



Women's Health East



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Women's Health East acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future. We affirm that sovereignty was never ceded and that colonialism and racism continue to impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women and can contribute to the high rates of violence that might be experienced. We recognise the strength, resilience and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women, and express our hope for reconciliation.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Women's Health East (WHE) is pleased to present our Annual Report for 2020-2021. We hope you enjoy reading about our exciting work to improve women's health and wellbeing in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR).

This report presents a summary of our key achievements, activities, projects, and financial performance. You can find the complete WHE financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2021 on our website.

At WHE, we strive to continually improve what we do and how we communicate with our partners, government and the wider community. We encourage you to share your feedback about our work, our organisation and this report. For more information on the projects and activities contained in this report, or to get in touch, please visit our website www.whe.org.au or contact us at health@whe.org.au.

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

- EMR: Eastern Metropolitan Region
- GE: Gender Equality
- LGBTIQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and/or Queer
- PVAW: Prevention of Violence Against Women
- SRH: Sexual and Reproductive Health
- TFER: Together for Equality & Respect
- VAW: Violence Against Women
- WHE: Women's Health East

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WHE staff at our Doncaster East office.

CEO & CHAIR REPORT

WITH THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC CONTINUING TO SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE OUR LIVES AND OUR WORK, WE ARE VERY PROUD TO PRESENT WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST'S SUBSTANTIAL BODY OF ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 YEAR.

Despite the uncertainty in the external environment, with varying restrictions and with work from home continuing to be a feature throughout the year, WHE Board and Staff have remained focused on our vision and priorities. The productivity at WHE over this year is a testament to the dedication and expertise of our team.

Some highlights include an array of initiatives focused on responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on women: the Parenting in a Pandemic project and associated videos focusing on the challenges and achievement of mums during lockdown, the Pen Pal project bringing together younger women and women in aged care facilities, and financial wellbeing workshops for women. The COVID and Women Forum brought together organisations from across the region and beyond to consider their role in creating a gender-equal pandemic recovery.

We were also thrilled to be a part of a state-wide project through Working for Victoria. Five women were employed from culturally diverse backgrounds to be trained, to provide health and COVID-19 information sessions. The sessions were delivered in their language to women in Mandarin and Hakha Chin communities. We also received a grant to disseminate vaccination information to women in these communities, to women with disabilities, and to women who are pregnant or new mums. These projects will continue into the next year.

The Together for Equality & Respect (TFER) partnership continued to support coordinated action for the prevention of violence against women. The Margins to the Mainstream initiative completed its second year working with women with disabilities to build a stronger understanding of the intersections of disability and sexism. We were thrilled to represent the TFER Partnership on a project with VicHealth, and with the support of the Inner East Primary Care Prevention, to produce the *Framing Gender Equality Messaging Guide*. This document will influence the use of effective language about gender equality across the state. Another exciting achievement was the development of fact sheets on women and finances for Commonwealth Bank Australia.

We continued to build stronger engagement in sexual and reproductive health with the regional sexual and reproductive health strategic reference group significantly growing in membership. This work culminated in the release of *A Strategy for Equality: Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in Melbourne's East 2020-2025*.

On a sad note, we were greatly disappointed this year to wind up the Speaking Out Program. For nearly a decade this program has provided training and support to women who have experienced either family violence or sexual assault to become change agents. We are so grateful to all of the women involved in the Program, giving their time and sharing their lived experiences to effect change. It was an incredibly powerful and effective program that was replicated across Australia. WHE will continue to use many aspects of this seminal program in our future work and are already utilising it in our co-design project with women with disabilities.

The Women's Health East Board of Governance has continued its focus on strengthening our governance, including undertaking an externally facilitated self-review. This year the Board also put considerable effort into developing our next strategic plan, now available on our website. The Board would like to extend its thanks to Dr Deepthi Iyer who resigned from the Board at the end of February 2020 after an eighteen-month period. Deepthi's insights and input were greatly valued.

Our management also saw some change over, bidding a fond farewell to Autumn Pierce and Samantha McGuffie. We were pleased to warmly welcome Kate Ravenscroft and Belinda Crockett to the leadership team at WHE.

At Women's Health East we recognise that our people and our partners are our greatest assets. They are critical enablers of our ability to work towards our vision of equality, empowerment, health, and wellbeing for all women. We would like to recognise the amazing commitment and expertise of our team and those we work with across the region, particularly in these times that have been a test of our resilience.

Thank you all for your ongoing commitment to a gender-equal future. We trust you will enjoy reading the WHE Annual Report 2020-2021.



Lisa Dunlop



Kristine Olaris

Lisa Dunlop (Chair)

Kristine Olaris (CEO)

OUR PEOPLE

Board of Governance

- Lisa Dunlop, Chair
- Dimity Paul, Deputy Chair
- Corinne Bowen, Secretary
- Leanna Marinucci, Treasurer
- Wendy Roberts
- Olive Aumann
- Dilnaz Billimoria
- Christabelle Adjoyan
- Ann Yeomanson
- Deepthi Iyer (outgoing 2021)

