



*Empowering women to
enhance their health
and wellbeing*

Annual Report **2017-18**

With the support of ACT Government

Through funding from the ACT Health Directorate

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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.

About WCHM

The Women’s Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) works to improve the health and wellbeing of women in the ACT and surrounding region, by providing information and representation on health and wellbeing issues and the social determinants of health affecting women, with a focus on those who are marginalised or experience disadvantage.

We do this by providing local and accessible information to support women in their pursuit of health and wellbeing, by working to ensure that women can contribute to and are aware of the health choices available to them, and by encouraging the Territory, the health system and other services to be more responsive to the needs of women.

WCHM informs our work by listening to ACT women about their stories, attitudes, assumptions, experiences and views. We use the data and evidence, local women’s views, and the stories of ACT women and their lived experiences to inform the social research reports which WCHM develops and to inform our work with services and policy areas in the ACT so that they can better meet ACT women’s needs.

WCHM also advocates on behalf of ACT women through consultation and submission processes (including Legislative Assembly Committees), directly with ACT Ministers and ACT Directorate officials, and through representation on high level advisory committees. We use these opportunities to disseminate the findings from our work with ACT women about their needs in order to influence responses in the ACT.

SUMMARY OF WCHM 2018 STATS



COMMUNICATING OUR MESSAGE

4
reports were published



3
other reports are underway

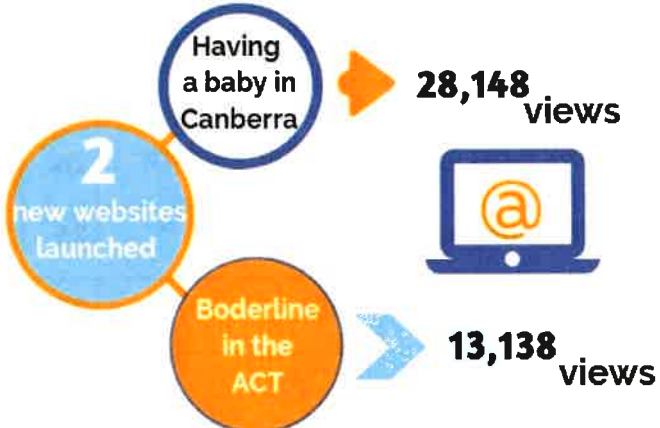
ONLINE PRESENCE

994
people like WCHM's facebook page



18,997 people visited the WCHM website

364
people received 12 editions of WCHM's newsletters



WCHM 2018 STATS

SUMMARY OF WCHM 2018 STATS *continued*



Chair's Report

Over the last 27 years, WCHM has provided independent, critical insights and advocacy to support the ACT women's health and wellbeing. During 2017-18, WCHM has undoubtedly worked hard to support women in the ACT and surrounding region, and as a result have continued to achieve amazing outcomes.

We were pleased that Karen Redshaw (Deputy Chair) and Renee Dockrill have continued on the Board. It has also been great to welcome several new Board members this financial year. I welcome Jo Schumann (Treasurer), Cassandra Gandolfo, Marija Gutesa, Kathleen McLaughlin, Nicole Mitchell, Alix O'Hara and Lori Rubenstein.

Unfortunately, we farewelled Erin Gillen who was an experienced and active Board member. I would like to thank Erin for her valuable contributions and commitment to the Board during her time with us.

I have very much appreciated the opportunity to work with such an energetic and savvy group of women, each of whom have drawn on their wealth of knowledge and experiences to support WCHM. This year the Board has been keen to actively support WCHM's activities and ensure that it is operating in accordance with robust governance processes. This has resulted in an engaged Board that has been involved in individual training, review of governance processes and policies, and closer involvement and attendance at various WCHM events throughout the year.

WCHM has remained in a strong financial and operational position. However, there have been indications that, following a change in ACT Government procurement processes, WCHM may need to respond to a tender request in order to secure continued ACT Government funding beyond 30 June 2019.

Currently, ACT Government funding is WCHM's key source of income. Accordingly, a focus for the Board this year has been ensuring WCHM is in a strong position to advocate for and secure ongoing ACT Government funding. In turn, the Board has been closely monitoring its financial viability and working towards a strong value proposition. This is an area that the Board will continue to prioritise, to ensure that WCHM has continued building on its track record of local, evidence-based research and advocacy that is receptive to ACT women's health and wellbeing needs for many years to come.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank WCHM's new and ongoing members who have continued to contribute to and support WCHM's research and advocacy work.

