

Demonstrating care, sensitivity and respect for people at their lowest ebb,

Wesley Mission's Health, Counselling and Accommodation Services group delivers this support to at-risk individuals and families through a vast network of mental health facilities, accommodation, gambling or financial counselling, legal services, crisis counselling and suicide prevention programs.

Celebrating 45 years of Lifeline

Lifeline Sydney, established by former Wesley Mission Superintendent, Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker, in response to the many calls he received from desperate people wanting to end their lives, celebrated its 45th anniversary in 2008. Lifeline services are a Christian response to society stresses and have been significant within our community. Now an international organisation with a mantle of care over some of the world's largest cities, Lifeline has offered support and hope to millions of men and women in times of loneliness, isolation and need.

In Sydney alone, more than 800,000 calls have been received since the doors opened in 1963. Over 20,000 calls have been taken this year; almost 10,000 additional calls could not be answered with insufficient volunteer counsellors to meet the demand.

Lifeline has introduced new training strategies for volunteers, equipping them to deal with people in crisis or with mental health issues. These include Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and crisis intervention workshops.

Challenging the suicide wave

More people commit suicide each year in Australia than all those who die from car accidents and homicide combined. Life is God-given and precious; Wesley Mission wants to preserve the lives of those at risk.

LifeForce celebrates three successful years working in the city and regional NSW. Through networks and training workshops, community workers and carers are educated on the predictors and appropriate support interventions to assist those at risk of suicide. Two memorial services are held annually – one each at the Sydney Opera House and Newcastle – which provide meaningful opportunities for families of suicide victims to remember family members within a supportive environment.

Addressing financial stress

We welcome State and Commonwealth Government funding increases for Financial Counselling Services, recognising that Australians are undergoing serious financial stress.

Further funds have been received for our ministry to the homeless – the most financially stressed group in our community. The Inner-West Case Management Team is being established through the assistance given by the Commonwealth Government's Innovation and Investment Fund. This will enable Wesley Mission to add resources to the current intensive crisis support model for homeless clients and provide more flexible service support options.

Local partnerships have also been fruitful, providing additional housing properties and food parcels. Clients of Wesley Rehabilitation Services have gained access to a new Financial Management Training Program called Money Minded while a new three-year training agreement with the Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP) will greatly benefit the Lifeline Face-to-Face Counselling Service.

Growth to sing about for our homeless

The Short-Term Unit Program is one of very few which can accommodate families consisting of couples with children, sole fathers or large families. This year the program increased its group work program. As well as a weekly supported playgroup, craft group and homework club, a monthly parenting program, and, more recently, a women's domestic violence support group have been included. "Sing and Grow" – for parents and toddlers has also been very successful.

Through an ongoing excellent relationship with the local Department of Housing office, the supported accommodation program in Newcastle has negotiated to receive 44 bed-sit units in three neighbouring blocks. As a result, the program can meet increasing client demand.

Many referrals turned away

Due to insufficient community resources, such as family accommodation and transition housing, Creditline turned away 2877 (52%) eligible referrals last year.

Edward Eagar Lodge, a crisis accommodation hostel with 24/7 year-round staffing, was forced to turn away an average of three people every day last year, almost 1000 in total. The Lodge gives hostel accommodation for up to three months to single men and women, aged 18 to 80+ years, offering privacy, dignity and secure storage for belongings. Edward Eagar Lodge and other emergency accommodation facilities provide comprehensive support for physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual, vocational and recreational needs. Youth, families, the aged, the homeless and people dependent upon drugs or alcohol are invited to prayer, counselling and worship services.

Mandy's debt-free future

Mandy*, 37, is single and works for a major airline. She had accumulated a \$30,000 debt on four different credit cards. Unable to pay, she considered voluntary bankruptcy and turned to Wesley Mission's Creditline Financial Counselling Service to find out more.

Creditline offered Mandy a range of options, taking into account her situation, earnings and goals, helping her to address her debt and to hopefully avoid bankruptcy. She selected the first option, a money plan based on her income and expenses, leading to the development of a personal and professional goal plan. With Creditline's help, Mandy contacted creditors offering to make a realistic repayment over time, with a final payout from a \$20,000 loan from her parents/bank. Creditors agreed to payments amounting to \$20,000, even though the debt was \$30,000. The bank agreed to a loan of \$20,000 to Mandy's parents, interest-free.

She is now gradually repaying her parents. In a phone call, Mandy said, "I can't believe I saved \$10,000 and have not gone bankrupt. Now I can save money. Thank you very much - without your support I never thought I could avoid bankruptcy."

