

Cumberland  
**WOMEN'S  
HEALTH**  
Centre

*Years*

2022-2023  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



*We acknowledge that we work on stolen Aboriginal land and that sovereignty was never ceded.*

*We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that our efforts towards inclusivity and solidarity must be ongoing and always evolving.*



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# ABOUT CUMBERLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE



## ***Together We Bloom***

Cumberland Women's Health Centre is a non-profit community based organisation that began thirty years ago. We provide women's health services and domestic violence specialist response services to all women regardless of age, gender or income. We are here to help you.

## ***Our Mission***

CWHC is committed to providing professional, affordable and holistic gender informed services that promote the health, wellbeing and empowerment of women in the local areas of Cumberland, Parramatta, Auburn and The Hills.

We recognise that women's health encompasses the physical, spiritual, environmental, emotional and social wellbeing of women. Our goal is to work collaboratively, within a feminist, trauma-informed framework, with women and the rest of the community in order to create stability and empower women to initiate positive change within their lives.

## ***Our Values***

empowerment collaboration  
respect support  
diversity

## ***Service Principles***

- We are a community based, NGO run by women, for women
- We work within a feminist, trauma-informed framework
- We target our services to meet the diverse and changing needs of disadvantaged women and their children in the local community
- We are open to all women, regardless of ethnicity, sexuality, income, disability and class.
- We strive to work in partnerships with our other agencies in working together to achieve positive health outcomes for women
- We deliver an integrated approach to planning and service delivery
- We seek to strengthen the capacity of women and the community
- We are committed to ethical best practice

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR



The year that has passed has been marked by creativity, empowerment, and resilience, as we embarked on a journey of self-expression and community support.

One of our most remarkable endeavours this year was the "Writing your Voice" project, where we provided a platform for women to craft powerful poems that resonate with their experiences and emotions. These poetic expressions have culminated in the creation of the inspiring anthology, *"Apples: An Unapologetic Anthology from the Core."* This book not only showcases the depth of talent within our community but also serves as a testament to the strength and resilience of the women we serve.

In addition to our literary achievements, we also ventured into the world of culinary arts with the creation of *"Huddles in the Kitchen."* This truly inspiring cookbook not only features cherished recipes but also shares the heartwarming stories of migration and family that are intertwined with these dishes. It is a celebration of culture, tradition, and the power of sharing through food.

Both *"Apples"* and *"Huddles in the Kitchen"* are testaments to the creativity, diversity, and unity of our community, and we are thrilled to showcase them tonight.

Furthermore, we have continued our commitment to supporting women in our community through the extension of the *"Take the Lead"* project under the Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children. This extension allowed us to run our employment boost programs, providing women with nationally recognized training and employment support. Collaborating closely with our consortium partners, Boronia Multicultural Society and Parramatta Council, we have made significant strides in empowering women to take control of their futures.

This past year has been a massive one for us, and we are showing no signs of slowing down. With changes to local government areas, we are excited about the prospect of expanding our reach and support to even more women in need.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners who have made these accomplishments possible. Together, we have made a profound impact on the lives of countless women in our community.

**Michele Anderson**

Chairperson

# MANAGER'S STATEMENT



Welcome to the Cumberland Women's Health Centre's (CWHC) Annual Report for the financial year 2022-2023. This past year has been a witness to our unwavering commitment to the development, implementation, and maintenance of services that resonate with the ever-changing needs of our beloved community. We have consistently sought input and feedback from our valued members, community leaders, and influencers to ensure that our services are relevant and responsive to our clients.

Despite the challenges we face every day as a community service organization, we have found inspiration in the remarkable resilience and collaborative spirit demonstrated by our local councils, community organizations, and dedicated community members. Together, we have worked tirelessly to improve our community and provide vital support to those who require it most.

As we look ahead towards the coming year, the Cumberland Women's Health Centre stands firm in its commitment to address the diverse needs of our community. We are eager to build upon the valuable lessons learned during the past years and continue adapting our services to meet the evolving challenges that lie ahead. With your devoted support and the strength of our community partnerships, we are confident in our ability to provide essential support and opportunities to the women and families in Cumberland, Parramatta, Hills, and the surrounding area.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners. Their unwavering commitment to our mission has been the cornerstone of our success this past year. Together, we will continue to make a profound and lasting impact on the lives of women and families in Cumberland, Parramatta, Hills, and the surrounding areas.

On behalf of the management team and the entire Cumberland Women's Health Centre, I wish to express our profound appreciation to all those who have supported our mission and contributed to our successes in the past year. Your dedication and partnership have been invaluable in our collective efforts to make a positive difference in our community.

**Salwa Albaz**  
Manager

# NSW WOMEN'S HEALTH FRAMEWORK

While Cumberland Women's Health Centre strives to provide services that provide a localised response, the strategic direction is informed by the NSW Women's health priorities and in line with the current NSW Women's Health framework 2019 and strategy. With this in mind, we develop a specialised approach to services and programs to meet particular needs of women throughout every stage of their life and adapt them to suit the needs of the local community. Programming for the 22-23 year has considered the core state health priorities, which remain heavily focused on Women and reducing the long term effects and impact of Domestic and Family Violence as evident in the numerous strategies within the framework providing safety and support. Prevention and early intervention is the key value of all Cumberland Women's Health Centre service delivery.

**Purpose:** To deliver services and foster environments in NSW to help women to meet their physical, emotional, social and economic potential by increasing opportunities for women and girls to experience better health and wellbeing at every stage of their lives.

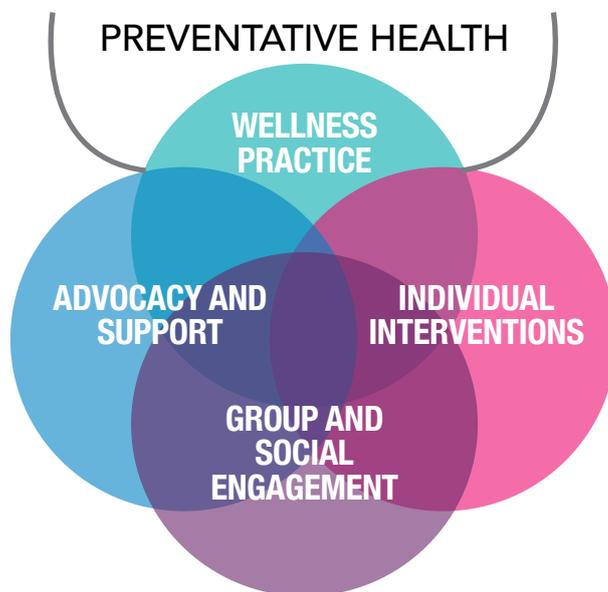
**Scope:** This framework applies across the NSW Health System and across the intersections with the broader health and wellbeing system including private sector organisations, not-for-profit organisations, and other government agencies. It recognises and provides an overarching perspective and principles to combine and apply the wide range of frameworks, strategies, policies, and plans that seek to improve or affect the health and wellbeing of women and girls.

## Goals and Strategies:

GOALS - ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NSW HAVE...					
Healthy Relationships	Healthy Minds	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy Bodies	Safety and Support	Integrating Care
STRATEGIES - ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS IN NSW ARE...					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Informed</i> about healthier relationships</li> <li><i>Empowered</i> to make healthier choices</li> <li><i>Engaged</i> with families, peers and communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Supported</i> to build resilience</li> <li><i>Supported</i> through major life changes</li> <li><i>Empowered</i> to feel more confident and comfortable with their bodies</li> <li><i>Informed</i> about mental health and wellbeing and support services</li> <li><i>Supported</i> by appropriate mental health and wellbeing services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Informed</i> and able to access high quality health and wellbeing information</li> <li><i>Empowered</i> and supported to make healthier choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Supported</i> to have better reproductive and sexual health</li> <li><i>Provided</i> with access to contraception and maternal support</li> <li><i>Engaged</i> in prevention and early intervention to reduce illness</li> <li><i>Supported</i> to prevent or manage chronic illnesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Protected</i> and helped to recover from violence and the effects of trauma</li> <li><i>Able to access</i> sensitive and approachable services</li> <li><i>Supported</i> with caring responsibilities</li> <li><i>Informed</i>, confident and safe using technology</li> <li><i>Able to access</i> stable housing, adequate financial resources and other support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Able to access</i> services in a convenient time and place</li> <li><i>Able to access</i> services and information that they can understand and that understand them</li> <li><i>Able to access</i> services that are safe and trauma informed</li> <li><i>Engaged</i> with health and wellbeing services</li> </ul>

# OUR SERVICE DESIGN

Preventive health activities are those that are designed to reduce the likelihood that something harmful to health will occur; or to minimise that harm if it does occur (National Public Health Partnership, 2006). It focuses on those health problems which are known to be amenable to intervention; and requires the identification of modifiable risk and protective factors, and the implementation of strategies to eliminate or reduce risk factors and maximise and increase protective.



