



Women's Health East



Investing in Equality and Wellbeing for Women

Annual Report 2014|15

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Women's Health East is pleased to present our Annual Report for 2014-2015. We hope you enjoy reading it!

The report presents our key achievements, activities, projects and work over the last year towards our vision of equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women. It also provides a summary of our financial performance and position. The complete Women's Health East financial statements for the year ending 30 June can be found on our website.

For more information on the projects and activities referenced throughout this report, please visit our website www.whe.org.au or contact us at health@whe.org.au or on 03 9851 3700.

At Women's Health East we strive to continually improve what we do and how we communicate with our partners, government and the wider audience. We encourage you to share with us your feedback about our work, our organisation and this report. You can do this by speaking to any one of our staff or by email to health@whe.org.au.

Acronyms

The following acronyms have been used in this report:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| • EMR | Eastern Metropolitan Region |
| • FGM/C | Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting |
| • NDIS | National Disability Insurance Scheme |
| • PCP | Primary Care Partnership |
| • SRH | Sexual and Reproductive Health |
| • TFER | Together for Equality & Respect |
| • WHE | Women's Health East |

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

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CHAIR REPORT

On behalf of the Board of Governance I am proud to present the Women's Health East (WHE) Annual Report 2014-2015.

With the growing national focus on the prevention of violence against women in the community and the royal commission into family violence, it has been a busy and exciting time for WHE as regional leaders. I am continually impressed by WHE's outstanding work in this area, and in our other priority areas. The achievements and success over the past year exemplifies our Staff and Chief Executive Officer's dedication to equality and wellbeing for women in Melbourne's East.

One achievement of particular note that sits outside of our health promotion role is the development of the Women's Health Services Quality Systems Framework. The Framework was endorsed by the Women's Health Association of Victoria this year. It is based on a set of standards that are specifically designed for the women's health sector. WHE is now leading the implementation of the Framework with the support of the other women's health services across the State.

This past year saw a number of changes within our Board. I myself joined the organisation in mid-2014 and more recently we welcomed our newest Board members, Cr Nora Lamont and Bharati Susarla. We also bid farewell to Jackie Kelly and Sarah Kleinitz. Jackie had commenced as a Board member in 2009 and Sarah in 2013. I would particularly like to express my thanks to Jackie for her leadership and dedication over the years to both the organisation and to women's equality.

I hope you enjoy reading our Annual Report and look forward to your ongoing support in the year to come.



Micaela Driberg
Chair



Pictured:
WHE Staff in 2014/2015.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

What an interesting year it has been at WHE!

Our work over 2014-2015 has included a diverse range of projects, such as an investigation of the links between gambling and family violence, a focus on Muslim women's health literacy and an examination of the benefits and challenges of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for women. We also undertook a regional sexual and reproductive health needs analysis, and highlighted the need for investment in a health promotion response to female genital mutilation/cutting in the East.

This was all in addition to our ongoing role in leading and coordinating regional efforts to prevent violence against women, through the Together for Equality & Respect partnership. In a year with a growing and unprecedented focus on the prevention of violence against women we have seen an increased number of organisations getting involved in the Strategy and some exciting work going on in the region. We have experienced a greater demand by our partners for gender equity training, consultancy and evaluation support for their work.

The Speaking Out: Media Advocacy to End Family Violence and Sexual Assault Program (previously known as the Eastern Media Advocacy Program) has also been increasingly busy with advocate requests. Building on the great success of this program, we used our expertise to develop Voices for Change: A Media Advocacy Program for the Prevention of Violence Against Women. This comprises an implementation guide and training manual for organisations interested in implementing a program of this type. This work has been undertaken on behalf of Our Watch, and in partnership with VicHealth. It will be launched and disseminated nationally next year.

We have continued to be actively engaged in a range of networks and partnerships across the region. WHE's input into regional planning has been increasingly valued by others, as the importance of bringing a gender lens to programs and services has grown in the consciousness of our partners.

The exciting and high quality of work produced over the year has been possible because of the commitment and focus of our staff. Many thanks to the team, including our volunteers and students, who give generously of their knowledge, expertise, ideas and efforts to enable the organisation to effectively address our strategic directions and produce such a high standard of work.

Much gratitude to the Board of Governance for their continued dedication to the good governance of the organisation and to our vision and directions. Particular thanks to outgoing Chair Jackie Kelly and the incoming Chair Micaela Driberg.

Finally, a sincere thank you to our members and partners for their support, and for working along-side us in promoting equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for women in Melbourne's East.



Kristine Olaris
Chief Executive Officer

OUR PEOPLE

Board of Governance *Current as at 30 June 2015*



Cr. Micaela Drieberg
Chair, Secretary



Annette Rudd
Deputy Chair



Yvette Pethebridge
Treasurer



Tricia Ong



Judy Flanagan



Tricia Malowney



Wendy Roberts



Bharati Susarla



Cr. Nora Lamont

> **Outgoing Members:**
Jackie Kelly, Sarah Kleinitz

Staff *Staff employed at WHE over the year*



Pictured: *Left to right: Belinda Haydon, Colleen Russell, Alexandra James, Deanna Imbriano, Vanessa Czerniawski, Melissa Tully, Kate Gibson, Sue Rosenhain, Kristine Olaris. Absent: Jill Exon & Anthea Alexander*

Kristine Olaris
Chief Executive
Officer

Melissa Tully
Finance Officer

Colleen Russell
Quality Project Officer

Deanna Imbriano
Administration Officer

Sue Rosenhain
Health Promotion
Manager

Vanessa Czerniawski
Health Promotion
Officer

Sue Sharrock
Health Promotion
Officer

Jill Exon
Health Promotion
Officer

Kate Gibson
Health Promotion
and Communications
Officer

Belinda Haydon
Health Promotion /
Project Officer

Anthea Alexander
Project Officer

Kate Ravenscroft
Health Promotion /
Project Officer

// My experience [at WHE] was very valuable. It changed my outlook on women's health... and deepened my understanding of victim blaming, sexism and violence against women.

NICOLE TOSEV, STUDENT

// From my time at WHE I have learnt the importance of gender equality and I now look at health issues differently... I can see the passion from all the staff and think they are doing an amazing job!

