



**searchlight group**

executive recruitment & advisory

## Board Directors Candidate Information



May 2026

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender Equity West (GenWest) is the gender equity agency for Melbourne's western metropolitan region. Established in 1988 as the Women's Health Service for the western region of Victoria — and subsequently known as Women's Health West — GenWest has grown into one of Victoria's most significant specialist organisations in the family violence and gender equity space.

GenWest is one of the only organisations in Victoria operating across the full family violence intervention continuum — from primary prevention and early intervention through to crisis response, recovery, and perpetrator accountability. This breadth is rare, and it positions GenWest as a genuine sector leader: a trusted voice in government policy discussions, a credible partner to frontline services, and a direct support for the thousands of people in the west who need it.

Today, GenWest employs approximately 240 people across multiple sites and operates with an annual budget of around \$30 million. Its services span family violence response and recovery, women's health promotion, sexual and reproductive health, mental health and wellbeing, and primary prevention programs — all delivered through a feminist, intersectional lens.

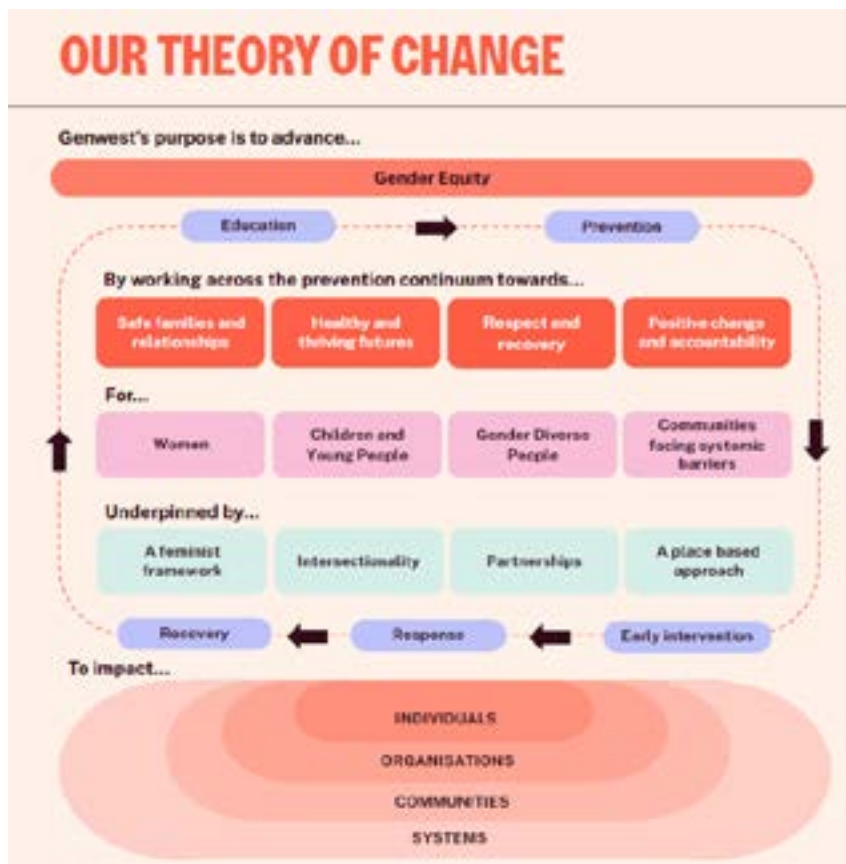
Mission	To achieve gender equity across Melbourne's west so that everyone can lead healthy and safe lives, free from family violence and oppression.
Vision	A society where gender equity is realised and everyone lives free from violence and oppression.
Values	Freedom · Creativity · Connection · Resistance
Purpose	To advance gender equity in Melbourne's west through feminist action, advocacy, health promotion, and evidence-based direct service delivery.