I would also like to thank the wonderful WCHM staff for their amazing work shedding light on various local women's health issues, listening to ACT women's voices and engaging in research-based advocacy across so many health areas. In particular, I would like to thank Marcia Williams (CEO) and Emma Davidson (Deputy CEO) for their outstanding leadership, commitment to WCHM's work and objectives and ongoing support to myself and the Board.

Finally, I wish to thank all the women who have generously shared their experiences and perspectives with WCHM over the past year, be it through participating in a focus group, responding to a survey or chatting to WCHM at an expo or another WCHM event. Your contributions are invaluable and very much appreciated.

Farzana Choudhury, Board Chair

2017/18 Board Members

(at 30 June 2018)

- Farzana Choudhury (Chair)
- Karen Redshaw (Deputy Chair)
- Jo Schumann (Treasurer)
- Renee Dockrill
- Cassandra Gandolfo
- Marija Gutesa
- Alix O'Hara
- Kathleen McLaughlin
- Nicole Mitchell
- Lori Rubenstein
- Marcia Williams (Public Officer)

WCHM farewelled Board member, Erin Gillen, during the year.

- 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.

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:

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) knows from our work for over 27 years that ACT women's health and wellbeing, and their ability to live healthy lifestyles, is affected by social and economic factors, so we work in the ACT across the social determinants of health for women.

As CEO I have been proud of the work that WCHM has been involved in over the last year and how well it has positioned us for the future. 2017/18 has been a very eventful year that has been full of many achievements and opportunities for WCHM. Our staff have been busier than ever this financial year, and the statistics speak for themselves.

WCHM has continued to be involved in a very wide range of important social issues which impact on women in the ACT and on issues that are associated with their access to supports and services for their health and wellbeing.

The priority issues that WCHM has been engaged in over 2017-18 have related to issues such as women's sexual and reproductive health; the health needs, barriers and gaps in access to health services for women in the ACT; the mental health needs of women in the ACT; violence against women and children; the hidden disadvantage for women in the ACT; housing and homelessness; access to maternity care and information; influencing the design of public spaces to recognise women's safety needs; exploring what impacts on ACT women's ability to maintain healthy behaviours; young women and the issues impacting on safe healthy relationships; and the needs of younger women in the ACT with chronic disease.

Despite our small size, during 2017-18 WCHM:

- released 4 four major reports, and worked on 3 others which will be released soon;
- launched 2 new local websites;
- participated in many ACT consultation forums;
- represented the views of women in the ACT as a member of many high level advisory bodies;
- contributed 5 submissions to Government;
- held several workshops and training for service providers and policy makers to enable them to be more responsive to the needs of women;
- held several forums and expos for women; and
- shared the results from our research - and from feedback from women – directly with many Ministers; various policy units within the relevant Directorates; as well as the ACT Primary Health Care Network; and ACT service providers.

We have maintained our presence in the media around the important issues for women in the ACT, with 17 articles about the Centre's work.

And we have continued to use Facebook as a way of engaging with women in the ACT, promoting health messages that may be useful to them, keeping them up to date with our work and linking them to relevant information. For the period 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018, WCHM's Facebook page received 994 page likes – a large increase on previous years.

Violence against women and their children has remained as a key focus for WCHM and the Centre maintained it's involvement in supporting the ACT's Family Safety Innovation Hub Family Safety Innovation Hub and contributing to the co-design and directions for the Hub that emerged, in

particular the focus on responses for pregnant women in relation to domestic violence, as well as sexual and reproductive coercion.

The Centre has been pleased that WCHM's maternity research from 2016 has informed changes in the ACT's design and delivery of maternity services and WCHM has been working with several areas of the Women, Children and Youth policy and service delivery areas to consider how to help them in evaluating the responses for women which have resulted.

We were pleased to be asked recently if the national BPD Awareness Week campaign could share the strapline from our Borderline in the ACT website - *KNOW BPD, NO STIGMA*.

And in June WCHM was honoured along with the Snow Foundation to be announced as the winner of the Small Grants category in the Annual Philanthropy Australia awards for the development of the Assistance Beyond Crisis Microfinance Program.

We continue to be supported by amazing community partners like Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Beryl Women Inc, ACTCOSS; the members of the ACT Women's Services Network; and the local maternity service network. All of them contribute their expertise and knowledge to our projects, our events and our advocacy and research work.

Thank you to our small group of talented and dedicated staff whose diverse skills are helping contribute to positioning WCHM for the future, and who have explored some innovative approaches to our work this year.

My thanks goes to the volunteer members of WCHM's Board, the majority of whom were new Board members this year who have brought new skills and expertise and ideas. They have dived straight in to understanding the issues for WCHM,

and in particular our reliance on one source of core funding from ACT Health, and are committed to exploring new opportunities and options.

