

MEDIA RELEASE

14 October 2014

For immediate release

Women in Leadership – Q&A

In the lead up to the State government election in November, Women's Health East are holding a Women in Leadership Panel discussion as a part of their Annual General Meeting from 3pm – 5pm on October 22nd at Women's Health East in East Doncaster.

The panel will include a mix of women politicians as well as local leaders. It will include:

Mary Wooldridge MP - Minister for Mental Health, Community Services, and Disability Services & Reform
Danielle Green MP - Shadow Minister for Women, Health Promotion and Prevention of Family Violence
Brooke Collins - Wurundjeri woman, Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association Program Coordinator and Co-director of the Coranderrk Festival
Cr Samantha Dunn - Councillor Lyster Ward, Yarra Ranges and Greens Candidate for Eastern Metropolitan Melbourne
Megan Dunstone - Survivor Advocate for the Prevention of Violence Against Women

MC and comedian Nelly Thomas will guide panel members through a suite of engaging questions that will highlight successes and learnings from the experiences of these interesting and inspiring women in positions of leadership. Through the discussion the importance of having women in leadership positions in the promotion of gender equality in our society will also be investigated.

Women currently make up less than [one-third](#) of all Australian parliamentarians. In our top 200 companies, women hold [12.3% of Board Directorships, and only seven have female CEOs](#). "Promoting women in leadership is a key area for focus if we are to improve gender equality" says Women's Health East CEO Kristine Olaris. "However women's leadership is not just about having women in prominent leadership positions but about women at all levels of society being heard and having influence".

It's really not surprising that only 1% of young girls are considering a career in politics given that 27% of Australians believe that men make better politicians and 19% think that men should be the head of the household ([Plan International Australia: 2014](#), [National Community Attitudes Survey: 2013](#)). It's not until we leave these gendered attitudes behind that women will achieve equal access to leadership and power.

Gender inequality has significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of women and girls. Not the least of these is the link between gender inequality and violence against women. Through society's adherence to gender stereotypes, women are generally placed in positions of less power and control within their homes, workplaces, socially, economically and politically. This relationship between gender inequality and violence against women is complex, but real. As the State election draws closer we have seen the major political parties acknowledge violence against women as a priority election issue for the first time.

But it's not all bad news! We still have reason to celebrate the achievements of many inspirational women who have emerged as influential and innovative leaders within their own, and broader, communities. Women's Health East has engaged five such women for the Q&A panel at their upcoming AGM. "We would like to extend an invitation to the community to come along and share this unique experience with us and our partners" says Kristine. If you would like to attend this event please contact Women's Health East on 9851 3700.

*If you or someone you know is experiencing violence, help is available - contact the Eastern Domestic Violence Services (EDVOS) on 9259 4200 or the Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault on 9870 7310.
In emergency situations or immediate danger contact Police on 000.*

- Ends -

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Links and further information:

- *The full report on the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Women Survey can be found here <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Freedom-from-violence/2013-National-Community-Attitudes-towards-Violence-Against-Women-Survey.aspx>*
- *Together for Equality & Respect: A Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women in Melbourne's East 2013-2017 can be downloaded from <http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/index.html>*
- *Together for Equality & Respect Action Plan 2013 – 2017 has just been released [http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/documents/2014-09-17%20TFER Action%20Plan_Final.pdf](http://www.whe.org.au/newsite/documents/2014-09-17%20TFER%20Action%20Plan_Final.pdf)*
- *Plan Australia <http://www.plan.org.au/>*

About Women's Health East

Women's Health East is a regional women's health promotion agency working across the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne towards a vision of equality, empowerment, health and wellbeing for all women. A not-for-profit agency funded primarily by the Victorian Department of Health, we advocate for gender equity and work to improve the health and wellbeing of girls and women. Our health promotion priorities include:

- Preventing Violence Against Women
- Sexual & Reproductive Health
- Gender Equity for Health Outcomes

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Women's Health East acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government