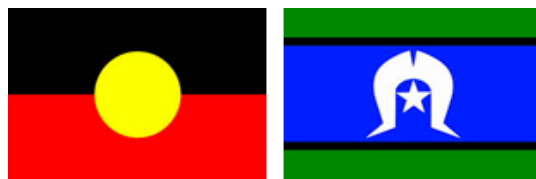


ANNUAL REPORT

SHELTER HOUSING ACTION CAIRNS
ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

2022 - 2023





Acknowledgement of Country

SHAC acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded.

Table of Contents

04	—	Vision, Mission Values
05	—	President's Report
07	—	CEO's Report
08	—	Our Services & Strategic Plan
09	—	Our Board & Staff
10	—	Treasurer's Report
11	—	Financial Summary
12	—	Housing and Family Support snapshot
13	—	IHRF Brokerage snapshot
14	—	My Money Program snapshot
15	—	Financial Counselling Project snapshot
16	—	NILs in focus
17	—	NILs snapshot
18	—	Work Skills Traineeships
19	—	Our Gratitude



Our **Vision** is to eliminate homelessness.

Our **Mission** is to support people on their path to a secure future.

We do this by:

- Supporting people to sustain tenancies.
- Providing temporary supported accommodation to people who are homeless.
- Supporting people to address the issues that contribute to their homelessness.
- Supporting people to develop increased financial capability.
- Speaking out about homelessness and inequality and seeking improved responses.

Our SHAC **Values** are:

- Respect
- Advocacy
- Human rights
- Diversity
- Transparency
- Environmental Stewardship



President's Report

A new financial year unfortunately did not see a sudden increase in available rental spaces across the Cairns region. Rental occupancies remained at below 1%, and while the harsh effects of the pandemic have eased, pressure and need for our services continued to pile onto SHAC's normal demands, warranting a busy 2022/23 year.

And as I say every year, I have been amazed and proud of how the team at SHAC have risen above the pandemonium and provided efficient, professional and empathetic services to some of the Cairns most vulnerable citizens. The 2022/23 financial year saw the Board and management work closely together to ensure SHAC could provide its services and facilities to Cairns and surrounding regions for the long term. This included another great planning day to make sure that SHAC's core goals and operations were meeting the growing needs of the people of Cairns, reviewing the structure and skillsets contained within the organisation to ensure SHAC has the right people with the right skills to achieve our core goals, and the securing of more government funding for programs aimed at helping those who need it most.

The sheer amount of government funded programs that SHAC is now successfully managing is not only a sign of the need in the community for these services, but also a testament to the fantastic, mostly unheralded work that the team at SHAC do every day, and the value add they provide to this city.

This year the Board also amended the title of Executive Officer to Chief Executive Officer to better reflect the work that is being undertaken in this role.

I am happy to state in this report that for the 2022/23 financial year that SHAC fulfilled all its obligations and services and finished the year with a surplus of just over \$65,000, and with a strong balance sheet bottom line of more than \$1,000,000. This solid financial position, with 'money in the bank' allows SHAC to continue its important work with confidence, and the security of extensions to government contracts provides staff and the community with the comfort of knowing that SHAC is not only a going concern, but a necessary part of the community who will continue to be there as and when needed.

In my report last year we farewelled Joe Cristaldi from the role of Treasurer. This year it has been a delight to welcome Mr John Andrejic into the role of Treasurer. John joins the SHAC Board with a depth of knowledge and experience in financial management and is a long time Cairns local. Thank you, John, for your efforts in this role. It has also been wonderful to welcome Margaret McDonald to the Board. Her extensive knowledge in social and community services has been invaluable to the Board's deliberations; thank you, Margaret.

As we move into the 2023/24 period, SHAC will continue to work not only on providing its day to day services, but also on establishing close relationships throughout the Cairns government and business community, as well as continue to speak out on issues that effect our clients and the solutions that can assist us in eliminating homelessness.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank Sally and her team for another great year amidst challenging circumstances, and from myself, a big thank you to the other Board members for all their effort, contribution, and commitment to SHAC's mission. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with all of you and look forward to another year!

Due to a change in jobs and a relocation back to Brisbane this year, 2022/23 will be my final year as President of SHAC. The past three years have been a wonderful experience for me and I have enjoyed working with the SHAC Board and team, but more importantly, I have been humbled by the constant unsung professionalism of those in that team, and the help, hope and dignity that they provide to Cairns, every day.

