

Nelson Women's Support Inc.

ANNUAL REPORT

1 April 2014 - 30 June 2015



Nelson Women's Centre / Te Whare Āwhina Mō Ngā Wāhine Puawai
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CC # 25231; GST # 63-299-901

Introduction

This has been a year of consolidation and development at the Nelson Women's Centre *Te Whare Āwhina Mō Ngā Wāhine Puawai*. The Centre's name in te reo indicates "a supportive place where all women can flourish." This describes how we want to be with each other, and what we want this place to be for all women who come here.

2014-15 is our first year as a single, unified organisation that includes the Women's Centre Coordination, Social Work and Counselling services. Please also note that this report is for a 15-month period, because we have changed our balance date to 30 June.

Our mission is: empowering women to be safe, resourceful, to value themselves and to reach their potential. This mission underpins everything we do here.

We are a registered charity: CC25231 and we are tax-exempt; GST # 63-299-901.

Women's Centre Patron

Annette Milligan, pioneer in women's health, Director and founder of INP Medical Clinic.

Personnel

In many ways, the people make a place, and we are blessed to be able to attract a wonderful combination of people (paid and volunteer) with great heart and strong skills.

Our current Governing Collective members are:

Gail Collingwood Elena Meredith Hilary Mitchell Sarah Wilson Ruth Parsons Myffie James

The responsibilities of the Governing Collective are to: guide the strategic direction of the Centre; develop major policies; oversee the organisation's finances; employ staff; assist with fundraising. (Note: Hilary Mitchell and Sarah Wilson joined the Governing Collective this year, and Anna Geene, Joy Shackleton and Raewynn Greenwood resigned. We wish them all the best for the future.)

The people employed by the Governing Collective are:

Centre Coordinator, Carrie Mozena Assistant Coordinator, Deanne Kilpatrick Community Social Worker, Lyn Ginty Cleaner, Lisa Ines Assistant Social Worker, Christine Henwood Finance Administrator, Kathleen O'Connor

We have a dedicated and skilled team of volunteer Counsellors:

Myffie JamesRuth ParsonsRebecca YoungMia RiddellJenny DavisAlex SawyerJulie JarNadine Kunz

During the 2014-15 year, counsellors Nadine Kunz and Mia Riddell resigned, and we brought a new counsellor on board, Julie Jar.

Other regular Women's Centre volunteers include:

Clancy Hunt, our gardener

Deb Rapson, who organises the Op Shop

Rona Spencer who offers Holistic Pulsing sessions every week

NMIT Social Work students on placement (Natalie in 2014 and Sally in 2015)

Nelson Women's Centre Coordination

The Women's Centre Coordinators, Carrie Mozena and Deanne Kilpatrick are facilitative leaders who focus every day on four key areas: people, programmes, our facilities and funding. Overall, they keep looking for ways to address issues in the community that are important to women.

Highlights

- Participation in all of our programmes and services at the Women's Centre remains strong. Our total number of client contacts for this 15-month period was 3820 (this is almost the same as last year, with a slight overall drop in attendance due a severe winter flu season.) This includes Centre visits, phone calls and email queries. More contacts keep coming in via our website, especially from younger women.
- 54% (2046) contacts related to our SOCIAL/CULTURAL offerings. Lots of people (individuals and agencies) enquire about our workshops; some approach us to be tutors; many attend other groups (e.g. 8-15 women and their children attend the Women Parenting Alone group every Friday; the 8-week Pathways to Power course runs twice every year; we ran four mindfulness meditation groups this year).

Hands-On Art and Discovery Afternoon workshops are popular: 512 women attended 76 workshops in the 15 months. The wide variety of workshops we offer accomplish many things: they introduce women to creative arts and crafts, help them to learn new skills, enable them to get to know new people, and boost their confidence in many ways. The tutors we engage are dynamic, skilled and inspiring people to be with. Our workshops also provide many women an easy introduction to the Women's Centre, which encourages them, later on as they may need, to link with the support groups, social work, advocacy and counselling services offered here.

<u>Our Hands-On Art & Creative workshop topics included</u>: drawing, painting (with acrylics and watercolours), mixed media, collage, pastels, 3-D felting, Asian bookbinding, paper mache, crochet, batik, crazy patchwork, creative sewing, quilting, ethnic cooking, and how to make raw and fermented foods.

