



**FREMANTLE WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE Inc.**

*A Service for Women of All Ages & Cultures*

**ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011**

# FREMANTLE WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE INC

## Vision

Communities which value and support women's health and wellbeing

## Purpose

To improve the health and wellbeing of individual women and communities, through provision of services within the broad social model of health

## Organisational Goal

To improve women's health and wellbeing in the South West Metropolitan region through the provision of high quality, holistic and tailored prevention and primary health care, prioritising the needs of women with the highest risk of poor health

## Values

- Honesty
- Fairness
- Respect
- Women-centred

## Guiding Principles

Fremantle Women's Health Centre aims to ensure that services and facilities:

- are accessible and inclusive of all women regardless of age, ability, religion, culture, sexuality or socio-economic circumstances;
- are of high quality and based on established best practice information and experience;
- are professionally delivered;
- are provided by staff, supported to be reflective in their practice and to pursue training/development opportunities;
- respond to community needs, and support and promote prevention strategies;
- have integrity;
- maintain high ethical standards; and
- are transparent and accountable.

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## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The scene has been set this year for Fremantle Women's Health Centre to further develop its programs and look ahead to its future growth potential in 2011/2012.

The Board has been very aware of the many changes both in the economy and the health sector, and has this year been working towards ensuring that the centre meets the needs of women using the centre and also looking at how we may address future sustainability.

A sustainability sub-committee was set up and Board members worked with the Director to complete an analysis of the centre's current services and possible future requirements. It was determined that an application to Lotterywest would be submitted, to employ a consultant to facilitate a formal review of our current services, complete a strategic plan and work with the Board, staff and stakeholders in developing an operational plan based on these outcomes. This has now been completed, and the centre now has exciting new strategic, operational and marketing plans.

The centre is now poised to take the next step in its development. The Board and Director are currently in the process of considering alternatives in terms of, for example, refurbishment of the centre, providing more diverse and varied programs to women, both in location and type of programs preferred by its clients, and to develop a working website which both informs and receives input from the community in terms of services offered.

During the year, whilst there have been many behind-the-scenes strategic initiatives, there has also been many developments within the centre, thanks to the Director and her team.

As a result, there has been an increase in indigenous women seeking the centre's services, a submission for an IT upgrade and new groups offered, such as the therapeutic/support group for pregnant women and stretch group for new mothers. Calls to the centre have doubled this year and there have been many partnerships and working relationships formed. It has also been very positive to see a further three year contract until 2014 for funding formalised with the Department of Health, which recognises the importance of our service.

I would like to sincerely thank the Director and staff of the centre for their hard work and commitment to continue achieving a high standard of service to women in our community.

Heartfelt thanks are also made to the Board for their time and effort in attending meetings and workshops, and carrying out the many activities required to support the centre. I appreciate very much working with women who are extremely committed and passionate in ensuring that the centre remains a thriving and growing community, and I look forward to working with the Board and staff again in 2011/2012.

Annette Chivers

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Welcome to the 2010/11 Annual Report. It gives me pleasure to reflect on the excellent work done by Fremantle Women's Health Centre over the last 12 months and to present the details of services provided.

FWHC continues to offer a welcoming, caring and safe environment in which women can access services and information to support their health and wellbeing. The centre has maintained a range of clinical, preventive and health promotion services for women in the south west metropolitan area. The professional medical, nursing, counselling and physiotherapy services are reported by clients to be highly satisfactory. A range of groups and activities - therapeutic, support, exercise, self-help, educational and social - cater for the diverse needs of our client group. New groups this year included a stretch group for new mothers, Mums and Bubs aerobic exercise group, walking group, Circle of Security therapeutic group and a therapeutic/support group for pregnant women experiencing anxiety.

