

Annual Report **2016-17**

Funding Bodies 2016-17

ACT Health Directorate

- Women, Youth & Child Health Policy Unit
- Mental Health Policy Unit

ACT Community Services Directorate

- Women's Safety Grants
- Disability ACT

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The Women's Centre for Health Matters acknowledges that we live and work on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay our respect to their Elders – past, present and future - and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

A Summary of WCHM'S Achievements in 2016/17

Listening to ACT women's voices

WCHM informs our work by collecting information and stories about the attitudes, assumptions, experiences and views of ACT women.

The social research reports developed from our consultations are enhanced by the stories of ACT women and their lived experiences, and they are used to provide data and evidence that reflect women's views and to assist services and policy areas to better meet ACT women's needs.

During 2016-17 WCHM conducted several consultations with women which will inform some major reports in 2017-18:

- A consultation with ACT women about ACT women's use of health services and their health needs - this was an opportunity for women to let us know what was working and not working for them when seeking to maintain good health; and
- A consultation with ACT women aged 18-50 years to find out their views and their experiences of having a chronic disease and accessing appropriate services and supports in the ACT.

We also worked on a report documenting the results of our Assistance Beyond Crisis project which engaged business and industry on the issues for women who leave domestic violence relationships. All our final reports are available on WCHM's website.

Empowering and supporting women

To ensure that women have access to local information so that they can make informed choices, WCHM also worked on the development of several resources:

- *Having A Baby In Canberra* website; and
- A local online resource for women (and men) with lived experience of Borderline Personality Disorder.

And WCHM launched a Safety Mapping Tool which enables women (and men) to identify areas where they feel safe or unsafe in Canberra, and to tell us why.

Consultations and Submissions

WCHM continued to advocate on behalf of ACT women through relevant consultation and submission processes, and to use these opportunities to disseminate the findings from our work with ACT women about their needs.

WCHM contributed a submission into the Inquiry into Insecure Employment in the ACT.

And WCHM was also involved in informing and providing views and expertise by:

- Informing the design of the ACT Government's Family Safety Hub and other responses to domestic and family violence;
- Participating in a Preventative Health Forum hosted by the ACT Health;
- Participating in a consultation about Emergency Material and Financial Aid in the ACT;
- Participating Participated in a consultation by the Public Advocate and Health Services Commissioner about access for ACT people with psychosocial disabilities to the NDIS;
- Providing input to the Action Plan which was developed for the ACT Women's Plan about women's health and wellbeing;
- Advocating as a member of several ACT committees including the Domestic

Violence Prevention Council; the ACT Primary Health Network's Community Advisory Council; the ACTCOSS Peaks Group; and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women;

- Participating in the lead-up to the ACT election as one of 19 diverse community organisations who endorsed a shared statement for the ACT 2016 Election which outlined the community priorities for action during the 2016-2020 term of the ACT Government.

Chair's Report

The past 12 months has seen the Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) make significant achievements on behalf of the women of Canberra. The organisation has gone from strength to strength, both increasing its policy, advocacy and operational capacity, as well as securing its financial and political standing.

The Board is pleased to have welcomed back Lauren Gale and Renee Toy following their re-election earlier in the year. While the organisation has benefitted from their steadying, experienced touch, it has been equally wonderful to welcome new faces to this year's roster.

I welcome Karen Redshaw who has extensive experience in the government and private sector; Farzana Choudhury who is a Solicitor for a Canberra Community Law Program; and, Renee Dockrill who has over 15 years experience working for a renowned accountancy/consulting firm.

These wonderful and talented ladies have brought a wealth of experience, knowledge and expertise to the WCHM Board, further strengthening the organisation's ability to enhance the health of women in Canberra.

Earlier in the year, the Board held a planning day. An ongoing review process will result in an overhaul of WCHM's documents and policy positions. This will lead to the organisation becoming better equipped to respond and proactively work toward the goals that will benefit the women of the territory.

As well as changes to the Board, the operational capacity of WCHM has also been enhanced. The Board saw fit to appoint a Deputy CEO, and we welcomed Emma Davidson to this role early in the year. The appointment of a Deputy CEO has furthered WCHM's ability to plan and deliver on the organisation's strategic objectives and provide additional support to the ever-growing role of the WCHM CEO. We have also welcomed a range of new staff to WCHM.

While WCHM remains in a solid financial and operational position, challenges do exist for the organisation that we will continue to strive to overcome, and from which we will need to thrive, if we are to continue our good work. The often turbulent political environment, the need to diversify our income stream and changes in the funding environment which will mean WCHM will need to tender competitively means that we must be vigilant, diligent and targeted in everything we do in serving our stakeholders.

