

Annual Report 2012-13

Bankstown Women's Health Centre

A feminist service primarily funded by NSW Ministry of Health. Run by women, for women.

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CONTENTS

1. Executive summary	
2 Client and Service Statistics	4
3. Service Reports	7
3.1 Counselling	7
3.2 Vietnamese Women's Health	8
3.3 Case Management	9
3.4 Natural therapies	10
3.5 Administration, Information & Referrals	11
3.6 Health Promotion	12
3.7 Groups, Workshops, Outreach	13
3.8 Private Medical Services	14
3.9 Private Psychology	14
3.10 Private Acupuncture	15
3.11 Child Sexual Assault Support Services	15
4 Organisational Structure	17
4.1 Management Team	17
4.2 Staffing and Workers	17
5 Partnerships	18

1. Executive Summary

Bankstown Women's Health Centre Incorporated (BWHC) is a community-managed women's health service initiated by women, for women. The Centre is in its 35th year of operation and continues to provide its unique services to all women regardless of age, nationality or background. Bankstown Local Government Area has a female population of 92,424. Many women from Bankstown and its surrounding areas access the Centre's services at little or no cost.

The organisation offered 17634 occasions of service to 1448 clients in 2012/13, with 84% of those clients experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage or not being in full time employment. 53% of clients were pensioners or did not have any form of income.

Mission statement: Bankstown Women's Health Centre is committed to providing a feminist service with a holistic approach to health for women in our community. We take a leadership role in addressing the issues that affect the health, safety and wellbeing of women as well as survivors of child sexual assault.

Objectives

- To address the health and social inequalities that exist for women in the community
- To assist in providing relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, disability or helplessness.
- To provide a quality preventative health care service for women regardless of age and ethnic origin.
- To provide and develop community based education programs for women with a focus on the needs of the community
- To treat a woman as a whole person and not isolate her medical/personal problems
- To provide quality ongoing support and practical self help skills for women experiencing physical and psychological stresses and pressures.
- To function as a link in the network of women's services.
- To research women's lifestyles and health needs.

Aims

- To provide a holistic health and medical service for women which recognises their particular health needs. Qualified practitioners will provide both natural and conventional therapies. Relaxation therapies or natural remedies will be offered where applicable.
- To educate women of the necessity for routine gynecological examinations {Pap smears, breast examinations etc}, as well as blood pressure checks. In accordance with these aims, special visits to schools, factories and agencies serving women and other women's groups will be made.
- To encourage women to know and take control of their bodies and to take responsibility for them through de-mystification and education. Information and counselling, for unplanned pregnancies and abortion referrals to legally constituted bodies will be freely available.
- To provide a confidential counselling service for women that is culturally sensitive
- To provide community research with a focus on disadvantage or those identified as being in need

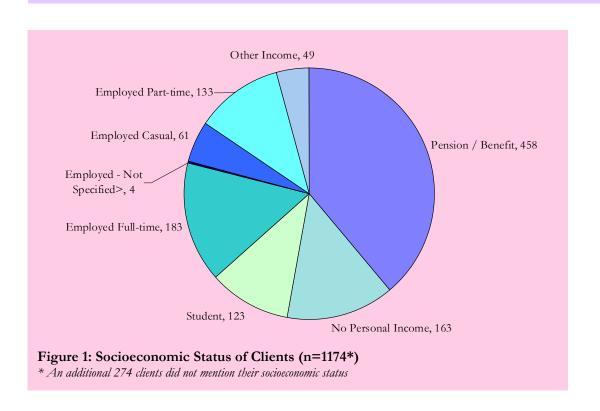
2. Client and Service Statistics

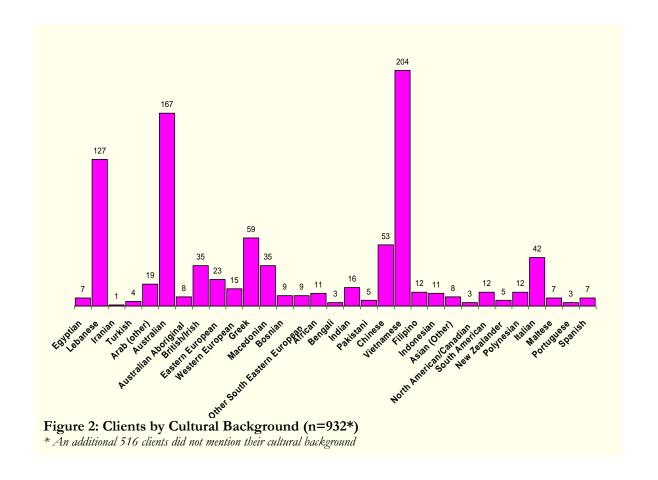
Table 1: Clients numbers and occasions of service

