



Highlighting 25 Years as Champions for Women

For 25 years, Women's Health Victoria (WHV) has been at the forefront of many contemporary issues and advances in women's health and gender equality through advocacy, policy, training and support. This publication provides a snapshot that demonstrates the incredible work of WHV over the years.

Women's Health Victoria (called Healthsharing Women's Health Resource Service 1993-1996) was formed in 1993 as a result of the amalgamation of Healthsharing Women and the Women's Health Resource Collective.

These remarkable services led the way for many years in bringing women's health to the fore, raising awareness about the need for all women to have a voice in their health care and have access to quality information to meet their needs and make informed choices.

Strong leadership has been a feature of WHV with two remarkable women leading the organisation for most of the last 25 years. In 1995, Marilyn Beaumont was appointed as the Service Manager, becoming the inaugural Executive Director until 2010, establishing WHV as an award-winning go-to for women's health policy and advocacy regarding women's health at a state and national level. In 2011, Rita Butera was appointed Executive Director and steered the organisation through a time of great social change and opportunity as a voice of significant influence in the prevention of violence against women, sexual and reproductive health and gender equality.

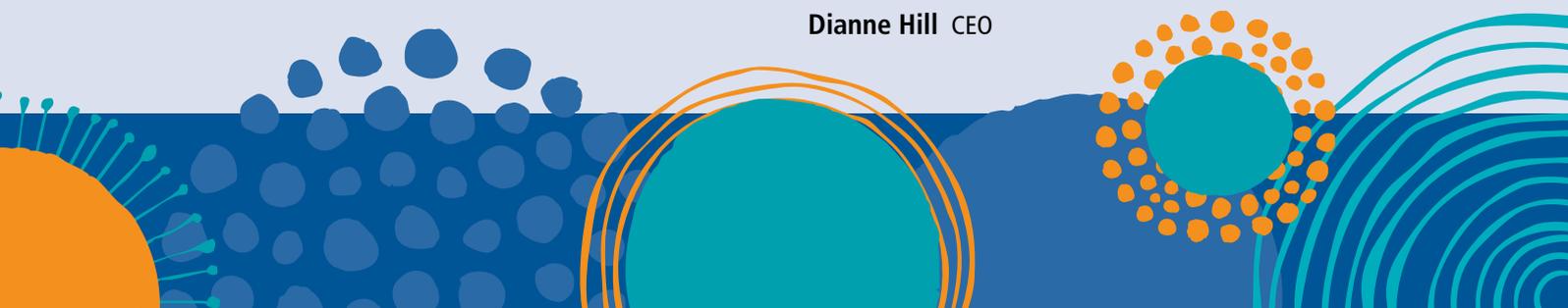
Throughout the years there have been a number of key areas of work, many of which remain as important today as they were in 1993, including reproductive choice, prevention of violence against women and gender equality which continues to underpin everything we do.

What becomes evident as you read through this snapshot of the last 25 years is the strong emphasis on diversity and supporting the rights and voices of all women throughout our work. Whether it is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, supporting lesbian and gay women, women with a disability, older women, or women in prison, Women's Health Victoria has a strong record of partnership and support with many organisations, to ensure that the needs of all women are being heard and they are able to influence policy and health outcomes.

WHV is also proud to be part of the women's health program, working in partnership with regional and other specialist statewide women's health services and supporting capacity of the women's health sector, who bring expertise and a gendered lens to women's health.

After 25 years as champions for women we have much to celebrate, but there is still more to do. We have cultivated a solid platform for change and we will continue to work in partnership with women, other women's health services, government and other stakeholders to achieve our vision of Women living well – healthy, empowered, equal.

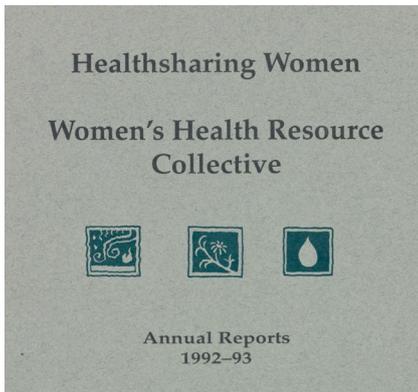
Dianne Hill CEO



1993

Healthsharing Women's Health Resource Service

- Healthsharing Women's Health Resource Service (HWHRs) is established on 1st July 1993
- Relocates to new premises in the CBD
- Appoints Inaugural Chair - Teresa Capetola
- 14 women are selected for the Inaugural Management Committee
- Sandy Roughley is the Coordinator during this time
- The Oct/Nov *Healthsharing Women Newsletter* is the first publication bearing the new name



respect as individuals. *The Good Practices in Women's Mental Health Training and Resource Kit* is also released