From the solid foundations set by the Board, I envision the organisation will have a solid base to grow, develop and respond to the needs set out by the women of Canberra.

But, as with all things, there is a season, a time to keep and a time to let go. We say goodbye to some talented individuals who have given their time, dedication and brilliance to serving on the Board. Members we will be saying goodbye to at this year's AGM are Lauren Gale, Renee Toy, Alyssa Shaw and Jodie Ledbrook and our Treasurer, Lynnere Gray. I thank them for their service during their terms.

The Board would like to thank; all of our new and ongoing members who continually provide feedback and who are involved in WCHM advocacy and research consultations; our new team who have successfully increased the organisation's capacity and effort and our CEO, Marcia Williams, who continues to lead, guide and support the organisation's vision and goals.

Anita Krikowa, Board Chair

2016/17 Board Members

(at 30 June 2017)

- Anita Krikowa (Chair)
- Erin Gillen (Deputy Chair)
- Lynnere Gray (Treasurer)
- Lauren Gale
- Renee Toy
- Alyssa Shaw
- Karen Redshaw
- Renee Dockrill
- Farzana Choudury
- Marcia Williams (Public Officer)

WCHM farewelled the following Board members during the year:

- Jodie Ledbrook
- Sue Ford

WCHM's Governance

The Board Structure—The Board comprises 10 elected members. At each Annual General Meeting five Board positions become available for two-year terms. Each elected Board position holds office from immediately after the Annual General Meeting at which they are elected until the second Annual General Meeting of WCHM after their election. No members of the Board may retain their position for more than three consecutive terms.

Once elected the Board selects from its members, by a majority vote, a Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer.

Board Role—Board members serve on a voluntary basis and do not receive remuneration. The Board is responsible for:

- Setting the policies and strategic directions for the organisation
- Approving and monitoring the annual budget, and establishing the overall financial delegations
- Monitoring overall organisational performance
- Ensuring the organisation meets its regulatory and statutory requirements

Board Meetings—The Board is required to meet at least six times in each calendar year, but generally meets more often to conduct the business of WCHM. This year the Board had seven Board meetings during the year, and one day which focused on Planning, and training and development.

Board Committees—Where necessary, the Board sets up committees. There were three Sub-Committees of the Board:

- Governance Sub-Committee
- Finance Sub-Committee
- Engagement Sub Committee

Board Training—New Board members receive an induction and a comprehensive series of fact sheets, training and access to a Board members' secure page on the WCHM website to access all the core WCHM documents.

Board Performance—Board performance is assessed annually through a survey of Board members. This is used to evaluate the Board's effectiveness, and helps to highlight priorities for further focus and improvement.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

It has been another very challenging and busy year for WCHM! We have continued to be involved in advocacy about important social issues which impact on women in the ACT and on issues associated with their access to services.

We have used our advocacy – based on the reports which we produced last financial year - to encourage the Territory,

the health and wellbeing system, and other services to be more responsive to the identified issues and to incorporate them into policy, planning and service design.

We have explored new alliances with business and industry – with the support of DVCS - so that they understand and are involved in important issues, and which we have also benefitted from in terms of new knowledge and access to pro bono skills. My thanks goes to Ernst and Young; Deloitte, KMPG, PWC and Protiviti who contributed their experience and skills to a project that we could not have done so well without them.

With the skills of our new Deputy CEO, we have focused on building our presence in the media, and submitting regular articles around the issues for women in the ACT.

The priority health and wellbeing issues that WCHM has been engaged in over 2016-17 have related to issues such as reproductive health and sexuality; the emotional and mental health needs of women; violence against women and children and the LGBTI community; housing and homelessness; the health needs, barriers and access to services of women in the ACT; and the needs of younger women in the ACT with chronic disease.

Violence against women remained high on the agenda nationally and in the ACT, and the Centre has been involved in informing the design of the family Safety Hub so that it takes account of the views and needs of ACT women and their children and their experience of different forms of violence.

The Centre has focused on responding to the needs expressed by ACT women about their needs for information about pregnancy, birth and maternal care. We know that ACT women still struggle with finding relevant and accessible local information that meet their needs, and so have been designing a *Having A Baby In Canberra* website.

And we have also been busy designing an online resource following last year's report which explored the lived experience of women who had been diagnosed or labelled with BPD in the ACT.

During 2016–17 WCHM continued to communicate health messages and advice to women in the ACT, and used WCHM's social media to promote health events and messages to ACT women.

We did not work alone and I am thankful that our community partners continue to work with us to contribute their expertise and knowledge which supports our projects, our events and our advocacy and research work. In particular, over the past year our key partners have been the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Beryl Women Inc, ACTCOSS; the members of the ACT Women's Services Network; and the services in the ACT mental health and maternity services who have helped us ensure our work is well informed by their expertise.

