



Leichhardt Women's
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Celebrating 50 Years





Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre

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Funded by NSW Health



Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) acknowledges and pays respect to the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We acknowledge the continuation of cultural and spiritual practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. LWCHC supports The Uluru Statement From the Heart.

LWCHC is committed to embracing diversity and eliminating all forms of discrimination in the provision of health services. LWCHC welcomes all women irrespective of ethnicity, mental health, history of suicidality, drug use, faith, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

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ABOUT US

Leichhardt Women's Health Centre (LWCHC) was Australia's first Women's Health Centre established in 1974 and has been a leader and innovator in the development and delivery of affordable, holistic, gender and trauma informed health care services for 50 years. We are an accredited service run by women for women. LWCHC is part of a network of women's health centres across NSW (Women's Health NSW).

Our Vision

All women in our community are

healthy
safe empowered
thriving

Our Purpose

Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre's (LWCHC) purpose is to provide our clients with a choice of high-quality professional health care, education and support services in an inclusive and safe environment.

Our Values

- Client-centred, trauma-informed practice
- Validating women's stories through empathy, trust and safety
- Working ethically and respectfully, through a feminist lens
- Embracing diversity and inclusivity
- Working collaboratively to build and maintain partnerships
- Championing social justice, equality and equity

"Fabulous find, such a relief to find a safe space for women's health. The admin staff were kind and caring. My doctor was patient and sensitive. I feel they really care" – LWCHC client



OUR CENTRE

The centre is funded by Sydney Local Health District (SLHD) and is a registered Public Benevolent Institution Charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and has been endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) since 2001.

Our multi-disciplinary team offers wrap-around health, education, and support services, including mixed-billing medical clinics specialising in women's health, complementary health clinics including acupuncture and naturopathy, generalist and drug & alcohol counselling, on-site and outreach health education programs, dance movement, yoga and other therapy groups, and community health education and support programs specifically for Vietnamese women. Our services emphasise preventative health and empower women to participate in their own informed health care and related life decisions, providing information that improves health literacy and promotes healthy lifestyle choices.

Our specialised state-wide service called Women Partners of Men who Have Sex with Men offers individual counselling and group support, as well as capacity building and training for other health professionals, health information and research and seeks to reduce stigma and influence health policy.

Our in-house partnerships include a registered psychologist and counselling for adult survivors of child sexual assault in partnership with Full Stop Australia.

We are a proactive presence in the community, partnering with other organisations to broaden our impact, integrate services, and empower women to improve their health, personal and social wellbeing, and safety. LWCHC further assists women to thrive and have meaningful, fulfilling lives through collaboration with government, non-government, business, health, welfare, education, justice and housing sectors.

LWCHC provides services across the inner west LGA and the wider community. While there are areas of affluence in the LGA there are also pockets of significant disadvantage, with the area experiencing significant challenges related to accessing housing and health services. This is due to a combination of high demand, scarcity of resources and high costs.

We offer continuity of care for women who are at risk of poorer health, or who have limited access to the mainstream health care system. Our priorities for access therefore include:

- Women with no or low income, or who are otherwise experiencing financial disadvantage, (including homelessness, and food insecurity);
- Women experiencing or escaping from domestic and family violence;
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women/ First Nations women;

- Culturally and linguistically diverse women, including refugees and women with interim visas;
- LGBTQIA+ women and non-binary women;
- Women living with disabilities;
- Women living with chronic and complex health conditions, including mental health conditions, drug/alcohol and other addictions, chronic pain, and HIV;
- Women with complex trauma, including those experiencing systemic racism and transgenerational trauma;
- Women with complex caring obligations.
- Women Partners of Men who Have Sex with Men.
- Women who have been subject to sexual violence as a child or adult or both.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



The past year has been a transformative period for LWCHC as we continued to advance our services, strengthen community ties, and celebrate our rich legacy in women's health. This report reflects the commitment of our Board, staff, and community partners to achieving sustainable growth and improved outcomes for the women we serve.

Board and Leadership Activities

The Board met ten times during the year, with additional monthly meetings held by the Financial Subcommittee to enhance financial oversight. This has been instrumental in streamlining processes and ensuring we maintain a clear financial roadmap. I want to extend thanks to all Board members, for their time, expertise, and dedication to LWCHC's vision and mission.

Staffing and Program Updates

This year saw the arrival of new staff, such as Kyla Lawson, who took on roles in health promotion and Program Coordinator for Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men and Anti-Violence Project Officer, enhancing our service capacity in critical areas. To maintain seamless operations, we also managed temporary coverage for roles affected by staff leave and welcomed Linda Bates as a locum naturopath, whose contributions were invaluable.

50th Anniversary Celebrations

LWCHC celebrated its 50th anniversary with a deeply meaningful art exhibition, *The Thread between Us*, held at the Leichhardt Library in March. This exhibition honoured the history and achievements of the centre since 1974, celebrating our feminist roots and community impact. Special events, such as Aboriginal Women's Weaving Workshops and guided tours, enriched the occasion, fostering community engagement and cultural exchange. We extend heartfelt thanks to all who participated and made this event a success, in particular I would like to thank Aunty Jenny Thomsen; The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, NSW Minister for Women, Seniors and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence; Councillor

Philippa Scott, Denele Crozier, Women's Health NSW; Richard Francis-Jones, FJC Studio; Naima, Centre client, Ses Salmond, Manager and the dance and smoking ceremony performed by Jannawi Dance Clan.

Expansion of Services and Infrastructure

Our commitment to improving service accessibility was underscored by the introduction of mixed billing for GP clinics, which generated additional income and bolstered our sustainable medical services. Significant enhancements to infrastructure included the replacement of our firewall in February, funded by the Strengthening Medicare GP Grant, safeguarding our digital security with up-to-date technology. Additionally, we initiated a



partnership with Purpose Accounting to support our financial management needs effectively.

Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men (WPMSM) Program

The WPMSM program continues to provide essential support and resources, expanding outreach through social media and online presence, particularly via a social media campaign that has elevated our online visibility. We launched a series of webinars, supported by evaluations to refine content and engagement. Kyla Lawson's leadership in networking and program presentations has bolstered our outreach, with the WPMSM newsletter and acceptance for a IUSTI Conference poster presentation abstract highlighting our dedication to sexual health advocacy and education.

Non-Fatal Strangulation and Acquired Brain Injury Initiatives

In partnership with Women's Health NSW and other stakeholders, we advanced training on non-fatal strangulation (NFS) and its health implications, particularly for survivors of sexual violence. This critical training included presentations to GPs and other healthcare providers, underscoring our commitment to improving healthcare responses for those affected by gender-based violence. We also expanded our referral pathways, now including Macquarie University's neuropsychology unit, ensuring that survivors receive comprehensive care. NFS also incorporates consensual sexual choking. LWCHC are increasing engagement and participation with youth and adolescent services to provide nonjudgemental harm minimisation education on the practice of consensual sexual choking.