JESSICA ELSWORTH, STUDENT

> Co-located Staff:
Jen Anderson, *Project Officer*

> Students:
Nicole Tosev, *Deakin University, December 2014 – February 2015*
Jessica Elsworth, *Deakin University, March 2015 – June 2015*

> Volunteers:
Bree Morison, *June 2014 – November 2014, Lisa Michelle Silvers, March 2015*
Alexandra James, *May 2015 – present, The Speaking Out Program Volunteers (see page 11)*

WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST STRATEGIC PLAN 2013-2017

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

Our Strategic Directions

- Fostering leadership and innovation in health promotion
 - Facilitating a responsive service system
- Strengthening our dynamic and sustainable organisation

Our Values

- Human rights
- Social justice
 - Diversity
- Collaboration
 - Innovation
 - Respect
- Environmental sustainability

Our Guiding Frameworks

- Social model of health
 - Feminism
- Intersectional approach
 - Gendered approach
- Evidence informed practice
 - Health promotion for population health

Our Health Promotion Priorities:

- Sexual and reproductive health
- Prevention of violence against women
- Gender equity for health outcomes

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS 2014 – 2015

Fostering leadership and innovation in health promotion

- Leading an integrated regional effort to prevent violence against women through Together for Equality & Respect (TFER), in partnership with more than 25 organisations. This included:
 - TFER Action Plan and Evaluation Plan
 - Building capacity of partner organisations in the areas of social marketing and organisational change through two regional TFER Forums
 - Listening to and Learning from Women social marketing campaign for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence
- Partnering to make a difference in preventing violence against women and promoting gender equity through active engagement in an array of committees and steering groups.
- Shaping the public discourse on violence against women and its causes through the Speaking Out program and the Voices for Change: A Media Advocacy Program to Prevent Violence Against Women implementation guide and training manual.
- Informing a broad audience on violence against women through the TFER video infographic.
- Delivering Media Advocacy training to women who have experienced sexual assault (with Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault) and Gender Equity training to partner organisations.

Facilitating a responsive service system

- Partnering with Women's Health in the North, Inner East Primary Care Partnership (PCP) and North East PCP for the Increasing the Odds for Safety & Respect Project, to investigate the links between problem gambling and family violence, and the service response to these dual issues.

- Shaping policies, plans and practice by bringing a gendered perspective to a range of planning networks, and through the promotion of the Priorities for Victorian Women's Health 2014-2018.
- Informing the evidence base, public policy and practice through:
 - Examining the benefits and challenges for women with a disability under the NDIS
 - Investigating the health literacy of Muslim women in the Inner East
 - Highlighting a need for a service response to female genital mutilation / cutting in the East
 - Providing gendered responses to reviews, including the Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence in Australia and the Royal Commission into Family Violence

Strengthening our dynamic and sustainable organisation

- Leading initiatives that build our credibility such as the Quality Systems Framework for Women's Health Services and Women's Health Association of Victoria's Communications working group.
- Shaping the organisational identity through the development of a new website and the implementation of an internal communications working group.
- Informing knowledge and practice through presentations at more than a dozen forums, including the Australian Health Promotion Association conference.
- Delivering actions that build organisational efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability; and align with our values and strategic directions including:
 - Environmental Sustainability Plan
 - Aboriginal Strategy
 - Quality Improvement Plan
 - Securing additional income

INTEGRATED HEALTH PROMOTION

Gender-based health promotion is core business for WHE.

Our work is based on understanding that effective health promotion must focus on the fundamental causes of poor health at a society and systems level, and not just risk factors for individuals and individual behaviours. Both sex and gender influence health outcomes. Sex, which is biologically determined, influences the nature and trajectory of disease experience in both women and men. Gender, which is socially and culturally determined, is internationally recognised as a fundamental cause of health disparities between men and women. Gender intersects with a range of other factors such as disability, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic standing, sexuality and Aboriginality to influence health outcomes. We strive to understand these intersections and reflect this in our work.

WHE works closely with others in the health and community sector to influence a gendered approach to program planning and service delivery, and in doing so, encourage our partners to address the complex, multidimensional factors that contribute to health outcomes. We do this with a view to women achieving optimal health, wellbeing and equal access to opportunities and resources.

WHE has the expertise and capacity to provide support at a regional level; to work with stakeholders to identify local needs and priorities; and to design and implement strategies to address these. Our health promotion priority areas are:

- Prevention of violence against women
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Gender equity for health outcomes

Pictured: *Left to right: Brianna Myers (Manningham CHS), Kate Gibson & Jill Exon (WHE).*



PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

PRIORITY AREA OVERVIEW

Violence against women is a pervasive, significant and unacceptable issue in our society. The impact of violence on women's health and wellbeing can result in short and long-term effects, including poor physical and mental health outcomes, gender inequality, social isolation and economic disadvantage. While violence against women is prevalent, it is also preventable. The key to ending violence against women is in achieving gender equality, which is where our work is focused.

Together for Equality & Respect

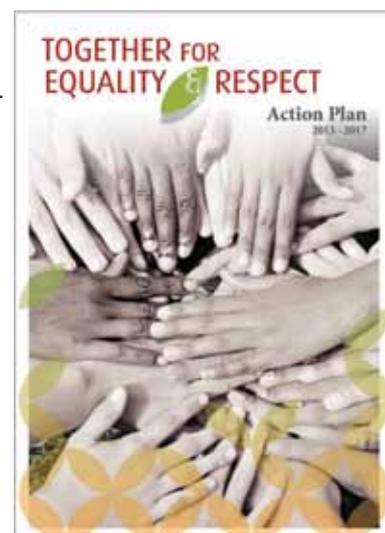
Together for Equality and Respect: A Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2013-2017 (TFER) was developed in 2012 to prioritise, coordinate and integrate efforts to prevent men's violence against women in this region. The implementation of the Strategy is led and coordinated by WHE in partnership with organisations across the East that have a strong commitment to the prevention of violence against women.

Action and Evaluation Plan

A key achievement for the year was the adoption of the TFER Action Plan. The Action Plan is a 'living' document which will be updated over the life of the Strategy as additional primary prevention work is planned and implemented by TFER partners.