## SERVICES AND REACH

GenWest delivers services across the prevention continuum, structured around four interconnected domains:

<h3>Safe Families and Relationships</h3>	<h3>Healthy and Thriving Futures</h3>
<p>Prevention and response to family violence — supporting individuals, families and communities to build relationships grounded in safety, respect and equality.</p>	<p>Addressing barriers to health and wellbeing to create equitable access to support so people can live safely, feel connected, and thrive.</p>
<h3>Respect and Recovery</h3>	<h3>Positive Change and Accountability</h3>
<p>Addressing gendered violence at its roots — promoting sexual safety and respectful relationships, and providing recovery responses to sexual assault.</p>	<p>Keeping those who use violence in view and accountable, while proactively working with boys and young men to promote gender equality.</p>



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

GenWest's Strategic Plan 2026–28 positions the organisation as a trusted leader driving impact across its four domains. It was developed through an extensive engagement process with the Board, Executive Team, staff, and community stakeholders, and sets a clear direction for the next phase of GenWest's growth.

### Strategic ambition

To be a trusted leader fostering and championing safe families and relationships; healthy and thriving futures; respect and recovery; and positive change and accountability, for everyone in our communities.

Lead practice excellence	Play a leading role in driving practice excellence across the sectors in which we work — embedding evidence-driven service models, strengthening client outcomes measurement, and becoming a trusted thought leader across the sector and government.
Expand reach and amplify impact	Enhance reach by expanding service offerings and partnerships in existing and new domains — including sexual assault services — to have more impact and access more people.
Positively disrupt systems	Advance wider sector and systemic change through active advocacy, learning and knowledge sharing — influencing system design, policy reform, and the gendered dynamics of harm and recovery.
Partner with clients and communities	Deepen community relationships, elevate the voices of clients, and work alongside them through collaborative co-design initiatives. Build community capacity across multiple settings.

### Strategic enablers

Two organisation-wide enablers underpin GenWest's ability to deliver on its strategic ambitions:

- Deepen strategic skills and capability — investing in workforce development, intersectional practice, trauma-informed care, and strengthening Board and executive capability to navigate reform and pursue sustainable growth.
- Strengthen organisational resilience — increasing financial independence through diversification of funding sources, including government contracts, philanthropy, and fee-for-service, to reduce risk and increase agility.

This strategic direction has direct implications for Board composition. GenWest needs Directors who can govern through a period of deliberate expansion, contribute to system-level advocacy, and support the organisation as it enters new domains — while holding firm to the feminist, intersectional values that define everything GenWest does.

## ABOUT THE BOARD

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GenWest is governed by a skills-based Board of Directors operating under the GenWest Constitution and applicable legislation. Board members are responsible for governing the organisation in accordance with the Constitution, setting strategic direction, overseeing financial viability, and contributing to the collective decision-making that guides GenWest's work.

The Board works in close partnership with GenWest's CEO, who leads a strong executive team with well-established government relationships and a clear mandate for the next phase of growth. The Board–CEO relationship is a genuine partnership, and active Director participation is both expected and valued.

### Context for this recruitment

This recruitment reflects a planned Board renewal process aligned to GenWest's new Strategic Plan (2026–28). GenWest is seeking to appoint up to four new Non-Executive Directors to strengthen the Board's collective capability and ensure it is well-positioned to govern through the next phase of the organisation's development.

The Board has recently completed a skills matrix review, and this recruitment is being shaped by the specific capability gaps that process identified. The Board is particularly focused on building a cohort that collectively brings the right mix of governance depth, sector knowledge, community connection, and diverse lived experience.

### Organisational context

Some important context for prospective candidates:

- GenWest currently relies predominantly on a single government funding source (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing). Diversifying income is a stated strategic priority and the Board will play an active role in guiding that effort.
- A constitution review is underway, with the Board working to uplift governance into a more strategic framework. This may also include consideration of Director remuneration in future.
- New reporting systems are being developed to provide greater visibility over financial and operational performance and service impact — this is an active area of Board focus.
- The CEO is highly-regarded, has strong relationships with State Government, and the Board is actively working to support leadership retention.
- The western metropolitan region is one of Melbourne's most linguistically and culturally diverse areas — this shapes everything about how GenWest operates, and the Board should reflect that diversity.

## DIRECTOR REQUIREMENTS

The Board is seeking to appoint Directors who bring depth across one or more of the priority areas below, alongside strong governance foundations and genuine alignment with GenWest's feminist, intersectional values. No single candidate is expected to cover all areas — the goal is to build a complementary cohort that collectively strengthens the Board.

Governance and Leadership	
<b>Board governance</b>	Demonstrated experience as a non-executive director, including committee participation, CEO oversight, and contribution to board-level decision making. Prior NFP board experience is highly valued.
<b>Legal / regulatory</b>	Experience in law, regulatory compliance, contract management or governance in a regulated environment. This capability is well-suited to a committee chair role.
<b>Finance and audit</b>	Financial literacy at board level — ability to interrogate financial statements, assess organisational performance, and contribute to audit and risk oversight. Relevant qualification (CPA, CA or equivalent) advantageous.
<b>CEO / executive experience</b>	Demonstrated experience leading an organisation of comparable scale and complexity. This is particularly valued given the Board's focus on CEO partnership and retention.
Sector and Strategic Knowledge	
<b>Family violence / community services</b>	Understanding of or lived experience in family violence, women's health, or related community services sectors. This is particularly valued alongside governance credentials.
<b>Clinical governance</b>	Experience with clinical governance frameworks, quality and safety, and practice excellence oversight. Candidates with this capability are well-suited to a committee leadership role
<b>Policy, advocacy and government relations</b>	Understanding of government policy settings relevant to family violence, gender equity, and community services. Experience engaging with state or federal government stakeholders is valued.
Organisational Enablers	
<b>Funding diversification / philanthropy</b>	Experience with philanthropic fundraising, corporate partnerships, or grant strategy. Given GenWest's strategic priority to diversify beyond its current primary funding source, this capability is particularly timely.
<b>Commercial acumen</b>	Business performance, financial sustainability, and organisational growth experience — balanced with genuine empathy for the complexity and culture of the work GenWest does.

## DIRECTOR REQUIREMENTS

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### Diversity and representation — a priority focus

GenWest is committed to building a Board that reflects the diversity, strength and lived experience of the communities it serves. For this recruitment, the Board is particularly seeking to strengthen representation across:

- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities — Melbourne's west is one of the city's most diverse regions, and the Board should reflect that
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Lived experience relevant to GenWest's mission — family violence, gender equity, community disadvantage
- Strong connection to and credibility within Melbourne's western suburbs

All appointees must identify as female or as a woman, consistent with GenWest's feminist governance approach and its obligations under the Equal Opportunity Act.

### Personal qualities

All Board members are expected to demonstrate:

- Genuine interest in GenWest and authentic commitment to its vision and values
- Integrity — putting GenWest's interests before personal interests, acting ethically and transparently
- Curiosity and courage — the willingness to ask hard questions and challenge management or colleagues where necessary
- Collaborative and interpersonal skills — working well in a group, listening actively, communicating views frankly and constructively
- Sound instinct and judgement — good business acumen, ability to get to the crux of an issue
- Active commitment — there is no room for passive participants; Directors are expected to contribute meaningfully
- Reliability and accountability — following through on commitments and meeting obligations

## TIME COMMITMENT

Board membership at GenWest requires a genuine commitment of time and energy. The Board operates with eight scheduled meetings per year, supplemented by committee responsibilities, strategy days, and participation in GenWest events. Candidates should carefully consider the time expectations before applying.

### Board meetings

The Board meets eight times per year, typically on the first Wednesday evening of the month between 6:00pm and 8:00pm. Meetings rotate between in-person and online attendance, with the format agreed in advance. Board papers are circulated prior to each meeting, and Directors are expected to attend having read them.

In addition to formal meetings, Directors are expected to:

- Attend the Annual General Meeting
- Participate in at least one annual strategy day
- Use personal and professional networks to further GenWest's goals and objectives
- Actively support GenWest events and functions as a representative of the organisation

### Committees

Committee	Meeting Frequency
Finance, Audit and Risk Committee	Quarterly (online)
Quality and Clinical Governance Committee	Quarterly (online)
Other working groups / task groups	As required

All Directors are expected to serve actively on at least one committee. Candidates with clinical governance, legal, or financial expertise are particularly well-suited to committee chair roles.

Overall time commitment is approximately eight hours per month, inclusive of meeting preparation, attendance, and other Board-related activities.

### Terms of appointment

Board members are elected for a two-year term and may be re-elected for three further terms of two years, giving a maximum tenure of eight years. Tenure may be extended at the Board's discretion by passing a Special Resolution.

### Remuneration

Board positions at GenWest are currently voluntary. The organisation's constitution is currently under review, and the Board may consider Director remuneration as part of that in the future.

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Searchlight Group is managing this process on behalf of GenWest. We would be delighted to hear from candidates who bring the capabilities described in this document, and who are genuinely motivated by the opportunity to contribute to GenWest's next chapter.

### How to apply

#### To apply, please provide:

- A cover letter (no more than two pages) outlining your specific skills and experience relevant to the capabilities identified in this document, and why you are motivated to join GenWest's Board
- A current curriculum vitae / resume

Applications must be submitted via the link: <https://searchlightgroup.com.au/jobs/board-director-2/>

### Recruitment process and key dates

Activity	Timing
Applications close	midnight on May 29th 2026
Preliminary conversations with Searchlight Group	Commencing as suitable applications are received
Longlisting	June 2026
GenWest Board interviews	June–July 2026
Reference and probity checks	Following shortlist/interviews
Appointments confirmed	June–July 2026

All applications will be acknowledged within 48 hours of receipt. Candidates will be updated on their status at key decision points during the process.

### Conflict of interest

All applicants will be required to complete a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement as part of the process. Please consider any existing professional, financial or organisational relationships that could give rise to a real or perceived conflict before applying.

### Questions and enquiries

If you have questions about this opportunity or the process, please contact:

**Michael Holdway, Managing Director, Searchlight Group**

**P:** 0400 006 513

**E:** michael@searchlightgroup.com.au

### Useful references

- GenWest website: [www.genwest.com.au](http://www.genwest.com.au)
- ACNC profile: [www.acnc.gov.a](http://www.acnc.gov.a)



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-28

# OUR KEY DOMAINS



## Safe Families and Relationships

We work to prevent and respond to family violence by supporting individuals, families and communities to build relationships grounded in safety, respect and equality.



## Healthy and Thriving Futures

By addressing barriers to health and wellbeing, we help create equitable access to the supports people need to live safely, feel connected and thrive.



## Respect and Recovery

We address gendered violence at its roots by promoting sexual safety and respectful relationships, and providing recovery and healing responses to sexual assault/abuse.



## Positive Change and Accountability

We deliver programs that keep those who use violence in view and accountable through service delivery and system advocacy, while also working proactively with boys and young men to promote gender equality.

Focusing only on victim support without addressing the behaviour of the person causing harm can limit long-term prevention. A victim's safety is bolstered when the system can anticipate, monitor, and respond to the perpetrator's risk. By including perpetrator-related pathways (or at least mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable), GenWest can more credibly claim a full-continuum approach, rather than being seen as reactive only.

However, "working with perpetrators" does not necessarily mean GenWest must run direct perpetrator intervention programs. It could mean ensuring referral pathways, advocacy, knowledge of evidence-based interventions, tracking, oversight, or collaborating with specialist agencies.

If we position ourselves to "keep perpetrators in view" in our Strategy, it may open doors to collaboration with specialist perpetrator intervention services, or even to become a partner in coordinated responses.