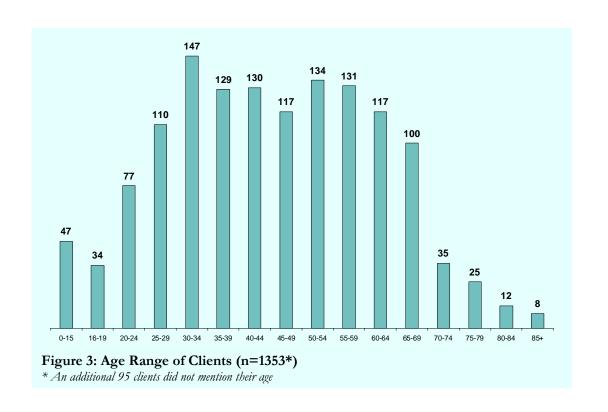
Service statistic	2011/12	2012/13*
Occasions of service	7559	7884
Total clients	1334	1448

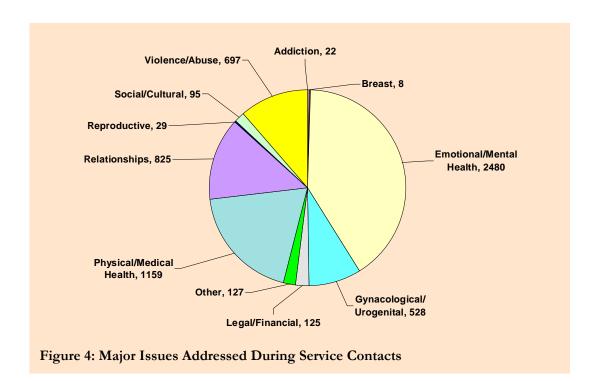
^{*}Not including Information and Referral Statistics

Table 2: Total Occasions of Service According to Funding Type (n=17634) Occasions of Service Service Type Funding Type Generalist Counselling 252 NSW Health **CALD** Counselling 127 NSW Health 95 NSW Health Case Management 23 NSW Health Interpreting Natural Therapy 287 NSW Health Administration 826 **NSW** Health **CALD** Groups 422 NSW Health Other Groups (Health-funded) 3621 **NSW** Health Information/Referrals 9750 NSW Health Child Sexual Assault (Counselling and Groups) 392 **FACS** Bulk-bill Medical 1074 Psychology 721 Bulk-bill Fee for service Acupuncture 44









3. Service Reports

3.1 Generalist Counselling*

NSW Ministry of Health funded – 0.6FTE

*Excludes Vietnamese counselling clients, see section 3.2

Staff member: Edwina Student: Fiona

At BWHC, a safe space is offered for women to tell their stories, and to be believed and heard without judgment, blame or labelling. In addition to one-on-one counselling, this service supports and advocates for clients in other ways such as through outreach, therapy groups, and mental health education.

Service Snapshot

- 51 clients
- 252 occasions of service
- 85% of clients are of low socioeconomic status
- Top five issues in counselling*:
 Depression (102 occasions)
 Anxiety (82 occasions)
 Domestic violence
 (64 occasions)
 Recovering from child sexual assault
 (47 occasions)
 Parenting (41 occasions)
- * Many of these issues are linked to clients' current or historical experiences of domestic violence or sexual assault

Highlights

- Facilitation of therapy groups and workshops, supporting women in learning interpersonal skills and exploration of internal processes
- The introduction of a therapy group for female survivors of child sexual assault
- Women were supported when leaving situations of domestic violence
- Support of parents with mental health issues
- Increased provision of outreach therapy groups and mental health education
- The organisation contracted a short-term counselling student, helping to address the increasing demand for counselling services