- *More than a pat on the back: carers talk about their health* video is released exploring the gendered nature of care – which most material on caring fails to acknowledge
- *The Library and Health Information Line* receives 4500 calls/visits (77% via phone) in the 1993/94 financial year
- Over 150 people attend the *Research Issues in Women's Mental Health Forum*



- First *Strategic Directions 1996-1999* is adopted in March after extensive strategic planning process
- First Vision Statement: 'To have women's voice incorporated into health research, education and policy'
- First Mission Statement: 'Using a feminist framework to identify and understand women's health issues and ensure women have access to quality health information. Use this understanding to resource women, contribute to health services, and influence health policy'
- New premises are opened at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre. WHV is determined to locate itself in the new centre to continue the historical connection between feminist health practice and the original Queen Victoria Hospital
- A collaborative agreement with the *Women's Information Referral Exchange (WIRE)* is forged

1995

- Marilyn Beaumont is appointed Service Manager
- Four *Pregnancy, motherhood and career* seminars are held in collaboration with the *Victorian Women's Trust and Family Planning Victoria*
- *Age cannot wither her* is published – a booklet featuring writing and interviews about sexuality with older women, most of whom are over 65 years of age
- In the 1994-95 financial year, over 13,000 resources are sold to health service providers, this is not including all the free resources routinely provided to individual women
- HWHRs advocates for a statewide women's health strategy to provide a context for discussions about changes in women's health services
- *Being Our Age* is launched – a training toolkit for health workers that work with older woman
- Community forums are conducted about the serious health issues relating to breast implants



1994



- Over 130 people attend the launch of the new service on 11th March
- The *Good Practices in Women's Mental Health Project* is completed. It highlights that women want mental health services that respond to their needs, within a system which offers them dignity, safety, control, practical assistance, quality care, choice and



1997

- WHV publishes two reports on women's health status and holds consultations with women to inform the development of a *Statewide Women's Health Plan*. Marilyn Beaumont - Service Manager is appointed Chair of the *Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women's Health (MACWH)* - which is responsible for the Plan's development. WHV participates in developing the *State Plan's* six themes and publishes 'Issues Papers' for each of them
- WHV receives two *Commonwealth Awards of Excellence for Good Practice in Women's Health* by the *Commonwealth Secretariat* in London for *Being Our Age - Older Women's Voices* project and *Customer Satisfaction: Cultural Hurdles, Non-English Speaking Backgrounds*

1996

Women's Health Victoria

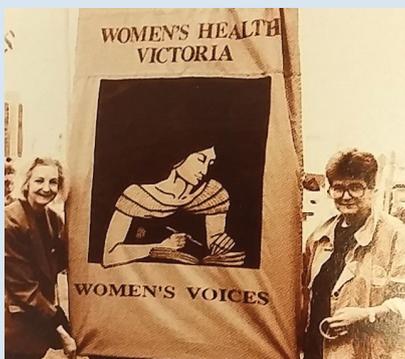
- The new name *Women's Health Victoria (WHV)* is launched by the Minister for Health, The Hon. Rob Knowles

Women's Health Information Strategy project. This results in a handbook on marketing health services to women from non-English speaking backgrounds

- Victorian Police contact WHV to explore how to work together on behalf of women experiencing domestic violence

1998

- Resulting from the numerous inquiries on abortion to the **Health Information Line**, WHV recognises that it would be beneficial to provide callers with one pamphlet combining a wide range of current information and a quick reference guide to available abortion services. After extensive consultation with several service providers and agencies, an article - **Making choices: information for women considering abortion** is produced
- After beginning an inquiry into informed consent protocols in two metropolitan hospitals, with particular regard to women requesting or undergoing sterilisation procedures, WHV consults the *Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecology* about unsatisfactory hospital practices, with a view to improving informed consent procedures for women
- WHV commissions the *Centre Against Sexual assault (CASA House)* to prepare information for women who have experienced sexual assault after receiving numerous inquiries
- WHV provides secretarial support toward the establishment of a *Victorian Women's Health Network*



1999

- The WHV Committee of Management becomes known as the WHV Council
- Public Benevolent Institution status is granted

