



# Year in Reflection

2023



**WOMEN'S HEALTH  
& WELLBEING**  
Barwon South West

# Introduction

Women’s Health & Wellbeing Barwon South West (WHWBSW) is the regional women’s health service for the Barwon South West (BSW) region. Our organisation was incorporated in 2011 following several years of collaboration to develop a dedicated organisation to advance the women’s health promotion agenda in the BSW region. We are one of twelve women’s health agencies across the state, funded by the Department of Health.

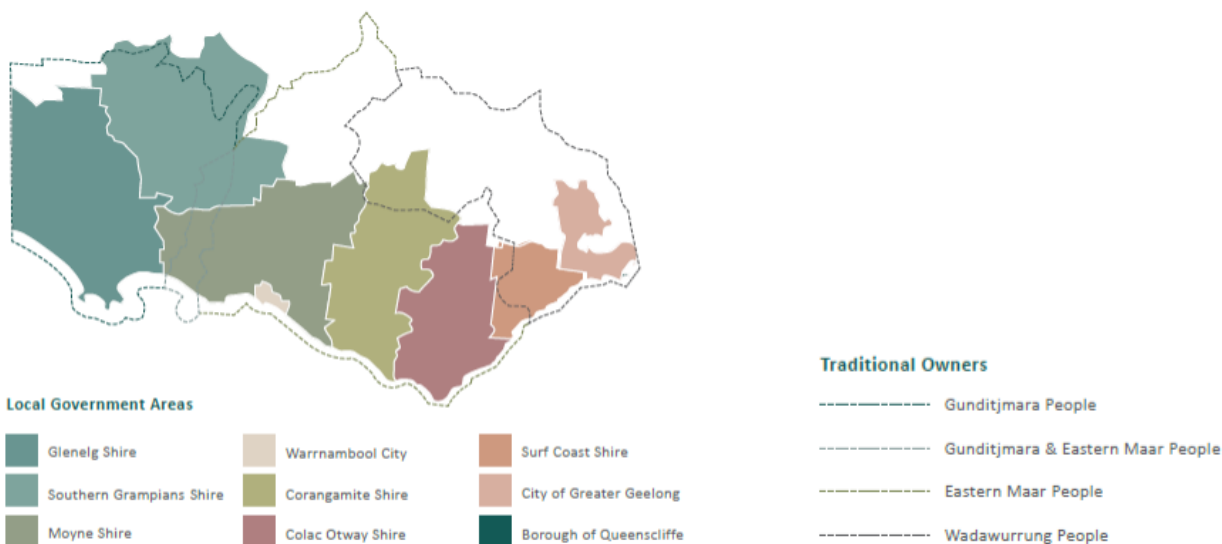
The BSW region spans the lands of three Traditional Owner groups – the Gunditjmara, Eastern Maar and Wadawurrung – and the clans that reside within them. The region includes nine local government areas: Borough of Queenscliffe, City of Greater Geelong, Colac Otway Shire, Corangamite Shire, Glenelg Shire, Moyne Shire, Southern Grampians Shire, Surf Coast Shire and Warrnambool City Council. The BSW covers 29,146 square kilometres, with a population of approximately 440,075. Of this, 224,928 are female, and 215,147 are male, according to the most recent Census (2021).

As a women’s health organisation, we work to redress gender inequities in health by supporting our region to take action to promote gender equity and improve women’s health, wellbeing and safety. We promote health and prevent ill-health before it occurs by taking action on the social determinants of health, and recognising that social, legal, economic and cultural factors impact on health. We lead change by shifting public discussion, translating evidence into action and pushing for policy changes in businesses, organisations and all levels of government.

Our work is built on a foundation of evidence and a commitment to excellence. We engage women from across the region to understand their experiences and elevate their voices, which then informs and guides our advocacy. Our consultation with women is targeted; focusing on those whose voices are often unheard or silenced. We also build the capacity of our partners and the broader community to tackle the factors that shape women’s health.

As a leading expert organisation, we commonly partner with local government, health providers and service organisations, supporting our partners to deliver coordinated, evidence-based health promotion action across all the levels of the socio-ecological model. Our focus includes building health promotion skills and expertise across the region so that more workplaces can advocate for and contribute to improving women’s health and wellbeing outcomes.