Staff

- Kristine Olaris, Chief Executive Officer
- Dr Belinda Crockett, Manager Health Promotion
- Kate Ravenscroft, Manager Equality & Respect
- Emily Kate Cowan, Executive Assistant
- Melissa Tully, Finance Officer
- Colleen Russell, Quality/Project Officer
- Alana Sadeghi, Health Promotion Outreach Officer
- Avega Bishop, Margins to the Mainstream Coordinator
- Claire Butselaar, Health Promotion Officer
- Georgina Nix, Health Promotion Officer
- Isabella Roxburgh, Health Promotion Officer
- Jane Brierty, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Katie McKee, Training Coordinator
- Kirsty Kain, Training Coordinator
- Lingzhi Ruan, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Samantha Wass, Marketing & Communications Coordinator
- Sui Cin Zah, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Sui Ram Lawt, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Vanessa Czerniawski, Health Promotion Officer
- Autumn Pierce, Health Promotion Manager (outgoing 2020)
- Samantha McGuffie, Manager PVAW (outgoing 2020)
- Liz Billings, Consultant & Acting CEO (outgoing 2020)
- Annette Rudd, Project Lead, Women's Financial Independence (outgoing 2020)
- Rachel Soh, Health Promotion Officer (outgoing 2020)
- SJ Matthews, Communications Coordinator (outgoing 2020)
- Laura Riccardi, Health Promotion Officer (outgoing 2021)
- Francesca Kuperman, Margins to the Mainstream Peer Facilitator (outgoing 2021)
- Naomi King Bol, Bilingual Health Education Officer (outgoing 2021)



WE ALSO WANT TO
WHOLEHEARTEDLY THANK
THE MANY VOLUNTEERS WHO
CONTRIBUTED TO SOME OF OUR
PROJECTS OVER THE YEAR!

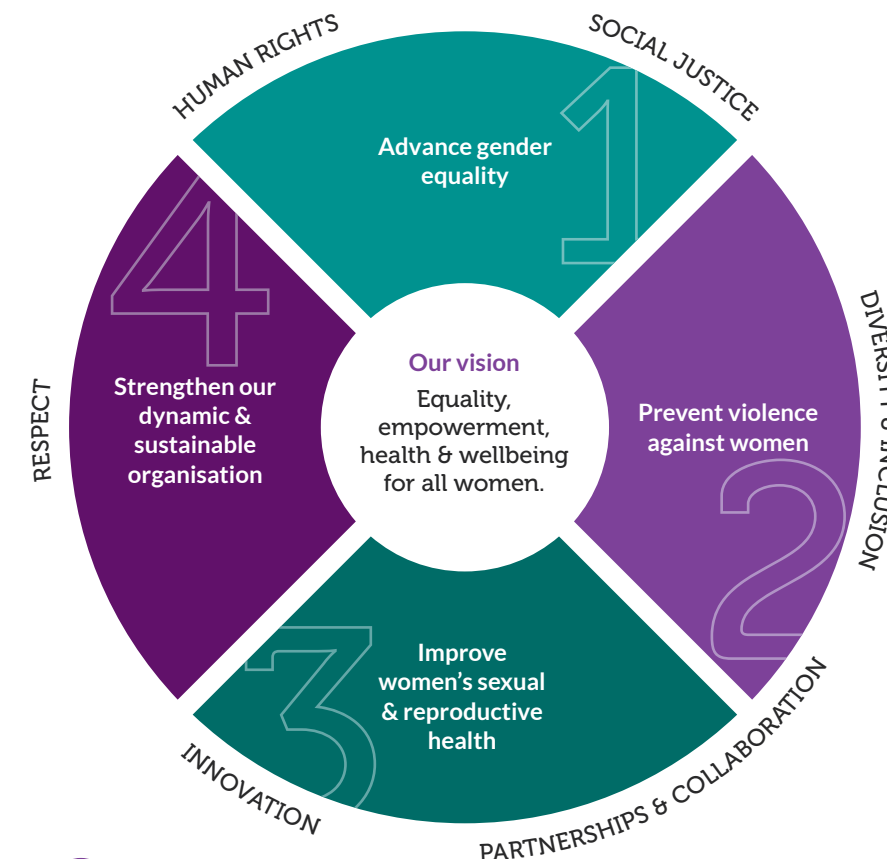
WHE Board of Governance.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2021

Our Purpose

Women's Health East drives action to build an equitable society. Guided by evidence and informed by women's lived experiences, we strengthen the capacity of the community to improve women's health and wellbeing.



WHAT WE DO

Working within a feminist framework, WHE addresses the social, cultural, economic, political and environmental factors impacting on the health, safety and wellbeing of women in the region.

We build the capacity of organisations, services and programs in the region to optimally address issues affecting women.

To achieve this, we partner with state and local governments, health and community organisations, and others with a role in improving health outcomes for women.

With a focus on our region we:

- Provide leadership, expertise and support to initiatives addressing our key priorities;
- Facilitate collaborative, integrated responses to our key priorities;
- Implement and support an intersectional approach to women's health promotion;
- Enhance the capacity of our partners to improve service system access and responsiveness for all women;
- Shape responses to women's health and wellbeing needs through the translation of evidence into practice, advocacy, consultancy and research;
- Influence public policy and public discourse on issues relevant to improving health outcomes for women; and
- Deliver training and education programs, opportunities for collective learning, resources and support to build workforce and organisational excellence in women's health and wellbeing.

