



WOMENS HEALTH SERVICES

@ 100 Aberdeen Street Northbridge WA

- 72% needed assistance with legal issues and court support
- 42% needed an interpreter
- 25% needed financial or material aid
- 62% were women with child/ren
- 38% were provided with culturally specific services

MULTICULTURAL WOMEN'S ADVOCACY SERVICE

We support women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who are experiencing domestic violence.

We work one-to-one with women, offering advocacy and information. We work closely with other agencies and help women access services such as legal aid, immigration, housing, medical, police, financial, and services for their children.

We offer our services from four locations, to make it easier for women to reach us – Northbridge, Mirrabooka, Gosnells and Fremantle.



MULTICULTURAL WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

The new Multicultural Women's Support Group is for women who have experienced domestic violence. It allows for women to share their experiences, participate in activities, create networks and obtain information on a wide range of services available from Womens Health Services and the wider community.

There is a group in Fremantle and in Northbridge. The Fremantle group began in March 2006 and caters for the southern metropolitan area. Further expansion into Rockingham and Mandurah is being explored. The Northbridge group, catering for the city and northern suburbs, commenced in June.

Plans are in place to form community partnerships which will further enhance the opportunities available to these women.

ADJUSTING TO BABY AND CHANGE

Services for women diagnosed with or suspected of having postnatal mood disorders.

We prepare an individual care plan during an initial assessment. Home visit assessments are offered where necessary. Our main focus is group therapy, but we also offer one-to-one counselling, referral and support. Once a term we run fathers sessions.

Here's what our clients say about our service:

Fabulous! Having someone listen and draw some conclusions, and giving a "diagnosis" made me feel more aware, and gave validity to my feelings. I didn't think I would be assessed as suitable for this program and was surprised that I was!

Looking forward to an event each week.

Hearing others' problems, putting perspective on my own.

I am not alone.

Support for each other.

I thought I was being heard and validated.

I appreciated (WHS) coming to my house at short notice to fit in with my program.

Seeing others and myself progress on the journey of postnatal depression.

I thought initially I would be nervous to share but I found it useful.

A little shocked. I had really convinced myself I was fine and had to just cope. Really didn't think I could do anymore to fix problems. I realise now that my thinking was really negative and that I just had to be more accepting and mainly be kinder to myself.

The group leaders did very well making the sessions light hearted, interesting and fun, which isn't easy when the topic is ourselves. This forced me to step out of my comfort zone and review virtually everything about myself.

Eye opening – I found it very supportive.

Women On Wellness (WOW) Week is held each year in May to celebrate women's health. WHS worked with staff and residents at Boronia Women's Prison to produce a WOW banner. Extracts of the banner are shown throughout this annual report.



100 Aberdeen Street Northbridge WA 6003

Phone: (08) 9227 8122

Tollfree: 1800 998 399

Fax: (08) 9227 6615

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Medical and Clinical Services • Clinical Advice, Counselling and Support
- Counselling • Adjusting to Baby and Change • Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service
- Mental Health Community Outreach Program

122 Aberdeen Street Northbridge WA 6003

PO Box 32 Northbridge WA 6865

Phone: (08) 9227 9032

Tollfree: 1800 246 655

Fax: (08) 9227 5860

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Women In Substance Education • PEPISU
- The Aboriginal Grandparents Family Support Program • Community Development and Education

Email: info@whs.org.au

Web: www.whs.org.au

WOMENS HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION INC

ABN 81 007 269 571

(THE CLOSEST BLUE CAT STOP TO WHS IS NUMBER 11)





WOMENS HEALTH SERVICES

Creating opportunities for women to improve their own, their family's and their community's health and well being.

Womens Health Services was formed by women to deliver services that women need –when they need them – at any point in their lives.