Community Engagement and Networking

The year was marked by extensive networking efforts, with the LWCHC team engaging with organisations like Family Planning Australia, Sydney Women's Counselling Centre, and Positive Life to foster collaboration and drive service development.

Strategic Plan and Theory of Change

This year we also revised our Strategic Plan and Theory of Change, set for professional publication in time for the AGM. This five-year roadmap captures our priorities and aspirations, informed by comprehensive consultations and stakeholder feedback, positioning LWCHC to continue adapting to the evolving health landscape.

Future Directions

Our journey toward improving women's health continues to inspire and challenge us. We remain dedicated to expanding our services and ensuring that LWCHC remains a beacon of support for women's health, advocacy, and empowerment. With the ongoing development of our new website, made possible by Tamlyn Creative, we are enhancing access to our resources, further amplifying our impact.

In closing, I wish to thank our funders, including the NSW Ministry of Health, SLHD, and PHN, for their unwavering support. Heartfelt thanks also go to our dedicated staff, Board members, and volunteers for their expertise, commitment, and resilience. Together, we look forward to another year of growth, collaboration, and advocacy as we work to realise a healthier, more equitable future for all women.

Marta Vasquez
Chairperson

MANAGER'S REPORT



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Welcome to the celebrating 50 years edition of Leichhardt

Women's Community Health Centre's Annual Report for 2023-2024 and in recognition of our 50 years of service, I would like to thank the women activists from the Women's Liberation movement who founded Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC), Australia's first women's health centre. They had the vision to develop a constitution, register as a company, develop a funding submission, and talk to the Whitlam Government under the Community Health Program to establish a community women's health service. These pioneering women were successful and in 1973 received \$33,000 which allowed the doors of LWCHC to open in 1974 with queues of women lining up the street. This was the same year that the Rape Crisis Centre and Elsie's Women's Refuge were founded too. And none of this would have happened 50 years ago had it not been for the vision and the activism of the Women's Liberation Movement.

From humble beginnings in 1974 with a grant of \$33,000 to now in 2024 where there was a funding enhancement from the NSW Government to support sustainable investment in women's health centres (see funding boost announcement section). It means we can be here for the long term to continue to provide services to women in the community and respond further to

community need. Our women clients are our primary focus and responding to their needs and including lived experience voices in the co-development of services can only enrich our service.

Women's health centres keep women safe, keep women out of hospitals, and make a difference to women's lives every day. Providing services to thousands of women, the Centre's legacy is interwoven with stories of resilience, courage and the positive impact on women's lives. The work at LWCHC has saved women's lives. LWCHC has seen over 250,000 women over the last 50 years and has provided over 1,000,000 occasions of service. Thanks to NSW Health who have funded LWCHC since 1982. (Please refer to the 50th anniversary section).

Ethos remains true

Leichhardt Women's from the get-go took information, support and services to the community where it was needed and this remains the ethos of the centre today. The intention of the Leichhardt Women's has always been to empower women through information and service delivery in house, in the community (mobile info van in 1976), in community languages (Bitter Medicine Campaign and video on minor tranquilisers translated into five community languages (1983-1987), and to advocate to improve policy and legislation for women to eliminate gender bias in service delivery.

Outreach service delivery model

Outreach medical and nursing clinics were delivered to residents of Malabar Housing estates and the Deli Neighbourhood centre at Mascot in 1980s, providing access to services where transport and other infrastructure were not present. LWCHC is still

providing outreach clinics to communities who find it difficult to access mainstream services. With the SLHD, Leichhardt Women's is providing outreach nursing clinics at Waterloo Neighbourhood Centre, Canterbury Community Centre in Lakemba, Guthrie House, Dr Quan Ngo's clinic in Marrickville, Poet's Corner in Redfern, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre and Common Ground in Camperdown. The outreach service delivery model for community based cervical screening was accepted as a poster presentation for the Cancer Innovations Conference. (See Nursing Outreach Clinics section).

Outreach drug and alcohol counselling is provided at Guthrie House, We help ourselves New Beginnings and Detour House. Outreach community-based support groups for the Vietnamese community includes LWCHC's longest standing Vietnamese Social Support Group who were involved in a great initiative with SLHD Stepping on Program. (Please refer to the Outreach section Stepping on Program).

Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men (WPMSM)

This service has operated from LWCHC since 2001 and provides free and confidential counselling and support groups to women across NSW, who discover or suspect their male partners are sexually active with men. We provide professional development for health professionals. In 2023-2024 we have undertaken a number of strategies to increase the visibility of WPMSM service both for the women with lived experience, health professionals and stakeholders. The focus has been on making the website more user friendly, production of professional development webinars and in service

trainings, quarterly newsletter to our mailing list and social media campaigns. (Please refer to the separate section on WPMSM)

Sexual Violence and Non-fatal strangulation (NFS)

WHC's bring into focus the impacts of violence on women's health and wellbeing and wellbeing. The sexual violence and non-fatal strangulation and acquired brain injury, an innovative impactful initiative from Women's Health NSW. Thanks to Denele Crozier, CEO, Jackie McMillan, Senior Project Officer and Courtney Artridge for spearheading this important work and supporting our centre to create our own policies, protocols and local referral pathways, to ensure that women get the timely help they need. Our two GPs Dr Frances Chen and Dr Melissa Tang appeared in a video about non-fatal strangulation produced by Women's Health NSW. The implementation of NFS in the centre has created a specific Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) and Sexual Violence (SV) role in LWCHC, ensuring that all the health impacts of NFS, DFV and SV are attended to. (See separate section on NFS and acquired brain injury)

Staffing

Thanks to all the staff for their dedicated, trauma informed work with clients and the Centre operations. Staffing changes in the past year.

- Lara Goulding, Generalist and Women Partners Counsellor (20 March 2023- 17 May 2024)
- Lara Goulding, Women Partners Program Coordinator (20 March 2023 - 9 November 2023)
- Kyla Lawson, Women Partners Program Coordinator/Health Promotion Officer (February 2024 – current)

- Kyla Lawson, Anti-Violence Project Worker (May 2024 – current)
- Taylor Wolf, Assistant in Nursing (May 2024 – current)
- Taylor Wolf, Receptionist (February 2024 – current)
- Aushlesa Ghale, Receptionist (February 2024 – current)

We held a 15 year commemorative anniversary for Lisa Macdonald on 9 April 2024 with family and friends and colleagues at the Centre. Dr Lisa Macdonald worked as a General Practitioner at Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) for five years from 1998 to 2002 and was distinguished by her high-level skills and enthusiasm for wholistic, integrative health care and her passion for learning. Her gentleness, kindness, compassion and dedication to the clients of LWCHC was phenomenal. Her legacy lives on through the Lisa Macdonald Learning Fund through donations from FJC Studio.

Student placements

Investing in the next generation of practitioners is an ongoing important commitment. In the last financial year, we had the following student placements:

- 8 medical students
- 1 nursing student
- 1 clinical nutrition student
- 3 health science students

Thanks

Dedication and commitment of all staff to provide the trauma-informed, holistic care to clients and the best possible service responding to and being informed by the needs of the community we serve.

