

ILLAWARRA WOMEN'S
HEALTH CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT
2017 - 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Our Centre is situated on land of the Wodi Wodi people of Warilla, part of the Dharawal Nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, where the Aboriginal people have performed age-old ceremonies of story-telling, music, dance and celebration.



We acknowledge and pay respect to our Elders past, present and those of the future, for they hold the memories, traditions and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.

We must always remember, that under the concrete and asphalt, this land is, was, and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.

We acknowledge that we work in the context of generations of resilient, strengths-based, holistic resistance to violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We commit to actively supporting and promoting the voices of Aboriginal people and organisations in our work.

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A black and white close-up portrait of an elderly woman with short, dark hair. She is smiling warmly, showing her teeth. Her eyes are bright and looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a small, round earring. The background is dark and out of focus, with some indistinct shapes that could be other people.

ILLAWARRA WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

We are an independent community-based feminist health care centre for women only. We provide a safe place for women to access specialised and trauma informed medical and health care services. We are run by women for women and girls and are a nationally accredited organisation.



OUR VISION

Women and girls are respected, safe and healthy and experience full participation and equality in their lives.

OUR PURPOSE

We work to improve the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of women and girls and advocate for positive change for women in the community and the health system.

OUR ROLE

We achieve our purpose by focusing on sexual and reproductive health, domestic and family violence, and mental health and wellbeing, and providing:

- Free or low-cost individual and group health care services:
 - Medical, mental health, and domestic and family violence therapy and support services.
 - Complementary therapies, social and wellness workshops and programs.
- A safe and woman-centred space for social support, community activities and groups.
- Primary prevention and early intervention programs and health education.
- Community development, activism and advocacy to address the underlying causes of poor health for women and girls, and improve policy and services.

OUR VALUES

Illawarra Women's Health Centre is guided by values grounded in feminist philosophy and the proud legacy of women's health centres. Our values are lived out in the way we understand women's experience and health needs, in our practice and action and in the way the Centre is managed and governed.

RESPECT

Women involved with our Centre are treated with respect and dignity.

EQUITY

We focus on women and girls who are at high risk or have special needs, and we stand with women in their struggle for justice, safety and equality.

COMPASSION

We provide a caring, non-judgemental and person-centred approach to service delivery that responds to each woman's individual circumstances.

INTEGRITY

Honesty, transparency and trustworthiness are foundational to the professionalism of our board, staff and volunteers and our relationships with clients, other services and donors.

DIVERSITY

We value and respect women's racial, cultural and sexual diversity and strive for excellence in being a culturally competent and inclusive service provider.

RECOGNITION AND RECONCILIATION

We value and recognise the heritage and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and are committed to advancing healing, reconciliation and justice for Indigenous Australians.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Established in 1986, we provide woman-centred, safe, high quality health services and programs. Since then we have evolved in response to the needs of women and girls in the region, shaped by evidence of effective practice and local, state and national policy contexts.

Despite the significant gains in accessing appropriate, quality health services made by women and girls over the last 30 years, gender inequality remains a major challenge in our society, and with it, discrimination, marginalisation and violence continues to occur to women and girls – across all aspects of our lives. With young women experiencing mental health rates twice as high as young men, rising rates of domestic and family violence, crisis levels of violence against women with disabilities, the pervasive and increasing objectification, sexualisation and abuse of (ever younger girls) and women on-line, and older women being the most rapidly increasing demographic for homelessness, we are as relevant to women's wellbeing as when we began. In this context, the provision of women centred services, the presence of a safe and inclusive community and a voice that argues for equitable access to employment, housing, justice and health is critical. That is what we do, that is why we are here.

Our strategic direction 2017-2020 builds on the Centre's strengths, our gendered analysis and understanding of our society and culture, and reflects an ambition to assist more women and girls in their communities, particularly those who are at risk of poor health outcomes because of disadvantage, exclusion or lack of responsiveness by mainstream services.

THE OUTCOMES WE WORK FOR

1. Women of all ages coming to the Centre:
 - have choice and control in how their health needs are met at different life stages.
 - can access timely, woman-centred clinical, allied and complementary health services in a safe community setting.
 - feel connected, validated and strong through participation in learning, social support and wellbeing programs.
 - get timely information, advice and support - directly and through referral to other services – on issues related to housing, legal matters, financial management and access to community services.
2. Women experiencing domestic and family violence and sexual assault get the support, information, guided referral and advocacy needed to ensure their safety, and a specialised, holistic response to their needs.
3. Girls can access appropriate information that empowers them to make healthy life choices and helps them access safe and personal support when they need it.
4. The health and community service system in the Illawarra is more accessible, cohesive and effective for women and girls who are at risk of poor physical and mental health.

| GOALS | | STRATEGIES |
|---|--|--|
| STRENGTHEN CURRENT OFFERINGS. | Develop community networks and activities with a prevention, early intervention and health education focus targeting high risk populations of women and girls. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build capacity to offer the Centre's suite of health care services and group activities for more hours and after hours. 2. Offer services off site and in partnership with other service providers to achieve wider geographic reach. 3. Develop new services and programs that are flexible and responsive to the needs of our priority populations. 4. Develop an evidence base that demonstrates the effectiveness of our services and programs and supports learning and continuous improvement. |
| COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS | Maintain and improve the current range of health care and wellness services and activities and grow our capacity to assist more women. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand community outreach and support for women with disabilities at risk of domestic violence and sexual assault. 2. Expand our young women and girls program focused on empowerment, resilience and self-protection (targets young women experiencing family violence, mental health and sexual and reproductive health issues). 3. Raise awareness among young women and girls of the risks and high rates of mental illness and suicide and how to address barriers, get support and maintain good mental health. 4. Develop outreach and support programs for older women who are socially isolated and financially disadvantaged. |
| RESEARCH, ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM | Strengthen the Centre's positioning as a respected expert in women's health matters and expand our efforts in advocacy and community activism to improve women's access to health and justice. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partner with the University of Wollongong and other research institutions to conduct and access research on community needs, service gaps and design and evaluation of services and programs. 2. Advocate for accessible and affordable termination services in the Illawarra, as part of a more comprehensive response to women's sexual and reproductive health needs. 3. Foster networks and partnerships to raise awareness and advocate the need for a more integrated, safe and timely service response to women experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault. 4. Participate in awareness raising and activism that challenges the increased objectification and sexualisation of women and girls. 5. Advocate for improved access to health and community services across the Illawarra, including the need for better public and community transport. |
| ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT | Develop the organisational capacities critical to our success – governance, visibility, a professional and committed staff team and a predictable funding base. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen Centre governance by building board stability and investing in board development. 2. Put in place a strategy to achieve stability of funding and growth in untied funding. 3. Ensure the centre's management, structure and staff competencies are in line with our goals and priorities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased Capacity in fundraising, public relations, advocacy and community mobilisation and outreach • a workable balance of full time and part time staff, and continued investment in staff learning and development. 4. Maintain strategic relationships with Women's Health NSW, the Illawarra and Shoalhaven Local Health District, other women's health centres and key stakeholders in our priority focus areas. |

"Kim is the bomb! She helped me more than she could possibly ever know and I'm eternally grateful for her kindness, support, positivity and cheery-ness when I was down."