I shall remain on the Board as a 'remote Director', and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the SHAC cause in 2023/24.

As we look toward the new financial year there will always be two constants: the ever present need to support those at their most vulnerable; and the professional, empathetic and caring team at SHAC who will continue to walk side by side with their clients, reduce the barriers, respond with compassion and light a path to home.

Paul Daly
SHAC President





“

At times when I didn't have a car, the workers came to my house, transported me to appointments, gave me information about services and other information that they thought would be of help to me, and rang and made arrangements for me if needed be. They helped at times with a bike to help my son get to and from school, helped with medication for my children, helped me with rent, food vouchers, credit for my mobile, a place to live.

THEY HELPED ME BY GIVING ME STABILITY WHICH WAS KEY TO ME BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR MY CHILDREN AND MYSELF TO HELP US ACHIEVE AND GET TO WHERE WE NEED TO BE.

”

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Our purpose – to support people on their path to a secure future – has rarely been more important or more challenging to achieve, than it has been over 2022-2023.

Without doubt, the last year has been a more difficult one than most for both our clients and our staff. Vulnerable Cairns families continue to suffer the very worst impacts of the continuing housing crisis – housing insecurity and homelessness. This has meant our staff have faced the very complex challenge of supporting people to access and/or sustain housing in a market where private rental housing is rare and increasingly expensive and social housing is in very short supply.

We've continued to provide short term supported accommodation, assistance to access and/or sustain secure housing and assistance to improve financial capability, resilience and wellbeing. We've also continued to offer No Interest Loans to vulnerable individuals and families in Cairns. However, we've needed to pivot, amend and expand our service strategies within these broad service delivery parameters in order to respond to the changing nature of our work. We've done this by prioritising both quality outcomes for our clients and looking after our staff.

Noticeably, our family support team has provided mobile support to 297 families over the past year, compared to 201 families in the previous year, and 62 per cent of our support periods ended with a secure housing outcome over the past year, compared to 75 per cent in the previous year. Similarly, this year 88 per cent of our My Money Program support periods ended with a secure housing outcome for the client, compared to 93 per cent in the previous year. These are telling statistics. The rise in demand for and delivery of No Interest Loans is also telling in the current context. In the past year we delivered 1,100 loans compared with 862 in the previous year. SHAC is the third largest loan provider in Queensland.

New areas of work have included the delivery of brokerage funds for the first time and the delivery of financial resilience services to new client groups. We've delivered brokerage funds to provide short term accommodation and other

essential assistance for families without other options. This amounted to an expenditure of approximately \$296,000, supporting 189 Cairns families. With a generous grant from the E Robert Hayles & Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust, we've delivered financial counselling services to 48 vulnerable clients who are not eligible to access our My Money Program Services.

The SHAC Board's strategic focus on service delivery innovation and expansion has provided the impetus and direction for these service delivery changes. Our Board has also focused heavily on looking after our staff and influencing governments and the broader community to effect the structural change required to end the horrific housing predicament in Cairns and elsewhere. Notably, SHAC has transitioned the majority of our staff to permanent contracts, committed to formal work from home arrangements and amended our corporate structure to better respond to the challenges we face. We've also maintained a strong media presence highlighting the nature and impacts of the housing crisis in our community and played a leading advocacy role in our sector.

I feel honoured and privileged to work for SHAC. I sincerely thank our staff team for their amazing work, their steadfast dedication and their commitment to SHAC's values and to each other. I want to note Taylor Kelly's strong oversight of service delivery and also thank our seven First Nations administrative trainees and two social work students we have hosted over the past year. Finally, I thank the Board for their leadership and support over the past year. SHAC is extraordinarily fortunate to have a Board with the range and depth of skills possessed by our Board Members. Importantly, I want to thank Paul Daly, our departing President, for his insightful leadership, his confidence in our team and his unerring encouragement and support.

