



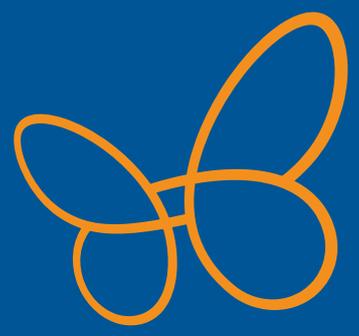
**Annual  
Report**  
2017 - 2018



**Women's Health**

V I C T O R I A

healthy ■ empowered ■ equal



## Vision

Women living well - healthy, empowered, equal

## Mission

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

## Values

Respect; inclusion; innovation; courage; excellence

### Artist's recognition

Gert Geyer is an artist and designer whose work is playful, exuberant and stripped of detail in a way that evokes the whimsy of a simpler world. Gert's illustrations have featured in an NGV exhibition and her public artwork Fig Tree adorns the façade of a prominent Brisbane building. She is represented by TW FINEART and has recently completed a 20 metre-long mural commission on the Gold Coast.



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## From the Chair

Welcome to Women's Health Victoria's 2018 *Annual Report* – what a year it has been! It is exhilarating to think of all that has been achieved this year, as I am sure you will agree after you have examined our *Annual Report*.

Not only have we developed the new Women's Health Victoria (WHV) *Strategic Plan*, this year has also seen us recognise and celebrate some significant milestones. Firstly, 2018 saw *Counterpart* celebrate its fifteenth year of operation and the 2018 financial year kick starts Women's Health Victoria's twenty-five-year anniversary celebrations.

Close to my heart has also been the establishment of *1800 My Options*. This free, confidential phone service is the first of its kind in the country and is designed to provide women with access to sexual and reproductive health information over the phone and through the *1800 My Options* website. This service enables women to gain easy and confidential access to information on a wide range of services including contraception, pharmaceuticals and termination providers across Victoria. The *1800 My Options* service is supported and managed by a team of highly-trained, experienced and sensitive staff who have extensive knowledge in sexual and reproductive health issues.

I would also like to acknowledge the support WHV has received this year from the **State Government**. In particular, we have received incredible support from both the *Minister for Health* and the *Minister for Women and the Prevention of Violence against Women*. Their confidence and support are much appreciated by the entire WHV team.



## From the CEO

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this year's Women's Health Victoria Annual Report. I hope it provides a valuable summary of key highlights. The year has been eventful, with significant growth including new initiatives, projects and celebrations. We have worked together to develop our new WHV *Strategic Plan* and I thank all our partners, Board and staff for their time, expertise, experience and vision in setting our priorities for the future.

A strategic shift for WHV has seen the inclusion of a new **State Government** funded service. *1800 My Options* provides information on contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health. We have long advocated for this important service and it has been exciting to play the lead role in its development and implementation. Congratulations to all the staff and partners who played a critical role in the establishment and now successful operation of *1800 My Options*.

The celebration of fifteen years of *Counterpart* (previously *BreaCan*) was a special event to mark with staff and volunteers who have played a vital role in the delivery of *Counterpart* services. Our commemorative event featured special guests, many who shared stories and photos. It was a wonderful time to both reflect and celebrate the achievements made by *Counterpart* over the years and to recognise the 135 remarkable *Counterpart* volunteers for their dedication and commitment to the service.

As part of the **State Government's** 'Victoria against Violence' campaign, we joined forces with the **City of Melbourne** to commission a mural of active women in sport. I encourage you to visit the *Throw like a Girl* mural at **North Melbourne Recreation Centre**. The representation of women in public spaces, including sexist advertising and the impact on feelings of safety and inclusion has also been a priority with our forums this year.

Our *Victorian Health Atlas* continues to draw awards and this year was recognised as a finalist in the 'Technology Innovator of the Year' category of

We have also been fortunate to have the **LUCRF Super Community Program** continue to support *Counterpart* to begin development of telehealth facilities and the increase use of these technologies, particularly in rural areas. We are very grateful for the incredible, ongoing support to this important program.

This is my last year as Chair and as a Board member as I have reached my final term, so I sadly must bid everyone farewell and express my gratitude to you all. I have had a fabulous eight years of involvement on the Board of Women's Health Victoria. It has been a great privilege to be part of the growth and development of such a fine organisation and to get to work with such amazing women. I am grateful to Marilyn Beaumont for encouraging me to apply to join the Board all those years ago and I cannot express how wonderful it has been to work with Rita Butera and all her staff.

A highlight for me has been the opportunity to work with and get to know the intelligent, dedicated and talented women who make up the Women's Health Victoria Board. Their voluntary contributions to Women's Health Victoria are enormous. They bring a huge range of expertise and are a critical factor in it's success.

Thank you all.

I look forward to remaining a member of Women's Health Victoria and staying in touch with all the achievements which are yet to come.

**Desiree Yap**  
CHAIRPERSON

the Australian Not for Profit Technology Awards. This is an outstanding achievement and recognises the unique representation of gendered health data across local government areas. Both our staff and developer **Spatial Vision** deserve special acknowledgment.

Our *Women's Health Daily*, as well as other WHV publications have provided invaluable information and evidence-based learnings, with a particular focus on young women and the complex relationship between gender, food, mental health and body image. I strongly encourage you to take the time to explore this information which gives insight into key issues and priorities for transformational change.

Our training program has grown again this year, with resources to tackle gender inequality and build capacity of our violence prevention workforce. Our leadership in this space has been further acknowledged with the recent announcement of funding granted to WHV to enable the development of a suite of accredited training modules on gender equity. We are excited to be working with a range of education partners to develop and test these units in the TAFE and Community VET sectors.

I'd like to extend a special thanks to the wonderful WHV staff who are committed and passionate about their work. This year their work has included the successful negotiation of our new *Enterprise Agreement* and the completion of a range of activities to support improved governance, IT systems and staff wellbeing.

A special thanks to the enormous contribution of the WHV Board for their time and leadership, as well as their strategic and governance support. I could not do my job without you. Finally, my warm thanks to Desiree Yap who ends her term as Chair and Board member this year. Desiree's leadership has greatly influenced the breadth and depth of WHV services over the past eight years.

