



Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc.

Annual Report
2023/2024

Accredited at
Certificate Level of
the Australian Service
Excellence Standards





Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc
North West Sydney Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service
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Funded by NSW Department of Health, administered by Western Sydney Local Health District
Funded by Legal Aid NSW

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. (BWGHC) is a Public Benevolent Institution with DGR Status. Donations of \$2.00 and above are tax deductible. The Centre holds **NSW Authority to fundraise: CFN/23808**.

All photos unless otherwise indicated are property of BWGHC. Thanks to the staff and students at BWGHC for their contribution of photographs to this report.

BWGHC Annual Report for 2023/2024 compiled by Shristi Singh

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We are committed to providing a professional, affordable and holistic gender informed service, promoting health, wellbeing and empowerment for women and girls, delivered in a caring, non-judgemental, respectful and safe environment.



Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. (BWGHC) is a community-based, non-profit women's health centre which provides accessible health and wellbeing services for women and girls in Blacktown and Hills Shire LGA. Our peak body is Women's Health NSW, and we are part of a network of 20 community-based women's health centres in NSW which share a similar mission and ethos.

OUR MISSION

We are committed to providing a professional, affordable and holistic gender informed service promoting health, wellbeing and empowerment for women, delivered in a caring, non-judgemental, respectful and safe environment.

We achieve this by:

- Providing a holistic women's health service to the community.
- Educating women and children so they can make informed choices about health and well-being.
- Empowering women and children to make informed choices throughout their lives.
- Providing a safe place for women and children.
- Advocating for and supporting women from a feminist perspective.

OUR VALUES

We recognise that women's health encompasses the physical, spiritual, environmental, emotional and social wellbeing of women and girls. BWGHC offers a holistic approach to understanding, managing and supporting women, girls and the broader community in the Blacktown LGA to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing. This approach is based on feminist philosophy, with an emphasis on respect and empowerment for all women and girls. Our values are:

- **Dignity** – we treat all people in a way that is respectful of their diversity and as valued individuals.
- **Compassion** – in our interactions with people, we strive to be kind and empathic.
- **Optimism** – the unwavering belief in the positive potential inherent in people and society.

OUR SERVICE PRINCIPLES

- We are a community based, non-government organisation run by, and for women.
- We are a public benevolent institution providing a direct service to disadvantaged women.
- We focus on prevention and early intervention.
- We work in partnership with other agencies.
- We are accessible to all women and girls.
- We strive to maintain ethical standards in all our activities.
- We are committed to best practice.
- Our work environment reflects our values.

Our Community

BWGHC provides health and wellbeing services to women and girls in Blacktown LGA, a 'huge and diverse' area with high levels of cultural and linguistic diversity¹.

Many areas of Blacktown LGA experience high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, poor health outcomes and high levels of unmet need when it comes to service provision³.

Our area is also experiencing rapid urban development and population growth and is now one of the most densely populated Local Government Areas in Western Sydney², further increasing the demand for services.

BWGHC considers the unique needs of our local community. We provide accessible services that consider the social, cultural and economic barriers that may exist for women and girls wishing to access health services and resources in our area.





2023-2024 Chairperson's report: Associate Professor Olayide Ogunsiji.



Members, friends and stakeholders, it is with great delight that I present to you, the annual report for 2023-2024 financial year for Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre (BWGHC).

Much more than the previous years, I am here to boldly say that 2023-2024 has been a very active year and the overall performance of BWGHC has been outstanding. The array of programs and services provided by the BWGHC and the trust we have built in the community are very important evidence of the excellent performance of the Centre. We have improved in several areas of our service provision. BWGHC continues to build on its strong foundation and network at all levels of the organisation and consolidating a solid platform for ongoing growth and success in serving the many women and girls in Blacktown Local Government Area.

During this financial year, BWGHC was successful in numerous grant submissions. The Centre continues to receive donations, nominations and government funding. These arrays of financial supports are very important for our ability to provide much needed extended services to women and girls in our area. Please take some moments to go through our extensive range of programs as provided in the following pages of this report.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I wish to express our deep gratitude to all the women and girls who use our services. Their ongoing trust in the high-quality women-centred care provided by BWGHC and in our capability to be the Centre of Excellence in women's health energise us in what we do.

We are very grateful to our community partners. This includes but is not limited to the Western Sydney Local Health District, Outer Western Domestic Violence Network, Legal Aid NSW, Family Planning NSW and the Department of Communities and Justice. We sincerely thank all the numerous grass-root services and their workers, whom we closely work with on a daily basis to ensure that women and girls get the relevant support they need.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I wish to thank our very able Executive Officer, Jhan Leach and her senior team who do their utmost to achieve more for the women and girls in our area, while professionally executing our strategic and operational goals effectively and efficiently.

Very importantly, a very big thank you go to all the staff and volunteers for their commitment, dedication, empathy and loyalty to BWGHC. Their welcoming smiles, timely support, passion and commitment make all the difference to the health and well-being of the women and girls they care for.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my colleagues on the Management Committee, Susan Baxter, Barbara Hillman, Mariam Mourad, Tammy Umasaran and Vaishali Parmar.

I am pleased to report that the BWGHC is in good health and good hands. We thank you all for your continuing support and we look forward to the future with confidence.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Olayide Ogunsiji



Treasurer's Report | Vaishali Parmar



It is with huge honour and pride I take on the responsibility of being Treasurer for BWGHC. The mix of diversity and experience that each member of our committee brings forward is inspiring and something we all should be proud of. When I first met Jhan and some of the ladies during a grant presentation, it was a pivotal moment for me to contribute on an ongoing basis and give something back to the community. Having worked in a frontline management role, I have interacted with many vulnerable members of our community who can use appropriate support and guidance.

With this report I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the staff, volunteers & members for showing resiliency in adapting to rapid changes & challenges presented.

The centre remains committed in delivering the services that our community needs. It is also important for our employees and members to focus on their own safety & wellbeing, which is highly encouraged. Coming months will see us navigate the new normal & continue to deliver on our services.

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” — Mother Teresa.

Vaishali Parmar



Western Sydney Zoo Glow Event for Families who have experienced Domestic and Family Violence



Executive Officer's Report | Jhan Leach



Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre, would like to acknowledge the Dharug and Gundungurra people, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise their deep spiritual connection to this land and their ongoing cultural and historical ties to it. We Honour their stewardship and the contributions they continue to make to our community, and we commit to fostering respectful relationships and understanding as we move forward together.

Thank you to our dedicated Management Committee Members, our Chairperson Dr Olayide Ogunsiji, Secretary Susan Baxter, Treasurer Vaishali Parmar, Members Barbara Hillman, Tammy Uma saran and Mariam Mourad, for all their excellent guidance and support over this past year. I would like to thank our professional and dedicated staff, our service partners, our volunteers and students, our medical, counselling, case management, reception and health program teams and our Nepean Blue Mountains and North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services Teams, that are dedicated to their work to assist women, girls and children facing the toughest and most challenging times, in their lives.

They have all provided our clients, women, girls and children with a high standard and excellence in service delivery.

Thank you to our dedicated Family Planning NSW, Doctors and Nurses, who hold clinics on Wednesdays; Women's Legal Services NSW and South West Sydney Community Legal Service's Solicitors clinics held fortnightly; the Australian Drug Foundation - Blacktown Local Drug Action Team, Art Therapy programs, Blacktown Domestic Violence Forum, WSLHD Multicultural Health Service programs. We support women, girls and children, with our free food program through Food Bank and Oz Harvest. Our commitment is to provide free food to our most vulnerable clients. Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers and organisations who provide us with much needed donations of clothing and essential items for our women, girls and children.

We're very grateful to Nova Employment Blacktown Manager, Neena Sood, for all her and her team's ongoing dedication and support. We thank our donors for their help and provision of funds, for our Blacktown Women's and Girls' Domestic Violence Emergency Fund and the Blacktown Club Grant Program funding, from the Blacktown Lifestyle Group. Thank you to Mr Rod Cullen at Lander Toyota, who provides us with dedicated and ongoing support for our vehicles and donations. To all our sponsors and donors who have assisted us materially, physically and financially this year, we're very grateful and thank you.

We have achieved solid progress this year with staff recruitment and development, Strategic and Business Planning and Team Building, enabling our continuing solid service growth. We have succeeded in collaborating with a number of government and non-government organisations across the Blacktown and Nepean LGA's and I would like to thank them for their support and dedication to women, girls, children and families in our community.

I'd like to thank Western Sydney University for presenting me on International Women's Day, with the Woman of Western Sydney Community Award 2024.

I'm very proud to have the ongoing support of our Local Member for Parliament, Mr Stephen Bali MP and with Women's Health NSW CEO Denele Crozier, we're grateful to the Premier of NSW the Hon Chris Minns for his dedicated provision of our much-needed increase in Women's Health funding for the next 4 years.

I'm very honoured to represent our organisation because of these achievements.

Yours sincerely,

Jhan Leach



Staff and Personnel

BWGHC employs permanent and sessional and casual staff as required and also provides students with placement opportunities. BWGHC also receives invaluable assistance and support from our volunteers. All personnel are accountable to the Executive Officer, Jhan Leach, who reports to the Management Committee.