WCHM is thankful to the funding bodies who have supported our work over the last year, which has enabled us to continue our work to enhance women's health and wellbeing in the ACT. In particular, we rely on our core funding from ACT Health in an era when other funding and grant opportunities are declining.

During the year WCHM needed to seek some legal advice, and we are very grateful to Ashurst Lawyers who provided us with access to pro bono legal services, and whose advice was clear, concise and timely.

My thanks goes to the volunteer members of WCHM's Board. We continue to attract women with diverse experience, skills and views who want to contribute their time to WCHM and its good governance. I particularly want to thank Lynnere Gray, who has been with WCHM for many years now as our Treasurer, and who has indicated that she will be finishing her tenure on the Board at the AGM. I have valued her advice, knowledge and skills, and her passion in ensuring that all the Board members were supported to have a good understanding of WCHM's financial matters, and for her excellent financial stewardship which has left WCHM in a very comfortable financial position.

This year we will also be losing several other Board members at our AGM who

have been with us for many terms. I wish to thank them for their contributions and commitment for many years now – in particular, to Lauren Gale and Renee Toy who have previously occupied the Chair and Deputy Chair roles and whose leadership has helped to ensure the Centre is well placed for the future. I wish them well and much joy with their young families.

Thank you to our members, who continue to support us and our role - many of you have been with us for many years and participate regularly in our activities. Other have joined us more recently after hearing of our work in the ACT. We are grateful for your support of the organisation and our work, and your contributions to it.

And last, but not least, I want to thank our staff! The diversity of the staff of WCHM bring a range of different life skills and experiences to WCHM's work. We saw changes in staffing this year, and we welcomed several new staff to the Centre whose contributions are already influencing and furthering the Centre's capacity and its work. And the Centre now has a Deputy CEO – Emma Davidson – whose skills will position us well for the future.

I hope that WCHM can continue to meet the changing needs of women in Canberra, and that we can adapt to the changing external environment in the ACT in a way that ensures we deliver on the expectations of our key stakeholders.

Marcia Williams, Chief Executive Officer

2016/17 Staff (at 30 June 2017)

- Chief Executive Officer—Marcia Williams
- Deputy Chief Executive Officer—Emma Davidson
- Health Promotion Officer – Amber Hutchison
- Health Promotion Officer — Emma Hoban
- Health Promotion Officer — Pip Courtney-Bailey
- Health Promotion Officer — Julia Tran
- Administration Assistant – Frances McNair
- Administration Officer —Margaret Ross

WCHM farewelled the following staff during the year:

- Health Promotion Officers - Angela Carnovale, Jane Yang, Jenni Gough
- Temporary Project Worker — Ruth Ragless
- Temporary Project Worker — Amy Jowers-Blain
- Community Development Officer (WWDACT)—Nicole O'Callaghan
- Principal Policy Officer (WWDACT)—Emilia Della Torre





WCHM's Key Areas of Focus

The WCHM Strategic Plan focusses on five key areas which further our work in supporting ACT women to make informed health and wellbeing choices, and to assist health related services and policy to be responsive to ACT women's needs.

1. KNOWING WHAT MATTERS!

2. COMMUNICATING WHAT MATTERS!

3. INFLUENCING WHAT MATTERS!

4. EMPOWERING WOMEN IN WHAT MATTERS!

5. DOING WHAT MATTERS!

The Year in Review

Our progress against our Strategic Plan

Key Area 1: KNOWING WHAT MATTERS!

Work with women in the ACT (especially those who are vulnerable to disadvantage and marginalisation, or who have specific gender-related needs) to:

- Gain knowledge and evidence about the economic, social and environmental issues affecting women's health and wellbeing in the ACT
- Understand the lived experience of women and the way this impacts upon their health and wellbeing
- Identify the health and wellbeing services and support available
- Identify new and emerging issues in women's health that are not adequately responded to by current policies and services

Our strategies and actions include: the use of research, forums and consultations with ACT women; working with networks, service providers and peer led groups to identify emerging issues; gender analysis; safety audits; attending conferences; and using gender based data from other sources to inform our work.

Feedback from a range of women, women's services and women's groups again informed WCHM's projects over the year.

WCHM seeks to involve women in all aspects of its work and our research to ensure that we are representing their issues and lived experiences in our work – these include the involvement of a diverse range of women in consultations, surveys and forums.

WCHM also maintains formal and informal networks with relevant organisations to ensure that information provided to women

is accurate and up to date, and that we tap into the feedback of women to those organisations.