**Rita Butera**  
CEO



# Year in Pictures

WHV wants every woman in Victoria to be living well-healthy, empowered and equal.



## Who We Are

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

We work collaboratively with women, 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.





# 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. WHV staff celebrating International Women's Day
2. Helen Coleman WHV Board Member is with Counterpart Volunteers Judy and Rhonda celebrating Counterparts 15th anniversary
3. Rita Butera WHV CEO and Counterpart Volunteer Jo speaking with Noela MacLeod previous WHV Board Member at the WHV 2017 AGM
4. Dianne Hill WHV Manager Support Services and Liz Simkiss Senior Project Officer, Department of Health and Human Services at the WHV 2017 AGM
5. Jenny Ward WHV Clearinghouse Information Officer and Graeme Martin General Manager Operations, Spatial Vision at the Australian NFP Technology Awards 2018
6. Amy Webster WHV Senior Policy and Health Promotion Officer and the team at Women's Health Goulbourn North East at the Rural Launch of Growing Up Unequal
7. Rita Butera WHV CEO, Denise Counterpart Volunteer, Luke Cornelius Assistant Commissioner, Victoria Police and Desiree Yap WHV Board Chair at WHV 2017 AGM
8. Yoga participants at Counterpart's Complementary Therapies Day
9. Desiree Yap WHV Board Chair speaking at the WHV 2017 AGM
10. The Minister for Health Hon. Jill Hennessy MP - visiting the 1800 My Options team
11. Meriam Abubeker from the Shout Out Program, Centre for Multicultural Youth speaking at the Launch of Growing Up Unequal
12. Guest speaker at the WHV 2017 AGM Luke Cornelius Assistant Commissioner, Victoria Police
13. Rita Butera WHV CEO getting ready for the Walk Against Family Violence 2017
14. The Shadow Minister for Women, Mental Health, Country Health & Senior Victorians Emma Kealy MP and Desiree Yap WHV Board Chair at the WHV 2017 AGM
15. Tania Angelini WHV Board Member and Christine Fitzherbert WHV Board Member, Deputy Treasurer at the WHV 2017 AGM
16. WHV Business Manager Dina Lynch is with Rita Butera WHV CEO and Mischa Barr WHV Policy and Health Promotion Manager at the Walk Against Family Violence 2017
17. Participants at the Serving up inequality workshop
18. The 'Throw Like A Girl' Gender Equity Mural launch at North Melbourne Recreation Centre





## Feature: Mural Project

One of the highlights for the year was commissioning and launching *Throw Like A Girl*, a vivid and engaging mural promoting gender equity. This was done in partnership with the **City of Melbourne**. This vibrant creation can be seen on the wall of the **North Melbourne Recreation Centre**. The *Throw Like A Girl* mural was designed and painted by local artist Gert Geyer. The 30 square metre mural features empowering, diverse and non-sexualised representations of women and girls being active. This project was made possible due to support of the **State Government** as part of its *Victoria Against Violence* campaign.

Preventing violence against women by promoting gender equity has been a long-standing priority for WHV and the **City of Melbourne**. Our popular *Making Space for Women* forums in 2016 and 2017 explored how the representation of women and girls in public spaces, including sexist advertising, impacts women and girls' feelings of safety and inclusion and inspired us to create our own visual representation of women in a public space.

Women and girls face specific barriers to participating equally in sport in their local communities. More boys than girls report that their parents let them walk or ride to places or visit local parks on their own. Young women report feeling concern about the presence of males when exercising and worry about being judged, humiliated and harassed. Whereas traits like strength, competitiveness, aggression, sweatiness and practical clothes are closely associated with masculinity, the opposite gender norms and expectations apply to girls and women.

The creation of *Throw Like A Girl* provided an innovative opportunity to make a tangible and lasting improvement to the way in which girls and women are represented and included in public spaces and continues our focus on improving the health and wellbeing of young women by challenging stereotypes that limit participation in community life. We hope the *Throw Like a Girl* mural will continue to generate more community conversations about gender equity and women's participation in sport.

To admire the wonderful creative piece, pop down to the **North Melbourne Recreation Centre** on Arden Street. You can also visit the WHV website to watch the time lapse footage of the mural being created.

# Improving Women's Health- Innovation and Leadership

## Policy & advocacy

### Sexual and reproductive health

Women's sexual and reproductive health has always been a central priority for WHV. In recent years a major focus of our advocacy was for the establishment of a dedicated state-wide sexual and reproductive health information service. We were delighted when the *Minister for Health, Jill Hennessy*, announced in October 2017 that WHV would be funded to design and operate such a service. A few months later in March 2018, *1800 My Options* took its first call.

The establishment of *1800 My Options* reflects how far we've come in Victoria since the decriminalisation of abortion in 2008 - another achievement in which WHV played a key role. Since then, the advent of medical abortion and the creation of safe access zones has seen not only more providers emerge across the state, but also some reduction in the stigma of abortion and other barriers for women. Prior to this, the service system remained hidden from public view and was hard to navigate, leaving women unable to access information about local service providers.

WHV continues to be involved in the implementation of the state-wide sexual and reproductive health strategy and will strongly advocate for this to remain a priority for the **State Government**.

We have also played a critical role in putting the neglected issue of 'reproductive coercion' on the national agenda. WHV identified that **Marie Stopes Australia** was uniquely positioned to respond to reproductive coercion and as such, we presented a convincing case for them to take up the issue. **Marie Stopes** went on to sponsor a dinner on reproductive coercion at the *Children by Choice* conference in August 2017. WHV both presented at this event and provided input into the white paper drafted by **Marie Stopes** on this topic, also providing media commentary and advice as required.

WHV has continued to advocate at the national level for improvements in women's sexual and reproductive health through submissions made informing the first *National Action Plan for Endometriosis* and the *Queensland Law Reform Commission's* consideration of abortion law.