*Not her real name or photo.

private hospitals
(mental health facilities)

gambling counselling

creditline
(financial counselling)

legal services

lifecycle crisis counselling

lifeforce suicide
prevention education

supported accommodation
for the homeless

rehabilitation services



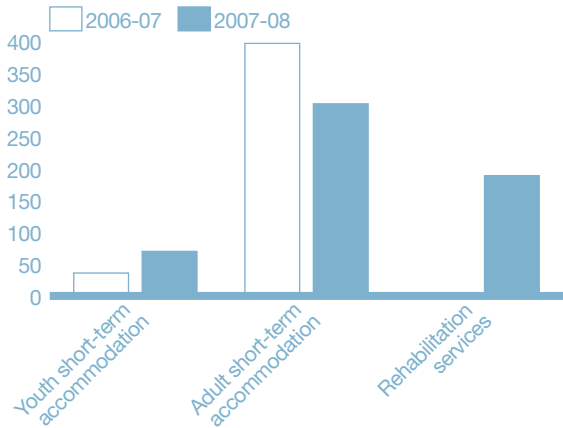


health, counselling and accommodation services

Homeless supported accommodation

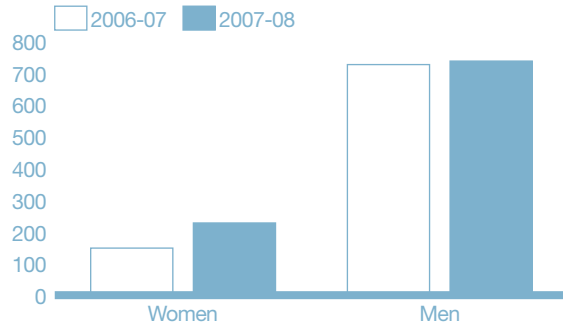
Individuals in short-term supported accommodation

Total number of individuals in short-term supported accommodation in 2007-08 was 561.



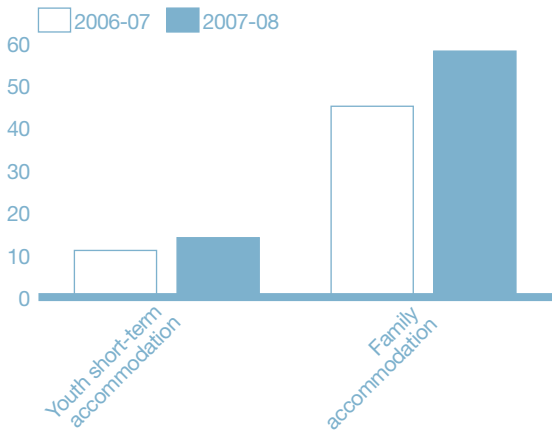
Individuals in crisis accommodation

Total number of individuals in crisis accommodation in 2007-08 was 963.



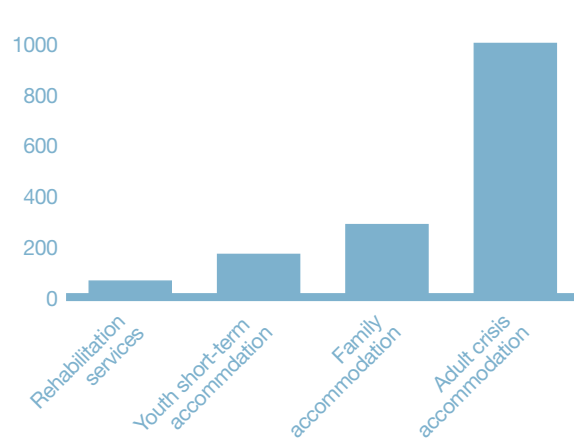
Families in supported accommodation

Total number of families in supported accommodation in 2007-08 was 72.

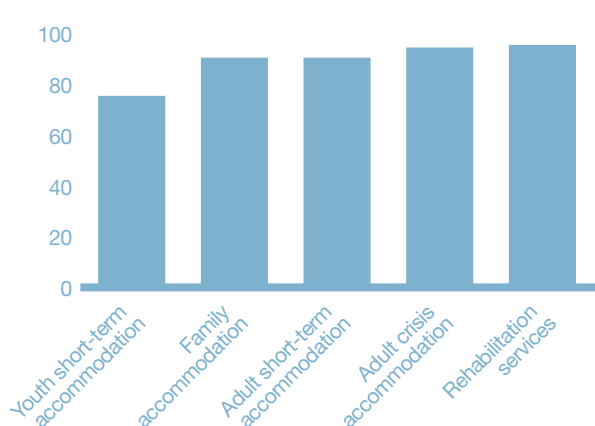


Unmet need

Total number of people turned away due to lack of vacancy in 2007-08 was 1513.