We use a wide range of options to ensure that ACT women are aware of the health choices available to them, and where there are gaps identified by women we work with women to design responses.

For example, a wide range of women have been involved in contributing to and advising WCHM about the content for the new *Having A Baby In Canberra* website. And WCHM has consulted with ACT women, carers and service providers in the development of the Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) website, and with a range of diverse organisations for the mental health content of the *Having A Baby In Canberra* website.

WCHM continued to develop strong relationships with other community sector stakeholders so that we can build our knowledge and influence policy and service design - and to allow us to advocate to create change where needed.

In particular we have worked closely with ACTCOSS, members of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, the ACT Women's Services Network, Shelter ACT, the ACT Youth Coalition, Health Care Consumers ACT, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, PANDSI, the Women's Services Network, the Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT, and other community sector peak bodies to raise the profile of issues relating to women and to develop approaches to working together in relation to services and responses for women.

For example, WCHM worked with Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Association (ATODA) to ensure they take account of women's needs, and also worked with services across the health, family and children's service areas to discuss and identify options to address the lack of early intervention programs to support young

families in the ACT, and particularly women and their children.

Social research is used by WCHM to inform our activities and representation, both through WCHM's use of a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to inform our views but also by keeping abreast of other research which is relevant to our work.

Over the 12 months, WCHM has continued to focus on building an evidence base that includes the voices of women and their lived experience as well as the collection of relevant national/ international research and local ACT data.

Social research: Women's health needs and utilisation of health services

In 2016, WCHM conducted a community consultation survey about ACT women's use of health services and their health needs. This was an opportunity for women to let us know what was working and not working for them when seeking to maintain good health. The survey sought to answer the following research questions:

- How do women understand and manage their health needs?
- Which health services are being utilised and whether there are barriers to that need?
- What are women's preferred methods of seeking health information and are there barriers to information seeking?
- The main health issues for women in the ACT.

The survey received over 600 responses, and WCHM has been analysing the results from the information received, and using focus groups to explore the top level findings in more detail.

Social research: Younger Women experiencing chronic disease

Much of the current policy planning and chronic condition programs, courses and services focus on the ageing population,

but increasingly younger women are developing chronic diseases.

So WCHM conducted a community consultation survey with ACT women aged 18-50 years to find out their experiences of chronic disease and accessing appropriate services and supports in the ACT.

WCHM was seeking to explore:

- Younger women's knowledge and experience of programs, courses, and services to provide information and support to those with chronic diseases;
- Which information, services, and support are relevant to younger women living with chronic disease – including their suitability and age-appropriateness; and
- The gaps and barriers that might exist, and ideas to improve younger women's access to and involvement in responses that assist them to manage their conditions in their life stage.

The survey closed on May 26th2017 and over 160 responses were received.

WCHM has been analysing the results from the information received, and using focus groups to explore the top level findings in more detail.

Report: State of women in the ACT

Aggregated ACT statistics portray Canberrans as being relatively privileged, and the statistics about women in the ACT show that on average they are relatively well off compared to women across Australia. But the use of averages masks the diversity that exists within Canberra and hides the real story about women in the ACT.

WCHM has been analysing already published data to find statistics relevant to women in the ACT in the areas of life associated with the social determinants: income, employment, unpaid work, health, and housing etc.

The final report will attempt to present available data that gives us a more realistic picture of the state of women in Canberra,

beyond a focus on how well the “average” is doing. The report will also comment on data gaps.

Digital health technology use

Because of the wide use by women of digital health apps, WCHM supported partners in the University of Canberra to host several forums to explore diverse ACT women’s views on the use of digital technology for improving their health and wellbeing outcomes. This preliminary information is now being used to inform a joint research project.



Key Area 2: COMMUNICATING WHAT MATTERS!

Communicate the evidence and insights gained from women in the ACT, particularly from our own research, but also from research conducted by other organisations to inform and educate others—including government—about ACT women’s health and wellbeing needs.

Our strategies and actions include: developing/launching reports using evidence and lived experience; submissions and advocacy to consultations, committees, advisory groups and working groups; media releases about the issues and the evidence; support for specific sectors/services about the needs of women; training/awareness raising to build an understanding of the gender issues for services/sectors; supporting health literacy in women/groups of women; online support/information for women; health promotion events; providing information to women about policy/service changes; skills development/training of vulnerable groups of women; and awareness raising in the broader community about specific gender and equity issues.

WCHM has used the stories from women experiencing domestic violence to inform the design of the Family Safety Hub, and to influence housing and homelessness discussions. We have facilitated their discussions with them or used their written stories.

Women’s stories also guided the conversations with business and industry about domestic violence.