Management Committee

BWGHC is an Incorporated Association, which is governed by a Management Committee made up of women committed to advancing the health priorities of women, girls, children and families living in our local community. The Management Committee is structured and operates according to the Rules of Association and consists of the Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Ordinary Members.

Funding

- NSW Department of Health, as administered by the Western Sydney Local Health District.
- Legal Aid New South Wales, Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program.
- Additional sources of funding are sought and provided via grant applications, community donations and strategic partnerships with other organisations.



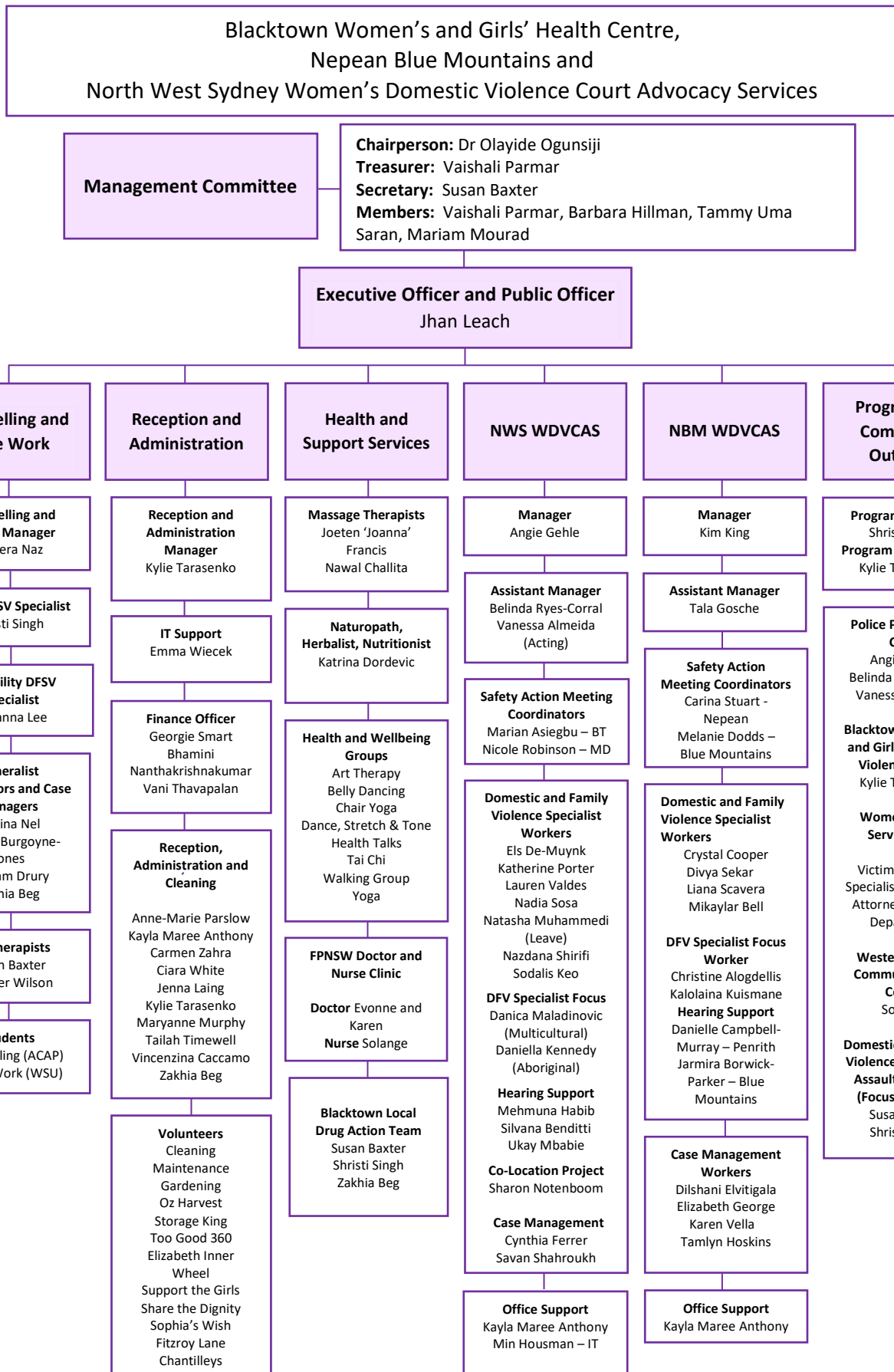
Margaret Balsille, Jobs Australia - providing Human Resource Training to all our Managers



Dr. Olayide Ogunsiji, Vaishali Parmer, Jhan Leach & Elizabeth. 2023 AGM



Staff Christmas Party 2023



Working in alignment with NSW Health Goals



BWGHC works in alignment with NSW Government Health Goals. The following is extracted from the NSW Health Framework for Women's Health:

Women's health priorities across the life stages

Goal

To deliver services and foster environments in NSW which help women to meet their physical, social and economic potential, by increasing opportunities for women to be healthy at every stage in their lives and preventing avoidable detrimental health outcomes such as chronic disease.

Purpose

To identify health needs particular to women (whether biological or social); to deliver appropriate healthcare and health-promoting services; and to monitor the impact of interventions on groups of women at most risk of poor health.

Approach

The framework focuses on issues where the detrimental health impact is disproportionately experienced by women, or where the response is different for women than for men. The framework places women at the centre of decision making for their own health and acknowledges women's health is impacted by many factors including housing, rural living, employment and access to services.

As health outcomes are influenced by the cumulative effect overtime of social determinants, a life stage approach is used to structure opportunities for enhanced delivery of services and programs.

Values

NSW Health's CORE values are the guiding principles for implementation of women's health strategies.

The CORE values are:
Collaboration, Openness,
Respect and Empowerment.



Priority populations

While the Women's Health Framework is for *all* women, it is recognised that there are certain population groups, which experience poorer health and/or due to their circumstances may require focused attention to better address their health needs. Examples of priority populations in women's health include:

- **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women**
- **Women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, migrant and refugee women**
- **Women who are socio-economically disadvantaged**
- **Women with disability**
- **Women who are primary or secondary carers for other people**
- **Women who experience violence (sexual, domestic and family violence)**
- **Women living in rural and remote areas**
- **Lesbian, bisexual, trans-gender and inter-gender women.**

These priority populations are similarly identified by the National Women's Health Policy. Working to advance women's health also requires working with the communities in which women live.

Partnerships

Improving health outcomes for all women will require an across-government and multi-sectoral approach. NSW Health has funded a range of community-based services supporting women's health and arrangements for evidence-based service delivery will remain important into the future. Need to build strategic partnerships with other organisations which are not funded by the health system. This framework identifies the partnerships between NSW Government agencies which contribute to the infrastructure, services and programs supporting women's good health.

Source: NSW Health Framework for Women's Health, 2013





Quality, Innovation and Performance

BWGHC is accredited at Certificate Level of the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES). Since receiving accreditation, the Centre has continued to upgrade systems and processes in order to meet ongoing improvement targets for internal processes, and strengthening our operational policies and procedures, including recruitment, employment, financial and organisational management.

Meeting High Demand

BWGHC has undergone important changes during this financial year. We have improved our Centre's facilities and continued to expand our capacity to meet high demand for services.

We have also employed additional staff to meet the continuing high demand for our counselling and case management services and for the North Western Sydney Domestic Violence Court Advocacy service.

Improving Effectiveness

BWGHC has taken an efficient and consistent approach to managing the continuing high level of demand by new clients for counselling and case management, including the growing demand for domestic violence and crisis response.

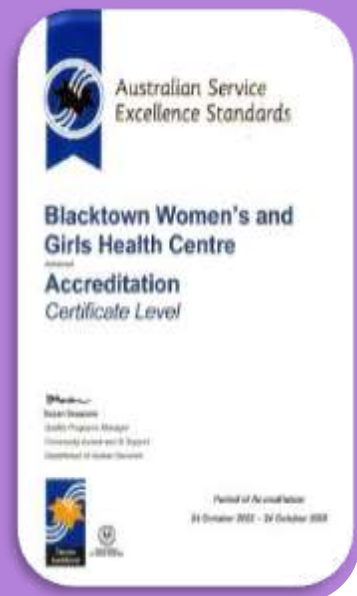
This year we have continued our work with Legal Aid NSW alongside North Western Sydney Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. We have a good working relationship with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program at Legal Aid NSW. Achieving solid progress this year with staff recruitment and development, team building, strategic and business planning and enabling our strong service growth.

Our health promotions and early intervention group program has brought the Centre into new partnerships with local organisations and agencies, and provided women and girls with useful ways to address issues such as physical health, mental health and social wellbeing, regardless of age or cultural background.

The **BWGHC Domestic Violence Women's Girls' and Children's Emergency Fund** is able to respond to the growing needs of women, children and girls, fleeing domestic violence, sexual abuse, homelessness and has been supported with a NSW Clubs Grant from Blacktown Workers Club. During the next 12 months, this fund will continue to provide practical assistance for women, girls and children in crisis and at risk of homelessness.

The BWGHC Reception team, the first 'point of call' for clients, received between 20 – 40 calls a day.

Over 10% of the calls were complex or crisis related, requiring sound knowledge of referral pathways and appropriate services, internal and external, for the woman or girls calling.