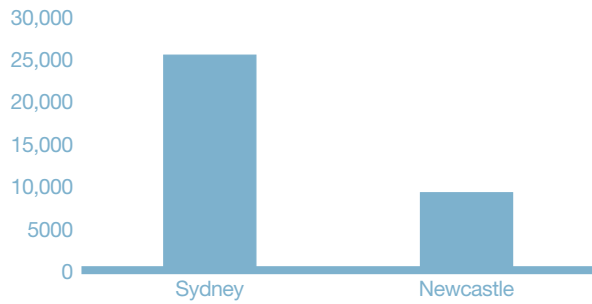
Average occupancy rate (%)



Welfare support services

Daily lunches provided

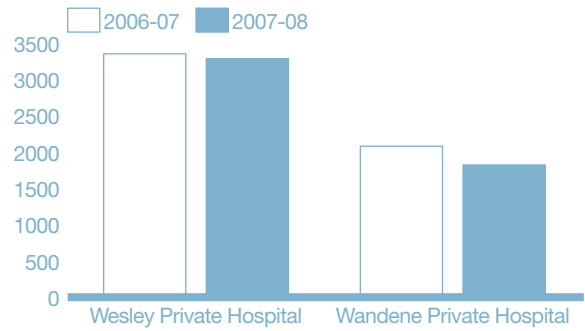
Total number of lunches provided in 2007-08 was 34,469.



Hospital services

Hospital admissions

Total number of hospital admissions in 2007-08 was 5098.



Hospital bed days

Total number of hospital bed days in 2007-08 was 22,099.

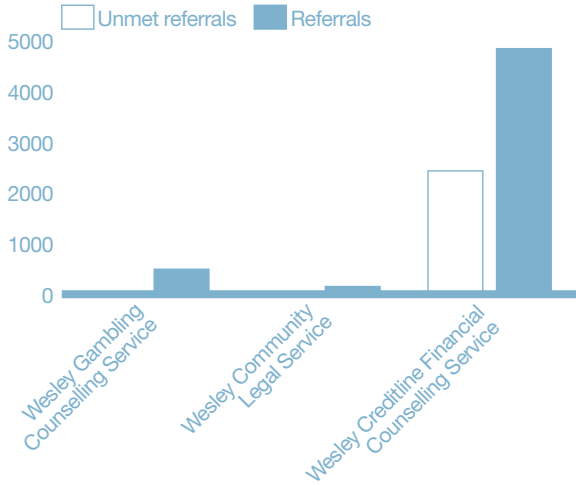


health, counselling and accommodation services

Counselling services

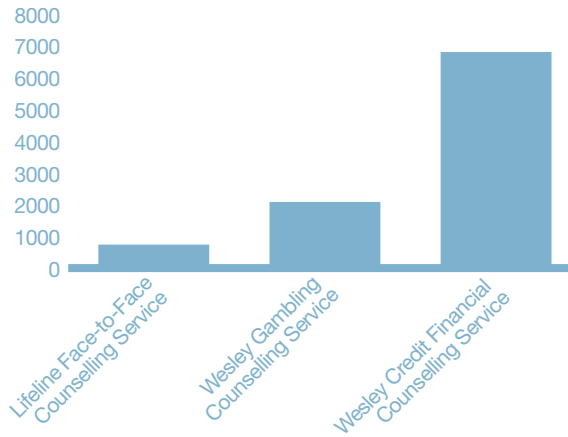
Clients assisted

Total number of clients assisted in counselling services in 2007-08 was 5470.



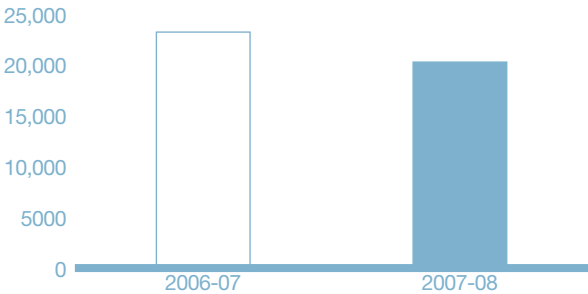
Counselling sessions

Total number of counselling sessions in 2007-08 was 9547.



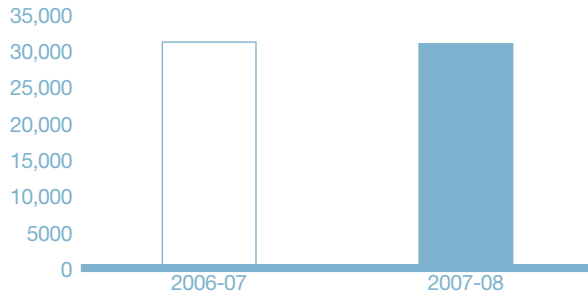
Lifeline crisis calls

Total number of crisis calls taken in 2007-08 was 20,239.



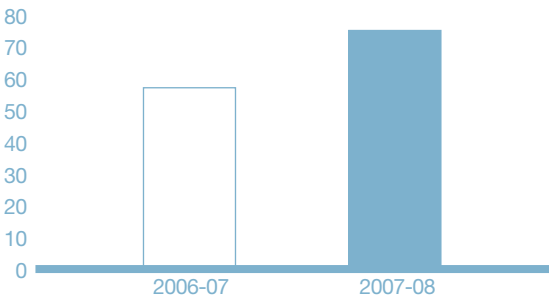
Lifeline volunteer hours

Total number of volunteer hours in 2007-08 was 30,853.



LifeForce suicide prevention training workshops

Total number of workshops held in 2007-08 was 75.



LifeForce workshop participants

Total number of people trained in 2007-08 was 1376.

