

Strategic Plan

2026 - 2030



Karinyahouse®

Acknowledgement of Country

Karinya

An aboriginal word meaning 'peaceful home'

Karinya House recognises the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to own and control their cultures and pay our respect to these rights.

Karinya House acknowledges, respects and seeks to learn from the diversity of Indigenous cultures Indigenous world views, lifestyles and customary laws.

We extend our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who for thousands of years have preserved the cultures and practices of their communities on country.

This land was never surrendered, and we acknowledge that it always was and will continue to always be Aboriginal land.

Child safety and wellbeing commitment

Karinya House takes the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people seriously, both within our organisation and within the broader community. We recognise that disrespect, abuse and trauma can have long-lasting impacts on the course of a child or young person's life. As such Karinya House is committed to providing a child-safe and child-friendly environment for all children and young people who engage with Karinya House, where their needs are met and they are thriving, whilst working with parents from a strengths-based, person-centred approach to service provision. Furthermore, everyone involved with Karinya House is responsible for the care and protection of the children and young people in contact with our service and reporting information about suspected child abuse.



About Karinya House

Our Guiding Principle

Karinya House affirms the value of every person.

Core Purpose

Karinya House provides support services for women during and after pregnancy.

Our Vision

Karinya House is a place where welcome, sanctuary and community is provided to women during and after their pregnancy.

Each woman is recognised for her unique story and individual case planning nurtures her holistic wellbeing.

Women are supported to develop their own pathway in finding their way forward.

Our Values

Respect and Appreciation – Through an attitude of self-respect and respect for others we recognise the value of each person.

Care and Compassion – Through care and compassion, we reflect to women their unique worth and affirm their self-esteem and belief.

Commitment and Loyalty – Through shared commitment to the Core Purpose, Values and practice Framework, we reflect and practice the shared Vision of the Association.

Integrity – All processes and actions of the Association are conducted with integrity.

Trust and Confidentiality – Trust is maintained by upholding the principles of confidentiality and privacy.

Excellence in Management and Service Delivery – Sound governance, efficient, flexible and resourceful service delivery is practised, striving for excellence in all actions.

Effective Collaboration and Community Development – Effective collaboration with each other, the women we support, other services, the community and the government is valued in developing positive partnerships. We move forward with the community in determining and servicing its needs, acknowledging strengths and working towards improving outcomes for all.

Context

Karinya House is a non-religious, non-political, community based, not for profit organisation offering residential and outreach case management and support for women in the ACT and surrounding region. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

For 28 years, Karinya House for Mothers and Babies (Karinya House) has been, and continues to be Canberra's only specialist homelessness provider for women who are pregnant or parenting a newborn baby¹ and have nowhere else to turn.

Over the term of our last Strategic Plan (2021-2025), Karinya House made important steps to ensure we can continue providing valued services to pregnant or parenting women in our community including:

- strengthening our financial position, including confirmation of a valuable long term partnership with the ACT Government
- improving how we use research and service feedback to measure the outcomes we deliver for women, tell their stories and improve our service delivery
- reaffirming our workforce to enhance the services we provide to women, maintain our culture and embed a new leadership structure, and
- improving our governance capacity and capability to deliver our long-term strategic vision.

These achievements have allowed us to successfully navigate turbulent times during and following the COVID-19 pandemic, which presented a major challenge to our service delivery arrangements.

This Strategic Plan for 2026-2030 has been developed in the context of sustained demand for Karinya House services with many women identifying housing, safety and, social isolation as key concerns when referred to us.

