SHOALHAVEN WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026

Shoalhaven Womens Health Centre

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre (SWHC) is incorporated under the Associations Incorporations Act and is a registered Charity with Public Benevolent Institution Status.

This status enables donations to be a tax-deductible item.

The Committee of Women (CoW), who oversee the Governance of the SWHC work, live or reside in the local community. The Centre currently employ eleven (11) permanent part-time and full-time staff dependent upon current funding streams. The Centre is supported by volunteers, including administration volunteers.

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre is a member of Women's Health NSW, the peak body of all Non-Government Organisations (NGO) Women's Health Centres in New South Wales.

SWHC/We would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians.

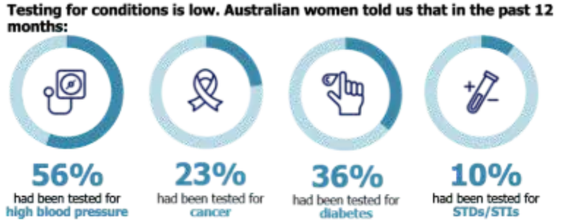
We value their cultures, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and are committed to making a positive contribution to the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, by providing services that are welcoming, safe, culturally appropriate, and inclusive.

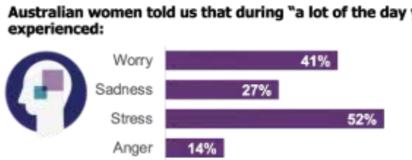
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How do Australian women feel about their health and well-being?







Our Centre is more important than ever to support and empower women in our community to take control of their health and wellbeing.

"Despite Australia's comparatively strong healthcare system, the findings point to persistent challenges in preventive health, emotional wellbeing, basic needs and personal safety. Together, these factors paint a picture of women's health that extends beyond clinical care and highlights the need for more holistic approaches to improving health outcomes and quality of life."

Global Women's Health Index | Year 5 Report | Hologic® Australia

Global Women's Health Index | Year 5 Report | Hologic® Australia

A YEAR IN REVIEW/ KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

JULY

- **NAIDOC** - attended Ngulla NAIDOC Festival in Ulladulla
- **Staff Training** - CLE training provided by Aboriginal Legal Service on Coercive Control and AVOs.
- **It Left No Marks Training** delivered to frontline workers at RoCC
- **Staff Conference**

AUGUST

- **Dying to Know Day** event in collaboration with ISLHD, Parnell + Brien, Solicitors and Open Harts Independent Funeral Guidance and Support
- **Health Aging Workshop** - facilitated by Calm Physiotherapy
- **Take Control - Reboot Your Budget Workshop**
- **It Left No Marks Training** delivered to frontline workers in the Illawarra hosted by Community Industry Group

SEPTEMBER

- **Launch of Women's Biz** September to December 2026
- **Jean Hailes Women's Health Week**
  - Women's Circle
  - Meditation
  - Free Hearing Checks
- **Spring Paper Flower Making Workshop**
- **RU OK Day** - Service visit to RoCC.
- **Art to You** - Lake Conjola
- **No Pub Pub Choir Workshop** facililtated by Trish Delaney-Brown.

OCTOBER

- **Booth Partners** successful financial audit
- **Celebration of 40 Years of Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre**
- **Annual General Meeting** -appointment of new Chair and CoW members
- **It Left No Marks Training delivered to Local Health District** -
  - Multicultural Services Frontline Workers
  - Wollongong Hospital Social Workers
  - Shellharbour Hospital Socal Workers
- **Reclaim the Night**
- **Chair Yoga course** facilitated by Carla Balsar

NOVEMBER

- **Pod arrives onsite** sponsored by Bendigo Bank
- **It Left No Marks Training** delivered to frontline workers in the Illawarra hosted by Community Industry Group
- **It Left No Marks Training** delivered to frontline workers at SASSI Illawarra
- **Take Control - Reboot Your Budget Workshop**
- **Natural Beauty Workshop** facilitated by Valerie Hill

DECEMBER

- **16 Days of Activism**
  - It Left No Marks training delivered to Social Workers Shoalhaven District Hospital
- **16 Days of Activism** Service Afternoon Tea
- **Drumming Workshop** facilitated by Elena Bellinato
- **Staff Training** - facilitated by Denele Crozier CEO of Women's Health NSW - Feminism in the Workplace
- **Christmas Hampers** thanks to SALT Care
- **Share the Dignity** Christmas delivery of over 80 Dignity bags for women in the communtiy.
- **Culburra Boomerang bags** Christmas delivery of toiletries
- **Shoalhaven District Hospital Sub-Acute Unit** - this unit was suddenly and sadly closed down but we thank them for 11 years of support to our women.