- Marilyn Beaumont, Executive Director, appears on *A Current Affair* to discuss the *Australian Medical Association's (AMA)* comment that "women are smoking to ensure smaller babies for an easier child birth". This results in an immediate back down by the *AMA* from their earlier 'irrefutable' allegations
- A monthly women's health radio segment on *3CR* is secured
- **Women's health library** now contains over 8,000 records and provides access to national and international data bases
- WHV develops guidelines for the delivery of gender-sensitive services – **Gender sensitive standards in primary health and community services sector: a background paper**



2000

- WHV is involved in the first *Victorian Prisoner Health Status Study* which informs the *Women's Correctional Services Policy Framework*
- WHV is granted an exemption by *VCAT* under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* that allows WHV to advertise for and employ women only and to restrict membership to women only
- New product *In the Newspapers* is developed - a weekly synopsis of women's health and related issues covered in the print media
- WHV provides input into a discussion paper and progresses the issue further with relevant agencies and the public until the *Fertility Access Rights Lobby* is established - to advocate for removal of discrimination in Victoria prohibiting single and lesbian women from accessing reproductive technologies
- A new constitution for the *Lesbian Cancer Support Group* is drafted with WHV assistance
- WHV representative is appointed on the *DHS Breast Care Advisory Committee* which advises the Department on policy

development, service delivery and quality improvement issues in relation to breast disease and breast care standards and practice



2001

- WHV receives a *Bronze Annual Report Award* – for the *1999/2000 Annual Report* from the *Australasian Reporting Awards*
- **Why women's health?** paper is released – based on a forum hosted jointly with *Victorian Women's Trust*, titled **Women's Health / Men's Health – Working Together?**
- Consultation papers are developed as a member of the *Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women's Health and Wellbeing*, scope includes: women with disabilities, Koori women, lesbians, working women (paid and unpaid) and women in and post prison
- 18 submissions are produced including the **Portrayal of women in outdoor advertising discussion paper**



2002

- New vision and mission statements are developed
- A \$10,000 trust fund is established with the *Melbourne Community Foundation* for donations and bequests in perpetuity for furthering work on women's health
- A new multi-layered website launches
- At the request of the *Department of Human Services* **A Snapshot of the health and wellbeing of Victorian Women 2002** is produced and forms part of the documentation within the *Victorian Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2002-2006*

- WHV secures funding from the *Department of Human Services* to establish a pilot consumer-focused **Breast Cancer Information and Support Service (BCISS)** in collaboration with the Victorian women's health services and the Breast Cancer Action Group



2003

- **BreaCan** officially launches in April by The Hon. Bronwyn Pike, Minister for Health



- Three-year accreditation is achieved, the *Quality Improvement Council* certifies that WHV meets requirements of the *Australian Health and Community Service Standards*. WHV receives commendations for understanding and management of change and for a diverse approach to health promotion
- WHV receives a *Silver Annual Report Award* for the **2001-2002 Annual Report** from the *Australasian Reporting Awards*
- A submission is written to the *National Breast Cancer Centre* on draft recommendations about the management and support of younger women with breast cancer
- Website traffic increases 400% since the launch of the new website in the previous year



2004

- WHV is a part of a successful tender to pilot the world's first *Gay, Lesbian,*

Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex Health and Wellbeing Resource Unit together with the *Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society* at *La Trobe University* and the *Victorian AIDS Council/Gay Men's Health*



- WHV is the auspice agency for multiple funded projects in partnership with the *Victorian Women with Disabilities Network*. This includes recurrent funding to establish and

maintain an *Advocacy Information Service* for women with disabilities

- The **Victorian Gendered Data Directory** is launched to assist in policies and service delivery that account for gender differences
- WHV's long term advocacy regarding intimate partner violence is acknowledged by *VicHealth* in their report *The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the Burden of Disease Caused by Intimate Partner Violence*
- A strong sister relationship emerges with the Canadian women's health policy and research sector. Dr. Lorraine Greaves, international gender and tobacco expert and Executive Director of the *British Columbia Centre of Excellence in Women's Health Canada* presents at our **Women and Tobacco Forum**



2005

- WHV is endorsed as a *Health Promotion Charity* by the *Australian Taxation Office*, a process that took three years of work to achieve
- Shift of focus as WHV moves from providing an information service to all Victorians to now focusing on providing quality information services to a broad range of service providers, policy makers and opinion leaders