The TFER Evaluation Plan and corresponding evaluation tools were also finalised, enabling partner organisations to evaluate their initiatives and contribute to the regional evaluation.

WHE would like to acknowledge the contribution of time and skills by all Leadership Group and Evaluation Working Group Members, and the particular commitment of Knox Social and Community Health (a service of EACH) to the development of the evaluation plan.



Website and Video Infographic

The TFER website was launched in February 2015 and brings together key resources, news and information about TFER, including the TFER Strategy, Action Plan and Evaluation Plan, as well as the shared evaluation tools. The TFER video infographic can also be found on the website. It outlines the seriousness of violence against women, the underlying causes and the role that everyone in the community has in preventing violence against women. The infographic was enabled by funding from the EMR Regional Family Violence Partnership. The TFER website can be accessed at www.whe.org.au/tfer.



Pictured: Website Banner.

Forums

The first of two TFER forums for the year was held in August 2014. It centred on social marketing and effective communication of messages for the prevention of violence against women.

The session was ably facilitated by Berni Murphy from Deakin University. Berni covered key elements of effective social marketing and facilitated an understanding of audience targeting, key message development and strategies and tools for improving our campaign reach.

Participants shared plans and ideas for the 16 Days of Activism campaign and White Ribbon Day, and discussed strategies to enhance reach and campaign effectiveness through a regional approach to messages. The session was successful in identifying a regional theme for the 16 Days: breaking down gender stereotypes to help end violence against women.

In March 2015 a full day Forum focused on evaluation of social marketing and organisational change for gender equity. Blythe Chidgey from Knox City Council gave an engaging presentation on social marketing evaluation and members of the TFER Evaluation Working Group shared TFER evaluation tools that are available for partners. Inspiro and Eastern Health gave an overview of the evaluation and social marketing strategies used in the YOU&I initiative.

WHE Chief Executive Officer, Kristine Olaris, started the afternoon session with a presentation on the key success factors for implementing organisational change. Scott Holmes from YMCA Victoria shared his experience of the Y Respect Gender Project in his presentation on organisational change for gender equity in practice. Forum participants were then able to glean ideas from a panel of experts.

A special thanks to Manningham City Council for generously organising the venue and to our speakers who made the day such a success.



Pictured: Attendees at the August and March TFER Forums.

Speaking Out: Media Advocacy to End Family Violence and Sexual Assault

Women who have experienced violence play a vital role in educating and informing the community about violence against women, its impacts, how we can improve our systems and how we can prevent it from happening in the first place. Speaking Out is an innovative program that provides ongoing support for women to speak with the media and the community about their experience of violence. The program is led by WHE in partnership with Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault and Eastern Domestic Violence Service.

It's been an exceptionally busy year for Speaking Out advocates. It is heartening that the broader community is recognising that women's voices are a critical factor in shaping our understanding of the issue and developing strategies to prevent violence against women.

In 2014-2015 advocates contributed to 49 media, public speaking and other engagements. These included local media stories, online articles, contributions to the royal commission consultations, participation in gender equity training, white ribbon events and launches, an address to parliamentarians at Parliament House in Canberra, an address to the Male Champions of Change, and attendance at the National Press Gallery alongside Rosie Batty for the launch of the Our Watch Awards.

In July 2014 the program recruited an additional nine women to participate in the 3 day training program and join our more experienced advocates in sharing their stories and educating the broader community. We have also established an advocate community of practice which will continue to support advocates via a number of strategies, including guest presenters and the opportunity to share and learn from each other.



Pictured: TOP Media advocate Gee shares her experiences with Isabelle Lane, *The Weekly Review Eastern*, 3 December 2014.

BOTTOM Left to right: Paul Linossier (Our Watch CEO), Jennifer Jackson (WHE Advocate), Andrew Broad MP, Ken Wyatt MP, Rosie Batty (Advocate & Australian of the Year) & Tim Watts MP at Parliament House, 2 March 2015.



Women's Health East would like to thank Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, the Regional Family Violence Partnership and Box Hill Central Rotary for their financial contributions to this program over the year.

Listening to and Learning from Women

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign to raise awareness about violence against women and its impacts on women and girls.

Throughout the 16 Days WHE promoted powerful statements from women who have experienced violence. These messages were used as a form of activism to challenge gender stereotypes, promote gender equality and to end violence against women. Messages were shared broadly with partner organisations through a region-wide communication campaign – Listening to and Learning from Women.

This compelling campaign celebrated the voices of women and publically recognised that women who have experienced violence have a wealth of understanding about this issue, and are critical partners in helping to end men's violence against women.



Pictured: *Listening to and Learning From Women* messages were used by the Eastern Community Legal Centre as part of their campaign to acknowledge the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign.

Messages shared by WHE via social media for this campaign reached 4767 Facebook users, made 17,000 Twitter impressions, and earned 501 twitter engagements.

1800 Respect

In December 2014, 1800 RESPECT launched a suite of online resources which provide accessible information for women who have experienced sexual assault and family violence – including information in 28 different languages. The site features videos and information for survivors, their friends and families and professionals. Two of our Speaking Out advocates were involved in the videos, and Kate Ravenscroft from WHE spoke at the launch. WHE is delighted to have contributed to this fantastic project. Congratulations to the team at 1800 RESPECT for delivering these outstanding resources. The website address is www.1800respect.org.au.

WHE would like to thank all of the advocates involved in Speaking Out for their commitment to preventing violence against women in our community. WHE is very proud of the work they are doing.

- Ka • Christine • Davina • Ellen • Faliana • Gee • Jane • Jennifer • Joanna • Kim • Kristy
- Linda • Megan • Mim • Natalie • Pamela • Sally • Tammy • Vanessa • Wendy • Kate



Pictured: *Kate Ravenscroft speaking at the 1800RESPECT launch.*

Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect

Increasing the Odds for Safety and Respect is an early intervention and prevention project addressing the link between family violence and problem gambling in the eastern and northern metropolitan regions of Melbourne. Funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, the Project is led by Women's Health in the North, in partnership with WHE, Inner East PCP and North East PCP. It evolved from a growing recognition of the relationship between problem gambling and family violence and the gaps in knowledge around appropriate approaches for prevention and response.