Sally Watson
Chief Executive Officer



Our Services

During the 2022 – 2023 period, SHAC has formally supported over 1,983 families and individuals, and many more through informal supports, information and referrals provided. Our funded services this financial year have included:

- Funded by the Queensland Government, the continuation of Temporary Supported Accommodation to nineteen properties, involvement in up to eight Same House Different Landlord properties, and the inclusion of two Long Term Community Housing properties, as well as case managed mobile support to families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- Funded by the Queensland Government, the extension of our My Money Program, which assists financially vulnerable individuals and families with specialist financial case management to sustain tenancies;
- Funded by the Queensland Government, the widespread distribution of financial brokerage under the Immediate Housing Response for Families (IHRF) initiative, providing short-term emergency accommodation and other brokered support for families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- Funded by Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, the delivery of No Interest Loans Scheme (NILs) across Cairns and broader FNQ rural and remote communities; and
- Funded by The E Robert Hayles & Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust to deliver a successful project, providing financial counselling advocacy, support and education to families and individuals in Far North Queensland, who were otherwise ineligible for the My Money Program.

2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan

In early 2023, the Board and SHAC Leadership team embarked on a review process of the previous Strategic Plan, to allow us to check in, reflect, and reset the strategy based on past learnings. What culminated was a refreshed update of the Plan, reflective of the important day-to-day core business of SHAC, with healthy growth targets and due consideration to the sustainability and growth of the organisation.



Our Board

Our volunteer Board of Management have generously given their time, skills and expertise to oversee SHAC throughout the year. Our Board Members are:

- Paul Daly (*President*)
- John Andrejic (*Treasurer*)
- Leanda Kayess (*Secretary*)
- Douglas Hendry (*Ordinary Member*)
- Hayley Grainger (*Ordinary Member*)
- Julie Ormsby (*Ordinary Member*)
- Margaret McDonald (*Ordinary Member*)

Our Staff

SHAC staff have worked extremely hard this year assisting families and individuals in the context of a continued housing and cost of living crisis. Our staff team for the 2022 – 2023 period were:

- **Leadership Team:** Sally Watson (*Chief Executive Officer*), Taylor Kelly (*Team Leader*), Esther Ward (*Finance Manager*).
- **Housing and Family Support Team:** Belinda Caracatsanoudis (*Family Support Worker*), Mary Barkes (*Family Support Worker; Acting Senior Prac April–June 2023*), Cindy Kadunc (*Tenancy and Property Officer*), Ramanpreet Kaur (*Family Support Worker until May 2023*), Raechel Oleszek (*Family Support Worker until October 2022*), Monique Chantrill (*IHRF Mobile Support Worker, commenced September 2022*), Rebecca D'Ath–Weston (*Family Support Worker, commenced November 2022*).
- **My Money Program:** Kesaia Vunibokoi (*Financial Counsellor*), Bettina Doolah (*Financial Counsellor*), Katja Hauser (*Financial Support Worker; Acting Senior Prac April–June 2023*), Selayka Solomon (*Financial Support Worker until March 2023, Trainee Support Worker commenced March 2023*), Sheree Haami (*Financial Support Worker, commenced August 2022*), Rachel Chaplin (*Financial Support Worker, commenced March 2023*).
- **No Interest Loans (NILs) Team:** Natalie Bignell (*Microfinance Worker until January 2023; Acting Senior Prac April–June 2023*), Roxanne Lindsay–Payne (*Microfinance Worker*), Darinka Nona (*Microfinance Worker until November 2022*), Jade Stafford (*Reception and Trainee Support Worker July – November 2022; Microfinance Worker, commenced November 2022*), Nguyen Nguyen (*Microfinance Worker, commenced February 2023*).
- **Traineeships:** Anglina Banu (*until September 2022*); Sonja Isaacson (*until September 2022*); Masae Buie (*until September 2022*); Tarzie Kiss–Anu (*commenced September 2022; Trainee Support Worker November 2022 – March 2023; Receptionist commenced November 2022*); Jana Banu (*Traineeship September 2022 – March 2023*); Jasmine Wilson (*commenced March 2023*); Pele Wilson (*commenced March 2023*).
- **Student Placements:** Geoff Henderson (*Social Work*); Melissa Norris (*Social Work*).



Treasurer's Report

Financial year 2023 has flown by and our wonderful team at SHAC have been busier than ever doing what they do best – helping those in need.

It is a sign of the times that our services are more in demand than they have ever been. Thankfully, this year we have seen significant uplifts in funding which has seen total revenue grow by \$554,668 or 30.9%. This growth in total revenue has been driven by an increase in grants of \$474,009 or 30.5%. Our major grant contributors for the year have been:

- Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy \$1,585,183
- Good Shepherd Microfinance \$336,316

We thank them for their continued support and putting their faith in us to deliver programs on their behalf.