OUR PEOPLE

COUNCIL OF WOMEN MEMBERS



JUDY DAUNT Chairwoman
(2015 – current)



VI BLAZEVSKA Treasurer
(2016 – current)



SUE BROWN Secretary
(Resigned March 2018)



SUE DIGNAN
(2016 – current)



DR MARY PAPAKOSMAS
(2016 – current)



BARBARA SANTOS
(2018 – current)

CATHY BALE
(Resigned January 2018)

SHARON HOLZ
(2018 – current)

SHANNON WRIGHT
(2016 – current)

STAFF



SALLY STEVENSON AM
General Manager



SUE ILIEVSKI
Operations Manager



THERESE WOLFE
Centre Coordinator



GRACE JENNINGS Student
Social Worker, Young
Women's Program



SHARON STEWART
Practice Nurse



LINDA BRADSHAW
Massage Therapist



ALICE MARTIN
Business Manager



BELINDA FABRIANESI
Research and Evaluation Officer



ALISON ILIEVSKI
Administration Assistant



KIM SATTLER Women with
Disabilities and Domestic
Violence Officer



DENIKA THOMAS Social
Worker, Young Women's
Program

EDITT MELGAREJO
Nurse Practitioner

LOUISE POPE
Generalist Counsellor

TINA MCLAREN-BELL
Generalist Counsellor

CHAIRWOMEN'S REPORT



The past 12 months have flown; there are so many highlights and fantastic achievements to celebrate at the Illawarra Women's Health Centre.

At the Annual General Meeting held October 2017 we accepted nominations and welcomed new Council members Shannon Wright and Cathy Bale, joining returning members Sue Dignan, Vi Blazevska, Sue Brown, Mary Papakosmas, Julie Crawford and myself. Since then we have farewelled several members due to professional and personal commitments who were not able to commit to the ongoing responsibilities of Council membership – Sue Brown, Julie Crawford, and Cathy Bale.

Since the launch of our Strategic Plan 2017 – 2022 at our last AGM the plan continues to set us a clear direction for core business. It has provided an excellent framework for the past 12 months, ensuring we strengthen the Centre's current offerings of focus on free or low cost individual and group services; extending our community engagement and outreach programs and growing the Centre's positioning as a respected expert in women's health matters, expanding our efforts in advocacy and community activism to improve women's access to health and justice.

The Centre had a refresh in the last 12 months. A very much welcomed grant from the Stronger Communities Program provided materials for a building makeover. It was a massive effort from Centre staff as they painted the interior, decorated with photos and upgraded displays. Thanks so much, it looks fantastic. Thanks also to the Shellharbour Club for an IT upgrade ensuring all systems are functioning at a high standard.

Strong leadership by Council Treasurer Vi Blazevska and General Manager Sally Stevenson sees the Centre in a comfortable financial situation, which supports ongoing viability and a strong future. There has been considerable growth of community-based funding, with partners including Warilla Bowls and Recreation Club, Oak Flats Bowling & Recreation Club and Rotary Club of Illawarra Sunrise. Over the year we also received several one-off philanthropic donations from generous members of the community, valuing the programs and services offered at the Centre.

With the ongoing implementation of the Centre's Strategic Plan there were several staff changes due to a restructure and subsequent recruitment process. The impact of these significant changes was reflected in the positive client evaluation survey and the staff wellbeing survey.

Programs within the Centre are very well utilised. Some are expanding at a great pace such as the Young Women's Program, and at times it overflows! There is increased recognition of our work within the sector and the broader community, and this continues to grow as the

Centre's reputation is spreading. The recently launched Mothers and Sons program focusing on raising respectful boys was very successful and widely acknowledged. Our Women with Disabilities and domestic violence program continues to drive local recognition of the devastating situation many women find themselves in. We are now a registered NDIS provider.

Another significant highlight this year was the Annual Fundraising Dinner, a sold-out event! This year instead of having a single guest speaker, the entertainment included a showcase of strong, creative, diverse female entertainers who all captivated the audience. The wonderful Melinda James as MC ensured the night ran smoothly. Over \$14, 000 was raised from dinner attendance, a successful auction and an online raffle ticket option for those who were unable to attend the function.

The future for the Illawarra Women's Health Centre continues to look bright and exciting - strong leadership from the Council, a dedicated and visionary General Manager, Sally, passionate and professional Centre staff, sound financial situation, an excellent working Strategic Plan and increased community reputation and recognition are all significant factors. However, the future is not without challenges. We must continue to work hard, remain vigilant and advocate for young girls and women so all are afforded the opportunity to improve and maintain their physical, mental and social health and well-being.

Finally, a big thanks and congratulations on a great year to all Council Members, Sally and Centre Staff. Please join me in sharing the Vision of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, a future where "Women and girls are respected, safe and healthy, and experience full participation and equality in their lives".

JUDY DAUNT

Chairwoman

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT



Our Centre provides a critical service in the Illawarra, welcoming all women who walk through our door, regardless of age, ethnicity, sexuality or disability. Ours is a unique place which offers safe, accessible and cost-effective support to women, demonstrating every day, how women can and should be treated in all aspects of their life: with respect, dignity and kindness.

2017-18 was a strong year, meeting both our operational and financial goals.

Throughout, we provided a range of services that reflect our community-based feminist approach to health care and response to the social determinants of health. Addressing key health issues for women, we focused on sexual and reproductive health, mental and emotional health, and violence against women.

We are a vital and dynamic component of the primary health care system in the Illawarra. During the year we supported 1,472 individual clients, approximately the same as last year. This translated to 4,580 occasions of service, covering 10,868 presenting issues reflecting our integrated care 'one-stop-shop' approach to services and support.

We facilitated and/or implemented 1,126 group sessions including yoga, meditation, singing, art therapy, quit smoking, healthy relationships and craft.

We achieved this whilst also:

- implementing our new strategic plan, which sharpened our focus on our key focus areas and target groups, and led to a restructure designed to strengthen our front of office presence and support, as well as our support to women experiencing, escaping or recovering from domestic and family violence;
- launching our (first-in-Australia) Mothers and Sons program and expanding our young women's program;
- developing our medical termination service;
- painting and re-decorating our Centre and upgrading our IT;
- refining and streamlining our financial management; and
- enjoying our most successful fundraising year on record.

All this was only possible because of our extraordinary team of multi-skilled, highly committed and compassionate women.

The Centre this year was funded (67%) by the NSW Ministry of Health, through the NGO Health Partnerships grant program, distributed and monitored by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. We met and, in most cases, exceeded our key performance indicators, associated with this funding.

We continue to experience high demand for all our services. This is in part, because our excellent reputation keeps growing, especially as we develop more outward reaching partnerships and relationships and persist in raising our voice

across all forms of media to advocate for women's health. It is also because the incidence of mental health and violence against women is rising, and more clients accessing our service do so with increasingly complex needs, often with difficult and traumatic histories. These clients require interventions from a variety of services, often over the long-term.

There has been no real increase in funding for women's health centres across the state since 1986. This is of great concern in the context of: increased demands on governance, administration management and services. It results in undue stress on our physical and human resources, and it means we have little capacity to meet additional needs – try as we might. An urgent increase in funding levels is required to meet current and growing governance and community service needs.

I thank our networks and partners for their support and commitment to the needs of our shared clients. I thank our Council of Women and staff for creating a women's health centre that we can all be proud of. And most of all I thank our clients who continue to put their faith in us, often under the most awful circumstances. Their quiet strength, remarkable resilience and perseverance, humour and humility are without question, inspiring. It is our privilege to support them.

SALLY STEVENSON AM
General Manager

EVERY WOMAN HAS
THE RIGHT TO
BE TREATED WITH
DIGNITY, COURTESY &
RESPECT

in trouble with police?
Call us now to help you
1800 10 18 10



"Thank you for asking for my feedback. I couldn't be happier with the service provided; always inclusive, always welcoming. Each woman at the Centre brings different skills to the team and they work so beautifully together to create a safe space for women of all different backgrounds."

