

# Annual Report 2025



Supporting  
girls & women  
globally, with  
practical  
assistance.





## An Overview

**Canberra Circle of Women is a small incorporated community organisation, which works to support girls & women globally, on a practical grass-roots level. We support a number of countries, plus vulnerable Canberrans and our First Nations people.**

**We are a membership organisation. We are inclusive, innovative and supportive of our volunteers, members and the wider community.**

**We are a completely voluntary organisation and receive no funding from government or other organisations. Most of our income is from our market activities. We are strong, innovative and resourceful.**

**Our coordinators lead all our programs and services.**

**Globally we work to:**

**End period poverty**

**Increase the uptake of education**

**Decrease infant mortality**

**Make a positive difference**



**Our volunteers are involved in:**

**Sewing and knitting circles**

**Packing days**

**Volunteering opportunities**

**Board participation**

**Administration assistance**



# Chair Report

This year has solidified our goals and purpose as we have continued to meet the needs of, not only women and girls internationally, but to meet the needs of both our own local vulnerable people, and also our First Nations people in Australia. It has been a successful year, full of challenges and successes and we are honoured and privileged to be part of an organisation which is innovative and responsive to need.

We have continued to be involved in markets in Canberra – realising that the Pearce Crafter's Market is such a successful market for our work and fundraising activities, we gave up the Old Bus Depot Market and formed another seasonal market called Vibe Coombs in 2025. This year we have focused on sewing and knitting for the market to raise funds as well as working with our sublimation printer and designs to produce market goodies, unique to our stall.

Our office has been a great benefit to us, and is large enough to manage the constant stream of donations and visitors, members and friends. Plus it provides a hub of activity everyday, staffed beautifully by the Office Crew. Over this year we have had a few of of crew leave, but others come on board and we have a full contingent, with the office open every week day 10 to 1pm.

We sublease Office 15 from The Little Capsule Co as we offered them our storage spaces behind their office and we in turn moved our storage into Office 15 along with Pearce Crafter's Market storage. This was an incredibly convenient idea both for us, and the The Little Capsule Co, making our life much easier with appropriate storage and easier access.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of a generous benefactor who assists us with the office rental costs, without his assistance, we would be still storing boxes and fabric in everyone's garages. We continue to need to find around \$600 per month in running costs (including insurance), however we manage to do this with the occasional unfettered donation, membership fees, and some market income. We structure the spending so that it is very prudent and modest, and while our bank account is not flush with funds, we continue to meet the need and we can be extremely proud of that.

There is much to be grateful for, and we could not do what we do without the incredible women who volunteer their time, energy and skills into making Canberra Circle of Women work so well. Their passion and commitment is so very much appreciated as we continue to grow, innovate and develop.

I want to thank the Coordinators of all the programs and in particular Leonie Kentish, who makes an incredible difference to the whole organisation every day! Also thank you to the Board for their support and advice, we are looking forward to an amazing year ahead

Carol Mead  
Chair & Founder

**Strong women are powerful voices for change globally.**



# Markets

Our market has continued this year with Pearce Crafter's Market and this year we launched Vibe Market in Coombs. This market has taken a bit to get it off the ground – however we are hopeful that it will become as popular as Pearce Crafter's Market for us. Certainly our market income is hugely important to our success, and we thank our sewers, crafters and volunteers who make everything work so well.

Our focus this year has been on Pearce Crafter's Market as our main source of income. We can happily say that we raised \$23573 through market and shop income, and we continue to ensure that the income helps girls and women in need.

Each market earns the funds which pays for postage and supplies to continue our work and we thank you all for helping achieve the great result we have.

We thank Chandanie Kottege, Leonie Kentish, Tina Sneddon, Ruth Whelan and Heather Dowler for their incredible dedication and coordination of the markets, which is our main fundraising activity.

We also thank the amazing volunteers who help us at the market to sell, take payments, sell raffle tickets and greet people at the door, and to look after the stallholders.