Meeting NSW Health Requirements

BWGHC continues to effectively, quantitatively record and measure our performance in all areas through our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which were developed in consultation with NSW Health to meet their requirements and provide a consistent framework for monitoring and evaluating performance.



Blacktown Women and Girls Health Centre Inc. provides affordable, accessible and multi-disciplinary services to girls and women across their lifespan, particularly focusing on vulnerable population groups.

Our services target key health issues impacting women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health and wellbeing, domestic and family violence, and chronic illness and disease.

As a community health organization, BWGHC aims to operate as a 'one-stop shop' delivering integrated care to women and girls with complex needs and those who do not readily engage with health services. Services are free or low-cost. No woman or girl is turned away due to inability to pay.

BWGHC Services

- **Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service:** North Western Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NNSWDVCAS)
- **Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service:** Nepean Blue Mountains Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NBMSWDVCAS)
- **Sexual Violence Hub** Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence services available for Communities of CALD and Disability.
- **Counselling** Domestic Violence, Sexual Abuse and General Counselling support for women and girls to assist in dealing with trauma, stress and personal issues both immediate and long-term)
- **Case Management** (Consistent co-ordinated support for women and girls with complex needs)
- **Women's Health Nurse Clinic** (Free education, information, breast checks and more)
- **Naturopathy and Nutrition**
- **Remedial Massage Therapy**



Women's Electoral Lobby – Feminism

BWGHC Services: In-House Partnerships

Our strong partnerships with other organisations help us to provide relevant, appropriate and responsive services to women and girls in our local community. The following services are provided onsite at BWGHC through our community partnerships:

- **Sexual and Reproductive Health Doctor and Nurse Clinics:** Family Planning NSW
- **Domestic Violence Counselling:** North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NNSWDVCAS)
- **Early Childhood Health Clinic:** Early Childhood Nurses from the Western Sydney Local Health District
- **Legal Support:** Women's Legal Services NSW (WLSNSW) Solicitors & Western Sydney Community Legal Centre (WSCLC) Solicitors
- **Police Prosecutors Clinic:** (DV Clinics – Blacktown)
- **Blacktown Domestic Violence Forum:** Blacktown Women's and Girls Health Centre and NNSWDVCAS.
- **Indigenous Women's Legal Support:** Indigenous Women's Legal Program (WLSNSW)
- **African Women's Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO):** regular outreach, meetings and information forums hosted by BWGHC
- **WSLHD Multicultural Health:** Health programs for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women and Girls.
- **Australian Drug Foundation:** Blacktown Local Drug Action Team
- **Western Sydney Local Health District:** Health and wellbeing Programs

Early Intervention and Health Promotion Group Programs (2023/2024)



- African Women’s Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO) Groups
- Belly Dancing Group
- Bra Gifting Day
- Centrelink Information Workshop
- Dance, Stretch & Tone Classes
- DIY Christmas Workshop
- Eating for wellbeing
- Finance Workshops
- Gardening for Beginners
- Gentle Exercise Classes
- Healthy Eating on a Budget
- Hearing Australia Testing
- How to get a better night’s sleep
- Information sessions for local school students
- Living Mindfully Groups
- Massage Therapy
- Meditation
- Naturopathy Services
- Oz Harvest/Food Bank
- Parenting Group – Tuning into Kids
- Police Prosecutors Clinic
- Scam Presentation
- Self Care & Mindfulness Art Therapy
- Service Australia
- Skin Cancer Screening
- Tai Chi
- The Heart Foundation - Women’s Walking Group
- WSLHD Multicultural Women’s Health Groups
- Yoga



Gardening



Healthy Eating on a Budget



Christmas Workshop



Eating for Wellbeing

Accessible and Culturally Responsive Services



During the 2023-2024 Financial Period, BWGHC provided culturally responsive services to women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Clients were provided with a free interpreter when needed, either onsite or via the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS).

BWGHC continued to develop and strengthen interagency and community partnerships. These partnerships allow BWGHC to benefit from the expertise of organisations which work closely with culturally diverse community groups to provide culturally responsive services including referrals, events and resources.

- Blacktown Women’s and Girls’ Health Centre hosted outreach meetings by the African Women’s Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO).
- We are members of an advisory committee that was led by SydWest Multicultural Services for the ‘CALD Domestic Violence Prevention Project’. This project is aimed at reducing violence against women and their children residing in the Blacktown LGA. The target groups were Afghan, South Sudanese and Indian Sub-Continent refugee and migrant communities.
- We hosted a program facilitated by Family Planning to provide sexual health information, advice and referral to CALD students of Evans High School with an interpreter.
- Blacktown Women’s and Girls’ Health Centre participated in Naidoc Week, delivering health information and service referrals to CALD communities.



NAIDOC Celebration 2024



African Women’s Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO) Women and Family Retreat 2024. Our Members with Dr Olayide Ogunsiji and Sumera Naz



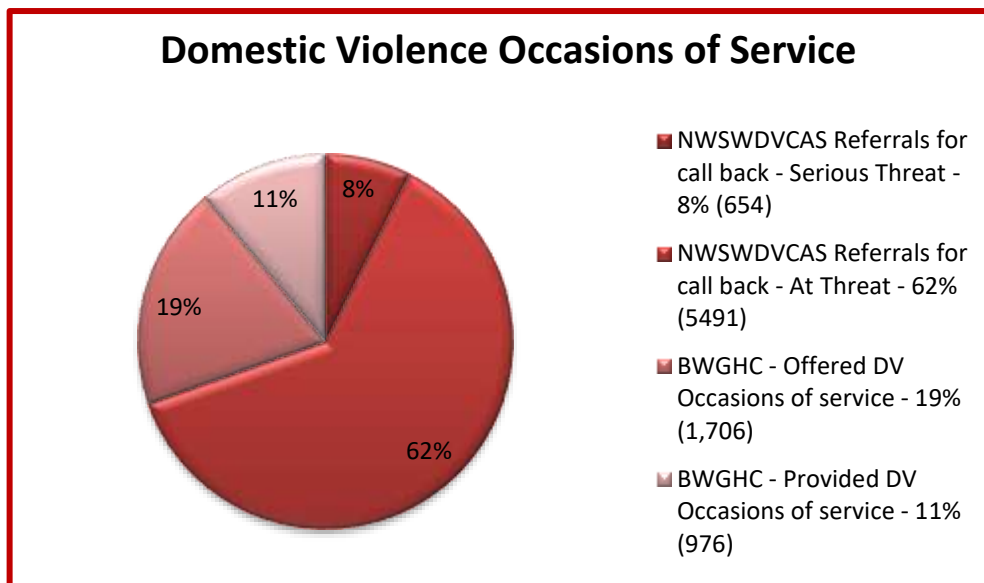
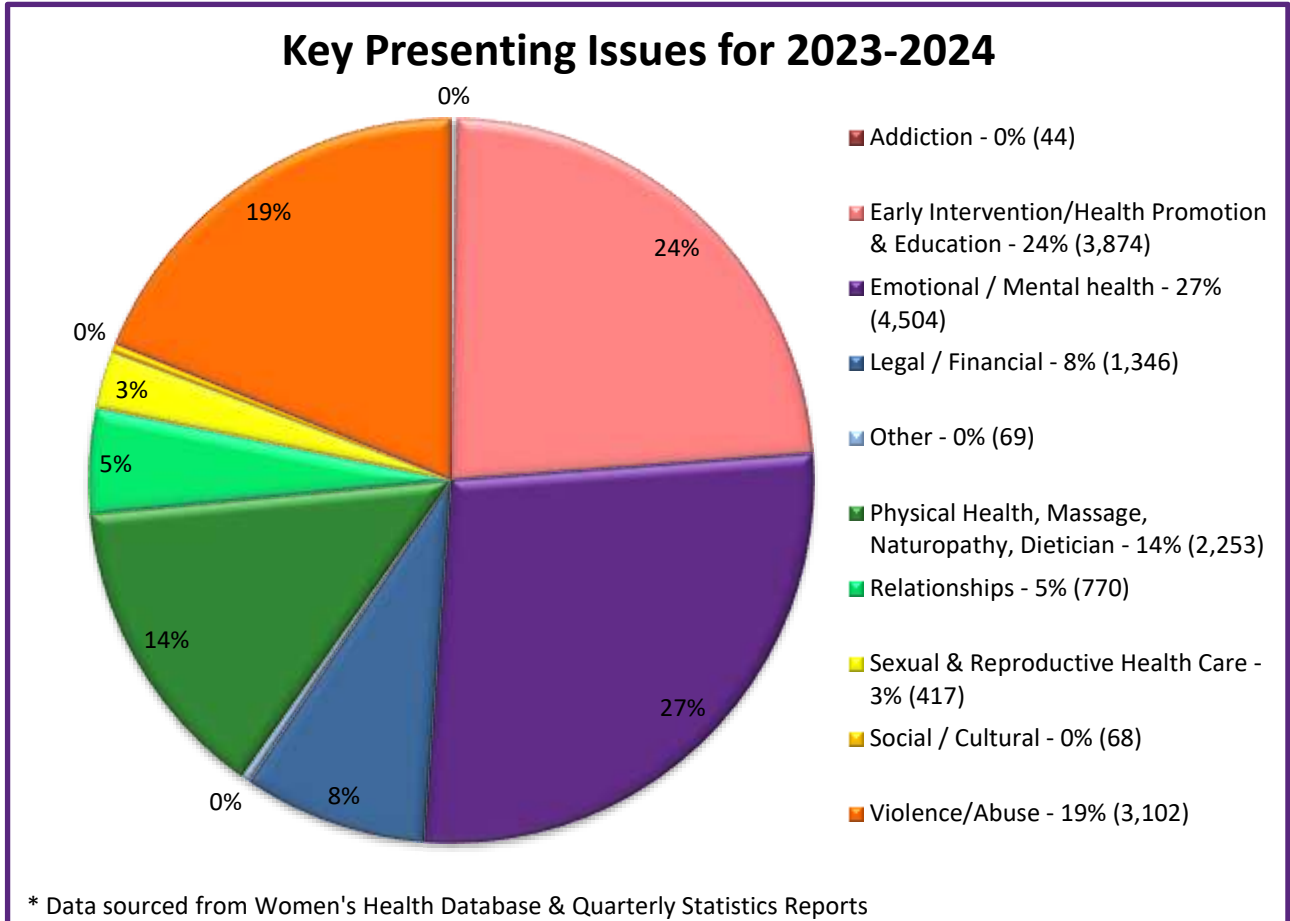
During the financial year **2023-2024**

