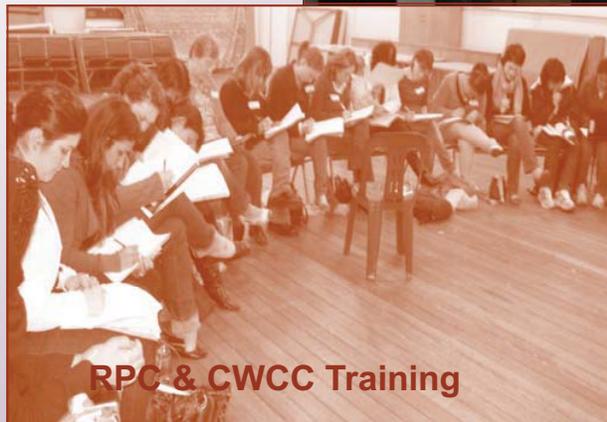


# Women's Health in the South East Annual Report 2008



## *Chairperson's Report*

The past twelve months have been a year of changes and challenges for WHISE. In November 2007 we moved premises from Frankston to Dandenong – a move that Council has long wished to do. Our new location is right in the centre of Dandenong, with a street-front entrance, and close to all the facilities and services that our clients are likely to use. So we are visible, accessible, and easily located!

We have made significant achievements against our Strategic Plan for 2007 – 2008, particularly in expanding our health promotion and training activities, and commencing some direct services through our Movement program. Our client groups have changed clearly with our move – we are seeing many more women from different cultural backgrounds, and we are linking in with a number of community groups that assist women and their families to settle better into Australia.

Internally we have had a number of staff changes – many thanks and goodbye to those who have moved on, and welcome to those who have arrived. Thanks also to our wonderful peer educators and volunteers, who continue to work in many WHISE programs. And our student placements this year have done some terrific work, that has been valuable not only for their own courses, but especially for our service development and evaluation.

At Council level we have welcomed three new Members, who have brought a new range of skills and experience to our Council – welcome to Xiaoli Ma, Wendy Mason, and Eva Orr.

As each year passes, WHISE grows stronger and more focused on the importance of women within our community – in whatever roles they take up within their families or externally. We recognise also the importance of men in our community, and the variety of roles and endeavours they undertake.

This year we decided to change the look of our Annual Report so that our Members and associated partners and colleagues can see how much WHISE has achieved in the last year, and what is now available to our Members, clients, partner organisations and the community. We hope you enjoy reading our “new look” Annual Report.

I would like to thank all staff members for their hard work and loyalty to WHISE, and particularly Tricia Mahon CEO, for her vision, tenacity and guidance, as well as her support to the Council, which has required many long hours of hard work.

Lastly I thank the Council Members for their guidance, support and advice during a year which has required all our talents, skills and patience. Thank you to every one of you.

Gail Quilliam

## *CEO's Report*

This year one of our clients said, as she was leaving (after several hours' discussion and advice with us): “I thought all I could do this morning was walk under a bus. Thank God I saw your door open, and came in here first. Thank you so much.”

We may not always see what we do from our client's perspective—but in those few words, our client made all the hard work worthwhile.

Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, peer educators, service partners, and community groups, who have helped us to do so much for women in our Region. We look forward to the coming year with enthusiasm, energy and determination, in achieving our vision of improved health and wellbeing for women in our Region.

Tricia Mahon

## Vision and Mission

### Our Vision

To improve the health and well-being of women in the Southern Metropolitan Region within a social model of health and within a feminist perspective

### Our Mission

- To provide a range of services that acknowledges the diversity of women and their total well-being
- To be accessible to all women in a safe and women-friendly environment
- To promote best practice in health service delivery for marginalised women, both in specialised and in mainstream service providers

### Our Goals

- Advocacy: Achieving system and policy change
- Health Promotion: Achieving best practice in Health Promotion especially to marginalised women
- Well-being Promotion: Improving community participation and social connectedness

### Our Strategies

- Working with key State, Commonwealth and regional groups, to inform and advocate government on policy improvements and service system changes
- Providing services directly to women in the community, using our expertise on equity and access for women from the most marginalized groups in society
- Working directly with women to promote health and well-being via the provision of information, education, self help and their inclusion in decision making processes
- Providing services to 'mainstream' service providers to help them more effectively meet the needs of women most at risk
- Maintaining the staff, resources, and infrastructure at the level necessary to achieve the goals.

## Report to Our Members: Strategic Achievements 2007 - 2008

This Report summarises the outcomes of the first year of the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009 for Women's Health in the South East (WHISE). It also provides direction for development of the final year of the Plan 2008 – 2009.

The Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009 was approved by Council in June 2007, and has formed the basis for service improvements over the past year.

The next major planning phase will be 2009 – 2012, which is the next three-year planning cycle for the Department of Human Services (DHS), and we will have prepared our next Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012, to help us in discussions with DHS at that time.

### *Abbreviations Used:*

ALRAV	Abortion Law Reform Association Victoria
ALSO	Formerly known as Alternative Lifestyle Organisation
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CASA	Centre Against Sexual Assault
COM	Committee of Management
DHS	Department of Human Services Victoria
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Federal)
PCP	Primary Care Partnership
SECASA	South East Centre Against Sexual Assault
SEHCP	South East Healthy Communities Partnership
SMR	Southern Metropolitan Region
WHAV	Women's Health Association Victoria
WHS	Women's Health Services

### **Priority Area 1: Mental Health and Social Connectedness**

#### ***Advocacy***

Strategies:	Expected Outcomes:	Outcomes Achieved:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-establish links with all PCPs of SMR</li> <li>• Identify key PCP committees for participation</li> <li>• Re-establish links with WHAV and WHS in Victoria</li> <li>• Maintain relationships with DHS Primary Health and Continuing Care (Central and SMR)</li> <li>• Develop collaborative arrangements with local government SMR</li> <li>• Expand relationship with DIAC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHISE a valued member of PCPs and subcommittees</li> <li>• Relationships strengthened with DHS and DIAC (as evidenced by support for funding applications)</li> <li>• Partnership arrangements developed with at least three local councils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased participation and contact with PCPs</li> <li>• Membership of COM of one PCP</li> <li>• Membership of subcommittees of 3 PCPs</li> <li>• Relationship maintained with DHS (no additional funding achieved)</li> <li>• Relationship with DIAC successful (funding achieved for 2008 – 2009)</li> <li>• Partnership arrangements not yet developed with local Councils</li> </ul>

**Priority Area 1: Mental Health and Social Connectedness (cont)**

***Health Promotion and Capacity Building***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide health education and information sessions to marginalised women's groups</li> <li>• Provide information and education on depression to individuals and health workers</li> <li>• Foster women's support / self-help groups</li> <li>• Foster women as leaders in the community through the Community Building/Leadership program</li> <li>• Develop activities for key annual events such as International Women's Day</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 400 women per year involved in health education, activities, forums, and capacity building activities</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieved and exceeded - Number of women involved in information, education, activities (DHS funded activity)</li> <li>• Health Promotion and Information sessions held on key topics</li> <li>• Self-Help and Support Groups maintained in Frankston area</li> <li>• Two new Support Groups (Chinese Families; Sri Lankan Carers) commenced</li> <li>• Participation in key annual events</li> </ul>
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***Well-being Promotion***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish calendar of key community and cultural events, commencing with the Frankston municipality</li> <li>• Organise activities focusing on calendar events, in consultation with self-help and community groups</li> <li>• Establish partnerships with other community groups already undertaking activities within the Frankston area</li> <li>• Liaise with Council to ensure that WHISE activities complement those already established</li> <li>• Seek community development and community activity funding to support activities</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendar of activities established for each year (2007, 2008, 2009)</li> <li>• Links established with key community and self-help groups in the Frankston area</li> <li>• Partnerships in developing and maintaining activities established</li> <li>• By 2009 commence process of delegating activities to community and cultural groups to sustain support group</li> <li>• Funding achieved from a variety of State, Federal, local government and private sources</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calendar of events not yet established</li> <li>• Links established with key groups in Frankston and other areas</li> <li>• Funding yet to be achieved to support community activities</li> </ul>
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<b>Priority Area 2: Preventing violence against women</b>		
<b>Advocacy:</b>		
<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify policy and legislative areas requiring improvement to protect women more effectively against violence</li> <li>Work closely with WHAV in advocating for government policy review and amendment</li> <li>Improve partnerships with domestic and family violence service providers</li> <li>Pursue funding to develop health promotion and service activities focusing on the prevention of violence towards women</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHISE a key contributor to WHAV activities commenting on policy development and legislative review</li> <li>Improved partnerships with Family Violence and Domestic Violence service providers</li> <li>Funding acquired for development of further education and activities aimed at preventing and reducing violence against women</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WHISE very much involved with WHAV 2007 – 2008, especially in the Abortion Law Reform campaign</li> <li>Links re-established with Family Violence working parties of our PCPs</li> <li>Links re-established with DV Vic – regular information and newsletters circulated to staff</li> <li>Additional funding not achieved for RPC program</li> <li>Additional funding achieved for 2008 – 2009, for education on violence against women</li> </ul>
<b>Health Promotion and Capacity Building:</b>		
<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue involvement with tertiary training institutes to inform and educate students about gender issues and violence</li> <li>Continue peer educator training, and peer educator involvement in both community development and health promotion activities</li> <li>Seek the continuation and expansion of the Respect Protect Connect program to additional schools within the region</li> <li>Continue to work in partnership with other organisations providing direct service to women experiencing violence</li> <li>Develop support groups and forums, focusing on young women, and on women perceived to be at risk of violence</li> <li>Work with CALD groups to support women experiencing violence, to help minimise violence within CALD communities</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 100 tertiary students per year involved in classes focusing on gender issues and violence</li> <li>Approximately 200 school students per year involved in the Respect Protect Connect program (or similar activities)</li> <li>Approximately 200 women per year involved in forums, education, activities aimed at increasing understanding of gender issues, catalysts for violent behaviour, and the support and services available to those experiencing violence</li> <li>Self-help and support groups established within CALD communities, to support women experiencing violence and to work with CALD communities in reducing violent behaviour</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Target achieved – approximately 100 tertiary students involved in gender and diversity education (through Chisholm TAFE June – Mar 08, and through single seminars delivered to a range of providers)</li> <li>Respect Protect Connect program targets exceeded</li> <li>Targets met</li> <li>Self-help and support groups re-established – Afghani group now meeting in Dandenong</li> <li>Foundation House Afghani group met at WHISE throughout Jan – June 08, and we are looking to continue support</li> <li>Sri Lankan Carers Association and Federation of Chinese Associations now meeting with WHISE regularly, building their individual health promotion activities</li> <li>Federation of Chinese Associations has a young mothers / playgroup at WHISE, to focus on health and violence matters</li> </ul>