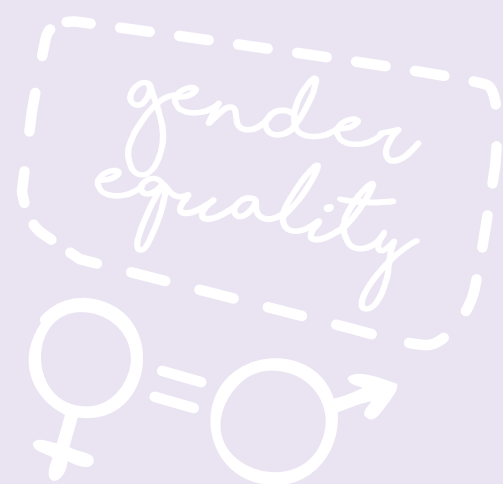
INEQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN CAN TAKE MANY FORMS.

ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

An unequal sharing of power, resources, entitlements, and the historical social norms and values around the roles of women can negatively impact the health of girls and women. How organisations are structured and programs delivered can similarly have unintentional negative consequences for girls and women. Such inequalities can limit the opportunities for women and girls to earn an income, get an education, and participate in the workforce and the community - all of which can contribute to their health and wellbeing.

To address these inequalities, WHE advocates for a gender equity approach to health. This approach acknowledges that men and women do not function on a level playing field and, as a result, women's health is affected. Different strategies and measures must be implemented for men and women to create fair outcomes. For example, increasing the representation of women in leadership roles and positions of power can help shift attitudes around traditional roles of women and men. It gives women the opportunity to have their say into decisions that affect their lives and the lives of other women in their community. This delivers better outcomes for everyone.

Change is possible through acknowledging that women are disadvantaged in many areas of society. It requires shifting social values and attitudes that lead to behavioural change. We work with partners across the EMR to ensure that existing inequalities experienced by women are recognised. This acknowledgement will then influence policy and practice to ensure gender equality and lead to positive health outcomes for women. This gendered perspective on women's health underpins all of our work and has an overarching influence on our planning, communication, advocacy and priority areas. It also guides us to influence the public discourse around gender equity to bring about the best possible health for women in the east.



CONTINUED

ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

Gender Equality Act

We joined the Action for Gender Equality Partnership which was appointed to the Panel of Providers by the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector to provide specialist expertise to assist organisations in understanding and meet their new obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).

No Limitations

<https://whe.org.au/what-we-do/gender-equity-for-health-outcomes/no-limitations-stories-play-kinder-school/>

We developed the Stories, Play, Kinder, School series and supported parents and carers by sharing practical ways to challenge gender stereotypes and show how gender equality is promoted in early years settings and schools.

Beyond the Studio: Advocating for Women's Visibility, Inclusion, and Safety through Public Art

<https://whe.org.au/beyond-the-studio-advocating-for-womens-visibility-inclusion-and-safety-through-public-art/>

We produced superimposed images that showcase how public spaces could look and feel if more artwork for and by women was commissioned, thanks to contributions from women from the Yarra Ranges community.

COVID and Women: Shining a Light on Gender, Inequality, and the Pandemic – Forum

<https://whe.org.au/covid-and-women-shining-a-light-on-gender-inequality-and-the-pandemic/>

We unpacked the gendered impacts of the global pandemic on women and investigated the way forward for a gender-equal recovery.

120 people listened to expert guest speakers, including Tanja Kovac, CEO of Gender Equity Victoria, Jane Fisher, Finkel Professor of Global & Women's Health at Monash University and Richard Denniss, Chief Economist at The Australia Institute.

Parenting in a Pandemic: Women's Mental Health and Wellbeing During COVID-19

We gathered a rich amount of data about the lived experience of women from the EMR who have parented a new baby during the COVID-19 pandemic and the mental health implications associated with the Victorian restrictions in 2020.

"This project really helped me to be heard and validate my feelings and experience as I felt like I was a forgotten unimportant casualty of COVID. I truly hope some positive change can come from this project."

PiaP Focus Group Participant

Gender Equity Walks

We engaged 37 women across the local government areas of Monash and Maroondah to 'walk' their local area and provide their perspectives on these public spaces.

"I think the walk was really great and very beneficial... It is very important to involve women and girls in the community as we are the ones using these public spaces the most and we are the ones who are affected by change."

Maroondah Online Walk Participant, age 16

Manningham Money Talks Series

<https://whe.org.au/what-we-do/gender-equity-for-health-outcomes/money-talks-building-womens-financial-wellbeing/>

We responded to the significant economic impact and financial pressures on women from the COVID-19 pandemic by running multiple free online webinars encouraging women to take action to improve their financial wellbeing.

Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) Financial Independence Project

We developed a range of fact sheets on women's financial wellbeing and the prevention of financial abuse for Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

Work for Victoria Workforce of Multilingual Health Educators - WoMHE Project

We partnered with MCWH, GenVic and the regional women's health services to develop a bicultural workforce to deliver multilingual COVID-19 information and health education. Between March 2021 and June 2021, WHE employed six women who completed an accredited multilingual health education course and commenced community engagement with Mandarin and Hakha-Chin communities in preparation for the delivery of health education sessions.

COVID-19 Vaccination Project

We applied an intersectional gendered lens to increase accessibility to accurate up-to-date scientific information to address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in the community.

Women's Pen Pal Project

We facilitated an exchange of postal mail between older women living in residential aged care facilities and women living in the Yarra Ranges community to provide social connection during lockdown.