The increases in revenues have allowed us to spend more in the community helping those in need and this is reflected in our total operating expenses which have increased by \$483,825 or 26.9%. Everything we do is costing more these days and SHAC is not immune to those cost of living pressures however we continue to do what we can with the resources we have.

We have returned a very modest surplus of \$65,277 which we hold over for unforeseen expenses which arise from time to time on our properties.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Esther Ward for her commitment and dedication over 6 years as the Finance Manager at SHAC. Esther left SHAC to pursue a promotion with another organisation and we wish her well in her future endeavours. It is great to see good people move on to bigger and better things but we do miss her. We have been lucky enough to welcome Natalie Bignell into the organisation who has done a wonderful job taking over from Esther.

Moving into next year we expect our services to be more in demand than they have ever been. Sally, Taylor and the team continue to strive to identify unique solutions to the problems which present on a day to day basis and with the commitment we have seen from our staff year on year I am sure our performance next year will eclipse the last.

John Andrejic

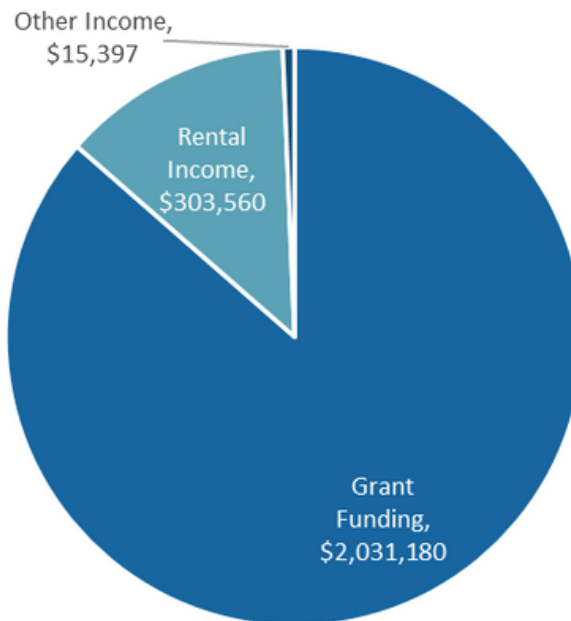
SHAC Treasurer



Financial Summary

Annual Performance

Total Revenue for the for the year end 30 June 2023 is \$2,350,137



Total Expenditure for the for the year end 30 June 2023 is \$2,284,859



Employment expense
\$1,573,739 (69%)



Property expense
\$190,655 (8%)



Office expense
\$152,670 (7%)



Depreciation expense
\$29,973 (1%)



Other Expense
\$337,822 (15%)

Total Net Profit for the for the year end 30 June 2023 is \$65,278

At June 30 2023, our total Member's Funds balance is \$1,377,901



Assets
\$1,934,769



Liabilities
\$556,867



Equity
\$1,377,901

Housing and Family Support Snapshot



My own house! It gave me relief, it gave me stability in which I could study, so that my babies can go into daycare, and my daughter be in her final year of high school and play representative sport, to achieve her dreams. SHAC has helped me in so many ways and for them I will be forever grateful. It was scary and daunting moving to Cairns, not knowing anyone or where anything was. Not having a car or house, being pregnant (and with my children), trying to get my life back together after losing everything due to DV and having to rebuild my life from scratch once again. SHAC's support has helped me – knowing I had their support beside me and knowing they were just a phone call away. They helped me gain the confidence in knowing I can do it, and if I ever felt I couldn't do it, they would encourage and remind me of how far I've come. Amazing people to work with.



45 Temporary Supported Accommodation tenancies assisted **54** adults and **138** children for **28,458** bed nights

13 Same House Different Landlord tenancies assisted **15** adults and **31** children for **4,755** bed nights

3 Long Term Community Housing tenancies assisted **3** adults and **6** children for **1,989** bed nights

201

families received Mobile Support assistance to obtain and/or sustain their housing