At Cumberland Women's Health Centre we strive to adopt a holistic and person-centred approach to service delivery. We understand that not all interventions are going to be effective for all women all of the time and recovery is rarely a linear process nor a cycle.

*Our service design allows for a customised approach, not only with each client, but with each and every engagement at any point in the clients journey.*

Additionally, keeping wellness practices at the top of each engagement provides a soft entry point for all of our clients, many whom may never have engaged with any services before and may not be able to identify what support they need. This element is also critical for sustainable client engagement as it means that even when a woman may have completed a full therapeutic intervention, through recovery and back to wellness, this model ensures every woman can continue to engage with the centre for years to come and always feel they belong and continue to ensure positive long term health outcomes.

# SERVICES

## CUMBERLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

### **Information and Referral**

This service is usually the first engagement point for many vulnerable women who often have never have engaged in any service support previously. Clients are welcomed through our easy to use online self-referral portal and professional referrals are always quick to access through our new website.

Support approaches can include:

- Housing Advocacy
- Domestic and Family Violence awareness counselling and support
- Depression and Anxiety counselling and support
- Preventative Health and wellbeing referrals
- Community and social Isolation

### **Women Who Have Experienced Violence**

With more than 1 in 3 women experiencing violence in their lifetime this is the core focus of the Cumberland Women's Health Centre service model. Women can be referred by a professional but can also self-refer at any time and on multiple occasions if needed.

Support and interventions provided include:

- Case Coordination
- Case Management and Advocacy Counselling
- Domestic and Family Violence support group Information about rights
- Court Support
- Trauma informed groups and workshops

### **General Counselling**

Women experiencing anxiety, depression, historical trauma and other situational mental health stressor can access one on one counselling and support through Cumberland Women's Health centre easily by self-referring via the online portal. The General Counselling service is available to clients as face-to-face appointments, over the phone or video conferencing.

### **Victim Services Counselling**

Women who have been a victim of violence have access to Cumberland Women's Health Centre's Victim Services Counsellor. Women approved under the Support for Primary Victims scheme have access to 22 hours of free counselling and support. This service is available remotely and appointments are conducted over the phone or video conferencing.

# CWHS SERVICE SNAPSHOT

## EXCEEDING TARGETS IN THE PAST YEAR

We are thrilled to share the outstanding achievements of our organization over the past year in delivering essential services to our community. Despite the challenges we faced, we not only met but exceeded our targets in multiple key areas, ensuring that we continue to provide valuable support to those in need. Here's a snapshot of our accomplishments:

**Counseling and DV Counseling:** We provided an impressive total of 548 counseling sessions, surpassing our target of 320. Our dedicated team went the extra mile to offer vital emotional and mental support to our clients, ensuring they received the help they deserved.

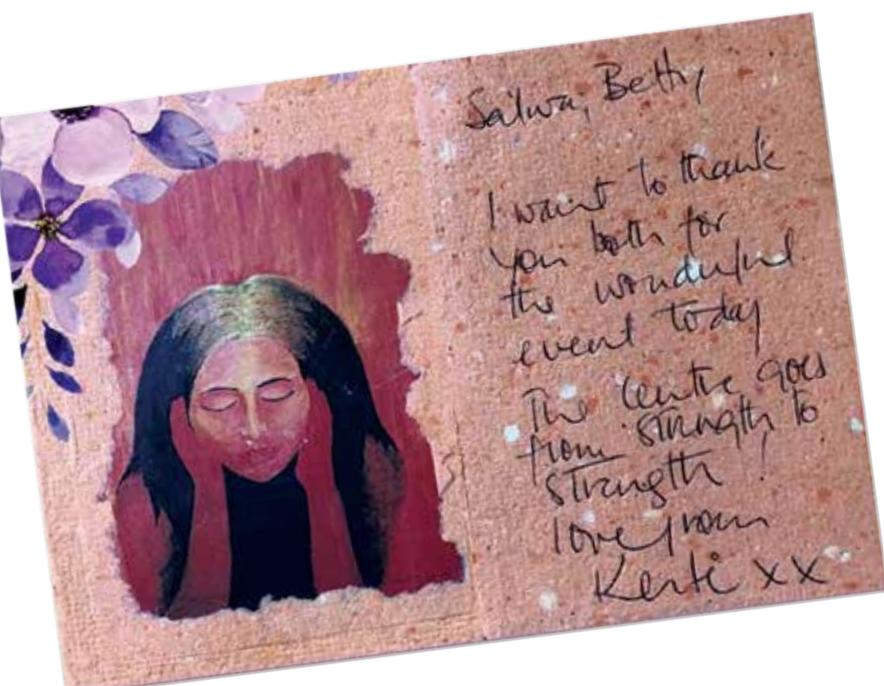
**Case Management:** Our case management services also exceeded expectations with 358 sessions, well above our target of 280. These sessions played a crucial role in assisting clients in navigating complex situations and accessing essential resources.

**Early Intervention Groups:** We hosted 12 sessions of early intervention groups, surpassing our target of 10. These groups were instrumental in preventing potential crises and building resilience within our community.

**Massage Therapy:** We achieved our target by providing 50 massage therapy appointments. These appointments contributed to promoting physical well-being and relaxation among our clients, helping them maintain their health and vitality.

**Community Health Promotion Events:** We successfully organized 14 events focused on community health promotion, exceeding our target of 10. These events were vital in educating our community members about making informed choices and prioritizing their health.

**Early Intervention Programs for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Communities:** Our organization conducted 14 specialized early intervention sessions tailored to the unique needs of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander communities, exceeding our target of 10. This culturally sensitive approach ensured that these crucial services reached those who needed them most.



These remarkable accomplishments underscore our commitment to meeting and exceeding the needs of our community. We are deeply grateful for the trust and support of our community members, and we pledge to continue delivering exceptional services that make a positive impact on their lives. Looking ahead, we are excited to build upon these achievements and further strengthen our commitment to improving the well-being of all those we serve.

# CWHS SERVICE SNAPSHOT

## EXCEEDING TARGETS IN THE PAST YEAR

### **Therapeutic Groups and Workshops**

Group programming is an essential and ongoing part of the work of Cumberland Women's Health Centre. Group work allows clients to explore their challenges with the support and learnings of others with common needs and goals, an important part to recovery. This modality also provides a platform for safe and supported social interactions, some who have no other social networks at all.

The groups and events held for the 2022-2023 period include:

- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Health Gathering
- Aqua Aerobics
- Bills Assist
- Certificate III in Community Services
- Construction Zone
- Cooking Culturally
- Employment Boost – Retail Ready
- Girls Talk
- Healing Through Word
- Healthy Relationships
- Legal Aid
- New Beginnings
- Race to Safety: Parramatta Cumberland Family & Domestic Violence Prevention Committee
- Recognise and Respond Training: Domestic and Family Violence in my Community
- Resilient Relationships
- Sing & Learn
- Wellness Day
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Group
- Writing Your Voice
- Yoga
- Zumba



**“Therapy is a way to connect with your inner wisdom and to find your own path to healing”**

Hubert H. Humphrey

# CWHS SERVICE SNAPSHOT

## EXCEEDING TARGETS IN THE PAST YEAR

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Health

Aboriginal women, both on country and visiting have always had a strong affiliation with Cumberland Women's Health Centre. Throughout the 22-23 year we have provided the platform Women's Gatherings for those that identify as First Nations Australians. These events give the opportunity to meet with other local women, reducing social isolation and keeping culture alive in the Parramatta and Cumberland districts. The groups also provide a soft entry for service delivery. This year the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Health Group has merged with the Women's Health and Wellbeing Group following feedback provided by group participants. The merger has allowed for the expansion of both groups where women have come together to share and to learn from each other.



### Trauma Informed Yoga

This trauma informed class is specialised form of yoga that creates a safe space for women to be present and find a sense of grounding. This can help women to connect with their bodies and minds by focusing on their breathing and how their body is feeling after trauma in a way that feels safe and supported.



# CWHS SERVICE SNAPSHOT

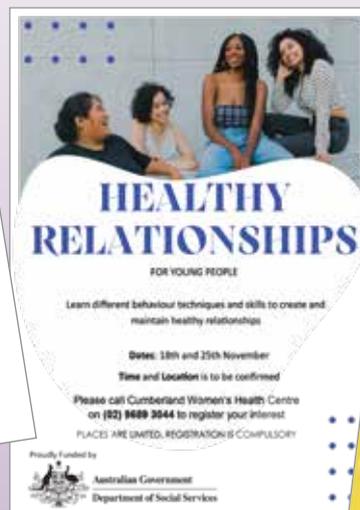
## EXCEEDING TARGETS IN THE PAST YEAR

### Women's Health and Wellbeing Group

This essential group has been running for the past 7 years at Cumberland Women's Health Centre and due to its success it continues to be active with new members participating each and every month, engaging an average of 15-20 participants each session. The Women's Health and Wellbeing Group is an open group that provides an important space for women to come together and engage in the sharing of stories and life experiences. In addition to the social aspect, the Group allows for the facilitation of learning for the women on topics that are relevant to their everyday lives. This year the facilitator covered topics such as effects of negative self talk on mental health, the power manifesting positive thought and setting intentions, importance of nutrition and impact it has on a person's physical and mental health.

