



## AWHN STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2013-2019

**Date adopted: 7 May 2013**

**Dates revised: 21 February 2014 and 20 November 2017**

This Strategic Framework identifies AWHN's key focus areas and, within each of these, the strategic objectives which provide the linkages between the Framework and implementation through AWHN's Annual Plans.

All of the work that AWHN undertakes is guided by being a feminist organisation and advocating for recognition that health is primarily influenced by the social determinants of health, and is reflected throughout this Strategic Framework.

I. As a feminist organisation AWHN:

- acts, speaks, writes, and advocates on behalf of women's issues and rights, and identifies injustice to women in the social status quo;
- advocates for equity practices to eliminate the barriers to inclusion, recognising that inclusion leads to equality;
- contributes to and participates in a strong national autonomous feminist movement to articulate the issues of importance to women's health, and
- acts as a catalyst for government action, public support and attention, and works with the media on issues which are important for public discussion.

2. AWHN's Constitutional objects identify its way of working through the application of a social view of health incorporating a health promotion framework, using a variety of interventions to prevent illness, disease and injury, and promote women's independence, health and wellbeing.

- AWHN's major advocacy message is that health is primarily influenced by the conditions in which we are born, grow, live work i.e. – the social determinants of health. It is these conditions that result in the health inequalities between countries, communities and social groups.
- Legislation and policy are crucial tools for women's health, especially in relation to the social determinants of health.
- Modern medical care is not responsible for improvements in population health (as distinct from improving the outcomes of individual episodes of disease), though with the major health spending investment going to hospitals and GP provided primary care, AWHN advocacy is for these services to be women responsive.

*(Drawn from 'Reaching for Health' Gwen Gray Jamieson 2012)*

## OUR VISION

Health and well-being for all women

## OUR MISSION

AWHN stands up to advance women's health and well-being. With our partners, we bring our expertise to influence policy and reform.

## OUR VALUES

In addition to our principles of feminism and the social view of health our values are:

**Accountability** – accepting responsibility for decisions and actions

**Transparency** – building trust by openness in all our dealings

**Integrity** – earning and sustaining public trust

**Respect** – treating others fairly and objectively

## OUR PRIORITIES

### A. Policy and reform

AWHN is a national leader in developing, advancing, supporting, reviewing, critiquing and responding to public policy and its implementation - as it impacts on women's health and well-being.

### B. Sector capacity building

We apply our expertise and experience to strengthen the capacity of our members, our partners, our key stakeholders and those organisations and institutions who work with us to improve women's health and well-being.

### C. Communication and promotion

AWHN uses manifold and effective communication processes to facilitate achieving the objectives across all priority areas within the Strategic Framework.

### D. Organisational development

To achieve its objectives, AWHN demonstrates use of best practice in its governance, management and operations.

## PRIORITY A: Policy and Reform

**AWHN is a national leader in developing, advancing, supporting, reviewing, critiquing and responding to public policy and its implementation - as it impacts on women's health and well-being.**

**Strategic Objectives:**

- A.1 Build AWHN's leadership in developing and influencing national policies and other relevant issues on women's health and well being
- A.2 Provide an interface between the Australian Government, health professionals and consumers
- A.3 Position AWHN as the body recognised nationally as the initial contact for advice, input and feedback on national women's health and well-being policy and reform

**PRIORITY B: Sector Capacity Building**

**We apply our expertise and experience to strengthen the capacity of our members, our partners, our key stakeholders and of those organisations and institutions who work with us to improve women's health and well-being.**

**Strategic Objectives**

- B.1 Identify key stakeholders and strengthen collaborative relationships and partnerships with them
- B.2 Take action to ensure there is current and future health workforce capacity in women's health
- B.3 Maintain an active and diverse AWHN membership with capacity to undertake AWHN work
- B.4 Undertake activities to facilitate networking and knowledge exchange

**PRIORITY C: Communication and Promotion**

**AWHN uses manifold and effective communication processes to facilitate achieving the objectives across all priority areas within the Strategic Framework**

**Strategic Objectives**

- C.1 Strengthen and promote AWHN's national profile and achievements
- C.2 Strengthen communication processes with members and other (as identified above) key stakeholders
- C.3 Enhance AWHN reputation through engaging with consumer advocacy/representative organisations, community organisations and health practitioners

**PRIORITY D: Organisational Development**

**To achieve its objectives AWHN demonstrates use of best practice in its governance, management and operations.**

**Strategic Objectives**

- D.1 Ensure that best practice applies to all areas of AWHN's operations and that it complies with all relevant regulatory requirements
- D.2 Draw from a wide range of good practice in governance to develop robust, transparent decision making processes
- D.3 Secure AWHN's financial, social and environmental sustainability

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT FOR THIS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

AWHN has a long and rich history of women's health advocacy in a changing policy and health funding environment which we acknowledge and celebrate.

With the rise in the 1970s of the women's health movement, large numbers of specialist and single issue women's health groups came into existence. In the 1980s, women in the movement turned their minds to the problem of how to improve the effectiveness of political action. With a proliferation of diverse groups, one response was the formation of a national peak body: the AWHN (p.127 *'Reaching for Health'* Gwen Gray Jamieson 2012). The AWHN was formed in 1986. The strength of this history provides the base for this Strategic Framework.

For a short period in 1986 AWHN had a small government grant. Since 1987, the organisation has operated on a strong volunteer network of women's health activists to raise women's health at the national level, with funding for activities coming from conference income and membership dues. Following repeated attempts, success in receiving funding for 1 year secretariat support was achieved in 2011/12 and enabled AWHN to employ its first CEO. This was shortly followed by success with a further grant for health sector capacity building between 2012 and 2016.

Revision of this Strategic Framework was undertaken on 21 February 2014, at a time of:

- overwhelming knowledge about what will improve women's health outcomes across diverse groups of women
- lack of translation of that knowledge into illness prevention or health service provision
- Significant policy direction uncertainty, both at the State/Territory and National level
- difficulty in advancing the gains possible through health promotion action in the face of consolidation of funding through primary care networks
- a complex world economic picture and budget cutbacks within Australia
- a growing multicultural population
- an increasing divide between the wealthy and poor, and
- Coalition Government replaced Labor at 2013 federal election.

An additional review of this Framework was undertaken on 21 November 2017 and its period of currency was extended from 2016 to 2019.

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