A total of **11,367** women and girls were referred in for support through 2023-2024.

4,687 women and girls attended appointments.

3,874 women and girls attended groups and activities.

2,806 women contacted the centre for referral, information and crisis support.





About Us

The North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service is one of 27 services of the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program across NSW. Our service provides support for women experiencing domestic and family violence across the community. This support includes threat assessment, information, referrals, case coordination, case management, safety planning and Court advocacy at Blacktown and Mt DrUITT Local Courts. NWSWDVCAS assist women to obtain effective legal protection from NSW Courts through the application of Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs). Support is provided before, during and after the Court process.

The Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) mission and aims guide NWSWDVCAS. We recognise the disproportionate and negative impact of domestic and family violence on women and provide a respectful service where women are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity. Women can freely express their needs and make decisions in a supported and non-judgemental environment.

Our highly skilled WDV CAS Workers provide a trauma informed model of service delivery and an integrated response to women assessed as 'threat' and 'serious threat' of injury or death due to domestic and family violence.

NWSWDVCAS is funded by Legal Aid NSW



NWSWDVCAS Team Members – 2023 Christmas Party



The NWSWDVCAS team consists of:

Manager	Angie Gehle
Assistant Manager	Belinda Ryes-Corral
Acting Assistant Manager	Vanessa Almeida
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Aboriginal Focus)	Daniella Kennedy
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Multicultural Focus)	Danica Miladinovic
Blacktown Safety Action Meeting Coordinator	Marian Asiegbu
Mt Druitt Safety Action Meeting Coordinator	Nicole Robinson
Case Management Worker/ Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Cynthia Ferrer
Case Management Worker/ Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Savan Shahroukh
Hearing Support Worker/Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Moni Habib
Hearing Support Worker/Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Silvana Benditti
Hearing Support Worker/Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Ukay Mbabie
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Els De-Muynk
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Katherine Porter
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Lauren Valdes
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Nadia Sosa
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Natasha Muhammedi
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Nazdana Shirifi
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Sodalis Keo
Blacktown Co-Location Worker	Sharon Notenboom
Cleaner and Administration Support	Kayla Anthony



This past year has been a remarkable one for North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NWSWDVCAS). As we reflect on our progress, we are proud to highlight the achievements and successes that have contributed to improving the lives of domestic violence survivors. Despite the challenges we face, our commitment to supporting victims through trauma-informed, victim-centric approaches has led to significant positive outcomes. From empowering clients to ensuring better access to support services, this report celebrates the milestones reached and the impact made by our service.

One of the most notable achievements this year has been our success in integrating the trauma-informed approach within the Specialist Family Violence List Court Pilot at Blacktown Local Court. This pilot program places a strong emphasis on ensuring that the court experience is as supportive and non-retraumatizing as possible. Victims are given more agency in the process, with the court recognising their autonomy in decisions related to their ADVOs (Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders).

WDVCAS has played an integral role in this shift, working alongside clients to ensure their voices are heard during ADVO proceedings. Many clients have reported feeling more empowered and involved in the legal process, which has led to improved outcomes for both the victims and their families. The implementation of trauma-informed practices has created a more respectful and understanding environment, where victims feel supported rather than overwhelmed. Through our advocacy, clients have been able to make more informed decisions about their safety and legal options, which has been a critical factor in their recovery journey.

Our staff has actively worked with the court system to ensure that clients are given the appropriate level of support throughout the legal process. This includes not only helping clients understand their rights but also providing them with the emotional and practical support needed during what can be a daunting process. As a result, we have seen improved confidence in the court system among victims.

Providing clients with critical information about ADVOs and their legal rights has also been a major success. Through one-on-one telephone support, case management, court support and co-location pilot, our staff has been able to guide clients through the complexities of their legal proceedings, ensuring that they understand the full extent of the protections available to them. This year, through our service, we have seen a marked improvement in how informed our clients are regarding their ADVOs.

This empowerment through information has also extended to ensuring that clients understand how to access resources such as counselling, housing, and mental health services. Many clients have successfully re-established their lives with our guidance, highlighting the importance of having an informed and supportive advocate during the legal process.

Another significant achievement this year has been the strengthening of our relationships with key stakeholders, including the court system, law enforcement, and other community organisations. We have been actively involved in ensuring that the needs of domestic violence victims are adequately represented in discussions about policy and practice. Through collaboration, we have successfully advocated for a more integrated and coordinated response to domestic violence, which has led to improved services for victims.



In particular, our relationship with the police has been instrumental in ensuring that victims receive the protection they need. While the court system has focused on victim autonomy, the police continue to prioritise victim safety. North West Sydney has worked to bridge the gap between these two perspectives, ensuring that both safety and victim agency are equally respected. This collaboration has resulted in more effective outcomes for victims, with both the court and law enforcement working together to create a safer environment for survivors.

Our ongoing partnerships with local service providers have also been instrumental in ensuring that clients have access to the resources they need. We have successfully connected victims to housing services, mental health support, and counselling, which has allowed them to take important steps toward rebuilding their lives. In addition, we have played a key role in advocating for improvements in local service provision, ensuring that resources are accessible to those who need them most.

A key focus this year has been supporting mothers with young children, especially in the court environment. Both Blacktown and Mt Druitt Local Courts present unique challenges for mothers who attend with their children, as the court proceedings can be overwhelming and difficult to navigate while caring for young children. Our staff has worked to address these challenges by providing additional support for these clients, including childcare and assistance with navigating court processes.

This year, we have seen mothers successfully participate in court proceedings with the support of our advocacy team. This has been particularly impactful for those who may have felt unable to attend court or fully engage with the process due to the demands of parenting. By addressing their needs in a comprehensive way, we have ensured that mothers feel supported and can focus on the safety of themselves and their children.

The past year has been one of the continued successes for NWSWDVCAS. From empowering victims with critical information and support, to strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders, we have made tangible progress in improving the lives of those we serve. Our trauma-informed, victim-centric approach has led to meaningful outcomes, including the successful securing of ADVOs, housing, and essential support services for victims. As we continue to navigate the complexities of domestic violence support, we remain committed to advocating for the safety and wellbeing of all those affected by violence.

NWSWDVCAS Management – We'd like to acknowledge Shristi Singh's contribution to this report.



Partnership with Blacktown Worker's Club



Harmony Day celebrations



*Meet & Greet with Blacktown Police
DV Team*



*DV Vigil at Lalor Park
Attendance by Shristi Singh*



*Knit Bomb Event 2023
Kylie, Jane and Danica*



NWSWDVCAS Staff at WDV CAP Forum



Acknowledgement

Nepean Blue Mountains Court Advocacy service would like to acknowledge the Dharug and Gundungurra People who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather and work, paying our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We recognise their deep spiritual connection to this land and their ongoing cultural and historical ties to it. We honor their stewardship and the contributions they continue to make to our community, and we commit to fostering respectful relationships and understanding as we move forward together.

Our Service

The Nepean Blue Mountains Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NBMWDVCAS) is one of 27 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services across NSW and is managed by the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program, Legal Aid NSW.

The service provides critical domestic and family violence specific services to women and their children across the Nepean, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury regions. The support provided is comprehensive and includes: DFV Specific threat/risk assessment; information, referral, case-coordination; case management; safety planning and court advocacy at Penrith, Katoomba and Windsor Local Courts. NBMWDVCAS provides timely support, information and support to women and their children accessing legal protection through Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) applications.

