

'Here We Are' Project Evaluation



Confidential Report prepared by Quality Service Improvement and Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV)

December 2018



This report has been developed for gathering evidence including data and stakeholder input to inform the evaluation of the Women with Disabilities Victoria, “Here We Are” project. The primary purpose of engagement was to talk with women with disabilities, partners and key stakeholders in the four communities who participated in the activities delivered, and to understand their experience and observations of the program. To protect the privacy of participants in this evaluation process, contributors have been de-identified. This information has been considered, along with program information provided by Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV), to inform the program evaluation.

The images and stories provided in this report have been shared for the sole purposes of providing a report to the National Disability Insurance Agency(NDIA), additional permissions may need to be sought from participants should the report and any elements of information contained in the report be shared with any other parties. WDV and Quality Service Improvement consider this a confidential report for the sole purposes of evaluating activity, understanding the outcomes to date and sharing the findings to meet reporting obligations. WDV will happily share the findings and learnings more widely should there be interest, however the interests of the participants must be respected and protected.

We would like to acknowledge all the participants, partner and stakeholders who provided constructive feedback and who have willingly been a part of the program evaluation, sharing their experiences and stories to assist with understanding and measuring the outcomes for the participating communities. We would also like to acknowledge WDV staff and staff from other organisations involved in the program. The people who shared their experience, knowledge and suggestions through surveys and discussions during the evaluation made it possible to review the projects outcomes. WDV can confidently use the information gathered to add further value to programs in the future.



“Quality Service Improvement respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.”

STORIES OF LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Originally thinking that she would like to work with youth, one participant discovered that she also liked working with the elderly and disabled participants at the centre. When asked about her favourite placement for the day, this participant (Kim) identified working with the Youth team as she was asked to contribute her ideas. The experience change her job focus, initially wanting to work in hospitality after a day at the Archie Graham centre she decided that working with youth would be her ideal job.

“I had some input into their skating competition, to maybe think about doing something for skaters with a disability, and they thought it was a really cool idea.” Participant

“We want to be inclusive and welcome women with disabilities to our organisation but we are worried about getting it wrong and offending people with disability. What I’ve learnt today is that asking and finding out, trying things and working it out together as we go will be the way to go”. Participant

“Employing me, a woman with disability, has shown me and people in the community that disability is only one part of me. I have been privileged to meet so many people and to share in conversations with other women with disability, their experiences, their frustrations and their aspirations. “

“Even if it is one corporation, one person, one business, I would just be so happy to see a bit of a difference.” Key stakeholder

“It (the LCB role) definitely appealed to me because of my own personal experience of disability and being a disabled woman in a regional area”. Local Community Builder

“We are really keen to welcome diversity and ensure we are inclusive. Interestingly enough, whilst we had thought about accessibility, we learnt a lot about how people feel and the simple things that make women feel welcome in a new place.” Participant

“The interactive activity to see where people were at in the layers of disadvantage was great, I thought it really demonstrated the layers of disadvantaged and gave us all a lot to think about”. Participant of the Sale Forum

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Executive Summary

Nearly one in five Victorian women and girls have a disability. Women with disabilities experience high levels of disadvantage across all areas of their lives including social exclusion, economic insecurity and high levels of violence and discrimination. The “*Here We Are*” (HWA) program is a practical initiative designed to strengthen inclusion of women with disability and reduce reliance on specialist supports. This program supports the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Information and Linkages Capacity Building direction of achieving national readiness for the changes being rolled out through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) by way of strengthening people with disabilities access to mainstream services and supports in their local community. Through this project, Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) aimed to support community capacity building with multi-regional partners in regional communities in Victoria’s Southeast, Northeast, Barwon and South West.

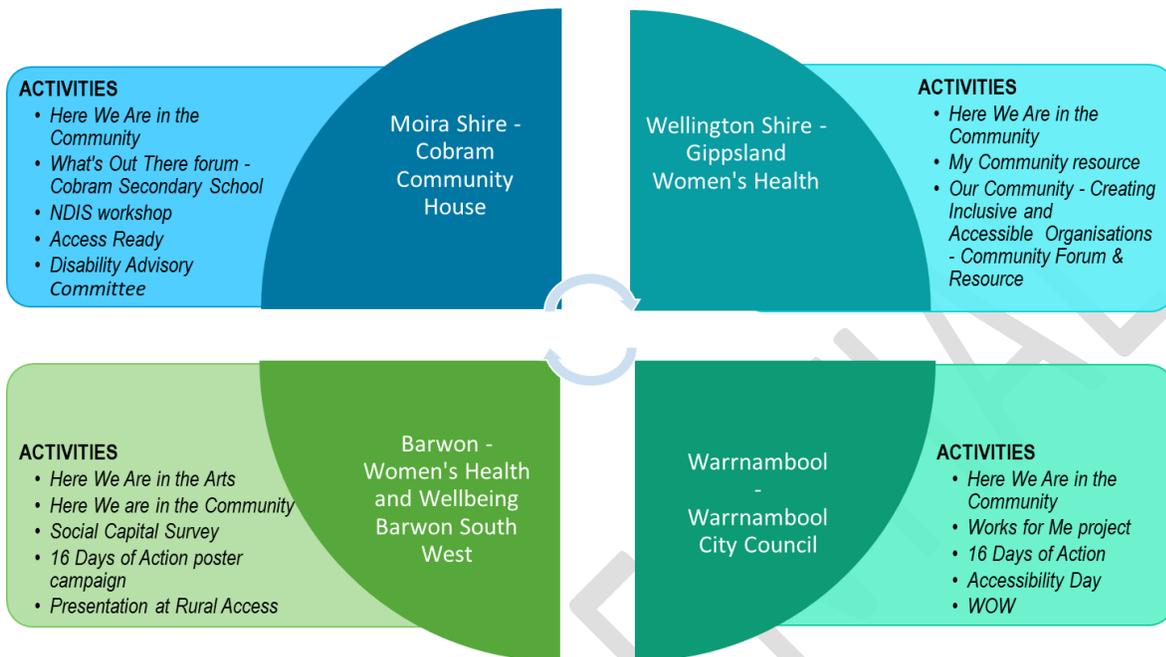
A designated partner in each of these regions worked with WDV to employ a local woman with disability to lead as a Regional Capacity Builder (RCBs). In the planning stages, WDV changes Regional Capacity Builder to Local Community Builder (LCB), in line with internal and partner feedback. The aim of the project was to support women with disability to feel more welcomed and involved in the activities of ordinary life – working, attending events, learning, accessing services and spending leisure time in their community. For women with disabilities living in rural communities the barriers to living an ordinary life include community attitudes, inaccessible services, limited access to information, and a loss of choice and control over their health. These barriers can be compounded by distance, travel, cost and lack of privacy.

The project employed six women, five with disability, and the structure comprised of a Project Officer based in Melbourne at WDV and five women working in their regional community. The Local Community Builder (LCB) roles worked to consult and collaborate on local campaigns, events and opportunities to improve community awareness of women with disabilities, challenging stereotypes and to improve inclusion in sporting, arts, leisure and other events. Women with disability were included in planning activities during this project. As part of the project, resources developed during the project will be available as an online toolbox to share information and strategies across regions. The four regional partners were:

- Moira Shire – with the project worker based at Cobram Community House in Cobram
- Barwon – with the project worker based at Women’s Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West Inc. in Geelong
- Warrnambool – with the project worker based at Warrnambool City Council in Warrnambool
- Wellington Shire – with the project worker based at Gippsland Women’s Health in Sale

Additional to these four organisations, Women’s Health Goulburn North East was also a partner in the ‘*Here We Are*’ program. The five partner organisations participated in the Project Advisory Group (PAG) through the life of the project. Each region identified and targeted unique needs and opportunities, which provided a diversity of activities delivered under the project.

The activities delivered by the four regions included:



The project was seeking outcomes to drive real change for women with disabilities in the four regions; the evaluation of this project looked at whether the individual projects and 'Here We Are' as a whole built local capacity and created opportunities for women with disabilities in their local community. Evaluation findings included:

It is estimated that approximately more than 600 people participated in the 'Here We Are' project activities, with the numbers in each region varied according to the design and intention of the activities that the LCB developed or supported. Additional to the attendee numbers, stakeholders, partner organisations and local organisations were involved in project delivery and attendance at events across the four regions. Five partner organisations and five LCB's were involved in project planning, development, implementation and review of the outcomes. The key findings and recommendations included:

- The opportunity for women with disability to apply and fulfil the project roles enabled leading, shaping and influencing of the community across the delivered activities but also within the organisations they worked in and with the networks and engagement that they delivered
- Reducing barriers for women with disability and increasing opportunities to live a life in the community as everyone else does starts with community awareness of lived experience and understanding the impact that inclusion can have on ordinary lives
- The project goals were met, to varying degrees, in each region. There is enthusiasm in the community to learn and do more, this will be capitalised by continuing the project with set goals and efforts targeted within each community

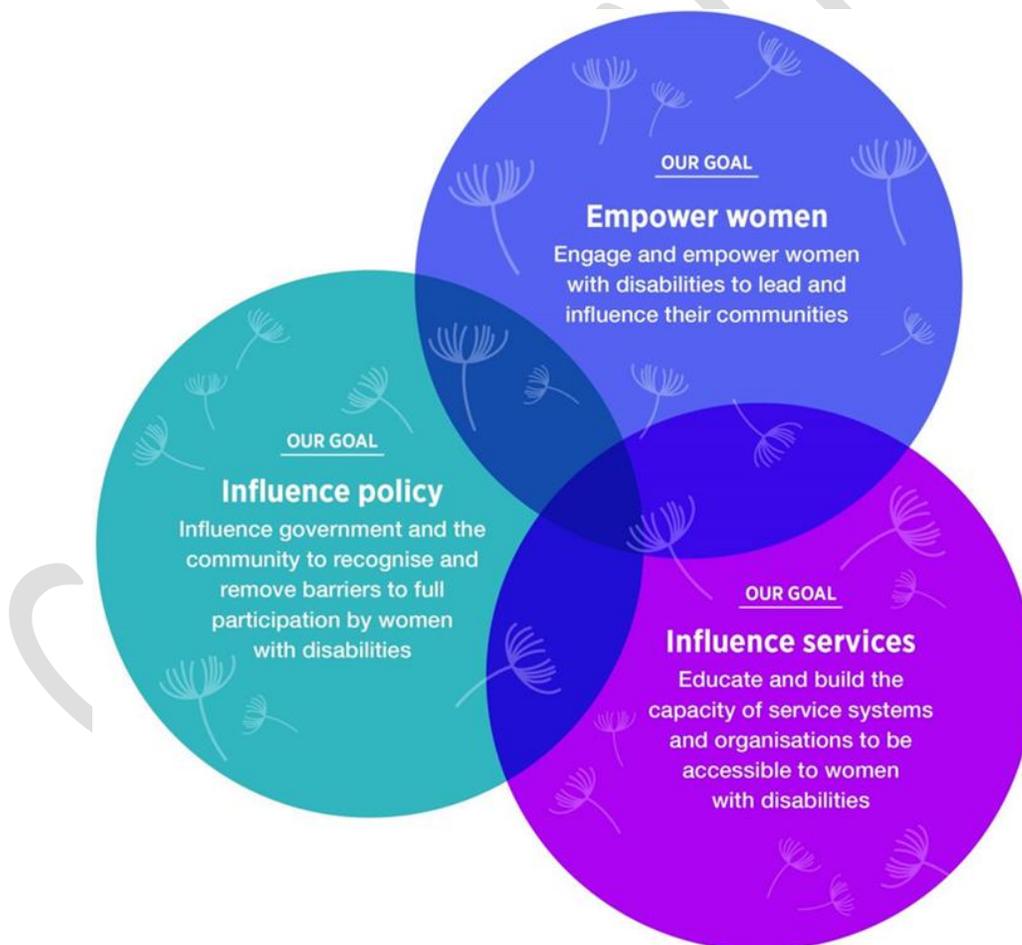
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- Conversations with women with disability about accessing mainstream services and understanding what the challenges and barriers to doing this was an important part of the project. Building this picture and providing examples, with the view to resolving the barriers is an important ongoing conversation for the LCB's as they engage with organisations and community members
- A strengths based approach to developing community capacity enabled gains to be made more rapidly than if the "Here We Are" project had attempted to deliver stand alone project activities
- The resources developed through the course of this project will assist with capacity building for organisations if the resources continued to be promoted, shared and supported. They will form part of the conversation of change.
- With further community engagement, people will be exposed to a range of knowledge, materials and support to continue their efforts to becoming more inclusive
- Increasing businesses, organisations and individuals knowledge of NDIS has been key in areas where it has not yet rolled out or is just commencing and there is still a lot of myths and misperceptions about how it will work or will not work.
- The incidental things that have occurred as part of this project include enhanced relationships and interconnections within the local region and across the four regions. The project has connected people with people they can confidently ask in their local community.
- Additional to NDIS funding there are some funding sourcing outside of disability specific funding which would be worthwhile exploring – including Creative Victoria. It is important that the local areas seek opportunities for ongoing funding.

Introduction

The Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) funding, is expected to contribute to the overall goals of the NDIS of increasing the social and economic participation of people with disability. This was an opportunity for Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) to further their work in building local capacity to support women with disabilities in rural and regional areas. WDV gathered information and observations to measure the activities delivered through the “*Here We Are*” project and to determine if differences were made in the communities where women with disabilities live. For the purpose of this project, the difference to women’s lives included women with disability in the four communities and focused predominantly on the services and activities in the community, building local capacity through awareness, knowledge and change. This ensures that women with disabilities in the regions are able to access and benefit from the same services and activities as everyone else.

The “*Here We Are*” project aligns well with Women with Disability Victoria’s (WDV) strategic direction, with the main aim of the Strategic plan 2017 – 2020 being to influence service providers, inform and educate the capacity of service systems and community events.



ILC funding is intended to support activity that runs alongside other supports to people in the community. Additionally, WDV recognises that building local capacity in communities is vital to ensure that women with disability have access to a range of services and supports that are not only accessible but also inclusive. Educating businesses, community groups and other organisations in the community that it is not just about being able to “get in the building” but for women with disability it is often about how inclusive the business or organisation is that influences whether you feel confident about coming back. Building capacity is also about women gaining access to housing and employment, some of the projects undertaken as part of “*Here We Are*” specifically addressed how disability employment agencies can enhance their readiness to assist women with disability.

The project allowed WDV to gather more information from the four rural communities in relation to the barriers for women with disability in the community. The “*Here We Are*” project worked to encourage organisations to be more inclusive and empower women to access all services in the community. The lived experience of women with disabilities living in rural and regional areas was a key driver for the project. The LCB’s spoke to people in the community to build knowledge and understanding about their role in creating a more inclusive community for women with disability, to share ideas and resources to support change and to share successes with the local community.

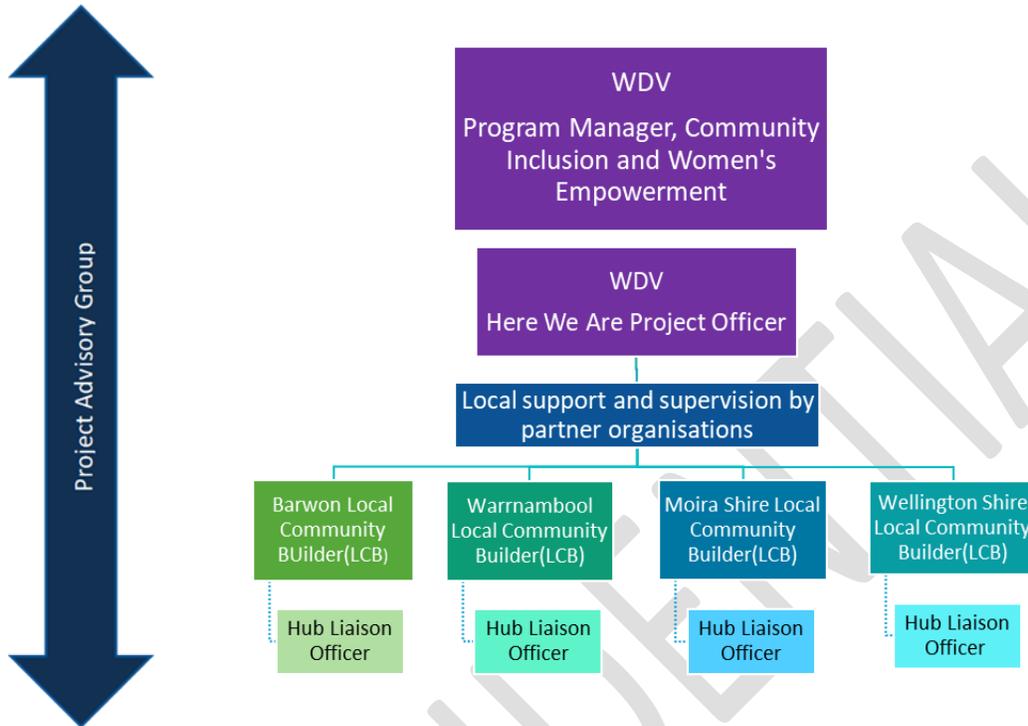
The project’s design considered relevant national and state documents including:

- National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020 (all six policy areas were relevant to the outcomes of this project)
- National Mental Health Strategy
- Workplace Diversity and Inclusion strategy 2016 – 2019
- State-wide Family Violence Action Plan and Primary Prevention Strategy.
- Disability Action Plan 2018-2020 (all four themes)
- Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan
- Victorian Health and Wellbeing plan 2015-2019
- SHUT OUT: The Experience of People with Disabilities and their Families in Australia

All of the above were referenced and consulted across the projects. There was particular emphasis on projects that incorporated opportunities for improving mental health, preventing violence and injury and improving sexual and reproductive health for women with disabilities in regional health. Throughout the journey the LCB’s talked to many women, people in the community and organisations to hear about their experiences.

