

Success Works Partners



2025 Impact *report*



Success Works
Working Together



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Chair's *Report*

“

Women with a prior criminal history generally don't have access to labour market opportunities once released from custody. Subsequently, they return to criminal activity.

”



It was this finding from a research paper published by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research that inspired the establishment of Success Works Partners in 2019. This inspiration, championed by a significant number of women, has culminated in an innovative service supporting hundreds of women into employment and reporting a recidivism rate of 11.5% compared with the state average of 50%.

With collaboration from the Board, our CEO and staff, our mentors, our employer partners and, of course, the women we support, we are doing what we said we would do. Our impact is impressive and our message that a criminal record should never be viewed as an automatic disqualification for employment is beginning to be heard. Our vision is no longer a dream – it is now a reality.

Megan

Megan Etheridge, OAM



Success Works Partners acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work. We acknowledge the disproportionate number of Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the criminal legal system and the impact on women, children and communities. We pay our respects to elders past and present.





Our Vision

Our vision is a world where women who have been impacted by the criminal legal system face ZERO discrimination in recruitment and employment.

Our Mission



Success Works Partners is a not-for-profit social enterprise with DGR (deductible gift recipient) status. We transform the lives of women affected by the criminal legal system by providing them with employability skills and empowering them to present themselves to an employer who sees their skills and potential and not their record. We break down the barriers to employment for these women through employer engagement, training and advocating for change.

Our Core Program



Transforming Women's Lives

We specialise in supporting and placing women with a criminal record into meaningful employment. Because most of our staff have lived experience of the criminal legal system, we know how it feels to go through a criminal record check process. If you are a woman with a criminal record seeking a job, we are here to support you.



Engaged Employers

As leaders in employment support for women impacted by the criminal legal system, we connect people to resources for building careers and finding meaningful job opportunities.



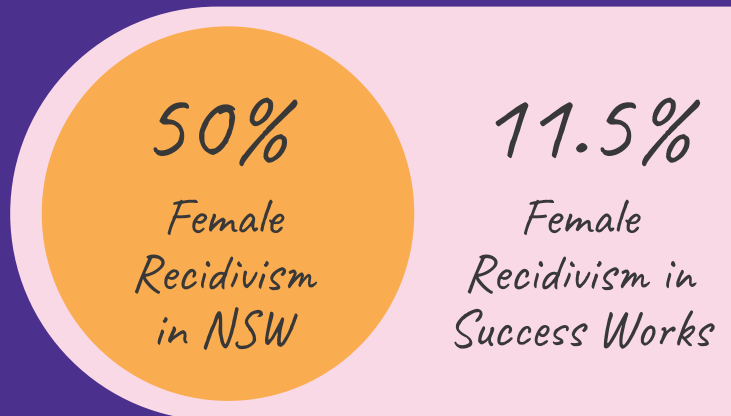
Supportive Mentors

Our volunteer mentors engage with our participants, support them through a series of workshops so they can learn new skills at a pace which suits them, and nurture their confidence. This support is extended for six to twelve months into employment, and some relationships remain on-going beyond the prescribed parameters.



We Are Changing *Recidivism Rates for Women*

Evidence shows that those who have been criminalised are more likely to return to prison unless they secure meaningful and sustainable employment (Baldry et al, 2025). Post-release statistics show that ex-prisoners have the highest unemployment rates of any marginalised group. This circularity between incarceration and unemployment is deepening, and this connection is even more significant when seen alongside increasing recidivism rates. In New South Wales, the female recidivism rates have increased to 50% among the total population of women with a criminal record while recidivism rates for the women engaged with Success Works are around 11.5%.



In 2025, the cost of keeping one person in a New South Wales prison was approximately \$170,000 per year, that is nearly \$500 each day. Notwithstanding the financial costs there are also human and social costs that include the potential for ongoing harm to victims and communities as well as weakening family ties and community safety.

