



Women's Health

VICTORIA

Annual Report
2019 - 2020

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Creation Story (front cover artwork)

Yakuna Gananggurr

(translates to Until Tomorrow in Yorta Yorta language)

When you are working through life's challenges, it will not happen overnight. It takes the support of beautiful people from all around and the guidance of our Ancestors. We look to tomorrow to find the answers, however do we have these answers already? Life's lessons are not to challenge this guidance, though move towards it and through it.

The circles that are in the top centre part of the image represent diverse communities with people (the rainbow-like shape represents people) gathering around them and traveling through them sharing stories and experiences. These communities are connected by the healing waters. Water is a powerful element of this land and it provides us with healing properties. These healing waters then flow down and wash over the mountains at the base of the image and the flowers throughout.

The yellow and orange represents mountains which can be understood as the challenges faced in life. The parts of life that are not so straight forward and easy. These challenges are like mountains, we can face them alone if we choose to or we can lean on the supports around us. The connections to country are what grounds us and keeps us moving Yakuna Gananggurr (Until Tomorrow).

The flowers represent new growth and vulnerability. Growth does not happen overnight. It can take days, weeks, months, or even years. Vulnerability in the shape of flowers, these flowers need to be nurtured and cared for. They should be free to grow organically and hold the inner strength an individual needs to be their authentic self. Society should learn to embrace vulnerability and learn to feel empowered by it.

Yakuna Gananggurr continue to allow these supports into our lives, connect with those around you, share experiences and come together. You do not have to face life's challenges alone.

Artist: Madison Connors

Madison Connors (nee' Saunders). A proud and strong Yorta Yorta (Wolothica), Dja Dja Wurrung and Gamilaroi woman and mother to two booris (babies) Marley and Yindi.

Madison was born and raised in Shepparton, spending the majority of her life living on her grandmother's Country. She comes from a strong line of women and is following in their footsteps. Oral history has taught Madison to yarn with her Elders; to listen, to understand and acknowledge the challenges they faced, to be strong in the face of adversity and to continue teaching her children the importance of her history, their history.

Message from the Chair and CEO

Welcome to the Women's Health Victoria (WHV) Annual Report for 2019-2020, in what has been a challenging year for women and communities across the globe.

As an organisation dedicated to women's health, the last 12 months have given us pause for reflection as we've witnessed the stark realities of gender inequality, magnified through the pandemic.

We know women have been severely impacted across their lives. They are more likely to be financially worse off, taking on greater caring responsibilities or working on the front line. Women have also reported higher levels of mental health issues, increased levels of intimate partner violence, difficulty accessing vital health services and are less likely to have time to prioritise their own health and wellbeing. We also know that women from different cultural backgrounds and circumstances are facing even more hardship.

At WHV we have seen firsthand the impact of the pandemic on women across our five priority areas - sexual and reproductive health, (prevention of) violence against women, women's mental health, women's equality and women and cancer.

This context has strengthened our resolve and reconfirmed the importance of our vision - women living well: healthy, empowered, equal.

This year's Annual Report is full of information highlighting our achievements and activities for the year and demonstrating the impact that we are having on the lives of Victorian women.

In the first half of the year we celebrated our 25th anniversary at our AGM. We marked this momentous event with the induction of our inaugural '25 Champions for Women'. This special group of women have worked with and supported WHV and have made a significant contribution and impact on the lives of women and girls over the last 25 years.

Our focus this year has been on scaling up key policy and advocacy work on women's health, delivering vital support services and developing innovative training and capacity building. These activities have been guided by the *WHV Strategic Plan 2019-2023* and our strategic priorities, which remain even more relevant in the current environment.

Some of our key achievements include; the 10,000th call to *1800 My Options* from women across Victoria, the establishment of the *Women's Mental Health Alliance* to bring a gender lens to mental health services, designing and piloting Australia's first accredited *Course in Gender Equity* in Australia and online delivery of *Counterpart's* wellbeing sessions to assist women in need during the pandemic.

While the pandemic has shone a spotlight on gender inequality, it has also provided an opportunity to address the structural barriers that prevent women's full participation in society; economically, socially and politically and to 'build back better'.

Strong partnerships and collaborations have become more important than ever during the pandemic. They strengthen our work and bring diverse perspectives to the table.

We've joined with many other organisations and voices across the country specifically to increase awareness of the significant impact of gender inequality on women during the pandemic and the resulting need for a 'gender lens' to lead every aspect of recovery.

We would like to thank our partners - Women's Health Services, academics and researchers, service providers, advocacy and policy organisations, training providers, funders and women themselves for their contributions and support throughout the year.

Our thanks also go to the **Victorian Government**, particularly to the **Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Women, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs**, the **Hon. Jenny Mikakos, Minister for Health** and the **Hon. Martin Foley, Minister for Mental Health**, all of whom have been great supporters of our work.

As an organisation of women, we are not immune to the many challenges that have faced our gender during the pandemic. We want to pay special tribute to our wonderful staff and volunteers for their dedication and resilience during a time of great upheaval and uncertainty and for continuing our great work to improve the lives of women and girls.

We extend a big thank you to the WHV Board for their commitment, strategic expertise and strong governance, which has steered the organisation through this unexpected period of ambiguity and change.

You will also have noticed the wonderful artwork gracing the cover of our Annual Report. We would like to thank **Maddison Connors**, a Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung and Gamilaroi artist who has designed this beautiful piece for Women's Health Victoria to use in our work. It reflects our commitment to reconciliation and working closer with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women and communities. You can read the creation story on the inside cover.

In the coming year, our work will be critical to ensuring that women are not left behind in the recovery from the pandemic. The issues are big – more housing for women, improving economic and financial security including; free childcare, better access to sexual and reproductive health services, gendered mental health services and reducing violence against women, just to name a few.

Together with our many partners and stakeholders, we will continue to advocate for and work towards a gender-led recovery. We will aim to embed gender equality in leadership and decision making, public policy, workplaces and other settings, as we work towards our vision of women living well – healthy, empowered, equal.



Candy Broad

Candy Broad
CHAIRPERSON



Dianne Hill

Dianne Hill
CEO

A Year in Pictures

Who We Are

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) is a state-wide women's health promotion, advocacy and support service with a proud history of over 25 years.

An independent, feminist, not-for-profit organisation, WHV advocates for and builds system capacity to support a gendered approach to health that reduces inequalities and improves health outcomes for women. WHV collaborates with women, health professionals, researchers, policy makers, service providers and community organisations. WHV's health promotion, information and support programs work with and for women, to identify and respond to service gaps and health inequalities in innovative ways.