The aim of the project was to support women with disability, in their local communities, to feel more welcomed and involved in the activities of ordinary life – working, attending events and learning. The project was developed recognising the barriers that women with disability face that include community attitudes, inaccessible services, information, and loss of choice and control over health. Where women with disabilities fail to access services and are not included at a local level, they experience social isolation, exclusion and they are unable to access the services and opportunities that they need to be truly engaged in the community.

“Here We Are” project structure



It is conservatively estimated that more than 600 people participated in the *“Here We Are”* project activities and events, with the numbers in each region varied according to the design and intention of the activities. To access a per region break down of this figure refer to Appendix 7. Additional to the attendee numbers stakeholders, partner organisations and local organisations were involved in project delivery and attendance at events across the four regions. Five partner organisations and five LCB’s were involved in project planning, development, implementation and review of the outcomes.

Project Scope

As part of the ILC grant funding, an Activity Work Plan (AWP) was used to set clear scope and timelines for activities that would be delivered as part of the grant agreement. The grant was for one year, with the intention of working with established stable structures within the community, utilising networks and resources to enhance the experience of these rather than creating a stand-alone project. The AWP outlined deliverables and timelines for the project and WDV regularly reported against these to the NDIA as part of the agreement. The plan included an outline of deliverables, a Planning phase, Establishment phase, Delivery phase and Consolidation and Knowledge sharing phase. Original timelines were altered due to candidate recruitment time in each region. The consolidation of knowledge and the sharing of the projects success and learnings will continue to occur after the project timeline has expired.

The NDIA recognised that there may be many different ways of achieving the ILC outcomes, this view allowed the “*Here We Are*” program to be design to encourage diversity, creativity and exploration in approaches to achieving outcomes for each region. The four regions looked at gaps and opportunities for strengthening community capacity and the projects were designed with the intention to meet the identified need. For each region, this looked different and projects took shape on different scales. Due to the short term nature of the funding opportunity, WDV, together with their regional partners, opportunities in the community that could be built upon where possible.

The project goals included:

- People with disability use and benefit from the same mainstream services as everyone else
- People with disability participate in and benefit from the same community activities as everyone else
- People with disability actively contribute to leading, shaping and influencing their community
- Using an embedded community capacity building model to support engagement and inclusion of women with disability in the activities of ordinary life – working, attending events, learning, accessing services and spending leisure time in the community
- Positive change in individual attitudes and community culture
- With support from WDV through virtual Community of Practice (CoP), collect, share and refine useful materials to produce an online resource toolbox to support women with disabilities actively contributing to leading, shaping and influencing their community
- Support WDV’s key messages to empower women with disabilities

As part of the deliverables, the project aimed to employ a woman with disability as the Local Capacity Builder (LCB) in each region. The development and implementation of the regional plans by the partners included the strategies within local networks to build relationships with local leaders and to seek organisations and structures within the community. The evaluation of the project ran alongside the project, with an external evaluator observing, monitoring and tracking impact of change throughout the project cycle.

The project risks considered included:

- Sustaining the impact, knowledge, skills and processes relating to the project beyond the 12 month project timeline
- Partnership breakdown
- Specific, place related risks (generally identified and managed at the local level)
- ICT failure
- Unable to attract and retain the WDV program team
- Unable to attract, retain and support women with disabilities in the LCB role

A series of online (virtual) Community of Practice (CoP) were conducted as part of the project to provide an opportunity to regularly share resources and information but also discuss engagement strategies and challenges across the four regions. To optimise the use of the work developed during

the course of the “*Here We Are*” project, the Project Officer gathered resources throughout the project to develop an online toolbox resource available for organisations and communities from the WDV website. The intention of the toolbox is to share the LCB’s work developed during the project with the potential to be replicated for inclusion in other regions. The resources include knowledge, learnings and successes of the capacity building activities.

At the commencement of the project, position descriptions and a project timeline were put into place. Memorandums of Understanding sealed the partnership agreements and the evaluation framework was developed to assist with the review and evaluation of the project. The evaluation component was designed to determine if the project met the desired project goals as well as governance and partner engagement. The evaluation looked at each activity delivered by the LCB in each area, with the goal to look at both individual and local area outcomes, the relationships developed, those that can be further enhanced or developed and what WDV needs to consider for ongoing relationship management in these regions.

The overall goals to determine clear scope and timelines for activities to be delivered were developed and modified along the course of the project by the Project Officer in consultation with each LCB and the local partner.

Definition of terms

Communities of Practice – a group of people who participate in shared learning; they generally share a profession or have a shared competence with the purpose of sharing knowledge and collective learning. Usually participation is voluntary, however for the purposes of the project it was an expectation that LCB's participate in each one through the course of the project.

Gender Lens – ensuring that conversations, planning, decisions and content consider gender imbalances and the lived experience of women. Historically gender power dynamics have favoured men, with women's perspectives and experience being less represented.

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) funding – NDIA funding intended to create connections through providing funding to organisations to deliver programs for the benefit of people with disability and the broader Australian community. For the purposes of this project, the funding was intended to specifically create community inclusion of women with disability however, some of the project outcomes benefit not only women with disability.

Intersectionality – the interconnected nature of societal categorisations such as gender, class, health or social status. Recognising the overlapping roles in discrimination and disadvantage for individuals and groups.

Project Advisory Group (PAG) – a group of people selected by WDV for the purposes of advising and guiding the project. Often four to six people, gathering at regular intervals throughout a project, referring to a terms of reference for the PAG was set at the commencement of the project. The progress of the project are discussed in line with the intended project outcomes.

Rural and Regional health – about one-third of Australia's population live in regional, rural and remote areas. Generally, they do not enjoy the same standard of health and wellbeing than those that live in the cities. Additional factors influence people living in these communities such as the impacts of droughts on farm families and rural communities

Program Partners and stakeholders

WDV collaborated with organisations for the purposes of this project. In Barwon, WDV partnered with Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West; Cobram Community House in Cobram; Gippsland Women's Health in the Shire of Wellington and Warrnambool City Council in Warrnambool.

The four organisations selected for the partnerships have strengths in women's health and wellbeing, disability and access, health promotion and community engagement. Each organisation was identified as being aligned with the intentions of the "*Here We Are*" project; WDV had already established relationships in these regions through the establishment of their rural hubs project. They also provided local supervision, which was part of the project design and funds were allocated to each partner organisation for this function.

The fifth partner was Women's Health Goulbourn North East, a non-government regional women's health promotion agency with a focus on Prevention of Violence against women, Sexual and reproductive health, women's empowerment and gender and respect. With a history of conducting local research that highlights the impact of rurality, gender and disability on women, their work and knowledge was a valuable addition to the project particularly for the LCB in Cobram and as part of the Program Advisory Group(PAG).

The five partner organisations formed part of the PAG who met at regular intervals via Zoom (teleconferencing technology) to:

- Discuss the project progress and activities in each region.
- Provide updates on the recruitment, project planning, evaluation and delays.
- Discussions about the overall project.

The short timeline of the project meant many of the activities were delivered close to the end and utilised the Project Officer role to discuss the activities that would be delivered in each region; the PAG was an opportunity to receive updates project process more than to guide and steer the project.

Partnership Agreement

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the project was developed to confirm and manage the partnerships with each region. The agreement was dated January 2018 to January 2019. The MOU set out elements of the project and expectations for the relationship and deliverables throughout the course of the project.

The agreement clearly defines the project goals, the rationale for the agreement and outlines that it will be a strengths based approach to partnership that shows a commitment to shared learning and development. The agreement requires the partner to track and monitor the outcomes, management of the program and other defined responsibilities. The same MOU was used for each partnership. The budget was also outlined in the agreement, including the payment distribution that requests proof of expenses.

Hubs

There are four WDV Hubs in Victoria that provide leadership networks for local women with disabilities who live in these areas. They are interested in leadership, advocacy, human rights, and empowerment, as well as local matters impacting the lives of women with disabilities. Women in the Barwon, Wellington, Moira and Warrnambool areas - and who identify as a woman with disability - are invited to join the Hubs. Joining the Hub is free and is facilitated by a Hub Liaison Officer who is employed by WDV one day a fortnight; the Hubs had a direct link to the LCB in each region providing knowledge, guidance and support across the project.

The predominant benefit of the Hubs already being in place in the regions of the *'Here We Are'* project was that relationships could be built upon from existing knowledge and experience rather than commenced from scratch.

Project Officer

The Project Officer role sought to guide, support and direct the project activities in each region. The Project Officer developed the project plan, coordinated the recruitment of the LCB's, delivered the inductions, collaborated on project design, developed the work plans for each region, and was in regular contact to offer support and guidance ensuring that the activities were on track and within scope.

The role also set the calendar of Communities of Practice and collected the project resources that were developed along the way to produce the toolkit of resources that will be available on the WDV webpage. The project included some regional travel to support the roles, and the Project Officer was able to attend, assist and support some of the key activities delivered across the regions. The Project Officer and the evaluator regularly met to discuss the observations and progress in each region identifying risks and scope creep.

The Project Officer and the Program Manager of Community Inclusion and Women's Empowerment worked closely together to identify project risks, manage contract and partner relationships and to discuss opportunities and successes across the project.

Local Community Builders

"That's why I'm here because I want to make that difference. It needs to be done. Raising awareness is a huge part of the role".

"I've been researching it for so long it's ingrained into me, all these social, political and environmental views about disabled women".

The work of the LCB's was anchored in stable service structures and enabled them to access established community networks and structures as well as work to making new ones during the project cycle. The LCB has had the benefit of accessing knowledge and resources from both WDV and the partner organisation who employed them.

WDV and the partner organisation jointly ran the recruitment process and selected the final candidate. WDV delivered the project induction and set the work plan in line within the scope of the 'Here We Are' project. The partner organisation provided the organisational orientation and support, as well as identifying gaps and opportunities in the region and linking the LCB to established networks and opportunities in their region.

The LCB roles were offered on a flexible part time basis, with different arrangements in each region according to the need of the candidate. The organisations were guided by the worker to determine what they may need to support them in their roles at the commencement of their employment. Some of the LCB's had been volunteers or not held a paid employment role for quite some time. The funding allowed WDV to support the employment of women with disabilities to identify the most relevant projects for their region and to champion the project.

Program Participants

Program participants included a range of people from across the community. Across the state there was a selection of:

- business managers,
- council staff,
- community sector staff,
- volunteers,
- local government councillors,
- business professionals,
- women with disability,
- colleagues of the LCB's,
- families and friends of people with disability,
- community members.

There were no limitations placed on who could attend the events and activities, however LCB's identified who they were targeting at the commencement of each activity.

Communities of Practice

Linking the LCB's together for professional development and knowledge building in relation to the project was vital. The LCB's, together with the Project Officer, met up via online platform Zoom for video conference Communities of Practice (CoP) sessions. The CoP brought the LCB's together over the course of this project to share ideas, knowledge and to discuss lived experience of disability both on a personal and professional level.

The group was surveyed at the commencement of the project to determine their current knowledge of CoP's to assist the Project Officer with understanding what type of introduction would be needed to ensure that all LCB's found it a valuable part of the project. The survey also required LCB's to indicate topics they might like to cover as part of the CoP sessions. The Project Officer ran through how they work, the benefits and how she envisaged the CoP would operate during the project.

The Project Officer delivered two CoP and the LCB's were required to select a topic and deliver it to the group. The varied skills across the group were shared during the sessions. Topics included:

- *Working with current disability providers in your area,*
- *Encountering resistance to gender equality,*
- *Women with disabilities seeking to return to study in your area,*
- *Women with disabilities in and out of the workforce (incorporating social model)*
- *Women with disabilities and technology (pick an app discussion).*

The group was surveyed after the last CoP to gain an understanding of whether they felt it had been useful and what they had gained from participating in the CoP.

Education and development

The LCB's came together in early July in Melbourne for a development session and to talk about their roles, the uniqueness of each region and the project ideas that they had. The LCB's came to Melbourne for two events over two days hosted by WDV. The first day was the WDV annual members' lunch with members and staff of WDV, and to attend a forum on advocacy.

The second day was "*Here We Are*" specific and the session was delivered by the Project Officer. Topics covered were Social Inclusion, Social Capital, Equity and Equality, Employment and general discussion about the project and their roles. It provided a good opportunity for the LCB's to meet face to face, as they began to work together. Social capital questionnaires were completed and the group discussed some of their responses drawing on personal experiences.

Leading up to the conclusion of the project, a session was facilitated by the evaluator for a collective discussion about the project and the shared learnings. This was an opportunity to share learnings and successes but also to discuss what could be improved in terms of project structure, working with people in regional Victorian locations and general reflection on the benefits of delivering the "*Here We Are*" project as part of a team. Three regions participated in this session.

Evaluation Methodology

When the ILC funding was being developed, people with disability in the community and their families were consulted on how to measure the impact of the activities delivered with the funding. In line with what was collected, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Surveys, some qualitative data collection and interviews have been used to understand the experience of the communities where "*Here We Are*" projects were delivered. Stories from participants and key stakeholders, as well as observations have been included throughout this report to represent people in the community who generously shared their experiences and observations.

Using this mix of methods enabled genuine participation from women with disability and a broad section of people in the community. It was recognised that before and after surveys of participants would be useful. This opportunity was limited in this project however, we have captured self-reports and stakeholder observations of the impact of the projects on individuals and the community.

The evaluation aimed to determine what and who had changed as a result of the activities delivered under the “*Here We Are*” project. The project involved strong community engagement and was short-term therefore the measurement of change was limited. Despite this factor it was still possible to measure the immediate impact and some of the flow-on effects of the activities that were delivered.

It was intended that the ILC Outcomes capture baseline data about the community, regular check ins on the status through the project and then the outcomes at the end of the project. The defined outcomes for this project, as outlined above, were used as the basis for measuring the outcomes of this program and the projects delivered in each region. In many cases, the indicators of successful local capacity building are going to be evident in the longer term. For example, to determine whether a video produced has made it easier for employment services to appropriately match women with work cannot be fully realised until the resource has been out and available to job providers for a while.

For each project, indicators were identified to tell us whether change had occurred. Throughout this project, WDV worked with the LCB’s and the stakeholders to understand what the local landscape was, including the challenges and where future opportunities may be.

Observation and personal reflection from women with disability, from organisations and other stakeholders who had been involved in the projects was collected. The evaluator regularly requested that the LCB’s share these observations, describe the level of engagement across the projects and share stories as well as provide contact details of those willing to participate formally in the evaluation.

Longitudinal data analysis was limited due to the length of the “*Here We Are*” project. During the NDIS consultation, it was noted that some outcomes take longer to achieve and cannot be observed at a single point in time. Therefore it was important to measure outcomes at multiple points in time. The goal was to understand through the evaluation who, what and how much has changed. How much and what was being done in each region to build community capacity and to influence positive change and community culture.

The project was aiming for sustainable change that built local capacity and knowledge within the 12 months, some of the changes that may occur as a result of the project will be observed after the project has finished.

The evaluation also aimed to determine the appropriateness of the activity against the project goals, how well the activity was delivered, whether the activity had the planned impact and what could be done differently to increase engagement and impact in the future. This is related to the quality of the activity and satisfaction of the users and other key stakeholders; this was measured with a combination of quantitative or qualitative data.

When looking at the change for the beneficiaries of the activity the evaluation looked for what difference activity made for an individual, an organisation or participants overall. Most of this information was gathered through interview and discussions along the way, some of the LCB’s and partners provided examples of change that they had observed during the project cycle.

LCB's listened to the community along the way, from the first engagement and throughout the project, and used the information to guide their project efforts. For some projects, such as the *'Here We Are' in the Arts*, observations were made by the LCB and the facilitators about the confidence of the participants when they first engaged with the project compared to after they had exhibited their work. Stories were also provided about how the community engaged with the artwork.

The evaluator sought to determine whether the project increased the confidence of the community to deliver inclusive services that are accessible to all and for women with disabilities in the four communities. Additionally, had their involvement in the projects increased their confidence in enabling access to mainstream services and had the activity enabled women with disability to contribute, lead and advocate in the community. Refer to Appendix six for a sample of the questions used during interviews.

Whilst some quantitative data was collected throughout the *'Here We Are'* program, this is only part of the picture. It was not simply about the number of people who attended an activity, it was how they engaged, what they gained along the way and how this would influence future activities in the community. The more significant indicators were found in the qualitative data, asking people in the community:

- were people more confident and aware of how to make their service or activity accessible to women with disability
- what had people learnt about creating an inclusive environment
- what were the benefits and challenges that they experienced
- what had they observed throughout the activity in terms of outcomes and learnings
- had it increased participation
- had it increased people's confidence in providing a more inclusive environment
- had it increased women with disabilities confidence in accessing services and activities within the community
- what were the unintended outcomes from the activities

The level of engagement with the evaluation was varied across the project, with three regions being highly engaged, willing to learn and seeing value in evaluation as part of the project. However, with one region participating minimally, barriers were created for WDV and the evaluator being able to evaluate elements of the project. This led to missed opportunities in a region that has potential to make gains towards a more inclusive community. It was evident during the project journey that despite the Project Officer and the Program Manager, Community Inclusion and Women's Empowerment regularly working to get the project to focus on the intended outcomes that some of the activities were out of scope for the project.