Annual Report 2006

FUNDING BODIES

05-06

- Department of Health
- Department of Health – Office of Mental Health
- Department of Health – Office of Aboriginal Health
- Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing
- Drug & Alcohol Office
- Department for Community Development
- Lotterywest
- Osborne Park Hospital
- Department for Community Development – Family & Domestic Violence Unit
- Department for Community Development – Non Government Policy & Funding
- Department of Families Community Services & Indigenous Affairs
- Department of Justice
- Friends of Heathcote
- Town of Vincent
- Department of Consumer & Employment Protection – State Peri Natal Co-ordinator
- HTT B (Inc)
- Department for Planning & Infrastructure
- RPR Consulting Pty Ltd
- Population Health North Metro
- Population Health East Metro
- WA Country Health Service
- WA GP Network
- DONATIONS
- Lifeline Australia
- The Panel Christmas Wrap - Pilotlight



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Womens Health Services has had yet another successful year of dynamic growth and positive changes for the organisation and service delivery.

Womens Health Services (WHS) thanks Lotterywest for their generous grant of over \$2.6 million. The funds are to build accommodation that will enable us to co-locate existing services, expand and grow. We thank present and past Board Members and other individuals who continue to donate to our building fund. We are committed to raising at least another \$500,000 to meet building costs and fit out the new premises.

Architects Ian Dewar (Dewar and Associates) and Kieran Wong and Emma Williamson (CODA) will manage the project to completion. They are very perceptive, creative and in tune with the purpose of the organisation and the diversity of clients and services. The East Perth Redevelopment Authority and Perth City Council support the proposed development and are facilitating progress to ensure timely completion.

The focus for the organisation in 2005/06 was to further the WHS sustainability plan. Planning strategies will ensure the long term future of the organisation and its services.

As part of re-branding the organisation, we changed the name of the core services to Womens Health Services. The name change has been well received by all sectors including community, government and corporate.

WHS established a donation account with the WA Community Foundation, an independent, not for profit organisation established to assist communities and charitable causes to attract funds. Working with the Foundation has brought many benefits, including marketing material for our website, partnership brochures and development and support of strategies for partnership, networks and sponsorship with the corporate sector.

The organisation attracted a further \$442,680 in 05/06 in addition to capital funding. Additional funding adds value to, and extends the capacity of existing services through:

- A Family Resource Kit – a partnership with the WA Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies, the Drug and Alcohol Office and funded by the Alcohol Education Rehabilitation Foundation. The kit will help children throughout Western Australia whose lives are affected by their parent's alcohol and other drug use.
- Strengthening Families – a child-specific therapeutic program. This builds on the work with women and their children in a holistic and integrated manner.
- Volunteer Program development and implementation.
- Alcohol and Drug CALD women's research project.
- Physical Activity grant that enables women and their children to participate in a wide range of physical activities.
- Emergency Relief funding.
- Aboriginal Grandparent Family Support program.

I thank WHS staff for their commitment to the delivery of high quality professional services, innovation and support for women, their children and families.

I also thank the Board for supporting the work of WHS by giving generously of their time and resources and working with staff to further the objectives of the organisation.

Ann Deanus
Chief Executive Officer

- * 45,000 contacts with women and families
- * more than 60 nationalities
- * serving Western Australia

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We are committed to transparency and accountability in our operations. A complete set of audited financial statements is available at our Annual General Meeting or on request.



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MEDICAL AND CLINICAL SERVICES

The Clinical service has specially trained doctors and nurses who provide health screening, information, diagnosis, treatment and counselling on a wide range of women's health issues. The client group are diverse and present with a range of complex health conditions that require time to resolve.

Advanced practice nurses provide information, assessment, referral and counselling services.

Most initial contacts are by telephone or email. Presenting problems are often complex and require a multi disciplinary approach including the use of interpreters.

The clinic works at full capacity with clients waiting up to six weeks for a new appointment. Emergency appointments are kept aside for urgent cases.

Trends for the past year included an increased number of both women seeking mental health services following discharge from government services and younger women presenting with sexually transmitted infections.

