

# Strategic Plan 2022-26

## Who We Are

WHG leads best practice health promotion and primary prevention work aimed at systemic change for gender equitable outcomes in domains of health, economic and workforce participation, and community participation more broadly. Our strategic plan sets out how we intend to continue and strengthen that work in the years ahead.

## Our Vision

A gender equal society where everyone can flourish.

## Our Mission

To eliminate gender inequality and improve the health, safety and wellbeing of women and gender diverse people.

## supported by Our Values

### Courage

We are confident and clear on our purpose and who we are here for; we speak up, stand on solid evidence and look after ourselves and each other

### Empowerment

We respect diverse experiences, identities and strengths of women and gender diverse people and seek to elevate their voices and experiences to provide the opportunity for self determination

### Feminism

Our feminism is intersectional and transformational. We strive for political, economic and social equality for all women and gender diverse people

### Respect

We are non-judgmental, ensuring everyone's voice and view is listened to and valued

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT and RECOGNITION

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands across the Gariwerd/Grampians region: the **Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Djab Wurrung, Wurundjeri, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Peoples.** We recognise their continuing connection to the land and waterways.



In particular, we recognise the **strength and courage** of Aboriginal women and girls in our communities who bravely speak up against oppression and the consequences of colonisation and **generously share their wisdom** on family, country and culture.

We acknowledge and honour the many women and gender diverse people who have **lived experience** of discrimination and violence, who, by bravely sharing their stories, have **helped inspire** cultural change.

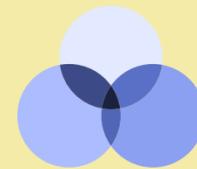
And we thank the many people who **generously contributed** their knowledge throughout the consultation process that informed this Strategy.



# OUR APPROACH and PRIORITIES

## Intersectional

Our intersectional approach seeks to unpack the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, over-lap or intersect and enables us to understand that different groups of women will be affected or disadvantaged by programs, systems and policies differently. We use this approach to challenge the systems, structures and beliefs that perpetuate racism, colonialism, class oppression, homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, ableism, and ageism adding to the impact of gender inequality. This approach is underpinned by the principles of listening, learning, being respectfully curious, reflecting and applying knowledge.



## Evidence Based

We draw on existing knowledge and evidence to guide our program planning and delivery, as well as seek to contribute to the knowledge base through a culture of learning, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating our activities. We demonstrate an agile and responsive approach, which is evidence based and skilled in the application and interpretation of the available evidence, recognising we are working in a time of rapid change and opportunity. We recognise the importance of our role as advocates for women's health and wellbeing, and will formalise, document and measure our advocacy work



## Collaborative

We commit to building trusting relationships and strong partnerships in all facets of our work, recognising that transformative change requires solidarity and mutual support. We communicate with honesty and integrity, set out clear expectations, seek to find our shared vision, learn from others and allow space for differing views and priorities. We are accountable and reflective in our partnerships.



## Our Strategic Priorities

- Improving Gender Equality
- Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Preventing Violence against Women and their Children

## Our Strategic Focus

- Making a Difference and Achieving Change: evaluating and measuring our work, in conjunction with our partners.
- Sustainability: of the work we do, our partnerships, our communities, and our organisation.

## Our Emerging Concerns

We will maintain a watching brief regarding these emerging issues:

- Women's Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Women in a Changing Society (Climate Change, COVID19 impacts, Emergencies)

# IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY

Gender inequality is a driver of compromised health and wellbeing outcomes for all women, including trans women and gender diverse people.

Intersectionality acknowledges that gender inequality is compounded by the effects of other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience due to characteristics such as: race; Aboriginality; religion; ethnicity; disability; age; sexual orientation; rurality and/or gender identity.

Women from diverse groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people, migrant women and others are more likely to experience discrimination, oppression and inequality because of intersecting factors such as racism, homophobia and ableism.

Achieving gender equality will lead to improved outcomes for women and gender diverse people in health, wellbeing, employment, leadership, community and sporting participation.

## Action 1

We will work with partner organisations and our members to identify and address the systemic barriers that prevent or limit improvements in gender equality, recognising that these barriers may vary across our region, and may require both local, state-wide and/or federal responses

## Action 2

Lead strong advocacy, informed and supported by women's lived experience of gender inequality discrimination and exclusion.

## Action 3

We will apply an intersectional approach to promoting gender equality, highlighting inequitable access to health information and service and developing tailored and responsive strategies for specific groups of women and gender diverse people who may be at greater risk of discrimination.

## Action 4

We will actively engage with First Nations led initiatives designed to highlight the impacts of racism and support self-determined approaches to deconstructing the oppressive structures of colonization that exacerbate gender inequality.

# IMPROVING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Our aim is for all women in the Grampians region to have equitable access to comprehensive, timely and affordable sexual and reproductive healthcare. However, there is ample evidence that access to services is limited outside metropolitan areas and varies widely across the Grampians region. This is particularly true of access to medical and surgical abortion.

Limited or non-existent access to sexual and reproductive health care is associated closely with health professionals' low prioritisation of women's health, systemic issues such as poor co-ordination between health professionals and hospitals; geographic distance, transport issues and stigma and cultural barriers to change all compounded by intersectional considerations.

## Action 1

WHG will work with regional and statewide stakeholders, including our membership, to examine the systemic barriers to provision of accessible, high quality sexual and reproductive health services across the region and develop solutions which will have measurable impacts for women, trans and non-binary people.

## Action 2

We will advocate for innovative and locally appropriate solutions to develop an adequate, suitably skilled and sustainable workforce for the region, ensuring SRH is considered a normal, destigmatised and valued element of the healthcare system.

## Action 3

WHG will apply principles and learnings from our body of work, particularly in amplifying lived experience, to inform our efforts in improving sexual and reproductive health, remaining cognisant that some women and gender diverse people face greater disadvantage than others through the impacts of intersectionality.

## Action 4

WHG will ensure a strong intersectional lens in consultation, needs analysis and co-design, including consulting with young people, trans and gender diverse and women from diverse backgrounds, acknowledging and advocating for their SRH needs.

# PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

WHG is the lead organisation for the prevention of violence against women in the Grampians region.

Through the CoRE Alliance, we work with partner organisations to prevent violence against women by addressing the inequalities and attitudes that lead to disrespect and violence. Primary prevention describes an upstream, population approach to addressing the underlying causes and drivers of violence, so that it doesn't happen in the first place. It seeks to change the social norms, practices and structures that allow violence to take place. The pursuit of gender equality lies at the heart of PVAW, as gender inequality is the main driver of violence against women and children.

An important part of WHG primary prevention work is in evidence based and well targeted advocacy that has the best scope to achieve prevention of violence against women and children. This will include promoting healthy masculinities and challenging stereotypes that limit regional and rural men, particularly where that offers the best avenue for effective change.

## Action 1

We will continue to lead and grow Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) enhancing the depth and quality of the work its and expansion to other sectors of community

## Action 2

We will expand and deliver our workforce capacity building program to increase the capacity of our partners in preventing violence against women, specifically focused on an intersectional approach.

## Action 3

We will identify key Grampians region settings for primary prevention as outlined in Change the Story (2nd Ed.) and the accompanying Changing the Picture (addressing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children) and Changing the Landscape (addressing violence against women and girls with a disability) and test new approaches specifically tailored to diverse groups in our communities.

## Action 4

We will actively engage with, and support First Nations led initiatives to prevent, reduce, and respond to family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the region and highlight the intersectional nature of violence, ensuring the voices of women from diverse backgrounds are heard

# EMERGING CONCERNS

## Women's Mental Health

Women's mental health has been identified as an emerging issue for WHG to consider in its future work. WHG will engage with the goals and strategies of the forthcoming Statewide Wellbeing Plan, supporting prevention and mental health promotion efforts.

## Action

WHG will gather data and evidence regarding mental health and wellbeing of women in the Grampians region over the first year of this plan and consult with our members to gain their insights. We will develop appropriate responses based on the findings of that evidence.

## Women in a Changing Society

Climate change is being factored in to planning for businesses, government departments and LGA's throughout our region, and is expected to have clear health impacts. The COVID 19 pandemic and other emergencies including fire and flood and clearly highlighted the fact that impacts of unexpected and unplanned events tend to be strongly gendered, with women often impacted much more heavily. For example, during the pandemic women were more likely to lose jobs, income, and more likely to bear the responsibility of caring for children and others. Change can be both positive and negative and as it is likely to continue WHG has identified this as an emerging issue that needs to be monitored, so that positive changes can be supported, and negative gendered impacts can be minimised.

## Action

WHG will work with partners to monitor the impacts of climate change and other societal changes relating to emergency response, specifically seeking to identify and understand any gendered impacts, and to advocate for women as changes become evident.

# SUSTAINABILITY and MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

**WHG is committed to achieving long-term change** that will ensure improvements in gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and prevention of violence against women are maintained. To do that, we need to ensure that WHG is viable and sustainable.

**We reflect on our systems and processes and take responsibility for ensuring cultural safety throughout Women's Health Grampians.** This is the foundation from which we can build meaningful opportunities for Aboriginal people and community-controlled organisations in our organisation and in our region.



Planning for any new program of work will include specific consideration of and design for **sustainability** of that work beyond the involvement of WHG.



WHG will demonstrate **best practice in employment** and contractual arrangements that seek to ensure that women are not disadvantaged, and that WHG is an employer of choice.



WHG will demonstrate **exemplary governance** and financial management to further build and strengthen the organisation.

**WHG is committed to making a difference in the Grampians region** and therefore will develop a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework to assist us in measuring what levels of success we are able to achieve.

**Evaluation will be built into all areas of our work** including our partnerships and collaborations.

Measurable indicators of change will be identified, and data collected against those. Reporting our achievements will be through our annual report and other mechanisms.

## Actions - Monitoring

We will monitor implementation of the strategic plan by reviewing the:

- ▶ Completion of action milestones across the four years.
- ▶ Progress towards each strategic intent.
- ▶ Monitoring emerging challenges and organisational sustainability.

## Actions - Evaluation

We will evaluate annually the implementation of the WHG strategic plan by measuring:

- ▶ Established key performance indicators and milestones.
- ▶ The effectiveness and impact against the three strategic priorities in terms of outcomes.

## Actions - Learning

We will ensure continuous learning from our implementation of the WHG Strategic Action Plan through our annual report which:

- ▶ Identifies the achievements and challenges in the implementation of the priorities, focus and emerging challenges.
- ▶ Allows opportunity to pivot future implementation according to lessons learned.
- ▶ Informs the development of actions for each year of this plan and for subsequent strategic plans.