



Women's Health East

ANNUAL REPORT



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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 contribute to the high rates of violence they experience. We recognise the strength, resilience and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and express our hope for and commitment to reconciliation.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

Women's Health East is pleased to present our Annual Report for 2021-2022. We hope you enjoy reading about the work we lead to improve women's health and wellbeing in Melbourne's eastern region.

This report presents a summary of our key achievements, activities, projects, and financial performance. You can find out more about these projects and Women's Health East's complete financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2022 on our website.

At Women's Health East, we strive to continually improve what we do and how we communicate with women, our members, partners 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.

OUR PEOPLE

Board of Governance

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

Staff

- Elly Taylor, Chief Executive Officer
- Dr Belinda Crockett, Manager Health Promotion
- Kate Ravenscroft, Manager Equality and Respect
- Jenny Peet, Finance Manager
- Emily Kate Cowan, Executive Assistant
- Colleen Russell, Quality Project Officer
- Avega Bishop, Margins to the Mainstream Coordinator
- Katie McKee, Training Coordinator
- Kirsty Kain, Training Coordinator
- Samantha Wass, Marketing and Communications Officer
- Georgia Bennett, Health Promotion Officer
- Jane Brierty, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Claire Butselaar, Health Promotion Officer
- Vanessa Czerniawski, Health Promotion Officer
- Naomi King Bol, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Georgina Nix, Health Promotion Officer
- Isabella Roxburgh, Health Promotion Officer
- Esther Xu, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Sui Cin Zah, Bilingual Health Education Officer
- Sui Ram Lawt, Bilingual Health Education Officer (outgoing 2022)
- Lingzhi Ruan, Bilingual Health Education Officer (outgoing 2022)
- Kristine Olaris, Chief Executive Officer (outgoing 2021)
- Annette Rudd, Interim Chief Executive Officer (outgoing 2021)
- Dr Maree Overall, Interim Chief Executive Officer (outgoing 2021)
- Melissa Tully, Finance Officer (outgoing 2021)
- Alana Sadeghi, Health Promotion Outreach Officer (outgoing 2021)



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

CEO & CHAIR REPORT

WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST IS PROUD TO PRESENT OUR ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021-2022. MEASURED AGAINST OUR STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES, THIS REPORT DEMONSTRATES OUR MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE YEAR DESPITE THE ONGOING CHALLENGES OF WORKING WITHIN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Women's Health East continues to demonstrate significant impact across Melbourne's eastern region to advance gender equality, prevent violence against women, and improve women's sexual and reproductive health.

The Together For Equality and Respect partnership continued to support coordinated action for the prevention of violence against women. In November 2021, we proudly launched the *Together For Equality and Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2021-2025* that includes an increased focus on intersectionality, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led family violence prevention work, and engaging men and boys in primary prevention. The partnership, which continues to build on its wide influence and community reach with 32 partners, is the regional infrastructure for the primary prevention of violence against women in Melbourne's east.

Throughout the year we provided various training sessions, online seminars, events and communities of practice on prevention of violence against women, the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, financial literacy, sexual and reproductive health promotion, and safe public spaces to professionals and community members.

We responded to the impacts of COVID-19 on women. We worked to ensure that refugee and migrant women had access to reliable, evidence-based in-language information about vaccination and booster programs and service navigation to make informed decisions about their and their children's healthcare.

Some further highlights include an International Women's Day campaign that profiled local women leading change on climate action and a powerful 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence social media campaign that was co-designed by women with lived experience of disabilities, which reached over 18,000 people.

We continued our important work leading *A Strategy for Equality: Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in Melbourne's East 2020 - 2025* to promote women's sexual and reproductive health and rights with our 27 partner organisations. Our Sexual and Reproductive Health Week campaign 'Know Your Rights' informed over 143,000 people about sexual and reproductive health education, services and support.

The last financial year has further strengthened our dynamic and sustainable organisation with many new initiatives evolving from initial planning stages into fruition. We joined Reconciliation Australia and commenced the formal process of developing a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan. We undertook a cultural audit and staff participated in cultural awareness training sessions delivered by Oonah Belonging Place to increase their understanding of Aboriginal culture, customs and local histories.