It also strengthens GenWest's narrative in policy and advocacy spaces: that we do not see gender equity solely as service to women, but a system of accountability to transform harmful behaviours and systems.

# OUR STRATEGIC AMBITION

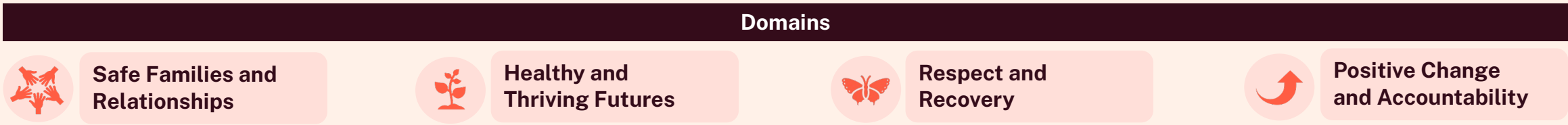
Our 3-year strategic ambition is...

**To be a trusted leader fostering and championing safe families and relationships; healthy and thriving futures; respect and recovery; and positive change and accountability, for everyone in our communities.**

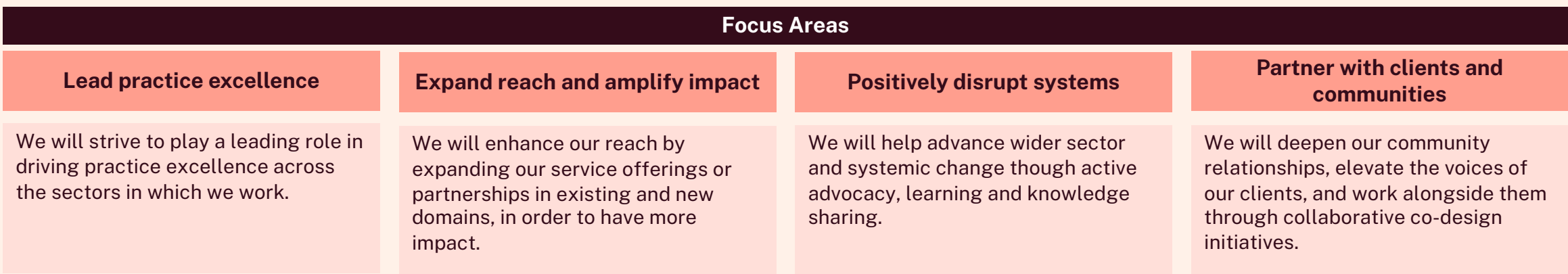
# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This slide outlines the draft priority focus areas and enablers for GenWest to achieve its strategic ambition across the four domains of GenWest’s work. These represent the key areas of work that the organisation needs to prioritise over the next strategic timeframe, which are in addition to ‘business as usual’ work that is not represented here.

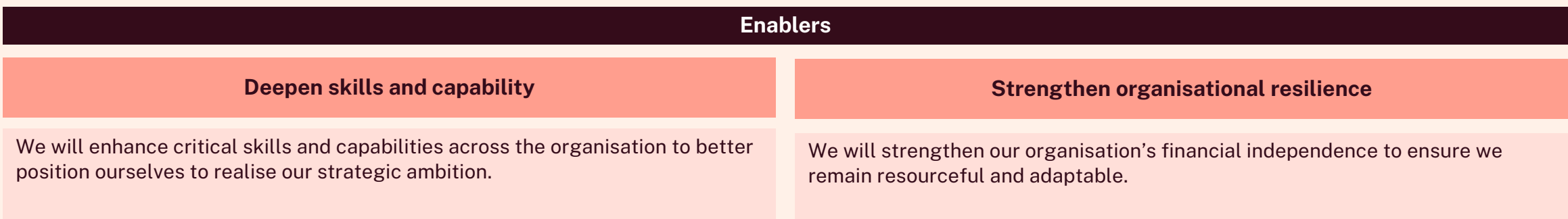
**Domains of strategic ambition**



**What GenWest will do to achieve its ambition**



**Supports for the focus areas**



*The selection of these Enablers represent top priorities for the organisation that will support the Focus Areas, but does not exclude other pieces of internal continuous improvement work.*