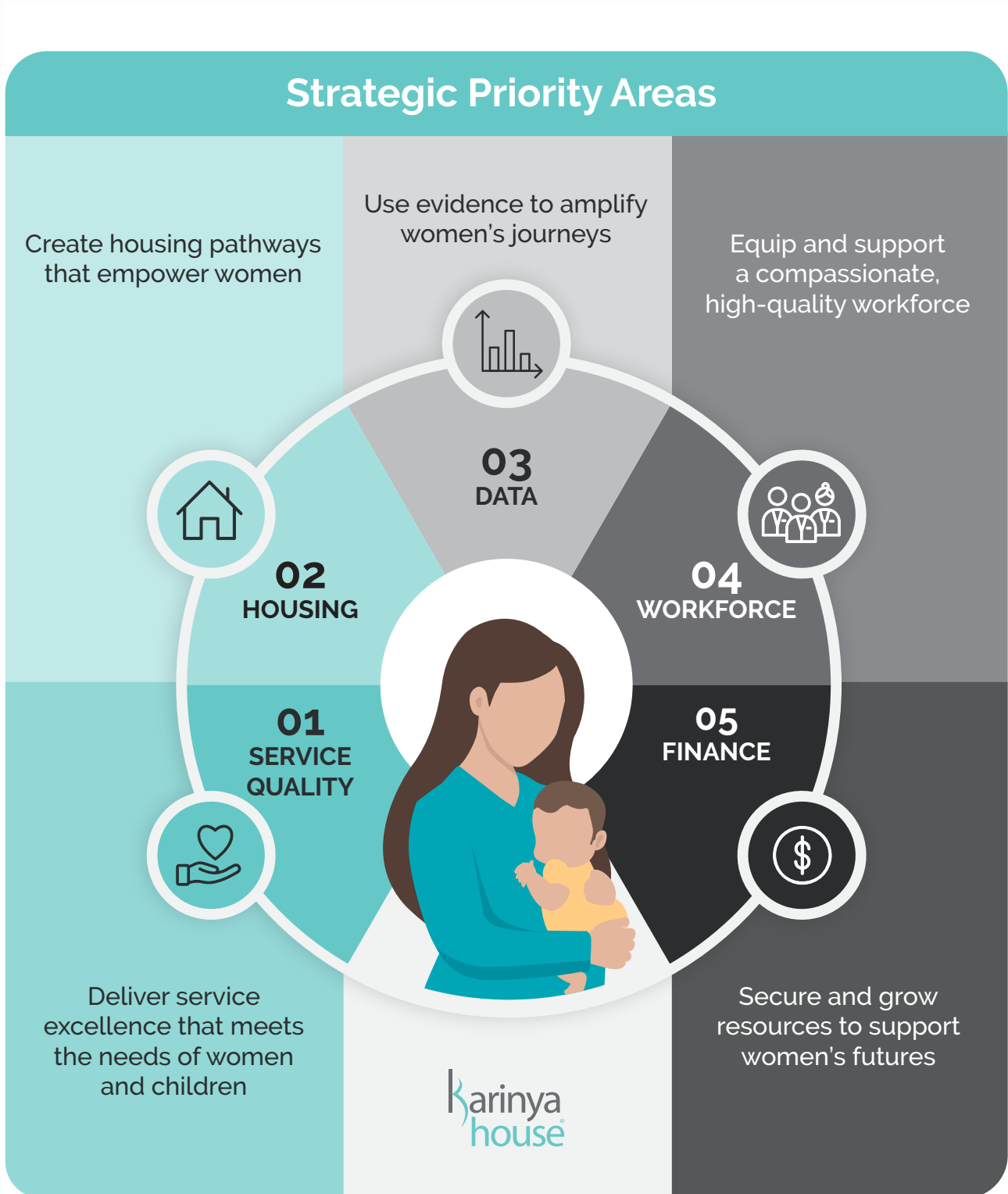
This reflects ongoing high rates of inward migration to Canberra, coupled with the crisis of domestic and family violence, rental unaffordability, housing shortages and cost of living pressures in the ACT community. This is unfolding against a backdrop of some constraints on ACT Government spending, ongoing gaps in critical parts of the sector and the service ecosystem in which we operate, a tight labour market to recruit from and technological advancements and AI challenging organisational readiness in the charity space. We expect these challenges to continue throughout the duration of this Plan².

1 The use of the term women/woman hereafter in this document refers specifically to women who are pregnant or parenting a baby.

2 Independent and internal analysis compiled for this plan suggests demand for Karinya Houses services are likely to at least remain steady or increase due to external contextual factors. Analysis also pointed to key gaps in the service system where women's needs are not being met in the perinatal period. Information from Government and sector counterparts projected an ongoing tight fiscal environment, however opportunities in the housing and early intervention/prevention space. It is from these projections that this plan has been developed.

Our Strategic Direction 2026 - 2030

We support women who are pregnant or parenting a baby, and who may have other infants/children through times of crisis with care, compassion, and practical support. Our 2026–2030 Strategic Plan builds on this legacy.