International Women's Day

<https://whe.org.au/celebrating-mothers-unsung-heroes-of-melbournes-lockdowns/>

We produced *Celebrating Mothers: Unsung Heroes of Melbourne's Lockdowns*, a short video recognising mothers' many important roles and unique experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.



WHE Health Promotion Officer, Georgina Nix, and Yarra Ranges artist, Sioux Dollman.



Photo by Suzanne Phoenix.

PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REMAINS PREVALENT AND IS A SERIOUS SOCIAL ISSUE WITH DEVASTATING SHORT AND LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

The evidence tells us that preventing all forms of violence against women requires a gendered approach and a generational effort.

WHE works towards ending violence against women in the EMR by addressing the underlying determinants of violence against women, which are centred around power and gender inequality. We do this through working in partnership with other organisations in a coordinated approach, through advocacy and research, and by implementing primary prevention programs.

Together For Equality & Respect

<https://whe.org.au/tfer/>

We have continued to strengthen the TFER partnership as a robust mechanism for organisations in the EMR to prioritise and collaborate on the PVAW initiatives that are integrated, aligned to the evidence base and mutually reinforcing.

This year saw a change of PVAW management at WHE with the appointment of Kate Ravenscroft as Manager – Equality & Respect, who carries out the leadership role for the TFER Partnership. We would like to acknowledge and thank outgoing PVAW Manager Samantha McGuffie for her significant contribution to the TFER Partnership, particularly during what was a challenging year.

We would also like to thank all TFER partners for their ongoing commitment to increasing gender equality and preventing violence against women in the EMR.

Despite the significant impacts of COVID-19 on the work practices, environments and lives of all our partners, it has been an action-packed year for the TFER Partnership. Here are some of the activities from the TFER Action Plan that WHE was involved in:



PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

CONTINUED

Together For Equality & Respect: TFER Interim Evaluation Report 2017-2021

<https://whe.org.au/tfer/share-learnings/evaluation-reports/>

We documented the ongoing strength and maturity of the TFER partnership.

"We would not be able to achieve anywhere near the level of outcomes that we are able to report on to our funder if it wasn't for the fact that we can partner with TFER."

TFER Partner

TFER Leaders Event

We hosted an event for leaders to profile the TFER partnership and champion support for the PVAW in the EMR.

"I am proud to be a part of TFER Capital, collaboratively driving gender equality in the East"

Tracey Blythe, Executive Officer, Inner East Primary Care Partnership

"WHE have been a tireless advocate and shown strong leadership in organising a regional response to reduce violence against women and promote respectful relationships and gender equity in the community."

Christine Farnan, Senior Advisor, Department of Health and Human Services

TFER Early Years Showcase Event

We identified that a high volume of PVAW work was taking place in the Early Years setting. In response, the TFER Leadership profiled this work through a 'flagship' approach to documenting activities, tools and resources that support the TFER partnership in this settings-based work. We held an event which featured interactive presentations from several partners of their initiatives in the Early Years settings.

TFER Communities of Practice

We delivered four Community of Practice sessions to the TFER partnership on a range of topics including Promoting Gender Equality in the Early Years, Preventing Violence Against Women With Disabilities, Framing Gender Equality Messaging and Prevention of Violence Against Women and Elder Abuse.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

We led an EMR-specific 16 Days of Activism campaign with consultation from our partner organisations, and developed tailored toolkits consisting of social media tiles, copy and a communications guide for our partners to share on their social media platforms.

"Tiles were well presented and captured the key messages and call to action."

Partner Organisation

"Free availability of visually appealing tiles is very useful when using current social media type platforms for organisational communications."

Partner Organisation

Training

We developed and delivered training and workshop facilitation across all three of our key priority areas.

Putting Prevention of Violence Against Women into Practice: PVAW training

"This is such valuable training and I think that even those who don't aspire to work in the space should have access to training such as this."

Training Participant

"Thank you once again for such a great program. I hope to take away my learnings and use them for a pilot project I am going to be involved in. Thank you for such a breadth of resources to look into and share with colleagues."

Training Participant

Call it Out, Active Bystander Training

"Thank you so much, I have found this so very valuable and something that should be utilised in every workplace"

Training Participant

"I really got a lot out of the training, thanks to WHE for running and thanks to the CFA for making it available."

Training Participant

"Thought provoking and useful training for everyone – not just for workplaces."

Training Participant

Framing Gender Equality Messaging Guide Masterclasses

A number of Framing Gender Equality Communications Masterclasses were offered to TFER partners, providing a unique opportunity to gain valuable skills creating meaningful and impactful messaging for future gender equality projects. These masterclasses were facilitated by Mark Chenery, Co-founder and Director of CommonCause Australia.

"Thank you for providing this valuable opportunity, it was one of the most useful & practical trainings I have ever had the benefit of, and I feel very lucky to have been able to attend."