OUR WORK

We are a vital and dynamic component of the primary health care system in the Illawarra. During 2017-18 we supported 1,472 individual clients with 4,580 occasions of service. These clients had 10,868 presenting issues, reflecting our integrated care "one-stop-shop" approach to services and support - and the growing complexity of client needs and situations.

We address key health issues for women using a variety of strategies, including clinical and allied health services, therapeutic and information workshops on mental and physical health and healthy relationships, financial and legal services, and outreach and community group activities. To do this, we employed or engaged doctors, women's health nurses, massage therapists, social workers, psychologists, counsellors and a dietitian.

The range and availability of these practitioners enables us to provide continuity of care under one roof, particularly important for women who are in vulnerable and marginalised situations.

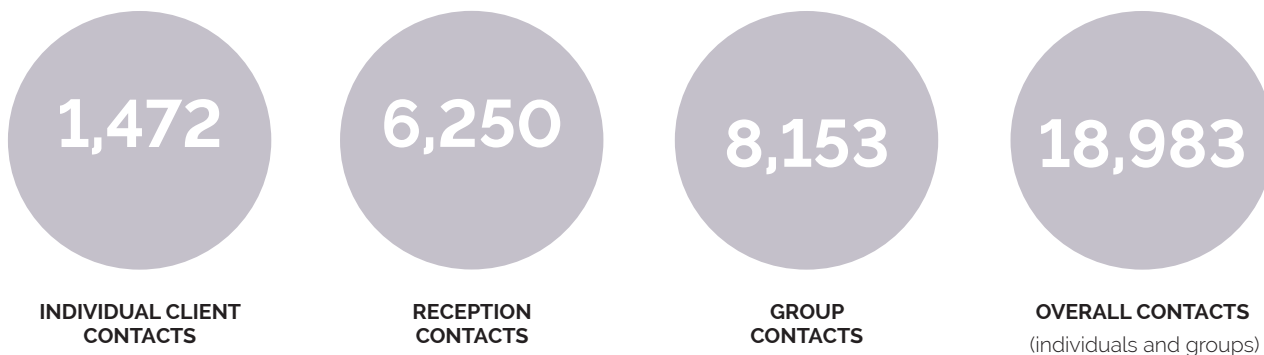
1,126

group sessions took place at the Centre including yoga, meditation, singing, art therapy, quit smoking, healthy relationships and craft with over 8,000 occasions of participation.

