Changesmith

WHIN 2021 strategic planning project: online survey results

Introduction

An online survey was developed by the WHIN planning consultant and tested/further improved by the Strategic Planning Working Group. Thank you to everyone! It was out in the field from 4 to 22 May 2021, emailed to a range of WHIN contacts with a short invitation from the CEO and a link to the survey monkey.   The results were collated by Changesmith Consulting. Priority ranking tables are available for staff or Board members who want to go into more details in key questions.

The aim was to explore perceptions of effectiveness and perspectives on future priorities, to inform strategic planning and understand more about the interests of WHIN's most actively engaged people. The survey was carried out at the same time as a series of 14 in-depth stakeholder interviews were undertaken by the planning consultant, with results provided in a separate report.

In total, **61 respondents** filled in the non-identifiable survey which was managed through Changesmith Consulting. Responses came from WHIN members (37); "other" - different staff partner lists (10); the WHIN newsletter (9); social media (3); and a one-week staff email signature link (2). The survey took approximately 12 minutes to complete.

Summary

- WHIN is a highly valued part of the Northern Melbourne gender equity and healthcare advocacy community.
- The majority of survey respondents work in women's health and community service and have worked with WHIN in that capacity.
- WHIN services which respondents rated most highly were provision of expert advice and training programs.
- With predominantly positive professional experiences with WHIN, most respondents advised WHIN to keep its original vision and mission statement and continue to improve on its strengths, in particular prevention of violence and encouragement of gender equity.
- Areas for change/improvement included:
    - Deeper engagement of minority groups for example Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and women with disabilities.
    - Different points of view on "women's" health contrasted with a less binary/more inclusive focus.
    - Some dedicated respondents would like WHIN to place a greater priority on climate change, the environment and disaster prevention.

Respondents Summary

About you

Q1. Are you responding to this survey as an individual, or as a representative of an organisation?
The vast majority (54) responded as "individual" rather than on behalf of their organisation, but Q2 showed most respondents work in relevant partners/sector organisations. Responses to Q2 showed that of those representing organisations, three work in women's health, and the other four work in sexual assault, community health, community services, and education respectively.

Q2. If you work in an organisation, what sector do you work in?

The majority (45) work in an organisation. Sixteen people skipped this question (presumably as they felt they were truly responding as an "individual").

The largest employer of respondents was women's health, at 35.6% (16 people), followed by community services at 17.8% (8 people) of respondents.

