

Women's Mental Health Network Victoria

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019



ABN: 39 597 342 174

## CONTACT US

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## Our mission

*Improving the mental health & wellbeing of women*



## Our vision

*The Network shapes the future of women's health outcomes through the empowerment of women and by building the capacity of the service system.*



## Our Objectives

The Women's Mental Health Network Victoria (the Network) was established in 1988 and is a unique organisation where women with a lived experience of mental illness, women carers and professionals work together. It has been a great promoter of women's mental health and our strength as a charitable organisation is founded on this collaboration, based largely on volunteer support.

The objectives of the Network are:

- (a) to provide information about the prevention and management of women's mental health issues to health professionals, service providers, carers, consumers and the public; and
- (b) to promote research into women's mental health issues; and
- (c) to promote opportunities for training and education in women's mental health issues and women-sensitive practice; and
- (d) to develop partnerships with key mental health and women's organisations to promote responsiveness to women's mental health needs; and
- (e) to create opportunities for women consumers, carers and service providers to work together in addressing mental health issues, and to share their experiences and information; and
- (f) to promote systemic change in order to make mental health policies and services more responsive to women's needs

## Message from the Committee

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It has been another busy year for the committee. We have experienced certain constraints due to committee numbers as well as the lack of core funding; however we have continued our work with passion and commitment. We have aimed to build awareness for the improvement of services that impact women who experience mental ill health and to educate and advocate for systemic change in mental health services. We have also endeavoured to keep safe and gender sensitive care for all consumers on the agenda.

Our strategic focus has been on core areas:

- secure women-only corridors and spaces within mental health facilities;
- women's mental health needs in rural and regional contexts;
- strengthening gender sensitive training and curriculum for the health workforce;
- building awareness around women's mental health through social media and other media platforms;
- empowering, informing and connecting women through training and forums;

and in all our actions - giving and being a voice for women experiencing mental health challenges.

At the beginning of the financial year, a number of long-term committee members took a step back from many years of amazing work and commitment. Some of whom continue to do very valuable work for the Network in a voluntary capacity. Even though we have had new members come on board, personal and work reasons have meant they have not been able to stay on for the duration. Also, the lack of ongoing funding has affected our ability to sustain any paid staff. With these impacts, it was in the best interests that we focused on the achievable tasks given our resources.

We have many highlights to celebrate this year. We have launched our new rebranded website and expanded our social media work. We conducted a consultative survey with our members and the general public to inform our submission to the Royal Commission into the Victorian Mental Health System; directing recommendations on issues of women's mental health and gender sensitive and safe practice. We also contributed to the joint submission made by Women's Disability Victoria.

Julie Dempsey continues to represent the Network on key advisory groups; advocating for and providing knowledge and wisdom to key stakeholders involved in policy and service delivery planning and decisions. The Network's gender-sensitive training package has also been recently promoted on the new Centre for Mental Health Learning, the first training sessions scheduled for later this year.

The Network continues to find its place in the sector, often needing to respond to consultations as well as professional and community education workshops; yet our current capacity has limited our ability to fulfil some of these requests. We are hoping that with a new incoming committee this year, we will have renewed energy, experience and innovation to build new directions, networks and active projects into the future. With a full complement of committee numbers, our capacity to engage in active and practical ways with all members and volunteers would increase. This would be wonderful, as there is so much wisdom, experience, skill and interest in the diversity of our member and volunteer base.



We would like to thank all members and volunteers who have contributed to the work of the Network over the last 12 months, a mention of thanks to Berenice our bookkeeper who has advised and supported the banking in the absence of a Treasurer.

Special thanks go to Robyn Minty and Julie Dempsey, who in their now voluntary capacity, have given a huge amount of time, guidance and hard work, and been both a valuable anchor and a driving force in our ongoing work. We would like to acknowledge the generosity of *drummond street services* (Karen Field CEO & Cheryl Miller- Yell, Director) for assisting the Network to keep costs down and still enable us to continue to have a visible presence. Special thanks also go to Kate Stewart and Jess Duda for bringing to life our social media platform work, and utilising these channels so well to empower, inform and encourage women in relation to mental health.

I thank all committee members for their time, passion, skill and commitment in all the various ways they have kept our great ship afloat during a challenging year for the Network.

This annual report will provide you some insight into the Network's activities over the year. We hope that those reading our report will feel moved to join the Network, become part of our work, and enhance the lives and health of women wherever you live, work and play.

*Bridget Nutting- Acting Chair*



1988

2011



## Members Update

To date, we have 197 individual members and 30 non-paying member -organisations registered. As a result of the recent online presence with Facebook and Twitter we have experienced an increase of memberships in the previous 12 months – we had 49 new members in 2018; at this point in time we have already 53 new members! A warm welcome to you all !

We have a strong network following of consumers, carers and health workers with additional member interest from women from public health, law and general workplace backgrounds, this is a significant development – due largely to our broader social media outreach - which was one of our core aims. This trend reflects that women's mental health issues are very much of concern & interest to the public.

From these members we have had 64 volunteers offering to assist in many different ways from helping in the office, training, research support, communications and fundraising. We hope to mobilise them as soon as we can, as well as seek out an experienced volunteer coordinator so we can optimise the voluntary work.

*Sandy Jeffs - Honorary Life Member & Secretary*



**WOMEN'S  
MENTAL HEALTH  
NETWORK VICTORIA**

2018

## A Life

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A life is only a breath  
shallow at times  
barely feathering the cheeks  
of one's companions  
who share the way.  
When they frame the shadows of  
the nether world in a golden cage  
into which she comes brittle and  
from which she leaves mad  
let them say:  
*she was the maddest of all*  
and she shall say:  
*my life was only a breath*  
*a hush and a crescendo*  
*that fell upon a deaf world.*

Sandy Jeffs  
*The Mad Poet's Tea Party*, Spinifex Press, 2015.

# Social Media

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WMHNV currently operates the following two social media accounts:

- Twitter @WMHNVic
- Facebook @wmhnv

One of our key goals this year was to build awareness around women's mental health through social media and other media platforms.

Since the establishment of the Network in 1988, current methods of communication have changed. With the evolution of technology has come a change in communication channels and the way in which systemic advocacy, mental health promotion and awareness campaigns are conducted. Previously, systemic advocacy was conducted predominately via face to face. Today, a fair portion of systemic advocacy campaigns occur online via website, e-newsletter, direct email campaign and largely, various social media platforms.



To ensure the Network remains relevant and to effectively conduct current and future advocacy, mental health promotion and awareness campaigns; the organisational identity needed to reflect the current practices of our community. By developing the necessary communication platforms on Facebook and Twitter, over the past 12 months the Network have been able to better engage with our members, both individual and organisational, as well as the wider community. We have also rebranded with an amazing logo which is smart and contemporary.

We have improved our social media presence this year. We now have been successful in reaching targeted members, raising awareness and sharing information. This is reflected in the number of individual followers on the Network's Twitter and Facebook page, and positive comments on the information that is posted.

The Network's Facebook page currently has 1354 followers (individual supporters and organisations) and is rapidly growing each week. The Network's Facebook posts are attracting an average of between 10 – 90 likes per post, between 40-180 engagements (e.g. clicks on links to articles we have posted) and currently has a 5/5-star review rating from our followers.

We have 337 followers on Twitter, with many individuals and organisations connecting with us. Twitter posts are attracting between 5-80 likes and re-shares per post.

In future, we aim to increase the Network's online presence to other social media platforms that may include LinkedIn, Instagram and Reddit.

*Kate Stewart & Jess Duda - Committee Members*

## Highlights of the year

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Gender sensitive & safe practice training is now a calendar item at the Centre for Mental Health Learning – the statewide platform for mental health workforce training.

### **Submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System 2019**

Our Royal Commission submission was the highest priority of the year.

After the Network completed a joint submission to the Royal Commission into the Mental Health with Women with Disabilities Victoria, the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Disability Justice Australia and the Disability Resource Centre, it was decided we had so much history, material and expertise that we ought to put in a submission of our own.

The Network distributed an online survey to all the members of the network, and a link placed on our Network website and social media platforms, for anyone in the broader public to access. 56 people completed the survey, with 89% identifying as female, 7% as male, and 3% preferring not to state gender. We canvassed opinions on what members thought were important issues we should focus on. The Network is keen to advance the notion that a responsive health system is a human rights issue.

Our submission focused on women's issues and emphasised the combined research, evidence and practice experience of our organisation and years of working to provide a voice for women with mental ill health. We want to see a system that works for the people it is intended to support, that upholds and respects peoples' human rights and enables their recovery. It should be a place people can get the support they need in a trauma-informed and gender-sensitive way, with a commitment to principles of human rights, collaboration, access and choice.

We produced an impressive submission in a relatively short time highlighting the impressive intellectual and policy-aware capacity the Network has within its ranks. It targets the terms of reference and identified many areas of concern for women accessing mental health care in the public mental health system. We put forward 30 recommendations.

We are also very proud of our Honorary Life Member, Julie Dempsey, who gave her personal witness account as the final witness statement to the Commissioners in July. Although Julie represented herself, the Network was mentioned by the legal team as a highlight of her broader work in the mental health sector.

Sandy Jeffs



## 8th World Congress on Women's Mental Health in Paris

Committee members Kate and Jess, and Network Member Leigh, represented the Network at the 8th World Congress on Women's Mental Health in Paris, France in March (coinciding with International Women's Day!).

Their attendance at this conference was self-funded and will support their current Forensic work with vulnerable women here in Melbourne. As members of the Network they bring to us their reflection on current treatments and models of care, their professional expertise and their commitment to women who have lived experience.

The Congress heard from 365 speakers from 62 countries! the main domains of interest being gender equality, well-being and vulnerability (important contributors to Women's Mental Health).

The conference offered an enriched suite of professional input, covering topics such as gender equality, well-being and vulnerability, as well as social, economic, ethical, legal, cultural, psychological and biological factors which affect Women's Mental Health.

The next World Congress on Women's Mental Health will be held in Melbourne in 2021 – Network members plan to present contemporary research regarding mental health and gender inequality; as well as including important lived experience perspectives.



## Congratulations to our Honorary Life Member!

Julie Dempsey, one of our Honorary Life Members, received the 2019 Royal College of Australian and New Zealand Psychiatrists Meritorious Award by the Victorian Branch in May.

This award goes to an individual who has contributed to the improvement of the mental health of individuals in Victoria. Pictured here with Julie is Professor Richard Newton the Chairman of the RANZCP Board presenting her the award at their AGM. Colleagues from Forensicare supported her on the night.

Congrats Julie!!



# Collaboration

## ADVISORY GROUPS

*Julie Dempsey - Honorary Life Member*

**The Family Safety Victoria (FSV) Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group** (DCI Working Group) continues to meet to give perspective and advice regarding diversity and intersectionality in programs/initiatives being developed in response to addressing the recommendations put forward by the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. WMHNV member Julie Dempsey attends these meetings often as the sole voice representing the mental health sector and related needs of mental health consumers. Mental Health issues are integrally entwined in the occurrence of Family Violence as well as addressing many matters arising from it. There is an ongoing need to have a mental health voice and presence in this field, which has many competing demands from other areas placed upon it.

**The Intersectionality Capacity Building Project** has arisen from the *Everybody Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement* which is part of a ten-year commitment to build an inclusive, safe, responsive and accountable family violence system in Victoria. WMHNV member Julie Dempsey, has been involved extensively through workshops and consultations in developing resources, such as a Stakeholder Handbook inclusive of mental health considerations, to guide related service staff when working in the Family Violence Arena. Final participatory sessions on tools and resources are planned for October.



**The Office of the Chief Psychiatrist - Sexual Safety Committee** continues to meet at regular intervals to discuss and look at ways of promoting gender-sensitive and safe care in mental health services. This Committee arose out of the need to address feedback from the Mental Health Complaints Commission Sexual Safety Report, launched last year, highlighting serious sector-wide sexual safety issues in mixed sex Inpatient Psychiatric Units, supporting years of lobbying on this issue by many concerned organisations and individuals. The next focused piece of work incorporating a participatory model approach will be the revamp of the Chief Psychiatrist Promoting Sexual Safety Guideline and the Service Guideline for Gender-Sensitivity and Safety. The Sexual Safety Committee will oversee this work which will facilitate extensive consumer and staff input.

# Finance Update

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The Network has been without a Treasurer for this financial year. A big thank you to previous bank signatories Cheryl, Julie and also to Berenice - our volunteer bookkeeper - who collectively supported myself and the Committee to keep an eye on the budget and support the running of the finances.

