

STRATEGIC PLAN
2020
and Beyond



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Acknowledgement of Positive Women Victoria Elders

Positive Women Victoria was founded in 1988, and for over thirty years, has been a powerful voice advocating for women who are living with HIV.

Positive Women Victoria recognises with respect and deep gratitude the courage and leadership of the organisation's founders and elders, and their vision of justice and flourishing for all women who live with HIV.

Acknowledgement of Country

Positive Women Victoria would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work, the Kulin Nation, and the lands on which our members live.

We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present, and extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We wish to acknowledge and pay respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are living with HIV in Victoria.

Our Vision for Women Living with HIV in Victoria

All women living with HIV in Victoria have access to the highest quality services, including peer-led services, to support their physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

All women living with HIV are supported by strong and visible leadership and peer-led advocacy that:

- a** Challenges stigmatising myths and negative stereotypes about women who live with HIV; and
- b** Ensures women's specific experiences of life with HIV are reflected in and central to research, policy and in the delivery of health services.

We do this through an integrated program of:

- Peer support services, peer-led activities and peer development programs
- Advocacy and leadership to ensure HIV and health policy programs in Victoria are delivering for women who are living with HIV
- Promoting wellbeing and providing tools to build health literacy for all women living with HIV
- Activities and interventions to challenge stigma and discrimination, and increase community understanding about women and HIV; and
- Responsible governance and business planning.

Our practice is founded on the following principles

Peer-led and peer-focused: Positive Women Victoria's work is developed and directed by women with HIV for women with HIV

Evidence-based: Positive Women Victoria's work is founded on evidence, including the evidence provided by the lived experience of women with HIV

Partnership-oriented: Positive Women Victoria recognises that the needs of women living with HIV are best served by us working together with other organisations based on communities of common and shared interest, including those in the HIV community sector, the health care sector, and women's health sector

Social and gender equity: the physical, mental, and reproductive health needs of women living with HIV are strongly bound to the achievement of social, cultural and economic equality and justice for all women.

We are a safe and inclusive service for members who are transgender or identify as gender-diverse.

Inclusive practice: Positive Women Victoria recognises and responds to the needs of women from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, life experience, countries of origin, and ages and builds strategies to support all women living with HIV into our peer support, advocacy and policy

Sensitive to the unique impacts of a HIV diagnosis on individual women: Positive Women Victoria provides a safe, compassionate and understanding service, and responds to unique issues, such as trauma, that a diagnosis can bring

Regular review of our strategy: The Strategic Plan is a living document that evolves through a regular biennial review process, or as required in response to emerging issues

The Plan

PEER SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Key activities over the life of the Plan

Provide a comprehensive set of peer-led and peer-centred services to support women living with HIV:

- Ensure that peer services are culturally safe and inclusive and cater to a diverse membership through strategies including training
- Increase access to interpreters and translation services
- Provide one-on-one peer support for individual women as they negotiate and navigate life with HIV
- Provide opportunities for women living with HIV to come together to share stories and experiences through social events, wellbeing events and other opportunities, including the organisation's annual Retreat
- Provide opportunities for women with specific or particular cultural needs or common interests to meet face-to-face or to support each other using new technologies, including social media and online meeting platforms
- Ensure that the broader social, cultural and financial wellbeing of women is supported through a network of clear and strong referral pathways
- Provide opportunities for women to develop their skills, confidence and capacity as individuals, speakers and advocates, through courses or learning opportunities developed by Positive Women Victoria or provided in collaboration with partners
- Provide training and opportunities for women to develop their skills as leaders and advocates for their own interests and those of women living with HIV
- Put in place a process by which all resources produced by the organisation are developed with peer input, and reflect knowledge of the lived experience of women with HIV; and
- Have in place a plan to support women living long-term with HIV as they enter the ageing process with peer-led input to ensure health services understand and are meeting their unique needs.

Benchmarks of success

- A diverse range of peer support services and styles of engagement are offered annually
- Member information and feedback is routinely and consistently collected, and used to understand the impact of our services and track improvements and changes over time
- Our peer support staff are supported with high quality training, opportunities to contribute to sector-wide debates and policies, and guidelines to support best practice
- An events planner or hub is available to provide a clear list of opportunities available to women offered by Positive Women Victoria or our partner organisations
- Events are evaluated by members, and responsively reviewed to meet the needs of our diverse membership
- Cultural safety of events is reflected in the attendance and engagement of women from diverse cultural backgrounds and countries of origin
- The organisation's cultural understanding is deepened with training made available to staff, Board members and members to ensure we are a safe place for our diverse members
- A plan to support women living with HIV as they age is in place

ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Key activities over the life of the Plan

Positive Women Victoria will strengthen its participation in the community and government conversation about HIV to ensure that health policies, programs and services for people with HIV in Victoria are:

- Inclusive of women living with HIV
- Responsive to the specific and emerging needs of women living with HIV
- Where necessary, specifically geared to meeting the different health or wellbeing needs of women living with HIV
- Accessible to all women living with HIV, including women from diverse backgrounds and life experiences
- Culturally safe for women with HIV
- Sensitive to the specific ways that women are affected by HIV; and
- Understanding of the specific ways in which gender can affect wellbeing for women.



We will:

- Effectively contribute to policy development, in partnership, or as an individual organisation through activities such as submissions to government, representation on panels, and participation in working groups
- Work with medical practitioners, nurses, allied health services and other service providers to improve and increase their capacity understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of women with HIV
- Ensure that Positive Women Victoria is represented on key bodies in Victoria dealing with HIV policy and planning, testing, treatment or service delivery, and HIV strategy
- Work in partnership with and participate with the leadership of HIV organisations at State and federal level to implement policies that will support the wellbeing of women with HIV
- Develop strategies and partnerships to support improved health outcomes and experiences for women diagnosed outside of high-caseload HIV clinics

- Provide and support opportunities for women to participate in health and community sector leadership and skills building programs
- Work with local and state government to support the goals and aims of the national and Victorian HIV strategies through participating in blood borne viruses/STI leadership programs
- Work to increase the visibility of women living with HIV in the Australian media
- Advocate for a national campaign to address stigma and discrimination against women and people living with HIV; and
- Ensure opportunities are available to support women through mentoring, scholarships and other supportive mechanisms.

Benchmarks of success

- Positive Women Victoria is represented on all key Victorian working groups and leadership groups in the areas of HIV and sexual health/blood-borne viruses
- There are interventions and activities which increase knowledge about HIV in the Victorian health care sector, such as forums
- Our peer support workers are visible and available to HIV clinics and sexual health services through outreach services or recognised referral pathways
- We promote HIV sector leadership programs and have a mechanism to support women to attend these through scholarships, covering fees or support with travel costs
- Positive Women Victoria maintains formal ongoing partnership arrangements with other community-based organisations in Victoria providing services or support for people living with HIV that ensure we work together in an open, respectful and mutually supportive way
- Positive Women Victoria is an active and respected contributor to the national organisation representing people living with HIV
- We have a range of formal and informal partnerships with organisations that have common interest in HIV or other areas of health and social wellbeing
- The organisation has developed a Reconciliation Action Plan that engages women with HIV who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to guide our work in meeting the needs of first nations women living with HIV

PROMOTING WELLBEING AND PROVIDING TOOLS TO BUILD HEALTH LITERACY

Key activities over the life of the Plan

- Maintain a strong, vibrant and up-to-date website that is a clear source of information, referral pathways, and organisational information about the benefits of membership
- Develop a flagship high quality online resource available for women with HIV covering a broad array of topics
- Contribute to and provide leadership on understanding the health and wellbeing information needs of women with HIV
- Communicate our vision, activities and member services strongly through our website, regular e-news communications, and our newsletter and using social media
- Investigate novel communication strategies and develop specific targeted strategies for specific groups of women among our membership who may have particular health literacy or information needs
- Maintain the Rose Fund as a means of supporting women to achieve their personal goals and support education and social wellbeing through a member grant process

Benchmarks of success

- All programs and services are regularly reviewed and evaluated
- New activities are regularly trialled, including those targeting women whose needs may not be met by current programs
- Positive Women Victoria has a website that is appealing, well-maintained, regularly updated and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure it is meeting the needs of our members
- A flagship high quality resource that is the a 'go-to' and authoritative source of information about living with HIV for women

CHALLENGING HIV STIGMA AND DEEPENING COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF HIV

Key activities over the life of the Plan

- Be part of a partnership that leads on the implementation of a national campaign to challenge HIV stigma
- Identify opportunities for women living with HIV to share their stories in the media, through our website, or at relevant forums, and support women to do so through training and skills building opportunities, and in partnership with existing opportunities or programs
- Strongly promote the knowledge that where HIV is undetectable, HIV is not transmissible, to a wide variety of audiences
- Support women, through our program of events, publications and activities, to overcome the psychosocial impacts of stigma

Benchmarks of success

- There is a national campaign challenging HIV stigma that includes strong representation of the lives of women living with HIV now within two years of the commencement of the plan
- Positive women have contributed to published articles and visible information in Australian media outlets clearly reflect that effective treatment means HIV is unable to be transmitted
- The diverse experiences and lives of women with HIV are visible in all national campaigns and education efforts to target knowledge of HIV
- There is an increased pool of women of diverse life experience who are living with HIV, and willing to share their experience openly in the broader Australian community

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE AND SAFE OPERATIONS

Key activities over the life of the Plan

- Ensure that governance structures are regularly reviewed and meet the changing culture and needs of the organisation
- Offer high quality best-practice governance training for women who are members of our Board
- Ensure there are opportunities for women on the Board to share skills and leadership experience with the members of other Boards in the community and health sectors
- Implement compliant member information and data management systems to protect the privacy and confidentiality of our members, and facilitate excellent communication, record-keeping and reporting
- Develop an explicit strategy for succession planning which includes a plan to increase the diversity of experience of women on the governance Board
- Engage Board members in the broader debate and discussion about HIV policy and health care in Victoria
- Implement an annual Board evaluation process
- Regularly assess and review opportunities for grants, research partnerships and programs to support and increase the scope of work able to be done by the organisation given its current funding
- Development of a Risk Management Matrix to enable the board to identify areas of potential risk to the organisation and develop risk mitigation strategies to enable agile responses in rapidly shifting and funding constrained environment.

Benchmarks of success

- Positive Women Victoria's Board includes and represents women from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, ages, and experiences of living with HIV
- Key organisational and governance policies and procedures are in place and reviewed biennially for compliance
- Positive Women Victoria has a database and reporting system in place that conforms with all legislative requirements, protects the private health information of members, is able to be used by all staff, and allows us to report on a range of key issues about our progress
- Governance training is available to all new Board members
- The Board annually evaluates its own performance
- Financial policies and procedures ensure the security and sustainability of the organisation's finances
- A diversified set of income streams is balanced with a sustainable approach to partnerships, new services or program delivery which does not over-commit the organisation, and in which all activities are clearly aligned to the Strategic Plan
- The appropriate staff mix is in place to support each of the key goals of the Strategy
- A Risk Management Matrix is in place and regularly reviewed



Positive Women Victoria (PWV) is the only community-based organisation specifically funded to support women living with HIV in Australia.

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