None of the respondents were from Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).
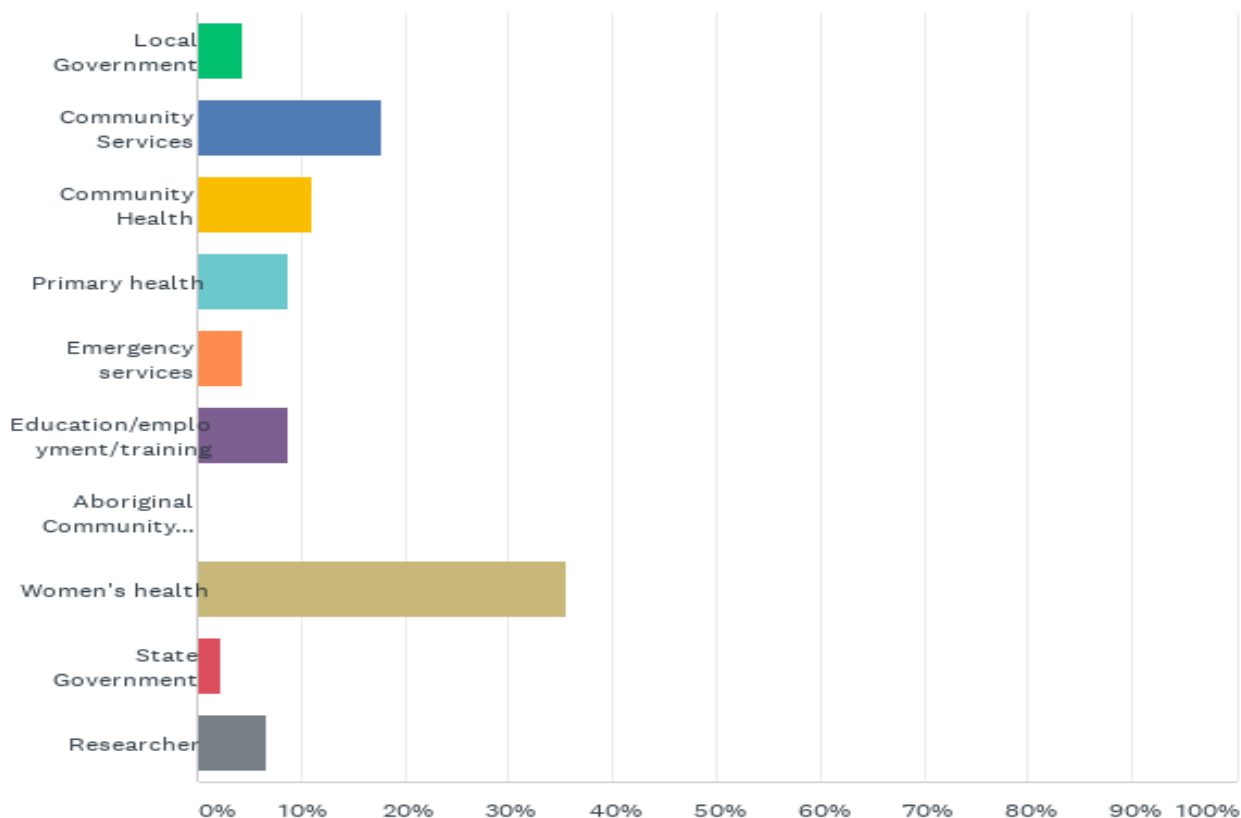
Q3. How long (approximately) have you had some involvement with WHIN?

Most respondents were also very familiar with WHIN and have a sustained involvement with WHIN's work. 50% of respondents have worked with WHIN for over five years.
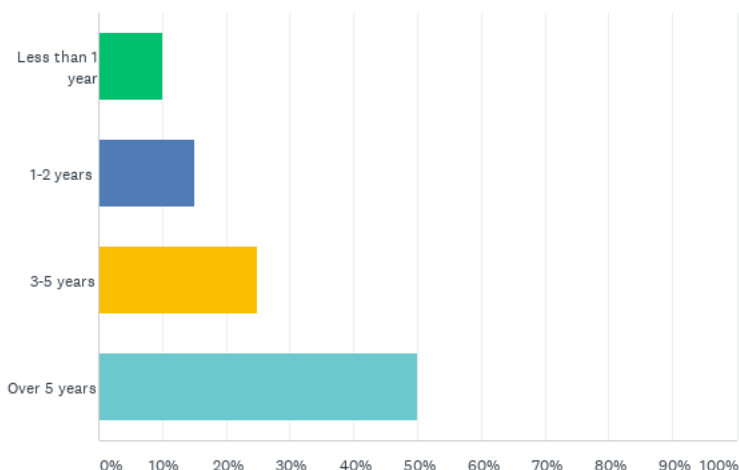
Q4. How does your work address women's health, safety and wellbeing in Melbourne's north? + Q5 If you ranked "other" above, what issue or priority were you thinking of?

This question covered all the Victorian Health & Wellbeing Plan 2019-23 priorities. The majority of respondents listed violence prevention, improving sexual and reproductive health and creating gender equity as the primary ways in which their work addresses women's health. The lowest rated answers were the three drug/tobacco/alcohol related questions. Only one respondent skipped this question.