Every single organisation, workplace, school, sporting club, media outlet, community group and education provider has the power to champion gender equality and respect through how they conduct themselves – both in person and via policies and procedures that shape their everyday operations. These settings present opportunities for significant influence over the social norms, organisational practices, and institutional structures that can drive change.



# Our vision is for a Barwon South West where women are healthy, safe and can access all of life's opportunities

We work to reduce health inequities across three priority areas impacting women living in the Barwon South West region.

## 1

### Advancing Gender Equality

We take a gendered approach to our work in health promotion from a feminist framework that aims to address many of the underlying inequities in systems and structures that negatively impact women's health and wellbeing.

## 2

### Preventing Violence Against Women

We take a strategic, regional, and collective approach to addressing the gendered drivers of violence in Barwon South West region. Respect 2040 is a collective movement that brings together community members, businesses, groups, clubs and organisations across Barwon South West to work towards a vision for a thriving, equal community.

## 3

### Promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health

We work collaboratively to ensure that women and girls living in the Barwon South West region have full access to sexual and reproductive health services, and that they experience bodily autonomy, agency and their full sexual and reproductive rights.

To acknowledge the complex nature of our work and the challenge of achieving lasting change, we focus on capacity building to work effectively and collectively towards adopting gender transformative practice.

Our evidence-based Learning Series are part of a coordinated approach to providing partner organisations with the fit-for-purpose tools they need to advance gender equality within their organisations.



# 21

Training sessions were delivered

# 300+

Participants attended our training sessions

We delivered 21 training sessions to organisations across the Barwon South West, including:

**Corangamite Shire Council:** Leaders from across the organisation attended and learnt about interrupting biases, the leadership shadow, and avoiding the merit trap.

**Moyne Shire Council and Glenelg Shire Council:** Staff participated in Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) training, which included key concepts and a history of gender equality followed by a practical session.

**Warrnambool City Council:** We ran two GIA training sessions with staff. The training highlighted the significance of GIAs in understanding and addressing gender in all aspects of policies, programs and services.

**Barwon Coast:** We ran three Gender Equality 101 training sessions to around 60 Barwon Coast staff. The training equipped staff with the knowledge, skills and confidence to understand gender equality principles.

**The Barwon South West Public Health Unit:** We delivered an online GIA training that highlighted the importance of using data and provided participants with the information, confidence, and tools to undertake a GIA.

**Moyne Health Services:** We delivered GIA training to Moyne Health Services managers and executive team.

# 19

Local government employees regularly attended our network meetings

# 9

Local governments across the BSW had a representative at our network meetings

# 8

Network meetings were held for local governments and health services this year

# 12

Health service employees regularly attended our network meetings

# 11

Health services across the BSW had a representative at our network meetings

We walk alongside 23 defined entities to build their confidence and capacity to meet their obligations under the Gender Equality Act. This support includes regional network meetings for Health Services.



In collaboration with Barwon Health, we hosted our first in-person meeting for the Gender Equality Health Service Network. We began with a round table Gender Impact Assessment practice, unpacking a service relevant to all the health services.

We explored the requirements of the upcoming progress reports where health services will be submitting their first progress towards their Gender Equality Action Plans under the Commission's obligations.

Lastly, together we identified collective actions for collaboration in 2024, with the vision to work together to progress gender equality within our health services across the region.



We worked with 14 Respect 2040 partners across the Barwon South West to build regional capacity to prevent violence against women.



# 8

New partners signed onto Respect 2040 in the G21 region this year

# 6

Respect 2040 G21 Partnership Advisory Group meetings were held this year

This year was a significant milestone for Respect 2040, with the merger of two sub-regional partnerships into one regional Barwon South West (BSW) partnership. The Respect 2040 regional merger and partnership restructure was endorsed by R2040 G21 Partnership Advisory Group and supported by R2040 Great South Coast partners and allies.

This year, Respect 2040 focused on building capacity in intersectional practice. Some of the work includes the development of 10 Intersectional gendered data profiles for the BSW and 9 Local Government Areas. These data profiles were distributed to over 20 partner organisations via the Respect 2040 partners and ally network. To continue supporting partners and allies in building intersectional PVAW capacity, Respect 2040 produced 8 Intersectional Practice videos.

