



# Annual Report 2014/2015

*Phone: 4421 0730*

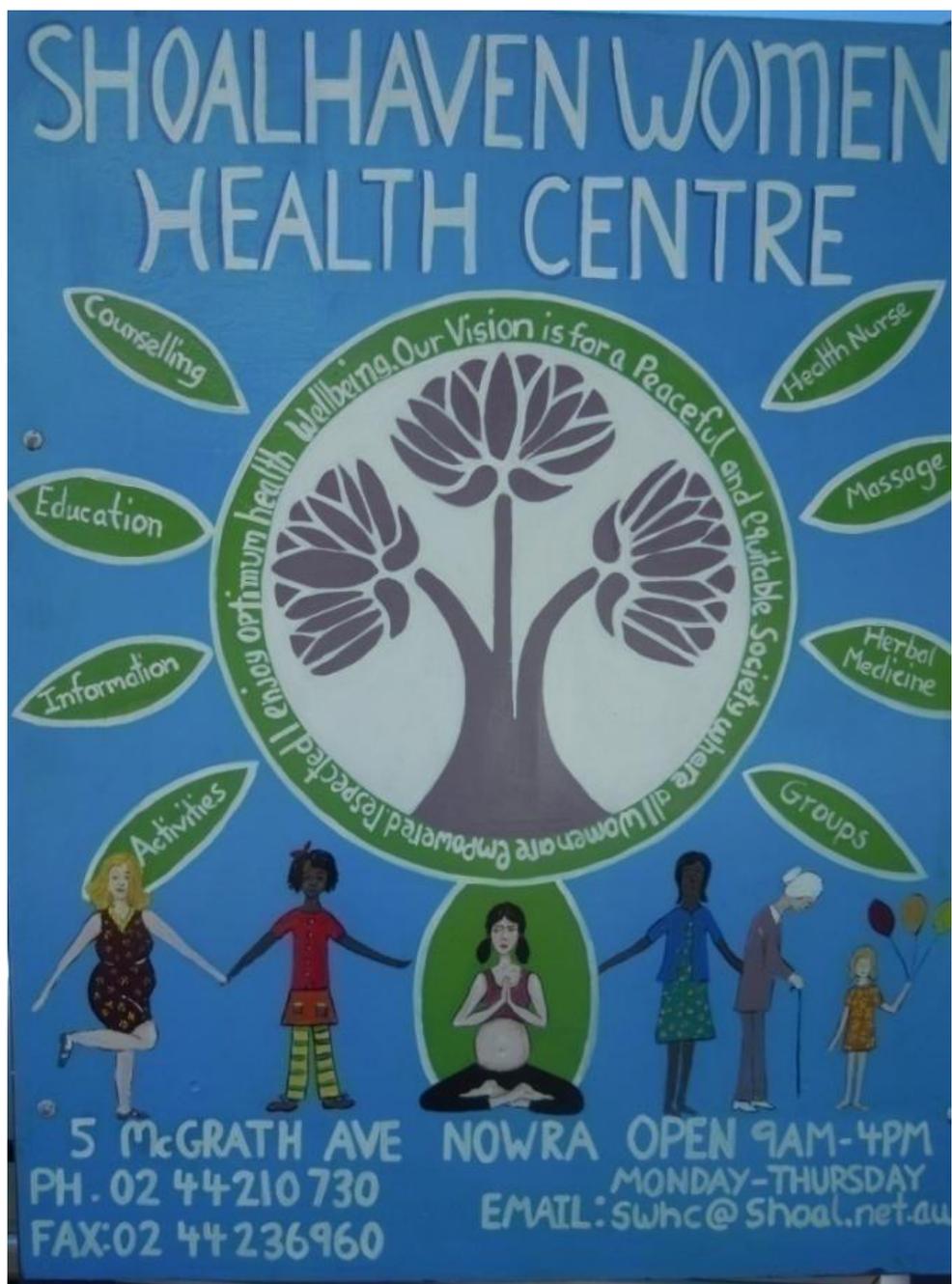
*Fax: 4423 6960*

*Email: [swhc@swhc.org.au](mailto:swhc@swhc.org.au)*

*Web: [shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au](http://shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au)*

*Facebook: Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre*

**A feminist service funded by  
Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District**



Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre (SWHC) is incorporated under the Associations Incorporations Act and is a registered Charity with Public Benevolent Institution Status. This status enables donations to be a tax deductible item.