Our Strategic Direction 2026 - 2030

During 2026-2030, we will focus on five strategic priorities that reflect our purpose, extend our reach and enable us to continue delivering long-term, positive impact for women.



01 Deliver service excellence that meets the needs of women and their children

We deliver contemporary, research-informed and personalised services that reflect women's voices and support their journey and growth.



02 Create housing pathways that empower women

We pursue safe, accessible and dignified housing options with women that feel like home - supporting their independence, stability and safety following a crisis.



03 Use research and data to enhance women's journeys

We collect and use meaningful data to understand and improve our impact, elevate women's voices and influence systems change.



04 Equip and support a compassionate, high-quality workforce

We invest in our people - attracting, developing and retaining a values-aligned workforce of staff and volunteers equipped to walk alongside women and children with care, expertise and compassion.



05 Secure and grow resources to support women's futures

We pursue financial independence, diversify our income streams and steward resources with care - ensuring sustainability, equity and flexibility to meet women's evolving needs.



01 Deliver service excellence that meets the needs of women and their children

We deliver contemporary, research-informed and personalised services that reflect women's voices and support their healing and growth.

Our Focus Areas

Design services with women at the centre

Continuously improve our services in partnership with women to consider their goals, preferences and lived experience and ensure relevance, care and impact.

Strengthen the Karinya House ethos across our service delivery and partnerships

Align all our staff, systems and external collaborations with our values, ensuring cultural, relational and ethical integrity.

Commit to continuous learning and improvement

Embed reflective practice, supervision and feedback loops that uphold our service quality and foster a culture of growth and innovation.

Use innovation to enhance access and experience

Explore opportunities to innovation (including digital) which improve our service reach, responsiveness and relational support for women.

We succeed when:

- Women receive personalised, trauma-transformative¹ support that reflects their goals, experiences and values
- Our services are continuously improved in partnership with women and guided by evidence and feedback
- Every woman feels respected, supported, and empowered to move forward in her own way, which reflects the ethos of Karinya House

¹ Trauma-transformative practice, goes beyond trauma-informed practice. Working from an orientation of compassion and care, trauma transformative practice actively focuses on healing and growth. Trauma-transformative practice emphasises strengthening relationships, creating safe and trustworthy environments that promote well-being and cultural sensitivity, rather than just mitigating the negative impacts of trauma.



02 Create housing pathways that empower women

We pursue safe, accessible and dignified housing options with women that feel like home - supporting their independence, stability and safety following a crisis.

Our Focus Areas

Expand our supported housing options beyond the current "intensive" accommodation model

Explore and co-design tailored, alternative supported housing solutions that match the needs and aspirations of the women we support and support long-term growth (for example: semi-independent housing, with pathways to rent-to-buy).

Grow pathways from homelessness to independence

Continue to work with Housing ACT, community housing organisations and sector allies to create housing solutions that feel like home and reflect Karinya House's values, meeting women where they are.

Strengthen the supports we provide to help women navigate from crisis into sustainable housing with choice, and continuity.

Advocate for systemic housing reform

Share our insights and collaborate on policy changes that improve access to long-term, affordable housing for women experiencing crisis.

We succeed when:

- Women supported by Karinya House can access safe, appropriate housing options beyond crisis accommodation
- Our advocacy and partnerships increase access to long-term, housing options that meet the needs and aspirations of women
- Women feel empowered by dignified housing pathways that offer , safety and security, and a place to call home.



03 Use evidence to amplify women's journeys

We collect and use meaningful data to understand and improve our impact, elevate women's voices and influence systems change.

Our Focus Areas

Measure what matters

Strengthen our data collection and analysis to generate robust, meaningful evidence of Karinya's contribution to women and children's journey, including independence, healing and long-term wellbeing impacts.

Embed lived experience into our evidence base

Ensure the voice of women, children, and families is central to our understanding of what works and why - informing our casework, service design and advocacy.

Consolidate, make sense and use what we know

Integrate quantitative and qualitative data to guide our decision-making, service planning and continuous improvement initiatives.

Use research to shape better systems

Share women's stories and data to influence policy, attract funding and partner with others to deliver system-level improvements through our advocacy and service innovation.

Evaluate our impact across generations

Measure how Karinya House contributes to positive change not just in the moment, but in the lives of women and their children over the long term, by tracking long-term outcomes and evidencing the value of early intervention and long term support.