### Gender equity and the prevention of violence against women

Over 2017 to 2018, WHV continued to play an influential role in the implementation of reforms to strengthen efforts in the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women and to promote gender equity.

Our CEO was appointed to the **Ministerial Council on Women's Equality**, which provides expert advice to the *Minister for Women* on the implementation of the Victorian gender equality strategy, *Safe and Strong*. We have also been closely involved in consultations to inform the development of Victorian gender equality legislation. At a national level, we made a submission to inform the Federal ALP's gender equality strategy, as part of their *Setting the Agenda* consultation.



*"I feel so much more educated about this topic than when I walked through the door! Thank you!"*

Our voice on key government committees for family violence is critical to ensure primary prevention is understood. This has included the **Family Violence Steering Committee**, **Ministerial Taskforce on Primary Prevention** and the **Family Violence Industry Taskforce**. This work includes assisting with the design of **Respect Victoria**, the new state-wide agency leading primary prevention in Victoria.

Our leadership in women's health and gender equality has been recognised with twelve months of funding secured from the **Victorian Government** specifically to address 'sexism in advertising'. This is the first coordinated effort in Australia to address the drivers of violence against women in the advertising space.

We are delighted to build on our long history of advocacy and capacity-building to address the sexualisation and objectification of women in advertising through this project. This work will be achieved in collaboration with expert partners **Our Watch**, **Domestic Violence Victoria**, **City of Melbourne**, **Collective Shout**, **RMIT University** and **Venus Comms**.

WHV convened a roundtable on 'sexual harassment in the workplace' which was designed to share information about current efforts to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and identify gaps. This work will continue into 2019.

Our CEO was also involved in the establishment of **#NotInMyWorkplace** - a network of female CEOs and leaders who are endeavouring to change culture and practices in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace.

## Research & innovation

In September we published an Issues Paper, entitled *Serving up inequality: How sex and gender influence women's relationship with food*, which led us to spearhead an influential community conversation about women, food and their bodies.

After a successful symposium and training workshop in May and June, we presented evidence to the **Senate Select Committee into the Obesity Epidemic in Australia**, based on a joint submission with **Health At Every Size (HAES) Australia** and **Swinburne University**.

*Growing up unequal: How sex and gender impact young women's health and wellbeing*, was published in October and has proven a success with nearly 1000 downloads to date, making it one of the most popular Issues Papers we have published. This work has also been cited by the **Australian Institute of Family Studies**, which both demonstrates its value and extends its reach.

Our forthcoming Issues Paper on motherhood and mental health will explore the impact that external and internalised expectations of motherhood have on the health and wellbeing of mothers. The Paper will examine the transition to motherhood, during which women experience changes to their identity, their body, responsibilities and relationships.

This year, we re-named and branded our *Clearinghouse Connectors* as *Spotlights* and published editions covering sexual harassment in the workplace, older women's health and wellbeing, self-harm and unpaid care. Each peer-reviewed *Spotlight* contains an overview of the issue and a selection of freely available online resources, including research, data, government policy and opportunities to address social and health conditions.

The *Victorian Women's Health Atlas* is an online tool that enables visualisation of sex-disaggregated data at state-wide, regional and local government levels. In May, we were proud to showcase the *Atlas* as a finalist in the **Australian Not-For-Profit Technology Awards**. In June, our technology partner **Spatial Vision** launched a new data visualisation product called Perception based on the *Atlas*, which is a further testament to its success.



*“Very useful fact sheets to provide data per local government area all in one spot. Clear and easy to understand.”*

Primary Care Partnership user  
Jan 2018



Throughout the year a total of 28 indicators were updated on the *Atlas* across five priority health areas. Four new indicators were also added: *Unpaid Domestic Work*, *Bowel Cancer*, *Low Gender Equality in Relationships* and *Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (IRSD)*. Important new functions were implemented, enabling users to visualise trends over time and compare indicators.

The *Labia Library* continues to be one of WHV's most successful resources, having reached a phenomenal 13.8 million page views since its introduction in 2013. This year, we published a new *Knowledge Paper* which presented themes and findings from analysis of the *Labia Library* user survey. The findings indicated demand for the expansion of the photo gallery to include a greater diversity of women's genitals and this work is now under way.

WHV also brought its expertise to *Flesh after Fifty*, a creative partnership with the **Royal Women's Hospital** and **University of Melbourne**. This innovative project, which receive **State Government** support, involves research focusing on ageing, body image and health and will include a photographic exhibition of 500 photos of older women to be displayed in galleries across Australia.

As part of continuous improvement, WHV reviewed the *Clearinghouse*, which collects and provides access to published women's health information. This has led to enhancements which will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the service.

Partnering in research to build evidence is critical to learning and informing practice. Over the last 12 months, WHV has partnered on several studies, including the **National Health and Medical Research Council** partnerships on Polycystic Ovary Syndrome with **Monash University**, and Early Menopause with **Monash University** and **RMIT** and in doing so, has imparted our expertise and learnings on these matters.

## Training and workforce development

Training and workforce development expanded in 2018 and is now delivering eleven public training sessions and tailored workplace training to more than 500 participants from a range of sectors including local government, state government, primary and community health, women's health, health promotion, insurers, academics and Victoria Police.

WHV's popular *Applied Gender Analysis workshop* was renamed *Gender Equity in Action* which resulted in a significant increase in demand, with our November, April and June sessions all selling out. Tailored gender equity training was delivered in May to more than 60 staff at **Greater Shepparton City Council**. Then in June, the updated workshop *Serving up inequality: A workshop about women, food and health promotion* was run which explores how gender inequality impacts women's health and their relationship to food as well as unpacking the complexities of health messaging and body image.

WHV's new *PVAW Communication Masterclass: Utilising storytelling techniques to communicate the drivers of violence against women*, which was piloted in November 2017, was a huge success and has now become part of our regular training program. *Being an active bystander to prevent violence against women* was another new addition to the public training calendar and was based on our successful workplace-based violence prevention program, *Take a Stand*.