OUR WORK

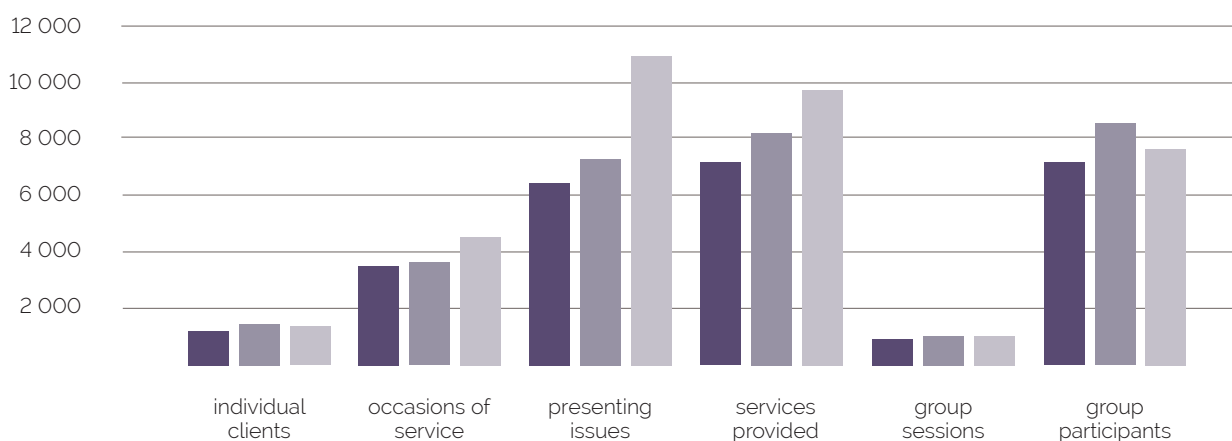
OUR WORK

OUR CLIENTS



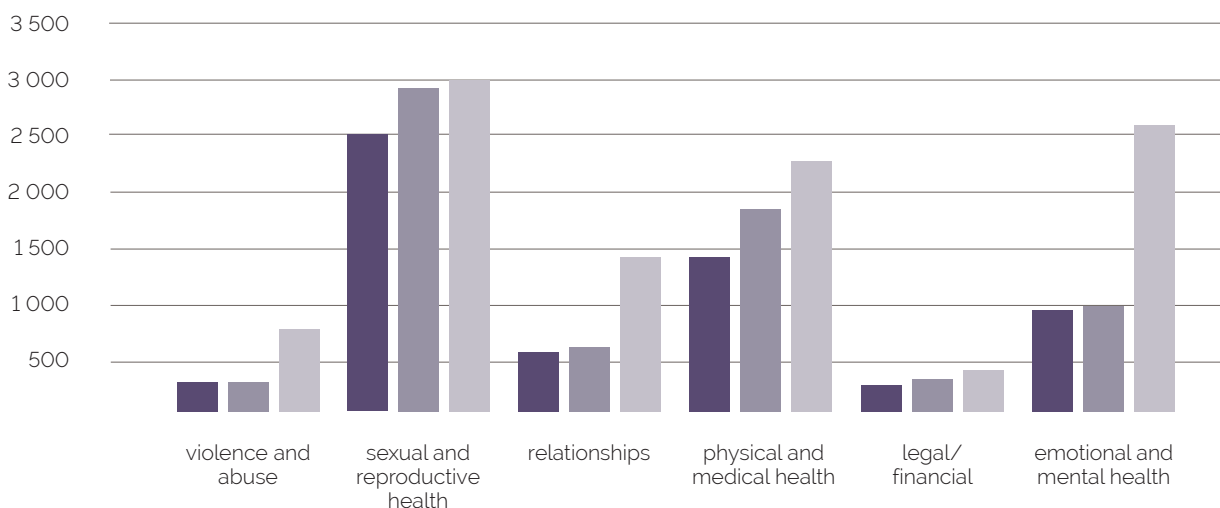
CLIENT ACTIVITY SNAPSHOT

2016 2017 2018

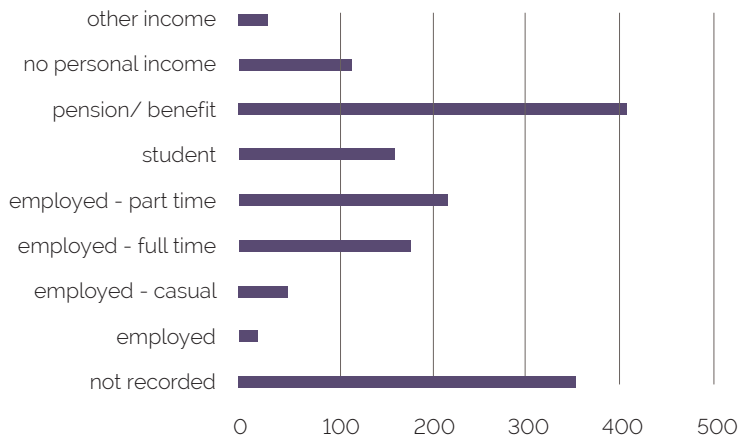


PRESENTING ISSUES

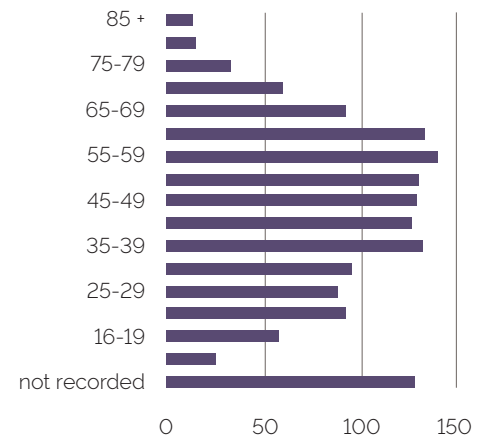
2016 2017 2018



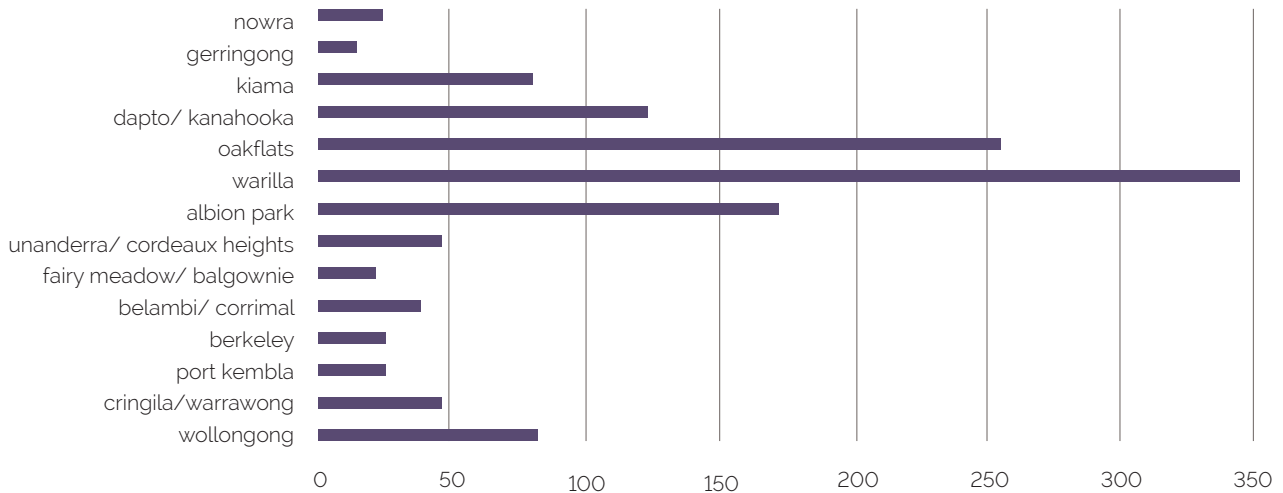
CLIENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS



CLIENT AGE GROUP



CLIENTS BY SUBURB



INDIVIDUAL CLIENT CONTACTS

4,580 TOTAL INDIVIDUAL CLIENT CONTACTS

2,157 CLINIC

1,488 MENTAL HEALTH

508 MASSAGE THERAPY

427 OTHER

776 DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

PARTNERS

delivering free of charge,
individual services at the Centre:

Illawarra Legal Centre and
Shellharbour Legal Solutions

Centrelink

Australian Hearing

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

The complexity of domestic and family violence demands integrated, high quality, flexible and safe services and referral pathways. We have 32 years of experience in addressing the impacts of domestic and family violence. We provide wrap-around support services that address the multiple physical, psychological, economic and social needs of women of all ages and from diverse backgrounds. This includes, **medical assessment, safety planning and referral, trauma recovery counselling, priority access to doctor and nurse consultations and a range of therapeutic, educational and support programs.** We have a dedicated domestic and family violence manager who provides crisis support and ongoing individual advocacy.

IN ADDITION TO THESE CORE SERVICES, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING UNIQUE PROGRAMS:

1. **Women with disabilities and domestic and family violence program:** 90% of women with disabilities experience domestic and family violence, usually with multiple experiences and from multiple perpetrators. We are the only service in the Illawarra to provide specialised and dedicated support to these women. In addition to one-on-one support, we work in partnership with a wide range of disability service providers to provide individualised support and advocacy and to deliver appropriate domestic and family violence and healthy relationships training to men and women. We are a registered NDIS provider.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2017-18:

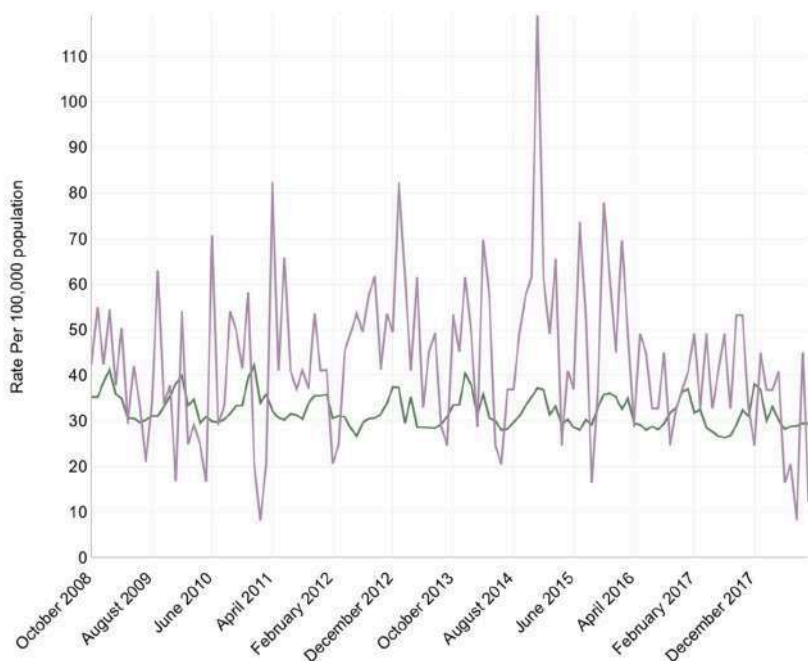
- Supported 15 individual clients with complex needs, ranging in age from 16-65 with a broad range of issues including sexual health, living skills, advocacy, referrals, NDIS challenges, and recovery from violence and abuse.
- Established a monthly Peer Support Group for women, with space kindly provided by The Illawarra Leagues Club.
- Delivered six Sexual Health and Cybersafety workshops and three Carer's and Worker's Training Sessions, for group home residents from Northcott Disability Services, The Disability Trust, IRT and Greenacres Disability Services.
- Delivered a Sexual Health Forum attended by 40 women, carers and support workers.
- Provided education sessions for students and Teacher's Aides with Lake Illawarra High School, Albion Park High and Warilla High School.
- Partnerships developed for referral pathways and training with Intellectual Disability Alliance, Physical Disability Council of NSW, The Disability Trust, Community Industry Group, People with Disability Australia, IRT- Kemira Residential, Council for Intellectual Disability, Immigration Rights Advice Service, Northcott Disability Services and Flourish.
- Membership of two Expert Panels hosted by People with Disabilities Australia in relation to Peer Group Sexual Health training and Disability Access to Domestic Violence Refuges.

We have actively worked to raise the profile of women with a disability experiencing violence, and are regularly asked to present at local conferences and panels on this issue.



Terri Weidl was referred to us by Greenacres Disability Services and came with her mum Jenni after leaving a long, violent marriage. She could barely communicate after her trauma. This is Terri two years later after creating an image of herself using the Life Happens game (a game we are piloting with University of Wollongong). She has regained her independence, is moving into a group home before Christmas and is very happy with her new life.