The Committee of Women (CoW), who oversee the Governance of the SHWC work, live or reside in the local community. The service currently employs seven (7) part time staff and one (1) contract position. The centre is supported by volunteers, including administration volunteers and a Tafe NSW placement student.

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre is a member of Women's Health NSW, the peak body for all Non Government Organisations (NGO) Women's Health Centres in NSW.

# Centre Fundamentals

## Vision

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre (SWHC) has a vision for a peaceful and equitable society where all women are empowered, respected and enjoy optimum health and wellbeing.

## Mission

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre (SWHC) empowers women to take control of their own health and wellbeing through the provision of accessible, integrated health and intervention services within a caring, feminist environment.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Association are:

- \* To provide a non profit primary health care service for women, managed by women, within a feminist framework, in the Shoalhaven area.
- \* To prioritise access for women who are living in poverty, or who have low or fixed incomes, by providing services at a minimal cost, or for no cost to ensure that women are not refused service, due to inability to pay.
- \* To ensure that services reflect the needs of local women providing educational, preventative and self help programs which encompass women's life span, experience and cross a broad range of health issues.
- \* To network, liaise and collaborate with other local service providers in order to provide necessary services to women in the community.
- \* To facilitate access to the service activities assist women to access other appropriate services (acknowledging and addressing the different needs of women of diverse backgrounds and the barriers they may face.)
- \* To uphold the rights of women who may use the service to express themselves freely, to be treated with respect, dignity and consideration.
- \* To ensure the creation and maintenance of a safe, healthy and supportive environment for the well being of staff, management and women who use the service.
- \* To activity encourage the empowerment of women in both the personal and social aspects of their lives by promoting informed decision making processes.
- \* To provide a range of services which reflect the diverse needs of Women's Health.
- \* To ensure effective community management and operation of the Women's Health Centre by and for women.
- \* To encourage training and staff development of Centre staff in all areas of Women's Health to ensure the highest standard of health care to consumers.



# Chair's Report

It has been another positive year for the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre with continued strength shown in achieving its core objectives and providing primary health care services for women in the Shoalhaven.

The management, staff and volunteers should all be extremely proud of their achievements in the past year. In all areas; occasions of service, groups undertaken and numbers of women attending the service, there has been a huge increase in numbers – such that can only be seen as a testament to the good work that is being done by all on a daily basis.

This year has seen the centre welcome Suzanne Perry to consolidate the clinical team of Linda Fenech, Sally Gardner, Kym Nicholson, Carolyn Lette and Maureen Cable (from ISLHD).

The Administration of the centre has again been well supported by Lesley Brook and Ali Goodwin. Lesley deserves to be acknowledged for her meticulous efforts in organising the activities to celebrate the 30th anniversary celebrations at last years' AGM.

The support of the volunteers, Patsy Robb, Richelle Wood, Valerie Hill and Kathy Eade are also highly valued. Thank you all.

We said goodbye to Kimberley Chiswell whose commitment to the centre and its members is greatly appreciated.

Congratulations to Tracy Lumb who has again guided the team through the last 12 months with dedication, inspiration, commitment and genuine care for the welfare of all. Well done Tracy.

Staff should also be commended on their efforts during the accreditation process which culminated in February this year. Months of preparation work were assessed in a two day interview process undertaken by a representative from Quality Innovation Performance. The evaluation report that followed acknowledged the areas of strong performance and outlined areas for improvement within the Centre. The Essential Recommendations made are being worked through to work towards a 100% compliance rate across all reported areas. Particular acknowledgement should be made to Alison Godwin whose meticulous efforts lead to a 100% compliance rate for the financial and contract management area. This is an outstanding achievement. The Centre also performed at a very high compliance rate for service provision including 100% for service outcomes and 71% for consumer outcomes. The report recognised the centre's commitment to meeting the needs of its consumers by providing a holistic service and individual support.

The centre has had a busy year again with involvement in a variety of activities including such events as the Women's Wellness Festival which culminated at the Lady Denman in an afternoon of fun and entertainment, despite inclement weather conditions. Staff also attended the Shoalhaven Women's Conference which was a highly entertaining and inspiring afternoon.

Thank you to the Committee of Women (CoW), Sally Wallace and Donna Rogers who have continued to support the centres growth. Welcome to Lia Anderson who has joined the Committee as Treasurer bringing with her extensive knowledge in this field.

I wish the centre well in continuing to provide a high standard service to the women of the Shoalhaven.

**Sally Lamb** *Chairperson* **Committee of Women**



# Manager's Report

The Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre, staff and volunteers continue to support the women of the Shoalhaven with programs that provide intervention and prevention strategies.

