



Annual Report

2019/2020



About Us.....	3
Centre Fundamentals	4
Vision, Mission and Objectives.....	4
Chair’s Report.....	5
Manager’s Report	6
Staff & Volunteers	9
Strategic Plan 2019-2029.....	11
Our Objectives	11
Our Goals.....	12
Service Provision	13
Comments & Feedback	15
Well Women’s Nurse Program	16
Shoalhaven IWD Committee	17
Major Activities & Achievements	18
Service Provision	18
Organisational Development	19
Financial Reports	20



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 nine (9) permanent part time and full time staff dependent upon current funding streams; with one (1) sub-contractor – limited contract. The centre is supported by volunteers, including administration volunteers.

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 New South Wales.

Centre Fundamentals

Our 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.

Our Mission

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre empowers women to take control of their health and wellbeing through the provision of accessible, multidisciplinary integrated health services within a safe, caring, supportive, feminist environment.

Our Philosophy

SWHC is committed to empowering women and valuing women's life experiences. We strive to incorporate into our work the feminist ideal of women's right to a valued place in society; accountability in providing quality multidisciplinary, integrated health care services; professional integrity in maintaining ethical standards in the provision of services; and on-going development and support for staff and volunteers.

Our decision-making process is guided by equity, effectiveness, relevance and appropriateness.

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre operates from a feminist perspective that views health within a social context as emphasized by the World Health Organisation and supported by the frameworks within Health Ministries both State and Federal. This view recognizes that:

- Health is determined by a broad range of social, environmental, economic and biological factors;
- Differences in health status and health objectives are linked to gender, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, disability, location and environment, racism, sex-role stereotyping, gender inequality and discrimination, ageism, sexuality and sexual preference;
- Health promotion, disease prevention, equity of access to appropriate and affordable services and strengthening the primary health care system are necessary, along with high quality illness treatment services;
- Information, consultation and community development are important elements of the health process.

Furthermore, critical considerations in women's health include:

- Women's health being understood as encompassing all of a woman's lifespan and reflecting women's various roles in Australian society, not just their reproductive role;
- The greater participation by women in decision making about health services and health policy, as both consumers and providers;
- The recognition of women's rights, as health care consumers, to be treated with dignity in an environment which provides for privacy, informed consent and confidentiality;
- The availability of accessible information which is appropriately targeted for different socioeconomic, educational and cultural groups; and

Women's health policy and services must be based on accurate data and research concerning women's health, women's views about health, and strategies which most effectively address women's health needs.

Chair's Report

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre (SWHC) continues to deliver strong performances while supporting women across the region with client centred service and activities.

While service delivery has been impacted by COVID-19 in 2020, the Centre has been able to provide ongoing support to the members of our community, here in Nowra and continued outreach in Ulladulla. This has been most important as a follow up and important part of the recovery work taking place in our region after the Bushfires late 2019 and early 2020.

The service continues to operate on a very tight budget and has been able to deliver services to many clients who would otherwise not be able to afford services such as legal help, financial and health care, counselling and therapy of all sorts. This is due to the diligence and outstanding work ethics of our staff.

As I write this report, the year feels firmly defined and divided by our disaster events – fires, floods and COVID. It is easy to be overwhelmed by these events and their impact, and to overlook the 6 months prior to these events. It is important we take the time to reflect on those previous months, and importantly, to acknowledge the wonderful work achieved by the Centre and our fabulous staff – all the massages and therapy, the art work, the workshops on managing stress, drumming, meditation, legal support and help, counselling and more, and the general safe place to call in for a chat.

On that note, I would like to thank the staff and volunteers for their hard work and passion:

- Ali Goodwin – Financial Counselling & Finance
- Carolyn Lette – Complimentary Therapist & administration support
- Leane Davidson – Reception
- Kym Nicholson – Counselling
- Suzanne Buzza – Counselling and policy review
- Linda Bradshaw – Massage
- Penni Craig – Massage sub contractor
- Kim Perkins – Financial Counselling
- Tracy Lumb - Manager
- Lyn Gerstenberg, Kathy Eade and Valerie Hill – Volunteers.