1464

hours were invested into assisting Mobile Support families

62%

support periods ended with the client in secure housing

70.8%

of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

80

clients identified experiencing Domestic and Family Violence

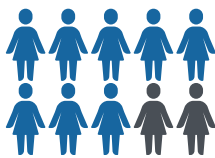
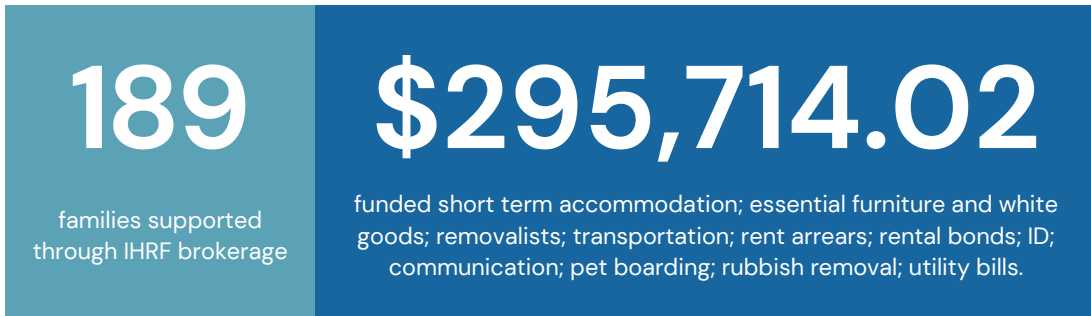
83.8%

of adult clients identified as female



Immediate Housing Response for Families Brokerage Snapshot

The Immediate Housing Response for Families (IHRF) was a key action of the Queensland Government in response to the housing crisis, aiming to assist families in need of housing and support. It provided a range of financial brokerage products to those experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including short-term emergency accommodation and supports to assist with transitioning to safe and secure housing.



79%

single parent households



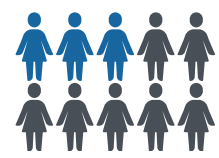
62.4%

identified as First Nations Households



472

children benefited from brokerage



35%

experiencing Domestic and Family Violence



63

sustained existing housing



37

secured new social housing



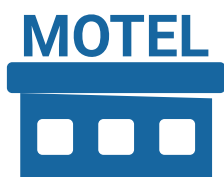
17

recured new private rental tenancy



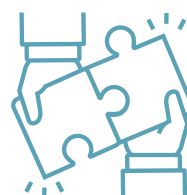
72

had an 'other' outcome



1626

nights of motel accommodation



10

SHAC collaborated with 10 organisations and Initiatives to deliver IHRF funding

My Money Program Snapshot

197

families and individuals assisted

61

clients identified experiencing Domestic and Family Violence

88%

support periods ended with the client in secure housing

81%

of clients identified as female

54%

of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

\$ 38,918.66

in debts waived through financial counselling

3935

hours invested into assisting clients

SHAC have been amazing and so very helpful. They have helped me to go from feeling completely helpless, overwhelmed and almost strangled by debt and penny pinching, to finally seeing debts paid off and having a budget that is workable and livable without having to give up every 'luxury' (such as the occasional piece of red meat!). I love having SHAC in my corner to help me. I finally feel like I am getting in control of my money and not constantly sliding backwards anymore. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, and PLEASE keep this service going!

Kind, good support, non judgmental and easy to understand. Helpful in improving money matters.

Very understanding, at that time I would have attempted suicide. Our lives were saved, literally.

My Money Program was very helpful and gave me a better understanding of how to manage my money and what to keep away from.

I whole heartedly say if it wasn't for SHAC, I personally wouldn't be doing as well as I am today, I have a long way to go but the SHAC team have made it possible for my little family to have hopes and dreams again. I was personally referred to many services here in Cairns and I was always let down. It wasn't until I became aware of SHAC and the services and reassurance from the team I started to feel safe. SHAC is a truly amazing service, highly trained professionals and such a lovely welcoming team.

Financial Counselling Project

Over the 2022–2023 period, SHAC was generously funded by The E Robert Hayles & Alison L Hayles Charitable Trust to deliver financial counselling advocacy, support and education to families and individuals in Far North Queensland.

The Project targeted clients otherwise ineligible for SHAC's My Money Program including families and individuals living in public housing tenancies; homeowners, as well as people residing outside of the Cairns Local Government Area. SHAC focused efforts on providing financial counselling and support in a flexible and responsive manner, relevant to the individuals needs of the presenting clients, and across the financial year, achieved the following successful outcomes:

- 48 clients supported
- 79.6% identified as First Nations People
- 75.5% identified as female
- 87.8% were single parent families
- 165 children were indirectly impacted
- 1,467 of hours were invested into direct case management, including 1,933 recorded contacts of support
- Across FNQ, support spanned over 24 suburbs.

