



# *Annual Report*

## *2021/22*



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***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. 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

I will commence my report by offering my personal thanks and appreciation to the wonderful staff of SWHC for their dedication and professionalism. They have managed to fulfill their roles during the difficult time of the Covid pandemic and are back on deck again now.

The practitioners and staff:



Lia Anderson  
Ali Goodwin  
Suzanne Buzza  
Kym Nicholson  
Melissa Hedger  
Linda Bradshaw  
Carolyn Lette  
Leanne Harrison

Finance  
Financial Counsellor  
Counsellor  
Counsellor  
Counsellor/Art Therapist  
Massage Therapist  
Naturopath/Complimentary Therapist  
Receptionist

Lizz Gerlowska	Well Women's Nurse – ISLHD Outreach Service.
Liz Parnell	Solicitor (Pro Bono) Legal support.
Isabel Arenas Mangal	Solicitor (Pro Bono) As above.
Kathy Eade	Volunteer
Valerie Hill	Volunteer

These women keep our Centre operating well and are all extremely valued for the great results achieved in keeping women of the Shoalhaven healthy and safe.

I must also say that I am disappointed in both the State and Federal Governments for the lack of support for Women's Health services in the Shoalhaven.

The SWHC is inadequately funded for a region with high incidents in mental health, family and domestic abuse, financial debt/hardship; including a shortfall in physical/wellbeing needs such as therapeutic massage, naturopathy/complimentary therapy and groups/workshops for a multiple of issues; which are all linked in some way, to provide the overall good health for women.

Without adequate funding these services are jeopardized either by needing to reduce staff numbers or reduce hours of operation, both which have happened in recent times.

Sadly, the demand is so high for mental health counselling and financial counselling, there are waiting lists for both services; both of which are mostly time critical, in some cases, leaving vulnerable women at risk.

Fortunately, we offer soothing massages and alternate therapies to relieve stress and anxiety in clients waiting for services or in need of any of our services.

Workshop groups are a great benefit to clients, and we are seeing an increase in attendance following the Covid 19 pandemic. The workshops are facilitated by either staff members, visiting practitioners or volunteers. Information for these is available in our 'Women's Biz' booklet.

I would like to extend personal thanks and appreciation to SWHC Manager, Tracy Lumb who is an extremely dedicated and capable manager; who is generous of her time and attention given to SWHC and her staff. Well done, Tracy.

Finally, I would also like to thank the ladies of the Committee of Women (CoW), Dorothy Winspear, Erin Nichols, Maureen Cable, Michelle Waples and Kate Morris. I appreciate the support and input offered and given, by them all.

Lyn Gerstenberg **Chair**

# Manager's Report



On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022, marked 120 years since

Australian women gained the right to vote in federal elections, following the passage of the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902. The Act extended the franchise to 'persons not under 21 years of age whether male or female, married or unmarried'. The Act also gave women the right to stand as candidates in federal elections.

With this passage, Australia became the first country in the world to give most women both the right to vote and the right to run for parliament. Unfortunately, it would take another 60 years before our First Nations Sisters would be able to enrol to vote.

Fast forward to our current 47<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 57 percent of senators and 38 percent of the members of the House of Representatives are women..... whilst this isn't an equal split, recognition is being given to the importance of representation of women in Government.

We saw five women leading the global response to COVID-19 in Science and Technology; in the Tokyo Olympics held in July 2021 49% of athletes were women – the highest ever number of women to compete; we saw the first woman of colour/Asian descent and only the second woman to earn best director at the Academy Awards and, Lego announces the end of gender bias in their toys.

But during the year, we have also seen the erosion of rights for women across the world curtailed, restrictions upon education, participation, socialisation and for some, removal from their employment. Sexual assault, domestic and family violence continue to increase at an alarming rate, and the plight for many women to have access to safe, secure and affordable housing continues. The US Supreme Court officially reversed Roe v Wade which sent a shockwave, not only through these United States but here in Australia; highlighting that there is still very little access to choice.