"Other" was listed as a priority by more than half the respondents (34 people), fourteen people rating at position 6 or higher (8 rated "other" as their first priority). Of those fourteen respondents, six addressed certain aspects of health care such as cultural safety and inclusiveness in the patient experience, positive ageing, managing chronic health issues and better communication of women's health. Three respondents named housing or homelessness and two referenced gambling prevention/support. Sexual violence prevention and accessibility and leadership were also nominated.
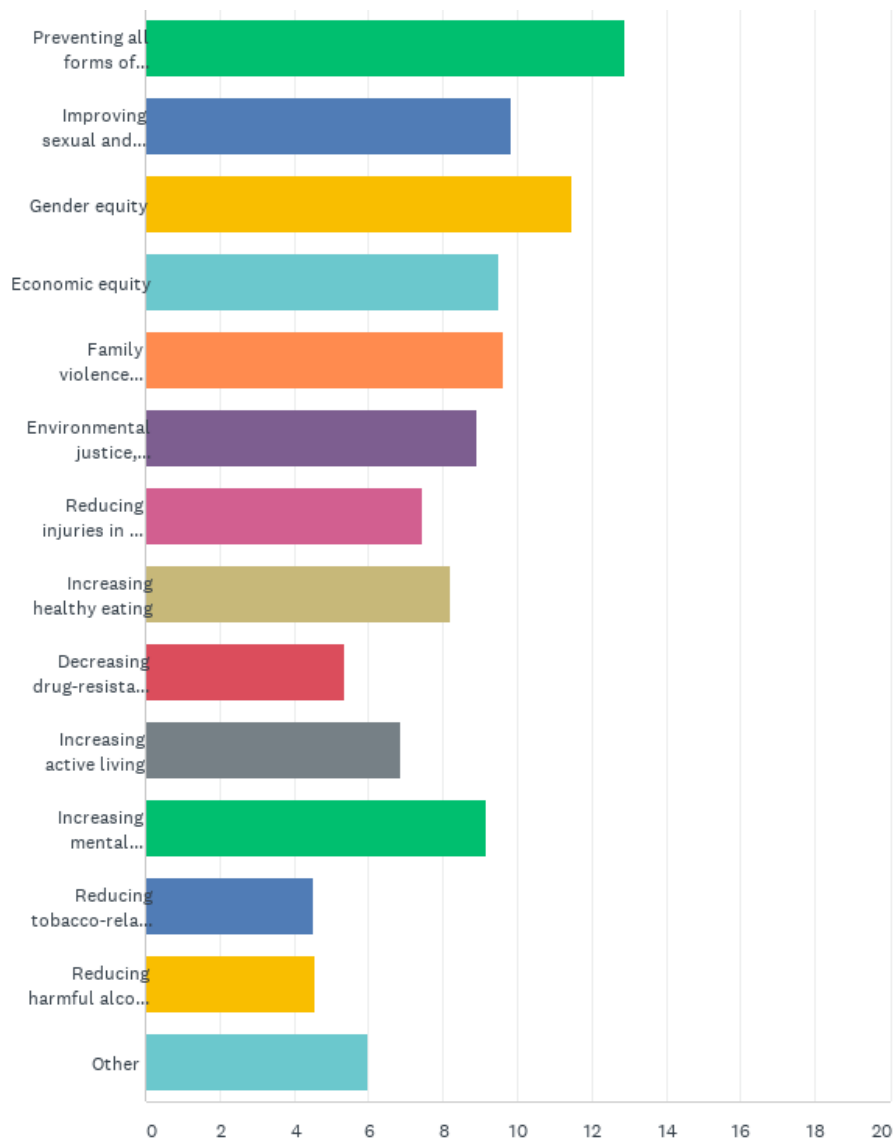
About WHIN

*Q6. What 5 words do you associate with WHIN?*

When asked what words the respondents associated with WHIN, 'women' (19), 'equity' (12) and 'health' (12) were the top three terms. Other highly used terms can be seen in the attached word cloud. Many of the terms chosen can be related to or seen as synonymous with WHIN's values and mission as outlined in the subsequent question.

One anomalous response was offered by a state government employee, who chose the terms "free stuff, white, privileged, distanced and unreachable". They didn't elaborate further but in later questions this respondent said that WHIN should keep its vision and to prioritise work to aid migrants and refugees in questions 13 and 14. When asked for further comment, the respondent stated they "would love to be more involved in your work but do not know how".