In April, we established a unit to strengthen our capacity to deliver high-quality gender equality consultancy programs to support defined entities to deliver on the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

We took part in the state-wide #SickOfSmallChange advocacy campaign in partnership with other Women's Health Services and our peak body, Gender Equity Victoria. The campaign highlighted the crisis in women's health and the decades of underinvestment in our sector. We were thrilled that these calls were answered with the May Victorian State Budget including funding of \$19.4 million over two years to 12 Victorian Women's Health Services, including Women's Health East.

In preparation for this funding boost, we undertook a restructure to recruit nine positions in June 2022. This included the establishment of a dedicated bicultural team following the successful use of bilingual workers in providing COVID-19 vaccination information. This new bicultural team will facilitate community capacity building and enable opportunities for refugee and migrant women's engagement, participation and co-design of in-language health promotion programs.

Our leadership saw some change over the past year. We farewellled Kristine Olaris after 10 years of extraordinary service as Women's Health East's Chief Executive Officer, and warmly welcomed Elly Taylor who stepped in as our new Chief Executive Officer in November 2021. We also said goodbye to Women's Health East's stalwart Melissa Tully who led our finance function for over 10 years and welcomed our new Finance Manager, Jenny Peet to the team.

Women's Health East's Board sustained its focus on strengthening good governance and executing our strategic plan in an ever-changing external environment. We farewellled Wendy Roberts in December 2021 after 10 years on the Board. We welcomed two new Board members Ann Yeomanson, and Belinda Li.

At Women's Health East, we recognise that advancing gender equality and effective primary prevention efforts requires long-term investment and action to effect change. This long-term work is only made possible by our highly dedicated, passionate and qualified staff and Board, and the invaluable support of our members, peers, partners, and funders. We thank you for your ongoing commitment and partnership, and we look forward to continuing to advance women's health, safety, and wellbeing in Melbourne's east.



Lisa Dunlop



Elly Taylor

Lisa Dunlop (Chair)

Elly Taylor (Chief Executive Officer)

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

Women’s Health East Strategic Plan Investing in Equality & Wellbeing for Women 2021-2025



Our Priorities



Advance Gender Equality

Intended outcomes

- Women equitably participate in our communities and experience decreased discrimination
- Women experience improved mental health and wellbeing
- Organisations have skills and knowledge to effectively advance gender equality

Prevent Violence Against Women

Intended outcomes

- Women benefit from coordinated, evidence-informed action to prevent violence
- Organisations and their workforces have skills and knowledge to effectively prevent violence against women
- Prevention initiatives are informed by the voices of women

Improve Sexual and Reproductive Health

Intended outcomes

- Women benefit from coordinated action to address their sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Organisations and practitioners have skills and knowledge to effectively improve women's sexual and reproductive health
- Women have improved access to reproductive and sexual health information, services and choices

Our Values

- Inclusion** We value and embrace women's diversity in all its forms, for an inclusive society, where everyone belongs
- Respect** We are respectful, at all times, of people's lived experiences, histories, views and opinions
- Integrity** We are honest, ethical and transparent
- Excellence** We strive for excellence and innovation, translating evidence into practice and generating creative solutions to complex issues



Our Approach

Our approach is underpinned by these principles

- ✓ Social model of health
- ✓ Health promotion
- ✓ Population health
- ✓ Human rights and social justice
- ✓ Collaboration and community connectedness
- ✓ Intersectional feminism



Our Enablers



Partnering and contribution to collaborative governance

We will continue to partner for effective action in the Eastern Metropolitan Region and with statewide or national stakeholders

Strong reputation and regional leadership role

We will sustain and communicate our social, environmental and economic impact

Our staff, board and volunteers

We will continue to develop, value and support our people

Funding

We will keep a focus on sustainable growth and diversify funding streams

WOMEN AND GIRLS CONTINUE TO
EXPERIENCE GENDER INEQUALITY AND
GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION.

ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

**Inequality between men
and women can take
many forms.**

Such inequalities can limit women's opportunities to earn an income, get an education, and participate equitably in the workforce and the community - all of which impact on their health and wellbeing. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, refugee and migrant women, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ women, young and older women and gender-diverse people, gender-based discrimination and inequality is intensified and compounded by racism, ableism, ageism, classism, homophobia and transphobia.

We work with partners across Melbourne's eastern region to ensure that existing inequalities experienced by women, girls and gender diverse people are recognised, and to develop solutions that advance gender equality. Advancing gender equality underpins our work and intersects with all of our strategic and operational priorities. Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls and is essential for optimal sexual and reproductive health outcomes. Gender equality provides widespread economic, health and social benefits and it is a human right. The gendered nature of COVID-19 has further demonstrated the necessity of our work to advance gender equality.



