

Annual Report

Gippsland Women's Health 2023-2024



Shaping
Equality
& Respect



Acknowledgements

Gippsland Women's Health acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of country and pay our respects to Elders past and present for they hold the stories, traditions and culture.

Gippsland Women's Health acknowledges that sovereignty has never been ceded and commits to respectful truth telling and working in partnership to improve the health and well-being and security and safety of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Gippsland Women's Health acknowledges and recognises the women and children who have died or been traumatised as a result of gendered and family violence and those who continue to live with violence.

Gippsland Women's Health acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



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Our Year at a Glance

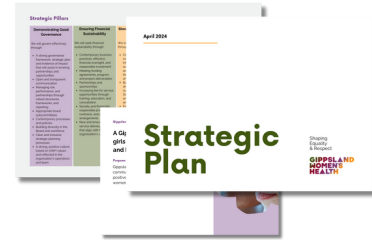
INITIATIVE LAUNCH

Launched “Men in Leadership - the Buck Stops with Us” partnership initiative



Launched our **2024-2026 Strategic Plan**

Click on the image to view the strategic plan



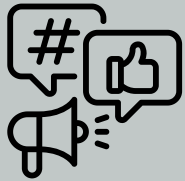
RECOGNITION

16 Days of Activism: Let's Chat Gippsland campaign was **recognised in Victorian Parliament** by Minister for Women, Natalie Hutchins



GROWING AUDIENCE

Social media audience of **6,566** reaching an average audience of **15,120** per month



INCREASED ATTENDANCE

A **35% increase** from 2023 in attendees **at the annual SRH Forum**



WEBSITE AND RESOURCES



28,120 website visits and **4,344** resource website downloads

MAJOR PROJECTS

Successful **recipient of 3 major grants** from the WorkSafe WorkWell Respect Fund, eSafety Commissioner and the Office for Women - Women in Energy

WOMEN IN ENERGY

eAware
Women & Girls' Online Safety

OUR EQUAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT.
Ending work-related gendered violence and sexual harassment.

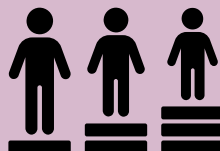
IN THE COMMUNITY



Connected with more than **3,000** Gippslanders

EMPLOYEE POLICES

Adoption of **contemporary employee policies** that further advance women's well-being and equity



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Provided workforce training and community learning to over **500** individuals



Message from the Chair



Jessica Saunders, Board Chair

It has been another eventful year for Gippsland Women's Health. One need only briefly glance across our impactful social media channels or our updated website to obtain an insight into the breadth of our work. But of course, I invite you to delve deeper than that!

The Board is immensely appreciative of the partnerships and collaborations that have allowed Gippsland Women's Health to further develop our work, explore new opportunities and further increase the community's understanding of our purpose and strategy. The impact of our work has been clearly demonstrated in the swelling of our membership and increased interest from women interested in applying for positions on our Board, leading up to the Annual General Meeting. Thank you to all the Gippsland women who have made enquiries and submitted applications, I wish you all well.

The Board continues its commitment to supporting the organisation and to good governance.

As a long-standing predecessor so eloquently described it in a past annual report, "governance is about how an organisation behaves and interacts both within the organisation and with others outside of it".

For many years, Gippsland Women's Health's primary audience consisted of women in Central Gippsland. There has been a huge change in culture at Gippsland Women's Health, with a move to remote working and the learnings from our 30th Birthday Roadshow across Gippsland. With an acknowledgement of intersectionality, inclusivity and a clear objective to engage with men in our prevention of violence and health promotion work, the need to change was recognised.

In order to progress gender equity in Gippsland and to achieve the aims of our core work, the GWH membership voted in favour of changes to our constitution at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. The new constitution was accepted by Consumer Affairs in January 2024, resulting in changes to governance and membership, while still upholding organisational integrity. This included clarification regarding office bearers, an inclusive definition of 'individual member' and new categories of membership. Gippsland Women's Health now offers associate memberships to allow staff employed by the organisation and other interested parties, who do not meet the requirements for general membership, to be eligible for membership, but not have the right to vote or stand for election for Board positions.

Message from the Chair

In terms of our internal governance, much work is being done to ensure there is a clear roadmap for the Board's work. In May, I attended an Australian Institute of Company Directors briefing on its latest Not for Profit (NFP) Governance & Performance Study entitled 'Governance at a Tipping Point'. The key takeaways were the increasing time NFP directors - the majority in a volunteer capacity - are spending on governance of their NFP and the challenging financial environment in which NFPs currently operate.

