

CUMBERLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT
2020/2021



Cumberland
**WOMEN'S
HEALTH**
Centre

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We acknowledge that we work on stolen Aboriginal land and that sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that our efforts towards inclusivity and solidarity must be ongoing and always evolving.



ABOUT CUMBERLAND WOMENS HEALTH CENTRE

Together we Bloom

Cumberland Women's Health Centre is a non-profit community based organisation, we provide women's health services and domestic violence specialist response services to all women regardless of age, gender or income. We are here to help you.

Our Mission

CWHC is committed to providing professional, affordable and holistic gender informed services that promote the health, wellbeing and empowerment of women in the local areas of Cumberland, Parramatta, Auburn and The Hills.

We recognise that women's health encompasses the physical, spiritual, environmental, emotional and social wellbeing of women. Our goal is to work collaboratively, within a feminist, trauma-informed framework, with women and the rest of the community in order to create stability and empower women to initiate positive change within their lives.

Our Values

Empowerment

Collaboration

Support

Diversity

Respect

Service Principles

- We are a community based, NGO run by women, for women
- We work within a feminist, trauma-informed framework
- We target our services to meet the diverse and changing needs of disadvantaged women and their children in the local community
- We are open to all women, regardless of ethnicity, sexuality, income, disability and class.
- We strive to work in partnerships with our other agencies in working together to achieve positive health outcomes for women
- We deliver an integrated approach to planning and service delivery
- We seek to strengthen the capacity of women and the community
- We are committed to ethical best practice



CHAIRPERSONS STATEMENT

As Chairperson it gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2020-2021 Annual Report for the Cumberland Women's Health Centre.

It has been another extraordinary year as Cumberland Women's Health Centre has continued to develop their strong connection to the local community and showcase and ability to adapt to the everchanging needs and demands for local support.

Following on from the adversities of the previous year, Cumberland Women's Health Centre has continued to provide responsive and flexible support services to women of the Parramatta, Cumberland and The Hills Shire LGAs, whilst prioritising the health, wellbeing and safety of our community. Cumberland Women's Health Centre also spent much of this year taking time to review, update and improve our service design, policies and procedures during our ASES accreditation period, which we have now successfully renewed.

Cumberland Women's Health Centre proudly continues to be a key provider for supporting NSW victims of crime under the agreement with the Attorney Generals Office and the Department of Victims Services. This agreement now incorporates group support specifically in relation to Domestic and Family Violence expanding the scope of what is delivered from the centre but also opens up further access to support for a different group of vulnerable women.

Under the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children (2010-2022), Cumberland Women's Health Centre, has continued to work in collaboration with the "Take the Lead" consortium, Boronia Multicultural Services, Hope Connect and Parramatta Council, to develop and deliver community-led violence prevention initiatives. This project has allowed Cumberland Women's Health Centre to offer sustainable pathways to employment and education for Women who have experienced Domestic and Family Violence in line with the service strategic goals and core values.

It has been my pleasure to serve as chair person for Cumberland Women's Health Centre this year and contribute to the values that Cumberland Women's Health Centre stand by in providing pathways to self-determination and social justice.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Chair Person

MANAGERS STATEMENT

Welcome to the annual impact report for Cumberland Women's Health Centre for the 2020-2021 financial year. We again have had another tumultuous year whilst battling the ups and downs of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, I am proud to say that CWHC have continued to show strength in the face of diversity!

This year, the service has been responsive and adaptive to the changing needs of our local community, to ensure that women experiencing disadvantage, violence and trauma had a safe place to seek support. In addition, this year we successfully renewed our Australian Services Accreditation Standard (ASES), which involved a very big rejuvenation of The Centre's policies and procedures - no small feat in the midst of the pandemic!

I would like to thank our local community and clients, who have continued to grow and learn with us during this period. We saw intake and referral significantly increase throughout this year, as well as an increase in demand for groups, counselling and case management. With this, the staff at CWHC have performed above and beyond to ensure that the women we service remained connected and supported.

We have also welcomed many new partnerships throughout the year working in collaboration with Parramatta Council, Hope Connect and Boronia Multicultural Services to deliver new and innovative programs for women, and we hope to continue to grow these partnerships.

Finally, I would like to thank the current board of Cumberland Women's Health Centre for proving the strength in our approach and for the time and dedication it has taken to see the organisation through one of the fastest paced year we have seen to date.

We hope to continue the momentum that has been established during this period by incorporating new and innovative ideas into the framework of the existing strategic plan and we are already walking in the new normal to service delivery and growing our community impact even further.

SALWA ALBAZ

Manager



NSW WOMEN'S HEALTH FRAMEWORK

While Cumberland Women's Health Centre strives to provide services that provide a localised response, the strategic direction is informed by the NSW Women's health priorities and in line with the current NSW Women's Health framework 2019 and strategy. With this in mind, we develop a specialised approach to services and programs to meet particular needs of women throughout every stage of their life and adapt them to suit the needs of the local community. Programming for the 20-21 year has considered the core state health priorities, which remain heavily focused on Women and reducing the long term effects and impact of Domestic and Family Violence as evident in the numerous strategies within the framework providing safety and support. Prevention and early intervention is the key value of all Cumberland Women's Health Centre service delivery.

Purpose: To deliver services and foster environments in NSW to help women to meet their physical, emotional, social and economic potential by increasing opportunities for women and girls to experience better health and wellbeing at every stage of their lives.

Scope: This framework applies across the NSW Health System and across the intersections with the broader health and wellbeing system including private sector organisations, not-for-profit organisations, and other government agencies. It recognises and provides an overarching perspective and principles to combine and apply the wide range of frameworks, strategies, policies, and plans that seek to improve or affect the health and wellbeing of women and girls.

Goals & Strategies:

Goals - All women and girls in NSW have:					
Healthy relationships	Healthy minds	Healthy lifestyles	Healthy bodies	Safety and support	Integrating care
Strategies - All women and girls in NSW are:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Informed</i> about healthier relationships • <i>Empowered</i> to make healthier choices • <i>Engaged</i> with families, peers and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supported</i> to build resilience • <i>Supported</i> through major life changes • <i>Empowered</i> to feel more confident and comfortable with their bodies • <i>Informed</i> about mental health and wellbeing and support services • <i>Supported</i> by appropriate mental health and wellbeing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Informed</i> and able to access high quality health and wellbeing information • <i>Empowered</i> and supported to make healthier choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supported</i> to have better reproductive and sexual health • <i>Provided</i> with access to contraception and maternal support • <i>Engaged</i> in prevention and early intervention to reduce illness • <i>Supported</i> to prevent or manage chronic illnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Protected</i> and helped to recover from violence and the effects of trauma • <i>Able to access</i> sensitive and approachable services • <i>Supported</i> with caring responsibilities • <i>Informed</i>, confident and safe using technology • <i>Able to access</i> stable housing, adequate financial resources and other support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Able to access</i> services in a convenient time and place • <i>Able to access</i> services and information that they can understand and that understand them • <i>Able to access</i> services that are safe and trauma informed • <i>Engaged</i> with health and wellbeing services

OUR SERVICE DESIGN

Preventive health activities are those that are designed to reduce the likelihood that something harmful to health will occur; or to minimise that harm if it does occur (*National Public Health Partnership, 2006*). It focuses on those health problems which are known to be amenable to intervention; and requires the identification of modifiable risk and protective factors, and the implementation of strategies to eliminate or reduce risk factors and maximise and increase protective.



At Cumberland Women's Health Centre we strive to adopt a holistic and person-centred approach to service delivery. We understand that not all interventions are going to be effective for all women all of the time and recovery is rarely a linear process nor a cycle.

Our service design allows for a customised approach, not only with each client, but with each and every engagement at any point in the clients journey.

Additionally, keeping wellness practices at the top of each engagement provides a soft entry point for all of our clients, many whom may never have engaged with any services before and may not be able to identify what support they need. This element is also critical for sustainable client engagement as it means that even when a woman may have completed a full therapeutic intervention, through recovery and back to wellness, this model ensures every woman can continue to engage with the centre for years to come and always feel they belong and continue to ensure positive long term health outcomes.

CUMBERLAND WOMENS HEALTH CENTRE SERVICES

Information and Referral

This service is usually the first engagement point for many vulnerable women who often have never have engaged in any service support previously. Clients are welcomed through our easy to use online self-referral portal and professional referrals are always quick to access through our new website.

Support approaches can include:

- Housing Advocacy
- Domestic and Family Violence awareness counselling and support
- Depression and Anxiety counselling and support
- Preventative Health and wellbeing referrals
- Community and social Isolation

Women Who Have Experienced Violence

With more than 1 in 3 women experiencing violence in their lifetime this is the core focus of the Cumberland Women's Health Centre service model. Women can be referred by a professional but can also self-refer at any time and on multiple occasions if needed.

Support and interventions provided include:

- Crisis Support
- Case Management and Advocacy
- Counselling
- Domestic and Family Violence support group
- Information about rights
- Court Support
- Trauma informed groups and workshops

General Counselling

Women experiencing anxiety, depression, historical trauma and other situational mental health stressor can access one on one counselling and support through Cumberland Women's Health centre easily by self-referring via the online portal. These services are continuously available remotely throughout the COVID-19 restrictions.

CUMBERLAND WOMENS HEALTH CENTRE SERVICES

Victim Services Counselling

Women who have been a victim of violence have access to Cumberland Women's Health Centre's Victim Services Counsellor. Women approved under the Support for Primary Victims scheme have access to 22 hours of free counselling and support. This service is continuously available remotely throughout the COVID-19 restrictions.

New Beginnings

As core service delivery, the Domestic Violence support group run each term and is a closed group for women needing to begin their healing journey. This group has engaged 20 women over the course of 3 program deliveries. These women often go on to access additional services and groups at the Centre.

Therapeutic Groups and Workshops

Group programming is an essential and ongoing part of the work of the work of Cumberland Women's Health Centre. Group work allows clients to explore their challenges with the support and learnings of others with common needs and goals, an important part to recovery. This modality also provides an platform for safe and supported social interactions, some who have no other social networks at all.

The groups held for the 20-21 period include:

- Alleviating Anger
- Art From the Heart
- Creating Capacity for Confidence
- Gathering Memories
- Making Me Matter
- Managing Stress and Anxiety
- Mindful Connections
- Music for Sound and Connection
- Nourishment Through Music
- Phoenix Landing
- Raising Resilience
- Work Ready - Work Skills Workshop



1040 Women
attended the 140
group sessions
delivered in
20-21.

CUMBERLAND WOMENS HEALTH CENTRE SERVICES

Massage and Aromatherapy

As part of the Women's Health approach to preventative health services, massage therapy and aromatherapy consultation forms part of the holistic approach to wellness. Whilst massage appointments were suspended during COVID-19 lockdown periods, over the phone bush flower consultations went ahead, with supplies posted to clients.

Trauma Informed Yoga

This specialised form of Yoga allows Women to feel supported to connect with their bodies and minds after trauma.

Women's Health Group

This essential group has been running for the past 6 years at Cumberland Women's Health and due to its success it continues to be active with new members participating each and every month, engaging an average of 15-20 participants each session. Topics of learning have included, breast health and screening, healthy eating and stroke prevention and many more.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Health

Aboriginal women, both on country and visiting have always had a strong affiliation with Cumberland Women's Health Centre. Throughout the 20-21 year we have provided the platform for three Women's Gatherings for those that identify as First Nations Australians. These events give the opportunity to meet with other local women, reducing social isolation and keeping culture alive in the Parramatta and Cumberland districts. The groups also provide a soft entry for service delivery, with 6% of Cumberland Women's Health Centre being of First Nations descent additional health referrals and support needs are made. The group continues to be supported by Cumberland Council.

Bill Assist

We have continued to partner with Christian Community Aid to provide financial support and stability to those Women in crisis who access our services. Women receive emergency access to food vouchers, travel vouchers and support and advocacy with household bills.