JING'S STORY

Jing is a university student attending from overseas. Jing heard about the service through her student liaison officer and presented to the clinic as a walk in.

Jing was worried about lumps she had felt on her external genitalia and the nurse identified them as genital warts.

Jing had become sexually active since arriving in Australia eight months earlier. She seemed to have very little awareness of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or the need for contraception or safer sexual practices. The nurse discussed these topics in detail and gave Jing written information to take away and read.

Jing returned the next afternoon for an appointment with a doctor. She received treatment for her genital warts, screening for STIs and contraception advice.

She returned to the clinic several times in the following month to receive her results, to check on the progress of her treatment and eventually to have implanon inserted as her contraception method of choice.

On her last visit Jing said that she felt cared for by the staff at WHS, which was very important to her as she had felt very alone with no family in Australia.





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MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A support service for women who have a mental illness and are caring for children.

Services include individual support, a variety of group activities, recreation and a children's group.

Individual support involves helping women to identify needs and supporting them in a range of areas including legal, financial, relationships, accommodation and mental health issues.

The weekly coffee morning is a popular group activity that runs during school terms. Women share their ideas and strategies, reducing their isolation. There are discussions and workshops on topics suggested by the women, such as nutrition, health issues, arts, parenting and self care. Meditation, creative writing and program planning have also been offered.

A school holiday program for families is organised during each holiday period. A walking group, access to Beatty Park Aquatic Centre, and a three day Mothers Day retreat to Rottneest were some of the recreational activities available to women and children.

Funkidz is a new group for kids aged 7-12 to foster friendships and support. They are able to participate in fun and sometimes challenging activities. During National Youth Week, MHCOP and ARAFMI Youth Services celebrated with an art exhibition at the YMCA youth facility in Leederville. High school aged youth participated in six art workshops culminating in the exhibition.

Core funding for the program comes from the Office of Mental Health, with additional funding for retreats and special projects from Lotterywest, the Town of Vincent and the Office for Children and Youth.

COUNSELLING

Professional counselling for women is short term and helps with depression, anxiety and panic attacks, relationships and past trauma.

There has been an increase in the number of women requiring longer term counselling, due to the seriousness and complicated nature of their problems. More clients now come from the northern metropolitan region, presumably because of the area's increased population.

As baby boomers age, there is a corresponding shift in the age mix of counselling clients. In 1998, the over 50 age group was 8% of clients; in 2006, this group was 35%. The trend is expected to continue as more baby boomers move into this age group. There is a marked difference in how these women view their lives and their expectations for their mental health, compared to women of this age in the last two decades.

More women are reporting workplace bullying. Reduced physical health is a primary factor in depression, stress and anxiety. More clients have been unable to receive appropriate treatment for their conditions or to find community services to support them, particularly those who are on their own. The lack of extended family support networks is also a major contributing factor to the development of mental health issues.

EDUCATION

Anxiety and panic attacks were the focus of two workshops in Northam and a Telehealth presentation. Nutrition and mental health were the topic of a talk for the Mental Health Community Outreach program. We hold monthly meetings with the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service, and the counsellors' network breakfast is held quarterly.





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- Our Aboriginal Grandparents service worked intensively with a core group of 41 families
- The total number of people we worked with during the past year was 318, aged 16 to 75
- 38 children under 16 yrs
- The top issues for clients were housing, respite, grief, welfare and family relationships.

ABORIGINAL GRANDPARENT FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

Supports Indigenous families where a grandparent is a primary carer.

This service provides support, counselling, advocacy, information sessions, and referral services. It also offers group activities, respite camps and peer support groups.

We work in a very non-threatening way, walking alongside people while they make their own decisions about their lives.

The people we work with are often exhausted by their experience of living in poverty. Grandparents are often looking after their own children, as well as grand children and great grand children. Most grandparents have no formal custody rights but are informally caring for children for long periods.