- An **Abortion Issues Paper** is produced in response to the increasing coverage of abortion in the national public arena. The paper outlines the situation regarding data, legislation, privacy and access to abortion and makes WHV's position clear. This is presented at a **Pro-Choice Forum**

- Recurrent funding is secured to ensure the **BreaCan Breast Cancer Support Service** will be translated from a pilot program to an ongoing fully funded service
- Participation on the *Corrections Health Board and Women's Correctional Services Advisory Committee* and our advocacy for women in and post prison assists with the development of a *Children in Custody* policy and draft *Corrections Management Standards for Prisons in Victoria*
- Leadership and participation in the *Fifth Australian Women's Health Conference* held in Melbourne



2006

- The Hon. Mary Delahunty, Minister for Women's Affairs, launches relocation of **BreaCan** to new premises at the *Queen Victoria Women's Centre*



- **BreaCan** launches it's 1300 phone line
- The highly successful event: **Unfinished business: Abortion law reform** is held in partnership with the *Association for Legal Right to Abortion in Victoria*. Systematic representation is made to all Victorian Members of Parliament to discuss the crisis in accessibility of abortion services in Victoria and the need for a statewide sexual and reproductive health policy
- WHV participates in joint advocacy with 13 women's health services to

influence government's health promotion priorities with the development of *10 Point Plan for Women's Health*

- **The Victorian gendered data directory** is accessed by approx. 18,000 users
- Work with the *British Columbia Centre for Excellence in Women's Health* to share learnings and assist in the development of a Canadian version of the data directory, this includes Executive Director Marilyn Beaumont and Policy and Research Officer Kerrilee Rice visiting Canada



2007

- In conjunction with 3 other women's health services WHV calls a media conference to highlight support for a bill to remove abortion from the *Crimes Act*



- A new approach to training is developed and delivers professional development workshops: **Advocacy and Health Promotion** and **Gender and Health Promotion**
- Marilyn Beaumont facilitates the successful *National Women's Health Summit* at Parliament House in Canberra
- Petra Beggall, Health Promotion and Education Officer, presents on **Gender and Health Promotion** and Marilyn Beaumont on the **10 Point Plan** and **Better Pathways** at the *World Conference on Health Promotion and Health Education in Canada*
- A submission is made to the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission's 'Same sex, same entitlements'* inquiry into discrimination against same-sex couples around financial and work-related entitlements
- **BreaCan** wins the 2007 *Victorian Public Health Award* for 'Innovation in Models of Care'



- **BreaCan** expands to include women with gynaecological cancer

2008

- **The Index: Women's Health and Wellbeing Data** is launched by The Hon. Maxine Morand – Victorian Minister for Women's Affairs – funded by *Helen McPherson Smith Trust*. This website is the redeveloped and updated version of the **Victorian Gendered Data Directory**



- The pilot phase of **Working Together Against Violence** project in partnership with *Linfox* is completed. This trialed workplace-based strategies to help prevent violence against women, using a bystander approach. The project is recognised with ongoing funding from *VicHealth*
- An Advisory Group is established to inform the development of the **BreaCan** service
- The passing of the unamended *Abortion Law Reform Bill* by the Victorian Government on October 10 is the culmination of 4 years of intensive work to remove abortion from the *Victorian Crimes Act*. WHV resources and coordinates activity across 8 Women's Health Services, producing evidence-based resources and responds to Members of Parliament's requests for more information in helping them shape their speeches



2009

- *Victorian Women with Disabilities Network (VWDN)* becomes fully independent – following a 4-year partnership with WHV enabling organisational capacity building and service development
- Phase two of the **Working Together Against Violence** project, in collaboration with *Linfox*, sees the first round of training entitled **Harm In the Home** deliver 33 sessions
- **BreaCan** develops its own stand-alone website, improving accessibility to information throughout Victoria
- After making a written submission, WHV is invited to present a further verbal submission to the *'Inquiry into pay equity and associated issues relating to increasing female participation in the workforce'*



2010

- **Working Together Against Violence** project in collaboration with *Linfox* wins the *Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award* for Victoria
- WHV's second round of training with *Linfox* is delivered under a new name - **Stand Up: Domestic Violence is Everyone's Business**. The training now takes a whole-of-organisation approach with three elements; lead, train and promote
- **Stand Up** wins two further awards:
 - *Vic Health Award for 'Organisational Development'*
 - *Victorian Community Sector Award Runner up* under the 'New Approaches to Partnerships with Business and Philanthropy' Category



