

SUPPORTING  
LOCAL ASYLUM  
SEEKERS



2023 - 2026

# STRATEGIC PLAN







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# 1. INTRODUCTION



## Who we are

West Welcome Wagon (WWW) is a small, predominantly volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation established in the western suburbs of Melbourne in 2013. Our purpose is to support people seeking asylum and refugees to rebuild their lives by providing whitegoods, furniture, appliances, food, and clothing to enable them to establish a comfortable home.

To date we have supported more than 2,200 households to establish their first homes in Australia by providing over 42,000 items. At the same time, through our collection of material donations, we have helped the wider community divert more than 350 tonnes from landfill.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## **What we do**

We provide essential household items to assist people seeking asylum and refugees to establish their first home in Melbourne's western suburbs. Determined by individual household needs, items may include beds, washing machine, fridge, blankets, doonas, linen, rugs, clothes, and hampers of healthy, culturally familiar non-perishable food items.

## **Why we do what we do**

People seeking asylum and refugees often arrive in our community with no possessions and receive little settlement assistance. After coming from incredibly difficult circumstances in their home countries, they face many challenges settling in Australia, including visa insecurity, learning English, navigating an unfamiliar system, finding employment, and securing affordable housing. WWW seeks to provide much needed essential items to assist these families to establish a comfortable home and feel welcomed into their new community while they face these challenges.

## **How we provide support**

WWW receives donations of good quality used furniture, household items (electrical appliances are tested and tagged before being sent to a family), clothing and toys. We also have a number of partnerships that provide new goods, e.g., Koala (as-new beds, couches), Uniqlo (as-new clothing), and IKEA (excess stock). Items are stored across our two warehouses in Sunshine West, packaged by our volunteers and delivered to our clients by a combination of paid staff and volunteers. We provide all items at no cost to our clients.

Referrals to WWW primarily come from other organisations assisting newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees, such as AMES, MiCare, and Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. Liaison with these organisations ensures that we are not doubling up on support services, but instead filling the gaps of other service providers.



## 2. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

### 2.1 Our Vision

People seeking asylum and refugees in our community feel welcomed and supported.

### 2.2 Our Mission

To provide good-quality household items to people seeking asylum and refugees by

- Identifying and responding to their needs
- Building strong connections within our community to foster a sense of belonging
- Offering volunteering opportunities for residents and businesses
- Actively participate in the circular economy, promoting sustainability

### 2.3 Our Values

Our organisation is committed to operating in an environment that is:









### 3. OPERATING CONTEXT



WWW is the only not-for-profit in the western suburbs of Melbourne that provides extensive material aid specifically to people seeking asylum and refugees living in our community. Our uniqueness lies in our predominantly volunteer run operation that is responsive to local needs. We receive donations from the general public and from businesses that are provided directly, and for free, to our clients. In addition, we actively and consciously participate in the circular economy by diverting goods from landfill.



## 3. OPERATING CONTEXT

### 3.1 External Environmental Scan

WWW takes a place-based approach to its service delivery and operates within an ecosystem that has at its centre its beneficiaries – people seeking asylum and refugees living in Melbourne’s western suburbs. We understand the complex issues that our clients face when they arrive in Australia, for example: visa insecurity, navigating an unfamiliar system, lack of English language, securing employment, and housing affordability, etc. not to mention landing in an unfamiliar country with little to no possessions.



We play an important role in this ecosystem by providing essential household items (including large goods such as fridges, washing machines, and beds), clothing and shoes, and linen to ensure our clients have a warm and comfortable home.

Optimal outcomes for asylum seekers and refugees are best obtained through collaboration between multiple organisations supporting this complex system. This requires collaboration and coordination, which in turn requires additional financial and human resources.

## 3. OPERATING CONTEXT

### 3.1.1 Trends

#### ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

According to the Refugee Council of Australia, the Australian Government statistics show that 940,159 refugee and humanitarian entrants arrived through offshore resettlement and onshore protection processes between 1 January 1947 and 30 June 2022. In the 2022-23 financial year, the Australian Government is planning to issue 17,875 refugee and humanitarian visas, with similar numbers estimated for the next few years. This results in an increase in demand for support and requires WWW to work harder and smarter to ensure we can provide goods to people seeking asylum and refugees as they settle in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

#### ECONOMIC

This year (2023) will bring increased inflation resulting in a potential reduction in government and philanthropic grant opportunities together with a decrease in individual giving because of cost-of-living pressures.

#### MATERIAL DONATIONS

On the supply side, increased donations of material goods are growing through partnerships with organisations looking to better address environmental waste while supporting humanitarian activities (e.g., Good360, Circonomy, Uniqlo, Koala). This provides a unique opportunity for WWW to provide large corporates an opportunity to invest in us to meet their ESG (environmental, social, governance) requirements.

#### CIRCULAR ECONOMY

models are gaining traction as many businesses and industries are increasingly adopting circular economy principles, which involve designing products with longer lifespans, promoting reuse and recycling, and reducing waste. Companies are recognising the economic and environmental benefits of closed-loop systems. WWW consciously participates in this space by accepting recycled goods (new and second or third hand) and giving them a new life in the home of an asylum seeker or refugee.

#### FUNDRAISING

A major fundraising trend for Australian not-for-profits like WWW, is diversification of revenue streams to sustain operating expenses.

The JBWere NAB Charitable Giving Index, which captures around one-fifth of the giving provided to charities, showed that while annual falls in giving due to COVID were modest at 3% and 4% in 2020 and 2021, measured against past trends, the income loss was almost \$1 billion per year.

