# Strategic Plan Plain English version

# WHG Strategic (Long-term) Work Plan 2022-2026

Women’s Health Grampians (WHG) is the leader of gender equality work in the Grampians region. We work to make sure women, men and gender diverse people have equal opportunities. We want our communities to be healthier and safer. This plan describes how we will get that work done over the next four years.

## What we want to see

A community where everyone has the same opportunities. A community where women and their children are happy and safe.

## What we are here to do

To make sure everyone is equal. To improve the health, safety and happiness of women and gender diverse people.

## supported by Our Values

Courage
We know what we need to do and who we are doing it for. We speak up for others and make sure we use the right information. We look after ourselves and each other.

### Empowerment

We know that people come from all kinds of backgrounds. We will make sure they get to have a say. We will respect their right to make decisions about their own lives.

### Feminism

We believe in equality for all women.

### Respect

We respect everyone’s voice. We will listen with kindness and respect.

## We acknowledge and pay our respects to

The Traditional Custodians of the lands across the Grampians region: the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Djab Wurrung, Wurundjeri, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Peoples.

We recognise the First Nations people of this land.

We recognise the strength and courage of Aboriginal women and girls. We recognise that they are brave and stand up for their people. We recognise their wisdom. We are grateful when they share their knowledge of family, country and culture.

Many women and gender diverse people have lived with violence. We recognise their bravery when they share their experiences. We know they have helped change our communities for the better.

We thank everyone who has helped us write this long-term plan.

## Our Approach

Intersectional – we recognise difference
Intersectionality is about recognising that people can face difficulties in their lives simply because of who they are. Sometimes, people’s differences lead to them being left out, controlled, or discriminated against more often than others. We use intersectionality to show where society is less equal for women, girls, and gender diverse people. Then we suggest ways to improve the situation. To do this we listen, learn, stay curious, and think about what we have learned. Doing this means we can challenge racism, colonialism, class oppression, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, and ageism whenever it occurs.

Evidence Based – we use research to plan our work
We use knowledge and evidence to plan our work. We share our own knowledge and research. We make sure the work we do is well-planned and useful for the future. We respond to changes in society and keep records of our progress.

Collaborative – we work together
We work with our partners across the Grampians region to change communities for the better. We are honest and open when we communicate. We make sure everyone knows what we want to achieve, and how we can work together to make it happen. We ask for feedback from our partners. We learn from everyone’s different experiences.

## Our Strategic Priorities – our main goals

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

## Our Strategic Focus – the best ways to achieve our goals

* Making a Difference and Achieving Change: we will think about our work and make sure we understand how it has made a difference.
* Sustainability: we will make sure our work, our partnerships, our communities and our organisation are strong and healthy enough to continue long into the future.

Our Emerging Concerns – issues we are starting to work on

We will make sure we are ready to manage these growing issues:

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

## Our Region

### Central Highlands

Ballarat

Hepburn

Moorabool

Golden Plains

### Grampians Pyrenees

Northern Grampians – Stawell

Pyrenees – Avoca, Beaufort

Ararat – Lake Bolac

### Wimmera

Yarriambiack

Hindmarsh

Horsham

West Wimmera

## Improving Gender Equality

Gender equality is when both men and women receive equal treatment and opportunities. When there is no gender equality, women’s health and wellbeing suffer.

Gender inequality can make existing problems worse for some people. Women from diverse groups are more likely to experience discrimination, oppression and inequality. This is due to related factors such as such as racism, homophobia and ableism. Women more likely to suffer from discrimination include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disabilities, LGBTIQA+ people, migrant women, and women living in the country.

Gender equality would lead to better lives for women and gender diverse people. They would be healthier and happier and have more employment opportunities. It would be easier for them to become leaders, and to get involved in sports and other community events.

Action 1
We will work with our partners to find out what is preventing gender equality in our region. We will find ways to overcome obstacles to gender equality. We understand that there will be many obstacles and they will be different depending on the place and community.

### Action 2

We will be leaders in speaking up for women and gender diverse people. We will make sure we highlight women’s personal experiences of discrimination.

### Action 3

We will take an intersectional approach to gender equality. We will highlight obstacles faced by groups of women and gender diverse people who are at more risk of discrimination. We will work to make sure these women have equal access to important health information and services.

### Action 4

We will follow the lead of First Nations projects that highlight the impacts of racism. We recognise that colonisation has been harmful for gender equality, especially for First Nations women. We will strongly support First Nations projects that try to undo the harmful effects of colonisation.

## Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health

Our aim is for all women in the Grampians region to have access to the sexual and reproductive health care that is right for them. There is lots of evidence that women who live in the country can’t access the services they need as quickly as they would like. Medical and surgical abortion services are especially difficult to access in the country.

There are reasons why access to sexual and reproductive health care can be hard to access in the country. These include:

* health workers might not see women’s sexual and reproductive health care as important
* doctors and hospitals might not communicate well with each other
* the distance between towns and cities
* limited and/or expensive transport
* people might see women’s sexual and reproductive health care as embarrassing
* people might see women’s sexual and reproductive health care as shameful

Action 1
We will work with our partners to find out what is preventing equal access to women’s sexual and reproductive health care in our region. We will find ways to overcome obstacles to equal access. We will make sure our solutions improve the lives of women, trans and gender diverse people.

### Action 2

We will support solutions that improve the health workforce in our region. We will work to make sure doctors, hospitals, and the community see women’s sexual and reproductive health care as an important and normal part of life.

Action 3
We will take an intersectional approach to sexual and reproductive health. We will highlight obstacles faced by specific groups of women and gender diverse people who may find it more difficult to access services. We will work to make sure these women have equal access to information and services.