The Project aims to:

- Strengthen the relationship between the family violence and problem gambling sectors
- Improve risk assessment mechanisms
- Strengthen referral pathways and service delivery
- Increase the safety of women experiencing violence from male partners

The Project involved consultations and information sessions with services and prevention bodies across the participating regions to share knowledge about the ways in which problem gambling co-occurs with family violence.

In June 2015 the Project held a forum called Examining the Links: Family Violence and Problem Gambling. The Forum was opened by the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Honourable Fiona Richardson. The attendance of more than 100 interested people underlined the relevance of the issue and the project to a range of sectors. It was also an opportunity to hear about the issue first hand from a personal, practitioner and academic perspective.



Pictured: LEFT Left to right: Simon McMillan, Monique Keel, Helen Riseborough, Kristine Olaris, Minister Fiona Richardson, Serge Sardo.

Voices for Change – A Media Advocacy Program for the Prevention of Violence Against Women

Voices for Change is a media advocacy program that has been developed by WHE. The project was funded by Our Watch in partnership with VicHealth, and provides organisations nationwide with a step-by-step guide to plan and develop their own Media Advocacy Program to prevent violence against women.

Drawing on the learnings from Speaking Out and other successful media advocacy programs, the Implementation Guide and Training Manual provide tools and resources to help organisations support women who have experienced violence in safely sharing their stories through media and community advocacy engagements. WHE is thrilled to have been involved in the development of such an important piece of work. Voices for Change is due for publication next year.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

PRIORITY AREA OVERVIEW

Good Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) is fundamental to a positive identity and the enjoyment of social relationships at all stages of women's lives. Our goal for this priority area is that 'all women in the EMR enjoy optimal SRH within relationships that are respectful and fulfilling'. In prioritising SRH, we aim to undertake a coordinated, regional approach to determining and addressing the needs of women in the region.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs Analysis

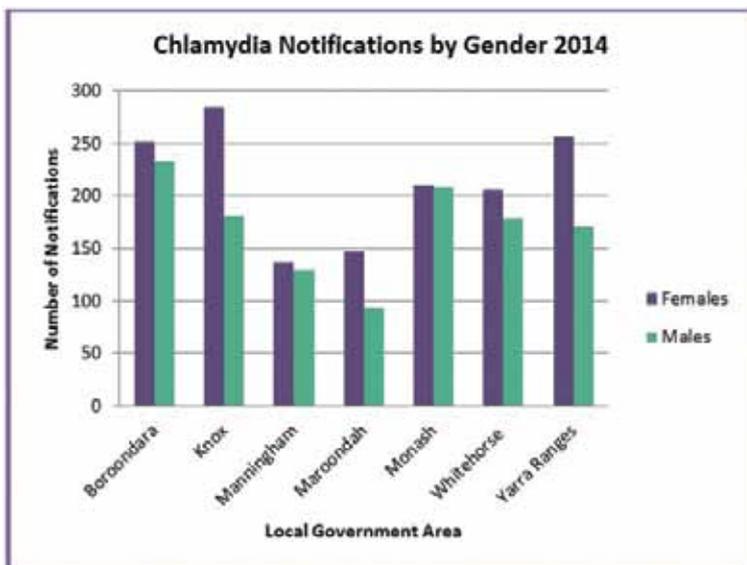
During the year significant progress was made on our SRH needs analysis. Considerable consultation was undertaken within the region and included:

- Individual consultations with a diverse range of stakeholders from health and other related organisations. Those consulted included managers, service delivery and health promotion staff.
- An online survey to a variety of organisations at local, regional and state level.
- A stakeholder forum involving staff with broad and varied expertise in SRH to gain feedback on the initial findings of the needs analysis.

WHE would like to thank all the staff and organisations who contributed to the consultations. In particular we would like to acknowledge those who participated in the stakeholder forum including:

- Headspace Hawthorn
- EACH
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Swinburne University
- Family Planning Victoria
- Yarra Valley Community Health

A strategic SRH reference group has been established to progress the identification of regional priorities and develop a framework for action. The group met for the first time in July 2015.



Of women who experience intimate partner violence, 40-45% will also experience sexual violence from that partner. The sexual & reproductive health impacts for these women can be significant and long term.

International Students

Roughly 25% of students who attend the EMR's three universities are international students. Female international students have been identified as a group who are vulnerable to higher rates of sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy, abortion and sexual assault. As a result, WHE has joined the newly formed International Students Sexual Health Network, which aims to explore SRH issues for international students, share knowledge and resources, and consider strategies to improve outcomes for international students in Australia.

Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting

A preventative response to the issue of Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting (FGM/C) was highlighted through the needs analysis as a service gap in the EMR. To develop a more in-depth understanding of the issue and to consider prevention options in the region, WHE has:

- Submitted a report to the Department of Health outlining our concerns
- Advocated for an adequate service response to be funded
- Developed a fact sheet for professionals in the EMR
- Contributed to International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation in February through social media and the launch of our fact sheet



Women's Health East Female Genital Mutilation / Cutting

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting is a significant global human rights issue for women and girls.¹

Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) is a "harmful traditional practice that affects the health and wellbeing of girls and women all over the world".² It is defined by the World Health Organisation as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons".³

FGM/C has no health benefits for the women and girls who undergo the procedure, however it can cause a number of physical and psychological health complications, irreparable damage and death.^{3,4} FGM/C is viewed internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women⁵ and is a crime in all states and territories of Australia.

About FGM/C

The practice of FGM/C is strongly linked to ethnicity, with practice concentrated in Africa, but occurring also in Asia and the Middle East.⁵ Prevalence patterns have become more complicated in recent decades due to global migration and displacement of communities from their home countries.⁶ FGM/C is sometimes wrongly linked to religious observance but has no basis in any religious text.⁷

Beliefs and meanings surrounding FGM/C vary considerably across ethnic and cultural groups. Generalisations about the practice within these communities may be harmful and lead to stigma and marginalisation for women.