2. **Young Women's Program:** with this program we work to build resilience and develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of young women to understand and protect themselves against domestic and family violence. We deliver outreach programs to local primary and high schools, provide free counselling, have a creative drop-in space and an annual Young Women's Health and Wellbeing Forum.
3. **Mothers and Sons Program:** Rising rates of son-to-mother violence and numerous requests from mothers for support led us to develop this (first in Australia) program. Initiated as an early intervention program and run over six weekly sessions, the pilot program was overwhelmingly successful. Designed and implemented by a female social worker and a male clinical psychologist, the program supports the mother and son relationship through new skills, techniques and strategies that foster the development of boys into respectful young men. The community interest in this program has been incredible.



Incidents of Assault (Domestic assault) in 2528 postcode, from October 2008 to September 2018.
(Source: BOSCAR)

- 2528 (Stable)
- New South Wales (Down 0.8% Per Year)

In 2017-2018, 776 clients presented with violence as their primary issue at the Centre.

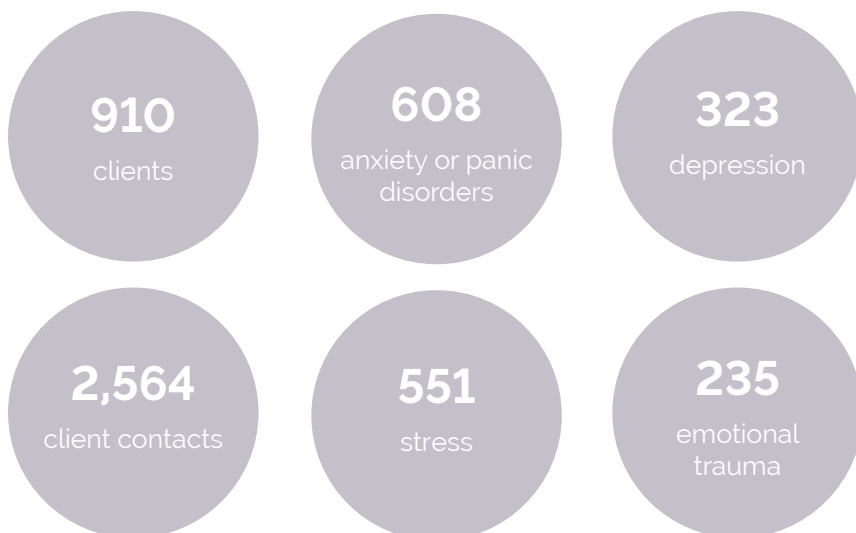
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

MENTAL AND SOCIAL HEALTH

Mental health increasingly dominates the disease burden for women, and in 2017-18 our professional mental health team supported 910 clients. Between our generalist counsellors, social workers and psychologists we offer individual counselling at the Centre, telephone counselling, crisis support, peer support groups, educative and therapeutic workshops, and outreach to schools. Of the utmost importance, our Centre is a safe space for women to come and simply be themselves and if they choose, part of a supportive community.

We have a focus on young women's mental health through our unique and tailored young women's program. The graph opposite is one illustration of a disturbing prevalence in mental health issues for young women in the Illawarra Shoalhaven.

MENTAL HEALTH KEY STATISTICS:



YOUNG WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Our unique-in-Australia, 'Talk like a Girl' program builds resilience and develops the skills, knowledge and confidence of girls and young women (12-16yo) to understand and protect themselves across three critical categories: domestic and family violence, mental health and sexual and reproductive health. We deliver this outreach program to seven high schools (350 students), as well as provide free counselling, a creative 'drop in' space and Young Women's Health and Wellbeing Forums. Using evidence-based strategies, and innovative forms of engagement (including social media) our program empowers young women to make informed choices about their lives, bodies and relationships, not only for today – but into the future as they grow into strong and independent women.

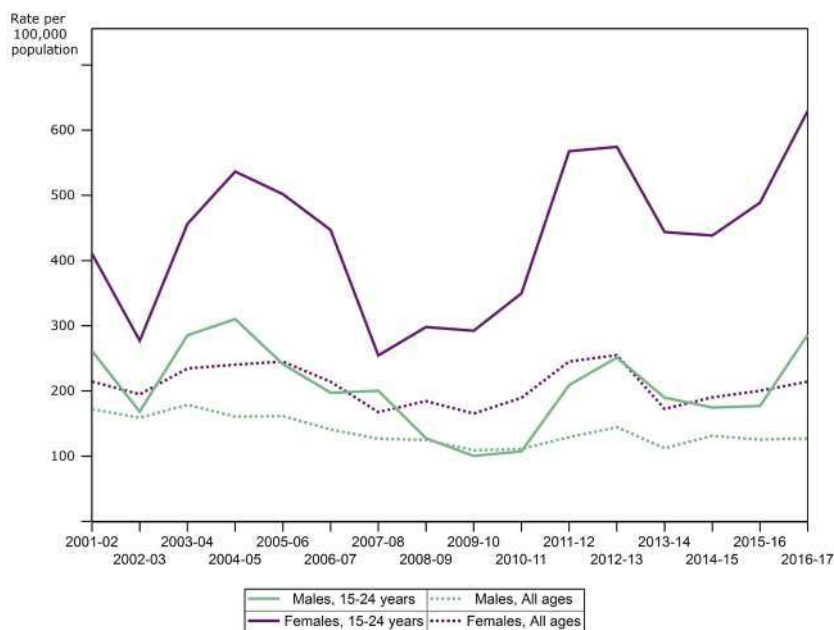
We work closely with community, schools and alternate education providers so young women can access safe and appropriate health information, services and programs. The impact of this program is significant for many young – often at risk – women.

We have experienced a large demand for counselling over the past 12 months. We attribute this to an increase in outreach groups, the flexibility around sessions we provide and the methods with which we engage with young women. Key concerns include; body image issues, eating disorders, low self-esteem, relationship difficulties, emotional regulation, domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

Our outreach programs in schools are client centred and strengths-based with a harm minimisation approach. We create an open and safe space to discuss and explore the issues affecting young women by positioning ourselves as equals, not figures of authority. Each program is unique, responding to the girls' needs at the time: they determine the topics and drive the conversation. We typically run the program over eight weeks, covering a different topic each week. Topics include self-esteem, mental health, healthy relationships, consent, contraception, sexual health and gender and sexuality. Our outreach groups allow the girls to ask questions and express themselves without shame, to better understand the issues that affect them. The girls develop communication and peer relationship/support skills, connect to health services and create a community of strong girls and young women. Girls have repeatedly stated the day of the program is the best day of the week for them.

We work with Warilla High School, Lake Illawarra High School, Dapto High School, Woonona High School, Warrawong High School, Oak Flats High School, Albion Park High School and Berkeley West Public School.

We work with young women so they can manage their mental health now and develop mental health resilience that will last a lifetime. We also develop knowledge and life skills that will allow them to manage their sexual and reproductive health and to sufficiently protect themselves against domestic violence by learning about healthy relationships and how to identify and escape violent ones.



Intentional self-harm hospitalisations, persons of all ages and 15-24 years, Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD, 2001-02 to 2016-17.
(Source: NSW HEALTH)



Warilla High School is fortunate to work in collaboration with the Illawarra Women's Health Centre in a range of capacities including weekly Girls' Groups, the annual Woman's Forum, R U OK Day, eSmart Cyber Safety Workshops and regular referrals on behalf of students that need one-on-one support.

I would like to offer my recognition and appreciation specifically to Denika (past group facilitator) and Grace (current group facilitator) who have conducted the Girls Groups on a weekly basis. I speak on behalf of myself and the students when I say that our experiences of Denika, Grace and the Illawarra Women's Health Centre is that they are relatable, knowledgeable, understanding, passionate and proactive.