We have collected information along the way to measure the outcomes of the project, and whilst there have been limitations on the volume of information collected, the information that we have collected has been rich. The quantitative data only tells us part of the story, in the project it is the women's stories and the experiences shared by people in the community that have provided information about the successes and challenges of the project. Whilst we can link the information

from each region, the projects are quite different so we measured outcomes on individual projects in addition to the perspective of the program overall.

‘Here We Are’ in the Community

“we don’t think about the different ways that that people experience the world.” Colleague from partner organisation.

The overarching work by the LCB in each region was engaging with the community to strengthen the inclusion of women with disability. The community engagement aimed to gain an understanding of lived experience of disability of women living in the community and to identify the opportunities to increase the community’s inclusion. The engagement and local knowledge gathered informed the choices and design of the activities for each region, enabling the LCB’s to tailor the project efforts in their region. Local engagement efforts ran the full course of the project.

The relationship development with local businesses and organisations across the regions increased engagement and understanding about the disability and the gender lens in their rural community. Through engaging with the local community, providing them with information, connection to resources and networks, they would be encouraged to work towards a more inclusive community where women with disability would have increased confidence in accessing mainstream services.

The LCB’s community engagement work was integral to the rest of the ‘Here We Are’ projects delivered in each region. Community engagement was vital to create community centred dialogue that gained understanding of perceptions and barriers in the community, building stronger relationships, understanding and increased commitment to creating an inclusive community.

The indicators to determine whether the community engagement had made a difference to the community’s knowledge and included:

- Increased community knowledge of the challenges face by women with disability and changes made to create more inclusive services and supports in the community
- Increased confidence of women with disability living in the community to access mainstream services
- Increase involvement of women with disabilities in the community across activities, services and advocacy

It was evident through speaking with stakeholders and people in the community and the opportunities that presented themselves throughout ‘Here We Are’ project, that the LCB’s had engaged with a broad range of people across the community. It was also evident that people in the community had expanded their view of the lived experience of women with disabilities in their community and the importance of creating a more inclusive community to allow women to fully participate in community life.

In Cobram, the LCB had strengthened some of the existing relationships with Cobram Neighbourhood house and The Moira Hub as well as creating new connections to increase people’s knowledge and understanding of disability. The Cobram Community House is a Registered Training
22 ‘Here We Are’ project evaluation

Organisation delivering a range of education programs but also social engagement and community development activities.

The LCB in Moira Shire also had access to Gippsland Women's Health research, knowledge and expertise about the region that was provided valuable additional insights into the local services and networks. The Barwon LCB optimised existing Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West, the Barwon Hub as well as some of her established networks in the community and built on these but additionally establishing new relationships and connections in the region.

The Wellington Shire indicated that the project's length of time restricted opportunities for engagement and decided to spend more time on resource development. The partnership in this region was with a health promotion service and this potentially reduced capacity for community engagement. Local community engagement expertise was not available however the LCB could have accessed the expertise and support from the WDV Project Officer or the Wellington Hub to strengthen local engagement.

In Warrnambool, the partner organisation was a local government with established relationships with the disability service providers. This is a vibrant community engaging well with disability issues and they are committed to raising the platforms of disability, disadvantage and family violence. The engagement in the Warrnambool region met delays when the LCB was needed to take some time from work. An additional LCB engaged late in the project and support from the partner to keep things moving the community engagement element of the work was evident in the type and number of projects that were delivered in a shorter time than the other regions.

The participants in the evaluation who had been part of an activity or who had been to a session that one of the LCB's had presented about the *'Here We Are'* project reported that they had gained a broader understanding of the issues facing women with disability in the region. It is too early, however, to understand what actions they have taken to increase inclusiveness. Many had gained a deeper understanding of the range of experiences that women with disability experience in the community and really valued the opportunity to learn more about the projects and services that were available in the area. Nearly three-quarters of the people we spoke to indicated that they now went around their own community with a different view of both the physical barriers but also the social barriers that women with a disability face when trying to access everyday services and social opportunities.

"As a feminist health promotion organisation we have gained a lot from this project.....we engaged with people we haven't managed to engage with before..... it's provided another lens ,and we have more practical ideas about how to be even more inclusive " Colleague

Two staff at one of the partner organisations described their experience of being part of *the 'Here We Are'* project as creating a wider consciousness of inclusion. Their observations were that it had broadened their understanding of inclusion in the work they were delivering and it had increased their external advocacy work for women with disability in the community and of inclusion more generally. They indicated that it had always been part of their conversation but that having the LCB housed in their organisation and part of general conversations about the services was a benefit to their

conversations and approaches. One example has been the way the organisation communicates to women in the community, the LCB has been able to enhance the way that messages are communicated via social media channels. The LCB encouraged visual descriptors to their communication.

“as a resource (the LCB), made us aware of more accessible and inclusive ways of communicating”.

When a colleague of one of the LCB’s was asked about the best thing that came out of the project the response was that it had allowed the organisation to reflect on *“how we do our work”*. It was indicated by both the LCB’s colleague and her local supervisor that partnering on this project had put the intersectional lens at the forefront of the work being done across the organisation. The issues of health, gender, disability, family violence and disadvantage that can be a part of women’s experience in the community. The LCB role enabled *“the next step of engaging women we haven’t yet reached”*

In the Barwon region, the LCB regularly provided feedback to her colleagues, providing the experiences of women with disability. One co-worker described having the *‘Here We Are’* project working from their organisation as a productive space to learn more about how to strengthen their work. One colleague described the LCB’s approach as really constructive. The colleague stated, *“feedback has always come from a positive mindset, providing tools and checklists when she has seen a gap”*.

One of the partners in the program indicated that, as a small organisation, this was their first experience of employing a woman who identified herself as having a disability. Employing someone with a disability was new; they took a common sense approach to understanding the needs of their new employer and adapting, as they needed to. There were conversations about what needed to be put in place to make the work place inclusive. The LCB in that region recalled that the Manager made the conversation about what adaptations needed to be made for her in the workplace and saying *“excellent, let’s go to Officeworks”* and made the discussion light and fun, she experienced a positive attitude to towards the modifications that they needed to discuss.

Other improvements that *‘Here We Are’* brought to the partner organisations included improving planning of events to increase accessibility and inclusion. An example was provided by one of the partners that the project had enabled them to better understand visual and hearing impairments that led to different planning and facilitating of events. The view was that by increasing the organisations knowledge about how to enrich the experience for people with hearing and visual impairment that women with disability attending future events would be able to fully participate.

“The role has been valuable to the region and for us on multiple levels.....it has strengthened our work and made it better” partner organisation.

‘Here We Are’ in the Community engaged the community in conversation about women with disability, sharing the lived experience of disability, got people thinking about what the challenges were to women who wanted to access mainstream services and encouraged people in the community to advocate for and be part of the change.

Talking with women about their experiences and challenges provided the LCB's with more information about the local barriers and what could be done to reduce them. It also enabled the LCB's to share this information with organisations and individuals in the community when they were lobbying for inclusion and describing the benefits of inclusion.

We were unable to measure whether this project increased women with disabilities daily access to community activities that they may not have considered before however with time, confidence and changes in community attitude it is likely that women may access services that they have not considered in the past due to a negative experience.

In considering whether this element of the project demonstrated women with disability actively contribute to leading, shaping and influencing their community the project saw many examples of leadership. LCB's demonstrated leadership through their advocating for change, challenging stereotypes, demonstrating leadership to other women with disabilities and shaping the conversations within the partner organisations by applying the gender and disability lens across the programs being delivered.

'Here We Are' in the Community and the LCB roles demonstrated that, with more time, these relationships and opportunities would develop profile and raise commitment to strengthening the inclusion of women with disability. The community engagement and networking that occurred during the project supported Women with Disabilities Victoria's key messages to empower women with disabilities.

'Here We Are' in the Community and in particular the Shire of Wellington was responsive to women with disabilities and empowered women to engage in the new system (NDIS) but also to build confidence to think more laterally, about how they can become more active in their community and to explore services that they may not have considered before.

The engagement with organisations and women with disabilities looked very different in each region and was organic in nature. Some of the commonalities included giving women with disabilities the confidence to let their voice be heard, connecting them to other opportunities within the community that they may not have considered before, promoting health and prevention of violence against women messages to women which included where to get help and support.

Barwon Region

The activities delivered by the LCB in the Barwon region included:

- *'Here We Are' in the Community*
- *'Here We Are' in the Arts* (which included a range of projects including Geelong Renew Art Workshops and music venue accessibility discussions, Artist interviewed and profiled as part of *'Here We Are' in the community*)
- Social Capital survey
- 16 days of activism poster campaign
- VIP – Access stickers for businesses.

For the purposes of the evaluation, we have looked at each activity separately and how it met with the goals of the 'Here We Are' program. The LCB and evaluator collected feedback throughout the project and spoke to randomly selected key stakeholders near the end of the project. Information about people's understanding, increased knowledge and engagement was collected during the course of the project however, given the short term of the project, the information was limited to those who were willing to engage in sharing their experience.

Information was collected from 36 individuals by interviews, surveys and other discussions.

"She (the Barwon LCB) is one of the most enthusiastic and respectful people I have ever met, her work led to participants being really excited about their involvement."

Barwon met with many women, talked to them about their stories and worked to engage them in a number of projects being delivered in the region. In terms of raising the profile of women with a disability living and ordinary life, the LCB aimed to create a space for women with a disability - not focussing on their disability but focussing on the work they were doing in the community. This work was important to compliment the projects efforts in the Barwon region and to give women with disabilities the confidence to get involved with the community in ways that connect them with their interests and skills.

It also raised the profile of the project, assisting with conversations with organisations about being more inclusive and the benefits of increasing local capacity to enable women with disabilities to access mainstream services and activities.



Figure 1 Local artist Meg Stewart, profiled as part of the Barwon 'Here We Are' project

'Here We Are' in the Arts

"The display of the women's art work led to a lot of interest from the community, the participants and their friends."

The LCB in Barwon engaged heavily with people in the arts, recognising that art is a form of expression, can be therapeutic, support personal discovery and bring people together. Organisations such as Creative Geelong were involved to create opportunities to for women with disabilities to engage in art workshops and exhibiting their work.



Figure 3 Contributor Lynne Foreman and her knitted Crockenbush

“Our work at Creative Geelong is all about the creative industries and one of our biggest things is about being inclusive so it was in line with our ethos being involved with the ‘Here We Are’ project. It showed the diversity of the industry, creatives and artists”

“When I first met and starting speaking with one of the women, who is an avid knitter who knits and knits and knits as a way of expressing herself we had many conversations about what made Art. She brought in a giant knitted croquembouche. Art comes in so many different ways and forms, for her to be comfortable to bring in the croquembouche..... it was amazing for other people to see it and have a play. A 19 year old came in and was really taken by the piece; he spoke with the artist about the piece. He was working in a patisserie. The connection between the two people and their discussion was so exciting. Oh my gosh, he purchased one of the mice from the croquembouche. She (the artist) got to experience firsthand how her art made others feel. This particular woman will definitely be keen to exhibit next year and at other opportunities which is very exciting”

The artist claimed “it’s not art” and the Creative Geelong staff member responded, “of course it’s art, it’s creative practice. It’s about collaboration and experimentation.”

The gallery also reported that a few of the contacts introduced to the space and the exhibition by the LCB have come back in and asked if they can bring additional groups in. The women took their time and worked at their pace, some of the woman came in a few times and added to their work. Specifically for women with disability, all ages involved and from different areas surrounding Geelong, those interviewed indicated that this was great.

They indicated that often they see the same art works represented by people with disability from certain groups and it was great to see that for this project the LCB had encouraged and attracted new people.

“It gave them a starting point and a space to feel comfortable to show their work and to feel validated in that space”. It wasn’t a confronting thing, it was done at their space and they weren’t pushed”
Curator



The flyer features a yellow background with a white border. At the top, there are logos for Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West Inc., Creative Geelong, and Barwon Month of Action. Below these is the title 'CREATIVE GALLERY SPACE' in large, bold, black letters. Underneath the title are five small images showing various art pieces: a tiger, a landscape with a person in a wheelchair, a person's face, a person's face in a stone-like texture, and a gallery space. The main text is centered and reads: 'THIS INSTALLATION IS PART OF AN EVOLVING GALLERY SPACE. A COLLABORATION OF VARIOUS MEDIUMS AND STYLES, EACH PIECE OF ART WAS CONTRIBUTED TO THE SPACE BY WOMEN WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE OF DISABILITY FROM ACROSS THE BARWON REGION. FOLLOWING THE POWERFUL ETHOS OF THE BARWON MONTH OF ACTION TO STOP MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CONTRIBUTORS WERE ENCOURAGED TO; CHALLENGE CONDONING OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, PROMOTE WOMEN'S INDEPENDENCE AND DECISION MAKING, CHALLENGE GENDER STEREOTYPES AND STRENGTHEN POSITIVE, EQUAL AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS. THANK YOU TO THE ARTISTS FOR SHARING THEIR WORK. THANK YOU TO CREATIVE GEELONG FOR THE USE OF THEIR SPACE. THANK YOU TO THE MANY PEOPLE PAUSING AND TAKING A MOMENT TO APPRECIATE THIS INSTALLATION. AND TO THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE BARWON MONTH OF ACTION AND YOUR EFFORTS TO STOP MEN'S VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, THANK YOU.' At the bottom, there is a small circular logo that says 'HERE WE ARE' and a contact information line: '+ FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT BRIGITTE AT BSTONE@WOMENSHEALTHSW.ORG.AU'. The footer contains the Womenwithdisabilitiesvictoria logo and the NDIS logo.

Figure 4 - 'Here We Are' in the Arts promotional flyer

16 Days of Activism

The Barwon South West LCB was also involved in supporting 16 Days of Activism in the region. This included partnering with the best nightlife venues in Geelong to raise awareness of the common forms of verbal and sexual harassment experienced in venues. The LCB specifically focussed her discussions on raising awareness of the experience of women with disabilities when they attend venues. Having an LCB working in the region ensured that women with disability were included in all discussions and events, strengthening the gender lens on disability issues.

'Here We Are' on the Scene

Identifying that women with disabilities experience challenges with access and inclusion in music and entertainment venues, the LCB commenced speaking with venues about creating a welcoming environment for women with disabilities where they could access what they needed at the venue and

where they could feel safe and enjoy music venues as everyone else does. The LCB gathered information and experiences from women with lived experience of prejudice and disadvantage - when either trying to access a venue or their treatment as patrons of venues. Women shared reports of “being pitied” and not being able to adequately access basic amenities. Another story was shared where some people with wheelchairs were at a venue and were asked to leave after a while as a private function required more space, with the inference that they were taking up too much room.

There are many more examples, some of the women from the Barwon Hub and the LCB identified live music venues in Geelong that they would love to go to but they would have to cross the road and use a toilet at another business, this has prevented them from accessing something that they absolutely love.

Social Capital survey

“I am amazing, just because I walk differently doesn’t mean I don’t think like you”.

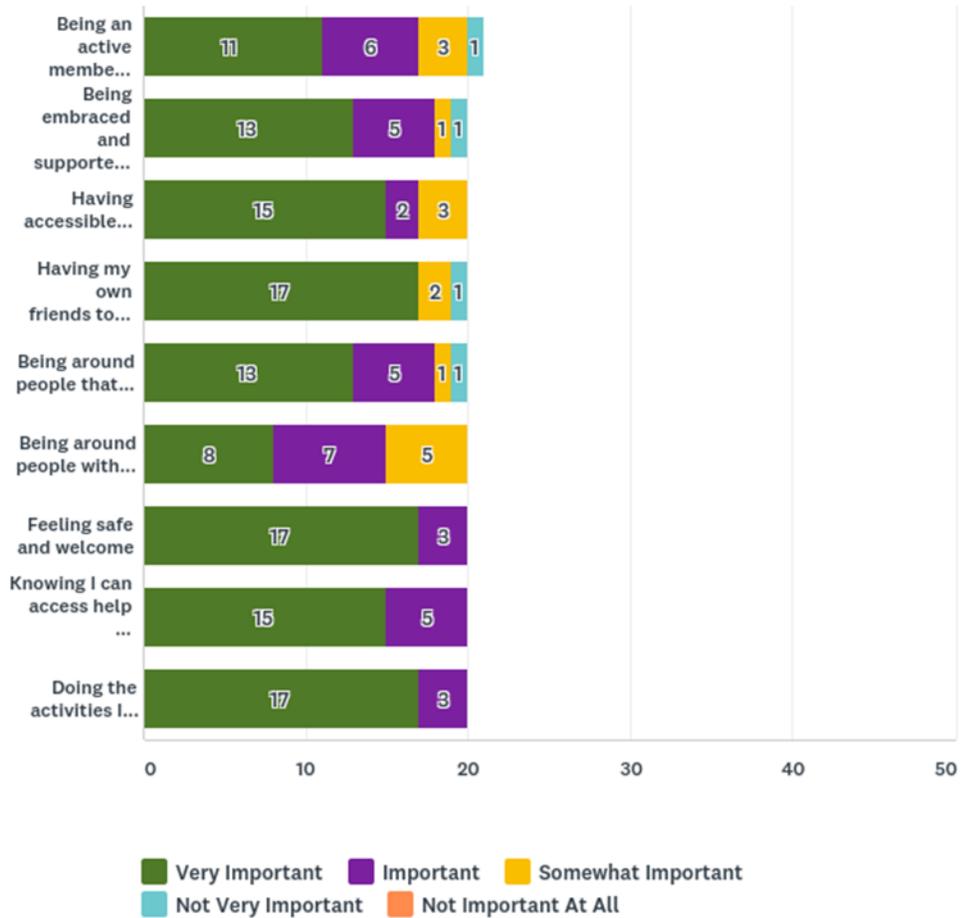
Barwon embarked on a Social Capital Survey in recognition that obtaining current and specific information from women with disabilities in the region and their experience of community life would assist with future efforts in the Barwon region. The survey was distributed via social media, the Women’s Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West communication platforms and, the LCB promoted the importance of participating in the survey and the role the information would have in future advocacy in the region. The survey was opened for two months; unfortunately the number of women who participated in the survey was lower than anticipated with twenty-one women completing the survey. The survey results indicated that:

- Over 95% of women completing the survey identified as being a woman with disability
- Almost 58% of women completing the survey identified as being a resident of Geelong or Greater Barwon Region
- Almost 58% of the respondents were under 45 years old
- Most of the respondents indicated a high level of technology use
- 75% had access to the internet at home and 70% indicated that they were confident using the internet and basic technology.
- *Having my own friends to spend time with, feeling safe, welcome, and Doing activities I enjoy* were identified as being the most important.

