*Support Association for the Women of Afghanistan*
*SAWA - Australia (SA) Inc.*

**SAWA-Australia (SA)**

# 2025/2026
# Annual Report
# SAWA- Australia (SA)





# Convenor's Report

**SAWA-Australia (SA)**

**Annual Report 01 July 2025 – 30 June 2026**

In a country where women's human rights and basic freedoms have been shattered by the Taliban regime, the services delivered by SAWA(SA)'s partners in Afghanistan continue to spread light into the lives of many women and girls. In working with our partners, SAWA is constantly reminded of the strength and courage they show every day in their determination to provide meaningful support to their students. They not only teach valuable skills, but also provide a nurturing environment where students spend time together supporting one another and growing as individuals.

Since 2008, SAWA(SA) has funded the Organisation for Promoting Afghan Women's Capabilities (OPAWC)'s Vocational Training Centre in Kabul, which has expanded over time to include classes in literacy, numeracy, English, computer skills, and sewing. This year, SAWA(SA) committee members joined on-line as the Centre celebrated special events such as Mothers' Day, Graduation Day, and a Welcome Event in June 2026 following the Centre's move to a new, safer location. A Drawing Competition in November was held under conditions in which Taliban laws prohibit image-taking (photography) and drawing of living beings. The event provided a safe space for women, girls, and children to express their feelings, develop artistic talents, and strengthen self-confidence. In addition to showcasing participants' artistic abilities, it played an effective role in fostering social cohesion and maintaining women's connection to cultural and educational spaces, demonstrating that art can serve as a constructive tool for hope-building, social vitality, and strengthening morale in difficult circumstances.

This financial year SAWA(SA) also funded projects in provincial areas. In June, OPAWC set up a small children's school in an area where the pursuit of education has always been deeply valued but, because of its ethnicity, access was unjustly denied. In July, SAWA(SA) funded two other twelve-month projects administered by our colleagues at New Hope/Omid Now. In one, a group of older women met for social and emotional support, and even a little gentle yoga-style exercise, under the guidance of their compassionate young teacher. These gatherings created a space where everyone could talk about daily challenges and find small solutions together. In the other, a trained health professional delivered sessions for women and girls in a remote village, addressing topics including mental health, menstruation and the reproductive cycle, prenatal, pregnancy and postnatal care. Both teachers reported that catastrophic social and economic conditions are perpetuating widespread psychological collapse in Afghanistan, with women and children being the most vulnerable.

An appeal to our supporters following the devasting earthquake in September 2025 in Kunar province enabled SAWA(SA) to send $11,000 for humanitarian assistance, which was delivered by OPAWC's Mobile Health Team. Later we sent another $3,000 for winter welfare assistance in Kunar. Financial assistance was also provided by our supporters, and facilitated by SAWA(SA), for a recently widowed mother of four young children, a former teacher at the VTC. We were alerted to her plight by an in-law who now lives in Europe and has herself done much to help former colleagues seeking a pathway to safety outside Afghanistan.

We have been greatly moved by the response of SAWA members, supporters and friends to all our special appeals for financial assistance, as well as the on-going regular donations that flow into our bank account. Without these generous donations SAWA's work could not continue. On behalf of all the SAWA(SA) Committee, I say a deep and sincere "Thank you" for standing by us and the women and girls of Afghanistan.

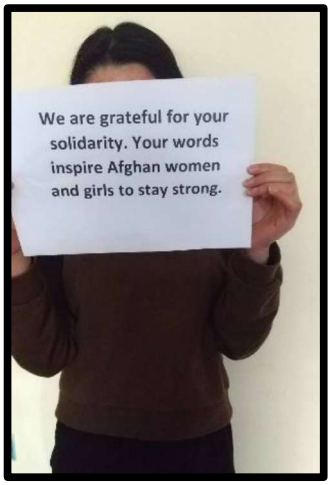
SAWA(SA)'s networking efforts during the year led to participation in the event "A Thousand Voices, A Thousand Hopes, A Thousand Suns" to mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, hosted by the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Canberra on 29 November. Committee members met with Ambassador Wahidullah Waissi in Adelaide to discuss the campaign and later had dinner with him and members of Adelaide's Aghan community. Unhappily, the Embassy closed on 30 June 2026. However, the newly established "The Afghanistan Institute" will continue to serve as a bridge between Australia and the Afghan people into the future. On 23 June, just before the Embassy closed, the Parliamentary Friendship Group with the People of Afghanistan was relaunched at Parliament House in Canberra, in "*a sign of enduring solidarity with the Afghan people amid the country's continuing political and humanitarian crisis*".

SAWA(SA) had a table at the November 2025 Ghan International Film Festival thanks to our friendship with producer Fahim Hashimy, and in June a similar collaboration helped the Rotary Club of Unley raise funds for their project to educate girls in a provincial area of Afghanistan. Our stall at Fullarton Market in November gathered 120 hand-written messages of hope from Adelaide for Afghan women. These were sent to the Embassy for its "1000 Suns" campaign. More messages of hope were signed at Amnesty International's "Power of Activism" event in March and sent directly to OPAWC prompting heartfelt thanks in return. For the safety of all involved, it is not possible to show the smiling faces behind these treasured messages from our Afghan sisters.










We were delighted to meet with Robyn Longhurst, convenor of SAWA(NSW) in Sydney, when she and her husband passed through Adelaide on holiday. Our two groups keep in close contact and share news with SAWA supporters via the SAWAN newsletter. Gali Weiss from New Hope/Omid Now also visited Adelaide. We learned from Gali that New Hope, as a small group, will tone down its activity and not initiate new support for Afghan women's education, due to overwork after five years.

Transparency in governance is vital so that SAWA(SA) members and supporters can have confidence in the way the organisation is managed. To this end, your Committee reviewed its 2025-30 Strategic Plan in July; gave obligatory formal presentations to members at the Annual General Meeting in October; and lodged its 2025 Annual Information Statement with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission in January. The quarterly SAWAN newsletter also provides up-to-date information on Committee activities and those of our partners in Afghanistan. We continue at all times to take care not to jeopardise the safety of the women we support by publicising names or photos of individuals.

There have been some changes to SAWA(SA)'s financial management this year. Membership is now administered via a GiveNow platform, which has improved record keeping and sends automatic renewal reminders. Since October, we have confidently used Sarafi Qasemi money transfer service to send funds to Afghanistan, following the closure of Etemad Services. OPAWC sends receipts for all money they receive.

We welcomed Charlotte Stubber, a university student with a strong interest in women's rights, to the SAWA(SA) committee at October's AGM. In the previous month, Mary Venner retired from the Committee and returned to Sydney where she joined the SAWA(NSW) group. We are extremely grateful that Mary continues to manage SAWA's social media, maintaining good outreach to followers via frequent postings. In April 2026, Zainab Kazemi also retired, to take care of her baby son. The contributions of Mary and Zainab to the Committee's work are sincerely appreciated. Happily, these two were replaced by Charlotte and, more recently, Hadya Qorbanzadaha and Rose Herriott, all of whom are making valuable contributions to SAWA meetings and events, and have reduced the average age of the committee significantly!

I finish with sincere thanks to the entire SAWA(SA) Committee who over the year have worked together with competency and great friendship to keep the organisation operating to the very best of our ability. To Carol Shamsabadi (Treasurer), Julie Irwin (Public Officer and Database), Margaret Gadd (Newsletter Editor), Jill Brooking (Merchandise and Fundraising), Mary Venner (Outreach and Awareness Raising), Zainab Kazemi (Website and Afghan community liaison), Charlotte (University groups liaison), Hadya and Rose, thank you all very much.

Maureen Arnott
Convenor, SAWA-Australia (SA) Committee
30 June 2026

# Financial Report

## Report for 2025/2026

Income and Expenditure show the total financial activity.

Support payments to Afghanistan were transferred in US dollars through Western Union and Sarafi Qasemi (SQ) 4ex. [1]

---

## Account overview

| | |
|---|---|
| Bank balance brought forward (30/6/2025) not including term deposits ($125,000) | **$ 21,891.67** |
| Total income (includes $321.40 interest from statement and savings accts) | **$ 194,644.38** |
| Transfer to Afghanistan for VTC and other projects (including monies refunded) | **-$ 106,560.59** |
| Other expenditure (including auditor fee) | **-$ 27,658.82** |
| SAWA-Australia (SA) bank balance at 30 June 2026 with term deposit **($68,291.37)** | **$ 150,608.01** [2] |