Whilst women's issues have become an increasing part of our dialogue which is a positive, we still face the staggering lack of funding needed to support women in our community; especially in rural, regional areas like ours.

We continue to be impacted by election cycles and the constant struggle with trying to keep up with the growing costs of running a service without any change to core funding since our inception in 1984..... The constant 'holding out the begging bowl' does become tiresome and frustrating.

But there is an upside; for 38 years SWHC has worked with and supported thousands of women in this community with dedication, commitment and loyalty of staff, volunteers and Committee of Women delivering effective, preventative, integrated health services at low or no costs due to our strong fiscal policy and budget management.

Of course we would like to expand more within the region and take services to more women but we are steadfast in ensuring our ethics and philosophy will always remain the same, committed to the work we do and the clients we serve.

Thanks must go to the staff, volunteers for making this service remain relevant to women and community and to our clients who have trusted us with their journey.

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 conducts outreach clinic through our partnership with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's Well Women's Program.

Our reception continues to be supported by staff and skilled volunteers. Staff are flexible, adapting to change as our cohort grows; with the continuation of in house and/or remote, outreach service delivery. With the changes we have faced in the last few years, the way we work is now very different. We must thank the NSW Department of Community and Justice who identified that the social services sector was under resourced in the IT and service mobility, developing a direct allocation of funds to the amount of \$27,000. This transformation funding allowed SWHC to overhaul our tired outdated systems and IT providing us with new equipment, phone systems, booking systems, laptops, mobiles etc. Staff can now work from varying locations which is so important in areas like ours that have been so impacted by natural disasters and COVID-19. For staff we have also seen the benefits of a better work/life balance with no impacts on clients and service.

We welcomed funds from the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources – 2019-2020 Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program enabling us to continue to deliver services in the Shoalhaven with a focus on the most impacted areas. This allowed us to increase counselling hours and develop and deliver groups with a focus on recovery and resilience. The funding period is for 26 months.

With one door opening there is always another that closes; SWHC had used all funds received from various Departments during the few years and due to no increases from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services we farewelled one of our Financial Counsellors, Kim Perkins, at the end of the financial year. After three (3) years with the service Kim has moved on – we wish her well.

The centre at this point in time will continue to remain open five (5) days per week, being assessed on a yearly basis, funding dependant.

Our Staff:

- ✳ ***Naturopath/Complimentary Therapist – Carolyn Lette;***
- ✳ ***Counselling – Kym Nicholson, Suzanne Buzza, Melissa Hedger (Art Therapist);***
- ✳ ***Financial Counselling – Ali Goodwin, Kim Perkins;***
- ✳ ***Finance – Lia Anderson;***
- ✳ ***Massage – Linda Bradshaw;***
- ✳ ***Policy/Intake – Suzanne Buzza;***
- ✳ ***Reception – Leanne Harrison, Sally Lamb (Retired), Leane Davidson (Resigned)***

Our wonderful volunteers when able support the Centre on a weekly basis in administration or workshops. Without their ongoing dedication and attendance our services would not operate as smoothly.

Thanks to:

- ♥ **Kathy Eade**
- ♥ **Lyn Gerstenberg**
- ♥ **Valerie Hill**

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 (Chair), Dorothy Winspear (Treasurer), Erin Nichols and Maureen Cable, Michelle Waples and Kate Morris. Special thanks to Lyn Gerstenberg, our Chair, who continues to be outstanding in her role, sharing her vast experience and support. Lyn continues to be available to me to meet, discuss, debrief; and ensures all staff are supported in their positions. Her dedication is never ending and she is admired and cherished by all staff..... always available with support.

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, ensuring 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. This was evident in our successful delivery of services meeting KPI's, business requirement and legislation within a tight fiscal environment.

Thanks to Liz Parnell (Principal Solicitor) and Isabel Arenas-Mangan from Parnell & Brien Solicitors, Berry for continuing to facilitate pro bono legal clinics at our centre. For women to receive legal expertise, plays an enormous factor in their empowerment. We thank Liz for her continued generosity and service to the women of the Shoalhaven. We look forward to another year of this valued service.