SUPPORTING WOMEN OF THE SHOALHAVEN FOR OVER 40 YEARS

A YEAR IN REVIEW/ KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

JANUARY

- **Launch of Women's Biz** January to April 2026

FEBRUARY

- **Commencement of new position** Health Promotion Worker
- **Welcomed UOW Social Work Student Placement**
- **Women's Wisdom Group** delivered over 4 weeks by SWHC Counsellors
- **Chair Yoga 6-week program** delivered by Carla Balsar
- **Chronic Pain Workshop** delivered by Illawarra Shoalhaven Chronic Pain Service ISHLHD

MARCH

- **International Women's Day Events**
  - Women Meditate
  - Women Speak
  - Women Write
  - Women Perform
  - Women Bushwalk
- **Creative Art Journaling Workshop** delivered over 4 weeks
- **Welcomed new Administration/Reception Worker** (backfill)
- **Senior's Festival Celebration**
  - Yoga
  - Tai Chi
  - Jiggle & Giggle
  - Meditation
- **Harmony Day Launch** - in collaboration with Shoalhaven Multicultural Interagency
- **Harmony Day Centre Open Day**

APRIL

- **Mindful Walking Workshop**
- **Soft Threads, Strong Stories Workshop**
- **Share the Dignity** delivery of period and incontinence products
- **Preparation commenced for November 2026 ASES Accreditation Renewal**
- **Chair Yoga 6-week program** delivered by Carla Balsar

MAY

- **SWHC Annual Business Plan Ratified**
- **Launch of Women's Biz program May to August 2026**
- **Women's Health NSW Forum** attended by other Centre Managers and staff
- **First Women's Wellbeing Newsletter launched**

JUNE

- **It Left No Marks Training** delivered to frontline workers arranged by Community Industry Group
- **Staff Training** - facilitated by Michele Pearson - Drug & Alcohol
- **Staff Planning Day**
- **Clay Making Workshop**
- **Natural Beauty Workshop** facilitated by Valerie Hill



CHAIR'S REPORT

It is my pleasure to present this report on behalf of the Committee of Management of Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre.

Over the past year, the Centre has continued to support women across the Shoalhaven through a broad range of health, wellbeing and support services. We recognise that women's wellbeing is shaped by much more than clinical care alone. Financial security, safety, access to information, social connection and the ability to make informed choices all influence health outcomes. As a geographically dispersed region, ensuring women can access timely and appropriate support remains a key priority. This year, the introduction of our dedicated Health Promotion Officer role has strengthened our ability to engage with communities across the Shoalhaven, deliver education initiatives and raise awareness of women's health issues.

One of the highlights of the year has been the continued growth and success of our Financial Counselling Service. In a period marked by rising living costs and increasing financial pressures, this service has become an important source of practical support for women navigating financial hardship and uncertainty. We were particularly pleased to secure Australian Government Department of Social Services funding to continue delivering additional financial counselling services over the next five years, providing certainty through to the 2030-31 financial year.

The Centre has also continued to respond to emerging areas of need. Our menopause clinic has highlighted the demand for specialised women's health services and the value of accessible, evidence-based care designed around women's experiences. Securing the future of this service will remain an important priority.

We continued delivery of It Left No Marks, specialist training focused on recognising and responding to non-fatal strangulation. Violence against women remains a critical health and safety issue, and this initiative continues to strengthen awareness and professional responses across our community. As our services continue to grow, we have also invested in the spaces from which we deliver them. The opening of our new flexible space, The Pod, made possible through the generous support of Bendigo Bank, has expanded our capacity to provide counselling, groups, training and community activities. Alongside this, the Centre underwent much-needed maintenance and improvements, creating a more welcoming, functional and comfortable environment for the women who access our services.

CHAIR'S REPORT cont.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank our dedicated staff and volunteers whose professionalism, compassion and commitment continue to make a difference in the lives of women throughout our community. I would also like to acknowledge the leadership of our Manager, Tracy Lumb, whose dedication and tireless efforts continue to drive the Centre's growth and success.

We are grateful to NSW Ministry of Health for its ongoing core funding and commitment to women's health services, and to the Australian Government Department of Social Services for its investment in financial counselling. We also acknowledge the leadership and advocacy of Women's Health NSW in championing women's health across the state.

Our thanks extend to the many organisations that partner with us, deliver outreach services from our Centre and work collaboratively to improve outcomes for women across the Shoalhaven. We also thank Share the Dignity for its ongoing support in providing essential period and incontinence products to women experiencing hardship.

It has been a privilege to serve alongside such a dedicated group of women on the Committee this year. I thank each member for the time, knowledge and passion they bring to the organisation and their commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of women across our community.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to strengthening services, securing the long-term future of key initiatives such as the menopause clinic, and continuing to advocate for healthcare that is accessible, affordable, safe and responsive to the needs of women across our region.

Erin Nichols



MANAGER'S REPORT

Here we are at the end of the 2025-2026 reporting year, and what a busy and exciting year we have had at Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre (SWHC).

All our interior painting/upgrades are complete, and we now have our additional space 'The Pod'; a relocatable office in our front yard thanks to the generous donation and support of the Community Bank Nowra & Districts – Bendigo Bank.

The Pod is a beautiful space: clients, staff and visiting services just love. Add to this beautiful space, local artist and supportive friend of SWHC, Ann Sudmalis, painted the most amazing mural on its side with purple Iris', Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow flowers, our Tree of Life and women woven between the roots and flowers; this represents Ann's expression of what we do in community and the women we work alongside.

As we have one year remaining of our current funding grant which provided us with our enhancement funding to grow our service, (an additional $290K approx. per year), allowing SWHC to expand the services we deliver. This also enabled us to secure two additional roles being a Health Promotion Worker and Financial Counsellor. This funding allowed us to welcome another 116 new clients this year and provide greater support for our existing ones.