The dedicated Board members for their wisdom, support and guidance around good governance and strategic direction of the organisation. Special mention and thanks to Judy Tonkin, as Chairperson who stood down in November 2023 for her dedicated and tireless service to the organisation.

Thanks to Denele Crozier, CEO of Women's Health NSW, peak body of all the community-based women's health centres who is always there when we need her and who always advocates for our service model and encourages us to be the best women's health centre we can be.

Thanks to SquarePeg Studio in Marrickville for facilitating a jewellery making workshop (Treasured Heirloom for LWCHC and Guthrie House clients in November 2023).

Thanks to Dr Teresa Anderson, Chief Executive, SLHD for her letter congratulating LWCHC on reaching the significant milestone of 50 years of commitment to the vision of every woman having the right to affordable and effective health care.

Dr Ses Salmund PhD
LWCHC Manager

"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organisation, but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights." Gloria Steinem.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS AND STILL GOING STRONG!



Jannawi Dance Clan Smoking Ceremony



Jannawi Dance Clan Smoking Ceremony with The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Women, Seniors and the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) celebrated its 50th Anniversary with the official launch of **"The Thread Between Us"** Art Exhibition at Leichhardt Library on 6 March 2024, nearly 50 years to the day since its opening on International Women's Day on 8 March 1974. The 40 meticulously designed and curated panels paid tribute to five pioneering and innovative decades of serving diverse communities of women with the themes of **services**, **activism** and **connecting women**.

Proudly affirming its feminist heritage which continues to this day, the exhibit highlights how LWCHC has been

at the forefront of transforming health services from the development of specialist cultural, linguistic, inclusive support groups and services, to pivotal campaigns around access to abortion, birth control, health information, refuges, safe health care, and prevention of violence against women. LWCHC continues to support women to take control of their health, push boundaries and transform health services to better address and respond to the evolving needs of women.

The first panels showed a timeline of achievements and notable events from 1974 – 2024. Twelve panels showcased **Services**, seven panels highlighted

Activism, seven panels celebrated **Women** - the clients, staff and partner organisations. The last panels showed a re-design of our existing space to take the Centre into the future, accentuating the enduring relevance of Women's Health Centres and the importance of protecting women's services going forward.

LWCHC is grateful to so many who contributed to the 50th anniversary celebrations which ran through March. The highlights of the celebration include the following with thanks to:

- **More than 150 people** attended the launch with a



Jannawi Dance Clan Smoking Ceremony with Ses Salmond, Manager LWCHC



Jannawi Dance Clan Smoking Ceremony with Denele Crozier, CEO Women's Health NSW

diverse mix of clients and staff from the past and present, partner organisations, and inner west residents.

- **The Inner West Council Community History Grant** which provided \$5,000 towards the exhibition and the assistance of Amy Zar and Aleem Aleemullah from Council who provided invaluable expertise, assistance and had the exhibition digitised as part of the library collection.
- The Jannawi Dance Clan who began the Launch with a **Smoking Ceremony** and provided an inspiring **Dance performance** at the end.

- Aunty Jenny Thomsen - **Welcome to Country**
- **Guest Speakers** who shared their heartfelt stories and unique perspectives about the Centre:
 - Marta Vasquez, Chair, LWCHC Board
 - The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, NSW Minister for Women, Seniors and for The Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence
 - Philippa Scott, Councillor (Gulgadya Ward) Leichhardt IWC
 - Denele Crozier AM, Chief Executive Officer, WHNSW

- Richard Francis-Jones, Design Director, FJC Studio
- Naima – Client of LWCHC
- Dr Ses Salmond, Manager, LWCHC

“It was this rich history ... that opened the eyes of Shopfront students to the importance of the project.” Grace Dulawan, Engagement Co-ordinator, Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion



Left to Right: Ses Salmond, Manager LWCHC; The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Women; Marta Vasquez, LWCHC Board



Exhibition Panels with UTS Shopfront Socially Responsive Design Students

- **UTS Shopfront Socially Responsive Design students** who went above and beyond requirements to produce and curate the panels: Kimberly Bojo, Heidi Hakala, Zoe Lyons, Xinyue Wu, Claudine Yuen.

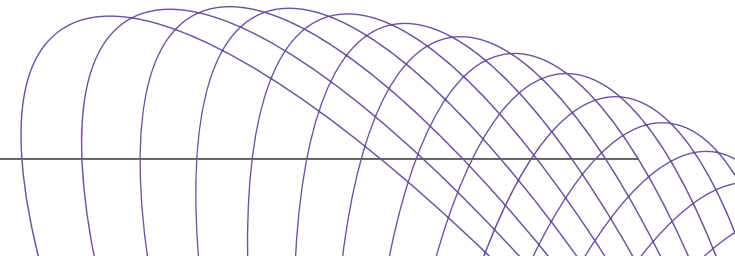
Four of the students attended the launch and were acknowledged for their extraordinary work.

- Hannan Dockrill Volunteer/paid designer who assisted in producing the **50th Anniversary Exhibition Video** (6 minutes) which highlights excerpts from three key historical audiovisual

productions, emphasising work with women from diverse backgrounds, sexual orientation, identities and those with complex needs. The source audio visuals were **“Bitter Medicine”** (1987 in 5 languages), **Women’s Health Women’s Lives** (1996), **“I Come From Vietnam”** (2010).

- **The Vietnamese Women’s Support Group**, LWCHC longest running group of 25 years visited the exhibition on 12 March 2024 with Thao Do, our Vietnamese Health Educator. The Vietnamese Support Group were excited to see how they had contributed to the Centre and how the Centre

allows the Vietnamese community to be involved in determining their own needs, including Vietnamese parenting groups, I come from Vietnam video acknowledging where they had come from and social and health education Vietnamese Support groups.





Exhibition Panels



Exhibition Panels with Ses Salmond, Manager LWCHC (left) and Donata Fiori (right)



Vietnamese Women's Support Group visiting LWCHC's 50th Anniversary Art Exhibition with Ses Salmond, Manager and Thao Do, Vietnamese Health Educator, LWCHC

- **Feedback from the Community** included wholehearted expressions of gratitude for the service from written evaluations, our Event Comment book and a letter of congratulations from Dr Teresa Anderson, Chief Executive Sydney Local Health District who administers our funding from NSW Health.
- **Special thanks to Ses Salmond** for her vision of the exhibit, the launch and Aboriginal weaving workshop (see separate section on this workshop) and for her tremendous work on all aspects of the celebration.
- **Many thanks** to Judy Tonkin and Lyn Bearlin for their support, feedback and work throughout the project and to staff's major contributions from Ashleigh Fleming, Megan Hunt, Donna Theodoridis, and Sharon Todd-Miller.
- Thanks to Dr Liz Bradshaw for initial curatorial advice, Dr Stephanie Short and Denise Fry for historical content and editing.
- Grateful acknowledgement to **Jamie James** for the **LWCHC 50th Anniversary photos.**

ABORIGINAL WEAVING WORKSHOP

An Aboriginal Weaving Workshop was held at Leichhardt Library on 13 March 2024 free to the public as part of our 50th anniversary art exhibition and tied into the theme of the exhibition "The Thread between Us".

