



WHLM Strategic Plan

2018-2020



This plan was developed from the ideas, aspirations, reflections and needs of the leaders of the organisation and its networks in during the second half of 2017.

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Our Purpose:

The health, wellbeing and equity of Loddon Mallee women

Women's Health Loddon Mallee was established in 1978 as the regional women's health service in the rural Loddon Mallee region. WHLM is a not for profit health promotion charity run by women for women.

OUR VISION:

Health, wellbeing and equity for women of the Loddon Mallee region

OUR MISSION:

To foster a culture of gender equity that underpins health and wellbeing for women within the Loddon Mallee region.



Our Values:

To operate within a feminist framework that aspires to the following core values:

1. RESPECT

- Listen to understand, seek to be understood
- Honest and authentic in everything we do
- Caring and concerned (maybe empathetic?) about women in our region

2. COURAGE

- Show leadership on issues that are important to Loddon Mallee women
- Empower and enable change to benefit women
- Innovative solutions to complex social problems
- Influencing decision makers to create equity
- Accountable for what we say we will do
- Understanding (and communicating?) "herstory"

3. DIVERSITY

- Understanding Loddon Mallee communities
- Be inclusive and welcoming of all women
- Recognise and celebrate difference
- Value the voices of women to lead and influence change



Our Key Focus Areas:

Our Strategic Plan outlines 4 areas of strategic focus that will assist us to respond creatively and with purpose to the challenges and opportunities of operating successfully as a regional women's health organisation between 2018 and 2020.

Our four key areas of focus for the next three years are to:

1. Enhance women's health and wellbeing
2. Develop partnerships and relationships to achieve gender equity
3. Strengthen the position of women in our communities to take on leadership roles
4. Strategically position WHLM as a driver of change

Our organisation focuses on these priority health areas to assist women to be healthier and more in control of their lives, particularly in the areas of:

- Gender equity
- Prevention of violence against women
- Sexual and reproductive health

Overall, Gender equality and its transformative practices, policies and actions is the central element of our work and organisation, and underpins and drives all areas of action.



Our Outcomes:

- ★ Participation in a diverse range of initiatives that underpin health, wellbeing and equity for the LM region

- ★ A strong regional profile that positions WHLM as the expert on women's health and wellbeing
- ★ A strong, robust organisation that is financially sustainable



The health, wellbeing and equity of Loddon Mallee Women



- ★ Feminist frameworks for all municipal health & wellbeing plans across the LM region
- ★ Improved health outcomes in LGA social indicators
- ★ Wider accessibility to information, support and services across the LM region for all women

- ★ A gender lens actively used by all WHLM stakeholders
- ★ Behavioural and structural change to move towards gender equity
- ★ Range of partnerships implementing quality gender equity initiatives

- ★ 50% representation on boards and in Executive role across the LM region
- ★ Programs established to build the capacity of a diverse range of women to take on leadership roles
- ★ An increase in the number of LM women being recognised across a range of award programs

Our Role:

WHLM recognises that women's health is determined by the complex relationship between the physical, social, emotional, cultural, environmental and economic aspects of their lives.

Both sex and gender influence health, resulting in specific outcomes for women and a need for a gendered response to health service provision.

We focus on understanding and working towards **building health** rather than curing illness. The focus is therefore on **prevention**.

WHLM recognises that women are a diverse group and have a **variety of needs, circumstances and aspirations that affect their lives and their health**. We understand and respect the differences caused by age, culture, ability, sexuality, geography, religion/faith, politics, class, education and other circumstances.

We have a commitment to working towards more **equitable distribution of power and resources to women**. Through gender transformative practice WHLM aims to enhance gender equality by changing the way communities view, value and assign roles to women and men. WHLM seeks to redefine harmful gender norms and develop and strengthen equitable gender roles and relationships.

We are interested in **advocating for change for ALL women** and direct services, support and programs towards those who are **disadvantaged and marginalised**.



Our Role:

WHLM focuses its work on creating change along a continuum of impact on people. We allocate resources and design programs that support individuals, build stronger communities, address social norms and build health public policy.

Societal

Social structures are gender equitable, assume positive roles for women and are structured to address equity challenges.

Community

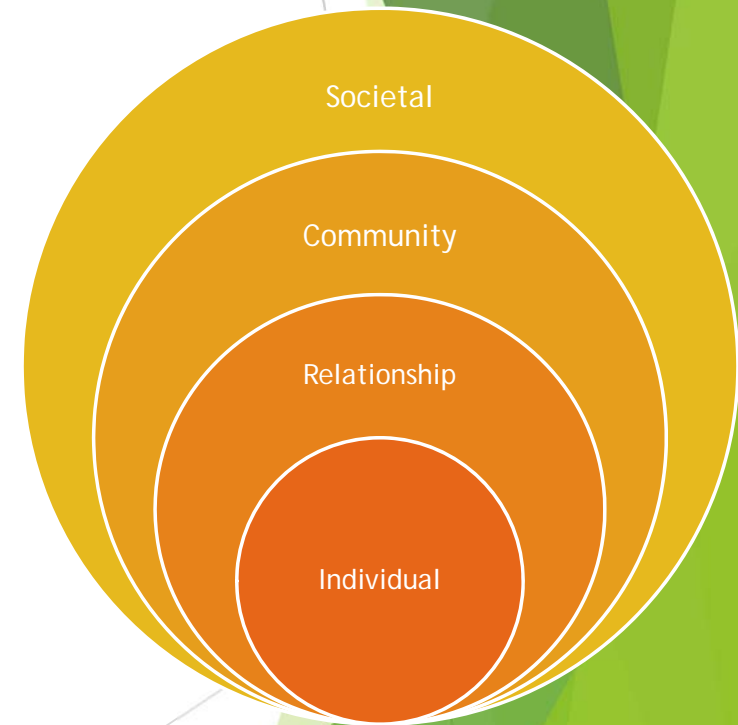
Opportunities exist for women to participate, lead, learn and work.

Relationships

Social norms and culture are more conducive to women achieving their potential – respect, non-rigid gender stereotypes, access to opportunities and services.

Individual

Women are healthier and more in control of their lives.



(Dahlberg & Krug 2002)

Achieving Change:

To be successful and sustainable WHLM will be required to step up to a changed model of operation.

There are approximately 150,000 women in the Loddon Mallee. This is twice the number of women than lived in the region when the organisation started some 35 years ago. Most women live in the cities of Bendigo and Mildura. Reaching out to service women's needs across a large physical area with a significant number of small rural and remote towns remains a constant challenge.

WHLM has been able to act as an effective niche organisation with a regional purpose for many years. Three factors now threaten the organisations capacity to act in women's health interests:

- ▶ the Federal and State policy drivers that splits funds for women's health through other health networks and programs
- ▶ the growing competition from other larger service providers who fit the government preferred scenario of amalgamation and sector reform
- ▶ the potential that such providers will service regional clients from a mindset and location at odds with regional needs

This could see women's health regional initiatives swallowed up, on a diminished base of funding, dominated by other voices and without effective regional and local focus.

However there are number of options that can contribute to our sustainability.



Sustainability:

The long established network of Victorian regional women's health organisations has commenced discussions with the strategic aim of influencing and countering these sector changes, and to pool knowledge and resources to innovate service delivery.

The gender equality approach brings a unique contribution to the planning of women's health and wellbeing services. We continue to partner with many other organisations to shape their policy and service delivery. The gender equality approach and the accumulated evidence base creates a strong foundation for our increased influence and reputation.

WHLM's organisation of the successful Violence Prevention - its everybody's business conference (Oct 2014) demonstrates the growing social and community willingness and capacity to organise smart, integrated responses to the prevention of domestic violence.

Social media provides opportunities to extend the reach of the organisation, its programs and ideas to a greater diversity of women. Social media provides a platform for women to advocate, self-organise, lead and speak in bold new ways.

And the leadership of the organisation has the appetite to invest in achieving more diverse funding streams.