CONTINUED

ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

Workforce of Multilingual Health Educators (WOMHEN's) Project

We delivered 16 in-language health education sessions to 495 women from the Hakha-Chin and Chinese communities on topics that included COVID-19 vaccination and booster programs, healthy relationships, mental health, contraception and cancer screening.

“After the session, I know how to better protect myself from the virus, as well as the benefits of getting boosters. I also gained knowledge on home isolation, such as how to do RAT test... It makes me feel more confident living through the pandemic.”

Program participant

“We are very glad that you held a health session in Hakha-Chin language on COVID-19 vaccine, nobody would explain to us clearly if you did not. We increased our knowledge.”

Program participant

Our Culture, Our Health

We supported a gender-equal COVID-19 recovery by delivering sessions that increased awareness of mental health and illness, strategies for managing mental health and wellbeing, and where to seek support. The project delivered 7 in-language health education workshops to 200 Mandarin-speaking women in the City of Whitehorse. Having in-language service providers present at the sessions also resulted in referrals to job seeking and mental health services for women.

“Having a good platform for professionals to come together is so important. We know these health issues are connected – mental health, family violence, unemployment – so having a network like this is valuable and can help us know where to go to support community members get back to their health and wellbeing.”

Project partner

It Takes a Village: Supporting refugee and migrant mothers' mental health and wellbeing

We promoted the mental health and wellbeing of 132 mothers from refugee and migrant backgrounds. The project delivered 7 health education sessions and workshops that enabled mothers who speak Hakha-Chin and Mandarin to connect with women from their community and strengthen their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing. We also undertook community engagement with 154 women as part of this project.

“I loved hearing everyone's experience specially during the pandemic. That made me feel less alone. I thought I was weak mentally or didn't have a strong faith when I was very stressed during the pandemic.”

Program participant

“Many young people in our community are suffering from depression but we don't know how to help them so thank you.”

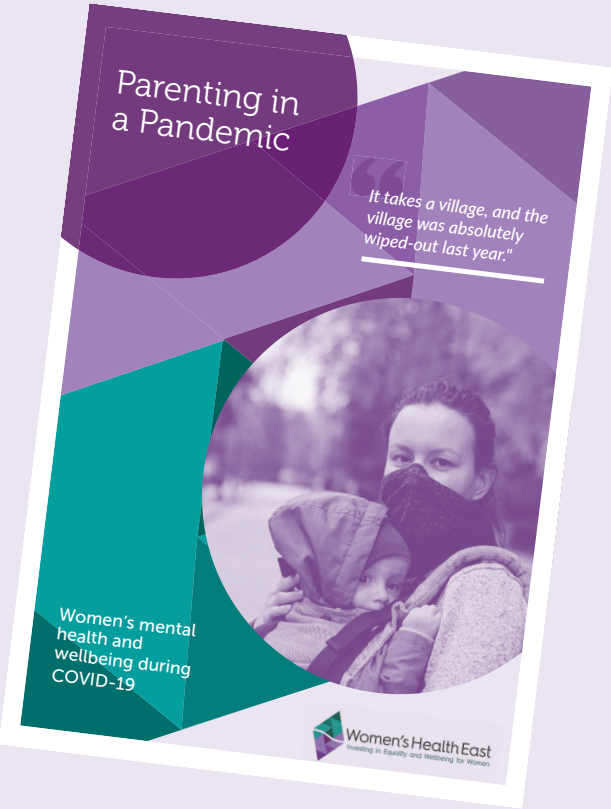
Program participant

Parenting in a Pandemic: Women's mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19

We implemented a research project that captured 18 local women's lived experience of being a new parent against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on their mental health and wellbeing. The report provided insights into the unique experiences of new mothers during COVID-19, with many reporting that they felt alone and unsupported, which they said negatively impacted their mental health. This research made recommendations on how to better support new parents to sustain and strengthen their mental health outcomes.

“Moving forward it is imperative that policy and practice take into account the lived experience of new parents, and reflect and consider the need for a fair, compassionate, and practical approach to perinatal and maternity care.”

Program participant



Kids, Coffee and Connection: Bringing Mothers Together

We provided social connection opportunities for new mothers who experienced social isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The project delivered 7 health promotion sessions to 11 women and their 14 children at the Notting Hill Neighbourhood House. The Neighbourhood House has now integrated the project into their regular schedule due to its success.