### Bills Assist

We have continued to partner with Christian Community Aid to provide financial support and stability to those Women in crisis who access our services. Women receive emergency access to food vouchers, travel vouchers and support and advocacy with household bills.



# GROUP SPOTLIGHT

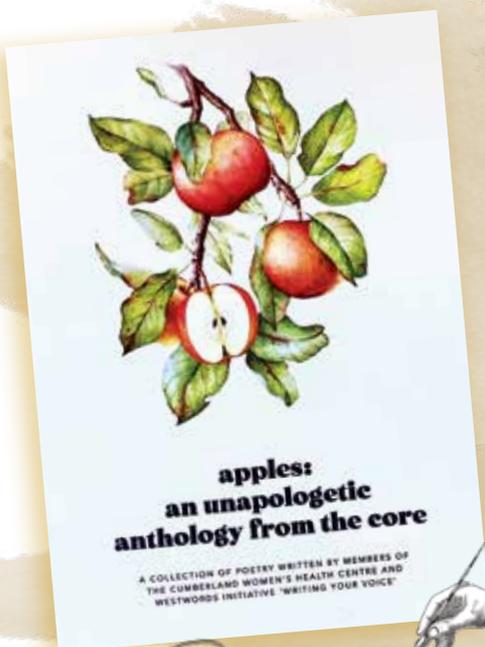
## WRITING YOUR VOICE

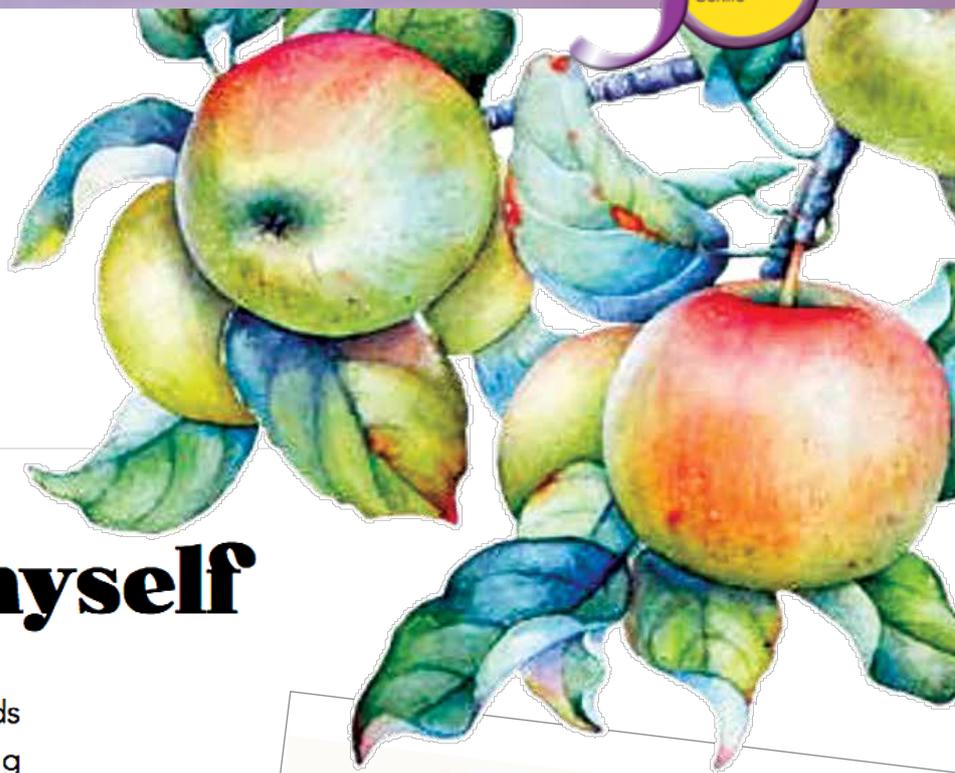
*Writing Your Voice* was a highly successful project delivered in collaboration with WestWords, funded by Parramatta Leagues Club through the Parramatta ClubGRANTS scheme. The project used the transformational power of poetry to make visible women's responses to hardship, including gender-based violence. The project brought women of varied ages and backgrounds together to share untold stories and healing journeys through creative mediums. Many of the participants had not previously engaged with support services and reported that the creative nature of the program was more accessible.

Narrative Practice, Art Therapy and Bibliotherapy are well-established therapeutic models used to facilitate solidarity and healing. By honing the craft of storytelling through poetry, participants gained new modes of self-expression - reducing nervousness, depressive symptoms and improving self-esteem.

This culminated in the professional publication of an anthology of poetry written throughout the project. Participants collaborated to title the collection *Apples: An Unapologetic Anthology From The Core*. The unusual title is a nod to the spirit of collaboration women created throughout the program, baring witness to each other's' stories and skills. The group used the code-word 'Apples' when a member was engaging in self-criticism or doubt. This offered a creative way to interrupt the effects of criticism and fear, which often work to silence women and stifle creativity.

*Apples: An Unapologetic Anthology From The Core* is a highly emotive collection reflecting the effects of abuse and women's stories of resistance. The poems are a testament to the diverse skills of the women involved in the program, who hope their words continue to resonate long after the page has been turned.





VILASINI SHANMUGAM

## hunt for myself

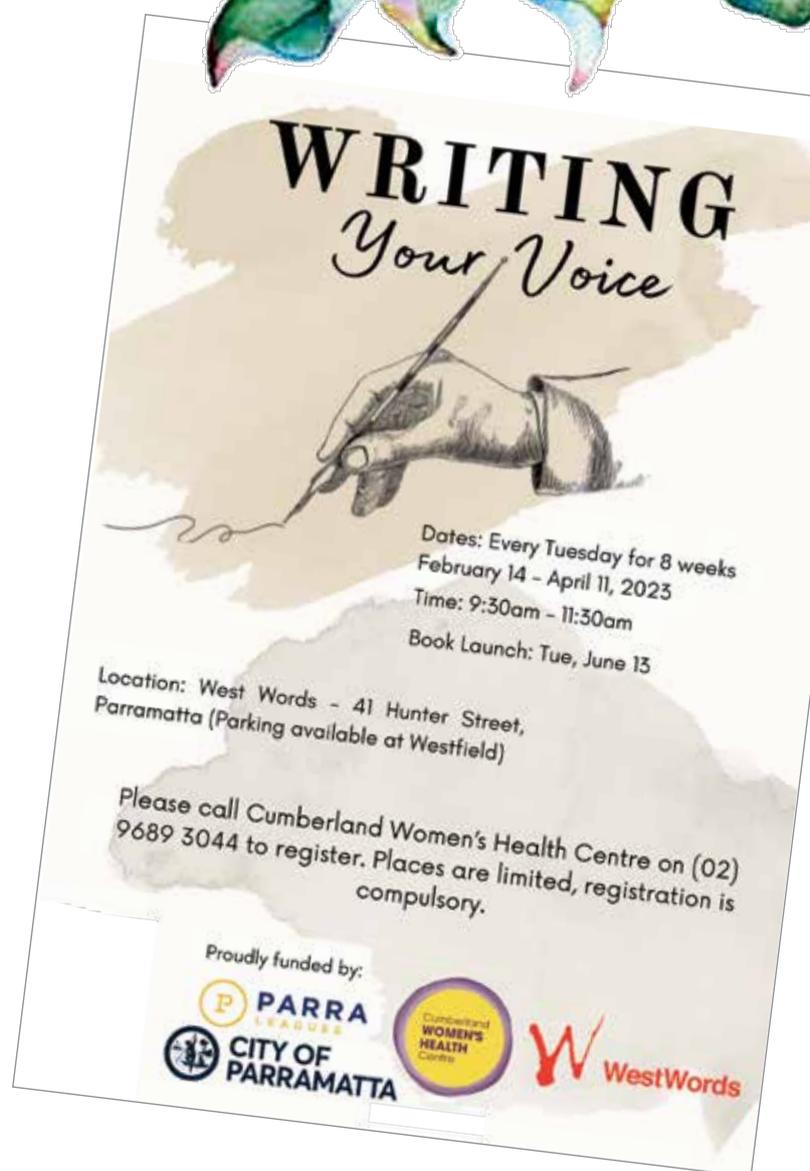
I was a little child, spreading hands wider to cuddle the world. Jingling like a bell, cheerfully blushing like a daffodil in the morning. Overflowing with quest and enthusiasm.

Becoming a Girl, gradually shadowed the child in me. Shrunk my world of desires. Escalated my inhibitions and fears, engulfed me with myriad confusions.

Blooming as a woman, family fences were raised against me. Doors of my dreams were slammed. Like the hands of a clock, pointlessly, I kept running, ignoring my emotions and passions.

I was celebrated as a daughter, a wife and a mother, but never as My Self.

Now I set to hunt for:  
 Who am I?  
 What belongs to me?



**WRITING**  
*Your Voice*



Dates: Every Tuesday for 8 weeks  
 February 14 - April 11, 2023  
 Time: 9:30am - 11:30am  
 Book Launch: Tue, June 13

Location: West Words - 41 Hunter Street,  
 Parramatta (Parking available at Westfield)

Please call Cumberland Women's Health Centre on (02)  
 9689 3044 to register. Places are limited, registration is compulsory.

Proudly funded by:

 **PARRA**  
 LEAGUE

 **CITY OF**  
 PARRAMATTA

 **Cumberland**  
 WOMEN'S  
 HEALTH  
 Centre

 **WestWords**

# GROUP SPOTLIGHT

## CERTIFICATE III COURSE



The Accredited Community Service course, a collaborative effort between Cumberland Women's Health Centre and TAFE, has been a remarkable success story in empowering women and enhancing their prospects for employment and personal growth. Funded through the Department of Social Services, this nationally accredited Certificate 3 program has made a significant impact over the past two years.

An astounding 98% of course participants successfully completed the program, demonstrating not only their dedication but also the effectiveness of the course. What's even more impressive is that 87% of these graduates have chosen to continue their educational journey or have entered the workforce, a testament to the life-changing opportunities this initiative has provided.

By offering nationally accredited training, this program has not only equipped women with essential skills but also instilled in them a sense of confidence and independence. It's not just about education; it's about women reclaiming their lives and seizing new opportunities. The additional support provided by the Centre has ensured that participants receive the holistic assistance they need to thrive in their chosen paths. The success of this program is a beacon of hope and empowerment, illustrating the positive impact of collaboration, education, and community support.



# GROUP SPOTLIGHT

## COOKING CULTURALLY

The Cooking Culturally program was presented by Cumberland Women's Health Centre during 2023, and was funded by Cumberland City Council. This program consisted of two parts: a narrative therapy part of six 1.5 hour sessions; and a cooking part of six 1.5 hour sessions. During the narrative therapy part of the program, the women from various cultures were interviewed about their cultural cuisines and a personal story of interest that they chose to share with the group. The interviews stimulated a lot of lively discussions. The women often resonated with similarities across cultures despite their linguistic differences, and were respectfully intrigued by their diversity. Appreciation and positive feedback to the women who presented their stories and their cooked dishes occurred continually throughout the program.

The stories that emerged from the narrative therapy sessions were first written in a documentary style and will be featured on the Cumberland Women's Health Website 2023-2024. Based on elements from these stories, tales were formulated for the book: *Huddles in the Kitchen*.

The cooking part of the program featured the women who presented their stories, cooking their chosen cultural dish for the rest of the participants to enjoy. Photographs and recipes for these cooked dishes are important features in the book: *Huddles in the Kitchen*.

The Cooking Culturally program was an opportunity for the women to: share and affirm their own cultural traditions; develop their social skills and form friendships; build their self-esteem; and contribute to their mental and emotional well-being. Everyone who had participated in this program had learnt about the culture, cuisine, and lives of others, and thus had expanded their horizons of knowledge and experience. Overall it was a very validating experience for all who attended.



# GROUP SPOTLIGHT

## NEW BEGINNINGS

**TERM 3: 28th July – 15th September 2022**

**TERM 4: 20th October – 24th November**

**TERM 1: 23rd February – 30th March 2023**

Cumberland Women's Health Centre facilitated the New Beginnings Domestic Violence Support Group for Term 3, Term 4 of 2022, and Term 1 of 2023. The group was designed for women who are or have experienced domestic and family violence in their lives.

The New Beginnings Domestic Violence group had several objectives. Primarily, the focus is on providing psychoeducation to women on the dynamics and impact of domestic and family violence and teaching women new skills. The group provided a safe, welcoming space for women to express their feelings, work through their grief and loss symptoms, and better understand their domestic violence experiences. Furthermore, the women were able to connect with others in similar situations and express themselves in a non-judgemental and supportive environment.

The New Beginnings course covered several important topics over its duration, including:

- identifying the behaviours that constitute domestic and family violence;
- building understanding regarding keeping self-safe and learning about the importance of boundary setting;
- processing strong emotions resulting from trauma such as anger, grief, and loss;
- recognizing the impact of the cycle of violence;
- building on self-regulation and self-management skills; and
- exploring aspects of healthy and unhealthy relationships and maintaining self-care.

The overarching therapeutic approach was to assist traumatized women to release shame and guilt and rebuild their self-esteem and self-confidence, achieving some level of self-empowerment.

During the first session, the women identified several objectives that they were seeking from the program such as 'to build understanding', 'identifying the impacts of family violence', 'to develop strategies and coping mechanisms', 'to build on self-esteem and self-confidence', 'to be given a voice', 'to be able to recognize warning signs and red flags', 'to build connections', 'to build on their support network', and 'to feel supported'. At the end of the program each objective was reviewed, and it was identified that the program covered all objectives the women identified and met personal needs.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH SPOTLIGHT

## GIRLS TALK WORKSHOP



Presented by Cumberland Women's Health Centre and Hilltop Road Public School



The Girls Talk program, a collaborative effort between Cumberland Women's Health Centre (CWHC) and Hilltop Road School, funded by Wentworthville Leagues Club, stands as a resounding success story. This initiative has not only resulted in the creation of a powerful podcast but, more importantly, it has left a lasting impact on the young participants, instilling in them a sense of empowerment and confidence.

The inspiration for the Girls Talk project arose from the extensive work carried out by CWHC in its programs aimed at empowering women, building their confidence, and fostering resilience. During these group sessions, women reflected on their own pasts and identified gaps in their education and development, particularly in areas like assertiveness, human rights, gender equality, and healthy relationship boundaries. They recognized that their lives could have taken a different, more positive trajectory if they had access to programs teaching such essential skills in their youth. This revelation led to the realization that there was a significant need for early intervention programs targeting young women to equip them with the skills necessary to become confident and resilient individuals capable of pursuing their dreams.

Building upon their successful partnership with Hilltop Road School, CWHC expanded their collaboration to work directly with young girls through the Girls Talk group program. This initiative embodies the commitment to empowering the next generation of confident, capable young women by providing them with a comprehensive education in confidence-building skills. The Girls Talk program not only bridges the learning gaps identified by the women but also serves as a shining example of proactive community support and empowerment.

# EVENTS SNAPSHOT

## ON INSTAGRAM



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** No rain could have stopped us from having our own sunshine! ☀️☀️

Today at Cumberland Women's Health Centre, we held our Client Wellness Day and we all had a blast! From candle making to breaking a sweat in Zumba and Bollywood dance sessions with @nartan\_institute, all the women were able to have such a fun pack morning, de-stressing and enjoying themselves! We also had STGA (@supportthegirlsaus) come in and provide amazing bra fitting services for all the women.

Our goal for the day was to provide everyone with a fun, safe, and enjoyable experience in an environment with likeminded women to

OCTOBER 6, 2022



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** While yesterday was #RUOKDay, the conversation should never stop as a simple "R U Okay?" could help someone. Here at Cumberland Women's Health Centre, we believe that we should all look out for each other just by reaching out and having a chat.

Swipe to read more about how you can help start a conversation and how you can make it apart of your every day. You can find more tips at ruok.org.au.

In addition, if you're in need of help or know someone who is in need of help, there are many services and support provided.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2022



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** Today is the 23rd of September, marking Bi-Visibility Day in part of Bisexual Awareness Week! 💜💜💜

At CWHC, we want to continue to show our visibility and support as an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community and promote inclusion and diversity within our services as equal and equitable access to health is a universal right to all people.

SEPTEMBER 23, 2022

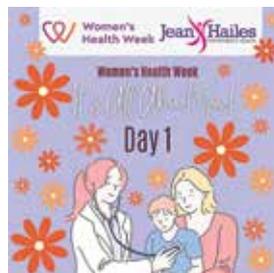


**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** 🎉 **Hooray!** 🎉🎉

Today is the 5th of September, marking the beginning of #WomensHealthWeek! Across the country, many Australians are choosing to celebrate women's health—of course including us here at Cumberland Women's Health Centre! With the 10th year anniversary, Jean Hailes's theme for 2022 is "It's All About You". 🌻

Did you know that since the pandemic, 1 in 5 women in Australia have missed their health check with GPs? 🤔 To jumpstart women's health week, we want to open the discussion on keeping up with your health checks to ensure your best health. Day 1 is all

SEPTEMBER 5, 2022



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** Today we celebrate International Non-Binary People's Day! CWHC seeks to support any woman who identifies as woman, as well as individuals who are gender non-conforming or non-binary that experience difficulty in accessing gender-specific healthcare or DFV services.

Healthcare can be a very gendered space and one of our goals this year as a health service is to increase our visibility as an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community and promote inclusion and diversity in all that we do.

JULY 14, 2022





**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre**  
 Lord Mayor's Christmas Celebration 2022 - Cumberland Women's Health Centre was selected as one of the Charity partner to take part for the Lord Mayor's Christmas Party on Friday 2nd December 2022. Our Manager Salwa Albaz proudly received \$5000 on behalf of the organization, the award was presented by the Lord Mayor of the City of Parramatta Lord Mayor Cr Donna Davis.

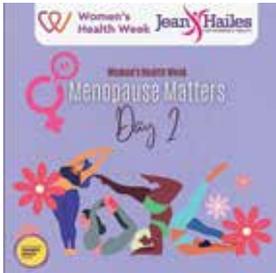
DECEMBER 6, 2022



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** For Day 2 of #womenshealthweek, we talk about Menopause and Perimenopause.

This time can be frustrating and confusing for many women and that is okay. Jean Hailes provide many health information, tips, and tools to help yourself navigate your health and to put yourself first. You can find more information by reading more here: <https://www.womenshealthweek.com.au/the-week/tuesday/>

SEPTEMBER 7, 2022



# Instagram



**CWHC - Cumberland Women's Health Centre**  
 7 March · 🌐

Our CWHC Manager Salwa Albaz attended "International Women's Day Morning Tea" event organised by U Creations. The event was a celebration of women who started new business & their achievements of their personal and professional goals. The event also raised most needed funds for The Westmead Institute for Medical Research.

Big thanks to U Creations/ Urmi Talukdar for organizing this wonderful event. We attended a long side Lord Mayor of Parramatta Donna Davis - Labor for Parramatta, Mayor Lisa Lake Cumberland City Council, Jodie Harrison MP and Durga Owen.



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** It's never too late to take control of your own health! Learning and understanding about how your body works and the medical services that are available to you are key towards improving your health and living a healthier life. 🌟

In collaboration with the Community Migrant Resource Centre, Cumberland Women Health Centre would like to cordially invite you to a Women's Health Care Workshop hosted at the Merrylands Community Centre (Miller Room) on the 29th of August, 10:30am - 12pm. At the workshop, medical professionals will raise awareness on numerous of health issues such as cervical cancer and breast cancer, and what you can do for yourself and your

AUGUST 17, 2022



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** Anything that you set your mind to, you can do! 🌟🌟🌟 At Cumberland Women's Health Centre, we're very excited to announce a new program: Construction Zone, proudly funded by Hope Connect.

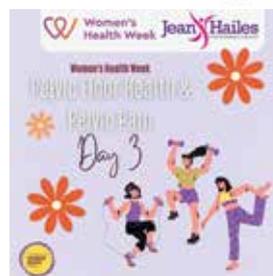
Construction Zone is a 6-week program open to all women wanting to learn handy-person skills and woodworking skills in a supported, safe environment. The program will go on every Tuesday's from the 4th of October to the 8th of November, 2022. This program is free to join, however eligibility applies so please enquire to see if you are eligible.

SEPTEMBER 6, 2022



**cumberlandwomenshealthcentre** For Day 3 of Women's Health Week, it's about Pelvic Power—specifically, pelvic floor health and pelvic pain. Read here to find out more information on what you can do to improve your pelvic health and manage pelvic pain.

SEPTEMBER 7, 2022



# SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

## VICTIM SERVICES COUNSELLING

### ASSESSMENTS FOR CLIENT PROGRESS IN THEIR WELL-BEING

176 clients received victim services counselling services by one counsellor through Cumberland Women's Health Centre from August 2022- August 2023. Out of this number of clients, 53 of them were new clients.

#### Methodology

At the beginning of their counselling sessions, all 53 new clients completed the DASS21 assessment tool for Depression, Anxiety and Stress, and the PCL-5 assessment tool for Post-traumatic stress. Only 30 of these new clients completed the DASS21 and PCL5 assessments after six or more counselling sessions.

The number of symptoms and their frequency experienced by these 30 clients at the beginning of counselling, was compared with the number of symptoms and their frequency experienced by them at the end of six or more counselling sessions. Results were grouped into three categories: minimized symptoms; increased symptoms; same (no change). It was also noted if clients were taking mental health medications and whether they were still in traumatic circumstances at the time of assessments. Numbers of clients in each category were then tallied, and graphs to represent results were drawn up.

#### Results

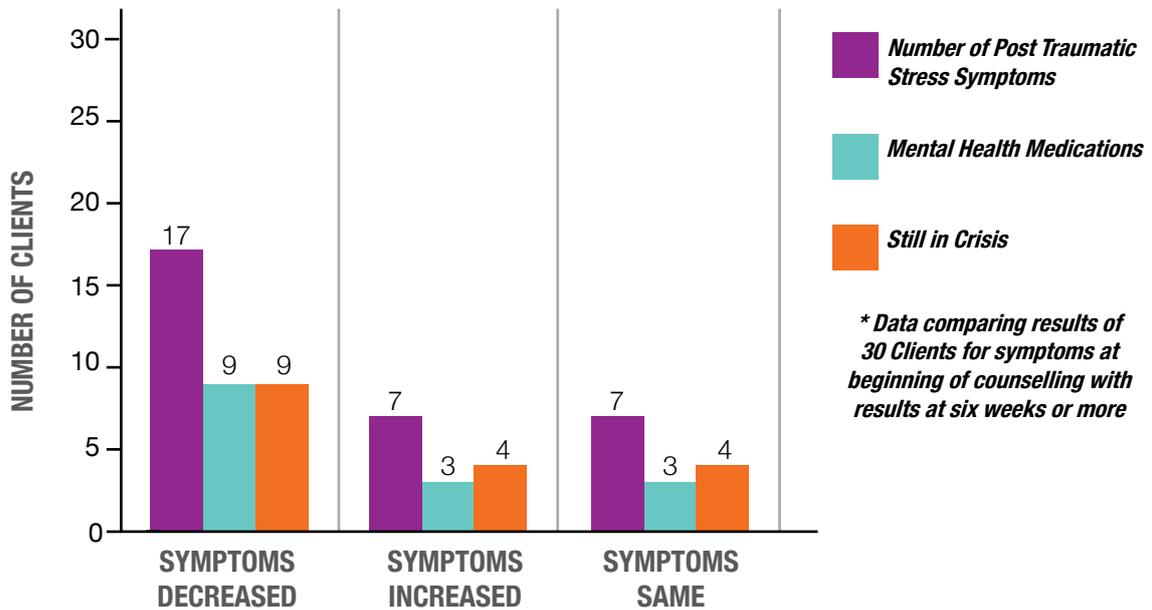
Results of assessments showed that:

#### 1. In terms of post-traumatic stress symptoms as listed in the PCL-5 assessment tool:

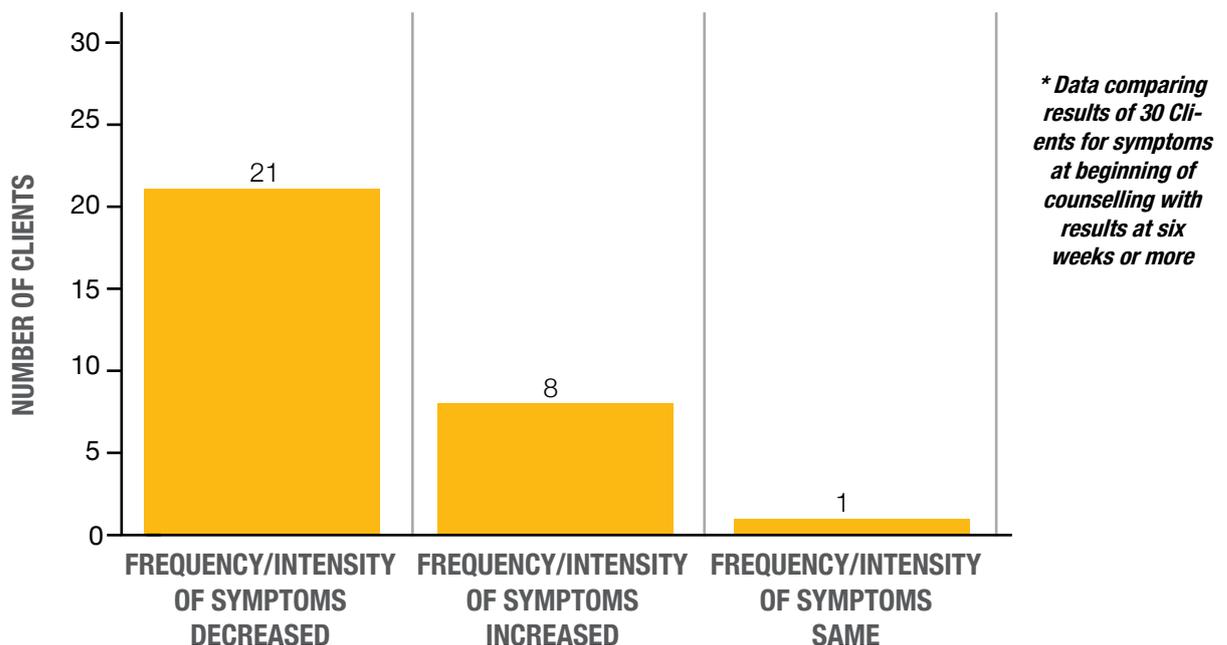
- **17 out of 30 clients** (56.6%) had **reduced symptoms** for post-traumatic stress by the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period. These clients had **decreased symptoms by a combined average of 5.7**. **9 of these clients** were still experiencing traumatic situations, and **9 of them** were taking anti-depressant medication at the time of assessments.
- **7 out of 30 clients** (23.3%) showed **an increase** in number of post-traumatic stress symptoms experienced by the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period. These clients had **increased symptoms by a combined average of 1.4**. **4 of these clients** were still experiencing traumatic situations, and **3 of them** were taking anti-depressant medication at the time of assessments.
- **7 out of 30 clients** (23.3%) experienced **the same number** of post-traumatic stress symptoms at the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period as they had at the start of their sessions. **4 of these clients** were still experiencing traumatic situations, and **3 of them** were taking anti-depressant medication at the time of assessments.
- **1 out of 30 clients** experienced **the same intensity/frequency rate** of her post-traumatic stress symptoms at the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period as from her first assessment.

- **8 out of 30 clients** experienced an **increased intensity/frequency rate** of their post-traumatic stress symptoms (average increase 5.7) at the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period as from their first assessment.
- **21 out of 30 clients** experienced a **decreased intensity/frequency rate** of their post-traumatic stress symptoms (average decrease 22.8) at the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period as from their first assessment.

### PCL-5 Symptoms for Post Traumatic Stress from 1st August 2022 – 1st August 2023\*



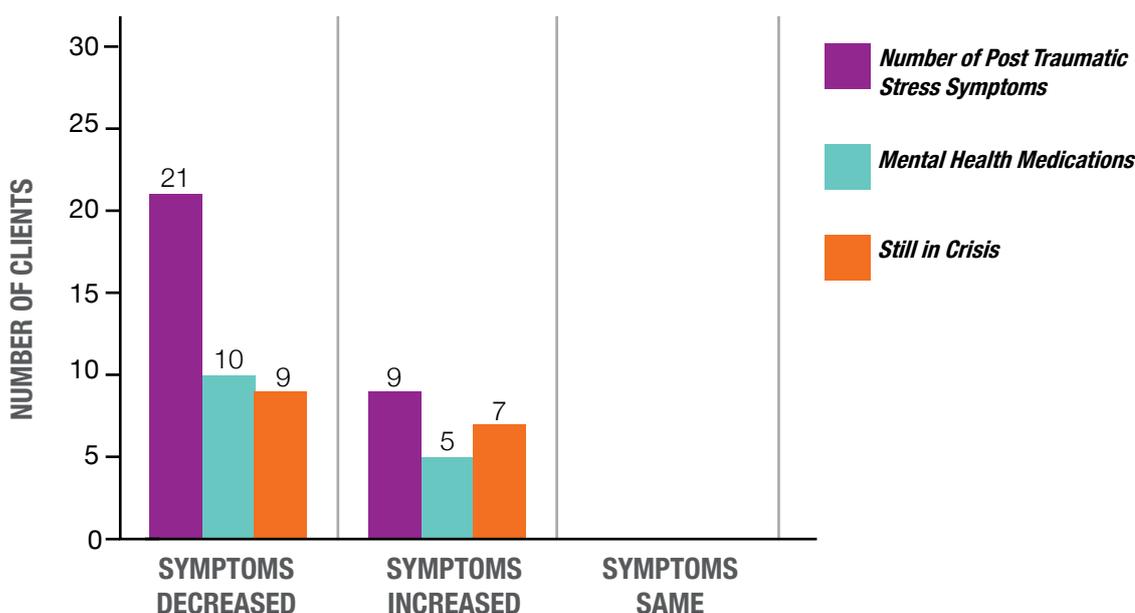
### PCL-5 Frequency Intensity of Symptoms from 1st August 2022 – 1st August 2023\*



**2. In terms of symptoms for depression as listed in the DASS21 assessment tool:**

- **21 out of 30 clients** (70%) had **reduced symptoms for depression** by the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period. The most dramatic shifts of decreased levels for depression were as follows:
  - 4 clients** had reduced their depressive symptoms from **extremely severe to normal** levels.
  - 4 clients** had reduced their depressive symptoms from **extremely severe to mild** levels.
  - 3 clients** had reduced their depressive symptoms from **extremely severe to moderate** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her depressive symptoms from **severe to normal** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her depressive symptoms from **severe to mild** levels.
  - 3 clients** had reduced their depressive symptoms from **moderate to normal** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her depressive symptoms from **mild to normal** levels.
- **9 out of 21 clients** with reduced depression were still experiencing traumatic situations, and **10 of them** were taking anti-depressant medication at the time of assessments.
- **9 out of 30 clients** (30%) showed **an increase in number** of experienced symptoms for depression by the end of counselling period.
  - 5 of these 9 clients** were taking anti-depressant medications, and **7 of these clients** were still experiencing traumatic situations.

**DASS21- Depression  
from 1st August 2022 – 1st August 2023\***

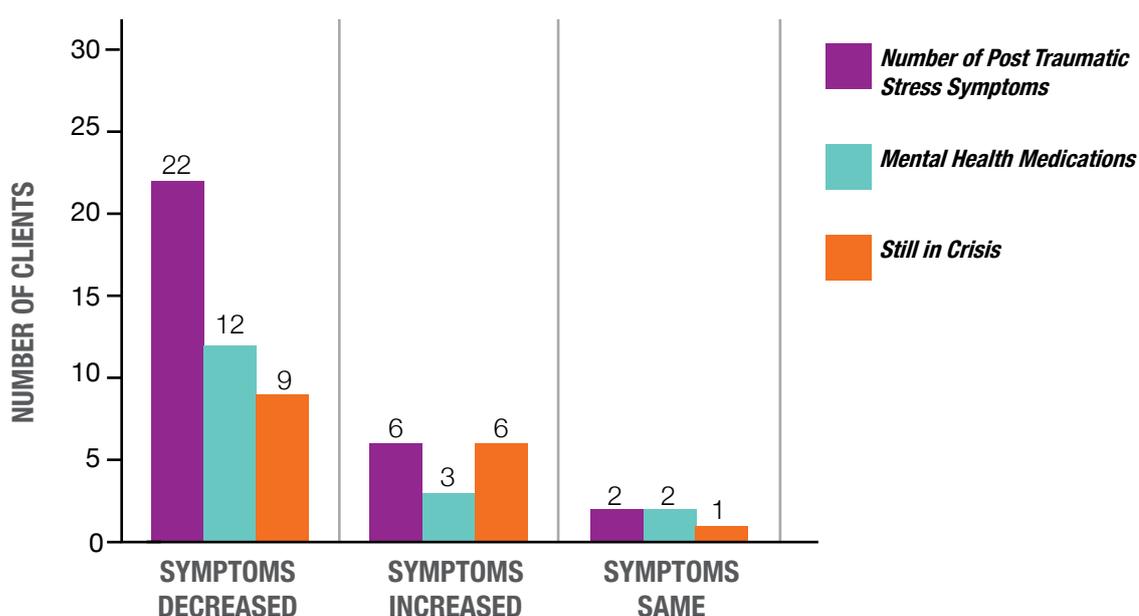


\* Data comparing results of 30 Clients for symptoms at beginning of counselling with results at six weeks or more

**3. In terms of symptoms for anxiety as listed in the DASS21 assessment tool:**

- **22 out of 30 clients** (73.3%) had **reduced symptoms for anxiety** by the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period. The most dramatic shifts of decreased levels for anxiety were as follows:
  - 4 clients** had reduced their anxiety symptoms from **extremely severe to normal** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her anxiety symptoms from **extremely severe to mild** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her anxiety symptoms from **extremely severe to moderate** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her anxiety symptoms from **severe to normal** levels.
  - 3 clients** had reduced their anxiety symptoms from **moderate to normal** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her anxiety symptoms from **mild to normal** levels.
- **9 out of 22 clients** with reduced anxiety were still experiencing traumatic situations, and **12 of them** were taking anti-depressant medication at the time of assessments.
- **6 out of 30 clients** (20%) showed an **increase in number** of experienced symptoms for anxiety by the end of counselling period. **3 of these clients** were taking anti-depressant medications. **ALL OF THESE CLIENTS** were still experiencing traumatic situations.
- **2 clients** experienced the **same number of symptoms** for anxiety at the end of the counselling period as they had at the start of their sessions. **Both of these clients** were taking anti-depressant medications. **1 client** with the same number of symptoms for anxiety was still experiencing a traumatic situation.