Three Aboriginal women elders, Aunty Delphine Leslie, Aunty Nettie Dixon and Aunty Kerrie Whitmore held an Introductory Weaving Workshop for Women to make raffia earrings and start on a basket in honour of our 50th Anniversary celebration of Leichhardt Women's Community Health centre. 14 people attended, including a young girl and her father.

Women expressed delight and gratitude for a chance to attend something most said they wouldn't normally have access to and which they enjoyed so much.

The social impact of this workshop was immense:

- a cancer survivor who had moved from Northern NSW to Sydney for cancer treatment who had no money, reported that this workshop was so nurturing to her.
- a migrant woman who attended had used the LWCHC services from 1997 to 2005 and commented that the centre had saved her life.
- the facilitators feedback was that the women who attended were lonely and this workshop helped to break down social isolation.



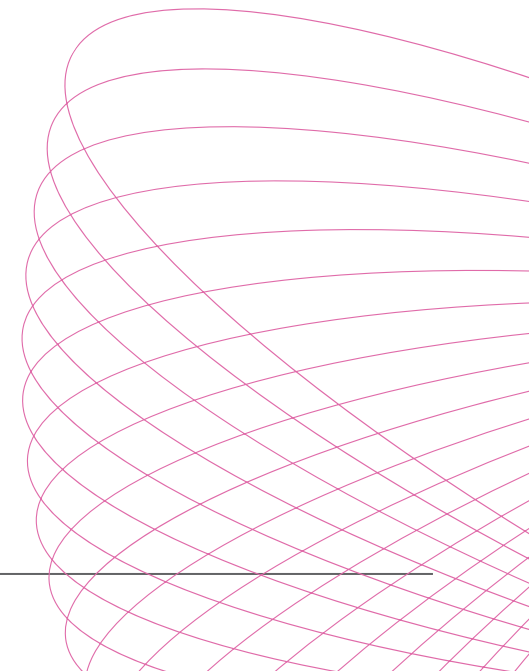
Aboriginal Weaving Group at Leichhardt Library – 13 March 2024



Aboriginal Weaving Group at Leichhardt Library – 13 March 2024



Raffia



CENTRE VISIT

BLUE MOUNTAINS WOMEN'S HEALTH & RESOURCE CENTRE VISIT LWCHC

Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) was delighted to host a visit from staff from Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre on 13 March 2024 which included lunch, cake and sharing ideas as well as a visit to the 50th anniversary of LWCHC art exhibition at Leichhardt Library.

The cross pollination of ideas between sister services allowed for innovative and creative ways to support each other in delivering the best services to women that reflect our local communities.



Blue Mountains Women's Health & Resource Centre staff visit to LWCHC – 13 March 2024



Blue Mountains Women's Health & Resource Centre staff visiting LWCHC's 50th Anniversary Exhibition at Leichhardt Library with Ses Salmond, Manager LWCHC – 13 March 2024

OUR FUNDING – SYDNEY LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT

In the 2023-24 financial year our funding was provided by Sydney Local Health District (SLHD), under the NSW Ministry of Health NGO Grants Program, for the following programs:

- Women's Health (WH),
- Alcohol and Other Drugs, and
- Population Health (HIV/AIDS).

The Women's Health Election commitment which arose from the Women's Health NSW Business Case (October 2022) led to an increase in funding to the women's health centres across NSW meant that the centre gained supplementary monies to advance services for women and to ensure sustainability.

Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) implemented a mixed model of billing in January 2024 to ensure a sustainable clinical service. The introduction of fees helps us maintain our capacity to help all women in need of our care.

Independent income received from donations, and one-off grants support enhanced service delivery through brokerage and continuing education and training for staff and clients, as well as directly subsidising some of the group programs.

WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM

In 2023-2024 there were 6,669 occasions of service and community health education provided to a total of 1,785 clients in the Women's Health (WH) program.

Client demographics:

- 43% of all women attending WH funded services were from CALD backgrounds, and 6% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
- 68% of women attending WH services were on pension/benefits.
- 86% of clients are currently residing in the SLHD.
- 47% of our clients are over 55 years and among this percentage the highest proportion are aged 65-69 years (15%). In the younger cohorts 10% are aged 25-29 years.
- 99% of our clients have complex chronic health care needs.

Practitioners in the WH funded clinical and counselling services recorded 22,688 presenting issues in the WHNSW Database. The highest presenting issues in WH sessions was emotional/mental health (35%), followed by physical health (25%), relationships (16%), legal/financial issues (6%), violence/abuse (5%), gynaecological/urogenital (4%) and social/cultural issues (4%).

There were 2,554 individual nursing, GP, health promotion activities and case management episodes of care, 908 naturopathic and acupuncture appointments and 587 counselling episodes of care.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS PROGRAM

The Drug and Alcohol Counsellor delivers counselling, health education and case management/referrals from a harm minimisation perspective to individuals and in group settings. This work is carried out both at the centre and in residential refuges/rehabilitation services and other NGO organisations.

The demographics of those attending the drug and alcohol service in the past year are as follows:

- 14% of women were from CALD backgrounds.
- 14% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander women.
- 80% of women were on pension/benefits.
- 89% of clients are currently residing in the SLHD.
- The highest proportion of clients were aged in the 30-39 age bracket at 39%, followed by 16% of the clients aged 25-29 years and 12% aged 50-54 years.

The two principal drugs of concern used by clients attending the service in the 2023-2024 financial year were methamphetamine (40%) and alcohol (36.5%).

POPULATION HEALTH (HIV/AIDS) – WOMEN PARTNERS OF MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN SERVICE

The Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men Service (WPMSM) is a state-wide service to NSW residents and has been successfully running for over 22 years at LWCHC. The Service has provided face-to-face counselling, support groups, training and resources for many women and health professionals throughout the years and will endeavour to continue providing this much needed service in NSW.

In the 2023-2024 financial year, there were 95 new clients to the service and 169 counselling appointments in person or via telehealth.

- The age range of clients attending the WPMSM service was highest at 25% in the 45-49 age bracket, followed by 19% of clients in the 30-34 age bracket and 15% aged 50-44 years.
- The majority of the counselling clients were born in Australia at 64%, followed by 7% from the UK and Ireland
- Most clients resided in the West Metro area at 25% followed by Southeast Metro at 13%.

There were 2,828 presenting issues canvassed in the counselling sessions: 44% were emotional and mental health issues and 38% were relationship issues.

The Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men Service continues to touch the lives of women throughout New South Wales and beyond, when they find themselves struggling with relationship changes they weren't expecting and don't know who to turn to.