NBMWDVCAS FIGURES AT A GLANCE:

- Provision of service at 3 Local Courts: Katoomba, Penrith and Windsor
- Provided 6368 events of service delivery to 3431 clients
- Assisted 433 clients with court advocacy
- 172 Clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 159 Clients identified as Multicultural





NEPEAN BLUE MOUNTAINS WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT ADVOCACY SERVICE (NBMWDVCAS)

NBMWDVCAS TEAM:

Manager

Angie Gehle

Assistant Manager

Kim King

Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Aboriginal Focus)

Christine Alogdellis

Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Multicultural Focus)

Savan Shahroukh (Maternity Leave)

Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Multicultural Focus)

Rhianne Jeyakumar (Maternity position)

Nepean Safety Action Meeting Coordinator

Tala Gosche

Blue Mountains Safety Action Meeting Coordinator

Sharon Notenboom

Nepean Hearing Support Coordinator

Silvana Benditti

Blue Mountains Hearing Support Coordinator

Jarmira Parker Borwick

Case Management Worker

Elizabeth George

Case Management Worker

Kelly Hierzer

Case Management Worker

Danielle Campbell Murray

Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker

Carina Stuart

Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker & Proxy

Els De-Muyneck

Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker

Melanie Dodds

Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker

Liana Scavera

Cleaner and Administration Support Worker

Kayla Anthony

IT Support

Min Housman

We acknowledge the following staff members and the contributions they have made to the NBMWDVCAS during this reporting period:

Emily Perry

Nadia Zeaitier





Managers' Report

I want to acknowledge the tireless work of the NBMWDVCAS team. Their dedication to supporting women experiencing domestic and family violence is truly inspiring. I also want to thank the team for being really resilient. The space we work in can be challenging at times, but the team continues to show their dedication to the women we service in the communities we work in.

I would like to acknowledge Angie Gehle who was the Manager of the NBMWDVCAS during this reporting period. Angie's approach to supporting women and advocating for their rights to live a life free from domestic and family violence is to be commended.

NBMWDVCAS understands that holding two WDVCS' is a huge commitment and this needs to be recognised. Our service truly appreciates the unwavering support from Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Management Committee and in particular the Executive Officer, Jhan Leach.

It is important to acknowledge that we are a relatively new team, the team has come together and has been able to mesh in a way that has allowed us to quickly become a cohesive and supportive team. The following is an example of a de-identified case study of how the team has collaborated together to best support a woman.

The team received a referral for Brooke. Brooke was contacted by one of the DFV Specialist Workers who had identified that she was to be raised to at serious threat and to be referred to the safety action meeting. This worker also identified a need for on-going, long term support through case management. Brooke was then assisted by the case manager with ongoing reporting to police, assistance with housing, security upgrades, liaising with the domestic violence officers and then when Brooke's matter came to court she was supported by the hearing support coordinator.

Brooke has been able to secure long term housing; her court matter is now finalised with Brooke feeling a lot safer and she has built up her financial independence. Brooke has also built up the confidence to commence Family Law proceedings.

This case study is a true reflection of the team working collaboratively and tirelessly together to provide the best outcome possible for all of our clients.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank our community partnerships. We deeply acknowledge and honour the invaluable collaborations of key agencies across the region. Without the commitment, dedication, and sustainability of our allies, women and children would continue to walk in isolation. It is through these partnerships that we create a network of support, empowerment, and resilience.





In particular, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the following services:

- NSW Police Force (Blue Mountains, Nepean and Windsor Police Area Commands)
- Women's Legal Services
- The Richmond Women's Cottage
- Corrective Services
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre
- Penrith Women's Health Centre
- DV West
- The Haven
- Department of Education
- NSW Health
- Domestic Violence Service Management
- Community Restorative Centre
- Family Violence Service
- DCJ Housing
- Centrelink
- IVPRS
- Springfield Cottage
- Victims Services
- Court Registry
- The Central Tablelands Community Legal Centre
- Sydney Regional Aboriginal Cooperation
- Merana Aboriginal Service
- Aboriginal Health

Training and Development undertaken by NBMWDVCAS staff include:

- Safety Action Meeting
- Domestic Violence Electronic Monitoring Scheme
- WDV CAP DFV Connect Training
- ADVO and Court information sessions
- Fire Evacuation & Warden Training
- New Workers Training WDV CAP
- WDV CAP Case Management Training

NBMWDVCAS is excited for the year ahead, where we can continue to grow and develop our skills through a wide range of training opportunities. This will enable us to better support and empower the women and children we walk alongside in their journey towards safety and well-being.

We'd like to acknowledge Kim King & Angie Gehle's contribution to this report.



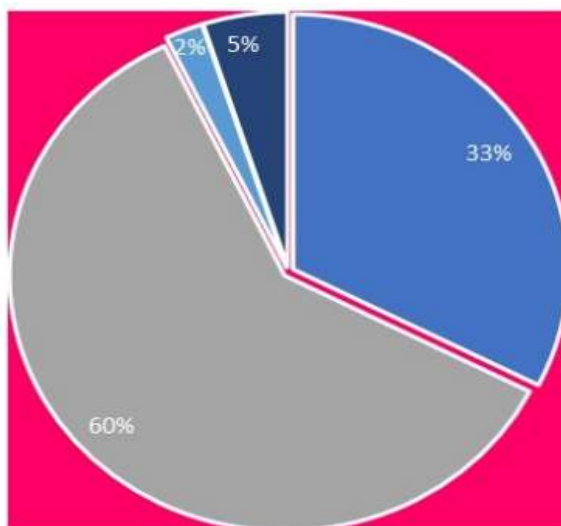
SERVICE PROVISION

The **NBMWDVCAS** is dedicated to providing vital support to women, children, and young people who have experienced domestic and family violence. We serve individuals across the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, and Nepean regions, offering a range of services aimed at promoting safety, healing, and empowerment.

The NBMWDVCAS have particular regard to be accessible and specifically tailored in service provision to the following groups:

- Aboriginal women;
- Women from multicultural communities;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) women;
- Women living with a disability;
- Young women (under 25 years of age);
- Older women (over 65 years of age);
- Women who have been incorrectly identified as the person using violence in court proceedings.

NBMWDVCAS Stats for 2023-2024



- Safer Pathways- 3431 Referrals
- Service Events completed - 6368
- Referrals to Multicultural Support Services - 235 Referrals
- Services to identified Aboriginal Women - 525 Referrals



Nepean Blue Mountains provide women experiencing domestic and family violence with:

Threat Assessment and Safety Planning – The **Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT)** is a standardised tool used to assess the level of threat faced by individuals experiencing domestic and family violence. By using the DVSAT, we are able to offer clients tailored and appropriate support, prioritise those at greater risk of harm, and take targeted action to prevent further escalation of violence.

Through the DVSAT, a person may be assessed as either "at threat" or "at serious threat" based on the level of danger they face. Our goal is to address clients' immediate safety needs, and where possible, we provide safety planning to help them navigate potential risks.

Case Coordination – We provide warm referrals to local services to address key needs for women, such as housing, counselling, and legal advice. In addition, we coordinate and follow up on the delivery of these services and supports to ensure women and their children receive the care they need.

Information – We provide legal information to help clients understand legal processes and procedures. This includes offering basic guidance on:

- Making an application for an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO)
- Making a statement to NSW Police regarding an AVO and/or criminal offence
- Court proceedings related to domestic and family violence
- The effectiveness of an AVO, including how to report breaches
- The role of the NSW Police Force in enforcing AVOs
- The role of legal representatives, including individual practitioners, Legal Aid NSW (including the Domestic Violence Duty Service), Police Prosecutors, and community legal centres

We aim to empower clients with the knowledge they need to navigate legal systems related to domestic and family violence.

Court Advocacy – We provide advocacy for women navigating the court process in domestic and family violence matters. Our primary focus is to help women secure legal protection through Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs) that are tailored to meet their individual needs. This may also involve advocating on the client's behalf with other organisations to ensure they receive the support and protection they require.

Case Management – Offers short to long-term case management services for eligible clients. Our Case Managers work with clients to develop person-centred case plans that identify key safety concerns, needs, and goals, while exploring options for addressing these. Case management is delivered within a trauma-informed, strengths-based framework, prioritising the respect and support of clients' autonomy throughout the process.

Hearing Support – We provide specialist Hearing Support for victims involved in defended hearings at Penrith Katoomba and Windsor Local Courts related to Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs) and/or domestic and family violence-related criminal charges. Our support helps address barriers to court attendance and aims to reduce the stress and trauma associated with the court process, including the experience of giving evidence as a complainant.



Police Prosecutor Clinic – In collaboration with the NSW Police Force, NBMWDVCAS runs Domestic Violence Prosecutor Clinics to help clients prepare for defended hearings. These clinics are held once a month at Penrith, Katoomba and Windsor Local Courts.

The clinics aim to alleviate any concerns clients may have about giving evidence in court by educating them on court procedures and providing essential information to prepare them for their hearings at either Penrith, Katoomba or Windsor Local Courts.

NBMWDVCAS thanks the Penrith, Katoomba and Windsor Police Prosecutors for their dedication and support in helping clients better understand the court process and what to expect when giving evidence.

Domestic Violence Duty Solicitor Scheme (DVDS) and Legal Support

The legal practitioners play a crucial role in providing clients with essential legal advice and representation across various areas, including:

- Family law
- Criminal law
- Civil law
- Private representation
- Care and protection matter
- Housing and credit/debt issues
- Immigration
- Victims' services
- Misidentification cases

NBMWDVCAS extends its deepest gratitude to all legal practitioners involved in the Domestic Violence Duty Scheme, funded by Legal Aid NSW, and to the Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains Community Legal Centre. Their unwavering commitment in attending court on ADO list days across the Katoomba, Penrith, and Windsor Local Courts is truly invaluable.

DVDS	Firm
Shirin Mirzaee-Amirabad	Azidi Lawyers
Uchenne Fischer	State Chambers
David Cleverly	Hammond Nguyen Turnbull Legal
Lang Goodsell	Lachlan Macquarie Chambers
Sione Breust	SCB Legal
Karen Mifsud & Team	Women's Legal Service NSW
Nazira Sowaid	Choice Law Group

Local Courts NBMWDVCAS attend



Katoomba Court



Penrith Court



Windsor Court



Women's cottage: Reclaim the Night



Sydney Regional Aboriginal Corporation



Merana Aboriginal Community Services Day



Penrith Police Station Official Aboriginal Flag Raising Ceremony Day



Nepean Blue Mountains WDV CAS Team photos





During the financial year we have worked in partnership with peer agencies and funders to deliver specialist services in alignment with NSW Health priorities. We also delivered a range of presentations and activities on priority health and wellbeing topics.

NSW Health Priority: Violence

Our trauma-informed case management and counselling services worked primarily with local women and girls whose health, wellbeing and safety was being negatively affected by issues associated with domestic and family violence. Women were provided with support and practical assistance to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and their children, and linked as relevant to our wellbeing activities and local services.

NSW Health Priority: Lifestyle-related chronic disease

During the year the Centre worked with Bilingual Community Educators from the Western Sydney Local Health District to run health & wellbeing groups for women from CALD communities.

Our registered women's health nurse and naturopath/nutritionist worked to support women with lifestyle related chronic disease, including issues associated with obesity.

Our exercise and movement groups, such as yoga, dance stretch and tone, belly dancing and walking groups have also given women and girls the opportunity to address chronic illness through exercise, as well as become linked with other services offered by the Centre's multidisciplinary team.



*Natalia Arnas, Cancer Council visit to
Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre
2024*



*Inner Wheel Donations
Kylie Tarasenko & Elizabeth*



NSW Health Priority: Nutrition and physical activity / healthy weight

This year the Centre has worked with qualified local fitness trainers to introduce two exercises classes during which clients can have personalised attention.

These classes are suitable for women of all ages and levels of fitness and ability, whether they have undertaken an exercise program previously or not. Our registered women's health nurse and naturopath have also developed a series of free health talks, which include diet and nutrition related topics, including healthy weight.

Through our partnership with Oz Harvest and Food Bank the Centre has also been able to provide clients with access to fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis, assisting between 30 to 40 families each week with food support.

NSW Health Priority: Reproductive and sexual health

The Centre works with Family Planning NSW to run two clinics every Wednesday where women and girls can attend for a full range of reproductive health care, including pap tests, breast checks, hormonal treatment, menopause care, contraceptive advice and prescription.

This year the Centre with Family Planning NSW ran a very successful Girls Group workshop, during which girls from local high school were provided education around reproductive health, consent, contraception and healthy relationships.



Thanks to Lions for donations of healthy food items contributing to our weekly Friday food hampers/Oz Harvest, 2024

NSW Health Priority: Mental health and social wellbeing

Our generalist and specialist domestic violence counselling services worked collaboratively with caseworkers and other members of the interdisciplinary team within a biopsychosocial framework to support women, girls and children with experiences of domestic and family violence including childhood trauma, to heal and recover from loss, grief and interrelation trauma.

As part of our ongoing health promotion and early intervention groups program, members of the Centre's interdisciplinary team also developed groups, which focussed on using mindfulness as a tool for dealing with anxiety and for developing healthy and empowering behaviours.

"My health & wellbeing has improved, loved being with the other ladies".

***Community Member**



NSW Health Priority: Screening

Weekly women's health clinics were provided by our contracted clinicians, Family Planning NSW, to provide pap tests, breast screenings and checks for sexually transmitted diseases. With cervical cancer an issue for local women at a higher level than in other regions, our Centre with Family Planning NSW continued the popular Paps for Pashminas program, which offered incentives for women having a pap test at one of the Centre's Family Planning clinics.

NSW Health Priority: Tobacco, drugs and alcohol

Our Centre is recognised as one of the Blacktown Local Drug Action Teams. The Centre's Art Therapy program has long been an integral part of our communities informed and responsive group program. This year our art therapist has worked with women and young people to use creative expression as a therapeutic tool and protective factor for developing safe and healthy emotional expression.

Art therapy has proven a popular and useful part of groups providing support and health promotion for women and girls in the Blacktown LGA. This year we continued to receive grants from the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) to develop and deliver programs, which can prevent or minimise harm from alcohol and other drugs. The program focuses on young culturally and linguistically diverse women and girls who may be negatively impacted by substance abuse, particularly ice (crystal methamphetamines). The program will use a combination of art therapy and narrative therapy to decrease the risk of developing addictive behaviours.



Belly Dance Group



A beautiful donation from Larissa from Anglicare Church with Shristi



During the financial year the Centre has worked in partnership with peer agencies, local police and community services and funders to deliver specialist services in alignment with priorities identified within our community, including domestic violence.

Community Priority: Promoting empowerment and resilience in girls and children

Working with other local agencies including Blacktown City Council Youth Library Services, the Centre engaged the community in both those agencies' programs and our programs.

Staff members and placement students have received in-service training from agencies such as the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, the Family Referral Service and ACT for Kids to enable the development of solid referral pathways.

A multidisciplinary team from the Centre developed two programs for high school age girls which focussed in age appropriate ways on building healthy relationships, sexual and reproductive health issues, self-empowerment, protective behaviours, personal growth and development and the healthy expression of feelings. Girls attended these popular programs from a range of ages and cultural backgrounds.



The Centre also offered a no appointment needed approach to encouraging students to visit the women's health clinics on Wednesdays.

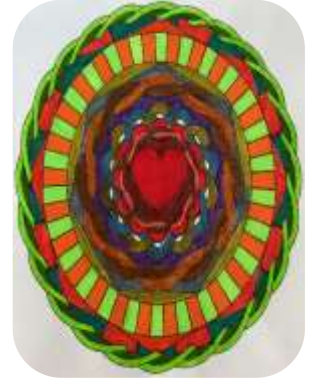
"My counsellor understands me very well".

***Community Member**

Community Priority: Emotional wellbeing

Our generalist counsellors worked with women and girls to address issues such as anxiety, depression, bullying, social isolation, emotional regulation, trauma, and much more by providing support and appropriate linking with specialist counsellors and agencies, after a thorough initial intake assessment. Clients with addictive behaviours and associated issues were also able to receive support from our group program which offered relaxation, stress management and mindfulness as core elements.





Our 2023 Mindfulness Art Therapy program aimed to create a safe space for women to explore their self-esteem, learn to meditate, develop skills in self-care, whilst having fun creatively.

Our two kind, generous, and caring participants created these beautiful trees of life which honoured their past & present, whilst identifying their hopes and strengths for the future.

It was a privilege to walk beside these two women and all women who took part. Thank you!



Art Therapist Report

Susan Baxter



2023 - 2024 Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre, led a new art therapy program "Empower Her" – An in-school girls' group on safety funded by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation.
Thank you to my Co-facilitators, Zakhia Beg and Shristi Singh who have played an integral role in the delivery of our program and its success.



We've had great feedback from Doonside Tech High School with requests to return and deliver our program to students more than twice. Our art therapy program focussed on topics such as (Identity, Healthy Relationships, Support Systems, Values, Peer Pressure, and the Tree of Life).

After our Healthy Relationships workshop. The feedback from the schools were that girls had proactive discussions with their peers and teachers explaining the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

This validates our evidence-based art therapy program, which focussed on protective factors, safety, and empowerment; showing that when young people are given the right tools, they can make healthy decisions.



Counselling and Intake Manager

Sumera Naz



I would like to begin my 2023-2024 report by acknowledging the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We have completed another successful year of dedicated service to our community. The center is committed to provide a safe and inclusive space for all women and girls. We work with women of all ages from 16 years and diverse cultural backgrounds, using a holistic approach to support women and girls with the range of issues they may face.

Despite various challenges including limited funding and staffing we have significantly improved our service delivery and networking. As a Manager of counselling and intake, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the BWGHC policies and visions. I am also responsible for providing support, guidance, mentorship to counsellors to help them improve their performance and achieve their career goals while ensuring the clients are receiving the best support.

With the new labor government and NSW additional funding contributed to domestic violence services we provided 12 sessions to clients along with case management. All our counsellors are trained to provide trauma informed and a strength-based approach to providing intensive and long-term support to women who have experienced domestic and family violence, trauma and have complex needs. We have seen an increase in the number of women accessing our services over this year. We supported 953 women who experienced mental ill health, to access opportunities that promote, protect and improve mental health, physical and emotional well-being and recovery to enable a fulfilling life. We have crisis walk in clients experiencing homelessness, fleeing domestic and family violence and who suffer from financial distress.