- The high demand for counselling often means there is only a short period of time that counselling books are open for new appointments. Some clients have to be diverted to the Private Psychology service in order to keep up with demand
- Counselling clients often benefit from casework support, but this is only available in limited amounts at BWHC

3.2 Vietnamese/CALD Women's Health

NSW Ministry of Health Funded – 0.7FTE

Staff member: Kim
Student: Quang

Vietnamese people form the second largest ethnic community in Bankstown. A Vietnamese Women's Health Worker works four days per week to provide diverse services to Vietnamese women to meet their needs. The Vietnamese Women's Health Worker also provides some group and outreach services to other multicultural groups.

Highlights

- Facilitated a multicultural walking group which has improved the physical and mental health of clients
- A cancer education workshop for Vietnamese in partnership with Bankstown Hospital & Cancer Council NSW, including medical professionals and interpreting
- A new monthly Vietnamese cancer support group at Bankstown was formed in June.
 This created a supportive environment and shared experiences, providing information for Vietnamese cancer patients, cancer survivors, carers and relatives of the patients to break their silence about this issue.
- Some women attending bilingual counselling and suffering from depression joined the walking group, falls prevention group and cancer group
- Supervision of TAFE work experience student

Service Snapshot

COUNSELLING

- 27 Vietnamese counselling clients
- 127 Vietnamese counselling occasions of service
- 97% of Vietnamese counselling clients are of low socioeconomic status
- Top 5 issues in Vietnamese counselling: Stress (73 occasions), Loneliness (69), Relationships (34), Sleep (28), Self esteem (26)

VIETNAMESE INTERPRETING

• 23 occasions of service

CALD SUPPORT GROUPS (INCL VIETNAMESE GROUPS)

- 8 CALD support groups run
- 88 clients attending CALD groups
- 422 occasions of service
- 100% of CALD support group clients of low socioeconomic status

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Health education and information
- Partnerships with other community organisations
- Liaising with Vietnamese community

- Due to the language barrier, Vietnamese clients are isolated. They are not confident to join a mixed group or groups with English speaking educators. This is especially true for women with depression
- Some Vietnamese women with depression begin to withdraw from both English and Vietnamese communities
- In Vietnamese culture, people with cancer feel guilty and their relatives feel shame. They keep it secret, so few family members know they have cancer. It is very hard to form a network to support them

3.3 Case Management

(NSW Ministry of Health Funded – 0.2FTE)

Staff member: Tegan



Case Management is a newly created position that has been in extremely high demand since it began in August 2012. In order to manage demand, it is only available to existing clients of the service (such as current counselling clients needing further support).

This role has helped to relieve the pressure of the counselors to perform casework, and has allowed clients to receive specialist support from a qualified Social Worker.

Service Snapshot

- 43 clients
- 95 occasions of service
- 18 crisis occasions of service
- 100% of clients are of low socioeconomic status
- Top five issues in case management:
 - Legal issues (26 occasions)
 - Access/advocacy (24)
 - Financial issues (22)
 - Pregnancy termination (13)
 - Housing (9)

Highlights

- Caseload is always at maximum capacity
- Assisted clients to leave DV situations through providing information, referrals, financial assistance
- Attendance at court, Housing and Centrelink to advocate for clients
- Offering specialist knowledge about housing, legal and financial assistance programs
- Successfully calling companies on behalf of clients to reduce bills or set up payment plans
- Support and advocacy for clients in financial hardship who are seeking pregnancy termination

- The new Case Management service necessitated the creation of policies, forms and procedures, which was a time consuming process
- There is a great demand for Case Management at the Centre, with a need for expansion of this service in the near future
- Clients needs have varied greatly, requiring the development of new staff skills and knowledge in legal, housing and financial areas

3.4 Natural Therapies

NSW Ministry of Health funded – 0.5FTE

Staff members: Cathy/Katrina



The Natural Therapies service includes Therapeutic Massage and Naturopathy. Therapeutic massage is an easy and effective way of reducing stress that can be a useful part of any health care plan. Naturopathy includes nutrition, iridology, herbal medicine and flower essences.

