.*

**Results**

In 2021-2022, our Rapid Response Clinic Workers assisted 107 individuals with information and support to get back on track.

In an evaluation carried out by For-Purpose Evaluation, we found that more than half of Rapid Response Clinic users were experiencing housing stress, often combined with family violence, financial stress and needing support for current homelessness. Our response work was often focused on providing private rental coaching to callers who were dealing with the flow-on impacts of family violence on their ability to sustain and gain tenancies. In a stressed and stretched system this service also played a key role linking and referring to other services in the family violence system. As a result, clients reported a greater understanding of the housing sector and confidence to access services when or if they need them.

*A huge thank you to the doTERRA Healing Hands Foundation for their generous support of this project.*

“Juno linked me in with [a service] where I was able to get a case worker who has assisted me with finding social housing...and will be moving in next week sometime. They have helped more than anyone else possibly could.”
- Service User

# **Case Management**

## **Homelessness Support**

In the 2021–2022 year, Juno’s Homelessness team worked with 145 women and non-binary people and 128 children to find permanent, safe and affordable homes or to address barriers related to their experiences of housing stress and crisis.

COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns again impacted the support Juno provided. We worked across Victorian
Government-funded Homelessness Emergency Accommodation Response Team (HEART) to continue supporting clients and accompanying children who were rough sleeping to remain supported in emergency hotel accommodation across Melbourne.

While the additional HEF funding to enable this outcome was welcomed by the sector, supporting clients into safe and secure housing was considerably more challenging for our team during Melbourne’s multiple lockdowns. Rental inspections were postponed or held online, creating further barriers for our clients.

*Juno case managers provide comprehensive, empathetic, and expert-level support. We believe consumers genuinely receive a different experience from us than other housing providers, which is reflected in the feedback we receive.*

As Homelessness Access Points returned to pre-pandemic levels of Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) funding, this meant decreased motel funding and limited financial support available for household set-up. This has increased pressure on the team in terms of supporting clients in more vulnerable positions (such as rough sleeping or living in their car) and needing to search more widely for financial support options for clients who have secured stable housing. We have also seen an increase in referrals for clients with pets, which can further reduce housing options.

*“One of the core issues we have seen is finding suitable and affordable private rentals for clients – especially for single people on support payments. There is simply not enough housing available, both private rentals or social and public housing properties.” – Program Manager*

We continued to work with Haven; Home, Safe to provide support to the women and non-binary people over 45 living in a local transitional housing property. This meant ensuring the property was a safe space for the tenants and that clients entering the house were supported and were the right fit for a shared living environment.

We were thankful to also receive additional funding from the Victorian Government to support clients to access COVID-19 vaccinations and targeted health information. This project funded two additional short-term case managers, increasing our organisation’s capacity and leading to strong partnerships across the health and homelessness sectors.

Over the year, we have strengthened our connections with valued partners, including Women’s Property Initiatives (WPI), Haven; Home, Safe, VincentCare and Women’s Housing Limited. As a result, we have referred several clients to WPI properties and affordable housing properties through Haven; Home, Safe. These networks have been an excellent resource for finding suitable, stable, and safe accommodation options for our clients.

## **Family Violence**

Our Specialist Family Violence workers together supported 133 individual women and 101 children and youth.

Family violence continues to be the main reason the women and non-binary people we support are pushed into homelessness, followed by a lack of affordable housing and financial difficulties. This financial year, 171 or 55% of the people we supported told us that family violence was the main reason they sought support, a 10% increase from last year.

The pandemic again brought on additional challenges for our team and, of course, the people we support. Extended lockdowns presented added layers in assessing and managing the safety risk of victim survivors. Financial hardship coupled with more time spent at home placed many women at increased risk of violence. We also noticed our family violence referrals dropped, which we believe was partly due to victim survivors’ inability to access services because COVID-19 restrictions kept them at home with the perpetrator.