Training Participant

#16Days16Ways #CallitOut
16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Address the behaviour, not the person



Call out inappropriate comments or behaviour

#16Days16Ways #CallitOut
16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Your actions make a difference online



Call out inappropriate comments or behaviour

CONTINUED

PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Gender Equality Training Sessions

Workplace Equality and Respect Training

“I think we came up with some good ideas about how we can work together to make things better.”
Training Participant

“The facilitators were excellent. It was nice to see you demonstrating some useful things during the training, e.g. when Kirsty said, ‘I want to amplify what Emily was saying.’”
Training Participant

“It was interesting and focused on the right issues.”
Training Participant

Margins to the Mainstream: Preventing Violence Against Women with Disabilities

We formed an Experts Group comprising ten women with lived experience of disability. The group participated in skill development sessions, co-design of key messages to be used in various resources, and a TFER Community of Practice session on the gender and disability drivers of violence against women with disabilities. The Margins to the Mainstream (M2M) project elevates the voices of women with disabilities and promotes their leadership and status in society by strengthening partnerships, building the capacity of partners, challenging intersecting sexist and ableist stereotypes, and contributing to the evidence-base of ‘what works’ in community-led prevention of violence against women with disabilities.

“My disabilities are considered a barrier in many other roles. I love how the Projects Experts Group acknowledges my lived experience of disability as a form of expertise. This has really helped me develop my sense of personal value and confidence.”
M2M Project Expert

“The Projects Experts Group has provided me with information that has helped me to shape the narrative of my life experience in a more healing way.”
M2M Project Expert

“The Projects Expert Group has helped me develop my self-advocacy skills. I feel more confident now to educate organisations when their processes are ableist.”
M2M Project Expert

“I feel really safe and valued being in the group with Avega and the other Project Experts. Having the regular interactions with the group helps me feel I have a sense of belonging and community.”
M2M Project Expert

End of an Era: Speaking Out Program Finishes

Speaking Out Program: Advocacy to End Family Violence & Sexual Assault



Sapphire and Libby on ABC's *You Can't Ask That* for Speaking Out.

The Speaking Out Program elevated the voices of women who have experienced family violence and/or sexual assault since its inception in 2011, with an aim to shift the public discourse and public policy about violence against women and its prevention. Unfortunately, our time-limited grant supporting the program came to an end.

WHE and our partners, EDVOS and the Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault, are extremely proud of the many achievements of this program, thanks to the incredible women who share their stories to build community understanding of violence against women, how to prevent it, and how to improve our service systems.

Over the life of the program, 55 women were trained and supported to become change agents. These courageous women spoke out in the community for almost 10 years, undertaking over 1000 advocacy engagements. These included public speaking, media interviews, sitting on family violence committees and co-designing programs and services as a part of government reforms.

We know that Speaking Out played an essential role in improving the way that violence against women was portrayed in the media, through the incorporation of women's stories and our education of journalists and the broader community. Over the life of the program, we saw significant improvement in the language used in reporting, in the linking of family violence to the broader societal issue of gender inequality, in the centring of people with

lived experience in articles and the following of ethical reporting guidelines.

Speaking Out advocates also played a significant role in shaping government reforms and community level programs and services. They strengthened support for gender equality and action on violence against women through their engagement in numerous events and forums.

We would like to sincerely thank all the women involved in the program; for your courage and generosity in sharing your stories, time and commitment, and invaluable knowledge that you have shared so powerfully to effect change.

Undoubtedly, the program has left a legacy that will inform the elevation of the voices of victim-survivors in the future. This includes the *Voices for Change* manual, which outlines how to run a media advocacy program for the prevention of violence against women, and contributing to the *Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework*.



Media advocacy with Speaking Out change agent Nicole

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH (SRH) IS AN IMPORTANT HEALTH ISSUE FOR ALL WOMEN IN THE REGION AND SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS THEIR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SOCIAL WELLBEING.

IMPROVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Optimal SRH is about much more than the absence of disease; it's about wellbeing, respect, and freedom from discrimination and violence. Ideal outcomes require access to accurate evidence and rights-based information and safe, effective, timely, and affordable health services. It's also essential that health promotion efforts address the gender inequality that underpins poor SRH outcomes.

SRH Week 2020: Sexual & Reproductive Health is Essential

We first created SRH Week in 2018 with the goal to highlight certain issues and our work, whilst also acknowledging two days on the international health calendar: World Contraception Day on 26th September and International Safe Abortion Day on 28th September. 2020 was the first year that a collaborative working group was formed to develop the campaign, comprising Health Promotion Officers and Communications Officers from Women's Health Services across Victoria.

A Regional Approach to Improving Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health: The SRH Strategic Reference Group (SRG)

We provided strategic direction, leadership and oversight to promote the sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing of women in the EMR by delivering relevant and timely information, services, advocacy, and research. The SRG comprises representatives from local government, community health organisations, and other service providers committed to improving the health and wellbeing of women in the region.

Endometriosis Awareness Month

We developed a month-long social media campaign alongside Women's Health Services from around Victoria, targeted to both our partner organisations and the community. We also hosted the Women's Experiences of Managing Endometriosis webinar with guest speaker Dr. Beck O'Hara, and published an article highlighting the work led by the Women's Health Services on the Women's Agenda website.

Early Medical Abortion Capacity-Building Forums

We delivered two Early Medical Abortion Capacity Building Forums for primary healthcare providers in the EMR. 80% of respondents said that they were very likely to become early medical abortion providers - a really promising outcome.

