

Annual Report 2020-21

**Funding Bodies
2020-21**

ACT Health Directorate

the voice for women's health and wellbeing in the ACT

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The Women's Centre for Health Matters is committed to reconciliation and acknowledges the Ngunnawal People who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise the strength of Aboriginal women and their continuing connection and contribution to this land, these waters, and our communities. May we walk gently and treat the earth and each other with care and respect.

About us

Women's Health Matters (Women's Centre for Health Matters Inc.) is an independent, non-partisan think tank that works to improve the health and wellbeing of all women in the ACT and surrounding region. We seek to improve access to health information and enhance knowledge and understanding about the causes of health and illness among anyone who identifies as a woman.

We advocate on behalf of all ACT women, especially those experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability. We want women to feel in control of and understand the determinants of their own health and wellbeing.

We do this through health promotion and by providing evidence-based social research, policy development and advocacy services to governments, the corporate sector, policy makers, service providers and peak bodies.

We are the voice for women's health and wellbeing in the ACT.

Our Vision is that our local research, evidence and data (informed by women for women) is used by decision makers to be more responsive to the needs of women and to improve the health and wellbeing of women in the ACT.

Our Vision is also that our guidance supports ACT women to make informed health and wellbeing choices and to understand how to access appropriate gender-sensitive services and information in the ACT.

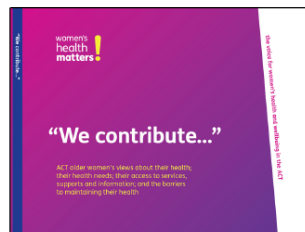
Our core Values are:

- Informed by women's voices
- Local and unique
- Trusted
- Independent
- Equity
- Inclusive
- Respectful
- Valuing lived experience
- Recognising the social determinants of health
- Evidence based
- Women focused

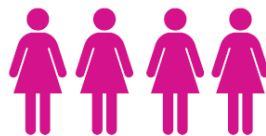
SUMMARY OF 2020-21 STATISTICS

women's
health
matters!

COMMUNICATING OUR MESSAGE



ONLINE PRESENCE

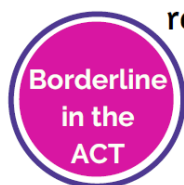


9K

people visited
the Women's Health
Matters website



New online and digital information
released for ACT women:



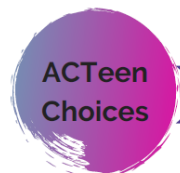
363,696 views



54,054 views



4,810 views



10,531 views



1,587 views



1,310 views

SUMMARY OF 2020-21 STATISTICS continued

women's health matters!

IN THE MEDIA



articles in the media
about our work



interviews on TV



radio interviews



CanberraWeekly

Expert applauds Lee's bid to ensure stealthing is criminal in ACT

Rosa Ritchie • April 24, 2021

The Canberra Times

We are failing female inmates at the AMC

Elizabeth Kikkert

Latest News

ABC

Haig Park is getting a makeover, but will it be enough to cover up the park's ugly reputation?

By Lisa Clancy

The Canberra Times

ACT election 2020: Indigenous incarceration rates to become election issue

Daniella White

ABC

Women's Health Matters CEO Marcia Williams on drink spiking, consent and the experiences of women in the capital

On Breakfast with Lish Fajor

The Canberra Times

Women's Health Matters encourage women to contribute to Canberra Safety Map

Alex Crowe

ACT Politics

CanberraWeekly

ACT establishes sexual assault working group

Nick Fuller • March 30, 2021

CanberraWeekly Politics

Dip in sexual assault stats prompts ACT Policing to encourage reports

Rosa Ritchie • April 7, 2021

The Canberra Times

ACT health services 'confident' in contraceptives trial, cautious of broader rollout

Kathryn Lewis

Health



18
high level Committees
Councils and advisory
groups which
we represented



7
events/forums
held



1
public hearings of ACT
Standing Committees



Celebrating our 30th birthday

In 2021 we marked our 30th birthday as an organisation that facilitates women in the ACT to *“reclaim knowledge of and responsibility for our own bodies and our own health”* – Dr Dorothy Broom (founder of Women’s Health Matters, formerly known as The Canberra Women’s Health Centre, in 1990).