50th Anniversary Event

Left to Right: Denele Crozer, CEO, Women's Health NSW; The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Women; Ses Salmond, Manager LWCHC, Kobi Shetty MP, Member for Balmain; Margherita Basile, Manager, Sydney Women's Counselling Centre; Lyn Bearlin, LWCHC Board; Marta Vasquez, LWCHC Board

"A really supportive environment for women – from health and mental well being" – LWCHC client

WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM



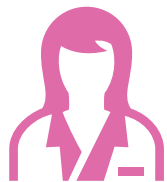
Over
6,669
occasions of service
to at least
1,785 clients

ALLIED HEALTH



908
naturopathic
and acupuncture
appointments

PRESENTING ISSUES



22,688
presenting issues in
the centre's statistical
database

COUNSELLING



587
counselling episodes
of care

FINANCIAL POSITION



68% of clients were on pension/
benefit or student



6% of clients had no
personal income



8% were casual or
part time employed

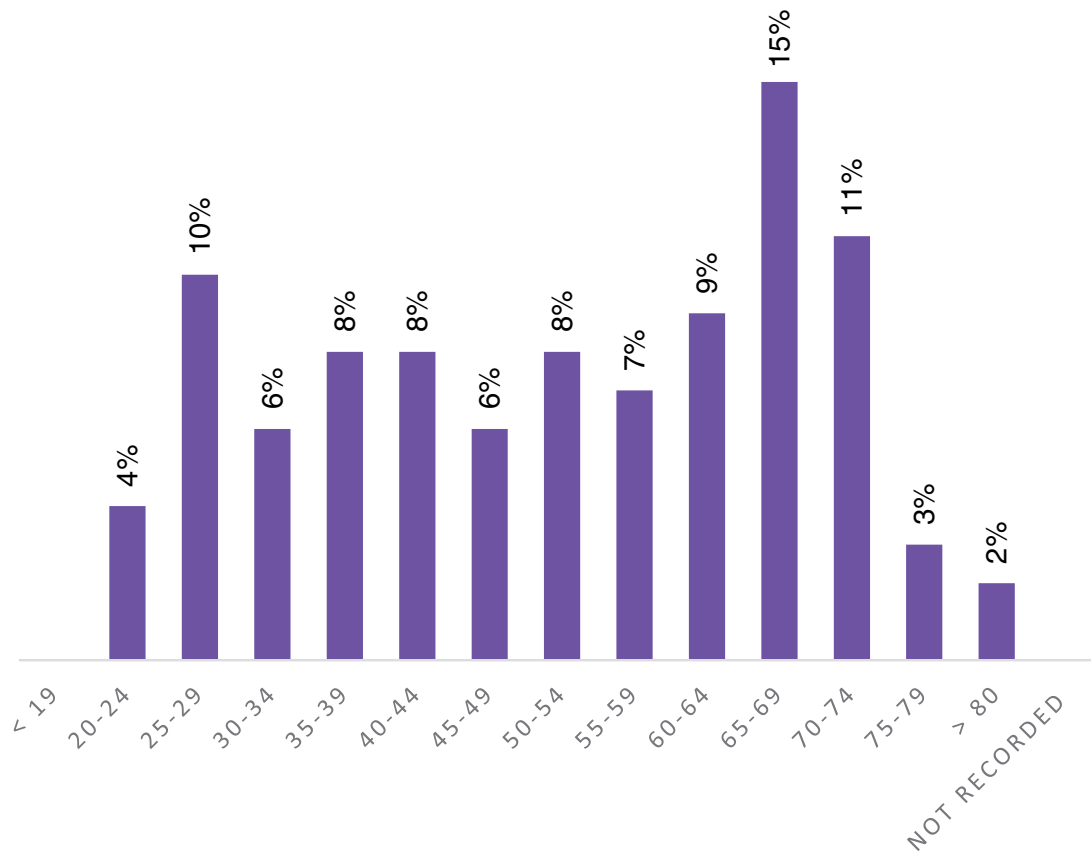
MEDICAL/NURSING



2,554

individual nursing, GP,
and case management
episodes of care

WOMEN'S HEALTH CLIENTS BY AGE GROUP



ETHNICITY OF WOMEN'S HEALTH CLIENTS

Australia	45%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	6%
NZ	3%
Pacific Islands	1%
UK + Ireland	4%
Central + South America	1%
Northern Europe	1%
Southern Europe	4%
Eastern Europe + Russia	1%
India, Nepal, etc.	2%
Southeast Asia	20%
Asia, South Central Asia, Tibet	2%
Middle East	3%
Africa	2%

DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM



A total of

137

clients attended

544

occasions of service

OUTREACH



55%

of clients seen were in residential rehabilitation settings

FINANCIAL POSITION



80%

of clients were on pension/benefit or student



3%

of clients had no personal income



5%

were casual or part time employed

EDUCATION



115

community education occasions of service provided

PRINCIPAL DRUG OF CHOICE

40%

methamphetamine

36.5%

alcohol

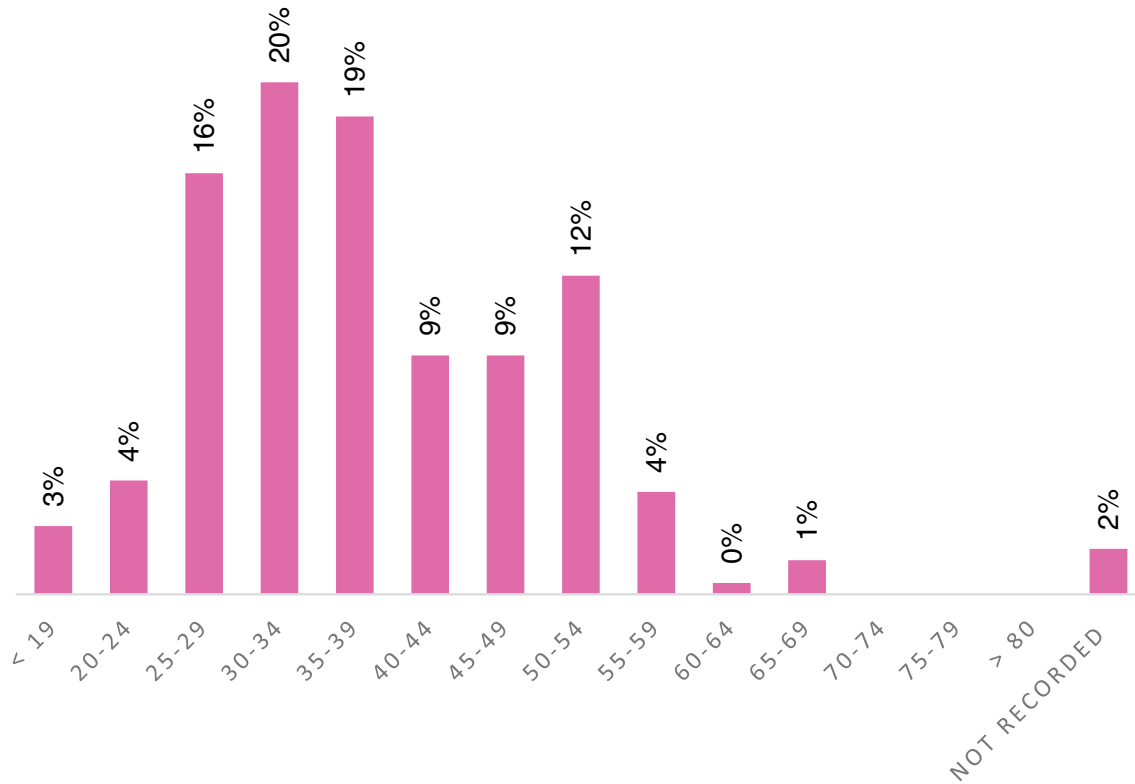
PRESENTING ISSUES



14,792

presenting issues in the centre's statistical database

DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM CLIENTS BY AGE GROUP



ETHNICITY OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM CLIENTS



WOMEN PARTNERS OF MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN SERVICE (WPMSM)