A stand out feature of families is the intergenerational impact of 'Stolen Generation' issues. Everyone is affected in some way.

Families often present with a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. This particularly relates to the process of constantly dealing with the encumbrance of government departments, policies and societal attitudes.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We build the capacity of individuals and families to take care of themselves. We also support groups and communities to pursue issues that are important to them.

We provide health information to women, including the Rural Telehealth Series, help agencies to work more effectively with marginalised women, and create physical activity opportunities for women and their children.

With the support of Lotterywest, Womens Health Services has developed a physical activity program. We purchased equipment such as bikes, yoga mats, fitballs and children's sporting equipment. The program also provides exercise classes to newly arrived migrant women and to a very active and enthusiastic Spanish seniors group.

We ran a 'learn how to ride a bike and learn how to ride a bike with a baby seat' workshop during Bike Week. The same event was repeated for the ASeTTS Afghan women's group. This time an interpreter was needed to relay the information, but there were many smiles as these determined women learnt a new skill and had lots of fun. Our thanks go out to our wonderful volunteers who make these days possible.

AWARD WINNER

The service won the 2005 Community Services Industry Award in Category 3 'Strengthening Communities'.

Information about the program model has been sought locally and internationally.

We have delivered presentations about the model at the WA Aboriginal Health Promotion Conference 2005 in Fremantle; the 'Building Bridges' Sexual Abuse Forum 2006 in Perth; and the 'Heal Our Spirit' Worldwide Conference 2006 in Canada.





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WOMEN IN SUBSTANCE EDUCATION (WISE)

Collaboration is a strong theme for WISE.

WISE provides individual counselling or group work for women concerned about their own, or someone else's, alcohol or other drug use. We also work in partnership with other agencies, such as the Palmerston Centre, to deliver the highly successful *Living with Ease* groups.

In addition to counselling we provide drama, art and sand play therapy at 122 Aberdeen Street and in our work at Bandyup and Boronia Women's prisons.

At the prisons, we offer pre-release support and welcome contact from the women on their return to the community. WISE provides education sessions and supervision to other agencies and is involved in working groups and forums.

PEPISU AND PEPISU CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

We offer a range of services to mothers who have issues with alcohol and other drugs, and to children who are living with parental substance use.

Some new initiatives this year include Baby Steps, a group for mothers and their babies. The youngest participant first attended when he was just 5 days old. A fortnightly group, it offers the latest strategies to enhance mother-child attachment and provide the best possible start to life. This unique program is run in partnership with the social work department at King Edward Hospital and Hearth.

In addition Ingrid Stotesbury developed the new ETC children's group. It uses creative expression, such as painting, clay work, movement and plenty of imagination to improve participants' self esteem. Initial evaluation suggests it is very effective.

CHILDREN ADD ENERGY

The mums and kids – including adolescents – tell us that they enjoy the family based events the most. While this has presented some challenges for the team, the increased participation of children and families at the centre has added a new energy to the whole service.

Who would have predicted that effective client planning could involve PEPISU staff coming to work in their pyjamas, eating pizza, playing statues and being inundated with 20+ children's enthusiastic opinions and ideas about past and future activities?

The Triple P party – Pizza, PJs and Planning – is just one example of the innovative approach to service delivery that has made this year so successful for the PEPISU program.

Thanks to the funders, the team – Jo, Fiona, Deisy, Ingrid, Esmeralda and Donna – and to the mothers and children who contribute so much to the program.

SHELLEY'S STORY

Shelley came to counselling with a long history of multiple drug and alcohol use and described a sense of increasing isolation and loss of meaning in her life.

Individual counselling provided a safe place for Shelley to look at the issue of problematic use and group work assisted her to feel more connected with others.

Shelley said a major benefit from the counselling was an increasing freedom from the shame she had experienced for decades. From this increasingly confident place Shelley made some major lifestyle changes and continues to access counselling when she wants a safe place to talk.