- WHV presents 8 papers to over 600 attendees at the *6th Australian Women's Health Conference* in Hobart
- Minister for Health the Hon. Daniel Andrews launches *BreaCan's* pilot program *The Bridge of Support* in partnership with the *Royal Melbourne Hospital*
- *It's About Choice*, a DVD capturing the work that went into having abortion removed from the *Victorian Crimes Act* in 2008 is produced and released. Featuring interviews with Jo Wainer, Kerrilie Rice, Joan Kirner and Leslie Cannold - with funding assistance from *Victorian Women's Trust*



- WHV makes a submission to the *Australian Association of National Advertisers: code of ethics review* addressing: objectification of women, independent regulation of advertisers and rules around depictions of women's genitalia
- WHV moves its main office to Bourke Street to accommodate growth and changing needs



2011

- A final report marking the completion of the *Working Together against Violence* project is published at *VicHealth's Sharing the Evidence Conference*

- WHV conducts *Abortion in Victoria Forum* to obtain cross-sector understanding of the key access, legal and policy issues arising since the implementation of the *Abortion Law Reform Act 2008*. The *Abortion in Victoria Working Group* is subsequently established
- WHV's submission to the *Australian Law Reform Commission Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws Issues Paper* is frequently referenced in the Commission's subsequent Discussion Paper
- A further two submissions are made to two Federal Inquiries into the classification and regulation of Australian film and literature
- *BreaCan* celebrates *National Volunteer Week* with Hon. Mary Wooldridge, Minister for Mental Health, Women's Affairs and Community Services



- *BreaCan* works with *Ovarian Cancer Australia* to design new resources for women with Gynaecological cancer

2012



- *Women living well- healthy, empowered, equal* is adopted as the new vision
- WHV takes its first step into social media with a campaign during Spring Fashion Week promoting the vision of *women living well- healthy, empowered, equal*. This generates 208 facebook friends and 720 twitter followers
- *BreaCan* volunteer base grows to 50 women
- *VicHealth* invites WHV to design the facilitator training component of the *Baby Makes 3* program at *Whitehorse Community Health*, promoting equity and effective communication during the transition to parenthood

- Julie Parke, *Stand Up* program Development Coordinator, represents Australia and WHV at the *Global Truce 2012 Peace One Day* event in London. *Peace One Day* is partnering with the *Eliminate Domestic Violence Global Foundation* to bring together a coalition dedicated to reducing family violence worldwide



- WHV hosts *Gender Transformative Policy and Practice Forum* with Nancy Poole – author of *Gender unchained* – and Director of *Research and Knowledge Translation for the British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Women's Health* in Canada as guest speaker



2013

- *Stand Up* is re-branded as *Take a Stand* with a focus on implementing Train The Trainer programs and licensing partner organisations to deliver the training in Victoria and Tasmania



- *BreaCan* celebrates 10 years:
 - The Hon. Mary Wooldridge, Minister for Community Services, unveils an anniversary quilt
 - The Hon. David Davis, Minister for Health, launches the *BreaCan Navigator*
 - Eight volunteers celebrate a decade of volunteering



- In a landscape where women are increasingly seeking out genital cosmetic surgery, WHV hosts a **Female Genital Cosmetic Surgery Forum** and launches the **Women and genital cosmetic surgery Issues Paper**



- The **Labia Library** website launches, containing information to dispel myths about female genital anatomy and what is 'normal', including a female genitalia photo gallery, developed with funding support from the **Australian Women's Trust**
- WHV hosts the **Economic abuse: the hidden cost of family violence forum** which explores how economic abuse impacts on women and **Beyond The 'Sext': Technology-facilitated Violence and harassment Against Women forum** examining troubling trends in technology-facilitated sexual violence and harassment

2014

- The Premier Hon. Denis Napthine launches **Breacan's Connecting and Supporting Rural and Regional Women with Cancer** project



- **Breacan** hosts first webinar offering more outreach sessions with women who want to attend events in their local area
- WHV hosts the Australian launch of **Making it better: gender-transformative health promotion**, a resource developed by the **British Columbia Centre of Excellence in Women's Health in Canada** with input from WHV
- With **Clearinghouse** database traffic increasing by 10,000 views per year, a new web interface is developed to improve flexibility and response time