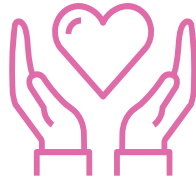
COUNSELLING



167

individual counselling occasions of service

NEW CLIENTS



95

new women accessed the service

SEXUAL HEALTH AWARENESS



100%

of clients reported increased awareness of sexual health and strategies to negotiate safe sex

SUPPORT GROUPS



43

occasions of attendance at support groups

WEBSITE



7,469

website unique visitors



8,262

resources distributed or accessed via the website

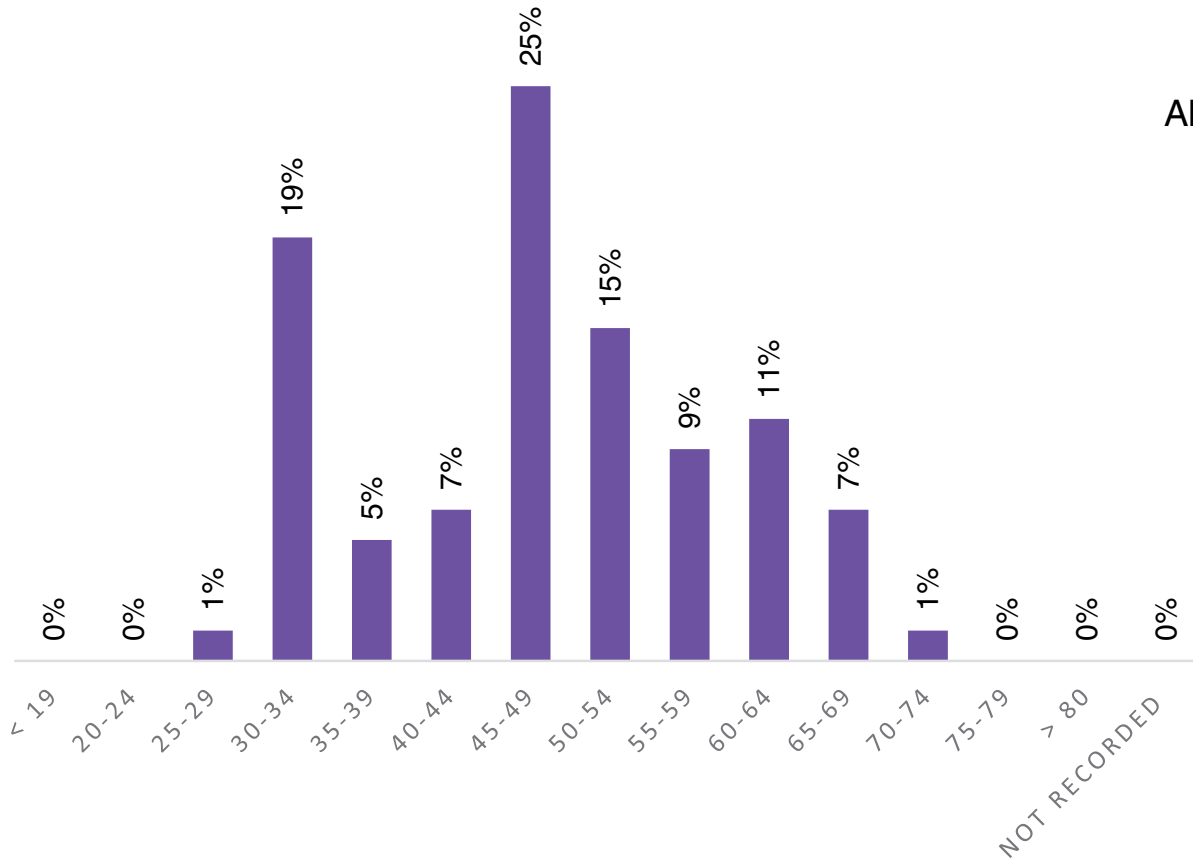
PRESENTING ISSUES



2,828

presenting issues in the centre's statistical database

WPMSM CLIENTS BY AGE GROUP



ETHNICITY OF WPMSM CLIENTS

Australia	64%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	1%
NZ	3%
UK + Ireland	7%
North America	3%
Central + South America	1%
Northern Europe	1%
Southern Europe	3%
India, Nepal, etc	1%
Southeast Asia	1%
Africa	9%

FUNDING BOOST ANNOUNCEMENT BY NSW HEALTH MINISTER

The NSW Minister of Health Ryan Park MP, NSW Minister for Women & Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Jodie Harrison MP, NSW Minister for Transport Jo Haylen MP, and Member for Balmain Kobi Shetty MP held a Press Conference at Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) on 12 September 2023 to announce the \$34.3 million funding over 4 years to the 20 NSW Women's Health Centres as per Scenario 2 in the Women's Health NSW Business Case.

Marta Vasquez attended the event on behalf of the LWCHC Board; Denele Crozier, CEO of Women's Health NSW spoke at the event along with Ses Salmond, Manager of LWCHC.

The funding boost means that centres will be able to:

- Increase staff numbers
- Put downward pressure on waitlists for counselling appointments
- Offer healthcare and counselling services to more women
- Adapt services to emerging demographic trends and population growth
- Adapt services to address the complexity of presenting health issues.



A ministerial delegation and media announcement by NSW Premier, The Hon. Chris Minns MP, NSW Minister of Health, Ryan Park MP and the NSW Minister for Women, Seniors and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault, Jodie Harrison MP at LWCHC on the investment in women's health centres occurred on 7 March 2024. The total allocation over four years to LWCHC will be \$1,221,000 ex gst. The ministerial delegation and policy advisors requested a tour of the Centre to meet staff and learn more about the services.

Funding Boost Announcement at LWCHC - 12 September 2023
Left to Right: Denele Crozier, CEO Women's Health NSW; **Ses Salmond**, Manager LWCHC; **The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP**, Minister for Women, Seniors and the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; **The Hon. Ryan Park MP**, Minister for Health; **The Hon. Jo Haylen MP**, Minister for Transport; **Kobi Shetty MP**, Member for Balmain.



Community Info Van, 1979 – Donata Fiori, first bilingual LWCHC worker providing information to women in the local community

**‘When women
can’t come to
Leichhardt,**

Leichhardt

goes to

women.’