Our Discovery workshops included a mix of personal development and life skills topics: budgeting, homeopathy for common ailments and first aid, Indian Head Massage, working with Tarot, Qi Gong, mindfulness mediation, menopause, self-defence skills, accessing your intuition, energy healing, beauty on a budget, Emotional Freedom Technique, boundary-setting, relationship and communication skills.

- 16% (607) came for a TIME OUT or to visit the OP SHOP. We are a drop-in centre where women can pop in for a cuppa, browse in our Women's Library, meet a friend for lunch, have an informal chat with someone, just hang out, or hunt for bargains in our Op Shop. This year we have seen a consistent flow of donations to and sales from the Op Shop, which raised over \$2,000. These extra funds help cover the daily running costs of the Women's Centre (such as power, internet, printing, milk, tea, rubbish, cleaning supplies, etc).
- 13% (503) contacted us for HEALTH reasons. Many women ask us for referrals to counsellors, GP's or other health services. This is because they are new to town, on a low income, or not happy with their current health provider. We refer women to NWS and SASH for support and counselling, and we maintain a resource list of private

counsellors who are full members of NZAC or NZAP. We also have had skilled volunteers who offer gold-coin reiki or holistic pulsing sessions for women on low incomes. In the past 15 months **144 women received a 50-min healing session** here at the Women's Centre.

- 4% (139) contacted us for help with INCOME. We are a contact point for the Angel Women's Loan Fund, who provide no-interest loans up to \$1200 for women to help with training/ education or to help develop a small business. We continue to get many requests for help with benefits and often link people with BUWT (Beneficiaries and Unwaged Workers Trust), CAP (Christians Against Poverty), Nelson Budget Service, and the Fifeshire Foundation (for grants in cases of domestic hardship). Also, due to ongoing tough times, many people come to the Women's Centre seeking food. We almost always have surplus bread, meat and fish to give away to individuals and families in need. We are immensely grateful for regular food donations from Nelson Food Bank (bread), Sealord (fish) and Lonestar Farms (meat).
- 3% (110) were requests for help with HOUSING issues. This includes emergency housing and finding affordable rentals.
 - a. Emergency Housing: The Women's Centre works closely with the Nelson Tasman Housing Trust, who oversee two emergency cabins at Tahuna Beach Holiday Park. The Women's Centre and six other community agencies share access to this emergency housing: Family Start, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Victory Community Centre, Te Piki Oranga and Women's Refuge. On average, 80 adults and 60 children each year are housed for 10 days. This emergency housing gives women and families breathing room so that they can find longer-term accommodation. The Women's Centre Coordinator helps lead the bi-monthly Emergency Housing Committee meetings, which guide the development of emergency housing in Nelson.
 - **b.** Affordable Rental Housing: Women on their own and families on low incomes have a hard time finding decent housing they can afford in Nelson. It is not unusual for people to struggle to pay rents that are 50-70% of their weekly incomes. We provide information on where and how to look for housing, link people to Women's Centre social workers and the Salvation Army for skilled advocacy on accommodation issues.
- 11 daytime VOLUNTEERS worked a total of 453 hours this year. We hugely appreciate Clancy Hunt for all of her gardening skills and creative additions to our grounds. Our loyal volunteer Deb Rapson continues to keep the Op Shop neatly sorted and organised. Two NMIT social work students, Natalie Randall and Sally Tohill helped with many daily tasks. Heartfelt thanks as well to Rona Spencer for freely giving her time to provide Holistic Pulsing each week to women on low incomes.

Development Projects:

Each year we work to improve the Women's Centre facility in some important way. This year we have focussed on two key projects:

a. Earthquake risk mitigation: in January 2015 we removed the two brick chimneys so they wouldn't fall and hurt people in the event of a big shake. We also had a special insulated flue installed so that we can continue to use the logburner to heat the lounge on cold winter days.

b. Counselling Cottage: with both SASH and the Women's Centre counsellors seeing more and more clients, we decided to add a third counselling space. Significant donations have come from Port Nelson Ltd, the James family, and many local supporters. The NMIT building programme donated labour: they built the cottage at NMIT and we then transported it to our back yard. While there are still some details to complete to satisfy the building consent, the new Cottage is already being used. Enormous thanks to Myffie James for project managing this effort so enthusiastically and gracefully.

