



Women's Health NSW

Non-Government Women's Health Services

Annual Report
2005 – 2006

Organisation Profile

Women's Health NSW is the peak body for non-government, community based, feminist women's health centres in New South Wales.

The Association is responsible for promoting a coordinated approach to policy and planning, service delivery, staff development, training, education and consultation between members, NSW Health and other government and non-government agencies.

There are twenty-three member centres that provide a diverse range of services to women in their communities throughout New South Wales. Services provided by Women's Health NSW members vary according to the level of funding received and the identified needs of the community they serve.

Women's Health NSW members have maintained a network that began in the seventies, which aims to inform service provision and structure, to maintain relevance and be cost effective.

There is a common aim of working to improve the health status of women through preventative health care service provision, community education, community development, advocacy and providing women with knowledge, skills and resources to enable them to take more responsibility over factors that may adversely affect their lives.

Member services operate from a feminist perspective and link the cause of ill health in women to a multiplicity of factors including biological, social, cultural, environmental and economic. These factors influence women's health status, their need of health services and their ability to access appropriate services.

Association Objectives

- To provide ongoing **training and education** in all aspects of management and service delivery
- To provide ongoing **programs** to enable services to identify women's health needs, women in need and health determinants
- To provide **guidelines** in the development of policies, procedures, protocols and practice
- To provide **models of best practice**
- To provide forums which aim to foster **accountability**, prevent professional isolation and minimise duplication of labour
- To encourage public **debate, research and education** in the areas of women's health and related issues
- Develop **partnerships** with key organisations relevant to women's health policy development, research training and service provision.

Management Structure and Decision Making

Women's Health NSW is an incorporated Association and is managed by a Board of Directors, eight of whom are appointed from the membership at the AGM and the Executive Officer. All decisions regarding sector policy and practice of Women's Health NSW are made at tri-annual member meetings. Sub-groups and working parties are appointed to carry out specific tasks. The Association thanks the Board for their time, support, experience and commitment.

This year a major change of Board Members was constitutionally required. To encourage and support the involvement of new Board members the sector at its 2005 AGM appointed a Board Advisory Committee (BAC). Women appointed to the BAC have been involved in governance and strategic planning of WHNSW over a considerable period of time and have a comprehensive knowledge of the sector.

The Board and BAC structure has worked well and we thank the women involved and their centres for the ongoing commitment to WHNSW. In particular we thank them for the support and understanding of the principles of women's health care, good governance, strategic planning, quality improvement, human resource management and ethical decision making and resource allocation practices. It has been a productive and focused team.

The Board of Directors for 2005 – 2006:

Rural	Karuna Fielden	Lismore WHC	Chair
Rural	Lin Davidson	Albury Wodonga WC	Treasurer
Metropolitan	Roxanne Cameron	Leichhardt WCHC	Vice Chair
Metropolitan	Felicity Martin	Cumberland WHC	Director
Specialist Service	Eman Sharobeem	Immigrant Women's Health Service	Director
General	Margaret Kirkby	Bessie Smyth Foundation	Secretary
Outer Metropolitan	Suzie Van Opdorp	Blue Mountains WHC	Director
Executive Officer	Denele Crozier	Women's Health NSW	Director

The Board Advisory committee for 2005 – 2006:

Rural	Gail Meyer	Wagga WHC	
Outer Metropolitan	Helen Dooley	Illawarra WHC	
Metropolitan	Sue McClelland	Bankstown WHC	



Elizabeth Brain, Denele Crozier and Vanessa Chen.

Staffing

The day to day operations of the Association rely on the work of three staff positions; Executive officer, Administrator and Bookkeeper, along with project workers; Women’s Health Training Program, Policy and Communication Project.

Employees for 2005 – 2006:

Denele Crozier	Executive Officer	2001 - 2006
Vanessa Chen	Bookkeeper	2003 - 2006
Robyn Walsh	Administrator	Resigned March 2006
Elizabeth Brain	Project Officer and Administration	Appointed May 2006
Shairon Fray	Training Officer Women’s Health Training Program	Casual as per WH Training Program Work Schedule
Louise McDermott	Project Officer Policy and Communication	April – September 2005
Toni McLean	Casual Administration	April – May 2006

Executive Officer Report. Summary 2005 – 2006

The work of Women's Health NSW (WHNSW) as a peak organisation, falls roughly into three major categories:

- Managing internal corporate, financial, human and operational affairs.
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- Strategic facilitation, support and development of the network of women's health centres and identified joint projects.
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- Representing the sector and identified women's health priorities.

While there are many components of the network that support and facilitate the work of Women's Health NSW, primary structure plays a major part.