Our market income  
for the year was  
\$23,573 which is a  
magnificent result





# Sewing Circle

## 12,000 kits!!!

We reached 12,000 Days for Girls kits sent to the world this year which continues our goal to help end global period poverty. We understand that we are just one cog in the wheel, but 12000 kits is incredible and when you consider each kit costs about \$10 to make, and \$2 to freight, that is a full on commitment. In flannelette alone we have used 12000 metres!

In perspective that is 12,000 girls and women who have the information to make their own choices, and not live in fear, shame and despair. The health outcomes for these global sisters look bright indeed, and we look forward to seeing their progress.

## Coordinators Sewing Circle Report

The sewing group has grown considerably over the last year with enthusiastic volunteers attending our twice monthly sewing circles often around the 20 mark. While recent sessions have concentrated on sewing components for the Days for Girls kits, our amazing members have also continued with the production of children's clothing and components for the mother and baby Joey Packs sent to Sri Lanka.

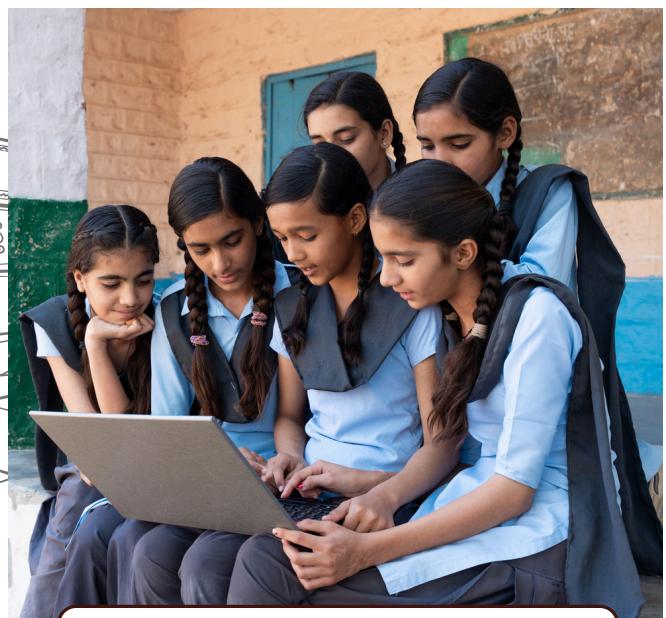
Of course, none of this could be achieved without the volunteers who wash, iron and cut the fabric first. With many volunteers also contributing at home, we have been able to keep up the supply of much needed help to women and girls in the communities we serve.

Going forward, the recent acquisition of new sewing machines and overlockers will facilitate greater output and less time spent coaxing some of the older machines to work properly.

A huge thank you to all of our sewing circle volunteers in all roles for another productive year.

*Heather Dowler and Deborah Kikkawa*  
**Sewing Circle Coordinators**

**DAY S FOR  
GIRLS**



**Every girl. Everywhere. Period**



# Knitting Circles

It is without a doubt that the knitting circles in both Mawson and Bruce are a hub of creative activity. Each volunteer is engaged and creative, assisting the Canberra Circle of women to achieve its goals in not only providing warm clothing to our recipients overseas, but also assisting our local community with warm beanies, hats and gloves through Canberra's cold and long winters.

You only have to sit in and see how important these groups have become for friendship and connection, many finding the groups so helpful in useful productive activity amongst friends. Help and guidance is always available at hand, with ideas and tips thrown in to the mix.

So many children in Pakistan have been clothed with jumpers and beanies that really assist their health and well being outcomes, often so important as they are dressed in thin cotton clothes – the extra knitted layers are vital.

This year we have received knitted items from groups in Victoria and New South Wales, the CWA has been particularly active. We also receive knitwear from individuals and small groups in many different local and not so local areas. Our adage is – if you get it to us, we will send it to those in need. Thanks you to all our knitters – whether at home or in groups – you really do make a tremendous difference.

## Coordinators Knitting Circle Report

The Tuesday afternoon knitting group continues to grow. The change of venue to Mawson Club has proved very successful and our numbers have more than tripled with everyone enjoying the opportunity to “knit and natter” with loads of lovely rugs, beanies, jumpers and other items at the end of it.

The donations of wool and yarn continue to come in at a steady rate, and we are looking forward to meeting more new friends next year.