Women's Health East Health Promotion Officer Vanessa with a local community member at a Kids, Coffee and Connection event



CONTINUED

ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

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

We recruited six local women artists from the Yarra Ranges to develop images that identified how public spaces could look if art was commissioned. The project demonstrates the critical role public open spaces play in promoting gender equality and improving women's sense of safety. This project increased opportunities to acknowledge, recognise and value women artists, and culminated in an update to Women's Health East's Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces for Women report.

"This initiative has opened my eyes to artists and programs in the area and your efforts to shine a light on them, as well as social issues that we encounter."
Program participant

Changing the Climate: Women making a difference in our community



We raised the profile of women in Melbourne's east who are leading the charge on climate change. We celebrated the remarkable contributions of five local women via a digital marketing campaign for International Women's Day. We reached an audience of over 2,000 people across our social media channels, educating and inspiring them about environmental sustainability, conservation and climate action in our region and beyond.

Vaccination Ambassadors

We increased awareness of credible and culturally appropriate COVID-19 and vaccination information by delivering a series of social media campaigns, which were translated into community languages and reached over 1,220 people. The project tackled myths and community concerns around vaccinations, promoted COVID-19 safe behaviours, and provided timely updates on public health recommendations.



Action for Gender Equality Partnership

Women's Health East, as part of a consortium of women's health services known as the Action for Gender Equality Partnership, is a member of the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector Panel of Providers. The Action for Gender Equality Partnership are expert consultants who provide organisations with specialist advice on how to action their obligations under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

We supported organisations to take an intersectional approach to the development of Gender Equality Action Plans, enabling progress associated with workplace gender equality. We also provided organisations with support to undertake gender impact assessments to promote gender equality in policies, programs and services, and to take positive action to promote gender equality. Organisations we worked with included Melbourne's eastern region local councils, universities, Victoria Police, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, Yarra Valley Water, Melbourne Sports Centres, and the Eastern Metropolitan Councils Emergency Management Partnership.

Our staff delivered training workshops associated with the Gender Equality Act 2020 to 175 executive leaders, managers, and practitioners from across our region.

We also delivered two projects for the Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, including a community of practice that provided a learning space for defined entities in Melbourne's eastern region to share their challenges and successes in implementing the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.



"Every time I run the health session or talk to any Chinese communities, they also feel that comfort that we speak the language they do, and it can reduce a lot of anxiety and fear. It also makes participants feel more safe and willing to open-up and ask questions, because they know you will understand." - Esther



"When you don't have the language to understand the resources that are available in the place where you are living, that is a big problem and in my community it's the reason it's so important to have a bilingual health educator." - Sui



The Beyond the Studio project re-imagined public spaces

PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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

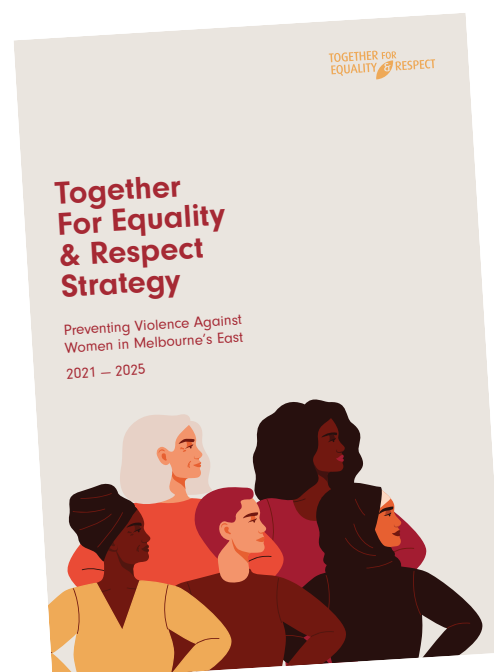
The evidence tells us that gender inequality provides the necessary social context in which violence against women occurs and that advancing gender equality is the key to achieving freedom from violence for women and girls.

To prevent violence against women before it occurs, we need long-term, coordinated action to advance gender equality across our community and in all of the settings in which people live, work and play. Women's Health East is committed to an intersectional approach to the primary prevention of violence against women and this work remains an important health promotion priority.

Together For Equality and Respect

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

The Together For Equality and Respect partnership is led by Women's Health East. The partnership has been working together since 2012 to prevent violence against women by taking coordinated, integrated action to advance gender equality in Melbourne's east. The partnership has wide regional influence and community reach with 32 partners, including local councils and health services, community organisations, utility services, specialist response services and Aboriginal services.