The structure of the Board, with representatives from rural, outer metropolitan, metropolitan and special purpose centres affords informed input on a regular basis. The ongoing commitment to three statewide conferences per year, held in March, July and November provides a structured focus for continuous education, policy development, consultation and networking. A full list of our education/training is itemised in this report.

In addition to the management of our four ongoing programs, **The Women's Health Training Program, Women's Health Conference Program, the Women's Health Database and the Women's Health NSW Long Service Leave Portability Scheme**, we continued a new project **Policy and Communication** which aims to develop statewide policy on priority women's health issues and improve the sectors participation in public debate.

Our Strategic Plan for this year also included commitment to a **Quality Improvement Cycle**. We have registered with Quality Management Services (QMS) to participate in an external quality improvement review process. We approached the review using a team approach which included the Board of Management, Board Advisory Committee and staff.

The year continued joint government/non government initiatives. Work included consultation at the **NSW Health Futures Forum** which identified values and operating principles of a health care system. We promoted and participated the NSW Health consultation **Fit for the Future** projecting health priorities in NSW over 26 years. We have continued our input into the development of **NSW Health NGO Policy Framework**.

In the women's health sector, we worked to further develop the profile of the **Bessie Smyth Foundation** and promote the work of **Reproductive Choice Australia**.

These examples demonstrate a diverse and busy year with a combination of internal and external work. We take this opportunity to thank all who have worked in partnership and support of our aims and objectives.

Women's Health NSW Corporate, Financial, Human Resources and Operational Responsibilities

Recruitment and orientation is an intermittent requirement in relation to Board membership appointments. Sadly, we were again required to recruit for a new staff. We take this opportunity to thank **Robyn Walsh** for her work and welcome our new Acting Project and Administration Officer **Elizabeth Brain**.

We also thank Project Officer **Louise McDermott**. Louise worked on our Policy and Communication Project from April – September 05.

Women's Health NSW Strategic Facilitation, Support and Development of Network and Management of Identified Projects

Women's Health Training Project: The Nature of Women's Health: Past, Present, Future.

Women's Health NSW has developed this comprehensive training package. Designed in two parts the program is a distance learning package of 6 modules with accompanying workbook, followed by an intensive three day workshop.

Workers, management, students and volunteers can:

- Explore the history and philosophy of the Western feminist movement and its relationship to health policy development, service planning, management and models of health care delivery,
- Identify current trends, practice and policy in women's health,
- Understand the impact of gender and other health determinants on health status,
- Apply an outcomes approach to health service planning.

Accreditation and Graduate Certificate Recognition

The Women's Health Training Program has achieved:

- Acknowledgement by Quality Management Services. It is now formally linked to the women's health quality improvement service development review process.
- Advanced standing for two elective subjects in the Graduate Certificate for Health offered at UTS, Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Health.

While we aim to run this program a minimum once per year, this year the program will not begin until August 2006.

Sector Education / Training

In addition to the Women's Health Training Program, professional development was provided to the sector at three statewide meetings held in July 2005, November 2005, and March 2006. Sessions included:

- 5th Australian Women's Health Conference. Overview and Feedback.
- Module of Standards For Women's Health Centres. Denele Crozier, Executive Officer, Women's Health NSW
- Women's Access to Reproductive Choice. Margaret Kirkby, Coordinator, Bessie Smyth Foundation
- Reproductive Choice Australia. Denele Crozier, Executive Officer, Women's Health NSW
- Working with Media. Louise McDermott, Policy and Communication Project Officer – Women's Health NSW
- Industrial Relations, Federal Legislation: Workchoices. Kathy Brooks, Australian Services Union.
- Disputes Management. Denele Crozier, Executive Officer, Women's Health NSW
- NSW Health, Aboriginal Health Impact Statement. Liz Wheeler, Acting Senior Policy Analyst, Centre for Aboriginal Health NSW Department of Health
- Lesbian and Gay Safe Place Program. Somalie Cerise, Anti-Violence Project Officer, ACON
- PHOFA Women's Health Outcomes: Successful Submissions. Shairon Fray, Women's Health Educator, Women's Health NSW
- Healing Depression. Assessing A Women's Health Approach. Sharon Todd-Miller, Study Principle Investigator, Health Educator Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre
- Managing Superannuation and Scheme Benefits. Carol Menere, Client Services Manager NSW, HESTA
- Community Banking. Dave Fisher, Regional Lending Manager, Members Equity
- The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health. Deborah Loxton, BPsych (Hons) PhD School of Health, University of New England
- Domestic Abuse and Health, Quantitative and qualitative investigations among mid-aged Australian women. Deborah Loxton, BPsych (Hons) PhD School of Health, University of New England
- HSNet. Zoe Petridis, Senior Project Officer, Human Services Network.
- Indigenous Women's Health Programs. Michelle Cutmore, Aboriginal Women's Health Worker, Cumberland Women's Health Centre
- Women's Health NSW Database, Understanding Data. Robyn Walsh, Women's Health NSW
- Temporary Protection Visas, Barriers to Health. Mitra Khaleghian, Immigrant Women's Speakout
- Managing the Monstrous Feminine: A study of Premenstrual Experiences in Australian Women – Prof Jane Ussher, Director; Julie Mooney-Somers, Asc. Research Fellow, Gender Culture and Health Research Unit, University of Western Sydney; Dr Janette Perz, Head of the School of Psychology, University of Western Sydney.