The centre received confirmation that funding would be continued for another twelve (12) months at the end of the current funding period 2015. This will ensure our funding until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

Whilst this is great news for our service and clients, it makes the job of planning and expanding the service very difficult.

Our staff not having a commitment past this time does not provide certainty of employment; I appreciate their loyalty in remaining with the service through these uncertain times.

One Hundred and forty (140) new clients accessed the service during the reporting period. During 2014/15 over 4500 points of contact by women either attending centre appointments, group/workshops, emergency drop in, drop in for information, via email, outreach clinic or by telephone. These numbers make the centre very busy and extremely consumer friendly. SWHC provided ninety nine (99) group sessions which saw an increase from seventy seven (77) in the previous year. A total of 588 women attended some form of group activity.

The SWHC continues to provide a high standard of service and continues to develop and reshape workshops to meet the needs of our women in a regional setting, identifying and supporting a diverse range of complexities.

The centre has found its 'groove' this year after enduring the stresses associated with restructure which occurred in the previous period. The staff are dedicated, loyal and caring, with the clients best interests always at the forefront of their work and working collaboratively as a team, ensures a pleasant and effective working environment.

Our Alternate Therapist Sally Gardner celebrated twenty (20) years with the centre and her enthusiasm for her position continues.

Our Well Women's Nurse Maureen Cable was also acknowledged for her twenty (20) years of attending the SWHC with her job in ISLHD.

With careful budgeting we welcomed Suzanne Perry, as a Counsellor and she brought with her Art Therapy, to the centre.

The Shoalhaven covers a vast geographical footprint and for such a small service it is difficult to meet the needs of all clients. SWHC benefits from the strong partnerships and MOU's in place with other service providers in the region. We thank our networks and partners for their commitment to service provision and the needs of our shared clients. Our Women's Biz continues to be a sought after 'read' distributing 700 copies four times a year..... with Facebook and our Website providing further up to date information.

The Women's Wellness Festival was another great success and after two years as lead agency this has been passed over to Waminda for the upcoming year.

Thanks go to my wonderful staff: Ali, Carolyn, Kym, Lesley, Linda, Sally and Suzanne; my ever committed volunteers and my CoW who support and encourage me to be the best I can..... ***this creates an amazing and caring environment we call, the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre.***

**Tracy Lumb** *Manager*

# 2014/2015 Staff/Volunteers

Centre staff remain a dedicated and committed team who continue to provide a high level of compassionate and professional service to the women of the Shoalhaven.

All staff employed part time are classified by the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Modern Award with the exception of the Financial Administrator who is a contractor and Maureen Cable, our Women's Health Nurse who conducts a weekly outreach clinic through our partnership with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's Well Women's Program.

## Our Staff:

- ♀ Alternate Therapist – Sally Gardner;
- ♀ Counselling – Kym Nicolson and Suzanne Perry;
- ♀ Finance – Ali Goodwin;
- ♀ Massage – Linda Fenech and Carolyn Lette;
- ♀ Reception – Lesley Brook.



Our wonderful volunteers support the Centre on a weekly basis and without their ongoing dedication and attendance, our services would not operate as smoothly.

## Thanks to:

- ♥ Kathy Eade
- ♥ Valarie Hill
- ♥ Patsy Robb
- ♥ Richelle Wood.



The Committee of Women (CoW) are a committed, professional team who bring a range of skills and knowledge to the governance of our service.

The CoW have faced the challenges of Accreditation and we have 'survived'. A workplan was developed by QIP in conjunction with SWHC and our completion date is January 2016. Whilst these are necessary steps that must be taken to ensure that services provide quality outcomes and workspace for clients, volunteers and staff.



The SWHC would like to thank Sally Lamb (Chair), Lia Anderson (Treasurer), Donna Rogers (Secretary) and Sally Wallace.

These women bring skills and commitment to our organisation and give their time freely to support a small community based not for profit organisation.

Whilst in the scheme of things we are small the requirements and obligations placed upon the centre and ultimately our Board is enormous. The CoW have supported myself and our staff with their belief, energy and values..... their belief that the service is essential and a basic human right for women; keeps us working within the centre, focused and responsive to the growing needs of our community and clients.