CONTINUED

PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Together For Equality and Respect governance and practice meetings

Women's Health East leads several Together For Equality and Respect leadership and practice meetings and communities of practice that form the regional primary prevention infrastructure in Melbourne's east.

We convened six Together For Equality and Respect Leadership Group meetings that brought together leaders who work to advance regional collective, primary prevention action. We also convened nine Evaluation Working Group meetings. This group oversaw the finalisation of the *Together For Equality and Respect: Final Evaluation Report 2017-2021*.

The evaluation of the partnership found that between 2019-2021 it showed significant reach. Quantitative data from 38 projects working across 10 settings found that:

- 12,069 people took part in a Together For Equality and Respect activity, such as a program, training session or co-design process
- 469,379 people saw, read or heard a gender equality message developed by partner organisations.

The Together For Equality and Respect communities of practice continued to build the capability of practitioners from partner organisations to deliver evidence-informed prevention activities and develop the leadership and organisational capacity of regional partners to take effective primary prevention action.

Women's Health East delivered three communities of practice to 54 practitioners in the region. A range of topics were covered, including the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence, communications, the prevention of violence against women with disabilities, primary prevention policy frameworks, and consultation and co-design principles and practice approaches.

Together For Equality and Respect 2021-2025 Strategy launch

We released the new Together For Equality and Respect Strategy in November 2021. The strategy outlines the case for action to prevent violence against women and sets a strategic framework for regional prevention activities. It builds upon ten years of dedicated work and past strategies developed by the partnership, acting as both a planning framework and an advocacy tool that sets the scene for growth and more advanced actions over the next four years. Our aim is for the strategy to inspire and support organisations, community groups and entities across Melbourne's east to reflect, plan, and take steps to promote gender equality within their organisations and across their spheres of influence.

The Together For Equality and Respect 2021-2025 strategy includes a revised and more inclusive vision that acknowledges people of all genders and recognises the impact of systemic discrimination. The strategy includes an increased focus on intersectionality, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led family violence prevention work, and engaging with men and boys in the prevention of violence against women.

"I think the revisions applied have strengthened the Together For Equality and Respect Strategy – really like the strengthening of intersectionality, inclusion of the focus on life phases and of course a reflection of the opportunity that the gender equality legislation provides."

Together For Equality and Respect partner

Margins to the Mainstream: Preventing violence against women with disabilities

We elevated the voices and lived experience of women with disabilities and built the capacity of Together For Equality and Respect partners to contribute to the prevention of violence against women with disabilities in Melbourne's east.

The eight women with lived experience of disabilities who are members of the Project Experts Group co-designed a range of resources for use by partners. This included digital resources and marketing collateral for the 16 Days of Activism campaign, short videos that featured their lived experience and calls to action to address gender inequality and ableism. The Project Experts also shared their insights and expertise at several meetings and events with partner organisations, including the community of practice sessions that focused on a range of aspects of preventing violence against women with disabilities.

The experts created positive messages about what equality looks like for women with disabilities that draws on their experiences of sexism and ableism. The messages are a powerful call for us all to take action to prevent violence against women with disabilities by addressing sexism and ableism in our relationships, families and social networks, workplaces, and the broader community.

"What stands out for me is that we all have lived experience. We learn from each other. We problem solve and as a group come up with solutions...I have a better understanding of the many types of abuse women with disabilities experience. It has also given me confidence in myself and that my lived experience is important in shaping how we deal with these issues. I have loved learning to be a part of the team. It has given me hope."

Margins to the Mainstream project expert

Messaging for Gender Equality

We supported 17 practitioners in our region to understand and develop the skills needed to build public support for gender equality using the Framing Gender Equality Message Guide in two masterclasses. We also produced a series of factsheets featuring messages that were developed by participants to illustrate the principles and recommendations from the guide, including gender impact assessments, conducting gender audits, preventing violence against women, and early years settings.



16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

We coordinated the 16 Days of Activism campaign after consulting with Together For Equality and Respect partners.

This year's campaign was co-designed by women with lived experience of disabilities to build understanding of how violence against women with disabilities can be prevented.

The project experts developed a series of messages, one for each day of the campaign around the theme of what equality looks like for women with disabilities. The campaign includes illustrations for each message. The project experts have provided the creative direction and feedback to six women illustrators who have drawn on their own lived experiences as women with disabilities to create illustrations complementing the messages.