Grants are increasingly both more bespoke and competitive making it critical that WWW take a targeted, place-based approach to its grant seeking.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, GOVERNANCE

(ESG) trends are continually evolving as organisations and investors place increasing importance on sustainability, ethical practices, and responsible governance. These are some of the key trends that WWW will track and seek opportunities to engage with over the next three years:

- Integration of ESG into mainstream investing: ESG considerations have become more integrated into investment decision-making processes. Institutional investors, such as superannuation funds and asset managers, are increasingly considering ESG factors when selecting investments.
- Social equity and diversity: there is increasing emphasis on social factors within ESG, including diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Companies are being evaluated on their efforts to promote a diverse workforce and inclusive workplace culture.
- Impact investing which seeks to generate positive social and environmental outcomes alongside financial returns, is on the rise. Investors are allocating capital to projects and companies that address specific societal or environmental challenges.



## 3. OPERATING CONTEXT

### 3.1. 2 Service Providers

There are a number of agencies that provide other support to people seeking asylum and refugees in the area who also refer their clients to us, for example:

- **AMES Australia** provides settlement services to newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees.
- **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)** provides support services such as: response and support program, homelessness support, casework, healthcare, food bank, legal services, and advocacy.
- **MiCare** provides youth, family and community settlement services, that includes job seeker support and training, community capacity building, women's empowerment safety, and community connections and partnerships.

We actively engage with local service providers to ensure that we are not duplicating support to this vulnerable cohort.



# 3. OPERATING CONTEXT

## 3.2 SWOT ANALYSIS

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### Strengths (Internal)

- Reputation and community profile
- CORE volunteers
- Warehouse processes
- Resourcing (material goods)
- Client engagement through Welcome Team
- Infrastructure
- Relationships/Partnerships
- Organisation structure and processes

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### Weaknesses (Internal)

- Volunteer engagement
- Volunteer burn-out
- Targeted/deeper contact with clients
- Communications (internal and external)
- Reliance on key volunteers
- Training and onboarding
- Insufficient un-tied funding

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### Opportunities (External)

- Collaboration with other agencies
- Streamline internal processes to mitigate volunteer and staff burn-out
- Investigate alternative revenue streams
- Conduct a needs assessment with our clients
- Co-design a pathways to employment program

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### Threats (External)

- Government policies change
- Insecure/loss of funding
- Volunteer numbers fall
- CORE group of volunteers burn-out
- Reduction in donations (material and financial)

To further build on our strengths and to align with our strategic priorities as articulated below, we will:

1. Continue to support existing and new clients within the current geographic area for a period of up to two years per household.
2. Appoint paid resources where workload demands it, including management, drivers, and other high demand areas where volunteers cannot be expected to work.
3. Review and upgrade our Work, Health and Safety Policy and Strategies in line with moving from a volunteer to partial employee structure.
4. Provide work experience and skills development opportunities in conjunction with the university sector.
5. Strengthen and diversify the Board.
6. Grow the number of partners with complementary strengths.
7. Explore alternative business models including social enterprise, alternative delivery channels, etc. to deliver on our vision and mission.



## 4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

WWW has set the following five key strategic priorities to deliver on its vision and mission. Accompanying this Strategic Plan are the 2023 -2024 Revenue Strategy and the Business Implementation Plan that details the Key Performance Indicators to measure our performance against each of these strategic priorities.

**01**

### **Provide Material Aid to Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

Objective: Continually monitor and evaluate our material aid programs to ensure we continue meeting the needs of our clients

#### **Actions**

Conduct a needs assessment with our client base to ensure we continue to meet their needs and explore other opportunities to support.

Provide good quality new and used household furniture, linen, kitchen essentials, and clothing to our clients.

Provide compassionate support to our clients for two years.

**02**

### **Engage our Stakeholders**

Objective: Strengthen connections with asylum seekers and refugees, volunteers, staff, donors, referral agencies, supporting businesses, local councils, and other not-for-profit organisations to ensure our effectiveness and financial sustainability.

#### **Actions**

Develop a stakeholder map that illustrates synergies and opportunities to deepen partnerships and explore revenue raising opportunities.

Engage with our stakeholders on a regular basis through effective communication channels such as social media and newsletters.

Seek out new partnerships with diverse funders to secure our financial sustainability.

## 4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

**03**

### Nurture Our Positive Organisational Culture

Objective: Our positive organisational culture attracts and retains volunteers and staff that are committed, informed, and supported in their roles and actively contribute to achieving our vision.

#### Actions

Recruit staff and volunteers that align to our core values.

Provide all staff and volunteers with a clearly defined position description, onboarding, and training.

Conduct staff and volunteer appreciation days.

**04**

### Achieve Financial Sustainability

Objective: We actively work towards achieving long-term financial sustainability through effective stakeholder engagement, fundraising, and business modelling.

#### Actions

Implement the 2023 – 2024 WWW Revenue Strategy.

Investigate alternative business models to secure financial sustainability.

Explore opportunities to co-design and implement a pathway to employment program.



# 4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

05

## Participate in the Circular Economy

Objective: We actively and consciously participate in the circular economy to create and sustain long-term value by accepting donations destined for landfill, recycling and upcycling donations as received thereby limiting our impact on the environment and delivering value to our clients.

### Actions

- Continuously gather feedback from our clients to ensure the quality and relevance of recycled and upcycled items and tailor our offerings based on client needs and preferences.
- Establish a system for tracking and reporting WWW's sustainability metrics, including number of items diverted from landfills, recycling rates, and environmental savings.
- Develop partnerships for impact by collaborating with local businesses, community organisations, and government (local, state, federal) to amplify our circular economy efforts; and, explore grant opportunities or funding sources that support sustainable initiatives.

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