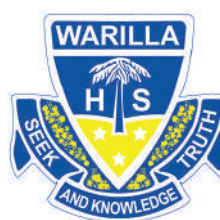
The Girls' Group provides students with a platform to have open conversations about topics that are often misunderstood or viewed as taboo. The group provides the students with an opportunity to meet new friends and familiarise themselves with the Centre and its staff should they need to access support in the future. Students participate in unprecedented conversations and fun activities that encourage self-reflection and assist in building on their identity and self-esteem. Both Grace and Denika have proven to be extremely attentive to the varying needs of the school and individual participants. The group workshops plant seeds in our students' minds which will assist them in educating others and more importantly, making positive decisions about their own health and safety, creating a sense of connection and belonging in the future.

Once a year the Centre opens its doors to about 30 female students from Warilla High School for the Young Women's Forum. Students visit the Centre, get to know the space and its workers and participate in a range of thoughtfully organised, educational workshops that acknowledge and honour the unique and often misunderstood day to day experiences of female adolescents. All staff that we have encountered spoke with a balance of warmth and conviction on these topics.

The genuine care each worker has for our young people and their wellbeing is evident during our interactions with the Illawarra Women's Health Centre and it is certainly reassuring to know that our students have access to such strong advocates in our community. I look forward to working in partnership in the years moving forward.

JEWEL VUKICEVIC

Warilla High School





COMMUNITY GROUPS

Providing an inclusive and women's only space to meet, create and be healthy together is an important part of what we offer our community. Social isolation is a devastating driver of mental health issues, and often a consequence of domestic and family violence. As a space that supports and welcomes the building of community, we support women in ways that are deeply important to their social and mental health. We thank all our wonderful facilitators who make such a significant contribution to our community by volunteering their time and energy to run these weekly groups.

FIONA STEPHENS
Singing & Musical Moments

ELENA BELLINATO
Drumming

LORRAINE MCKEW
Gathering of Women

KIM SATTLER
Aromatherapy

JUNE MORRIS Carers
support & social group

LYN YOUNG
Craft

TAMARA CARMODY
Strengthening & conditioning
exercise classes

**TRACEY JAMES &
LISA MOREY** Yoga

MAUREEN OLIVER
Quit smoking support group

MARTA VENEGAS
Tai Chi

MYRA SUCH
Qigong

**SUE REID & ELIZABETH
BRANDIS** Meditation

DEB SYKES
Belly Dancing



"This is the only place I know of and is safe to me, that I know can I can come to and feel completely safe. Sometimes I need that."

Women's Counselling
and Information Line.

1800 TALK HI
(1800 825 554)

WOMEN'S COUNSELLING AND INFORMATION LINE

Our telephone counselling and information line offers a critical service to women who prefer to receive support over the phone. Importantly, clients speak to the same qualified counsellor (a professional social worker with long term phone counselling experience) each time they call, enabling consistent support through an ongoing relationship.

The telephone line is utilised by a variety of women of all ages. Often women will have mental health challenges or will have experienced some trauma (such as domestic and family violence). They find it easier to pick up the phone than to attend an appointment in person. Some women do see a counsellor face to face but need extra support between appointments. Any woman is welcome to ring the counselling line, whether the issue involves themselves, their family or a friend.



REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH

In 2017-18 support for women to understand and manage their sexual and reproductive health included:

- Screening and referral for cervical cancer
- Provision of a wide range of contraception options, include IUD
- Counselling, information and management of fertility, pregnancy planning and pregnancy options to women
- Screening, assessment, diagnosis, treatment and referral for women who present for sexually transmitted infections
- Targeted outreach services for sexual and reproductive health, and breast awareness information and community education to vulnerable populations
- Provision of a comprehensive program to treat urinary incontinence
- Provision of group-based workshops or programs on menopause, continence, nutrition and stress management

Our medical team consisted of a specialised women's health nurse practitioner, (4 days per week), a practice nurse (2 days per week), and two doctors (1.5 days per week). During the year they had 2,067 occasions of service, which covered over 4,000 presenting issues.



"That abortion remains in the criminal code is not only outdated but also misogynistic. Our right to choose should not be a crime. Our sexual and reproductive rights are human rights - our bodies are not a place for negotiation and control."

SALLY STEVENSON

ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN TO HAVE TERMINATION SERVICES IN THE ILLAWARRA

Throughout the year we continued to advocate publicly for Illawarra women to have the support they need to make autonomous choices about their safe reproductive rights. In addition to raising awareness that abortion – outrageously - remains in the NSW criminal code, we also argued for vastly improved access to termination services in the Illawarra. Here, the public health system provides no service, there is one private provider, which, for many women is financially prohibitive, and only a few female GPs offering medical terminations. This is not acceptable, when 1 in 4 women will seek an abortion at some time in life.

Recently, emerging and compelling research has brought to light the range and types of reproductive abuse and coercion experienced by women (often as part of a broader pattern of power and control) and has demonstrated inextricable links between reproductive coercion and sexual, domestic and family violence. Any denigration of unequivocal support for reproductive autonomy suggests a lack of genuine understanding in relation to the experiences and impacts of violence against

women at a time when the Australian community is demanding knowledge and progressive change on this issue.

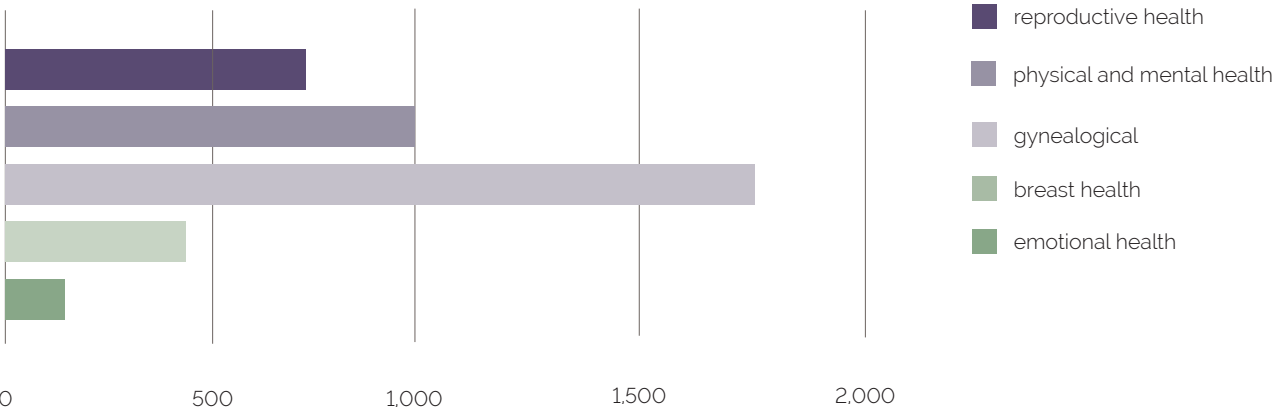
Abortion is contained in sections 82, 83 and 84 of the NSW Crimes Act, with penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment for women, doctors and anyone who assists.

We will continue to advocate to the government, our political representatives, government services and the community for all women to have the support they need to make autonomous choices about their safe reproductive rights.

We have a long way to go, here in Australia, before a woman can truly and freely have complete power over her own body.

We are pleased to report that from July 2018 we will begin offering a free (bulkbilled) medical termination service at the Centre.

REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH PRESENTING ISSUES



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Our thanks to ABC Illawarra Radio, the Illawarra Mercury and WIN NEWS for their constant support of the Centre, and women's health issues.

'Rising rates of domestic violence – including son to mother violence – are behind a ground-breaking pilot program being rolled out in the Illawarra, by the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, a Mothers and Sons program – the first of its kind in Australia.'