When respondents were asked *Thinking about your own happiness and satisfaction in the community how important do you rate the following* , respondents were asked to rate on a five point rating scale from *Very important* to *Not important at all* the following aspects of community life:

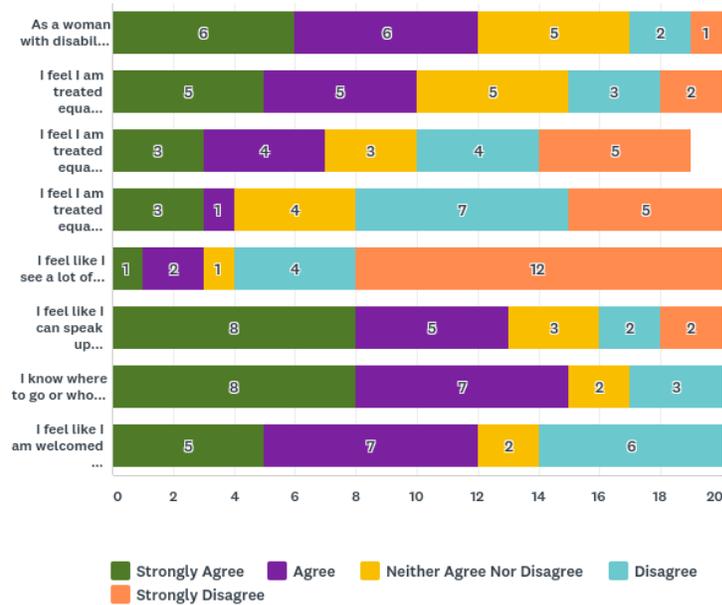
- Being an active member of my community
- Being embraced and supported by my community
- Having accessible buildings, programs and activities
- Having my own friends to spend time with
- Being around people that enjoy the same things as me

- Being around people with various abilities and disabilities
- Feeling safe and welcome
- Knowing I can access help if needed (with security, staff or manager for example)
- Doing the activities I enjoy



Feeling safe and welcome, Knowing I can access help if I needed and doing the activities I enjoy were all rated very important or important. Respondents indicated that it was less important to them to be around people with various disabilities and abilities. The survey will be further analysed by the LCB to determine what the overall findings are relevant to their current and future work in the region. The additional element, in terms of building local knowledge with the view of building also community capacity building to create a more inclusive community, is to determine what information should be shared more broadly and how to do this well.

Q8 As a woman with disability how strongly do you agree with the following statements.



60% strongly disagreed with the statement I feel like I see a lot of women like me on TV or in magazines etc.

30% Strongly Agree and 30% Agree to the statement As a woman with disability I feel I am treated equally at home

21.05 % Disagreed and 26.32% Strongly disagreed I feel I am treated equally by society as a whole

Refer to Appendix one - Barwon Social Capital survey results Q 8 for full table of data.

Women were asked As a woman with a disability what kind of impact would the following have on your life?

95% indicated that if there was more women with disability shown in the media, including local advertising it would have a positive impact on their life

90% if there were, no obstacles in the community stopping you from participating in the activities you wanted would have a positive impact on their life.

85% indicated the following would have a positive impact on their life

- if venues and public spaces were easily identifiable as being welcoming and inclusive for women with disability
- If you could be included in the activities you wanted with people of various abilities and disabilities
- If you could trust that people in the community would be welcoming and supportive

"I can have impact"

"I am a great mum. It can be done. You can have a disability and have kids and be great at it".

"I may have had a stroke but I am still ME I haven't changed. PLEASE society stop judging me for whom I am now, your support is what I need not to have all of you family, friends because I speak up finally about sexual abuser"

"I, like everyone else, am a complex person. Let's try not to judge others instantaneously"

"I am a confident advocate for others"

"Despite my disability I am a member of the community and feel comfortable being part of the community even if they don't"

A copy of the survey data and full report can be obtained by contacting Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West.

The survey data had a small number of respondents compared to the number of women with disability living in the Barwon region, the information that was collected as part of the survey will provide background information and will be useful information to consider and share however it needs to be provide in the context of the number of people that participated.

Moira Shire

The activities delivered by the LCB in the Moira Shire included *'Here We Are' in the Community, What's Out There forum at Cobram Secondary School, Access Ready*. Additionally the role supported two NDIS workshops and became part of the Disability Advisory Committee for the Moira Shire Council.

For the purposes of the evaluation, we have looked at each activity separately and how it met with the goals of the *'Here We Are'* program. The LCB and evaluator collected feedback throughout the project as well as the evaluator speaking to randomly selected key stakeholders near the end of the 12-month project.

Information about people's understanding, increased knowledge and engagement was collected during the course of the project however, given the short term of the project, the information was limited to those who were willing to engage in sharing their experience. Twenty-one people engaged with interviews with the evaluator, discussions during events and surveys.

- Increased community knowledge of the challenges face by women with disability and changes made to create more inclusive services and supports in the community
- Increased confidence of women with disability living in the community to access mainstream services
- Increase involvement of women with disabilities in the community across activities, services and advocacy

When considering the engagement achieved in the Moira region, it was evident that the LCB had engaged with a broad range of people across the community. The LCB has strengthened some of the existing relationships with Cobram Community House and created new connections to increase people's knowledge and understanding of disability.

People we spoke to had gained a broader understanding of the issues facing women with disability in the region however; it is too early to understand what actions they have taken to increase inclusiveness.

What's Out There forum – Cobram Secondary College

"I felt that the students were really engaged and that they soaked in the activity and the information sharing. It was the first opportunity that we had had to talk with students at the Secondary school; it was great to be given the opportunity." Presenter and local stakeholder

"The students seemed to enjoy putting together their own bag of information and goodies which was a good sign of their interest in the information that had been provided." Presenter and local stakeholder

"It is hard to know whether any of the participants have accessed our service, in a sense I hope they haven't had to but they know we are here" Presenter and local stakeholder

One stakeholder advised that whilst their volunteer service is very knowledgeable about local services, they do not know as much about services that they can refer people to in surrounding areas. Attending the session enabled the stakeholders to gain increased information about other services that people within Cobram may benefit from accessing when there is a need.

"We already knew about the work that Jen and Nancy were doing and are familiar with WDV. It was a great opportunity for us to learn about other services that are outside of our local area that we can refer people to".

Outcomes against the goals

The activities delivered in the Barwon region have extended across many areas of the community, creating opportunities for women with disability to actively contribute in leading, shaping and influencing their community through a number of different ways but particularly through art. The opportunities that have been created by the project have enabled partnership. With an open and constructive approach, they have built capacity and understanding about the challenges that women with disability face when accessing the community. The projects have encouraged organisations to consider the barriers and aim to reduce them so that women with disabilities can participate in their services and activities. As a result, some women have increased their confidence in accessing mainstream services.

What's Out There forum – Cobram Secondary College

The *What's Out There* forum was intended to provide information and education to secondary school girls about health and wellbeing, covering a range of issues that affect girls of secondary school age and their families. The program was designed to be delivered to all students, and those who identified

as being a female with disability. This emphasised inclusion and provided information for those who have family members with disability. The session also provided information about disability and the increased rates of women experiencing disability as they age. Approximately twenty-five students participated in the workshop, with 11 responding to a post forum survey.

The LCB consulted with health professionals and educators in the region; most importantly, the LCB met with students to find out the issues they wanted more information about. The student's feedback was a prominent feature in driving what the session would cover.

One limitation to the forum was there was a lot to cover in a short amount of time. This meant that most presenters had to deliver their message and engage with the students within 10 minutes and there was not a lot of time for the students to approach the presenters. The LCB briefed presenters about this constraint before their session and most really maximised the information and knowledge that they could share with the students during that time.

The format of the forum included introduction by the LCB and posed some questions about images in the media and healthy body image. The speakers included Goulburn Valley Area Mental Health services, Cobram Support and Information Services (CSIS), RIAC, Women's Health Goulburn North East, Uniting Care, and the Moira Hub. The Centre and Headspace provided booklets and other info about their services and stress balls, wristbands and pocket cards about mental health were offered to the students.

The LCB had focussed on a well-planned and engaging session and this was evident on the day with how well the forum ran. Some of the challenges included engaging with stakeholders and presenters for the forum and last minute cancellations that led to a change in the format for the day.

"I felt that the students were really engaged and that they soaked in the activity and the information sharing. It was the first opportunity that we had had to talk with students at the Secondary school, it was great to be given the opportunity." Presenter and local stakeholder

"The students seemed to enjoy putting together their own bag of information and goodies which was a good sign of their interest in the information that had been provided." Presenter and local stakeholder

"It is hard to know whether any of the participants have accessed our service, in a sense I hope they haven't had to but they know we are here" Presenter and local stakeholder

One stakeholder advised that whilst their volunteer service is very knowledgeable about local services, they do not know as much about services that they can refer people to in surrounding areas, attending the session enabled the stakeholder to gain increased information about other services that people within Cobram may benefit from accessing when there is a need. *"We already knew about the work that Jen and Nancy were doing and are familiar with WDV. It was a great opportunity for us to learn about other services that are outside of our local area that we can refer people to".*

Whilst it may be a less expected outcome, this opportunity has increased the presenters and stakeholders knowledge about other services and enables them to refer people to a broader variety of appropriate services and supports in the region.

The teachers from the school indicated that the speakers were well chosen and the information was informative. Some students advised their teachers that the topics they wanted covered were not included. The resources brought by the speakers complimented the information provided by the speakers. It was suggested that if it was to be delivered again that maybe include some presenters who provide information about health and disability, not just information about the services. The preparation work done by the LCB to coordinate and prepare the session with the teachers and students input was described as well organised and they were happy that it caused minimal disruption to the school and students.

"I think it was great. Made the kids really think about things they either take for granted or just make an assumption on. I think it met all of the kids needs and would definitely keep it as it was."

"The most effective part was get the girls up and having to decide where they can stand with certain questions."

Some of the student's feedback included that they really enjoyed the game where they agreed or disagreed with statements that Bernadette from Women's Health Goulbourn Norther East posed.

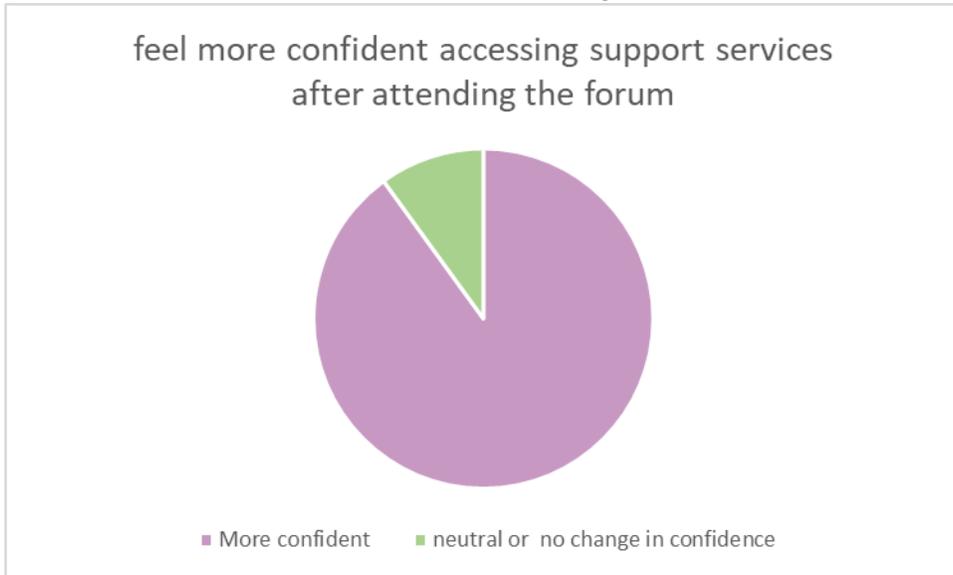
Some of the issues and information that was discussed included –

- purchasing condoms in a small town, how these can be accessed without everyone knowing your business
- accessing other forms of contraception such as the morning after pill
- being able to go to the doctors without your parents' permission if you are over 16, many girls did not know this and this is empowering
- acknowledgement that it is hard to get information about contraception and what the local options were for advice
- knowledge about bulk billing, girls were advised that if you are under 18 and you need to see a Doctor that cost should not be a prohibition, you can bulk bill. The reaction in the group indicated that they were not aware of this.
- bulk billing and Medicare was explained in brief to the students by one of the teachers
- linked to my options – sexual health and choices.

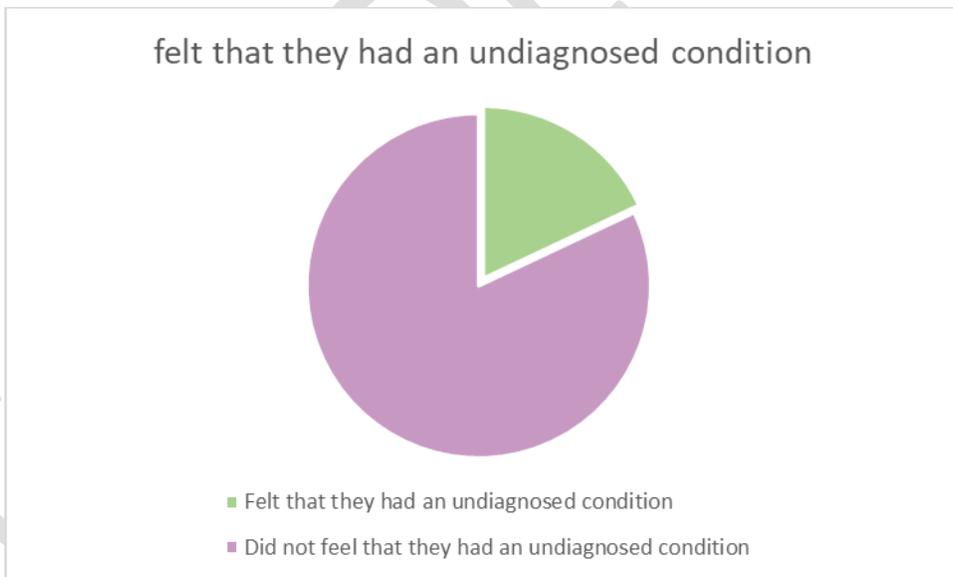
One student said that her favourite part of the Forum was *"learning about sexual health and answering questions because lots of people don't know as much as they should"*

The Forum was ideal for female students and staff who may have a disability now or in the future to learn how to access and participate in mainstream service provision local to their area. The information was outside of students regular contacts, many of them indicated that they did not know those services even existed and that it was useful to know that there was support available locally.

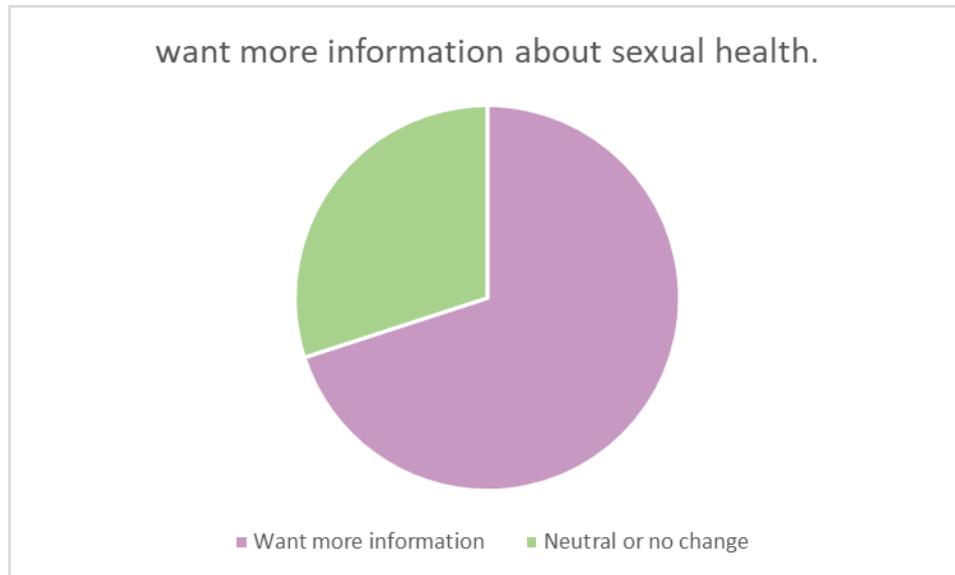
Over 90% Girls who completed the survey indicated that they feel more confident accessing support services after attending the forum.