And last, but not least, we are grateful to our members for their support - those who have been with WCHM us for many years and who participate regularly in our activities, and those who have joined us more recently after hearing of our work in the ACT. We look forward to working with you all in the coming year, and to having your support in such a changing external environment.

Marcia Williams, Chief Executive Officer

2017/18 Staff (at 30 June 2018)

- Chief Executive Officer—Marcia Williams
- Deputy Chief Executive Officer—Emma Davidson
- Health Promotion Officer – Amber Hutchison
- Health Promotion Officer — Pip Courtney-Bailey
- Health Promotion Officer — Julia Tran
- Administration Officer — Sandra Wiens

WCHM farewelled the following staff during the year, and we thank them for their contributions to the Centre and it's work:

- Health Promotion Officer - Emma Hoban
- Project Worker – Fairlie Hawke
- Administration Assistant – Frances McNair
- Administration Officer —Margaret Ross



WCHM's Key Areas of Focus

The WCHM Strategic Plan focusses on five key areas which further our work in supporting ACT women.

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.

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.

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.

WCHM also maintains formal and informal networks with relevant organisations to

ensure that we tap into the feedback of women to those organisations.

During 2017-18 WCHM continued to develop strong relationships with other community sector stakeholders so that we can build our knowledge. In particular we have worked closely with Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, the Women's Health Service, the ACT Women's Services Network, Shelter ACT, the ACT Youth Coalition, ACTCOSS, Beryl Women Inc, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, maternity services providers such as QE2 and PANDSI, members of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council, 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.

Social research is used by WCHM to inform our activities and representation, through qualitative and quantitative methods and this complemented by keeping abreast of other research which is relevant to our work.

Nationally and locally many health studies and policies relating to health issues, access, barriers and needs focus on the broader population, or on specific disease areas or parts of the health system. Very few focus on local ACT data, and even fewer on data about the needs of women, the social determinants, gendered evidence about the impacts on women's health or their emerging health needs and barriers in accessing the health system.

So during 2017-18 WCHM has continued to focus on building our 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.

During 2017-18 WCHM:

- Sought input from ACT women about how they access information about sexual and reproductive health; how and where they access sexual and reproductive health services and what the barriers are to that access; and what makes them feel comfortable in seeking services and advice from health care providers in relation to their sexual and reproductive health (including terminations of pregnancy);
- Explored the views of ACT women about what impacts on their ability to maintain healthy behaviours;
- Documented the experiences and barriers that face women in accessing support and services for their health and wellbeing, including younger women with chronic diseases;
- Worked with ACT women and service providers to understand the issues for women in relation to affordable housing, safe public spaces, domestic violence and insecure work;
- Conducted forums with ACT services to explore and document the issues for young women 15-20 which impacted on safe and healthy relationships;
- used data to explore the gendered nature of disadvantage in the ACT; and
- Consulted with women and mental health service providers about the experiences of women to influence the design of the ACT Office for Mental Health.

WCHM also held several consultations with women to identify the issues of ACT women and to inform our advocacy.

WCHM's Sexual and Reproductive Health Research

Over 600 responses were received to WCHM's sexual and reproductive health survey when it closed in November 2017, and some interesting and diverse themes

have emerged about the challenges that ACT women of different age groups face in managing their sexual and reproductive health, including issues relating to access to services and information. In May, WCHM staff held many forums with local women who further shared their views about the issues raised about sexual and reproductive health, including their access to contraception and abortion. These discussions complement the results from the sexual and reproductive health survey.



The findings from this research will be used to inform and work with ACT Government about the gaps and barriers that ACT women may face in this important area of their health.

Younger ACT women

WCHM's local research with younger women and service providers in the ACT who work with them has showed that sexual and reproductive health is also a significant issue for younger ACT women as well. Our work has identified that there is a need to improve access to information and advice for younger women (and young men) and their parents about sexual and reproductive health (including contraception, STI prevention and treatment, and abortion), what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy, realistic expectations about sex, the safe use of technology, normal body image, what consent looks like, and where to go for reliable trusted advice and support (local services and online information).

Young women with chronic disease in the ACT

Much of the current policy planning and programs, courses and services relating to chronic condition in the ACT focus on the ageing population. But increasingly younger women in the ACT were telling us that they were developing chronic diseases. While many chronic diseases are preventable, many of these chronic diseases are known to have a genetic basis and impact on women more than men. For example, women are more susceptible to developing autoimmune disease, particularly during childbearing years, and account for 75-80 percent of individuals diagnosed.