FGM/C as a Human Rights Issue

FGM/C is a violation of the human rights of girls and women and reflects profound societal inequality between women and men. FGM/C is generally carried out on young girls without their consent, constituting a violation of the rights of the child.⁵ Additionally, evidence suggests that many women who belong to communities where it is practiced would like to see it end.⁷ It is also recognised internationally as a form of violence against women and as such, is a violation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).⁷

In countries with a long history of the practice, FGM/C has been accepted and normalised and is considered to be an essential rite of passage necessary for marriageability and social acceptance.¹ Failure to have a daughter undergo FGM/C can lead to stigmatisation and ostracisation.⁴ This stigma can be compounded for minority diaspora communities, and can impact significantly on body image and cultural identity for these women.²

"In every society in which it is practiced, FGM/C is a manifestation of gender inequality that is deeply entrenched in social, economic and political structures."¹

- FGM/C affects more than 125 million women and girls globally
- Countries that have the highest estimated prevalence (>75%) include Somalia, Egypt, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Mali, Sudan and Eritrea.³

Fact Sheet — Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting

Good SRH implies
"that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life, the capability to reproduce, and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so" (United Nations Population Fund).

GENDER EQUITY FOR HEALTH OUTCOMES

PRIORITY AREA OVERVIEW

The World Health Organisation identifies gender as a factor most likely to dictate your position or status in society, and therefore one of the most powerful indicators of your health and wellbeing. Gender inequality is so ingrained in our society that sometimes we don't even notice it; however we need to start redressing these inequalities that have a significant negative impact on the health and wellbeing of women. One of the most striking inequalities is the 18.2% difference in the average pay of men and women.

At WHE we promote a gender equity approach to addressing inequality. A gender equity approach recognises that women and men experience different benefits, barriers, access to power, resources and responsibilities, and goes about trying to rectify these imbalances to ensure equal outcomes for all.

Bringing a Gendered Perspective to the Region

Over the last year WHE has actively sought to bring the perspective of women's needs to a broad array of health and wellbeing issues that our partners are working on across the region. We do this to influence the planning and delivery of services and to support our partners to provide accessible and responsive services for women.

As one of WHE's key priority areas, promoting gender equity underpins all of our work, including engagement with partner agencies – whether it be understanding the importance of gender in infrastructure, sports and recreation, and project planning to responding to specific health issues. To achieve full and equal participation for both men and women in all spheres of life, a gender equity focus has to be central.

As a part of this commitment WHE participates in many planning committees, ranging from Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Committees, Safety Committees, Health Promotion working groups, and steering committees for individual projects. WHE provides additional support by providing sex disaggregated data and resources on a range of topics and health information.



Gender Equity Training

WHE's Gender Equity Training has been developed to raise awareness and to build the capacity of organisations in the EMR to promote gender equity in the workplace and in the planning and delivery of their services to the community. The Gender Equity Training is an important tool to help participants and organisations begin to unpack the concept of gender and gain skills to create a workplace that models and promotes gender equity. The Training also explores the link between gender equity and preventing violence against women – one of our other priority areas.

In 2014-2015 training sessions were delivered to Inner East Community Health Service and to Boroondara City Council. We were approached by a number of other organisations during the year requesting training in the upcoming year.

WHE will continue to expand and deliver the training on a broader scale as part of TFER.

The NDIS Model Through a Gendered Lens

In March 2015 WHE commenced a project to explore the potential benefits and challenges of the NDIS for women with disabilities, their families and other support people.

In 2015 a literature review and some early consultation was completed and work on an issues paper was begun. Thanks to the following organisations for their contributions:

- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Disability Advocacy Resource Unit
- EACH
- Scope
- Department of Health & Human Services (Eastern Region)
- Association for Children with a Disability
- Jackie Moden Consulting



Pictured: Image source: WHE website.

Health Literacy Project for Muslim Women

In November 2014 WHE partnered with Benevolence Australia on a Health Literacy Project for Muslim Women. Funded by Inner East Melbourne Medicare Local and linked to the Opening Doors Community Leadership Program, the Project aimed to increase understanding of the health and service needs of Muslim women in the inner east. The Project sought to identify relevant cultural and religious service supports in order to improve Muslim women's access to and retention of health services.

To better understand the health needs of Muslim women in this region, project workers undertook a review of literature and data, and consulted with women via face-to-face interviews, community focus groups and an online survey.

Findings from the consultations will be presented at a Forum on Muslim Women's Health & Wellbeing in August 2015.

Many thanks to those who contributed to the Project including: Benevolence Australia; Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne); Migrant Settlement Committee; Connect4Health Partnership members; and Manningham Community Services Forum.



Pictured: LEFT: Health Literacy Project Officers, Belinda Haydon and Anthea Alexander.

RIGHT: Women from the Migrant Information Centre Health Literacy consultation session.

“ It is really important that the doctors listen to what the patients are saying... that people are able to be heard, that the practitioners are listening and hearing what people are saying, being respected... I would like to go to the doctors more often, but I haven't found anywhere that I feel comfortable – I haven't found a clinic that I'm happy with, for those regular tests.

SUBMISSIONS

Royal Commission into Family Violence

In May 2015 WHE submitted a response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The process provided an important opportunity to advocate for a stronger focus on the prevention of violence from both an organisational and regional level.

WHE also developed a tip-sheet that provided partner agencies with key messages around primary prevention – identifying key gaps and good practice, while also showcasing some of the work happening in the EMR, including a case study on TFER.

The key recommendation that partners were encouraged to include in their submissions was the need for an increased, long term investment in primary prevention. This includes advocating for appropriate governance structures, a coordinated approach to prevention, and the centrality of gender equity to any efforts aimed at preventing violence against women. The tip-sheet was disseminated broadly across the region (and beyond).

WHE was involved in and supported a number of other collaborative responses including submissions by:

- Women's Health Association of Victoria submission
- Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership / Together for Equality and Respect
- Increasing the Odds for Safety & Respect Project Partnership

Through the Women's Health Association of Victoria WHE also supported the shared submission by primary prevention bodies 'Getting serious about change: the building blocks for effective primary prevention of men's violence against women in Victoria'.

We look forward to hearing the Royal Commission's findings and recommendations in 2016.



Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence in Australia

In July 2014 WHE submitted a response to the Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence in Australia. WHE provided feedback on how the Federal Government can eliminate violence against women and their children, calling for appropriate evidence informed responses that address the underlying determinants of violence whilst acknowledging the need for a long term, multidisciplinary and coordinated approach.