18% of the respondents felt that they had an undiagnosed condition, this was interesting information and needs further exploring by the school or future health sessions.



Over 70% indicated that they want more information about sexual health.



There is an opportunity to build on this work and to involve the LCB in further work with young women in the community. The LCB was able to use non-threatening and current language as well as provide relevant examples, with her rapport built with the group. Some suggestions for improvement included linking some information on topics as well as services, which would be in line with the feedback students provided.

“My interactions with Nancy have all been positive, she came to present on her role at our wellbeing meeting and from this we gained interest in holding the forum at our school. Nancy was efficient and organised and able to work well with us to ensure the forum was informative but also caused minimal disruption to the schools day-to-day functions which is always a plus.” Educator

Working with Skills for Work

The WDV Moira Hub, Cobram Community House and Skills for Work, has developed a program with the focus on self-discovery. The program works with women to define their skills and strengths to assist in increasing employment opportunities. The LCB has been involved in supporting the program by providing basic Yoga moves to improve their fitness and general wellbeing.

Through her involvement in the Hub each month, she has become familiar with the local women and the gentle stretching exercises have been well received by participants. The program was initially a month long training course with Cobram Community House where setting goals, making it achievable and working on self-development was the focus. Working with this group of women has provided the LCB with more examples of what it is like to live in the region as a woman with disabilities.

Access Ready

This project has commenced but is at the infancy of the project. Cobram has been linking in with Barwon region to share ideas and approaches. Due to the time of year, engagement was restricted.

NDIS workshops

The LCB was involved in two NDIS workshops in the region, however unfortunately the second workshop was not attended by women from the region. The first session was attended mostly by people who care for a person with disability. Eleven people provided a response to the session via survey indicating what they had gained from attending the session. Here is a snapshot of what participants reported learning from the workshop:

“there is a lot of services for children not so much adults”

“General ideas for planning”

“That this (NDIS) is something that I really need to think about and it is more complex than I thought”.

“more about the forms that I need fill out”

“working with everyone”

They were asked if being able to participate in the workshop had help reduce isolation for you or the person you care for, participants were asked to use a sliding scale to respond to this question with the scoring being from 0 – 100. 100% of respondents indicated that it had help reduce isolation for themselves or the person they cared for , with 50% of respondents selecting it meeting that need 70 -100 out of a score of 100.

When participants were asked *what could the community house could do better to make you or the person you care for more include in the community?* Nine out of eleven respondents indicated that they were not sure. The two that responded suggested that more information for adults in Numurkah and Shepparton would be useful and that talking and posting more online information would be useful. Participants indicated that the session was informative and useful. They also indicated that more information related to NDIS and the services available in the area for people with disabilities was needed.

Moirra Women’s Health, Cobram Community House, the Moira Hub Liaison and the LCB recently reviewed what has occurred over the year and what their priorities for working together in the future. The 2018 actions and outcomes for the Moira region include an increased community knowledge of the challenges face by women with disability and changes needed to create more inclusive services and supports in the community.

Working with the Hub and the regional partners provides further opportunity to increase involvement of women with disabilities in the community across activities, services and advocacy. The recent appointment of the LCB on the local government Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) and the Governance Group for Victoria Alive are two positive steps that will further strengthen the inclusion of women with disability in the region. These two developments have created opportunity for women with disability to actively contribute to leading, shaping and influencing the community.

The partnership between Cobram Community House, The Hub and Women's Health Goulbourn South West has been strengthened through the work with the Moira Hub and the "Here We Are" project. The work delivered by "Here We Are" was in line with key themes that were raised by Moira women in women's voices gathering:

- Disability and women's sexual and reproductive health
- Build workforce knowledge of women with disability and SRH, including intersections between gender, disability, access and participation in rural communities.
- Availability and Access
- Build and strengthen cross sector partnerships to provide integrated health and community services and support that are accessible, safe and affordable for rural women of all abilities
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Literacy

Outcome against the goals

The work in the Moira region has met all of the goals of the project; there is still time needed to embed and build on the good work. The activities are:

- Building local capacity through relationships
- Providing information about the lived experience of women with disability
- Societal changes that need to occur to increase inclusion in the community.

The Forum at the Cobram Secondary school was a great example of building capacity within the community and delivering an intersectional message about disability. Specifically targeting young women, who may experience disability themselves or through family members and friends, it was an effective way of building capacity and understanding in the community with the view to increase engagement.

Wellington Shire

The activities delivered by the LCB in the Wellington Shire included 'Here We Are' in the Community, My Community resource, Our Community – Creating Inclusive and Accessible organisations resource, Our Community – Creating Inclusive and Accessible organisations Forum and Consultations.

For the purposes of the evaluation, we have looked at each activity separately and how it met with the goals of the "Here We Are" program. The evaluator collected feedback from a random selection of key stakeholders near the end of the 12 month project. The LCB provided the contacts list. In addition, participants at the forum were approached by the Project Officer and evaluator to gain consent for contact after the forum.

Information about people's understanding, increased knowledge and engagement was collected; the information was limited to those who were willing to engage in sharing their experience. In total 11 people participated in discussions with the evaluator, this included the partner agency supervisor, the LCB, the Hub Liaison officer, eight participants and community stakeholders.

The NDIS has not yet reached the Shire of Wellington however some women in the community have been part of the pre roll out. The LCB role reported that there was a great need in the region for women to be provided with education and support about the NDIS and how it works.

The Wellington region took a different approach to determining the activities they would deliver under the 'Here We Are' project, with the view that focussing on developing resources that would remain after the funding had ceased would be a more sustainable approach to building local capacity in the region. Two resources were developed and the LCB engaged with different organisations to build knowledge of people with disability and organisations in the community that could increase their inclusiveness.

The LCB recognised the need to get people ready for NDIS, women were requesting information and assistance about what the NDIS by having conversations about it and demystifying it. The LCB reported that this was a significant factor in her interactions with the community. Additionally there was a small involvement with Skills-Plus a local skills, education and career provider.

Resources

Two resources were developed by the LCB aimed to assist and encourage individuals with disability to become actively involved in community, and for people and organisations in the community to create a more inclusive community.

My Community

Intended to encourage people with a disability to become more active and engaged in their local community. The resource suggested making new friends, connecting with people who can offer support, lowering mental health problems and increasing your opportunities to be heard. *My Community* describes briefly what the NDIS is and where to go for more information. It also describes the new roles that people will be accessing as part of the NDIS scheme and what NDIS self-management is. The booklet was designed to encourage community participation and to educate and inform people about the types of engagement they could participate in, with a broader view. The emphasis is on thinking about what activities that people might like to access in the community and how they might do it.

My Community offers an overview of NDIS, the terminology and how the funding works with the strong message that the NDIS is designed to assist people with a disability to access the same services as everybody else. Additional to NDIS information, it breaks down volunteering, physical activities, joining clubs and going to events. The language is clear and accessible, pitched to inform and encourage people with a range of disability. At the end of the resource there is a section to support individuals to reflect on what they enjoy and things they may need help with, and to set goals for becoming more active in the community. The resource is not limited to then region, it could be used across Australia if shared and promoted.

The resource has been distributed to George Grey Centre, a service for adults with a disability who live in the Wellington Shire, The Sale Special School and Maxima employment. Fifty-seven copies of the resources were provided directly to individuals living in the Wellington Shire by the LCB and one

hundred and fifty were provided to the three organisations listed above to distribute. As a result of being part of this project. *My Community* is accessible on the Gippsland Women's Health website and the Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West website and it will form part of the '*Here We Are*' toolkit which will be a part of the WDV website early in 2019. Feedback has not yet been collected from people with disability about the resource.

To access go to the link <https://www.gwhealth.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/My-Community-Booklet-Oct-2018-Accessible.pdf>

Our Community – Creating Inclusive and Accessible Organisations

This resource emphasises that it is not only about building designs but also about attitudes towards people with disability that influence how inclusive and welcoming an organisation is to women with disability in the community. It shares the vision of the NDIA to remove the barriers for people with disability to live an ordinary life with connections and relationships. The capability of people in the community to facilitate and create opportunities for accessing an ordinary life and mainstream service is essential, this resource was designed to build capacity in the community, to make the NDIA's vision a reality.

The resource is important because women face challenges when accessing leisure services, volunteering and other opportunities in the community to connect and participate. Regularly, women with disability are offered only the activities which are specifically for people with disabilities which limits their access to a whole range of activities. Transport, time of activities, accessibility information and community attitude also limit women with disabilities participation in activities.

The resource states, "It is estimated that 53% of people over the age of 65 will develop a lifelong health condition or disability" and that "actively seeking our people with a disability and making your organisation more inclusive" (Gippsland Women's Health, 2018). The resource outlines elements vital to inclusion, these are:

- Embedding inclusive practices within your organisation
- Engaging women with a disability
- Ensuring inclusion
- Monitoring the success of what you have put in place.

Each stage contains a table with key elements to consider and plan. The tool will assist local businesses and community groups to become more accessible and inclusive of women with disabilities in the local community if they chose to use it.

Our Community – Creating Inclusive and Accessible organisations forum

A community forum was held to introduce the *Our Community – Creating Inclusive and Accessible Organisations* developed by the LCB.

With the aim of building the capacity of the local community to work with and include women with a disability, the forum placed an emphasis on the fact that the impact of disability can be lessened by adjusting the physical and social environment to suit the needs of individuals with a disability. Ensuring

businesses and services are more inclusive and accessible benefits women with disabilities and many other people in the community will benefit such as the elderly and mothers with prams.

The forum emphasised the responsibility the community has to make their services and activities accessible for everyone; it was intended to attract community organisations and recreation groups. In addition to receiving the resource and addressing the audience's specific questions about being inclusive at the forum, the LCB offered to provide a tailored consultation to organisations until January 2019.

Invitations were sent to attend the forum via social media and other channels, including the Rural Access Worker. All organisations listed on the Wellington Community Directory received an email invitation. The forum was also advertised through the Gippsland Women's Health website <https://www.gwhealth.asn.au/community-forum/>.

Unfortunately there was a low take up of the session with 12 people attending the session. These included organisations such as employment services, Neighbourhood houses, Children's Centres, emergency services and local government. Despite the LCB sending out reminders a week before, six people from the community attended including representatives from Maffra Neighbourhood house, Sale Neighbourhood house, Wellington Hub Liaison Officer, Hub members, East Gippsland Calisthenics Inc, Wellington Shire Council and Country Women's Association.

The session included an exercise to demonstrate the levels of disadvantage that a woman with a disability can experience due to a range of factors. Participants were highly engaged in the discussion and thinking about the layers of disadvantage those women in the community experience. Participant's questions were heard and discussion around areas of:

- recommended different resources
- contacts to assist with creating a more inclusive environment.
- Inclusive design experiences and approaches for this

Three people provided their details to provide further feedback about the resource and how they intended using it. Participants were provided with a manual survey, designed by the LCB, to share their experience of the event. Unfortunately, despite pre planning by the evaluator, the survey was not provided for feedback or to ensure that it met both the presenter's needs but also the requirements of the ILC Funding in time to provide feedback or make modifications. An electronic survey was also developed for the forum to collect responses however it was not distributed by the LCB. The survey asked participants to share how they rated their knowledge of the challenges facing disability prior to the session and after the session.

Three participants completed the survey, the survey data was limited due to the number of participants that completed survey. The barriers identified to making places more inclusive included money and not owning your own space as a restriction to implementing physical change to the environment.

One of the participants, a Calisthenics teacher in the area, commented that, as a teacher, she identified it was her responsibility to modify classes according to student's needs and abilities but for her it was about getting more people with disabilities through the door as the first step. Her motivation to attend the session was to get ideas and information about how to create a welcoming and inclusive message to enable the first step.

Participants raised that the forum was informative and assisted in raising awareness of the challenges that women with disability face accessing businesses and activities. A great example was one woman who said that her vision impairment, which has been a recent deterioration, had made her fearful of leaving the house and getting into the community. She shared that she stayed at home for a very long time due to complete loss of confidence.

"its simple things like someone meeting me at the door, if the entrance is not easy to navigate with a vision impairment, that is a starting point. "

Three participants completed surveys and provided them to the presenter. The survey questions were designed by the LCB, an online survey was also available but not offered to participants which limited data collection. Some of the participants shared why they went to the forum and what they learnt. The reasons that participants reported that they attended included *"to learn about how to make groups more inclusive"*, to share knowledge and to understand how to link into disability networks. The three participants who completed the survey all self-reported that their knowledge had increased by attending the session. Here is a snap shot of what some of the participants we talked to shared:

"Would be really useful to walk through the accessibility of your branch or service and hear from someone in the field about the practicalities and then inclusive issues – talk about speech impediments or hearing difficulties and how we can make it easier for people when they want to join in. I am not sure how welcoming they (our group) would all be for a woman with a disability. It is the welcoming and inclusive environment we need to think about. Thinking about what would make a difference to a women's experience if she joined us for the first time".

"It was great to break down some of the disability myths, when we did the activity it was clear that it is not only disability but disadvantage that can significantly impact a woman and her journey, it really got me thinking".

"Our activity group is mostly white middle class ladies, not much diversity so it would be beneficial for them to hear about lived experience and talking about the person rather than their disability in order for us to really be inclusive and welcoming".

"I've been trying to encourage more diversity at our dance school but I haven't had much luck. My experience is that it is often the parents of people with a disability that might decide that they will not be able to participate fully. As the teacher, I see all sorts of skills and capability enter the studio and I can work with anyone who wants to be there. It's getting people through the door and ensuring they feel confident that we will make it a good experience".

The resources were relevant and well researched with language and style appropriate to the intended audience. They were not too complex and the later resource was not too over burdensome which is vital when trying to encourage organisations to review their current practices and to plan for a more inclusive environment. The resource has also been distributed to a few organisations within the region and the LCB is also planning to distribute them at the local TAFE and any remaining resources will be delivered to the Neighbourhood house and libraries in the shire.

Outcomes against the goals

The resources targeted two specific groups in the community - people with disability and business owners; organisations and community groups, with the view of increasing their knowledge and capacity to be more inclusive. The resources will be valuable to a range of people in the community and are pitched at a level that is appropriate for the intended audience, the challenge to maximise the exposure and interaction with this resource remains. The resources need further promotion to extend into the community, promotion of the resource includes convincing people of the benefits associated with becoming a more inclusive business, activity or service. The *Our Community* resource is not yet available on the Gippsland Women's Health or the WDV webpage, once they are available on line a further promotion of the resources and their benefits would be another step towards building local capacity.

The *My Community* resource developed to assist people with disability may increase confidence to accessing mainstream services in the community. The evaluator was not provided with the opportunity to gain an understanding from women with a disability in the community as to whether either resources had improved their inclusion, it would be difficult to meaningfully measure the impact of either resource at this stage of their public life.

Whilst it was demonstrated that examples of positive change had occurred at an individual level, the number of people engaged was small and the evaluator was unable to determine whether the resources and work delivered by Wellington Shire had created positive change in community culture. Given the timing of the resources being released it is also too early to determine whether women with disabilities had observed any improvements in community inclusion as a direct result of the resources developed. The outcomes measured are based on the evidence provided by the LCB as well as what the evaluator has collected and observed during the project.

Warrnambool

AccessAbility Day

Accessibility Day was delivered in November, 2019 in collaboration with the Warrnambool City Council Rural Access and Human Resources teams, WDEA Works Disability Employment Service (DES) and the Archie Graham centre. The day was developed in recognition that people with disability in Australia are underrepresented in the workplace. For women with a disability, the opportunity to find meaningful work, particularly in regional areas, can be extremely challenging. The LCB was involved in AccessAbility Day, a new Australian Government initiative to connect jobseekers with employers.

Five jobseekers with a disability were given the chance to have a day of hands on work experience in various departments at Warrnambool City Council. The jobseekers with a disability were provided with the opportunity to try a job for a day. The development of the concept and the coordination of the day was driven by the LCB in cooperation with other stakeholders with the view of encouraging inclusiveness wherever possible. The jobseekers were matched with an area that aligned with their career aspirations, such as working in the Communications team being exposed to a range of programs and assisting with sound recording on a video production. Other locations included the Warrnambool visitors centre, the Parks and Gardens team, the Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village Warrnambool.

The activity demonstrated that the workplaces were accessible for people disability and also that different people have different needs in the workplace. The supervisors were very supportive of the program and met with participants a week before their placement to go through any areas of concern. From a gender perspective, four out of the five participants were women and one woman was chosen to work at the Warrnambool City Council Depot. During their placement participants were taken through induction including OHS procedures and introduced to the team. They were designated a space to leave their belongings and shown through the building as any new employee would be.



