



**Women's Health Grampians Annual Report**  
2020-2021

## WHG ANNUAL REPORT 2021 CHAIR & CEO REPORT

Incredibly, once again our year was dominated by the disruption and unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic requiring us to adapt, rethink, reschedule and generally be prepared for anything! Being engaged directly in research and advocacy around the impact of COVID-19 on women and the emotional load it has created, we have been particularly mindful of how we support our staff and the culture we promote to ensure everyone's wellbeing. Never have family-friendly policies and practices been so evidently needed, especially for those with caring responsibilities at home. Despite the challenges, our staff have been tremendous in staying the course, supporting each other and being even more productive than ever, as you will read in this report.

The Board and CEO have worked closely to constantly review areas of risk and strategies to manage this uncertainty and this has been vital to maintaining stability and sense of purpose in all areas of governance over the past year. Of particular significance for both Board and staff has been the completion of a Cultural Safety Audit, which has laid a strong foundation for the progression of our Reconciliation Action Plan which you will read more about elsewhere. This remains a key priority for WHG. We were delighted to see our new Constitution passed unanimously in February, a clear and accessible document that we believe is more fit for the purposes we now pursue, reflecting our goals in diversity and inclusion and clarity around membership and other processes.

The Board has remained stable, with the only change being the formal election of Jessica Grimble. We undertook a valuable exercise in succession planning and we seek to continue to recruit women from a diversity of backgrounds and lived experiences across the region to help steer the organisation and represent our members. Once again, staff numbers increased, thanks in part to the opportunity to participate in the WOMHEn Project led by Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, which provided us with six fantastic bilingual

educators across the region. We have also been fortunate to recruit several other high-quality staff in Business Administration, CHIFVC and Gender Equality Advisor roles. We farewelled Marieke Dam and Belinda-Sue Parsons, all whom left strong legacies and we thank them for their work.

The Communities of Respect and Equality Strategy moved into a new phase, with the comprehensive evaluation of the first four years and the launch of the second iteration. Sustained and strong stakeholder buy-in is still very evident and we are encouraged by the enthusiastic recommitment from CoRE members. We are proud to play a significant role in Victoria's primary prevention infrastructure. The role of CoRE demonstrates further value through the implementation of the Gender Equality Act, and we relish the opportunity it provides to work even more closely with all the public entities progressing gender equality measures despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Strong collaborative partnerships continue to be fundamental to our values and our effectiveness, and there are numerous examples of this throughout this report. The establishment of the Action for Gender Equality Partnership (AGEP) involving the 12 Victorian Women's Health Services, Gender Equity Victoria and Koorie Women Mean Business has enabled a platform of expertise in gender equality training with a strong intersectional focus. It has aligned well with the deepening intersectional lens across all areas of our work.

We look forward to a year of recovery and consolidation ahead with the health and wellbeing of our communities across the Grampians remaining a key priority.

Marianne Hendron, Chief Executive Officer

Amy Rhodes, Chairperson



Amy Rhodes  
Chairperson



Marianne Hendron  
Chief Executive Officer

# ABOUT WHG

## Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021

Our strategic plan consolidated WHG's role as regional leader in translating evidence into practice to support improvement in women's equality, health and wellbeing. We look forward to developing our new strategic plan from this solid foundation.

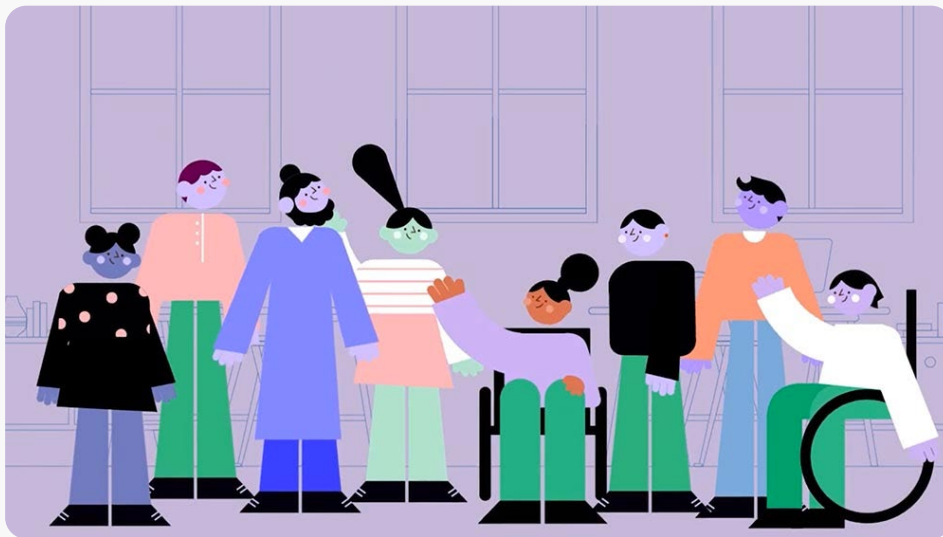
Strategic Plan

## Our Vision

Gender equality improving women's health

## Our Values

We work within a feminist framework, valuing:  
Empowerment • Diversity • Partnership & Collaboration • Respect



## Working within a Feminist Framework

WHG's work highlights the role of gender in the formation of traditional roles and stereotypes and the ways in which these reflect and perpetuate bias against women. The resulting gendered inequality means women as a group experience numerous forms of disadvantage and discrimination. The barriers to equality and full participation go across multiple levels: structural, institutional, cultural and individual.

WHG works within an intersectional feminist framework. We recognise that identity is multifaceted. We understand that this impacts on how women experience the world, and the choices available to them. Where marginalised identities intersect – for example, for women of colour, women living with a disability, LGBTQI+ women – disadvantage and oppression can be amplified. WHG advocates for all women and works to dismantle social structures that make life harder for some than others.

WHG uses an inclusive definition of 'woman'. We work to support everyone who identifies as a woman.



## OUR BOARD

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Amy Rhodes  
Chairperson



Rachel Whittaker  
Deputy Chairperson



Julie-Ann Zajac  
Treasurer



Frances Salenga  
Board Member



Shani Cain  
Board Member



Jennie Courtney  
Board Member



Di Thomson  
Board Member



Shawna Dominelli  
Board Member



Jessica Grimble  
Board Member

# OUR STAFF



**Marianne Hendron**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Rose Durey**  
Manager Programs and Strategy



**Shannon Wolf**  
Business Administrator



**Valma Ffrost**  
Office Administrator



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



**Melissa Morris**  
Regional Consultant – Wimmera



**Dee Micevski**  
Regional Consultant – Central Highlands



**Shannon Hill**  
Health Promotion – Sexual Health



**Ange van den Berg**  
Project Co-ordinator CoRE Hi-Vis



**Deb Harris**  
Regional Consultant Health Promotion



**Rebecca Bol**  
Multilingual Health Educator



**Quynh Tran**  
Multilingual Health Educator



**Sumira Chhabra Gambhir**  
Health Outreach Officer



**Leena Edward**  
Multilingual Health Educator



**Mura Htoo**  
Multilingual Health Educator



**Tan (Resayna) Tu**  
Multilingual Health Educator



**Jane Measday**  
Gender Equality Act Advisor



**Claire Evans**  
Gender Equality Act Advisor



**Jess Cadwallader**  
CHIFVC Principal Strategic Advisor



**Maggie Muller**  
Administration Support Officer,  
Central Highlands Integrated  
Family Violence Committee



**Youzhen Huang**  
Workforce Development Officer,  
Central Highlands Integrated Family  
Violence Committee



**Belinda-Sue Parsons**  
Project Coordinator – CoRE:  
Equality for All



**Marieke Dam**  
Reproductive Choices  
Project Worker

WHG also welcomed Natasha Olisoff, University of Melbourne Masters of Social Work student on placement in 2020-21.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of staff members who departed WHG during 2020-2021: Belinda-Sue Parsons – Project Co-ordinator CoRE Equality for All; and, Marieke Dam – Reproductive Choices Project Worker

## REGION & PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership, collaboration, networking and the sharing of expertise is fundamental to the way that WHG works. The working relationships we develop in the Grampians region and beyond underpin our capacity to achieve our goals and contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of women. Our gratitude and appreciation goes out to all who have worked with and supported us over the past year.

WHG is an active partner across the region and is represented on a wide range of networks and committees, detailed below:

### Whole of Grampians region:

Dhelk Dja – Grampians Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group

### Central Highlands region:

- Ballarat 4 Kids Partnership
- Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee
- Central Highlands PCP Alliance and Prevention Network
- Hepburn Shire Council Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan Committee
- City of Ballarat – Health Partners Network
- City of Ballarat Community Safety Committee
- Golden Plains Shire Municipal Health and Wellbeing Committee
- Moorabool Council Municipal Health and Wellbeing Committee
- Sports Central Board
- Safer Pathways Governance Group
- Central Highlands Elder Abuse Prevention Network
- DEDJTR Activate 2020-2030 Working Group
- YMCA's Make Your Move Collaborative Working Group
- Hepburn Shire Council's Active Women & Girls Strategy Working Group
- Ballarat City Council Active Women's Network

### Grampians Pyrenees region:

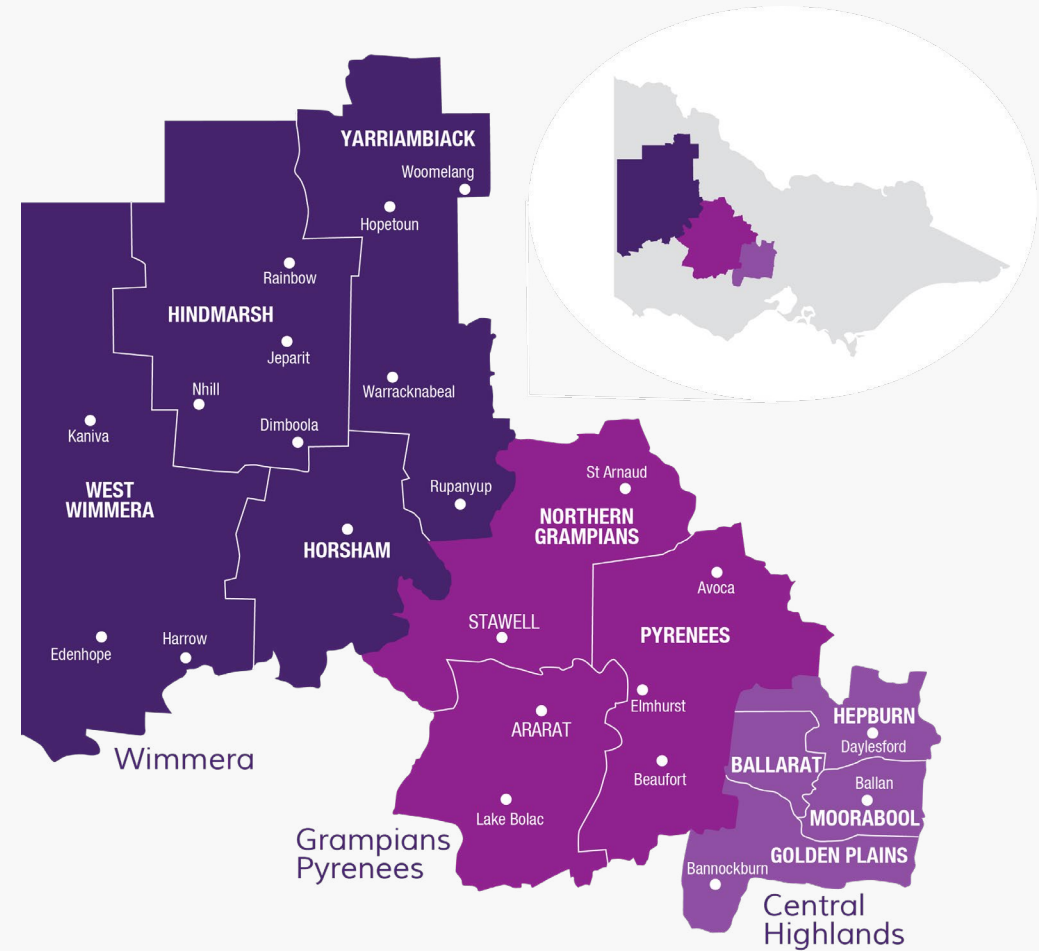
- Grampians Pyrenees PCP Executive Committee
- Pyrenees Community Safety Committee

### Wimmera region:

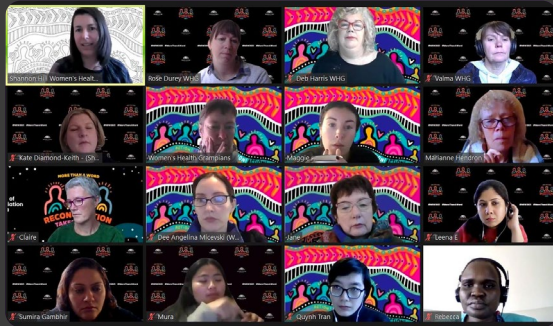
- Wimmera PCP Executive
- West Vic Primary Health Network Wimmera Community Council
- Wimmera South West Integrated Family Violence Partnership
- Horsham CEO Network
- Wimmera Local Area Planning Group

### Statewide prevention of violence against women and gender equality committees:

- Domestic Violence Resource Centre Community of Practice
- GEN VIC Communications Community of Practice
- MAV Preventing Violence Against Women Network
- Women's Health Services Council
- GEN VIC Gendered Violence Prevention Community of Pra



# OUR STAFF



## Cultural Safety Training

Over 2020-21 we completed our Cultural Safety Action Plan. This was part of WHG's commitment to the Victorian Government's 'Strengthening Cultural Safety in Family Violence Services' program. All WHG staff were privileged to complete cultural safety training with the guidance of Leigh Brown from the Bendigo and District Aboriginal Cooperative and Shelley Lillyst from the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative.



## Reconciliation Action Plan

WHG staff and board members are proud to share our Statement of Reconciliation developed in 2020-21. It outlines WHG's commitment to working in partnership and solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and provides a solid foundation for us to develop our broader Reconciliation Action Plan.

[Reconciliation Statement](#)



## Disability Inclusion Plan

In 2021 WHG partnered with Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) as a part of their workforce development and capacity building initiative. WHG conducted three disability inclusion audits and have developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan that will be launched later in 2021. The audits focused on strategic planning, partnerships, communications, employment and leadership. All WHG staff undertook inclusive prevention of violence against women training delivered by WDV.



# ADVOCACY & INFLUENCE

## Members of Parliament

This year, our advocacy to our Ministers and Members of Parliament focused on the gendered impact of COVID-19. We corresponded with local Federal MP Catherine King, and wrote to federal Treasurer, the Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP, Libby Coker MP, Dr Anne Webster MP, and the Hon. Dan Tehan MP regarding a gender-equal COVID-19 response and recovery. We raised three main concerns:

- the importance of applying a gender lens to economic and social recovery from COVID-19;
- the lack of gendered data collected and applied to recovery modelling;
- that key economic recovery measures appeared likely to disproportionately benefit men.

We also met with: Michaela Settle, Member for Buninyong; Juliana Addison, Member for Wendouree; Louise Staley, Member for Ripon; Emma Kealy, Member for Lowan; and the Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Women, Aboriginal Affairs, Youth and the Prevention of Family Violence. We appreciate the time taken by all these representatives to discuss our shared goals to improve the lives of women.



## Consultations and submissions

This year we made submissions to the following:

- Consultation Paper for the National Preventive Health Strategy
- Sport & Active Recreation Victoria – Active Victoria Framework Consultation
- Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2
- Course in Contributing to the Prevention of Family Violence and Violence Against Women
- DHHS Family Violence Safety and Wellbeing Framework
- National Survey for the Development of the Next National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children

WHG also contributed to the following submissions from Women's Health Victoria and GEN VIC, peak body for Victorian women's health services:

Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence

- Consultation Paper for the National Preventive Health Strategy
- Submission to the PAEC COVID-19 Inquiry
- Submission to the Review into Decriminalisation of Sex Work 2020
- Submission to the Family Violence Implementation Monitor
- Submission to Skills for Victoria's Growing Economy Review 2020
- Submission to Victorian Treasurer – Pre-Budget Statement on a Gender Equal Recovery
- Victorian Budget Analysis 2020 & 2021
- Productivity Commission – Interim Report Submission Skills and Workforce Development Agreement
- Submission to Federal Treasurer on Gender Equal Budgeting
- Submission to Prime Minister and Minister for Women re: Safeguarding Women in Federal Parliament

## OUR STAFF

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25

Media Articles Published

3

Television Appearances

3

Radio Interviews

905

Stakeholders receiving newsletters

5,299

Website visitors

1,101

Twitter followers (77 new)

359

Tweets liked (92 retweeted)

814

Facebook followers (153 new)

17,804

Social media post reach (up 39.5%)

## CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

### The impact of COVID-19 on female participation in sport

We were delighted to hold a webinar focusing on the impact of COVID-19 on female participation in sport. We know that the significant impact of the pandemic on women involved in sport has been widely documented, and that there is work to do to re-engage women and keep them connected.

This webinar included appearances from:

- **Tony Baker** – Board Director, Minyip Murtoa Football Netball Club
- **Rochelle Eime** – Professor of Sports Participation, Federation and Victoria University
- **Emily O'Brien** – Project Coordinator, Sports Central

Women traditionally participate in club-based sport at half the rate of men, and are more likely to be physically active through non-sport activities such as walking, running, going to the gym or Pilates. There is a concern that women may be less likely to return to club-based sport at all post-COVID-19.



### Local Stories of Action Launch

In 2020-21, the new edition of the Local Stories of Action was produced, in which CoRE members showcased the innovative actions that they have undertaken as part of their CoRE membership. Held as an online event in December 2020, the launch was chaired by Marianne Hendron and featured the following speakers:

- Kevin O'Brien, Director Communities and Place, Horsham Rural City Council
- Norman Pruefer, Manager People and Culture, Pyrenees Council
- Jennie Courtney, Director Community Engagement, Ballarat Health Service

### International Women's Day – Brazen Hussies movie

A joint International Women's Day event was held with WRISC Family Violence Support to screen the movie Brazen Hussies at the Regent Cinema in Ballarat. Attendees were welcomed to country by Deanne Gilson, and heard from Joy Juma, WHG Equality Advocate and Chair of Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council, and Alex Ocean from A Pot Of Courage. The screening was very well received and 128 people registered. All proceeds went to WRISC.



# MARCH4JUSTICE

WHG was proud to attend the March 4 Justice protests that took place across Australia on 15 March 2021. Staff members attended marches in Canberra, Melbourne, and Ballarat. The values of the March 4 Justice movement strongly align with our own, and we add our voice to the call for:

- all levels of government to take decisive and progressive action to reduce gendered violence;
- preventative action initiatives and associated services to be properly funded;
- genuine steps to be taken towards achieving economic and social equality for women.



# COVID-19

Applying a gendered lens to COVID-19 response and recovery planning has been vital in ensuring that the specific needs of women are recognised and incorporated into decision-making processes, planning and region-wide recovery. Our work over the past year to highlight this issue has been important, and will ultimately contribute to better health outcomes for women in this swiftly-changing space.

## Impact / Adapting update

As in 2019-20, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the way we work. However, the lessons learned from our early adaptation to this new context have been put to good use and enabled us to maintain a consistent and effective presence in the region. In some key ways we have been able to forge new connections and develop meaningful ways of working that help overcome traditional challenges of leading change in regional areas:

- We consolidated alternate modes of sharing information, including online communities of practice, webinars and the development of online training courses
- We were able to reach new and diverse audiences as the use of online communication technology rapidly became more widespread and accepted
- We focused on our online outreach with projects including our Youth Equality Advocates and Multilingual Health Educators.



## Are you safe at home video

In August 2020 we launched our 'Are You Safe At Home' video, developed with WRISC Family Violence Support and Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee, in response to research showing an increase in family violence as the COVID-19 pandemic took hold.

Our video reached 816 people through our social media channels and was shared multiple times by our partners.



## COVID-19 vaccination ambassadors project

In the second half of 2021 we drew upon our existing Multilingual Health Educator team to prepare for the delivery of the COVID-19 Vaccination Ambassador project. Multilingual Health Educators had already been trained to deliver in-language health education sessions to community, and this was expanded to incorporate a specific focus on promoting COVID-19 vaccination. Priority populations included:

- Indian community (languages: Punjabi, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu) – based in Ballarat/Central Highlands region;
- South Sudanese community (languages: Nuer) – based in Ballarat/Central Highlands region;
- Karen community (languages: Karen, Thai) – based in Nhill/Wimmera region;
- Vietnamese community (languages: Vietnamese) – based in Ballarat/Central Highlands region.

WHG is now well-placed to continue to promote COVID-19 vaccination to migrant and refugee women in the Grampians region.

# GENDER EQUALITY ACT

This year, we have assisted CoRE members to understand and take action to meet their obligations under the *Gender Equality Act*. This landmark piece of legislation directs defined entities to consider the gendered impacts of their policies, programs and services – ensuring better outcomes for people of all genders, across the community.

## Supporting CoRE members

Approximately one-quarter of all CoRE members are defined entities under the Act, which means they have obligations to meet within a prescribed time period. Through their previous work as part of CoRE, our members have found themselves in a strong position to meet their obligations. We have delivered briefings, training, resources and one-on-one conversations with WHG Regional Consultants that bring Gender Equality Act obligations to life and ensure their relevance and longevity.



## Gender Equality Act Advisors

Two dedicated Gender Equality Act Advisors are now working with a number of Grampians region defined entities (11 regional health services and two local councils) to support implementation of their Gender Equality Act requirements. The Gender Equality Act Advisors, resourced by those defined entities, are embedded within and supported by WHG. They are based in Horsham and Ballarat to ensure regional coverage.

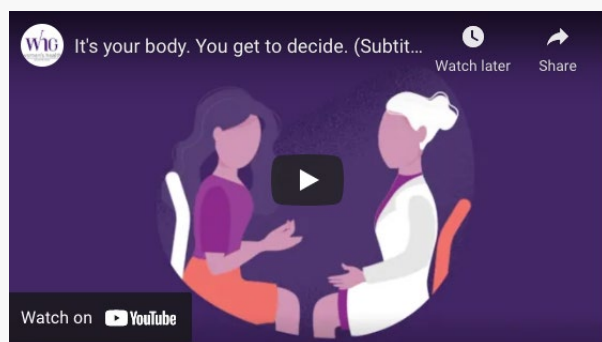
The following resources have been developed and shared with our partners:

- The Gender Equality Act and CoRE Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRrtIWVylP8&feature=youtu.be>
- Gender Lens Checklist – updated to include the Gender Equality Act: [https://whg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Gender\\_Lens\\_Checklist\\_2021.pdf](https://whg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Gender_Lens_Checklist_2021.pdf)
- Gender Equality Act Overview – presentations to leadership
- Presentations on key aspects of the Gender Equality Act, including ‘defining direct and significant’;
- Gender Impact Assessment Workshop;
- Adaptable resources including Gender Equality Action Plan templates, briefing notes, Case for Change presentation, leadership statements, sample board briefings, communications plan templates, consultation principles, summary of obligations, question and answer resources;
- Facilitation of AGEP Gender Equality Action Plan workshops.

# SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

## It's Your Body, You Decide video

On Safe Abortion Day 2020 we launched our 'It's your body, you get to decide' video. The video discusses regional options for medical and surgical abortion, and promotes awareness of 1800 My Options. It has been disseminated widely, used by a regional Sexual and Reproductive Health Nurse for client information, and viewed 317 times on our own channel. With access to abortion continuing to present a challenge for women across the Grampians, we expect our video to remain a valuable resource for years to come. In 2021, WHG began a collaboration with the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to develop multiple-language versions, which will enable the information to reach an even broader and more diverse audience.



## Building capacity and supporting our sexual and reproductive health workforce

We hosted a webinar to launch the Increasing Reproductive Choices Evaluation report in collaboration with The University of Melbourne and The Royal Women's Hospital. Through the Increasing Reproductive Choices Partnership Group, we continue to monitor sexual and reproductive health service provision across the region, remaining alert and responsive to any workforce challenges or barriers for women accessing abortion care. This partnership ensures WHG can provide strong rural and regional advocacy to relevant peak bodies and networks in working towards improved reproductive choices for women.

## Advocating for better access to sexual and reproductive health services

Our advocacy over the past year has focused on four key areas:

### Supporting organisations to improve access to condoms across the Grampians region

Our work with Ballarat Community Health led to the installation of condom vending machines in Ballarat Library facilities. Free condom dispensers have been installed in the Moorabool Youth and Library spaces. Pre-planning discussions with the Central Highlands Neighbourhood House Network, Golden Plains Shire, and Longerenong College seek to improve access at those sites.

### Advocating for more services to register with 1800 My Options

The following health promotion advocacy occurred in 2020-21:

- 1800 My Options Ararat-focussed campaign;
- Inclusion of 1800 My Options service gaps and recommended actions in Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Gender information sheets for each local government area;
- Promoted "Be Proud of Your Choices" poster campaign;
- Met with doctors in schools, school nurses, and pharmacies in Halls Gap and Ararat.

### Advocating for women's access to the full suite of sexual and reproductive health services, including surgical abortion, in public hospitals

This year, WHG prioritised promotion of the Ararat Sexual and Reproductive Health Outreach Clinic, aiming to improve uptake of this service and retain this presence in the centre of our region.

WHG's Sexual Health Advisor sits as the Rural Consumer Advisor support on the SPHERE ORIENT Advisory Group – a project developing a nurse-led model of care for general practice.

WHG raised concerns about a lack of publicly-funded abortion care with SPHERE COVID-19 Coalition which was developed into a consensus statement of recommendations for the duty of care to provide abortion services.

### Advocating for and contributing to the next statewide Sexual and Reproductive Health strategy, using the Sexual and Reproductive Health Theory of Change

WHG was part of a statewide sexual and reproductive health sector consultation led by Women's Health Victoria to develop priorities for the next Victorian women's sexual and reproductive health plan 2021-2025.

WHG also provided a stakeholder interview for 1800 My Options evaluation, providing clear evidence to support ongoing funding and future directions of this essential service.

WHG contributed sexual and reproductive health input into GenVIC's Priorities for Women's Health Services 2021 paper.

# COMMUNITIES OF RESPECT AND EQUALITY (CoRE)

This year marked the end of the first iteration of the CoRE Plan and the release of the new CoRE Strategy 2021-2025, a milestone achievement in addressing the far-reaching and severe negative health impacts of violence on women, children, families and communities in our region.



## New resources

In 2020-21 we produced a range of well-received and widely-shared resources to support our members, evaluate CoRE's progress, and plan for the future:

- CoRE Strategy 2021-2025;
- 16 Days of Activism resource for members of the CoRE Alliance;
- 16 ways for #16Days resource for CoRE members;
- Development of new CoRE Plan: Discussion Paper;
- A Review of Policy, Research and Practice Trends Since the Establishment of CoRE Student Paper;
- [Video – the Gender Equality Act and CoRE](#);
- The gendered impact of COVID-19: a summary to inform response and recovery – resource for CoRE members;
- [Are You Safe At Home](#) video, developed with WRISC and CHIFVC.

38

Downloads

Gender lens checklist – updated to include the Gender Equality Act

126

Downloads

Advice Note: Family Violence & Working from Home

194

Downloads

Gender, Disaster and Resilience COVID-19 fact sheets: COVID-19 and Gender Equity (developed with GenVIC)

751

Downloads

11 Gender Infosheets to inform Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans





## Communities of practice

Moving to online delivery of our community of practice sessions resulted in increased participation from CoRE members. Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the sessions.

**Number of community of practice sessions held: 3**

**Number of people attending: 121**

**Number CoRE organisations represented: 71**



## CoRE training

After a period of adjustment to COVID-19, we recommenced our training program in October 2020 with minimal rescheduling for the remainder of the financial year.

**Training sessions:** 41 (35 online, 6 face to face)

**Participants:** 484

**Organisations:** 28

“Talking through the scenarios was really beneficial I thought, particularly when you could relate the scenarios to instances that may have personally occurred and talk through how you could change for next time.”



## Developing our new CoRE Strategy

To inform the next CoRE Strategy, WHG sought input from a range of stakeholders both involved in and external to CoRE, gathering a wide range of perspectives to shape development of the CoRE model. The following resources were produced in 2020-21 to guide consultation processes:

1. *Development of new CoRE Plan: Discussion Paper*
2. *CoRE – The first four years: 2016-2020.*
3. *A Review of Policy, Research and Practice Trends Since the Establishment of CoRE: Student Report*

The 2021-2025 CoRE Strategy sets the scene for growth and more advanced actions over the next four years. CoRE continues to support its members to address the five essential actions to reduce violence against women that are outlined in OurWatch’s Change the Story.

[Download](#)

## PROJECTS

**Act@Play**

Challenging sexism, discrimination and violence against women

### Gender & Sport

We recognise the distinct challenges and value the many opportunities associated with engaging our sporting club CoRE members. In the past year we have adapted our bystander training to connect more effectively with this sector, and begun to adapt Act@Play gender audit and gender equality action plan template resources for the same purpose. We have also revisited our gender and sport portfolio to ensure learnings from Act@Play are translated across to CoRE work with sporting clubs and associations.

Act@Play is a gender equality, cultural change initiative delivered in a sport and recreation setting. Funded by Sport & Recreation Victoria, and in partnership with SportsCentral, we worked with Ballarat City Football Club this year to plan and implement quality actions to improve gender equality in their club. Feedback included:

- “I think the stats/examples provides context for the need for the program”.
- “I like the discussion around unconscious bias – I feel that this is extremely common within a sporting club and association”.



### CoRE Hi-Vis

The CoRE Hi-Vis project aims to assist organisations in the construction and manufacturing industries to recruit and retain more women into non-traditional roles.

We were delighted to welcome Nicholson Construction on board to pilot the CoRE Hi-Vis project in June this year. The leadership team at Nicholson Construction are fully supportive of the project, and are committed to improving the gender balance of their company and influencing the wider construction industry. We have also developed a suite of CoRE Hi-Vis resources this year, including an audit and action planning tool and training packages. We are grateful to our Industry Reference Group for their support and guidance in this work.

Another highlight of our women in non-traditional roles work this year has been our successful application for an Office for Women grant to develop the See What You Can Be project. This three-year project will build on the work of CoRE Hi-Vis and will commence in July 2021.



## Multilingual Health Educators

The Multilingual Health Project was funded by Working for Victoria and aimed to deliver health information to migrant women. The six-month project started in April 2021.

Multilingual Health Educators received six weeks' training from the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health in order to conduct health information sessions in the community. Sessions were provided either in the community language or in simple English. The team delivered 15 health education sessions (in person and on Zoom) and reached out to 115 women in the community within Ballarat, Horsham and Nhill. The sessions included topics related to: physical and mental wellbeing; workplace discrimination and bullying; mental health and wellbeing; COVID-19 vaccine information; and healthy living (in collaboration with Ballarat Community Health). We are glad to see the close connections forming between staff on this project and women from diverse communities



## Youth Equality for All





Our Youth Equality for All project, funded by the Office for Women, commenced in 2020-21. Two young women from multicultural backgrounds spoke from their lived experience to highlight the particular challenges faced by their cohort during COVID-19. They also developed three videos and a suite of social media campaign resources for use by CoRE members: [Youth Equality for All](#)





## Equality for All

The Equality for All project, funded by the Office for Women, concluded in March 2021. This project was delivered successfully, with 11 women from diverse backgrounds recruited to speak publicly about their experiences. The project has enhanced the capacity of CoRE members to apply an intersectional lens to their work, including through the development of an Intersectionality Guide.

-  8 Equality Advocates speaking engagement
-  3 Equality Advocates diversity and inclusion image audits
-  3 Intersectionality training sessions
-  6 Podcasts recorded

Equality advocates continue to be engaged on a fee for service basis.

# GENDER EQUALITY ACT



## CHIFVC

Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee spent 2020-21 focused on orienting around the new Strategic Plan 2020-2023, and building a Committee and structure that could deliver on it. While this has guided our efforts, responding to the dramatic increase in family violence across Central Highlands (including a 40% increase in Ballarat, our most populous LGA) has necessitated a degree of flexibility as the service system has prioritised responding to demand.

Responding to ongoing disruption from lockdowns and other restrictions, much of the work is taking place virtually. This has enabled a greater engagement across the full geographic breadth of the region, and made it possible for some members to participate more fully.

Despite the challenges and complexities posed by the pandemic, CHIFVC has gone from strength to strength, refreshing its structure, developing new working groups, welcoming a new Chair and two new staff members, and kicking off a series of innovative new projects drawing on our collaboration across the service system.

## The Strategy Hub

A long-standing commitment across the Central Highlands was realised this year, with the Principal Strategic Advisors across the CHIFVC, the Central Highlands Family Services Alliance, the Central Highlands Care Services Alliance and the Central Highlands Homelessness Alliance being brought together into one location, with Women's Health Grampians providing the office space. A shared resource in Maggie Muller, our new Administration Support Officer, has been vital to supporting work across the four governance groups. The Strategy Hub enables increased cross-sector engagement and the identification of shared goals, aspirations and challenges.

## Working Together Partnership

The Working Together Partnership has recognised the key successes of the Collaborative Practice Project, and committed to an extension of funding to June 2022. The Partnership developed a robust project plan to guide the implementation of the Project across 2020-21. Recruitment of a new Collaborative Principal Practitioner led to Kristen Sheridan taking up the role in September 2020, and the creation of a reference group of clients and ex-clients, as well as regular reflective practice designed to enable the development of a Collaborative Practice Model which will support increased 'working together' across family services and specialist family violence services.

## Governance

Highlights in relation to the Governance Strategic Priority included implementation of a working group structure designed to deliver on the Strategic Plan. This involved the formation of three working groups: Workforces, Data, Outcomes and Evidence, and System Integration and Improvement, with the Senior Executive Team taking on the Governance priority actions. Each working group also now has a co-Chair to ensure that CHIFVC is supporting the development of senior leadership across the region. Workplans for each of the Strategic Priorities have been developed, to help guide, monitor and deliver the priority actions under the Strategic Plan.

We considered the make-up of the CHIFVC, adding members from local government, from Ararat and from the disability advocacy sector to support further integration, geographically and across the service system. A consultation about the structure of the Senior Executive Team (SET) was also undertaken, leading it to increase in size. We thanked Libby Jewson (WRISC Family Violence Support Inc) for her service as the Chair of CHIFVC, welcomed Denise O'Dowd (Berry Street) into the role, and added Angie Wickham (The Orange Door in Central Highlands) and Christian Brown (Department of Education and Training) to the SET.

## System Integration and Improvement

System Integration and Improvement has been particularly focused on supporting the Specialist Family Violence Service sector throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. CHIFVC has supported the development of the Combined Allocations process, which enables The Orange Door to allocate to Family Services and Specialist Family Violence Services, where this is warranted by the needs of the client/s.

Collaborative Demand Management meetings, held fortnightly, enable the sharing of information about demand, and identification of pressures on the system as a whole. Guests have included representatives from the Courts, Victoria Police and health services. 'Deep dives' are held regularly to examine key issues impacting on demand, including pathways into the sector, recruitment, funding and targets, housing and refuge, building connections with health services and adolescents who use violence in the home.

In collaboration with the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), CHIFVC developed a series of social media short videos and tiles to support young people in recognising family violence and accessing services when needed. CHIFVC contributed family violence expertise and funding to enable the series to go ahead, while the YAB ensured the phrasing was suitable for the audience, and sourced a designer to develop the videos themselves. These were distributed by the YAB and a range of CHIFVC agencies.

## Workforces

In response to a dramatic increase in adolescents using violence in the home during the lockdowns of 2020, we organised a Sector Forum in collaboration with Family Services Alliance to explore the issue and raise awareness of best practice in this area. Elena Campbell from the Institute for Innovative Justice, lead author of *The PIPA Project: Positive Interventions for Perpetrators of Adolescent Family Violence in the Home (AVITH) (2020)*, introduced us to her research in the area, and highlighted the importance of responding to adolescents differently to older perpetrators.

It was well attended, with over 60 workers from across the two sectors in attendance. The discussion led to the formation of a number of recommendations, which were presented to the Collaborative Network.

Following the recruitment of a Workforce Development Officer, Youzhen Huang, the online delivery of MARAM Collaborative Practice training kicked off in early 2021. This training is a core element of practitioner development as part of aligning to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework, Fulfilling Recommendation 3 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. CHIFVC introduced an Expert Speaker Program as part of this training package, designed to facilitate engagement between specialist family violence workers and those from other services navigating new responsibilities to identify and respond to family violence.

CHIFVC was fortunate to receive funding for three new graduates as part of the Family Safety Victoria Regional and Rural Social Work Graduate Program, designed to increase retention of new graduates in the sector, and in regional and rural areas. These three graduates have been given access to significant additional professional development, including statewide Communities of Practice. CHIFVC has also developed an approach to supporting these new graduates, with a plan to deliver support to all supervisors of new graduates across family violence services in the region.

## Data Outcomes and Evidence

In collaboration with the Central Highlands Family Services Alliance, the Central Highlands Care Services Alliance, the Central Highlands Homelessness Alliance, and with support from Federation University, CHIFVC began a monthly series of interactive presentations with researchers. Drawing on the PhD studies funded by the Child and Youth Area Partnership (now defunct) and by CHIFVC agencies, we have heard from researchers about research undertaken within Central Highlands and focused on the service system.

The DataPRESS Project has been subject to significant planning and development over the past year. Presentation of the capacities of the portal to support the decision-making of Regional Integration Committees has led to significant interest from other parts of the state. The DataPRESS captures data from a range of publicly available sources, and pairs it with local area reporting to enable local service system profiling, demographic analysis and service planning and evaluation. The next steps of the project will focus on increasing the data capacity of the CHIFVC to make full use of this resource, and considering expansion to other regions and/or governance arrangements within regions.



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. GEN VIC works with organisations across Victoria to advance a shared vision of gender equality, health and freedom from violence for every woman and girl in every community across Victoria. 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.



WHG acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



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.

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