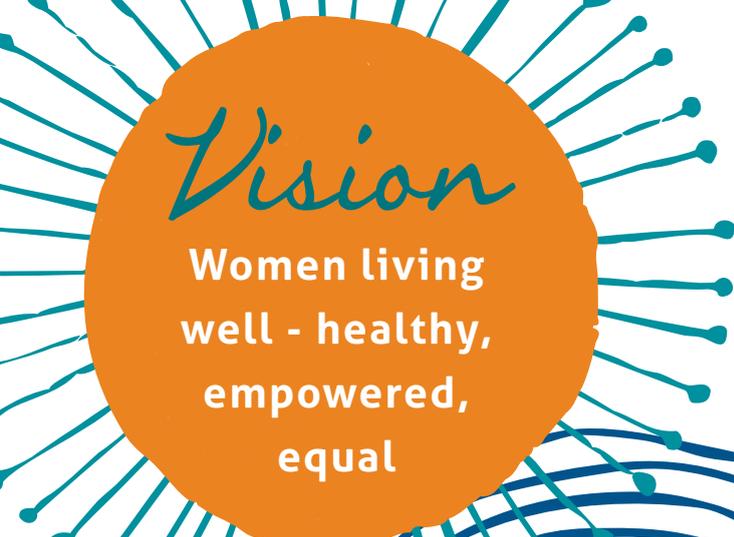




# Women's Health

V I C T O R I A

A large orange circle with a sunburst pattern of teal lines radiating from its top edge. The word "Vision" is written in a teal cursive font inside the circle.

# Vision

Women living well - healthy, empowered, equal

A dark blue, organic, abstract shape that resembles a splash or a stylized leaf. The word "Mission" is written in an orange cursive font inside the shape.

# Mission

To improve health, wellbeing and gender equity for Victorian women through leadership, expertise and support

A teal circle with several concentric white and blue lines around its perimeter. The word "Values" is written in a teal cursive font inside the circle.

# Values

Respect; inclusion; innovation; courage; excellence

A series of concentric orange circles of varying thicknesses, creating a ripple effect.

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## From the Chair

This is my last report as Chair of Women's Health Victoria. As I look back over the last year and beyond I feel very privileged to have served in this role. It has given me the opportunity to work with and meet so many wonderful women. They include our fabulous staff, the many women who volunteer with us, our supporters at the **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** and other partners, and of course my fellow board and committee members. The time and expertise everyone contributes adds so much value to our work.

We undertook an extensive recruitment process to replenish our board and committees this year. We were very gratified to find so many wonderful women keen to join us. Kate Broun, Elizabeth Dax, Judy Hacker and Emily Howie joined the board with Karen Browne and Beryl McMillan adding their expertise to our committees.

Our well supported committees include the BreaCan Advisory Group. I am especially grateful to Lyn Allison who chaired the BreaCan evaluation reference group. The evaluation has given us a detailed picture of BreaCan and the evidence to continue to develop effective strategies in collaboration with our volunteers and partners. This is vital to our efforts to ensure increasing numbers of women dealing with cancer have access to peer support.

Another highlight of the last year was the passage of the Safe Access Zones legislation - yet another step in the journey to safeguard women's reproductive rights. Though the sleep deprivation wasn't fun, it was exhilarating to be in the gallery to see the legislation finally pass the Victorian Parliament with cross-party support.

We were also really delighted to partner with the **Women's Hospital** and **Family Planning Victoria** and with funding from the **DHHS** to commission research that will provide strong data to inform an action plan on improving access to reproductive health services for Victoria. We look forward to the development of the strategy itself in the near future.

We saw the Labia Library winning a public health award, a fitting tribute to its ongoing role attracting worldwide attention to the diversity of women's bodies. And we are all very motivated by the findings of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and to be able to play a strong role in their implementation. This includes the role of our indefatigable ED, Rita Butera on the various governance groups and of our broader staff and partners in delivering Take A Stand - our workplace training to challenge family violence, as well as our broader Applied Gender Analysis workshops.

Our staff continue to undertake fascinating research and create innovative tools. You may be familiar with our Issues Papers - exploring how women's experience of the world affects our health, this year included a report on oral health. It will tell you for example some of the reasons why women on average have more missing and fewer natural teeth than men.

Our new Women's Health Atlas takes this kind of research deeper providing access to data at a local government level. It's really worth a look. So too is the rest of this Annual Report for the glimpse it offers into the dynamism of this small organisation with big ambitions to promote women - healthy, empowered and equal.



*Meredith Carter*

Meredith Carter  
CHAIRPERSON

## From the Executive Director

2015-16 has been an eventful year of achievements and opportunities. An exciting development has been the government's commitment to a reproductive health strategy with funding to review the capacity of this service sector. In partnership with **Family Planning Victoria**, and the **Royal Women's Hospital** we engaged **Jean Hailes / Monash** to undertake the work. We look forward to the findings which will inform a much needed sexual and reproductive health strategy for Victoria.

Another highlight was the success of the campaign to legislate for safe access zones around abortion services in Victoria. This has been a significant achievement made possible by many working together to ensure women will no longer be harassed when seeking essential health services. A thanks to our leaders across government for supporting the passage of this very important legislation.

An important focus for WHV is the BreaCan service, a unique information and peer support program for women with breast or gynaecological cancer. In the last year an evaluation of the service highlighted BreaCan's strengths, in particular the Bridge of Support. It identified opportunities to extend the reach to more women with cancer across the state. Webinars and outreach sessions have assisted in engaging with women where they live. I would like to acknowledge the financial support from the **Department of Health and Human Services** to undertake this work. I would like to thank **LUCRF Super**, without their financial assistance, the Bridge of Support in Western Health would not have been possible. I also thank the ongoing financial contribution from **Treasure Chest Inc.** for the Bridge of Support at the **Royal Melbourne Hospital**.

Prevention of violence against women is a key priority as we continue to see worrying trends in prevalence rates. The Report of the Royal Commission into Family Violence includes 227 recommendations. WHV is a member of the Family Violence Steering Committee and we look forward to bringing our prevention expertise to the implementation of these recommendations - stopping it before it occurs.

The support of women's health services in developing regional action plans for the prevention of violence against women has also been acknowledged by government with further funding to continue this work. I am also encouraged to see the increase in demand for workplace training. This has been delivered through our program 'Take a Stand' against Domestic Violence and our Applied Gender Analysis workshops. This demand has been related to the increased awareness in the community and workplaces of the role they can play in addressing gender equity as a key determinant of violence against women.

Our Labia Library continues to surpass our expectations with more than 10 million hits to the website from over 360 countries. It is now a core component of G.P. training on genital cosmetic surgery.

WHV works in partnership with a range of organisations and understands the importance of data and research to inform advocacy and practice. The Victorian Women's Health Atlas and Clearinghouse are core to this and their value continues to be demonstrated by the increased usage.

I want to thank staff for their extraordinary effort, dedication and commitment to improving the health outcomes for Victorian women. I especially want to thank volunteers at BreaCan and across other services and acknowledge the dependence of our service on the dedication of Board members and other professionals who voluntarily give their time and expertise to support our vision. These are acknowledged in more detail throughout the report.

I also thank all our members for their ongoing support over the year.



*Rita Butera*

Rita Butera  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# Who We Are

Women's Health Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation that is focused on improving the lives of Victorian women.

We work collaboratively with health professionals, policy makers and community organisations to inform, influence and improve policy and service delivery for women. We are committed to reducing inequities in health which arise from social, economic and environmental determinants. This is achieved by advocating for a gendered approach to health which will reduce inequity and improve health outcomes for women.

Women's Health Victoria aims for every woman in Victoria to be living well, healthy, empowered and equal.

## A Year in Pictures

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# Strategic Directions

2015 – 2018

Women's Health Victoria's Strategic Directions focuses on achieving its vision and is guided by five goals:

1. Advocate for policy and programs that reflect gender equity and improve health outcomes of women in Victoria
2. Promote a Victorian health service system that is responsive to the needs of all women
3. Sustain and develop the key health focus area of women and cancer
4. Inform, support and empower women
5. An influential, sustainable and responsive organisation

1. Leader of the Australian Sex Party, Fiona Patten MP talking with WHV Board Member, Candy Broad at the WHV 2014-15 AGM
2. WHV's display booth at the 2016 Lesbian, Bisexual & Queer Women's Health Conference
3. WHV in attendance at Parliament House on the day the Lower House passed the Public Health & Wellbeing Amendment (safe access zone Bill)
4. Participants at WHV's Applied Gender Analysis Workshop
5. Meredith Carter, WHV Chair presenting at the WHV AGM 2015
6. Candy Broad, WHV Board Member introducing the Medical Abortion Forum
7. Vanessa Born, Domestic Violence Victoria & Steph Rich, Women's Health West at WHV for the launch of Domestic Violence Victoria's guide for PVAW

8. Hon. Jill Hennessey MP, Minister for Health launching the Victorian Women's Health Atlas at the WHV 2014-15 AGM
9. Mary Woolridge MP, Shadow Minister for Health & Rita Butera, WHV ED in the gardens of Parliament House
10. WHV stands with Political Leaders in support of existing Abortion Laws in Victoria with the release of an open letter from 40 signatory organisations; Colleen Hartland MP The Victorian Greens, Alexis Apostolellis CEO MSI Australian Healthcare, Sonya Kilkenny MP The Australian Labor Party, Fiona Patten MLC leader of the Australian Sex Party, Rita Butera WHV ED, Maria Deveson Crabbe former Regional CEO of MSI, Nina Springle MP The Victorian Greens, Hon. Mary Woolridge MP Shadow Minister for Health, Georgie Crozier MLC Shadow Minister for Women

11. Volunteer Coordinator Kellie Holland with BreaCan volunteers Lois S, Teresa, Frederika and Pam, who celebrated 10 years of volunteering at BreaCan at a National Volunteering Week event
12. Jenny Ward, Clearinghouse Information Officer WHV with Lyn Paltrow, ED of National Advocates for Pregnant Women at the Nashville forum, Pregnancy, drug use and the law
13. BreaCan Volunteer instructor Judy with Feel Good Gentle Exercise participants
14. Hon. Jill Hennessey MP, Minister for Health with Rita Butera, WHV ED accepting an award for Excellence in Women's Health at the 2015 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards

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*“The Equality and Safety for Women Guide is one of a number of initiatives leading regional action to prevent men’s violence against women before it occurs”.*

Hon. Fiona Richardson MP,  
October 2015



## *Improving Womens Health-Innovation and Leadership*

### **Feature - Safe Access Zones**

Women’s Health Victoria is proud to have played a significant role in partnership with other leading organisations in the establishment of 150 metre safe access zones around abortion services in Victoria. This commenced on May 2, 2016, following similar legislation in Tasmania and the ACT.

Timely access to abortion has lifelong impacts for women. Inability to access sexual and reproductive health services can contribute to social and economic disadvantage for women and further exacerbates health inequalities.

While Victoria’s 2008 Abortion Law Reform Act made a vital step forward in decriminalising abortion, it made no provision to enable women to access these services safely, without being harassed by protesters. At a time when the Australian community has been calling for an end to violence against women, allowing the continued public harassment and intimidation of women when they are accessing a legal health service could be seen as a double standard.

A case brought to the Supreme Court by the **Fertility Control Clinic** and supported by the **Human Rights Law Centre** demonstrated the inadequacy of existing laws and the need for legislative reform. Women’s Health Victoria campaigned with key agencies for legislation to create safe access zones, through both mainstream and social media, including an interview with The Huffington Post. WHV also provided information and evidence across the network of women’s health services and other supporters in order to assist advocacy efforts at a regional and local level.

Two Bills to amend the Public Health and Wellbeing Act in order to create safe access zones outside abortion services were introduced into the Victorian Parliament, first by the Sex Party in August and then by the Labor Government in October.

In November 2015, the Government-sponsored Bill passed both houses of the Victorian Parliament with overwhelming support and without amendment. The advocacy of Women’s Health Victoria was acknowledged by several MPs during the debate, with WHV’s Executive Director formally thanked. WHV’s submission to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee supporting the Bill was also quoted several times during the debate.

Victoria now has legislation prohibiting harassment and intimidation of women and staff within 150 metres of facilities that provide services for surgical and/or medical terminations and other essential reproductive health services. This would not have been achieved without long-term advocacy by service providers, women’s health and women’s rights organisations, including collaboration with female MPs from across the political spectrum.

### **Policy & Advocacy**

It has been a busy and productive year for Women’s Health Victoria in advocating for better health and equity for women. Together with other agencies that support women’s rights, WHV took part in a campaign to legislate for safe access zones around abortion services in Victoria, ensuring women will no longer be harassed when they are seeking access to essential health services. Safe access zones are a huge step forward for women’s health and gender equality and

are the culmination of years of advocacy by women’s health services, providers and other women’s rights advocates.

Shortly after safe access zones commenced in May, WHV’s advocacy efforts were required once again, this time to oppose the Democratic Labour Party’s Infant Viability Bill, which attempted to limit women’s rights to access abortion. Following a highly effective state-wide campaign providing evidence to MPs, the Bill was soundly defeated in the Victorian Upper House.

Women's Health Victoria made several major policy submissions in 2015-16. The Health 2040, submission in October, outlined the need for a gendered approach to the prevention of chronic disease. This was followed by two submissions on gender equality to inform the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy and the Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence and Gender Inequality in March and April. WHV set out a detailed framework for a long-term, whole-of-society approach to achieving gender equality, recognising the interplay between gender norms and stereotypes and structural barriers to equality. All submissions are located on the WHV website.

Women's Health Victoria continues to be at the forefront of policy and advocacy in relation to the prevention of violence against women (PVAW). In May, following the release of the report from the Royal Commission into Family Violence, Executive Director Rita Butera was appointed to the Family Violence Steering Committee. This appointment provides an important opportunity to shape the future of the family violence system and to continue to advocate for a stronger focus on primary prevention, including the implementation of the forthcoming state-wide Gender Equality Strategy.

Over the 2015-16 period, WHV also made submissions to inform the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-2019, the third Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children, the State Disability Plan, the second draft National Chronic Conditions Framework and the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Abortion Law Reform.

## Research & Innovation

### Sexual and Reproductive Health Service Capacity Review

Women's Health Victoria, **Family Planning Victoria** and the **Royal Women's Hospital** were funded by the **Department of Health and Human Services** to undertake a service capacity review of pregnancy advice, contraception and termination of pregnancy services across Victoria. The partner agencies engaged **Jean Hailes / Monash University** to conduct the review, which aims to map current services and identify gaps and barriers. The outcomes of this work will help to inform the development of an action plan on improving access to reproductive health services.

### Clearinghouse

Clearinghouse Connectors bring together recent research, resources and practice guidelines relating to priority areas of women's health and emerging issues in order to build the capacity of others to apply a gendered approach to health. Eleven Clearinghouse Connectors were published in 2015-16 on: Aboriginal women's health; gender equity; long-acting reversible contraception; reproductive coercion; rural women's health; multimedia resources for gender equity; cardiovascular disease; representation of women in advertising; medical abortion; online harassment; and clinical drug trials. Since November 2015, each Connector has received peer review by experts in the relevant field. This has served to strengthen the content, forge new stakeholder relationships and broaden awareness and uptake of Women's Health Victoria's resources.

Over the 2015-16 period, the Clearinghouse online catalogue received over 12,500 page views from 3,800 different users. Usage was closely aligned with usage of Connectors and some resources were accessed over 100 times. In 2015-16, the Clearinghouse catalogue was featured as a Presto model site by the US software vendor and was enabled for Google to search within the content to enhance access to Clearinghouse resources.

## Issues papers

Women's Health Victoria's 10th Issues Paper, **Women and Oral Health** was finalised in June. The paper highlights some of the oral health issues women face, including higher rates of missing teeth and tooth decay, injuries from family violence and financial barriers to accessing dental care. The paper will be launched during Dental Health Week in August 2016 and promoted by the Australian Dental Association. Updates have commenced on the **Women and Food Issues Paper** and the associated workshop resources. It is anticipated that this issues paper will be published in 2016-17.

## Research Partnerships

Women's Health Victoria continues to contribute expertise to a range of research projects, including: **Medical Abortion and the Role of General Practice (University of Melbourne, Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health)**; elucidating the increasing demand for genital cosmetic surgery among girls and women in Australia (**Monash University, Jean Hailes for Women's Health**); and **ACCESS to Emergency Contraception (Monash University, Centre for Medicine Use and Safety)**.

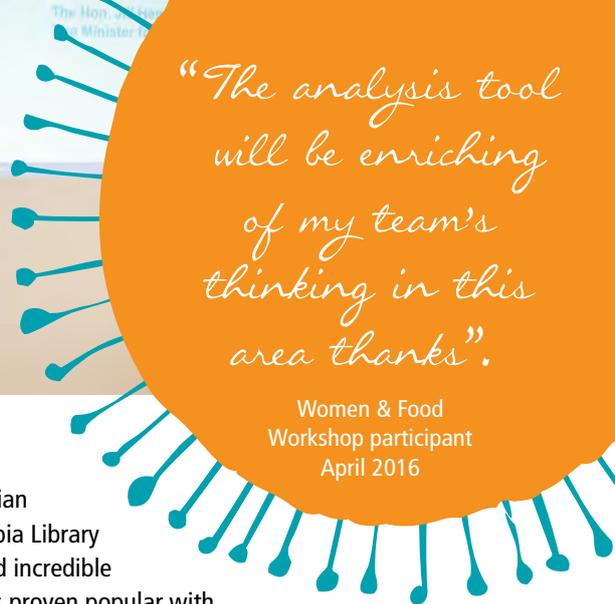
This year, WHV was invited to participate in a new project exploring pornography and intimate relationships among young women and men in Australia (**Monash University, Jean Hailes for Women's Health**).

## Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW)

A new Equality and Safety for Women online resource guide was developed by Women's Health Victoria in collaboration with the members of the **Women's Health Association of Victoria (WHAV)**. Funded through a grant from the (former) **Office for Women**, the guide includes information, evidence, tools, resources and best-practice examples to support primary prevention of violence activity by regional women's health services, local governments, community organisations and others. The guide was officially launched in October by the Minister for Women and Prevention of Family Violence against Women, Hon. Fiona Richardson MP. Funding has subsequently been received to continue and strengthen the guide and the Prevention of Violence Against Women Community of Practice and to deliver new workforce initiatives.







*"The analysis tool will be enriching of my team's thinking in this area thanks".*

Women & Food  
Workshop participant  
April 2016

In 2015-16, the Applied Gender Analysis training was updated and delivered to professionals and students from a range of backgrounds, including local government, community health and social services. Feedback shows that the workshop increased participants' understanding of the interplay between gender norms and structures and gave them practical skills and tools for performing a gender analysis.

An updated and improved workshop on Women and Food was also delivered, which increased the capacity of health promotion planners and practitioners to plan and deliver gender-sensitive food and nutrition programs in their communities.

### Primary prevention of violence against women

This year has seen increased demand for workplace-based training on gender equity and prevention of violence against women, which has included the provision of gender equity training to **Victoria Police** and active bystander training to staff at **Transurban**.

In response to the increased demand, WHV increased service capacity and expanded the workplace training pool. WHV's workplace-based program for the prevention of violence against women, **Take A Stand against domestic violence**: it's everyone's business expanded interstate, with Rockhampton Women's Health Centre now licensed to deliver the program to workplaces in central Queensland.

### Forums

WHV hosted a significant forum on medical abortion in collaboration with **Family Planning Victoria** and the **Royal Women's Hospital**. The forum brought together more than fifty health professionals, researchers, public and private abortion providers and women's health services to discuss how the increasing availability of medical abortion has impacted on access to sexual and reproductive health care in Victoria. The forum also provided an opportunity to share best practice models.

In partnership with **Domestic Violence Victoria** and **Women's Health West**, Women's Health Victoria ran a seminar for staff from women's health services on speaking publicly about domestic violence and responding to challenging questions. Participants found the seminar valuable and expressed an interest in a more in-depth workshop on this topic.

### Health Information

#### Labia Library

2015-16 was another outstanding year for the Labia Library, which won Gold at the **2015 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards for Excellence in Women's Health**. Further, the Labia Library was included as a recommended resource in the **Royal Australian College of General Practitioners'** guidelines on female genital cosmetic surgery.

Initially aimed at young Victorian women, the Labia Library has experienced incredible growth and has proven popular with women of all ages throughout the world.

Since its inception in 2013, the Labia Library has received almost 10 million page views from 3.5 million users from across 236 countries around the world and continues to be promoted via international media. The Labia Library currently receives approximately 4000 visits every single day.

Throughout the year, WHV evaluated almost 10,000 responses to the website's pop-up survey which highlighted an overwhelming majority of positive responses, with users reporting reduced anxiety and improved self-confidence with their genital appearance after viewing the website. This information will now inform next steps for enhancing the Labia Library.

### Extending our Reach Media

Women's Health Victoria achieved unprecedented media reach across national, state and regional newspapers (print and online) and radio over 2015-16. In addition, WHV was cited in government media releases, government inquiries, guidelines for health professionals, academic journals and sector publications. Media attention focused on Women's Health Victoria's campaign for safe access zones, the Labia Library, the Family Violence Royal Commission and Steering Committee, the Victorian Women's Health Atlas and included Victorian regional newspaper coverage for BreaCan and Take a Stand. A career profile of WHV's Executive Director also featured in *The Age*.

### Social Media

Social media reach continues to expand, with a 52% increase in page 'likes' on Facebook and a 37% increase in Twitter followers. Policy and advocacy posts are always the most popular on Facebook. These popular posts included those related to the federal government's proposed cuts to pathology bulk billing and the passage of safe access zone legislation in the Victorian Upper House. The Minister for Women, Hon. Fiona Richardson MP, cited WHV's message on the absence of women's representation in Parliament as one of the 'top tweets' of the #VictoriaAgainstViolence campaign. Other social media campaigns this year highlighted WHV's Principles for Gender Equality, Women's Health Week and Equal Pay Day.

# Statistical Snapshot

2015-2016



**Women's Health**  
V I C T O R I A



**Victorian Women's**  
HEALTH ATLAS

The Victorian Women's Health Atlas website recorded **14,090** page views with **2,556** unique users, of these **36%** were returning to the site, while **64%** were new.

Each priority health area has had the following number of sessions:

**2,727** for Sexual and Reproductive Health  
**2,468** for Gendered Demographics  
**2,291** for Violence against Women  
**1,364** for Mental Health

The Clearinghouse received **12,534** page views with **3,843** unique users, **78%** of these were new over **5,094** sessions.

**11** Clearinghouse Connectors were published, the most utilised include:

Sexualisation of women and girls **1,625** views  
Aboriginal women's health **417** views  
Gender equity **389** views  
Multimedia for gender equity **321**

Facebook likes grew **52%** and Twitter grew by **37%** with **193.4K** impressions, **237** mentions and **7863** profile visits

**BreaCan**  
GYNAECOLOGICAL & BREAST CANCER SUPPORT

BreaCan recorded **1375** one-on-one contacts with people affected by a gynaecological or breast cancer, **16.2%** more than last year.

Group sessions included **11** webinars, up from 4 the previous year, and **7** outreach sessions held in community locations, up from 2 the previous year.

The BreaCan website had **9503** unique visitors, an increase of **16%** on last year.

Webinars were viewed **521** times. Podcasts of information sessions were played **990** times.

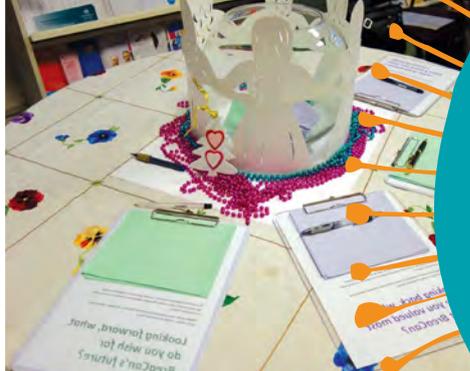
In 2015-16, the **500th** woman received support through the Bridge of Support program at RMH.

the Labia LIBRARY

This year the Labia Library website recorded an average **4991** visits per day with **4,672,778** page views.

**9565** voluntary survey responses were analysed reporting **91%** found the Labia Library increased their knowledge about genital diversity.

The Labia Library has been accessed by a total of **3,277,141** users from **236** countries with **9,688,262** page views to date.



*"I believe the satisfaction I feel with my treatment is largely attributed to the information and support I got from Breacan".*

Breacan service user



## Women and Cancer

Providing peer support for women with cancer continues to be a major priority for Women's Health Victoria.

Breacan provides individual and tailored information and support services to Victorian women who are diagnosed with a gynaecological or breast cancer, as well as to their families and friends. The service also works with health professionals in the cancer sector.

Access to information is important for women who want to understand their diagnosis and treatment options and gain confidence in their decision making. Talking with women who have been through similar experiences is a vital part of the service offered by Breacan. The material provided by Breacan complements the information and care which women receive from their health professionals, who also play a valuable role in many Breacan sessions. Women with advanced cancer often experience isolation and distress. Breacan recognises the unique support and information required by these women and offers a tailored program that has been especially designed to meet their needs.

Breacan services can be accessed in a number of ways, for example some information sessions are presented as webinars. New resources (often suggested by women who use the service) continue to be added to the library collection. This catalogue is available through the Breacan website and resources are sent free of charge to people across Victoria.

Support at Breacan is primarily provided through Peer Support Volunteers. These women, who have all experienced their own cancer diagnosis and treatment, are trained to provide emotional, practical and social support to people affected by a gynaecological or breast cancer. Their empathy and understanding of how women experience a cancer diagnosis and treatment provides hope to others that they can live well during and following treatment. They are also able to provide insight into the personal challenges that women face during this time. Breacan aims to support women to make the decisions that are right for them.

Breacan is supported by Consumer and Volunteer Reference Groups which reinforce the consumer focus of the service. The Breacan Advisory Group, a sub-group of the WHV Board, along with the WHV Board provides guidance, support and expertise to enable Breacan to reach its goals of providing information and support to all Victorians affected by a gynaecological or breast cancer.

## Breacan Highlights

♀ An external evaluation of Breacan was commissioned during the year to provide greater understanding of Breacan's goals, governance and activities. The evaluation explored Breacan's role in the health care system and looked at how Breacan's services are used and whether the use of services is optimal. The peer support model was also reviewed. The report includes a number of recommendations regarding Breacan's reach, profile and data collection and examines ways in which the service can reach more women across the state.

♀ A new volunteer role has been developed at Breacan - the Peer Link Volunteer. This role provides an important first connection between women with breast cancer at **Sunshine Hospital** and Breacan services. It is also exciting to report and welcome another intake of Breacan Peer Support Volunteers. Volunteers support Breacan in many ways: through providing direct support to women in the Resource Centre and at the Bridge of Support programs at **Sunshine Hospital** and the **Royal Melbourne Hospital**, co-ordinating the library and resources, assisting at forums and events across Victoria and providing exercise classes for women following cancer.

♀ The Bridge of Support at **Sunshine Hospital** was officially launched on 23 May, 2016, by MLA Natalie Suleyman. Representatives from **Western Health**, **LUCRF Super** and Breacan were in attendance. Breacan Volunteer, Coralie spoke about her experiences both as a **Western Health** patient and as a Peer Support Volunteer on this program. Women's Health Victoria Board Chair, Meredith Carter thanked **LUCRF Community Partnership Trust** for providing establishment funding and acknowledged the hard work and dedication of all those involved.