WHV is now also delivering *Safe and Supported: Building workplace capacity to manage family violence*, which complements both *Take a Stand* and our bystander training. In addition, we were funded by the **Department of Health & Human Services** to design and deliver four *Shared Learning Forums* for the *Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention* grants program in collaboration with several sector partners. The forums provided a valuable opportunity for grant recipients to network, share experiences and gain knowledge and skills to strengthen their projects.

WHV's flagship workplace training program *Take a Stand* continues to strengthen and is now being rolled out at **Oxfam Australia**. After 10 years of delivering bystander training WHV published *Working with Workplaces: Challenges and Opportunities for Workplace Violence Prevention and Bystander Programs*, the first in a new series of Knowledge Papers. These Papers inform continuous improvement and contribute to the evidence base on 'what works' when it comes to promoting women's health, gender equity and venting violence against women.

It is exciting to be partnering with **RMIT** to develop a first ever suite of 'micro-credentials in gender equity'. Micro-credentials (also known as digital badges) are short, interactive online modules that aim to prepare students for the world of work. These micro-credentials provide an excellent platform for ensuring the next generation of workers understand and can apply a gender lens to their work.

With the support of a seed grant from the *Workplace Training and Innovation Fund* WHV submitted an extensive proposal to develop and deliver accredited training in gender equity, in partnership with **Adult and Community Education Victoria, RMIT, Women with Disabilities Victoria, Knox City Council, Monash University**, and two **Learn Local Organisations**. Once announced, WHV will be developing the first ever accredited training in gender equity which can be incorporated into a range of accredited training courses across the state and nationally.

## Events and forums

The second of the 'new look' issues papers, *Growing up unequal: How sex and gender impact young women's health and wellbeing*, was launched in October with expert panellists - including young women - exploring key themes. This was followed by a regional launch hosted by **Women's Health Goulburn North East** in Benalla which generated both strong local engagement and positive media coverage.

As part of the *16 Days of Activism*, WHV partnered with **Plan International Australia** and the **City of Melbourne** to host a community forum, *Making Space for Women: Sexist advertising and the representation of women and girls in the media and public space*. The event brought together a panel of expert speakers including activists, advertising industry experts, academics and young women and was well attended. This was visually recorded by **Think in Colour**.

A successful symposium in partnership with *Dr Natalie Jovanovski* and *Dr Carolynne White* from **Swinburne University** was held in May. This symposium was designed to discuss the impact of weight-focused health promotion on women. *We need to talk: How public health discourses around obesity impact women's health* drew on findings from the *Serving Up Inequality Issues Paper*. Experts and policy-makers from the health, mental health and social services sectors heard from key researchers and practitioners and then explored health promotion approaches to address these issues.

## Extending our reach

### Conferences

2018 saw the WHV team continuing to share expertise through the involvement in a range of conferences, including presentations at the *Children by Choice* conference in Brisbane on the topic of abortion law reform in Victoria, the *National Eating Disorders and Obesity Conference* on the Gold Coast on women, food and health promotion and the *Public Health Prevention Conference* in Sydney on applying a gender lens to health promotion. These important national opportunities enable WHV to share learnings and influence change in policy and practice.

### Transvaginal mesh support

Women's Health Victoria delivered a series of support groups for women impacted by transvaginal mesh surgery, funded by the Victorian Government.

## Media

There was strong media interest in the establishment of *1800 My Options*, including an in-depth article in **The Age** on the occasion of the service's 1300th call in June. There was significant coverage of the regional launch of *Growing up Unequal*, including an interview with ABC local radio. *Our Making Space for Women* event and the open letter to the Premier co-signed by WHV and **Plan International** advocating for a ban on sexist advertising were both featured in the **Herald Sun**. The *Labia Library* continued to generate media attention, including being featured in an article in **The Age**. *The Victorian Women's Health Atlas* was also featured in the **Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria** newsletter, promoting uptake in secondary schools.

## Social media

Campaigns that were implemented in 2018 included *16 Days of Activism*, which focused on sexist advertising; the launch of the *Issues Paper Growing up unequal*; Women's Health Week where work on women and food was highlighted; and the *#40YearsStrong* campaign which celebrated 40 years of women's health services.

A 'call for artists' to create a design for the mural project became the most popular campaign, followed by the posts of the finished mural, *Throw Like A Girl*.

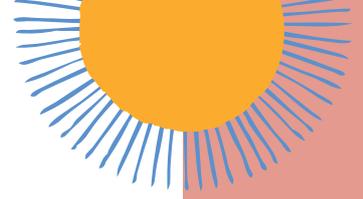
## Other activities

WHV continues to contribute to **Good Shepherd Australia and New Zealand's Power to Persuade Women's Policy Action Tank** by providing short critical analyses of the impact of public policy issues on women and girls. This year's contributions have focused on unpaid care and women's relationship with food.



"Thank you -  
ground-breaking  
and brave."

We need to talk -  
Symposium on women, food and bodies  
May 2018



## Giving Victorian women better access to sexual and reproductive information and services

As a leading advocate for women's sexual and reproductive rights, WHV was proud to launch Victoria's first ever, state wide sexual and reproductive health phone line, on March 19, 2018.

*1800 My Options* was developed in conjunction with other sexual and reproductive health sector stakeholders and has been enthusiastically supported by the women's health services network, WHV partners and broader health sector.

The new service is part of Victoria's first-ever women's sexual and reproductive health strategy (Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health: key priorities 2017-2020). The strategy, funded by the **Victorian Government**, sets out key actions to reduce barriers and service gaps that affect women's access to reproductive and sexual health services.

*1800 My Options* is a free and confidential phone line and information service for Victorian women seeking timely and trusted sexual and reproductive health information.

Using a woman-centred approach, highly trained and sensitive staff provide impartial information about services including contraception, pharmacies, pregnancy options, counselling, termination providers and a range of other sexual and reproductive health providers.

The *1800 My Options* team are proud of what has been achieved in such a short time. In June 2018, the *Minister for Health Jill Hennessy* (pictured below with *1800 My Options* team) acknowledged the success of *1800 My Options* and visited the service to celebrate its 1000th call. By the end of June, the number of calls had grown to over 1200.