Our Family Violence team adapted to new ways of working, while continuing to provide person-centered, trauma-informed and tailored family violence support. This included education around client’s rights, safety planning, support to apply for Intervention Orders, relevant referral pathways and support to access brokerage. The case managers provided both practical and emotional support through what are undeniably incredibly tough times.

Our team have again noticed an increasing trend in women experiencing technology-facilitated abuse. Our family violence workers have been liaising with WESNET around options for increased tech safety and distributing alternative modes of communication early in support periods.

Our Specialist Family Violence worker returned to the outpost role at VincentCare and Haven; Home, Safe, in December 2021 and April 2022 respectively, for the first time since COVID-19 restrictions came into place in 2020. This has facilitated an increase in family violence referrals and a deepening of the relationship between services as we progress our unique specialist family violence response to victim survivors presenting at Homelessness Access Points.

*“I can’t thank you enough. You have literally made more moves in the short amount of time we’ve worked together than anyone has since I reached out for help.”
– Juno Client*

We are forever proud of the resilience and commitment of the Homelessness and Family Violence teams and their ability to support women and non-binary people - and accompanying children - with multifaceted and complex needs. We thank you for your passion, dedication and creativity when it comes to providing vital support to clients.
 *Juno acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.*

**CASE STUDIES**
**Tara**

Tara, 34, was referred to Juno for housing support after leaving her interstate home due to family violence. She experienced ongoing family violence, including coercive control, with her now ex-wife using controlling behaviours and financial abuse over many years.

Tara had found a way to leave her relationship and move interstate safely, although without a house to go to, she spent months couch surfing with friends before being referred to Juno.

Tara identified several tasks that she needed support with. In particular, she was having difficulty navigating a new service system. She needed support to establish her new tenancy, transfer her work cover claim and link to appropriate family violence support (including counselling).

Tara’s Case Manager explored her needs with her to provide tailored and appropriate support. Tara is a proud member of the LGBTQIA+ community and regularly commented on the need for a service response with an LGBTQIA+ lens. As an intersectional organisation, Juno ensured culturally appropriate support, considering Tara’s identified neurodiversity and her
LGBTQIA+ status.

During the conversation, Tara expressed struggling with her mental health but that it had improved significantly since learning she would have a place to live, having secured a private rental. Tara stated she was ready to start her new life away from violence.

Her Case Manager was able to apply for a Family Violence Flexible Support Package, carry out safety planning, and ensure Tara had food and essential supplies through material aid support. They also liaised and advocated with other services to ensure they provided appropriate and culturally specific support. Her Case Manager also connected Tara with resources and information to support her recovery and interstate move with a holistic view, such as connection to social groups in line with her hobbies.

“The case worker kept following up and contacting me when I was really struggling with burnout, to communicate, to keep going, and was losing hope. They managed to create a safe space and build trust with me, despite never meeting in person, which is a great feat considering my previous experiences with other support services, people in general and disappointments before that. The case worker at Juno listened to what I needed and provided practical support and helpful solutions while not overwhelming me with unnecessary information or handballing me to other services. The Juno worker could clearly define and prioritise my needs by asking broader and deeper questions. The holistic approach combined with problem-solving skills and teaming it up with practical solutions placed into action and strong advocacy is what made a difference. The biggest factor would be genuine care, honesty and authenticity from the case worker, which enabled the whole process. Clear communication and expectations also helped when I was dealing with a lot of uncertainty.

Some of the things that Juno was able to assist and made a difference on my journey were:

* *Advocacy*
* *Regular check-ins, counselling and support*
* *Collaboration and liaising with other services*
* *Organising a skip bin to assist with the removal of damaged goods*
* *Food vouchers (pickled onions aren’t sustainable)*
* *Escaping Violence Payment process and getting the necessary items to help manage and make life easier, as well as safety planning*
* *Providing relevant information - not bombarding me with a bunch of pamphlets and making me feel overwhelmed*
* *Considering factors that would help me, e.g., sports and social activities*

*Planning for my ongoing needs and providing me with appropriate contacts*

**Lee**

Lee, 53, accompanied by her 8-year-old son, was referred to Juno in May this year. They moved to Melbourne to escape family violence and to be closer to Lee’s oldest child. Lee was forced to leave her previous rental because it was an unsafe environment for her and her child due to the risk of violence. Prior to renting, Lee owned her home but had to sell her house to pay the costs associated with a family court matter involving the perpetrator.