FWHC aims to ensure that services and facilities are inclusive of all women regardless of age, ability, religion, culture, sexuality or socio-economic circumstances. Although some low cost fees for service are charged, FWHC provides bulkbilling for pensioners and health care card holders, concession rates for FWHC Support fees and fees are waived for those unable to pay. FWHC continues to see large numbers of women born overseas from different cultural backgrounds and this year there was a substantial increase in the number of Aboriginal women seeking counselling services. FWHC has embarked on a project to increase access to services for indigenous women. This has involved establishing relationships with Aboriginal workers and agencies in the region that have been successful at engaging with Aboriginal clients. This has been important in terms of discovering the best ways to attract and retain Aboriginal clients and of enlisting support to facilitate Aboriginal women's use of FWHC's services. This networking has been facilitated by the employment of an Aboriginal worker at FWHC in the role of Administrative Assistant. FWHC will hold an Indigenous Open Day in August, so that Aboriginal women in the region can meet the staff and become more familiar with the facilities and hopefully feel more comfortable about accessing services. The South Lake Ottey Centre and Willagee Community Centre buses will transport some of the Aboriginal women to this event.

FWHC was successful in obtaining a grant from Lotterywest to employ consultants to work with the Board, Director and staff to develop new strategic, development and marketing plans. The consultants did an accommodation needs assessment and investigated possible future accommodation options that would enable effective delivery of current and future services. The need for larger, better equipped premises may see FWHC relocate in the future. A key challenge for FWHC is how to fund growth of services to meet the growing demand in the region. A substantial waiting list for general counselling services indicates a need for more counselling hours and at times there is pressure on the medical services. There is also a demand for expanded group and crèche services. Another challenge is how to deliver services to the women most at risk of poor health outcomes where they are most needed. The strategic planning process has identified the need for increased service delivery and for outreach services in the local government areas of Melville and particularly Cockburn which is fast developing

with many young families. It has also identified indigenous women and young women as two groups in need of more services provided where they can be easily accessed.

Another application was made to Lotterywest for a grant to upgrade FWHC's Information Technology hardware and software, including the development and implementation of both a website and database. The application will be considered at the August Lotterywest Board meeting. A website will be an important way to promote FWHC services, especially with a younger age group, and to provide a range of health information. The database will enable collection of more sophisticated statistics which will assist in planning for service delivery and reporting.

I would like to thank all the committed staff who worked hard to ensure the provision of high quality services at FWHC during the year. My thanks also go to the Board members for their commitment, skills and time devoted to ensuring good governance. This year was a busy one for Board members with the Strategic planning process and the amendments to FWHC's constitution. The constitution was re-worked in order to modernise it, to ensure that all the legal requirements were met, that the purposes and objectives adequately encompassed current operations and future directions, while maintaining FWHC's charitable status and establishing it specifically as a Health Promotion Charity.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the ongoing funding support from the WA Department of Health (Women's Health Policy and Projects Unit, Women and Newborn Health Service) and the Mental Health Commission.

Diane Snooks

## **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

During the year one member resigned and two new members joined the Board of Management. At 30 June 2011 the Board members were:

<b>Chairperson</b>	Annette Chivers
<b>Deputy Chairperson</b>	Diedre Timms
<b>Secretary</b>	Lesley Kirkwood
<b>Treasurer</b>	Tracey Ford
<b>Members</b>	Janette Bayman
	Jane de Lacy
	Joanne Connaughton
	Pippa Worthington
	Trish Cowcher

## BOARD MEMBER PROFILES

**Annette Chivers** Chairperson  
Joined the Board in 2006

Annette has been the Manager of the Zonta House Women's Refuge for the last 7 years. She has worked in a range of areas, including such roles as Associate Director of Development at Silver Chain, Manager of the Careers and Prospective Students Service at Curtin University and Marketing Coordinator for a hotel chain. Annette has also worked for 5 years with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade with postings to Thailand, Laos and Israel. Annette is on the boards of the Community Housing Coalition of WA and the Fremantle Domestic Violence Regional Alliance. Annette has a Masters in Human Resource Management and a Bachelor of Business.

Annette joined the Board because of her interest in women's issues and in particular, women's health.

**Diedre Timms** Vice-Chairperson  
Joined the Board in October 2008

Diedre has some 20 years management and community development experience in the not for profit sector in rural and metropolitan environments. She has managed programs and organisations in the areas of disability, women's health, aboriginal health, aged care and community care. She is CEO of Volunteer Task Force. Diedre is a passionate advocate for social justice. Diedre has a Bachelor of Education.

Diedre joined the Board to support services to women by contributing to best possible governance for FWHC and supporting women in the workforce in the not for profit sector.

**Lesley Kirkwood** Secretary  
Joined the Board in October 2007

Lesley has worked in the community sector since commencing practice as a solicitor in 2003. Lesley relocated to Perth in 2007 and commenced employment at the Women's Law Centre of WA Inc in October 2007. In June 2010 she was appointed as the Senior Solicitor at WLC and has been the Managing Solicitor since June 2011. Lesley is a member of Women Lawyers of WA, the Family Law Practitioners Association and the Law Society of WA. Lesley has a Bachelor of Laws and Legal Practice.

Lesley joined the Board to develop her knowledge and understanding of community sector governance and broaden her experience and contribution to the community and women's sectors in Western Australia.

**Tracey Ford** Treasurer  
Joined the Board in February 2010

Tracey works for Drug ARM WA Inc. as the Chief Financial Officer and has over 8 years experience in accounting for the not-for-profit sector. Tracey is a CPA qualified accountant, a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has a Bachelor of Commerce and a Graduate Diploma in Accounting.

Tracey joined the Board in order to use her skills to contribute to the community and ensure the organisation is the best it can be.

**Jane de Lacy**

Joined the Board in 2005

Jane has over 17 years experience working in mental health services in both inpatient and community settings. She is a Clinical Social Worker with a special interest in the social determinants of women's health. Jane has had extensive experience providing clinical support to women with both severe and high prevalence mental disorders such as depression, anxiety and complex post-traumatic stress disorders often associated with family and domestic violence or a history of abuse. Jane is currently employed by Fremantle Adult Mental Health Service as a Senior Social Worker and Community Liaison Officer for Women at Risk. Jane has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Social Work.

After a long professional association with Fremantle Women's Health Centre, Jane joined the Board to contribute further to the development of women's health services in the local community.

**Joanne Connaughton**

Joined the Board in October 2007

Joanne works as clinical coordinator for the School of Physiotherapy at the University of Notre Dame Australia. Over the last 30 years she has worked as a physiotherapist in many locations including Royal Perth Hospital, Rocky Bay, Therapy Focus and Fremantle Adult Mental Health Services. Joanne has also spent 10 years living and working in Newman running her own Physiotherapy Business. She has a Bachelor of Applied Science in Physiotherapy.

Joanne joined the Board as she has a personal interest in seeing that all women have easy access to women's health services, particularly after her experience of working with women in the Fremantle area who had difficulties because they were living with mental illness.

**Pippa Worthington**

Joined the Board in November 2010

Pippa's professional experience is in marketing, community engagement, coaching and volunteer management in the education sector and with not for profit organisations. She has worked both here in Western Australia and in Ireland, and has also run her own consultancy assisting people to make positive change in their lives. Pippa has a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and Management.

Pippa joined the Board as a way to contribute to the local Fremantle community particularly in her interest areas of women's interests and mental health.

**Trish Cowcher**

Joined the Board in April 2011

Trish has worked for many years in the community sector as a campaigner and political activist on local, national and international campaigns and advocacy. She has also been a board member of Oxfam Australia. Trish has a Bachelor of Arts in Politics and Women's Studies.

Trish joined the Board to work with women in the community sector to provide safe affordable health services for women, particularly those most marginalised or not able to access the current health system.

