

**Fair is based
on what each
person *needs*.**



**Health is
complicated
but the system
shouldn't be.**



**We make sure
that women's
health is taken
seriously.**

2024-25 **Impact Report**

**Everyone
deserves
healthcare
that's *inclusive,
equal and fair.***



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Acknowledgement of Country

Women's Health Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land that our offices are situated on, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. As a statewide organisation, we also acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters across Victoria and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and that we are the beneficiaries of stolen land and dispossession, which began over 230 years ago and continues today.

Artwork created for WHV by Madison Connors - a proud and strong Yorta Yorta (Wolothica), Dja Dja Wurrung and Gamilaroi woman

Our Commitment to Gender Diversity and Inclusion

Women's Health Victoria's focus is women (cis and trans inclusive) and gender diverse people. We address gendered health issues and are committed to supporting all people impacted by gender inequity who can benefit from our work. As a proud intersectional feminist organisation, Women's Health Victoria is working towards meaningful inclusivity, guided by and supporting people who identify as women, trans, intersex and gender diverse.

What *we* do

Women's Health Victoria is the statewide not-for-profit women's health organisation leading the pursuit of gender equity in health.

We work with governments, the health sector and the community to improve health for women (cis and trans inclusive) and gender diverse people. All of our work contributes to gender-transformative health systems.

We deliver vital support services and empowering health information to the community

Initiatives such as 1800 My Options and Counterpart empower women and gender diverse people to navigate the healthcare system and make informed choices about their health.

We share evidence and recommendations to challenge bias in the health system

We use evidence to inform the design and implementation of programs and capacity building. The evidence collected and synthesised by our team also informs WHV's advocacy, policy and communications.

We build capacity in the health sector to achieve equitable health outcomes

We support gender-responsive care through training, programs and resources. We work in partnership with health professionals and services.

At Women's Health Victoria, our vision is simple and powerful: *gender equity in health so everyone has equal access to quality healthcare that responds to their needs.*



Reflections from *our Chair of the Board*

Women's Health Victoria has been through many changes in recent years, but 2024-25 was a year of consolidation and laying of strong foundations with the appointment of new CEO Sally Hasler in July 2024. Sally and the WHV team of experts have helped the organisation go from strength to strength. 2024 was also my first year as Chair, taking over from the remarkable Judy Hacker after her eight year tenure.

At our 2024 AGM, members voted on a refreshed Constitution which was updated to align with recent governance changes in the not-for-profit sector that better reflects our new strategy and the way WHV operates, and incorporates best practice government standards.

The Board's focus remained on the *Women's Health Victoria Strategic Plan 2023-2028*, keeping a clear eye on our purpose to drive gender equity in health through systems change by leveraging our unique position as the statewide women's health organisation.

A major highlight of this year was the release of the *Realising*

Access: abortion and contraception inequities and enablers in Victoria report in November. This landmark report combined the data from our nation-leading 1800 My Options sexual and reproductive health service with WHV's evidence and data insights. It is an excellent demonstration of the expertise we have at WHV and how we can lead policy and service reform. We were delighted when the Victorian Government committed to continued funding of the 1800 My Options service through the Victorian State Budget 2025-26.

Our consistent focus on evidence, service insights and advocacy led to an invitation to meet with the Victorian Premier, Jacinta Allan, in June. Sally and I welcomed the chance to brief the Premier on our work and the emerging issues in women's health, and were pleased to share our recommendations for reform and investment to ensure equitable healthcare across the state.

During this year, we also recruited three outstanding board members, Deb Walsh JP, Professor Euan Wallace AM and Assunta Morrone,

maintaining the highest standards of leadership and governance and ensuring our board includes a strong mix of skills, experience and lived experience. It meant that we began 2025-26 with a reinvigorated and energised board and we are well placed to continue our work to achieve gender equity in health.

I am optimistic about the future of Women's Health Victoria, and for women's health in Victoria, thanks to the work of our staff, volunteers and partners, and the support of so many people and organisations. Thank you for a wonderful year and we look forward to continuing to work together in the future.

Sandy Forbes

Reflections from our *Chief Executive Officer*

My first full year as CEO of Women's Health Victoria has been action-packed as we work hard to capitalise on the opportunities to progress health equity in Victoria. Unprecedented Government investment, media attention and courageous lived experience perspectives are continuing to drive a critical reform moment.

We have maintained our strong focus on systems change and equity across our three priority areas – sexual and reproductive health, cancer and mental health – championing the importance of integrating a gender lens into policy, investment and service design. WHV continues to deliver two outstanding services across Victoria through Counterpart and 1800 My Options, reaching more than 10,000 women through support, evidence-based health information and system navigation. The combined work of our policy, data and 1800 My Options team in producing the *Realising Access* report led a national conversation on equitable abortion access. Our new Gender Equity in Cancer Care project is also leading a critical focus on gender equity in cancer care in partnership with

leaders across the cancer sector, and grounded in lived experience.

Over 3000 people enrolled in our training modules during the year, of which 1088 joined us online. We were also proud to launch two new online training modules – Gender Responsive Mental Health and Men as Allies. Men as Allies is a core part of our work to promote gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.

The Victorian Women's Health Atlas has continued to provide an incredible service to the health sector with thousands of people using it over the course of the year to help them understand women's health in their local government area. With more than 60,400 page views, we know it is an incredibly valuable tool to increase knowledge for healthcare providers. We have begun a refresh of the Atlas to expand the data sets and make it more user friendly as we approach its 10th birthday.

Following a period of review, we embarked on a restructure of our teams to more closely align with the priority areas of the *Women's Health Victoria Strategic Plan*

2023-2028. We developed WHV's first ever Revenue Diversification Strategy to identify opportunities to expand and diversify our funding sources and partnerships.

We also embarked on refresh of our physical environment by moving all our people into a redeveloped professional office space in Bourke Street. Our combined office was opened by our Chair Sandy Forbes and former Chair Candy Broad OAM as part of an official opening with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung elder Aunty Annette Xiberras.

We are deeply grateful to the Victorian Department of Health and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing who provide critical funding to support our work, and to our partners across the health and community sectors, including the Victorian Women's Health Services Network. I also would like to thank our partners, the Board, staff and volunteers for their continued contributions to our mission to drive gender equity.

Sally Hasler



Our year at a glance

Leading policy, advocacy, research and engagement:

We celebrated **WHV's 30th anniversary** with a major sector event as part of **Beyond the Bias** health activation at Queen Victorian Women's Centre, **attended by Victorian Minister for Women** and sector leaders.

In October 2024, WHV released the ***Realising Access: abortion and contraception inequities and enablers in Victoria*** report which advocated for strengthened contraception and abortion provision in Victoria.

129 times the *Realising Access* report, WHV and/or 1800 My Options was mentioned in the media during this campaign.

In April 2025, WHV led an advocacy campaign ahead of the **2025 Federal Government election**, which attracted **40 sector signatories** with five key asks to strengthen access to affordable, accessible abortion care.

WHV's CEO is a member of the **Women's Health Ministerial Advisory Council** to **provide advice to the Victorian Minister for Health** on matters affecting women's health.



We secured a **major new grant** to deliver the **Gender Equity in Cancer Care Project** in partnership with **major statewide partners** including the Royal Women's Hospital, MacCallum Cancer Centre, Transgender Victoria and the Regional Integrated Cancer Services.

Submissions:

Surgical Procedures for Gender Affirmation in Adults with Gender Incongruence to the federal Medical Services Advisory Committee's consultation.

Emerging Mental Health Curriculum Framework for Undergraduate Degrees to Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

WHV worked with the Office for Women to **provide advice and data analysis** as part of ***Our Equal State: Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy*** with focus areas including health care access and experience, SRH, and mental health.

WHV led **public presentations and advocacy** on the opportunities and risks of using **digital technologies** to support women's health.

500+ people reached.

Advocating for gender responsive mental health:

Developed the **Gender Responsive Mental Health Care** online training program.

Provided **advice to the Victorian Minister** for Mental Health through the Ministerial Advisory Committee.

Led 3 Women's Mental Health Alliance meetings. Presentation topics included:

- Women's Recovery Network (WREN),
- Australian Muslim Centre for Women's Rights, Our Health, Our Mind: Mental health needs in Muslim migrant and refugee communities, and
- Safer Care Victoria on Improving Sexual Safety.

Continued consultation with **Transforming Trauma Victoria Advisory Group**.

Presented at the **Asia Pacific Women's Mental Health Conference**, promoting promising practices in prevention and mental health system design.

Our services & impact

Sexual and reproductive health



Our service 1800 My Options received **8392 calls** in 2024-25 (**14% increase from 23-24**)



Reached our **40,000th call** milestone in April 2025.

35% of callers noted **financial barriers** to services required.

105,000 users visited the website accessing sexual and reproductive health information.

Maintained a register of **823 service providers** in Victoria who's details we provide to people looking for sexual and reproductive health services.

Public advertising and communications campaign to raise **awareness of 1800 My Options service**.

Capacity building and training

Developed and delivered our new **online training programs** – **Men as Allies** and **Gender Responsive Mental Health Care**.

Over **60,000 page views** of the **Victorian Women's Health Atlas**, up 14%.

More than **one million visits** to WHV's **Labia Library website** that promotes positive body image by providing evidence-based health information and unmodified and non-sexualised photographs of labia.

Cancer support and outreach



Our service Counterpart supported more than **1000 women with cancer**. 25% of people using our service are from regional Victoria.

Our **Bridge of Support** program resumed, providing peer support for women living with breast and gynaecological cancers at the **Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre** in May 2025.

The Counterpart team led **nine Counterpart Wellbeing Days** across regional Victoria, **supporting 158 women living with cancer**.

We ran **26 events**, including three events for women with advanced/metastatic cancer, four clinical and information sessions, three creative activities, five wellbeing activities, a Melbourne Wellbeing Day and nine regional Wellbeing Days.

Launched a new online **Yoga4Cancer** series to provide **health and exercise opportunities**, thanks to a generous donation from Theresa MacDonald and Delia Jones' Alps to Ocean fundraiser.

3068 participants enrolled in online modules on WHV's Training Hub:



1088 in online modules.

525 in the prevention of gender-based violence.

264 in SRH, including early medical abortion service provision, post-abortion follow up and sexual health care.

273 in the impacts of gender on mental health and mental health service access.

Sexual and reproductive health

Across the world, we are seeing sexual and reproductive health rights being wound back. In many places, access to contraception and abortion is becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible. We can't lose focus on ensuring all Victorians can access safe, affordable healthcare.

We know there is a huge demand for support to access sexual and reproductive healthcare here in Victoria – our 1800 MyOptions service hears this from people every day. In fact, during 2024-25, we had more than 105,000 active users on our website and we took 8392 phone calls from people looking for help to navigate the system and find an appropriate healthcare provider. Demand for the service is growing, including a 14% increase in calls above last year. In April, we took our 40,000th phone call and we are preparing to take even more calls in 2025-26.

In addition to hearing it from people every day, we know our focus on accessible care is required because we undertook a rigorous research project to understand people's abortion and contraception experiences in Victoria.

We were proud to release the groundbreaking report, *Realising*

Access: Abortion and contraception inequities and enablers in Victoria, in October 2024. The report analyses trends in sexual and reproductive health service seeking across Victoria with a focus on abortion and long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), drawing on previously unpublished data from 1800 My Options and data from the Victorian Women's Health Atlas.

The report supports our advocacy efforts to protect and expand sexual and reproductive healthcare, and it drew the attention of the media and the public – with more than 120 media mentions on launch, including 96 broadcast (radio/tv) mentions and 33 news/online/print mentions. Our estimates indicate it reached as many as 14 million people across the campaign. In addition, through our training work, more than 260 people completed training in sexual and reproductive health, including early medical abortion service provision, post-abortion follow up and sexual health care via our online training hub.

Expanding our advocacy, in April 2025, we led a campaign ahead of the 2025 Federal Government election, which attracted 40 signatories from organisations across the healthcare spectrum.

The campaign made five key asks to strengthen access to affordable, accessible abortion care. This work was followed up with requests for meetings with the government's ministers and newly elected MPs, which has resulted in multiple meetings scheduled for 2025-26 in Canberra.

Acknowledging our crucial work to provide support for people seeking sexual and reproductive healthcare, and evidence-based policy advice to government, we were thrilled to confirm that our work would continue to be funded with ongoing funding committed in the 2025-26 Victorian State Budget.

*...we took **8392** phone calls from people looking for help to navigate the system and find an appropriate healthcare provider.*



Cancer care

As we do in sexual and reproductive health, we have a dual focus in cancer care – that is, providing real practical services, and complementing that with research and evidence gathering to advocate for policy and systems reform to benefit everyone.

In Australia, it is estimated that cancer affects 1 in 2 people, either directly, or indirectly as a friend or family member of someone living with cancer. Access to high quality cancer care is one of the most pressing issues many Victorians face.

For more than 20 years, we have been providing support to women living with cancer through our Counterpart service. In 2024-25, the service continued to grow in response to increasing demand – with 22% more interactions than the previous year and more than 1000 people coming to us for help.

Counterpart supports women with a diagnosis relating to all cancers. In 2024-25, 20% of people we helped have a cancer other than breast or gynecological which is an increase in our reach to ensure that everyone can get the support they need, regardless of cancer type.

A clear area of need is focused on

regional and rural Victoria. About 25% of our interactions are with women from regional Victoria, so we had a real focus on engaging more with women outside the city limits in 2024-25. We hosted nine regional Wellbeing Days where women could come to a regional centre and spend the day with us and other women who know what it's like to live with cancer. The focus is on providing practical help, often through exercise and dietary advice, as well as psychological support with professionals who can help with mindfulness and creativity.

The regional wellbeing days are hosted in partnership with local healthcare providers and are a great success. A 2024-25 survey of attendees revealed that their knowledge of cancer services and supports that are available to them improved and as a result they felt more supported. Just under three-quarters of the attendees reported there was at least one thing they would do differently after the wellbeing day and almost 100% reported they would recommend the wellbeing days to others.

To expand our reach into regional Victoria in a more consistent way, we scoped and developed a new Peer Support Hub service to provide

regular support to women living with cancer. The first hub was planned for Geelong in 2024-25, and we are pleased to report that it opened in early July 2025!

In more exciting news, we began work on the Gender Equity in Cancer Care project in 2024-25. Funded by the Victorian Government, the study will look at the gendered impacts of cancer care and further inform the implementation of the Victorian Government's Cancer Care Plan 2024-28. The new project brings together leaders from across the healthcare system and is guided by an advisory group to centre lived experience. Major project partners include the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre, the Royal Women's Hospital, Transgender Victoria, and the Barwon South West and Gippsland Regional Integrated Cancer Services. We are also working alongside regional women's health services in Gippsland, Barwon South West and Loddon Mallee. The report is expected to be released in mid-2026.

...with 22% more interactions than the previous year and more than 1000 people coming to us for help.

Peer support

At Counterpart, our trained volunteers provide peer support. They are women who understand what it is like to live with cancer, as they have all had a diagnosis of their own.

They can:

- be there to listen with care and understanding
- share helpful tips and resources
- support your wellbeing through shared experience.

Our Peer Support Volunteers do not provide medical, legal or financial advice or counselling.

Speak to a trained Peer Support Volunteer:

- By phone - 1300 781 500
- In person - Visit us in our office.
- In hospital

Mental health

WHV's advocacy and capacity building to support gender responsive mental health policy and practice continued in 2024-25.

In November, we launched a major initiative – an online course in Gender Responsive Mental Health Care. The course was developed in partnership with mental health care providers to equip the mental health workforce in providing gender-responsive approach to mental health care. In the six months since launch, more than 270 people have completed the course, and the feedback from participants has praised the use of case studies and knowledge-check quizzes between lessons within the online module.

In August, we presented on sexual and gender safety in mental health inpatient and emergency settings at the 'In Conversation' event hosted by the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing. The event was a springboard to our trip west to share our expertise at a national level three months later.

At the conference hosted by the Western Australian Association of Mental Health in November 2024, we spoke to around 400 attendees on sex and gender considerations in

implementing sexual safety in acute inpatient units.

In October, we presented at the Asia Pacific Women's Mental Health Conference, promoting promising practices in prevention and mental health system design.

Closer to home, we continued our leadership of the Women's Mental Health Alliance (WMHA), advocating for gender-responsive mental health care. During 2024-25 we lead three WMHA meetings, which included presentations about:

- Women's Recovery Network (WREN),
- Australian Muslim Centre for Women's Rights, Our Health, Our Mind: Mental health needs in Muslim migrant and refugee communities, and
- Safer Care Victoria, Improving Sexual Safety Initiative

As a member of the Transforming Trauma Victoria Advisory Group, we continued to meet with Transforming Trauma Victoria to assist them with development of their resources.

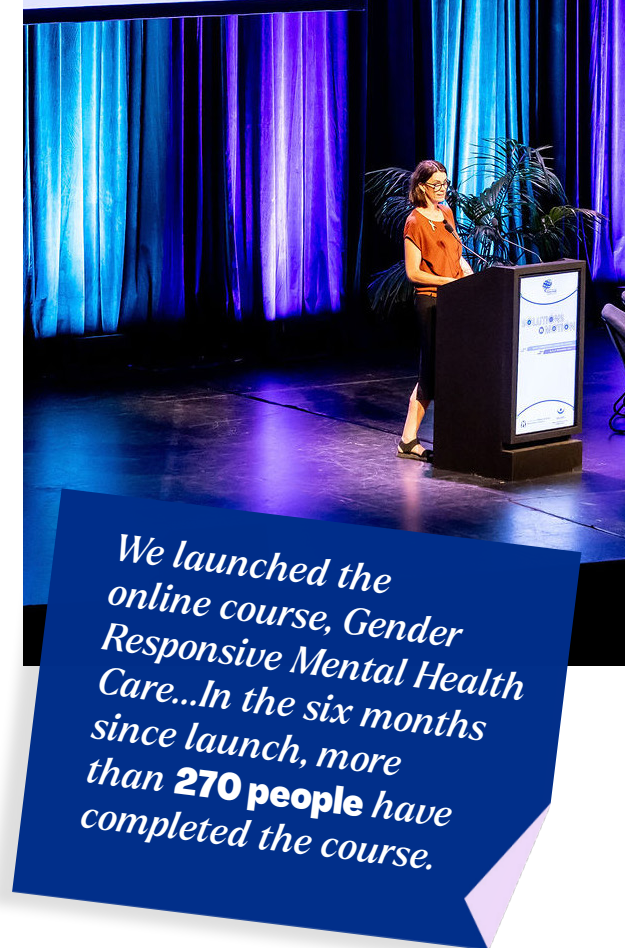
Tackling systems reform through advocacy, in April we made a submission to the Australian Government Department of

Health and Aged Care on its consideration of the emerging mental health curriculum framework for undergraduate health degrees. In the submission, we made five recommendations and await the government's response.

We also reached out directly to the public as part of the Beyond the Bias festival we co-convened with the Queen Victoria Women's Centre. In October, we convened a public information session 'Mental Health through Perimenopause, Menopause, and Beyond' a guest presentation by Jenny Babb, Director of the Women's Recovery Network (WREN).

Our earlier work on systemic issues in mental health continues to draw interest, with 906 views of the webpage where we published *Towards a gendered understanding of women's experiences of mental health*. The final piece of work in that discussion paper series will be released in 2025-26.

Promising practice in mental health promotion and primary prevention



Who we are

WHV Board



Sandy Forbes
Chair
(appointed July 2024)
Meetings attended 7/7



Ashlea Gilmore
Deputy Chair
(appointed Oct 2021)
Meetings attended 7/7



Lesley Ber
Treasurer
(appointed Nov 2023)
Meetings attended 6/7



Julie Bignell
(appointed Oct 2021)
Meetings attended 4/7



Brigid Maher
(appointed Oct 2019)
Meetings attended 6/7



Sharon Olivier
(appointed Jan 2024)
Meetings attended 7/7



Stacey Ong
(appointed Jul 2024)
Meetings attended 5/7

Board members who resigned/retired during the 24-25 Financial Year:

Judy Hacker (Chair)
Kate Broun
Shaymaa Elkadi
Emily Howie

Volunteers

Volunteers are the engine room of our work at Women's Health Victoria, especially our Counterpart Peer Support Services.

We are deeply indebted to the 34 people who volunteer in the service, and thank them for contributing 1499 hours of their time in 2024-25.



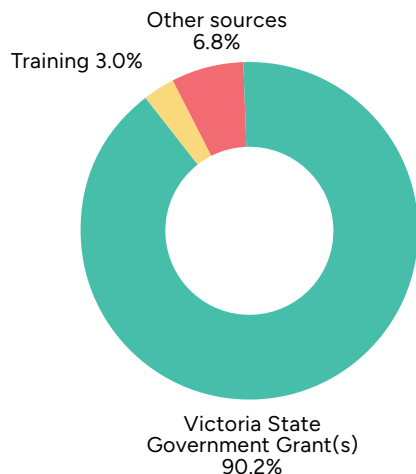
Our finances

The selected financial information below reflects the operations of Women's Health Victoria (WHV) and should be read in conjunction with the Audited Women's Health Victoria Inc Financial Statements for the year ending 30 June 2025 with the accompanying notes available on our website.

Women's Health Victoria prepared the financial statements in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

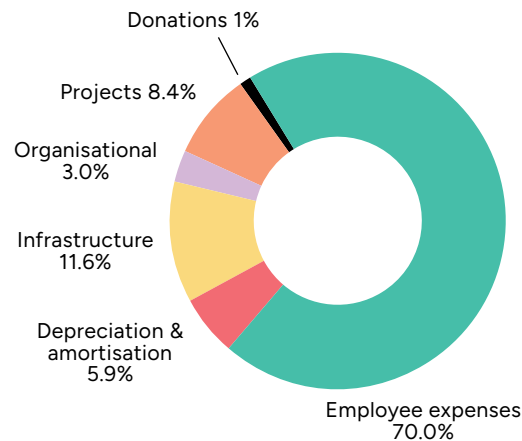
Revenue by source

Total revenue for the financial year was \$4.76M. The Victorian Government's grant funding represents the majority of the revenue.



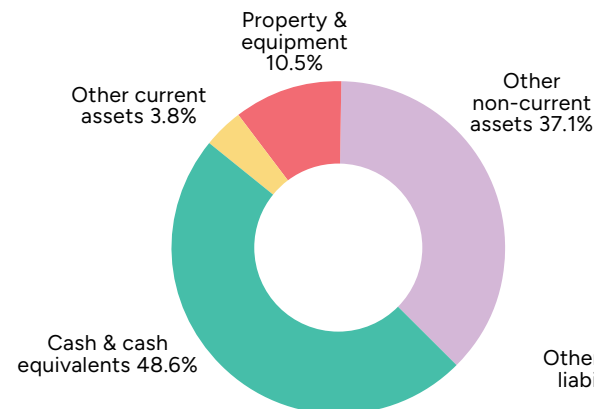
Expenditure

Total expenditure for the financial year was \$4.59M.



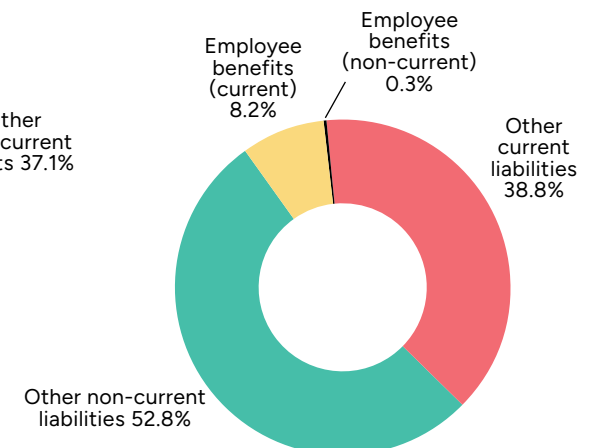
Assets

Assets totalled \$4.39M with \$2.30M reported as current assets.



Liabilities

WHV had \$3.02M in liabilities at the end of the financial year. 46.94% are current liabilities.



Get *involved*

There are many ways to get involved with Women's Health Victoria, from attending events, connecting with us via social media, becoming a member, fundraising, sponsoring or partnering with us.

whv.org.au



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