WCHM conducted research with younger women aged 18 to 50 years old with chronic diseases in the ACT about their experiences with ACT government and non-government programs, courses and services specially funded to provide information and support on chronic conditions. The project aimed to help identify the degree to which information, services and support were relevant to younger women living with chronic disease(s) in the ACT to gather insight and understanding into:

- their knowledge and experience of pre-existing local programs, courses and services which are specifically funded to provide services, information and support for chronic conditions;
- The suitability and age-appropriateness of these supports for young women;
- Their ideas for ways to facilitate and improve young women's access to information and involvement in activities in the ACT.

The final report summarised the results of the consultation for the 161 ACT women

who responded to and completed the survey questions.

Exploring what impacts on ACT women's ability to maintain healthy behaviours

This WCHM project has been exploring with a wide range of ACT women what impacts on their healthy eating and physical activity, and how they feel about health promotion methods and messages in the media. We know that women are busier than ever, and that health messages can often be confusing or conflicting.

Hidden disadvantage among women in the ACT

WCHM knows that social and economic disadvantage factors, such as poverty and low income, are more likely to be experienced by women than men, which can result in poorer health and well-being outcomes. But it is often hard to access gender disaggregated data for women in the ACT. Without this data, it is hard to know how many women are impacted by specific disadvantage factors, and in what ways.

This is why WCHM engaged NATSEM to provide us with data by gender so that WCHM could look specifically at the differences in disadvantage for women compared to men in the ACT. The report, *Hidden disadvantage in the ACT*, used the latest 2016 Census data to highlight pockets of disadvantage in the ACT, and showed that when looking at averages in the ACT, disadvantage can be hidden and that the gendered impacts can be overlooked, because disadvantage in Canberra is not concentrated in particular suburbs or regions. This report also reminded us that marginalisation is gendered.

The report showed the findings at suburb level in relation to low income households (with an equivalised household income of

\$500 per week or less), sole parent households on low incomes, and adults (aged 15 years or older) who have not completed Year 10 and are not still studying. The data showed the geographic distribution of women experiencing disadvantage within the ACT, and that there are many more suburbs in the ACT where there is a high proportion of disadvantage for women compared to men. And that women are experiencing disadvantage in these areas in higher proportions than men.

The data also showed that in the ACT there are two and a half times more women than men who are sole parents on a low income, and that the proportion of women who don't have at least a Year 10 level education is 5.8% whereas for men it is 4.8%.

WCHM Housing Forum

In September, WCHM held a forum to seek women's views on housing for input to Government consultations with a focus on:

- the suitability of their housing for their family's needs;
- what they sacrificed in order to afford the higher ACT rent/mortgage costs; and
- their worries about their ability to afford the housing they need in the future.

The information was used in a WCHM submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning and Urban Renewal Inquiry into Housing, and in our advocacy work on the socio-economic determinants of women's health.

WCHM forum for women on insecure work

In August, WCHM held a forum to seek the views of women in insecure work. The information we received from women at the forum was included when WCHM appeared at the hearings for the inquiry into

insecure employment in the ACT by the Legislative Assembly's Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs. This information will also be used in WCHM's ongoing advocacy on the socio-economic determinants of women's health.

Intersectoral collaboration

A key component of WCHM's work is also working across sectors to achieve change and participating in intersectoral collaboration. Intersectoral collaboration refers to our cooperation with multiple sectors in the community, which include (but are not limited to): health, mental health, human services, urban planning and services, legal, justice, domestic violence and sexual assault, and government.

For WCHM intersectoral collaboration includes the provision of information and support to other sectors to consider women's health and wellbeing needs in their operations. Through this collaboration we aim to achieve greater awareness of the health consequences of policy decisions and organisational practice.



Celebrating to the 30th birthday of the Women's Health Service

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.

The results from WCHM's research and from feedback from women have been disseminated widely, and have been included in consultations, meetings, advocacy and to Committees that WCHM has informed.

Results from all WCHM research and from feedback from women through forums, have also been disseminated to the relevant Ministers; to various policy units within the relevant Directorates including ACT Health Directorate; the Community Services Directorate; the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the Transport and Municipal Services Directorate; to the ACT Primary Health Care Network; to ACT service providers and to other ACT public servants through funding and submission processes.

Report launches

WCHM holds events to launch each of the reports and invites key Territory, other Government and community organisations to attend and hear the results.

These reports are important because they add depth of understanding about ACT women and their lived experiences, and provide data and evidence that also reflect marginalised and disadvantaged women's views and which aim to assist services and policy to better meet ACT women's needs.