We provided partner organisations with a social media toolkit that included social media tiles, copy, and image description text to support the accessibility of the campaign. Sixteen Together For Equality and Respect partner organisations shared the resources, which travelled beyond our region with state-wide and national organisations sharing the campaign materials. Women's Health East made 68 posts across four social media channels, with a reach of 18,564. We also supported the campaign via presentations to partner organisations, reaching over 200 participants with campaign messages and information about how to take action to prevent violence against women with disabilities.

"The involvement of the lived experience experts was incredible – they made the messages and the campaign overall incredibly powerful."

Together For Equality and Respect partner

Women's Health East's training program

We delivered two training workshops on an introduction to prevention of violence against women to 26 early career practitioners, including university students, counsellors, nurses, librarians, health promotion practitioners, and family violence advocates.

We also delivered this training to 9 Swinburne University students who deliver on-campus peer-to-peer health promotion activities. The training included a practical component where participants had the opportunity to develop a plan for a primary prevention project to be implemented in their workplace or community.



WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST DELIVERS EFFECTIVE, EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAMS AND CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES THAT PROMOTE WOMEN'S SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS.

IMPROVE SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Sexual and reproductive health is an essential component of women's general health and wellbeing. It is also a fundamental human right.

Optimal sexual and reproductive health includes the right to healthy and respectful relationships, to choose if and when to have children, to have bodily autonomy and reproductive choice, and to have access to culturally appropriate, inclusive and responsive health services, including abortion services.

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

A Strategy for Equality: Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health in Melbourne's East 2020 - 2025 is a five-year sexual and reproductive health promotion strategy for women in Melbourne's eastern region. The strategy is supported by 27 partner organisations and led by Women's Health East.

An action plan was developed with partners to effectively operationalise the regional strategy. The plan outlines the collective actions that will be undertaken by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategic Reference Group to improve the sexual and reproductive health of women in Melbourne's east.

A regional approach to improving women's sexual and reproductive health

We provided strategic direction, leadership and oversight to promote the sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing of women in Melbourne's east by delivering relevant and timely information, advocacy, and research.

The Strategic Reference Group met quarterly throughout 2021-2022 in order to optimise member engagement and collaborative action. An Implementation Sub-Committee was established and met quarterly to oversee the implementation, evaluation and reporting of the action plan.

The Strategic Reference Group continues to grow in membership engagement, with the number of organisations growing to 27 representatives from local government, community health organisations, and other service providers committed to improving the sexual and reproductive health of women in the region.

Our Health, In Language

We delivered in-language women's health education sessions to women who speak Hakha-Chin in Melbourne's east. Session content was co-designed with women to determine the health topics they wanted to know more about. The project improved women's knowledge of sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and healthy relationships through in-language community education workshops attended by 22 women. Women's Health East also worked collaboratively to address the health needs of refugee and migrant women by sharing project findings with the regional Sexual and Reproductive Health Reference Group.

"It is good to know that there are many contraceptive methods. Maybe I will try to change mine because I feel that it has a bad side effect for me."

Program participant

Sexual and Reproductive Health Week 2021: Know Your Rights

We ran the first Sexual and Reproductive Health Week social media campaign in 2018 and now collaborate with other Victorian Women's Health Services. Sexual and Reproductive Health Week acknowledges two significant days on the international health calendar - World Contraception Day on the 26 September and International Safe Abortion Day on the 28 September.

The theme for 2021 was 'Know Your Rights', which highlighted the sexual and reproductive health services, education and support that all women, trans, non-binary and gender diverse people in Victoria have the right to receive. Nineteen organisations took part in the campaign. Across the seven days, there were over 40 posts, Instagram stories, articles and blog posts reaching over 143,000 people.

Women's Health East Chief Executive Officer Elly Taylor with member for Box Hill, Paul Hamer MP



STRENGTHEN OUR DYNAMIC AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST 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 achieving our vision of equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Women's Health East commenced the process of developing a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan with Reconciliation Australia. The Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, chaired by Women's Health East's Chief Executive Officer, met bi-monthly to progress this work.

Using a whole-of-organisation approach, a Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan will support Women's Health East to lay the foundations for future plans that are meaningful, mutually beneficial, and sustainable. In 2021-2022, Women's Health East provided three cultural learning opportunities to staff to build their understanding, knowledge and skills to ensure culturally responsive and respectful practices in the work that they do. Women's Health East recognises that the impacts of colonisation and racism are ongoing and continue to drive health and social inequities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, their families and their communities. A Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan is an important step in our reconciliation journey and is crucial to our efforts to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal women.