Vision

Women living well – healthy, empowered, equal

Purpose

We are champions for every Victorian woman's health and wellbeing

Values

Respect; inclusion; innovation; courage; excellence

Our Strategic Plan 2018 – 2023

Women's Health Victoria is guided by five strategic priorities:

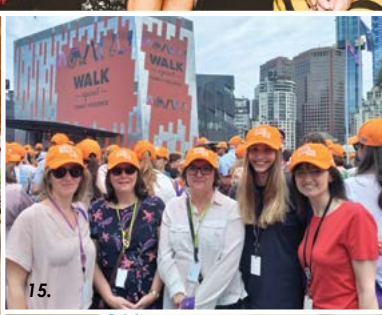
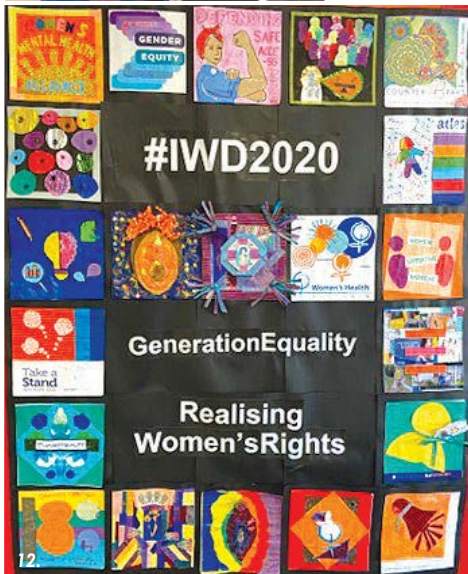
1. Improve women's health and wellbeing through strengthened voice and reach
2. Influence system capacity for women's equality through research, policy, advocacy and training
3. Influence the capacity and responsiveness of the health system to meet the needs of all women
4. Inform, support and empower women
5. Build a flexible, sustainable and innovative organisation

Our Priority Areas

- Sexual and reproductive health
- Prevention of violence against women
- Women and cancer
- Women's mental health and body image
- Women's equality



1. 1800 My Options Information and Resource Officer Emily Dang and Managers Carolyn Moghbar and Julie Keys promoting 1800 My Options in Bourke St Mall for World Contraception Day
 2. WHV Health Promotion Officer and Training Coordinator Bianca Walsh with Rosie Batty AO and Sue Rosenhain at Gender Equity in Action training
 3. WHV Policy and Health Promotion Manager Mischa Barr with WHV Senior Project Officer – Gender Equality in Advertising Linden Deathe hosting an online Project Reference Group meeting for the Gender Equality in Advertising Project
 4. RMIT University and WHV present the Progressing Gender Equality in Advertising event at Storey Hall, RMIT. L to R: MC Stef Digianvincenzo - Google rare; Dr Lauren Gurrieri - RMIT; John Broome - Australian Association of National Advertisers; Michael Daddo - The Shannon Company; Anita Fox - HESTA; Bec Brideson; Megan Bugden - WHV
 5. Leader of the Reason Party Hon. Fiona Patten, former WHV CEO Rita Butera and former WHV CEO Marilyn Beaumont at the 2019 AGM
 6. Piloting the accredited Gender Equity Training at Knox City Council



7. Hon. Mary Wooldridge MP at the 2019 AGM
 8. Celebrating 25 years as Champions for Women at the 2019 AGM
 9. Hon. Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs presenting at the Forum: *Think Again: Why Sex and Gender (Still) Matter in Women's Health* at Rydges Melbourne
 10. Panelists at the Delving Deeper into Gender Transformative Practice Forum. L to R: Regina Quiazon – MCWH; Cara Busst – VicHealth; Shane Tas – Our Watch; Nancy Poole and Lorraine Greaves – Centre of Excellence for Women's Health, BC Canada; Claire Varley, MC Linden Deathe – WHV.
 11. Hon. Jill Hennessy MP, Attorney-General; WHV CEO Dianne Hill and Hon. Fiona Patten MP, Leader of the Reason Party, at the 2019 AGM
 12. Banner created by WHV Staff for International Women's Day 2020
 13. Some of the WHV inaugural Champions for Women at the 2019 AGM:
 back: Dr Susie Allanson, Louise Johnson, Dr Paddy Moore, Belinda Asti,

Dr Desiree Yap, Judy Sammut, Beth Wilson AM, Meredith Carter, Di Missen, Marilyn Beaumont, Dr Jo Wainer AM, Dr Maggie Kirkman, Hon. Jill Hennessy MP
 middle: Rita Butera, Hon Mary Wooldridge MP
 front: Dr Sally Cockburn, Hon. Fiona Patten MP, Rhonda Cole, Patty Kinnersly
 14. WHV Board Members at the 2019 AGM: Helen Coleman, Kate Phillips, Elizabeth Dax, Tania Angelini, Kate Broun, Magdalena Simonis, Jennifer O'Donnell-Pirisi, Candy Broad, Cristina Wolters
 15. WHV staff Ellie Swindon, Dianne Hill, Dina Lynch, Paige Kernebone and Kylie Insearra participating in Walk Against Violence 2019
 16. WHV Policy and Health Promotion Manager Mischa Barr presenting at Access and Equity II: *inclusive and culturally sensitive SRH services in Victoria (and how to build them)* held at Queen Victoria Women's Centre
 17. Kylie Insearra – WHV Communications Coordinator, Liliana Sanelli – Perfect Events CEO; Dianne Hill – WHV CEO; Vicki Macdermid – Pitcher Partners Partner,

Bianca Walsh – WHV Health Promotion Officer and Training Coordinator at Pitcher Partners and Women's Health Victoria Boardroom Lunch
 18. Morning tea celebrating the completion of the LUCRF Super-funded Telehealth Project. Lauren Ferris – WHV Digital Coordinator; Fiona McRae - Counterpart Manager; Hon. Monica Gould – Chairperson LUCRF Super Community Program; Charlie Donnelly – CEO LUCRF Super; Dianne Hill – CEO WHV; Karen Hutchinson-Drake - Community Program Manager LUCRF Super; Greg Sword AM - Project Director LUCRF Super
 19. MC Dr. Ruth De Sousa at the Forum: *Think Again: Why Sex and Gender (Still Matter) in Women's Health* held at Rydges Melbourne
 20. Champions for Women: Rhonda Cole, Judy Sammut, Belinda Asti, Di Missen at the 2019 AGM
 21. WHV staff, together with women's health services, GEN VIC and members of the Abortion & Contraception in Victoria Working Group saying no to the Religious Discrimination Bill in front of the Fertility Control Clinic in East Melbourne

Sexual and Reproductive Health

A critical focus for Women's Health Victoria continues to be safeguarding and increasing women's access to sexual and reproductive healthcare - in the face of both legislative threats and public health challenges.

Advocacy in opposition to the proposed *Religious Discrimination Bill* has been an important focus of WHV's work this year. Submissions made by WHV on both the first and second drafts raised concerns that the Bill would wind back women's reproductive rights by threatening access to essential health services, including abortion and contraception. WHV joined forces with **Gender Equity Victoria** and the **Abortion and Contraception in Victoria Working Group** to launch the campaign 'Our Health, Our Rights, Our Lives: Women say NO

to the *Religious Discrimination Bill*'. WHV stands by, ready to continue advocacy when Federal Parliament resumes post-COVID.

COVID-19 presented further challenges to women's access to reproductive healthcare. Anxiety, financial constraints, intimate partner violence and service restrictions have all impacted access, with some women more adversely affected than others, particularly migrant women and international students. WHV partnered with the **Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health** to establish a service provider working group to monitor access issues, conducted a gendered analysis and produced a range of fact sheets to support advocacy.