A young woman who originally wanted to gain employment in hospitality was provided the opportunity to work at the Archie Graham Centre. During her day, she was able to work on reception, participate in an exercise class, and work with the youth team and with one of the social groups at the centre.

"I was working with people with vision impairment who were having the paper read to them" "I learnt that people with a vision impairment see the world differently".

The Communications team at Warrnambool City Council promoted the day through Council webpage, their Facebook page, the intranet and the Promenade. After the completion of the day communication was important to promote the positive experiences that staff and participants had. Social media was also used as a platform for participants to share their experience and receive positive feedback.



One participant who is currently studying Certificate III in Horticulture worked with the Parks and Gardens team. Her aspiration is to become a Park Ranger. The highlight of the day was planting a palm tree at the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens which she can watch grow for decades to come. One comment on Social media was *"Oh wow is that the famous Crystal T....., emoji keep up the good work emoji"*

Women of Warrnambool (WOW)

Women of Warrnambool (WOW) was delivered in December through a partnership between Warrnambool City Council, Warrnambool East Primary School and Department of Education and Training Respectful Relationships. It was developed in recognition of women in the Warrnambool people who are not necessarily high profile but contribute to community life.

Fifty-three profiles of women living in the Warrnambool community were chosen to represent the fifty-three women killed as a result of domestic violence each year in Victoria. The LCB role advocated that the ratio of women with disability involved in the project should be reflective of the statistics which indicate that 1 in 5 women with disability experience domestic violence or intimate partner violence in their lifetime. The working group were very welcoming of the intersectional lens and 11 of the profiles were women with disability.



53 profiles of everyday local women to represent the number of women killed through domestic violence in Victoria each year.



Figure 5 WOW day on the Civic Green profiles

Nominations were sought for the inclusion in this project. The nominees were asked a series of questions and their responses were included on the cut outs for the day on the Civic Green. The women were asked to provide responses to the following questions:

- List five strengths that make you, you
- What personal achievements are you most proud of?
- What is the biggest challenge you have had to overcome in your life?
- In three sentences, describe your ideal world
- What character strengths make a positive role model?
- What makes you proud to be a woman living in Warrnambool?
- What piece of advice could you offer to a man in your life?

The LCB gave a presentation at the All Abilities Advocacy meeting to encourage women to nominate for the WOW. Women were recruited by being approached individually and the LCB found that most women were more than happy to participate with some disclosing that they had personally experienced abuse and it was important to participate in this opportunity. Contacting the local disability services to gain nominations was not successful, with one organisation stating that they

would need to gain permission from the woman's parents due to the perceived negative overtones of the project. Promotion of the event was done through radio and social media.

Information bags were provided to the community on the day of the event. The bags contained information about supports and services and the organisations took on board the request for small discreet bags, with wallet sized information cards. Emma House, Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West, Lifeline, Everybody's Business, WCC Community Services, SWCASA, Women with Disabilities Victoria and Djirra.

The project outline which details the 11 women with disability profiles which were included in the WOW project can be found in the Appendix (see Appendix two). After the day on the Civic Green, the profiles were prominently placed in Warrnambool for the community to view. The women who participated were proud to be a part of it and share their story, it demonstrated the diversity of women and disability, it addressed some of the misunderstanding surrounding disability such as the perception that physical disability equates to an intellectual disability and it asked participants to really think about what makes a positive male role model rather than focussing on the perpetrators of violence.

One of the councillors from Warrnambool City Council reportedly commented that it was refreshing to see real women in the community being profiled. It was a chance for women to share their story with their family, friends and the community.

Works For Me

A video conversation was produced showcasing women with disability and their expectations for inclusion in the community, organisations, social settings and employment. The project came about to improve the experience of women with disabilities accessing Disability Employment Services (DES) and gaining employment. The project required recruiting women, designing the format, editing and getting employment services on board. The launch of the resource occurred in early December 2018.

The video was launched as part of International Day of People with a Disability at South West TAFE. The launch was part of a selection of projects showcased on the day. Activities and providers attending offering information and resources to people with disability, their families, friends and other members of the community.

The LCB provided some information about women with disability and their lived experience in the community, the "*Here We Are*" project and then showed the video. After the video had been launched the LCB thanked the participants and presented them with a copy of the video, this followed some feedback from the woman that in the past they had participated in projects and not seen the result. Providing the woman a copy of the video enabled them to share their work with their families and friends. The women were excited and proud of the video.

One group in the audience was from a local primary school and, after the video had been launched, two of the woman who appeared in the video stayed and answered the questions of the school students. It was a fantastic opportunity for the students to ask about having a disability and the women really enjoyed talking with the students and sharing their knowledge and experience.

To view the video go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw_a2qN0kCY The video has had over 1, 400 views and has received 43 likes, has been shared over 20 times from the Warrnambool City Council site to date and the BWP Facebook site date has also shared the video. The video will also be included in the WDV 'Here We Are' toolkit.

16 days of activism

As part of the 16 days of activism Warrnambool had a series of posters displayed around the town on building and bus stops to create awareness about Violence against women to inspire action in the community. The LCB in the region advocated that women with disabilities be specifically referenced in some of these posters as reflection of the statistics around the increased risk of family and intimate partner violence towards women with disability.



Figure 6 - 16 days of activism bus stop profile

The posters were placed in prominent locations throughout Warrnambool to increase awareness of the increased risk of violence for women with disabilities in the community. In speaking with some of the community, it was indicated that this was quite a confronting statistic and that *"it was not until it was spelt out on a bus stop that I was aware of how much more at risk a woman with disability is"*.

The promotion of the 16 days of activism included radio, social media platforms, local newspaper and Warrnambool City Council in their email footer. Please refer to Appendix four and Appendix five to see examples of promotion communications used during the 16 days of activism.

Business and Professional Women Southwest Committee Meeting Presentation

An opportunity was created to present a short presentation to the Business and Professional Women (BPW) Southwest committee meeting. The LCB provided a summary slide show to accompany the discussion about the disadvantage and challenges those women with disabilities face when trying to gain employment. The group were particularly interested in the LCB's personal story and her lived experience of disability. *"We've heard the academic side of disability but we would really like to hear from women and what their experience is"*.

50 'Here We Are' project evaluation

The group was particularly interested in the “*Here We Are*” project and are hopeful that the funding is extended to build on the work that has been achieved. The group want to know more and have decided to invite the LCB as guest speaker to one of their sessions next year. Approximately 50 – 70 women attend the BPW Southwest sessions. The BPW Southwest also promoted the Works for Me video on their Facebook page.

Outcomes against the goals

All of the initiatives delivered in Warrnambool played a role in strengthening inclusion of women with disability in the local community. The Works for Me video and the Civic Green project were examples of women with disabilities leading, shaping and influencing their community by sharing their lived experience of disability as well as their opinions, both activities provided an opportunity to be heard.

Enabling partnerships between Warrnambool City Council, Disability Employment Service providers and South West TAFE have assisted in creating awareness, allowing women to share their stories with the view that the activities will lead to reduced barriers and increased opportunities for women with disabilities.

AccessAbility day offered DES providers and participant’s professionalism by all Warrnambool City Council staff, as well as open communication and positive feedback from the participants. All stakeholders gained knowledge, with each person taking something different away from the experience. For the participants, they learnt about different aspects of the workplace and discovered things about themselves, including their strengths and new interests. The participants gained confidence in their own abilities, a sense of pride and a chance to enhance their social skills.

The DES providers gained information about the skills, talents and capabilities of the participants because they were given the opportunity in a workplace. The staff that worked with the participants on the day gained confidence in working with people with disability.



Overall findings

Project Model

The model of WDV working with regional partners allowed for local knowledge and relationships to identify activities that would be effective and relevant to the local community. The deliberate employment of women with disabilities in most regions was a successful part of the project with the LCB's being able to engage by sharing their experiences and understanding the diverse range of lived experience of women with disabilities. These roles have been positively leading, shaping and influencing their communities and the three other regions participating in the project.

Speaking with one of the LCB's about her experience she reflected that she had been doing voluntary roles for a while and did not have the confidence to put herself forward for a paid role. It was with encouragement from family that she applied and once in the role it was clear that her skills and ability were a perfect fit for the role, *"it has increased my confidence and made me realise that I am employable"*.

Another LCB recalled the when the role was advertised that it stated *'women with disability are encouraged to apply'*, this provided her with the confidence to apply for the role. This simple step for an organisation to state that they welcome applications from women with disability attracted a candidate that may not have considered applying under other circumstances.

The central project management is a model with merit however there are some elements of the model that need improvement, this includes establishing an agreed way of working between WDV and the partners across the region and managing this along the way to maximise project oversight and to ensure the project stays within scope.

Partnerships

There were many strengths of the partnerships identified during the evaluation and these were explored during discussions with partners by the evaluator. The values and goals of the organisations were aligned in terms of their focus on women's issues including health, advocacy and the desire to increase the presence of women as leaders and shapers of their community. WDV had worked with most of the organisations before and had a good working relationship. The local knowledge added significant value to the project and enabled the grant to build on good work already being done in the community, the partners were able to identify opportunities that met with the outcomes trying to be achieved and identify risks and challenges along the way that WDV may not have had local knowledge of. For some regions it was recognised that approaching people and organisations under the WDV banner, and as partners, opened some doors that may have not normally been as accessible. It was also clear that the communication and promotion of the project was varied across the region and it would be valuable to explore this and determine the best way to maximise exposure for the project and both organisations. It would be good to establish if a visual project document or one pager outlining the key deliverables would be useful as a ready reference for organisations or a more action focused project plan to track project progress. It is understood that this project is on top of their regular work and establishing the best tool to outline the goals and the outcomes of the project as a useable and quick reference point may be useful.

The areas identified for improvement included establishing ways of working together that meet the needs of the project and its outcomes as well as the nuances of each organisation involved. This can be achieved by an established communication flow and potentially more discussions between the Project Officer and local supervisors along the way, particularly at the commencement of the next stage. Additionally in terms of maximising the flow of good work being done across the project, there is an opportunity to establish a better way to share information, resources and achievements across all partners throughout the course of the project. This may be a share platform such as a private facebook group or a WDV dashboard function.

Project Risk Management

In terms of project risks a number of the risks identified at the commencement of the project occurred at parts of the program. At the commencement of the project the Project Officer was employed however the project had a delayed start which impacted on what could be achieved against the project timeline. It took considerable time in some regions to attract a suitable candidate and, as a result, the LCB roles commenced at different times, with Cobram, Barwon and Warrnambool commencing considerably later than the LCB in Wellington Shire. The delay in commencement of the LCB's placed pressure on the project to identify and deliver outcomes with a compressed timeline. The project timeline restricted some of the projects that may have been commenced had the project had a full 12 months with all positions filled; the approach adapted was to build on and enhance work in the region rather than commence stand alone projects.

The impact of this was that the LCB's in the three later regions had to be on boarded and into action very quickly with their time to deliver on the projects for their regions condensed. One of the LCB's became unwell and required unplanned leave; a decision between WDV and the partner was made to engage an additional woman for the LCB role so that the work could continue, with flexibility being applied to the other employer when they were ready to return.

Whilst there was a lot of good will, enthusiasm and energy demonstrated along the project within the communities to create inclusive environments it will be challenging to keep the momentum going. By the time most of the projects were rolled out it was quite late in the 12 months, it was difficult to gain momentum additionally the LCB workers have obtained an identity and profile in their local community and it would be beneficial for a project extension for another one to two years to further their work and to further embed change within the stakeholders and wider community to ensure that the efforts can be sustained.

With the opportunity to be employed for a short-term project, three of the LCB's would like to continue their work as they have experienced great gains in a short period of time. The resources will be available after the project has finished but without the LCB in place, promoting these resources and making sure they are utilised will be more challenging and limits the sharing of the resources to those who have already accessed them and know about them.

WDV and the partner organisations would benefit from putting a strategy together on how to promote and distribute these resources further as their reach has not yet been fully realised.

Partnership breakdown was identified during the project planning, in one region there was a dilution of project scope. A shared understanding and commitment to meeting and working towards the “*Here We Are*” project outcomes is vital. The risk mitigation strategies were applied to try to increase communication and redirect the project however this continued to be a challenge throughout the project. There are learnings from this instance in terms of communication, partnership engagement, project performance management and WDV continues to work with the partner to determine how the project could have been delivered more successfully.

Specific, place related risks were identified and managed at the local level, this included risks around relationships. Supervision from partnering organisations was key to provide the LCB’s with the local relationship knowledge, the interconnections and the preferred styles of engagement that were likely to be most successful. It was also identified that due to the short project cycle that LCB’s really focus on what they were setting out to do and manage scope creep to ensure they did not jeopardise other work being delivered in the area and that they achieved their intended outcomes.

The final risk that had been identified at the commencement of the project was ICT failure. It was expected that there may be some ICT failure throughout the life of the project, and this was experienced however it was minimal in the scheme of the whole project and the frequency of communication across each region.

Most LCB’s and PAG members reported that Zoom worked well for them as a platform for video conferencing compared to other platforms that they had used previously. The challenge was greater for some regions than others with some equipment availability issues or intermittent connectivity issues which were attributed to connection not equipment. Whilst the groups valued the opportunities to connect, some found the connection delayed or could not maximise the usage of the ICT as their equipment limited them experiencing all of the features of Zoom. An example of this is that one site didn’t always have a camera available and another used an iPhone at times which meant they could not see all of the members of the discussion at once and this impacted the flow of conversation for them.

Overall the risks identified were identified early and the Project Officer, LCB’s and partners worked through them together as they occurred. The central project management function is vital in ensuring a coordinated approach to meeting the project outcomes. It was identified that perhaps an agreed way of working, more regular formal discussions about project progress against the project scope and responsiveness to direction and guidance from the Project Officer may have mitigated missed opportunities to stay within scope in one region.

The Partnership Agreement was not referred to at key parts of the project when WDV needed information that they were, in some instances, not receiving from the partners. This limited oversight over some key areas such as what was being achieved against the project goals, it also restricted WDV’s view of how the budget was tracking and whether supervision and other elements of the project were being met.

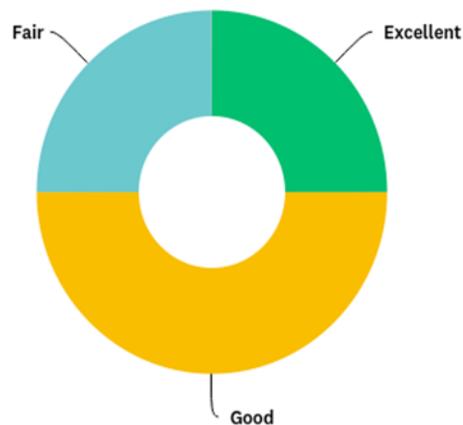
Communities of Practice

“A chance to build knowledge, share information and bounce ideas and viewpoints from one another”. Local Community Builder

The CoP provided an additional opportunity for the LCB's to come together and support each other in peer learning and discussion about topics relevant to the *“Here We Are”* project. The CoP operated as an information sharing on set topics with less structure and more discussion about an issue and ways to approach it. The success of CoP's rely on members engaging in problem solving by sharing resources, stories and tools to address the issue being discussed. Pre and post survey results were completed to determine what LCB's learnt about Communities of Practice and whether it was useful to them as they delivered the project.

Communities of Practice pre and post information

Q1 How would you rate your current knowledge of Communities of Practice?



Q1 How would you rate your current knowledge of Communities of Practice?



Figure 7 Pre and post CoP survey responses

There was a significant increase in self-reported knowledge of Communities practice between the commencement of the project and the last CoP session. With 25% of LCB rated their current knowledge of CoPs as Good or excellent at the commencement of the project compared with 75% after the last CoP session. One LCB had participated in CoPs before working on the 'Here We Are' project.

The benefits of the CoP included 75% of the LCBs found it beneficial for their professional development and mostly relevant to their project. Response was mixed to the CoP and what it added to the project, however the majority found that they benefited from it and recognised that not all of the information covered was relevant straight away but would be useful in the future.

It was raised that addressing issues identified by the LCB's rather than picking topics from a predetermined list at the commencement of the project may be more beneficial. Other LCB's identified that it was great to discuss the impact that the lack of confidence in women with disabilities and the flow on effect that it has on their lives such as work, study, relationships. This was also discussed on a personal level as the LCB's shared their stories and discussed things that could be done to increase women's confidence and encourage them to participate.

When thinking about this tool and future use for a project like this, it would be beneficial to revisit the topics selected at the start of the project to determine if there are topics that are more relevant specific to identified needs within the group or across the project. It would be beneficial to revisit the format and audience to determine whether this CoP could be beneficial to agencies and professionals in the region as a way of further building local knowledge and capacity, however the demand and effectiveness of this needs to be established.

Service Outcomes

Outcome one - To strengthen the inclusion of women with disability

All of the activities delivered under this project were focussed on strengthening inclusion of women with a disability; the conversations and relationship building were all flavoured with the gender and inclusion lens however during the evaluation some activities demonstrated the gains made more than others at this stage of the project.

The *Our Community – Creating inclusive and accessible organisations* resource provides a good foundation level of information for people in the community, the next step is to engage with more organisations in the community and to deliver the message directly to services.