Our submission engaged advocates from the Speaking Out Program to ensure that the voices of women who have experienced violence were included in the response.

Hepatitis C

In February 2015 WHE provided feedback to and endorsed Women's Health Victoria's submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Hepatitis C in Australia. This submission emphasised the need for gender sensitive approaches to policy, prevention and treatment of Hepatitis C.

Health & Energy Choices Position Paper

Globally, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This is largely due to gender inequalities and traditional gender roles. WHE endorsed this paper that has been produced by a collaboration of health sector organisations concerned that the health impacts of Australia's energy choices are not being considered in public policy decision-making. Other signatories included the Public Health Association of Australia, Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation, National Toxics Network, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health, Australian Medical Students Association, and the Climate and Health Alliance.



SHARING OUR KNOWLEDGE

Equity @ the Centre: Action on Social Determinants of Health – National Australian Health Promotion Association Conference

The 22nd National Australian Health Promotion Association Conference & 18th Chronic Diseases Network Conference was held in Alice Springs, 4 – 5 September 2014.

WHE Health Promotion Manager Dr Sue Rosenhain attended the conference and delivered a presentation about the benefits of using Intervention Mapping to support integrated planning across organisations and sectors. Development of the TFER Action Plan was presented as a case study to demonstrate the practical application and successful outcomes.

Stop Working in Silence: Preventing Violence Against Women Forum – City of Whitehorse

WHE CEO Kristine Olaris gave the keynote address at the Stop Working in Silence: Preventing Violence Against Women Forum in November 2014. The event was organised by Whitehorse City Council in conjunction with the Whitehorse Disability Advisory Committee and the Whitehorse Preventing Violence Against Women Working Group.

WHE was included in a program of speakers from organisations across the EMR who work with women with a disability, women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and older women. The Forum was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the impacts of violence on these groups of women and, importantly, how violence against women can be prevented.

Other Presentations

WHE presented about our work and key priority areas at a number of events throughout the year. These included:

- **Family Violence Prevention Forum, Yarra Ranges Council** - July 2014
- **Family Violence Forum: Practice and Prevention, Doncare** - August 2014
- **EMR Regional Justice Reference Group** - September 2014
- **Opening Doors Group** - September 2014
- **Inner East Primary Care Partnership Members Forum, Inner East PCP** - October 2014
- **Empowering Women to Feel Safe, Manningham City Council** - October 2014
- **Women's Safety Session, Maroondah City Council** - October 2014
- **Interfaith Forum, Manningham City Council** - November 2014
- **Box Hill Central Rotary** - November 2014
- **Healesville Rotary** - December 2014
- **Opening Doors Alumni Group** - March 2015
- **Department of Health & Human Services** - March 2015
- **Boorondara Family Violence Information Day** - April 2015
- **MonashLink PVAW Committee, MonashLink** - April 2015
- **Regional Family Violence Partnership Induction Day** - October 2014 and May 2015
- **Manningham Councillors Safety Briefing, Manningham City Council** - May 2015



Pictured: LEFT WHE CEO, Kristine Olaris, giving the keynote address at the Whitehorse Forum.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Common Threads

Common Threads was an International Women's Day (IWD) event which brought together women from diverse backgrounds to celebrate their resilience in overcoming experiences of trauma. This fabulous event was the result of a joint partnership between organisations represented on the Regional Family Violence Partnership Cultural Partnerships Working Group including Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service, Eastern Domestic Violence Service, Eastern Community Legal Centre, Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne), Victoria Police and WHE.

The event was held at the Lilydale Lake Community Room and launched by Cr Maria McCarthy, the then Mayor of Yarra Ranges Council.

Highlights of the day included a fascinating presentation on The Victorian Possum Skin Cloak Project, performances by the Wurundjeri dancers and Jasmine Dance group and a talk by Muslim woman Susan Carland highlighting that women from all cultures have similar experiences of violence. In addition to this, media advocate Faliana spoke of her experiences as a survivor of family violence and a representative from Intouch: The Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence gave a presentation on the fantastic services they offer.

@wepublichealth

Led by WHE CEO, Kristine Olaris, the Women's Health Association of Victoria's Communications Committee was given carriage of the public health twitter site @wepublichealth on Monday 2 March through to the close of IWD on Sunday 8 March.

The week was a great success with women's health organisations from across Victoria tweeting and sharing messages throughout the week on priority issues for women's health and wellbeing. WHE took the reins on International Women's Day itself and focused our messages on celebrating women's achievements and promoting gender equality in line with the global theme to #MakeItHappen.

Happy International Women's Day!! This year's theme is #MakeItHappen



Pictured: Common Threads Flyer

Box Hill Central Rotary Breakfast

WHE Health Promotion Manager Dr Sue Rosenhain contributed to a panel discussion convened by Box Hill Central Rotary addressing Work Life Balance – Good For Me, Good For Business. Sue presented the position that work is an important part of life and contributes to health outcomes as recognised by the World Health Organisation; the nature of the work we do and the degree of control we feel we have in our work all relate to finding the right balance for optimal health.

WHE would like to thank the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central for their generous donation of \$5000 to our work.



Pictured: Sue with other panel members from left: Danielle Story, Zoe Clondiffe, Sue, Simon Kinsella, Murray Baird, Mary Wooldridge and Fabian Dattner.

Boroondara City Council Breakfast

Boroondara City Council hosted an IWD breakfast to highlight the ongoing importance of International Women's Day and to celebrate women's achievements. The theme of the session was considering gender equality under the banner of Make It Happen.

Boroondara Mayor Cr Coral Ross gave an overview of the history of IWD and highlighted the need for greater representation of women in local government. Sue Rosenhain presented on gender equality, and the relationship between gender inequality and violence against women. She also highlighted the work being done across the region through TFER. At the conclusion of the event, guests were invited to commit to doing one thing to Make It Happen, and to share this idea via a large collage.