As we enter a time of renegotiating contracts, myself and some staff recently had the opportunity to meet with the Hon. Ryan Park MP, Minister for Health NSW to discuss our service; the increases to services we are delivering and the value for money we demonstrate on behalf of the NSW State Government through excellent budgeting and fiscal policy.

We were pleased to receive assurances from Mr Park that whilst he holds the role of NSW Minister of Health our future is secure, providing continuity of care for the women we serve.

Leanne Harrison our Administration Worker took a step sideways and now holds the role of Health Promotion Worker. As we have never had the opportunity to employ a dedicated worker in the Health Promotion space, we see this as quite the achievement and clearly demonstrates another example of the ways enhanced funding has expanded service. Leanne will develop this role in community along with continuing her work in the area of training and referral for the 'It Left No Marks' Project.



MANAGER'S REPORT cont

We welcomed Caitlin Osborne to the role of Administration/Reception (backfill). Caitlin is a bright, welcoming and enthusiastic part of the team; and has already enrolled in further studies in Community Services.

Also, our University of Wollongong Social Work Student Placement Emma Davison joined us for 500 hours and was loved by all. Clients and staff miss her happy and helpful disposition; we waved her goodbye as she sets out to take on the world. SWHC is hoping in years to come, she circles back and joins our team.

When writing an annual report, one reflects on the past year and the one we head into. In community, we constantly hear about the challenges of frontline workers, and rightly so, but I often feel those who serve the community at spaces like SWHC can be overlooked in that broad brushstroke term.

Staff, Volunteers at SWHC see women at their most stressed and vulnerable time; continuing to support, advocate and refer in the most respectful, empathetic and graceful manner…. There are not enough ways to describe or thank our staff for the work they do for women in our community.

Acknowledge must be given to the Committee of Women (CoW) who give their time freely, to support myself and the overall governance of the organisation. We are surrounded by outstanding women.

As a girl I went to a high school in Sydney and our school motto was Ut Prosim, Latin of course. It was in our school songs, on our uniforms, at the front gate and whilst we were told the meaning, it has never been as clear to me as in my time at SWHC. "That I May Serve" is the translation of this motto; constantly being reflected in the work all our amazing staff undertake at our centre in serving our community.



Tracy Lumb



OUR SERVICES

Counselling

Counselling supports a wide variety of issues including depression, anxiety, grief, sexual assault, stress, parenting, sexuality and relationships. Art Therapy is available at our Centre.

Financial Counselling

Financial counselling is a free, confidential and non-judgemental service that can assist those in financial difficulty to explore their financial options. This includes providing information and advice on creating sustainable budgets, planning for changes in income and expenses, setting goals and managing debt, including advocating for you with creditors.

Massage/Reiki

Therapeutic and remedial massage is available 2 days per week. Massage helps relieve body stresses and may improve mobility and musculoskeletal function. Massage is offered on a priority basis. Reiki is also available on request. Reiki (universal life energy) is a non-intrusive method of hands-on healing which may assist the body and mind to achieve a greater sense of well - being.

SWHC IS A SAFE SPACE WHERE WOMEN FEEL WELCOMED, HEARD AND EMPOWERED

Natural Medicine

Assistance with managing your health by exploring underlying causes with the aim to assist the body to health itself. A consultation will include, nutrition, dietary education, herbal medicine and advice on lifestyle changes.

Workshops

The Centre runs a variety of workshops throughout the year including Women's Wisdom, Financial Wellbeing, Art Therapy, Emotional and Physical Wellbeing, Nutrition, Digestive Health and Health Promotion.

Women's Health Nurse

We host an ISLHD Well Women's Nurse. Women can access services including cervical screening, breast checks, education/information on a variety of issues including contraception, PMS, menopause, information on sexually transmitted infections and hormone replacement therapy.

Pregnancy Options

Pregnancy options and referrals are supported by this Centre.

Menopause Clinic

Women who are experiencing challenging symptoms of menopause and perimenopause can get help. You will have a comprehensive and holistic assessment, including guidance and support. This service compliments care from your GP.

Legal Clinic (pro bono)

Liz Parnall, Principal of Parnell + Brien Solicitors, in conjunction with her solicitor, Isabel Arenas-Mangan offer free legal advice for SWHC clients in the areas of Family Law (Property & Parenting), Conveyancing and Wills & Estates.

Non-Fatal Strangulation & Sexual Choking

Our Health Promotion Worker can assist with information associated with cause, harm and effects, risk, harm reduction and, information and referral to specialist services/GP's. Information brochures are available at the Centre.

Visiting Services

Community Services regularly visit our Centre to provide better access to women in the region; these include Uniting NDIS Helpdesk and Southern NILS (No Interest Loans). Please ask when enquiring what other visiting services may be attending.

Information & Referral

We provide women, community members and groups with a wide range of information and referral options within community.

Women's Biz

Women's Biz is our regular newsletter detailing upcoming activities and events.
Monthly Women's Wellbeing Newsletter - health promotion newsletter on targeted health topics.

WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHT

Doll Making Workshop

The doll making workshop offered participants a gentle, creative space to explore identity, self-expression and personal meaning through fabric, colour, texture and touch. Using soft calico dolls prepared by a local sewing group, participants selected materials to dress their dolls in ways that reflect aspects of themselves, their experiences and inner strengths, or in admiration of a women meaningful to them. The hands-on process of stitching, tying and arranging fabric encouraged calm focus, supporting emotional regulation to reduce feelings of distress or anxiety.