2015

- New branding is launched at the 2015 AGM
- WHV strengthens its advocacy campaign and becomes a key player to legislate for safe access zones around abortion services in Victoria with media releases, media interviews, submissions and letters to MPs, **State Government** and **Melbourne Council**
- Executive Director, Rita Butera stands with Political Leaders in a press conference promoting an open letter from 40 signatory organisations in support of existing abortion laws in Victoria, opposing the **Democratic Labour Party's Infant Viability Bill** which was soundly defeated in the **Victorian Upper House**
- WHV, **Family Planning Victoria** and the **Royal Women's Hospital** are funded by the **Victorian 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 engage **Jean Hailes** and **Monash University** to conduct the review
- **Labia Library** is recommended as an educational tool in new **Australian GP guidelines** to help ensure that women are better informed about genital diversity before they resort to genital cosmetic surgery

- **Labia Library** wins gold at the 2015 **Victorian Public Healthcare Awards** for Excellence in Women's Health



- WHV coordinates the development and launch of **Equality and Safety for Women**, an online planning guide for the regional prevention of violence against women in collaboration with the **Women's Health Association of Victoria (WHA)**
- **Suicide Prevention Australia** releases **Suicide and suicidal behaviour in women: issues and prevention** which endorses and amplifies many of the recommendations developed by WHV
- WHV in partnership with **Family Planning Victoria** and women's health services develops and launches the **Victorian Women's Health Atlas** - providing interactive access to sex-disaggregated health and socioeconomic data at statewide and local level



2016



- **Safe Access Zones** are introduced with WHV's advocacy acknowledged by several MPs during the debate. CEO Rita Butera is formally thanked and WHV's submission to the **Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee** is quoted several times

- The Minister for Women, the late Fiona Richardson MP specifically recognises WHV's contribution to the development of Victoria's first state-wide *Gender equality strategy – Safe and Strong*



- WHV plays an active role in committees, working with *Victorian Government* to co-design reforms in the *State Government's* agenda for the *Prevention of Violence Against Women*, with a focus on primary prevention
- **BreaCan Bridge of Support Western Health** is launched by Natalie Suleyman MP at *Sunshine Hospital*, with 2-year funding from *LUCRF Super*
- **Labia Library** celebrates its 3rd birthday with 3.8 million users and 11 million page views



- WHV partners with *Women with Disabilities Victoria* and *Women's Health in the North* to deliver **Making Space for Women: Planning community spaces and public art** forum

2017

- WHV plays a significant role in the development of *Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health; Key priorities 2017-2020* released by the *Victorian Government*. Emphasis is placed on women having improved access to sexual and reproductive services including contraception and abortion in acute and primary health settings



- CEO, Rita Butera is appointed to the *Ministerial Council on Women's Equality* – providing expert advice to the Minister for Women. WHV is closely involved in consultations to inform the development of *Victorian Gender Equality Legislation*
- **Take A Stand** bystander training is delivered to 500 employees at *Victoria Police* and *Oxfam Australia*
- **BreaCan** re-launches as **Counterpart - women supporting women with cancer**. This is an important milestone strengthening its model as a unique and valued service for women with cancer



- WHV's social media campaign for International Women's Day #be bold for change theme is picked up as the lead image in the *SBS* article on 'The most inspiring and thought – provoking tweets about International Women's Day'



2018

- WHV develops and launches **1800 My Options**, a new *State Government* funded service providing free information on contraception, pregnancy options and sexual health via a statewide telephone line and website



- **Counterpart** celebrates it's 15th birthday with:
 - reaching 30,000 contacts with women
 - 3 volunteers celebrate 15 years of service and 13 volunteers celebrate 10 or more years
 - **Counterpart Navigator** expands to include six gynaecological cancers and early breast cancer



- WHV commissions and unveils **Throw Like A Girl** – a vibrant and engaging mural promoting gender equality on the wall of the *North Melbourne Recreation Centre*, in partnership with *City of Melbourne* and supported by the *State Government's Victoria Against Violence* campaign



- WHV becomes the lead organisation in a consortium of industry and training providers collaborating to develop and pilot an Australian-first accredited **Gender Equity Training (GET)**
- **Sexism in advertising Project** commences in collaboration with *Our Watch*, *Domestic Violence Victoria*, *City of Melbourne*, *Collective Shout*, *RMIT University* and *Venus Comms*. This is the first coordinated effort in Australia to address the drivers of violence against women in the advertising space. The **Advertising (in)equality** Issues Paper is launched