# Strategic Plan 2014-2016

## Our Objectives...

- ◆ To provide a non-profit primary health care service for women, which is managed by women, within a feminist framework in the Shoalhaven area.
- ◆ To prioritise access for women who are marginalised and/or poorest of health issues by providing services at a minimal cost or for no cost to ensure that women are able to receive service and support.
- ◆ To ensure that services reflect the needs of local women providing educational, preventative and self-help programs which encompass women's life span, experience and cross a broad range of health issues which also recognise and respect Aboriginality and CALD backgrounds.
- ◆ To network, liaise, collaborate and establish MOU's where applicable with other local service providers in order to provide necessary services to women in the community.
- ◆ To facilitate access to services and activities and to assist women to access other appropriate services (acknowledging and addressing the different needs of women of diverse backgrounds and the social barriers).
- ◆ To uphold the rights of women who may use the service to express themselves freely, to be treated with respect, dignity and consideration.
- ◆ To ensure the creation and maintenance of a safe, healthy and supportive environment for the well being of staff, volunteers, Committee of Women (CoW) and women who use the centre and its services.
- ◆ To actively encourage the empowerment of women in both the personal and social aspects of their lives by promoting informed decision making processes and strategies.
- ◆ To provide a range of integrated services which reflect the complex nature of women's health with a focus on prevention and early intervention.
- ◆ To ensure effective Governance and operation of the Centre by and for women.
- ◆ To encourage training and staff development in all areas of women's health to ensure the highest standard of integrated, client centred health care to consumers.
- ◆ Strive to maintain ethical standards in all our activities.
- ◆ Commitment to best practice and continued Quality Improvement.
- ◆ Advocating for and supporting women from a feminist perspective including at all levels of Government and their Ministries.



# Our Goals 2014-2016...

1. Secure and develop a strong and dynamic organisation capable of providing a range of sustainable and effective programs which address women's health and wellbeing.
2. Provide a range of multidisciplinary, integrated health services, education and information to empower women and improve their health and wellbeing, and build social and community capacity.
3. Work collaboratively with strong partnerships and cross sector organisations at local, state, national and global levels. To advocate, lobby and have a positive influence on public opinion, recognition, policy, services and practices relating to women especially those who are marginalized and of the poorest of health issues.
4. Improve access to health services and information for all women with the aim to expand and develop greater opportunities.

## Our Strategies...

**Goal 1** – Secure and develop a strong and dynamic organisation capable of providing a range of sustainable and effective programs which address women's health and wellbeing

### Strategies:

- ◆ Maintain, evaluate and review the SWHC Policy and Procedure Manual and continued implementation of procedures across the organization.
- ◆ Maintain planning and evaluation processes and cycles to ensure SWHC operate effectively and continues to meet the changing needs of women.
- ◆ Ensure that the governance of Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre is of the highest standard and members are drawn from the local community.
- ◆ Ensure that the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre delivers high quality health and wellbeing services to target groups with budget.
- ◆ Develop a Business Plan to steer the future financial security of the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre and its services.
- ◆ Develop and maintain appropriate Key Performance Indicators in line with the NSW Health Framework for Women's Health 2013 in collaboration with The Ministry of Health to underpin our Contractual (2015-16) obligations.
- ◆ Complete assessment and workplan for industry accreditation (2015- 2016) and maintain best practice industry standards.
- ◆ Ensure all staff and volunteers have optimum access to professional development opportunities. Ensure that mandatory training is undertaken.
- ◆ Ensure that all women involved in the Centre feel valued and supported.
- ◆ Maintain a strong, diverse and dynamic membership base with the aim to build and grow these numbers.
- ◆ Continually assess and source funding for service provision, training and development and infrastructure.
- ◆ Build the public profile of the Centre through a variety of activities and mediums.

**Goal 2** - Provide a range of multidisciplinary, integrated health services, education and information to empower women and improve their health and wellbeing, and build social and community capacity.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Continue to provide education, information and referral.
- ◆ Continue to provide and expand a range of core clinical services including alternate therapies, counselling and massage services and the Well Women's Program.
- ◆ Continue to provide and expand clinical, therapeutic and information and education groups and activities.
- ◆ Expand service provision to encompass groups and activities which address women's social, cultural and recreational wellbeing.

**Goal 3** - Work collaboratively with strong partnerships and cross sector organisations at local, state, national and global levels. To advocate, lobby and have a positive influence on public opinion, recognition, policy, services and practices relating to women especially those who are marginalized and of the poorest of health issues.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Work collaboratively and develop relationships, exchange information and work with key local stakeholders, organisations, associations, networks, and agencies including all levels of Government.
- ◆ Advocate and lobby through a range of mediums to facilitate improved outcomes relating to women's health and wellbeing.
- ◆ Advocate for greater support and recognition of the importance of gender specific health strategies through promotion, policy, practices and activism.