The stories from WCHM’s community consultation survey with ACT women about their health service utilisation and health needs have been used to inform WCHM’s advocacy efforts in ACT Health and in the Capital Health Network. The early findings from younger women experiencing chronic disease has also been used to inform decision-making in ACT Health.

Submissions

As relevant opportunities arise, WCHM prepares submissions in response to issues impacting on ACT women's health and wellbeing.

WCHM prepared a submission to the Inquiry into Insecure Employment in the ACT. In our submission we highlighted that while women in the ACT have a relatively high engagement in the paid workforce compared to women in other parts of Australia, they still experience higher levels of unemployment and underemployment, or work in part time or casual employment. And because women are expected to bear most of the burden of unpaid work, their ability to work longer hours or negotiate more suitable working arrangements is limited. This means they do not have as strong a negotiating position in the labour market, and are more vulnerable to exploitative work arrangements.

Improving awareness of domestic and family violence in the LGBTI Community

On 19th May, the Women's Centre for Health Matters launched a campaign aimed at raising awareness in the LGBTIQ community about family and domestic violence.

The need for the campaign arose from research which the Centre conducted in late 2015, where this issue was explored in the ACT. It identified gaps in local knowledge and understanding, with many of the local respondents identifying that they were less likely to identify domestic and family violence in their relationships.

A recommendation from the report was for the development of LGBT culturally appropriate resources and materials that would raise awareness within the ACT LGBTIQ Community about domestic violence, what it looks like and what they can do/where they can seek support.

WCHM then worked with members of the local LBGTI community to explore what would work best and what the concepts and wording for awareness raising in the

community should be. The majority of the community members who were consulted said they needed to see their relationships in a positive light, even if such a difficult and negative topic was involved.



The result was a positive campaign which shows local loving and diverse couples in the ACT but which reminds the LGBTIQ community that domestic and family violence can happen in their relationships and that there are services which can help. The campaign also encouraged the LGBTIQ community to find out more about domestic and family violence by directing them to more information on a website created by WCHM - - www.helpstopdv.org.au.

Development of the Assistance Beyond Crisis microfinance facility

From WCHM's work, we know that the majority of women leaving domestic violence in the ACT stay in their homes post crisis. Imagine finding the courage and making the difficult decision to end the violent relationship and then finding you can't afford to pay your rental or mortgage payments or essential bills – even though you are on a reasonable income? Can you imagine having to decide whether it is better to face losing your home or not being able to pay your essential bills, or instead to resume the relationship with your violent partner because that is the 'best' available option?

WCHM believes that, as a community, we need to invest in solutions for those women

and men who have reached a period of stability and are rebuilding their lives post-crisis, women who have made it beyond crisis but now need a hand.

That is why Women's Centre for Health Matters and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service worked with Deloitte, the Snow Foundation, Service One and CARE Financial Counselling to develop a local ACT response to the need for local women (and men) who have escaped domestic violence situations and stabilised their situation, but who have immediate financial needs, and whose ability to pay at that point in time is low.

A micro-finance facility was designed, and the viability of the business model proven. The facility offers one-off, no interest loans, primarily for providing some stability financially for a short term one-off need. The micro-finance facility relies on local community donations for the initial corpus, and there we many pledges of support including from the Snow Foundation, Deloitte, Ernst and Young, Price Waterhouse Coopers, KPMG, Beyond Bank, and many others.



The Assistance Beyond Crisis (ABC) micro loan facility was launched on 20th June 2017, and commenced on 1 July 2017.



We have been so privileged to work with the local businesses who have supported and contributed to the development and ongoing delivery of this important microfinance facility.



Other

During 2016-17, WCHM also started to scope an approach with Sexual, Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT), the Women's Health Service and Maree Stopes ACT to inform the design of more appropriate responses to the provision of termination of pregnancy in the ACT and the cost of termination of pregnancy in the ACT especially for vulnerable women. We will continue to explore innovative approaches to this issue during 2017-18.

Building on the Safety Mapping Tool that WCHM designed, we have been working with staff in Transport Canberra and the Planning Directorate to identify where they want input and feedback from women about what makes certain urban areas safe and unsafe – this will then provide women's input to the planning for new areas or the rejuvenation of old areas.



Key Area 3: INFLUENCING WHAT MATTERS!

Use the evidence to work with others to:

- Encourage services and systems to be responsive to women's needs
- Promote women's participation in decision making and management
- Promote health equity among women
- Build knowledge about gender, from a women's perspective
- Ensure that ACT policies and services are gender sensitive, from a women's perspective

Our strategies and actions include: advocacy and lobbying, awareness raising, and highlighting gender and equity issues in the design and implementation of policies and services; writing submissions; participating in consultations; representation on committees, advisory groups and working groups; providing support to community sector in responding to any reviews or policy changes that impact on the delivery of services.