As a sole parent with one income, soaring rental prices and low rental availability meant Lee could not find an affordable property and was pushed into homelessness. She spent some time couch surfing with family before making the move to Melbourne. At the time of referral to Juno, Lee and her son were moving into emergency accommodation after the property where they had been couch surfing became too crowded.

Lee’s Juno Case Manager supported her in getting an extension on her emergency accommodation to relieve pressure while exploring longer-term housing options. This included private rental coaching and liaising with real estate agents, completing a public housing application, and successfully putting forward a community housing nomination. We were also able to support Lee with access to rent in advance funding so she wouldn’t be under additional financial stress.

Lee’s Case Manager also supported her to access material aid and food relief programs so that she and her child had access to basic needs while working on long-term goals. They also provided Lee with a Safe Connections phone through Women’s Services Network (WESNET) as part of family violence safety planning.

Lee regularly mentioned several support needs that she was not currently in a space to work on, including accessing a GP for a health check and mental health care plan, counselling support, and support for her child’s mental health and wellbeing. Before the support period concluded, Lee’s Case Manager provided her with a comprehensive list of resources and available supports for her to refer to when she has the capacity.

“Juno has been amazing, especially my case worker. They have been emotionally supportive and have been able to find me a home. I feel so grateful. I was unable to find a secure home for myself and my now 8-year-old son for the last three and half years. Due to domestic violence, I had to leave where I was living and was able to stay at friends’ and family’s places over the past few years. This was okay at first, but after a while, I just felt so exhausted. I moved to Melbourne at the end of last year to be closer to my adult children. I thought it would be easier to find a place in Melbourne, but it was just the same: high rents and a housing crisis. I was referred to a homelessness support service as I became homeless, and they set me up with emergency accommodation. I was then referred to Juno. After many weeks of continuous housing applications and advocacy from Juno, I finally got an interview with the Women’s Property Initiative. I am now in secure, affordable long-term housing. It is wonderful, and again, I am so grateful to my case worker and Juno for getting me the interview.

# **Building From Trauma – Long Term Stability**

## **EMPower Coaching**

*Women have economic independence and are free from poverty. They are self-sufficient, empowered, connected, well-resourced and safe. They have a sense of agency, achievement and self-determination. Women thrive.*

Our traditional case management framework supports women to gain safety and housing security. This is an essential and fundamental first step. However, a bigger question is how we can address and support gender equity and long-term economic stability. This is where the EMPower Coaching model comes in.

EMPower is a life-changing coaching program that gives women who have experienced homelessness or family violence the skills and confidence to rebuild and achieve greater economic freedom.

Since launching EMPower in 2021, Juno’s EMPower Coaches have worked in partnership with 35 women to set and achieve goals across life domains, including family and housing, career and education, finances, and health and wellbeing. We have seen how long-term, recovery-focused coaching supports people to feel supported, gain confidence and become better resourced to build economically secure and thriving futures for themselves and their families.

*The EMPower model is not just about income – it is a holistic, ‘whole of life’ approach that supports stability and security in housing and family, health and wellbeing and equitable access to education and employment.*

“My life and the life of my kids have improved heaps since joining EMPower. I am now an independent, financially stable, single mum. It’s an amazing feeling. I can now plan goals for my family’s future efficiently and successfully.”
- Program participant

“Every hurdle that I hit, she [my coach] helps me look at it from a different angle and not feel so stressed about it. I walk out of there and I just feel so amazing, the word is ‘empowered’”.
- Program participant.

