

# FREMANTLE WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE



**Annual Report  
2023-2024**





# FOREWORD

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2024, like most years has had its share of highlights and challenges although with each challenge comes opportunity. In August our previous CEO Peta Wootton left to pursue other opportunities and Jenny Carter has kindly and ably stepped in as Acting CEO. Jenny has worked with FWHC for some years, enabling a smooth transition and we are most grateful to her for stepping up at a time of great change.

After some anxious months and at a time when demand for our services continues to increase, we received confirmation in June that our major funding has been secured for another five years. While welcome news, it highlighted how exposed we are to the vagaries of government funding and funders and highlighted the need to diversify our income stream.

The board has for many years been pondering the future of FWHC to ensure it remains viable into the future. While we have operated from South St for over 35 years, models of care and the requirements for contemporary health premises mean that this location is no longer serving us in the way it has in the past. Put simply these premises are no longer fit for purpose. We need to explore new ways of reaching women in the community as well as new opportunities to generate revenue to ensure we are providing services to women in need in another 35 years. In July the board agreed to sell our South St premises and explore opportunities for the purchase of a new property nearby. This decision was not made lightly and came after discussions with our stakeholders including funders, clients, local government representatives and staff. It also came after a long process of discernment which included exploring merging with like-minded and complementary partner organisations, joint-ventures, co-location and redevelopment on the existing site. Ultimately however the only option for the future of FWHC is to sell and relocate.

We acknowledge that some will be surprised and possibly disappointed to hear this news however we have always believed that it is our wonderful staff who make FWHC what it is. This sentiment was also echoed in client feedback where women highlighted that it is the staff who make them feel welcome and safe and none of that will change when we move. We will continue to listen and work with our staff and clients to ensure that our move is not only a smooth one with minimal disruption to service but results in a space which remains warm, safe and inviting.



This AGM sees me retire after 3 terms on the board along with Penny Nash, Nichola Wood and Nikita Thomas. I thank them most sincerely for their time, expertise and support. I leave knowing that the board have approved what is probably the most important decision of its 35 years and one which will see it continue to thrive into the future. We also welcome new board members who bring fresh eyes and skills which will be required as we move into a new phase. The future of FWHC is bright and I would like to thank you for your continued support of the work we do.

Dr Gail Ross-Adjie

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the country on which we live and work, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.





## FAREWELL

Dear all,

*It is with a heavy heart that I am leaving Fremantle Women's Health Centre where I have worked for the last 3 years. I have loved working there with amazing staff, wonderful nurses and loyal patients. It is a very friendly, cosy place to work and one which achieves a lot for the community. It was a haven for me. I wish Fremantle Women's Health Centre the very best of luck, a long and productive life, and can't emphasise enough my gratitude for my time there.*

*Dr. Keren Witcombe*

Good  
bye

## CEO REPORT

I am pleased to present the 2023-24 FWHC Annual Report and appreciative of the kind words from our doctor, Keren who was a valuable member of our team. Thank you to Gail, our Board Chair for her report and also for her contribution to FWHC. Gail will be standing down in October with three other hard working board members and we thank them all for their invaluable input over that period. Thank you also to the volunteers, staff, board members, partner organisations, funders and supporters who continue to work with us to enrich the journeys of our clients.

Lastly, thank you to Peta Wootton who has led FWHC as CEO for the past 5 years. Her experience and expertise was invaluable, particularly during the COVID period where there were many challenges. Her dedication to clients and the work done at the centre have left an amazing legacy for the future.

Last year FWHC celebrated our 35th year of operation and we continue to deliver high quality, professional women's health services. A current focus is to seek a new premises that will allow us to be innovative and grow for the future. We

look forward to developing new partnerships in the community and are so fortunate to have been supported by some key organisations that assist us in developing such a high level of care. These include: Carers WA, Palmerston, Meerilinga, Playgroup WA, Sing and Grow, Women's Legal Service, Hearing Australia, City of Fremantle, City of Cockburn and City of Melville.

The coming months will see a new strategic plan developed for 2025 - 2029, one that will enable us to keep supporting clients.

Our vision: Women to enjoy gender equality and good health.

Our Purpose: Provide strategic, co-ordinated and gender-responsive services with our partners and stakeholders to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of women and girls and their families.

Our values: Women-Centred, With Integrity, Inclusive and Collaborative

Jenny Carter (Acting CEO)





# KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

## Accreditation

- FWHC successfully completed an accreditation process in 2023

## Client Complexity and Vulnerability Rating Scale trial and 2024 findings:

- 40% required additional time to the scheduled appointments
- 60% of clients have had a life changing event in the past 12 months
- 24% of women required parenting support
- 60% have some financial issues

## Health Week:

- Cervical Screening Awareness Week
- Elder Abuse Week
- National Condom Day
- Ovarian Awareness Month
- Harmony Day
- International Women's Day (March)
- World Health Day
- Perinatal Maternal Mental Health Day
- NAIDOC
- White Ribbon Day and 16 Days of Activism
- Period Poverty
- Women's Health Week information** was taken out into the wider community, local community groups, a local school, and a Women's Health Week fair at the Ottey Centre and City of Cockburn.

## Kitwek Women's Health Event - November:

- FWHC's specialist Nurse and BreastScreenWA attended KITWEK Association, (a community based organisation that seeks to foster unity and positive integration) discussing cervical screening, mammograms and breast checks.

## Harmony Week - March:

- Celebrate and embrace culture through storytelling" – a group of mums and their children attended this event. Some women read children's stories and lullabies from their country and culture. *Funded by Office of Multicultural Interests.*

## World Maternal Mental Health Day - May:

- Engaging Mums through Culture, Art, Storytelling and Improving Maternal Mental Health. Mothers and children from many cultures attended. They watched previously recorded videos of mothers reading stories in different languages. *Funded by The Department of Health.*

## Circle of Security Parenting held each term:

This 8 week program for mothers designed to:

- Understand your child's emotional world
- Support your child's emotions
- Enhance the development of your child's self esteem
- Honor your innate wisdom and desire for your child to be secure





# PARTNERSHIPS & PROJECTS IN COMMUNITY

## WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICES

provided appointments from women at FWHC once a month

## HEARING TESTS

provided by Hearing Australia every 3 months

## CARERS WA

weekly appointments for carers, held at FWHC

## WELL WOMEN

Run by Palmerston ran each term for 8 weeks for women looking to develop a healthier lifestyle, coping strategies and relationship support. This safe and supportive, client-centred group helped to make connections with a support network, develop healthy coping strategies, Improve difficult situations/ life challenges.

## MOTHER BABY NURTURE

a parent support group, run each term for mothers during school term

## SUNFLOWER PLAY GROUP

The Play Group was held during school terms and was for parents and children under the age of 3. The group provided a safe and non-judgmental place where participants could enhance their relationships with their children, build positive peer connections and improve self-esteem and parenting confidence. Social interaction and networking helped participants to meet new people and make friends. Overall the feedback was extremely positive. *Funding was provided by the Mental Health Commission.*

## GROW AND NURTURE PROJECT 2024

Weekly sessions were held over 5 weeks at Coolbellup. Over 16 participants were introduced to a range of gardening and art activities designed to support women and their mental health. The City of Cockburn partnered this project and partners and participants assisted in the co-design of the activities. *Funding was provided by the Department of Communities.*



# CLIENT FEEDBACK

**Friendly professional staff,  
excellent care**

**I felt very comfortable talking  
with the nurse and she was  
very informative, all staff  
very welcoming**

**I wish every Doctor/Nurse  
would make you feel as  
comfortable as they do in  
the FWHC.**

**Everyone was amazing. 10/10  
experience with the nurse.  
Very friendly, helpful and  
informative.**

**Great friendly welcoming  
service, amazing kind  
compassionate sensitive**

**Very patient and informative,  
took a lot of time for me and  
my questions. Thank you  
very much.**

**Highly recommended this  
service to all women. The  
nurse was so great warm  
compassionate caring in every  
aspect of the nature of my visit  
today. Made me so comfortable  
and at Ease. The reception staff  
were equally kind and caring.  
A warm welcome with a coffee  
too. Everyone was so kind and  
lovely. Thank you for your time  
and consideration during my  
visit today.**

**Great treatment, the nurse  
went through all my worries**

**Everyone was so lovely and  
friendly and made me feel so  
at home! The nurse was so  
gorgeous and easy to chat  
with. She explained everything  
to me so well. I enjoyed the  
whole experience and look  
forward to coming back.**

**Skilled, sensitive, warm and  
supportive service from the  
nurse, which reflected the  
quality of contact with all staff  
-over many years as a patient.  
Celebrate the culture you have  
achieved and maintain.**



**100%**

of service users felt that staff at FWHC respected their beliefs and values.

**98%**

of service users felt that staff at FWHC respected their culture.

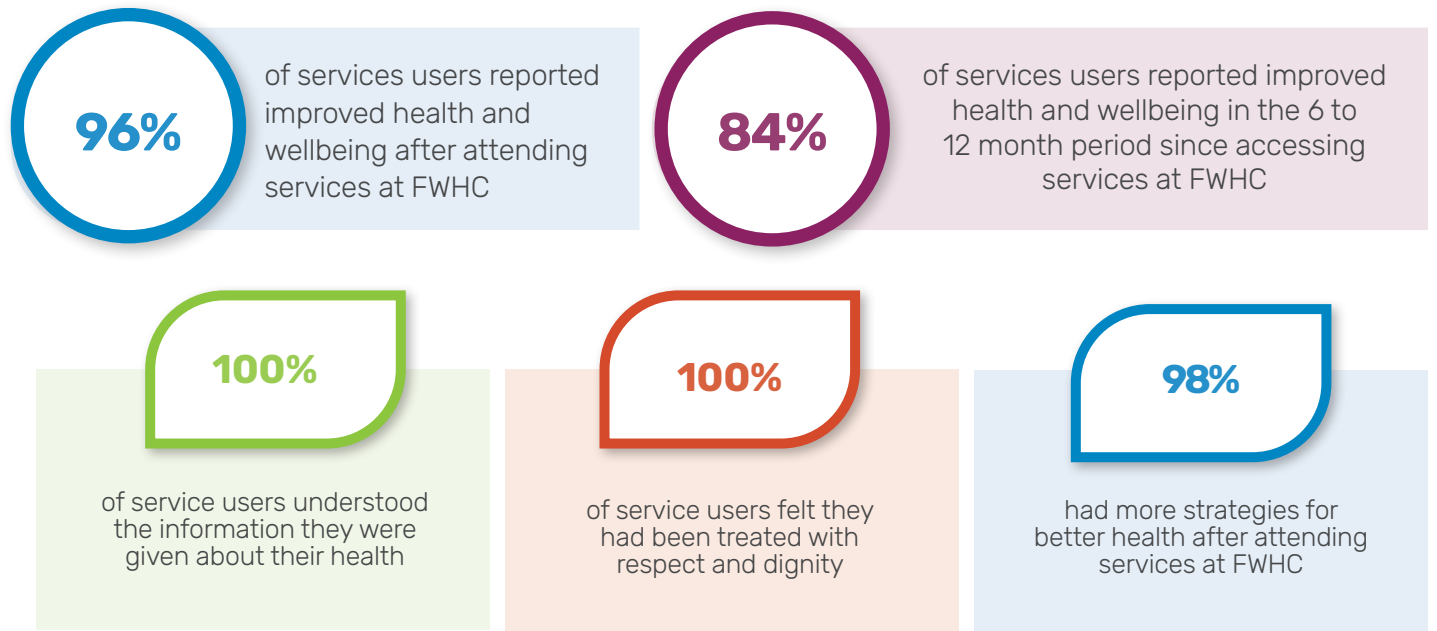
**40%**

increase in clients attending our Circle of Security graduate group. (Held twice a year to support ongoing conversations and reflections about how we put COS parenting principles into action)





# CLIENT OUTCOMES



# CLIENT ACTIVITY





# THANK YOU

FWHC is a registered charity and donations make a big difference to our ability to provide new services. Any donations are appreciated and acknowledged, please email us on enquiries@fwhc.org.au

We would also like to thank our donors big and small who have contributed to FWHC over the past financial year.

Thank you to all our supporters, volunteers, and students who have given their time and expertise to FWHC during the past financial year. Your support is invaluable. Also thank you to:

- Glen (Ace Roof and Guttering) for some pro bono work for FWHC
- Kaya Matt, Andrew and the team at Office Relocation Solutions for their donation
- Ronelle for the resources supplied to the playgroup

Finally, thank you to all of our clients for your support over the past 12 months. It is an absolute pleasure working with each and every one of you and we hope we can continue to support you in the future.

## FWHC ACKNOWLEDGES OUR PARTNERS WHO WE WORK CLOSELY ALONGSIDE TO SUPPORT OUR CLIENTS, AND THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS, WHO WITHOUT THEIR SUPPORT WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OFFER SUCH VALUABLE SERVICES:



Government of Western Australia  
Mental Health Commission



Government of Western Australia  
North Metropolitan Health Service  
Women and Newborn Health Service



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Local Government  
and Communities



Department of  
Local Government, Sport  
and Cultural Industries

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CATCHING THOUGHTS  
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