



2024 – 2025 ANNUAL REPORT





WHOS acknowledges Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander people as the
Traditional Custodians of this country and
its waters.

We wish to pay our respects to Elders past
and present.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Someone once said that we live in interesting times, and that is certainly true today for those of us who choose to serve the community on not-for-profit Boards.

For the WHOS Board, our desire to ensure WHOS services for the community remain accessible and deliver a level of care that meets our service users' expectations in quality and safety; however, maintaining these service standards is becoming more difficult.

While the quality of our staff and programs is able to meet these standards, WHOS ability to provide them with the necessary sustainable infrastructure in both financial and administrative support is being challenged. Our resources are being stretched beyond capacity as funding bodies, facing their own financial pressures, ask for more from services with levels of resourcing that have not kept pace with the cost of living and operational costs.

This is a funding strategy that is unsustainable.

Maybe it's time for all of us, including governments, to turn our attention to the current levels of investment in the National Drug Strategy and which predominantly favour law enforcement programs. While law enforcement must be a part of any effective strategy, it is also time to be clear-eyed and look at the returns from all our investments that are targeted to address drug use and its impacts on the community, families and individuals.

At WHOS, we know that when confronted with problematic drug use, families and loved ones want treatment services of high quality that are properly resourced and available. Few, if any, will seek the criminal justice system to address their concerns.

This is why WHOS, with some of its corporate supporters, have decided to embark on a process to produce some significant data on the positive returns attributable to WHOS services. We hope that this will result in not only better support for WHOS but also for the entire sector that works at addressing problematic drug use issues.

As President, I continue to be honoured to be a member of the WHOS Board and team, and on behalf of the entire Board, I want to thank all our staff for their commitment to making WHOS one of the leading services in the sector.

Frank Kay
President - We Help Ourselves

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The past year for WHOS has been one that is difficult to describe.

One constant is that despite any challenges thrown at WHOS, our incredible staff always maintain their commitment to WHOS and ensure our residents and clients receive the best possible care and treatment.

One of the major challenges we face is the lack of new funding being directed at existing services such as WHOS. As an example, despite significant funding being made available via the NSW Government's response to its Special Commission into Ice, the bulk of this funding was allocated to government services. Even when funds were directed to non-government organisations, the priority seemed to be for government-designed new initiatives, with any funding to sustain current programs completely overlooked. Unfortunately, this outcome was not consistent with the recommended plan of the original Ice Commission report.

While it's easy to understand the fascination for government officials to invest in new and sometimes untested service options, this should not be done at the expense of investing in the existing alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, especially as they continue to carry the bulk of the work for the AOD sector.

The lack of sustainable and growth funding for services like WHOS, coupled with the lack of indexation that matches the true cost of inflation, or the well-deserved staff salary increases, places enormous pressure on NGO services. This pressure is exacerbated by the ever-increasing demand for our services from the community and is compounded by complex compliance requirements and the additional administrative time and costs being imposed via new funding requirements such as the superannuation guarantee, portable long service leave and workers compensation premium increases.

I truly hope that with the completion of Federal, State & Territory elections and the NSW Drug Summit, we will see governments increase their support for the non-government AOD sector and the exceptional value we provide for the community.

On a more positive note, despite these challenges and pressures, WHOS was again able to directly assist over 1,000 people across our



residential services and XXX at our Day Programs, and many more families, loved ones and friends indirectly. Our commitment to continuous quality improvement also shows a continuation of very high levels of satisfaction.

Another positive has been the increased support from the corporate sector in providing a range of both goods and services. It is an extraordinary and welcome recognition for all involved with WHOS and has allowed some funds to be re-directed to offset the challenges we faced.

Finally, on behalf of the WHOS Management I wish to thank staff, funding bodies, supporters, our local, state and federal representatives who also step up and support WHOS when needed, and all the people that continue to allow WHOS to be so successful and well respected for the important services we provide for the community.

Garth Popple
Executive Director – We Help Ourselves



ABOUT WHOS

WHOS is one of the largest drug and alcohol treatment Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) in Australia.