Worker Forums

At each conference, time is allocated to 'worker forums'. This is an opportunity for workers of the same profession to get together and focus on specific issues of their day to day work.

Coordinators/Managers, Counsellors, Nurses, Health Promotion, Administration and Alternative Practitioners are provided an opportunity to report on new and innovative programs, growth, development and/or change in practice concepts, appropriate management, structural change, concerns of the community, issues in service provision, legislative change and policy needs. In addition, an informal mentoring system is promoted.

A list of the issues highlighted during the forum sessions are listed below.

Key Sector Issues

During statewide meetings 2005-2006 the following issues were raised and discussed:

- Financing Capital Works
- Insurance Coverage for Women's Health Nurses
- NGO Operational Guidelines. Identifying responsibilities of key stakeholders and timelines in relation to NGO Program Management.
- Access to Breastscreens for women 40 – 50 years of age.
- Access to FPA Pap screening for rural women over 24 years.
- Ongoing need for services for adult survivors of child sexual assault
- Access to Area Health pathology by Women's Health Centres.
- PHOFA. To be included in Coordinators Orientation Package.
- Accountability vs Confidentiality: File Audits and ASP Code of Ethics.
- Confidentiality: Client Feedback and Complaints.
- VAW / DoCS: Protection of Children AND the Needs of Women.
- Information Sharing: Networking of resources, services at different centres and the need for a service directory with more detail.
- Practice Nurses Medicare Rebate.
- Front Desk Response. Skills for the Accidental Counsellor.
- Professional Development – Support not just Training.
- Challenges and Strategies in overcoming professional isolation.
- Rural services providers - access to training resources
- Shared Counselling – how it works and how to introduce.
- Transport Problems / access to services.
- Management of Client Waiting Lists. (Counselling Services).
- Access to Childcare to support attendance at clinics and groups.
- Quality Improvement Peer Reviews.

Quality Improvement

Women's Health NSW has a performance target to provide models of best practice to ensure the provision of quality and competent health services to women.

To that end, we have an ongoing working relationship with Quality Management Services (QMS). First established in 1989, we came together to jointly develop the 'Standards Module For Women's Health Centres'. These standards have been endorsed by the national body Quality Improvement Council (QIC).

When QMS conduct independent reviews of Women's Health NSW members against optimum standards of practice, two documents are used. The Australian Health & Community Services Core Module and the Standards Module For Women's Health Centres.

Of the twenty two Women's Health Centres funded by NSW Health, twenty have completed a full QMS review cycle. With funding from the NSW Health Drug and Alcohol Unit, Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre and The Sydney Women's Counselling Centre have gone on to achieve accreditation.

As stated earlier, this year **Women's Health NSW** registered with QMS to complete its own review. It had been decided when committing to the QMS cycle in 2005 that the Board of Women's Health NSW along with WHNSW Board Advisory Committee and WHNSW staff would approach the development of the QMS Quality Journals as a QMS Combined Team and a selection of days were put aside as part of our Strategic Planning.

At the first meeting of the WHNSW QMS Combined Team we assessed the QIC Core Module, Community Services Module (CSM) and the Women's Health Centres Module (WHC) in our efforts to map out the scope of the work required. Staff and Board members were provided with valuable opportunities to work collaboratively and share knowledge.

The final part of the QMS review process asks the organisation to identify what it had learnt going through the review. WHNSW QMS team identified the following positive outcomes:

- The collaborative work of the Staff and Board members provided opportunities to review the organisation's systems, reflect on current practice and to consider improvements within a best-practice/continuous quality improvement framework.
- Going through this process has meant a new appreciation for the systems being used. Strengths in the systems of WHNSW have been identified and some improvements have been flagged.
- Very affirming to see and document what a small organisation can achieve.

Women's Health Database

Women's Health NSW has developed a database system that recognises a holistic and feminist approach in health care using a Microsoft Access software platform.