The *'Here We Are' in the Arts*, the *WOW project*, the *Works for Me* project, *AccesAbility day*, the Yoga and personal development sessions in Cobram are all good examples of strengthening the inclusion of women through engagement and promotion of the activities with the hope that other women will hear about the activities and gain confidence to become active participants too.

Outcome two - To increase local capacity to enable women with disability to access and benefit from the same services and activities as everyone else

The *Our Community - Creating inclusive and accessible organisations* resource provides a good foundation level of information for people in the community, the next step is to engage with more organisations in the community. Through a combination of engagement with women in the community, working with women at the Hubs and discussions with organisations the project started the conversations and saw some steps towards organisations making efforts to become more inclusive and welcoming however this work is in its infancy.

Creating awareness and encouraging women to explore accessing mainstream activities led to some individuals exploring new leisure and social opportunities. Physical accessibility issues have begun to be addressed in some regions, such as one of the Art Galleries in Geelong, the partner organisations demonstrated changes to their communications, policies and procedures to strengthen their efforts to become more inclusive and the Cobram Secondary school forum was an example of providing information to everyone about women's health issues and lived experience of disability.

Outcome three - To enable and develop partnerships to reduce the barriers and increase opportunities for women with disability

Relationships were built upon and partnerships were formed to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for women with disabilities.

All regions worked to form strategic partnerships to achieve this outcome, the *'Here We Are' in the Arts* partnership with Creative Geelong is a strong example of a partnership that has been developed, delivered a project and plans to continue it's work to include more women with disability to exhibit in mainstream exhibitions as well as projects that are specifically targeted at women with disabilities.

In Warrnambool new relationships have been formed with the TAFE and with the Women's Business network with commitment to work together again in the future on enhancing inclusion for women with disabilities and sharing the message with the community.

The forum at Cobram Secondary school could be built on with potential further work to be done with an intersectional lens applied to sexual and reproductive health.

Outcome four - To create more opportunity for women with disability actively contribute to leading, shaping and influencing their community

WDV encouraged women with disabilities to apply for all roles that formed part of the "Here We Are" project, this resulted in over 80% of the roles being filled by women with disabilities which demonstrated leadership and allowed for shaping and influencing to occur as well as encouraging other women in the community that they too could influence and encourage a more inclusive community.

The partner organisations that employed the LCB's reported learning and building organisational capacity from the LCB sharing their knowledge and lived experience as a woman with disability.

For women in the community, the women who spoke as part of presentations such as the *Our Community – Creating inclusive and accessible organisations* forum, the inclusion of Hub Liaison officers and their experience in some of the activities, the women featured in promotional articles in the Barwon region, the women who participated in the *WOW project* and the *Works for Me* video all demonstrated actively leading, shaping and influencing conversations relevant to women with disabilities experiences in their community.

Outcome five - To increase confidence to accessing mainstream services in the community

The 'Here We Are' in the Community work delivered messages and encouragement to women to access mainstream services and to advocate for themselves and others where there were challenges to accessing services. The *My Community* resource in Wellington Shire was a written resource encouraging people to consider mainstream services when considering activities in their local community, this was not women with disabilities specific however it provided information about being active in the community.

Women who participated in the Barwon region were encouraged to participate in art exhibitions that they may not have done historically, some of the people who work in the arts commented that they saw new women engaged and new art work which demonstrated to them that there were women engaging in the activity that hadn't shared their crafts before in a public domain.

Additionally some of the women employed for the project had not engaged in employment for a long time, reporting that they were unsure if they were employable. However given the encouragement from friends, gaining the position, working within inclusive organisations and delivering the "Here We Are" project in their community has increased their confidence and their view of future employment.

Outcome six - Develop tools and resources to support women’s inclusion

The tools and resources developed during the project that will be useful for ongoing work by WDV, the partner organisations and other organisations looking to create more inclusive communities and build local capacity include the Communities of Practice Sessions, the Works for me video, the Our Community – Creating Inclusive and accessible organisations booklet, presentations used to groups during the projects such as the women’s business committee and the Cobram Secondary School forum.

Outcome seven - Positive change in Individuals and Community Culture

Many women and people in the community have shared their stories, some of these demonstrate a positive change in their experience of being a woman with a disability accessing an ordinary life in the community, where barriers to employment and participation have been minimised.

Stakeholders and people in the community who have participated in an activity delivered through this program have shared their increased knowledge and awareness of the barriers which women with disability regularly experience in the community. One women that we spoke with said that her engagement with the project had really opened her eyes up to the invisible disabilities, such as chronic pain, which affect women in the community.

The number of people interested in attending the International Day of People with Disability at South West TAFE and shared the *Works for Me* video to their friends and networks via Facebook has got people thinking about inclusion and reducing the barriers in the community. The local partners and stakeholders have seen value in the work and want the project to continue which demonstrates an appetite for change and commitment to inclusion.

Learnings and Recommendations

The table below details the project outcomes. The overall findings from this evaluation session were that the intended project outcomes were mostly met. The comments are additional to the comments in the July evaluation report. Across the project there were many learnings both about the local communities but across the project. The learnings and recommendations have been divided into the project phases which the NDIS funding identified.

LEARNINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Project Deliverables	
<p>Each region met achieved goals of the project to different degrees and in different ways. Measuring the outcomes depended on the type of project delivered and the opportunities to collect information about the activities and those who engaged with the activity. Sharing the achievements across the project was vital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and promote the successes and learnings of the project more regularly • Promote and celebrate the achievements of the program across the regions from a central point to raise the profile and the engagement in the project across the regions but also to organisations outside of the four regions who may learn or adapt their approaches according to shared ideas

<p>Communication and partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every region and partnership worked differently and there are improvements that can be made by both WDV and the partner organisations. <p>It was indicated that communication across the project could be improved. Some partners and LCB's communicated with WDV more frequently during the project and created a clear picture of what was being achieved and where the challenges were, some preferred to minimise communication which created issues including scope creep and reduced focus on the intended goals of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agreed way of working to be established with key project milestones openly discussed between WDV and the partner organisation to avoid scope creep and to ensure that WDV can assist and support where need. • Review communication and develop a communication plan for the next part of the project • Provide regular updates, share successes with LCB's, the partners and PAG participants • Ensure project updates are sent out regularly to increase awareness of what other regions are delivering and identify ideas that can be replicated or shared in other regions • Request partner organisations use their communication platforms for relevant information • Monitor how the projects are being promoted and communicated locally with consistent branding, language and messaging so that people in the community know about the project and it's intention • Check that LCB's are maximising their local opportunities to promote the program and offer support and troubleshooting if there are barriers.
<p>Keeping the LCB's focussed on the 'Here We Are' project outcomes and the agreed work plan during the project lifespan was challenging due to different priorities from WDV and the partner organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm work plan, the role of WDV and the partner organisation in finalising the work plan and remaining focussed on the project outcomes • Have regular and open conversations with the LCB and seek help from their supervisor early if there are concerns that there is scope creep or a deviation from the intended outcomes.
<p>Planning phase</p>	
<p>Where there is a difference in understanding and obligations of roles within the project, the issues need to be addressed and redirected early to ensure that the project maximises its intended outcomes and to reduce scope creep.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where projects proposed are not in line with the project deliverables discuss and make efforts to resolve this quickly to reduce lost time and missed opportunity for "Here We Are" focussed community engagement • Check the MOU meets the needs of the funding agreement that WDV has with the funder to ensure that partners deviation from the project does not affect WDV's obligations.

<p>The Activity Tracker designed to assist with project management ended up being inconsistently used. It was developed to assist with gaining a monthly update of activities in each region however it wasn't always provided to the project officer on time and often provided very little detail about the progress towards the project goals. Details provided were often more task focussed than project outcome focussed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an agreed way of working with the regions to increase the line of sight and to increase the opportunities for cross promotion of activities • Provide a tool to the regions that delivers summary information against the project deliverables. It might simply be a project plan that measures actions against the goals that the project is aiming to achieve • Develop regular one on one catch ups with each region to determine how the projects are progressing against the project outcomes and what WDV can assist with • Work with the local partner to outline who will provide what assistance to the LCB, to identify risks, project delays and appropriate supervision and support.
<p>Evaluation Engagement – Planning occurred between the Project Officer and the evaluator at the outset. Evaluation also formed part of the ongoing conversation with the project team however this did not always translate to timely cooperation with the evaluation of the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the collection of evidence and deliver more of the survey distribution from a central point to ensure that data is received and issues with collection and follow up are addressed early • Ensure that evaluation is explained briefly to participants to increase respectful evaluation engagement and quality of data collection.
<p>The evaluator met with the LCB's and the project officer to determine what needed to be collected to measure outcomes, collection of information was more successful in some regions than others. Three out of four regions demonstrated a high level of engagement in the discussion around what could be collected and provided to assist with measuring outcomes and the impact of the project. Whilst the concern with one region was raised, the evaluator should have sought assistance to better engage with the region that was not engaging to increase opportunity to gain a full picture of the activity and progress being achieved in the area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Project Officer and evaluators roles and restrictions for data collection at the commencement of the project, including the actions that both roles should take to mitigate issues with collection • Include the Project Officer in the discussion with the LCB to ensure high level engagement from each region and to assist with project management and data collection during the course of the project.
<p>Scope creep or projects that are not meeting the projects specific goals must be addressed and escalated to senior staff at the partner organisation both to resolve the project issues but also to assist the partner organisation to be accurately measuring project success and performance against the project goals for the purposes of supervision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where projects proposed are not in line with the project deliverables or are going off track and efforts to resolve this with the LCB • WDV and the partner work closer in terms of outlining how the project is tracking against the project goals and supervision of worker must

	occur regularly and be directly linked to the project goals.
Establishment phase	
<p>The intention of the Activity Tracker was to be a supporting document to provide a monthly overview of what was occurring in each region for the Project Officer to assist with project management and supporting the regions. The function of this process did not meet with its intention, when the reports were received the information was often at a micro level and did not detail progress against the project goals. One region decided that it added no value and discontinued completing it which further reduced project oversight and project control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the information exchange will occur, including project progress, challenges and opportunities • Less task oriented and more project progress focussed • Include reflective questions to guide their summary and to enhance professional development.
<p>Base line data was difficult to obtain due to the timeline and the nature of the projects. Informal knowledge was gathered by LCB's at a local level but to illustrate the impact it would be valuable to record more of this information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre evaluation across the projects for participants or a general community based survey which identified what the barriers to creating an inclusive environment were for organisations and indications of what and how the project could assist them. • This would collect general data and could be facilitated by the partner organisations through their networks or the local government in each region across their platforms.
<p>Evaluation needed to occur before the end of the project timeline due to NDIS reporting deadlines, this in effect reduced the data collection by 4 - 6 weeks of the project. This is a significant portion of the project particularly in regions where there was a delay in project commencement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data for the evaluation as part of the monthly reporting from LCB's and ensure that regular discussion between the Project Officer and the local supervisor of the LCB to ensure that this is being completed. • Project officer to provide support and trouble shoot where the LCB is experiencing difficulty meeting the requirement.
<p>The PAG functioned more as an information distribution and sharing point rather than a project governance group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That WDV consider the mix of participants on the PAG and include some participants who are not the project partners to provide an additional lens to the project. • Consider the inclusion of some members outside of the sector to enhance the project approach, to assist with trouble shooting, to broaden networks and to increase inclusion, reducing barriers to mainstream services
Consolidation and Knowledge sharing phase	
<p>People in the community are keen to be more inclusive but are worried about getting it wrong.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some promotion is done to share this sentiment publicly, to remove the concerns over engaging in the conversation and to enhance

	<p>conversations about working together to find the solutions in each community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on some standard communication to share this fear and normalise it so that people are comfortable asking the questions they need to increase the creation of inclusive environments.
<p>Attracting women with disability in the community to apply for roles needs a considered approach. Specifically identifying that WDV and the partner agency encourage women with disability to apply played a crucial role in attracting women with disabilities to apply for the Local Community Builder roles in some regions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and promote this success story with organisations and employment agencies • Provide suggested wording and an explanation about the barriers to employment for women with disability, including confidence to apply.
<p>The evaluation process met with challenges in terms of knowledge and data collection. It is unclear whether some regions did not value the evaluation process, did not plan for it adequately or did not prioritise it but this made collection difficult and influenced the quality of the evaluation of some projects.</p> <p>The missed opportunities for learning from projects can be minimised when all staff value, understand and contribute fully to evaluation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the evaluation element in the position description and work plan, regardless of the size of the evaluation it is best practice to exercise reviewing and evaluation of project work • Consider a professional development half day on evaluation and measuring success.
<p>Some people involved in the projects were not aware of the connection to the 'Here We Are' and the broader work being achieved through the project across the four regions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising electronic platforms to increase the reach of the 'Here We Are' project messages about inclusive communities and the positive impact that inclusion has on community culture • WDV could provide some key messaging to assist the regions in promoting the program and WDV's systemic advocacy work.
<p>Partners have reported that employing a woman with a disability in the role of Local Community Builder has enriched their experience in terms of employing someone with a disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the learnings and the benefits gained by employing a woman with a disability • Profile the organisations and share across communication platforms to encourage other organisations to increase inclusive employment strategies.
<p>Partners have reported that one of the benefits of employing an LCB with knowledge about accessibility and inclusion has enriched the conversation and improved their processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits and organisational learnings that the partners have experienced by having additional skills and knowledge about inclusion and lived experience of women with disability.
<p>That the project would benefit from additional time and funding to embed local capacity building and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Arts Access Victoria funding, leisure activity funding and other avenues to explore

creating opportunities for women with disability in mainstream activities	increasing mainstream activities for women with disability
That women with disability want more support and knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. Cobram and Barwon in particular gained feedback that young girls and women would like more information and support in this area of their life. The lived experience of women with disability identified that often women with disability were given limited knowledge, information and support about their sexual and reproductive health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the <i>'Here We Are'</i> project continues or similar work should continue in the regions, Sexual and reproductive health should be further explored as being a component of the activities offered • That WDV and project partners advocate for increased resources to provide inclusive sexual and reproductive health information and services.
Barwon region identified that gender barriers still existed and that offering gender equity training in the area would build local capacity in the community to understand the gender imbalances and how to combat this and be more inclusive in the way services and supports are communicated and delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WDV and partners seek opportunities to support organisations to offer gender equity training, offering a range of options including onsite within organisations.
There is alignment and overlap between <i>'Here We Are'</i> , Hub Liaison and the Rural Linkages program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the function of each program, the synergies and determine whether funding can be applied for to encompass all projects as one with the key components being community capacity building, inclusion and advocacy.
Evaluation of activities was highly reliant on the LCBs cooperation, in some instance surveys were received very late with no time to provide input or to improve them. In some regions the evaluator was able to design and complete the surveying and in other regions the evaluator was restricted from completing this, which was an evaluation limitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the surveys are all completed by the evaluator or project officer in consultation with the LCB rather than the LCB developing them.

The future of the program

“Empowerment builds empowerment” Warrnambool LCB

Determinants of health and wellbeing - being healthy is more than being free from disease. Health encompasses - physical health, mental health and quality of life, belonging and feeling connected to others, safety (feeling safe and being free from harm and violence, resilience and ability to cope with change. Each activity increased active living and social inclusion.

There are many incidental things that have occurred as part of this project, the most significant are the relationships and interconnections that have occurred, the conversations and the realisation that sometimes all you need to do is ask to make sure you are being inclusive and to learn how to become more inclusive of women with disabilities. The project has connected people with people they can confidently ask in their local community.

Increasing businesses, organisations and individuals knowledge of NDIS has been key in areas where it has not yet rolled out or is just commencing and there is still a lot of myths and misperceptions about how it will work or will not work. With knowledge rural access roles are ceasing, it has been another opportunity for the local community to identify the work and the gaps that Rural Access addresses and start thinking about what can be done to continue the work of this role in their community.

Creating capacity in the local community is vital and sometimes organisations that are not local government are better placed at encouraging change and supporting sustainable changes which benefit people with disability. With the vision of the NDIS being to optimise the social and economic independence and full participation of people with disability the *“Here We Are”* program should continue to demonstrate sustainable examples of activities that will increase the opportunities for women with disability to live an ordinary life.

The ILC looks to invest in those activities that develop independence, self-determination and community inclusion. Speaking to the women, businesses and organisations throughout this project, it is evident that although the gains may seem small at this point there have been many gains across the four regions and continuing the momentum is where real change and embedded positive community attitude towards women with disability will strengthen inclusion and participation.

Some have been on an individual, the women who've reported increased confidence and participation in their community by delivering the *Works for Me* video and for organisations, small things will make a difference to whether a woman with a disability will enter their business or join their group.

The next step for these achievements is to share the resources and stories more broadly to increase the opportunity of strengthening inclusion of women the community.

Although the goal is specifically about woman and their lived experience of disability in the community some of the outcomes of this program are not gender specific and have benefits to other people in the community. This is an important part of the message as creating inclusive and welcoming

communities benefits everyone. Continued education and support is needed to assist women with disability, and the community around them, to understand their rights and to know where they can go to seek knowledge, support and assistance.

Many of the women we have spoken to in the community during this project have identified that a glossy brochure doesn't provide the impetus to get assistance, it's when you meet other women, build relationships of trust and can have a conversation which enables and reinforces your right to be safe and free from violence that really makes the difference. It's when women have these conversations with people they trust that they are more open to information about local supports and services become more relevant and more possible to connect with to seek support.