**Priority Area 2: Preventing violence against women (cont)**

***Well-being Promotion:***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop stress management and social connectedness activities specifically aligned to prevention of violence against women</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities developed in consultation with the Health Promotion team and external service providers</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several attempts to develop meditation, yoga, well-being activities at Dandenong – to be addressed again early 2009</li> </ul>
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**Priority Area 3: Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health in Women**

***Advocacy:***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify policy and legislative areas requiring improvement to protect women in the areas of sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Work closely with WHAV in advocating for government policy review and amendment, including the area of decriminalisation of abortion</li> <li>• Pursue funding to develop health promotion activities focusing on the improvement of sexual and reproductive health in women</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHISE a key contributor to WHAV activities commenting on policy development and legislative review</li> <li>• WHISE working with ALRAV in the area of legislative reform on abortion</li> <li>• Funding acquired for development of further education and activities aimed at improving the sexual and reproductive health of women</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHISE very much involved with WHAV 2007 – 2008, including the Abortion Law Reform campaign</li> <li>• Additional funding not achieved for RPC program</li> <li>• Additional funding achieved for 2008 – 2009, for education activities which will cover sexual and reproductive health in women, among other topics (Mental Health Council of Australia, Lord Mayor’s Fund)</li> </ul>
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**Priority Area 3: Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health in Women (cont)**

***Health Promotion and Capacity Building:***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide gender and diversity training to health service providers</li> <li>• Provide information and consultation sessions for women on sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Develop on-line links to current information on sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Continue to work in partnership with other organisations providing direct services in sexual and reproductive health to women, particularly young women and lesbian women</li> <li>• Develop support groups and forums appropriate for young women, and appropriate for lesbian women, focusing on information, education and support</li> <li>• Work with CALD groups to identify ways to support lesbian women within CALD communities</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 200 young women per year involved in sessions focusing on sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Approximately 50 service providers involved in gender and diversity training focusing on sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Approximately 100 women per year involved in information and education on sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Self-help and support groups established within CALD communities, to support lesbian women, particularly younger lesbian women</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targets achieved and exceeded</li> <li>• RPC program very much in continuing demand</li> <li>• WHISE partnered with SEHCP and Family Planning Victoria to run the Partnerships in Safer Sex and Testing (PSST) program, which resulted in a number of focus groups with young people, and with youth workers working with alienated youth. The outcome of this is some further discussions with SEHCP and Family Planning Victoria about the need for regular information and confidential screening for sexual and reproductive health in our region</li> <li>• Self-help and support groups not yet further developed with the CALD communities on sexual and reproductive health matters – to be considered again early 2009</li> </ul>
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***Well-being Promotion:***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop stress management and social connectedness activities which support and inform on sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Link with other agencies working in the area of sexual and reproductive health</li> <li>• Assist other agencies to offer information and activities in sexual and reproductive health</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities developed in consultation with the Health Promotion team and external service providers</li> <li>• Links developed with CASA agencies, Positive Women, and other key groups across metropolitan Melbourne</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities not yet developed. Links improved with SECASA, and with Positive Women, ALSO and several other groups</li> </ul>
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**Priority Area 4: Organisation Sustainability**