**Goal 4** - Improve access to health services and information for all women with the aim to expand and develop greater opportunities.

**Strategies:**

- ◆ Target key groups of women to expand our client profile. Working to expand our 'new to service' client base.
- ◆ Expand our existing outreach services in the Shoalhaven.
- ◆ Build and expand partnerships and MOU opportunities with other services, organisations and groups to offer an extensive, diverse, supported, client focused service to women.
- ◆ Explore and build our technological capacity to increase opportunities for women including services profile and contact via Website and social media.
- ◆ Continued participation, support and auspice of the Shoalhaven IWD Committee and lead agency for the Women's Wellness Festival.
- ◆ Continue to work towards increased service provision by exploring a variety of options including funding submissions and opportunities, partnerships, MOU's, consortia or amalgamation.



# Service Provision

Shoalhaven Women’s Health Centre activities and outcomes reflect the goals and philosophy of our Strategic Plan. During the period we have incorporated the new **Key Performance Indicators** from the Ministry of Health plus a **Business Plan** and **Environmental Scanning Document** which will be ratified by the CoW during the next financial period.

Project and service goals were achieved across all areas of service delivery. Outcomes were beyond expectations.

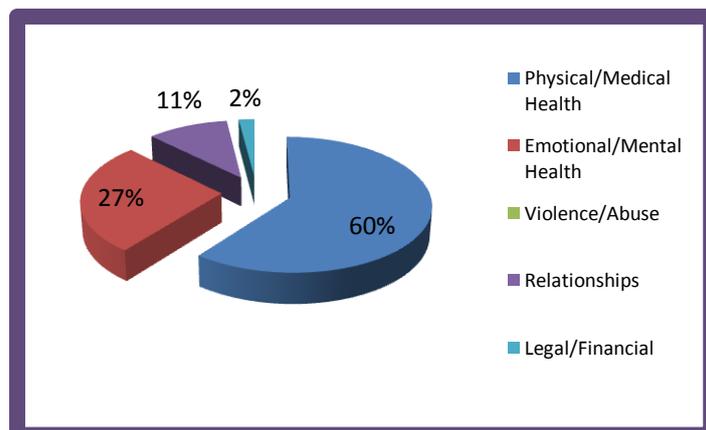
SWHC continues to evaluate its services and consult with women who attend the centre. We pride ourselves in responding to the expressed need of local women and develop assessable services with a **prime focus on prevention and intervention** at a minimal or no cost.

The SWHC and the Illawarra Women’s Health Centre (IWHC) continue to work and support our services through a strong, positive and supportive MOU. This year saw the introduction of a Telephone Counselling service for the region. The service in the combined areas of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven handled 1450 points of contact. This is an invaluable service to our women and SWHC looks forward to this continued collaboration between the two services. Thanks to Sally Stevenson for her ongoing support of SWHC, the women of the Shoalhaven and myself.

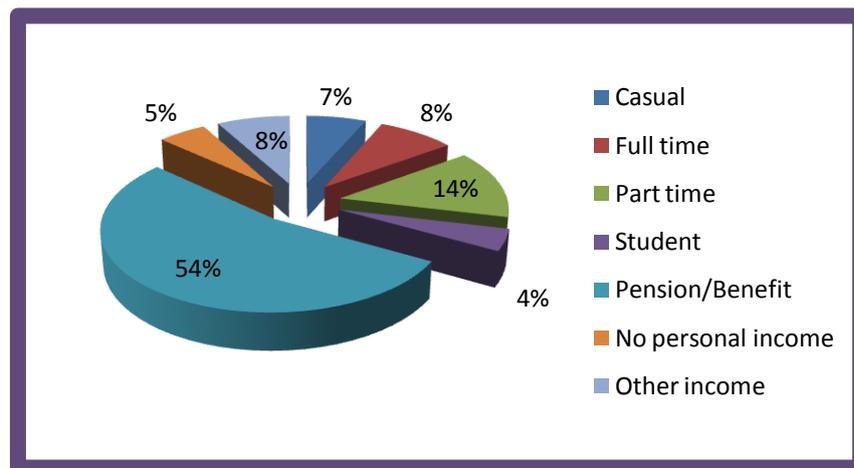
During 2014/15 **796** women attended appointments in core service areas.