**DASS21- Anxiety  
from 1st August 2022 – 1st August 2023\***

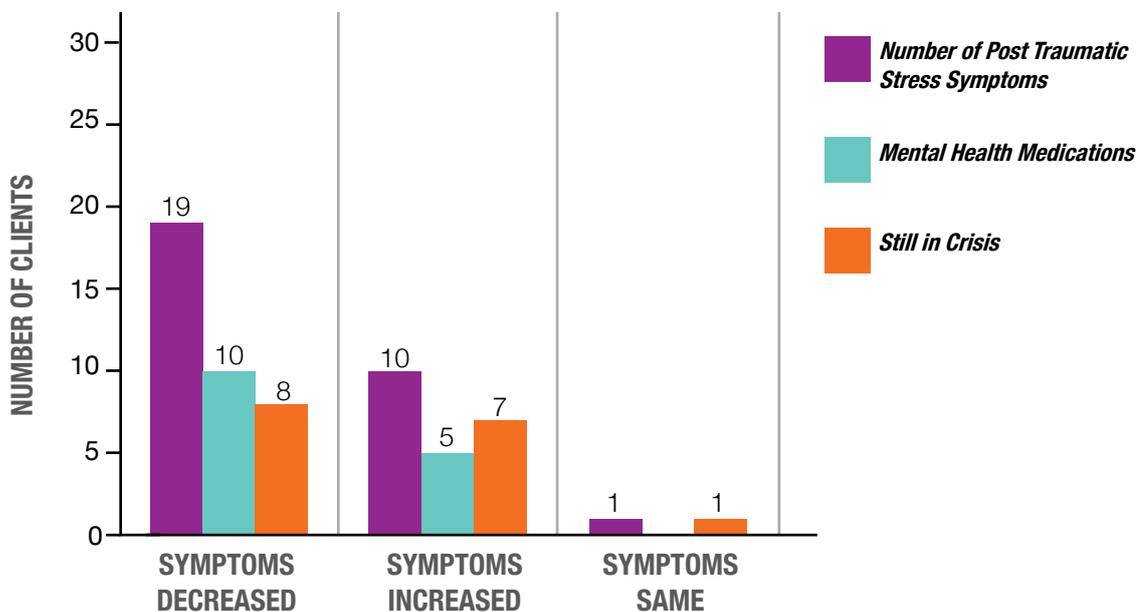


\* Data comparing results of 30 Clients for symptoms at beginning of counselling with results at six weeks or more

**4. In terms of stress symptoms as listed in the DASS21 assessment tool:**

- **19 out of 30 clients** (63.3%) had **reduced symptoms for stress** by the end of a minimum six weeks counselling period. The most dramatic shifts of decreased levels for stress were as follows:
  - 4 clients** had reduced their stress symptoms from **extremely severe to normal** levels.
  - 3 clients** had reduced their stress symptoms from **extremely severe to mild levels**.
  - 2 clients** had reduced their stress symptoms from **extremely severe to moderate** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her stress symptoms from **severe to normal** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her stress symptoms from **severe to moderate** levels.
  - 2 clients** had reduced their stress symptoms from **moderate to normal** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her stress symptoms from **moderate to mild** levels.
  - 1 client** had reduced her stress symptoms from **mild to normal** levels.
- **8 out of 19 clients** with reduced stress symptoms were still experiencing traumatic situations, and **10 of them** were taking anti-depressant medication at the time of assessments.
- **10 clients** (33.3%) showed an **increase in number** of experienced symptoms for stress by the end of counselling period. **5 out of these clients** were taking anti-depressant medications.
  - 7 out of the 10** clients were still experiencing traumatic situations.
- **1 client** experienced the **same number of symptoms** for anxiety at the end of the counselling period as she had at the start of her sessions. This client was not taking anti-depressant medications, but was still experiencing a traumatic situation.

**DASS21- Stress  
from 1st August 2022 – 1st August 2023\***



\* Data comparing results of 30 Clients for symptoms at beginning of counselling with results at six weeks or more

## **Analysis and Concluding Comments**

In examining the above results in relation to the 30 clients who completed assessments of post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and stress, the following conclusions can be deduced:

- A majority of assessed clients experienced a reduction in the number of symptoms for post-traumatic stress. Significantly, over two thirds of the total number of assessed clients experienced a reduction in the frequency/intensity of their symptoms for post-traumatic stress.
- Over two thirds of the total number of assessed clients experienced a reduction in depressive symptoms. Impressively, 26.6% of clients were able to reduce their depressive symptoms from extremely severe to normal or mild levels.
- Over two thirds of the total number of assessed clients experienced a reduction in anxiety symptoms. Significantly, 16.6% of clients were able to reduce their anxiety symptoms from extremely severe to normal or mild levels.
- Almost two thirds of the total number of assessed clients experienced a reduction in stress symptoms. Significantly, 23.3% of clients were able to reduce their anxiety symptoms from extremely severe to normal or mild levels.
- The reduction of symptoms and their frequency/intensity experienced by the assessed clients can be attributed to a combination of the following factors:
  - Source of trauma (no contact with perpetrator of violence) removed from current experience
  - Counselling
  - Medication
  - Social and supportive network in place
  - Engaged in achieving personal goals.
- Clients with increased and unchanged scores for depression anxiety, stress, as well as post-traumatic stress in terms of number of symptoms and the frequency/severity of their experience can be attributed to combinations of the following factors:
  - Ongoing experience of trauma resulting from continual contact with perpetrator of abuse;
  - A new additional traumatic experience towards end of the counselling period, which triggered or exacerbated symptoms previously experienced;
  - Coping with other diagnosed mental illnesses;
  - Coping with chronic pain;
  - Coping with social isolation with little or no support from family and friends; and
  - Had a long history of multiple traumas going back to childhood.

Counselling and medication could have contributed to preventing these clients from experiencing a further escalation of their symptoms for post-traumatic stress, depression, anxiety and stress.

Overall, the results of assessments showed that most assessed clients had improved in their well-being to some extent, which can be partly attributed to the counselling they have received, and partly to a more favorable change of their circumstances.

# PARRAMATTA CUMBERLAND FAMILY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE

For the past 15 years, Cumberland Women's Health Centre has consistently assumed the leadership and organizational responsibilities for the Parramatta Cumberland Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Committee, and this year has been no exception to our steadfast commitment. In collaboration with numerous local organizations, our collective effort is dedicated to involving and educating the broader community about the pressing concerns surrounding gender-based violence. Together, we strive to raise awareness and underscore the vital role each of us plays in the prevention of such violence. This ongoing collaboration and dedication reflect our unwavering commitment to making a positive impact on our community's well-being.



## RACE TO SAFETY Parramatta Cumberland Family & Domestic Violence Prevention Committee

In December 2022, the Committee spearheaded an exceptional event titled "Race to Safety." The event's overarching objective was to advocate for the establishment of an integrated and well-funded system to support survivors of Domestic and Family Violence (DFV). The event offered a compelling platform to shed light on the current underfunded and chaotic state of the existing DFV support system.



Through a strategic approach inspired by the Amazing Race model, "Race to Safety" engaged participants in an interactive and eye-opening experience. Real-life case studies were integrated into the event, serving as focal points for various activities. Participants embarked on a journey from Parramatta to Merrylands, symbolizing the journey survivors often endure. This unique approach aimed to vividly demonstrate the pressing need for systemic change, emphasizing the necessity for increased funding and research to bolster the support systems available to DFV survivors.

"Race to Safety" stood as a powerful testament to our unwavering commitment to advocating for the well-being of DFV survivors and the urgent reforms required to ensure their safety, recovery, and support within a more integrated and well-funded system.

# DVPASS

## NSW JUSTICE

The Domestic and Family Violence Proactive Support Service (DVPASS) operates through a collaboration between a specialized domestic violence service and the New South Wales Police, functioning as a comprehensive support system for victims of domestic violence. This program empowers the police to formally seek consent from domestic violence victims to share their information with domestic violence support services. These support services then undertake a prescribed follow-up within a typically agreed-upon timeframe, often set at 72 hours.

Cumberland Women's Health Centre has been actively engaged in this collaborative effort alongside the local police for more than 15 years. This partnership referral model, financially supported by the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), has consistently proven to be an invaluable resource for women and clients in need. It has facilitated the deployment of a dedicated anti-violence worker with expertise in domestic violence casework and advocacy, solidifying Cumberland Women's Health Centre as the preeminent specialist organization serving three districts in this capacity.

In the past calendar year, the DVPASS program has achieved remarkable success in its mission to support domestic violence survivors. Surpassing its target, the program reached 373 clients, providing each one with comprehensive case management support and safety planning, while 60% accessed critical brokerage support.

Beyond immediate assistance, clients were supported in accessing wrap-around services, including legal aid, victim support, housing, financial assistance, and mental health and disability services.

Client feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 85% reporting improvements in their emotional, mental, or physical health, 89% feeling empowered to achieve their case plan goals, and 90% noting enhanced feelings of safety.