For the first time ever, Victorian women, health professionals and support workers also have access to a centralised database which connects them to a range of sexual and reproductive health services across the state. Health professionals and services have embraced the opportunity to get involved, with 110 new providers joining the database between March and June 2018.

### Dr Mark Farrugia, GP, explained his reasons for joining the 1800 My Options database:

"Women who are vulnerable shouldn't have to wade through the phone book and travel around the state to access primary health care. *1800 My Options* and the support of GPs can remove some of the stress from this very difficult time. Transparency takes this service out of the darkness and into everyday conversation where it should be, going some of the way to removing unnecessary and unkind stigma felt and experienced by vulnerable people."

### My Story - Kelly

Kathy, who lives in rural Victoria, contacted *1800 My Options* in May to find out where she could have a termination. Her GP had referred her to a Melbourne based service, but she was hoping to find a service closer to home as she did not drive and had two young children at home to care for. The *1800 My Options* team was able to provide Kathy with the details of a local service which neither Kathy nor her GP had not known about. Kathy was greatly relieved, as it meant she would not need to travel to Melbourne or arrange childcare.

By making the sexual and reproductive service sector more visible, *1800 My Options* gives women like Kathy who live in regional and rural Victoria, greater knowledge of and access to local services.

### Women and Cancer

Counterpart connects, supports and informs women living with breast or a gynaecological cancer to live well.

Peer support is at the core of Counterpart (previously BreaCan). Highly trained, professional Peer Support Volunteers provide emotional, social and practical support, understanding and comfort to other women who have been diagnosed with cancer, thereby providing hope that they can live well during and after treatment.

Providing access to current, evidence-based information enables women to understand their diagnosis and treatment options and be confident in their decision making. Counterpart provides information through its Resource Centre, numerous health and wellbeing sessions and webinars with qualified professionals, the online Counterpart Navigator and an extensive borrowing library.

It has been an exciting year at Counterpart, celebrating 15 years of connecting, supporting and informing women who are living with breast or a gynaecological cancer to live well. Counterpart has supported women who have experienced cancer, their family or friends, more than 30,000 times since 2003.

In April, Gabrielle Williams, Parliamentary Secretary for Health and Parliamentary Secretary for Carers and Volunteers joined Counterpart in its 15th birthday celebrations. Ms Williams acknowledged the special role that Counterpart volunteers play in supporting women to live well following a cancer diagnosis. It was a fantastic opportunity to acknowledge the enormous contributions provided by more than 135 volunteers over this time. Some highlights of the event included:

- **A celebration of Counterpart volunteers who have achieved 10 and 15 years of service.**

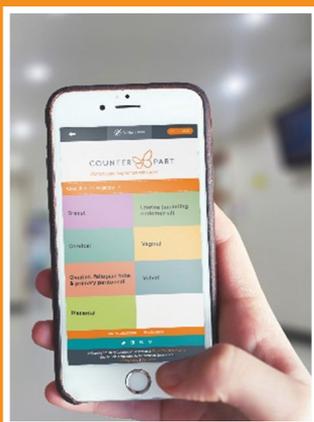
Ms Williams presented certificates to our volunteers Janine, Judy and Rhonda, who have been with the service since it first opened its doors 15 years ago. Aaltje, Annette, Chris and Jules were also presented with certificates acknowledging 10 years of volunteer service. They join another 15 volunteers who have previously reached 10 years of service.

- **Thanking Heather Beanland for her contribution to Counterpart.**

Ms Williams presented the Counterpart Champion Award to retired Peer Support Volunteer, Heather Beanland. Heather was involved in the planning and implementation of the first volunteer training program, which she also participated in as one of the first volunteers. Heather has continuously used her own experience to support other women with cancer and advocates for improved care and treatment in many cancer settings.

- **Launching the new Counterpart Navigator**

Funded by the Victorian Government, the new Counterpart Navigator was developed with the support of health professionals and women who have experienced cancer.



#### Counterpart Navigator

This new Navigator is a stepping stone to reliable, up-to-date information which can be accessed anywhere, anytime on a computer, tablet or mobile phone.

The tool builds on the previous early breast cancer navigator and includes six gynaecological cancers:

- cervical
- placental
- vaginal
- vulval
- uterine (including endometrial)
- ovarian, fallopian and primary peritoneal.

All content has been reviewed by Australian health professionals and women with breast or a gynaecological cancer

# Other highlights

## Outreach program

*Counterpart* is firmly focussed on increasing the reach of the service to women across Victoria. This is occurring through:

### Rural and regional project

With funding from the **Victorian Government**, the *Counterpart Rural Program* has extended from Mildura to Bairnsdale; Warrnambool to Albury/Wodonga and many points in between. This work enabled and understanding of the pressures and issues that health professionals and women with cancer face in remote parts of Victoria and has helped *Counterpart* provide programs and services to meet these needs.

The impact of this project is illustrated by the increased numbers of women in rural areas using the service. *Counterpart* will continue to increase its presence, develop partnerships and provide opportunities for rural women to talk with peer support volunteers and connect with each other over the next 18 months of this project.

### Webinars

*Counterpart* is expanding its information-based webinars, allowing people to access sessions from home at any time, regardless of where they live. This year, webinars included topics as diverse as wellness practice, sleeping soundly, scalp cooling and law & cancer. This brings our library of webinars to 34, all of which are available through the *Counterpart* website.

### Stepping into Wellness

*Stepping into Wellness* engages women with cancer in a range of gentle exercise activities in a safe and social environment in the community over a six week period. The program is designed to help build confidence in one's body and encourages women to continue with some form of exercise after completing the program.

There has been fabulous attendance for the *Stepping into Wellness* programs in Cranbourne, Epping, Frankston, Heidelberg, Sunshine and Sydenham. Spread across outer metropolitan Melbourne, this program is another important way of providing women access to a valuable *Counterpart* service in an area that's closer to where they live. The *Stepping into Wellness* program is generously supported by **Pink Affair**.