In the last financial year, we have noticed an increase of women facing significant financial hardship. We provided case management support to 533 women presenting with mental health issues, domestic and family violence, housing, food bank, debt, security upgrades to their existing homes, assisting with victim services, escaping violence payments, material aids, immigration and court. We also provide a safe woman only space, support women's journeys towards employment, volunteering and education. Throughout this year we have reinstated most of our counselling to face to face enabling women to reconnect with their counsellor. At the same time, we have continued with some hybrid options for several sessions enabling accessibility to some women who are no longer living with the perpetrator, have disability. Regardless of the high number of women waiting we have not closed our waiting list.

I have also been a part of Legal Aid NSW DVCAS Safety action meeting every fortnight to prevent and lessen serious threats to the safety of the domestic and family violence victims and their children through targeted information sharing. All members share information to develop tailored safety action plans to reduce threat. We as a team of 8 counsellors and 5 students worked hard to improve wait times, ensuring privacy and providing personalized care. I continue to support staff to look after their wellbeing whilst at work. Offering counselling, training, making sure staff have regular breaks and eat lunch away from their desks. Staff also continue to have free massages at the center, naturopath and doctor. We have achieved much but there remains a lot to be done. With the support of the local community and committed partners we are confident that the upcoming year will bring more success.

Program Manager Shristi Singh



This year marks a significant milestone for me as I celebrate 10 years of employment with Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the honour of serving our community and contributing to the vital mission of ending gender-based violence.

I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to support the organisation in its growth and to help create a better environment for future generations of women. My experience over the years has been enriched by getting to know each of you and working together towards our shared goals of fostering a happy and healthy community. Together, we strive to ensure that women and girls in the Blacktown LGA can live free from violence, enjoy equal rights, and achieve optimal health.

Following my leadership at North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, I am proud to be managing the new DCJ funding received by BWGHC, ensuring that we deliver high-quality services and fulfil our service agreements to better support women and girls affected by domestic, family and sexual violence. We are also fortunate to welcome

Susanna Lee as our Disability Specialist Worker, whose experience and skills will greatly benefit vulnerable women. Our specialist CALD work continues to reach many at-risk minority communities.

I am also thrilled to support BWGHC programs in achieving our mission of delivering the best outcomes for women and girls in the community. I am immensely grateful for the invaluable contributions from Kylie Tarasenko, whose dedication and vision have been instrumental in allowing our programs to flourish. Kylie's unwavering commitment and leadership have enabled us to reach more women than ever before, making a profound impact in their lives. Her ability to inspire and motivate the team is truly commendable, and we are fortunate to have her as a driving force behind our initiatives. Thank you, Kylie, for all that you do!

On programs here at BWGHC, we embody our values of treating community members and colleagues with dignity, compassion, and optimism. I want to thank each of you for exemplifying these values and for making this workplace a truly enjoyable one.



"It's really inspiring and motivating learning new skills and connecting with old and new friends."



I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the local community and stakeholders for their commitment to the mission of Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre. Your support, feedback and active involvement have been crucial in shaping our programs and ensuring their success. Together we are making a meaningful impact and creating a safer and more supportive environment for all. I am pleased to share some highlights below that were designed to meet the growing needs of our community:

New Programs and Initiatives

This year, we focused on expanding our services to address critical issues affecting our community. We have built a stronger partnership with Women's Health NSW, which has been instrumental in leading

important projects such as the Non-Fatal Strangulation/ Traumatic Brain Injury, as well as the Bowel Cancer Screening project in Blacktown. These efforts have significantly enhanced awareness and increased resources available for individuals affected by domestic, family and sexual violence.

Additionally, it has been incredibly rewarding to contribute to the development of best practice standards for practitioners in the sector working with domestic, family and sexual violence. This initiative aims to ensure that all clients receive the highest quality of care and support.

Funding Success

We are thrilled to report our success in securing multiple Community Builders Grants. These funds have allowed us to undertake renovations to create additional space at the centre. We are now able to provide enhanced services, including a new counselling area and increased storage for emergency goods. Furthermore, we successfully acquired funding for an additional vehicle, which will directly improve our outreach and service delivery.

Partnerships and Workshops

A key highlight of the year was our successful partnership with the Alcohol Drug Foundation, through which we ran Safety First workshops for high school girls in the community. These workshops aimed to equip young women with vital knowledge and skills for their safety and well-being.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Doonside Technology High School, Blacktown Girls High School and Evans High School for their commitment to improving the lives of women and girls in our community, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Their support and engagement have been invaluable in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.



Massage Therapists

Nawal Challita & Joanna Francis



Massage Therapy



Hi my name is Nawal, I started working here in the clinic since January 2023 and what a lovely experience it's been so far working with a bunch of strong and amazing women.

I have been in the Massage industry since 2018. Here in the clinic I specialise in Swedish massage every Tuesday from 9.30am till 4.30pm.

Many women say that after their massage they feel more relaxed and calmer. It a safe and nurturing place for women to refocus and find clarity. Massage can lower stress levels and feelings of anxiety. It can improve mood and relaxation while increasing confidence and self-image.

I can't believe how quickly this year flew past, but still can't wait for another exciting year!

Would also like to thank Kylie and Jhan for having me on board.

Nawal Challita



Hi my name is Joanna, I'm one of the massage therapists at BWGHC. I have worked at the Centre since April 2022, but have been friends with BWGHC for many years prior.

In doing my job, I have felt the passion and self-fulfilment of knowing that my clients have felt much better physically and emotionally after their massage sessions. I also enjoy working together with some wonderful counsellors, a nutritionist and other professional colleagues at the Centre.

I think I am lucky to be able to work in this happy environment and thank BWGHC for the warm memories I have made over the years.

Joe Ten (Joanna) Francis.



Naturopath and Nutritionist Report

Katrina Dordevic



Naturopathy / Nutrition Clinic



Naturopathy is an evidence-based system of health care that empowers clients to make healthier choices and provide improvements with their health and well-being.

The Naturopathic & Nutrition clinic compliments the many other services in the centre and can support many aspects of women's lives, which are impacting on their health and wellbeing.

Clients may also be referred to counselling, case work, Family Planning Women's Health Dr and Nurse, external GP, massage therapy, group work, physical therapies such as gentle exercise and art therapy groups.

Presenting issues in the Naturopathic clinic:

- * Stress, anxiety, low mood, loneliness and social isolation
- * Trauma / PTSD; this is a significant acute and chronic issue for many clients
- * Insomnia and sleep issues
- * Chronic illness management; ie. diabetes, cardiovascular disease
- * Chronic pain including; arthritis, chronic pain following injury or accident
- * Gastrointestinal issues; often present in people with stress, anxiety, depression
- * Assorted hormonal issues; thyroid, reproductive
- * Nutrition support; women wanting support to make healthier lifestyle and food choices.
- * Food insecurity and lack of resources

Health & Wellbeing Groups

Living Mindfully

Living Mindfully was run over 2 weeks and discussed many topics including; stress and stress reduction techniques, mindfulness, healthy eating to support good mental health, benefits of exercise and self-care.

Group participants reported feeling like they had more tools to assist with stress and mental health. Many have gone on to include more self-care and mindfulness strategies as part of their lives.

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Healthy Eating on a budget ran over 3 weeks and was developed to assist clients with improving eating patterns and food insecurity. The group was very engaging with lots of encouragement and positive support between the group participants.

The group discussed many topics from shopping, budgeting, eating well, seasonal eating, reducing food waste, meal planning and lots more.

Group participants reported feeling more aware of their current shopping and eating habits and very happily reported each week changes and improvements they made to their shopping and eating patterns.

Katrina Dordevic

Students and Volunteers at the Centre



Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health centre acknowledges the commitment and dedication shown by our students and volunteers. We really appreciate their support and assistance during their time at the centre.

Thank you so much for all your hard work and help!

THANK YOU, to VOLUNTEER

* **Lorraine Robertson**



Lorraine, Our Walking Group Volunteer

Students from Institutions:

- * Australian College of Applied Psychology
- * Open Training Education Network
- * TAFE Western Sydney Institute
- * Western Sydney University



"BWGHC provides a safe space to be open and honest about life situations".

***Community Member**

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre has offered women and children, Creative Art Therapy groups, both at our Centre and in High Schools. Our Mindfulness Art Therapy 8-week group program and our new Empower Her – girls' Art Therapy Group, focus on safety, they were delivered in two different Schools, Doonside High School and Blacktown Girls' High School and these wonderful programs were funded by the Alcohol and Drug Foundation and we'd like to thank them, as this enables our continuing work, with our Blacktown Local Drug Action Team.

We would like to thank our following key partners:



A big thank you to all of our sponsors, we don't know what we would do without your generosity in supporting Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre, it is very much appreciated.



