



## Annual General Meeting

Women's Health Grampians (WHG) Annual General Meeting was held on 20 November 2019 at the Lucas Community Centre, Ballarat where the 2018-19 Annual Report was presented. Audited Financial Reports for 2018-19 are provided as a separate supplement. The WHG Annual Report and Financial Reports are available via the WHG website [www.whg.org.au](http://www.whg.org.au).

## Membership

WHG encourages all women and supporters to join as members. Membership is free. If you are interested in joining visit our website.



WHG is a member of Gender Equity Victoria (GEN VIC), the peak body for gender equity, women's health and the prevention of violence against women. Through GEN VIC, WHG is able to advocate, influence and collaborate to improve outcomes in gender equity, women's health and in the prevention of violence against women at a state wide level.



Women's Health Grampians acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of all the land and waters of the Grampians region, their Elders, past and present and in particular the strong Aboriginal women of these lands who are central to family and community. We are proud and honoured to work with them.



WHG acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

Annual Report design by  
Designscope

Thank you to Michelle Dunn  
of MDP for supplying some  
of the imagery used in this  
report



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# Chair of the Board and CEO Report

We proudly present this report, capturing as it does the immense body of work that this small organisation has accomplished in the past 12 months. The WHG Board has led the strategic thinking and support to enable the service to further develop, mature and diversify in terms

of funding sources along with innovative approaches to achieving social change and gender equality. We have continued to closely monitor performance against our financial and other strategic goals and are confident the organisation's structures and processes are sustainable and strong.

Once again, the Rural Women's Health Services Boards Gathering was a highlight, taking place this year in Echuca and including an excellent combination of governance training, inspirational women speakers, networking, fun and exercise.

Late 2018 saw us undertake the 'big move' to our new Ballarat premises in Barkly Street, surprisingly smooth and seamless thanks to the organisational skills of Valma and great co-operation of the team. We have settled in well enjoying increased space and beautiful surroundings and thank our new landlords, Conservation Volunteers Australia for their welcome and accommodation of our needs.

Partnerships have continued to feature strongly in our work and we express particular appreciation for those members of the CoRE Alliance Governance Group who provide leadership and direction with this plan. We have been excited to expand our networks into the sporting and business sectors particularly through the innovative work around gender equality in the construction industry and the Act@Play initiative in the sporting arena. It has been exciting to consolidate our work in reproductive choices, noting significant progress in expanding access to sexual health services in the Western end of the region. A landmark project this year has been the Equality for All project which you will read more about in this report.

During 2018-19 the Board farewelled Katherine Gillespie and Jude Channon. Katherine achieved six years of Board membership and was in the role of Chair for five of those. We are grateful for the wisdom and leadership she provided. We welcomed Debbie Bach and Shani Cain and express thanks to them and all the Board members for their contributions and their willingness to work as a team, and share the responsibilities of good governance. Together with our highly professional and committed staff group, we are excited about the year ahead and look forward to building on this year's achievements towards equality and empowerment for all women in our region.



Amy Rhodes Chair



Marianne Hendron CEO



# About WHG

## Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021

### Our Vision

Gender equality improving women's health

### Our Values

We work within a feminist framework, valuing:

- Empowerment
- Diversity
- Partnership & Collaboration
- Respect

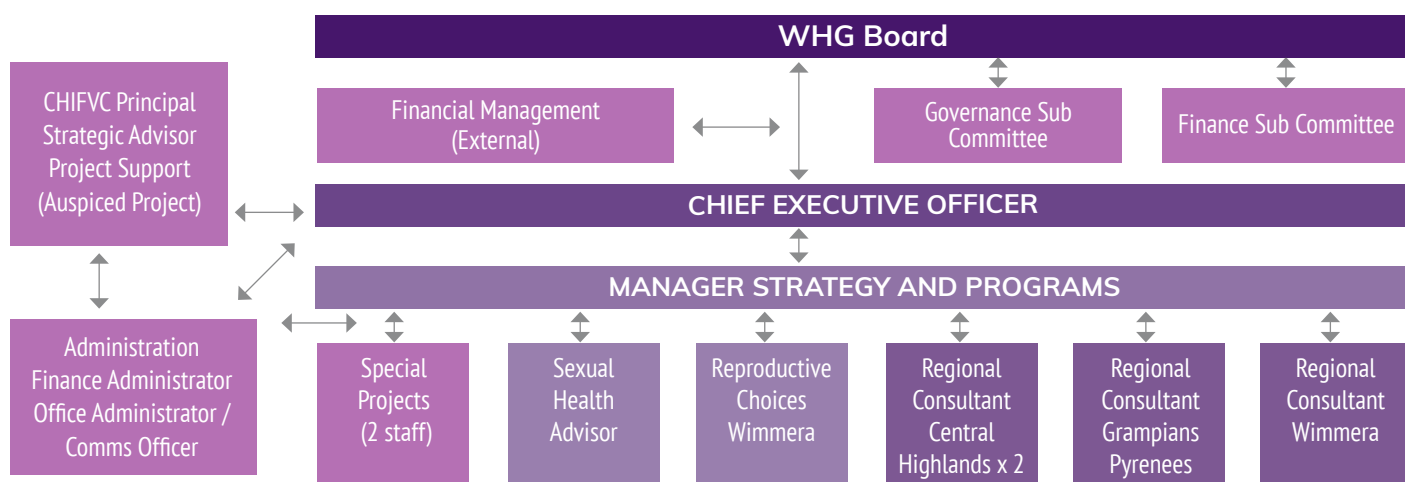
Our strategic plan provides a solid foundation for Women's Health Grampians' role as the regional leader in translating evidence into practice to support improvement in women's equality, health and wellbeing.

### Working within a Feminist Framework

Women's Health Grampians' work emphasises the role of gender in the formation of traditional roles and stereotypes and the ways in which these reflect and perpetuate bias against women. Women as a group experience disadvantage and discrimination in many different forms and the barriers to equality and full participation go across multiple levels: structural, institutional, cultural and individual.

The negative consequences of inequality are exemplified in poor health outcomes, poverty and violence against women. These are amplified for women in rural areas. The intersection of gender with other forms of discrimination and disadvantage further compounds inequality, for example, for Aboriginal women, women from migrant backgrounds and women with disabilities.

### Organisational Structure



# Advocacy and Influence

## Members of Parliament

This year, we met with many of our representatives in Parliament to shine a light on the issues affecting women in our region, including the Member for Wendouree, the Member for Lowan, the Member for Ripon, the Member for Buninyong and the federal Member for Ballarat.

In April, we hosted the Minister for Women, the Prevention of Family Violence and Youth, the Hon. Gabrielle Williams, with Michaela Settle MP and Juliana Addison MP, at two roundtable discussions – one with members of CoRE Alliance Governance Group and another with WHG staff and Board members.



L-R: Jo Clarke, Michael Flynn, Juliana Addison MP, Kirsten Holden, the Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Dee Micevski, Catherine Marcharia, Michaela Settle, MP.

In May, we wrote to all state election candidates in the Grampians region, highlighting the inequality faced by women in rural and regional areas, and urging action to improve gender equality, commit to women's sexual and reproductive health, and prevent violence against women.

## Media





# Celebrations and Events



Dr Paddy Moore medical abortion information session Horsham 2019.



International Women's Day, Ballarat, March 2019



International Women's Day, Horsham Town Hall, March 2019

## Medical Abortion Education Sessions

In February, we partnered with the Royal Women's Hospital, Ballarat Community Health, Western Victoria Primary Health Network and 1800 My Options to deliver a series of Medical Abortion Education sessions. Dr Paddy Moore, Clinical Head of Abortion and Contraception Services at the Women's shared her expertise for clinical guidance, support and referral pathways for GPs interested in providing medical abortion. Events in Horsham, Ararat and Ballarat were well attended with 66 attendees including GPs, medical students, nurses, pharmacists and specialists.

## Leading Change - Ballarat

The Central Highlands Leading Change event in August brought together organisations from across the region to find out how they can prevent violence against women within their workplaces and lead community change. Patty Kinnersly, CEO of Our Watch and Karen Oldaker from Medibank spoke at the event, Attended by 78 people from a range of industries including community organisations, businesses, local council, emergency services and government, health and education sectors.

## International Women's Day - Ballarat

This year in Ballarat, we launched the Unstoppable Women postcards sharing women's stories and voices. The newly appointed Equality Advocates, also shared their hopes for the year ahead.

## International Women's Day - Horsham

Over 200 women gathered to celebrate International Women's Day. This sold-out event heard from Noradjuha-born Bridget Noonan who made history last year with her appointment as the first female Clerk of Victoria's Legislative Assembly in 161 years. We proudly partnered with the Rotary Club of Horsham East, the Centre for Sexual Assault and Family Violence, and the Department of Health and Human Services, with the support of Horsham Rural City Council.



# Sexual and Reproductive Health

## Increasing Reproductive Choices project

We continue to make headway in the Grampians Pyrenees and Wimmera catchment areas. Funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, with the University of Melbourne as our evaluation partner, this project aims to improve knowledge among health professionals of abortion services and referral pathways. Healthcare providers have reported that they have been able to support women to access medical abortion locally. Providers have listed their services on 1800 My Options both publicly and privately, making it easier for women to access this important information when and where they need it.

## Building capacity and support for our sexual and reproductive health workforce

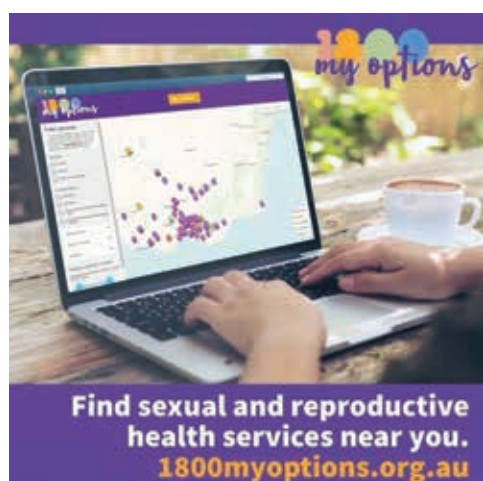
We value and invest in networks and relationships to help us bring the latest developments, evidence and support for sexual health into our region.

Meeting with service providers across Central Highlands we shared information about the new 1800 My Options statewide sexual and reproductive health phone line. The aim of this work is to encourage more providers to register with and refer women to this important service. We also continue to guide local councils on action to take in relation to sexual and reproductive health.

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At the launch of 1800 My Options, Victoria's first helpline for sexual and reproductive health, in March 2018 only 2 of the 150 providers registered where within our region. We are proud to report we now have 11 service options spanning Ararat, Ballarat, Horsham, Daylesford and Edenhope.

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We also shared local sexual health referral pathways with 90 health professionals, GPs and nurses from the region at the Western Victoria Primary Health Network Biennial Women's Health Event.

## Mapping a vision for Sexual and Reproductive Health

In collaboration with Women's Health Services across the state we worked to develop a long-term vision for women's sexual and reproductive health. A Theory of Change in Sexual and Reproductive Health for Victorian Women is an important resource that will guide the development of our regional plan and engage stakeholders and partners in action to improve women's sexual and reproductive health.

# Act@Work

“This program is one of the most valuable that any organisation committed to fairness and basic human rights could undertake.”

The Act@Work program began in 2012 and has now been rolled out across 18 organisations in the Grampians region. It is estimated that over 5,000 employees have participated in the program, with considerable reach into the wider community as participants discuss the issues with friends, family and other networks.

Four organisations took part in Act@Work this year – Hepburn Shire Council, Golden Plains Shire Council, CAFS and Moorabool Shire Council – and we congratulate them for their efforts and commitment to preventing violence against women.

# Act@Play

“Great presenters, great conversations and discussion, loved the videos. I feel inspired to take this back to the club.”

Delivered in 2018-19 the Act@Play project, funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria and in partnership with Sports Central strengthened our work with sporting clubs and associations through CoRE. The intensive 6 month tailored program, designed to support clubs to promote gender equality and raise awareness of violence against women, reached 22 staff and 41,127 members within the AFL Goldfields community and 11 direct staff and 4,580 members in the Basketball Ballarat community.

AFL Goldfields and Basketball Ballarat committed to action plans that incorporated:

- Recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain women and girls across all different roles of the club
- Communications strategies to raise awareness of violence against women and the need for bystander action
- Collection and use of gender specific data to inform their programs and pathways
- Bystander training for their wider membership

# Communities of Respect & Equality (CoRE)

CoRE has experienced another strong year of growth across the Grampians region. The model is established, membership is growing and the majority of members are undertaking meaningful actions to prevent violence against women. It has been great to see new members committing to CoRE and other members driving change and innovation as we work towards our vision for a safe, equal and respectful community.

## New members

Membership has continued to both grow and diversify across the entire region. Over the past 12 months CoRE membership has grown from 90 to 118 members – an increase of 31% and representative of a range of industries.

In addition to over 18,000 employees, we estimate that CoRE members are able to influence over 4000 volunteers and in excess of 75,000 individual club or network members. All 11 Local Councils are CoRE members and membership is growing and becoming more diverse.

## Presentations and awards

We have raised the profile of CoRE by delivering presentations at a range of events this year:

- East Wimmera Health Service AGM -The role of health services in response & prevention
- Federation University - WHG role in influencing public policy
- City of Ballarat - Right to the Night Forum
- City of Ballarat - International Women's Day Event

- PHAA Prevention Conference - Prevention of violence against women in rural and regional areas
- PHAA Prevention Conference - About the CoRE Alliance
- PHAA Prevention Conference - Intersectionality and the prevention of violence against women
- Elder Abuse forum – panel presentation on prevention

The CoRE Alliance was one of five finalists for the 2018 VicHealth Award for Gender Equality.

## Training



The WHG training program aims to build community capacity and knowledge of gender equity, the prevention of violence against women, and how to take action to challenge the drivers of violence against women. This program is supported by WHG staff and a team of 19 trainers who are committed to our vision for a safe, equal and respectful community.



# CoRE Communities of Practice



Leading Change business lunch, Ballarat August 2018

“Through CoRE I have more knowledge about resistance and backlash and have learnt tips to use in situations.”

We ran four CoRE Communities of Practice – the Grampians Pyrenees sub-region, the Central Highlands sub-region, the Wimmera sub-region and the Communications Community of Practice. This year, our Communities of Practice explored:

- Applying a gender lens to your organisation and the way it operates
- Sharing new policy templates and how to use them
- Learning from the recent National Community Attitudes Survey data
- Hearing from our Equality Advocates about applying an intersectional lens to our work
- Considering diversity and inclusion in our communications and imagery



# Equality for All



Equality Advocates L-R: Shannon Secombe, Michelle Dunn, Biny George, Sumira Chhabra Gambhir, Joy Juma, Ripsina Chatterjee, Bernadette O'Shannessy, Kirsten Holden, Jenny Beales (absent: Catherine Marcharia, Kate Mutch).

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“Equality for All allowed me to know I’m not alone.”

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Through the Equality for All project, we have recruited, trained and supported an amazing group of women with a range of diverse backgrounds to share their lived experiences of discrimination. They have shared their stories with CoRE members, enabling organisations to understand their role in leading cultural change that supports equality for women from all backgrounds and experiences.

This year:

- Equality Advocates spoke at over 23 different speaking engagements across the Wimmera, Grampians Pyrenees and Central Highlands regions
- 11 Intersectionality short films were developed by the Equality Advocates, sharing their lived experiences of discrimination and gender inequality
- The Speak Up for Equality event in Ararat launched the Equality Advocates’ short films. Over 55 people attended from local organisations and the community
- Equality Advocates spoke at the Public Health Association of Australia Prevention Conference in Melbourne

Funded by the Office for Women through the Free From Violence Innovation fund, the project has been extended until March 2020.



# UnstoppableWomen



Attendees at the Unstoppable Women - WoW event in Ballarat.

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“It feels like we’re a big family. We laugh, we’re sad, we cry, we’re happy, we teach each other new things and share our stories from our homelands. We all try to help each other if we can.”

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The Unstoppable Women project, funded by Ballarat Neighbourhood Centre and the Victorian Women’s Trust – Prue Myer Sub Fund, aimed to enable women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to ‘take a seat at the table’ as decision-makers, change-makers and leaders, and to develop skills to become confident contributors to reference groups, committee meetings, school councils and more.

Through 22 weekly sessions, program participants learned about a range of health, cultural and relationship issues. Participants developed their facilitation, presentation and public speaking skills, and many members of the group have now gone on to paid employment.

Members of the Unstoppable Women group planned and delivered the Women of the World – WoW event as the culmination of the program. This event brought together 45 girls and women ranging from 12 years old to 70+ from a range of cultural backgrounds. It saw an intergenerational skills exchange with cookery demonstrations, traditional Aboriginal basket weaving, making beeswax food covers and make-up sessions.



# Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee

Auspiced by Women's Health Grampians, the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee (CHIFVC) leads and advocates for a strong family violence system in Central Highlands.

The CHIFVC is a cross-sector partnership of 20 organisations working together for a joined up, integrated approach that helps keep women and children safe, and perpetrators accountable.

The CHIFVC works across the following priority areas.

## Practice Change and Innovation

A key focus of the Practice Change and Innovation working group is to deliver Community of Practice events to the broader family violence service sector to support professional development and networking. This year the group delivered three Community of Practice events, all of which were well received:

- Through the Eyes of the Child – July 2018, Bacchus Marsh
- Responding to Family Violence in Rural and Regional Communities – November 2018, Hepburn
- Information Sharing Reforms – May 2019, Bacchus Marsh

## Information and Systems Intelligence

The Information and Systems Intelligence working group was pleased to receive a grant from the RE Ross Trust, to develop the Data Press project. This collaboration with Ballarat Health Services, Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence, and The Centre for eResearch and Digital Innovation (CeRDI) at Federation University aims to develop a collaborative data collection and data sharing platform. This will demonstrate the impact of family violence on communities across the Central Highlands region and improve the breadth and integrity of data that can inform CHIFVC's strategic coordination and integration of the family violence sector. It will also enable the family violence sector to track, analyse and demonstrate demand, enabling shared responses and effective advocacy for resources where needed.



# Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee



CHIFVC Community of Practice, May 2019

## Community Engagement

The activities of the Community Engagement working group focus on prevention and early intervention. A key component of this work in 2018-19 was participation in the Hepburn Family Violence Action Group (HFVAG). The HFVAG is a cross-sector partnership of agencies in the Hepburn region, committed to improving the operation of the family violence system in the region. The HFVAG's advocacy document identified four key service system priorities for the Hepburn region and is working on their implementation. Some highlights for the HFVAG this year have included: implementing an emergency accommodation initiative; supporting Ballarat and Grampians Community Legal Service to deliver LGBTQI family violence workshops in Ballarat and Daylesford; an information session for local police members and family violence sector workers; and planning for the Daylesford Community of Practice event.

## Working Together Project

The Working Together partnership is made up of members from the CHIFVC and the Central Highlands Family Services Alliance (CHFSA). This innovative partnership supports increased collaboration between family violence specialist services and family services. This year the partnership has independently funded the creation of the Collaborative Principal Practitioner position. The Collaborative Principal Practitioner will build cross-organisational practitioner teams to begin collaborative responses to those clients shared between family violence services and family services.

# Our Board



**Amy Rhodes**  
Chair  
Joined 2016



**Jo Millard**  
Member  
Joined 2016



**Rachel Whittaker**  
Deputy Chair  
Joined 2016



**Frances Salenga**  
Member  
Joined 2017



**April Ure**  
Treasurer  
Joined 2016



**Shani Cain**  
Member  
Joined 2018



**Katherine Gillespie**  
Member  
Joined 2015



**Debbie Bach**  
Member  
Joined 2018



WHG would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Board member Jude Channon who departed from the Board in 2019.





**Marianne Hendron**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Melissa Morris**  
Regional Consultant  
Wimmera



**Rose Durey**  
Manager Strategy and  
Programs



**Kate Diamond-Keith**  
Regional Consultant  
Grampians Pyrenees



**Pat Loughnan**  
Finance Administrator



**Dee Micevski**  
Regional Consultant  
Central Highlands



**Valma Ffrost**  
Office Administrator



**Deb Harris**  
Regional Consultant  
Central Highlands



**Jess Cadwallader**  
Principal Strategic  
Advisor, CHIFVC



**Shiree Pilkinton**  
Intercultural  
Engagement Advisor



**Ange van den Berg**  
Project Support,  
CHIFVC



**Belinda-Sue Parsons**  
Project Coordinator,  
Equality for All



**Shannon Hill**  
Sexual Health Advisor



**Christy Knapman**  
Project Support,  
CHIFVC  
(Maternity Leave)



**Marieke Dam**  
Reproductive Choices  
Project Worker



WHG staff and Board acknowledge the passing of Amber Wells in March 2019. Amber was a much loved staff member and we remember her very fondly.

# Partnerships

## Partners

We are active partners in our region and are represented on a wide range of networks and committees.

### Grampians region:

- Dhek Dja - Grampians Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group
- Grampians Hysterectomy Variation Working Group

### Central Highlands region:

- Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee
- Central Highlands PCP Alliance and Prevention Network
- Hepburn Shire Health and Wellbeing Committee
- Hepburn Shire Active Women and Girls Strategy Committee
- City of Ballarat – Health Partners Network
- City of Ballarat Community Safety Committee
- Golden Plains Shire Health and Wellbeing Committee
- Sports Central Board
- Central Highlands Children and Youth Area Partnership
- Safer Pathways Governance Group
- Central Highlands Elder Abuse Prevention Network
- Elder Abuse Primary Prevention Network

### Grampians Pyrenees region:

- Northern Grampians Health and Wellbeing Working Group
- Grampians Pyrenees PCP Executive Committee
- FARMHer Project Reference Group

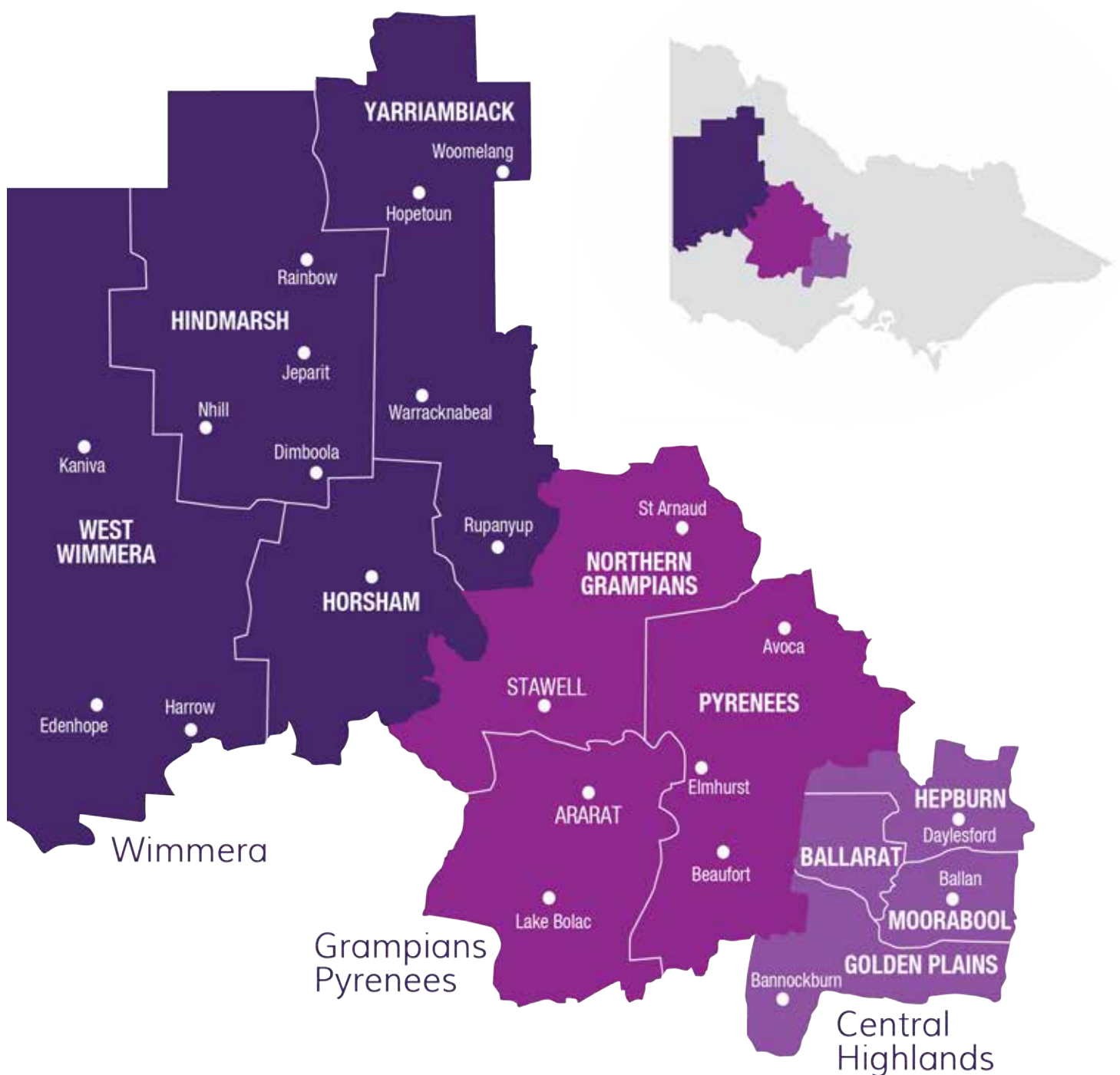
### Wimmera region:

- Wimmera Southern Mallee Crime Prevention Committee
- Wimmera PCP Executive
- West Wimmera Shire MH&WBP Consultative Group
- West Vic Primary Health Network Wimmera Community Council
- Wimmera South West Integrated Family Violence Partnership
- Horsham CEO Network
- Wimmera Local Area Planning Group
- Horsham Rural City Council Gender Equality Project Reference Group

WHG also provided a range of support to local councils in the Grampians to assist in the progression of prevention of violence against women and gender equity elements of their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

# Acknowledgements

Women's Health Grampians would like to extend our thanks and acknowledge the value of our partners, organisations and individuals that have contributed to and supported our work in 2018-2019. These relationships underpin our capacity to achieve our goals and contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of all women from across the Grampians region.







Women's Health Grampians

728 Barkly St, Ballarat VIC 3350

t: (03) 5322 4100 | [www.whg.org.au](http://www.whg.org.au)