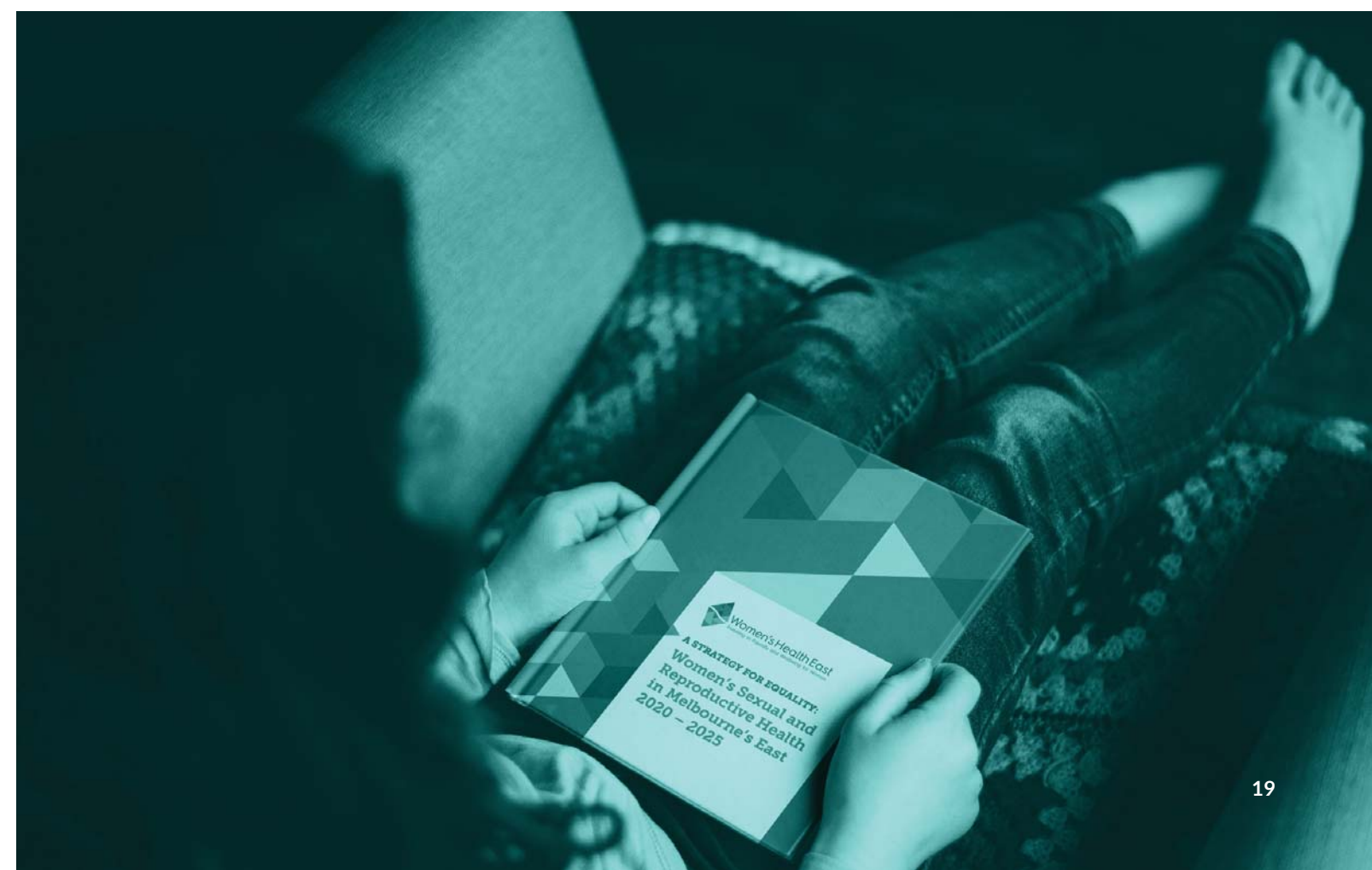
A Strategy for Equality: Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in Melbourne's East 2020-2025

<https://whe.org.au/a-strategy-for-equality-womens-sexual-and-reproductive-health-in-melbournes-east-2020-2025/>

We created a five-year Strategy containing three strategic priorities and seven high-level objectives to improve women's sexual and reproductive health and well-being outcomes in our region.

The Strategy, and its associated Background Paper, is the culmination of extensive literature review, data analysis and consultation with a range of stakeholders including the EMR SRH Strategic Reference Group, local government, community health organisations and other health promotion agencies. It is the first strategy in Melbourne's East to provide a framework for action on women's SRH.

The Strategy was launched in February 2021 at an online forum with guest speakers Dr. Ruth McNair (Northside Clinic) and Claire Vissenga (Family Planning Victoria) presenting. The work was also showcased at different planning meetings for Health Advisory Committees across the region.



STRENGTHEN OUR DYNAMIC AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

WHE STRIVES TO BE AN ETHICAL AND DYNAMIC ORGANISATION AND EMPLOYER, COMMITTED TO ONGOING LEARNING, QUALITY AND INNOVATION.

We recognise that our staff and our partnerships are our greatest enablers to attainment of our vision of equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women. The external environment has provided us with plenty of challenges this year. These have included the need to support our staff's occupational health and safety through a pandemic, learn and adapt to new ways of working, and continue to deliver high quality and timely responses to the changing issues for women. We are proud of the way our team has risen to these challenges.

Quality Improvement

We led the Women's Health Services Quality Framework implementation across the Victorian women's health sector. All Women's Health Services have continued their keen engagement in continuous quality improvement work this year, with a particular focus on reviewing and adapting systems and processes to enable programs and activities to be successfully delivered online. New online resources to support organisational quality assessment and review processes across the sector have also been developed.

Coronavirus response

We developed and continued to implement our coronavirus response, evaluation tools, and monitor and update our COVID-19 Safe Plan.

Internal Capacity and Professional Development

We provided continued support for staff learning which including internal training on Aboriginal Cultural Awareness, quality improvement, working in a feminist organisation, budgeting, framing gender equality messaging and women's mental health and wellbeing



CONTINUED

STRENGTHEN OUR DYNAMIC AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

Sharing our Knowledge

We found a myriad of ways to share our knowledge and contribute to the public discourse on women’s health and wellbeing, including through online forums, published articles and blogs.

- *Creating Safe and Inclusive Public Spaces for Women:* Health Promotion Officer Vanessa contributed an article to the July 2020 edition of the Planning Institute of Australia’s Planning News. It highlighted the role that design plays in creating spaces that are safe, welcoming and accessible for women, and emphasised the importance of women’s voices and expertise in creating spaces that are safe and inclusive for everyone.
- *Why women’s employment is a critical issue for pandemic recovery.* Published on Croakey in July 2020, our CEO Kristine Olaris wrote this piece highlighting the growing impacts of COVID on women and the threat that this posed to gender equality. She particularly shone a light on the increased likelihood of women being underemployed or unemployed because of the insecure and casualised nature of women’s employment. The article calls for a transformational gender lens over pandemic recovery and asks its readers to speak up for a fair go for women.
- Our CEO Kristine Olaris was invited to speak at the U3A in Deepdene in November. Kristine talked to the impacts of COVID on women and on the need for a gender equal recovery.
- Our Training Coordinator Kirsty Kain delivered a presentation on the *Gender Equality Act 2020* to the Eastern Homelessness Service System Alliance.
- Our Manager of Equality and Respect, Kate Ravenscroft, filmed a video for Eastern Community Legal Centre to use at the launch of their *Primary Prevention of Elder Abuse Framework*.
- We wrote submissions on a range of policy issues and continued to advocate for a gendered understanding of COVID-19 impact, response and recovery.
- We joined an array of women’s organisations led by the Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health calling for the prioritisation of the voices of migrant women and migrant women’s organisations in pandemic responses.
- In addition to the *COVID and Women Forum*, we also brought a gender lens to other discussions of COVID-19 recovery in planning forums across the region.
- WHE staff continued to participate in a range of external committees, working groups and Communities of Practice across the sector (see our partners on pages 26-27).



WHE contributed to and supported a range of other advocacy work and submissions including:

- Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System
- GEN VIC’s *Towards a Gender Equal Recovery 2021/2022* budget submission
- Overview for the consultation process on the renewal of the Victorian HIV, STI and viral hepatitis response for 2021-2025
- Victorian LGBTIQ Strategy
- Women’s Mental Health Alliance (WMHA) response to the Department of Health consultation on the recommendations from the Productivity Commission’s Report on Mental Health (submitted by WMHA and supported by WHE)
- Preventative Health Strategy review (Women’s Health Victoria response, supported by WHE)

Communications

Our Reach:

As our projects, resources, and training sessions remained predominantly restricted to online formats while COVID-19 continued to impact our face-to-face service delivery, our engagement grew significantly throughout 2020-2021. Thanks to all of our followers for your ongoing support!

WEBSITE
1817

unique web views average per month (+71%)

f
998
followers (+35.7%)

t
2.3K
followers (+21%)

i
1.3K
followers (+205%)

in
417
new followers



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following information is an overview of the finances of Women's Health East Inc. and should be read in conjunction with the Women's Health East Inc. Financial Statements for Year Ending 30 June 2021 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.

Total income for the 2020-2021 financial year was \$1,444,358 compared to \$1,184,913 in the previous year. Core recurrent funding remained relatively stable while other income increased by 49%. This included a cashflow boost of \$100,000 from the ATO. Total expenditure was also higher than the previous year with employment expenses increasing by 25%, primarily due to additional project funding.

The result for the 2020-2021 financial year was a surplus of \$6,977.

WHE's current ratio of 2.24:1 means that the business has \$2.24 in current assets to meet every \$1 in current liabilities. The current ratio is a calculation performed to assist in determining financial liquidity.

COVID-19 had an impact on both the income and expenditure of Women's Health East in the 2020-2021 financial year. The impact on income included a cashflow boost of \$100K from the ATO and grant funding related to the impacts of COVID-19. The impact on expenditure was both positive and negative with lower expenditure recorded in areas such as occupancy and meeting expenses and higher expenditure in information technology than previous years.

Financial overview

	2021 \$	2020 \$
Summary Income Statement		
Income		
DHHS Core funding	734,371	709,321
Other	709,987	475,592
Total Income	1,444,358	1,184,913
Expenditure		
Employment Expenses	1,156,776	937,037
Other	280,605	247,916
Total Expenditure	1,437,381	1,183,953
Operating Profit/(Loss)	6,977	960
Summary Balance Sheet		
Cash	726,557	908,628
Receivables	55,645	19,318
Property, Plant & Equipment	31,311	44,521
Total Assets	813,513	972,467
Payables	72,797	91,716
Income in Advance	132,521	294,138
Provisions	144,344	129,739
Total Liabilities	349,662	515,593
NET ASSETS	463,851	456,874
Current Ratio	2.24 : 1	1.80 : 1



DONATE / MEMBERSHIP

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:

- Shine a light on the gendered impacts of COVID on women
- Deliver programs to support women's mental health & financial wellbeing
- Provide gender equity and prevention of violence against women training
- Support organisations implementing the Gender Equality Act 2020
- Lead and drive the EMR's first women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy

Give a one-off or regular donation, or leave a bequest using the secure website at www.givenow.com.au/whe

Membership

WHE Membership is free, and open to anyone who identifies as a woman and who lives, works or studies in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, and to organisations whose target groups include women in the EMR. WHE had 106 members at the completion of this year.