As an NFP Board, one of the key challenges we continue to face at Gippsland Women's Health is the responsibility to ensure adequate funding is available to continue our efforts in primary prevention, community campaigns and training to organisations, stakeholders and communities to understand the drivers of gendered violence and develop the skills to collaborate on eliminating violence. Some key work is currently focused on how we adequately prepare for funding uncertainty and increasing our options.

In the past four years of my Board membership, we have had the development of a sophisticated governance framework, including the creation of a calendar of obligations, risk register and a new online portal for Board documents. A further step has been the creation of a Governance, Risk & Evaluation Lead position to further embed strong governance across the organisation and I am very pleased

this role will contribute to the Board's future planning. This is an excellent investment by the organisation and demonstrates the increasing governance burden on NFPs that must be self-funded, despite the reporting requirements placed on us by our funders.

Our Board continues to evolve. This amazing group of women are progressing in their careers, completing study, playing sport and continue to juggle their day jobs and families with the increasing work of our Board! Thank you for your commitment and your time.



Golden Beach,
Wellington
Shire

During the year our Chair, Emily Harris, tendered her resignation from the Board in order to pursue a GWH staff position. On behalf of the Board of Management of GWH, I warmly acknowledge Emily's dedicated work and mindful leadership as our Chair and thank her for the work done leading our organisation. We are so glad that Emily will stay with GWH in the Manager Health Promotion and Prevention role and continue her commitment to improve health literacy for women and girls in Gippsland. Thank you Em.

Message from the Chair

Another departure was our Treasurer Jenny O'Neill who moved away from Gippsland mid year. Jenny's "black hat thinking" and ability to identify potential risks has set a high standard for the broader Board to uphold. I particularly wish to commend Jenny's approach to inclusive leadership and Board succession planning. Thank you Jenny.

The Board welcomed new Board members from last year's election and a casual vacancy was filled by Jodie Simpson from East Gippsland, ensuring geographic representation across our broad region. The commitment of our Board members made it so much easier for me to step into the Chair role, knowing that I was genuinely supported by the Board and our active sub-committees.

I also acknowledge the ongoing work of the staff of Gippsland Women's Health who have contributed throughout the past year, continuing to be flexible and agile in a very challenging funding environment – thank you.



GWH Staff



Buchan, East Gippsland

Finally, my sincere thanks to Kate Graham, our courageous CEO for her care of Gippsland Women's Health, for her enthusiasm and passion for the women of Gippsland and the organisation, and for her care of our greatest asset, our staff - the women who make everything happen. Some key goals that Kate set upon her initial employment have come to fruition in the past 12 months, including the operation of the updated constitution and the formal termination by the Fair Work Commission of the nominally expired EBA which has now been replaced by a comprehensive Employee Handbook. This has been detailed work but speaks to Kate's attention to detail and getting the difficult jobs done. Her commitment to open consultation with staff and the Board is exemplary. Kate is an absolute powerhouse and it is a privilege to work with her.

Treasurer's Report

Dr. Leanne Habeeb, Board Treasurer

In the 2023-2024 financial year, the Finance and Risk Sub-committee continued to consolidate the strong foundation of work undertaken in previous years. We focused on re-assessing and mitigating our two most critical financial risks – loss of current funding and lack of new funding streams – with forward looking recommendations from our Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Kate Graham, and Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Jo Harris.

Gippsland Women's Health maintained a strong financial position throughout 2023-2024. We waited with keen interest for the announcement of the 2024 Victorian State Budget and were delighted to receive news that GWH funding, including the significant funding uplift introduced two years ago, would be extended until 30 June 2026.

In line with our [Strategic Plan](#), the Sub-committee continued to address ongoing financial stability and growth to ensure sustainable services and advocacy for women and girls across Gippsland. Our approach involves responsible stewardship of retained earnings and supporting the initiatives of our CEO and CFO.



To this end, the Board approved a two-year budget for financial years 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. We continue to invest reserve funds not required by GWH for daily operations into appropriate term deposit accounts with established financial institutions operating in Australia.

We are in the process of developing a protocol for managing retained earnings, with the aim of increasing our ability to both weather potential decreases in current government funding and remain agile in diversifying fee-for-service income streams.



Rokeby, Baw Baw Shire

Treasurer's Report

Our CEO's work to lead, influence, collaborate, and partner across community this year and last year has resulted in a range of externally funded projects in partnership with other organisations. This includes the project "Women in Energy: Towards Gender Mainstreaming in Gippsland" to address gender inequality and promote women's participation and leadership in renewable energy.

The Finance and Risk Sub-committee met eight times in line with our constitutional requirements. We maintained our Calendar of Obligations to ensure tracking of legal and regulatory obligations, and our Risk Register to ensure monitoring and mitigation of risk. We reviewed policies and procedures, including those related to fraud, conflict of interest, bullying and harassment, and delegation of authority.

Our newly appointed auditor – Cardell Assurance and Audit – provided positive feedback during the audit process, including appreciation for the:

- assistance received from our CEO and CFO;
- strong controls and risk management demonstrated by the range and quality of GWH policies;
- high quality of our financial statement; and,
- satisfactory clarification and resolution of any auditing, accounting and disclosure issues.

This was reflected in an unqualified audit statement for 2023-2024.

None of this work would be possible without the leadership of Kate Graham, the expertise of Jo Harris and the contributions of Sub-committee Members Jess Saunders and Maddy Forbes. This year, our Treasurer, Jenny O'Neill, completed her six years as a Board Member. We acknowledge Jenny's passion and thoroughness in supporting a high standard of financial and risk oversight. We have benefitted from her leadership and guidance in the Finance and Risk Sub-committee.



Farmland near Leongatha,
South Gippsland

Our Board

Current Board Members



**Jessica Saunders,
Board Chair**



**Alisha Gilliland,
Deputy Board Chair**



**Dr. Leanne Habeeb,
Board Treasurer**



**Kerry Ellis,
Board Secretary**



**Madeleine Forbes,
Board Member**



**Jodie Simpson,
Board Member**



**Rosemary Joiner,
Board Member**

Outgoing Board Members

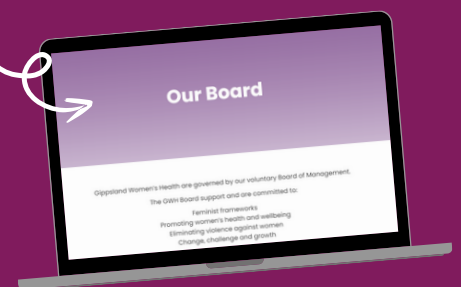


Jenny O'Neill



Emily Harris

Click on the
image to read
more about our
Board



CEO Report



Kate Graham, Chief Executive Officer

In our work, we are familiar with change. It doesn't always come easily; sometimes it is challenging but if we can find the space to embrace it, it can be exciting and inspiring.

It was a difficult time for GWH and the Women's Health Services across Victoria in the lead up to the 2024 State Budget, however we were pleased to receive another two years of funding uplift associated with our core funded women's health promotion and prevention of violence activities.

It is clear that this outcome was significantly aided by the enormous work undertaken by the Victorian Women's Health Services sector with strategic lobbying and the **Small change, big impact: Women's Health Services Network collective impact** report and the **Return on Equity - Health and economic dividends from investing in Women's Health Services** report.

As part of our strategic planning, the GWH Board understood and acted on the significant risk associated with total reliance on single stream State Government funding. As a result, we have won several significant projects in the past 12 months including **Our Equal Local Government** (WorkSafe, WorkWell Respect Fund), **eAware: The prevention of tech-facilitated abuse of women and girls'** (e-Safety Commissioner) and **Women in Energy** (Victorian Office for Women).

As a result of the budget uncertainty and the increase in major project funding, we took the opportunity to re-invent our structure to one where we are more agile and much better positioned to respond effectively and quickly to new opportunities. The development of a project management team has created tremendous possibilities and a more refined and seamless way of managing major projects.



Balook, Latrobe Valley

CEO Report

These adjustments bring inevitable change to an organisation but also the opportunity to grow as individuals, as a team and as an organisation.

I am indebted to the exceptional team members at GWH for their creativity, courage, professionalism and for their endless determination in seeking better outcomes for women and girls across Gippsland. It has been honour to witness the incredible work that has occurred throughout the year and to see the hopes and aspirations of our team come to life.

Not only has our team continued our core work and developed new opportunities, but we have also made significant systems improvements including the launch of our intranet portal, refreshed our website and developed new visual identity guidelines.

This past year has seen the GWH Board lead the way in adopting a range of contemporary employment policies including SRH leave, additional paid family violence leave, proactive health leave and superannuation on unpaid parental leave. Over the past 12 months, we have also undertaken a major review of all Human Resources policies and procedures, and finalised an exceptional resource in our new Employee Handbook.



Coastline outside Inverloch, Bass Coast

Our existing work and partnerships continue across the region with the reinvigoration of the Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) Partnership, a new SRH Strategy and another very successful SRH forum.

We continue our work in supporting the Gippsland and Latrobe Valley Transition Plan and have undertaken Gender Equality Leadership training, presented at industry conferences and expos and partnered with the Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) to provide Gender Equality and Gendered Violence prevention training for small to medium supply chain industry.

CEO Report

This year has seen the commencement of the regional “Men in Leadership – the Buck Stops with Us” partnership formed with the advocacy and support of LVA Chief Executive Officer, Chris Buckingham. This group of 35 male leaders from across Gippsland recognise that gender inequality is the primary driver of men's violence against women. They have developed a vision for a Gippsland that is a safer and more respectful place for women and girls. The group will continue to work on developing tangible actions and outcomes to meet their vision.

International Women's Day was again a busy time for GWH. We released our updated International Women's Day (IWD) toolkit, provided a keynote address to the New Energy industry and participated in the Baw Baw IWD event. GWH was also extremely proud to be awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the Victorian Minister for Women, Natalie Hutchins at State Parliament for our outstanding work on the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

The International Women's Day toolkit was **downloaded 1,061 times**. Click on the image to download the toolkit!



Male leaders from organisations across Gippsland participating in the inaugural “Men in Leadership - the Buck Stops with Us” partnership

The GWH Board has continued its exemplary leadership this year and focused its energy on good governance and strategic thinking. This has resulted in the launch of the GWH Strategic Plan 2024-2026 which provides an excellent guide for the team, not just in operationalising the Board's vision but in understanding the Board's aspirations for the organisation.

My greatest appreciation is extended to the amazing team of women I work with at a Board and operational level and to the incredible partners across Gippsland who continue to share our vision for a Gippsland where women and girls are safe, informed, well and healthy.

Our Key Achievements



Major Projects

 **Three projects aimed at improving general equity and preventing gendered violence were commenced by GWH.**

The Our Equal Local Government Project, funded by WorkSafe WorkWell Respect Fund in partnership with all six Gippsland councils, is working to end gendered violence in the workplace.

**OUR EQUAL
LOCAL
GOVERNMENT.**
Ending work-related gendered violence and sexual harassment.



eAware: Women & Girls Online Safety, funded by the e-Safety Commissioner in partnership with other regional women's health organisations, is delivering a technology facilitated abuse prevention project for women and girls in rural and regional Victoria.

eAware
Women & Girls' Online Safety



The **Women in Energy** Project, funded by the Office for Women, involves GWH collaborating with energy providers in Gippsland to promote and enhance gender equity practices within the sector.

**WOMEN
IN ENERGY**



Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH)

Women in East Gippsland now enjoy enhanced access to Sexual Reproductive Health services, thanks to the **2024 Annual Gippsland Sexual Reproductive Health Forum**. As a result of this forum, an East Gippsland health service has registered as a provider of Medical Termination of Pregnancies (MToP).

An additional key SRH initiative includes the **"Are You Covered"** magazines, which highlight the stories and experiences of women in Gippsland. This magazine has been published three times, with 900 printed copies distributed and 1,409 downloads recorded.

Key outcomes from the forum, which attracted over 100 attendees, include:

- **82%** of participants reported they would implement what they learned during the forum.
- **93%** of attendees were still applying their learnings three months later.
- **86%** of participants noted that the forum positively influenced their work practices.

**"Keep up these forums!
It's so valuable to have these events and forums to connect with stakeholders across the region and state."**

Attendee at the 2024 SRH Forum



Click on the images to read the magazines!

Other SRH Key Achievements



494 SRH-related social media posts reached a total audience of 57,804



14 partners engaged in the Gippsland Sexual and Reproductive Health regional partnership.



SRH literacy sessions delivered to over 300 people

Gender Equality

Workforce and community capacity building

This year, GWH has undertaken a major review of our **education and training resources and delivery methods** to better meet the needs of individuals, organisations and the community in being gender equality allies.

Utilising external subject matter experts, we have comprehensively assessed all materials including Active Bystander.

As a result, we are currently developing new learning tools and resources that will be launched in early 2025.

Major Projects

The Our Equal Local Government, in partnership with all six Gippsland councils, has developed a Gender Equity Improvement process to embed gender assessment and planning cycles in Gippsland workplaces.

The Women in Energy Project is building an evidence-informed gender equity toolkit to support the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in the energy sector.

Gender Just Transition Sessions

GWH undertook 13 Gender Just Transition Sessions over the past year.

These sessions highlight the current gender inequities in Gippsland and workshop practical and achievable steps for leaders to implement actions for women and gender diverse people both in the community and in workplaces

- **100% of participants reported learning something new.**
- **82% intended to talk to somebody about what they had learned.**
- **88% intended to take action based on what they learned.**



Gender Just Transition Session presented by CEO, Kate Graham

Prevention of Gendered Violence

Candlelight Vigil and Community Awareness Campaign

GWH engaged 42 regional partners to assist them to put on safe and successful events in the region. Seven Candlelight Vigils to remember the women and children who have died because of gender-based violence were held across Gippsland, The events were attended by more than 600 people.

The Candlelight vigil toolkit was **downloaded 519 times**, indicating strong interest and participation from the community. Click on the image to download the toolkit!



Social media posts performed highly with a total reach of **4,598** over the campaign period.

"Events like these serve to remind us that there is much work yet to do in moving towards a safer and more equitable Baw Baw Shire."

Baw Baw Shire
Mayor, Cr McCabe

Let's Chat Gippsland: 16 days of Activism

"Let's Chat Gippsland" is focused on the primary prevention of gendered violence. The Let's Chat campaign in 2023 was our biggest one yet! The campaign centered around a social media campaign with campaign partners, event support through a campaign toolkit and a Gippsland wide event through our BIG Respect Photo Pop-Up campaign.

Key Highlights:

- 94 campaign partners
- 69,440 people reached on social media
- Over 875 Gippsland Participants

Click on the logo to read more about the campaign



eAware: Women and Girls Online Safety

The eAware Project, in partnership with regional women's health services, is developing resources and a campaign for rural and regional communities to raise awareness and promote online safety from technology facilitated abuse.

Our Equal Local Government

Our Equal Local Government partners have developed a marketing and communication strategy to drive the prevention of gendered violence based on a shared commitment to prevent gendered violence in Gippsland Local Government.

Our Future Work

Other exciting initiatives we are working on include:

- Rolling out our recently redeveloped values of **Authenticity, Courage** and **Possibility** along with our associated **principles** and success measures.
- Creating a **learning and development** package that empowers employees, employers, and community members to take action in improving gender equity and preventing gender-based violence.
- Establishing a **mentoring and coaching program** focused on gender equity for current and aspiring leaders in Gippsland.
- Development of an **Evaluation Framework & Stakeholder Ecosystem Framework** to effectively manage and nurture the diverse relationships across core funded work, project-based initiatives, and professional services.
- Development of the GWH **Staff Health & Wellbeing Strategy**.
- Roll out of the Board's Annual Governance Action Plan.
- Development of our **Gender Equity Strategy** and re-invigoration of our **Gendered Violence Prevention Strategy**



Wilsons Promontory, South Gippsland

Our Future Work

- Development of a **seasonal and surge workforce project**, focusing on gender equity and sexual and reproductive health.
- Establishing a framework to **support women and girls during extreme weather events and climate change**.
- Rolling out **women's health and wellbeing groups** across Gippsland, to improve health and social outcomes.
- Developing an implementation framework to **support and respond to recommendations of the Department of Health Inquiry into Women's Pelvic Pain**.
- Disseminating **toolkits to promote women's health, gender equity and gendered violence prevention** campaigns across Gippsland.
- Rolling out our **Health Promotion and Prevention engagement plan** across Gippsland with a series of presentations, aligned with our workforce and community capacity building work.



STAY IN TOUCH

Follow us on social media
@GippslandWomensHealth
or visit www.gwhealth.asn.au



BECOME A MEMBER

Everyone is now eligible to become a member of Gippsland Women's Health.
[CLICK HERE](#)



CONTACT US!

We want to hear from you!
[CLICK HERE](#)