We thank those who have kindly donated to us this year. You are aware that as a non - government funded organisation, the Network is totally reliant on charitable income and small grants. Whilst your contributions support the day to day running, they are not enough to sustain all key work areas as well as employ dedicated staff. An employee is able to more effectively action our objectives as well as keep a more consistent approach to fundraising opportunities. Our aim this year was to take actions that could improve the immediate situation and better position us for the next steps to sustainable funding. We have over time, reduced as many of our running costs as possible, this however has placed more pressure on our volunteers - this is not an ideal situation.

Operating costs have been kept to a minimum and are budgeted at \$10,000 per year. The operating costs include storage of our office files, running our website and accountancy platforms. A small amount of revenue is required to support committee members and those other volunteers conducting advocacy and attending meetings as representatives.

During this financial year we had several large expenses for networking activity and promoting the organisation. We hope to be able to leverage these for future funding activity. One expense was our trip to Canberra to meet MP Greg Hunt. Another large one off expense item was our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event (held at our 2018 AGM) and publication of the *Women's Safety Matters* Book - for which we are very proud to finally have our 30-year history noted and on the record.

As development of the website was a high priority also, we were very pleased that this budgeted item was met by an unexpected ATO refund. To have this website revamped and with a donations access online finalized, we are now able to move away from the previous manual receipting system; this will improve our efficiency all round. The donation access point is easy to use and will give us an opportunity to drive targeted campaigns such as crowd funding for program development and donations. We hope we can set up a pledge program too, this will provide us better forecast budgeting with a consistent revenue stream – all donations being tax deductible.

Overall we have reduced costs to the organisation with additional thought going into weighty office expenses when the office is not required. We are now well established as a *365cloudoffice* for all admin operations – as this has been a success – we will continue with this option for the time being.

Given our responsible funds management the Network remains in a settled financial position for the next 12 months with sufficient funds to meet our obligations, however in order to continue to expand our awareness activity and programs we need to improve our financial sustainability. The Network requires a funding strategy that builds on our history and taps into our new found market to ensure we can continue as is.

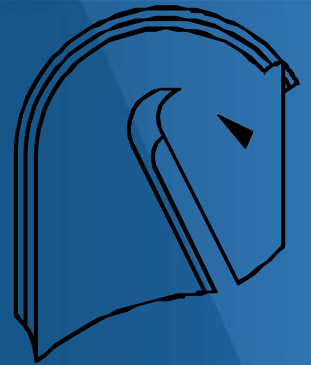
*Robyn Minty*

# WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK VICTORIA

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ABN 39 597 342 174

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019



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# WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK VICTORIA

ABN 39 597 342 174

## Committee's Report

For the year ended 30 June 2019

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Your committee members submit the financial accounts of the WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK VICTORIA for the financial year ended 30 June 2019.

### Committee Members

The names of committee members at the date of this report are:

Bridget Nutting, Acting Chair  
Sandy Jeffs, Secretary  
Jess Duda  
Kate Stewart  
Julie Dempsey (non-voting member)  
Robyn Minty (non-voting member)

### Principal Activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were: Promotes awareness of women's mental health and the development of services that are safe, effective and respond to the gender needs of women.

### Significant Changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

### Operating Result

The deficit from ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to

Year ended	Year ended
30 June 2019	30 June 2018
\$	\$
(19,867)	(32,576)

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These financial statements are unaudited. They must be read in conjunction with the attached Accountant's Compilation Report and Notes which form part of these financial statements.



# Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2019



**Income and Expenditure Statement**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2019**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<hr/>		
<b>Income</b>		
Donations received	603	1,143
Interest received	511	1,049
Total income	<u>1,113</u>	<u>2,192</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Accountancy	2,200	1,400
AGM Catering	264	
Annual Report - Compilation	467	
Advertising and promotion		86
Bad Debts		5,000
Bank charges	200	
Brochure, survey publications	417	
Bookkeeping fees	95	4,698
Conference/seminar costs	1,450	
Contract payments	1,154	5,972
Depreciation - other	671	671
Event	2,300	
Employment expenses		440
Training	127	10,280
Travelling expenses		390
Printing and stationery	394	1,797
Insurance		531
Workcover	435	
Professional Development		1,104
Publications	6,421	
Rent on land & buildings	1,946	2,250
Staff amenities		30
Travel, accom. & conference		118
Website - platform	650	
Website - Development	1,789	
Total expenses	<u>20,980</u>	<u>34,768</u>
<b>Profit (loss) from ordinary activities before income tax</b>	<b>(19,867)</b>	<b>(32,576)</b>
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**Income and Expenditure Statement**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2019**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
<b>Net profit (loss) attributable to the association</b>	<b>(19,867)</b>	<b>(32,576)</b>
<b>Total changes in equity of the association</b>	<b>(19,867)</b>	<b>(32,576)</b>
Opening retained profits	44,037	76,613
Net profit (loss) attributable to the association	(19,867)	(32,576)
<b>Closing retained profits</b>	<b>24,170</b>	<b>44,037</b>

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**Detailed Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2019**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
		<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<hr/>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Cash Assets</b>			
Bank Australia #6758 S65		24,469	40,428
Load & Go Visa Card		12	500
Petty Cash		-	200
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		24,481	41,128
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>24,481</b>	<b>41,128</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
<b>Property, Plant and Equipment</b>			
Office Furniture & Equipment		-	3,945
Less: Accumulated Dep'n		-	(3,946)
Computer		2,238	2,238
Less: Accumulated depreciation		(1,343)	(671)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		895	1,566
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<b>895</b>	<b>1,566</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>25,376</b>	<b>42,694</b>
		<hr/>	<hr/>

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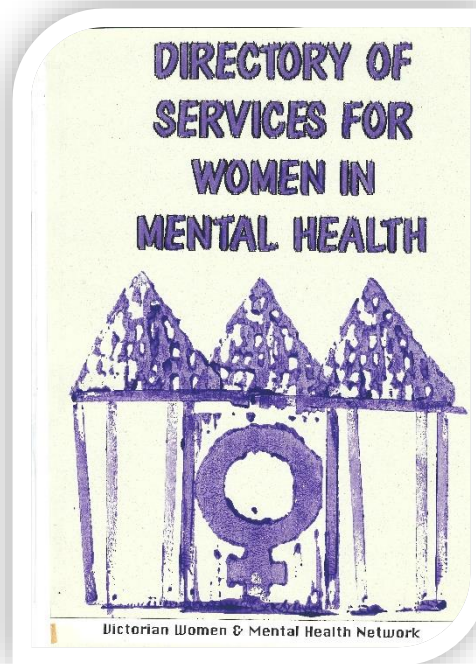
WOMEN'S MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK VICTORIA

ABN 39 597 342 174

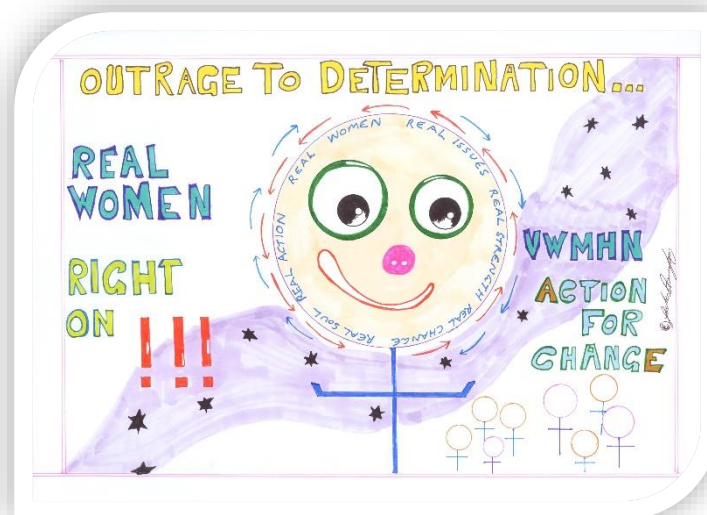
Detailed Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2019

	Note	2019 \$	2018 \$
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
<b>Payables</b>			
<b>Unsecured:</b>			
Trade Creditors		-	44
		-	44
<b>Current Tax Liabilities</b>			
GST payable control account		-	(3,587)
PAYG Clearing		-	1,417
		-	(2,170)
<b>Provisions</b>			
Superannuation Payable		-	230
Workcover Payable		-	553
		-	783
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		-	<b>(1,343)</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		-	<b>(1,343)</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b>25,376</b>	<b>44,037</b>
<b>Members' Funds</b>			
<b>Reserves</b>			
General reserve		1,206	-
Accumulated surplus (deficit)		24,170	44,037
<b>Total Members' Funds</b>		<b>25,376</b>	<b>44,037</b>

2000



2011



2018