♀ The final report for 'The Connecting and Supporting Rural and Regional Women with Cancer Project' has been completed. This project was funded by the **Department of Health and Human Services** and undertaken in partnership with the **Integrated Cancer Services of Barwon South Western and Grampians**. The project revealed a strong desire from women with cancer to have access to a range of peer support options and suggested a number of strategies for this to be achieved.

# Somboon's BreaCan story



My name is Somboon. I was diagnosed with breast cancer on 24 February 2015. I'm a country patient who is currently having my treatment at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. I was introduced to BreaCan when I was first diagnosed, by the Breast Care Nurse. Talking with BreaCan helped me to deal with my denial and confusion at that time. And from then on my life-changing journey began.

I meet Wendy and the BreaCan volunteers regularly at the hospital. They are so friendly, kind and sincere. They provide support and share their experiences and find reliable information for me regarding my disease. I feel I have met new good friends who really care for my wellbeing.

I've really appreciated your time and efforts of meeting me at the hospital when I'm having chemo. Thank you so much.

Cancer treatments are long and physically hard for me. It's so nice to receive a phone call from the volunteers to follow up after my hospital appointments. I don't feel alone. They are there to listen.

BreaCan reminds me that there is hope, and the peer support volunteers mean a lot to me. They are real women who have survived. To see them looking well and healthy inspires me. I feel I have sisters taking my hand and walking through this journey with me. They help to calm my fears.

## Our Supporters

### Our Funders

Women's Health Victoria acknowledges the support of the State Government of Victoria, specifically:

Department of Health & Human Services  
Department of Premier and Cabinet

We also acknowledge the support of:

Pink Affair  
LUCRF Community Partnership Trust  
Treasure Chest Inc.  
Family Planning Victoria

### Our Members

Women's Health Victoria relies upon the women of Victoria for their support and ongoing membership. Membership is free and available to individuals or organisations. Members can nominate for election to our Board and vote at elections. Apply for a WHV membership online at [whv.org.au/who-we-are/membership](http://whv.org.au/who-we-are/membership).

### Our Donors

Women's Health Victoria expresses sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to the service over the past 12 months and would like to particularly acknowledge the following:

### Pro-Bono Support for 2015-16

We acknowledge and thank those who have provided expert pro-bono support to WHV:

Russell Kennedy Lawyers  
Our Community  
NAB  
Brett Ellenport - Bell Creative  
Naideen Hillier  
Roger Blachet

We would also like to acknowledge additional contributions made by the following people:

Peter Cash - Berringer  
Leonie Morgan  
Sam Burrone Design

### Donors to WHV for 2015-16

Noela MacLeod for her kind contribution.

We thank those who have donated directly to the Australian Communities Foundation on behalf of WHV.

We also acknowledge and thank those who have donated directly to the BreaCan service; these donors and supporters are listed in the BreaCan's Year in Review 2015-16.

### Donate to WHV

You can donate to WHV at:

[donate.communityfoundation.org.au/womens-health-victoria](http://donate.communityfoundation.org.au/womens-health-victoria)

*"Fantastic to hear the insights from those working from diverse disciplines".*

Women & Food  
Workshop participant



# Our Board

The Women's Health Victoria Board is governed by a group of dedicated women from a range of professions.

## Board Members for 2015-16



**Meredith Carter** GAICD, BA, LLB & LLM (Melb), Grad. Cert. Health Economics (Monash)  
**Chair**  
**Elected to Board:** Jul 2009  
**Meetings attended:** 9/9  
Meredith Carter's background in law and commitment to community participation are foundations of her work as a health and social policy consultant. She has served on a number of boards and statutory tribunals.



**Candy Broad** BComm (UWA), GAICD, GAIST  
**Member**  
**Elected to Board:** Oct 2013  
**Meetings attended:** 9/9  
Candy Broad contributes extensive experience on the issues associated with reforming Victoria's statutory framework for women's sexual and reproductive health choices and devising more integrated government responses to the prevention of family violence.



**Desiree Yap** MBBS, FRANZCOG, MPHTM, FRCOG  
**Deputy Chair**  
**Elected to Board:** Jun 2010  
**Meetings attended:** 9/9  
Desiree Yap is a Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist with a Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. She has professional experience in metropolitan, rural and remote Australian locations and internationally.



**Jennifer O'Donnell-Pirisi**  
**Member**  
**Elected to Board:** Oct 2011  
**Meetings attended:** 4/9 (includes leave of absence for one meeting)  
Jennifer O'Donnell-Pirisi, through her previous role in the Trade Union movement, was one of the founding members of the Family Violence clause that now covers more than 2 million Australian workers. She is passionate about gender equality.



**Cristina Wolters** BBus (Acc), M Taxation (Melb), GAICD  
**Treasurer**  
**Elected to Board:** Nov 2011  
**Meetings attended:** 5/9  
Cristina Wolters is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, a Fellow of the Taxation Institute of Australia and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Cristina is currently General Manager of Taxation at Transurban.



**Helen Coleman** Dip Com Dev (Swinburne) and BSc (RMIT)  
**Member**  
**Elected to Board:** Oct 2011  
**Meetings attended:** 6/9  
Helen Coleman is a local government Councillor, former Mayor and current Deputy Mayor and has taken leadership roles in gender equity within Local Government and community. Helen brings experience serving on several boards, working in government, the community and health services fields.