Image 1 Dr Dorothy Broom speaking at opening of The Canberra Women's Health Centre in 1991.

To celebrate this significant milestone in April 2021, Women’s Health Matters showcased a “Thirty Years in Thirty Day Series” on social media. This brought our followers, older and newer, back in time to visit our extraordinary achievements in the last three decades. It told the story of our evolution from direct service delivery to community development and capacity building using the social determinants of health model.

In the last 14 years and onwards, our organisation has come to a new focus of identifying and responding to the unmet health and wellbeing needs of ACT women through social research, advocacy, policy development, information provision and health promotion.



Image 2 The Women's Health Matters team in 2021 consisting of Health Promotion Officer Amber Hutchison, Communications and Administration Officer Adelaide Haynes, Chief Executive Officer Marcia Williams, Health Promotion Officer Pip Courtney-Bailey and Health Promotion Officer Julia Tran (left to right).

We proudly concluded the series celebrating 30 years as the voice for women’s health and wellbeing in the ACT by hosting an evening at the National Arboretum and on Facebook live stream on 30 April 2021. We were joined by incredible people who shaped the priorities, culture, relationships and subsequent achievements of Women’s Health Matters and we thank you all for your continuing support.



Image 3 Chief Executive Officer Marcia Williams, Life member Dr Dorothy Broom, Minister Emma Davidson, Chair Renee Dockrill and Minister Nicole Lawder (left to right) cutting Women's Health Matters' 30th birthday cake.

Much of who we will be in the future is ingrained in who we are now and who we have always been. With our organisational history spanning back to 1990, Women’s Health Matters remains committed to achieving excellence, especially for those experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability.

Chair's Report

As COVID 19 has continued to impact the world throughout this year, it has highlighted the importance of continuing to research, advocate and give a voice to women in the ACT to support their health and wellbeing.

This year we welcomed new Board members Tamzen Armer, Rebecca Smyth, Jennifer Welsh and Dr Melanie Dorrington, who have brought a wealth of valuable expertise and skills to enhance the Board's composition. We have also been fortunate to retain the experience of ongoing Board members Sheena Ireland (Deputy Chair), Josephine Schumann (Treasurer), Mirjana Wilson, Jolene Reece and Romy Listo. Unfortunately, we will be farewelling Dr Melanie Dorrington from the Board, following this year's AGM, and Romy Listo resigned from the Board in early October 2021. The Board has had a particularly busy year, and I would like to thank you all for your ongoing contribution, commitment and genuine desire to see WHM flourish.

November 2020 saw an exciting new phase for Women's Centre for Health Matters, with our rebranding to becoming Women's Health Matters. This was the result of significant research and engagement with stakeholders to understand and reflect what WHM means and delivers to the women of the ACT. Our new branding better captures and describes what we deliver as an independent non-partisan think tank that is the voice for women's health and wellbeing in the ACT.

This year also saw WHM mark a significant milestone with its 30th birthday. On 30 April, a beautiful event at the National Arboretum was the culmination of 30 days of celebration to recognise the history and significant contribution of WHM over the past three decades. During the event, addresses were made by Mister Davidson, Nicole Lawder MLA and Professor Dorothy Broome, a lifetime member, who also made an address at the opening of WCHM in 1990.

In a year that had a number of major events, perhaps the most significant was the departure of our CEO. It was with great sadness that WHM farewelled Marcia Williams, our CEO of over 12 years. While Marcia's achievements and

contribution to improving the lives of women in the ACT are too numerous to mention, I would like to highlight a small number of Marcia's significant accomplishments:

- one of seven local ACT community members who attended the second National Summit on reducing Domestic and Family Violence with State, Territory and Federal Ministers in Adelaide in October 2018.
- being part of a co-design process with the Office for Women, YWCA Canberra, and ACTCOSS to inform the October 2019 Women's Summit which would inform the development of the Second Action Plan 2020-22 under the ACT Women's Plan 2016-26.
- leading WCHM's research into sexual and reproductive health that informed ACT Health and relevant Ministers and advisers about more affordable access to contraception and termination of pregnancy for women, resulting in new legislation allowing greater access to medical termination medication.
- working with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Deloitte, the Snow Foundation, Service One and CARE Financial Counselling, Marcia was instrumental in the establishment of the Assistance Beyond Crisis microfinance facility to allow women leaving domestic violence, to access interest free loans.
- as Chair of the ACT's Domestic Violence Prevention Council, Marcia presided over two significant Extraordinary Meetings which led to reform in responses to children and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence and the need for the Territory to explore a death review mechanism.

It is widely recognised that Marcia has been a driving force in improving the health and wellbeing of women in the ACT and surrounding region for more than a decade. I would like to thank Marcia for her unwavering commitment to advocating for women, especially those experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability.

This financial year has also seen some movement among WHM staff, with Sandra Weins returning to Argentina, Pip Courtney-Bailey taking a leave

of absence to pursue an opportunity with the ACT Inspector of Correctional Services and we welcomed Adelaide Haynes to the team. I would like to commend both departing and remaining WHM staff for their continued delivery of outstanding work under ongoing challenging circumstances.

Finally, on behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our stakeholders and members for their ongoing contributions and support for WHM activities over the 2020/21 financial year.

Renee Dockrill, Board Chair

2020/21 Board Members

(at 30 June 2021)

- Renee Dockrill (Chair)
- Sheena Ireland (Deputy Chair)
- Jo Schumann (Treasurer)
- Romy Listo
- Jolene Reece
- Mirjana Wilson
- Tamsin Amer
- Dr Melanie Dorrington
- Rebecca Smyth
- Jennifer Welsh

WHM farewelled Gaylene Coulton and Melissa Hobbs as Board members earlier in the year.

WHM'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 eight Board meetings during the year, and a Planning Day.

Board Committees

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

- Governance Sub-Committee
- Finance Sub-Committee
- Member Engagement and Fundraising Sub-Committee.

Board Training

New Board members receive an induction, training where needed and access to a Board members' secure page on the WCHM website to access all the core WCHM documents and a comprehensive series of fact sheets and relevant information on their roles as Board members.

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.

Interim Chief Executive Officer's Report

Women's Health Matters has a long and proud history of being a strong voice for women's health and wellbeing in the ACT. It is therefore a great privilege for me to have joined as Interim CEO to continue the great work of Marcia and the team.

I commenced in September 2021 at a very interesting time; on the first day of Women's Health Week and the National Summit on Women's Safety 2021 and amidst the ACT's COVID-19 lockdown. These three issues I believe aptly capture the pressures and challenges that women face in 2021 and the prominence of women's health and safety on the national agenda.

Since joining Women's Health Matters I have received the warmest of welcomes from our Board, staff and community partners, which I believe speaks to our organisation's reputation and history of delivering high quality outcomes for local women.

2020-21 has not been an easy year for our organisation with the departure of our longstanding CEO and key staff, however despite the many challenges Women's Health Matters has continued to make a meaningful contribution for women in our community.

Our key achievements in 2020 include the publication of our research report "**We contribute...**" which documents ACT older women's views about their health and health needs.

Our former CEO was also instrumental in influencing the ACT Government's decision to establish a **Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group**. As part of this announcement, in March 2021 Women's Health Matters conducted a **survey** regarding women's experiences seeking help for sexual assault in the ACT, which may be captured as a key evidential piece in the program's final Report to be handed Government later in 2021.

Women's Health Matters continued to be a strong voice for ACT women's health and wellbeing in 2020-21 through our advocacy to

government and our diverse range of health promotion programs. We continued to publish a range of online information and tools and made significant improvements to the structure and content of our website. This included a fresh new look and feel to reflect our new branding and new web pages on a range of health conditions.