### New projects announced

The team is delighted to announce the commencement of two new projects which will further increase access to the *Counterpart* service for women across Victoria.

- **LUCRF Super Community**

**Program** has funded *Counterpart* to develop telehealth facilities and expand its digital offerings across Victoria, allowing more women to have direct contact with *Counterpart's* peer support or participate from their home or within the local community.

- The **Victorian Government** has funded *Counterpart* to develop partnerships and outreach activities for women with cancer who are living in the eastern and southern metropolitan areas of Melbourne.

### Bridge of Support

*Counterpart* continued to run two *Bridge of Support* programs at **Sunshine Hospital** and the **Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre (VCCC)**. Both programs provide women with peer support and access to programs, both after diagnosis and during treatment.

In the last 12 months, the **VCCC** program has expanded to include women with a gynaecological cancer at **The Royal Women's Hospital** and to women with breast cancer at **Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre** – both significant achievements. *Bridge of Support* at **Sunshine Hospital** continues to reach more women through greater integration between the areas of the hospital where women with breast cancer receive treatment. We thank the **Victorian Government**, **The Royal Melbourne** and **The Royal Women's Hospitals**, **Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre** and **Western Health** for their support of these programs.

More information about *Counterpart* can be found in our *Year in Review 2017-2018* available at [www.counterpart.org.au](http://www.counterpart.org.au)



Stepping into Wellness, Sydenham



Bridge of Support, Sunshine

## Rhonda's volunteering story

"When I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1978, there was not the wealth of information and support that is available to us now and apart from my oncologist, I didn't really discuss it with anyone.

When I started volunteering at *BreaCan* (now *Counterpart*), the service was unique. Women could speak with someone who had not only had the same fears, but who could give them the hope they too could be well again. We've been through what they're going through we get it!

In 2014, the insidious hand of cancer touched me again - a total and mind-numbing shock - and I commenced a long treatment regimen.

I became the recipient of support not only from my fellow volunteers and *Counterpart* staff but also from other service users a very strange feeling to be on the 'other side'.

Women supporting women is what we do. I am enormously proud and grateful to be part of this service that has given me confidence and belief in myself.

My involvement with *Counterpart* started on the first shift on the very first day we opened our doors: 15 years of supporting women and I still love what I do!"



Recording **1,753** downloads across **3** Issues and Knowledge Papers, the most popular being; Growing up unequal: How sex and gender impact young women's health and wellbeing with **869** downloads.

There were a total of **4,536** Spotlight and Connector page views with the most popular being; Aboriginal women and health with **601** views.

The Clearinghouse received **8,702** page views, with **3,350** unique users, **89%** of these were new.



The Victorian Women's Health Atlas produced **2** new indicators and a total of **28** indicator updates this year.

The site recorded **33,563** page views, up **35%** from the previous year, with **2,385** unique users, of these **79%** were new and **21%** returning.

**1,601** Factsheets were downloaded, up **70%** from the previous year.

Popular priority areas include, Violence Against Women with **5,583** views, then Sexual and Reproductive Health with **4,881** views, followed by Gender Equality with **3,340** views.



Counterpart recorded **2435** contacts with people affected by breast or a gynaecological cancer in 2017-18.

There were **865** individual service users; **61%** were new. Service provision to women living in rural health regions increased by **132%**.

**1285** webinars were viewed, an **80%** increase on the previous year. **90** health and wellbeing sessions were conducted, **45** were held in community locations.

Contacts through Bridge of Support increased by **67%** at Sunshine Hospital and by **174%** at the Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre

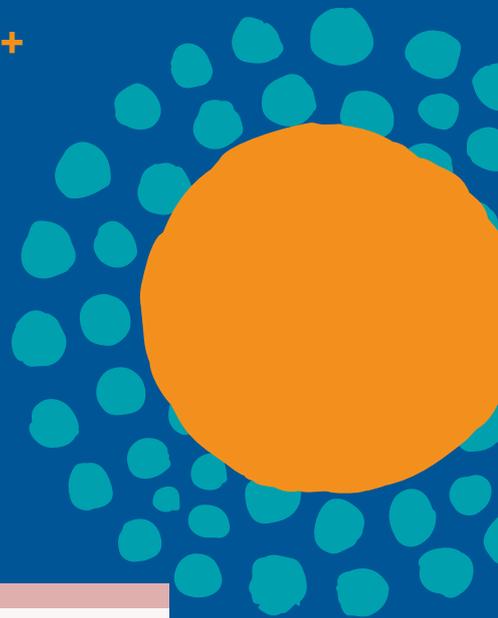
(following the 2018 expansion to Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and to gynaecological patients at The Royal Women's Hospital).

WHV Facebook likes grew **17%** with a reach of **131,400K+**

The most popular campaign being the call for artists for the mural project reaching **16.8k**.

Our Twitter following grew **12.6%** with **174.3k** impressions, **233** mentions and **7709** profile visits.

**681** participants were engaged through training, events and forums. **3** new workshops were developed and piloted.



1800 My Options have received **1245** calls from when the service opened on March 19, 2018.

Of those women who gave their age, **43%** were 26-35 years old, **37%** were 18-25 years old, **14%** were 36+ years old and **6%** were under the age of 18 years.

**88%** of calls received were metro calls and **12%** were rural/regional calls.

The 1800 My Options website has recorded **6553** page views since launching in March.

There are currently **117** service providers on the database.

The Labia Library website recorded over **2,800** visits per day and more than **2.7 million** annual page views.

This is a total of **16.7 million** page views since launching the website in September 2013.

**938,136** users accessed the site this year, of these **93%** were new, **7%** returning, this totals **5,741,037** users from **236** countries/territories/regions since its inception.



# Our Board

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

**Desiree Yap** MBBS, FRANZCOG, MPHTM, FRCOG

Chair

**Elected to Board: Oct 2010**

**Meetings attended: 9/10**

Desiree Yap is a Specialist Obstetrician and Gynaecologist who holds a Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. She has worked as a clinician in metropolitan, rural and remote Australian locations as well as internationally. She holds appointments at the Royal Women's Hospital and Monash Medical Centre in addition to private practice.