As well as navigating these unexpected challenges, WHV



1800 my options

This year *1800 My Options* celebrated several significant milestones. The service received its 10,000th call in just over 2 years and 350+ trusted sexual and reproductive health services are now registered on the database.

The highest demand for the service comes from pregnant women trying to navigate the hidden and often confusing abortion system in Victoria. *1800 My Options* provides evidence based information about options and pathways to trusted to services.

In 2019-2020 *1800 My Options* developed its service capacity, networks and reach across the sexual and reproductive health sector. As the profile of *1800 My Options* has increased, more and more women and health professionals are considering the service as the to 'go to' when seeking information about sexual and reproductive health. More women are hearing about the service through either word of mouth or from their GP.

Further, the demand for contraceptive and general sexual health information and services has gradually increased.

COVID-19 raised unique challenges for *1800 My Options*, with a number of women experiencing heightened anxiety in relation to accessing services and whether or not services would still be operating and available to them. Further, COVID-19 meant that many women were experiencing increased financial insecurity or other barriers had emerged, preventing them from accessing services. In March 2020, the service quickly 'pivoted' to deliver a remote working model. COVID-19 also created a new demand for the team to provide information and health promotion campaigns focused on the safety of medication abortions. The team also explored how telehealth works for sexual and reproductive health and focused on the importance of sexual and reproductive health as an essential health care service.



continued its proactive policy, research, advocacy and capacity-building activities across a range of issues.

The second in WHV'S series of sexual and reproductive health forums *Access and Equity II: Inclusive and culturally diverse SRH services in Victoria* identified ways to build and develop services to better meet the needs of diverse service users. The insights explored in this forum were informed by the lived experiences of people from communities that are traditionally underserved by sexual and reproductive health services.

WHV's research has focused on identifying the strategies required to improve health practitioners' compliance with conscientious objection obligations and to address reproductive coercion.

WHV also partnered with **Healthtalk Australia**, **Monash University** and **RMIT University** to create two online resources focused on early menopause which provide information about initial symptoms, diagnosis, treatments and quality of life impacts.

Given that the current state-wide women's sexual and reproductive health plan comes to an end in 2020, the WHV team was pleased to welcome **Minister for Health, Jenny Mikakos MP**, to WHV's premises in March where the Minister confirmed the government's commitment to a new iteration of the plan. WHV is now preparing a sector-wide consultation and advocacy strategy to inform the next women's sexual and reproductive health plan.

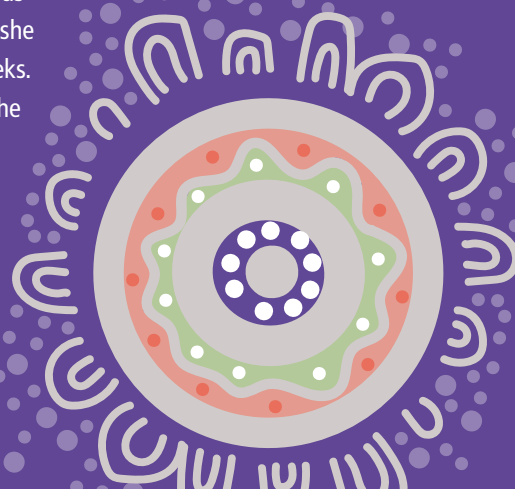


May's story

As a 21-year-old student working in the hospitality sector, the COVID-19 pandemic immediately impacted on May's financial security when her workplace suddenly closed and she found herself unemployed. As May waited for government assistance to become available, she struggled to pay rent and other bills. Distracted and worried about money and 'what next', May was then shocked when she realised that she hadn't had her period for several weeks. When May called *1800 My Options*, she was 8 weeks pregnant. The *1800 My Options* worker was able to explain May's options to her, both in relation to medication and surgical abortion and helped her to find a low-cost provider of abortion care services in her local area.

Anne's story

Anne had recently discovered that she was 6 weeks pregnant when she called *1800 My Options*. She was scared about her situation as her GP had told her that it was impossible to access abortion services in rural Gippsland. Not only was Anne worried about getting care for her young children so that she could travel to Melbourne for an abortion, she was also concerned about going to Melbourne during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The *1800 My Options* service was able to assist Anne with locating multiple abortion care options in the Gippsland region, so that she was able to access services locally and with peace of mind.



Prevention of Violence Against Women

WHV continues to share its expertise in the prevention of violence against women and gender equity through delivery of high quality, evidence-based training workshops for both practitioners and workplaces. Despite the emergence of COVID-19 and the cancellation of several training sessions, WHV still delivered 23 workshops to more than 450 participants over the 2019-2020 period. WHV is now in the process of transitioning some training online.

A *Most Significant Change* - evaluation captured stories highlighting the impact of WHV's masterclass series in the prevention of violence against women. It showed this series strengthens practitioners' skills in communicating the drivers of violence and applying an intersectional lens to their work.

"We started to consciously think of ways to communicate the drivers of violence against women using more intersectional language."

Storytelling for Change participant - Evaluation report 2020

WHV's one-off workshop *Delving Deeper into Gender Transformative Practice*, held in conjunction with Canadian experts **Drs Lorraine Greaves** and **Nancy Poole**, engaged advanced practitioners in critical discussions about working with men and defining 'healthier' masculinities, hegemonic femininity and intersectionality. Ahead of the workshop, WHV published research informing the Gender Transformative Change Masterclass in *'Towards gender transformative change: A guide for practitioners'*.

WHV's *Gender Equity in Action* workshops also continued to build the capacity of practitioners to deliver gender equitable programs and services.

"This [Gender Equity in Action] was one of the best training sessions I have ever been to. It will inform my work for years to come."

Gender Equity in Action participant - October 2019

WHV has a continued focus on supporting workplaces to promote gender equity and prevent violence against women with the delivery of WHV's award-winning *Take a Stand* program in conjunction with **Oxfam Australia**; the successful pilot of **Our Watch's Workplace Equality and Respect Standards** training with **Knox City Council**; and the delivery of *Change the Story* training to both the public and to **Respect Victoria** staff.

In the policy sphere, WHV partnered with the **Power to Prevent** coalition to advocate for the implementation of recommendations arising from the **Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Work** report into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.



Women's Equality

Working from a social model of health, Women's Health Victoria addresses a broad range of factors influencing women's health and equality. This year, WHV's policy work has included submissions to Parliamentary inquiries on gender-responsive budgeting and homelessness, as well as participation in the review of the *Sex Work Act*.

WHV also presented at the *Australian Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement (AMIRCI)* conference, drawing on the 2018 *Great expectations* issues paper to explore how the idea of 'choice' in motherhood is constrained by gendered expectations and structures.

The reach and uptake of the *Victorian Women's Health Atlas* greatly expanded over the last year as the result of a range of promotional and educational activities. These activities included the development of a new logo; an introductory webinar for new users in February which was co-hosted with technology provider, **Spatial Vision**; engagement with the *Respectful Relationships* educators group; and the development of a series of [Atlas education resources](#) for Year 10 Geography, created in partnership with the **Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria**, which highlighted the emerging value of the *Atlas* as a tool for schools.