There are many people who have helped Women's Health Matters in 2020-21; however first and foremost I would like to acknowledge to the many hundreds of **ACT women** who have shared their experiences with us during our research surveys, focus groups and forums. You have entrusted us with very personal and often harrowing information and I extend my thanks to you for your honesty and openness. I commit to honoring this trust by ensuring your voices are heard and used to inform improvements to ACT services and programs that impact women.

I would also like to extend my thanks to:

- **our members** for their feedback and contribution to our research, forums and events,
- **our partners** across the community and health sector for their time, commitment and resources to support us be a strong voice for ACT women, and
- **ACT Health** and our funding bodies who have entrusted us to deliver value for ACT women.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the amazing women on the Women's Health Matters **Board** for their strong governance, commitment, and leadership. I would also like to acknowledge the extra time they have volunteered to maintain our organisation during the absence of key staff towards the end of 2020-21 and the generous support they have shown to me since commencing in the role.

I would also like to thank our **current and former staff** who served over 2020-21, including Marcia, Sandra, Amber, Pip, Julia, Nida and Adelaide. Through your written voices I have heard your passion and commitment towards improving outcomes for ACT women and have been inspired by the high quality of your work and the impact you have clearly made.

Women's health and wellbeing will continue to have a strong prominence on the national and

ACT agendas in 2021 and beyond, with the launch of the National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030 and key ACT Government strategies and commitments that will impact ACT women's health and social determinants of health.

As we enter a new era for Women's Health Matters we should look to our strong and proud history of delivering quality outcomes for women for over 30 years. I look forward to leading Women's Health Matters through a significant period of transition and ensuring we continue to be a strong voice for ACT women now and into the future.

Vivien Bevan, Interim Chief Executive Officer

WHM'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 next pages outline our progress against our Strategic Plan in 2020-21.

The Year in Review

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.

Consultation with women in the ACT and surrounds and our research on the social determinants of women's health has informed us in identifying disadvantages women experience, especially those from marginalised groups.

In 2020 Women's Health Matters undertook consultation with women who have experienced **sexual assault** and how their experiences of accessing reporting services and the health system impacted their lives. Our information was pivotal in informing the establishment of a new Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Working Group by the ACT Government announced by Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Yvette Berry on 23 March 2021.

In March 2021 we furthered this work by conducting a survey on *Women's experiences of seeking help following a sexual assault*. This study sought to examine the unmet needs of women seeking information and services about mental health, legal assistance, policing procedures, crisis support, education and trauma. We plan to use these findings to advocate for improved systems of support for women's safety in the ACT and submit our survey findings to government in 2021-22.

In October 2020 we published our research report "***We contribute...***" *ACT older women's views about their health; their health needs; their access to services, supports and information; and the barriers to maintaining their health*. This report is the fifth in a series that looks at the views and experiences of health and the health needs of ACT women, with the aim of improving options and access to services. This study sought the views of older ACT women on: their health, their health needs, their access to services, supports and information, and the barriers to maintaining their health. The report also explores issues such as their social connectedness, their housing and living arrangements, their financial status, and their access to transport.

In early 2021 we conducted research asking **women with disabilities** about their health and wellbeing and their access to health services and supports in the ACT. Women told us their experiences of their health in the past year including how COVID-19 impacted on access to health services. Women's Health Matters are using these consultations to advocate for improved health outcomes. The report will be released late 2021.

In early 2021 we conducted research asking women who identified as having a multicultural background about their health and wellbeing in the ACT. Preliminary results are being finalised in late 2021.

Our online **Canberra Safety Map** continues to inform us how women feel about public spaces. This is an interactive tool where women can drop a pin on a map and select options about how safe or unsafe they feel

about the area. In 2020 we upgraded the Map to allow for a more user-friendly interface. This information is continuously collected and used to inform the design of urban spaces and planning of public transport systems that welcomes more positive and efficient use of the built environment.

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.

Women’s Health Matters continues to provide ACT women with current and innovative health and wellbeing information.

This year we have focused our attention on digital and online opportunities for disseminating health information and the opportunities that this presented within the wake of COVID-19.