Beyond Crisis report launch

On 14 August, WCHM (in conjunction with our partner Domestic Violence Crisis Service) launched our report, *Beyond Crisis - Working with Canberra's professional firms and businesses to make safer choices easier for survivors of domestic violence* - which described the outcomes of the BEYOND CRISIS project.



It was launched by DVCS champion, Kristen Henry from 106.3 radio. That project provided an opportunity to start conversations in Canberra between the community sector and business sector, to discuss the impacts of domestic violence, and to consider the vital role that businesses could play.

2018 WCHM International Women's Day Event – *Why women's health matters!*

On 1 March, WCHM held an event in the leadup to International Women's Day at the Canberra Museum and Gallery. Many of our members and key stakeholders

attended, as well as representatives from a wide range of organisations and sectors that WCHM work closely with – both non-Government and Government. Caroline Le Couteur MLA and Gaylene Coulton, CEO of the Capital Health Network, also attended.



Three speakers spoke on the topic from the perspectives of past, present and future.

The first speaker was Professor Emerita Dorothy Broom, who has had a connection with WCHM since our beginnings. Following the release of the first National Women's Health Policy and the allocation of funding to the states and territories, Dorothy took a lead role in the ACT consultations that eventually led to the creation of the Canberra Women's Health Centre (which later became WCHM). Dorothy has spent many years teaching and researching gender and various aspects of the sociology of health, as a Professor at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University, and is an expert in women's health and women's health centres. She spoke about what women's health was like in the past in Australia, and how the women's movement redefined and, in practical terms, changed things.

Next WCHM's CEO, Marcia Williams spoke about the present and why we need to focus on ACT women and the services and

supports we need, and included findings from the latest two WCHM reports.

And then Liz Chatham, Executive Director of the Division of Women, Youth & Children in ACT Health, spoke about the future, and the changes occurring in ACT Health which will provide opportunities to improve the delivery of health services and supports for ACT women.

After showing a short collection of images collated about how women experience endometriosis chronic disease by local ACT artist and WCHM member, Margaret Kalms, the Minister for Health and Wellbeing – Meegan Fitzharris – launched WCHM's two new reports:

- *ACT women's health matters! ACT Women's views about their health; their health needs; their access to services, supports, and information; and the barriers to maintaining their health;* and
- *I don't have the spoons for that... The Views and experiences of younger ACT women (aged 18 – 50) about accessing supports and services for chronic disease.*



Gender & disadvantage: why does it matter?

WCHM, in conjunction with National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) held a successful launch of our new report – Hidden Disadvantage amongst women in the ACT (by Emma Davidson) – at a lunchtime event on Monday 6 June.



The CEO introduced the new report's findings:

- Disadvantage is here in the ACT, and it's not evenly distributed. It's worse for women than men.
- There are two and a half times more women who are sole parents in low income households than men in the same situation.
- There are 26 suburbs with a high proportion of women in sole parent households on a low income AND high proportion of women who don't have at least a Year 10 education level.
 - There is nowhere in the ACT where sole parents on a low income, or single people on low income including the Age Pension, can afford to pay private rent.
 - Access to housing, education, employment, and other services is limited for women experiencing disadvantage due to low income, caring responsibilities as a sole parent, or low education level.

A panel of speakers was then facilitated by Virginia Haussegger (Director, 50/50 by

2030 Foundation) to discuss the topic. The speakers were, Ashleigh Streeter-Jones (ACT Woman of the Year, 2018); Matt Grudnoff (Senior Economist, The Australia Institute); and Susan Helyar (Director, ACTCOSS).



Endometriosis event

WCHM has been part of the Canberra Endometriosis Network which has informed the delivery of a national response to Endo, and organised an awareness raising event to highlight the work being done in the Endometriosis Centre at the Centenary Hospital and by the local Endometriosis Network.



The Network provides support to women experiencing endometriosis and their families in Canberra and the surrounding area. The network now has over 600 members, and provides social events and hospital support visits to women receiving treatment. For women with this disease, being able to talk to other women about

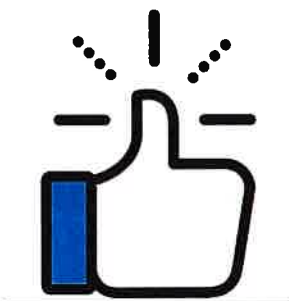
their experience can help in managing the emotional trauma, as well as sharing information about managing the disease.

National Families Week

WCHM coordinated and supported an event for National Families Week in May, with Families ACT and the ACT Youth Coalition, to highlight good practice in working with children and young people who have experienced trauma.