Q7. WHIN's vision, mission and values. WHIN's vision is that "women in the north have voice, choice and power in all aspects of their health, safety and well-being". WHIN's mission is to "work to eliminate gender inequities and improve outcomes in women's health, safety and wellbeing". WHIN's values are: Feminist; Ethical; Inclusive; Courageous; Collaborative. **Do you think WHIN should keep this vision, mission and values?**

The majority (53) respondents said yes. Only six respondents felt that WHIN shouldn't keep their current vision, mission and values. Two declined to answer, leaving 87% of respondents actively in the affirmative.
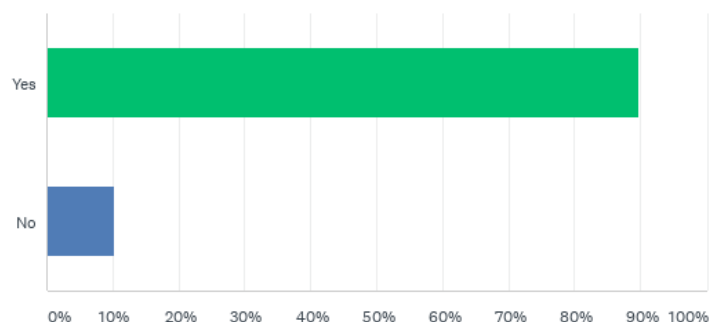
Q8. If you think the vision, mission or values should be changed, what could WHIN express differently or more strongly?

Five of the six seeking some change responded, offered these answers:

- "WHIN's contribution to make workplaces more equitable and to promote women's economic participation"
- "I think WHIN needs to state women and gender-diverse people across the vision and mission if WHIN's values are to include 'inclusive'. WIRE has a great trans and gender diverse inclusion policy, for example."
- "Vision to have stronger reference to social justice. Not sure the value 'Courageous' is that useful."
- "Make it clear it is about women. Gender is an intellectual repositioning of rights for women i.e. the female sex. Say 'eliminate women's inequality'"
- "I would not necessarily change the substance but change wording to be more plain English and accessible; i.e. simplify 'eliminate gender inequities and improve outcomes in women's health.'"

In response to question 8, many respondents who had previously answered in the affirmative took the opportunity to elaborate on their reasoning or suggest minor adjustments. These comments are listed here:

- "Equality with both gender"
- "I'm not sure if it's possible but having a statement about the importance of environment, responding to climate change or not having detrimental impact on the environment. I think this is important moving forward- climate change will probably have different (more severe) impacts on women than men."
- "Include a sense of HOW you carry out this work"
- "work to eliminate gendered inequalities and improve women's health, safety, and wellbeing through education, engagement, and empowerment"
- "Maybe emphasise the partnership with other community Organisation"
- "Add to mission wording around financial independence and empowerment"
- "Maybe review the word feminist, however it demonstrates where we have come from- something that reflects diversity"
- "Empowerment and job opportunities"
- "Maybe include Persistence Perseverance as it needs to be advocated strongly in terms of women safety in this COVID pandemic"
- "I agree with your values and mission. Perhaps the only thing that could be improved is WHIN 's public profile with widespread knowledge of their existence and availability to people in the north. I would love to be able to speak to many more women and realise they know about WHIN."
- "Keep vision but maybe update values"
- "Creating ongoing career opportunities for migrants and refugee women in WHIN"
- "Welcoming and open"

Perspectives on WHIN priorities and activities

Q9. Rating of WHIN's current focus. Where is WHIN being most active and effective? (up to 6 priorities)