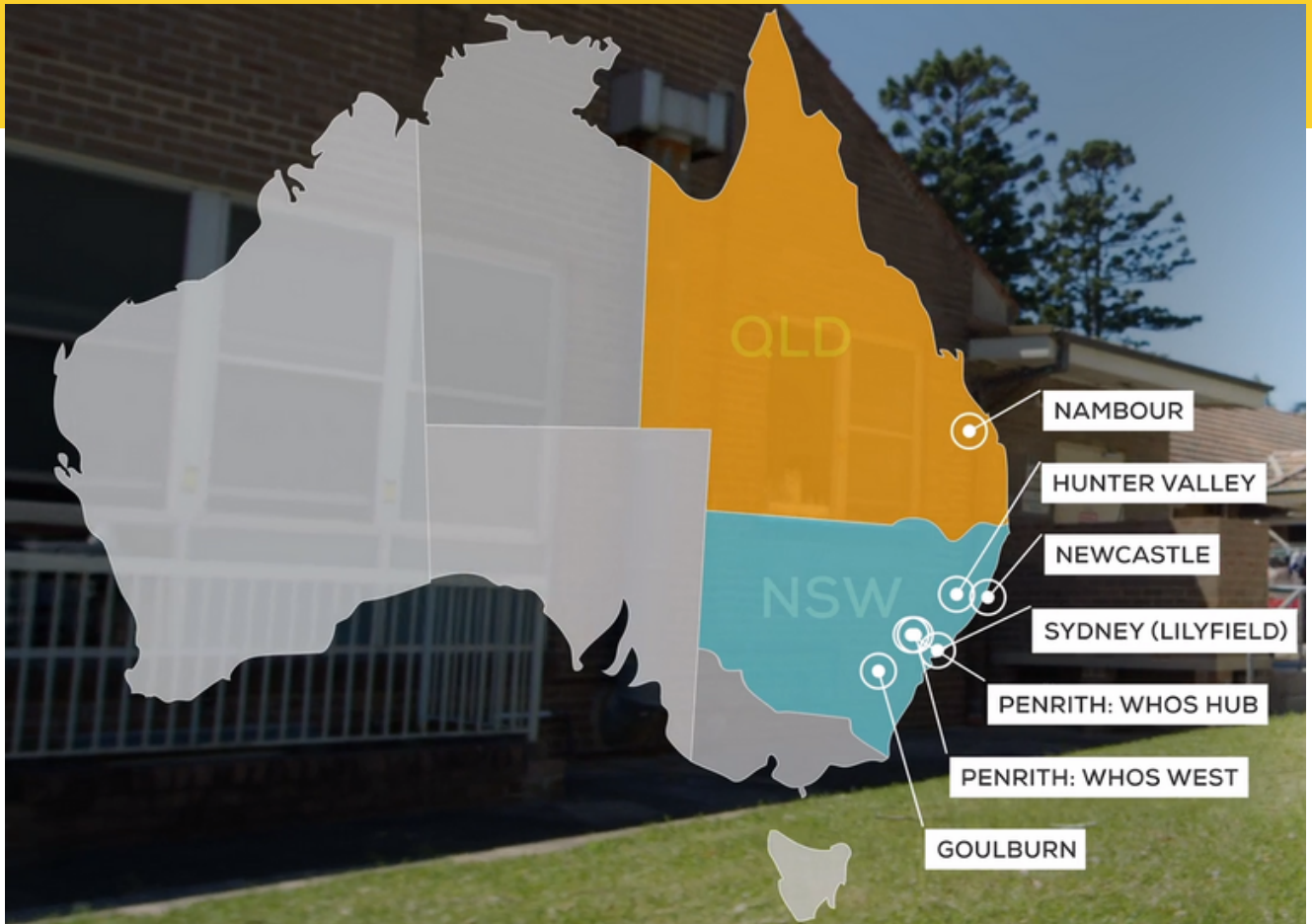
We offer a wide range of evidence-based therapeutic and support programs and services to help individuals with substance use and associated issues in their recovery.



OUR SERVICES

WHOS operates 7 Therapeutic Community services and 14 transitional and exit houses. Additionally, our Day Programs extend our reach and provide accessible support options to our clients, including before and after residential treatment.

- Residential therapeutic programs known as therapeutic communities
- Day programs
- Residential transitional supported housing and associated supports
- Infectious disease and harm reduction projects and initiatives



52 YEARS AND COUNTING...

WHOS was established in 1972 by concerned ex-consumers to help drug-dependent individuals of the community find healthier lifestyle options. In its early pioneering days, WHOS offered self-help and peer support, which laid the foundation for its evolution into a traditional Therapeutic Community (TC) model.

This transformation was solidified in 1974 following connections with similar models in the United States, marking the beginning of WHOS' long-standing leadership in therapeutic community-based care.

As Australia's first TC for individuals with alcohol and other drug dependence, WHOS has grown from a grassroots self-help organisation into a respected, professional service provider.

Today, WHOS continues to deliver care through the TC model while integrating harm minimisation approaches and responding to co-occurring mental health needs, ensuring holistic, person-centred support for those with complex challenges.

A YEAR'S OVERVIEW

WHERE WE ARE NOW

WHOS treated 916 individuals during the 2024-2025 financial year in our 3-to-6 month TC program (202 beds) and 1,033 Day Program clients, as well as operated post-treatment Transitional/Aftercare services (94 beds).

WHOS focuses on delivering a holistic approach to treatment, measured by client treatment outcomes.

Treatment outcome data is collected at set intervals (on entry, 60 days and 90 days), and WHOS utilises Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (NADA) Client Outcome Management System for data collection and reporting.

WHOS services were highly effective, with treatment outcomes showing (next page):





88%

REDUCED SEVERITY OF DEPENDENCE

The SDS is a brief five-item screening measure of psychological aspects of dependence. This short, yet effective tool, is easy to administer to evaluate the level of severity of substance dependence perceived by the client.

100%

DEMONSTRATED IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE OF HEP C, HIV AND SAFER SEX

Clients' knowledge is assessed before and after program delivery, which contributes to safer practices and harm minimisation.

82%

IMPROVEMENT IN PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

The Kessler 10 scale (K10) is a widely used measure of psychological distress, which can be used to identify those in need of further assessment for anxiety and depression. It is based on questions about the individual's level of nervousness, agitation and psychological fatigue.

67%

IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE

The WHO QoL-8 is a broad domain based measure that records quality of life across health, physical life, psychological life, social relationships and living environment.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

UTILISATION STATS



TC drug-free
736 admissions
100% Occupancy
77 days - average length of stay



Day Program
1,033 admissions
129 days - average length of stay



TC Opioid Treatment
180 admissions
91% Occupancy
72 days - average length of stay



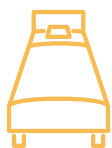
Client Demographics
64% Male / 34% Female
22% Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander people
90% born in Australia
39 years old - average age

VALUE FOR MONEY

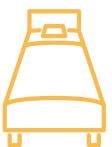
Over 45,000 people have been treated in WHOS residential programs in the last 52 years, with estimated savings to the community from WHOS treatment of \$123 million annually and over \$3 billion since 1972.

It is estimated that not treating an individual with AOD dependence and associated issues costs the community \$482 per day*.

*Sources: Independent Hospital Pricing Authority; Australian Government Productivity Commission reports; Australasian Therapeutic Community Association Survey - 2009 (adjusted to 2018). Data estimates provided by WilliamBuck



WHOS actual cost of funding a drug-free
program bed per day \$190*
Sector average cost \$296**



WHOS actual cost of funding an Opioid
Treatment Program bed per day \$242
Sector average cost \$410 **



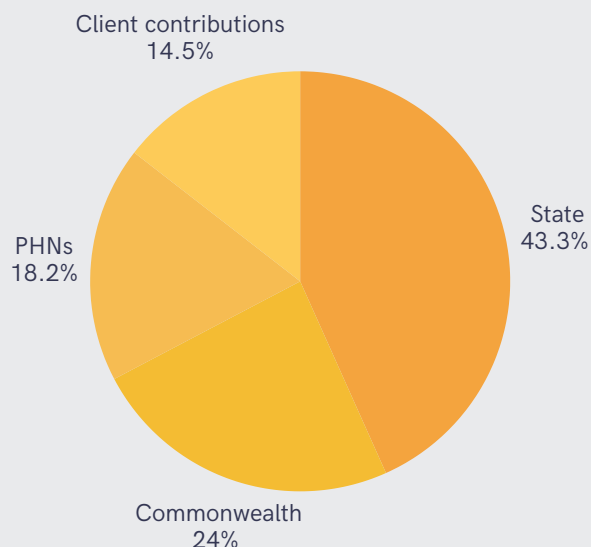
Average cost of admitted acute hospital bed
per day is of \$4,680 ***

*Bed costs includes
program enhancements
such as nursing staff
(mental health, OST,
dosing, medical),
aftercare, family
support and
HIV/Infectious diseases
education
** Source: 2019 NADA
Resource Paper
*** Source: Australian
Institute of Health and
Welfare (AIHW)