Facebook

Facebook is 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; link with other community events and campaigns (eg such as important weeks for women and women's health, and Domestic and Family Violence campaigns with other organisations such as DVCS); to promote more widely the work we do and our projects, research reports and findings; and to raise awareness around current issues.



With health promotion days occurring regularly and a steady flow of news, research and events relating to women's health and wellbeing WCHM is never short of items to post. This includes health information from trusted sites, women's health news and research, highlighting

quality health sources and awareness raising during key health promotion dates.

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.

WCHM shared the results from WCHM's research and from feedback from women to the relevant Ministers; to various policy units within the relevant Directorates including ACT Health Directorate; the Community Services Directorate; the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the Transport and Municipal Services Directorate; to the ACT Primary Health Care Network; to ACT service providers; to other ACT public servants through funding and submission processes, and through media.

And we continued to focus on advocacy 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.



During 2017-18 WCHM has contributed to and influenced a wide range of discussions in the ACT and we have engaged with the ACT Health and Wellbeing Minister, the Minister for Domestic and Family Violence, the Minister for Mental Health/ Corrections and other MLAs.

Submissions

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

WCHM has disseminated its findings from its work through the following submissions to consultations:

- WCHM Submission on Exposure Draft of Crimes (Invasion of Privacy) Amendment Bill in July 2017;
 - WCHM Submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence – Policy approaches and responses in October 2017;
 - WCHM Feedback on Consultation for the ACT Office for Mental Health in October 2017;
 - WCHM Submission to the Housing Choices consultation in March 2018; and
- WCHM Submission on draft Crimes (Consent) Amendment Bill 2018 in March 2018.

Informing discussions on health needs and access to health services

The information from ACT women in WCHM's community consultation survey about their health service utilisation and health needs has been used to inform WCHM's advocacy efforts in ACT Health and in the Capital Health Network.

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 and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women about the results of our health and wellbeing research.

The findings from younger women experiencing chronic disease has also been used to inform discussions with ACT Health.

Informing discussions on access to sexual and reproductive health services

The findings from the research into sexual and reproductive health has been used to inform ACT Health about options for delivering better access for women to sexual and reproductive health services in the ACT.

As part of that work, WCHM has also, with the support of Sexual, Health and Family Planning ACT (SHFPACT), informed ACT Health and relevant Ministers, MLAs and advisers about the design of more appropriate responses to the provision of termination of pregnancy in ACT public and the cost of termination of pregnancy in the ACT especially for vulnerable women.

And WCHM and SHFPACT supported ACT Health, Ministerial advisers and MLAs to understand how legislation tabled by MLA

Caroline Le Couteur would advance better community access to appropriate reproductive health care like abortion in the ACT.

Informing discussions on non-consensual image sharing legislation

WCHM contributed to discussions about the Exposure Draft of the proposed legislation on non-consensual image sharing by MLA Caroline Le Couteur, and – because the legislation created new criminal offences for behaviours already common within the ACT community – we adapted WCHM's What To Say website to include an awareness campaign to ensure that young people and their parents understood what the new laws were and how to ensure they complied.

Informing housing and homelessness responses

The CEO and Deputy CEO attended the inaugural ACT Housing and Homelessness Summit on 17 October and have been involved in informing the development of the new ACT Housing Strategy through attendance at community consultations and submissions.

Informing the Family Safety Innovation Hub

WCHM has been heavily involved in informing the Stage 2 codesign by the Family Safety Innovation Hub, and contributing to the directions that emerged from the co-design. This included a focus on responses for pregnant women in relation to domestic violence, as well as sexual and reproductive coercion. WCHM was then involved in contributing at a forum to discuss and identify opportunities to engage with and assist pregnant women

and new parents who may be affected by domestic and family violence.

Informing Urban Planning

Building on the Safety Mapping Tool that WCHM designed, WCHM have been working with the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate to provide input and feedback from women about what makes certain urban areas safe and unsafe, and to identify opportunities for assisting to provide women's input to the planning for new areas and the rejuvenation of old areas.



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

WCHM continued to advocate through representation on committees for greater inclusion of gender sensitive policies, practices and infrastructure relating to women.

WCHM has highlighted the results of our reports and the need for women sensitive approaches to legislative, policy and service delivery through membership on high level ACT advisory bodies, including:

- the Domestic Violence Prevention Council;
- the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women;
- the Core Design Group for the Family Safety Hub;

- the Capital Health Network's Community Advisory Council;
- ATODA's Project Advisory Group;
- the ACTOSS Peaks group;
- the ACT Justice Reform Group; and
- the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance Advisory Group.