The workshop also fostered connection, trust and shared understanding within a safe and nurturing group environment. The process promoted confidence while the shared making experience encouraged conversation, belonging and positive social connection. A morning tea and delicious lunch, all enjoyed in the serene setting of the SWHC garden on a sunny April day, complimented the experience. As participants later reflected on their dolls, they were supported to externalise feelings, gently explore grief or challenges, and strengthen their sense of self. In one participant's experience, her doll accompanied her on a road trip, providing emotional support, comfort and connection beyond the workshop itself. Another participant placed her doll on her living room bookshelf, where it provided a sense of safety and of being looked out for.








ART THERAPY SPOTLIGHT

Clay Workshop

In this workshop, participants first explored the sensory qualities of clay and considered the moods or ideas they wanted to express. We discussed using symbols—such as hearts, flowers, and animals—to represent feelings and aspects of personality. Each participant then created a piece and shared its personal meaning. Some women especially valued the freedom to simply play with the clay, something they rarely allow themselves to do. The group agreed that the activity was a fun way to connect and explore their creativity.







Zen Garden Workshop

In this workshop, participants created a small container of "Zen" or peace as a visual reminder to pause, relax, and focus on the present moment. We talked about how difficult it can be for women to find peace and quiet, and to breathe without feeling overwhelmed by their to-do lists. Participants were invited to bring items from home, and one participant brought small plants to share. Each woman then created her own expression of peace and tranquility. Feedback from the group highlighted the value of making space to discuss this topic with other women.





WELL WOMEN'S NURSE PROGRAM 2025/2026
NOWRA OUTREACH WOMEN'S HEALTH NURSE

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health Districts Women's Health Service continues to work collaboratively with the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre in providing clinical services to women.

Women's Health and Sexual health Clinical Nurse Specialist Lizz Gerlowska has a background in working with women involved in the criminal justice system, women who have recently left drug and alcohol facilities, refugee communities and remote area nursing in Aboriginal communities.

Lizz also works for the Clinical forensic medicine team as a sexual assault nurse examiner and can also see clients who require follow up testing and sensitive discussions around strangulation and domestic violence focussing on historical injuries.

The Women's health service provides clinics twice a month prioritising women who do not or who are unable to access mainstream services in our community.

Services include:

- Cervical screening
- Breast health
- STI screening and management
- Implanon insertion and removal
- Menopause information
- Contraception including referral to the LARC contraception clinic for eligible women
- Pregnancy testing
- Sexual and reproductive health care including termination
- Education

Lizz ran 28 clinics during reporting period



Services are prioritised for women in the following groups:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- LGBTQI including both transgender men and women
- Homeless
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol and other drug dependencies
- Disabilities
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Refugees
- Women who have been affected by the criminal justice system

The Women's Health Service looks forward to continuing the Well Women's Outreach Program in Collaboration with the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre for the coming year.

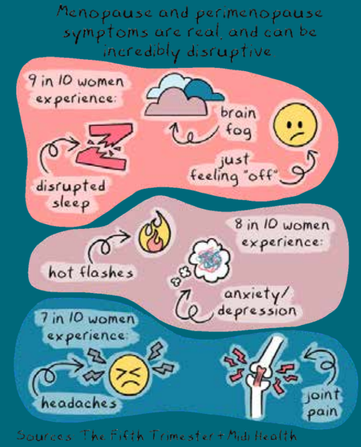
MENOPAUSE SERVICE

Women who are experiencing challenging symptoms of menopause and perimenopause can get support at our Menopause Service. You will have a comprehensive and holistic assessment, including guidance and support for:

- manage challenging symptoms of menopause
- bone health for the management of osteoporosis and prevention of fractures
- lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke
- supporting mental health and well-being
- management of weight and lifestyle
- managing urinary problems

18
clinics
supporting
131
occasions of service





SHOALHAVEN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8 MARCH 2026

The Shoalhaven International Women's Day committee worked together over the last 12 months to put together a range of events during International Women's Day in the Shoalhaven area.

Our events started with a meditation group on the 3rd of March held at Hanging Rock at the Nowra Showground. The group was beautifully led by Colleen Langan with a performance by Deb and Ini from Lotus Harmonies. The outlook was inspirational and the women attending experienced a relaxing and peaceful meditation practice.



The Women Speak event held on 7th of March at the Berry School of Arts was well attended and included afternoon tea prepared by the Berry Country Women's Association. The event opened with an uplifting performance by Sing Express Sisters led by Tena Broad who performed a song "What Happens When a Woman" that was immensely enjoyed by all those in attendance. The guest speakers were Sharon Callaghan from the Australian Services Union, Denele Crozier CEO Women's Health in New South Wales, Dr Fiona Mackie from Zonta in Berry, Jen Robinson International Human Rights Lawyer (best known for defending Julian Assange and representing Amber Heard) and Philippa Cracknell - a lifelong advocate for women's rights, a survivor of domestic abuse and a significant figure in the women's refuge movement. These inspiring women spoke from their own life journeys which led to a discussion on current issues that women face in the changing political economic and social landscape. Close to 90 women attended the event.



The Women Writers event held on 14th of March in the Shoalhaven Library meeting room provided an opportunity for women to come together in a warm and supportive environment to read and share their work and to be inspired by the work of others. The event also included some light refreshments for those attending.

The Women Performing event held on 14th of March at the Tomerong Hall was well attended by over 90 people. It was an opportunity to showcase local talent and was a very lively event with lots of audience participation. Dinner was also provided by Claude's Kitchen.

The bushwalk was held on 25th March At Berrara Creek led by Ronnie Kroon.

ACCREDITATION, MEMBERSHIPS AND TRAINING

Memberships held by Centre Staff

- Australian Association of Social Workers
- Financial Counsellors' Association of NSW
- The Australian and New Zealand and Asian Creative Art Therapies Association
- Australian Traditional Medicine Society
- Massage & Myotherapy Australia

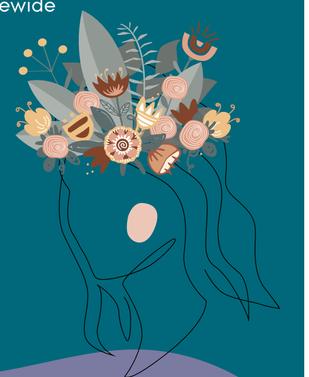
All staff and volunteers complete regular National Police Checks and Working with Children Checks.

Employees' Professional development and training:

- Mental Health First Aid Training
- DV Alert Training
- First Aid Training
- Non-Fatal Strangulation Training
- Feminism is Practice - WHNSW CEO
- Coercive Control - Aboriginal Legal Service
- AVOs - Aboriginal Legal Service
- Drug & Alcohol - Michele Pearson
- Staff attended various training opportunities and webinars associated with their own practice throughout the year.

Community Groups

- Shoalhaven Domestic & Family Violence Committee
- Ulladulla Interagency Committee
- Shoalhaven Interagency Committee
- Shoalhaven Multicultural Interagency
- Women's Health Centres Statewide



CENTRE FUNDAMENTALS

At SWHC our focus is guided and encouraged by the shared philosophy of the importance of high-quality standards of service and the basic human rights of women.
We will continue to apply this philosophy to all areas of our work and service.



Human Rights & Social Justice

Value women's contribution to our community

Leadership, Equity & Promotion of women

Advocacy for and with women

FOUNDATIONS

PHILOSOPHY

Empower women and value their life experiences based on the feminist ideal of women's right to a valued place in society.

VISION

A peaceful and equitable society where all women are empowered, respected and enjoy optimum health and wellbeing.

MISSION

Empower women to take control of their health and wellbeing by providing accessible, multidisciplinary integrated health services within a safe, caring, supportive, feminist environment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Healthy Relationships
- Healthy Minds
- Healthy LIfestyles
- Healthy Bodies
- Safety & Support
- Integrated Care

MOTTO: EMPOWERING - HOLISTIC - SUPPORTING

SWHC STAFF

Centre staff continue to provide a high level of compassionate and professional service delivery to the women of the Shoalhaven through dedication and commitment.

All staff employed have varying hours and are classified by the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Modern Award. Bogumila Gerlowska (Lizz), our Women's Health Nurse conducts outreach clinic through our partnership with Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's Well Women's Program.

Our reception continues to be supported by staff and skilled volunteers. Staff are flexible, adapting to change as our cohort and demand grows; with the continuation of 'in house' and/or remote, outreach service delivery. Staff continue to work from varying outreach locations. Staff continue to feel the benefits of flexible working arrangements offering a better work/life balance with no impacts on clients and/or service delivery.

Administration/Reception
- Caitlin Osborne

Complementary Therapist/Naturopath
- Carolyn Lette

Counselling
- Kym Nicholson
-Suzanne Buzza
-Melissa Hedger (Art Therapist)

Financial Counselling
- Ali Goodwin
-Anita Gibson

Finance
- Lia Anderson

Health Promotion
- Leanne Harrison

Massage
- Linda Bradshaw

Policy
- Suzanne Buzza

This year we looked at milestones and the service years of staff to our Centre. SWHC has always been very fortunate to have staff who have remained at the service for many years. This has not only benefited our clients with continuity of care but provided a stable workforce, budgetary savings in costs associated with recruitment/training but more importantly a cohesive team.

This included **Linda Bradshaw** 20 years, **Carolyn Lette** 20 years, **Ali Goodwin** 10 years, and **Kym Nicholson** an incredible 25 years!



SWHC VOLUNTEERS

Our wonderful volunteers support the Centre on a regular basis in administration or workshops. Without their ongoing dedication and attendance, our services would not operate as smoothly.
To Kath, Carol and Valerie.....A huge thank you!

Our Volunteers:
♥ Kathy Eade
♥ Valerie Hill
♥ Carol Williams – our newest team member.



SWHC COMMITTEE OF WOMEN

The Committee of Women (CoW) are a committed, professional team who bring a range of skills and knowledge to the governance of our service. They face the challenges of the changing environment of NGO's and the legislative and statutory requirements of the position. It must be remembered that the work contributed by these women in meeting the service standards is demanding of their time and, ongoing.

The SWHC would like to thank:
Erin Nichols (Chair/Treasurer)
Jaime Carpenter (Secretary)
Maureen Cable
Kate Morris
Gillian Quinn
(Ordinary Members)
Special thanks to Erin Nichols our Chair, for sharing her vast experience, offering support and her professional manner.

IN HER WORDS

You have made such a difference in my life in a short time and I am truly grateful to all of you.

OMG I did not think they would....holly molly you have been amazing and a life saver to me and my family... I am so grateful for you and am so grateful for everything you have done thus far. You and the service need to know you're so appreciated and grateful you're here to help. You have taken stress off me, and assistance beyond what I could do so thank you.

Thank you so much..... I'm still very emotional. Couldn't imagine not having you with all your help. Truly grateful so thank you again. Thank you for all the support you gave me during the last few years, numerous times you were the only human kindness I received. Your strengths helped me through the toughest and roughest times I've ever experienced in my lifetime.

You are my saviour,
you said all the right words, and I now feel like I'm out of that hole.
No other counsellor said the right words,
but you did.

Ali, thank you from the very bottom of my heart for everything . I was in a very dark place. Between you and Melissa I have been given the opportunity to take more care of myself .



Words just are not enough for everything you have supported me with...you are truly one in a million girls

Your nurse is absolute delight, she is a treasure.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre has remained a constant in our community for over 40 years.

From a small community based organisation of a few staff, we have grown and expanded to cover a greater footprint within the Shoalhaven but have remained steadfast in our philosophy and continuity of care for women in our community.



1,254
Client appointments including ...

869 Counselling
268 Financial Counselling
230 Massage
47 Alternate Therapy
127 Groups
1134 Group attendance

PLUS
4,547
telephone and zoom support

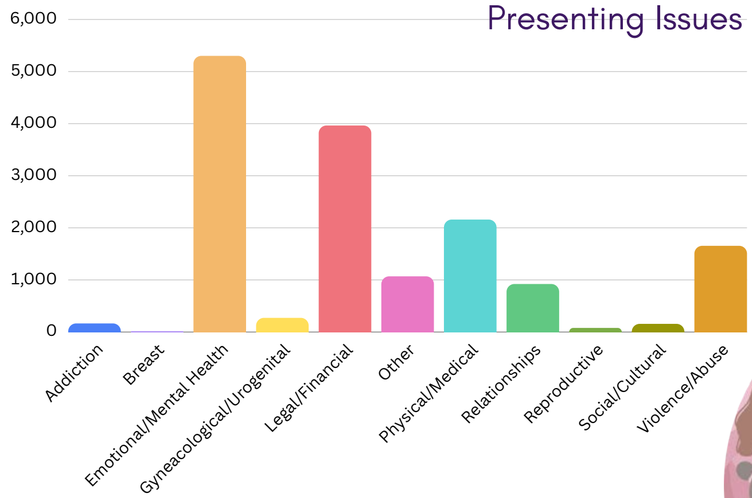
THIS YEAR WE WELCOMED
116
NEW CLIENTS TO OUR CENTRE

Women support Women



TOTAL
Client Contacts
7,514

OUR CLIENTS

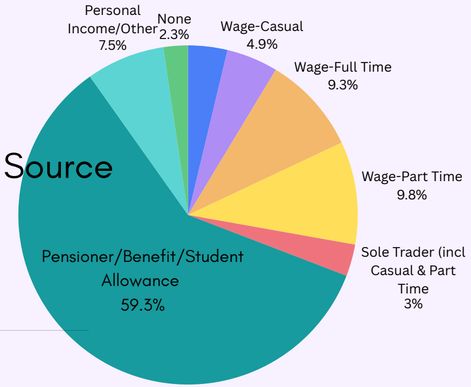




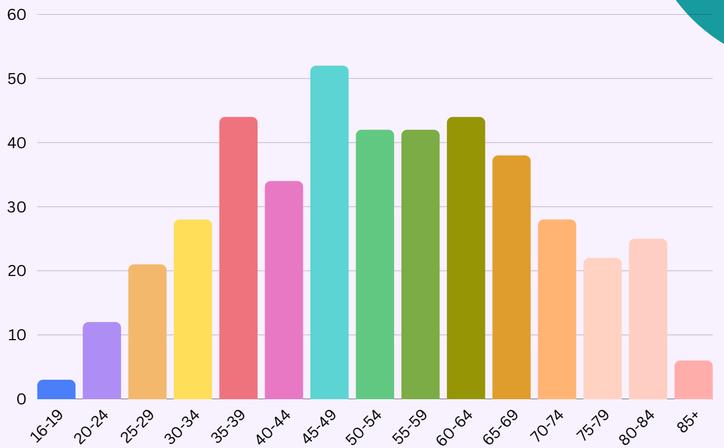


OUR CLIENTS

Income Source



Age Ranges



150
women identified having a disability

112
live with a chronic/long term illness

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre for the year ended 30 June 2026

	2026	2025
Income		
Grant Income	892,528	791,279
Other Income	20,846	49,360
Total Income	913,374	840,639
Expenses		
Administration Expenses	52,694	52,882
Depreciation	6,359	6,402
Employee Related Expenses	758,023	710,538
Office Expenses	37,209	38,006
Rental Expenses	43,516	41,066
Repairs & Maintenance	14,987	21,497
Total Expenses	912,788	870,391
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit)	586	(29,752)

NSW Ministry of Health (MoH)