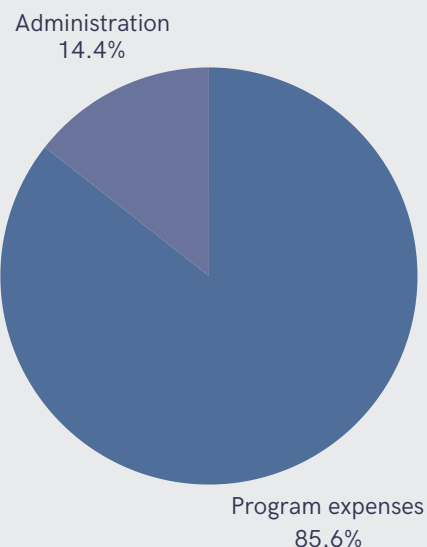
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

We remain committed to strong stewardship of resources, ensuring funds are directed where they matter most. 86% of our expenditure was invested directly into program delivery to support our clients. Administration accounted for just 14%, reflecting our focus on maximising impact.

INCOME



EXPENDITURE



A YEAR OF AWARDS FOR WHOS



WHOS recognised for excellence in harm reduction

WHOS was successful in winning the NADA Excellence in Health Promotion and/or Harm Reduction Award. This award recognises excellence and/or innovation to prevent and/or reduce alcohol and other drug-related harms.

WHOS harm reduction approach is embedded in all services, and has dedicated Harm Minimisation worker positions at all TCs and Day Programs, delivering the WHOS harm reduction approach to all clients, educating and supporting those in our care.

Garth Popple was awarded the prestigious NADA Outstanding Contribution Award

This award recognises the significant contribution of an individual working in the non-government alcohol and other drugs sector.



Garth paid tribute to WHOS by describing WHOS early involvement in initiatives and service developments that led to the growth and expansion of WHOS, particularly the therapeutic community model. Garth further acknowledged the therapeutic community approach and WHOS involvement with the ATCA and the WFTC.

CELEBRATING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY

We celebrate Garth Popple's ATCA Lifetime Membership Award, a rare honour awarded to only four members, acknowledging his longstanding contribution and leadership in the sector. This award reflects Garth's dedication to advancing the Therapeutic Community model and supporting best practice across the AOD sector.

WHOS was also honoured with the ATCA Significant Contribution Award for the New Beginnings Women's Service at Lilyfield, recognising our commitment to advancing the Therapeutic Community model in Australasia. This award reflects the dedication of our staff and the resilience of the women who engage with the program.



ATCA YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

We are proud to acknowledge our staff and volunteers for their dedication and commitment, recognising the years of service that strengthen our WHOS community.

10-20 Years of Service

Colleen Clifford - OSTAR
Henry Everingham - OSTAR
Jevan Sayer - Lilyfield Cafe
Min Ni - accounts
Scott Hassett - RTOD
Hunter (Therapy Dog) - Hunter TC

20-30 Years of Service

Bob Phelps - OSTAR

OUTSTANDING DEDICATION AWARD

Dr John Harris from Nambour Clinic Family Medicine has been providing for the general health and wellbeing of our clients for 18 years, almost as long as we have been operating on the Sunshine Coast. Over nearly two decades, Dr Harris has worked alongside WHOS Najara to ensure that clients receive consistent, quality healthcare while participating in our programs.

Dr Harris delivers fantastic medical and mental health support to everyone in our program, approaching each person with compassion, respect and a commitment to improving their wellbeing.

His support has been instrumental in helping clients address both physical and mental health needs, ensuring they have the best chance to engage fully in their recovery journey.

In February, we attended a special morning tea at his clinic to celebrate and acknowledge his dedication to Najara. It was an opportunity to reflect on the hundreds of people he has helped over the years.

We thank Dr Harris for his ongoing support and commitment to WHOS Najara, and we look forward to continuing this valued partnership into the future, ensuring that those who need it most continue to receive compassionate and effective care.



WHOS AT THE 2024 NSW DRUG SUMMIT

WHOS participated in the NSW Drug Summit, a significant event that brought together government, health leaders, service providers, and people with lived experience to shape the future of alcohol and other drug (AOD) policy in NSW.

This summit built on the legacy of the landmark 1999 NSW Drug Summit, which led to transformative changes in AOD policy, including the establishment of Australia's first Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC), expanded harm reduction services, and increased investment in treatment and prevention.

The 2024 summit provided an opportunity to reflect on these achievements and assess progress. Original 1999 summit delegates, including WHOS Executive Director Garth Popple, returned to contribute their insights, highlighting the value of sustained leadership in addressing complex AOD challenges.

Key themes of the 2024 summit included expanding treatment access, increasing investment in harm reduction services such as pill testing and opioid substitution therapies, and reducing stigma through public education. There was also a strong focus on strengthening the role of lived experience in policy design and service delivery.

WHOS reaffirmed its commitment to working collaboratively to strengthen AOD services and advocate for policies that improve health outcomes and social inclusion for people affected by substance use.

The summit emphasised the importance of continuing the work started in 1999 and driving further innovation in treatment and harm reduction across NSW.



GOVERNOR OF NSW VISITS WHOS

In 2024, WHOS Southern NSW was honoured to host a visit from the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC. The visit acknowledged WHOS' contribution to regional AOD services, providing an opportunity to showcase our therapeutic community model and engage in meaningful conversations about recovery.

2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS



WHOS AT ART FROM THE HEART OF THE CROSS

Janet Woolley, Executive Team Manager and Lyn Roberts, Projects Review and Development Manager attended the launch of this year's Uniting MSIC (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Art From The Heart of the Cross art exhibition. The theme of the exhibition was 'People before politics' and all of the artworks were created by clients of the Centre.

The exhibition is an annual event, now in it's 14th year, showcasing the creative talents of the people who visit the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre. The project empowers MSIC artists to express themselves and their circumstances creatively and it

was an absolute delight to see so many wonderful artworks on display.

MSIC has never had one fatality from overdose in its 23-year history and continues to provide a safe space for drug users and has many linkages with organization like WHOS which can offer treatment via it's residential or day program services.

To see so many creative works of art was indeed heartwarming and it was a privilege to have attended this launch.

EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES (EFTC) CONFERENCE

In September 2024, hundreds of leaders gathered in Gdansk, Poland, for the EFTC Conference, Shaping the Future Together.

Representatives from 24 countries came together to emphasise the essential elements of therapeutic communities, sharing innovative practices and engaging in discussions on emerging issues and challenges facing the sector, all to improve outcomes for the people we serve.

Garth Popple, Executive Director of WHOS, and Nic Nash, Manager of WHOS Southern NSW TC, attended the conference and presented on the work and achievements of WHOS. Their presentation was well received, with universal praise for WHOS' ongoing contributions to the Therapeutic Community model.

We congratulate EFTC and the Polish Federation of Therapeutic Communities on hosting such an informative and inspiring conference.



WHOS NAJARA RECEIVES SUPPORT FROM BUDERIM FOUNDATION TO EMPOWER CLIENTS

We are thrilled to announce that WHOS Sunshine Coast has recently been awarded a grant from the Buderim Foundation's Community Fund Grants program. This initiative aims to provide financial support to local community groups, and we are immensely grateful to have been selected as one of the recipients.

The grant provided the funds to purchase computer equipment to assist our senior clients study, become work ready and participate in on-line self help groups.

This investment will create significant opportunities for our participants, empowering them to actively search for jobs, access critical support services, and further their skill development. By providing these tools, we are helping to pave the way for greater self-sufficiency and success as these clients move toward independent living.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Buderim Foundation for their generosity and look forward to continuing this positive connection in the future.



WHOS STUDY TOURS



WHOS was pleased to host an important delegation of TC providers and academics from South Korea as part of its ongoing commitment to expanding networks across the Asia-Pacific Region. The visit provided the opportunity for key members of the AOD community in South Korea to exchange practices and ideas on delivering higher quality treatment.



Additionally, WHOS recently welcomed Dr. Kantilal Tailor and Mr. Amanaki Taufua from Tonga, who visited to learn about WHOS' Therapeutic Community model and explore approaches to AOD treatment to support their local communities.

RECOGNITION IN PARLIAMENT

WHOS was honoured to receive a Community Recognition Statement in the NSW Parliament from Ms. Kobi Shetty MP, acknowledging the vital work WHOS undertakes in supporting individuals, families, and communities impacted by alcohol and other drug use.

In her statement, Ms. Shetty highlighted WHOS' commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based treatment through our TC programs and our role in advocating for harm reduction across NSW and beyond. We thank Ms. Shetty and the NSW Parliament for acknowledging the positive impact WHOS has made in the community over many years.



WHOS SECURES GOULBURN AOD SERVICES FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS

WHOS is proud to announce it has been successful for the second time in securing the NSW Health tender to deliver Alcohol and Other Drugs Residential Rehabilitation and Day Program Services in Goulburn, ensuring we can continue providing high-quality, evidence-based services for another five years.