- \$188,220 worth of debts waived through financial counselling advocacy

- \$91,489 in brokerage and donations accessed

Some of the learnings as a result of undertaking this project included:

- There is a higher demand and need for financial counselling services across FNQ than what currently funded services can practically meet.
- Financial hardship can occur in an individual's life, regardless of their housing situation. In this Project, we worked with people with public housing tenancies, homeowners, as well as those experiencing homelessness, and all presented with unique financial issues that required the support of a financial counsellor to resolve, in order to positively impact the sustainability and ongoing stability of their housing situation.
- Women continue to experience increased economic disadvantage, driven by factors such as unpaid caring responsibilities of dependents, unpaid domestic duties, pay disparity in the workplace, unpaid child support, economic abuse, etc. This reinforces the need for Financial Counselling services tailored to support the unique needs of women and single mothers to increase their financial wellbeing and to work to close the gap of gendered economic disparity.
- A vast majority of the debts waivers gained were related to Buy Now Pay Later schemes; small amount credit contracts; or consumer leases – and were often used for ongoing or one-off essential household expenses. These credit options are unaffordable, with high interest and fees, and are a band-aid option for people experiencing financial hardship, where the individual is left with the liability far greater than which they can afford to repay. Further advocacy and supports are required to increase income, including increasing Centrelink supports, to match realistic essential household expenses and basic cost-of-living in Australia.



NILs: in Focus

In 2005, SHAC became the first accredited No Interest Loan Scheme (NILs) provider in North Queensland, partnering with Good Shepherd. In the early days, SHAC self-funded the wages, resources and capital necessary to get the program off the ground and running for the region, and it was in 2008 when Good Shepherd and NAB commenced capital funding, as well as funding a community development worker to assist in the growth of NILs in the Far North.

Today, SHAC is the third largest Loan Provider in Queensland; we assess around 1,100 applications annually (approximately \$1.5million); partner with around 13 Community Service Providers (CSPs) across 34 postcodes in QLD (from southeast Queensland all the way through to the Cape and Torres Strait). Approximately 68% of our clients identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and approximately 67% of our clients identify as female, with a large portion of these being single mums.

One of the highlights of our year so far was representing NILs at community outreach events in Doomadgee and Mornington Island communities in partnership with other national, state, and local services and organisations, both government and non-government. Some of the barriers remote communities face in accessing essential goods and services can include scarce internet access; difficulties navigating online services; barriers accessing correct documentation; lengthy distances to the closest Government office/community service/bank branch; extensive wait times for product stock and availability (can be up to 12 weeks); exorbitant delivery fees; and finding products (e.g. fridges/washing machines) which will survive the harsh FNQ weather (humidity, heat waves, storms and cyclones, flooding, frequent power outages, etc.) These are some of the reasons we (and CSPs alike) go the extra mile to ensure NILs can be accessed by all Aussies, including First Nations People in regional and remote communities. All in all, the Events held in Doomadgee and Mornington Island were extremely successful, and in nine hours, our NILs worker was able to process 16 NILs applications for first time borrowers.

We look forward to continuing to work with local services to see NILs reach extend to support more First Nations communities in Far North Queensland.