We also continue to receive donations of kitted items from other groups and individuals who enjoy the opportunity to create beautiful items to send overseas and for our market stalls.

*Julie Merg and Anne Taylor*  
**Knitting Circle Coordinators**

To come and  
knit with others  
makes my day!





## Circle of Support

This year we have largely increased our reach into the Canberra Community, which I am very proud of and feel like while we are making a difference overseas, we are also helping in our home town.

The winters in Canberra are incredibly cold for our very vulnerable Canberrans, who are often homeless, or living in sub-standard accommodation, who have chronic illness, mental health concerns and need support.

Again this winter we ran our Winter Warmers Campaign and it was again an incredible success! Knitted beanies, socks, finger-less gloves and scarves kept our knitters very busy and were so thankfully received. Donations of good quality, clean and usable clothing items, blankets and toiletries were sent to a number of organisations to support the people they work hard to help.

Thank you all for helping with this campaign.

It makes such a difference to people's lives and comfort.

The organisations we supported through the campaign were Directions Health Services, Early Morning Centre - Uniting Care, St John's Care, and Night Patrol - St Vinnies.



## Circle of Support - Remote Care

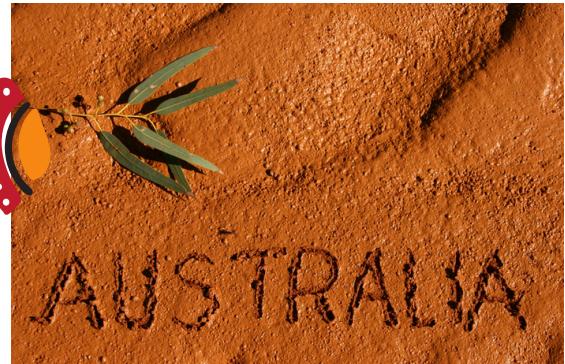
Similar to last year we have continued to support our First Nations People through providing donations to the Remote Opshops program. This program is a community driven social enterprise that generates independent funding that is used to seed creative projects and new opportunities. Since 2016 the Remote Opshop program has been growing a network of outback Opshops and has positive outcomes for women, families and communities.

[www.remoteopshopproject.org](http://www.remoteopshopproject.org)

This amazing program accepts donations nationally and the specific donations needed by each Remote Opshop are posted on facebook, where we find a fit for our donations. Specifically we send bras and baby jumper sets (fish and chip sets) which we often have excess to our needs.



**When women come together as sisters, we see no boundary, just love.**



# Thank you

With all that has been achieved, we all recognise that none of us stands alone – every friend, volunteer, board member, family member and the broader community, play a significant role in the the success of Canberra Circle of Women. We would like to thank these amazing people and organisations for their work and commitment to the Canberra Circle of Women over this past year.

The Canberra Circle of Women Board who have planned, assisted, advised and supported our work:

- Carol Mead – Chair
- Micaela Centenera – Deputy Chair
- Natasha Lohano – Treasurer (resigned)
- Daphne Bate – Treasurer
- Melanie McAllister – Secretary
- Lucas Anasdow – Public Officer
- Rebecca Gordon
- Jessica Weber
- Nirmalie Rodrigo
- Yesara Ratnaike – Youth Advisor



Thank you so much to our amazing volunteers who continue to support our work in so many ways – we are very grateful for everything you do.

## ALSO

- Domenic Stramandinoli – Nexis Accountants & Business Advisors – who provides support and advice to the Canberra Circle of Women
- Craig Dingwell – Dingwell & Co
- Pearce Community Centre is our landlord for our office
- Civic Insurance Brokers – David MacLary
- Days for Girls International
- Roundabout ACT for your donations and keeping us stocked up with items for Sri Lanka and the Philippines
- CWA – we thank the various CWA groups around NSW for continually providing support and donations in so many ways
- Canberra Girls Grammar School



**Every girl we reach  
with a Days for Girl Kit  
has what she needs  
to attend school without  
embarrassment**





# Volunteers

We certainly would not be where we are today without our amazing volunteers. We have had a huge growth in our volunteer members with membership and engagement an important part of why people join Canberra Circle of Women.