Social Work Services - Overview

<u>The uniqueness of our agency is we are able to see all women</u> within and around our community, we have no restrictive criteria. All women seeking our help are validated and heard, treated with respect and dignity in a confidential and safe environment. Our Māori wāhine are embraced within the kaupapa of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We respond to all enquiries as quickly as possible. We prioritise urgent cases. These are generally walk-in clients who are in distress and need urgent help: women of different cultures and ages who may need to talk to someone regarding food, housing, domestic violence, advocacy re Work & Income or lawyers appointments etc. Women also present with mental health issues that need immediate attention. We also have an outreach service that allows our social workers to make home visits. This is beneficial for all women who are disadvantaged financially and physically.

Our referral system is simple: a phone call to the landline or our cell phone which is held by one of the social workers at all times, or via email or the website. We aim to respond to any messages left to us within one hour during work hours or otherwise within 24 hours. Women are referred to Nelson Women's Support by family, friends, co-workers or other agencies such as Nelson Hospital, GPs or practice nurses, Work & Income, CYF etc.

<u>We work collaboratively with SASH</u> who are also based at the Women's Centre. Whenever women have been affected by sexual violence we can connect them easily with caring, specialist help, and our social workers can continue to assist them in many practical ways.

Social Workers' Roles

We employ two social workers, Lyn Ginty and Christine Henwood, who are both full members of ANZASW (Aotearoa NZ Association of Social Workers). They are both very experienced and respected in the community, with good reputations for being honest and trustworthy when working alongside other agencies. Both social workers work from a strengths-based perspective which allows the client to determine their own journey or course of immediate action. Our Māori social worker, Lyn, has her own ability to engage specific theories within her practice e.g. Te Wheke Māori model is used when working alongside the whānau determining whakapapa. This enables both worker and client to form a meaningful relationship and where both fit in iwi, hapū, whānau.

Both social workers have a strong belief regarding safety of children. Notifications are made alongside whānau as we promote transparency, trust and support. Anonymous notifications are only made if there is a threat to the safety of the social worker. Both social workers have a wide knowledge of the Nelson community, therefore are able to think on their feet regarding referrals to other agencies within the area who may have more expertise in specific areas.

Both of our social workers also have a lot of experience helping women address domestic violence. We are able to help women understand the dynamics of power and control, create safety plans, and help them secure protection and parenting orders if needed. We frequently refer women to the programmes of Stopping Violence Services. We also link many clients to the services of SASH so that women who had been sexually abused as children or raped as part of ongoing family violence can get specialist support and care. Our social workers continue to help these clients with practical matters re housing, food, clothing, children's education and more.

Social Work Support & Advocacy – this service has three "streams":

- a. <u>Intensive Family Support</u>, for 60 families per year, funded by a contract with Ministry of Social Development. This year, we worked with a total of **74 high-risk families** (with 286 children), with **all** of these families achieving at least 80% of their goals set through their case plan.
- b. **General Social Work Support**, largely funded by grants from NZ Lottery and the Rātā Foundation (formerly The Canterbury Community Trust). This year, we worked with **over 200** women and families in this general area.
- c. <u>Social Work Support for women over age 45, struggling on their own</u>, funded by a contract with Nelson City Council. This year, we worked with **over 100** such women.

Primary Presenting Issues for All of Our Clients

Domestic violence/abuse - 27% Parenting - 18% Legal/custody issues - 22% Housing - 9% Mental health/addictions - 22% Poverty - 2%

Please note that in most cases, it isn't just one area of concern but actually several, intertwined. And underlying most is financial hardship/poverty.

AGES of Clients		ETHNICITY of Clients	ETHNICITY of Clients		
24%	17-30 years	69% NZ European			
34%	31-40 years	28% Māori			
37%	41-60 years	01% Pacific Islanders			
05%	over 60 years	03% Other			

Results-Based Accountability

This year we began tracking all clients' progress in terms of positive changes in their:

- information, education, skills
- attitudes, perceptions, awareness
- behaviour and actions
- circumstances

This happens via a closing assessment between the social worker and client. Results for each client vary according to each person's situation and their set goals. Examples of common results are: better understanding of the harmful effects of family violence on children; improved parenting skills; stronger ability to take care of self; learning to set better boundaries; resolving difficult access arrangements; and gaining secure housing.

Outreach Service

Referrals are made to our social workers from agencies such as Nelson Hospital social workers. We will visit and make sure that women who have recently had surgery whether young, old or middle-aged are able to cope. Many of them cannot drive and need help to attend their follow-up appointment. These usually involve short-term plans.