Why become a member?

As a member of WHE you will gain:

- Eligibility to stand for election to the Women's Health East Board of Governance
- Voting rights at Women's Health East member meetings and Board of Governance elections
- Access to up to date issues impacting women and receive regular updates through the Women's Health East E-news
- Invitations to participate in community consultations from time to time
- Inclusion in a community of women committed to equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women!

How to become a member:

If you would like to become a member and help to improve women's health, safety and wellbeing, please submit your application via our website www.whe.org.au, or for any further information contact us at health@whe.org.au

Membership is subject to Board of Governance approval and is renewed every three years.



STATE

- Country Fire Authority
- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria/Domestic Violence Victoria
- Family Planning Victoria
- Gender Equity Victoria including the Women's Health Services Council advisory committee
- Action for Gender Equality Partnership (AGEP)
- Hepatitis Victoria/LiverWELL
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Municipal Association of Victoria
- Rainbow Health Victoria
- The Royal Women's Hospital
- Victoria Police
- Victorian Council of Social Services
- Victorian Hepatitis B Alliance
- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Women's Health Services Quality Framework Reference Panel
- Women's Health Victoria
- Women's Mental Health Alliance

REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL

- Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service
- Community Health, Health Promotion Special Initiatives Group
- Community Houses Association of the Outer Eastern Suburbs (CHAOS)
- Department of Education and Training (DET)
- Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
- Doncare
- EACH
- EDVOS
- Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC)
- Eastern Elder Abuse (EEAN) Prevention Working Group
- Eastern Health, including Eastern Healthier Masculinities for the PVAW Steering Group, and Eastern Health Community Leaders in the Eastern Region Reference Group
- Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
- EMR SRH Strategic Reference Group
- Family Access Network
- Inner East Integrated Health Promotion Partnership
- IE IHP Leadership Group
- IE IHP Managers Group
- IE IHP Social Inclusion Practitioner Working Group
- Inner East Primary Care Partnership
- Margins to the Mainstream Project Advisory Group
- Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Region) including the Family Violence Project Steering Committee, Refugee and Asylum Seeker Strategic Partnerships and Capacity, Strengthening Connections for Family Violence Prevention,

- and COVID-19 Family Violence Project Steering Committee
- Building Program Steering Committee
- Migrant Information Centre Family Violence Project Steering Committee
- Monash University
- Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place
- Network of Inner Eastern Community Houses (NIECH)
- Outer East Primary Care Partnership including the Executive Committee
- Oonah
- Q-East Alliance
- Regional Family Violence Partnership Systems Leadership Group and Implementation Committee
- Regional Women's Health Services
- Speaking Out Steering Committee
- Together for Equality & Respect Partnership and Working Groups
- #TogetherForRespectAtHome Working Group
- Women with Disabilities Victoria including Eastern Region Disability and PVAW Community of Practice
- Yarra Valley Water

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA

- Access Health & Community
- Boroondara Family Violence Network
- Boroondara Public Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee
- Carrington Health/healthAbility
- Cire Services
- Inclusive Clubs Project Working Group
- Inspiro
- Knox Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee
- Knox Financial Wellbeing Project Working Group
- Knox PLEDGE Steering Committee
- Link Health & Community
- Manningham Access and Equity Advisory Committee
- Manningham Gender Equity Working Group
- Manningham Healthy Cities Advisory Group
- Manningham Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group
- Maroondah Access, Inclusion and Equity Advisory Committee
- Maroondah Partners in Community Wellbeing Committee
- Monash Gender Equity Advisory Committee
- Monash Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan Steering Committee
- Upper Yarra Youth Gender Equity Advisory Committee
- Whitehorse Collaborative Action Network for PVAW
- Yarra Ranges Council
- Yarra Ranges Gender Equity Partnership
- Yarra Ranges Gender Equity in the Early Years Working Group
- Yarra Ranges Integrated Health Planning
- Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group

THANK YOU

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of our funding partners:

- The Victorian Government
- Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector (Gender Equality Act - Gender Equality Action Plan training)
- Manningham City Council (Manningham Money Talks Series, No Limitations series, COVID & Women forum)
- Yarra Ranges Council (Pen Pal Project, Beyond the Studio: Advocating for Women's Visibility, Inclusion and Safety through Public Art)
- Commonwealth Bank Australia (CBA Financial Independence Project)
- Outer East Primary Care Prevention (Messaging for Gender Equality: Phases 1 & 2)

We also highly value collaborative effort to achieve improved outcomes for women, and we demonstrate this by nurturing our national, state and regional partnerships. We'd like to acknowledge and thank all organisations and committees that have collaborated with us and supported the work of our organisation.

NATIONAL

- Australian Health Promotion Association
- Australian Network for Universal Housing Design
- Australian Women's Health Network
- Climate and Health Alliance
- Commonwealth Bank Australia including membership of the Financial Abuse Community of Practice
- Our Watch
- Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA)



Women's Health East

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