**Christine Fitzherbert** MBA, BA (Politics), GradDip (IR), Company Director's Diploma in Finance  
**Deputy Treasurer**  
**Elected to Board:** May 2013  
**Meetings attended:** 9/9  
Christine Fitzherbert, until recently, was Executive Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development at Melbourne Health. Christine now runs her own consultancy practice specialising in the field of organisational performance, management and cultural change.



**Tania Angelini** MA (Comm), GradCert Prof Writ & Edit, B Arts (Media Art)  
**Member**  
**Elected to Board:** May 2013  
**Meetings attended:** 8/9  
Tania Angelini has extensive experience in strategic communications, issues management and public relations and is currently the Chief Communications Officer at the Royal Women's Hospital.

## Co-opted Board Members for 2015-16



**Elizabeth Dax** Associate Professor AM; MD,BS; PhD; GAICD  
**Co-opted Member**  
**Co-opted to Board:** Feb 2016  
**Meetings attended:** 2/3  
Elizabeth Dax is now retired from her career in medicine and science. She is a director on three not-for-profit boards, including Chair of one. Her last appointments (1990-2009) were as director of the National Serology Reference Laboratory, Australia and of a World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre.



**Kate Broun** Bach. App. Sci (Health Promotion) (Honours), Post. Dip. App Sci (Org Dynamics)  
**Co-opted Member**  
**Co-opted to Board:** Feb 2016  
**Meetings attended:** 3/3  
Kate Broun is the Manager of Cancer Screening at Cancer Council Victoria. She brings extensive experience in health promotion, screening and women's health.



**Judy Hacker** B.Ec, Dip.Ed, Certificate in marketing  
**Co-opted Member**  
**Co-opted to Board:** Feb 2016  
**Meetings attended:** 3/3  
Judy Hacker's experience covers 30 years in the corporate world in senior marketing roles and the establishment of Maxim Marketing. Strategic development, communications, brand strategy and governance are particular areas of interest and expertise.



**Emily Howie** BA, LLB, LLM (Columbia)  
**Co-opted Member**  
**Co-opted to Board:** Mar 2016  
**Meetings attended:** 1/2  
Emily Howie, in her role as Director of Advocacy and Research at the Human Rights Law Centre, ensures women have access to reproductive health rights through advocacy and legal action.

# Our People



## Executive Director

RITA BUTERA

## Communications Coordinator

Kylie Inserra

## Business Services Team

### Business Manager

Dina Lynch

### Executive Assistant/Administration Officer

Ranee Madison

### Assistant Accountant

Coco Qi

## Policy & Health Promotion Team

### Policy & Health Promotion Manager

Mischa Barr

### Senior Policy & Health Promotion Officer

Amy Webster

### Clearinghouse Information Officer

Jenny Ward

### Health Promotion Officer

Linden Deathe

### Policy & Health Promotion Officer

Renata Anderson

## Special Projects

### Project Officer – Data Analysis

Emma Dardick

## BreaCan Team

### BreaCan Manager

Lee Kennedy

### Team Leader BreaCan Programs

Fiona McRae

### Volunteer Coordinator

Kellie Holland

### Program Coordinator

Wendy Pullan

### Communications Coordinator (Acting)

Katherine Bradstreet

### Programs & Resources Coordinator

Linda Rehill

### Project Manager

Robin Curwen-Walker

### Administration Officer

Brooke Underwood

## Thank you

*WHV would like to acknowledge and thank the support of the following women who contributed on our Task Groups, Working Groups and Advisory Groups:*

Lyn Allison – BreaCan Advisory Group  
Monique Baldacchino – BreaCan Advisory Group  
Karen Browne – Business and Resources Task Group  
Danielle Carpenter – BreaCan Advisory Group  
Christine Evely – BreaCan Advisory Group  
Frederika Laurie – BreaCan Advisory Group  
Beryl McMillan – Fundraising and Communications Working Group  
Alison Murphy – BreaCan Advisory Group  
Penny Sanderson – BreaCan Advisory Group  
Beth Wilson – BreaCan Advisory Group

*We would also like to acknowledge the following people who contributed to our organisation during the year:*

Gaby Pagniello-Priolo  
Violeta Canedo  
Goldie Kelly  
Alexandra James  
Emilia Wojcik  
Judith Armstrong  
Tammy Boatman  
Helen Mertin  
Simone Nelson

*We thank the women who volunteered for BreaCan in 2015-16 for their generous contributions:*

### Peer Support Volunteers:

Aaltje, Annette, Bridget, Chris G, Chris S, Cindy, Coralie, Danni, Denise, Elizabeth, Frederika, Grace, Greta, Heather, Helen, Irene, Janet, Jannet, Janice, Janine, Jenny, Jessie, Jo, Joan, Joy, Julie, Kerry, Lianne, Lois M, Margaret, Maureen, May, Nadia, Naideen, Nikki, Pam, Pauline, Rita, Sandra, Sue G, Sue S, Teresa, Trish, Victoria, Vivien, Wendy and Yvonne.

### Peer Link Volunteers:

Chris G, Diana, Elizabeth, Kene, Lyn and Paula.

### Mail Out Volunteers:

Ann, Bev, Danni, Elaine, Elizabeth, Janet, Jaya, Jennifer, Lois S, Maryse, Patricia and Vivien.

### Exercise Support Volunteers:

Judy, Meril and Lois S.

### Library Volunteers:

Gwen, Janet, Jules and Vivien.

*We would also like to thank volunteers from the National Australia Bank for assisting with the mail outs:*

Shannon, Nicholas, Sweta, Cheong, Tracey, Robert, Charles, Crysteen, Paul, Bincy and Teresa.