Pictured: Boroondara City Council Breakfast.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

2014–2015 has been a very productive year for quality improvement. WHE achieved significant progress in leading the development and implementation of a Quality Framework for the Victorian women's health sector. After a successful trial within five women's health services and some further refinements, the Women's Health Services Quality Framework was formally endorsed in February 2015 by the Women's Health Association of Victoria. This was followed by an Information Forum in June 2015 for organisations planning to actively utilise the Quality Framework. We have been very ably assisted in this work by Quality Consultant, Linda McCrorey, whose expertise has been invaluable.

Unlike other quality assurance or accreditation systems currently available, the Women's Health Services Quality Framework provides a set of

standards, together with self-assessment and review tools, which are tailored specifically to the roles, functions and activities of the women's health sector. This enables a more seamless, integrated approach to quality assessment, continuous improvement and review processes within women's health organisations.

During the year, WHE has also been actively using the new Framework to assess and build on improvements to our own organisational systems and processes. As part of our Quality Improvement Plan, we have further improved our governance and administrative processes; launched the new WHE website; introduced a policy to encourage physical activity for staff; purchased standing desks for staff use; and strengthened our health promotion planning and monitoring processes.

The Women's Health Services Quality Framework provides a set of standards, together with self-assessment and review tools, which are tailored specifically to the roles, functions and activities of the women's health sector.

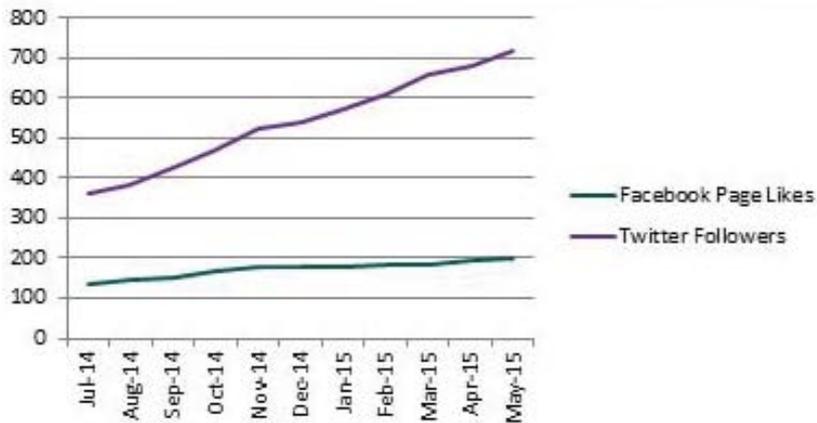
Pictured: WHE Quality/Project Officer Colleen Russell with the Women's Health Association of Victoria Quality Systems Framework Guide.



COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT

Social Media

WHE staff have continued to work at increasing our social media reach through the regular use of Twitter and Facebook. A range of stories, pictures and articles have been shared to educate, increase awareness and engage around our priority areas. The following graph demonstrates the growth of followers of WHE's social media profiles.



Interested in Women's Health?
Join our conversation!

Like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter

Twitter

Twitter is a social media platform for keeping abreast of breaking news, tracking online trends and promoting messages. Uniquely, it is all about what is happening right now! This was WHE's top tweet for the last financial year, with 2715 impressions and a total of 211 engagements.



Facebook

Facebook is often regarded as a relaxed social space where individuals catch up with friends and check out photos. For Women's Health East, Facebook is about joining in conversations, sharing news and becoming part of a broader on-line community.

Here are two of our best performing Facebook posts for the financial year:

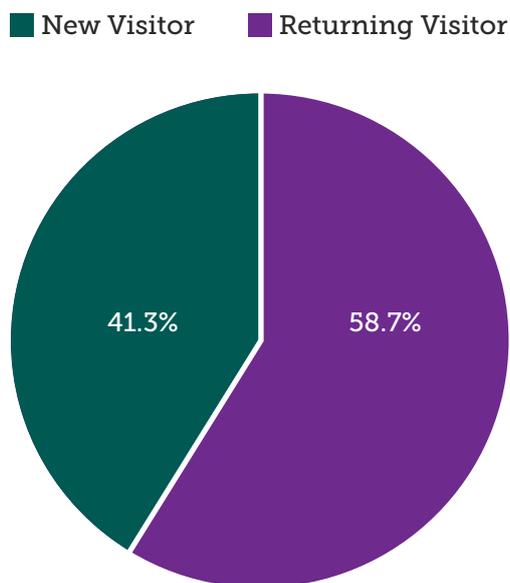


Website

If you haven't already, we invite you to take a look at our new website (www.whe.org.au) that was launched in January 2015! We think it looks great, but would love to get your feedback on how it could be even better. When you next visit our website, feel free to click on the icon 'click here to tell us what you think of our website' and leave us a message with your feedback.

Since launching we have had steady interest in the website, with the 'About Us' and 'Preventing Violence Against Women' pages being two of the most popular places to visit.

There have been a total of 20,663 page views and 119 sessions were via social referrals including Facebook and Twitter. This graph illustrates how many of our visits were new visitors as compared to returning visitors.



E-newsletter

The WHE e-newsletter is a quarterly publication that provides our members and subscribers with up to date information on WHE news, activities and events. Over the last year, open rates for our e-newsletter (the measure of subscribers who engaged with the newsletter by opening it) have remained steady at 30%. While this may not sound like it, this is actually a great result, sitting at 8% above the standard industry rate of 22%.

Email Signatures

Throughout the year WHE staff coordinated an approach to promoting important messages, WHE events, publications and other work using email signatures. These signatures included images and hyperlinks to relevant information, and promoted WHE's social media pages – some samples are shown below.



National Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements and to explore how each of us can join the national reconciliation effort. See www.reconciliation.org.au for details on how to get involved!