Service Snapshot

- 130 clients
- 287 occasions of service
- 95% of clients are of low socioeconomic status
- 13 counselling clients used Therapeutic Massage as a complementary therapy
- Top five issues in Natural Therapies:
 - -Stress (266 occasions)
 - -Chronic pain (224 occasions)
 - -Acute pain (210 occasions)
 - -Chronic injury (102 occasions)
 - -Arthritis (75 occasions)

Highlights

- The Naturopathic service has recently applied for funding for a Herbal Medicine dispensary which will further allow the Natural Therapies services to complement other BWHC services
- The Natural Therapies service has introduced new weekly health promotion groups for women at the Centre, including Laughter Yoga and Stretch/Meditation
- Regular Natural Therapies workshops are held on topics such as Green Cleaning, Self Massage, and Natural Therapies for Sleeping Well

- Therapeutic Massage is often unable to accommodate the high client demand for this service, so clients are only able to attend a maximum of four appointments per year
- The Therapeutic Massage service can make special allowances for clients with particular need, such as counselling clients. In 2013/14 the Centre aims to increase the availability of Therapeutic Massage appointments for current counselling/case management clients, however this will impact the total number of clients able to use the service and may result women missing out if they have less urgent needs

3.5 Administration, Information & Referrals

NSW Ministry of Health funded

Tracey (Information/Referrals, 0.8FTE) Kristina (Manager, 1FTE) Cheryl (Bookkeeper, 0.3FTE)



The Information and Referral service forms the first point of contact with clients of the Centre. As well as providing information to new and existing clients, it also includes the provision of administrative support to BWHC's private practitioners, which would not be able to function in the Centre otherwise (see Section 3.8 and 3.9).

Service Snapshot

- 9750 information and referral contacts
- 2653 additional administration occasions of service supporting private practitioner clinics, such as processing Pathology results
- Internal and external referrals provided to clients

Highlights

- Provision of information to existing clients and general community members on a range of health topics, including the provision of internal and external referrals
- Providing callers with telephone support and information on the topics of suicide, self harm and mental health issues, in accordance with BWHC's Suicide Policy (telephone risk assessment)
- Administration support for all of BWHC's private practitioners two doctors, three psychologists and one acupuncturist
- Making clients feel comfortable and welcome when coming to the Centre

- As the organisation continues to grow, the need for administration, information and referral support increases, leading to greater workload and time pressure in this role
- Due to funding limitations the Information and Referral worker is present four days per week, meaning that Reception is unstaffed on Fridays. This can cause difficulties for clients trying to get in contact with the Centre

3.6 Health Promotion

NSW Ministry of Health funded, 1FTE

Staff members: Tegan/Johana

Social Work Students: Liz, Olivia

Medical Students: Melissa, Ravneet, Vienna



Health promotion aims to promote health, social functioning and wellbeing across groups, communities, and populations. Major activities for this role include: Coordination of BWHC's group program (Section 3.7); coordination of special events; health education; research and evaluation; and marketing and social media.

Service Snapshot

- 3 needs assessments conducted
- Health promotion talks
- 2 information stalls
- 200+ Facebook interactions
- 252 Facebook Friends
- 792 Twitter Followers
- 4853 visitors to website
- 5 media releases
- 48 clients referred to Centre by local media
- 300 surveys distributed
- 69 women contributing to whole-of-service evaluation

Highlights

- Research and planning to establish a community garden in Bankstown
- Attendance at interagency expos at schools and Universities
- A marked increase in the number of followers on BWHC's Facebook Page, including other agencies and organisations across Australia
- Delivery of a healthy eating workshop for women at Headway, an agency that caters to people with acquired brain injuries
- Collaboration on an International Women's Day event with BCRG at the Centre a cultural day with Vietnamese and Lebanese speakers, with a presenter discussing cultural identity and child care/playgroups
- Attendance at interagency committees such as Domestic Violence Liaison Committee
- Collaboration on the International Women's Day event at Villawood
- Continuing efforts to green the Centre, including partnerships with the TAFE carpentry school to build a vertical garden on the patio

- Due to the popularity of the Yoga classes and consistent requests through group evaluations, the Centre is trialling a Holiday Yoga class
- The Group Program has been changed to accommodate the growth in group participation and group activities. There have many changes to the groups, such as a second (advanced) Tai Chi class, new support groups and a Laughter Group

3.7 Groups, Workshops, Outreach

NSW Ministry of Health funded, performed within other staff roles

Staff: Tegan, Kim, Edwina Contractors: Monika, Le, Kerre, Joanna, Ileana

BWHC runs a comprehensive program of women's groups that also includes outreach, workshops, and health education talks. Due to client demand, many groups expanded in 2012/13 and new groups also had to be introduced.