When we speak to volunteers we often find that the Canberra Circle of Women has offered them a place to belong, to enjoy and share their skills. They love the passion and purpose, and that they can be as involved as they wish to be. Our volunteers talk about connection, and friendship, helping others and feeling part of a bigger picture.

## Coordinators

As the organisation continues, the coordinators of the programs and activities helps to keep it all working and integrated. The coordinators are an essential part of why it all works as well as it does, and every coordinator is so important to the organisations strength and success. Their incredible work to support every individual and help to achieve our goals is so amazing and we would not be able to function to the level we do without the work that they do.

- Office & Membership Coordinator – Michelle Cains
- Sewing Coordinators – Anne Bozsoky (resigned), Heather Dowler, Deborah Kikkawa
- Knitting Circle Coordinators – Anne Taylor, Julie Merz
- International Coordinators – Carol Mead, Nirmalie Rodrigo, Micaela Centenera
- Packing Day Coordinators – Leonie Kentish, Carol Mead
- Logistics Coordinator – Annette Maunsell
- Market Stock Coordinator – Leonie Kentish

## Volunteer of the Year 2024

There was a unanimous decision this year for volunteer of the year – we awarded it to Chandanie Kottege for her incredible dedication, tireless leadership of Sri Lanka support and constant assistance to Canberra Circle of Women.



Volunteer of the Year  
2024  
Chandanie Kottege

We    
our  
Volunteers



# Sri Lanka Report

## Year in Review

Our humanitarian assistance to the disadvantaged and vulnerable communities in Sri Lanka continued steadily over the past 12 months. Since the last Annual Report was published, CCoW helped make a real difference across Sri Lanka.

Together we sent and distributed 747 DfG kits, 325 New Mumma & Joey Packs, and a range of one off donations including 495 reusable incontinence underwear for disabled children and over 270 reusable baby nappies. Those items reached individuals in the poorest communities and children in orphanages, touching every province and corner of the country with one simple aim: to improve health and hygiene for those who need it most.

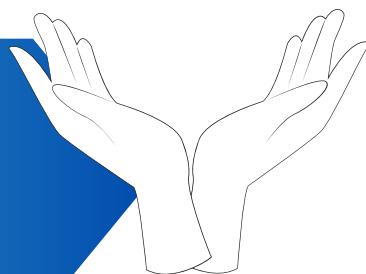
## Challenges & Successes

In April we welcomed Dr Nirmalie Rodrigo as our new Sri Lanka Coordinator at a time I had to step aside due to health issues. Nirmalie now manages all shipping of our donations to Sri Lanka, local transport and the ontheground distribution of DfG kits and newborn packs. Nirmalie has built a network of doctors who help identify and reach the most vulnerable girls, young women and new mothers. With the local expertise we will continue to make our distributions targeted and effective, ensuring resources go to people who truly need them.

In August we met Her Excellency Yasoja Gunasekara, the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, to introduce the work we've been doing since 2020 to improve health and hygiene for females of all ages and newborns from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The High Commissioner held a reception at the Sri Lanka High Commission to recognise CCoW and our volunteers for the service we provide to poor and vulnerable women, girls and babies in rural and remote regions. The event was warm and well attended, and it was wonderful to see our volunteers acknowledged at that level.



Your kindness and support has made a profound difference





# Sri Lanka

## Successes

Securing enough funds for shipping has consistently been one of our biggest challenges. Yet time and again, we've been able to rise above it—thanks to the creativity of our fundraising efforts and the heartfelt generosity of our well-wishers.

## Future Goals

Our journey continues. With the unwavering support of our incredible volunteers, we remain deeply committed to continuing our work in Sri Lanka—sewing, knitting, shipping, and distributing DfG kits and baby items. We will ensure these reach the families who need them most. Together, we'll keep making a meaningful impact, one stitch and one delivery at a time.

## Our Gratitude

What we do matters: the sanitary items and newborn supplies we send helped girls stay in school with dignity, allowed young mothers to care for their babies, and given disabled children better quality daily care. The credit goes to the dedication and commitment of CCOW and the incredible volunteers — your donations, your time, your effort and your belief that small, practical items can change lives.