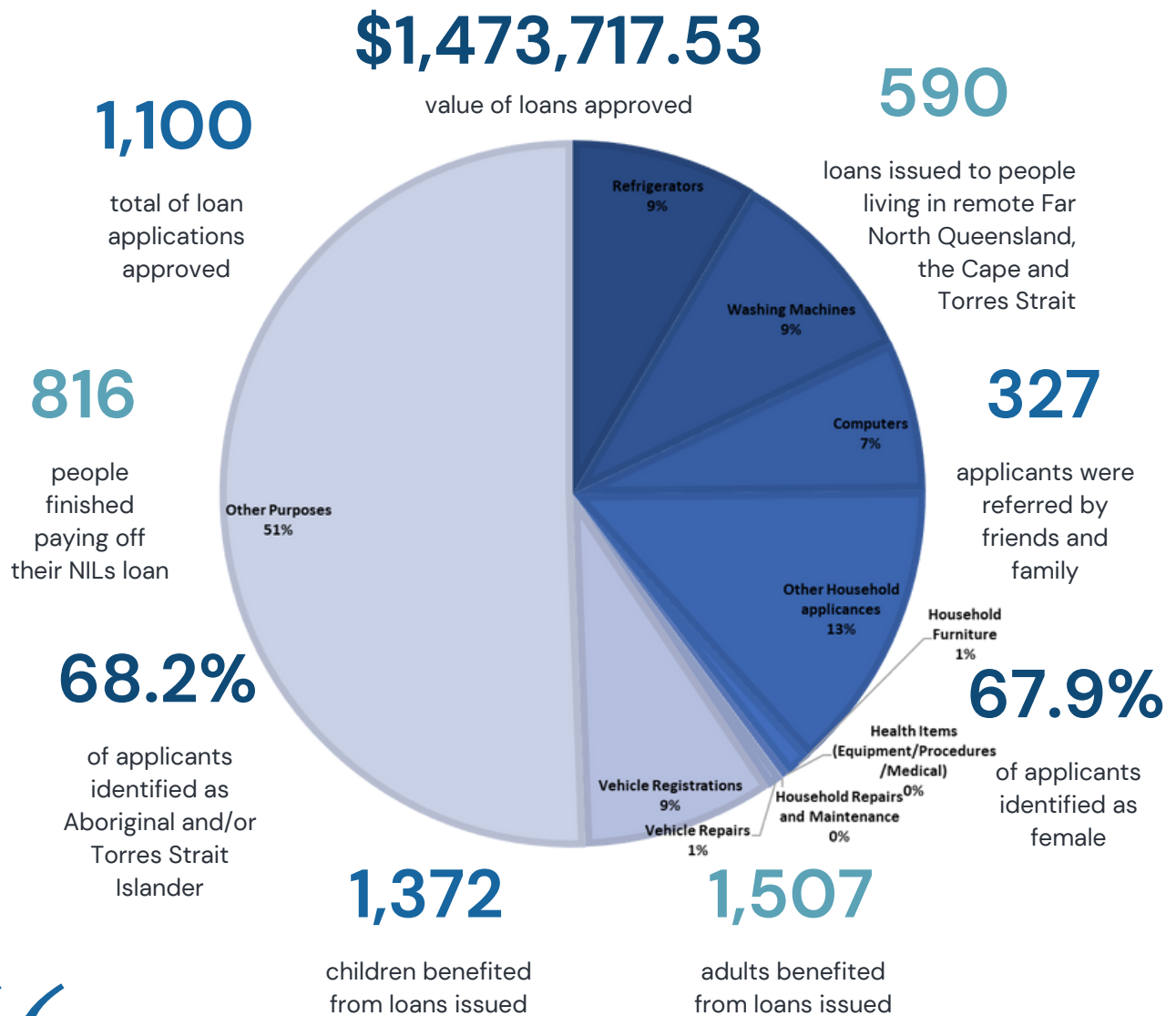


We find the best way to get the word out about NILs to the community is through Word of Mouth from family and friends already engaged in the Program. We have had one Torres Strait Islander mum who was introduced to NILs back in 2019 through SHAC's financial counselling program, who has successfully paid off 7 loans since. Prior to this she was only accessing consumer leases (those dodgy rental places) for essential goods and services and paying 3-4 times the actual price. Now, we see her in the office about every six months personally accompanying her nieces, nephews, aunts, and other relatives to introduce them to NILs at SHAC. Another client has accessed NILs to furnish his house, and to help pay for medical expenses. He is a strong believer in the NILs program, and he told us, "I tell all my friends and family about NILs loans when they need something."

Another great client story is Ms F, who has been accessing NILs through SHAC for the past four years after finding out about NILs through her daughter. Ms F last NILs loan was used to go towards a family members headstone opening. NILs has helped Ms F maintain and continue her family cultural practices by providing a stress free and smooth NILs process. "SHAC has helped everyday pensioner people like me, who are on Centrelink to provide loans for things I need that I can't afford since retiring." "I always promote SHAC to my family and friends to get a NILs because the ladies there are really nice, non-judgemental, who have a good attitude towards people who are looking for help."

For SHAC, our aim is to help families and individuals access NILs who really need it most – it's about the client, and increasing their access to safe and affordable credit, reducing those barriers to poverty and increasing financial inclusion. This is what one of our clients had to say on our feedback survey: "I have highly recommended NILs to people whom I know also can't afford to suddenly pay out large sums of money. Even trying to save a sum of money can seem impossible when you are unemployed or underemployed whereas a NILs gives you a reliable, safe and manageable way to cover lump sum expenses and pay them off in a way that you can see a positive impact without having to completely cut out other costs. There have been times when I have been lucky to have \$20 for a weeks' worth of groceries pre-NILs. Now there are still times when my budget is tight but thankfully not that tight and I don't feel strangled and hopeless like I did pre-NILs."