## Farewell

A special thank you goes to our retired Board members Dr Magdalena Simonis and Dr Sally Fawkes for their contribution to the WHV Board.

*Thank you to the following staff members who were farewelled during the year:*

Robyn Minty  
Catherine Watts  
Frieda De Donker

# Financial Summary

This selected financial information reflects the operations of Women's Health Victoria and should be read in conjunction with the Women's Health Victoria Inc. Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2016 together with the accompanying notes. Women's Health Victoria prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards as outlined in Note 1.

## FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL STATISTICS

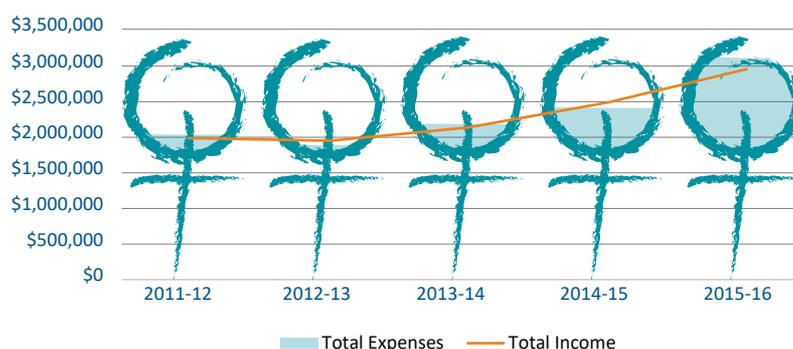
	2012 \$	2013 \$	2014 \$	2015 \$	2016 \$
<b>Summary Income Statement</b>					
Total Income	2,014,847	1,942,539	2,407,616	2,547,004	3,390,648
Total Expenses	2,028,765	1,929,457	2,217,359	2,452,281	3,205,929
<b>Net Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>(13,918)</b>	<b>13,082</b>	<b>190,257</b>	<b>94,723</b>	<b>184,719</b>
<b>Summary Balance Sheet</b>					
Cash	562,158	549,844	814,887	987,667	1,970,438
Receivables	46,918	12,658	48,666	11,116	24,623
Property, Plant & Equipment	254,429	226,013	191,990	179,973	148,646
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>863,505</b>	<b>788,515</b>	<b>1,055,543</b>	<b>1,178,756</b>	<b>2,143,707</b>
Payables	183,775	83,639	141,957	177,306	848,984
Provisions	179,097	161,161	179,614	172,755	281,309
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>362,872</b>	<b>244,800</b>	<b>321,571</b>	<b>350,061</b>	<b>1,130,293</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>500,633</b>	<b>543,715</b>	<b>733,972</b>	<b>828,695</b>	<b>1,013,414</b>
<b>Current Ratio</b>	<b>2.03 : 1</b>	<b>2.66 : 1</b>	<b>3.40 : 1</b>	<b>3.30 : 1</b>	<b>1.86 : 1</b>

In the 2015-2016 financial year the organisation recorded a surplus of \$184,719. The surplus includes grants received this financial year that were partly or fully not expended in this financial year. These grants were from: the Department of Health and Human Services for the following projects - Development of a Women's Health Databook, Rural Pilot Project, Development of Digital Resources, Database Development and the BreaCan Relocation; The Department of Premier and Cabinet for the WHS Leading Regional Action for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children. The ratio of revenue from State Government in proportion to total revenue has increased this year compared to last year due to the receipt of non-recurrent grants for programs.

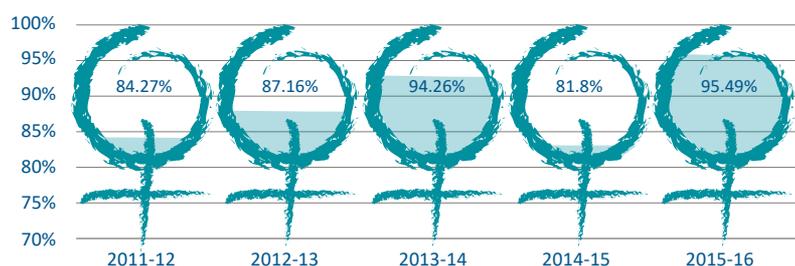
Employee expenses have increased to take into account the annual increase of the Enterprise Agreement. Non-employee expenses have increased from last year to incorporate the increase in leasing costs. Project costs have increased due to the increase in project grants.

The ratio analysis, as highlighted in the table, is calculated to assist in determining the financial viability of WHV. The minimum current ratio is 1:1. This means that the business must have \$1 in current assets for each \$1 of current liabilities. WHV's ratio is 1.86:1 this means that the business has \$1.86 in current assets to meet \$1 in current liabilities. The financial statements disclose Victorian Department of Health and Human Services recurrent funding for the Women's Health Program and the BreaCan service.

## FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL STATISTICS



## STATE GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO TOTAL REVENUE



The graph shows the comparison of Victorian State Government grant revenue to total revenue which reflects significant funding from the Victorian State Government.



# Women's Health

V I C T O R I A

healthy ■ empowered ■ equal

## Women's Health Victoria

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[whv.org.au](http://whv.org.au)

## Postal address

GPO Box 1160 Melbourne Vic Australia 3001

## BreaCan - a service of Women's Health Victoria

Queen Victoria Women's Centre

Level 5, 210 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Vic Australia 3000

T 1300 781 500 E [brecan@brecan.org.au](mailto:brecan@brecan.org.au)

[brecan.org.au](http://brecan.org.au)

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Copies of this Annual Report are available online:

[whv.org.au](http://whv.org.au)



Women's Health Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government

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