The Together for Equality & Respect website is live! Click on the picture or visit <http://whe.org.au/tfer/>



Click on our Annual Report to read about key achievements and activities at Women's Health East

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following information is an overview of the finances of Women's Health East and should be read in conjunction with the WHE Financial Statements for Year Ending 30 June 2015 and their accompanying notes (available at www.whe.org.au). WHE prepares the financial statements in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards as outlined in the Independent Auditor's Report.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	2015 (\$)	2014 (\$)
SUMMARY INCOME STATEMENT		
<i>Income</i>		
DHHS funding	587,923	563,619
Other	155,818	70,321
Total Income	743,741	633,940
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Employment Expenses	560,342	444,656
Other	135,195	145,837
Total Expenditure	695,537	590,493
Operating Profit/(Loss)	48,204	43,447
SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET		
Cash	604,674	524,717
Receivables	10,829	14,729
Property, Plant & Equipment	23,833	28,488
Total Assets	639,336	567,935
Payables	26,270	22,234
Provisions	68,969	55,074
Accrued Charges	24,960	6,027
Income in Advance	45,604	59,269
Total Liabilities	165,802	142,604
Net Assets	473,534	425,330
Total Ratio	3.71 : 1	3.78 : 1

Women's Health East recorded a surplus of \$48,204 for the 2014-2015 financial year. The increase in income from the Department of Health and Human Services compared to the previous year was due to indexation of our grant and support to cover salary increases in line with the Equal Remuneration Order made by the Fair Work Commission. Funding from other sources increased and was predominantly made up of one off grants. Expenditure was up primarily due to increased employment costs in response to the 2014-2015 increase in non-recurrent grant income. The ratio analysis above is a calculation performed to assist in determining the financial viability of WHE. WHE's ratio of 3.71:1 means that the business has \$3.71 in current assets to meet \$1 in current liabilities.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

1. WHE is a health promotion organisation working collaboratively to address disease prevention and control, health inequities and disadvantage for women.
2. WHE, using a social model of health and a holistic approach, aims to prevent illness, disease and injury and promote the independence, health and wellbeing of women through a range of strategies and interventions.
3. WHE engages in and facilitates health promotion activities through:
 - a) Community education, research, information sharing, awareness raising and action on women's health issues
 - b) Education and training for health professionals concerning women's health issues
 - c) Health programs aimed at improving women's health and wellbeing
 - d) Participation of women in health networks at regional, state-wide, national and international levels
4. WHE aims to actively involve and empower women in seeking:
 - a) Ultimate choice, responsibility and control over their own health
 - b) Equity and access to women-sensitive health care options, recognising a woman's whole life-span and various roles
 - c) Dignity and respect for women, with sensitivity towards those physically, emotionally or educationally disadvantaged
 - d) A holistic approach to health care and wellbeing and a broadening of options
 - e) Decision making input into planning and development of health care organisations and the influencing of policy and practices
5. WHE engages in charitable and/or benevolent activities concerning women's health which are consistent with these purposes.

The WHE Statement of Purposes has been taken from the WHE Constitution.

Please see our website to download the complete WHE Constitution.



MEMBERSHIP

WHE's membership is free and open to any woman who lives, works or studies in the EMR and to organisations whose target groups include women in the EMR. We encourage you to become a member!

Why Become A Member?

As a member of WHE you will:

- Receive invitations to attend all WHE events, including our Annual General Meeting
- Be eligible to stand for election to the WHE Board of Governance
- Have voting rights at WHE member meetings and Board of Governance elections
- Be regularly informed on issues impacting women and receive regular updates via e-news
- Be invited to participate in community consultations from time to time
- Support WHE and our work to improve women's health, safety and wellbeing
- Join a community committed to equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER

If you would like to become a member, submit your application via our website www.whe.org.au, or for any further information contact us at health@whe.org.au or on 03 9851 3700. Membership is subject to Board approval and is renewable every three years by 1 July.



DONATE

You can help us improve the health, safety and wellbeing of women in the EMR by donating to WHE.

A small donation could make a big difference. All donations above \$2.00 are tax-deductible.

Your donation will be supporting our work to:

- Train a survivor of family violence or sexual assault to become a media advocate
- Provide Gender Equity training to organisations across Melbourne's East
- Coordinate a regional strategy to prevent violence against women
- Identify and respond to key sexual and reproductive health issues for women in Melbourne's East

TO DONATE:

- Give a one-off or regular donation, or leave a bequest using the secure website at www.givenow.com.au/whe or
- Contact us to obtain a donation form, or donate by phone on 03 9851 3700

Should you have any further queries about donating to WHE, please contact us at health@whe.org.au or on 03 9851 3700.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

As a small organisation with a region-wide mandate, WHE's greatest strength in achieving equity and justice for women in the east is through robust partnerships.

WHE would like to acknowledge and thank all partner organisations that have collaborated with us and supported our organisation over the past 12 months.

NATIONAL

- Australian Women's Health Network

STATE

- Women's Health Association of Victoria and Sub-committees
- Victorian Cross-Sector Advisory Committee on Preventing Violence Against Women with the Media
- Victorian Council of Social Services
- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Women's Health Victoria
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Domestic Violence Victoria
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria
- Voices for Change Project Steering Committee

REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL

- Together For Equality & Respect Leadership and Evaluation Groups
- Regional Family Violence Partnership (executive, prevention & cultural partnerships working groups)
- Eastern Regional Justice Reference Forum
- Eastern Metropolitan Social Issues Council
- EMSIC Advisory Committee violence in vulnerable communities
- Community Health Health Promotion Special Initiatives Group (CHHPSIG)
- Community & Women's Health CEO Network
- Community & Women's Health Primary Health Manager Network
- Health Literacy Interest Group (Eastern Region)
- Speaking Out Steering Committee

- Inner East Primary Care Partnership
- Outer East Health & Community Support Alliance
- Population Health Collaborative (Inner East)
- Muslim Women's Health Literacy Project Steering Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

- Boroondara Public Health and Wellbeing Committee
- Knox Community Health and Wellbeing Reference Group
- Knox Community Safety Advisory Committee
- Knox PLEDGE Steering Committee
- Manningham Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Steering Committee
- Manningham Community Services Forum
- Manningham Family Violence Reference Group
- Manningham Access and Equity Advisory Committee
- Monash Health & Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2013-2017 Steering Committee
- Monash City Council Gender Equity Advisory Committee
- Maroondah Council Partners in Community Wellbeing Committee
- Whitehorse Prevention of Violence Against Women Working Group
- Whitehorse Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Committee
- Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group
- Yarra Ranges Community Safety Steering Committee
- Yarra Ranges YOU&I Steering Committee
- Yarra Ranges Family Violence Committee



Women's Health East acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

Investing in equality and wellbeing for women

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