Service Snapshot

- 439 clients
- 4816 occasions of service
- 7 therapy groups/workshops
- 4 general support groups
- 11 CALD groups/workshops
- 29 exercise groups
- 21 Health education groups/workshops

THERAPY GROUPS/WORKSHOPS

Healing from Child Sexual Abuse Group (x2) Depression Outreach Workshop(x4) Domestic Violence Outreach Workshop

CALD GROUPS AND WORKSHOPS

Breast Screening for Vietnamese women (x3)
Cancer Education Outreach for Vietnamese Women
Vietnamese Cancer Support Group
Vietnamese Parenting Workshop
Vietnamese Women's Outreach Group - Villawood
Falls Prevention Outreach Group-Vietnamese Women
Healthy Women Group
Multicultural Women's Outreach Group - Punchbowl
Multicultural Walking Group

HEALTH EDUCATION GROUPS

Domestic Violence outreach presentation
Financial Decisions in Retirement workshop
Green Cleaning workshop
Women & Culture (Arabic & Vietnamese workshops)
Laughter outreach workshop
Make Your Own Natural Skincare workshop
Natural Therapies for Sleep workshop
Nutrition outreach workshop
Self Massage workshops (x2)
Sex Worker Outreach (x8)
Drug Overdose Education for Sex Workers workshop
Women's Health outreach workshop (x2)

EXERCISE GROUPS

Tai Chi (x4)
Belly Dancing (x4)
Laughter Group (x4)
Stretch/Meditation (x2)
Advanced Yoga (x4)
Gentle Yoga (x4)
Beginner's Yoga (x3)
Pilates (x4)

SUPPORT GROUPS

Craft Support Group (x4)

3.8 Medical Services

Primarily funded by HIC Medicare – 0.3 FTE Administration and Vietnamese interpreting funded by NSW Health

Dr Brenda McPhee, Dr Ngaire Millener Administration: Tracey Interpreting: Kim

BWHC provides medical services run by private practitioners. BWHC's two female doctors possess expertise in the recognised field of women's health, and only see clients for women's-health related issues. Having doctors co-located at the organisation assists with seamless service provision, as the doctors refer many clients to BWHC staff for counselling, and vice versa. The Vietnamese Women's Health Worker, Kim, provides interpreting for the medical clinics as required on a weekly basis.

Service Snapshot

- 812 clients
- 1074 medical occasions of service
- 23 occasions of Vietnamese interpreting
- 1838 administration contacts

10% of women said they would have gone to hospital if they had not come to BWHC doctors

3% of women said they would have gone to a Community Health Centre if they had not come to BWHC doctors

3.9 Psychology

Funded by HIC Medicare – 1 FTE Administration funded by NSW Health

Psychologists: Heather, Helen, Edwina Administration: Tracey



Psychology is offered at BWHC four days per week, with some evening appointments. A Mental Health Care Plan allows up to 10 sessions with a psychologist bulk-billed under Medicare. The psychology service provides support to adult women regarding various issues relating to mental health, wellbeing and lifestyle. Edwina also provides counselling to children and adolescents for issues such as anxiety disorders, autism, grief and post-traumatic stress.

Service Snapshot

- 255 clients
- 721 occasions of service
- 95% of clients experience socioeconomic disadvantage
- 721 administration contacts
- Top 5 issues in psychology:
 - Anxiety (405 occasions)
 - Depression (335)
 - Relationships (166)
 - DV/sexual abuse (136)
 - Stress (97)

14% of women said they would have gone to a Community Health Centre if they had not come to BWHC psychologists

7% of women said they would not have sought any help at all if they had not come to BWHC psychologists

3.10 Acupuncture

(Fee-for-service, health insurance rebates – 0.15 FTE) Administration funded by NSW Health

Acupuncturist: Eunbee Administration: Tracey

The Acupuncture service was introduced to BWHC in March 2013, with new and existing clients utilising the service. Some clients have used this physical therapy service to complement the psychological therapy they are receiving in BWHC counselling or support groups. The service is growing in demand, with new hours being added recently to accommodate increased client numbers.

Service Snapshot

- 10 clients
- 44 occasions of service
- 44 administration contacts
- 100% of clients experience socioeconomic disadvantage
- Top 5 issues in Acupuncture:
 - Pain/injury (22 occasions)
 - Depression (7 occasions)
 - Fatigue (6 occasions)
 - Allergies (4)
 - Anxiety (4)

3.11 Child Sexual Assault Support Service

(Funded by Department of Family and Community Services – 1FTE)

Staff member: Debbie Social work student: Cathyrene

The Child Sexual Assault (CSA) support service provides individual counselling sessions for children, adolescents, women and families who are survivors of CSA. After-hours appointments are available to children and families to work around school hours. The CSA service also provides family support and advocacy to clients. Part of this role includes providing court support to clients as well as providing evidence to court when requested. Other activities designed to assist these clients include supportive group work for teenage girls affected by CSA; outreach to adult female sex workers in Bankstown in conjunction with SWOP (the Sex Worker's Outreach Project); and sharing

professional knowledge through conference presentations.

Service Snapshot

- 59 clients
- 367 counselling occasions of service
- 25 groupwork occasions of service
- 97% of clients in socioeconomic disadvantage
- Top 5 issues in the service:
 - -Emotional trauma (352 occasions)
 - Family issues (291 occasions)
 - Child impacted by sexual assault (246 occasions)
 - -Adult impacted by child sexual assault (118 occasions)
 - Relationships (73 occasions)

The CSA role requires strong partnerships and collaboration to provide coordinated care to vulnerable individuals affected by CSA. Being a board member for the peak body CASAC (child, adolescent sexual assault counsellors) has assisted in this task, as has working in collaboration with other agencies in creating public awareness of CSA.

Highlights

- Success in court when advocating for clients
- Knowledge gained and contacts made within the court system to support clients (The Law and Justice Foundation; Legal Aid Sexual Assault Communications Privilege Unit)
- The creation of a working party to clarify the roles of community organisations in supporting vulnerable clients and children within the court system, with the goal of advocating for better treatment of children within the court process
- Campaigning to secure funding for the Bankstown Child Sexual Assault
 Service and other NSW CASAC services. This lobbying resulted in increased
 publicity for the service and on the topic of child sexual assault, which
 brought new clients to the organisation and improved community awareness
 of child sexual assault. Many community members and clients came forward
 with stories or asked to learn new information as a result of this campaign
- Creating new connections with the Juvenile Justice system and strengthening connections with individual case workers from the Department of Family and Community Services

- Changes to the CSA service will soon occur due to the transition of this
 program to EIPP funding (Early Intervention and Placement Prevention).
 Unfortunately, these changes caused some distress to clients who were
 concerned about the future of the service and were feeling destabilised
- The CSA service is now faced with the task of transitioning ineligible clients away from the service, with the challenge being finding other suitable and affordable services that these clients can go to

4. Organisational Structure

4.1 Management Team

Bankstown Women's Health Centre is incorporated under the Associations Incorporations Act, 1984 and is a registered Charity with Public Benevolent Institution Status. This status enables donations to be a tax deductible item on your tax return. The Centre's structure consists of a Management Committee, which has nine women who work, live or reside in the Bankstown Local Government Area, and one elected staff member.

Role	Member Details
Chairperson	Liz Trenam (Manager DAD&HC). Commenced September 2012. Prior to
	this was a Committee Member
Assistant	Jenny Ashwood (Domestic Violence Support Worker). Commenced
Chairperson	September 2012. Prior to this was Chairperson
Treasurer	Betty Christou (Manager Bankstown Sexual Assault Service)
Secretary	Tracey Bowne (Staff representative, BWHC). Commenced September 2012
Member	Jeanette Holloway (Clinical Nurse Consultant). Resigned November 2012
Member	Mariam Mourad (Family Worker, Riverwood Community Centre).
	Commenced February 2012
Member	Rebecca Kay (Community Advocate). Commenced November 2012
Member	Bozna Popovska (Community/Client Representative)
Member	Sophie Zaverdinos (Community/Client Representative)
Non-voting	Sue McClelland (Centre Manager). Resigned July 2012
member	
Non-voting	Kristina Brenner (Centre Manager). Commenced role in June 2012. Prior to
member	this was Secretary.