The focus rated as most active and effective was "prevention of violence against women", which twenty-two respondents rated 1st with a total score of 4.9. WHIN's strongest areas in descending order are prevention of violence against women, gender equality (15 rated it 1st, average rating of 4.6), and family violence systems leadership (9 rated it 1st, average rating 3.73). The three areas which seemed less active or effective to respondents were sexual and reproductive health (5 rated it 1st, average rating 3.65), economic equality (1 rated it as 1st, average 2.7) and then environmental justice (4 rated it 1st, average rating of 2.13).
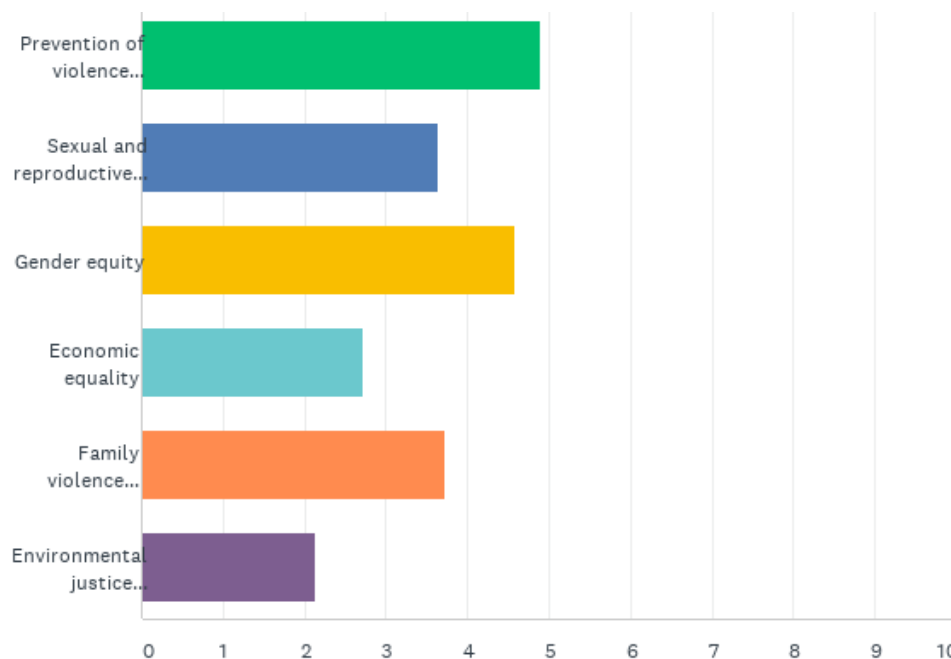
Q10. Looking at the areas you rated highly, why did you rate those areas higher than others?

When elaborating on areas they ranked highly, many respondents explained their ranking not based on their own observations of WHIN's effectiveness, but instead based on WHIN's information campaigns and marketing. While one person said "find it hard to rate. Don't have enough insights into all areas, for many respondents, the ranking may better reflect the areas where WHIN's work is more visible or perceived as relevant to the work of partner organisations. Frequent sentiments:

- "they're the areas I'm most familiar with in my association with WHIN"
- "I have noticed these in your communications many times"
- "I got a few emails in relation to these topics"
- "I'm more aware of the work undertaken by WHIN in these two areas [family violence and prevention of violence]
- "written about often in newsletters…"

Some respondents explained their ranking based on an in depth understanding of certain priority areas ("because they are still happening and don't seem to stop" and "still need so, so much work") or that PVAW, GE and SRH are effective based on external evaluations of work in these areas and their understanding of where funding had been allocated.

One respondent suggested that "environmental justice is far broader than the specific area WHIN covers, and therefore not a good descriptor of WHIN's priorities", while another said "world class work on the issue of environmental justice! What an extraordinary achievement."