Action 4
We will make sure that we ask women about their own experiences. We will work with them to design solutions to problems. We will talk to young people, trans and gender diverse people, and women from diverse backgrounds. We know these groups have special sexual and reproductive health needs. We will speak up for their right to access the sexual and reproductive health care that is right for them. We will support solutions that make this happen.

## Preventing Violence Against Women and their Children

WHG leads work to prevent violence against women in the Grampians region.

We lead a network of organisations called the Communities of Respect and Equality Alliance, known as CoRE. Through CoRE, we work with our partners to identify the reasons why people use disrespect and violence. We work together to find ways to change this behaviour. Primary prevention aims to prevent violence before it happens. It tries to change the social norms, practices and systems that allow violence to take place. Achieving gender equality is very important to preventing violence against women. Without gender equality, violence against women and their children will continue.

An important part of WHG primary prevention work is making sure that our solutions are based on good evidence. We know there is good evidence to show that gender stereotypes lead to disrespect and violence. Gender stereotypes are when people have fixed ideas about how women and men should behave, how they should look, and what they should do for work. This limits opportunities for women and men to be healthy, happy and feel included in their communities. No one should be limited by their gender. This is why our work includes promoting lots of different healthy ways to be a man. We also challenge stereotypes that tell men there is only one way to be.

Action 1
We will continue to lead and grow Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE).

### Action 2

We will increase our ability to train and support our partners to help prevent violence against women. We will do this using an intersectional approach. Our solutions are better and stronger when we take different views into account.

Action 3
We will identify key areas in our region to focus our work on. This is based on evidence from three important reports: *Change the Story* (2nd Ed.); *Changing the Picture* (this is about violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children); and *Changing the Landscape* (this is about violence against women and girls with a disability). We will try new ways to work with diverse groups in our communities.

Action 4
We will work with and support First Nations projects that prevent, reduce, and respond to family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We will make sure the voices of women from diverse backgrounds are heard.

## Emerging Concerns

Women's Mental Health
Women's mental health is an issue we may need to focus on in the future.

Action
We will collect evidence on women’s mental health and wellbeing in the Grampians region over the next year. We will talk to our members to get their opinions and ideas. Then we will decide how we can start to address the issue of women’s mental health.

Women in a Changing Society
We expect climate change to have a big impact on the health of people in our region. Women are often impacted more by emergencies than anyone else. This was clearly shown during and after the COVID 19 pandemic and other emergencies including fire and flood. For example, during the pandemic women were more likely to lose jobs and income. They were also more likely to have to care for children and others.

Change can be both good and bad for women. We want to make sure that good changes are supported and bad changes do not do too much harm.

Action

We will work with our partners to identify the impacts of climate and other changes. We will focus on how the response to emergencies impacts women. We will speak up when women’s health and wellbeing is affected.

## Sustainability and Measuring our Success

We want our work to improve the lives of women and gender diverse people for many years to come. Any progress we make in gender equality, sexual and reproductive health and prevention of violence against women must be supported into the future. To do that, we need to ensure that our own organisation works well, delivers good outcomes, and looks after itself.

We will make sure our workplace is a culturally safe place for everyone who works here or is involved in our programs. This will help us work with Aboriginal people and community-controlled organisations in our organisation and in our region.

* When we plan our programs, we will think about how they can be continued in the future, even if we are no longer involved.
* When we employ people, we will make sure the conditions of their employment support their needs. We aim to be a workplace that people really want to join.
* We will manage the business side of our organisation carefully so that we can grow and strengthen.

For us to make a difference we need to be able to measure the success of our work. We will make sure we figure out the best way to do this, and do it every time.

We will collect feedback from our partners. We will decide what data we need, and we will collect that as well. We will report on our work regularly, including in our Annual Report.

### Actions – Monitoring

We will make sure this plan stays useful by regularly checking:

* If we have achieved our goals over the next four years.
* What progress has been made with achieving our long-term priorities.
* What new challenges have appeared, and whether we are prepared to meet them.

### Actions – Evaluation

Every year we will check on our progress by measuring:

* If we have met the goals we set for each of our priority areas.
* If achieving these goals has improved gender equality, sexual and reproductive health or the rates of violence against women and their children in our region.

### Actions – Learning

Our Annual Report will help us learn and improve by:

* Telling a story about what we have done, the difficulties we faced, and the successes we achieved.
* Showing us the areas where we need to improve or change our focus.
* Laying the foundation for each year of this plan and for other plans in the future.

# Important terms

Ableism
When someone is treated unfairly or differently because they have a disability.

Ageism
When someone is treated unfairly or differently because of their age.

Colonisation
The act of one country settling another place, in order to become the new rulers of the new country, and to live in the new country. It usually involves violence against the people who already lived there.

Discrimination
When someone is treated unfairly or differently because the person is one of a particular group.

Gender diverse
Gender diverse people do not see themselves as either a boy or a girl.

Gender
Someone's gender is if they behave like a boy or a girl or neither. It is different from someone’s sex, which is if they have male or female physical parts/chromosomes.

Homophobia, biphobia
Fear or poor treatment of people who are attracted to the same gender.

### Intersectionality

Recognises that people can be hurt by discrimination in several different ways at the same time.

Oppression
When a person or group of people who have power use it in a way that is unfair, unjust or cruel.

Racism
When someone is treated unfairly or differently because of their race.

Traditional custodians
The original Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples who lived in an area.

Transphobia
Fear or poor treatment of people whose gender does not match their sex.