We extend our deepest thanks to all the incredible volunteers of CCOW and our supporters who have helped us in countless ways—through generous financial contributions for shipping, donations of baby items, and invaluable logistical support both here and in Sri Lanka. Your kindness and commitment have made a profound difference.

You've helped keep girls in school, supported new mothers, and brought comfort and dignity to disadvantaged families across Sri Lanka. Truly, none of this would have been possible without you.

*Dr Nirmalie Rodrigo*  
**Sri Lanka Distribution Coordinator**

*Chandanie Kottege*  
**Local Coordinator**

We sent 325  
Mumma and Joey Packs  
to Sri Lanka



# The Philippines

## Overview

This year has been our most impactful yet, with the love and generosity of our community continuing to reach those who need it most in the Philippines. What began as a small act of kindness has grown into a thriving network of giving one that is changing lives across dumpsite communities, orphanages, schools, and women's centres.

## Highlights of 2025

140 Balikbayan Boxes Sent;

- Each box was packed with care and filled with essential and life-changing items including:
  - Days for Girls reusable period kits
  - Clothing and shoes for children, women, and men
  - Medical supplies and toiletries
  - Bedding, towels, and school supplies
  - Toys to bring joy to children in need
- These boxes were distributed across 18 dumpsite locations, three orphanages, a women's birthing centre, and a not-for-profit school, ensuring that every donation reached the hands of those who need it most;

## Weekly Feeding Programs:

Across four dumpsite locations, regular feeding programs continue to provide nutritious meals to children and families, offering both nourishment and hope in challenging conditions. Canberra Circle of Women support this program by providing containers which can be cleaned to the participants of these programs. To date over 600 containers have been sent through kind donations.

## Child Sponsorship Program:

We are happy to let you know that through the care of local charities and their sponsors the opportunity for 53 children are now attending school with their school fees paid in full, allowing them to continue their education and work towards a brighter future.



Impact 140  
 Balikbayan Boxes  
 Sent...





# The Philippines

## Community Contributions

This incredible effort has only been possible thanks to the kindness and collaboration of so many. Donations have come from:

- The Little Capsule Co Store
- Roundabout Canberra
- Canberra Circle of Women
- And the incredible ladies of the Canberra Circle of Women, who have handmade and gathered essential items with love and dedication.

## Growth and Gratitude

This year marked our biggest year yet with donations arriving more regularly and our reach expanding faster than ever before. The momentum continues to build as more people join this mission of compassion, proving that when communities come together, remarkable change happens.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to every donor, volunteer, and supporter who has played a part in this journey. Your contributions are making a tangible difference – one box, one meal, and one child at a time.

## Looking Ahead

As we move into the next year, our focus remains on sustainability and expansion continuing to strengthen relationships with our partner communities and ensuring ongoing access to education, nourishment, and dignity for those we serve.

Together, we are creating brighter futures and we're just getting started.

*Micaela Centenera*  
**Philippines Coordinator**



**We have sent 2314 toys and games to kids in need**



# Pakistan

## Overview

This year we have continued to support Pakistan women and girls in two areas – Toba Tek Singh Punjab and surrounds, and Taxila.

This is our largest freight cost and we have tried this year to do smaller shipments more often. However the cost factor is difficult sometimes to achieve with cash flow always an issue – but we persist.

We have provided clothes, toiletries, school supplies and Days for Girls kits. Like everywhere the need always outstrips what we are able to achieve and we try hard to ensure that Pakistan has some of their needs met in our shipments. It is always challenging when you feel that there is always more to do – and many more mountains to climb – but we have a saying now – we do all we can!

It is a testament to their commitment to Days for Girls that Lubna Ghani, Kainat Albert and Sara Asif work tirelessly distributing kits and supplies in the region and we are grateful for their efforts to help girls and women in the region. Their determination to get the Days for Girls Kits, clothing, stationery and numerous other items often sees them traveling many kilometres into remote villages and towns to help women and girls.