\+

Shoalhaven Womens Health Centre

=

$$$
Value for money for women

Core
$355,000

\+

Enhancement
$296,000

=

$651,000

Counselling
3 days/week

\+

Additional
10 days per week

=

13 days per week

Massage Therapist + Alternate Therapist

3 days per week

Manager

5 days per week

Reception

3 days per week

Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
5.14
10 employees

New Roles

Financial Counsellor
4 days per week

=

4 days per week

Health Promotion
4 days per week

=

4 days per week

Social Work Student Placement

Emma Davidson - UOW



This year we were fortunate enough to have a final year Social Work student, Emma Davidson, join us for her 500-hour student placement. Emma fitted into SWHC from the first day and became a highly valued member of the team. She brought her knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for women's health with her. She contributed her wonderful singing talent in support of Harmony Day in the Shoalhaven, co-facilitated workshops and so much more.
Thank you Emma for all your hard work and dedication.
You will be missed by our staff and clients.

Emma describes her experience:

Student experience - Completing placement as a social work student can often be quite a daunting experience. Throughout our degree, we are required to complete two 500-hour placement blocks in a variety of professional settings, often stepping into completely new environments and roles. I was lucky enough to complete my final placement block at Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre, and I can confidently say that my experience here has been nothing short of exceptional. On a professional level, the learning opportunities I was provided with exceeded my expectations. I was given opportunities to engage in one-on-one interactions with clients, co-facilitate therapeutic groups, create and facilitate my own programs, and so much more. However, the main element that has stayed with me during my time in the service would have to be the team. From the first day I walked through the door, I felt extremely welcomed. As a student in a professional agency, it can be difficult to feel like you fit in; however, while working at SWHC, I never had that issue. Every single staff member went out of their way to ensure I was comfortable and felt welcome. Each person kept me in mind for certain tasks and opportunities if they felt it would enhance my learning experience. I can appreciate that having a student for 500 hours can add extra work to an already busy service, but not once did they make me feel like a burden. Working at SWHC has overall been an encouraging, educational, welcoming, and empowering experience. I have witnessed firsthand how hard every staff member works to ensure the best possible care for clients, and that same respect and care was extended to me as a social work student. I have had such an incredible experience at this service, and I feel very lucky to have finished my degree surrounded by such an amazing team.

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN
Strategic Plan 2019-2029

Our Objectives

- Ensure that the Governance of SWHC is of the highest standard and members are drawn from the local community.
- Strive to maintain ethical standards in all our activities.
- Commitment to best practice and continued quality improvement.
- Provide a non-profit primary health care service for women, managed by women, within a feminist framework in the Shoalhaven area.
- Prioritise access for women who are marginalised and/or have poorest of health issues by providing services at a minimal cost or for no cost to ensure that women are able to receive service and support.
- Ensure that services reflect the needs of local women providing educational, preventative and self-help programs which encompass women's life span, experience across a broad range of health issues which also recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women of CALD backgrounds.
- Network, liaise, collaborate and establish MOU's where applicable with other local service providers in order to provide necessary services to women in the community.
- Provide services and activities to guide women by the referral process, acknowledging and addressing the different needs of women of diverse backgrounds and social, physical and emotional barriers and mental health issues.
- Provide specialised support and service provision for women who have experienced historic or current trauma and/or domestic violence.
- Uphold the rights of women who may use the service to express themselves freely, to be treated with confidentially with respect, dignity and consideration.
- Ensure the creation and maintenance of a safe, healthy and supportive environment for the wellbeing of staff, volunteers, Committee of Women (CoW) and women who use the centre and its services.

Goals and Corresponding Strategies

Each goal is underpinned by the SWHC on-going commitment to advocate for and support women from a feminist perspective including at all levels of government and their Ministries.

1. To secure and develop a strong and dynamic organisation providing a range of multidisciplinary and integrated health services by professional and experienced practitioners.
- Maintain evaluate and review the SWHC Policy and Procedure Manual.
- Maintain appropriate KPI's in line with the 'NSW Health Framework for Women's Health 2013' in collaboration with The Ministry of Health to underpin our yearly Contractual obligations.
- Complete the self-assessment process (QIP) and maintain best practice industry standards.
- To ensure effective Governance and operation of the Centre by and for women.
- To encourage training and staff development in all areas of women's health.

2. To work collaboratively through strong partnerships and cross sector organisations at local, state, national and global levels.
- To ensure the SWHC delivers high quality health and wellbeing services to target groups within budget.
- A Business Plan embedded into our Strategic & Operational Plan to steer the financial planning, budget and management of SWHC and its services.
- Build the public profile of the Centre through a variety of activities and mediums.
- Build and expand partnerships and MOU opportunities with other services, organisations and groups to offer an extensive, diverse, supported, client-focused service to women.