***Governance:***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Council operations, to strengthen accountability, effectiveness and knowledge</li> <li>• Set strategic directions on a three-year basis, and review annually against outcomes and funding</li> <li>• Establish and monitor compliance against key documents, including policy and procedures manual, finance manual and delegations</li> <li>• Ensure organisation meets accreditation standards</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Survey of Council members conducted</li> <li>• Annual review of Council member attendance</li> <li>• Three-year Strategic Plan developed, and reviewed annually</li> <li>• Key policy documents and delegations established and monitored annually</li> <li>• Accreditation achieved and maintained</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey of Council members skills and experience conducted</li> <li>• Annual review of attendance to be completed</li> <li>• Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009 developed</li> <li>• Strategic Planning Day Council and Staff held April 2008</li> <li>• Annual report on Strategic Plan 2007 – 2008 completed</li> <li>• Amendment of Strategic Plan 2008 – 2009 underway</li> <li>• Key documents and delegations established</li> <li>• Re-accreditation review due September 2008 – preparations in hand for audit visit</li> </ul>
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***Staffing:***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and maintain an appropriate staffing structure and the employment of experienced and qualified staff, to ensure priority areas can be achieved</li> <li>• Establish and maintain appropriate human resources procedures and documentation, including contract of employment, position description, individual improvement plans, and staff training program</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staffing structure, including clear reporting lines established</li> <li>• Staff qualifications verified and experience checked as part of selection process</li> <li>• Human resources policy and procedures established and reviewed regularly</li> <li>• Contracts of employment and position descriptions accurate and current</li> <li>• Staff training program documented and implemented.</li> <li>• Individual improvement plans documented and implemented</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WHISE operational structure established – clear reporting lines</li> <li>• New staff qualifications verified and experience checked upon selection</li> <li>• HR policy and procedures draft manual completed – currently being finalised</li> <li>• Each staff member has current contract of employment and position description</li> <li>• Staff training program included in individual workplan.</li> <li>• Individual improvement plans (in the form of individual workplans) now established for each staff member, and reviewed on a monthly basis by HR Manager with staff member</li> </ul>
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**Priority Area 4: Organisation Sustainability (cont)**

***Funding:***

<p>Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain effective relationships with funding authorities</li> <li>• Investigate additional sources of funding in line with WHISE priorities</li> <li>• Establish the organisational budget on an annual basis</li> <li>• Monitor expenditure against budget on a monthly basis</li> <li>• Report as required on funding and expenditure to funding authorities</li> <li>• Ensure that the organisation is externally audited annually and reported to the Annual General Meeting</li> <li>• Establish and maintain financial procedures and delegations</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective relationships maintained with funding authorities, as evidenced through continued and/or increased funding</li> <li>• Additional sources of funding explored and submissions for funding made</li> <li>• Annual budget approved by Council, and monitored monthly by Council</li> <li>• Annual audit of WHISE and full report to the Annual General Meeting</li> <li>• Finance manual and delegations established and implemented</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective relationships maintained with funding authorities – DHS funding levels maintained; DIAC submission successful for 2008 – 2009</li> <li>• Additional sources of funding identified – several successful submissions</li> <li>• Annual budget 2008 – 2009 approved by Council – monitored monthly</li> <li>• Cost centre budgeting and performance being developed</li> <li>• All annual audit and AGM requirements completed</li> <li>• Finance manual and financial delegations approved by Council, and made available to all staff, especially Finance Officer</li> </ul>
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***Infrastructure:***

<p>Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish and maintain the facility, systems and equipment of WHISE at a standard sufficient to sustain and support service provision</li> <li>• Identify areas for extension and/or improvement</li> <li>• Standardise where feasible systems and operations, to ensure that WHISE presents a consistent appearance, which is easily recognised by clients and community</li> </ul>	<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of current facility and location completed</li> <li>• Additional locations/facilities investigated</li> <li>• Review of systems and equipment completed annually, in line with staff and service requirements</li> <li>• Standardisation of information, documents, and other systems completed</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes Achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to Dandenong completed</li> <li>• Regular audit of building and facilities, focusing on safety and maintenance</li> <li>• Regular safety review of fire equipment</li> <li>• Review of electricity services has resulted in installation of safety switches</li> <li>• Improved security and safety features installed at Dandenong</li> <li>• Standardisation of information – brochures, information kit, document templates, training templates – nearly completed</li> <li>• Regular IT maintenance and upgrading of operating and virus protection systems</li> </ul>
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## WHISE Launch

### WHISE Launch 27th March, 2008

The new premises of Women's Health in the South East, located at 15 Scott Street, Dandenong, were opened on Thursday, 27th March by Lily D'Ambrosio, Parliamentary Secretary for Community Development, and John Pandazopoulos, Member for Dandenong (Sam Afra attended in place of John Pandazopoulos).

Women's Health in the South East (WHISE) had previously been located in Frankston, and made the decision to move to Dandenong, to be closer to its clients (most of whom continue to come from Dandenong, Casey and Cardinia).