More than 50 *Atlas* datasets were updated over the past year, with a number of new indicators added to the resource. The [Atlas website](#) was also enhanced with downloadable maps and streamlined access to factsheets.



The second year of WHV's ground-breaking project to promote *Gender Equality in Advertising* was extremely busy. WHV launched two major research papers on consumer responses to gender portrayals in advertising and promising practices from around the world to address sexism in advertising. A consumer toolkit for reporting sexist ads was also developed and launched. These activities generated considerable media attention, including WHV's first ever article in **The Conversation**, a video on SBS's **The Feed** (which achieved over 500,000 views), a live interview on **ABC 774** and an article in the **Herald Sun**.

Following extensive consultation with the ad industry, WHV has developed a strategic framework for promoting gender equality in advertising. The framework takes a whole-of-system approach and focuses on three priority areas: industry culture change; empowering community; and regulation and policy. The framework will be launched later in 2020, together with new logo and a website for the project. The WHV team will then move into the third phase of the project, focusing on engagement and capacity-building.

WHV has also been constructively working with the **Australian Association of National Advertisers (AANA)** on their review of the *Code of Ethics* which has included making a detailed submission in October to recommend the adoption of a harm-based model, similar to the model that has been implemented in the United Kingdom.

WHV would like to thank all project reference group members for their contributions, particularly those who have produced work for the project: **Marmalade, The Shannon Company, City of Melbourne** and **RMIT University**.



Gender Equity Accredited Training Project

In 2018, the Victorian Government funded Women's Health Victoria to develop a range of accredited gender equity education programs. This work was done with a consortium of organisations - **RMIT University, Monash University, Knox City Council, Women with Disabilities Victoria, ACEVic** - and two community learning centres **Coonara Community House** and **Yarrowonga Neighbourhood House**.

The *Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence* identified a need to skill the emerging gender equity and prevention of violence against women practitioners and through that the broader Victorian workforce. WHV's *Gender Equity Training (GET)* project sought to contribute to meeting this fundamental need.

This year, the *GET* project achieved several milestones, including:

- Developing Australia's first *Course in Gender Equity (22521VIC)*, accredited until July 31, 2024 on the **Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority** register of accredited courses
- Two *Gender Equity Pathway Courses* to support jobseekers and career changers
- Six *Micro-credentials* to support workforce professional development
- Producing a range of quality, industry and evidence informed resources, including:
 - A *Research Report* supporting the development and delivery of the gender equity units of competency, written by **Monash University**
 - A virtual workplace to support pre-service students to understand the application of gender equity in the workplace when completing the course

Women's Mental Health and

Mental health was a major focus for WHV in 2019-2020, particularly in light of COVID-19. Following on from the submission made to the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* in July and concerned by the lack of attention paid to women's mental health in the **Royal Commission's** early work, WHV established the *Women's Mental Health Alliance* in September 2019 specifically to advocate for a mental health system that better responds to the needs and experiences of women and girls.

Complementing our policy and advocacy work, WHV's *Spotlight series* – which summarises research on women's health issues – has also focused on mental health. These included *Spotlights* on alcohol, trauma-informed practice and gender-responsive mental healthcare.

The WHV team was delighted to welcome long-time friends of the organisation, **Drs Lorraine Greaves** and **Nancy Poole** from the **Canadian Centre of Excellence for Women's Health**, together with **The Hon. Gabrielle Williams MP, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs** to WHV's December symposium exploring why sex and gender still matter in women's health. Featuring 15 expert speakers and over

120 participants across 6 sessions, the symposium supported participants to use sex-and gender-based analysis (SGBA+) tools, as well as gender transformative and trauma-informed frameworks in order to address ongoing challenges in mental health and substance use.

WHV continued its focus on body image through a submission to the **National Obesity Strategy** consultation which recommended adopting a weight-inclusive health promotion framework. Worked continued on an issues paper on the impact of weight stigma and



GENDER

EQUITY

Knowledge • Skills • Solutions

- A teaching toolkit supporting the pedagogical practices required to teach gender equity, written by **Monash University**
- Eight sets of teaching and learning resources to support delivery of the course.

The course and microcredentials were piloted at three sites - **RMIT University, Coonara Community House** and **Yarrawonga Neighbourhood House**. Support for this included building the capability of the pilot trainers to deliver the course; responding to the impact of COVID-19 with all three pilot sites successfully pivoting to virtual classroom delivery; and collecting valuable feedback from the pilot deliveries to inform improvements to the teaching and learning resources.

The WHV team look forward to sharing these resources with Victorian training providers in 2021.

Body Image

discrimination on women's health, experience of healthcare and socio-economic status.

The WHV team was also delighted to partner with the **University of Melbourne** and **Royal Women's Hospital** on *Flesh After Fifty*, an exhibition and conversation series designed to challenge negative stereotypes about ageing while promoting positive images of older women through art. Sadly, the exhibition has been postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19.

The *Labia Library*, WHV's award winning health literacy resource for women and health professionals continues to empower girls and women – reaching 20 million page views in September 2019.

the *labia* LIBRARY

Women's Mental Health Alliance



Bringing experts together to improve women's mental health – the *Women's Mental Health Alliance*

Australian women and girls experience poorer mental health than Australian men and boys, including higher rates of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress, self-harm and suicidal behaviours.

Gender is internationally recognised as a social determinant of mental health, with gender impacting on mental health in many ways, including through experiences of discrimination, gendered violence, unpaid care work, economic disadvantage and the marginalisation of women's needs within the mental health system.

Yet there is a lack of awareness about the prevalence, risk factors and experience of poor mental health among women and girls plus limited evidence regarding how best to prevent and respond to mental ill health among women and girls.

In September 2019, WHV established *The Women's Mental Health Alliance* to advocate for a stronger focus on the mental health of women and girls, particularly in the context of the *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System* and the **Mental Health Complaints Commissioner's 2018 *Right to be Safe* report**. The *Alliance* brings together consumer and carer bodies, clinicians, women's health and community organisations, human rights bodies and researchers.

The *Alliance's* early work – publishing a [statement](#) ahead of the **Royal Commission's** interim report and a [gender analysis](#) of the recommendations in that report – highlighted the importance of gender in mental health and led to meetings with the **Royal Commission, The Hon. Martin Foley, Minister for Mental Health** and other key stakeholders.

The *Alliance* has now established constructive relationships with the **Royal Commission and Mental Health Reform Victoria (MHRV)** – providing [additional evidence](#) to the **Royal Commission** on gender, trauma and safety in mental health, and contributing to an ongoing dialogue with **MHRV** on applying a gender lens to the reforms.

Recognising that women are significantly more likely than men to have experienced negative mental health impacts from COVID-19, the *Alliance* produced a [policy brief](#) exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on women's mental health and have discussed the importance of a gender equal response to COVID with both state and federal MPs.

With the COVID pandemic shining a light on mental health and the **Royal Commission** formulating its recommendations, the *Alliance* is well positioned to make a critical and timely contribution to mental health reform. WHV thanks the members of the *Alliance* for lending their time and expertise to advancing women's mental health.

Women and Cancer

Each year, thousands of Victorian women are diagnosed with breast or a gynaecological cancer. Many more are living with side effects of their cancer and treatment. *Counterpart connects, supports and informs women to help them to live well* at any stage of their cancer experience.