Respect 2040 uses 16 Days of Activism to showcase the steps we are taking to advance gender equality and prevent violence against women 365 days a year in the BSW. 13 organisations across the BSW participated in the From 16 to 365 Social Media campaign this year, each sharing information on the work they do to advance gender equity and prevent violence against women.

The logo for Respect 2040 features the word "RESPECT" in a bold, teal, hand-drawn font, with "2040" below it in a yellow, hand-drawn font.

16 Days of Activism  
Barwon South West  
social media campaign

CAMPAIGN REPORT 2023

# Intersectional Practice Forum

# 40

Delegates from 22 organisations attended the forum

This year we held our first Intersectional Practice Forum in response to Respect 2040 partners identifying a need to build capacity in intersectional practice across the region.

40 delegates from 22 organisations spanning Glenelg to the Bellarine shared a learning space anchored in a genuine drive to improve how we work with the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of difference richly embodied in the women, girls, and gender diverse people of the Barwon South West.

Guest speaker, Marina Carmen from Safe and Equal, captured the sentiment of the forum when she said that we are all still working out the practicalities of doing intersectionality well.

This forum was the first in a series of twice-yearly professional development initiatives within the Respect 2040 movement.



# Events we attended

## Our Equal State: Victoria's gender equality strategy and action plan launch

This year we were pleased to be part of the launch of 'Our Equal State.' Our PVAW Team Leader, Becky was invited to present on the panel about women's safety.



## South West Sport - Respect in Sport Leadership Luncheon

For 16 Days of Activism, South West Sport held a luncheon to celebrate the launch of their 'South West Women in Sports Leadership' video campaign. Our PVAW Team Leader, Becky was invited to speak on the panel about gender equality in sport.



## International Women's Day

International Women's Day is an important time for reflection, recognition and celebration.

Our team attended several events across the region. We were delighted to see so many of our partners celebrating and recognising the achievements of women.



## Women's Health in the House

This year our Interim Regional Manager, Dr Robyn Gregory, joined other outstanding women at the 'Women's Health in the House' event held at Victorian Parliament House to launch the Women's Health Services Collective Evaluation report.





# Women's Health Services Network

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT

This year, our organisation, alongside the other organisations in The Victorian Women's Health Services Network launched Small Change, Big Impact: Women's Health Services Network Collective Impact Report.

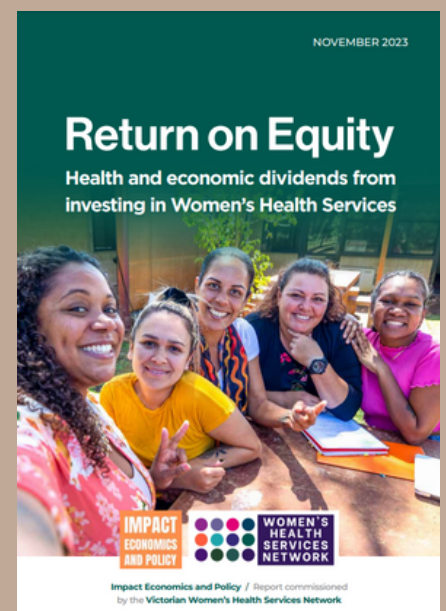
The report captures the combined impact of the women's health sector to advance Victorian women's health and equality – a key part of Victoria's public health infrastructure for four decades.

The report:

- Describes the unique role of the women's health sector in Victoria's health system over the past four decades.
- Illustrates the role health promotion and primary prevention play in reducing demand on clinical and response services and keeping Victorians healthier and safer.
- Showcases how the sector's work drives a more equitable Victorian health system.
- Draws on case studies and testimonials that show best practice evidence-based partnerships and projects that deliver effective and economically efficient activities.
- Demonstrates the significant value investing in the sector's people, plans and systems brings to the health and wellbeing of Victorians.

## RETURN ON EQUITY

This year, the Victorian Women's Health Services Network commissioned Impact Economics and Policy to undertake a report to better understand the broad economic contribution of the women's health services to Victoria and to assess the importance of the ongoing investment from the Victorian Government.



# Thank you!

We extend sincere thanks to all our wonderful partners and collaborators for another year of great achievements.

Thank you for your continued commitment to advancing gender equality, to improving women's health and to preventing violence. Together we are creating a region where women and girls are healthy, safe and can access all of life's opportunities.

We look forward to continuing this work with you in 2024!



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