Ms D'Ambrosio said that this is an important time for women's health services generally. WHISE is working more extensively with women and their families from different cultural backgrounds, helping them settle into local communities, and assisting them to access health and community services more easily. Current research indicates that if the right information is provided to newly arrived women at the right time, then they will then circulate that information around their family, relatives and community groups.



***Sam Afra and Lily D'Ambrosio officially opening the building***

Sam Afra welcomed WHISE to Dandenong, and noted that WHISE was already working in partnership with a number of service and community groups, including the Ethnic Communities Council of the South East. "Like all health services, women's health services need to change in response to their clients' needs, and WHISE is taking up this challenge very well. In addition to working with women in newly arrived communities, WHISE is starting to work more with young women who need comprehensive information and a variety of choices, in managing their own health better."

The new premises, opposite the Uniting Church, have been extensively refurbished, and WHISE has commenced discussions with City of Greater Dandenong about a mural on its external walls. The mural project hopefully will involve young people from the Dandenong area, through the Street Science group.



***The Bunjil Aboriginal Dancing Group***

Gail Quilliam, Chairperson of the Council of Women's Health in the South East, said, "We are delighted with the move, and we wish to thank all those who have contributed so generously in making this happen. This building gives us more space, and more visibility for our clients and our service partners, and puts us in the middle of the action."

The launch was celebrated with a dance by the Bunjil Aboriginal Dancing Group, who welcomed WHISE to Dandenong with traditional dance and music. Those present at the launch were then invited to join in a dance celebrating the strength of women.

The launch concluded with information sessions and a tour of the premises. The highlight of the sessions was the presentation by Positive Women, concerning the complex issues and concerns of women living with HIV/AIDS.

## WHISE Now and in the Future

### Training and Education

This year has seen a number of changes in WHISE's training and education programs, following our move from Frankston to Dandenong.

Our training activities are provided:

- for community groups and individuals
- for service professionals and organisations
- For WHISE volunteers and peer educators.

Our training calendar is now published every quarter, so that we provide more regular information on our activities. In addition to the calendar, we provide training activities and forums tailored to the specific needs of community groups and organisations.

As more than 50% of Dandenong's population are from overseas countries (principally non-English speaking or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse—CALD), we recognised the need to reflect this change in our client base through recruitment of appropriate volunteers. A major campaign was run in early 2008 with the result that 50% of our current group of trained volunteers are now from non-English speaking backgrounds, including Afghani, Sri Lankan, Egyptian and Vietnamese. The volunteer training program for RPC and CWCC is currently being revised into a competency-based format, as part of the standardising of our training programs. This format is used in TAFE programs and workplace training, and gives trainer and participants clear structures and guidelines for every training program delivered.

Our trained volunteers work in a range of WHISE programs, including our Respect Connect Protect Program for secondary schools, Connecting Women Connecting Communities home visiting program, CALD projects, Community Kitchen and in WHISE reception and administration.

WHISE has delivered programs aimed at reducing violence to women to a variety of CALD communities including Sudanese Women's groups in Footscray and Dandenong, and Afghani Women's groups in Dandenong. The Sri Lankan Women's group has participated in health information sessions and in computer literacy training.

Newly established Mothers' groups are taking place at WHISE and currently involve Chinese and Afghani mothers who attend with their children, gaining information on personal health and nutrition, parenting issues, and socialisation. In addition, a Muslim Girls Youth Group is under development, a program for young Muslim girls to participate in activities led by our Afghani staff member.

Health promotion programs about diabetes, tuberculosis, cancer, cervical cancer and pap screens are held on a regular basis at different venues for community groups. WHISE is also offering exercise groups for older adults—for those from CALD backgrounds (the Chinese Friendship Group in Dandenong) and for residents in retirement villages and aged residential care settings.



## WHISE Now and in the Future

### Training and Education (cont)

Our specialist education now includes:

**Emotional Intelligence Workshop** which will be offered to health professionals as well as the general public at the beginning of 2009.

**Financial Literacy Workshops for Women of CALD backgrounds** which focuses on budgeting, banking, electronic banking and payments, credit management, and long term financial planning.

**Women's Leadership Program:** an extended program which can be taken as separate modules or as a complete program over a year, and including topics such as financial literacy, presentation skills, dealing with the media, liaising with local government, report and submission writing, IT skills, working with volunteers, gender and diversity and how to facilitate groups and community meetings. This program is aimed at those who wish to take up leadership roles in their communities, or on a Board of Management of a community organisation.

**Arts and Craft for the Soul:** a craft course promoting mental health and well-being, bridging language gaps and cultural diversity, through practical activities and skills development.

**Food and Well-Being:** a course highlighting the relationship between food and mental and physical well-being—the right diet for the right mood; the do's and don'ts of correct food intake.

**Relationships Do Matter:** assisting in establishing, maintaining and re-entering a relationship; new partner issues especially with instant families; and how to maintain relationships and essential connections for your own health and well-being.

**Exercise and Well-Being:** targeting CALD women who lack body awareness through lack of exercise. Initially this program will discuss the positive effects of exercise, and will lead to regular exercise activities and groups.

**Women's Health in the Workplace:** providing health information and discussion at workplaces, at a time and location suitable for women workers. The program will be tailored to the interests of the women at each workplace.

We will continue our workshops and seminars on:

- Gender and Diversity and the impact of these on women's health and well-being
- Working effectively with CALD communities in sensitive areas of health and well-being (such as mental well-being, family violence, relationships, parenting)
- Violence prevention and relationship improvement (focusing on secondary school girls)
- Transition to Australian society and culture (for newly arrived communities)
- Volunteer and Peer Educator training for a range of WHISE and other activities.



## WHISE Now and in the Future

### Respect Protect Connect Program

Demand for our Respect Protect Connect Program continues to increase every year—in 2007-2008 nearly 5,000 secondary school girls attended our program (with approximately 3,000 secondary school boys attending the boys' workshops run by SECASA). We are particularly delighted that we have presented this program successfully in our first Muslim secondary school, and are looking to develop this further in consultation with school and community groups.

Over 4 days in September new volunteer training took place for the Respect Protect Connect (RPC) Program and the Connecting Women Connecting Communities (CWCC) Program.

Once again there was keen interest in the RPC program with around 30 young women applying. Twelve young women between the ages of 18 and 25 were selected and trained and are now fully equipped with the skills and knowledge necessarily to deliver violence prevention workshops to young women in secondary schools.



### Connecting Women Connecting Communities Program

The CWCC program was just as popular. Eleven new volunteer home visitors were chosen and trained to go into the homes of newly arrived refugee women to provide them with support and assistance to make their transition into Australia a little easier. This year we have trained women from several different backgrounds to be volunteers, including women from Afghanistan, Egypt, Vietnam, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

This is the largest number of women volunteers trained for several years and the first time that we have had women volunteering in both programs. They all bring excitement, diversity and commitment to the women with whom they work.

We congratulate all our volunteers new and "old", and look forward to having them involved at WHISE for a long time.



## WHISE Now and in the Future

### CALD Projects

In 2008 WHISE was successful in achieving funding for two projects focusing on newly arrived families from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Both projects are a partnership model with Windermere Child and Family Services and the Ethnic Communities Council of the South-East, with WHISE as the lead agency in the first project, and Windermere the lead agency in the second.

The Helen McPherson Smith Trust has funded the project, ***Strengthening the role of CALD Men within their families in the Australian Context***, which works with newly arrived men of CALD backgrounds to help them:

- Take up family and community roles which retain the best features of their home culture, and adopt good features of the Australian culture
- Take leadership and mentoring roles in their home cultures, to assist younger men growing up in the context of dual communities (CALD and Australian)
- Build the confidence of CALD men in relation to family, work and their worth within Australian society.



The Ivor Roland Evans Trust has funded the project, ***Strengthening the CALD Family with particular emphasis on the needs of children***, which helps children of CALD families to:

- Describe and express their experiences as refugees of newly arrived migrants
- Understand the difficulties experienced by their parents in the transition to the Australian community
- Develop strategies to cope more effectively in their family and/or community
- Develop their confidence in their own capacity and that of their families, to live full productive lives in the Australian society
- Explore educational inputs that can empower children to take a lead in their own lives and in their new community.

Our target groups for the projects were: Sudanese, Afghani, Vietnamese, Chinese and Turkish.

The first stage of each project was to identify members of each target group, who had been resident in Australia for some years, and who were willing to work with newly arrived families to assist their transition to Australian society.

We used a Peer Educator/Mentor training model, which provided community leaders with sessions on community development, conflict resolution, how to plan and conduct groups, the purpose of the peer education model, skills in identifying their community needs, general awareness of the services available as well as support and pathways for their communities. Those trained have now become community mentors for their own communities, working particularly with newly arrived men, children and families.

## WHISE Now and in the Future

### CALD Projects (cont)

Information sessions have been provided from a range of service providers such as Victorian Police, Frankston Court, Centrelink, Family Relationship Centres, City of Dandenong, Multicultural Resource Centres, Health Professionals, Southern Health and Connections.

The Ivor Roland Evans project (the CALD Families project) is a one-year project, finishing at the end of 2008. The final report for this project is being prepared.

The Helen McPherson Smith project (the CALD Men's project) is a three-year project, with 2008 the first year.

Preliminary outcomes of both projects indicate:

- The need for early support and intervention for newly arrived families, from trained members of their own communities, to help them make the transition to Australian society more easily
- The need for longer-term support and specialist services, for those families experiencing trauma and depression as a result of experiences in their home countries
- The need for further discussion among CALD communities of sensitive issues such as family violence and mental health needs.