## Income and expenses by source and destination

| Income | | Expenses by destination | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Account balance on 1/7/2025*** | *$21,891.67* | **Support sent to Afghanistan from SAWA (SA) for OPAWC – VTC, and other projects** | |
| **Donations and memberships via GiveNow** [3] | | July 2025 | $16,000.00 |
| Literacy and Vocational Training (VTC) | $7,257.95 | November 2025 (1 payment for $5000 refunded) [6] | $10,000.00 |
| | | December 2025 (1 payment for $7822.59 refunded) [7] | $22,822.59 |
| Teacher Sponsorship (hidden) | $1,382.76 | January 2026 | $12,000.00 |
| | | February 2026 | $10,000.00 |
| Rural Education Centre (SAWA- NSW)[4] | $421.26 | March 2026 | $10,000.00 |
| | | April 2026 | $10,000.00 |
| Memberships | $504.83 | May 2026 | $7,269.00 |
| **Total income through GiveNow**: | **$9,566.80** | June 2026 | $8,469.00 |
| | | **Total payments to Afghanistan** | **$106,560.59** |
| **Donations and memberships via bank and other sources**[5] | **$174,687.47** | **Expenses in Australia** | |
| | | Auditor | $200.00 |
| **Earthquake appeal payments through bank** | **$8,750.00** | Donation to New Hope | $13,907.00 |
| | | Payments made to SAWA (SA) for SAWA (NSW) – some through GiveNow | $10,103.50 |
| **Merchandise, event donations:** PIRA movie night /Rotary film night / Fullarton market, misc. | **$1,318.71** | Website updates, web hosting and domain registration | $1,114.26 |
| | | Payment to Rumi Palace - AGM dinner | $254.00 |
| **Bank interest (not including term deposit interest)** | **$321.40** | Purchase of SAWA bags, PO Box, postage, printing, Tyro fees, bank fees, Fullarton Market fee, & other | $2,080.06 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Total expenses in Australia** | **$27,658.82** |
| ***Overall income for 2025/26*** | **$194,644.38** | ***Overall expenditure for 2025/26*** | **$134,219.41** |

Notes:

[1] Most Australian banks do not allow money transfer to Afghanistan. SAWA-Australia (SA) has used ANZ bank; however, after the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban it has been very difficult to transfer money through banks. Transfers made through SQ 4ex (Blair Athol SA) are easily accessible in Afghanistan.

[2] SAWA-Australia (SA) sends funds to Afghanistan at the beginning of the calendar year but operates on Australia's financial year. The bank balance at the end of June 2026 therefore represents part of the funds that will be sent to Afghanistan in 2026/2027 financial year. This also includes $20.76 in the SAWA ANZ account (previously used to transfer money to Afghanistan) which is now used for funds received for New Hope which SAWA auspices.

[3] Donations received online through www.givenow.com.au.

[4] SAWA-Australia (SA) collects donations for SAWA NSW through GiveNow and forwards this money at various times throughout the year.

[5] Donations received through cheque, cash, direct credit into the SAWA-Australia (SA) Bendigo Bank account, and PayPal. This also includes interest from term deposits.

[6] We tried to send a $5000.00 payment through Western Union online; however, it was rejected and returned to SAWA.

[7] A committee member tried to send money from their ANZ bank account to a bank in Afghanistan (as per MOU instructions). This was reimbursed to the member by SAWA; however, the transaction was unsuccessful and the money was returned

and then reimbursed to SAWA.

SAWA AUSTRALIA (SA)

www.sawa-australia.org
info@sawa-australia.org

SAWA-Australia (SA)
PO Box 44
Dernancourt 5075 SA

www.sawa-australia.org
info@sawa-australia.org

Bendigo Bank Adelaide
BSB: 633-000
Account: 126035633

ABN: 73 162 014 759
Licence No. CCP1699

Secretary: Maureen Arnott (acting) Convener: Maureen Arnott Treasurer: Carol Shamsabadi
Committee: Margaret Gadd, Julie Irwin, Jill Brooking, Rose Herriot, Hadya Qorbanzadaha, Charlotte Stubber
Public Officer: Julie Irwin

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT

QUALIFIED REPORT

TO THE COMMITTEE OF SAWA Australia (SA)

**Scope**

I have conducted an audit on the financial reports of SAWA Australia (SA) to the year ended June the 30th 2026. The committee of SAWA Australia (SA) is responsible for the preparation of the financial report and the information contained therein.

I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of SAWA Australia (SA).

My audit has been conducted in accordance with the Australian Accounting and Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial reports are free of material misstatement. My procedures include examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the disclosures in the financial report. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with accounting concepts and standards. The audit opinion in this report has been formed on the above basis.

**Qualification**

As is common for organisations of this type, it is not practicable for SAWA Australia (SA) to maintain a system of internal control over donations, fundraising and similar activities until their initial entry into the accounting records. Accordingly, my audit in relation to those activities was limited to amounts recorded.

**Qualified Audit Opinion**

In my opinion, subject to any adjustments, if any, that might have been determined to be necessary, had the limitation referred to in the qualification paragraph not existed, the financial reports presented fairly the payments and receipts of the SAWA Australia (SA) a fair view of the operations and state of affairs of the SAWA Australia (SA) for the year ended 30th June 2026.

Yours faithfully

Robert Schahinger

9th October 2025