By contrast the cost of successfully engaging a woman in Success Works services and ultimately to engage with successful employment is around \$11,000. However, the benefits are much more far reaching. The intergenerational damage caused by incarceration is incalculable due to the lasting impacts on children and their families. With employment, many women who have been affected by the legal system are able to secure housing and, more importantly, gain back the custody of their children.

While the factors contributing to unemployment are multilayered, the combination of stigma and shame, with the resultant marginalisation, creates extreme challenges for individuals to become integrated members of mainstream society. This potential discrimination is particularly the case for women which is why the workshops and mentoring services Success Works offers are so important to help break down stigma and build up confidence.

The cost of keeping one person in a NSW prison per year is \$170,000.



The cost of one woman graduating from the Success Works program and into sustainable employment, or supporting a woman into training is \$11,000.



Highlights of 2025



1

In October 2025 we welcomed Yvette Evans-Streeter as CEO.

“ I'd love to see some real change. How we position ourselves to be more influential at government policy level is something I want to strengthen over the next few years.

Yvette has a strong background supporting women, including working with vulnerable children in home care due to parental incarceration. She knows there are long term affects to the children whose parents have been incarcerated:

“ ...this becomes intergenerational ...we know that the outcomes for those children are really poor, usually. And so, I think that that justice system has a lot to answer for in that regard.

Yvette recognises that keeping women out of prison is the first step in securing healthy lives for children. This belief led Yvette to Success Works and the opportunity to work with a team of staff with lived experience:

“ ...the staff are amazing. I think the real focus is on ensuring that we have people with lived experience at the coalface... [this] is really embodying what we are trying to say. So, I think that that's really authentic, which is great.

The other highlight for Yvette has been the women in the program. There have been plenty of success stories but then there are some women that might not quite be ready the first time they use the service, but they still feel safe to come back when they have other things in place:

“ I think is a real testament to the fact that there's this trust that they develop with us, that we are non-judgmental, that we do try and help them with their careers and that they feel comfortable to come back to us, even if it didn't work out the first time.

Yvette doesn't underestimate the importance of the work they do at Success Works and the outcomes 'are really powerful.' Success Works is an organisation that changes women's lives not just in the short term but through sustainable employment options that benefit not just the women but their families and friends.

Yvette has only been a Success Works for six months, but she has focused on refreshing the co-design workshops, introducing evidence-based improvements to the journey from onboarding to employment and continuing to build a strong staff team who can focus on their potential and strengths.

In any organisation there are challenges and Yvette identifies structural challenges, particularly unstable funding and limited resources. A lot of resources are spent chasing funding, taking valuable time away from helping the women who use the service.

“ We currently rely predominantly on philanthropy and foundation funding which we are so grateful for. I do think there should be further investment by government especially long-term contracts to ensure we are sustainable.

Yvette's call to action:

• How can you create more employment opportunities for women?

Employ the women that we support. That's a no brainer and it's something that people have control over!

• How can you help us grow?

Use Test and Tag, our new social enterprise, make a donation, sponsor our program, become a mentor.

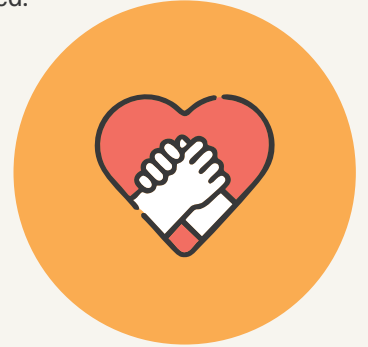
(<https://successworks.org.au/test-tag/>)

2

Expanding Programs to Include Volunteering

The staff at Success Works have recognised a need for some of the women in the program to make a gentle transition into employment. For this reason, a volunteering program has been instigated. Volunteering is a powerful tool for supporting women impacted by the criminal legal system: it helps with skill-building, social connection, restoring identity and building confidence. Many women entering the Success Works program lack formal job histories, so volunteering offers low-risk opportunities to explore different types of work—such as conservation or recycling—helping participants test interests and build direction without the pressure of formal employment. Volunteering also helps to reduce social isolation. Many women have lost their previous support networks and may have deliberately distanced themselves from past environments to rebuild their lives. Volunteering can provide a working environment where they can form peer relationships and experience a sense of belonging that may have been absent in their lives. It's also a great way to “give back,” contributing positively to society and rebuilding a sense of self-worth.