#SickOfSmallChange: Increased funding to Victorian Women's Health Services

Women's Health East, in partnership with Victorian Women's Health Services and our peak Gender Equity Victoria, called for the Victorian Government to increase investment in women's health.

Women's Health East's Chief Executive Officer met with 11 local members of parliament to discuss the Women's Health Services Budget Bid, and the impact that additional funding would have on our ability to support and improve the health and wellbeing of marginalised and disadvantaged Victorian women. The sector hosted a 'Crisis in Women's Health Event' and led the #SickOfSmallChange social media campaign.

The Victorian State Budget included \$19.4 million over two years to 12 Victorian Women's Health Services. This investment resulted in Women's Health East receiving more than double our funding from the Victorian Government. Following a consultation process with our Board, leadership team and staff in May and June 2022 to determine how this new funding would be used, nine positions were advertised and filled in June 2022.



Women's Health East staff members Naomi and Sui at the Chin National Day Festival

CONTINUED

STRENGTHEN OUR DYNAMIC AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

Quality improvement

We continued our leadership role to support the Victorian Women's Health Sector in its use of the Women's Health Services Quality Framework. This year saw the introduction of quarterly community of practice meetings for women's health service quality coordinators and other staff, in addition to our annual quality information and training forum, which had 10 participants from women's health services.

During 2021-2022, Women's Health East undertook a comprehensive organisational quality self-assessment followed by a successful review of our systems and processes by an independent quality auditor.

COVID-19 response

Our COVID-19 taskforce continued to meet fortnightly to review changes to the public health guidelines and the organisation's Recovery Plan. COVID-19 staff leave was implemented in February 2022, which provides staff with 7 days additional paid leave. Our policy and practice continued to evolve and change, as we worked to ensure the COVID-19 safe return to in-person delivery of health promotion programs, events and training. A whole-of-staff survey was undertaken in March 2022, with 90 per cent of staff reporting they feel 'very safe and supported to undertake their role' in the context of COVID-19.

Building staff capacity via professional development activities

We provided continued support for staff learning that included quarterly internal whole-of-staff training on Bicultural Professional Standards, Culturally Responsive Approaches to Mental Health Promotion, Cultural Safety Guidelines and How to be a Good Ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Staff also attended a Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place Cultural Education Walk in March 2022.

Women's Health Week 2021

We chose to focus on the health and wellbeing of our hard-working staff in 2021. Having been thrown into another COVID-19 lockdown, a series of remote events were organised that aimed to support staff mental and physical wellbeing. Throughout the week, staff took part in a scavenger hunt, a guided meditation session, and an online group cooking session.

Sharing our knowledge

Women's Health East staff shared their knowledge, expertise and contributed to the public discourse on women's health and wellbeing, including through online forums, published articles and blogs.

- We supported the 'My Money' webinars, a partnership project with Eastern Community Legal Centre, Outer East Primary Care Partnership, Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council, Yarra Ranges Council and Women's Health East that built the financial literacy and confidence of women of various ages and life stages in Melbourne's east.
- We partnered with Eastern Community Legal Centre and the City of Maroondah on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day for the 'Celebrate Ageing: Know Your Rights and Live Your Life' forum to highlight inequalities experienced by older people and promote the prevention of ageism.
- Our bicultural staff contributed to the Left Behind: Migrant and Refugee Women's Experiences of COVID-19 Research Report published by the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and Gender Equity Victoria.
- We published the Building Trust: what I'm learning about community engagement blog on our website.
- An article on the Kids, Coffee and Connection project was published on the online knowledge hub, The Well.
- Our 16 Days of Activism campaign materials were profiled at a Victorian Government event on lived experience and family violence with over 400 attendees.

Women's Health East staff participated in 45 external committees, working groups and communities of practice across Melbourne's east and Victoria.

Women's Health East also led, contributed to and supported a range of public policy submissions and advocacy that included:

- Endorsement of the Victorian Abortion Sector Statement on Roe v. Wade alongside 23 other organisations
- A submission on behalf of the Together For Equality and Respect Leadership Group to the draft National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032
- A submission to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act Engagement Paper
- Contributed to Gender Equity Victoria's Inquiry into Economic Equity for Victorian Women Submission
- Contributed to the Women's Mental Health Alliance Parliamentary Inquiry into Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.