**“Creating a better world  
requires teamwork,  
partnerships and  
collaboration”**

Simon Mainwaring

# EMPOWERING LIVES

## CREATING IMPACT

At CWHC, our mission is to empower individuals, provide essential support, and create lasting positive change within our community. We are proud to present the following highlights from our annual report, showcasing the significant impact we've had on the lives of our clients over the past year:



### Client Satisfaction

A resounding 89% of our clients agree that the services offered at CWHC meet their needs, with an additional 9.1% stating that they meet most of their needs. This remarkable feedback reaffirms our commitment to tailoring our services to the unique requirements of each client.



### Service Excellence

An impressive 72.7% of our clients believe that there is no improvement needed for the services we provide. This reflects the dedication of our team in consistently delivering high-quality support and care.



### Exceptional Satisfaction

A staggering 93.9% of our clients expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the services they received, with the remainder being somewhat satisfied. This overwhelming positive response speaks to the effectiveness and impact of our programs and support.



### High Worker Satisfaction

Equally impressive, 90.9% of our clients are very satisfied with the workers they engaged with, emphasizing the strong rapport and trust that our clients have in our dedicated team members.

In conclusion, our annual report reflects a year of incredible achievements, high client satisfaction rates, and the powerful impact of our services on the lives of those we serve. We are deeply grateful for the trust our clients place in us and are committed to continuing our mission to empower and uplift individuals within our community. Together, we look forward to making an even greater difference in the coming year.

# COMMUNITY VOICES

## CLIENT FEEDBACK

Our clients' voices echo the transformative experiences they have had at CWHC:

"I felt so blessed because when they shared the stories as if like a flashback to memory Lane to my actual stories and as if they're invited us to their table and to their culture."

"The best features of the program were "the sharing of experiences and the content of the course. [The facilitator] provides a safe and caring space with excellent content."

"To me, [the group] was perfect. It was really good. Everyone being honest and open. Learning more about myself and learning to express myself more without worrying about others."

"It was just really interesting to see how unique everybody is but similar at the same time. I know I've repeated it, but that's what I found really interesting. I didn't think that I'd find so many similarities"

"Feeling confident and dealing with situations. Really good service and helpful for the women who are in DV or any kind of trouble."

"The group made me feel connected and less lonely. I felt I reclaimed my confidence and voice. Given more tools to deal with my self-esteem in a positive manner."

"Counselling' has helped reduce nightmares that are a result of my trauma. It has also helped me heal faster than I thought possible. Eliminated fear of the future. [I learned that] what happened to me was not my fault."

"Cooking was GREAT fun!"

*"I have benefited, emotionally, financially and feel greatly supported. [I have learned] that there is support for domestic violence victims out there, that I am not alone in my struggles, that it's not all my fault and that there are positive ways to move forward in my life. The team at your centre is amazing and are a blessing in my life at a very difficult time for my kids and me."*

"That was amazing, I learnt so much! I will go home and check out my car now!"

# GOVERNANCE

## CUMBERLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

### OUR BOARD

**Michele Anderson**  
*Chairperson*

**Shabnam Mahabat**  
*Vice- Chairperson*

**Kate Lamb**  
*Secretary*

**Rema Nazha**  
*Treasurer*

**Kate Meyer**  
**Julie Tai**  
**Hatice Vural**  
**Vandana Setia**  
*Ordinary Members*

### STAFF POSITIONS HELD

- Manager
- Massage Therapist
- Book Keeper
- Group Facilitator
- Generalist Counsellors
- Anti Violence Case Worker
- Community Development Worker
- Health Promotion and Communication Worker
- Administrative Assistant

The manager ensures compliance and governance structures of CWHC through various mechanisms. Governance is upheld by regular management committee meetings, effective supervision of staff and strict adherence to Centre reporting procedures. Further, tender applications are routinely completed by the manager to secure and maintain healthy financial systems, which allow for effective centre operation. We have focused on engaging staff and having open communication concerning workloads and capacity limits to ensure that workers feel supported and do not experience burnout, which could impact on quality of service provision.

This financial year, CWHC ensured continuity of quality service provision in a number of ways. CWHC believes that a key concern relating to "quality" service provision, is ensuring that our services address identified and emerging concerns of clients and the community. With this in mind, client and community feedback has been a key factor in developing unique programs that have responded to community needs this year. Hence, CWHC has continued to develop, implement, and maintain a diverse range of services that address the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental health needs of clients.



# FINANCIAL

## STATEMENT 2022-2023

The records for the annual financial year can be found below. While Cumberland Women's Health Centre core service funding is provided by NSW Department of Health, funding for DSS and DVPASS programs has been renewed. Many of the essential community development and group based interventions rely on small grants from various sources with acknowledgement to Local Council and the Club's grants scheme and other opportunities. During this period Cumberland Women's Health Center's financial position remained strong with a significant increase in small opportunity grants.

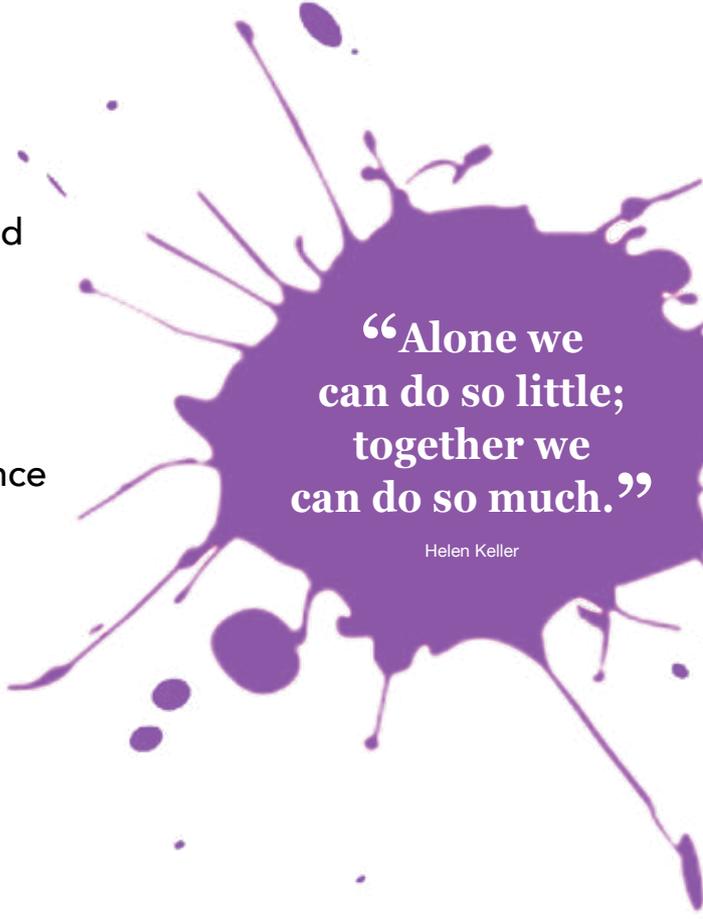
<b>CWHC STATEMENT OF INCOME</b>	<b>2023 \$</b>	<b>2022 \$</b>
<b>GRANTS RECEIVED</b>		
■ WSLHD - Grant	438,300	419,400
■ DVPASS Project	50,000	50,000
■ Small Grants	-	134,082
■ Other Grants/unspent funding brought forward	491,283	520,965
■ PCC Community Grant	10,000	-
■ Victims Services	21,898	1,778
<b>DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING</b>		
■ Donation Received	5,926	956
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
■ Interest Income	2,289	68
■ Clinic Fees	10,293	611
■ Recovery of Expenses	1,180	-
■ Reimbursements	4,099	118
■ Other Income	2,864	19,416
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,038,132</b>	<b>1,147,394</b>

# OUR COMMUNITY

## PARTNERS

The work we do would not be possible without our Community Partners. Across the Parramatta, Cumberland and the Hills districts there are so many outstanding organisations doing important and impactful work and we are proud to service this community alongside you. For those we have the privilege of working side by side with in service delivery, our work and achievement are magnified through you. To our new corporate's partners we are looking forward to growing our partnerships and the positive impact on the Women we serve with your support.

- Boronia Multicultural Centre
- Christian Aid (Bills Assist)
- City of Parramatta Council, Cumberland City Council
- Clubs NSW
- Community Migrant Resource Centre
- Cumberland WDVCS
- Department of Human Services
- Goods360
- Granville TAFE
- Guildford Leagues Club
- Hills Community Aid / Hills Daily Grind
- Hilltop Public School
- Hope Connect
- Immigrant Women's Speakout
- Parramatta/Cumberland/Ryde Police
- Parramatta Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service
- Parramatta Women's Shelter
- Reconnect Project
- Share the Dignity
- Sisters of Mercy
- Support the Girls
- Thread Together
- UADV
- Victims Services
- WESNET
- Western Sydney Community Legal Centre



**“Alone we  
can do so little;  
together we  
can do so much.”**

Helen Keller

*Thank you*

Cumberland Women's Health Centre  
thanks all our generous partners  
for their invaluable support



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[WWW.CWHC.ORG.AU](http://WWW.CWHC.ORG.AU)

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