Women affected by breast or a gynaecological cancer across Victoria can talk to a *Counterpart Peer Support Volunteer* for free. *Peer Support Volunteers* are all women who have a lived experience of cancer and are therefore able to provide understanding, support and hope.

“Right now, peer support is especially important, as many of us are feeling the effects of isolation. I think Counterpart Peer Support Volunteers can help because we know what it is like to have cancer and we can give women a space to talk through their feelings or worries.” May, Counterpart Peer Support Volunteer

As soon as COVID-19 restrictions were put into place the *Counterpart* team responded quickly. A number of *Counterpart Peer Support Volunteers* were willing to make phone calls to women from home to continue giving them support during stressful and uncertain times.

The program of events for women was also quickly adapted to be delivered online. In addition to webinars, *Counterpart* now offers online workshops over Zoom. These workshops provide another way for women to connect with each other, participate in wellness activities and learn new skills.

As hospitals have had to adapt to the pandemic, the importance of *Counterpart's* relationships with health professionals has increased. A simple e-referral process supports these health professionals to connect women from across Victoria to the *Counterpart* service.

“My patient was quite tearful during my consult with her yesterday too and I know was really looking to have someone who understood. You are the right people for the job, for sure.” Rosalind Deacon, Physiotherapist/Accredited Lymphoedema Practitioner, Bendigo Health

Highlights

Supporting women across Victoria

Two significant **Victorian Government** funded projects were completed in the second half of 2019. The *'Rural and Regional Project'* and the *'Area-based Project'* allowed *Counterpart* to increase access to cancer support across the state. By establishing firm partnerships with health professionals, *Counterpart* was also able to support more women and hold more events.

With more online events being offered in 2020, women in rural, regional and outer-metropolitan areas have been able to keep connected with *Counterpart* - and each other - while trying out wellness practices or hearing from clinical experts.

Bridge of Support

Bridge of Support is a hospital-based program that connects women with cancer to peer support.

In September 2019, the *Bridge of Support* program at **Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre** was expanded to support women diagnosed with a gynaecological cancer. *Counterpart Peer Support Volunteers* now see women with breast or a gynaecological cancer across the three **VCCC** hospitals – **The Royal Melbourne** and **Royal Women's hospitals**, the **Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre** and at **Sunshine Hospital**.

Bridge of Support launch for gynaecological cancer patients at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre.

Since the pandemic began in March 2020, *Counterpart* staff have been liaising with staff at partner hospitals and *Peer Support Volunteers* have continued to provide support over the phone.

Stepping into Wellness exercise programs

'Stepping into Wellness' is a six-week program that helps women to get back into exercise after being diagnosed with cancer. A qualified fitness instructor leads each class in a safe and supportive environment. Three *Stepping into Wellness* programs were run between August and November 2019 in Craigieburn, Chirside Park and Hoppers Crossing. These programs provide women an opportunity to connect with others in their local community.

Stepping into Wellness is funded through the generous support of **Pink Affair**. This ongoing support enabled the development of an online pilot *Stepping into Wellness* program that will be implemented in November 2020 for women in rural and regional areas. The rollout of this program provides an opportunity for women who have less access to exercise to come together, share their experiences and gain confidence.



Cancer and Wellbeing Days

Counterpart ran a number of successful *Cancer and Wellbeing Days* in partnership with health services throughout 2019 – 2020.

“The highlight of the day was the beautiful energy – so much learning, loved the crowd and that other people stopped to do so much wonderful self-care.” Brighton wellbeing day participant

Cancer and Wellbeing Days

July 2019	Cancer and wellbeing day – Mornington
October 2019	Living with metastatic breast cancer Organised in partnership with Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness and Research Centre
November 2019	Cancer and wellbeing day – Brighton Organised in partnership with Cabrini Health
March 2020	Living with cancer and wellbeing day for women with gynaecological cancer Organised in partnership with Mercy Health and Ovarian Cancer Australia

Volunteers

In August 2019, ten new *Peer Support Volunteers* completed their six-week training program. The extensive 40-hour program includes presentations by a range of health professionals including oncologists, a breast care nurse and a physiotherapist.

Counterpart continued to support volunteers through regular training and social events. In May 2020, *Counterpart* volunteers came together to celebrate *National Volunteer Week* over Zoom.

Navigator

The *Counterpart Navigator* app helps women find useful, evidence-based information that has been reviewed by health professionals and other women who have experienced breast or a gynaecological cancer. In October 2019, an evaluation by researchers from **Deakin University** showed high satisfaction rates among surveyed users. A range of recommendations have further improved the usability of this resource.

Looking forward

Looking to the year ahead, *Counterpart* will:

- Integrate online sessions into on-going face to face connections and activities with women, when the pandemic situation allows.
- Continue to work with and develop partnerships with health professionals, especially in rural and regional Victoria.
- Recruit and train more *Peer Support Volunteers*.
- Encourage women with breast or a gynaecological cancer to contribute to the activities of *Counterpart*.

More information can be found in the *Counterpart Year in Review 2019–2020*. This can be downloaded at counterpart.org.au/publications/

The 2019 intake of Peer Support Volunteers.



A Counterpart volunteer's Story

On 23 January 2016, I found a lump in my right breast. From there my experience with cancer began.

While my journey was short, intense and successful, some people endure many months of treatment and sometimes their journey takes a very different path.

I felt lucky that my treatment was completed in my home town and that I had a lot of support from my large family and my Breast Care Nurse. Coming from a rural community - where everybody knows everybody - privacy and anonymity can be an issue for some women, making them hesitate to access local support.

As a volunteer at our local Cancer Centre, I've seen the impact that cancer has on patients, their families and friends. I have some understanding of what that can be like and I wanted to help more. The challenge was being unsure of what to say, what not to say and how to say something to vulnerable people without causing them further anxiety.

I learned about Counterpart through my wonderful Breast Care Nurse. After completing peer support training in 2018, I gained the confidence to help women in my area access the support and resources that are available from the Counterpart Resource Centre.

Now my focus is on enjoying the future, paddling with my women's dragon boat team, having lunch once a month with a bunch of fabulous breast cancer pink ladies and encouraging rural women to seek peer support from someone who's been through a similar experience.

The impact of COVID-19 has seen our local Cancer Centre temporarily cancel their volunteer service and local support group gatherings are restricted, making it difficult for women to share their experiences face to face. Counterpart provides an avenue of hope for women, to connect and feel supported, particularly while direct contact is restricted or not available.



Glenda, Warrnambool

A snapshot of W+H's Reach

GENDER

EQUITY

Knowledge • Skills • Solutions



"I feel more **empowered** to support gender equity programs in our workplace."

Course in Gender Equity Student

Improving workplace gender equality across the Victorian public sector, universities and local councils with **Australia's first accredited** Course in Gender Equity

Providing knowledge, skills and solutions with course resources;

8 learner guides (800 pages),
28 assessment tasks,
100 activities,
2000 slides,
36 session plans



"This course gives us language to carefully and **purposefully explain** what we're doing and why."