The projects have promoted and informed discussion on issues relating to family violence, and the rights and responsibilities associated with treating others respectfully. Because the projects work from a mentoring perspective, there is a positive focus to discussions, emphasizing the importance of the respective roles of women and men in the family, particularly in the Australian context.

The final reports of both projects will be available to all interested, and will eventually be accessible through the WHISE website.



## WHISE Initiatives for 2008—2009

### More Community Kitchens

Following the success of the Multicultural Community Kitchen at Frankston this year, WHISE is seeking funding for three additional kitchens in our catchment area:

- A second multicultural Community Kitchen based in Dandenong
- A Community Kitchen for disengaged youth, especially young women, in the Dandenong/Doveton area
- A Community Kitchen for young mothers, in the Hastings area.

All the Kitchens provide basic nutrition information, food buying, preparation and cooking, and food budgeting information. In addition, the Kitchens provide a relaxed atmosphere in which participants may raise other issues of concern, or seek information on further services available.

For those who wish, participation in the Community Kitchen may lead to successful completion of a Certificate 1 course in Hospitality (Operations) - an initiative currently under discussion with local TAFE institutes and Skills Plus.

\* \* \* \*

### New Health Information Sessions provided by General Practitioner

WHISE has just concluded arrangements for Health information sessions to be provided to Sri Lankan women by a female General Practitioner, Dr Padma Herath, in what we hope is the first in a series of arrangements involving female General Practitioners, particularly those of CALD backgrounds.

The purpose of the Information Sessions (which commence in November) is to provide sensitive and safe surroundings in which to discuss matters such as:

- Specific women's health matters (Pap Smear testing; Cervical Cancer information and preventive treatment; Breast Cancer screening; Pregnancy; Sexually Transmitted Infections)
- Depression, including post-natal depression and mental health needs
- Chronic disease management
- Family and domestic violence
- Other topics as required by the participants.

The sessions will be followed up by referral to appropriate services and medical clinics for further information and treatment, as necessary.

Once this model is working successfully with Sri Lankan women, we will seek similar arrangements with other female doctors to work with other CALD communities. We have developed excellent liaison and cooperation with the Federation of Chinese-Speaking Associations, the African—Australian Holistic Association, and the Sudanese, Afghani, and Horn of Africa communities.

In addition to health information sessions, WHISE is currently preparing IT Literacy training for women of CALD background, together with volunteer and work experiences, to help them in their further education and employment.

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## WHISE Initiatives for 2008—2009

### Movement Program

More than one half of the Australian population are not active enough to achieve the health benefits of regular physical activity. Unfortunately, lack of physical activity is similar to cigarette smoking and alcohol abuse, in that it is a major modifiable risk factor for conditions such as heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, Type 2 Diabetes, and heart disease.

Here at WHISE we are currently in the early stages of implementing our Movement Program to address the issue of physical inactivity, and to prevent the incidence of common chronic health conditions mentioned above.

Our Movement Program involves matching exercise and movement interventions to suit the needs of each individual client. Exercise programs range from gentle stretching and walking, to moderate balance and strength exercises.

The Movement Program was developed primarily around our aim to improve the quality of life, physical and psychological health, and well-being of local community members. We have already implemented our Movement Program in a local Retirement Village, Senior Citizen's Centre, and Croquet Club.

We have progressed from conducting the program for one group of Senior Citizens participating in gentle exercise and balance training on a weekly basis, to now helping three groups of local Senior Citizens who work towards improving their physical and psychological health and quality of life.

Our Movement Program has already become a great success. Local senior citizens have identified the following benefits from being involved in our program:

- laughter
- meeting people
- better management of their health condition
- activities of daily living are now easier to do
- learning about their body and their health
- better sleep and strength
- improved self-confidence.

Our Exercise Physiologist Robyn Smith has been providing home visits for elderly individuals who do not usually leave their homes, other than to see their doctor or to get milk and bread. The improvement in their psychological health and well-being has been amazing and we are slowly increasing the number of home visits.

While we have received excellent feedback from older adult participants, we aim to further improve our program through:

- programs for younger women, using movement and exercise to improve both physical and mental well-being
- ante-natal and post-natal exercise and support groups for mothers of all ages. These exercise classes will be designed to increase the mother's strength and health for labour; increase recovery of the muscles and joints after giving birth; and help to manage conditions such as post-natal depression, pelvic instability and fatigue.

Our Movement Program has been running for the past six months and we look forward to seeing the program grow and reach more women in need over the coming months.

## WHISE Initiatives for 2008—09

### No Interest Loan Scheme

In October WHISE became the auspice for the No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) for the Cockatoo area.