See the interview on Page 11 with Ren Fernando from ReLove



3

Business for Good Event



Success Works held its inaugural celebration ‘Business for Good’ on 30th October 2025 at the Ethics Centre Sydney. Invited speakers for the evening included Professor Emerita Eileen Baldry AO and KWOOP Co-Chair; Natascha Consigli, Employment and Training Program Coordinator at Success Works; Patrick Manley, Co-Founder and CEO of Cercle and Shaun Christie-David, entrepreneur and CEO of Plate It Forward.



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Video Launch

Success Works launched the promotional video 'Success Works Supporting Women into Employment' featuring staff and one of the Success Works women who gained employment with Cercle, an innovative company producing recyclable cups.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_VUxPeGfmc



5

New Social Enterprise



As we reported in the Impact Report in 2024, Success Works employed Lois Dillon as the Social Enterprise Manager to develop a Test and Tag social enterprise. The social enterprise has been designed to provide employment for women in the Success Works program and as an essential service to ensure NSW workplaces are compliant through certified appliance/RCD testing and digital reporting services across Sydney. The Test and Tag initiative will encourage organisations to support women to provide real work opportunities and help break the cycle of disadvantage. Look out for the Success Works Test and Tag opportunities for your business.

<https://successworks.org.au/test-tag/>

Who We *Support*

Of the women we support in the Success Works Program:



45%
Experienced
Domestic
Violence



41%
Experienced
Homelessness



44%
Experienced
Mental Health
Issues



16%
Are Single
Mothers



27%
Are Over
40 years old



17%
Are Aboriginal
or Torres
Strait
Islander

Our *Impact*

Throughout 2025:

We received



referrals to our
program.

We conducted



workshops
which were designed
to build confidence and
support the women's
potential to reintegrate into
society and work.

We onboarded



women,
58 completed
job-ready workshops,
41 were placed into
employment and 30 were
linked into training.

We trained and welcomed



mentors
and 9 volunteers
into our service.



Success Works Impact *snapshot*

Self-Esteem Transformation: From Start to 3 Months

To measure the impact of the Success Works program, participants completed a **Self-Esteem Survey at the beginning of their journey and again after 3 months of support.**

The survey asked participants to reflect on key areas linked to wellbeing and employment readiness, including:

- Confidence in preparing for work
- Feelings about themselves
- Optimism about the future
- Recognition of personal strengths
- Overall self-worth

These surveys provide a **before-and-after snapshot** of each participant's mindset, allowing us to track meaningful changes over time.

Overall Improvement

- Positive self-esteem responses increased from 35–50% to 90–97% in 3 months
- Near elimination of negative responses after 3 months