## **STAFFING**

FWHC is currently staffed by a full time Director and fourteen part-time staff. During the year a medical practitioner, senior counsellor, manager clinical services and administrative assistant were recruited following resignations. At 30 June 2011 staff included:

<b>Director</b>	Diane Snooks
<b>Manager Clinical Services</b>	Claire Hanlon
<b>Medical Practitioners</b>	Marie Dittmer Jane Hanrahan Diane Faulkner-Hill
<b>Senior Counsellors</b>	Lisbeth Sundqvist Karoline Werner C. Gally McKenzie
<b>Clinical Nurse</b>	Selena Geyer Mavrack
<b>Finance Officer</b>	Ronald Lucas
<b>Receptionists</b>	Ali Bouquey-Murray Cherie Savin Angie Kew
<b>Administrative Assistant</b>	Rebecca Cock
<b>Resources Coordinator/ Child Minder</b>	Linda Wilshusen

## **FREMANTLE WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE SERVICES**

FWHC provides women's health services primarily to women living and working in the south west metropolitan area, but no women seeking assistance are turned away if the services are appropriate to their needs. The centre is open four days a week Monday to

Thursday for medical, nursing, physiotherapy and counselling services. Group activities can operate on those days as well as Fridays, week nights and weekends.

Demand for services continues to be high and FWHC is well utilised. There were 10,464 telephone calls to the centre, almost double the number last year. 1268 women attended 2422 appointments with medical practitioners and 814 women attended 1188 appointments with clinical nurses, who also took 652 telephone calls and saw 162 walk-ins for health information and test results. Counsellors provided services to 223 women with a total of 1219 counselling sessions (face-to-face and phone). The program of group activities continues to offer a mix of old favourites with some new groups and events to meet the changing needs and interests of clients.

Clients pay an annual FWHC support fee that entitles them to access services, receive the quarterly newsletter, and borrow books from the library. 31% took advantage of the concession rate and fees were waived for clients experiencing financial difficulties.

### **MEDICAL AND NURSING SERVICES**

The women's health services were provided by three doctors (1 FTE) and two nurses (0.8 FTE). The doctors are experienced women's health practitioners. A Nurse's Pap Smear Clinic provided in the first 6 months was particularly useful during the period when FWHC was one doctor short for 4 months.

On average FWHC doctors and nurses provided 7.5 clinic sessions (3.5 hours each) per week, plus 12 nurses Pap smear clinics. The waiting period for appointments fluctuated between 1 day and 2 weeks.

Two nurses see most of the new clients and clients who have not attended for over six months prior to their appointment with a doctor to take blood pressure, assess body mass index, take waist measurements, analyse urine samples, take a brief history and to clarify the presenting health issues. Nurses do the client medical recalls for test results, follow-up medical appointments and Pap smear reminders. Nurses also have separate consultations to give health information and advice to clients, including pregnant women. They see walk-ins wanting health information, give information over the phone and post out information. Three nursing students from Notre Dame, Edith Cowan and Curtin Universities were supervised on placement.

### **Numbers and Demographics**

Doctors' client and appointment numbers didn't vary significantly from the previous financial year, despite fewer clinic sessions resulting from a 4 month gap between the resignation of one doctor and recruitment of a replacement. However, there was a substantial increase in the clinical nurses' client numbers (12.4%) and appointment numbers (20.6%).

<b>Medical Practitioners</b>	
Number of clinic sessions (3.5hrs)	<b>379</b>
Number of appointments	<b>2,422</b>
Number of clients	<b>1,268</b>

### **Clinical Nurses**

Number of Pap smear clinics	<b>12</b>
Number of Pap appointments	<b>33</b>
Number of other appointments	<b>1188</b>
Number of clients	<b>814</b>

The majority of clients were in the 25-44 years (42.7%) and 45-60 years (32.1%) age groups and came from the local council areas of Fremantle / East Fremantle (31.3%) down 8%, and Cockburn (27.6%) up 10%. A substantial 45.2% were born overseas, similar to the last financial year. Indigenous clients represented 1.8% of the total, a slight increase on last year.

The vast majority of clients had attended in previous years or were new self referrals (69.4%), for many others the service was recommended by friends and family (9.3%), and the remainder were referred by their doctor or other agencies (21.2%). Cervical cancer screening (pap smears) continues to be the most common presenting issue (31.7%) and there was an increase in demand for this service. Other women's health issues responded to include (in order of prevalence): medical problems including hypertension, high cholesterol, hepatitis B & C, HIV, obesity, thyroid problems; mental health issues and this is increasing; breast examinations; contraception/fertility regulation; menopause; vaginal problems; menstrual problems; STIs; pelvic problems; urinary tract issues; vulva problems; pregnancy & follow-up; relationships/sexuality; cervical problems; ovarian problems. Presenting problems are often multiple and complex.

### **COUNSELLING SERVICES**

These services were provided by three Senior Counsellors (0.6 - 0.8 FTE). The day-to-day work of the counsellors is supervised by the Director and they receive monthly external group clinical supervision from a Clinical Psychologist.

Short term counselling (up to 10 sessions) is provided for both general and perinatal mental health clients. For those clients who present in both antenatal and postnatal periods, they are offered up to 10 sessions in each period. Funding for the counselling services is provided by the Department of Health through the Women's Health Policy and Projects Unit (Women and Newborn Health Service) for the general counselling and by the Mental Health Commission for the perinatal mental health counselling.

The waiting time for general counselling has fluctuated between 2 and 12 weeks. Perinatal counselling referrals are given priority so that a response can be made within a 2 week period. Counsellors do a risk assessment by phone and if they are at all concerned that a client cannot wait for an appointment, alternatives will be suggested and referrals made to other counselling and support services.

FWHC continues to be one of the main providers of perinatal mental health counselling services in the south west metropolitan region. At the first appointment a thorough assessment is conducted. Clients are offered individual counselling and for those with postnatal depression there is the option of the weekly therapeutic and support group facilitated by one of the counsellors. An 8 week Antenatal Anxiety group was also

provided in September – October 2010 with funding from the WA Perinatal Mental Health Unit.

The Counsellors again organised what has become an annual networking event for agencies / services that refer to, and/or take referrals from, FWHC's perinatal mental health counselling services. This year it was an opportunity to give feedback on the new antenatal anxiety group as well as other aspects of the perinatal services provided

### **Perinatal Mental Health Counselling**

In comparison to the previous financial year, there was a decrease in client and session numbers as a result of a decrease in counselling hours available in the last six months of the year.

Number of sessions	<b>701</b>
Number of clients	<b>95</b>

The majority are aged in their thirties (59%) and live in the local council areas of Fremantle/East Fremantle (39%) up 17%, and Cockburn (36%) down 8%. In terms of cultural and ethnic background, 20.6% were born overseas and 7.4% were Aboriginal, an increase on last year. The majority were referred by Child Health Nurses (38.2%) or were self referred (25%), and were referred in the postnatal period (83.6%) for depression, anxiety and stress.

### **General Counselling**

There was a decrease in client and session numbers due to reduced counselling hours.

Number of sessions	<b>518</b>
Number of clients	<b>128</b>

The majority are in the 25 to 44 years (59.7%) and 45 to 60 years (24.7%) age groups and live in the local council areas of Fremantle/East Fremantle (30.8%) and Cockburn (30.8%). There is a significant percentage (29.5%) born overseas and the 15.4% of Aboriginal women seen represents an increase of 14.5% on the last financial year. The majority are self referrals (62.9%) an increase of 13%, and clients presented largely with high prevalence mental health (depression and anxiety) and relationship issues. There was an increase in those presenting with trauma and domestic violence issues compared to the previous financial year.

### **FREMANTLE GP NETWORK COUNSELLING SERVICE**

FWHC counselling services are augmented by the Fremantle GP Network Counselling Service that operates at the centre Mondays 2-6 pm. This provides counselling to women with high prevalence mental illness (depression and anxiety) who have been referred by their General Practitioner.

## PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICE

The physiotherapist is employed by Fremantle Hospital for one day per week to work at FWHC and provides an important community based service to women in the south west metropolitan area. This service specialises in incontinence and women's health physiotherapy. This includes antenatal and postnatal care for those women compromised by childbirth and/or child bearing.

## HEALTH PROMOTION

FWHC provides health information and education in a variety of ways including by telephone, at appointments with various staff, in the form of presentations to groups of women, by providing a comprehensive library of books for loan and a large range of pamphlets that are regularly updated. Regular displays at FWHC are organised to highlight particular health issues and health journals and magazines are available to read in the waiting room.

The library has books on a variety of topics relating to women's health including contraception and family planning, pregnancy, sexual, gynaecological, general medical, emotional and mental health. There are books on child health, child development, parenting and family relationships. There is also information on alternative and complementary approaches to health and wellbeing.

During the year, FWHC organised presentations / activities at the centre and took part in external health promotion events / forums:

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Presentation / Event</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Oct	Breast Awareness presentation FWHC	Breast cancer prevention
March	International Women's Day event FWHC	To celebrate women's achievements / development of self-esteem
March	Open Day at Willagee Community Centre	Promoting WCC and other services to Aboriginal women
June	Incontinence presentation FWHC	Managing bladder and bowel optimally
June	Aboriginal Women's Health Forum in Cockburn	Chronic disease prevention

Displays at FWHC were provided on:

- Be active
- Bowel cancer
- Breast health
- Incontinence
- IWD
- NAIDOC week

- Cancer Council
- Carers WA
- Diabetes
- Gynaecological awareness
- Healthy eating
- Heart Foundation
- Osteoporosis
- Safe sex
- Sexual assault
- Sexual health
- Stay on Your Feet

## GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

A range of groups and workshops have been provided during the year. Some of these are facilitated by FWHC staff, some by FWHC-paid facilitators, some by staff from other agencies/departments and others by private facilitator/teachers who hire the facilities. Before facilitators (private or from other agencies) hire facilities their goals for the group and their capacity to work within the values and philosophy of FWHC are assessed. Only those groups / workshops that add value to existing FWHC services are supported.

Group	Group Goals	Facilitator	Frequency
Postnatal Support	Therapeutic and peer support for women with postnatal depression and anxiety	FWHC counsellor	Weekly
Antenatal anxiety	Therapeutic and peer support for pregnant women experiencing anxiety and stress	FWHC counsellor	8 sessions
Circle of Security	Therapeutic and psycho-educational support for mothers with children exhibiting mental health problems	Fremantle Child and Adolescent Mental Health psychologist and social worker	8 sessions
Positive Parenting Program	To give parents strategies to effectively manage 3-5 yr old children's behaviour	Child Health Nurses	5 sessions
Portuguese Women	Exercise and social contact	FWHC-paid personal trainer	Weekly
Wise Women Exercise	Exercise and social contact for women 50 years and over	FWHC-paid personal trainer	Weekly
Walking group	Fitness for women of any age	FWHC staff	6 sessions
Stretch group	Fitness and relaxation - gentle 'getting in shape' exercise for new mothers	Private facilitator	8 sessions
Mums & Bubs exercise	Fitness and social contact for mothers with small children	Private facilitator	11 sessions
Simple Sign Say & Play Group	Playgroup for children with developmental delays and disabilities / teaching signing to children	Private facilitator	8 sessions

Overeaters Anonymous 2 separate groups	Self-help support for overeaters	Peer run	Weekly
Massage courses /workshops x 9	Well-being and skills learning	Private facilitator	15 sessions

## **CHILD MINDING**

FWHC does not provide child minding for clients attending doctors, nurses or counsellors appointments, but has a crèche facility that operates for some of the groups that run at the centre. The groups catered for included Postnatal Support, Positive Parenting Program, and Circle of Security. The crèche was also used by the Simple Sign, Say and Playgroup. The use of the crèche is limited because the crèche workers have other responsibilities in the centre. FWHC uses volunteers in the crèche when they are suitable and available.

## **SERVICE PROMOTION**

FWHC has maintained good communication with clients through staff contact, the quarterly newsletters, notices in reception and the group room and email updates. Posters highlighting FWHC's services are widely distributed to libraries and agencies in the region to increase visibility among potential new clients, rather than just relying on personal recommendations which have been so successful in the past. The Director attends regional networking meetings to maintain FWHC's profile in the region.

## **CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY**

A survey was conducted during February and March 2011 with 137 clients responding. The sample size and the fact that the respondents' demographics reflect annual client demographics means that the results can be used with some confidence as an indication of the views of the larger client population.

The results indicate continuing satisfaction with the services provided by FWHC, with 97.6% of respondents rating the quality of services in the two top categories very good (65.1%) and good (32.5%). Individual services were also rated highly with doctors, nurses, counsellors and physiotherapist receiving respectively 73.8%, 70.4%, 80% and 83.3% very good ratings.

Staff were reported to be welcoming, friendly, helpful, respectful, compassionate, caring, professional, competent, thorough, knowledgeable and informative. The centre was experienced as a safe, comfortable place in which clients were not rushed, receiving holistic and personal service.

For some, the more negative aspects were the waiting time in reception for medical appointments, limited parking, and the payment of fees. Suggestions for change included after-hours appointments, bigger library, a website, and more activities.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

During the year collaborative partnerships were maintained with two agencies in order to extend the range of services available at FWHC to women in the region. These agencies provided the professional workers and FWHC provided the rooms, facilities and administrative support for a quarterly fee. The agencies involved were:

- Fremantle Hospital – continence physiotherapy service one day per week.
- Fremantle GP Network – mental health counselling service four hours per week.

FWHC and Community Midwifery WA remain keen to co-locate in larger premises in the future and maintain contact over developments in our respective organisations.

FWHC also has cooperative working relationships with the following agencies:

- Child Health Nurses in the region
- Kaleeya Hospital
- Fremantle Mental Health Services
- Fremantle Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
- Fremantle GP Network
- Fremantle Multicultural Centre
- Cockburn Family Support Services
- South Lake Ottey Centre
- Melville Community Centre

## **DEVELOPMENTS AND CHALLENGES**

This was the third consecutive year that FWHC, and the other women's health services, were offered a 12 month only roll-over service agreement funding contract from the Department of Health. However, we were informed during the year that we would be offered a 3 year contract for 2011-14, outputs and outcomes were negotiated and the contracts signed by the end of the year. FWHC's 3 year contract with the Mental Health Commission finished 30 June 2011 and FWHC has signed off on a 12 month only roll-over contract for next year. Short term contracts create uncertainty and make it difficult to plan for the future, so the 3 year contract is much appreciated and hopefully another 3 year contract will be forthcoming from the Mental Health Commission.

This year there was more certainty and clarity about the level of funding and indexation to be paid by Department of Health and a new arrangement of two payments with 70% of funding in July and 30% in February has made it possible to maximise interest earned on funds. The financial situation for 2011/12 will be further improved by a 15% increase in state government funding for 2011/12 (for the community sector) aimed at improved sustainability. A major aspect of sustainability is the ability to recruit and retain suitably qualified staff by being able to pay competitive wages. This increase will enable increased wages which will lessen the gap between wages in the not-for-profit community sector and the government sector. Although this increase is very welcome, it is about sustainability of current services and will not address the need for growth income to fund increased services to meet the growing demand in the region.

The Director has continued her support for the Women's Health Sector by maintaining involvement in the WA Peak of Women's Health and contributing to the development of

the policy document *Women's Health Matters: A 10 Point Plan of Action for Western Australian Women's Health and Wellbeing 2011-2015*, which was launched in March 2011. This was considered essential as, although the Federal Government released a new National Women's Health Policy in December 2010 (the first review in 20 years), there is still no State Government women's health policy and the profile for women's health is low. The Peak has established a good working relationship with the Women's Health Policy and Projects Unit, which is developing a WA Women's Health Strategy 2011-2014, and is in the process of setting up a database for use by all women's health services in Western Australia. This will enable uniform collection of data that will inform planning for the whole sector. A raised profile for women's health together with sound statistical evidence of the needs / demands for service provision and the effectiveness of that provision are essential in making a compelling case for growth funding.