4.2 Staffing & Workers



BWHC Staff Members

Centre Manager – Kristina
Information & Referral Worker – Tracey
Bookkeeper – Cheryl
Generalist Counsellor – Edwina
Vietnamese Women's Health– Kim
Massage Therapists – Cathy and Katrina
Health Promotion/Case Manager – Tegan
(former worker Iohana, resigned August 2012)

Private Practitioners/Contractors

Doctors - Brenda McPhee, Ngaire Millener

Psychologists - Heather, Helen and Edwina

Clinical supervisors – Lisa Gardiner, Shirley Kent, Pam Stavropoulos, Helen Kershaw

Yoga and Pilates facilitator – Kerre

Belly Dance facilitator - Ileana

Craft facilitator – Joanna

Tai Chi facilitator – Ly (formerly Monika, resigned December 2012)

5 Partnerships

Australian Academy of Tai Chi Australian College of Applied Psychology Australian Communications and Media Authority Australian Vietnamese Volunteer Association Bankstown Area Multicultural Network Bankstown Child Protection Interest Group (BCPIG) Bankstown City Council Bankstown Community Health: Bankstown Sexual Assault Service, Health Promotion, Women's Health Unit, Community Participation Unit, Youth Health team Bankstown Child and Families Hub Bankstown Community Resource Group Bankstown DVLC Bankstown Fire Brigade Bankstown Hospital Bankstown Immunisation Clinic Bankstown Joint Investigation Response Team Bankstown Masons Bankstown NEAMI Bankstown Police Bankstown Scouts Bankstown State **Emergency Service** Bankstown TAFE Bankstown Youth Development Service Bass High School Benevolent Society Birrong Public School Blacktown Women's and Girl's Health Centre

Breastscreen NSW Brighter Futures Bankstown Cancer Council NSW Canterbury Domestic Violence Liaison Committee Canterbury Bankstown Domestic Violence Response Team Catholic Care Youth Services Centrelink Bankstown Chester Hill Neighbourhood City of Canterbury Council Child and Adolescent Sexual Assault Counsellors (CASAC) Communities for Children Bankstown Contraceptive Services Corner Youth Health Service Creating Links Cumberland Women's Health Centre Department of Education Department of Family and Community Services (Ingleburn and Bankstown) Department of Housing Bankstown Domestic Violence Western Sydney Support Service East Hills Girls High School Forum Sentencing Heart Foundation Walking Headway Hope Point Church Jannawi Family Centre Joint Investigation Response Team (Bankstown) Koorana Play Groups Legal Aid (general) Legal Aid (Sexual Assault Communications Privilege Unit)

Leichhardt Women's

Community Health Centre

LifeCare Bankstown Local high schools Marie Stopes International Marrickville Legal Centre Mary's Place Muslim Women's Association NSW Sexual Assault Team Other Women's Health Centres Older Women's Network Bankstown Probation and Parole (Community Corrections) Punchbowl Public School Rape Crisis Centre Red Cross/Save a Mate Program Refugee Support Service SAL Consulting Sex Workers Outreach Project Smith Family Bankstown South West Sydney Local Health District Survivors of Torture and Trauma Service Sydney Women's Counselling Service University of Western Sydney Medical School University of Western Sydney School of Social Work Vietnamese Professional Health Care Association Wollongong West St Centre Women's Health Unit – Ministry of Health Women's Health NSW Women's Legal Services Woodville Community Centre

Thank you to:

BWHC Management Committee for their hard work and leadership

BWHC staff and contractors for their commitment and dedication

Bankstown Masons for their generous donation to help women in crisis

Bankstown City Council for use of premises and other support

Our service partners for their collaboration and assistance

Our funding bodies, NSW Ministry of Health and Department of Family and Community Services

All of our clients and community members... it is wonderful to watch you grow and flourish