Key Outcomes

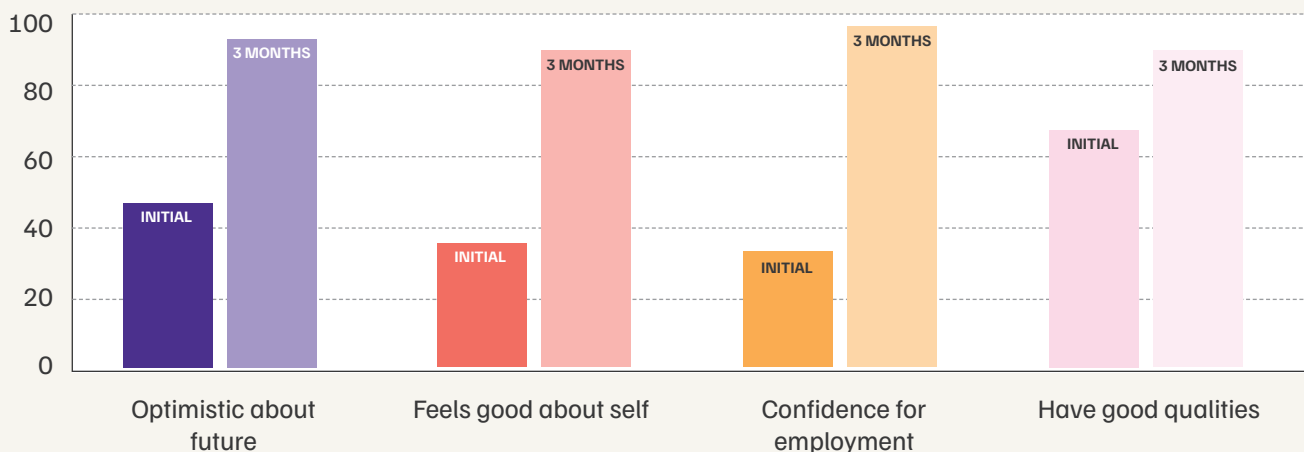


Impact Summary

Participants in the survey moved from uncertainty and low confidence to strong self-belief, optimism, and readiness for employment. The program has delivered a clear and measurable transformation in self-esteem across all areas.

Visual Comparison

Self-Esteem Survey Results



Our Stories

Pulkit Agrawal

Pulkit Agrawal founded UR Digital in 2021 after identifying a clear gap in the search engine optimisation market. Today, the agency helps clients to gain visibility across platforms such as Google, ChatGPT, and emerging AI technologies. The name of the business speaks to Pulkit's values. UR honours his parents — U for Usha, his mother, and R for his father — a reflection of the gratitude and integrity that shape how he leads. These values are also evident in his strong commitment to supporting women who have come to him through Success Works.

We spoke with him about the value he sees in employing women recommended by Success Works, and the insights he has gained that may inspire other employers to think differently about talent, opportunity, and inclusion.

UR Digital now employs 11 staff. One of the most recent recruits is Ebony, who is also featured in this year's Impact Report (see page 10). He has a core belief that: *'Everyone deserves a second, third, or even fourth chance.'* Reflecting on Ebony's journey, he recalls that she initially applied for a role she didn't secure. Yet something stood out. Seeing her potential, he invited her back to the agency to work one day a week in a different position. When Ebony later told Pulkit that she was taking on another job to support her family as a single parent, he made a decision on the spot — offering her a full time role that same day.

Months later, he reflects on the commitment Ebony brings:

“Women like Ebony don't see it as just a job. They see it as a life changing moment — their chance. And because of that, they invest everything into it.”

He adds with a smile, *'Sometimes I have to tell her, "Just get out of the office. Go home. Don't call me on Saturdays or Sundays."*' This level of dedication, he believes, comes from how deeply Ebony, and other women in her position value the opportunity for sustainable employment and the chance to create a different future for themselves and their families.

When discussing why some employers hesitate to hire people with complex backgrounds, he acknowledges that risk is often used as justification. However, he believes founder led organisations are uniquely positioned to look beyond stigma and see potential:

“Once decisions are left to delegation or management layers, vested interests can take over. Stigma replaces curiosity. Decisions get made without hearing the full story — it's almost like a social boycott.”

Rather than seeing background as a risk, he reframes it as experience. Women like Ebony, *'They bring a different set of eyes. A different perspective. A worldview where everything hasn't been handed on a platter. That diversity of thinking is incredibly valuable — especially in our line of work.'* He encourages other employers to reflect honestly:

“Get off the high horse. Look past the stigma and the taboo. I've made plenty of false hires. But Ebony came with honesty, lived experience, and heart. I don't worry when she's in the office — she takes care of everything. Sometimes, I just worry she works too hard.”



“
Talent Knows
No Boundaries
”



Ebony

Success Works Graduate

Before coming to Success Works Ebony had little work experience other than working in a bar. After leaving a transition centre she had work at a warehouse but came to Success Works as she wanted meaningful employment. She went for an interview at an internet marketing agency but missed out on the role as she didn't have the right skills. Despite this the employer was impressed with her and so it was that Pulkit Agrawal at UR Digital (see above) offered her a different one day a week role in administration. This very quickly turned into a five day a week position.

