



Women's Health East: Strategic Plan 2013–17

Women's Health East - Investing in equality and wellbeing for women

Our Vision

Equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women

Our Purpose

Women's Health East acts to improve women's health, safety and wellbeing through leading, partnering, shaping, informing and delivering responses that address the needs of women

Women's Health East acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land on which we work.

Our Values

Human rights	We are committed to protecting and promoting women's economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights
Social Justice	We aim to redress social inequality through an equity approach to our work, with a particular focus on gender equity
Diversity	We value and embrace women's diversity in all its forms
Collaboration	We value the engagement and participation of our community and stakeholders in order to achieve our purpose. We aim to build trusting and respectful partnerships with those with whom we work
Innovation	We strive for excellence and innovation in our work
Respect	We respect the experiences and opinions of women, our community and our partners and aim to engage at all times in a respectful manner
Environmental sustainability	We acknowledge the importance of a healthy planet to our health and wellbeing and aim to minimise our organisational impact on the environment

Our guiding frameworks

Social model of health	We recognise that health is determined not just by physiology and individual characteristics, but by a range of environmental, economic, social, and cultural factors. We have a specific focus on addressing gender as a social determinant of health.
Feminism	Our work is underpinned by a feminist framework which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims to redress inequality and discrimination that women face as

	<p>a result of their gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embraces the diversity of women’s lives • respects, supports and advocates for women’s individual and collective right to make their own choices • values and respects women’s voices and experiences • promotes women’s participation and leadership • recognises the importance of the provision of services by women for women
Intersectional approach	<p>We recognise that a woman’s experiences, choices, socioeconomic status and level of advantage or disadvantage are shaped by an array of intersecting factors in addition to gender. These may include race, sexuality, religion, disability and history of migration and/or colonisation. We utilise a ‘diversity lens’ to analyse the way these factors interlink, connect and inform women’s experiences and recognise that gender cannot be considered in isolation.</p> <p>We are committed to working with our community and partners in a way that is respectful of culture and beliefs, that values difference and is free from discrimination in order to promote equality, safety and inclusion.</p>
Gendered approach	<p>We utilise a ‘gender lens’, to analyse the social structures that affect women’s health and wellbeing, and to inform the planning and implementation of effective responses to issues affecting women’s health and wellbeing.</p>
Evidence informed practice	<p>We base our work on evidence where it is available and through innovative practice and evaluation aim to add to the evidence base about women’s health</p>
Health Promotion for Population Health	<p>We work with the community to address the determinants of health to achieve better health outcomes for women within EMR.</p>

About Women’s Health East

Women’s Health East is a regional women’s health promotion agency working across the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. We work with stakeholders to build the capacity of services and programs in the region to ensure they optimally address issues affecting women.

Women’s Health East works predominantly in gender-based health promotion, which involves:

- Providing leadership around women’s health issues of regional significance and facilitating integrated responses
- Working in partnership with local governments, health and community agencies and other stakeholders to promote gender-based health promotion and service delivery, and to improve service system access and responsiveness for women
- Shaping responses to the promotion of women’s health and wellbeing through research, advocacy and consultancy
- Providing information and advice to key stakeholders in order to raise awareness of health and wellbeing issues experienced by women and to promote women’s health and wellbeing
- Delivering training and education programs for our partner organisations on women’s health issues and gender sensitivity in planning and service delivery

Women's Health East also works directly with women in order to ground our work and to:

- Understand women's health and wellbeing issues
- Support and strengthen our health promotion
- Identify and inform responses to service system gaps

The organisation is a not-for-profit incorporated association, and receives the majority of its funding through the Department of Health. In addition Women's Health East receives funding for specific projects. This funding comes from a variety of sources including philanthropic trusts, community grants and other areas of government including local government.

Why women's health

Women and men face different health risks and experience health and health care differently.

This is partly due to the biological and physiological differences between women and men. For example certain health conditions such as osteoporosis, major depression, breast cancer and eating disorders affect women more than men. Some conditions affect women differently to men. Heart attacks and HIV/AIDS are two of the more serious conditions that are sometimes overlooked in women because the signs and symptoms appear differently in men and women, and because they are conditions more commonly seen in men. Many common diseases affect women differently than men, women have different symptoms and respond differently to many treatments and preventive health measures.

Health is however about much more than biology. Our gender (the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women) greatly impacts on our health and wellbeing.

Gender roles and responsibilities are rarely evenly balanced in society and Australia is no exception. Gender differences in our society result in a range of inequalities between women and men impacting on women's health and wellbeing. Some examples include:

- Family violence is the highest risk factor leading to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15-44 yearsⁱ
- Women earn on average 17.5% less than menⁱⁱ
- Women are more likely to undertake childrearing and caring rolesⁱⁱ
- Women are more likely to experience socioeconomic disadvantage and financial insecurityⁱⁱ
- Women often face greater stigma and judgment about their sexual and reproductive health choicesⁱⁱⁱ
- Women are at greater risk of impacts emerging issues such as climate change^{iv}
- Women are more likely to be socially isolated and face a greater burden of mental health concerns than men^v

So when it comes to health and wellbeing both sex and gender matter.

At Women's Health East we use a gendered approach to analyse the social structures that affect women's health and wellbeing in order to best understand and influence the lives of women in the region. We work with our partners, including state and local government, community health services and other community organisations to ensure that women's health and wellbeing needs are considered in planning and delivery of health and community services. We strive to make sure that current and emerging issues faced by women in our community are consciously considered in policy decisions, services and programs.

Our strategic directions

Fostering leadership and innovation in health promotion

Facilitating a responsive service system

Strengthening our dynamic and sustainable organisation

Our strategic themes

Preventing violence against women (PVAW)

Promoting gender equity for health outcomes (GEHO)

Our action commitments

Fostering leadership and innovation in health promotion

<p><i>Leading:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ an integrated regional effort to prevent violence against women
<p><i>Partnering:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ to make a difference in preventing violence against women and promoting gender equity▪ to influence sexual and reproductive health outcomes for women
<p><i>Shaping:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ health promotion responses to the prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equity to facilitate evidence informed practice that meets women's needs▪ the public discourse on violence against women and its causes▪ gendered health promotion responses to emerging health and wellbeing issues impacting on women
<p><i>Informing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ stakeholders of evidence relevant to addressing the prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equity
<p><i>Delivering:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ training programs that are focused on the prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equity

Facilitating a responsive service system

<p><i>Partnering:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ to promote gendered planning and service delivery
<p><i>Shaping:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ policy, plans and practice in respect to gendered responses to existing and emerging health and wellbeing issues impacting on women
<p><i>Informing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ stakeholders about the importance of gendered approaches to health and wellbeing issues

<i>Delivering:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> training and support that facilitates better analysis of women's needs in planning and service delivery

Strengthening our dynamic and sustainable organisation

<i>Leading:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initiatives that build organisation credibility and make a difference
<i>Partnering:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to increase business efficiency and sustainability
<i>Shaping:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actions that build organisation credibility and capability organisational identity and communications to build recognition of WHE as dynamic, up to date, relevant and effective
<i>Informing:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge and practice through sharing our work and contributing to the evidence base
<i>Delivering:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisational plans, policies and practices that align with our values and strategic directions

Find out more/contact us

Women's Health East

1/125 George St

Doncaster East 3109

Ph: 9851 3700

Email: health@whe.org.au

w: www.whe.org.au

f: [facebook.com/womenshealtheast](https://www.facebook.com/womenshealtheast)

t: twitter.com/wheast

ⁱ Women's Health East, 2013, Violence Against Women Fact Sheet <http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/documents/2012-12-13%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20Fact%20Sheet-%20final.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Women's Health East, 2013, Women and Financial Security Fact Sheet <http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/documents/2012-12-17%20Women%20and%20%20Financial%20Security%20Fact%20Sheet%20red.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Women's Health East, 2013, Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health <http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/documents/2012-12-17%20Women%20and%20Sexual%20&%20Reproductive%20Health.pdf>

^{iv} Women's Health East, 2013, Women and Climate Change <http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/documents/2013-01-21%20Women%20and%20Climate%20Change%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

^v Women's Health East, 2013, Women and Mental Health <http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/documents/2012-12-17%20Women%20and%20Mental%20Health%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>