Course in Gender Equity Trainer

COUNTER  PART

Women supporting women with cancer

"Thank you so much for what you are doing. Every time an email from you hits the inbox I breathe a little easier knowing I'm about to be treated to exactly what I need."

Anna, service user



882 women were supported

The Navigator app was used over **2500** times, informing people about breast or a gynaecological cancer



There were **77** opportunities for women to connect through events, webinars and exercise sessions and wellbeing days



Usage increased by **25%** compared to the previous year



Increasing the availability of reliable data to more than **3,300** users (82%), new with almost **30,000** page views

"This Atlas is amazing and so useful for understanding the major health issues in the population and gender issues."
[DHHS Epidemiologist - 13 Nov 2019]

Building a better picture of gender inequality in Vic with more than **50** datasets updated, **6** new indicators and new map features

Uptake of the tool indicated with over **1500** downloads of factsheets and over **1,000** downloads of maps (new feature)

Reaching a **new audience** and emerging as a valuable tool for schools with the development of **education resources** for **Year 10 Geography**



Delivering more information to Victorians through our website with users increasing more than **43%** and sessions increased by **36%**



Provided 25 sessions to more than **460** participants - helping to build the capability of the workforce in gender equality and prevention of violence against women

“I will apply some of the learnings and resources from the forum to the subjects I teach in Public Health. I am also inspired to develop some research proposals to investigate some of the issues highlighted at the forum.”

Think Again Forum attendee

Interest in the sexism ads project continues to increase with over **3,400** page views on the WHV website

Over **35** organisations have come together to advocate for a gendered approach to mental health



Positively impacting on women's health by reducing anxiety and providing reassurance to **1,232,588** visitors to the Labia Library

94% of them were new visitors



Delivering health information more than **3,600** times per day

Extending our **international reach** with visitors from all over the world



mostly from United States, United Kingdom & Australia

18 my options

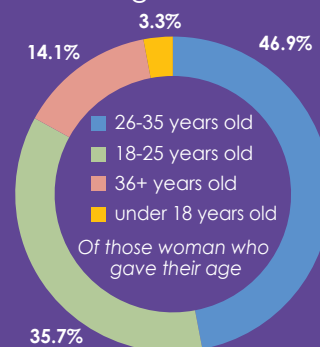
Making SRH services more visible with over **350** providers on our GEO map database across Victoria



Supported over **4300** callers

Increasing access to SRH services for regional and rural women - representing **11%** of callers

Woman of all ages are accessing information



Nearly **24,000** users accessed health information in over **30,000** website sessions

“My doctor told me I would have to travel (1.5 hours) to Melbourne. Thank you so much for giving me the right information, so I can get an abortion close to home. Now I don't need to worry about getting a babysitter, or explaining why I'm out of town for the day.”



Candy Broad B.Comm (UWA), GAICD, GAIST
Chair

Elected to Board: Oct 2013 **Meetings attended:** 9/9
Candy Broad serves as a Trustee Director of First Super, Board Director of the Australian Council of Superannuation Investors (ACSI) and Board Director of Haven; Home, Safe. She brings extensive experience in government as a former Minister and advocate for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights and women's equality through policy and legislative reform.



Christine Fitzherbert MBA, BA (Politics), GradDip (IR), Company Director's Diploma in Finance
Deputy Chair

Elected to Board: Oct 2013 **Meetings attended:** 9/9
Christine Fitzherbert, until recently, was Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development at Melbourne Health. Christine now runs her own consultancy practice specialising in the field of organisational performance, management and cultural change. In addition, Christine is the CEO of the St Kilda Police & Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), a not-for-profit organisation specializing in youth support services and a gymnasium. Christine is also a Director on another not-for-profit board.



Elizabeth Dax Associate Professor AM; MB, BS; MD; PhD; GAICD
Treasurer

Elected to Board: Oct 2016 **Meetings attended:** 8/9
Elizabeth M. Dax retired from her career in medicine and science in 2009. She has longstanding experience as a director of not for profit organisations and is now a director on four not-for-profit boards, including Chair of the Cunningham Dax Collection Pty Ltd and Secretary of the Accountability Round Table Ltd. Her last appointments (1990-2009) were as director of the National Serology Reference Laboratory, Australia and the World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre on diagnostics of blood born viruses.



Tania Angelini MA (Comm), GradCert Prof Writ & Edit, B Arts (Media Art)
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2013 **Meetings attended:** 8/9
Tania Angelini has extensive experience in strategic communications, issues management and public relations and is currently the Chief Communications Officer at the Royal Women's Hospital.



Kate Broun BAppSc (Health Promotion) (Hons), PGDipAppSc (Org Dynamics); GAICD
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2016 **Meetings attended:** 7/9
Kate Broun is an experienced public health professional leading cancer prevention policy and programs to improve population health, with a commitment to reducing health disparities among priority communities. Kate is the Head of Screening, Early Detection and Immunisation at Cancer Council Victoria. She is passionate about women's health and achieving equality.



Judy Hacker B.Ec, Dip.Ed, Certificate in marketing
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2016 **Meetings attended:** 7/9
Judy Hacker has over 30 years marketing and communications experience gained in both senior roles in the corporate world and in her own consulting business Maxim Marketing which was established in 2007. She also has extensive experience on numerous not-for-profit boards since her first appointment in 2002. Strategic development, communications, brand strategy and governance are particular areas of interest and expertise.



Emily Howie BA/LLB(Hons), LLM (Columbia)
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2018 **Meetings attended:** 7/9
Emily Howie brings extensive experience in law, women's rights, advocacy and campaigning. Emily is the Head of Legal and Dispute Resolution at the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. Previously, in her role as Director of Legal Advocacy and Research at the Human Rights Law Centre, she worked to ensure that women have access to reproductive health rights through advocacy and legal action.



Brigid Mahar B. Comm B.PD CA
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2019 **Meetings attended:** 5/6
Brigid Mahar has extensive experience working with not for profit organisations in relation to strategy and operations, specialising in the development of transparent and efficient funding models, policies and processes to support effective decision making. She is a chartered accountant and has a strong financial background spanning the not for profit and corporate sectors.



Magdalena Simonis MBBS FRACGP Dip.Obst RANZCOG
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2013-Oct 2015, Re-elected Oct 2017
Meetings attended: 7/9
Magdalena Simonis is a doctor with a passion for women's health advocacy and chronic disease prevention. She is a Senior Research Fellow with the Department of General Practice at the University of Melbourne and her other appointments include the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Expert Committee for Quality Care, Breast Cancer Network Australia (BCNA) Strategy and Policy Committee, National Coordinator for the Australian Federation of Medical Women, Co-Chair of Medical Women's International Association Scientific and Research Subcommittee and President of the Victorian Medical Women's Society. Magdalena teaches and is an RACGP and University of Melbourne Medical Student Examiner.



Diana Quinn BSC (Hons) Computational Mathematics and Investment Management Certificate (CFA UK)
Member

Co-opted to the Board: November 2019
Meetings attended: 4/5
Diana is a partner at PwC with c.20 years of global experience, mainly in advisory roles working with organisations going through change to reshape their businesses and operating models. Diana is a keen advocate of women's rights. She currently champions initiatives addressing diversity and inclusion, and regularly uses her platform to raise awareness of women's issues.