No Interest Loans (NILs) Snapshot



My overall experience with SHAC was they just "Too Deadly" very helpful, they get paperwork done quickly and making sure follow up is done, and I feel comfortable in speaking to them.

SHAC NILS was useful/ helpful in helping me get washing machine and especially with car expenses - servicing the car, mechanical problems, and helped with my car rego. I would like to thank NILS for your services and the staff those who helped me so much this year. Your service is a great and magnificent support to our people in this country.

I didn't have to take out a personal loan from a bank or similar. The repayments are manageable. They are deducted from my pension first.

NILs is one great service. They understand my need for it and helped get it sorted ASAP. I love getting NILs as I don't notice the repayments as they come out before I get my pay (in my bank). I have had 4 or 5 of them so far, and they help me get through life's little speed bumps easier.



Works Skills Traineeships

In March 2022, SHAC was successful in joining the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, a program by the Queensland Government offering paid traineeships. SHAC's key objectives were to: respond to unmet demand for low interest loans; facilitate the development of a diverse range of administrative skills for disadvantaged First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) trainees, through on the job training; facilitate the employment of First Nations people in entry level administration jobs in the not-for-profit charities sector in Cairns through assistance with job search and direct advocacy on their behalf; and facilitate the entry of First Nations People to further training or tertiary education.

Throughout the 2022 – 2023 financial year, SHAC supported seven First Nations women (one Certificate II in Workplace Skills over a year, and six Certificate I in Workplaces Skills over six months, two at a time). The trainees became confident and competent in the tasks and duties of an administrative role, important and necessary skills transferable to every future workplace.

We celebrated their growth, resilience, newly developed skills and capabilities, and their significant outcomes achieved, including:

- Six trainees successfully completed their study competencies and received their Certificate.
- One trainee successfully applied and commenced studying a Bachelor of Social Work.
- One trainee successfully applied and commenced studying a Certificate III in Community Services.
- One trainee went on to engage in further traineeship opportunities.
- Three trainees were offered different work opportunities at SHAC (one contract work for six months; one casual relief work, and one a full time contract position).

Some of the trainees reflected on their time with SHAC, and shared:

- *My traineeship at SHAC is already helping me on that pathway as I am building new skills and learning how a social service works.*

- *I love learning about different parts of the community and how each person presents with a different set of circumstances and a different set of needs. I am also enjoying learning about all of the other organisations that play a role in helping the community.*
- *Working at SHAC helped me learn more skills in the business area. I gained new skills like answering calls, doing a Nils Loan application, calling clients, doing face to face appointments. SHAC helped me to see more opportunity in working in the business area and I will continue to work my way up in the business industry.*
- *The main skills I learnt here was how to communicate with clients in person and building my confidence in doing reception job e.g., answering incoming calls and making calls to clients. SHAC also taught me how to prioritise my work. I enjoyed working alongside the very friendly and supportive work colleagues at SHAC.*
- *During the time working at SHAC has given me the encouragement to further my career goals in working to support people in the community. I have built my interest in this role and is now currently studying certificate III in community services. This has been an opportunity for myself to prove that I am willing to take the responsibility in my hands of helping those who needs my help, which the certificate I hold I am able to go back to my community in the Torres Strait to help.*
- *Completing the Certificate of Workplace Skills at SHAC has given me the opportunity to build new skills and knowledge. It (the certificate) gave me a lot of understanding around the role I was working in at SHAC.*
- *SHAC has given me so much support and encouragement. I really am impressed the amount of effort they have made. There were times where I found things difficult personally and SHAC respected and helped in ways so that I could still be successful in completing the Certificate.*

We look forward to continuing delivering this exciting Initiative throughout the 2023–2024 period.



Our Gratitude



SHAC gratefully acknowledge the ongoing contribution from our funding bodies, who through their continued funding support SHAC to deliver its day to day service delivery to families and individuals in Cairns and Far North Queensland.



SHAC sincerely thanks our community and corporate partners and supporters, who have generously contributed throughout the year to SHAC services and clients.



We thank you for your ongoing support and partnership, and look forward to the year ahead.



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