*Thank you to Mr Rod Cullen at Landa Toyota
For your generous and ongoing donations.*



*Thank you Olivia and co-worker from Mecure Blacktown for your donations –
with Kylie Tarasenko.*



We're very grateful for the Food Donations we receive from community organisations

We would like to thank our following key partners:



- MOU with **Women's Health NSW** to manage the Women's Health Database.
- MOU with **the Western Women's Health Consortium** including sister centres **Penrith Women's Health Centre, Bathurst Women's Health Centre, Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre, Cumberland Women's Health Centre and Liverpool Women's Health Centre.**
- MOU with **Family Planning NSW** to provide Doctor and Nurses clinics in-centre.
- MOU with **Women's Legal Services NSW** who provide a Legal clinic for women and girls, focusing on family court matters specifically, including domestic family and intimate partner violence.
- Service Agreement with the **Indigenous Women's Legal program** to provide an outreach worker to specifically service Indigenous women from the local area needing legal advice and referral.
- Service Agreement with the **Western Sydney Local Health District Early Childhood Nurses (Doonside Community Health Centre)** who provide an Early Childhood Clinic.
- Service Agreement with the **Australian Breastfeeding Association Blacktown Branch**, which meets at the Centre.
- A relationship with the **National Share the Dignity Organisation** providing a collection of donated sanitary and continence products for distribution to women and girls who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



Self Defence Class facilitated by A.J.S. Self Defence

- Agreement with **Oz Harvest** and **Foodbank** to provide fresh fruit, vegetables and other items as they become available, for collection by our disadvantaged clients.
- A Service Agreement with **the African Women's Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO)** who meet at our Centre to hold regular health promotion forums for women.
- A relationship with **Nova Disability Employment** providing a transition to work traineeship at the Centre to provide employment to women and girls.



Oz Harvest Food Donations



Self Defense Workshop Group



BWGHC Clients attending our Senior's Week event enjoyed a lovely cake



Artwork from our Art Therapist Jen's, Mindful Art Therapy Group

Connecting with Our Community



Community events provide a valuable opportunity for BWGHC to educate and raise public awareness of health issues, and advocate for women's interests in the community.

Participating in local community events also helps BWGHC gain insight into local issues, respond to local needs and develop and strengthen our interagency partnerships.

The following is a list of some of the community and interagency events that BWGHC participated in during this financial year:

- 100 Jobs in 100 Days – NOVA Employment
- Blacktown City Council Women's Forum
- Blacktown Domestic Violence Forum (BDVF)
- Blacktown Domestic Violence Leadership Group
- Blacktown Multicultural Abuse Forum
- Blacktown Workers Club – Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Breakfast
- BWGHC, NWS and NBM WDVAS AGM
- Coercive control Forum
- Collaborating Effectively
- Commonwealth Bank – Donation presentation
- Dress for Success Event
- DV Awareness Lunch – Blacktown Workers' Club
- Hawkesbury Suicide Awareness Event
- Inner Wheel – Donation presentation
- International Women's Day Breakfast with service providers and Blacktown City Council
- Knit Bomb-Domestic and Family Violence Event
- Linker Network – Blacktown
- Lions Club Donation
- NAIDOC Doonside
- NOVA Employment functions
- R U OK? Doonside High School
- Saying Yes to the Vote
- Wellness Conference (AWHASO) – Presentation
- Western Sydney Awards for Business Excellence (WASABI)
- Winter Solstice/ Shine a light on Suicide Prevention
- Women's Health Week
- Women's Legal Service



Evans High School Workshop with Family Planning NSW



1800 Respect - Domestic and Family Violence Presentation with Jhan Leach and the Minister for Social Services Australia-Amanda Rishworth and the Blacktown City Council

Donations from Individuals, Organisations and Sponsors



We are thankfully indebted to our Major Donors and Sponsors:

- Blacktown Lifestyle Group
- Commonwealth Bank
- Lander Toyota Blacktown
- Storage King Blacktown
- Blacktown Lions Club
- Alcohol and Drug Foundation

Grateful thanks to our generous donors, including those who have made private and anonymous donations of goods and services:

- Blacktown Area Community Centre
- Blacktown Lifestyle Group
- Baked and Co.
- Bunnings Blacktown Superstore
- Unilever
- Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- Costco Marsden park
- Foodbank
- Inner Wheel
- Ikea Marsden Park
- Oz Harvest
- Share the Dignity NSW/ACT
- Zonta Club of Cumberland West

... And many others who have given donations large and small to assist the clients of the Centre

"Excellent courses/classes - very professionally run".

***Community Member**

BWGHC would like to thank **the Blacktown Lifestyle Group** and other clubs participating in the **Blacktown City ClubGRANTS** for awarding BWGHC with a 2023-2024 ClubGRANT.

BWGHC would also like to thank all our partners and donors for their support in our ability to provide professional, affordable and holistic services to women in a safe environment with an emphasis on promoting health, wellbeing and empowerment our vision throughout the year.

These services have partnered with BWGHC to deliver important services and to engage in joint fundraising activities to benefit local women and girls.



Thank you to our Lion Club Members who organised a food drive for our families.



Jhan Leach receiving the Australian Women's Small Business Champion Award in 2023



Jhan Leach speaking at the Western Sydney Zoo Glow Event for Families who have experienced Domestic and Family Violence



Jhan Leach, Kylie Tarasenko & Olayide Ogunsiji receiving the "Most Inclusive Employer" award at the Blacktown City Local Business Awards 2023

Funders and Other Partners



Thank you to all our partners and funders for your collaboration and support during the financial year 2023-2024

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre is a member of Women's Health NSW. We are primarily funded by

NSW Ministry of Health and Legal Aid NSW.





BWGHC loves to work co-operatively with individuals, other organisations and agencies to improve the services we offer our clients. Together, we make a community of support! With thanks:

- ACT for Kids
- Acute Care Mental Health Team (Blacktown Hospital)
- Alice's Cottages
- Blacktown Area Community Centres (BACC)
- Blacktown City Council
- Blacktown Friendship Centre
- Blacktown Hospital Women's Health Clinic
- Blacktown Hospital Social Work Department
- Blacktown North Public School
- Blacktown Police LAC and DVLOs
- Blacktown Pride in Diversity Network
- Bonnies Support Services (Refuge)
- Brighter Futures Blacktown/Baulkham Hills
- CALD Women's Health Groups (NSW Department of Health)
- Catholic Care Social Services
- Charmian Clift Cottages
- Community Resource Network (CRN) Inc
- Domestic Violence Services NSW
- Doonside Community Health team
- DV Safe Phones
- Family Planning NSW
- Family Referral Service
- Harman Foundation
- Headspace
- Hon Stephen Bali MP
- Hon Michelle Rowland MP
- Horizon Family Law Centre
- Immigrant Women's Speakout
- Junaya Family Development Services
- LGBTI Health Alliance
- Mackillop Family Services
- Marist Youth Services
- Mission Australia
- Ngroo Aboriginal Education Corporation
- Nova Employment
- Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
- NSW Department of Health
- NSW Department of Juvenile Justice
- NSW Refugee Health
- Odyssey House NSW
- Outer Western Domestic Violence Network
- PACS Blacktown Adolescent and Family Counselling
- Police Citizens Youth Clubs
- Quakers Hill Police LAC and DVLOs
- Relationships Australia
- Rosie's Place (women's refuge)
- Safe Relationships Project
- Safe Space Blacktown
- Salvation Army
- Share the Dignity (NSW/ACT)
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Staying Home Leaving Violence (the WASH House)
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- TAFE NSW
- The Australian College of Applied Psychology
- The University of Sydney
- The Western Sydney University
- Transcultural Mental Health team
- Tri-Community Exchange
- Wesley Mission
- West Connect Domestic Violence Services (women's refuges)
- Western Sydney Community Legal Centre
- Women's Cottage
- Women's Legal Services NSW
- Zonta Club of Cumberland West

"Calmness, acceptance; centre is full of activities for my wellbeing and mental health".

***Community Member**



Blacktown Women and Girls Health Inc

ABN 98 059 698 895

Financial Statements - For the Year Ended 30 June 2024

Detailed Profit or Loss Statement

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income

For the year ended 30 June 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
Revenue	6,473,150	5,130,659
Other Income	122,280	30,490
Total revenue	6,595,430	5,161,149
Employee benefit expenses	(4,743,136)	(3,496,657)
Administrative expenses	(384,394)	(384,400)
Occupancy costs	(5,482)	(24,102)
Depreciation expenses	(3,652)	(4,912)
Other expenses	(1,086,499)	(823,683)
Total expenses	(6,223,163)	(4,733,754)
Surplus / (deficit) before income tax	372,267	427,395
Income tax	-	-
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	372,267	427,395
Total comprehensive income for the year	372,267	427,395





Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. Annual Report for the 2023/2024 Financial Year

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. (BWGHC) is a Public Benevolent Institution with DGR Status. Donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible

BWGHC is funded by NSW Health, administered by Western Sydney Local Health District and Legal Aid NSW.

Our Peak Body is Women's Health NSW.

BWGHC is accredited at Certificate Level of the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES)

We are accountable to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) and NSW Fair Trading. The Centre holds NSW Authority to fundraise: CFN/23808.

Contact Us:

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E: info@womensandgirls.org.au

W: www.womensandgirls.org.au

 BWGHC is on Facebook

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NOTES

^{1&3}Keynan, M., Hossain, M., & Hughes, R. 2013, *Blacktown LGA Community Health Needs Assessment Project Report*, Western Sydney Local Health District, Sydney.

².id, the population experts, 2019, 'Community Profile: Blacktown City', compiled from 2011 and 2023 Census Data.

*Names changed to protect client privacy. Client comments from BWGHC Client Surveys 2023/2024 FY.