In October 2020 we released our **new website** to make finding local and reputable health and wellbeing information more accessible and easier for women. This new website includes

a consolidation of our former websites and inclusion of additional health information specific to women’s health and wellbeing needs.

We created a new webpage **Sexual and Reproductive Health** containing information for women of all ages seeking ACT based services. The page includes updated legislation regarding choices available for STIs, sexual safety, planned and unplanned pregnancy, contraception, costs and consent. All content is evidence-based and appropriate to women in the ACT. This section was developed as a recommendation from our 2018 social research report *“Improving choices and options: The views of ACT women about their sexual and reproductive health needs”*.

We created a new section on our website called **Having a Chronic Condition**, which was sparked by previous research about the health and wellbeing of younger women and chronic disease. The section provides comprehensive information to help and support women with chronic conditions deal with the varying facets of their lives including how to talk to health professionals, employee rights and tips for looking after women’s wellbeing.

We continue to promote key public health messaging through social media to help with the dissemination of quality health information to women about COVID-19, and other issues such as health screening and domestic violence.

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.

Women's Health Matters continued to be a strong voice for ACT women in informing ACT Government and community services. This year we were involved in several discussions with Directorates, Ministers/Advisers and news media in identifying the gaps and issues that impact local women.

These have included advice on domestic and family violence, women's access to health services, mental health issues for women, the need for improving responses for women at the AMC, improving informed choices for sexual and reproductive health needs, and access to Canberra Health Services for women including maternity services.

In 2020 we attended and contributed to feedback to ACTCOSS and the ACT Government about the ACT Government's **ACT Wellbeing Framework**, launched in 2020. We identified indicators lacking intersectional and nuanced data and that potentially hide

information about women who are marginalised and disadvantaged.

We were involved in the **Expanding Public Health Care Services for Eating Disorders** for the Territory Reference Group; attending monthly meetings to represent the social needs of women with disordered eating and to influence the design of building, organisational, rehabilitative, clinical structure of the to be developed new residential facility.

We consulted with women in the AMC to inform the **Justice Reform Group** as a means for us to represent the voices and concerns of women in the AMC about their human rights while in prison.

Women's Health Matters also explored the available data and provided insight and representation about access to eating disorder services to inform the design and planning of ACT's first **eating disorder residential facility**.

The results of our COVID-19 consultation with women were used to inform other services supporting women such as **Perinatal Wellbeing Centre**, and the Minister for Mental Health in identify emerging areas of need.

We used the **Canberra Safety Map** to help to advocate and inform decision makers about how to improve public spaces to improve public safety.

Women's Health Matters' advocacy and lobbying also included:

- Engaging the ACT Health Minister, the Minister for Women, the Minister for Corrections, the Minister for Disability and Older people, the Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Housing;
- Using the findings from consultations to advocate for better responses for women seeking help after sexual assault.
- Using the information from ACT women in the AMC to influence changes in the

AMC delivery of services and responses for women.

- Influencing and advocated for tabled bill to outlaw stealthing.
- Advocating for better health services that meet the needs of women experiencing eating disorders.
- Influencing and advocated for better health service responses for LGBTIQ women.

Women's Health Matters also represented the views of ACT women on many ACT advisory bodies, reference groups and working groups including:

- a Ministerial Roundtable about the needs of women in the AMC;
- a Justice Housing Program ACT Community Roundtable;
- as a member of the ACT Domestic Violence Prevention Council;
- as part of a small Steering Group for a *children and young people experiences of DFV project* for the Family Safety Hub;
- the Capital Health Network's Community Advisory Council;
- a Reference Group to inform the development of an ACT Women's Offender Framework;
- the First 1000 Days Reference Group;
- the ACTCOSS Peaks group;
- the ACT Justice Reform Group;
- the Maternity Design Working Group for Canberra Hospital for Women and Children Expansion Project; and
- the Canberra Health Services Strengthening Health Responses to Family Violence Steering Committee.
- Expanding Public Health Care Services for Eating Disorders for the Territory Reference Group

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.

Women's Health Matters continued to work with the health system and other services in 2020-21 to delivered a rich assortment of **health promotion** programs to empower local women to better manage their health and wellbeing.