Q11. WHIN resources and activities. Please rank these, based on their usefulness to you or your organisation/network.
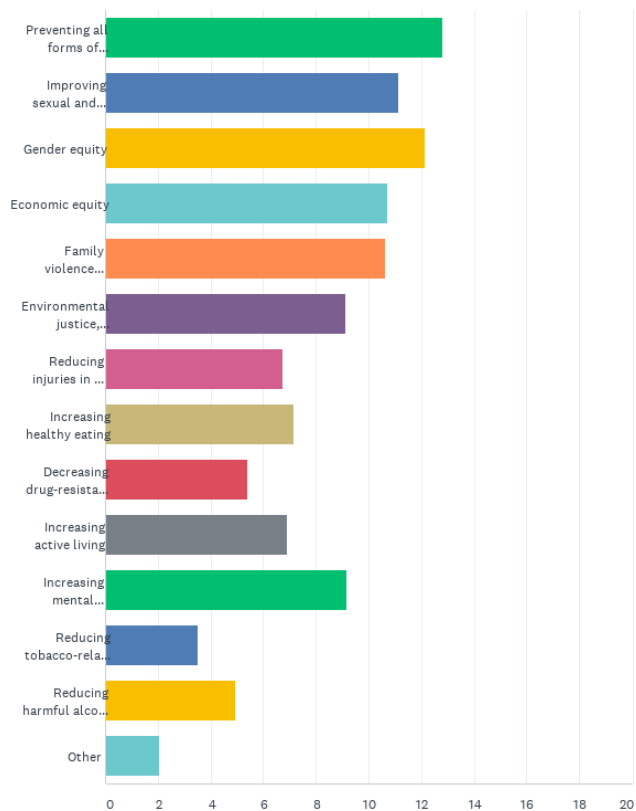
WHIN's provision of expert advice was ranked first out of 8 choices (average rating 5.77, with 7 people rating it 1st), and "development and delivery of training" ranked second (12 people rating it 1st, average 5.29). However, "leadership in regional strategies" was rated 1st by 15 people (average rating of 5.2). Lowest ranking was WHIN's advocacy and community engagement (8 people ranked it 1st, average rating 3.86) and conducting research (0 people rated it 1st, average rating 3.93).
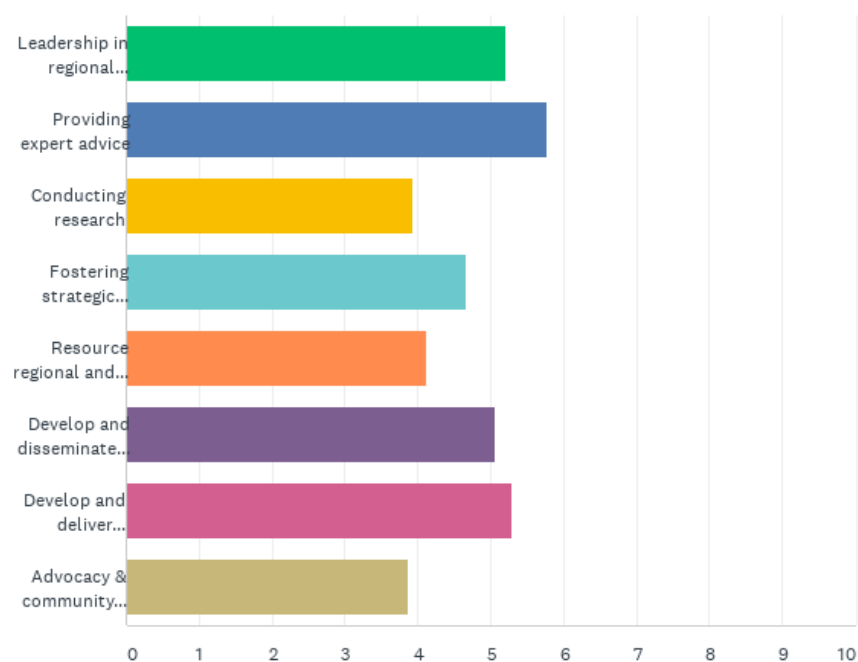
Q12. Future priorities for WHIN. In the future, what issues or priorities do you think WHIN should focus on?

The most important future priority for WHIN by far (with 24 first placements, and 54 of total respondents rating it as a priority), was "preventing all forms of violence especially violence against women". In second place was gender equity (13 nominated as 1st priority, with 53 respondents placing it as a priority). Third ranked was economic equity (23 people rated it 1st priority, 49 rated it as a priority). Fourth ranked priority was sexual and reproductive health (6 rated it 1st priority, total of 48 votes). Ranking fifth was family violence systems leadership (1 respondent rated it 1st priority, total votes 46) and sixth ranking was mental health & wellbeing (2 respondents rated it 1st priority, 40 respondents rated it). Environmental justice was ranked number 7, rating 1st priority with 5 respondents (38 total votes).

"Increasing active living" (One person at 1st priority, total of 29 votes) and "healthy eating" (One person at 1st priority, 27 total votes) both rated higher than the topics rated as least important for WHIN: "reducing tobacco related harm" (0 at 1st priority, 25 total votes) and "reducing harmful alcohol and drug use" (0 at 1st priority, 28 total votes).

Bar chart showing priority rankings:

Priority	Value
Preventing all forms of...	~13
Improving sexual and...	~11
Gender equity	~12
Economic equity	~11
Family violence...	~11
Environmental justice,...	~9
Reducing injuries in ...	~7
Increasing healthy eating	~7
Decreasing drug-resista...	~5
Increasing active living	~7
Increasing mental...	~9
Reducing tobacco-rela...	~3.5
Reducing harmful alco...	~5
Other	~2

Q13. Looking at the priorities you ranked highly, why is this? (and if you rated "other" please say what you are thinking of)

It appears that rankings were in keeping with respondents' answers to question 4; the areas of lesser importance to the respondents in their own work might be viewed of lesser importance in their advice to WHIN.

The majority suggested WHIN should play to their strengths, prioritising issues they believed WHIN's skillset was more suited to. This is indicated in certain respondents' comments: "because I think WHIN are very good at this" and "these are the priorities I am most familiar with". For some respondents, this also tied in with funding, and that they believed WHIN should focus its available funds to a select few issues.

Others spoke to their belief that greater overarching income equality and family violence prevention would positively affect all other areas or were in greater need. By this logic, they suggested issues such as drug and alcohol use would be rectified if women had greater economic freedom and access to affordable health services.

In addition, while "environmental justice, including climate change and its impact on health" was a low scoring priority overall, it had 5 respondents that rated it 1st priority. This indicates that while of lesser importance than other priority choices to most respondents, those who rank it highly prioritise it above most else. Three of those respondents further stressed its importance in question 13, arguing that the environment is "intrinsically tied" to all other priorities.

Q14. Priority communities. Some women in the metro northern area experience more health inequities than others. What would your top priorities be for WHIN's extra attention or focus? + Q15. If you answered "Other" to the last question, please say who you were thinking about

The highest ranked priority groups were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (21 respondents rated this their 1st priority, 46 ranked as a priority), women with disabilities (5 with 1st priority), young women and girls (7 with 1st priority) and older women (6 with 1st priority), with rankings of 11.65, 10.31, 9.88 and 8.5 respectively. The lowest ranked were sex industry workers and people in, or leaving, prison, (3.63 and 3.66).

"Other" priorities received lower ranking. With zero 1st priority rankings and 21 votes at rank number 13, a total of 25 respondents gave "other" a priority ranking. In question 15, one respondent explained they believed lesbians should be their own priority community, saying, "Why would a women's organisation advocate for all the other letters in the queer alphabet soup? Shouldn't you prioritise women?" Five of the twenty-four who ranked 'other' as a low priority group offered an elaboration, the rest left question 15 blank. Some other groups that were offered as potentially falling into the "other" category were: homeless people, pregnant women, women sole traders and "women from high income bracket and parents who come on visitor's visa suffer from mental and emotional abuse but being in that bracket causes hindrance or barrier to express so need to conduct workshops or awareness programs for them as well."
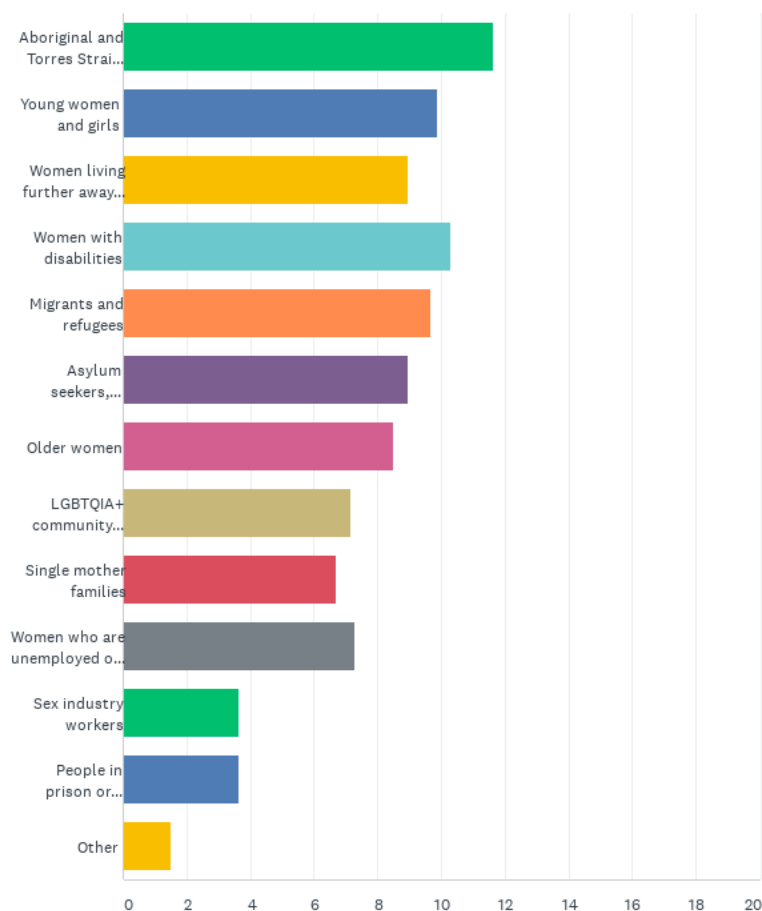
Q16. Is there any other feedback you would like to give to WHIN (note this survey is anonymous so no individual issues can be followed up)