For Ebony one of the greatest barriers for her has been the stigma associated with having a criminal record. When seeking work the concern was that if people found out she had a criminal record 'they wouldn't want to work with me, or I lose my job, or the company I work for loses business.'

In fact, the opposite has happened with Ebony becoming a much-valued employee. She is grateful to Success Works:

“It's amazing. The ladies at Success Works don't like me saying this but they're the reason I am where I am today. They believe that I did it myself, but I don't believe, without them, I would have got half as far.

Having a job has helped the feelings of stigma, where she can easily acknowledge, 'I'm at a point now where I did what I did. I also paid the time for what I did... I can't change what anyone else thinks anymore.'

Reflecting on her life journey Ebony said:

“Not all of us grew up with, you know, a white picket fence, this four-bedroom house with mum and dad. Some of us had to struggle to get where we are and mistakes are going to be in that journey.... I mean, we're all human at the end of the day. We're all going to make mistakes.

There was definitely no mistake going to Success Works and seeking their help in forging a new life that was made possible through sustainable employment.



“I'm doing everything that I thought I couldn't.”



Volunteering with ReLove

Ren Fernando

Ren Fernando is a woman with a mission. The charity ReLove began in 2021 with a modest goal to help five women furnish their homes. Today they help over a thousand families a year into furnishing their homes.

Many of the people they help are transitioning out of crisis accommodation and have secured housing but lack the basic items needed to live including beds, cookware, and furniture. This is where ReLove steps in to provide the basics.

Central to ReLove's approach is collaboration. Rather than duplicating existing services, they work alongside organisations that support people into housing, employment, and recovery. Their role is to ensure that when someone receives housing, they can step into it with dignity, comfort, and a sense of ownership. Ren reflects on what the service means to the people they help:

“...it's the really intangible moment of people feeling like, what do you mean I'm worth this ...that's really, really important for us that people feel like we've listened to them. And when they get into that first night where they're sleeping in their bed, that they're looking around their home and because they chose the purple velour cover, that means something to them. That's the most powerful thing we do that we've slowed down and we've listened and people feel "oh my gosh, people do care about me".

ReLove's collaboration with Success Works further extends their impact. Many women at Success Works volunteer with ReLove to help gain work experience but also to become engaged with a supportive, low-pressure environment. As Ren notes, 'It's not about who you are or where you've come from, it's about showing up, contributing, and being part of something.' Success Works volunteers also offer a lived experience that helps to provide a different understanding about the needs of ReLove clients. Ren reflects it is always a 'good day' when the Success Works women are there, '... everybody just wants to roll their sleeves up and get going and contribute and there's this real lack of judgement of who you are and where you've come from'.



Our *Staff* in 2025



Yvette Evans-Streeter,
CEO



Gemma Kollios,
Mentor Program &
Candidate Operations
Manager



Lois Dillon,
Social Enterprise Manager



Natascha Consigli,
Employment & Training
Program Coordinator



Kylie Chambers,
Candidate Support
Coordinator



Nirjala Pandey,
Candidate Support &
Employment Administrator



Shannon Denmead,
Volunteer Program
Coordinator



Eleni Psillakis,
Community Partnership
and Outreach Coordinator

Our *Board*

in 2025



Megan Etheridge OAM,
Chair



Gabrielle Droulers,
Deputy Chair



Dr Prudence Black



Angela Pirrone



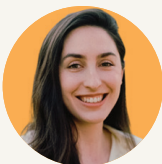
Jennifer Agius,
Secretary



Nicola Norris,
MFIA, FFIA



Malika Siyali,
CPA Treasurer



Anastasia Dounas



Dr Diane van den Broek



Gemma Wisdom



Susan Goldie



Our Funders



Judith Neilson Foundation



Ian and Shirley Norman Foundation



Women NSW



Social Impact Investment Department of Education



Give Together



Parramatta Club Grants



City of Parramatta



Pitch for Good



Impact 100 Sydney North

Our Practice Partners



Keeping Women Out of Prison Coalition (KWOOP) and the Sydney Community Foundation.