We also do home visits with young mums who have no transport, women with addictions who get into difficulty, plus all women in urgent need of support, e.g. doctors appointments when children are sick. Our service has on occasions reached from Nelson, Richmond and surrounding areas to Motueka. We are able to evaluate clients' needs at home and then put other agencies and resources in place for them within their area.

Contact via Website and Email

One of our groups of "hard to reach clients" is often married women who have learnt to be resilient, but who are living in controlling relationships. These women may be professionals who do not want agencies or outsiders knowing what is going on in their homes. They will make contact by phone or via our website and check us out first. They always enquire about confidentiality firstly. We engage with these women usually by email until they feel safe to come into the Women's Centre. We have clients who are running from abusive relationships, from as far away as Australia, who connect with us through our website, who ask for contact as soon as they arrive back in Nelson.

Counselling Service

Nelson Women's Support has six qualified, volunteer counsellors, who provide up to 10 free counselling sessions to any woman over age 17. Our social workers assess women who request counselling, and will "hold" these clients until they are able to be seen by a counsellor (usually within 2-3 weeks). Our counsellors are required to keep written records and evaluation sheets on each client as an accountability measure for the agency. The counsellors attend a meeting with all staff once per month, and meet as a peer group after the main meeting. All counsellors have their individual external professional supervision, plus some training paid for by the agency (thanks to ongoing fundraising for this purpose).

In the past 15 months, our counselling service worked with 80 new clients, providing 667 hours of free counselling. A very big thank-you to our counsellors Ruth, Myffie, Jenny, Rebecca, Alex, Julie, Mia and Nadine for all of their work in empowering women to make positive choices and changes. Their skilled presence in working with largely low-income women who aren't able to pay for private counselling makes a tangible difference in women's lives.

Outcomes from our counselling service include clients reporting:

- positive changes in their attitudes and perspectives on grief, conflict, and loss;
- improvements in abilities to set appropriate boundaries in their relationships;
- improved self-acceptance and sense of self-worth;
- greater willingness to try new things;
- enhanced ability to assert themselves when necessary.

Pathways to Power Courses

Each year we run two Pathways to Power courses, skilfully facilitated by Kindra Douglas. (Kindra created the course 10 years ago and continues to develop the course material).

Pathways to Power is an 8-week guided course in exploring one's sense of self, strengths, ability to reflect on one's behaviours and beliefs, the power to choose and make things happen, and to feel more in charge of life – now and for the future. In the past 15 months, **27 women attended three Pathways courses**. Participant feedback 98% positive.

<u>Learning outcomes from Pathways to Power are</u>: increased self-knowledge, centredness, and self-confidence, and a clearer sense of life direction and goals.

<u>Important Trends Seen by Our Social Workers This Year:</u>

Poverty

In the past 15 months our focus has gone right back to <u>basic</u> social work. We see women who have lost hope and the resilience to cope financially in an economic climate where their income does not cover their needs. These women range from single-parent or two-parent families, to single women, young and old. They feel socially excluded because of inequality and poverty. Their children also feel the impact of poverty e.g. socially excluded at school by their peers if they are not digitally connected by internet, facebook, twitter, and snap chat. They can't afford to buy credit for their phones; therefore they miss out a lot of communication in our new 21st century digital world. Families struggle to provide trendy clothing and pocket money. Their mums report that with the increasing costs of healthcare for the family, housing and food there is NO money for extras. This has consequences as some of the children then act out at home and school. We have seen this lead to teenage addictions such as cigarette smoking and drug use as these kids get involved with others that are like-minded and form small groups where they share their resources.

Our agency works alongside schools and out-of-school youth education programmes, Child Youth & Family, Youth Justice, and the Police to help these families. We will set up Strengthening Families meetings as they are very effective in reaching positive results, linking the whānau into the community where as a collective positive change can be seen.

We also rely on people like <u>Lois from St Vincent De Paul</u> or the <u>Salvation Army</u>, who often help with food parcels, urgent travel costs, or finance for medical bills or refills for gas cylinders. Without their swift care, life would be dismal for some of our clients.

<u>Fifeshire Foundation</u> is another great financial support for many of our clients. Every month, both social workers, Christine and Lyn, make applications for urgent grants to cover power bills, firewood, dentistry, washing machines, food, basic furniture. We are very humbled by the Fifeshire Foundation's generous support of people in great need.