Media

WCHM also has strong links with local media and had much coverage this financial year to highlight the issues affecting ACT women and their health and wellbeing including:

- *ACT women increasingly travelling for abortions (The CANBERRA TIMES - June 9th, 2018)*
- *Disadvantage is here, but it's not evenly distributed (The RiotACT - June 6th, 2018)*
- *Canberra & the 'hidden disadvantage' among women (BROADAGENDA Blog - June 5th, 2018)*
- *Women experiencing disadvantage at a greater rate than men in the ACT, report finds (The CANBERRA TIMES - June 3rd, 2018)*
- *Canberra scheme supports domestic violence victims with micro loans (The CANBERRA TIMES by Emily Baker - April 20th, 2018)*
- *Canberra's world-class endometriosis clinic (The Riot ACT - April 16th, 2018)*
- *Housing choices for women (The Riot ACT - April 10th, 2018)*
- *Child survivors of domestic violence demand action to address trauma (The CANBERRA TIMES - April 8th, 2018)*
- *Chronic disease support for young Canberra women lacking, report finds*

(The CANBERRA TIMES - April 8th, 2018)

- *Healthy eating and physical activity: what works? (The Riot ACT - April 7th, 2018)*
- *ACT Health Minister Meegan Fitzharris says review into abortion access ready next year (The CANBERRA TIMES - November 19th 2017)*
- *Let's talk about sex (The Riot ACT - 1 November 2017)*
- *Talking to teens about their sextspectations (The Riot ACT - 22nd October 2017)*
- *"Urgently" needed abortion fund could help women in need in ACT region (The AGE - 8 October 2017)*
- *New website for expectant Canberra parents (HER CANBERRA - 5 September 2017)*
- *Having a baby in Canberra (The Riot ACT - 4 September 2017)*
- *Where to find support and information about menopause in Canberra (The Riot ACT - 12 July 2017)*

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.

We know from our research that ACT women still struggle with finding relevant and accessible information (including local information) that meets their needs, and so WCHM has been focusing on delivering on accessible information in some key areas.

WCHM has continued to work closely with the Women's Health Service, the Women's Services Network, the maternal health sector, Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT, Maree Stopes and others to look at how we can work with them and share our capacity and skills to complement their work.

Online information for ACT women

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.

Launch of Having A Baby In Canberra website

On 4th September, the *Having a Baby in Canberra* website was launched at an event held at the Calvary Birth Centre.

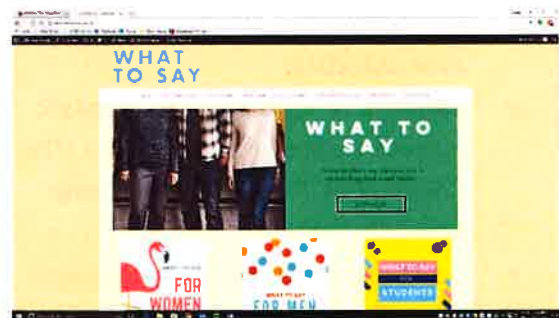
The Minister for Health and Wellbeing, Meeghan Fitzharris, launched the website.



What to Say website relaunch

In October WCHM updated and relaunched it's What to Say website to include more materials which relate to:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission survey of university students which reported on the prevalence of sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities; and
- the changes to ACT legislation on image sharing.



WCHM's CEO was interviewed by ABC Drive Time host Adam Shirley on 19 October about WCHM's new materials on the What To Say website.

Launch of Borderline in the ACT website

On 15 November WCHM launched its new Borderline Personality Disorder website – *Borderline in the ACT*.



The ACT Minister for Mental Health, Shane Rattenbury formally launched it.

The website is designed to provide access to resources and information about Borderline Personality Disorder in the ACT to assist women living with BPD and their supporters, and also for service providers.

BPD Workshop

The launch of the BPD website was preceded by a workshop for service providers in the ACT who may at times work with people affected by borderline personality disorder. WCHM hosted the workshop and supported and funded Natalie Malcolmson from BPD Awareness ACT to prepare and deliver this training. Both of these actions deliver on recommendations from the 2016 WCHM report *Borderline Personality Disorder: Exploring The Lived Experiences Of ACT Women And Service Providers* which investigated the experiences of women with lived experiences of being diagnosed or labelled with BPD in the ACT and the experiences of service providers who helped and supported them.

New BPD Training for service providers

Because of the very positive feedback WCHM received about the BPD training which WCHM arranged, and the requests

for more, WCHM planned and organised to run additional training sessions on March 13, 14th and 21st.

