

# Creating better health in the West

## Summary Report



## North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network

ABN 93 153 323 436

Telephone: (03) 9347 1188

Fax: (03) 9347 7433

Street address:

Level 1, 369 Royal Parade, Parkville, Victoria 3052

Postal address:

PO Box 139, Parkville, Victoria 3052

Email enquiries:

[nwmpnh@nwmpnh.org.au](mailto:nwmpnh@nwmpnh.org.au)



### Acknowledgements

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN) acknowledges the peoples of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work in the community takes place. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

We also recognise, respect and affirm the central role played in our work by people with lived experience, their families and/or carers.

### Disclaimer

While the Australian Government Department of Health has contributed to the funding of this material, the information contained in it does not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government and is not advice that is provided, or information that is endorsed, by the Australian Government. The Australian Government is not responsible in negligence or otherwise for any injury, loss or damage however arising from the use of or reliance on the information provided herein.

©NWMPHN November 2021. All rights reserved. N20 00061 v1

RA1035a



# Creating better health in the West

---

[The Better Health Plan for the West](#) (BHP4W) is a regional partnership of diverse stakeholders working to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Melbourne's western region by building a strong health system. First established in 2011, the partnership brings together the expertise of members working in:

- hospitals and integrated health services,
- primary and community health services,
- regional and representative organisations; and
- state and local government authorities.

Due to the dynamic and rapidly evolving health system and policy landscape, with significant reform at State and Commonwealth levels, the BHP4W Governance Group agreed to move to a regional forum model following the conclusion of the most recent Partnership Framework 2017–2021.

The BHP4W partnership will continue to work collectively to achieve improvements in the health and wellbeing of people living in Melbourne's west.

## BHP4W's key partners are:

- cohealth
- Victorian Department of Health
- Djerriwarrh Health Services
- HealthWest Partnership
- IPC Healthcare
- LeadWest
- Local Government (Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley, Moorabel, Wyndham)
- NorthWestern Mental Health
- Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health
- Werribee Mercy
- Western Health
- North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN)

NWMPHN became the auspice agency for BHP4W on 1 January 2016 and led a review of the partnership. Outcomes of the review included a new governance structure, operating model, and an updated partnership agreement.

These identified key driving partners, and a priority focus on the delivery of improved health outcomes for the people of Melbourne's west. As the auspice agency, NWMPHN works closely with relevant regional partners, and has been responsible for the day-to-day coordination and management of the BHP4W.

This includes liaison with other established and developing regional collaborative initiatives across primary, community and acute care within the NWMPHN region.

A strength of the BHP4W partnership is that it brings cross-sectoral collective intelligence to consideration of directions, implications, and development of responses to maximise the opportunities and address challenges of the current reform environment.

## Key messages:

- BHP4W is a well-established partnership of health and government stakeholders who have worked together in Melbourne's west since 2011.
- BHP4W harnesses the combined capability and influence of multiple partner organisations to deliver impact that improves health and wellbeing outcomes in Melbourne's west.
- BHP4W gives priority to outcomes that improve equity and service integration.
- BHP4W partners are committed to doing the work on shared priorities to create impact at a population level.
- BHP4W is an effective platform for collective advocacy in support of its mission.
- BHP4W engages with agencies and individuals outside the partnership through information-sharing, consultation, collaboration, and co-design to support shared priorities.

## The next stage for BHP4W: Regional Forums

A new regional forum structure will be tested in the 2021–2022 financial year. These forums will:

- enable access to local insights on the population health needs and impact of reform on people and communities of the west
- provide a platform to identify opportunities for collaboration and collective action
- drive local thought leadership and joint advocacy.

Members/participants will share insights and discuss the impacts of the range of state and federal health and care reforms on the people and communities of the west. This includes mental health and aged care reforms, as well as Victorian service reform following the establishment of public health units and health service partnerships.

After the approach is tested, the results will be reviewed to identify opportunities for driving further partnership efficiency and effectiveness beyond 2022. Forums will be coordinated and facilitated by NWMPHN.

Before we embark on the next stage of our partnership, we would like to acknowledge some of our shared achievements to date.

## Shared achievements

---

### Advocacy

The BHP4W partnership builds on the strong historical culture of dialogue and collaboration among health and community service providers in the west of Melbourne. It provides a collective platform for advocacy and has generated a significant profile as a flagship alliance, giving individual organisations a common point of reference.

Governing partners create opportunities for ongoing dialogue and advocacy across the broader partnership and with other key stakeholders in Melbourne's west and beyond.

### Telehealth

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth has become a key platform for delivering care. BHP4W and various partners provided information and resources to help advocate for the continuity of this service delivery mechanism. Currently, this major change in healthcare has been implemented for the duration of the pandemic to protect the vulnerable and those with complicated care needs, young and old. However, there is strong support to retain this system beyond the pandemic.