**Cristina Wolters** BBus (Acc), M Taxation (Melb), GAICD

Treasurer

**Elected to Board: Oct 2011**

**Meetings attended: 6/10**

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.

**Meredith Carter** GAICD, BA, LLB & LLM (Melb), Grad. Cert. Health Economics (Monash)

Chair until: Oct 2016

**Elected to Board: Oct 2009**

**Retired: October 2017**

**Meetings attended: 4/4**

Meredith Carter's background in public policy, law reform and governance, along with her commitment to community participation, have underpinned her career. Currently managing several national health policy initiatives for the Department of Health & Human Services, her many other leadership roles have included serving on statutory tribunals and boards, including as Chair.

**Jennifer O'Donnell-Pirisi**

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2011**

**Meetings attended: 8/10**

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. Jennifer designed and delivered the inaugural, Rail and Maritime Transport Union New Zealand, Helen Kelly Women in Union Leadership Program. She is passionate about gender equality.

**Elizabeth Dax** Associate Professor AM; MD, BS; PhD; GAICD

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2016**

**Meetings attended: 8/10**

Elizabeth Dax retired from her career in medicine and science in 2009. She is a director on three not-for-profit boards, including Chair of the Dax Centre Ltd. Her last appointments (1990-2009) were as director of the National Serology Reference Laboratory, Australia and the World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre on diagnostics of blood born viruses.

**Magdalena Simonis** MBBS FRACGP DipObst RANZCOG

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2013-Oct 2015,**

**Re-elected Oct 2017**

**Meetings attended: 6/6**

Magdalena Simonis is a practicing GP with interests in community health, chronic disease prevention and women's health. Magdalena is on the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Expert Committee for Quality Care, is an Honorary Research Fellow with the department of General Practice at the University of Melbourne and is the current President of the Victorian Medical Women's Society.

**Candy Broad** BComm (UWA), GAICD, GAIST

Deputy Chair

**Elected to Board: Oct 2013**

**Meetings attended: 5/10**

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.

**Christine Fitzherbert** MBA, BA (Politics), GradDip (IR),

Company Director's Diploma in Finance

Deputy Treasurer

**Elected to Board: Oct 2013**

**Meetings attended: 9/10**

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. In addition, Christine is the CEO of the St Kilda Police & Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), a not-for-profit organisation specializing in youth support services and a gymnasium.

**Helen Coleman** FAICD, Dip Com Dev (Swinburne)

and BSc (RMIT)

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2011**

**Meetings attended: 9/10**

Helen Coleman is a former local government Councillor and Mayor and has taken leadership roles in gender equity within Local Government and the wider community. Helen brings experience serving on several boards, working in government, the community and health services fields.

**Tania Angelini** MA (Comm), GradCert Prof Writ & Edit,

B Arts (Media Art)

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2013**

**Meetings attended: 10/10**

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.

**Judy Hacker** B.Ec, Dip.Ed, Certificate in marketing

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2016**

**Meetings attended: 7/10**

Judy Hacker's experience covers 30 years in the corporate world in senior marketing roles and the establishment of her own business Maxim Marketing. Strategic development, communications, brand strategy and governance are particular areas of interest and expertise.

**Kate Broun** Bach. App. Sci (Health Promotion) (Honours),

Post. Dip. App Sci (Org Dynamics)

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2016**

**Meetings attended: 7/10**

Kate Broun is the Manager of Screening, Early Detection and Immunisation at Cancer Council Victoria. She brings extensive experience in health promotion, cancer prevention and women's health.

**Kate Phillips** MAICD, Bach. App. Sci (Human Movement);

Finance & Accounting for the Non-Financial Executive

Member

**Elected to Board: Oct 2017**

**Meetings attended: 5/6**

Until recently, Kate Phillips was the Chief Executive Officer at YMCA Ballarat. She brings a high level of understanding in enhancing financial performance and has experience in organisation-wide strategy development and policy, building corporate culture and supporting the primary health needs of Victoria's regional and remote women.