During 2016-17 WCHM has contributed to discussions about domestic and family violence, maternity care, access to health and services and responses needed for young women with chronic health issues in the ACT, and undertaken advocacy and public awareness raising as required. We have engaged staff of the ACT Health and Wellbeing Minister, and the Minister for Domestic and Family Violence, as well as other MLAs.

WCHM provided input to the Action Plan on women's health and wellbeing which was developed for the ACT Women's Plan, and have briefed the Office for Women on the results of our health and wellbeing research.

As a member of the Capital Health Network's Community Advisory Group, WCHM has reported on the early findings from the WCHM Women's Health Utilisation research about the top health

issues identified by the women and their feedback about GPs.

Women overall reported that affordability, appointment availability and long waiting times were the largest difficulties/barriers to accessing services. Many women highlighted that they were unable to access a regular consistent GP, and that many GPs have extensive wait times which meant that women were often unable to access appointments for many weeks. As such, women who needed immediate care, for illness or to access medical certificates, were choosing to see an alternative doctor who was immediately available. As a result, many women identified that they did not have a regular GP with whom they could form a trusting relationship. Participants felt that this impacted on the level of care that they received and their ability to discuss sensitive issues with health care professionals.

WCHM has also:

- Used the findings of our research into women's help-seeking journeys to influence the design and reform of systemic responses to domestic and family violence in the ACT through advisory groups, key partnerships, other relevant networks, Ministers, the DVPC, ACT Health, the Community Services Directorate, business and industry consultations etc;
- Advocated for women sensitive changes to the human service system responses (including the current child protection approach, and the need for culturally appropriate responses for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community) and for improved financial/legal system responses for victims of domestic and family violence;
- Organised and hosted a consultation in February between women's services and Wellways Australia about the design and delivery of their new ACT Women's Mental Health Service;
- Participated in a consultation by the Public Advocate and Health Services Commissioner about the access for ACT people with psychosocial disabilities to the NDIS;

- Attended a Preventative Health Forum hosted by ACT Health to inform a new preventative health strategy for the ACT;
- Participated in an Emergency Material and Financial Aid (EMFA) Forum which aimed to consider the nature and effectiveness of ACT's Emergency Material and Financial Aid program; and
- Provided input to the ACT Health Map and Gap project about blood borne viruses and to a consultation about promoting the publicly funded homebirth trial and to the ACT Health Multicultural and Diversity Health Policy Unit.

In relation to the findings from the Safety Mapping tool:

- WCHM attended meetings at Woden Community Council and Gungahlin Community Council to talk about findings so far, and promote the tool; and
- Provided a summary of results to the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to inform their timetable of revisions to planning documents.

Business and Industry Engagement on Domestic Violence

The aim of this project was to engage local ACT business and industry leaders to identify opportunities and solutions they could be involved in to reduce barriers for women who have experienced domestic violence and are resettling post-crisis. WCHM was supported by a Grant from ACT Government.

WCHM and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service worked with professional services firms in Canberra to facilitate forums with different business and industry groups. The professional services involved were Ernst and Young, Deloitte, KMPG, Price Waterhouse Coopers and Protiviti.

The objective of the forums was to explore what opportunities and solutions there might be for industry and business to help

meet the needs of a woman leaving violence, so that they do not tip back into crisis, or into homelessness, or financial insecurity, or return to an abusive relationship because it is too hard to keep themselves and their children safe and secure. The forums were also about having conversations between sectors that have not previously discussed the impacts of domestic violence.



The importance for WCHM of working with business and industry was:

- Community services and government cannot address domestic violence alone;
- The majority of Government funding in this space targets the 'crisis' services and responses – such as refuges, police, medical services, courts, specialist homelessness services;
- That means there is a large gap in domestic and family violence service delivery that occurs post-crisis, and broader support needs to be available post crisis than that provided by Government; and
- Many of the solutions to the issues lie with business and industry and they can play a vital role in identifying ACT wide opportunities and solutions.

There were seven areas of focus for the *BEYOND CRISIS: Canberra professionals making safer choices easier for victims of domestic violence* forums. These seven areas of focus for the forums were informed by the feedback from women in the ACT gained through the research and

consultations by the Women's Centre for Health Matters and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service: Housing, Finance, Legal, Insurance, Childcare, Transport and Pets.



There were over 150 participants in the forums who were overwhelmingly positive about the forums and gained insight into the challenges the community sector and survivors of domestic violence face.

The project undoubtedly raised awareness of the impacts and manifestations of domestic violence, and through the use of a powerful survivor voice and the expertise of DVCS, the project has already generated practical outputs for women, including the *Assistance Beyond Crisis* microfinance facility.

The project also built on the influence, professional skills, connections and resources of the professional firms. Comments from the partners of professional firms included:

- *Positioned professional services firms as contributors to solutions – very significant foundation for future work.*
- *Collaborative approaches with traditional competitors with strong focus on outcomes for victim survivors.*
- *The private sector must unite and move beyond simple government-funded solutions to more innovative forms of support.*

Representing the views of ACT women on advisory bodies, reference committees, and working groups

WCHM continues to advocate through representation on committees for greater inclusion of gender sensitive policies,

practices and infrastructure relating to women:

- Board member Lauren Gale represented WCHM as a member of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women (MACW);
- The Chief Executive Officer continued her role as the Chair of the ACT Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC), the ACT Ministerial advisory body responsible for providing the ACT Attorney General with advice on preventing domestic and family violence in the ACT;
- The Chief Executive Officer continued as a member of the ACT Primary Health Network's Community Advisory Council;
- The Chief Executive Officer was a member of the Core Design Team for the development of the Family Safety Hub;
- The Chief Executive Officer was a member of the Project Advisory Group for the Research, Scope and Design of a Safer Families Project for the Alcohol and Other Drugs sector (AOD Safer Families Project); and
- The Chief Executive Officer represented WCHM as a member of the ACT Council of Social Services peak groups' forum.

Key Area 4: EMPOWERING WOMEN IN WHAT MATTERS!

Support women and women's groups:

- To make informed health and wellbeing choices
- To understand how to access appropriate gender-sensitive services and information that support their health and wellbeing
- By providing capacity building and organisational support for small NGOs and peer-led support groups

Strategies and actions include: developing and delivering support for specific sectors or services about the needs of women; training and awareness raising to build understanding of gender issues for services/sectors; capacity building for small organisations; building health literacy in women/groups of women; information provision for women; online support for women; health promotion events; support for women to understand changes in the environment (changes to Medicare, e-health, NDIS); community sector planning, and training and support; skills development/ training of vulnerable groups of women.

WCHM has continued to work closely with the Women's Health Service, the Women's Services Network, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Canberra Rape Crisis Service, Health Care Consumers ACT, the maternal health sector, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, Maree Stopes and others to look at how we can assist and support them to build capacity.

Auspicing and capacity building /organisational support for Women With Disabilities ACT (WWDACT)

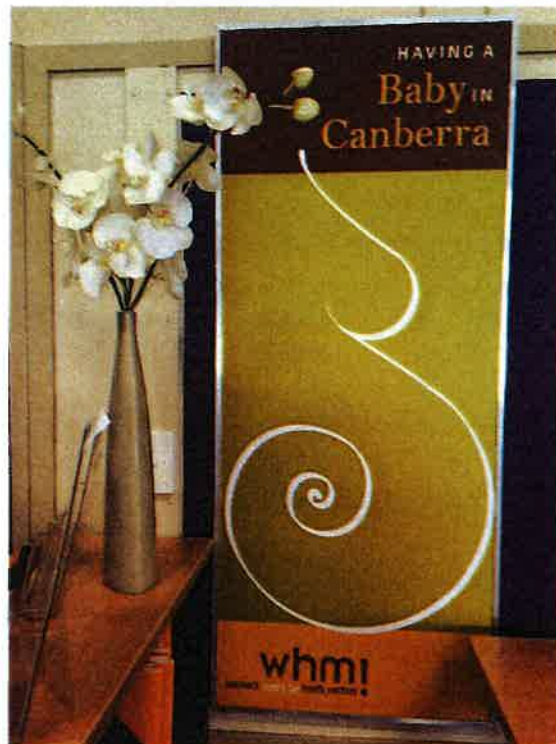
Until 30 April 2017, WCHM continued to auspice Women With Disabilities ACT and to support their staff and activities in order to understand and identify emerging issues for women with disabilities.



During that time WWDACT advised us of the good news that they planned- after 7 years of auspicing by WCHM - to move to become an Incorporated Association, in their own right. WCHM worked with them and the Community Services Directorate to organise the transfer of the Deed Of Grant and the remaining Grant funding from WCHM to WWDACT. Congratulations to WWDACT!

Having a Baby in Canberra (HABIC) website

During the design of the website WCHM met with key service providers and women's groups to ensure that there was relevant content for the website, and that the material was easily accessible. A forum was held with women who provided helpful feedback on content and navigation for the website. WCHM has also developed and printed postcards which will be used to promote the website in GP offices, ACT Health venues and similar other locations.



Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) website

The website is nearing completion and during it's design WCHM ran several focus groups with women with a BPD diagnosis to get feedback on content and navigation, and have linked with service providers to inform the information provided. As part of this we will make sure that we also link to other relevant and trusted information and websites (including the Australian BPD website).

WCHM also continued to develop strong relationships with other community sector stakeholders in order to build our knowledge and to influence policy and service design and to advocate to create change where needed.

WCHM hosted a Yoga for Mothers event for Mental Health Week in October at the Old Parliament House Senate Rose Gardens. The event was held in partnership with PANDSI.



WCHM worked with members of the Women's Services Network to understand the impacts on women of changes to the procurement of services and to service design in the ACT, with a focus on domestic and family violence, sexual violence and homelessness.

WCHM also continued to work closely with ACTCOSS around advocacy on women's issues, and the needs of ACT women in accessing crisis and support services and NDIS.

WCHM continued to work with CRCC in relation to the prevention of sexual violence in the ACT, and with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the women's refuges in relation to domestic and family violence.

Key Area 5: DOING WHAT MATTERS!

Ensuring that WCHM:

- Represents a strong and diverse membership
- Is actively engaged with the women we represent
- Is a well governed and managed organisation with accountability and transparency for members, staff, funders and stakeholders
- Has controls in place which ensure compliance with its obligations and legislation

Using the WCHM website and social media WCHM to communicate with members and stakeholders about women's health and wellbeing

The WCHM website is used to ensure up-to-date access to current news and information about events, services, programs, reports, consultations and other matters that may be of interest to ACT women. The website had over 22,400 page views over 2016-17.

During 2016-17, WCHM focussed on updating its website for ease of use and to ensure that women in the ACT were directly linked to available information and information sources through the Health and Wellbeing Hub.

WCHM updated our website over the year and reviewed and updated the Women's Health Hub, put in place improvements to make it easier to search, and made it more prominent on the front page of WCHM's website.

Because our own research shows that local women connect to personal stories from those with similar health issues or circumstances, we also moved to a focus on women's stories through a link from the homepage.

WCHM used Facebook to complement our main channels of communication - the WCHM website, our quarterly e-Bulletin, and our use of media. Daily posts on

Facebook are used to provide regular and up-to-date information on women's health and wellbeing in the ACT and to raise awareness about issues relating to women's health and wellbeing; local events, activities and forums; WCHM's activities, women's health promotion information and events; links with other community events and campaigns; to promote more widely the work we do and our projects, research reports and findings; and to raise awareness around current issues.

We have steadily increased the page likes and reach over the last year on our Facebook page.

The WCHM team prepared and released four editions of the Quarterly e-bulletin in 2016-17. This electronic newsletter provides an opportunity for WCHM members and supporters to be updated about issues affecting women's health and wellbeing in the ACT and nationally, be informed about upcoming WCHM events, be introduced to the WCHM staff and find out about WCHM projects.

Maintaining the highest level of professionalism

The WCHM Board continues to maintain and review organisational policies and governance processes to ensure efficient, effective and accountable management practices.



Treasurers Report

The operating result for the financial year ended 30 June 2017 was a surplus of \$52,221 (surplus for 2016 was \$26,425), representing an increase of 112% on last year. This result is consistent with budget expectations and is mainly reflective of

lower employee expenses and reduced Management Committee expenses (last year included Centre birthday celebrations and the Women of Canberra exhibition).

The major source of income continued to be received in the form of recurrent income from the ACT Health Directorate and the grant from Disability ACT. The revenue for WCHM reduced by 3% during the year, however this was offset by the reductions noted above.

The Board continued to capitalise on the ability to invest in the future with new ICT equipment and cloud storage, to name a few, before any potential end of useful life risks could eventuate. This again represents prudential financial risk management.

As noted in previous years, our employee expenses continue to be our largest expense category. This remains consistent with the sector. We received the fifth year of funding from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Government to supplement us for the impact of the equal remuneration pay increases and the resultant additional on-costs and this will continue for 2018.

We continued to provide auspicing arrangements to Women with Disabilities ACT (WWDACT) for the majority of the financial year. We wish WWDACT continued success and look forward to collaborating in the future.

This was my third year as Treasurer for WCHM I would like to thank again our Chief Executive Officer, Marcia Williams, for her ongoing support and would like to formally welcome our Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Emma Davidson. To our valued staff, thank you for your commitment and the quality work that you do every day.

It is with a sad heart, that I will not be standing again next year. To my fellow Board Members and to all Board Members of the future I wish you every success and wholeheartedly support the work and values of the Centre. To our wonderful staff, please continue to be involved in this valuable work so passionately.

Lynnere Gray, Treasurer