Sheena Watt
Member **Elected to Board:** Oct 2019 **Meetings attended:** 6/6

Sheena Watt is a Yorta Yorta woman, Indigenous engagement advisor and public health and wellbeing advocate. Sheena is the Executive Manager for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy & Programs at AFL SportsReady and serves on the boards of VicHealth - The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Merri Health, Progressive Public Health Australia and the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCSS).

Retired Board Members



Cristina Wolters BBus (Acc), M Taxation (Melb), GAICD
Treasurer

Elected to Board: Oct 2011 retired Oct 2019
Meetings attended: 3/3
Cristina Wolters is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, a Fellow of the Taxation Institute of Australia and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Cristina is currently General Manager of Taxation at Transurban.



Jennifer O'Donnell-Pirisi
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2011 retired Oct 2019 **Meetings attended:** 3/3
Jennifer O'Donnell-Pirisi, through her previous role in the Trade Union movement, was one of the founding members of the Family Violence clause that now covers more than 2 million Australian workers. Designed and delivered the inaugural, Rail and Maritime Transport Union New Zealand, Helen Kelly Women in Union Leadership Program.



Helen Coleman OAM; FAICD, Dip Com Dev and BSC
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2011 retired Oct 2019
Meetings attended: 2/3
Helen Coleman is a former local government Councillor and Mayor and has taken leadership roles in gender equity within Local Government and the wider community. Helen brings experience serving on several boards, working in government, the community and health services fields.



Kate Phillips MAICD, Bach. App. Sci (Human Movement); Finance & Accounting for the Non-financial Executive
Member

Elected to Board: Oct 2017 retired Oct 2019 **Meetings attended:** 3/3
Kate Phillips is the Chief Executive Officer at YMCA Ballarat. She brings a high level of understanding in enhancing financial performance and has experience in organisation-wide strategy development and policy, building corporate culture and supporting the primary health needs of Victoria's regional and remote women.

Our People

CEO's OFFICE

CEO
Dianne Hill
Ann Clark Interim CEO (May-Sep 2019)

Executive Assistant to the CEO

Georgie Sagers
Paige Kernebone (until Nov 2019)

Communications Coordinator

Kylie Inserra

Marketing & Communications Officer

Nicole Gunn (until January 2020)

BUSINESS SERVICES TEAM

Business Manager

Dina Lynch

Accountant

Arta Mataj
Michelle Hy

IT Project Coordinator

Gaby Pagniello-Priolo

Administration Officer

Souzi Markos (until Feb 2020)

POLICY & HEALTH PROMOTION TEAM

Policy & Health Promotion Manager

Mischa Barr

Senior Policy & Health Promotion Officer

Django Love
Amy Webster (until September 2019)

Policy & Health Promotion Officer

Renata Anderson

Senior Health Promotion & Training Officer

Justine Devonport
Linden Deathe (until December 2019)

Health Promotion Officer & Training Coordinator

Bianca Walsh

Information Officer

Jenny Ward

Senior Project Officer – Gender Equality in Advertising

Linden Deathe
Megan Bugden (until November 2019)

Project Officer – Gender Equality in Advertising

Mandy McKenzie (until November 2019)

Project Support Officer

Phoebe Myatt (until October 2019)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Workforce Development Manager

Debra Parker

Workforce Development Officer

Ellie Swindon

VET Resource Writer/Consultant

Kim Monaghan

SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services Manager

Dianne Hill (promoted to CEO September 2019)

1800 My Options

Managers

Carolyn Mogharbel
Julie Keys

Information and Resource Officers

Emily Dang
Marti Kaiser
Lucy Curtis (until January 2020)

Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator

Georgina Castles (until October 2019)

Counterpart

Manager and Team Leader

Projects and Development
Fiona McRae

Operations Team Leader & Volunteer Coordinator

Kellie Holland

Program Coordinator – VCCC Bridge of Support

Wendy Pullan

Program Coordinator - Western Bridge of Support

Louise Knell

Rural Programs & Stepping into Wellness Coordinator

Tammy Boatman (until December 2019)

Program & Resources Coordinator

Linda Rehill

Communications Coordinator

Katherine Bradstreet

Digital Resources Coordinator

Lauren Ferris

Administration Officer

Rebecca Harraghy

Area-Based Coordinator

Mary Macheras-Magias

Volunteer Training Coordinator

Helen Mertin

Casual Program Coordinator

Lieve de Clerk

Thank you

WHV would like to acknowledge and thank the support of the following women who contributed on our Task Groups, Working Groups and Advisory Groups:

Alison Murphy – Counterpart Advisory Group
Bernadette Zappa - Counterpart Advisory Group
Carmel McCarthy – Counterpart Advisory Group
Christine Evelyn – Chair, Counterpart Advisory Group from October 2019
Danielle Carpenter – Counterpart Advisory Group
Greta Hawke – Counterpart Advisory Group
Janice Wailes – Counterpart Advisory Group
Monique Baldacchino – Counterpart Advisory Group
Liz Dax – Counterpart Advisory Group
Helen Blennerhassett – Counterpart Advisory Group
Helen Coleman – Chair, Counterpart Advisory Group until October 2019

We would also like to acknowledge the following people who contributed to our organisation during the year:

Volunteers

Georgia Bennett
Inge Clinknick
Phoebe Myatt
Sarah Roussette

We thank the women who volunteered for Counterpart in 2019-2020 for their generous contributions:

Peer Support Volunteers:

Ailsa, Amanda, Barbara, Branka, Bridget, Chris G, Chris O, Danni, Denise, Emma, Evelyn, Glenda, Greta, Helen, Isabella, Janice, Jenny, Jill, Jo, Joan, Khim, Lea, Liz, Lyn, Marcia, Marg, Margaret, May, Meri, Nadia, Pam, Pam S, Penny, Rebecca, Rhonda, Sue G, Sue S, Teresa, Thérèse, Trish F, Trish M, Vivienne, Wendy, Wilma, Yvonne.

We remember with fondness Peer Support Volunteer Lianne, who died in September 2019.

Program Volunteers: Amy, Damien, Diana, Fe, Jan, Jaya, Lucy, Marg, Savi, Susan, Tia,

Exercise Support Volunteers: Judy, Lois S, Meril

Training support: Belinda Astl

We would like to thank volunteers from the National Australia Bank for their assistance: Ahmed, Beth, Christopher, Claudia, David, Jaclyn, Johanna, Katie, Matthew, Megha, Melody, Najwa, Nina, Paula, Samantha, Shaikh, Wendy, Yvonne.

