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REGIONAL MEN'S HEALTH INITIATIVE FINAL  
REVIEW

June 2014

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SOCIAL DIMENSIONS



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Prepared for

Wheatbelt Men's Health, Inc.

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## Executive summary

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Regional Men's Health Initiative (RMHI) is a program to improve men's health and wellbeing in regional Western Australia. Funded by the Western Australian state government, RMHI has been delivered by Wheatbelt Men's Health Inc (WMH) from January 2010 to June 2014.

RMHI promotes men's health and wellbeing messages by giving presentations, and having displays and running free health assessment checks called Fast Track Pit Stops. All of these services are done at the request of a community group or service that has identified the need, organised the event and is in a position to continue to promote the messages in their communities. In 2013 alone RMHI staff members interacted with 313 unique groups and organisations, most of them based in regional communities. From January 2010 to April 2014 the project has delivered 782 events in regional Western Australia to 29,396 participants.

Complementing the education activities, RMHI community educators and a resilience officer assists individuals who ask for help or those who are concerned about someone. From July 2010 to April 2014 RMHI has provided 2,012 episodes of personal assists. RMHI also uses media to promote men's health and wellbeing; the organisation has a monthly column that is printed in country newspapers and regular radio shows.

Evidence of the value of RMHI can be found in the demand for their services from community based organisations, From July 2010 to April 2014 the total average cost per regional event is estimated to be \$1945 and per each personal assist episode to be \$700.

Prior to RMHI, WMH's target audience was primarily men involved in the agricultural sector. As a result of delivering RMHI the programs are now for all regional men. The organisation is regularly asked to present to boys and young men, men in the resource sectors, other sectors and in regional centres such as Geraldton and Albany. The partnerships with local men's organisations have been a vehicle to reach other target groups including Aboriginal men.

Through a dedicated program of regular visits and networking, RMHI now regularly delivers activities in the Gascoyne, Pilbara, Kimberley and Goldfields-Esperance. The proportion of RMHI activities in these regions is equal to the proportion of regional

adult males living there. This means that these regions are benefiting from RMHI to the same degree as the other regions.

RMHI services have expanded throughout the state. The proportion of RMHI events held in the more remote regions of the Gascoyne, Pilbara, Kimberley and Goldfields and Esperance approximate the proportion of adult males living in those regions. Proportionately fewer events are held in Peel and South West than would have been expected based on their population size.

The quality of governance and management processes were assessed through independent analysis of documents and interviews and through an organisational capacity assessment survey completed by members of the WMH management committee, staff and stakeholders. The conclusions are that processes are sound and aligned with best practice. Personnel are highly motivated and valued by the organisation and stakeholders. The areas of information management and strategic planning need the most improvement. Financial uncertainty is a concern to staff and is starting to be a concern to community members who rely on RMHI services.

There is evidence that RMHI is continuing to have a significant impact on regional men and communities. A separate exercise, conducted by a DAFWA economist concluded that RMHI had an annual benefit to cost ratio of 4.9, meaning that every dollar allocated to RMHI, resulted in five dollars of economic activity through averting mortality and morbidity. These estimates were based on Social Dimensions calculations of RMHI's contribution to promoting healthy choices and averting suicides and chronic depression.

Furthermore, several stakeholders claimed that RMHI has contributed to lasting cultural change in agricultural communities. Through the encouragement of WMH, communities in the Wheatbelt have gained the skills to look after each other and set up strategies such as regular breakfasts to build social resilience.

Based on the lessons learned from four and a half years of implementing RMHI, 17 recommendations are made for continuing to consolidate, expand and keep relevant the important work that WMH does to promote men's health and wellbeing throughout regional Western Australia.