**Hazel Hawke – 8 March 1999
LWCHC 25th Anniversary Speech**

COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION (OUTREACH)

NURSING OUTREACH CLINICS

In partnership with Sydney Local Health District Priority Populations Program, LWCHC Women's Health Nurse Comfort Danquah raised awareness and uptake of the self-collection Cervical Screening Test (CST) and breast screening in community outreach settings at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Common Ground, Guthrie House, Redfern's Poet's Corner and Women and Girls Emergency Centre. Cultural Support Workers (CSWs) and a female Senior Aboriginal Health Worker (SAHW) enhanced cultural safety and patient navigation.

Cervical self-collection was a game changer in helping those who often do not access mainstream services to feel empowered to collect their own sample. This collaboration has supported women from priority populations to access care.

This community outreach screening work was accepted as a poster presentation at the Cancer Innovations Conference in August 2023 in Sydney entitled Community Based Cancer Screening: improving access for priority populations.



Left to Right: Comfort Danquah, LWCHC Nurse and Ana Romero, SLHD Women's Health Program Manager – August 2023

STEPPING ON PROGRAM FOR VIETNAMESE WOMEN

Thao Do, LWCHC's Vietnamese Health Educator, worked with Jennie Vien (Diversity Programs & Strategy Hub, Population Health) and Trish Lynch (Health Promotion Unit) from Sydney Local Health District to form a working partnership to run a **Stepping On Program** for Vietnamese women in July 2023 for eight (8) sessions at Campsie Library.

The program is all about building confidence and reducing falls for people over 65 years of age and covered a range of topics including falls and risks, strength and balance exercises, home hazards, safe footwear, vision and falls, safety in public places, community mobility, coping after a fall and understanding how to initiate a medication review.

Twenty (20) Vietnamese women attended and 19 completed the program. All participants enjoyed the sessions as they learned new skills, increased their knowledge, and built the confidence to stay active and independent.

The participants have stated that they would highly recommend the program to their friends and family.

"After participating in the Stepping On program and persistently practicing every day, I now no longer stumble like before. I feel much more confident when walking and living alone."

- Ms Ut Nguyen, participant



Stepping On Program for Vietnamese Women – July 2023



NIA Class at Annandale Community Centre – French Flair

'FRENCH FLAIR' NIA DANCE MOVEMENT GROUP

Inspired by the up-coming Paris Olympics, the Nia Dance Movement Group led by Sharon Todd- Miller, Dance Movement Therapist enthusiastically responded to the option of French dress-ups for a session. Add some very French music and we were transported to Paris!

Nia (and incorporating Dance Therapy) is a mindful and restorative movement practice which uses many forms of social engagement to create a safe and supportive space for healing of distress, trauma and challenging life circumstances. This includes use of group rhythm, creative expression and improvisation, circle dancing, the structure of choreography, singing/sounding, humour, playfulness, body awareness, mindfulness, relaxation and use of select music in the therapeutic mix.

Van De Kolk's book "The Body Keeps the Score" (2014) helped underpin the value of rhythm and dance in settling the nervous system from a neuroscientific perspective as did the work of Amber Gray (2017) and Deb Dana (2018) in their work with the Polyvagal nerve theory.

References:

- Van de Kolk, B. (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, mind and body in the healing of trauma*. NY Viking.
- Porges, S.; Carter, S.; (2017) *Polyvagal Theory and the Social Engagement System: Neurophysiological bridge between connectedness and health*.in *Complementary and Integrative Treatments in Psychiatric Practice*.
- Gray, A (2017) *Polyvagal-informed dance/movement therapy for trauma: a global perspective* *American Journal of Dance Therapy* 39, 43-46.
- Dana, D. (2018) *The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy: Engaging the Rhythm* WW Norton.

WOMEN PARTNERS OF MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN SERVICE

Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men Service (WPMSM) has continued to strengthen its access to services for those with lived experience and in doing so can be immediately agile to this client feedback. The WPMSM service has expanded its reach in its health promotion and education and networking opportunities to ensure that clients, services, and health professionals are aware of our statewide service. The increased visibility through social media campaigns, women partners website and print media and targeted digital banners to the women partners and their male partners has been highly effective at directing important health promotion messages to both women partners and their male partners.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

WPMSM piloted targeted health promotion campaigns aimed at reducing heterosexual HIV transmission. LOUD Communications, Pink Media and WPMSM developed the advertising campaigns in consultation with Population Health. The Grindr targeted banner displayed *Isn't it time she knew* and the women's lived experience targeted on Mamamia and Star Observer displayed the banner *Is your husband gay?*

The industry standard Click Through Rate (CTR) is 0.05%, any higher percentage demonstrates strong engagement and positive ad placement.

First media campaign results:

- The Grindr ad received 0.7% CTR with 166,667 impressions
- Mamamia received 0.32% CTR with 3,500 impressions
- The Star Observer 0.08% CTR, with 3,500 impressions
- "Is your husband gay" broad targeting received 0.07% CTR with 800,000 impressions
- A retargeting of audience attracted 0.9% CTR with 375,000 impressions

This equals 1,348,667 total impressions.

WPMSM "Is your husband gay? Health promotion campaigns targeting female partners of Men who have Sex with Men" Abstract was accepted by the ASHM/ IUSTI 2024 conference for a poster presentation.

Need support?
Call us.



SOCIAL MEDIA

WPMSM Facebook page has been revitalised and made visible, and the page has 1,000 likes and 1,000 followers currently.

WEBSITE

WPMSM website numbers have engaged 8,300 users. WPMSM website has been Google translated into Arabic 5 times, Chinese 6 times and Hindi 3 times. WPMSM website visibility has increased significantly with finessed Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

Google results:

- Is my husband gay Australia #7 result
- Is my husband gay NSW: #2 results
- Is my husband gay counselling: #1
- Is my husband gay support: #1

"I feel incredibly blessed that this service exists and I can't imagine going through my experience without it" – Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men Service Client

Is your husband gay?
You are not alone.
Find out more.

Isn't it time she knew?
Find out more.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Further Sexual Health information including the benefits of comprehensive sexual health testing has been incorporated into several pages of the website. Now not only does WPMSM have the HIV Landing page, but information on the "About" and WPMSM landing page have also incorporated this information. The data on those who have accessed this Sexual Health information is as follows: 1,037 views of the HIV Landing Page, an additional 6270 views who visited WPMSM landing page and 1,158 views of the About page, have now been provided sexual health information.

WPMSM QUARTERLY NEWSLETTERS AND MAILING LIST

WPMSM have restarted quarterly newsletters with the first being published in June 2024, with 10 organizations currently receiving this newsletter.

RESEARCH

Women Partners of Men who have Sex with Men Service (WPMSM) are in the process of creating a formalised research agreement with UTS, which includes a multi-stakeholder commentary piece as a starting point. It is anticipated that Western Sydney Sexual Health Service plus additional CALD community and health organisations may form a part of this 3-part research plan.