The topics were “*Understanding Borderline Personality Disorder to Work Effectively with Clients with BPD*”, and “*How to use dialectical behaviour skills to work more effectively with people with BPD, and look after yourself*”.

Health promotion events

WCHM held several health promotion events and forums for ACT women to raise their awareness about their health and wellbeing, and to connect them to local services and responses in the ACT.

Women’s Health Week forums

WCHM organised 3 forums at 3 locations for Women’s Health Week to raise awareness for women about the importance of creating and maintaining good health.

- 5 September – Aspen Medical at Deakin;
- 6 September - National Archives of Australia; and
- 7 September – Prime Minister & Cabinet at their main office Barton.



We used promotional material and free gift bags from Jean Hailes Foundation and other information which was sourced from local ACT health providers to support an 'Expo' of other information that the women could take away including pamphlets from a wide range of services and on a wide range of topics such as menopause, heart health for women, nutrition, health checks, mental health, eating well etc.



We also worked with the Women's Health Service who supported the forums with speakers from their staff.

Having a Baby in Canberra Expo

On Saturday 17 February, WCHM organised and hosted a Having a Baby in Canberra Expo at the National Library of Australia. WCHM created a Facebook event to promote the Expo and also promoted it through Facebook and Instagram advertisements; flyers and a poster that was sent through WCHM's networks; and through local media. Roadside signs were also placed throughout Canberra promoting the event.



The exhibitors at the Expo included 19 local maternity services, including:

- All public and private hospitals in Canberra and Queanbeyan except Calvary Private in Bruce;
- Pre-natal yoga, doulas and parenting preparation classes;
- Private midwives;
- Mental health and wellbeing services, including psychologists and PANDSI;
- Services to help with sleep, including Queen Elizabeth II Family Centre;
- Breastfeeding support services, including Australian Breastfeeding Association;
- Support services for vulnerable new parents; and
- Pharmacy Guild of Australia, who have a program to support pregnant women quit smoking.



Opportunities existed for the exhibitors to give a talk/demonstration during the day.



The event was attended by over 100 pregnant women on the day, most in the first trimester of pregnancy where they would be making decisions about their maternity care.



Feedback was collected to help inform planning for any similar future events WCHM might host. Women on the day told us they appreciated having an opportunity to find out about different health services all in one place, and maternity service providers appreciated the opportunity to network with each other as well as answering questions from women.

Women's Health Stall at National Multicultural Festival

WCHM organised and hosted a women's health information stall at the National Multicultural Festival from 16 to 18

February 2017 to provide information and promote women's health services and support groups in the ACT.

There were more than 280,000 attendees over three days at the 2017 National Multicultural Festival.

Participants included:

- WCHM
- ACT Women's Health Service
- BreastScreen ACT
- Bosom Buddies
- Australian Breastfeeding Association
- Canberra Mothercraft Society and Queen Elizabeth II Family Centre
- PANDSI
- Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service



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 communicates 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 18,990 page views over 2017- 18.

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 twelve editions of the monthly electronic newsletter during 2017—18. This 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 2018 was a deficit of \$58,688 representing 9.7 % of the overall operating budget. The result reflected the Board's decision to ensure it invested in items that would develop our evidence and enhance our profile in a year where it is still uncertain whether WCHM will need to participate in a competitive procurement exercise this year in order to retain our funding. This included the engagement of an additional temporary project worker to explore a project about the issues of consent and coercion for young women in the ACT and the funding for a contract with NATSEM to undertake specific ACT gendered data analysis relating to poverty and which resulted in the report "Hidden disadvantage for women in the ACT" that was launched in May this year, just before the ACT Budget was announced. The data will also inform a second report soon.

As noted in previous annual reports, employee expenses are the largest expenses for WCHM. Consequently, other spending that contributed to the deficit (a little less than half the deficit) arose from the fact that this year there was an extra pay in June, a large worker's compensation payment adjustment, and costlier leave provisions than anticipated as a number of staff were relatively new to the organisation and had not had the opportunity to take their accrued annual leave in the financial year.

The Centre still retains a healthy fiscal position and the Board's intention is to deliver a surplus position again in this financial year.

The major source of income for WCHM continues to be in the form of recurrent income from the ACT Health Directorate. The certainty around this funding remains unclear and as noted by the Auditors it will

be important in 2018-19 for the Board to continue to monitor its financial viability, including the sourcing of additional funding and watching for Directorate updates on funding for this sector in the ACT. The Board has begun this process of investigating additional funding sources and plans to continue to invest its time and energy into this aspect of the organisation's operations in 2018-19.

Jo Schumann, Treasurer