- ✓ Provided appointments (face to face and by phone) for women across core service areas – counselling (294 contacts), massage (283 contacts), alternate therapist (45 contacts) and the nurse (245):
- ✓ Recorded 588 women attending a total of 99 health education/promotion groups and intervention/prevention workshops across a multitude of disciplines;
- ✓ Managed an estimated number of requests for information, referral, and appointments, follow up totalling over 4,500 through our reception and introduced another 140 new clients to our service.

Presenting issues across counselling, massage and the alternative therapist service were extensive but the main presenting issues were in the broad areas of physical/medical health, emotional/mental health, violence/abuse, relationships and legal/financial.

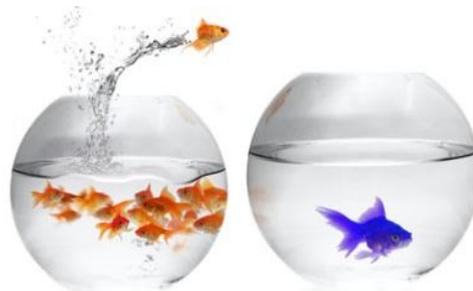


The age range of clients who accessed SWHC core services during 2014/2015 was broad. Services were provided to clients from the ages 16 years to 85+. It is pleasing to note that we continue to support clients in the **85+ years** range. Health and wellbeing is lifelong!



**Health Education Programs** focused on self esteem issues, confidence building, diet, nutrition and lifestyle issues. **588** women attended workshops and groups held at the Centre including:

- ⊙ Mindful Meditation and Pain Management x 3 (8 weeks)
- ⊙ Pelvic Floor x 4
- ⊙ New to Town x 15
- ⊙ Menopause x 2
- ⊙ Art Therapy x 2 (6 weeks)
- ⊙ Arthritis x 1
- ⊙ Assertiveness x 2
- ⊙ Self Esteem x 2
- ⊙ Women's Wisdom x 12
- ⊙ Ayurvedic Principles x 1
- ⊙ Boost Your Energy x 8
- ⊙ Brain Health x 2
- ⊙ Heart Health x 1
- ⊙ Ladies Start Your Engines x 2
- ⊙ No Cook Cooking x 4
- ⊙ Saver Plus x 2
- ⊙ Gentle Stretch x 2
- ⊙ Stress Management x 1
- ⊙ Diabetes x 1
- ⊙ Bling a Bra x 4



Over **75%** of **new clients** attending workshops go on to access further SWHC services.

Clients report feeling **less stressed, more informed** about health issues and able to make more informed choices.

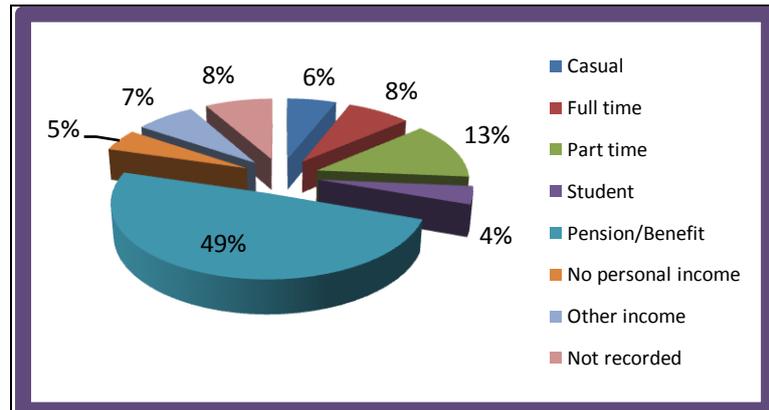


2014/15 the Centre received approximately **4500 requests** for information and or referral by phone, drop in, email or through practitioners and staff; including follow up.

Through the collection of data on client registrations **138** women **identified as disabled**. This was an increase of 36 clients from the last reporting period. This included: Chronic Health Complaint, Physical, Psychiatric, intellectual, Brain/Nerve Damage and Vision/Hearing.



Socioeconomic information collated demonstrated the largest client group in this area was women on a pension or benefit which represented 49% of all women. 8% of women indicated they were employed full time, with 13% working part time, and 6% reporting that they worked casually. 7% of women reported having other income, 4% of women were students, and 5% of women reported having no personal income. We saw a reduction in the amount of women who work full time or part time.



SWHC provides a **multidisciplinary, integrated health service** with a **primary focus of client centred care**. The number of new clients continues to grow at a steady rate and returning clients are a constant with the service. The number of **clients utilizing other services provided** by SWHC demonstrates the **direct benefit to our clients**. SWHC consistently receives **high numbers of referrals** from other local health services requesting service provision. Approximately **1000 referrals** to other supporting agencies within the region to ensure clients received the most appropriate service for their needs. Staff spend **a significant amount of time** ensuring that our clients who may not benefit from some of our services **are directed and engaged with those who can**.



## Feedback included:

Clients report **positive changes to lifestyle, health and wellbeing** as a **direct result** of participation in service provision. **Clients comment** on individual attention received and even in group situations **each person is recognized**.

Clients comment **'no request is too great'** and staff, practitioners and volunteers will **'go out of their way'** to provide information and resources. SWHC continues to receive feedback surrounding the welcoming, friendly, information, **safe and non judgmental atmosphere** of the Centre.

# Well Women's Health Nurse Program

A total of 222 women attended well women clinics and of these 171 pap tests were taken. Of these, 105 women had not been screened for four years or more (under-screened), and 10 women had never been screened.

Opportunistic sexual health (swabs/urine) testing is included in the clinical service and provided to women who present at consultation with symptoms. <26 years of age who are asymptomatic will be offered Chlamydia testing -22 women were tested for Chlamydia and/or other tests, nil positive results recorded the opportunistic sexual health screening is supported by standing orders document with the sexual health service as per Dr Brown sexual health policy and standing orders agreement.

The women's health nurse also receives phone calls from clients who have been referred from the women's health centre for information concerning women's health issues and possible referral for further management.

The women's health nurse also responds to drop in clients to the centre who require medical information and referral to discuss pregnancy options. The emergency pill is available to women requiring treatment due to failed contraception. This medication is given using the standing orders from Dr K Brown as per sexual health policy protocol for women's health nurses.

The women's health nurse also provides Education sessions on a range of women's health topics.



<b>Women's Health Nurse - Services Provided</b>	
No of Women attended clinical service	222
Pap tests taken	171
Under- screened	105
Never screened	10
Sexual Health	22
Pregnancy Options and referral	12

The Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre (SWHC) promotes access to a range of feminist holistic health care options for women.

The centre offers an environment that promotes a "Welcoming" and inviting environment to all women and especially to those women who are "nervous" about accessing services for their health care needs.

**Maureen Cable** *Nurse*

# Major Activities/Achievements during 2014/2015

## Service Provision

- ◆ Continuation of service provision in core areas of counselling, massage, alternative therapist, Well Women's Clinic (outreach), and health promotion (*internal health education workshops including yoga and gentle stretching, health, education and training, relationship and self esteem workshops & outreach groups*);
- ◆ Community development activities including *IWD, The Women's Wellness Festival, NAIDOC* and partnerships/networking relationships and activities with other agencies;
- ◆ Participation in the Nowra Domestic & Family Violence Interagency Managers' Group and the Shoalhaven SHLV Reference group;
- ◆ Network member of *Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention & Awareness Network* (SSPAN);
- ◆ *Sector activism/ advocacy* in areas of improved service delivery to women and their families;
- ◆ The continuation and growth of groups i.e. *Women's Wisdom group; Mindful Meditation and Pain Management;*
- ◆ *Labrys Project* identifying and supporting needs of Lesbians and Same Sex Attracted Women.

## Service Promotion

- ◆ Our website '*traffic*' and feedback is outstanding: [www.shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au](http://www.shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au)
- ◆ Continuation of *Women's Biz our newsletter publication*. This is available in hardcopy or via email – over 700 direct mail outs, plus electronic copies distributed quarterly;
- ◆ Our *Facebook page* is well supported and *liked*. Updates are posted several times per week;
- ◆ Print and broadcast media when opportunity arises.

## Organisational Development

- ◆ QIP Assessment and workplan implemented. Completion date January 2016;
- ◆ Policy and Procedure Manual *review schedule* (three year cycle) to form part of our QIP;
- ◆ *Volunteer* program continues; all volunteers joining the organization are offered training in *Mental Health First Aid*;
- ◆ *MOU* with *Waminda, IWHC and SWHC*;;
- ◆ *MOU* with *IWHC*;
- ◆ *MOU* with *Waminda*;
- ◆ *MOU with Barnardos*;
- ◆ *Staff* attended *training/personal development* opportunities including Mental Health First Aid to assist with supporting clients who may present in crisis situations.