SEXUAL VIOLENCE PROGRAM – NON-FATAL STRANGULATION (NFS) AND ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

In this reporting period our staff have improved their knowledge of, and readiness to respond to, non-fatal strangulation, sexual choking, and acquired brain injury. This was done through one round of face-to-face training provided by our peak body, Women's Health NSW, under the Sexual Violence Project Fund. The project, *Local pathways for victims and survivors of sexual assault related non-fatal strangulation and acquired brain injury*, is a statewide initiative designed to support and strengthen professional understanding and local capacity to respond to sexual assault-related non-fatal strangulation and acquired brain injury

The two-year project, which includes a dedicated site coordinator here at the centre, has also seen us engage with local services to begin building our own multidisciplinary referral pathway. This referral pathway and related organisational protocols will help us improve responses to any women we see who have experienced strangulation, who engage in sexual choking, or who may have an acquired brain injury. The project also includes a dedicated online learning hub, *It Left No Marks*: www.itleftnomarks.com.au

At LWCHC we have made our site coordinator the Anti-Violence Project Officer (AVPO). The AVPO is responsible for updating the LWCHC's Domestic and family violence policy to include sexual violence more extensively, developing specific protocols and practice manuals in consultation with staff, and expanding service-wide screening tools, including one for strangulation and sexual choking.



At the conclusion of this two-year project, the AVPO will transition into a case manager position with the capacity to support a full caseload of women requiring health-specific needs following non-fatal strangulation.

With the project resources indicating sexual choking is particularly prevalent among younger cohorts, LWCHC have prioritised raising awareness and providing health promotion to adolescents and young people. Following a train-the-trainer session for site coordinators provided by Women's Health NSW, the AVPO has developed a plan that will include training, in-service presentations, and networking with local organisations that work with adolescents and young people.

It is hoped that increasing LWCHC's reach with adolescent specific services will drive increased engagement and presentation by young people at LWCHC relating to their sexual health and wellbeing. This is an evolving space.

NO MORE: NATIONAL RALLY AGAINST VIOLENCE

On 27 April 2024, the Sydney's **No More: National Rally Against Violence** was held, as part of a wider national stand against the increasing violence against women, and in particular, the gendered attacks of the Bondi's Westfield stabbings. Eleven rallies were held nationwide and were attended by thousands.

Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre (LWCHC) staff attended this rally as part of the centre's commitment to safety and wellbeing of women, and to take a stand against all forms of violence and discrimination against those who identify as women.



LWCHC Staff at the No More National Rally Against Violence – 27 April 2024

BUILDING RE-DESIGN - FJC STUDIO

FJC Studio is LWCHC's principal corporate sponsor through the Lisa Macdonald Learning Fund and have worked with Centre staff over the past year to determine service and client needs in a building re-design vision for LWCHC.

The design team at FJC Studio prepared a building re-design vision to take LWCHC into our next 50 years of service delivery which was showcased in our 50th anniversary art exhibition and depicted in the graphic below on the right-hand side.

The Centre is exceptionally grateful for this support as there is currently not enough room in the building for all our service provision and counselling space for the organisation is a pressing issue.

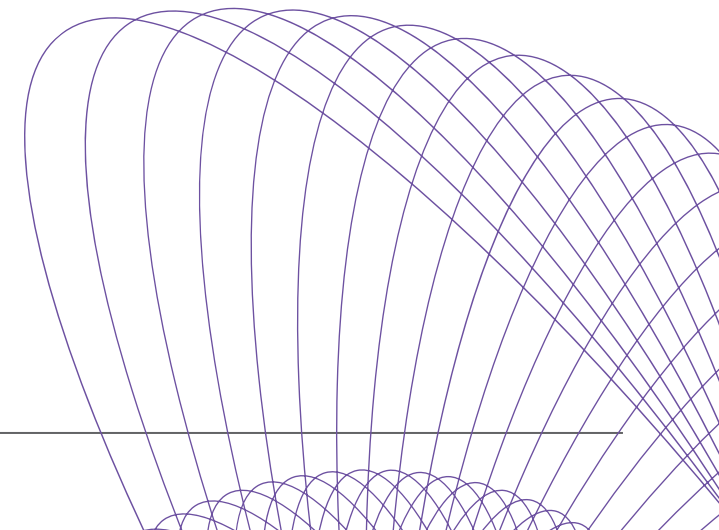


OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Centre has formed strong partnerships with other women's services to establish a strong community of practice. The success and enduring relevance of LWCHC can, in part, be attributed to the support and collaborative efforts of key individuals and partner organisations, without whom LWCHC would not have achieved the impact it has today.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our partners and member organisations for their generous contributions and support throughout the years. Their dedication to women's health has allowed us to expand our services and reach more women in need than ever before.

- Women's Health NSW
- Inner West Council
- FJC Studio
- Guthrie House
- We Help Ourselves (WHOs) – New Beginnings
- Detour House
- Full Stop Australia
- Mindful Therapy
- Kathleen York House
- Pozhet (Heterosexual HIV service)
- Positive Life NSW
- ACON
- Canterbury City Community Centre
- Sydney Vietnamese Workers Interagency
- Community and Cultural Connections Inc
- Network of Alcohol & Other Drugs Agencies (NADA)
- Domestic Violence NSW



FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Victoria Thompson,
Treasurer

The financial records for Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre have been prepared as at 30 June 2024.

The special purpose financial statements have been prepared to meet the reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

The financial statements have been audited by Byrons Audit Pty Ltd and reviewed by the Board.

No unadjusted audit issues are noted by Byrons Audit Pty Ltd.

Leichhardt Women's Health Centre Incorporated

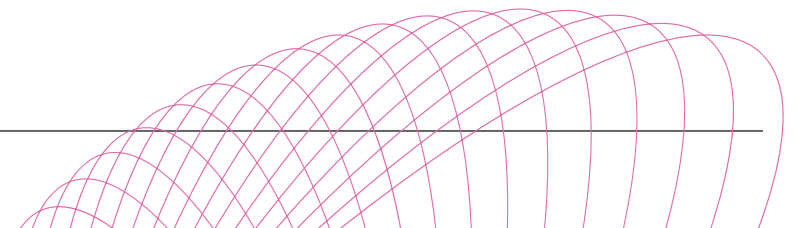
ABN 54 497 880 851

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

		2024	2023
	Note	\$	\$
Revenue	3.	1,626,508	1,402,229
Interest Income	4.	36,460	22,314
Other income		59,594	85,303
Employee benefits expense		(1,230,738)	(962,758)
Depreciation expense		(41,277)	(45,432)
Other expenses	5.	(336,023)	(497,695)
Finance expenses	4.	(18,032)	(6,848)
Surplus/(Deficit) before income tax		96,492	(2,887)
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		96,492	(2,887)



Young Women's Mural Project 2003 on LWCHC's side wall on Cary Street





Leichhardt Women's
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Celebrating 50 Years

Email: info@lwchc.org.au
Website: lwchc.org.au
Tel: 9560 3011
55 Thornley St
Leichhardt NSW 2040

Funded by NSW Health

We are a Public Benevolent Institution and
donations are tax deductible