As the need continues to grow, we are also very aware of the concerns our coordinators face, as there have been threats and difficulties with elements in the population. Rioters have been tearing down churches, and also there have been the natural elements of smog and floods, all affecting the poorest on the community.

We have vouched for Lubna with the police in an area – as there has been a groundswell of people who are not happy in the provision of menstrual packs to girls and women. In a way this is could be seen as a positive response that we are making a difference and that it is having an effect – change is always hard and not always accepted. We keep working and moving forward – one small step at a time it seems.

## Successes and Achievements

This year we have been able to get more kits and supplies out to Pakistan, in comparison to the the previous year which suffered with our cash flow issues. We do thank a couple of donations to help this occur – they made a difference at times when needed.

## Challenges

Our challenge is always funds to get the boxes out and we are trying to keep things moving in smaller shipments which has a dual effect – it is easier to raise the funds for smaller shipments, and there is not such a storage problem at the other end when the shipment arrives.



# Pakistan

## Future Direction

Education of the children continues to be a concern with voluntary school attendance, so children born into poverty do not have access to education because of the inhibitive school feels and that it is not a compulsory requirement. These children are very much at risk and will probably never be able to break the shackles of poverty without an education.

We also have been told that some of the public schools have now been sold to become private schools in some areas where we provide assistance, this further limits education to these vulnerable children.

## Gratitude and Appreciation

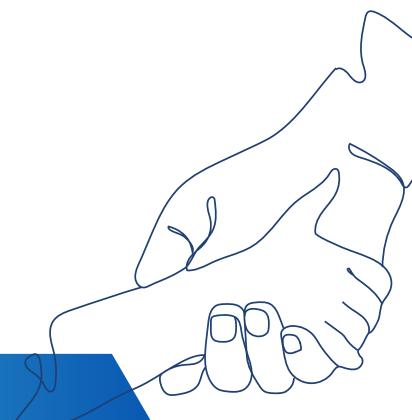
Thank you to our amazing Ambassadors for Women's Health - Lubna Ghani, Kainat Albert and Sara Asif - who are advocates for change in their communities and who work so diligently to educate women and girls.

And we could not achieve what we do in Pakistan without the support from all our volunteers who sew and knit for these girls and women.

We thank several donors who have assisted us to get the shipments out by their very kind donations.

And lastly thanks to our shipping gurus Adsar & Ahmer Syed who work with us to get the boxes on time and in great condition to Pakistan.

*Carol Mead*  
**Pakistan Coordinator**



**Every Girl  
Everywhere  
Period!**



# Logistics Report

This year we have increased our support to the local community as well as globally. Our exceptional Logistics Coordinator Annette Maunsell and has the exceptional skill of getting things to where they are needed, which can be a massive task.

**This year we have shipped 34534 items, supporting 6 countries, 17 Canberra charities and organisations and 10 interstate charities and organisations**

## The countries we have sent items to are :

Sri Lanka  
Philippines  
Pakistan  
Fiji  
Sierra Leone  
Papua New Guinea



## Campaigns

The Winter Warmers Campaign supported local vulnerable adults with 1476 items such as clothing, shoes, blankets, coats and knitwear

The Christmas Cheer Campaign supported vulnerable adults with 112 bags of 8 gifts per bag

## Other large donations to people in need include:

Baby knitwear (fish and Chip sets) 1110 sets  
Bras 3729  
Stationery items 3217  
Adult Clothing 2853  
Toiletries 6418



## Canberra Based charities & organisations:

Early Morning Centre  
Communities at Work  
Goodeeze  
Dignity Street Pantry  
Zonta  
Anglicare  
Pam's Pantry  
Directions Health ACT  
Vinnies Night Patrol  
Samoan Community  
ACT Embroiderers Guild  
St Johns Care  
National Capital Hospital  
John James Hospital  
Roundabout  
Cook Consortium

## Interstate charities & organisations:

Remote Op Shops  
Braidwood Hospital  
Braidwood Life Centre  
CCP Crafters Cowra  
WOSSCA Alice Springs  
Purple House NT  
Women's Safety Service  
Alice Springs School  
Pyjama Foundation



We proudly support



Night Patrol



# Contact Us

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