The early intervention program aims to support mothers to raise respectful, happy and non-violent boys. There is high demand for the program, which the Centre developed in response to their clients' concerns.

While women can leave situations where there is domestic violence with the right support, that's often just not possible with a mother and son. The program offers strategies for the boys to calm down if needed and focuses on strengthening the mother-son bond so when there are big emotions they'll be able to handle them in a respectful and safe way.

'There are issues that can affect all women, regardless of who they are or where they're from: in and of itself, being a woman is a risk to your health.'

'Mainstream health systems are not gender focused or sensitive.'

'Women's position in society and the way we are both perceived and treated, has an impact on our health, from a socioeconomic point of view, from an opportunities point of view and in terms of risk factors for certain health issues.'

'Women's experiences are different, but the mainstream health system does not recognise that women are experiencing disease biologically differently, and also experiencing mental health and wellbeing differently. There is also little recognition, she says, that women's health goes well beyond the traditional perception that it's just about mammograms and pap smears.'

ILLAWARRA MERCURY

JUNE 15 2018 - 12:30PM

Illawarra Women's Health Centre starts mother and son program

Lisa Wachsmuth

Latest News



Psychologist Maris Depers with Danielle and Luca Attorre and Illawarra Women's Health Centre general manager Sally Stevenson. Picture: Robert Peet

Rising rates of domestic violence – including son to mother violence – are behind a groundbreaking pilot program being rolled out in the Illawarra.

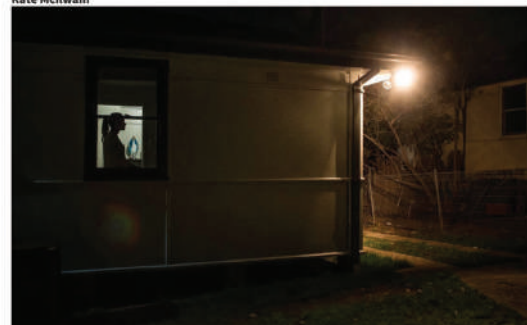
ILLAWARRA MERCURY

MARCH 4 2018 - 9:53AM

Grim figures no surprise to domestic violence support groups in the Illawarra



Kate McIlwain



Stark reality: A landmark new report showing the extent of domestic and sexual violence in Australia has found one woman a week and one man a month is killed by a current or former partner. Picture: Wouter Peeters.

'Domestic violence causes more illness, disability and deaths in Australian women aged 25-44 than smoking, alcohol use, being overweight, being physically inactive or any other risk factor, a new national report has found. Among a litany of shocking statistics, the [AIHW] report found that, on average, one woman a week and one man a month is killed by a current or former partner.'

'For the Illawarra Women's Health Centre, the data comes as no surprise. The statistics formalise it, but we see this on a day-to-day basis. To quote [domestic violence campaigner] Rosie Batty, this is overwhelming and unrelenting, and this is what we face at the Centre.'

'In an effort to break this cycle the Centre runs outreach programs in Illawarra schools, aimed at girls mostly aged between 13-16 (years 7-10), and as young as Year 5. Our health system is often structured to respond at crisis point, so you see people in hospital – but we know from a public health perspective that prevention and early intervention is the best investment.'

ILLAWARRA MERCURY

MARCH 3 2018 - 4:37PM

Illawarra Women's Health Centre: 'Being a woman is a risk to your health'

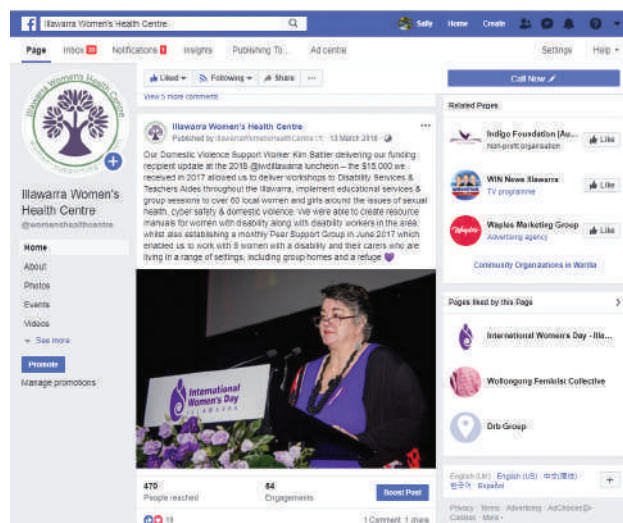
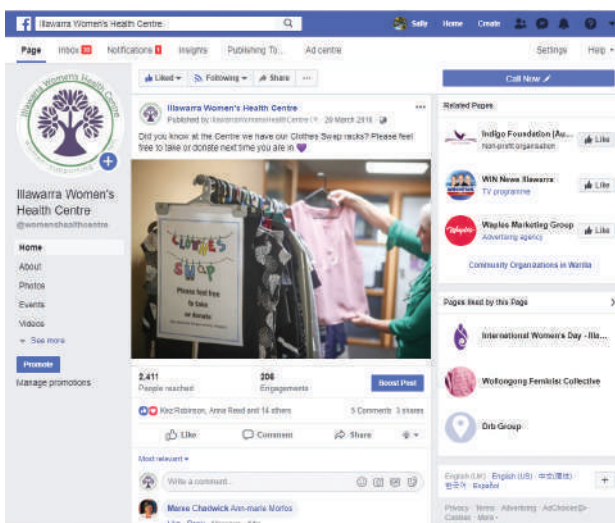
 Kate McLain



'I didn't think I was this sort of person': Donna, 53, says attending a quit smoking support group was the first step in changing her life. Photos: Adam McLean

As this year's International Women's Day approaches, Kate McLain explores an Illawarra health centre fighting the daily battle against the risks of being a woman.

1,478 FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS - AND GROWING!



OUR PARTNERSHIPS

The Centre works collaboratively to maximise the use of resources and achieve the best outcomes for the community. In 2017-18 the Centre actively networked, attended meetings and contributed to local community and regional forums, consultation (committees) and interagencies. There are many examples of interaction between the Centre and other NGOs, government departments and health services. These include:

- The Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre and Waminda, South Coast Women's Health and Welfare Aboriginal Corporation.
- Women's Health NSW, DVNSW, the Illawarra Industry Group, and NCOSS.
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, including the Women's Health Unit, Violence Abuse and Neglect Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, the HIV & Related Programs Unit and Drug and Alcohol Services.
- The Illawarra Committee Against Domestic Violence, Wollongong Women's Information Centre and SAHSSI (Supported Accommodation & Homelessness Services Shoalhaven Illawarra).
- Illawarra Legal Centre, Shellharbour Legal Solutions, Legal Aid and the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and the Illawarra Justice Partnership.
- Family Services Illawarra, Relationships Australia, Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill (ARAFMI), Barnardo's, CatholicCare, Salvation Army, Mission Australia, the WaterShed, Shellharbour Aboriginal Community Youth Association (SACYA) and Family Planning Australia.
- Unanderra Community Centre and Darcy House.
- Warilla, Lake Heights, Albion Park, Woonona and Dapto High Schools, Five Islands College and Berkeley West Public School.
- Greenacres Disability Service, People with Disabilities Australia, and the Disability Trust.
- Illawarra Multicultural Services and Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra.
- Wollongong, Kiama and Shellharbour Councils.
- Lake Illawarra and Wollongong Local Area Commands.
- Centrelink and the Department of Human Services, and Department of Family and Community Services, the Office of E-Safety Commissioner and NSW Treasury/PMC
- Illawarra Women in Business and Illawarra Committee for International Women's Day.
- University of Wollongong and Charles Sturt University.
- Mental Health Association NSW and the Heart Foundation.

The value of these partnerships and relationships in significantly extending and multiplying the impact of the Centre cannot be overestimated. It is also important to acknowledge the time and resources it takes to maintain such relationships and make them both effective and efficient.



UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GRANTS

We continue to develop active research partnerships with the University of Wollongong. This year we were a partner in two of the four University Community Engagement Grants: Refinement of the Life Happens Resource for High Risk Target Groups and Project ADVOCATE.

Life Happens is a program that is designed for young people to explore difficult experiences within their own lives or that of a friend. The purpose of the program is to have a safe, "external" space to explore the emotions and consequences/ solutions to common life experiences of teenagers. A group of young people is given a character which they develop as different life events happen to them (e.g. have unprotected sex, get expelled, contract an STI etc). This method of exploring challenging situations helps build empathy for the character so participants are more likely to react by wanting to help and be supportive rather than reject and stigmatise. It is a very creative way to discuss real issues without the young people having to disclose their own vulnerabilities or experiences. The Centre piloted the game for UOW with Aboriginal girls and young women with disabilities, providing valuable feedback on improvements and successes.

Project ADVOCATE aims to understand the knowledge and attitudes of University staff around the issue of domestic violence. Using data gathered through a campus based survey, a draft online domestic violence awareness package for University staff is being developed. The Centre is a member of the Steering Committee alongside Domestic Violence New South Wales, Women's Health New South Wales, Leichardt Women's Health Centre and Hunter Women's Health Centre, with support from University of New South Wales and University of Newcastle.

FINANCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

We are funded by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and are deeply thankful for the support offered through grants and donations by the following organisations:



A special thank you to Malika Elizabeth, Hawraa Kash, Michele Kenworthy and Melinda James, the very generous donors of raffle and auction items and all our wonderful supporters for making our annual fundraising dinner such a success. Thank you to our local representatives Gareth Ward, Anna Watson, Paul Scully, Ryan Park, Stephen Jones and Sharon Bird for their unwavering support.

The stuff about boundaries & my rules that I should stand by

including where the boundaries are in a relationship and how to help or who to go ~~with~~ to if I need help.

They answered questions that you wouldn't think to ask but would be embarrassed to ask

I learned about the signs of domestic violence ~~and~~ and how to avoid it.

WHY:

Because I learnt about things I was too scared to ask.

consent / to know when im ready

WHY:

Because I felt very safe.

WHY:

I know how to look after myself with these facts

WHY:

because was fun and educ

WHY:

Because there was no shame

OUR FINANCES



TREASURER'S REPORT



I am very pleased to report we had an excellent year with many highlights I would like to draw to your attention.

Following a small surplus last year, we managed a healthy operating surplus of \$25,723 this year, allowing us to build our reserves to a prudent level, and allowing for flexibility, continued innovation and sensible risk management. Our strong performance this year reflects three key points:

1. The high value the community places on the Centre: we have had an excellent year in terms of community-based grants, donations and fundraising.
2. The success of our marketing and fundraising strategy.
3. Most importantly, the hard work of the staff and Council of Women, in providing a highly regarded professional and safe health service to women.

Our financial statements when matched with the depth and breadth of our services and programs show we are both highly cost effective, and an excellent investment.

I'm proud to present these statements to our membership and the community.

KEY FINANCIAL DATA

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| INCOME | 766 544 |
| EXPENDITURE | 724 862 |
| SURPLUS | 25 723 |
| MEMBERS EQUITY | 43 318 (5% of income) |

The full audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2018 are available on request.

VI BLAZEVSKA

Treasurer

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2017-18

Consolidated income and expenditure statement year end June 2018.

| INCOME | 2018 | 2017 |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| GRANTS | 571 354 | 569 230 |
| MEDICAL SERVICES | 102 499 | 105 499 |
| DONATIONS | 35 612 | 13 919 |
| FUNDRAISING | 22 778 | 29 534 |
| FEE FOR SERVICE | 7 880 | 6 355 |
| OTHER | 24 033 | 4 199 |
| MEMBERSHIP FEES | 55 | 372 |
| INTEREST | 2 333 | 2 484 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 766 544 | 731 592 |
| EXPENDITURE | 2018 | 2017 |
| EMPLOYMENT COSTS | 513 173 | 550 508 |
| PROGRAM COSTS | 29 349 | 11 660 |
| GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES | 187 054 | 147 441 |
| EQUIPMENT, SOFTWARE AND MAINTENANCE | 11 245 | 20 271 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 724 862 | 729 880 |
| | 2018 | 2017 |
| OPERATING SURPLUS/DEFICIT | 25 723 | 1 712 |
| ACCUMULATED FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD | 17 596 | 15 884 |
| ACCUMULATED FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD | 43 319 | 17 596 |

BALANCE SHEET

JUNE 2018

OUR FINANCES

| CURRENT ASSETS | 2018 | 2017 |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENT | 154 798 | 149 804 |
| TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES | 4 208 | 6 358 |
| OTHER CURRENT ASSETS | 3 287 | 1 523 |
| TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS | 162 293 | 157 685 |
| NON CURRENT ASSETS | 2018 | 2017 |
| PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT | 24 224 | 40 503 |
| TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS | 24 224 | 40 503 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 186 517 | 198 188 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | 2018 | 2017 |
| TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES | 15 975 | 22 695 |
| SHORT TERM PROVISIONS | 75 858 | 88 765 |
| OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES | 46 389 | 63 314 |
| TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES | 138 192 | 174 774 |
| NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES | 2018 | 2017 |
| LONG TERM PROVISIONS | 5 007 | 4 863 |
| OTHER NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES | | 955 |
| TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES | 5 007 | 5 818 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 143 199 | 180 592 |
| NET ASSETS | 2018 | 2017 |
| NET ASSETS | 43 319 | 17 596 |
| EQUITY | | |
| RETAINED EARNINGS | 43 319 | 17 596 |
| TOTAL EQUITY | 43 319 | 17 596 |



"The best way for us to cultivate fearlessness in our daughters and other young women is by example. If they see their mothers and other women in their lives going forward despite fear, they'll know it's possible."



"Do you have a vagina? And do you want to be in charge of it? If you said 'yes' to both, then congratulations - you're a feminist!" - Caitlin Moran

Our feminist beliefs and this social view of health shape our approach to women's health and they underscore why our focus on marginalised and disadvantaged women and girls is so important. We are a nationally accredited community health service.

We are a feminist women's health centre. This means we understand and value women's life experiences and recognise the continued discrimination and structural inequality they face in their communities and Australian society. It also means we see an ongoing need for a gendered analysis and approach to health, empowerment of women and girls, and strong advocacy for gender equity and women's rights.

We embrace a social view of health, as framed by the World Health Organisation, and reflected in Australian federal and state health policies. This view recognises health status is shaped by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Factors such as financial security, affordable housing, education, employment, disability, racism, locational disadvantage, gender inequality and discrimination based on sexual identity and preferences impact individual health outcomes and cause health inequalities.

We are committed to excellence in service delivery and continuous quality improvement and learning, guided by national standards and research relevant to our field.

We are an Incorporated Association and a registered Charity with Public Benevolent Institution status. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible. We are a member of Women's Health NSW, the peak body for all non-government Women's Health Centres in NSW. We have been operating in the Illawarra for 32 years.





A NEW AND BETTER TEST FOR WOMEN

Talk to your health worker today - for yourself, your family and your community.

Where can I go for more information?

If you have any questions, ask a health worker or contact your local health service.

You can also find out more at www.health.gov.au or by calling 13 11 22.

If you have problems with our health, you should see your health worker immediately.





ANNUAL REPORT
2017 - 2018