Be bold
o "WHIN is an incredibly important and influential organisation and [can] do even more. I encourage WHIN to look at strategies for growth and investing in the organisation so it can take up opportunities and meet community needs as they arise. Women in the north need WHIN's leadership. The Board and CEO can take steps to be bold, invest in growth and embrace this power."

Priority communities
o "Rather than isolating all the different categories, could we focus on intersectionality? For example, older migrant women living further away from services or Older women in or exiting prison who are also in financial hardship? Women with disabilities in or leaving prison?"
o "Priority communities was difficult to rate. If you continue working toward the gaps of need for women living in the North to improve equity & access to health services and health education through working with partners to strengthen the response. Understanding what current services deliver and connect people on their health pathways for optimal health & wellbeing."
o "I believe that WHIN would be well placed to work in partnership with other orgs in their delivery of work moving forward. For example, there may be a partner who is already engaged in work with a hard to reach group of vulnerable women, but WHIN could bring extra resources or expertise to pilot/trial a program before rolling it out regionally."
o "My choices to the last ranked [question] were based on my own personal knowledge of support services available or in other cases my lack of knowledge of support given to some communities."

Preventing violence
o "Violence towards women in general. Domestic violence is recognized but from a recent violent experience I encountered from a complete stranger (male) who came to my property displaying extremely threatening behaviour. Initial police response towards me was lacking."

Community engagement/working to support active women in the community
o "It would be nice if WHIN were seen to be doing more community focussed events. There are so many opportunities for women to come together with shared interests, for example hosting regular movies with topics relevant to the work of WHIN."
o "Disappointing to open survey to find a direct focus on women employed in various sectors and not individuals or non-working women. This wasn't described in the pre survey letter."
o "Outreach to masses needs to be improved as all programs depend on funding and once funding is over there is no continuity and the link is broken. All the previous hard work is down the drain as the above mentioned issues and people coming in the country or citizens face them continuously so the programs need to be conducted for the masses on continuous basis for long lasting effect and to get positive results"

Definitions of gender/focus on women
o "Yes please keep using the word women to describe your services - that should include anyone who identifies as a woman. Inclusive and intersectional practice is critical but big at the cost is one group over another. Keep focused on your core business - applying a gendered lens to achieve the best health and safety outcomes for women."

- o "I understand that this may not be the right time, but the name Women's Health In the North is not inclusive, by default. Gender Equity In the North? Something to think about for the future maybe."
- o "Keep the focus on women and the way women are oppressed and work to empower women"

"Keep doing what you are doing. WHIN is a fabulous organisation that leads the way for promotion of women's health in our region."