

2016 - 2020

# STRATEGIC *PLAN*



MULTICULTURAL  
CENTRE FOR  
WOMEN'S HEALTH



Reepa Patel (Chairperson), Li Luo (Board Member), Adele Murdolo (Executive Director), Sandra Lordanic (Deputy Chairperson) & Anna Aristotle (Board Member).  
Absent: Nicole Spratt (Treasurer) & Anna Moo (Board Member).

*This document has been compiled and printed on Wurundjeri land.*

*MCWH acknowledges and thanks the traditional owners and their continuing connection to land, sea and community.*

*We recognise that as immigrants to this country, we also benefit from British colonisation of Australia and share the responsibility of respecting the land and its people.*

*We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their ancestors and elders, both past and present.*

# INTRODUCTION

## **2016-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**We are pleased to present the 2016-2020 Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) Strategic Plan.**

MCWH honours and values the strength and resilience of immigrant and refugee women. We recognise that health outcomes for immigrant and refugee women are poorer than those in the general Australian population, and that the best way to turn this around is to create positive opportunities for immigrant and refugee women to make that change. We foster women's leadership and capacity to have an impact on their own health and wellbeing, and on the wellbeing of their families and communities.

This plan was developed through a comprehensive consultation and summit process. Our valued stakeholders contributed their energy, wisdom and vision through individual interviews, which shaped a two-day strategic summit focusing on 'strengthening and expanding MCWH's impact through innovation, collaboration and leadership.' The end result is a dynamic and practical document that will guide the direction of MCWH for the next four years.

We extend our gratitude to all who helped us develop this Strategic Plan and look forward to working further with them in the implementation of the plan over the next four years.

**Repa Patel**  
*Chairperson*

**Adele Murdolo**  
*Executive Director*



# ABOUT US

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health (MCWH) is a national, community-based organisation which is led by and for women from immigrant and refugee backgrounds. We are committed to advancing the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee women, through our research, leadership, education and advocacy: our experiences, our stories and our voices.

Our vision is to be the national voice for immigrant and refugee women's wellbeing in Australia.

MCWH works together with immigrant and refugee women, community organisations, health practitioners, employers, communities and governments to build and share knowledge, achieve equity and improve health and wellbeing for immigrant and refugee women.



## OUR APPROACH

**MCWH follows a feminist peer education and research model where women's knowledge and experience is valued and respected.** We communicate with women in their preferred languages, facilitating active participation in health education and research through trained and accredited bilingual health educators who are a part of women's communities.

Health education is supported by multilingual information and other tailored visual materials to increase the relevance and value of health messages for each woman.

MCWH's unique standpoint is shaped by the lived experiences and perspectives of immigrant and refugee women, who we place at the centre of our work.

MCWH employs an intersectional, feminist and human rights based approach to health, which acknowledges the complexity of women's lives and identities in the context of social and systemic oppression including gender, racial, ethnic or religious identity, ability, socio-economic position, sexuality, age and immigration status.

# OUR HISTORY



**2018 will mark 40 years since the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health was first established in 1978.** Originally named Action for Family Planning (AFP), MCWH was formed in response to research that showed that immigrant and refugee women had limited access to multilingual health education about contraception, which hindered their capacity to make informed reproductive choices. A public forum of over 200 women, held at Monash University in 1977, called for

a multilingual peer education program that visited immigrant and refugee women in factories, heralding MCWH's existence.

From its beginnings as a Factory Visiting Program, MCWH has continued to grow and learn by listening to immigrant and refugee women. As the welcome daughter of women's research and advocacy, MCWH's unique legacy is a growing evidence base for immigrant women's health and wellbeing guided by immigrant and refugee women's leadership.

# OUR FUTURE *DIRECTION*

MCWH is guided by a positive vision of the future for immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing and a belief that the stories women share with one another today significantly contribute to imagining that future. MCWH continues to be guided by current knowledge and responsive to the dynamic needs of immigrant and refugee women.

Over the next four years we will increase the positive impact we have in immigrant and refugee women's lives by continuing to engage women's leadership and capability while harnessing the power of strategic partnerships, new technology and a solid financial foundation.



**OUR STRATEGIC PLAN:**

# INCREASING *OUR* IMPACT

*Over the next four years our goal is to magnify, focus and celebrate our significant and positive impact on immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing across Australia. We will do this in four ways.*

- 1** Working strategically and collaboratively to promote immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing.
- 2** Showing national leadership in addressing key issues for immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing.
- 3** Communicating our messages to reach further and connect more deeply with women wherever they live across Australia.
- 4** Ensuring that MCWH is sustainable in order to continue championing immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing.

***Preventing violence together through women's leadership and gender equality.***

Immigrant and refugee women's wellbeing is significantly impacted by gendered violence and inequality. Through women's leadership we will work together to build gender equality and prevent violence against immigrant and refugee women.

***Marking 40 years of progress in immigrant and refugee women's leadership and health education.***

In 2018 MCWH will celebrate 40 years of multilingual health education. It's a chance to share our story of immigrant and refugee women's success, to take stock and draw strength from our past as we look to our future.

***Adapting the ways we communicate to connect better with women about their health and wellbeing.***

Making health education accessible and relevant to women's lives and circumstances is complex. By embracing new ways to connect and communicate MCWH will reach more immigrant and refugee women from all over Australia.



# **PROMOTING** HEALTH **AND** WELLBEING

## **We will:**

### **Foster strategic collaboration and partnership**

Develop, enhance and nurture strategic partnerships that will result in positive outcomes for immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing.

### **Increase women's health literacy through education**

Advance health education models and practices that reach out, recognise and meet the needs of all women, in all their diversity, who have temporarily or permanently settled in Australia.

### **Expand MCWH training capacity**

Provide innovative national training that promotes transformative social change, reflective practice and meaningful cross-cultural dialogue about gender and culture.

### **Prevent violence against women and promote gender equality**

Work with immigrant and refugee women and their communities to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. Build and promote women's leadership through our innovative PACE (Participate, Advocate, Communicate and Engage) model.





# NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## ***We will:***

### **Conduct, contribute to and communicate influential research**

Encourage, conduct and contribute to high quality research and accurate data collection to inform best practice approaches to improving immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing.

### **Create positive change through evidence-based advocacy**

Bring lasting benefit to immigrant and refugee women's health and wellbeing by conducting strategic, evidence-based advocacy for transformative social, cultural, policy and structural change.

### **Facilitate women-led advocacy and research**

Create opportunities for immigrant and refugee women to actively participate in, guide and lead research and advocacy about their own health and wellbeing.



# COMMUNICATING *AND* CONNECTING

## ***We will:***

### **Build pathways to knowledge**

Create virtual and community-based learning spaces for immigrant and refugee women to connect, and to access and share specialist knowledge about women's rights, gender equality, health and wellbeing.

### **Use innovative communication technologies**

Develop and diversify online communication platforms to increase the national reach of our advocacy and health education, including enhancing accessibility for multilingual users.

### **Reach more women with meaningful information**

Reach new audiences across Australia with reliable and culturally relevant multilingual health information that addresses women's health and wellbeing.



# SUSTAINABILITY

## ***We will:***

### **Build financial sustainability**

Establish a strong and stable financial foundation to continue our work to improve the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee women.

### **Maintain a healthy, dynamic and equitable workplace**

Foster MCWH's family friendly, inclusive and productive workplace culture, in which policies and resources support and value MCWH staff and Board.

### **Celebrate 40 years of immigrant women's health education and advocacy**

Honour and take stock of the collective efforts of the thousands of immigrant and refugee women who have shaped MCWH since 1978.



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