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For immediate release

Women in the East call for end to violence

"I want an end to anything that devalues, objectifies or belittles a person on the basis of gender," says Sally, a survivor of family violence.

Women across the East are speaking out as part of White Ribbon Day and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. Women, who are themselves survivors of violence, have had enough and are speaking up about the changes needed in society to bring an end to violence against women.

On 25 November, White Ribbon Day, Women's Health East will launch the *Listening to and Learning from Women* campaign. The campaign which has been developed in partnership with the Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault and the Eastern Domestic Violence Service, highlights messages from women who have survived violence and calls for action from the whole community to prevent violence against women. The messages will be shared in a social media campaign and on posters across the Eastern region during the 16 Days.

One in three Australian women have experienced physical violence and almost one in five have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. Victoria Police reported a 21.6% increase in family violence incidents during 2012/13.

"Evidence shows that gender equality is key to preventing violence against women," says Women's Health East CEO Kristine Olaris. "This campaign honours women's strength and expertise. By promoting women's voices, this campaign contributes to greater gender equality and an end to violence against women."

Sally, also a participant in the campaign, says "People need to acknowledge that violence against women is occurring. If someone witnesses or hears violent or sexist behaviour they need to act immediately and say 'this will not be tolerated'. Although difficult, people must stand up against their friends, fathers, and strangers who are perpetrating violence against women. In the community, we need to find the strength to stand up for what is right."

- Ends -

Media enquiries: Kristine Olaris, Chief Executive Officer, 9851 3700 or kolaris@whe.org.au
Kristine Olaris and Sally, a survivor of family violence, are available for interview
The campaign will be celebrated at the Women's Health East AGM, 27 November @ 3pm,
with special guest Natasha Stott-Despoja, Chair of the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women

Links and further information

- The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence run from 25 November (White Ribbon Day) – 10 December (International Human Rights Day)
- The campaign messages will be released daily on Women's Health East Facebook www.facebook.com/WomensHealthEast and Twitter twitter.com/WHEast
- More information about the campaign is available at: <http://listeningtoandlearningfromwomen.wordpress.com/>
- The Women's Health East AGM will be held at 125 George St, Doncaster East on 27 November at 3pm.
- The AGM will include a key note speech from special guest Natasha Stott-Despoja.
- Survivor advocate Sally will then introduce the *Listening to and Learning from Women* campaign.