For Women's Health Week 2020 we focused on a campaign promoting **cervical screening** for women and everyone with a cervix. This was a joint campaign with Meridian and Cancer Council ACT. It provided women information and choices about where they can get screened so to avoid stigma and ensure they access a comfortable and understanding environment.

We also celebrated Women's Health Week with the women inmates in the **AMC**, with an **art exhibit** during International Women's Day focusing on this year's theme of "Choose to Challenge" to showcase art work made by the women detainees. The art exhibition provided

the women with the opportunity to express about what it means to them to be a strong woman and how their **physical and mental health** influenced other factors in their lives and vice versa.

While we were limited on holding face to face events or traditional **health promotion activities** during COVID19 restrictions, we used Facebook and newsletters throughout the year 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 specific health and wellbeing. This included reminders for regular health checks, promotion of local health and community organisation websites, events, and services.

We developed promotional articles for social media during National Pain Week, Homelessness Week, Women's Health Week, BPD Awareness Week, Mental Health Month, Perinatal Mental Health Week, National Condom Day, NAIDOC Week Equal Pay Day, Ant-Poverty Week, R U OK? Day, Reclaim the Night, National Cervical Cancer Week, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, International Day of People with Disability, Human Rights Day, Safer Internet Day, Ovarian Cancer Month, Harmony Week, National Heart Week, Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS) Awareness Day, International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT), MAYDAYS, Reconciliation Week, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, Endometriosis Awareness Month.

During the year we also facilitated health promotion information sessions for women in the **AMC** on key topics identified by them during our weekly discussions with them and advocating for their rights to health, housing, legal aid and education while in prison and at release

Our **digital platforms** and our many websites continue to provide information to assist empower local women manage their health; including Having A Baby In Canberra, Borderline in the ACT, the ACT Women's Health Hub, ACTTeen Choices, What To Say,

and Help Stop DV, Women with chronic conditions, Sexual and reproductive health for women. We also collaborated with SANE forum for live virtual discussions on Topic Tuesdays about all matters mental health.

Our **ASSURED** tool continues to assist ACT women to assess whether health and wellbeing information on the internet is credible or trustworthy. We have also updated our resources on **financial issues** for women that promote independence and financial clarity.

This year we have been working to create a **STI navigation video series** to be completed in late 2021 targeted towards young women and demystifying the stigma and intimidation of getting STI checks in local non-judgmental sexual health clinics.

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

Women's Health Matters continued to communicate with and support its members and stakeholders about women's health and wellbeing.

Our Board and staff continued to work together to ensure the efficient and effective management of our organisation.

In 2020 we developed a Communications Strategy to ensure Women's Health Matters continues to be a strong and effective voice for ACT women. The Strategy sparked a

rebranding process in 2020 which has led to the fresh new look for our organisation. The Strategy also drove updates to our website in 2020-21 to consolidate information and enhance user experience.

We will continue to implement actions within the Strategy in 2021 with the aim of further raising our profile and broadening our membership and readership base so that we can strengthen the value of services we provide for ACT women.

Treasurers Report

The operating result for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 was an operating profit of \$47,559. Total ACT Health income for the year of \$ 694,443 represented a small percentage increase as compared to the 2019/20 year, mainly due to increased grant funding, the increase in the pay equity subsidy and COVID 19 cash boost stimulus. Total income including cash boost stimulus was \$760,433. Total expenditure for the year was \$ 712,873. Retained earnings remained stable at \$253,118.

The Association has \$349,641 in cash and cash equivalents as at 30 June 2021. In addition, the Association has a secured funding arrangement in place from the ACT Health Directorate until financial year ended 2022. Annual funding under this arrangement in 2021 is \$638,575 which was further increased by the standard indexation rate per ACT Treasury for financial year 2021-22 to \$653,840 (these amounts also include a pay equity subsidy). The current cash position and secured future funding will be sufficient to meet the ongoing office administrative and other expenses of the Association in the foreseeable 12 months.

Jo Schumann, Treasurer