

MEDIA RELEASE
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Record number of women seeking support at Hutt St Centre

Hutt St Centre has been supporting a record number of women over the past two years, with almost 30 per cent more women seeking assistance in 2024 compared to 2022. Alarming, more than 80 per cent of these women are experiencing homelessness for the first time.

Chief Executive Officer, Chris Burns said the increase in demand reflects the deepening cost-of-living, housing, and domestic violence crises, with more women needing access to essential services such as meals, showers, laundry facilities, and healthcare.

To help meet this growing demand, Hutt St Centre is launching the Louise Homefulness Fund, a crisis financial assistance program exclusively for women experiencing homelessness.

Named in honour of Saint Louise de Marillac D.C. co-founder of the Daughters of Charity—the organisation that established Hutt St Centre over 70 years ago—the fund aims to provide immediate, life-changing support to women in urgent need.

Funded by the generosity of the local community and philanthropists, the Louise Homefulness Fund will provide one-off payments to help women access non-government funded emergency accommodation or cover essential expenses critical to securing or maintaining a safe place to live.

Hutt St Centre has been working tirelessly to meet the rising demand, with 2025 expected to bring another record number of visitors. The organisation continues to adapt its services to support the changing demographics of people experiencing homelessness.

“Since COVID, we have seen a significant shift in the people seeking our help, and we’ve had to be agile in responding to these changes,” Mr Burns said.

“Our Wellbeing team introduced a successful female-only group, Ignite, which provides a safe space for women to connect, learn, and support one another on their journey to homefulness. We know that programs such as these have a profound impact for our female clients.”

Since 2022, Hutt St Centre has recorded a 26 per cent increase in women accessing laundry services, a 14 per cent rise in shower use, and a 10 per cent increase in medical visits. Wellbeing Centre visits by women have grown by 30 per cent, with an 80 per cent

increase in new clients experiencing homelessness for the first time. Attendance at female-specific programs has risen by more than 115 per cent over two years.

“Women experiencing homelessness are often hidden—not because they aren’t there, but because they are trying to stay safe,” Mr Burns said.

“They are more likely to be couch surfing, sleeping in cars, or if they are rough sleeping, staying on the move throughout the night to stay safe.”

This International Women’s Day, Hutt St Centre is calling on the community to take action and support the growing number of women seeking to change their circumstances for good.

To donate to Hutt Street Centre visit huttstcentre.org.au