We succeed when:

- We collect and use meaningful data to improve our services and outcomes for women and their children
- We amplify women's voices and lived experiences to shape service design and influence systems
- We use evidence to show what works, share our impact, and drive continuous improvement



04 Equip and support a compassionate, high-quality workforce

We invest in our people - attracting, developing and retaining a values aligned workforce of staff and volunteers equipped to walk alongside women and children with care, expertise and compassion.

Our Focus Areas

Attract and retain a values-aligned workforce

Implement and evolve our employee value proposition that reflects our values, recognises staff contributions, and supports job satisfaction and stability.

Develop staff capability and opportunities

Provide staff with the support and opportunities they need to have fulfilling careers at Karinya House and support our succession planning needs – including onboarding, early-career and ongoing professional development, supervision and mentoring, placement opportunities and transition-to-practice pathways.

Create an environment for our staff and volunteers to thrive

Ensure our workspaces, systems and resources support staff wellbeing, collaboration and effective service delivery.

Celebrate and promote our people

Showcase the depth and diversity of our staff and volunteer workforce and highlight Karinya's impact using storytelling and social media.

Embed continuous feedback and review

Strengthen our feedback culture with regular performance reflection, workforce planning and mechanisms for staff to have input on improvements.

We succeed when:

- Karinya House attracts and retains compassionate, skilled staff who are aligned with our values and committed to transformative care
- Our people are supported with the right training, supervision and recognition to grow and thrive in their roles
- Staff and volunteers feel valued, equipped, and empowered to make a meaningful difference in the lives of women and children.

(These outcomes and activities are reflected in the *Karinya House Workforce Plan*).



05 Secure and grow resources to support women's futures

We pursue financial independence, diversify our income streams and steward resources with care – ensuring sustainability, equity and flexibility to meet women's evolving needs.

Our Focus Areas

Secure and grow our resources

Build future revenue streams and financial reserves to ensure we can operate independently to support women into the future and navigate unexpected funding shortfalls.

Diversify funding and foster strong partnerships

Expand our donor base through a balance of government, philanthropic, corporate and individual donor partnerships, to support our service delivery and reduce our reliance on any single source.

Invest in service growth and innovation

Use our financial platform to invest in areas where we can deliver significant impact for women through new and/or improved services.

Steward our financial resources through effective financial management

Ensure our financial policies and practices are transparent, values-aligned and support our long-term sustainability.

We succeed when:

- We have a strong, diverse funding base that supports long-term services and future growth
- Our financial decisions reflect our values and enable us to expand our impact
- We manage resources wisely to ensure stability and support for women's independence

Our service delivery commitments

Ensure equitable provision and availability of essential services to all women we work with

Ensure equal access for women who meet the service criteria, celebrating and valuing their differences.

Provide a place of sanctuary and community support

Provide a place of welcome and sanctuary where individuals can gain support, strength, and skills to develop their capabilities and achieve their best as valued members of the community.

Nurture the holistic wellbeing of individuals

Acknowledge an individual's circumstances and provide a framework of care and compassion that encompasses the whole person and their needs through service or by appropriate referral.

Install recognition of self-worth

Acknowledge an individual's uniqueness and work with them to reach their potential through building self-knowledge and resilience.

Promote a culture of ongoing learning

Recognise and value personal growth and learnings from life's experiences and promote ongoing personal and professional development.



Women at the centre

"Thanks to Karinya I now only have little worries and I feel I can do these things on my own now"

"When we met Karinya, it was like my children and I were in a small boat on an ocean surrounded by big waves, in a storm, it was very dark and scary. Karinya threw us a rope and lead us to calm waters. I feel I can now sail our boat on my own on a calm lake, not the stormy ocean"

"At Karinya I could finally rest, and re-group, so I could be a good mum to my children."

"Karinya is part of my and my baby's story now. Karinya gave me the skills to look after my baby that will last a lifetime."

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone at Karinya! You've made me feel part of a family and have given me so many opportunities that I will be eternally grateful for. I will forever cherish the memories that have been made throughout my time with everyone. Thank you again"

"I can't pay back your help and everything you do for me and my kids Karinya. The best safe house ever. Thank you so much. I appreciate all your love."