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 the year ending 30 June 2022 and their accompanying notes (available at www.whe.org.au). Women's Health East prepares the financial statements in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards as outlined in the Independent Auditor's Report.

Total income for the 2021-2022 financial year was \$1,809,556 compared to \$1,444,358 in the previous year. Core recurrent funding remained stable while other income increased by 50%. Total expenditure was also higher than the previous year with employment expenses increasing by 26%, primarily due to additional project funding.

The result for the 2021-2022 financial year was a surplus of \$67,900.

Women's Health East's current ratio of 3.15 : 1 means that the business has \$3.15 in current assets to meet every \$1 of 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 2021-2022 financial year. The impact on income included one-off grant funding related to 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

	2022 \$	2021 \$
Summary Income Statement		
Income		
DH core funding	743,475	734,371
Other	1,066,081	709,987
Total Income	1,809,556	1,444,358
Expenditure		
Employment Expenses	1,455,262	1,156,776
Other	286,394	280,605
Total Expenditure	1,741,656	1,437,381
Operating Profit/(Loss)	67,900	6,977
Summary Balance Sheet		
Cash	651,194	726,557
Receivables	76,946	55,645
Property, Plant & Equipment	34,626	31,311
Total Assets	762,766	813,513
Payables	73,080	72,797
Income in Advance	60,917	132,521
Provisions	97,018	144,344
Total Liabilities	231,015	349,662
NET ASSETS	531,751	463,851
Current Ratio	3.15 : 1	2.24 : 1

MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATION

YOU CAN HELP US IMPROVE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF WOMEN IN MELBOURNE'S EASTERN REGION BY DONATING TO WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST.

DONATE

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

Your donation will support our work to:

- Deliver in-language health promotion programs and community education to refugee and migrant women
- Shine a light on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 on women
- Deliver programs to support women's mental health promotion
- Provide gender equality and prevention of violence against women training
- Lead Melbourne's eastern region's first women's sexual and reproductive health strategy.

To give a one-off or regular donation, or to leave a bequest using the secure website please visit www.givenow.com.au/whe

MEMBERSHIP

Membership to Women's Health East is free and open to anyone who identifies as a woman and who lives, works or studies in Melbourne's eastern metropolitan region, and to organisations who work with women in our region. Women's Health East had 135 members on the 30 June 2022.

Why become a member?

As a member of Women's Health East 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 information about women's health, safety and wellbeing received via Women's Health East's e-newsletter
- Invitations to participate in community events and consultations
- 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.



THANK YOU

Our impact in 2021-2022 was made possible by the support of funding from:

- The Victorian Government
- The Australian Government
- The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector
- Outer East Primary Care Partnership
- Whitehorse City Council
- Manningham City Council
- Monash City Council
- Safe + Equal

We would like to also thank organisations who contracted us to deliver work, including as part of the Action for Gender Equality Partnership.

Many thanks to our invaluable partners for supporting and contributing to our long-term work:

NATIONAL

- Jean Hailes for Women's Health
- MSI Australia
- Neami National

STATE

- Gender Equity Victoria
- LiverWELL
- Sexual Health Victoria
- Women's Mental Health Network Victoria
- VicHealth

REGIONAL

- Access Health & Community
- Boroondara City Council
- Boordawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service
- Box Hill Institute Job Advocate
- Centre for Holistic Health
- Deakin University
- Department of Education and Training
- EACH
- Eastern Community Legal Centre
- EDVOS
- Eastern Health
- Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network
- Headspace Knox
- healthAbility
- Inner East Primary Care Partnership
- Inspiro
- Knox City Council
- LaoLaiLe Seniors Group
- Lilydale Youth Hub
- Link Health and Community
- Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Region)
- NLEC Commcare
- Manningham City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Monash City Council
- Monash University
- Notting Hill Neighbourhood House
- Outer East Primary Care Partnership
- Regional Family Violence Partnership – Eastern Metropolitan Region
- Swinburne University
- Whitehorse City Council
- Yarra Ranges Council
- Yarra Valley Water

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM

- GenWest
- Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Gippsland Women's Health Service
- Women's Health Goulburn North East
- Women's Health Grampians
- Women's Health In the North
- Women's Health In the South East
- Women's Health Loddon Mallee
- Women's Health Victoria
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West





Women's Health East

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



Women's Health East staff Walk Against Family Violence