The NILS scheme is an initiative of the Good Shepherd organisation, and involves developing a community group to manage the loan scheme, targeting low or no-income earners who need urgent financial assistance, generally for white goods. The loans are assessed by trained volunteers, who work within the Good Shepherd guidelines for interviewing applicants, assessing applications and awarding and monitoring the loans granted. The typical loan is approximately \$1000, and is repayable at no interest over an agreed period of time. The Cockatoo community group is the Committee of Management for the Cockatoo NILS program, and involves Cardinia-Casey CHS, WHISE and Good Shepherd, as well as Cockatoo residents.

WHISE is currently discussing with Good Shepherd the possibility of applying for NILS programs in other areas of our catchment, such as Doveton.



### Our Education Partnerships—Student Placements

We have encouraged tertiary student placements with WHISE for a number of years now, and this year have had seven students on placement in the first half of the year, and a further four students currently on placement.

The tertiary institutes involved are:

- Monash University (medical students)
- Deakin University (health promotion students)
- NMIT (bilingual health student)
- Chisholm TAFE (community development students)
- TBM Training Pty Ltd.

In all placements, the students have undertaken projects in areas of WHISE work, and have contributed significantly to our services. Projects have included:

- Mental health project (in conjunction with the Inner South East Partnership in Community Health)
- Youth and family violence project, focusing on Dandenong secondary schools
- Evaluation of the Partnerships in Safer Sex and Testing program
- Evaluation of the RPC training material
- Translation of key WHISE documents into another language
- Health promotion to the workplace (preliminary scoping)
- Organisational development project, including facilities and safety audit.

We expect to have similar number and breadth of student placements in the coming year, and convey our appreciation and thanks to the students and their tertiary institutes, for their generous contribution to our services and work.

## Council

Gail Quilliam	<i>Chairperson</i>
Elaine Hall-Foote	<i>Vice-Chairperson</i>
Maureen Mirabella	<i>Treasurer</i>
Heather Gerraty	<i>Assistant Treasurer</i>
Carmel Croft	<i>General Member</i>
Annabel Fegan	<i>General Member</i>
Xiaoli Ma	<i>General Member</i>
Eva Orr	<i>General Member</i>
Wendy Mason	<i>General Member</i>

## Staff Members

Tricia Mahon	<i>CEO</i>
Heidi Norman	<i>Deputy CEO and Systems &amp; Services Co-ordinator</i>
Helena Bishop	<i>RPC &amp; CWCC Co-ordinator</i>
Iresha Buthgamuwa	<i>Health Promotion Advocate</i>
Stella Demou	<i>CALD Project Officer</i>
Ilonka Guse	<i>Community Education &amp; Training Co-ordinator</i>
Marlene Hoff	<i>Community Kitchen Co-ordinator</i>
Kerry Jones	<i>Administration Officer</i>
Neela Kareemy	<i>Health Promotion Worker</i>
Robyn Smith	<i>Exercise Physiologist</i>
Elisabeth Speller	<i>Senior Health Promotion/ Community Trainer</i>
Udani Waidyarathna	<i>Community Development Worker</i>
Dongmei Zhang	<i>Health Promotion Advocate</i>

## Congratulations to Students on Placement

Lisa Hansen	Neela Kareemy
Kay Nicholls	Danuta Kowalski
Cassie King	Meghan Vincent
Lauren Scharenguivel	Annabel Scally
Stefanie Louey	Stella Demou

## Thanks to Our Volunteers

### Administration

Udani Waidyarathna	Sharyn Hall
Arani Jayaroopan	Roslyn Heydon
Nyamakal Riek Dhol	Catherine Chinery
April Ward	

### RPC

Imogen Carmel	Hayley Wesson
Monimalika Segupta	Narumon Sae-Chow
Alanna Attard	Fonu Bain-Vete
Renay Almond	Melissa Pattison
Liz Meade	Melissa Pucher
Neela Kareemy	

### CWCC

Navsheil Singh	Neela Kareemy
Shamila Udawatta	Phuong Thi Lan Le
Atifa Atai	Khulud (Lola) Sabawi
Saori Mizoguchi	Hanh Thi Pham
Annapuma Erla	Joan Higgins
Eugenia Lai Leng Chan	

### Afghani Women's Group

Masooda Akbary

### CALD Projects

Mary Daniel  
Jikany Deival  
Fatma Faruk  
Min Qiang Liu  
Mumtaz Masoud  
Zabi Mazooni  
Suleyman Sahingoz

### Community Kitchen

Sylvia Arendze  
Kay Burdett  
Brenda Haynes  
Michael & Toni Kernaghan  
Lesley McIntosh  
Joy McIver  
Abbie Mills-Franklin  
Dawn Peacock  
Edna Runerman  
Patricia Scully  
Bernadette Stevens

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