You all do an amazing job individually and as a team – and this is evident in the positive position the Centre holds in the Shoalhaven community, as well as the ongoing demand for service. Your focus on clients and how we can assist them, is to be commended. Thank you.

Post fires, we have been granted funds to deliver financial counselling to those impacted by the fires in the Shoalhaven region, including outreach to Ulladulla. This has proven to be a valuable and emotional service for those community members in need, and we acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Ali and Kim.

While there have been challenges to overcome – physical distancing, hand sanitising and washing, masks and temperature checks etc – the Centre has been able to continue to offer services which cater to supporting and nourishing our wellbeing – including drumming, therapy, phone support, and advocacy. The Committee of Women appreciates the hard work and guidance of our Centre Manager, Tracy, who has steered the Centre through all things 2020.

Thanks must go to the Committee of Women – Lyn Gerstenberg, Lia Anderson, Maureen Cable, Erin Nichols, Michelle Waples. Thank you for your ongoing commitment, passion and guidance for the Centre – every one of you is valuable to the team and I appreciate your wisdom, knowledge and guidance.

Alison Murie **Chair**

Manager's Report

Necessity is the Mother of Invention...

Or reinvention.....



.....as the case may be.

Who would have ever thought the last 12 months would look like they do today.....

As a community, we have endured catastrophic bushfire and flooding, and as a country, watched and listened as the words COVID-19 became part of our everyday speech.

The 12 months of this year (1st July 2019 – 30th June 2020) look nothing like I could have ever imagined and have changed us in so many ways, for now and into the future.

The bushfires were surreal, the courage of those who fought and the legacy that remains is ongoing and challenging. We were then battered by rain which produced floods and then watched it happened all again.....and in the midst of all this, tried to understand, adjust our lives, endure isolation and social distancing. Things we have never known before.

But through all this, we have seen the resilience of human spirit; we have seen the community donate, share and support those impacted; we have had to understand and accept being separated from loved ones; and we have had to reinvent the way we live.

Change can be difficult and confronting but it can also allow us to take the time to reflect and identify what is important to us....what feeds our soul.

Suddenly, we have had to reassess, slow down and examine what makes us happy. For many, it has been going back to the simple things. Walking, hiking, being in nature, riding a bike, reading, jigsaws, the garden, craft, painting, finishing that jumper you started knitting five years ago, working from home, more time with family.... We've gone from running, to jogging and now we are walking at a comfortable pace.

We have allowed ourselves to slow down..... lying in bed with a cuppa reading till lunchtime on a Saturday is really 'OK'. Retail therapy is somewhat of a distant memory of a day out, and many have let their social media accounts gather some dust..... It is a time that you have to reinvent what your day to day life looks like..... Is that a bad thing.....I'd say 'maybe not'.

SWHC had to reinvent itself also..... the way we provide service, the way we engage, access to service and most importantly, how we continue to support the women of this community. Whilst it has sometimes been not exactly what we wanted, we have remained available and open throughout the year. And like many, we had to reinvent how we do this..... I had not even heard of Zoom.

So here is an overview of how we 'reinvented' ourselves to deliver services to the women of the Shoalhaven and the changes we made along the way.

SWHC in the reporting period continued to operate five (5) days a week and increased our outreach services in Ulladulla with Counselling and Financial Counselling seven (7) days per fortnight.

In February 2019, the Shoalhaven Women's Health Service (SWHC) was provided with Grant Funding from the Australia Government Department of Health (\$50,000 per year for two (2) years); to directly support the mental health of women in the region. Unfortunately, we saw the cessation of this funding on the 30th June 2020. However, we will continue to lobby, apply, liaise and annoy all levels of Governments to obtain a funding stream, to cover this shortfall.



The SWHC staff and volunteers continue to support the women of the Shoalhaven with programs that provide intervention and prevention strategies working from a trauma informed model of care.

This year SWHC welcomed another one hundred and thirty (130) new clients to our service. This saw an increase from our previous year.

Our space is always busy even in these different times, but we continued to do what we do best: approximately 4,698 points of contact, an increase of over a third from last reporting period. Women were either attending centre appointments, groups/workshops, emergency drop, drop in for information, via email or letter, outreach clinic or by telephone. SWHC continues to focus on the importance of client centred service provision, with the focus on intervention and prevention. This philosophy makes SWHC an extremely comfortable and consumer friendly sought-after service providing a safe space to all women.

Due to health guidelines and restrictions our much sought after groups had to cease but before this occurred, SWHC still provided one hundred and forty four (144) group sessions, again increasing the amount facilitated from last year, and taking into account COVID-19 shutdowns, an amazing achievement by all staff. Group work plays a vital role in women's wellbeing and all staff look forward to when we can recommence this service.

The staff at SWHC continues to provide a high standard of service and continue to develop, revamp and reassess all things we do; ensuring that all practice and information is accurate and current. Intervention and prevention is the key focus when identifying and supporting a diverse range of women with often complex needs within a regional setting.

With the ever-increasing complexities of our clients and the environment which we currently live in, staff remain steadfast in their dedication; a loyal and caring team of women working, in collaboration ensuring an effective and pleasant work place.

We said goodbye to some and welcomed others. This included Kim Perkins, Financial Counsellor and Leane Davison, Reception.

Carolyn Lette DBM, Dip NUT in utilizing her many skills by expanding her role to include dispensing of supplements in the upcoming period. This will be another exciting 'arm' to our service delivery.

With the introduction of the new Financial Counselling Service, staffed by Ali Goodwin and Kim Perkins, we have been able to increase the support we provide to women. As we all know and are aware, the impacts of finances upon our mental health and wellbeing is enormous. Being able to offer this service free of charge has increased SWHC's ability to fully support women. The centre, in most instances is that 'one stop shop'. With our ability/flexibility to outreach, this service allows SWHC to take the service to our clients, thus providing a greater 'footprint' across the Shoalhaven.

SWHC continues to forge strong networks, partnerships and MOU's with other service providers in the region. The Shoalhaven covers a vast geographical area and services like ours find it difficult to meet the growing needs of both existing and new clients. These networks provide us with pathways for clients, where our service does not meet their requirements or service needs.

Our Women's Biz has taken a rest in the last few months, but we look forward to when we can go to print again. But rest assured, staff are working behind the scenes to plan for the easing of restrictions and return to groups. Facebook continues to provide 'updates and what's on' not only at SWHC but other community services in the region, with our Website providing a more comprehensive overview of information.

The dedicated and responsive staff at SHWC continue to provide a valuable service to women, delivered in a client centred, holistic manner. Their empathy, loyalty and commitment to delivering outcomes are evident in the ongoing and growing client base. Our team going forward into the next financial year will be Ali, Carolyn, Kym, Linda, Leane, Kim and Suzanne; Lizz our new outreach nurse; our committed volunteers, and our dedicated, knowledgeable, supportive and encouraging CoW.

So, in reflecting on the past year and the way we have adapted to what is the 'new way of life', I would like to focus on what we can do, compared to what we can temporarily, no longer do. A five (5) day a week service similar to other services/peers, a suite of services that provide 'wrap around' support.

Recognition and credit go to the staff for the work they do in supporting our women and most importantly each other. But most importantly, the women who trust our philosophy and work ethic, allowing SWHC to be part of their journey..... we are small but our vision and drive is mighty.

Tracy Lumb **Manager**



SWHC Staff & Volunteers

Centre staff continue to provide a high level of compassionate and professional service to the women of the Shoalhaven through dedication and commitment.

All staff employed have varying hours and are classified by the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Modern Award. Bogumila Gerlowska (Lizz), our Women's Health Nurse who conducts outreach clinic through our partnership with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's Well Women's Program.

Our reception continues to be supported by reception and intake/health workers and skilled volunteers. Staff are flexible, adapting to change as our cohort grows, often playing 'musical chairs', but at no time is service provision/standards compromised.



Our Staff:

- ✱ ***Naturopath/Complimentary Therapist – Carolyn Lette;***
- ✱ ***Counselling – Kym Nicholson, Suzanne Buzza;***
- ✱ ***Financial Counselling – Ali Goodwin, Kim Perkins;***
- ✱ ***Finance – Ali Goodwin;***
- ✱ ***Massage – Linda Bradshaw and Penni Craig (sub contractor);***
- ✱ ***Frontline/Intake – Carolyn Lette and Suzanne Buzza;***
- ✱ ***Reception – Leane Davidson.***

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***
- ♥ ***Valerie Hill***
- ♥ ***Lyn Gerstenberg***

The Committee of Women (CoW) are a committed, professional team who bring a range of skills and knowledge to the governance of our service. They face the challenges of the changing environment of NGO's and the legislative and statutory requirements of the position. It must be remembered that the work contributed by these women in meeting the service standards is demanding of their time, and, ongoing.

The SWHC would like to thank Lyn Gerstenberg (Vice Chair), Alison Murie (Chair) Lia Anderson (Treasurer), Erin Nichols and Maureen Cable, and we would like to welcome Michelle Waples. Michelle re-joins our committee after time away and we look forward to the knowledge and dedication to community she brings. We say goodbye to Rebecca Kate and thank her for her contribution. Special thanks to Alison Murie, our Chair, who has been outstanding in her role and brings vast experience to our service. Alison continues to be available to me to meet, discuss, debrief; and ensures all staff are supported in their positions.

The CoW's governance of the SWHC and attention to detail and the importance placed upon following the process, reviewing policy, ensuring strategic and business plans are in place is a credit to such a small team this ensures quality outcomes and workspace for clients, volunteers and staff. With the ever changing and competitive environment, these women work together in a cohesive and dedicated manner.

Acknowledgement and thanks must go to Liz Parnell, Solicitor at South Coast Law and Mediation, for facilitating pro bono legal clinics at the centre. For women to receive legal expertise, plays an enormous factor in their empowerment.

The service, staff and CoW are well placed as we enter the renewal phase of our ASES Accreditation process. Thanks to Ali Goodwin, Suzanne Buzza and Lyn Gerstenberg for their work in ensuring we are well positioned for a successful outcome..... roll on December 2020.

Whilst in the greater landscape of community services we are small, our focus is guided and encouraged by the shared philosophy of the importance of high-quality standards of service and the basic human rights of women. We will continue to apply this philosophy to all areas of our work and service.

Women Supporting Women

Strategic Plan 2019-2029

Our Objectives

- Ensure that the Governance of SWHC is of the highest standard and members are drawn from the local community.
- Strive to maintain ethical standards in all our activities.
- Commitment to best practice and continued quality improvement.
- Provide a non-profit primary health care service for women, managed by women, within a feminist framework in the Shoalhaven area.
- Prioritise access for women who are marginalised and/or have 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.
- Ensure that services reflect the needs of local women providing educational, preventative and self-help programs which encompass women's life span, experience across a broad range of health issues which also recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women of CALD backgrounds.
- 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.
- Provide services and activities to guide women by the referral process, acknowledging and addressing the different needs of women of diverse backgrounds and social, physical and emotional barriers and mental health issues.
- Provide specialised support and service provision for women who have experienced historic or current trauma and/or domestic violence.
- Uphold the rights of women who may use the service to express themselves freely, to be treated with confidentiality with respect, dignity and consideration.
- Ensure the creation and maintenance of a safe, healthy and supportive environment for the wellbeing of staff, volunteers, Committee of Women (CoW) and women who use the centre and its services.

Goals and Corresponding Strategies

Each goal is underpinned by the SWHC on-going commitment to advocate for and support women from a feminist perspective including at all levels of government and their Ministries.

1. To secure and develop a strong and dynamic organisation providing a range of multidisciplinary and integrated health services by professional and experienced practitioners.

- Maintain evaluate and review the SWHC Policy and Procedure Manual.
- Maintain appropriate KPI's in line with the 'NSW Health Framework for Women's Health 2013' in collaboration with The Ministry of Health to underpin our yearly Contractual obligations.
- Complete the self-assessment process (QIP) and maintain best practice industry standards.

- 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.
- 2. To work collaboratively through strong partnerships and cross sector organisations at local, state, national and global levels.**
- To ensure the SWHC delivers high quality health and wellbeing services to target groups within budget.
 - A Business Plan embedded into our Strategic & Operational Plan to steer the financial planning, budget and management of SWHC and its services.
 - Build the public profile of the Centre through a variety of activities and mediums.
 - Build and expand partnerships and MOU opportunities with other services, organisations and groups to offer an extensive, diverse, supported, client-focused service to women.
- 3. To improve access to health services and information for all women with the aim of expanding and developing greater opportunities for their health and wellbeing.**
- Maintain planning and evaluation processes and cycles to ensure SWHC operates effectively while meeting the changing needs of women.
 - Ensure that all women involved in the Centre feel valued and supported.
 - To provide a range of services which reflect the nature of women's health with a focus on prevention and early intervention, empowering all women through:
 - the referral process;
 - education provided by the nurse and through workshops; and
 - provision of alternate therapy, counselling, massage and legal counselling for continued wellbeing.
- 4. To work towards expansion of services operating on a five-day basis.**
- Maintain a strong, diverse and dynamic membership base with the aim to build and grow these numbers.
 - To decrease lengthy waiting lists for current services provided.
 - Expand service provision to encompass groups and activities which address women's social, cultural and recreational wellbeing. Service provision to include the introduction of new services such as financial counselling.
 - Advocate for greater support and recognition of the importance of gender specific health strategies through promotion, policy, practices and activism.
- 5. To expand our client profile and services targeting new groups as a response to the changing population of the Shoalhaven.**
- Expand our existing outreach services in the Shoalhaven to include off-site health workshops and women's and cultural festivals.
 - Explore and build our technological capacity to increase opportunities for women including services profile and contact via Website, email and social media.
 - Continue to work towards increased service provision by exploring a variety of options including funding submissions and opportunities, partnerships and MOU's.

Service Provision

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre activities and outcomes reflect the goals and philosophy of our Strategic Plan (2019-2029) being underpinned by our Business Plan, the Environmental Scanning Document and Key Performance Indicators set down by our funding bodies, which determines our direction and service outcomes during the reporting period.

Project and service goals were achieved across all areas of service delivery. Outcomes and client support were met and, in many instances, exceeded expectation through client centred wrap around care.

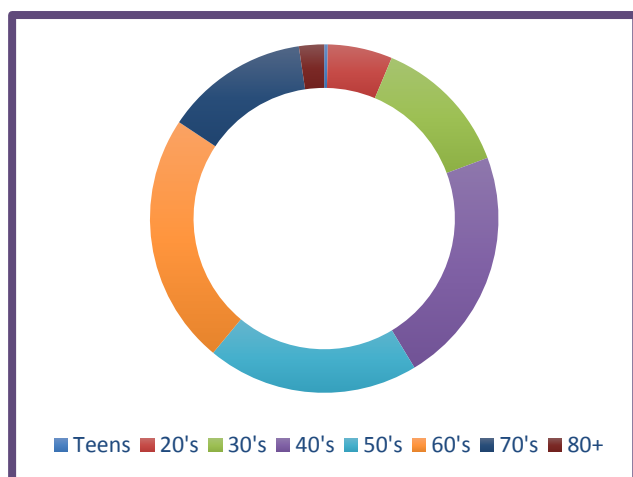
SWHC continues to evaluate its services and consult with women who attend the centre. We pride ourselves in responding to the expressed need of local women and develop assessable services with a prime focus on prevention and intervention at minimal or no cost. This service has remained steadfast in this view for over 36 years.

The SWHC and the Illawarra Women's Health Centre (IWHC) continue to work and support our services through a strong, positive and supportive MOU. The Telephone Counselling Service for the region continues to offer supportive and much needed services for women, especially when appointments for face to face counselling are not available. Waiting time frames for face to face counselling can be extensive and books are often closed. This service provides SWHC with the ability to 'link' new/current clients into a therapeutic relationship and not just 'wait listed'. The service in the combined areas of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven handled 396 points of contact. This is an invaluable service and SWHC looks forward to this continued collaboration between the two services. Thanks to Tina McLaren-Bell for being 'on the other end of the phone' and to Sally Stevenson IWHC CEO for her ongoing support of SWHC and the women of the Shoalhaven.

During 2019/20 appointments were delivered in core service areas in a variety and different manners due to COVID-19; some face to face, some by phone, some by Zoom, some by email. Totalling **1,148** modes of service support.

- * Provided appointments (face to face) for women across core service areas – counselling (**458** contacts), financial counselling (**93** contacts), massage (**207** contacts), complimentary therapist (**17** contacts) and the nurse (**68** contacts – Nurse was not recruited by ISLHD until second half of reporting period);
- * Provided appointments/supports (**via phone, Zoom, email**) for women across core service areas – counselling (**265** contacts), financial counselling (**207** contacts), complimentary therapist (**13** contacts)
- * A total of **126** health education/promotion groups, events and intervention/prevention workshops across a multitude of disciplines; plus **12** legal clinics.
- * Managed an estimated number of requests for information, referral, and appointments, follow up totalling **4,698** through our Reception;
- * SWHC welcomed **130** 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, other, gynaecological and breast health, relationships, and violence/ abuse.



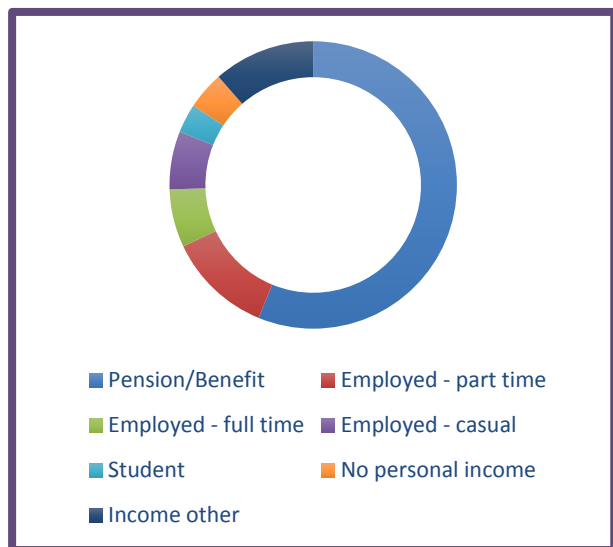
The age range of clients who accessed SWHC core services during 2019/20 was broad. Services were provided to clients from teens to 80's+. Women's health and wellbeing is essential to the ongoing strength of family and community. Gender specific services allow women to receive client centred support throughout their lifelong journey with a focus of intervention and prevention.

Health Education Programs focused on prevention and intervention strategies, self-esteem issues, confidence building, diet, nutrition and lifestyle issues. Women attended an extensive range of workshops and groups held at the Centre and outreach locations, including:

- ⊙ **Aromatherapy**
- ⊙ **Arthritis**
- ⊙ **Assertiveness**
- ⊙ **Binji and Boori Calendar Shoot**
- ⊙ **Boost Your Energy**
- ⊙ **Campbell Page**
- ⊙ **Music/Performance Night**
- ⊙ **Drumming**
- ⊙ **Earth Craft**
- ⊙ **Eat Plant Learn**
- ⊙ **Gut Health**
- ⊙ **Hearing Bus – onsite testing**
- ⊙ **Introduction to Reiki**
- ⊙ **IWD Basket Weaving**
- ⊙ **IWD Breakfast**
- ⊙ **IWD Meditation**
- ⊙ **IWD Writer's Night**
- ⊙ **Kombucha Kraut**
- ⊙ **Legal Clinic**
- ⊙ **Meditation**
- ⊙ **Mood Food**
- ⊙ **NAIDOC Day**
- ⊙ **Renal workshop**
- ⊙ **SDMH Sub Acute Unit – Community Hot Seat**
- ⊙ **Self-Massage & Gentle Stretch**
- ⊙ **Social Support**
- ⊙ **Solar Prints – young women & girls**
- ⊙ **Stress Management**
- ⊙ **Therapeutic Doll Making**
- ⊙ **Women's Wisdom Group**



Through the collection of data on client registrations 124 women identified as disabled. This was an increase of 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 56% of all women. 7% of women indicated they were employed full time, 12% working part time, and 7% reporting that they worked casually. 11% of women reported having other income, 3% of women were students, and 4% of women reported having no personal income. We saw an increase in the number of women who received a pension/benefit and a marked decrease in those working full time.

SWHC provides a multidisciplinary, integrated health service from a trauma informed model of care with a primary focus of client centred care. The number of new clients continues to grow 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. Unfortunately, due to service demands, we are unable to meet all requests which can be equally distressing for clients and staff. Staff ensure when service provision cannot be supported by SWHC that referrals to other supporting agencies within the region are undertaken so clients received the most client focused, appropriate service. Again, this process can have its challenges due to demand in a regional area with limited community services.

Comments and Feedback

- ♥ *Thank you so much Ladies, It has to be the best and most comfortable group I have been to. So grateful.*
- ♥ *To all the wonderful Ladies at SWHC, Thank you for always being amazing, happy and caring.*
- ♥ *To all the lovely women, Thank you for your support you have given me over the years.*
- ♥ *To the Head Angel and to all the Little Angels, to you all, love always.....*
- ♥ *Amazing care....gentleness, expertise & consideration..... a lovely soul.*
- ♥ *Service provider – I spoke with her on Skype yesterday after her call with Suzanne..... you should have seen the beam on her face!!!*
- ♥ *Service provider – I have been sending my clients to the service for many years now and I rate it very highly and valuable. The programs offered are of great service to our community.*

‘You have given me my life back’



Well Women's Nurse Program

Nowra Outreach

Women's Health Nurse

Clinical Service to Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre.

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts Women's Health Service continues to work collaboratively with the Nowra Women's Health Centre in providing clinical services to women.

New to the service is Women's Health and Sexual health Clinical Nurse Specialist Lizz Gerlowska who has a background in working with women involved in the criminal justice system, women who have recently left drug and alcohol facilities, refugee communities and remote area nursing.

The Women's Health Service provides clinics twice a month prioritising woman who do not or who are unable to access mainstream services in our community.

Services include:

- Cervical screening
- Breast health
- STI screening and management
- Menopause
- Contraception
- Pregnancy testing
- Sexual and reproductive health care
- Education and research.

Services are prioritised for women in the following groups

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- LGBTQI including both transgender men and women
- Homeless
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol and other drug dependencies
- Disabilities
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Refugees
- Women who have been affected by the criminal justice system.

The Shoalhaven Women's Health Service looks forward to continuing the Well Women's Outreach Program in Collaboration with the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre for the coming year.



Shoalhaven International Women's Day 8 March 2020

The 2020 IWD program held promise of a variety of vibrant and inclusive celebrations however like many events globally it was waylaid by the Covid19 Pandemic.

Our much-loved events such as the IWD Award Presentation, Women Performing and the Women's Dance Night were unable to take place however on the bright side we were fortunate to sneak in four events before lockdown and social distancing took over.

The program commenced with the Wrapped Coil Basketry Workshop held in the Tomerong Hall. Mary Preece guided a group of novices into producing a work of art from a pile of string, rope and materials which, with persuasion from a needle and thread turned into a small basket. A group of women unknown to each other prior to that day formed a common bond over this activity. Many thanks to Mary for providing her time, expertise and companionship.

The Writers Night with Andrea Lofthouse at the helm focused on 2020 the Year of the Nurse and what a year it has turned out for the nursing profession! While nurses have to deal with very serious issues, we discovered from the speakers that a certain element of humour, good nature and a touch of the mischievous also assist the work to take place. Women speaking from their heart always make this evening one to remember, well, that and the delicious supper!

LISA (Lesbians in the Shoalhaven Area) hosted the IWD Breakfast in a local café which was attended by about twenty women with, once again, lively conversation taking place. Robyn Sedger spoke about the history of IWD providing entertainment for our group and well as the other café patrons.

The last event was the Meditation at Hanging rock and thanks to Colleen Langan for her calming influence in a troubled time.

With the aim of the celebrations always being on social inclusiveness and bringing women in the community together, the uncertain future Covid19 barriers have activated the committee to venture into unknown waters for 2021 celebrations with an online Arts Festival. Major decisions are taking place, website development, domain names, entry guidelines etc made possible through funding from the Shoalhaven City Council Arts Grants and committee funds.

Big thanks to all our members for their hard work and a reluctant goodbye to Moira who revitalised the Women Performing Night, special mention to Sarah Firkin for taking up the baton although the race was cancelled.

We look forward to exciting times ahead.

**Margaret McHugh
On behalf of SIWDC
18th September 2020**



Major Activities & Achievements



Service Provision

- ◆ Now operating five (5) days per week;
- ◆ Outreach to the Ulladulla Community Resource Centre by Social Worker three (3) days per fortnight, Financial Counsellor (4 days) per fortnight;
- ◆ 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 aromatherapy, assertiveness, budgeting, drumming, gut health, self-massage and gentle stretch, soothing the senses, meditation, relationship/self-esteem workshops, wellness retreat & outreach groups);
- ◆ Community development activities including International Women's Day (IWD), NAIDOC and partnerships/networking relationships and activities with other agencies; unfortunately, some of these events were impacted by restrictions due to COVID-19;
- ◆ Participation in the Nowra Domestic & Family Violence Interagency, Southern Shoalhaven Interagency; Hot Seat SDMH Sub Acute Unit;
- ◆ Member of Shoalhaven District Memorial Hospital Consumer Advisory Committee;
- ◆ 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; Music and Art Therapy;
- ◆ Continued support by Liz Parnell to our service from South Coast Law & Mediation who provides two pro bono legal clinics per month to clients at our centre. Support in Family Law property issues, parenting disputes, criminal law; will, power of attorney and enduring guardian; information about applying for legal aid and tenancy disputes.

Service Promotion

- ◆ Our website is outstanding: www.shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au and our continued thanks must go to Tracey Johnston who designed and continues to maintain our page;
- ◆ Continuation of Women's Biz our newsletter publication. This is available in hardcopy or via email – over 1,200 copies are traditionally distributed three times per calendar year; only twice this period due to COVID-19.
- ◆ Our Facebook page is well supported and liked. Updates are posted several times per week keeping our information up to date, interesting, informative, topical and community focused;
- ◆ Print and broadcast media when opportunity arises;
- ◆ Public speaking opportunities upon request.

Organisational Development

- ◆ Australian Service Excellent Standards (ASES) - current; reassessment scheduled for December 2020.
- ◆ Policy and Procedures are reviewed on a monthly basis to adhere to our Policy Review Schedule to form part of our QIP;
- ◆ Strategic Plan 2019/2029 current and implemented by the CoW.
- ◆ Business Plan 2019/2020 and Environmental Scanning Plan 2019/20, SWHC Compliance Register and Risk Management Register
- ◆ Volunteer program continues; all volunteers joining the organization are offered training in Mental Health First Aid;
- ◆ MOU with Anti-Poverty Committee
- ◆ MOU with IWHC;
- ◆ MOU with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District
- ◆ Staff attended training/personal development opportunities to assist with supporting clients who may present in crisis situations; mandatory training is attended in line with our service standards;
- ◆ Staff attendance at centre Planning Days;
- ◆ All staff undertake appropriate supervision.