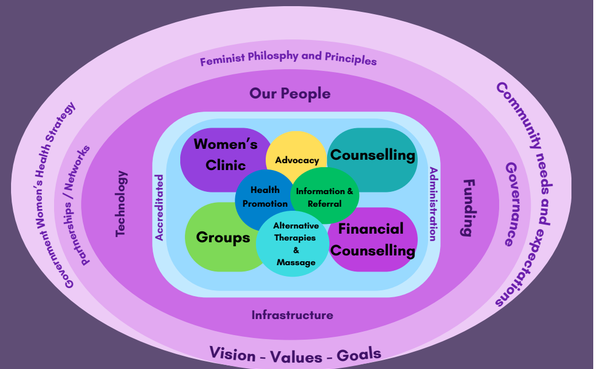
WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN
Strategic Plan 2019-2029

3. To improve access to health services and information for all women with the aim of expanding and developing greater opportunities for their health and wellbeing.
- Maintain planning and evaluation processes and cycles to ensure SWHC operates effectively while meeting the changing needs of women.
- Ensure that all women involved in the Centre feel valued and supported.
- To provide a range of services which reflect the nature of women's health with a focus on prevention and early intervention, empowering all women through:
  *the referral process;
  *education provided by the nurse and through workshops; and
  *provision of alternate therapy, counselling, massage and legal counselling for continued wellbeing.

4. To work towards expansion of services operating on a five-day basis.
- Maintain a strong, diverse and dynamic membership base with the aim to build and grow these numbers.
- To decrease lengthy waiting lists for current services provided.
- Expand service provision to encompass groups and activities which address women's social, cultural and recreational wellbeing. Service provision to include the introduction of new services such as financial counselling.
- Advocate for greater support and recognition of the importance of gender specific health strategies through promotion, policy, practices and activism.



5. To expand our client profile and services targeting new groups as a response to the changing population of the Shoalhaven.
- Expand our existing outreach services in the Shoalhaven to include off-site health workshops and women's and cultural festivals.
- Explore and build our technological capacity to increase opportunities for women including services profile and contact via Website, email and social media.
- Continue to work towards increased service provision by exploring a variety of options including funding submissions and opportunities, partnerships and MOU's.



PARTNERSHIPS

At SWHC we work closely with other organisations. We acknowledge the role they each play, supporting the services we provide to the women of the Shoalhaven, through partnership, referral and connection.

Parnell + Brien Solicitors provide pro bono legal advice to clients twice a month.

Parnell + Brien Solicitors

Uniting NDIS provide outreach helpdesk support one day a month.

ndis Uniting

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District through provision of Women's Health Nurse and Menopause outreach clinics.

NSW GOVERNMENT Health Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

No Interest Loans funded through Good Shepherd provide outreach at SWHC to help women secure loans to pay for everyday living expenses.

No Interest Loans
For essentials you need now.

Women's Health NSW is our peak body. They continue to advocate for Women's Health, inform Ministry and Department, provide research and seek funding opportunities to provide stability to our sector.

women's health nsw

FUNDING

As a not-for profit organisation, we rely on funding, grants and donations to continue our work supporting women in the Shoalhaven community.

Funding Bodies

- NSW Ministry of Health
- Australian Government Department of Social Services

Donors & Sponsors

- Bendigo Bank
- Share the Dignity
- Callala Beach Boomerang Bags

Community Bank Nowra & District
Supporting your community
Bendigo Bank

Share the Dignity donate period and incontinence products, as well as It's in the Bag each year. We would like to thank Shirley Edwards for her extradinoary support through Share the Dignity.

sharethedignity

Callala Beach Boomerang Bags donate lovely handmade tote bags and personal care items for clients.

SPACE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

We are incredibly grateful to Bendigo Bank for their generous donation of a relocatable office space to Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre.

This additional space has increased our capacity to support women in our community, providing a welcoming and private environment for connection, support and wellbeing.

THE IMPACT OF
BENDIGO BANK'S GENEROUS DONATION

PRIVATE SPACE
A confidential and comfortable setting for one-on-one support, counselling and casework.

DEDICATED WORKSPACE
Provides additional workspace for staff, supporting the day-to-day delivery and coordination of services for women in our community.

GREATER CAPACITY
The additional office allows us to make better use of our existing spaces and increases our capacity to support women accessing the centre.

Community Bank Nowra & District
Supporting your community
Bendigo Bank



Thank you,

BENDIGO BANK

Your generous contribution has provided our centre with valuable additional space to support women in our community.

This space is already making a meaningful difference and will continue to support women for years to come.

We are so grateful









PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS



Elena Bellinato
Registered
Music Therapist

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

community INDUSTRY GROUP

NSW GOVERNMENT Health
Illawarra Shoalhaven
Local Health District

Australian Government
Department of Social Services

South Coast & Country
COMMUNITY LAW
South Coast | Snowy | Queanbeyan

CARLA BALSAR
YOGA

Aboriginal
Legal Service
(NSW/ACT) Limited

YWCA
Australia

South Coast
Medical Service
Aboriginal Corporation

Calm Pelvic & Lymphoedema

Anglicare

sassi

MENTAL
HEALTH
HUB

RCC FOR WOMEN

salt care



Open Harts Independent
Funeral Guidance &
Support

COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

- Shoalhaven Domestic & Family Violence Committee
- Ulladulla Interagency Committee
- Shoalhaven Interagency Committee
- Shoalhaven Multicultural Interagency
- Women's Health Centres Statewide

Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre
5 McGrath Avenue, Nowra 2541
PO Box 314 Nowra NSW 2541
Telephone: 02 4421 0730
Email: swhc@swhc.org.au
www.shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre.org.au
www.facebook.com/shoalhaven.womenshealthcentre
www.instagram.com/shoalhavenwomenshealthcentre