We also thank the <u>Nelson Tasman Housing Trust</u> for all their support in housing several of our families. This has given these women the hope, warmth, security that has encouraged them to make positive changes. A happy, warm home helps to make happy people, no matter how hard the struggle.

Teenage girls

Teenage girls are difficult to deal with. The girls come in to the Women's Centre with friends, never usually alone. They are both Māori and of European descent. These girls present as high on drugs, with noticeable cold sores around their mouths, agitated and unclean. They are often homeless and have many demands. Once our evaluation is made with the girls with short-term daily plans we then can offer them temporary emergency housing as we are part of the MOU for emergency housing. (This is not always positive as

some of these girls have no boundaries re their friends and may cause havoc for the housing provider and ourselves.) They are often not on benefits. We have to pull out all our contacts and resources for these girls. The most effective way our agency can help is to offer them a warm meal, clothing from our op shop, a hot shower, and laundry facilities. We encourage these girls to use the Centre during the day for rest. I have found reconnecting them with whānau for the Māori girls at Whakatū or Te Āwhina Marae with the older kuia to be short-term but effective for sleeping arrangements if our emergency housing is full.

One of the young women that required our support has lost her child into care. She is supported by our agency to reach the goals that Child Youth and Family has set for her. We also support her to access meetings with her child weekly to keep up contact. Other young women have left their whānau due to a breakdown within the family unit. They are often at school. We then work alongside Child Youth and Family, Work & Income, police, youth justice, school social workers, and FamilyWorks.

Domestic Violence

Nelson Women's Support deals with the impacts of domestic violence rather than the event. The event is either historical or dealt with by Nelson Women's Refuge. Women need housing, furniture, clothing and benefits as the aftermath of domestic violence. We are able to offer these families immediate support, comfort and resources. Both social workers have worked at Nelson Women's Refuge in the past therefore are both professionally able to handle any domestic violence situation (from developing safety plans to getting protection orders, and many things in between).

Both social workers are aware that education is the most positive outcome and driver for change. We refer our clients to education programmes held at SVS-Living Safe, Barnardos, and Whakatū Marae.

Our Friday women's group is often full of women who have attended counselling through SVS-Living Safe. They feel safe here at the Centre and often form lasting relationships.

Pets are always a challenge when re-housing whānau as many landlords will not house families with pets. This is often part of the aftermath of domestic violence when the mum and children have to leave their home. Threatening violence to pets is a way of isolating the women and children from third party support systems or to keep women from leaving a relationship. The bond between humans and animals is often fundamental to daily lived experiences. We advocate strongly for these women to keep the family pet.

Closing Comments from Carrie, Women's Centre Coordinator:

After serving over 12 years as Centre Coordinator, I am ready for a new challenge. I am leaving the Women's Centre to take up a role as Director of the Nelson Tasman Housing Trust. I am keen to keep advancing the provision of warm, dry, affordable housing for people on low incomes. Still, I want to reflect on the significant challenges met and great improvements we have made here at the Nelson Women's Centre since 2002:

• **Funding Growth:** we have navigated an increasingly uncertain funding environment, added a half-time Assistant Social Worker, found creative ways to run more low-cost workshops and groups, and managed to improve wages.

- **Fundraising Success:** we have raised over \$50,000 from many special events including 14 fundraiser films, 4 benefit concerts, 3 sausage sizzles, 2 special calendars, 2 garage sales, an Arts Fair and numerous raffles.
- Facility Expansion: installation of the prefab out back has meant we can offer more and longer workshops; the new Cottage adds valuable consultation space.
- Extensive Renovations: have improved all offices, the lounge and central hallway.
- Recovery from the Fire in 2007: we closed for 3 months, but strong community donations helped renovate the kitchen and Op Shop plus install a security alarm.
- **Professionalism:** we now have two social workers, both full members of ANZASW; 70% of our 18 volunteer counsellors have gained provisional NZAC membership.
- **Programmes:** we have doubled the number of Arts/Discovery workshops we run, plus set up Pathways to Power, the Women Parenting Alone group, free cervical smear clinics and gold coin healing sessions.
- Counselling Service: we have increased over the years from 3 to 5-6 volunteer counsellors, as well as expanded funding to cover all our volunteer counsellors' supervision costs, plus added a training fund.
- Website, new brochures, e-newsletters: have greatly improved our ability to publicise the Nelson Women's Centre programmes, events and services.
- **IT upgrades:** we have upgraded all computers, installed a networked printer/ scanner, and a VoIP telephone system (reducing our telephone costs by 50%).
- Improved partnership with SASH: thanks to proactive relationship building, SASH have evolved from a passive 'tenant' of the Centre to an active partner in what the Women's Centre provides as a whole.
- Strategic Merger: after extensive consultation, Women in Nelson merged with Nelson Women's Support, strengthening governance and streamlining operations.