### Other advocacy

BHP4W advocated in a range of forums to elevate the partnership health voice with the Western Metropolitan Partnership and City Deals. The unique capability and influence of our cross-sectoral, multiple partner organisations to deliver impact and focus on activities that improve health and wellbeing outcomes in Melbourne's west was offered to:

- the community hospitals program
- the Footscray Hospital development,
- promotion of the ground-breaking GenV project
- to support partner submissions against gaming machine licenses in the west.

BHP4W also made formal submissions to:

- **Victorian Public Health & Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023 Consultation**, June 2019.
- **Community Health and Hospitals Program:** Healthy Children, Health Families: A partnership approach to addressing low birthweight outcomes, Jan 2019.
- **Consultation on the National Health Prevention Strategy**, Sept 2020.



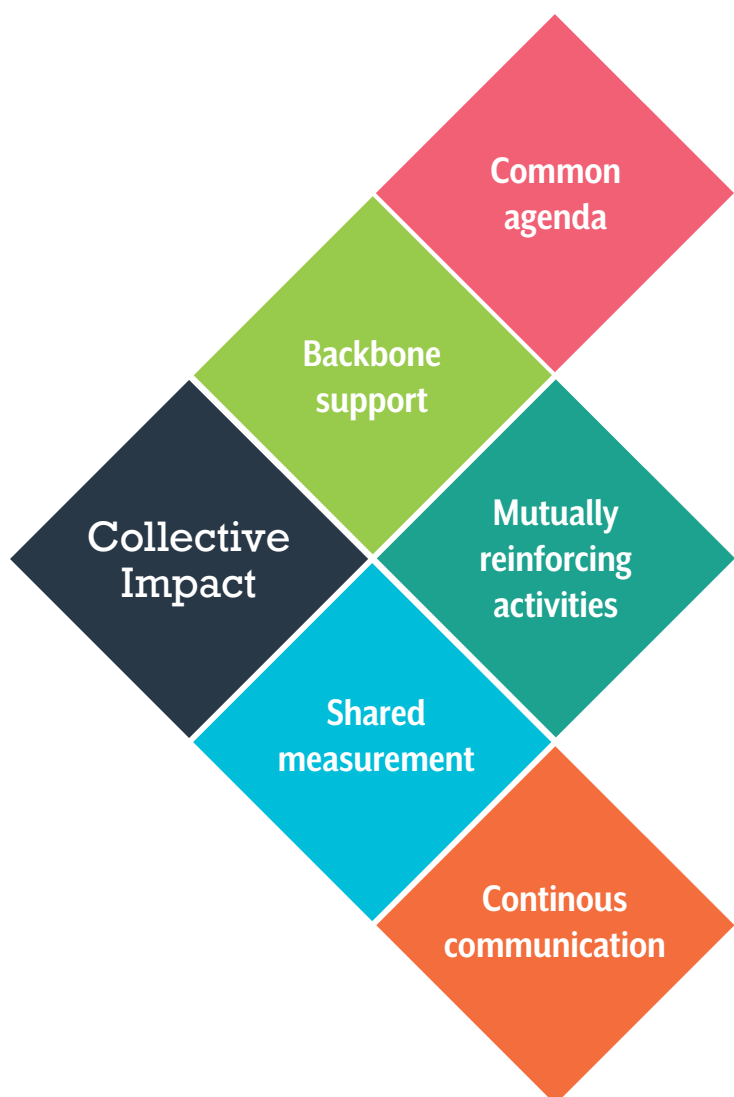
## Approach

Following transition of the auspice arrangements from Western Health to NWMPHN in 2016, an independent review of the BHP4W partnership was undertaken and the [BHP4W Partnership Framework \(2017-2021\)](#) was developed to guide future work and create greater opportunity for the west to be a leader among regional health partnerships in Victoria.

The framework outlined a 'new way of working' under a Collective Impact Model of change.

This model built on the long-term commitment of diverse partner organisations to align efforts and advance the creation of measurable impact to solve specific identified problems affecting communities in the west.

**The BHP4W operating model was based on the five conditions for Collective Impact shown below:**



In early 2021, noting the dynamic and rapidly evolving health system and policy landscape with significant reform at State and Commonwealth levels, the BHP4W Governance Group agreed

to move to a regional forum model. This change in approach acknowledges the establishment of the developing [Victorian Health Services Partnerships](#), while providing an ongoing platform for partners across primary, community and acute health, state and local government to share insights and collaborate for the benefit of people and communities of the West.

## Partnership Framework

The [Partnership Framework](#) articulates how BHP4W harnessed the combined capability and influence of multiple partner organisations to deliver the greatest collective impact. It provided the overarching context, principles, and structures for the BHP4W partnership, which shaped the way local health organisations responded to the needs of one of Australia's fastest growing and most diverse regions.

Two streams of priority activity were driven by steering groups which together enabled the elements of the BHP4W mission to be carried out:

- 1. Western Region Primary Prevention Taskforce**, focused on 'effective primary prevention and health promotion'.
  - Managed under the auspice of the HealthWest Management Group.
  - Formal interface via representation on the BHP4W Governance Group.
  - Focused on primary prevention planning, implementation, and evaluation.
- 2. Service Integration Steering Group**, focused on 'an equitable, accessible, well-coordinated and high-quality service system.'
  - Comprised of senior managers from partner organisations.
  - Focused on improving access, equity and integration across the primary care and acute services.

## Evaluation Capacity

In 2019 and 2020, HealthWest led and funded with partners, the region's capacity to apply monitoring, evaluation and learning in primary prevention work, using this [tool](#).

The intention of the evaluation capacity health check is to enable organisations, or subsets within it (specific teams/departments) that are responsible for primary prevention activity, to assess their current evaluation capacity.

HealthWest, along with their Prevention Partners, developed the [Meaningful Engagement for Social Inclusion: A Practice Guide](#) to help organisations create or improve their social inclusion work.

## Children and Families

In 2018, BHP4W explored opportunities for partnership action in the Children and Families focus area. The partnership had previously (2017) identified the first 1,000 days of life as its starting point for collective action and advocacy.

This exploration included developing a Theory of Change; and consideration of the strengths and potential of BHP4W partners to contribute to shared outcomes, including measurement and evaluation.

For BHP4W to achieve its objective of ensuring that every vulnerable child in the west has access to the highest standard of care and wellbeing, The Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) conducted a review, '[Understanding and Responding to Child and Family Vulnerability](#)', for BHP4W. The aim of the review was to inform a systematic and place-based approach to achieving BHP4W's objectives.

The purpose of the review was to:

- support BHP4W to sharpen the targeting of their work to benefit those most in need
- improve BHP4W's understanding of the unique context and needs of children and families in these areas
- allow BHP4W to identify their most important priorities, based on the evidence
- provide BHP4W with options regarding how best to move forward in improving health and wellbeing outcomes among vulnerable children.

## Tactile Tools Project

Child and family health is a growing focus for the collaboration, particularly in the growth corridors in the north and west of our region. BHP4W worked with service providers, community members and interested groups to identify the key health issues and vulnerable groups that we can help most through commissioning new and enhanced health services.

'Personas' combining the experiences, health issues and concerns of many real people were created as part of a project to better understand local health needs by BHP4W, specifically around families with low birth-weight babies. Dr Leah Heiss and Dr Marius Foley from RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) University's School of Design led the creation of the personas as part of a broader project called Tactile Tools, compiling, and compositing copious quantities of de-identified health information and shaping it into representative individuals.

The personas provided the starting point for looking at a health issue in a person-centred way, then the work of breaking down the problems and finding potential pathways to better care is done using the Tactile Tools.



CEO of NWMPHN Christopher Carter said that the personas can teach us real lessons. *“Using innovative tools like the Tactile Tools and personas help ensure that the reforms and changes we make, and the programs we collectively and individually fund, always have the needs of individual people in mind,”* Carter said. *“That is after all why we are partners in this collaboration to create better care for all of the people of the West.”* The partnership with RMIT Master of Design Futures engaged and built capacity of a broad range of stakeholders in design thinking. This process developed skills in:

- human-centred design
- systems thinking
- innovation.

The project helped the partnership to better understand complex client journeys in the current system. Insights were used to inform Children and Families commissioning work by NWMPHN and collective impact initiatives across the partnership.

The partnership’s intended goal was to:

- bring, collectively, the range of expertise that will connect with the needs of the targeted population group(s) throughout pregnancy and will deliver program outcomes for prioritised population group(s)
- ensure knowledge transfer is embedded at all stages of the project to demonstrate how the service is adapted to suit the needs of the targeted population group(s), including service integration; and
- demonstrate the capacity and capability to measure progress towards goals, through developmental evaluation.



### Addressing low birth weight collectively

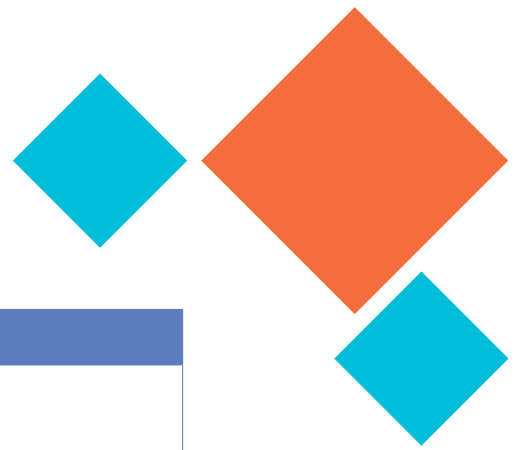
In March 2019, the Governance Group approved prioritising Melton and Wyndham as areas to focus our collective action on children and families. It was decided that improving low birth weight would be an effective intervention that would deliver maximum benefits for the community. Partner contributions were identified to demonstrate collective effort. A summary of all partner contributions can be found in the table below.

### Principles of practice (from Theory of Change)

- Equity
- Family and child inclusive
- Sustainable
- Client centred
- Strengths based
- Response based

**Table 1. Improving healthy birth weight rates and helping babies born with low weight thrive**

| Organisation   | Response  |
|----------------|---|
| NWMPHN         | <p>Commissioning, workforce capacity building and system improvement activities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Commissioned a consortium led by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute to co-design, implement and evaluate new <a href="#">approaches to support pregnant women and families in Melton South</a>.</li><li>• Scale up of the <a href="#">Strengthening Care for Children integrated model of care</a> which aims to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– strengthen the paediatric care skills of GPs</li><li>– increase knowledge of child health and management in general practice</li><li>– reduce the need for referrals to hospital services.</li></ul></li><li>• Produced 29 state-wide care pathways to support general practice care of children. The pathways provide clear, concise best practice guidance and referral pathways to support evidence translation and increased primary care confidence in caring for children.</li><li>• Provision of education and training for primary health care practitioners across the North Western Melbourne PHN region.</li></ul> |
| cohealth       | <p>Established an internal practitioner working group (community of practice) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead peer education about low-birth-weight risk factors at the Laverton hub.</li><li>• Encourage sharing of experiences with screening for vulnerable women and children (with potential for trialling new ways).</li><li>• Provide education, warm referral and (limited) care facilitation.</li></ul>   |
| Western Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Investigate increasing continuity models of care targeting higher women.</li><li>• Monitoring of foetal growth rate.</li><li>• Early lactation support – investigate community for more effective early and ongoing lactation support.</li></ul>  |



| Organisation                                | Response   |
|---|--|
| <b>IPC Health</b>                           | <p>Available services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diabetes educator – gestational diabetes education and support.</li> <li>• Living well coach (motivation, relaxation, healthy eating, QUIT smoking, the Life Program with Diabetes Australia Victoria).</li> <li>• Counsellors: financial, Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD), motivational.</li> <li>• Gamblers Help representative.</li> <li>• Exercise physiologist.</li> <li>• Dietician.</li> <li>• Bulk-billed GP and specialist paediatric services (inc. shared care arrangements with Mercy Hospital obstetricians).</li> </ul> <p>Healthy Mums and Healthy Bubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Melbourne &amp; Brimbank-Melton Cradle to Kinder Partnerships.</li> </ul> <p>St Kilda Mums – equipment and items for vulnerable families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated (warm) referrals to the Western Melbourne and Brimbank-Melton. Child FIRST &amp; Family Services Alliance.</li> <li>• IPC Health are partners in the Footprints to Success Partnership &amp; Service.</li> <li>• IPC Health Aboriginal Health Access team.</li> <li>• IPC Health are partners in the Western Region integration Family Violence Committee.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Sunbury Community Health</b>             | <p>Delivered the Enable and First Steps programs to support vulnerable families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable is a home and community-based program which aims to help parents to identify and respond to the early signs of developmental delay.</li> <li>• First Steps is a consultation and assessment program which provides parents with an opportunity to discuss concerns regarding their child's development. First Steps is often the entry point into the service system for families of children with developmental delay.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Department of Health (formally DHHS)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enable and influence funded work, including human services, child protection, social housing, neighbourhood houses (connecting with child protection).</li> <li>• Work with Health Informatics Standing Committee (HISC) group in Wyndham, concept of connector – Wyndham Vale and Manor Lakes.</li> <li>• Build cross-sector capability using consistent common language to support understanding of aims, at-risk communities, how to connect to communities.</li> <li>• Koori Maternity Services at <a href="#">Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre Committee (WACC)</a>.</li> <li>• Brimbank-Melton gestational diabetes project.</li> </ul>  |

## Conclusion

Through a 'collective impact' approach, BHP4W has shaped the way local health services respond to the complex needs of one of Australia's fastest growing and most diverse regions. The overarching goal of the BHP4W has always been to build a strong health system in Melbourne's west to deliver better health and improved wellbeing for local people.

For the first time since the 2016 review of the BHP4W collaboration, partners gained key insights into areas for improvement in how we work together and incorporated those into the work undertaken through the partnership.

As BHP4W's auspice agency, North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network provided information and resources to build collective capacity and help advocate for the continuity of services, combining capabilities with partners to deliver the greatest collective impact. Various projects have helped the partnership to better understand these collective impact initiatives, including *Children and Families*, which was an area of focus for the partnership.