# OUR FOCUS AREAS, ENABLERS & GOALS

**Our 3-year strategic ambition is to be a trusted leader fostering and championing safe families and relationships; healthy and thriving futures; respect and recovery; and positive change and accountability, for everyone in our communities.**

<p><b>Lead practice excellence</b></p> <p>We will strive to play a leading role in driving practice excellence across the sectors in which we work.</p>	<p><b>Expand reach and amplify impact</b></p> <p>We will enhance our reach by expanding our service offerings or partnerships in existing and new domains, in order to have more impact.</p>	<p><b>Positively disrupt systems</b></p> <p>We will help advance wider sector and systemic change through active advocacy, learning and knowledge sharing.</p>	<p><b>Partner with clients and communities</b></p> <p>We will deepen our community relationships, elevate the voices of our clients, and work alongside them through collaborative co-design initiatives.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Embed evidence-driven practice</b> so that all service models are consistently aligned with statewide policy frameworks, Social Service Standards, and emerging best practice in prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen client outcomes measurement</b>, ensuring that lived experience, qualitative insights, and quantitative data shape program design, delivery and continuous improvement.</li> <li>• <b>Become a trusted thought leader</b> across the sector and government, positioning the organisation as an expert in gender equity across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expand service reach</b> for response and recovery services, giving consideration to service gaps and under-served cohorts and locations.</li> <li>• <b>Build community capacity</b> by equipping local leaders, peer advocates, and partner organisations to effectively engage with communities that are under-served or hard to reach.</li> <li>• <b>Access more people</b> by partnering across health, education, workplaces, and community settings, ensuring earlier access to prevention and support initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Influence system design and policy reform</b> reducing duplication and fragmentation to create a more integrated and effective system through partnerships, evidence and advocacy.</li> <li>• <b>Pilot innovative service models</b> that demonstrate alternatives to existing pathways and shift practice across the system (e.g. integrated crisis response, peer support, culturally tailored prevention).</li> <li>• <b>Centre gender equity in system advocacy</b>, ensuring government, funders and partners understand the gendered dynamics of harm and recovery, and reflect this in policy and investment decisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strengthen co-design processes</b> so that clients, lived experience groups and diverse communities actively shape services, policies and advocacy priorities.</li> <li>• <b>Embed accessibility and inclusion</b>, ensuring that services are culturally safe, and responsive to the intersectional needs of clients and the community.</li> <li>• <b>Build community capacity</b> through prevention, education and leadership programs across multiple settings, including schools, sporting clubs, business and diverse communities, to deliver GenWest's strategic priorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deepen strategic skills and capability</b></p> <p>We will enhance critical strategic skills and capabilities across the organisation to better position ourselves to realise our strategic ambition.</p>		<p><b>Strengthen organisational resilience</b></p> <p>We will strengthen our organisation's financial independence to ensure we remain resourceful and adaptable.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Invest in workforce development</b>, equipping staff and leaders with skills in intersectional practice, trauma-informed care, advocacy, and systems thinking alongside the capabilities to lead and support teams effectively. This includes fostering collaborative ways of working, a fair and respectful workplace and practices that enhance psychologically safe environments, particularly in trauma-impacted settings.</li> <li>• <b>Develop and promote an Employee Value Proposition (EVP)</b> that actively supports gender equity at work</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen governance and leadership</b>, building Board and executive position to navigate sector reform, influence public policy, and pursue sustainable growth.</li> <li>• <b>Increase productivity</b> by exploring AI, machine learning and digitalisation to create efficiency.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Explore income sources</b> to reduce risk and increase agility to achieve strategic ambition, balancing government contracts, philanthropy and fee-for-service.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen fundraising capability</b> within the team.</li> </ul>	