**Participant Results:**

In early 2022, Juno engaged For-Purpose Evaluations to evaluate the EMPower program over 2022 - 2024.
Our internal reporting results so far are extremely positive:

In the first year, we saw 87% of participant’s goals achieved.

We saw an average 25% shift in women’s \*Bridge scores. In 12 months, this is significant – we can’t wait to see what happens in 24 months.

In the past 12 months, we have seen an average 40% increase in participant’s financial wellbeing, career planning and networks, and a 30% increase in perception of health and employment.

\*The Bridge is used to map out where participants are in 5 core areas of their lives and to track and reflect on change over time from entering the program.

“I have a strong resume, but when you lose that confidence, you don’t feel worthy. [My coach] was able to help build me up, to work towards the Work Ready program, which was an intense 6 months. I wouldn’t have been able to get there [before the program]. [Now] I am working part-time at [organisation]. This was my dream job.” - Program participant

EMPower is based closely on a highly successful model created by Boston-based organisation, EMPath, and we thank them for their support and guidance. *EMPower is proudly funded by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation, Phyllis Connor Memorial Trust (administered by Equity Trustees) and The Erdi Foundation.*

# **In The Community**

## **Powering Future Choices**

Powering Future Choices is a peer education project that provided information and early intervention supports to older women (50+) at risk of homelessness, across Melbourne’s northern suburbs between December 2021 to June 2022.

According to the 2016 Census, women over 55 are the fastest growing group to experience homelessness in Australia. Using a peer education model, thisproject was aimed at reaching this cohort, whose income and life circumstances may put them at risk of homelessness and providing them with the knowledge and skills to navigate the housing system and access support.

Women engaged as peer educators in this project were 48 and over and had a lived experience of housing crisis, homelessness, relationship breakdown or family violence.

“My confidence to study and return to the workforce has exceeded anything I expected. I have found self-confidence I’ve never had in my life. I met some exceptionally strong women who have now become lifetime friends and supporters. I will be forever thankful for this opportunity to support women who are experiencing situations similar to mine. I thank Juno for believing in me and promoting the power of lived experience.” - Lived Experience Peer Educator

* 7 women completed training and were engaged as peer educators for the project
* 30 workshops on ‘Housing’, ‘Money’ and ‘Relationships’ were facilitated by peer educators
* 160 attendees to community workshops, delivered in a range of group settings, virtual and in-person, across northern suburbs of Melbourne

These workshops gave older women the knowledge and skills to be able to successfully access available resources and supports to mitigate their risk of homelessness and financial stress when and if they needed to. As well as increasing the confidence and skills of 7 incredible peer educators, including in facilitation, advocacy and effectively accessing their lived experience expertise.

**Participant Results:**

100% of peer educators reported gaining confidence in sharing their lived experience with others, in facilitation skills, knowledge of sector supports, and increased digital literacy. The peer educators repeatedly reflected on the “incredible difference” being part of this project has made in their lives. They reported considerable increases in self-confidence and a newfound “belief in their own power”.

Workshop feedback demonstrated an overall increase from ‘low’ to ‘very high’ in participants’ knowledge and awareness of available community sector supports and resources, including understanding available housing options, entitlements, and financial and legal rights. More than half of the attendees affirmed that they had gained knowledge they would go on to share with five or more people in the community.

“I’ve learnt how to get housing and financial support if I need it down the track”
- Workshop participant

There are ongoing opportunities for peer educators to link in with Juno’s other services. We have been able to offer pathways for some of the educators into our 18-month EMPower coaching program that gives women the skills and confidence to achieve greater economic freedom through one-on-one coaching and group work.They are thriving in this program and looking towards long-term employment and career goals.

Powering Future Choices has provided Juno with significant insight into the value of employing women with lived experience within our workforce. We are committed to developing our lived experience framework, including a commitment to lived experience employment and advocacy projects.

“I now know about the range of services on offer for older women and how they can be accessed.” - Workshop participant

*This project was supported by Bennelong Foundation, Darebin City Council’s Community Grants Program, The Victorian Women’s Trust and #GoKindly.*

## **Podcast: Coming Home**

Raising awareness of women’s experiences and the systemic drivers of homelessness

In 2021, Juno produced a 6-part podcast series, Coming Home, which tells the story of three Melbourne women, from their childhoods, through to facing homelessness and eventually finding safety and a place to call home. Written and produced by Kate Lawrence, Coming Home looks deeply and critically at how women’s homelessness is fundamentally different to men’s and the systemic drivers that lead to women becoming homeless: gender inequality, economic disadvantage and family violence, and the unaffordable housing market in Australia. The series centralises the three women’s stories, following their lives across time and place, whilst also contextualising their experiences within the context of Australia’s broken housing system and broader society.

“You’ve got this option of just talking and telling your story from start to finish, however you want to in your own words, because it’s your experience, it’s no one else’s. It’s a new
kind of freedom.” - Mary

“I was silenced for so long. I have a voice now and I am not going to be silenced anymore. [Coming Home] gave me a chance to not be silent anymore, even though it could be quite challenging at times.” - Neen

You can listen to Coming Home on all podcast streaming platforms, or via our website: https://juno.org.au/podcast-coming-home/

## **Targeted Case Management Activities for COVID-19 Vaccination Program**

In early 2022, Juno received funding from the Victorian Government to promote access and reduce barriers to COVID-19 vaccination for the women and non-binary people and their children that we support through our homelessness and family violence programs.

“I did have major concerns about a 4th jab however Juno staff and nursing staff eventually explained and answered my all concerns and that helped me decide to get the jab. And I now feel better knowing I am covered, so big thank you to all.” - Juno client

Juno delivered a range of activities to reduce COVID-19 vaccine misinformation and hesitancy, including one-on-one case management conversations, referrals to health services and vaccination engagement events across our catchment areas with bilingual health educators. The program also focused on removing practical barriers to accessing vaccinations and support, which we provided through organising and funding transport to and from appointments and events, offering childcare and facilitating in-home vaccinations for clients that faced additional barriers.

We look forward to ongoing opportunities to collaborate across the sectors to provide accessible, timely and tailored healthcare to people experiencing homelessness.

We are thrilled to have been able to partner with such amazing local community organisations throughout the project, and we thank everyone involved for their collaboration and dedication to supporting increased uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine among women and non-binary people and their children experiencing homelessness and family violence.

Thank you to our partners:

* Victorian Government
* Women’s Health in the North
* DPV Health
* Western Health
* Your Community Health
* Drummond St Services
* Youth Projects
* Lead The Way

# **Advocacy and Policy**

Juno continues to have a strong focus on advocacy and policy, to raise awareness of the driving causes of homelessness for women, build evidence-bases for the work we do, share our perspectives and expertise on homelessness and family violence, and to influence policy and improve the systems and structures that disproportionally impact women’s ability to thrive.

**Higher rental affordability needed, especially for victim survivors and single mums**

In 2021 during the pandemic, Juno set up a Rapid Response Clinic that supports women and non-binary people to find out about their housing options at the first sign of housing stress. We speak about social housing, financial assistance and how to have conversations with landlords and real estate agents about getting and keeping a tenancy. This is so important for the bulk of victim survivors we work with who have been left with financial debts, arrears and damage to property and their rental record from perpetrators.

Women we work with report time and time again the challenge with a) finding a property in their income range and b) when they can afford that property being turned down because they are on a single-parenting payment and landlords don’t feel they are a safe bet.

Juno is calling for investment in programs that support women to obtain affordable private rentals, or maintain an existing private rental property, without falling below the poverty line and being pushed into homelessness. We also urgently need more social and affordable housing on top of the 12,000 already committed as part of the Victorian Government’s Big Build, and a greater proportion needs to be set aside for victim survivors. These properties also need to be in areas accessible to public transport, schools, training and employment to give women the best shot at success.

This lack of choice and uncertainty places real risk of victim survivors returning to violence and prolongs their trauma.

Juno welcomes the newly elected Federal Labor government’s promise to do more to fix homelessness through the Housing Australia Future Fund, which will build 30,000 new social and affordable housing properties over five years. However, much more needs to be done, especially to support victim survivors who are too often forced to make the impossible decision between homelessness or returning to violence.

**Calling for an integrated systems approach across housing and family violence**

Juno supports and advocates for an integrated approach and multi-disciplinary service delivery to improve safety and decrease the systemic barriers that many women face when seeking support.

There are barriers in the current service system that prevent women from achieving the housing and support outcomes they need to overcome homelessness. These barriers include:

* Varying eligibility criteria across different service systems (e.g. family violence services, homelessness services, prison release programs) means that common clients find it difficult to access the service they need at the time when they need it.
* While the new Orange Doors service (for women escaping family violence) provides a better triage and referral service, it doesn’t provide access to the housing needed.
* Lack of a common practice framework across the different service systems mean that clients are still facing a range of different intake, assessment and waiting list processes.

“The current system in Victoria and how funding is allocated is quite disappointing, especially regarding The Orange Door being the main domestic violence service entry point and referral service and not being linked to the housing sector. It has been extremely difficult navigating the housing sector. Due to the government funding and current system, the separate system approach has made it difficult for clients to navigate and access the necessary support. Unfortunately, I have come across services not being transparent about what they can offer, and I can only assume that they are trying to be protective of their limited funding. Being allocated or limited a certain time period of support has added to my anxiety about when and how I receive support and trying to make the most out of it, but then feeling helpless and hopeless when I can’t do anything or communicate during that allocated time due to burn out or other medical reasons. Unfortunately, I’ve found that many service providers care more about their public profile in order to receive funding with the competition for resources. If there was more collaboration between the services, it would be helpful for clients. Also, bringing different sectors together in the service system, e.g. domestic violence sector and the housing sector.” - Past Juno client and advocate

Source: Homes for 100 Women Demonstration Project – A Proposal from the Women’s Housing Alliance as a three year demonstration project that provides long term housing and integrated support services to women and their children experiencing homelessness. You can read the proposal here: https://womenshousingalliance.wordpress.com/projects/

**Crisis in Crisis – Call to improve crisis accommodation**

The majority of homelessness is hidden - only 6% of people are sleeping on the street and the rest are in crisis accommodation, in subpar rooming houses, insecure and overcrowded dwellings, couch surfing or sleeping in their car.

The Northern and Western Homelessness Networks of which Juno is a member published the Crisis in Crisis II (2021) report, which revealed that only 1 in 10 private Rooming Houses used for emergency accommodation provided a level of safety to clients that was perceived as ‘barely acceptable’.

We need more social and affordable housing so that women and children are not forced into substandard and potentially dangerous accommodation. Constructing sufficient social housing to enable rapid access to a ‘Housing First’ model of housing and support would eliminate the reliance on private motels and rooming houses for emergency accommodation.

**Policy submission: GEN VIC Budget Submission 2022/2023: Recovery and Resilience – Recognition, Representation and Gender Equal Investment after COVID-19.**

Juno made a submission to the 2022/2023 GEN VIC Budget on our new integrated response, EMPower, which has been purpose-designed to work with women on low incomes who have experienced family violence and homelessness coaching them to achieve economic mobility. This program has strong potential to partner with women post-crisis to support their economic mobility and long-term housing futures.