Together, we have made tremendous progress in growing and developing the Nelson Women's Centre *Te Whare Āwhina Mō Ngā Wāhine Puawai*. This place is so much more than the sum of all its parts, so much more than any of us as individuals. It has been a true privilege and a joy to help create a genuine and caring team environment. I sincerely hope that the Centre's mission of empowering women endures far into the future.

In conclusion, we wish to thank the Governing Collective members, Gail, Elena, Ruth, Sarah, Hilary and Myffie for all of their support, vision and energy. We also want to thank all our wonderful Counsellors, Ruth, Myffie, Alex, Julie, Rebecca and Jenny, as well as our co-workers, Deanne, Kathleen, Christine, Sarah-Jane, Delia, Sylvia and Jemma for their heartful work and good humour this year. We, all of us, make the Nelson Women's Centre a good place to be.

In sisterhood,

Carrie Mozena
Women's Centre Coordinator

Lyn Ginty Community Social Worker

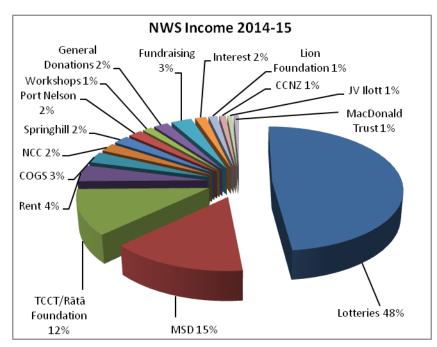
Financial Summary:

Nelson Women's Support has a diverse mix of funding sources. We have a social work contract with Ministry of Social Development, and we appreciate the ongoing support of NZ Lottery Grants Board, Rātā Foundation (formerly The Canterbury Community Trust), COGS, United Way NZ, Nelson City Council, Creative Communities NZ, John Ilott Charitable Trust and RG & EF MacDonald Trust. We also greatly appreciate the community support that makes our fundraising events so successful.

NWS' total income for this 15-month period was \$204,040 and our total expenses were \$172,168. This means a surplus of \$31,872. The reason for the a surplus was receiving two NZ Lottery grants in the 15 months. This surplus effectively balances out last year's on paper deficit of \$26,545.

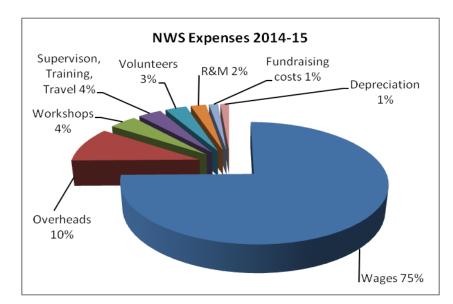
Nelson Women's Support Inc Financial Summary 2014-15

Income:					
NZ Lotteries Grants Board		98,500			
Ministry of Social Development		30,000			
TCCT/Rātā Foundation		24,000			
Rent	\$	8,810			
COGS	\$	6,000			
NCC Community Assistance	\$	4,500			
Springhill Trust	\$	4,500			
Port Nelson Ltd		4,000			
Donations - workshops	\$	2,854			
Donations - general	\$	4,230			
Fundraising projects		6,008			
Investment Interest		3,168			
Lion Foundation		2,580			
Creative Communities NZ		1,890			
John Ilott Charitable Trust		1,500			
RG & EF MacDonald Trust		1,500			
Total Income:		\$ 204,040			



Expenses:

Wages (incl Kiwisaver & ACC)		\$ 128,700	
Overheads		16,844	
Workshops, groups & advertising		6,919	
Volunteer costs - Counsellors		5,869	
Supervision, Training, Travel		5,450	
Repairs & maintenance		3,866	
Fundraising costs		2,324	
Depreciation		2,196	
Total Expenses:		\$ 172,168	
Surplus (Deficit) for Year:	\$	31,872	



Nelson Women's Support finished the year with \$29,098 in the cheque account and term deposits totalling \$68,126.