# Shoalhaven International Women's Day 8 March 2015



In its flyer for International Women's Day 2015, the Committee promoted 8 events. These included:

- \*IWD Art Exhibition and Celebration Launch
- \*Ulladulla IWD Business Breakfast and Awards
- \*High Tea: Honouring Women of World War 1
- \*Girls Aloud: Young Women's Performance Afternoon
- \*IWD Awards
- \*Women's Performance Night
- \*Women's Wellness Festival
- \*Writers Night

All the events were successful, with the High Tea achieving outstanding interest and attendance. At the High Tea local historian Robyn Florance spoke on how women of the Shoalhaven contributed to WW1, and Cheryl Scowan, Meroogal House Museum, read excerpts from letters which revealed how the war affected a Nowra family. We know now that local women sent passionfruit to the front line! Everyone enjoyed home made cakes, scones and a cup of tea.

Girls Aloud was a new event introduced this year to encourage the talent of local young women. Gemma Hart from BBCR drew together outstanding talent for performance. The Committee are keen to see this event continue.

Writer's Night was full of fun, laughter and reflection, with stories, poetry, music, and the best ever carrot and coriander soup! Many thanks to the women who shared part of their lives with others.

As a result of these events, especially the Wellness Festival which drew great participation, hundreds of women participated in IWD celebrations in the Shoalhaven. Through press coverage potentially thousands more were exposed to an acknowledgement of the need for women to act on our own behalf to improve our social, economic and political position.

Our current finances stand at a balance of \$3804.10.

**Marg McHugh**  
SIWDC

# Women's Wellness Festival 2015

The 2015 Shoalhaven Women's Wellness Festival continues to grow on the success of the inaugural event in 2012. It is one of the many events held during the month of March celebrating International Women's Day.

This year the Festival was held at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum formerly the Lady Denman Museum Complex, Huskisson on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. Staging the Festival in the Bay & Basin area honoured the Committee's commitment to making it a truly Shoalhaven wide.

Festival attendance was consistent with previous years with approximately 500 people through the museum complex. The committee secured 42 stall holders and continuous interactive workshops and performances were held. Performers included the Starz Performing Arts Centre, Verdant Voices, Wandering Menstruals, Uke 'N Harp, The Strumpets, The Jam Tarts, The Mix and our headline act Which Witch.



*The Jervis Bay  
Maritime Museum  
offered an outstanding venue.*



*Judith Reardon  
Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services  
Was our ever ready on the 'mic'  
Mistress of Ceremony*

The WWF Committee is committed to taking the festival to the community of the Shoalhaven, so therefore a new location is chosen each year to ensure that a broad section of the community can be engaged. We were able to return to the Bay & Basin area for 2015 and the event took place with the support and partnership of the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum at Huskisson.

This is the most beautiful venue that offers the most festive atmosphere whilst being able to enjoy the natural environment. The event presented a different 'look' this year with performers and workshops being held in the open space and pavilion throughout the afternoon. You could listen to women sing or participate in a Tai Chi demonstration or learn how to resuscitate an injured person along with the community information stalls traditionally seen at this event. The festival was very interactive and there was some form of entertain throughout the afternoon.



*The Verdant Voices shared their talents*

The festival this year also merged with the IWD Dance Night and we held the Music Celebration Night commencing at 4.30pm with young performers from Starz Performing Arts Centre. This then lead onto our local women performers sharing their talents and an opportunity for the audience to dance the night away in this welcoming and safe setting.

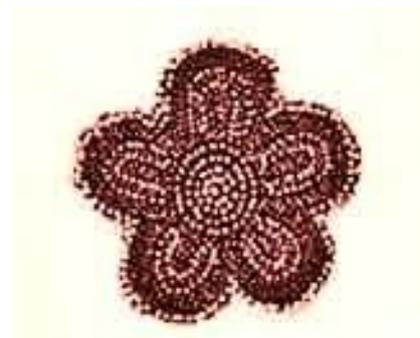
Community Services Welfare Students supported the Festival Committee and undertake a Community Development Project in line with their learning modules. The students ran the information desk.



*Maxine Edwards from Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services supported Tafe students on the day.*

In 2015 the Lead Agency the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre with the position of Chair being held by this service's Manager.

As the two year tenure undertaken by Shoalhaven Women's Health Service concludes the 2016 festival will move to Waminda who will undertake this role.



Thanks to our wonderful Committee:

- ♥ **Vivien Kish** – ISLHD
- ♥ **Judith Reardon** – Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services
- ♥ **Kristine Falzon** – Waminda
- ♥ **Alison Murie** – Australian Red Cross
- ♥ **Donna Rogers** – The Smith Family
- ♥ **Carley Jones** – Waminda
- ♥ **Maiki Blakeney** – Waminda
- ♥ **Wendi Hobbs** - ISLHD Shoalhaven Youth Health