# **Partnerships**

In the last year, Juno has participated in the following committees, working groups and advisory bodies:

* Moreland Family Violence Support and Prevention Network (MFVSPN)
* Women’s Health Community of Practice
* Northern Integrated Family Violence Services
* The Northern Local Area Services Network
* Specialist Family Violence Services Leadership
* Northern & Western Homelessness Networks Advocacy Working Group
* Safe and Equal CoP MARAM Practice Lead
* Women’s Mental Health Alliance
* Statewide Disability Inclusion Community of Practice
* The Orange Door in Hume Merri-bek, NEMA
* Housing and Homelessness Services Interface Working Group

**Organisation Memberships:**

* Women’s Housing Alliance
* Council to Homeless Persons
* Australian HR Institute
* Jobs Australia
* Justice Connect
* Safe & Equal
* Gen Vic
* Our Community
* EMPath
* Rotary Inner Melbourne Emergency Relief Network
* Western Emergency Relief Network
* You Matter
* Kids Under Cover

**Treasurer’s Report**

I am pleased to present the audited financial report for the period from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Through the 2021-2022 financial year period, Juno has delivered programs and projects in response to the changing needs of its clients following the COVID-19 pandemic. The results for the year were a net loss of $161,259 following a surplus of $71,692 reported in the previous year. No pandemic support payments were received in the year following the closure of the program during the previous year.

The focus for Juno now and into the future is to maximise value for the organisation, its members, clients and stakeholders. The Board and management will continue to assess and pivot revenue raising and cost optimisation strategies together with effective governance on resource deployment matters.

I would like to thank Alexandra Fink, our previous Treasurer, for her stewardship
of the Audit & Risk Committee. Alex resigned from the Board in April 2022 after
5 years of serving on the Board of Directors and as Treasurer.

Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd were appointed as auditors for 2021-2022 and have completed their audit of the financial report for the period ended 30 June 2022. I move that we accept the audited reports for this period.

Geeta Kulkarni
Treasurer

# **List of 2020-21 supporters**

Our work at Juno is made possible by the tremendous support, partnership and collaboration of a range of organisations and individuals.

This year we were fortunate to receive the generous support of a number of individuals and organisational donors. This support has been instrumental in building our programs such as EMPower and the Rapid Response Clinic. It has also enabled us to share the lived experience through our Powering Future Choices community education activities and the Coming Home podcast.

We thank the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for their ongoing funding that supports our core homelessness and family violence case management responses.

We also extend our thanks and gratitude to a number of philanthropic organisations who have supported our work this past financial year.

**Thank You**

* + Anglicare (Family Violence Flexible Support Packages)
	+ Bennelong Foundation
	+ Club Liberty
	+ doTERRA Healing Hands Foundation Australia and New Zealand (dHHFANZ)
	+ Erdi Foundation
	+ Family Safety Vic
	+ Inner North Community Foundation
	+ #GoKindly
	+ Grill’d
	+ Haven; Home, Safe
	+ Karma Currency
	+ Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation
	+ Pierogi Studio
	+ Share The Dignity
	+ Street Smart
	+ Thornbury High School
	+ Uniting Vic and Tasmania (Family Violence Flexible Support Packages)
	+ Victorian Government
	+ Vincent Care
	+ Women’s Health West (Family Violence Flexible Support Packages)

# **Please Support Our Work** Your donations enable us to help some of the most marginalised women and non-binary people and their children in Melbourne’s north.Be part of the movement for real change so that we can:

* Continue providing tailored responses to women and non-binary people and their children
* Help women and non-binary people move into safe, permanent and affordable housing
* Support individuals experiencing early signs of being at risk of homelessness
* Deliver innovative programs that move women out of poverty and homelessness for good
* Support women and non-binary people working on long-term goals for economic independence
* Offer activities that promote wellbeing and recovery from trauma
* Advocate for a redesign of the current homelessness system to meet the unique needs of women and non-binary people

If you would like to make a donation, please email supportus@juno.org.au or call (03) 8692 2020

# **Financials**

[You can read the full audited report here](https://www.wire.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Financial-Statements-202293.pdf): <https://juno.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/JUNO_AnnualReport2022_ART_web.pdf>