Farewell

Thank you to the following staff members who were farewelled during the year:

Tammy Boatman
Megan Bugden
Georgina Castles
Ann Clark - Interim CEO
Lucy Curtis
Nicole Gunn
Paige Kernebone
Souzi Markos
Mandy McKenzie
Amy Webster

Our Supporters

Our Funders

Women's Health Victoria acknowledges the support of the State Government of Victoria, specifically:

Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of Education and Training

We also acknowledge the support of:

Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health
Melbourne City Council
LUCRF Super Community Program
Pink Affair
Victorian Government

Our Members

Women's Health Victoria relies upon the women of Victoria for their support and ongoing membership. Membership is free and available to individuals or organisations. Members can nominate for election to the WHV Board and vote at WHV elections. To apply for a WHV membership visit: whv.org.au/who-we-are/membership

Our Donors

Women's Health Victoria expresses sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the service over the past 12 months and would like to particularly acknowledge the following:

Pro-Bono Support for 2019-20

We acknowledge and thank those who have provided expert pro-bono support to WHV:

Marmalade
Russell Kennedy Lawyers
Shayna Burns
The Shannon Company

Additional Support for 2019-20

We would also like to acknowledge the additional contributions made by the following people and organisations:

Attractor
Cath Smith
Claire Varley
Ellis Jones
Highland Creative
IT Strategic
Melissa Grenville
Sam Burrone Design
Warren Marshall

Donors to WHV for 2019-20

Alexei Gurov
Ana Aguilar
Bunnings Group Limited
Comhar Foundation
Elise Lerpiniere
Emily Langley
Isobel Buckley
Jenifer Strauss
Jane Carter
Michael Cosmano

We thank those who have donated directly to the Australian Communities Foundation on behalf of WHV.

We also acknowledge and thank those who have donated directly to the Counterpart service. These donors and supporters are listed in [Counterpart's Year in Review 2019-20](#).

Donate to WHV

You can donate to WHV at: whv.org.au/get-involved/donate

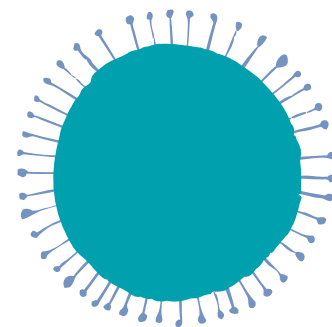
Reconciliation Action Plan

In 2019, Women's Health Victoria was proud to complete the first *Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) - Reflect*. WHV's RAP reflects a commitment to working towards a society in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, knowledge and cultures are respected; the impacts of invasion, colonisation and racism are acknowledged and addressed; Aboriginal self-determination is supported; and mainstream services are culturally safe and inclusive.

Highlights of WHV's reconciliation journey so far include:

- Drafting a WHV- specific *Acknowledgement of Country* guide
- The completion of Cultural Safety Training by staff and board members
- Inviting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guest speakers to internal and public events
- Engaging staff in learning activities, including *National Reconciliation Week* and *NAIDOC Week* events
- Offering two free places at each WHV training session for ACCO staff
- Piloting an option for staff to work on 26 January in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The *Reflect RAP* was extended for another year in 2020 as the WHV team works towards our *Innovate RAP* in 2021.



Financial Summary

This selected financial information reflects the operations of Women's Health Victoria and should be read in conjunction with the Women's Health Victoria Inc. Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2020 together with the accompanying notes. Women's Health Victoria prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards as outlined in Note 1.

FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL STATISTICS

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Summary Income Statement					
Total Income	3,390,648	2,697,591	3,325,422	5,114,348	4,026,281
Total Expenses	3,205,929	2,623,327	3,139,771	4,426,721	3,776,288
Net Profit/(Loss)	184,719	74,264	185,651	687,627	249,993
Summary Balance Sheet					
Cash	1,970,438	1,394,612	1,785,879	2,382,967	1,710,236
Receivables	24,623	67,389	19,792	21,334	141,352
Property, Plant & Equipment	148,646	130,363	229,270	160,071	393,998
Total Assets	2,143,707	1,592,364	2,034,941	2,564,372	2,245,586
Payables	848,984	190,051	407,894	248,492	1,109,208
Provisions	281,309	314,635	353,717	354,924	352,290
Total Liabilities	1,130,293	504,686	761,611	603,416	1,461,498
NET ASSETS	1,013,414	1,087,678	1,273,330	1,960,956	784,088
Current Ratio	1.86 : 1	3.21 : 1	2.46 : 1	4.29 : 1	1.54 : 1

Our income in this financial year has come from the State Government: Department of Health and Human Services for the recurrent funding for the Women's Health Program and the Counterpart service. Funding has also come from the Department of Health Human Services for our 1800 My Options service and the Department of Premier and Cabinet for Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) Capacity Building and the Gender Equality in Advertising project.

In this financial year we have also received subsidies from the Federal Government and State Government due to the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation.

The movement in expenses is due to the completion of short-term projects which has led to a reduction in the number of staff employed and project expenses. The increase in property, plant and equipment is due to extra investment in IT to support staff working from home as a result of COVID-19.

This year has also seen the introduction of two accounting standards: ASSB1058 and ASSB16.

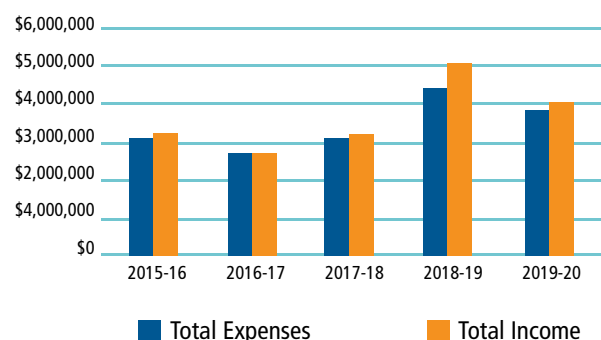
The introduction of ASSB16 and the way leases are now treated has seen changes in both the Statement of Comprehensive Income and the Balance Sheet. This now means that leases are brought in at the commencement of the lease as a right of use asset and as a corresponding liability. This change was brought in retrospectively in July 2019 and has seen the fixed assets and the accumulated depreciation increase. The annual lease payment is now brought in as a depreciation expense which increased the depreciation expense but saw a decrease in organisational costs.

Due to changes in AASB1058, unexpended government grants are now able to be carried forward into future periods as liabilities. This change is significantly different to how income was reported in prior years and it has impacted how total income, balance sheet liabilities and the equity position are now reported.

The ratio analysis, as highlighted in the table, is calculated to assist in determining the financial viability of WHV. The minimum current ratio is 1:1. This means that the business must have \$1 in current assets for each \$1 of current liabilities. WHV's ratio in this financial year is 1.54:1. This means that the business has \$1.54 in assets to meet \$1 in current liabilities. The ratio in this financial year reflects the changes in the accounting standards.

More detailed information about the impact of the new accounting standards are contained in the Women's Health Victoria Inc. Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2020 and accompanying notes available on our website at whv.org.au

FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL STATISTICS



Women's Health Victoria

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Counterpart - a service of Women's Health Victoria

Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Level 5, 210 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Vic Australia 3000

T 1300 781 500 E info@counterpart.org.au

counterpart.org.au

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Copies of this Annual Report are available online:

whv.org.au



Women's Health Victoria acknowledges the support
of the Victorian Government

Women's Health Victoria acknowledges and pays our respects to the traditional custodians of the land, the peoples of the Kulin Nation. As a statewide organisation, we also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters across Victoria. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and that we are beneficiaries of stolen land and dispossession, which began over 200 years ago and continues today.



#championsforwomen

Socialise with us on:

