

Annual **Report**

2023 ————— 2024



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. We pay our respect to Elders past and present. Sovereignty has never been ceded.

Publication

Australian Women's Health Alliance

Annual Report 2023 - 2024

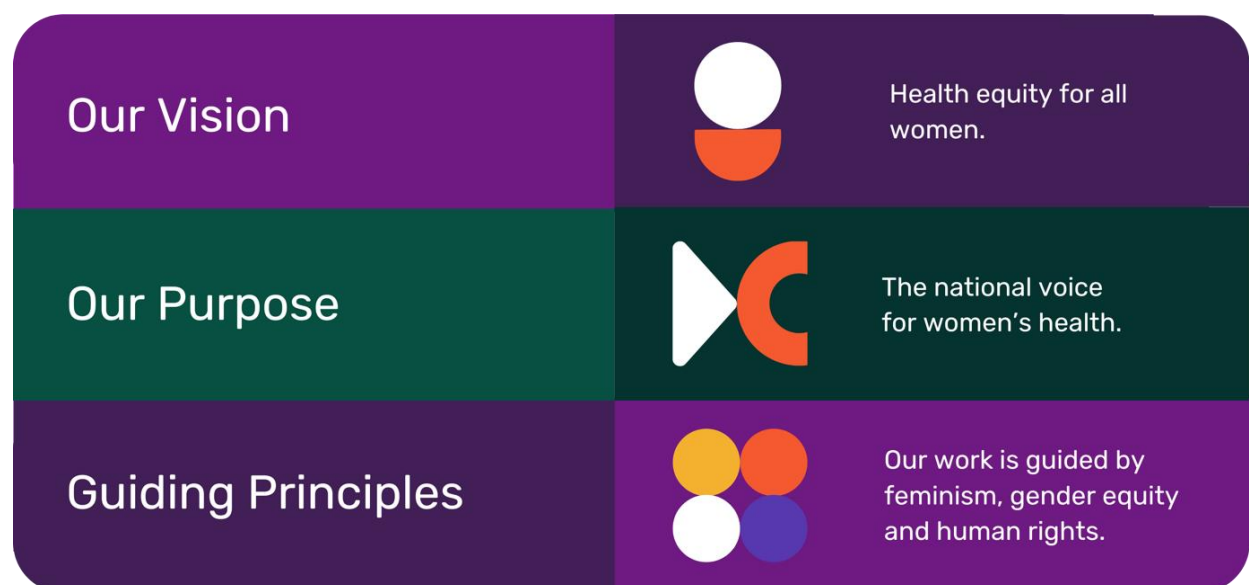
Leichhardt, Australia

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The Australian Women's Health Network Pty Ltd is now trading as the Australian Women's Health Alliance

Reg. No. A02383 ABN 84 238 300 000

Graphic design support and logo by Ximena Jiménez



Our Vision

Health equity for all women.

Our Purpose

The national voice for women's health.

Guiding Principles

Our work is guided by feminism, gender equity and human rights.

Leadership Structure

The Australian Women's Health Network, now trading as the Australian Women's Health Alliance, formed in 1986. We have members across every state and territory, working in areas of women's health, gender and health equity. Effort is made to ensure the board reflects a diversity of experience, views, skills and connection into existing networks, so that we can collaborate in providing a national perspective.

Chair Bonney Corbin

Treasurer Denele Crozier AM

Secretary Megan Elias

Public Officer Dr Romy Listo

Subcommittee Chairs

Business Services and Risk Subcommittee Chair: Dr Angela Brown

Governance, Partnership and Membership Subcommittee Chair: Jo Flanagan

General Board Members

Emma Iwinska

Eva Perroni

Gemma Black

Heidi La Paglia Reid

Holly Brennan OAM

Rachael Uebergang

Tahlee Blade Stevenson

Diane Hill (resigned December 2023)

Contractors

Bonnie Laxton-Blinkhorn – Copy Editor

Kim Blattner – Administration Officer

Min Houseman – IT support

Sienna Aguilar – Senior Project Officer

Ximena Jiménez – Graphic Designer



Thank you to Bobbie Trower, Illawarra Women's Health Centre, Jana Ventura, Kate May, Kate Whelan, Margherita Dall'Occo-Vaccaro, Phoebe Nagorcka-Smith, Dr Samara McNeil, Tess Moodie and Vanamali Hermans for policy advice, and DropIN Solutions for web design support.

Acknowledging Women's Health NSW for supporting our contractors and administrative work through a business services partnership agreement.

Foreword

Over the past year we have invested in building and expanding the Women's Health Hub. This work is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, supporting our role as a national health peak advisory body.

All that early co-development and consultation work has fed into an exciting and dynamic site that is delivering on its goal of helping people find the information they need about gender equity in health. We have hosted webinars, run a women's health policy community of practice, and a women's health communications group, collated and housed resources on the Hub, written and published new policy publications and developed an e-learning platform.

All this work has led to an unprecedented public interest in the Alliance. Nationwide, people are talking about women's health.

We continue to face repeated requests for us to provide representation on consultative bodies and policy networks, and to provide advice on policy developments. Clearly the voice we hold, of health policy that centres gender equity and the social models of health, is one that is valued and sought for.

While requests for us to participate in national discussions are exciting, it is also challenging, because our government funding is proof that Aristotle was right, and one swallow does not a summer make. It's disappointing that the success of our Women's Health Hub and all the good will, demand and interest it has generated has not yet translated into longer term peak funding.

While we are a national network, with representation from every state and territory, we remain a volunteer network, resourced only by membership fees, donations and volunteer energy. If the passion and energy of women working for gender equity could be linked to the national grid, we could probably power South Australia, but finding funding to support our work is an urgent priority for 2025-26.

We must move beyond selling cupcakes. It's time to share an uproar about women's access to education, housing, economic security, connection to self, to Country, culture and kinship, to social and community supports. It's time for Australia to invest in gender-responsive health.



Bonney Corbin

National Board Chair



Strategic Priority 1: Policy and Reform



The Alliance is a national leader in developing, advancing, and responding to public policy and practice as it impacts women's health. We provide independent advice from a broad evidence-base to promote a gendered approach to women's health care.

An important focus this year has been growing and maintaining the Women's Health Hub. This national resource is a vital repository of information for people dedicated to improving women's health outcomes.

The resources on the Women's Health Hub support health advocates, practitioners, policymakers, governments, funders, people with lived experience, and others working across the health eco-system, to embed a gender equity lens through their prevention work.



638
resources housed



34,859
website views



10
new Alliance policy
publications released

Another Alliance priority in the last financial year has been the development of a series of policy publications and professional learning resources to strengthen understanding about gender-responsive approaches to health and prevention. This portfolio of resources is housed on the Women's Health Hub and freely available to download.

There has been increasing demand for information, support, advice and coordination of the women's health movement in Australia. At the Alliance, general enquiries, media enquiries and requests for women's health sector support increased by approximately 530%. While some of these enquiries can be linked to activities involving the renewal of the Women's Health Hub, the vast majority are beyond the scope and capacity of the project.

Impact Focus: A Gendered Framework for Action

'A gender-responsive health system is a more effective and efficient system.' – Kate May, Health Promotion and Communications Consultant, Alliance Policy Advisor

The Gendered Framework for Action on Prevention and Healthcare is one of the Alliance's flagship publications. It highlights 7 structural factors that must be addressed to achieve gender and health equity.

The framework provides a focus to inform the development of gender equitable policies and strategies and suggests key actions to make the broader health system more gender-responsive. The framework is supported by 7 standalone policy briefs outlining each structural factor in detail. All these publications are available on the Women's Health Hub.

Emerging evidence indicates that individuals and organisations are using the framework, and supporting publications, in a variety of contexts, such as education workshops and advocacy submissions, to ensure gendered approaches are considered in trauma informed practice.

In June 2024 the Alliance launched Module 1 of Introduction to Gender-Responsive Health, a free e-learning course to better understand and apply a gender-responsive approach to health and prevention.

As we know, women and gender diverse people experience health, illness and health care differently to men and this course aims to increase understanding about these differences, and how gender-responsive approaches can improve health equity.

Impact Focus: Building Knowledge and Capacity in Gender-Responsive Health

'...Great examples of gendered health determinants in these modules that communicate the barriers faced by my peers and friends, which are presented in simple ways. I will be having conversations with people, and business-owners who I know, about adding more equitable practices to their [standard operating procedures].'

– Learner

What's the course?

Introduction to Gender-Responsive Health

Who's the course for?

Workplaces and individuals

What's included?

- 5 modules (approximately 45 minutes each)
- Optional resources to read, watch, download or use in future
- Engaging activities, assessments and recaps
- Badge after each module
- Certificate on completion





65

users tested course materials



84%

reported an increased understanding
of gender-responsive health



80%

found the draft modules
accessible



90%

found the content applicable
to their work

How can it be applied in practice?

Initial feedback has highlighted various ways to use the course and learnings, such as:

- mandatory workplace training, including inductions and continuous professional development
- raising awareness about health equity beyond the health sector, for example education and community legal services
- upskilling individual health care professionals and small practices
- informing external training and group programs, such as youth work
- boosting knowledge and confidence among people completing studies and entering the health workforce
- educating the community about gender-responsive health and health rights
- informing policy development and advocacy.

'I thought the course was excellent. I'm a beginner in gendered health and I learned a lot. I have a background in gender (employment, DFV and homelessness) but not health, so this was helpful for me.' – Learner

Strategic Priority 2: Connect and Collaborate

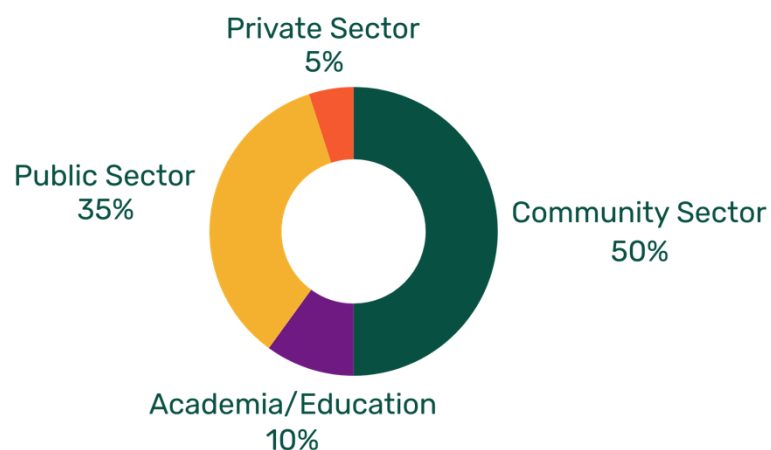
The Alliance is a vehicle for women's health organisations, consumers, and advocates to connect and collaborate through our membership base and effective processes to represent the views of members and their constituents.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the members, partners and contributors who shared their expertise, time and energy to grow the Women's Health Hub throughout the year.

 **7,900+** followers across multiple social media platforms

Our co-development sessions, National Women's Health Policy Community of Practice and informal Women's Health Communications Group had an important role in informing our policy publications across a range of structural domains and specific health concerns as well as our e-learning course, 'Introduction to Gender-Responsive Health'.

13 co-development sessions held
68 participants



46 change makers participated in the
National Women's Health Policy Community of Practice



of participant respondents felt they
had **meaningful opportunities** to
share expertise.

'I was not sure what to expect on enrolling in this program but having a tangible outcome and resource for women to reflect on created by our group has been an incredible experience thus far.' – Community of Practice participant

Alliance representatives continue to be positioned across a number of government and non-government committees and advisory boards, including the National Women's Health Advisory Council, the Health Peak and Advisory Bodies Program, the Therapeutic Goods Association Women's Health Products Working Group, the Early Pregnancy Loss Coalition, the Women Deliver Oceanic Committee, the Health Equity Learning Lab Oz by Stretton Institute at the University of Adelaide, the SPHERE Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Coalition and the Equality Rights Alliance.

We collaborated on joint statements, publications and actions with the Australian National University, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, the National Disability Insurance Scheme Registration Taskforce, the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG), Women Deliver, the Women in Economics Network and had various members present at the Senate Inquiry on Issues related to Menopause and Perimenopause.

Our partnership with the Women's Health Research, Translation and Impact Network (WHRTN) has also continued in 2023-24. We attended the face-to-face meeting of the network in August 2023, and we continue to work in collaboration to optimise the impacts of our respective efforts by sharing information and opportunities with our audiences and networks. Through our partnership, WHRTN's network of Consumer Advisor/Advocates are offered free membership of the Alliance as key informants of women's health movements and change making.

Impact Focus: Fair Agenda

FAIR AGENDA

This year we continued our successful partnership with Fair Agenda, collaborating on campaigns that progress our shared vision of a more gender equitable future and activities that improve women's health and wellbeing.

Our partnership with Fair Agenda has its foundation in the alignment of our organisational visions and objectives. Our collaboration provides an opportunity for the Alliance to contribute to significant campaigns on issues that impact women's health and wellbeing. This year our major campaigns have focused on improving access to abortion care, preventing sexual and gender-based violence, enhancing system responses to sexual violence and making our universities safer.

In an historic year, where passage of the *Abortion Legislation Reform Bill 2023* in WA meant the decriminalisation of abortion access for people seeking care in every state and territory in Australia, we worked with Fair Agenda to ensure media attention also focused on the continuing barriers to abortion provision and care. Together with Fair Agenda and other key stakeholders, we platformed compassionate abortion care affordability and accessibility and called for training and investment in evolving models of abortion care.

Strategic Priority 3: Governance and Agency



As an independent peak and health promotion charity, the Alliance demonstrates best practice in its governance, leadership, and operations.

The board met every second month, and chose to invest in 2 subcommittees as priority areas of investment and action:

- Business Services and Risk Subcommittee, chaired by Dr Angela Brown, oversees all aspects of business including project management, the Fair Agenda partnership agreement, donor reporting, finance, risk, record management, administration and contractors. In the absence of an executive officer role, this subcommittee oversees operational functions, meeting formally bi-monthly and undertaking tasks weekly.
- Governance Subcommittee, chaired by Jo Flanagan, refreshed a suite of internal policies and procedures to strengthen organisational governance mechanisms, supported a continually strengthened board recruitment process, and is progressing a constitutional review process. As the Alliance continues to renew, this subcommittee met monthly to continue momentum for development and change.

We reviewed and maintained our business services agreement with Women's Health NSW, which provides critical business services and administrative support functions. Previous advice from board evaluations and member feedback was incorporated into risk reviews, continuous improvement, and ongoing organisational development.

Finance

Audited financial accounts for the 2023-24 financial year are tabled at the Annual General Meeting and available on request to the membership. We currently have a 3-year grant from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Health Peak and Advisory Bodies Program.

Our non-institutional sources of income are membership fees, philanthropy, and one-off donations all of which slightly increased in the last financial year. This includes our grant management agreement with Fair Agenda to collaborate on campaigns related to women's health and wellbeing.

We have a small but strong finance team coupled with good financial systems and projected budgets for the year ahead overseen by our Business Services and Risk Committee. We started this year with a projected budget and ended with an unqualified audit.

The Australian Women's Health Alliance continues to operate to budget and asserts that there are reasonable grounds to believe it will be able to pay its debts, if, and when, they fall due.

	2022/23(\$)	2023/24(\$)
Revenue		
Project grants	151,002	166,048
Memberships	3,900	3,400
Donations received	178,371	250,889
Interest	269	758
Other income	89	89
Less donations distributed	(172,168)	(241,895)
Revenue from ordinary activities	162,463	179,289
Expenses		
Accounting and audit fees	5,300	5,282
Consultancy	6,695	7,861
Human resources expenses	125,452	130,171
Infrastructure expenses	2,076	9,723
Governance and strategy	3,265	4,880
Marketing and communications	4,098	14,977
Other expenses	357	308
Total expenses by function	147,243	173,202
Surplus/(deficit) from ordinary activities	14,220	6,087
plus other comprehensive income	1,227	220
Total equity	37,597	6,307



Denele Crozier, AM
Treasurer

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