With six centre having used the Women's Health NSW Database successfully for more two years we have now developed a plan for statewide distribution, training and installation.

With the appointment of Elizabeth Brain to the team in May 2006 we reconstructed our Administrator position allocating 60% of the administration hours to the Women's Health Database Project. Elizabeth's first task is to familiarise herself with the database and develop a statewide training program and schedule. The training and implementation is expected to begin July 2006.

With the embracement of an outcomes approach to service planning and evaluation that requires evidence based programs and informed strategic direction, the Women's Health Database is a vital tool. We are excited to think that within 12 months we will have a statewide view of the Women's Health Sector service provision through standardised data collection.

We look forward to this statewide approach as it will enhance the capacity of women's health centres in their own evaluation and planning process along with the management of client database systems.

Publications/Resources Distributed:

- Australian NGO Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Womens Rights Action Network Australia.
- English for Health, A manual for teaching English and Women's Health. Family Planning NSW.
- The Debt Handbook. NSW Young Lawyers, Attorney General's
- WWDA Online Information and Referral Directory – www.wwda.org.au
- Women's Health through Creativity. Government of South Australia, Australian Government, Australia Council
- The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, Research Highlights, The First Decade 2005. Women's Health Australia

Representation and Participation

Women's Health NSW undertakes to be an effective peak body acting as a central contact base for information, advocacy, representation and support. To maximise this undertaking the following strategies are employed:

Participation on a number of ongoing committees, both government and non-government:

- NSW Health, Primary and Community Health Working Group
- NSW Health, Non Government Organisations (NGO) Advisory Committee
- QMS NGO Quality Improvement Program
- Non-Government/Government Women's Health Quarterly Meeting
- NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) Management
- NGO Health Policy Advice Group, NCOSS
- Forum of Non Government Agencies (FONGA), NCOSS
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Advisory Committee
- Management Support Unit Advisory Committee (MSU), NCOSS
- Bessie Smyth Foundation, Pregnancy Options Information Service
- Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN)
- Reproductive Choice Australia (RCA)

Participation in Projects, Consultations and or Advisory Committees short term or one off consultations:

- NSW Women's Health Strategy Working Group, NSW Health
- UWS Faculty of Medicine Community Council. Bachelor of Medicine Curriculum
- NSW Health, Future Forum
- NCOSS Pre Budget Women's Policy and Budget Implementations.
- Korean Women's Health Research & Policy NGO Development
- Department For Women, Peak Women's & Other Organisation's.
- RU486 Senate Inquiry
- Presenting the Principles of Women's Health Care: International Scholar Laureate program
- Fit For the Future, NSW Health
- NSW State Budget Analysis NCOSS

Conference, Forum, Seminar Participation/Attendance

- Refocusing Women's Experience of Violence
- Women and Depression

Communication

The Women's Health NSW website outlines the structure, aim, history and philosophy of Women's Health NSW and has been a vital for the publication of calendar events and project updates.

In addition, there is summarised information regarding each member centre, outlining their contact details and range of service provision. This will aid women, workers and students to find their nearest women's health centre.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

The effectiveness of the Service will be measured against the following performance indicators developed by Primary Health and Community Partnerships Branch in collaboration with Women's Health NSW.

Activity Indicators	2005 - 2006
Number of policy and procedures protocols and guidelines developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Health NSW Domestic Violence Factsheet.
Number and type of professional training sessions, education forums and conference sessions provided to the women's health sector.	<p><u>Women's Health Training Program :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None held this financial year. <p><u>WHNSW Conference Training Program:</u></p> <p><u>Education Sessions/Forums:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 education sessions/forums <p><u>Statewide Professional Forums</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 forum discussions sessions <p><u>Statewide Reports and Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 sector reports on programs, government policy, current issues
Number of participants attending each of the professional training sessions, education forums and conference sessions.	<p><u>Women's Health Training Program :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program was not run this financial year. <p><u>WHNSW Conference Training Program:</u></p> <p><u>July 05 Attendance:</u></p> <p>Wed. 27th, Thurs. 28th, Fri. 29th. Representing 83% of NSW WH</p> <p><u>November 05 Attendance:</u></p> <p>Tues. 15th, Wed. 16th, Thurs. 17th. Representing 65% of NSW WH Centres and 100% Government Women's Health Coordinators.</p> <p><u>March 06 Attendance</u></p> <p>Wed. 15th, Thurs. 16th, Fri. 17th Representing 96% of NSW WH Centres.</p>

Report on the number of identified key partnerships and partnerships activities involved in and level of involvement, ie low, medium or high.

Women's Health Coordinators

High level of involvement.