NSW & ACT

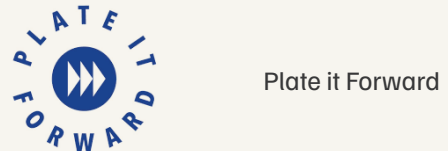
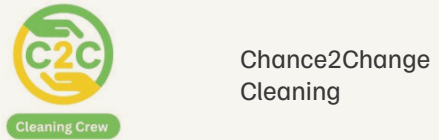
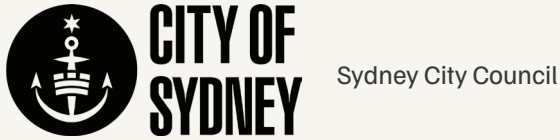
Dress for Success NSW & ACT

“ We have long shared a commitment to supporting women impacted by the justice system to build confidence, independence and brighter futures. Our organisations remain closely aligned in both purpose and practice, and we are proud to continue supporting the important work and impact of Success Works through its programs and ongoing connection with women across the community. ”

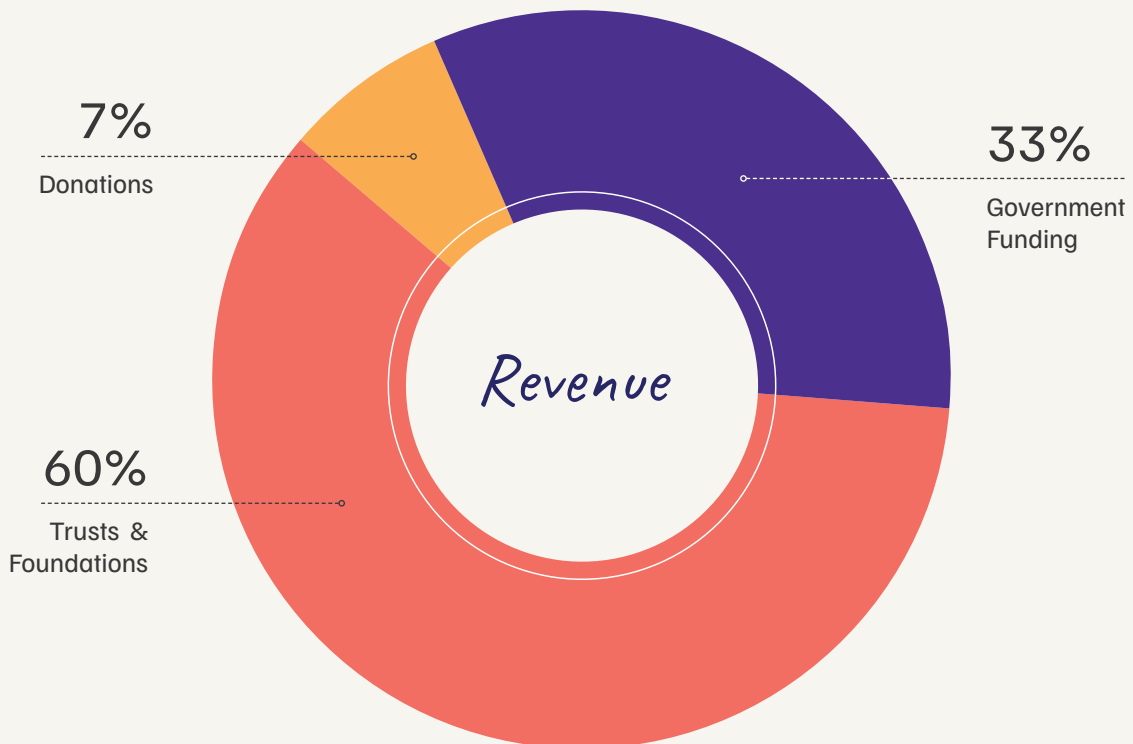
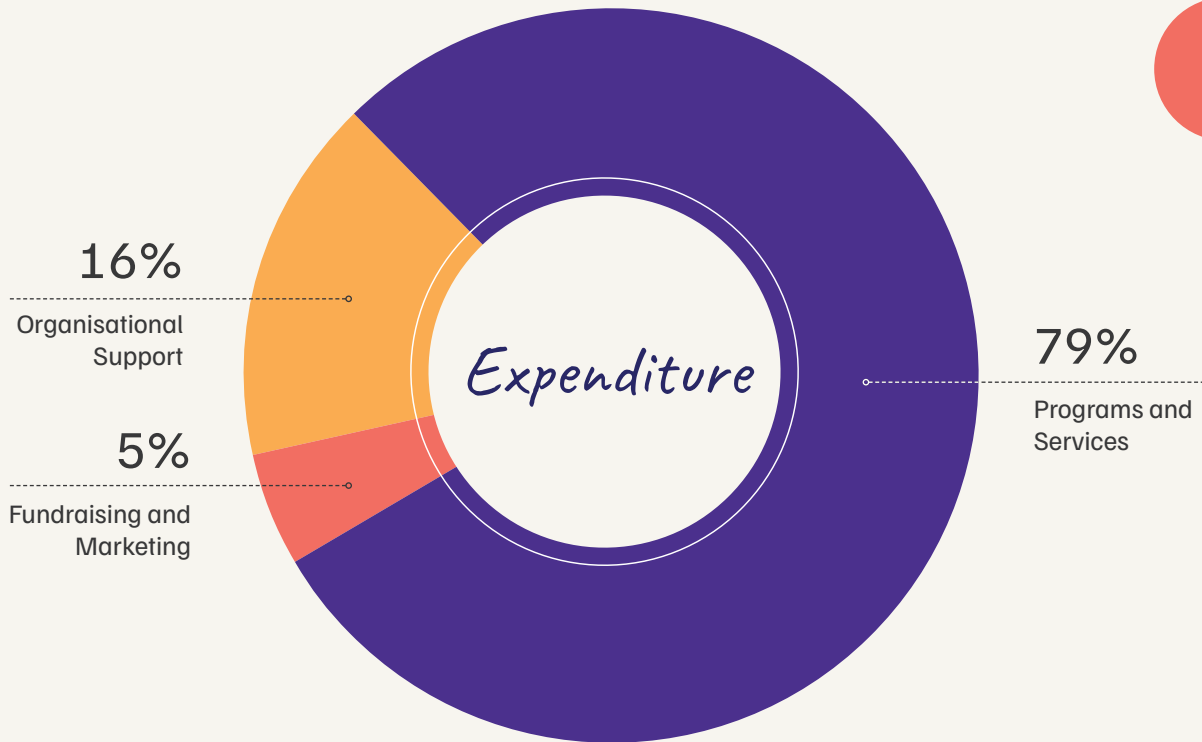
Sonia Casanova CEO
Dress for Success NSW & ACT



Our Employer Partners



Our *Financials*



What you *Can do to Help*



Donate and Fundraise

Please consider making a one-off donation, becoming a monthly donor, or organising your own fundraising event and change one woman's life.

<https://successworks.org.au/donation/>



Volunteer as a Mentor

Our women-only volunteer mentors provide wrap-around support, working with candidates as they search for jobs and through to the early months of employment. Full training is provided.

<https://successworks.org.au/mentors/>



Become an Employer Partner

If you believe in diversity, equity and inclusion become an employer partner and open your recruitment processes to women impacted by the criminal legal system. Come and talk to us about how we can meet your staffing needs.

<https://successworks.org.au/employers/>



Spread the Word

Tell your networks about Success Works and share your belief that we should live in a world where women who have been impacted by the criminal legal system face ZERO discrimination in recruitment and employment.

Contact Us

Email: info@successworks.org.au

Address: Level 9, 111 Phillip Street, Parramatta, 2150

Phone: 1800 255 736