Through this partnership with Southern NSW Local Health District, WHOS will continue to offer a structured Residential Therapeutic Community Program, Day Program, and Withdrawal Services, supporting individuals to address psychosocial issues, build recovery skills, and improve health outcomes. We also provide assertive follow-up, aftercare, and post-treatment support, ensuring clients maintain treatment gains and successfully reintegrate into their communities.

Our approach prioritises excellence in service delivery, collaboration with LHD personnel and community stakeholders, and a commitment to achieving shared goals. We deliver client-

centred, fully compliant programs aligned with clinical care standards while fostering a supportive, recovery-focused environment.

This contract renewal reflects WHOS' strong reputation and dedication to supporting individuals and families impacted by substance use in the Goulburn region and across Southern NSW. We look forward to continuing this vital work, helping people rebuild their lives and reconnect with their communities.



\$1M GRANT FOR NAJARA PROPERTY

WHOS Najara is pleased to have secured a \$1 million grant to improve its property and facilities, ensuring a safer, more welcoming environment for residents on their recovery journey.

This funding will support much-needed upgrades, including infrastructure improvements, enhanced living spaces, and modernised communal areas to better meet client needs.

These improvements will enable WHOS Najara to continue delivering high-quality, evidence-based Therapeutic Community programs in a setting that promotes dignity, safety, and wellbeing.

We thank our funders for recognising the vital role Najara plays in supporting individuals and families impacted by substance use on the Sunshine Coast and beyond.

CLIENT STORIES



**New
Beginnings**

It is a drug free
residential TC for
women located in
Sydney

I am a 35-year-old mother of three, and I sit here today at WHOS New Beginnings, grateful for the time I have spent here.

Thanks to WHOS, I now have a positive attitude and a new lease on life. If someone had told me a little over 3 months ago, whilst in heavy addiction, well and truly broken and defeated, that I would be genuinely happy, proud of the person I am today and high on life, I wouldn't believe that!

I've had my fair share of struggles from a young age and was determined to do it on my own in my own way. I truly believe becoming a mother at 16 years old and the struggles I've faced throughout my life has shaped the person that I have become. Proud and eager to prove that I wasn't the stereotypical young mother, I stayed with his father for seven years, desperately wanting the picket fence, so to speak. I experienced abuse of every kind and was sheltered from the real world. I finally built the courage to escape with the support of my family, where my pendulum swung from one extreme to the next.

I experienced a life of twists and turns of unfortunate events, grief, loss, domestic violence, crime, and my fair share of poor choices. I found myself in a situation where I had exhausted almost all options, bar two, either come to WHOS New Beginnings or prison. I came unwillingly, frustrated and with little to no acceptance around the situation.

Since being here, my views, mindset, and my gratitude for this program are overflowing. I understand the concept of the program, and I can't thank the staff and my rehab peers enough for playing a massive part in not only my recovery but the beginning of my new beginning."



Najara

It is a drug free residential TC for men and women located in Sunshine Coast

For the last 8 years, I've wanted to get recovery. I've tried numerous detoxes, outpatient programs, counselling, and self-help groups, except for a longer-term rehab. Three years ago, I went to rehab for 30 days, from there, I got a few months sober and drug-free, but never did I do any work on myself. Then, my last relapse began. Within a few short months, I was back at the bottom I was all too familiar with.

The eight months leading up to my coming to WHOS Sunshine Coast (SSC) were hell. There wasn't a single waking moment when I wasn't putting a drink or drug into my body. I would try and get to self-help meetings, but would just lie and say I was clean when I wasn't, sober when I wasn't. I was working as a support worker, living in constant shame that I was working while high or drinking in between shifts. One day, I was coming down after a shift, and I had just had enough.

I called WHOS SSC and got a bed. I quit my job, broke my lease, and the rest is a blur. My using was completely out of control. I was in and out of

psychosis but eventually made it to WHOS Sunshine Coast 3 weeks later.

My experience at WHOS SSC is nothing short of amazing. The first month, I was all over the place. Detoxing, then getting used to the idea of living with so many personalities. I didn't know what to expect; all I knew was what I had to do. There were days when I felt the program sucked, the people sucked, but when looking at the bigger picture, these problems were actually nothing.

As life went on, things got harder. I was faced with the pain of my self-hate and worthlessness. I've learnt to start facing these struggles and see them with compassion. I know I am in the right place and with time and hope, I will one day be a proud man who is worth love, laughter and happiness."

OUR SUPPORTERS

WHOS would like to publicly thank and acknowledge all our corporate sponsors and supporters over the years - their support and assistance has been invaluable.



WHOS acknowledges our 2024-2025 funders and Donors for
helping us fulfill our mission

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