SWHC continues to be an ASES Accredited Certificate Level Service and successfully hold all current funding body and Legislative requirements, meeting all ongoing obligations.

***At SWHC 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 especially during another reporting period impacted by natural disasters and the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 and lockdowns. Through flexibility, continued adaptation and clear understanding of client needs we continued to effectively provide 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 in all our years of operation.

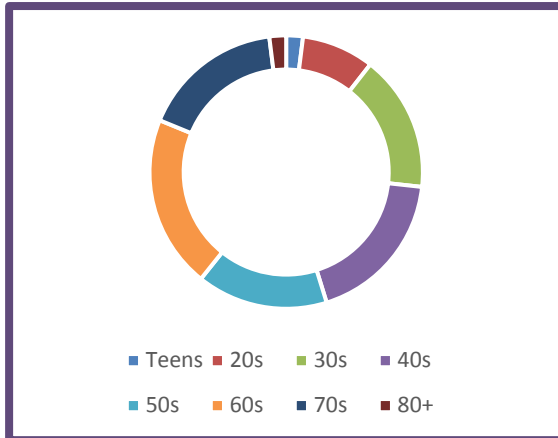
The SWHC and the Illawarra Women's Health Centre (IWHC) continue to work and support our services. The Telephone Counselling Service for the region continues to offer supportive and much needed services for women, without the need to travel. This is an invaluable service and SWHC looks forward to this 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 2021/22 appointments and services were delivered in core service areas in various and different ways due to COVID-19; some face to face, some by phone, some by Zoom, some by email. SWHC staff have seen a positive return to group work by clients in the 2022 calendar year.

- \* Provided appointments (face to face, phone, Zoom, email including outreach settings) for women across core service areas – counselling (291 contacts + 617 contacts via phone & email), financial counselling (172 contacts + 1107 contacts via phone & email), massage (124 contacts), complimentary therapist (44 contacts + 32 contacts via phone & email) and the nurse (32 contacts);
- \* A total of 50 health education/promotion groups, events and intervention/prevention workshops across a multitude of disciplines; plus 18 legal clinics. Whilst this number was lower than previous years, we are heartened as we come out of COVID-19 group numbers are growing.
- \* Managed an estimated number of requests for information, referral, and appointments, follow up, totalling 2290 through our Reception;
- \* SWHC welcomed 85 new clients to our service.
- \* In addition to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, 18 countries of origin were identified.

Whilst these numbers have fluctuated during the reporting period with lockdowns, natural disasters, redeployment and the like, the centre has remained busy and continues to adapt to the changing landscape of service delivery.

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.



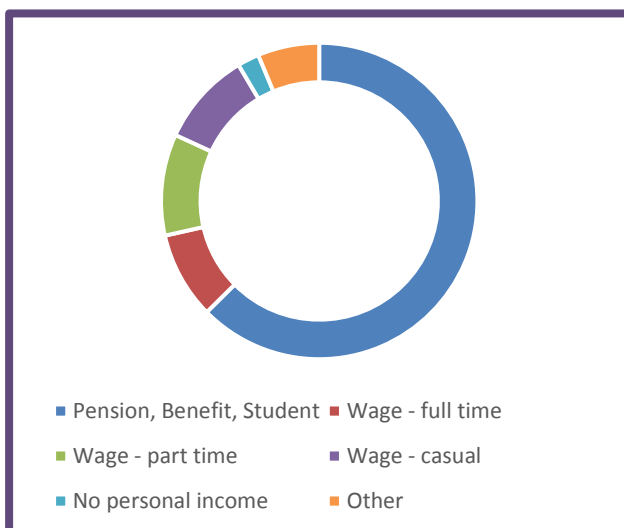
The age range of clients who accessed SWHC core services during 2021/22 was broad. Services were provided to clients from teens to 80's+. Women's health and wellbeing is essential to the ongoing strength of family and community. Gender specific services allow women to receive client centred support throughout 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**
- ⊙ **Assertiveness**
- ⊙ **Drumming**
- ⊙ **Gut Health**
- ⊙ **International Women's Day Events**
- ⊙ **Jiggle & Giggle**
- ⊙ **Kombucha Kraut**
- ⊙ **Legal Clinic**
- ⊙ **Mood Food**
- ⊙ **Noah's My Time**
- ⊙ **Reboot Your Budget**
- ⊙ **Savings**
- ⊙ **SDMH Sub Acute Unit – Community Hot Seat**
- ⊙ **Self-Massage & Gentle Stretch**
- ⊙ **Sing & Grow**
- ⊙ **Women's Wisdom Group**
- ⊙ **Your Life Matters**
- ⊙ **Zinc Assessment**

Through the collection of data on client registrations 112 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, benefit or student which represented 60% of all women. 9% of women indicated they were employed full time, 10% working part time, and 9% reporting that they worked casually. 10% of women reported having other income, and 2% of women reported having no personal income.

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 receive 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

- ♥ *LOVE IS A VERB! Thank you so much! For your time, care, love, wisdom, sharing & availability! Wow! And all you do that makes a difference to us, the women of this town! It's changed my reality!*
- ♥ *To the amazing ladies at Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre, thank you for being such lovely people and always making me feel so welcome.*
- ♥ *Encouraged to make some changes in my life.*
- ♥ *Learning to love moving our bodies.*
- ♥ *Confidence to be assertive – thank you for a great group.*
- ♥ *I enjoyed realising how to be assertive as I was able to reflect and see I am more positive.*
- ♥ *The space always feels comfortable and safe.*
- ♥ *The facilitators were excellent. I particularly loved the non-judgemental approach in delivering such sensitive content.*
- ♥ *Thank you.....today was fun!*
- ♥ *Information is Power!!!*
- ♥ *Brilliant! Thank you! Coming in to this group I was in a dark space and now thanks to you.....I see light.*

# **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.

Women's Health and Sexual health Clinical Nurse Specialist Lizz Gerlowska 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 in Aboriginal communities.

The Women's health service provides clinics twice a month prioritising women 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 information
- Contraception including referral to the LARC contraception clinic for eligible women/trans men
- Pregnancy testing
- Sexual and reproductive health care including termination
- 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 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.



**Health**

Illawarra Shoalhaven  
Local Health District

# ***Shoalhaven International Women's Day 8 March 2022***

This was the first opportunity in 2 years that the Shoalhaven International Women's Day committee was able to hold all events as face to face events. Women of the Shoalhaven were pleased to have the opportunity to gather and celebrate International Women's Day (IWD) over the month of March in the unique Shoalhaven style. A variety of events were planned by the Shoalhaven IWD committee, starting with a march and rally to highlight issues related to violence against women and children and concluding with a women's dance night. Despite some dreadful weather situations, creating a need for alternate venues on three separate occasions, all these events were well attended.



The Reclaim the Night / March for Justice march and rally, held on 4 March, was a collaborative effort between Shoalhaven City Council, the Shoalhaven IWD committee and the Shoalhaven March for Justice group. Fifty six women, men and children marched through Nowra CBD to the School of Arts where a rally was held to highlight issues related to violence against women and children. Originally planned as an outdoor rally at Jelly Bean Park, the rainy weather meant that the rally was held indoors at the School of Arts. Despite the rainy weather seventy people attended the rally. Aunty Ruth Simms provided a Welcome to Country and speakers included the Mayor, Amanda Findley, Jan Frikken, and Imogen Cradraisma. Tayah Larson provided some beautiful music and singing.

This was the first march related to IWD since 1970 and the committee agreed it was highly successful. The march created a lot of interest and support from members of the public and there was a very positive atmosphere both on the march and in the hall.

The writer's afternoon, held on 5 March, was due to be held in the front garden area of SWHC but rainy weather meant that a change of venue was also necessary for this event. The event was then held in a meeting room at Nowra library and was attended by 25 women, many of whom presented their writings. This event was facilitated by Marg McHugh. A successful outcome from this event was the formation of a writers' group.

The trivia night was held at Huskisson Community Centre on 12 March. Although bad weather prevented some women from attending, it was good to see such an enthusiastic group of sixty women participating in a great night of trivia. Many thanks to Moira Lowry for preparing the questions and acting as the Quiz Mistress on the night. Thanks also to the Huskisson Bakery for donating some beautiful cakes for supper.

The ever-popular weaving workshops, facilitated by Mary Preece, have become a regular feature in Shoalhaven IWD programs. This year, Mary facilitated a basketry weaving workshop on 13 March at Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre. The demand for this workshop was so great that a waiting list was set up in an attempt to accommodate the women who wished to participate. Although the original venue for this event was scheduled to be the garden area of SWHC, bad

weather again forced a change so that the workshop was held indoors in two separate areas of the centre.

The women performing event, held on 19 March at Huskisson Community Centre, was ably coordinated by Tracy Lumb who also created a great atmosphere through her role as Mistress of Ceremonies. Several great performances were interspersed with a sing-along of feminist songs, with all present singing along in a joyful atmosphere. A volunteer group of women provided and managed the sound equipment; Lyn Wallin decorated the tables with her usual creative flare and “Emma’s Coffee Spot” was on the premises to serve hot drinks and snacks.

The meditation session has also become a regular feature of Shoalhaven IWD activities. This year’s event was held on 22 March with twenty women participating at Hanging Rock, Nowra. The SIWD committee acknowledges Colleen who facilitates these sessions.

The month’s activities concluded with a women’s dance night on 26 March at Tomerong Hall. The committee described this night as “amazing” as all participants appeared to appreciate the first opportunity to dance in a long while and enjoyed themselves immensely. In fact, the band, Which Witch also enjoyed themselves so much they donated their fee! The sound equipment was supplied and managed by Damian Sterling from South Coast tickets and Emma’s Coffee Spot was there again serving hot drinks and snacks. The Hall looked spectacular with lights and decorations supplied by Lyn Wallin.

The success of the 2022 Shoalhaven International Women’s Day events would not have been possible without the commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of the Shoalhaven IWD committee, consisting of Tracy Lumb, Marg McHugh, Lyn Wallin, Robyn Sedger, Linda Pfeiffer, Mary Preece, Hayden Fineran, Jessica Richardson and Kerry Laws. Planning is now well under way for International Women’s Day events in March 2023 and we are looking forward to another great month of celebrations next year.

***Marg McHugh,  
Linda Pfeiffer  
Robyn Sedger  
Shoalhaven International Women’s Day Committee  
15<sup>th</sup> September 2022***



# **Major Activities & Achievements**

## **Service Provision**

- ◆ Continued operation five (5) days per week;
- ◆ Outreach to the Ulladulla community (counselling and financial counselling) – thanks to Waminda with supporting our services at their location;
- ◆ 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, therapeutic art making workshops, relationship/self-esteem workshops & outreach groups);
- ◆ Community development activities including the month of March for International Women's Day (IWD), partnerships/networking relationships and activities with other agencies;
- ◆ 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 in Therapy;
- ◆ Continued support by Liz Parnell, Parnell & Brien, Berry 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: [www.shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au](http://www.shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au) providing service information;
- ◆ Publication and circulation of our Women's Biz newsletter. This is available in hardcopy or via email – over 1,500 copies are traditionally distributed three times per calendar year;
- ◆ Our Facebook page is well supported and liked. Updates are posted 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**

- ◆ Current Australian Service Excellent Standards (ASES) – valid until December 2023 – reaching 100% in every Standard;
- ◆ 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 continued implementation by the CoW.
- ◆ Business Plan 2021/2022 and Environmental Scanning Plan 2021/22, 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 Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

- ◆ Staff attended training/personal development opportunities to assist with supporting clients with many and varying complex needs; mandatory training is attended in line with our service standards;
- ◆ Staff attendance at centre Planning Days;
- ◆ All staff undertake appropriate supervision.

