

31 March 2016

For immediate release

Royal Commission puts prevention on the agenda

The landmark report of the Royal Commission into Family Violence was publically launched yesterday. Women's Health East welcomes the report and applauds the Victorian Government for its commitment to implement the recommendations in full. Women's Health East sees the report as a strong framework for future action.

Women's Health East is pleased that the Commission identifies the importance of survivors' voices in policy and service design, with specific reference being made to the [Speaking Out](#) program in the report. We are hopeful that this may result in funding support to this program. We are very encouraged by the already announced intention of the Victorian Government to establish a Victim Survivors' Advisory Council.

"I am particularly pleased to see that the report has put the prevention of violence against women clearly on the agenda" says Kristine Olaris, Women's Health East's Chief Executive Officer. The report recommends the development of a long term, evidence informed, primary prevention strategy that addresses gender inequality. It highlights the need for dedicated funding for this work. These are all points which Women's Health East had put forward in its [own submission](#) to the Royal Commission.

The Commission also underlined the need for leadership and coordination of prevention efforts at a statewide, regional and local level. It is very pleasing to see that the Commission recognised the role of Women's Health Service in building partnerships, and in developing and leading regional action. It also reinforces the important role that local governments play at a local level.

"Women's health services are the back bone of violence prevention across Victoria" says Ms Olaris. There is a regional women's health service in every region of the State, as well as statewide services Women's Health Victoria, Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and Women with Disabilities Victoria. Together, the sector brings state wide reach, regional focus, and specialist expertise to this work. "The sector looks forward to working with the Victorian Government to discuss and strengthen this role" Ms Olaris says.

The Royal Commission recommends a whole of school approach be taken in the implementation of the Respectful Relationship Education in schools program and a focus on workplaces as settings for primary prevention. Women's Health East is supportive of these recommendations but recognise a range of other settings and strategies that will be important in achieving gender equality. As the Commission points out, a comprehensive primary prevention strategy will need to be informed also be the upcoming Victorian Gender Equality Strategy.

Women's Health East has also been calling for a [comprehensive approach to sexual violence and its prevention](#). It is pleasing to note that the Royal Commission has specifically considered the various contexts of family violence-related sexual assault and has a focus in its recommendations on collaboration of family violence and sexual assault services.

Women's Health East looks forward to working with the Victorian government, our key partners, and women who have experienced violence, to shape what the recommendations look like in practice.

- Ends -

**Media enquiries or to speak with a Speaking Out advocate contact:
Kate Gibson, Health Promotion and Communications Officer, 9851 3700 or kgibson@whe.org.au**

Links and further information

Women's Health East is the lead organisation for [*Together for Equality & Respect: A Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women in Melbourne's East 2013-2017*](#)

Media and local organisations can speak with an advocate through the [Speaking Out: Media Advocacy to end Sexual Assault & Family Violence](#) program

Important contacts

- In emergency situations or danger, call police on 000
- For confidential help and referral, call the National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line on 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)
- Eastern Domestic Violence Service 92594200 (Mon-Fri, 9- 5)

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