Activities include

- Gov/Non Gov Quarterly Meetings
- NSW Women's Health Strategy

NGO Coordinators

High level of involvement.

Activities coordinated through

- Joint Membership NSW Health
NGO Advisory Committee

NGO Women's Health Centres

High level of involvement.

All activities and policy development of Women's Health NSW is under the direction of NGO Women's Health Centres through:

- Constitutional makeup of Board of Management 90%
- Three Statewide Conferences
- E list and website

Officers working in the Women's Health Portfolio in the Primary Health and Community Partnerships Branch.

High level of involvement.

Activities:

- NGO Advisory Committee
- NGO Policy Framework Development

NGO Health Peak Groups

High level of involvement.

Activities

- WHNSW currently acts as chair to this group which meets bi monthly to discuss joint issues of concern
- Sub Committee to Review/rewrite NSW NGO Operational Guidelines

	<p><u>Australian Women's Health Network</u></p> <p><u>High</u> level of involvement.</p> <p><u>Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's Health NSW is currently on the Board of Management as the NSW Representative • Updated Australia wide network of women's health services • Upgrade of AWHN website <p><u>NSW Network of Women With Disability</u></p> <p><u>Low</u> Level of Involvement.</p> <p><u>Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in employment panel for Women with Disability Project
<p>Report on the number of women's health research programs involved in and the level of involvement, low, medium or high.</p>	<p>2004-2007 Strategic Plan: Timeframe for this outcome is due 2006/2007 year.</p>
<p>Report on the number of women's health research papers distributed and the number of people distributed to.</p>	<p><u>Distribution</u></p> <p>All 23 members receive distributed information – mostly through e-list. All conference papers and some publications are distributed by mail.</p> <p>The following ten Research Paper and information were distributed to all Women's Health Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health, Research Highlights, The First Decade 2005.</i> Women's Health Australia • <i>An Evaluation of the NSW Child Sexual Assault Specialist Jurisdiction Pilot.</i> Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research • <i>Scoping Study of Depression among Australia's Indigenous peoples.</i> Beyondblue • <i>Australian Social Studies: The First Report.</i> Macquarie University • <i>Premenstrual Experiences Study.</i> University of Western Sydney. Requesting Promotion of Study • <i>Chronic Conditions Research.</i> Eureka Strategic Research. Request promotion of Study

	<p>To 23 Women's Health Centres In NSW We distributed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training, Conferences, Forums & Seminars and Grants – 45 emails • Articles and Health Information – 25 emails • 4 emails regarding new publications • 20 e-news bulletins from NCOSS, Tri-Community Exchange, AFTINET, RCA, Law & Justice Foundation • 15 media releases from government, and non government agencies.
Quality Indicators	
Number of women's health centres which have undertaken quality improvement process and level of quality improvement undertaken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Women's Health Centres have completed QMS Service Development Review – a full three year quality improvement cycle where the work of the centre is measured against best practice standards of the Australian Health and Community Services Core Standards Module and the Standards Module for Women's Health Centres • 2 Women's Health Centres have completed a second three year cycle to achieve accreditation.
Number and percentage of women's health centres which have the following in place:	Time frame for reporting on these outcomes is due 2006/2007 reporting year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Code of ethics 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff policy and procedure's manual 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Occupational Health and Safety Manual 	
Outcomes Indicators	
Number of women's health centre's which are implementing the Women's Health Database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently six Women's Health Centres are using the Women's Health Database
Number of women's health centre utilising data collected through the database to improve services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of these centres have used the Women's Health Database for more than 12 months – part of the trial has been the capacity to use the date for reporting and evaluation.

Percentage of women's health participants who have rated the conferences, professional training sessions and education centres as poor, good, very good, or excellent.

Women's Health Training Program :

- Not held this financial year.

WHNSW Conference/Training Program:

July 05 Conference Overall Rating:

- Good 37.5%
- Excellent 62.5%

November 05 Conference Overall Rating:

- 5.3 % Average
- 57.9% Good
- 36.8% Excellent

March 06 Conference Overall Rating:

- 7.4% Fair
- 33.3% Good
- 55.6% Very Good
- 3.7% No response

Education Sessions/Forums Average Rating:

- 1.2% Poor
- 12.3% Good
- 42.4 % Very Good
- 26.7% Excellent
- 17.3% No Response

Statewide Professional Forums Average Rating:

- 19% Average
- 38% Very Good
- 24.1% Excellent
- 19% No Response

Statewide Reports and Updates Average Rating:

- 2.4% Poor
- 12.6% Average
- 42.5% Very Good
- 20.8% Excellent
- 21.7% No Response