Women with disabilities identified that increasing social connections, becoming involved in paid or voluntary work increases, having opportunities to do the things you love without barriers were vital to living an ordinary life. The regions have identified areas that they would like to build on including increasing the availability of sexual and reproductive health resources and support for women, increased training and development of gender quality and inclusion in the community, demystifying inclusion and creating real change in businesses across the region in relation to accessibility and inclusion of all people and to provide more opportunities

No two people with a disability are the same, the key message at the Sale forum and the Works for me video was "just ask".

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ILC Grants – Activity Work Plan

#16coffeecupsCampaign, Report Evaluation Findings. Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West

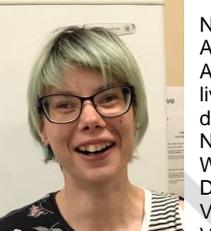
Appendix

Appendix one - Barwon Social Capital survey results Q 8

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
As a woman with disability I feel I am treated equally at home	30	30	25	10	5
I feel I am treated equally at my school, work or other scheduled programs	25	25	25	15	10
I feel I am treated equally by society as a whole	15.79	21.05	15.79	21.05	26.32
I feel I am treated equally by the media	15	5	20	35	25
I feel like I see a lot of women like me on TV or in magazines etc.	5	10	5	20	60
I know where to go or who to call if I need help or support	40	35	10	15	0
I feel like I can speak up when I have a problem	40	25	15	10	10
I know where to go or who to call if I need help or support	40	35	10	15	40
I feel like I am welcomed and encouraged to participate in my community	25	35	10	30	0

Appendix two - WOW project , women's profiles

PROJECT NAME:	WOMEN OF WARRNAMBOOL (WOW)	SAT DECEMBER 1, 2018
PARTNER ENGAGEMENT:	Warrnambool City Council Rural Access Warrnambool City Council Warrnambool East Primary School Department of Education & Training - Respectful Relationships	Neil Ballard, Maree Wyse Lisa McLeod James Chapman Sarah Prescott
LOCAL PARTNERS	Nominated women with disability	
 <p>Nomination : Donna Kenna Are you a woman living with a disability? Yes Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney)</p> <p>Phone:0437 897 396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>What personal achievements are you most proud of? Paying off my house. What is the biggest challenge you have had to overcome in your life? Completing my VCE as it took a lot of work to pass as I had to deal with a lot of symptoms of my Cerebral Palsy – but I did it! In three sentences, describe your ideal world. - Acceptance by everyone - Equal opportunity for everybody - Accessibility to everywhere. What makes you proud to be a woman living in Warrnambool? It is beautiful and I have a lot of family who live in and around Warrnambool who support me. There are lots of choices of services available to people with disabilities. Which woman has most influenced the way you live your life? And why? My mum – because she is such a strong lady and she fought for everything for me. It must have been hard back in the day.</p>	 <p>Nomination : Grace Moloney Are you a woman living with a disability? Yes Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney) Phone:0437 897</p> <p>396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>What does it mean to be a woman in 2018? For me, being a woman in 2018, means I am able to further embrace myself as a disabled woman. Each year, I see progress within the worlds community and each year it gets easier. What personal achievements are you most proud of? I am most proud of fully embracing myself as a disabled woman in a world that does not always make it easy. What is the biggest challenge that you have had to overcome in your life? The biggest challenge I have had to overcome was the fact that growing up disabled had it's difficulties but as said above, I overcame it. In three sentences, describe your ideal world. My ideal world entails the break down of stigmas against minorities. My perfect world would be almost fairy-tale like</p>	 <p>Nomination : Jenny McLean Are you a woman living with a disability? Yes Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney) Phone:0437 897</p> <p>396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>What personal achievements are you most proud of? Moving back to Warrnambool. What is the biggest challenge that you have had to overcome in your life? Settling in to Warrnambool. What character strengths make a positive male role model? Someone that shows respect for women and doesn't treat them like a piece of paper – something you can throw away. In three sentences, describe your ideal world. My ideal world would be one where everyone is happy.</p>

LOCAL PARTNERS	Nominated women with disability	
 <p>Nomination : Jo Fenton Are you a woman living with a disability? Yes Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney) Phone:0437 897 396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>What is the biggest challenge that you have had to overcome in your life? Becoming hearing impaired at the age of 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusting to my hearing loss and wearing hearing aids Coping with the challenges in social settings and work environment Feeling isolated in certain situations as people assume I can hear The effort to concentrate on what is being said and what is going on around me <p>Feeling 'foolish' when I cannot hear or understand conversations, particularly in loud environments</p> <p>What character strengths make a positive male role model? Respectful Honesty Confidence</p> <p>In three sentences, describe your ideal world. Ensure every person is safe from poverty, violence and war. That our leaders work in harmony for a peaceful world, where every person is given the opportunity to be 'great'.</p> <p>If you could write a message to your 15 year old self, what would it say? Enjoy every moment of being a teenager Value your education and learning opportunities – it will give you more choices personally and professionally in your adult life.</p> <p>What makes you proud to be a woman living in Warrnambool? Being part of a safe and supportive community!</p> <p>Which woman (historical or current) has most influenced the way your live your life? And why? My mum! For her constant love and unconditional support throughout my life.</p> <p>What piece of advice could you offer to a man in your life? Your son, partner, student, nephew or friend. Don't take it for granted that I can hear you. Although we live with my hearing loss every day, at times we all forget, leading to unnecessary misunderstandings. But thank you for</p>	 <p>Nomination : Jodie Gebert Are you a woman living with a disability? Yes Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney) Phone:0437 897</p> <p>396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>List five strengths that make you, you.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Music People person Life Me Crotcheting <p>What personal achievements are you most proud of? Being involved in the All Abilities Choir</p> <p>What is the biggest challenge that you have had to overcome in your life? My mental illness and disability.</p> <p>What makes you proud to be a woman living in Warrnambool? Being close to the sea.</p>	 <p>Nomination : Julie-Ann Miller Are you a woman living with a disability? Yes Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney) Phone:0437 897 396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>List five strengths that make you, you.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I'm helpful. I'm a caring person. I have my own style. I have a great sense of humour. I can write and I'm good at craft. <p>What personal achievement are you most proud of? Being able to work part-time and moving and making friends.</p> <p>What is the biggest challenge that you have had to overcome in your life? When my brother was sick.</p> <p>What character strengths make a positive male role model? Caring, helpful, kind.</p>
<p>70</p> <p>are we are project evaluation</p>	 <p>Nomination : Kylie Thulborn Are you a woman living with a disability? No Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney) Phone:0437 897 396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>List five strengths that make you, you.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I can stand on my head I am open to new experiences I care passionately I am resilient I believe in the power of me <p>What personal achievements are you most proud of? My family</p> <p>What character strengths make a positive male role model?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Empathy Understanding Equality Someone to raise me up as a woman in society 	 <p>Nomination : Lou Hollis Are you a woman living with a disability? Yes Nominated by: Women with Disabilities Victoria (contact: Vicki Kearney) Phone:0437 897 396 Email: vkearney@warrnambool.vic.gov.au</p> <p>List five strengths that make you, you.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stubborn Questioning Loyal High standards Finish what I start <p>What personal achievements are you most proud of? Being involved in discussions to get more people involved in breast screening.</p> <p>What is the biggest challenge that you have had to overcome in your life? Peoples perceptions of me because so many believe that a physical disability equates to an intellectual disability.</p>

Appendix three - WOW project, promotional material



Figure 8 promotion of the WOW project

Appendix four – WOW radio promotion

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=d5c80d2fbc&attid=0.3&permmsgid=msg-f:1619058638273121611&th=16780d40dccc0d4b&view=att&disp=safe>

Appendix five – Equity in a bag

Warrnambool's Equity in the Bag campaign – promotional artwork, additional to the social media campaign this was included on the bottom of Warrnambool City Council staffs emails.



Figure 9 promotion of 16 days of activism - email footer for Warrnambool City Council staff

Appendix six – Evaluation engagement

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS STAKEHOLDERS WERE ASKED

- The teachers were asked
- What they thought the selection of speakers and topics were appropriate and relevant to the students
- If they thought that the forum met the student's needs
- What the most effective part of the forum was for creating awareness of disability, health issues and the supports available?
- What would you do differently?
- What was the feedback from the students?
- What has been your experience of your interactions with WDV and Nancy?

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK – summary structure applied to the activities

- What was the issue identified that the project aimed to address
- What were the groups that you worked with
- What activities were delivered to these people
- What changes or outcomes did people observe as a result
- What was the end goal
- Did the measurement give us the full picture?
- What types of stories and feedback have you heard that indicates the activity was a success?
- What was the date you collected? We are describing, measuring and reporting on outcomes not just the number of people we talked to, the number of people who attended activities of the numbers of resources we distributed.

QUESTIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS

- were people more confident and aware of how to make their service or activity accessible to women with disability
- what had people learnt about creating an inclusive environment
- what were the benefits and challenges that they experienced
- what had they observed throughout the activity in terms of outcomes and learnings
- had it increased participation
- had it increased people's confidence in providing a more inclusive environment
- had it increased women with disabilities confidence in accessing services and activities within the community
- what were the unintended outcomes from the activities

Participant engagement per region – surveys, discussions at events and phone surveys

	Interviews	Surveys	Other collection
Barwon	10	21	5
Cobram	11	22	8
Warrnambool	15	0	7
Wellington	7	0	4
TOTAL	43	43	24

Appendix seven – Community engagement

Region	Estimates per Activity	Comments
Barwon 181 Women with disability - 51 Participants from Community orgs - 40 General public - 90(conservative est.)	Community including businesses, health services, local government and community members – 60 (including rural linkages forums attended and presented at) Survey - 21 Workshops & exhibitions - 100	This area was a highly networked area, this number is based on activity reported which includes connections made but does not capture the outreach of activities such as 16 days of activism. The general community access to the arts displays and other activities are difficult to estimate and have been estimated conservatively as a figure was not provided. Disability figures are an estimate as identifying disability was not required in any activity.
Moira 93 Women with disability - 12 Participants from Community orgs - 31	Community including businesses, health services, local government and community members – 30 NDIS sessions – 30 Teachers – 4 Health services, local government, businesses, community – 20	This number is based on activity reported which includes connections made and Students included in general public count. Disability figures are an estimate as identifying disability was not required in any activity.

General public – 50(conservative est.)	Skills for work – 9(including participants(6) and supports/skilled professionals)	
Warnambool 320 Women with disability - 25 Participants from Community orgs - 60 General public – 235(conservative est.)	Community including businesses, health services, local government and community members, including BPWSW – 50 AccessAbility day – 20 (includes 4 women participating and direct council staff) WOW – 150 (conservative estimate includes students, DET, representatives, women profiled and families and friends attending. 100 reported attendances to the official launch & 200 brown bags and 175 orange bags were distributed on the day.) Works for Me – 100 including women featured in the video, organisations and technical crew involved in creating video and the community who attended on the day of the launch.	BPWSW have a membership of approximately 70, presentation was limited to their committee however has provided an opportunity to access the full group in 2019. AccessAbility day also communicated and promoted across council and on City of Warnambools on social media platforms including facebook page. WOW – number of community on the day and following weeks is difficult to estimate. Works for me – it is too early to estimate the number of people and providers who will access this video. Online figures in the report of over 2,000 in mid December. Disability figures are an estimate as identifying disability was not required in any activity.
Wellington 97 Women with disability - 51 Community organisations – 30 General public – 10(conservative est.)	Community including businesses, health services, local government and community members – 40 Forum participants – 12 (including 6 organisations) 6 women with disabilities) My Community – 45 (in addition 180 distributed as extra resources to Sale Special School, George Gray & maxima)	Due to nature of resource and undetermined follow up, numbers of resources that were distributed and used cannot be determined. General NDIS information provided within the community however a figure not provided, this is estimated in the general community figure which includes networking and attendance at local meetings an events. Disability figures are an estimate as identifying disability was not required in any activity.

*figures don't include the LCB in the women with disability numbers.

**Community organisations includes individuals not number of organisations and is based on best guess of non profit, community organization status such as local government, health and community services and other non profits.

***General public includes business owners, technicians involved in filming, carers and family of people with disabilities and general community members.

Appendix eight – Democracy Ambassador Simone Stevens



November 2018

HWA in the Community

Women with Disability; Connecting, Impacting and Defining the Community

INTRODUCING SIMONE STEVENS, DEMOCRACY AMBASSADOR

Victoria's State Election is just around the corner and excitingly for some Victorians this will be the first time they will be exercising their right to vote, thanks largely to the Be Heard campaign. Earlier this year, local Barwon resident (and somewhat of a local icon!) Simone Stevens was appointed as a Democracy Ambassador on behalf of the Victorian Electoral Commission to help spread the word about Be Heard. To learn more about the campaign and why voting is so crucial to the rights and liberty of people with disability, Simone shared some time with us.

Firstly can you tell us a bit about yourself? My name is Simone Stevens. I live independently in my own home in Thomson with my 4 and a half year old cat named Buster. I am a passionate Collingwood supporter. I live life to the absolute max!

Recently you were announced as a Democracy Ambassador, congratulations. Can you please tell us about your job for the Victorian Electoral Commission? Well I go into services and teach people with intellectual disabilities on how to vote.

And how did you get involved with the project? It was a funny thing that. It was by accident. Someone nominated me and I was actually going to turn it down. Because I didn't want it to conflict with my work with VALID (Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability). But then I was told to go for it. So I did.

After your appointment to the position what kind of training did you do? Four days of training. We just learned how to relate to people really. That's the most important thing. It wasn't just for people with disability, you've got democracy ambassadors going into homeless shelters and other areas too which is great. They are covering a big field. But I was asked to do people with disabilities. Encouraging particularly people with intellectual disabilities to vote. **You mentioned that there are other demographics in Victoria being included by the Be Heard campaign, you are also reaching out to communities identifying as culturally and linguistically diverse, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, can you tell us a bit more about that?** Yeah for sure. For example, people experiencing homelessness as I mentioned. Also adult school leavers, so they know how to enrol and what to do to vote and the importance of enrolling. To not see it as boring or like; "oh no we have to vote", which some people unfortunately have that attitude. So we really want to show the positive.

Simone's Cat Buster



And its not a biased campaign at all is it? You don't care who people vote for as long as they vote, right? Yeah that's right its run by The Victorian Electoral Commission. Its not a political party. I think that's important to let people know that, its vital. We are just there to get the message out there. And we are there to support people. Because there has been a lot of study to say people with an intellectual disability, in particular, aren't voting because they have been told they can't vote.

That does seem to be a common misconception with regards to people with intellectual disability and their eligibility to vote, why is that? Basically I hate to say it but sometimes parents can unknowingly reinforce the idea that people with intellectual disability can't vote. They just aren't seeing the big picture. They think they are protecting their child but really they aren't seeing their full potential. I would say, parents ask your child what they want. Don't just assume. And that's why we have people like me. We can help empower people to vote. In a fun and interactive we show people and their families or staff that if they can make a decision like; what they want to wear that day, or what they have for breakfast that morning, they can make a decision on who to vote for.

Where to Find The Voters Voice App...

Apple: <https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/voters-voice/id1140391321?mt=8>
Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=au.gov.vic.vec.votersvoice>



Simone Stevens is ready to Be Heard this November 24

Why do you think it is important for people with disabilities to learn about their right to vote and how to do it properly? Its not just about political parties. Its about having your say and your choice heard. If you don't have that say and you miss the boat then that's it. Someone else might come in and the party you don't like might get elected but its too late. You didn't vote!

What are some of the things you have learned through the Be Heard campaign about making the voting process more accessible? You are always learning. You never stop learning. I have always taught myself with each election by going through the VEC website.

And now the website has resources available about Be Heard for others which is great. I love the campaign because its not just for people with intellectual disability its for people with hearing and visual impairments and all kinds of disabilities. Its catering for everyone including different languages.

You mentioned the VEC website which has some great resources on how to vote. In the lead up to the next State Election what other tools are out there for people with disabilities to access to assist them in casting their votes? There is the awesome Voters Voice App to download on your phone and your iPad or Android Tablet. And I hope people have been downloading this as it does help locating nearest voting centre and accessibility. As well as other great information. We also have 'Telephone Assisted Voting' available through the website where people can call in and vote. Which is available until Friday November 23. (<https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/Voting/TAV.html>)

I am guessing its going to be a busy month for you Simone, what have you got scheduled so far? I have got two sessions tomorrow and I am doing an expo on Saturday. I am doing two shifts on Monday and I am hoping that I get more bookings within the next week! Booking forms available on the VEC website!

And on election day what can people with disabilities access to make sure their vote counts? There will be people like myself around with a maroon vest that can help cast their vote. So don't be afraid to ask for assistance! I'll be stationed at Newcomb Park Primary School from 8am to 6pm.

Its great to have someone so passionate representing democracy in this State Simone, why is it so important to you? I think its really, really important because it means community and it means togetherness and it means I can help support other people to be a part of that community. I just love inclusion and participating in democracy is inclusion!

Finally, Simone remind us again... when exactly is the next State Election for Victoria?? Saturday November 24 don't forget and don't forget to vote!

"I just love inclusion and participating in democracy is inclusion!"