# Our People

## CEO

Rita Butera

### Executive Assistant

Paige Kernebone

### Communications Coordinator

Kylie Inserra

### Business Services Team

#### Business Manager

Dina Lynch

#### Accountant

Michelle Hy

#### Administration Officer

Souzi Markos

#### Information Management & Administration Coordinator

Gaby Pagniello-Priolo

### Policy & Health Promotion Team

#### Policy & Health Promotion Manager

Mischa Barr

#### Senior Policy & Health Promotion Officer

Amy Webster

#### Prevention of Violence Against Women Workforce Development Coordinator

Claire Varley

#### Health Promotion Officer & Training Coordinator

Megan Bugden      Linden Deathe

#### Clearinghouse Information Officer

Jenny Ward

#### Policy & Health Promotion Officer

Renata Anderson

#### Policy & Health Promotion Support Officer

Whitney Exposto

#### Take a Stand Consultant

Mandy McKenzie

### Support Services

#### Support Services Manager

Dianne Hill

### 1800 My Options

#### Team Leaders

Julie K

Carolyn Mogharbel

#### Information & Resources Officers

Lucy C

Emily Dang

### Counterpart

#### Assistant Manager & Outreach Team Leader

Fiona McRae

#### Operations Team Leader & Volunteer Coordinator

Kellie Holland

#### Program Coordinator – VCCC Bridge of Support

Wendy Pullan

#### Program Coordinator - Western Bridge of Support

Louise Knell

#### Rural Programs & Stepping into Wellness Coordinator

Tamara Boatman

#### Program & Resources Coordinator

Linda Rehill

#### Communications Coordinator

Katherine Bradstreet

#### Digital Resources Coordinator

Lauren Ferris

#### Administration Officers

Rebecca Harraghy

Brooke Underwood

#### Administration Officer

Priscilla Salloum

#### Program Coordinators

Mary Macheras-Magias

Lieve De Clerca

#### Volunteer Training Coordinator

Helen Mertin

#### Trans Vaginal Mesh Project Coordinator

Julie Keys

# Thank you

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

Lyn Allison – Counterpart Advisory Group

Monique Baldacchino – Counterpart Advisory Group

Danielle Carpenter – Counterpart Advisory Group

Victoria Ellis – Counterpart Advisory Group – *Victoria passed away last year*

Christine Evely – Counterpart Advisory Group

Casey Burchell – Fundraising and Communications Task Group

Beryl McMillan – Fundraising and Communications Task Group

Alison Murphy – Counterpart Advisory Group

Pam Salamanca – Counterpart Advisory Group

Penny Sanderson – Counterpart Advisory Group

Janice Wailes – Counterpart Advisory Group

Beth Wilson – Counterpart Advisory Group

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

### Volunteers

Alexandra Barry

Verity Cooke

Madeline Ridgeway

Alexandra James

**We thank the women who volunteered for Counterpart in 2017-2018 for their generous contributions:**

### Peer Support Volunteers:

Aaltje, Annette, Branka, Bridget, Chris G, Chris S, Cindy, Coralie, Danni, Denise, Elizabeth C, Elizabeth D, Grace, Greta, Helen, Jan K, Janice, Janine, Jenny C, Jenny K, Jo, Joan, Lianne, Lois, Lyn M, Marcia, Margaret, May, Mika, Nadia, Nikki, Pam, Rhonda, Sue F, Sue G, Sue S, Susan R, Teresa, Trish, Victoria, Vivien, Vivienne, Wendy, Yvonne

### Program Volunteers

Adikari, Ailsa, Gwen, Jaya, Jules, Jennifer, Kene, Maryse

### Exercise Support Volunteers

Meril, Judy, Lois S

**We would like to thank volunteers from the National Australia Bank for their assistance:**

Angelina, Belinda, Camilia, Catherine, Charles, Elena, Gauthri, Irina, Ivan, Janice, Jeanette, Jenny, Julie, Jyoti, Kellee, Leilani, Lien, Nina, Olivia, Robert, Roopashree, Sandy, Sarah, Tracey

# Farewell

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

Carl Arico – Project Development Consultant

Vanessa Born – PVAW Statewide Project Officer

Cindy Bridge – Team Leader

Esther Clay – Executive Assistant

Ranee Madison – Administration Coordinator

Danni Ramalingam – Finance Officer

Robin Curwen-Walker – Bridge of Support Western Health Project Manager

# 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 & Cabinet  
Department of Education & Training

We also acknowledge the support of:

Besen Family Foundation  
LUCRF Super Community Program  
Pink Affair  
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. Apply for a WHV membership online at [whv.org.au](http://whv.org.au)

## 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 2017-18

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

NAB  
Peter Cash  
Russell Kennedy Lawyers

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

Cath Smith  
IT Strategic  
Leonie Morgan  
Melissa Grenzille  
Sam Burrone Design  
Warren Marshall

### Donors to WHV for 2017-18

Shane Morrison  
Jennifer Strauss  
Dr Pamela Williams

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 Counterpart service; these donors and supporters are listed in *Counterpart's Year in Review 2017-18*.

## Donate to WHV

You can donate to WHV at:  
[whv.org.au](http://whv.org.au)



*"I realised  
much of my  
work has  
potential to  
consider the  
impacts of  
gender more  
- an advocacy  
opportunity"*

Gender Equity in Action participant  
June 2018

# 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 2018 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

	2014 \$	2015 \$	2016 \$	2017 \$	2018 \$
<b>Summary Income Statement</b>					
Total Income	2,407,616	2,547,004	3,390,648	2,697,591	3,325,422
Total Expenses	2,217,359	2,452,281	3,205,929	2,623,327	3,139,771
Net Profit/(Loss)	190,257	94,723	184,719	74,264	185,651
<b>Summary Balance Sheet</b>					
Cash	814,887	987,667	1,970,438	1,394,612	1,785,879
Receivables	48,666	11,116	24,623	67,389	19,792
Property, Plant & Equipment	191,990	179,973	148,646	130,363	229,270
Total Assets	1,055,543	1,178,756	2,143,707	1,592,364	2,034,941
Payables	141,957	177,306	848,984	190,051	407,894
Provisions	179,614	172,755	281,309	314,635	353,717
Total Liabilities	321,571	350,061	1,130,293	504,686	761,611
NET ASSETS	733,972	828,695	1,013,414	1,087,678	1,273,330
Current Ratio	3.40 : 1	3.30 : 1	1.86 : 1	3.21 : 1	2.46 : 1

In the 2017-2018 financial year the organisation recorded a surplus of \$185,651. The surplus includes grants received this year that were partly or fully not expended in the current financial year. These grants were from: The Department of Health and Human Services for the following projects - Rural project, Improving Reproductive Health Database, Gender Equality & PVAW, Counterpart Area Based Coordinator. DHHS also funded a new programme - 1800 My Options that commenced operations in the second half of the financial year. The ratio of revenue from State Government in proportion to total revenue has increased this year compared to last year due to a one-off receipt of a large non-current grant that was received last year.

Employee expenses have increased to take into account the annual increase of

the Enterprise Agreement and the increase in programme funding. Project costs have increased due to the implementation of 1800 My Options programme that was expensed this financial year and the distribution of a one-off grant to the Women's Health Services.

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 2.46:1. This means that the business has \$2.46 in assets to meet \$1 in current liabilities. The financial statements disclose the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services recurrent funding for the Women's Health Program and the Counterpart service.

## FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL STATISTICS



## STATE GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO TOTAL REVENUE



The graph shows the comparison of State Government grant revenue to Total Revenue, which reflects significant funding from the Victorian State Government to the organisation.

## Women's Health Victoria

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

### Postal address

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### Counterpart - 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 [info@counterpart.org.au](mailto:info@counterpart.org.au)

[counterpart.org.au](http://counterpart.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

Women's Health Victoria acknowledges and pays our respects to the traditional custodians of the land, the peoples of the Kulin Nation. As a statewide organisation, we also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands and waters across Victoria. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and that we are beneficiaries of stolen land and dispossession, which began over 200 years ago and continues today.



Socialise with us on:

