



Women's Health
NSW

Peak Body for Non Government
Women's Health Centres

Annual Report
2007 – 2008

Organisation Profile

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

In addition, we are responsible for promoting a coordinated approach to policy and planning, 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 in New South Wales. Throughout the network service provision is influenced by the identified needs of local communities and a common aim of working to improve the health status of women.

Strategies incorporated by Women's Health Centres include preventative health care, community education and development, advocacy and empowerment; 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.

Our Vision

That all women and girls are empowered to fulfil their potential within a safe and healthy environment

Our Role

Women's Health NSW works within a feminist framework to improve health and social justice outcomes for women

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

For anyone looking to find their nearest Women's Health Centre, our website has an information page on each Women's Health Centre in NSW outlining their contact details and range of service provision. www.whnsw.asn.au

Aims and Objectives

Women's Health NSW will be proactive on priority issues relevant to women's health and wellbeing using the following strategies:

Reorienting the health system

- To reorient government and non government health services to feminist holistic women's health care approach.

Advocacy

- To identify and advocate on critical women's health issues.

Networking

- To develop and maintain an ongoing relationship with key stakeholders relevant to the women's health sector, government and non government.

Research

- To identify, use and contribute to research and information relevant to priority women's health issues.

Women's Health NSW will increase the capacity of the women's health sector to respond to women's health issues:

Training Education and Sector Development

- To provide access to ongoing training opportunities on key health issues and to support development of a well informed and skilled sector.

Models of Best Practice

- To provide and promote models of best practice within the sector.

Resource Development

- To provide key policy and program initiatives.

Enhance organisational management and performance to ensure Women's Health NSW achieves its aims and objectives:

- To maintain a strong representational peak body that can respond to the changing needs of the sector and to women's health issues.



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.

WHNSW has also an appointed 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 continues to be a productive and focused team.

The Board of Directors for 2007 – 2008:

Rural	Karuna Fielden	Lismore WHC	Chair
Rural	Belinda McMahon	Wagga Womens Appointed AGM Nov.08	Director
Metropolitan	Roxanne McMurray	Leichhardt WCHC	Vice Chair
Metropolitan	Felicity Martin	Cumberland WHC Resigned AGM Nov 08	Director
Metropolitan	Sue McClelland	Bankstown WHC Appointed AGM Nov.08	Director
Specialist Service	Margaret Kirkby	Bessie Smyth Foundation	Secretary
General	Maggie McNulty	Penrith WHC	Treasurer
Outer Metropolitan	Suzie Van Opdorp	Blue Mountains WHC	Director
Outer Metropolitan	Helen Dooley	Illawarra WHC	Director
Executive Officer	Denele Crozier	WHNSW	Director

The Board Advisory Committee for 2007 – 2008:

Rural	Gail Meyer	Wagga WHC	
Metropolitan	Sue McClelland	Bankstown WHC	



**Board Members from Left:
Karuna Fielden, Maggie McNulty, Suzie Van Opdorp,
Roxanne McMurray and Sue McClelland.**

Staffing

The day to day operations of Women’s Health NSW rely on the work of three staff positions sharing the hours of 1.7 full time equivalents; Executive Officer (EO), Project Officer/Administration, Bookkeeper and, Project Casuals for the Women’s Health Training Program.

Employees for 2007 – 2008:

Denele Crozier	Executive Officer	2001 - 2008
Nola Cooper	Casual Bookkeeper	
Elizabeth Brain	Project Officer and Administration	2006 - 2008 Women’s Health Database
Shairon Fray	Training Officer Casual Schedule	Women’s Health Training Program
Rose Weingarth	Student Placement, USyd. Social Work and Policy Studies	Women’s Experience of Depression

Executive Officer Report. Summary 2007 – 2008

This year we have seen the consolidation of programs following review, and the introduction of new approaches. We have continued to update and successfully run our ongoing programs; **The Nature of Women's Health: Past; Present; Future**, the **Women's Health Statewide Conference Education Program** and the **Women's Health NSW Database**.

One of our strengths is working with partnerships as shown with the success of the **National Women's Health Summit** and the development of discussion paper **Women's Health; The New National Agenda**. A list of our current partnerships is itemised further in the report.

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.
- Strategic facilitation, support and development of the network of women's health centres and identified joint projects.
- Representing the sector and identified women's health priorities.

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

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. In addition, the **membership e-list** provides a mechanism for dissemination of a very broad range of information.

We continue to embrace **Quality Improvement Programs (QI)**. During this funding cycle the Women's Health Centres are using WHNSW Statewide conference forums to jointly analyse best practice measures and shared policy development in preparation for the external Quality Improvement Reviews. Having completed its own QI Review, WHNSW is in a good position to guide and advise.

New programs include the development of information/factsheets. WHNSW is currently researching '**Women's Experiences of Depression**' for publication and discussion purposes.

These examples demonstrate a diverse and busy year with a combination of internal and external work. We continue to extend our partnerships and work to improve health outcomes for women. **We take this opportunity to thank all our colleagues who have worked with us in support of our aims and objectives – it has been a pleasure working with you.**

Women's Health NSW Database

Women's Health NSW has developed a Women's Health Database using a Microsoft Access software platform.

We have made the Women's Health Database a priority as it will enhance the capacity of Women's Health Centres in their own evaluation and planning process, improve client management systems and provide a statewide view of women's health issues.

The Women's Health NSW Database has a combination of capacities:

- Client Management System: Demographics, Practitioner, Contact Type and Date, Identified Health Issues, Health Treatments and Referral Links.
- Statistical Data Collection: On all of the above.
- Personnel Directory: Staff, Management, Members and Volunteers.
- Health Worker and Organisation Directory.

While six centres have been using the Women's Health NSW Database successfully for more three years (Leichhardt, Liverpool, Bankstown, Illawarra and Penrith) we now have a total of 17 Women's Health Centres on board.

With an increased number of database users with growing expertise the program requires management in four major areas:

- Monitor and manage current usage –ongoing support and training
- Database development –content and platform
- Sector Issue logs
- Implementation of Upgrades
- Integrated statewide data – collation and distribution

In addition, Microsoft Access 2007 Software and Windows Vista contain some incompatibilities with the previous versions of Office 2003 and windows. While this has caused problems with Powerpoint conversions at various conferences, it is a major problem for anyone using Access as a database platform.

We have decided to focus on the installation of our current upgrade while we investigate the range of long term platform options (improvements listed below), this will give the sector access to a superior database.

A big thank you to our Database Program Officer Elizabeth Brain for her tenacious approach to the fine art of managing database nuances across a sector of various IT capacities and equipment.

Women's Health NSW Database

- **2008 Update includes:**
 - Integrated Referral System
 - Client Contact Warning
 - Client Details Upgrade
 - Statistical Reports
 - Mail Merge from additional Modules
 - Personnel/Members/Management
 - Additional Administration Set Up Features
- **Priorities for 2008-2009:**
 - Investigating platform options
 - Follow up and Front Line Modules
 - Upgrade to Group Module
 - Addition of CSA Module

National Women's Health Summit



Nationally, Australia was a world leader in women's health in the 1970s and 1980s. The National Women's Health Summit held on the 20 September 2007 was a critical opportunity for health leaders and decision makers across Australia to come together and set the new national agenda for women's health.

It also saw the establishment of an Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN) Aboriginal Women's Health caucus.

A program of keynote speakers, eminent academics and practitioners in women's health, highlighted women's health priorities specifically within an understanding of gender as a social determinant of health and health outcomes.

Some health issues that affect women only	Some health issues more common in women	Special conditions related directly to gender roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ menstruation ▪ pregnancy ▪ complications of pregnancy ▪ menopause ▪ gynaecological cancers ▪ polycystic ovarian syndrome ▪ endometriosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ breast cancer ▪ heart disease ▪ osteoporosis ▪ depression ▪ hypertension ▪ arthritis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ sexual abuse ▪ domestic violence ▪ effects of prostitution ▪ anorexia/bulimia nervosa ▪ conditions related to poverty, particularly in older women or as a result of women's role as carers

The main aim of the National Women’s Health Summit was to outline key arguments for making women’s health a priority of government, health professionals and the broader community. To that end, the Australian Women’s Health Network launched its Position Paper *Women’s Health: The New National Agenda* in March 2008. Copies can be found on our website and www.awhn.org.au

AWHN publication *Women’s Health: The New National Agenda*, includes:

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1. Executive summary	5
2. Understanding why women’s health matters	7
3. Building on the first Australian National Women’s Health Policy	8
4. Current status of women in Australia	10
Population – women live longer than men	10
Economic security – women are less economically secure	10
Women as mothers and carers – women maintain the primary caring role	11
Violence against women – a debilitating and costly problem in all communities	11
Women’s health outcomes - divergent issues and outcomes	12
5. Gender as one of the social determinants of health	13
5.1 Gender vs. sex differences	13
5.2 Benefits of a gender equity approach	14
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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). We came together in 1989 to jointly develop the 'Standards Module for Women's Health Centres'. These standards have been endorsed by the national accreditation 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.

QMS NGO Quality Improvement Program (NGO QIP) 2006-2009.

Funded by NSW Health this program allows NSW Health funded NGO's to register with QMS to participate in external Quality Improvement review processes.

For this current NGO QIP, thirteen (13) Women's Health Centres have been chosen to participate (most have had an initial review prior to 2002). All of the centres will be using the new 5th Edition QMS Core Module and Women Health Module, both of which have a greater emphasis on ongoing mechanisms of quality improvement.

As stated earlier, a unique feature of the current QI process within the women's health sector has been a team approach to the development of best practice measures analysis – usually services have internal teams rather than across sector teams. This sector approach allows for a greater sharing of expertise and knowledge.

WHNSW Quality Improvement

As reported last year, Women's Health NSW completed its own QMS Quality Improvement Review. The process strengthened an already effective management team and skilled the Board and organisation to provide leadership for the sector during the NGO QIP 2006 – 2009 cycle.

There are four recommendations from the WHNSW QI Review, they are scheduled for implementation during our 2007 – 2010 Strategic Plan.

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

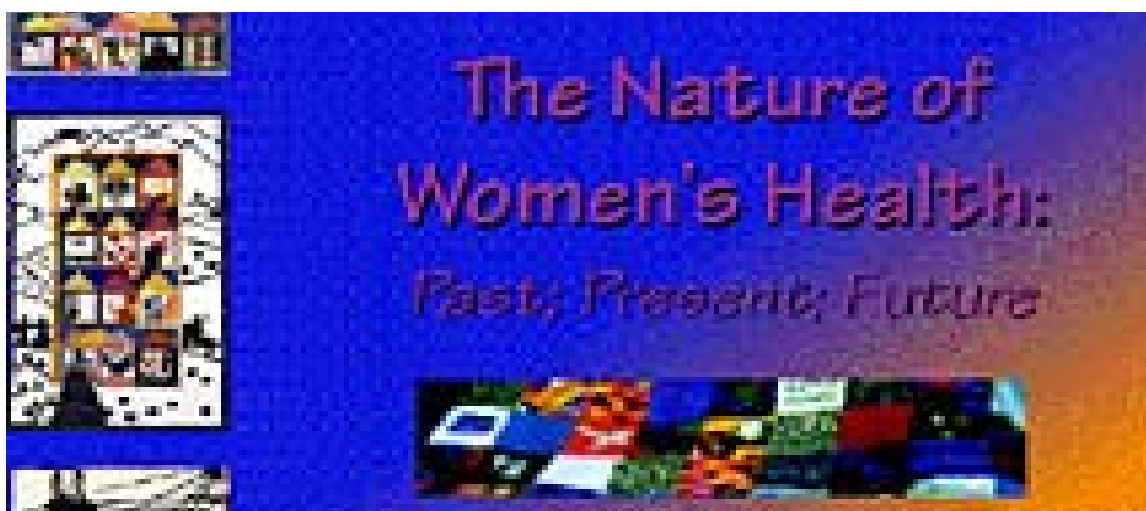
The Women's Health Training Program has achieved:

- 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.

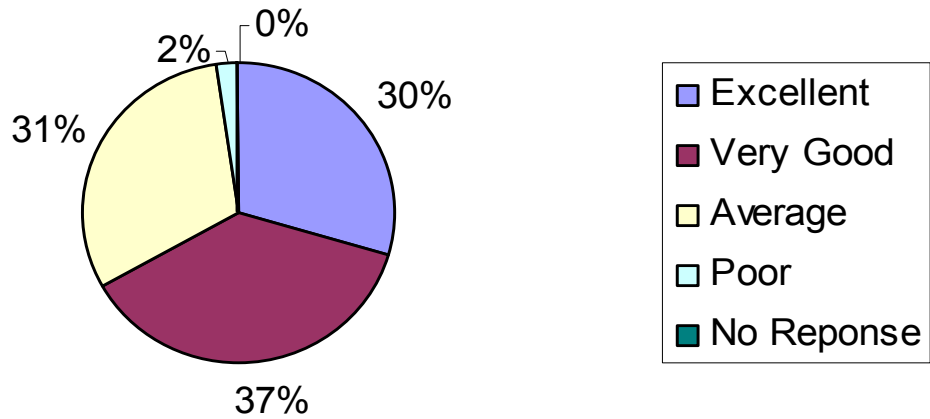
Training Schedule 2007-2008

The program was held once this financial year in Sydney, openly advertised for government, non government and student participation.

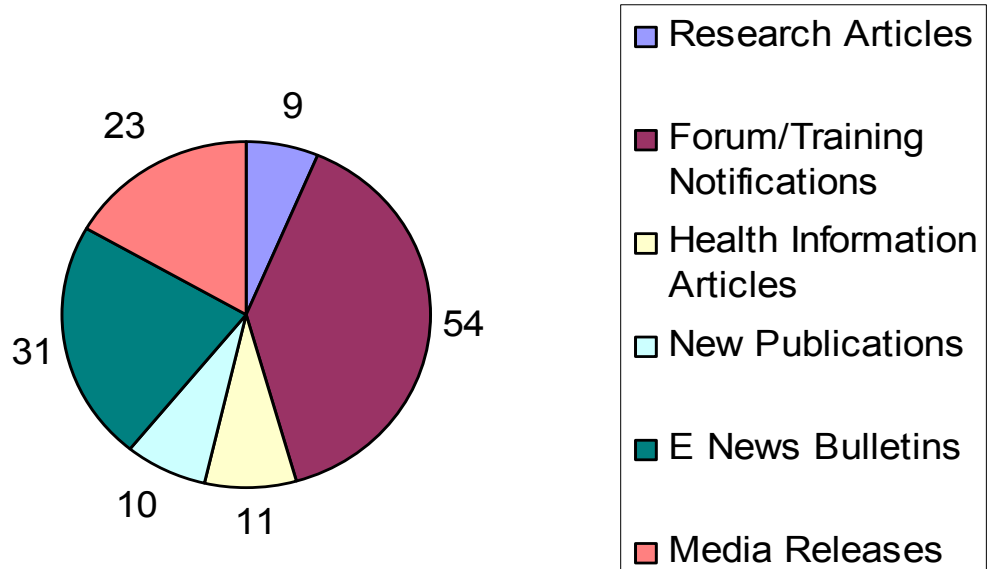
The process evaluations continue to support this as a relevant and dynamic program. 31 participants all showed high levels of learning outcomes.



**The Nature of Women's Health:
Past, Present; Future.
Learning Outcomes 07/08**



**WHNSW Distribution 07/08
Sector Information Elist**



Sector Education / Training

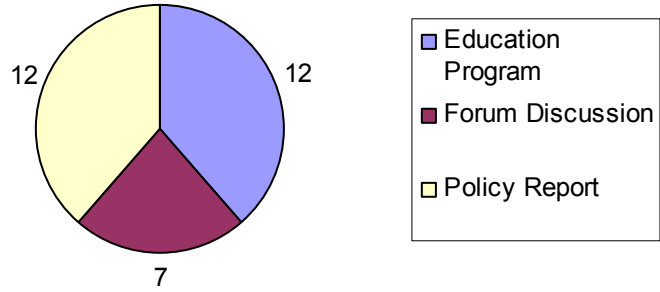
In addition to the Women's Health Training, professional development was provided to the sector at three statewide meetings held in July 2007, November 2007, and March 2008. Sessions included:

- Learning and Working with Refugee Women in NSW. B-Ann Echevaria, Project Officer, and Ruth Skelton, Nurse, NSW Refugee Health Service
- Public Policy Development in Canada and the USA. Leanne Wallace, Director, Primary Health & Community Partnership Branch, NSW Health
- Conservative Management of Pelvic Floor Problems – The Neotonus Pelvic Floor Chair. Dr Colette Hourigan, Central Coast WHC
- Sexual Assault – Responding to the Crisis. Jacqueline Burke, Counselling Coordinator, NSW Rape Crisis
- NSW Health Women's Health Strategic Implementation Plan. Anna Svensson, Policy Project Officer, Primary Health & Equity Team
- New Directions in Preventing Violence Against Women. Alex Shehadie, Principal Policy Officer, Office For Women
- Weeo Wiser – A Young Women's Peer Education Project. Sonia Hoffmann, Project Coordinator, Liverpool WHC
- Developing Tobacco Intervention Guidelines for all Practitioners within a Multidisciplinary Team. Roxanne McMurray, Manager, Leichhardt WCHC
- Bravehearts - NSW Education Program. Kate McIntyre
- Preventing Psychological Injury from Vicarious Trauma: A Case Study. Jacqueline Burke, Counselling Coordinator, NSW Rape Crisis Centre
- Family Law Act. Changes and Implementation. Sara Blazey, Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre
- Magistrate Court and Family Law. Megan McMahon, Counsellor, Family Law Court
- Child Sexual Assault Allegations in Family Law. PhD Research Findings, USyd, Department of Social Work, Wendy Lee Foote
- Succinct QI Reporting: What are the QMS reviewers looking for. Yve Repin, Consultant.

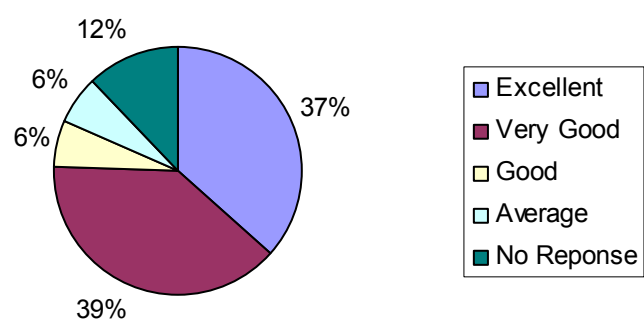
Publications/Resources Distribution

- Family Court of Australia – The Child Responsive Program
- His Secret Her Story – Australian Women Tell Their Stories
- Incontinence New Hope –Magnetic Pelvic Floor Stimulation
- WWDA Violence Against Women With Disabilities Resource Manual
- There is No Justice – There's just Us: The Status of Women with Disabilities in Australia
- Moving Forward – Sterilisation and Reproductive Health of Women and Girls with Disability
- Oyster Grit – Collection of Writing by Australian Women With Disabilities
- Taking the Lead: A Leadership and Mentoring Resource Kit for Women with Disabilities
- Girl Stuff. Kaz Cooke.

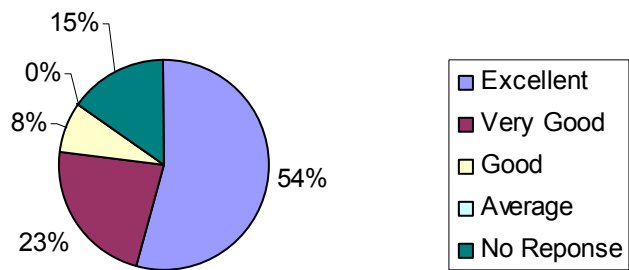
**WHNSW Statewide Sector Training
07/08**



**WHNSW Statewide Training 07/08
Evaluation Ratings Education Overall**



**WHNSW Statewide Training 07/08
Evaluation Ratings Professional Overall**



Policy/Program Updates

At each statewide meeting the Executive Officer gives an overview of policy and program developments significant to the sector:

- Human Services CEO's – Strengthening NGOs to Improve Sustainability and Performance:
 - Standard Chart of Accounts
 - Streamlining Commonwealth/State Accreditation and reporting requirements
 - Governance Resources for NGO Directors/Boards
 - Partnering with Indigenous Services and Building Capacity
 - Service Outcomes for Peak Bodies
 - HSCEO NGO Development and Support Working Group
- Overview of NSW State Plan and NSW State Health Plan
- Community Health & Outpatient Minimum Data Set
- NGO Coordinator Handbook
- National Health Triage phone lines
- Community Health Review
- NSW Health NGO Policy Framework – final version
- NSW Health NGO Operational Guidelines – initial consultation
- Medicare Dental Care Program
- Federal Grants: Fit and Proper Person Policy – propriety of senior leaders in NGOs that manage funds
- Review: Coordination NSW Government Action Against Domestic and Family Violence
- Australian Women's Health Network Discussion Paper – Women's Health - The New National Agenda.
- NCOSS – NGO Sector IT and Workforce Strategies.
- Inquiry in Acute Care Services NSW Public Hospitals
- National Patient Charter of Rights
- Inquiry into Closing the Gap – Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage
- Performance Audit of NSW Government Grants. Audit Office of NSW
- National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy.

Research/Resources Distribution

- Public Health Care Research and Information Services Bulletin link
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care literature review on 'open disclosure' link
- Poverty in Australia Sensitivity Analysis and Recent Trends
- Rural, Regional and Remote Health: Indicators of Health Status and Determinants of Health
- Sex Abuse Haunts Half of all Women. Griffith University
- Canadian Study on Breast Cancer. Canadian Breast Cancer Network
- Exploring Social Locations: Women's Health and Policy in Canada
- Global: Gender Equality, Work and Health. WHO
- Australian Bureau of Statistics Community Profiles 2007 – 2012.

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, 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 below.

Key Sector Discussion

During statewide meetings 2007-2008 the following issues were raised and discussed:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) v Genital Cosmetic Surgery
- High Incidence of Hysterectomy in Australian Women
- SACS Award v CPI
- Cuts to service provision through non replacement of staff
- Variations in funding levels across NSW
- Client violence and principles of safety
- Stress effects on workers/agencies over increased demand for services
- Forensic Medical Exam Report
- Using *OHS Policy* to promote self care
- Managing staff performance
- Developing mental health care plans
- Managing counselling waiting lists and no show appointments
- Matching feminist framework and medical approaches - using narrative language
- Development of support network amongst sector counsellors
- Working with clients with diagnosed mental health problems
- *Quest For Life Retreat* weekends for health workers
- Need for measured breaks between counselling sessions
- Client records – counselling notes
- Sector collaboration in Quality Improvement Processes
- Data Collection – internal resource allocation
- Data Collection – variation in input and output procedures
- Social view of health and complex needs – NGO workloads.

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
- Non-Government/Government Women's Health Quarterly Meeting
- NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) Management
- NGO Health Policy Advice Group (HPAG), NCOSS
- Forum of Non Government Agencies (FONGA), NCOSS
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Advisory Committee
- Bessie Smyth Foundation (BSF), Pregnancy Options Information Service
- Australian Women's Health Network (AWHN)
- Reproductive Choice Australia (RCA).

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

- NSW Women's Health Strategy Writing Group, NSW Health
- Department for Women, Peak Women's & Other Organisation's Meeting.
- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW and Network of Women With Disability – Roundtable discussion on Women with Disability from NESB and/or Carers - Experiencing Domestic Violence
- NSW Police Force Domestic & Family Violence Stakeholder Forum
- Royal Australasian College of Physicians: Health Consumers and Community Partnerships Forum
- Peaks Forum, HSCEO.

Conference, Forum, Seminar Participation/Attendance:

- Diverse and Inclusive Practice: Redrawing the Boundaries. Domestic Violence, Disability and Cultural Safety
- Perspectives on Poverty
- Flight to the Future: Towards 2017 NCOSS Sector Development
- Women of Ideas: Feminist Thinking for a New Era
- International Women's Day: 100 Years of Shaping Progress For Women
- 2007 NSW Violence Against Women Prevention Awards
- Discovering Voice & Strength: Creative Arts with Refugee Women.
- Clare Burton Memorial Lecture 2007: Understandings of Sex Discrimination in the Workplace: Limits and Possibilities
- Jacaranda Project: A Research report: Group programs for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

