

Women's Health East



Welcome to **Women's Health East** first quarterly e-newsletter of 2012.



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About Us

Women's Health East (WHE) works to improve the health and wellbeing of girls and women.

We are a regional women's health promotion agency working across the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne. The region covers 7 Local Government Areas - Yarra Ranges, Knox, Maroondah, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse and Boroondara.

The organisation, which is a not-for-profit incorporated association, receives the majority of its funding through the Department of Health.

The health promotion team at Women's Health East works exclusively in gender-based health promotion, which involves:

- Advocacy and consultancy within the health and community sector to promote women's health and wellbeing
- Working in partnership with other health and community agencies to promote gender-based planning in health promotion and service delivery, and to improve service system access and responsiveness for women.
- Training and education programs for service providers on women's health issues and gender awareness in planning and service delivery
- Research into women's health needs
- Raising awareness of health and wellbeing issues experienced by women
- Partnerships with service providers and establishing networks to improve services for women.

Greetings from WHE's new CEO- Kristine Olaris

Hello to all our members. I commenced at Women's Health East about 2 months ago now and am quickly getting to know the East! For those who don't know, my previous work has mostly been in the Community Health sector, where my role has included a strong focus on working with disadvantaged segments of the community. This has included homeless people, GLBTI communities, Aboriginal people and refugees. I also sat on the Board of Women's Health in the North for about 5 years prior to coming to WHE and am currently a Board member of the Climate And Health Alliance.

In my first two months, I have been really impressed with the work of WHE and the commitment to Women's Health from our partners in the Region. I am really looking forward to working with you all to progress this important work in the future.

Media and Advocacy Project

Women's Health East together with Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (ECASA), Eastern Region Family Violence Partnership (ERFVP) and the Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service (WDVCS) are committed to ensuring that the voices of women who have experienced family violence and sexual assault are heard through the media and public events. Our work aims to influence a **change in community attitudes and promote the prevention of violence against women**. Women survivors of **sexual assault** and **family violence** in the EMR are available to tell their stories and bring a human face to help stop violence against women.

The advocates challenge many of the commonly held beliefs around sexual assault and family violence. They are able to correct misconceptions and stereotypes about victims, and can support the Victorian Government and Victoria Police to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

Twenty six women are available to do media and public speaking opportunities.

Since the commencement of the project, the advocates have been involved in **58 opportunities** with another 5 upcoming opportunities booked. The advocates have featured in newspaper articles, attended press conferences and have been involved in public speaking at various events.

[Media and Advocacy Flyer](#)

[Public Speaking Request Form- PDF](#)

[Public Speaking Request Form- Word](#)

If you would like to request working with these advocates or to find out more about the project please contact Loren Imbriano from Women's Health East on 8873 3700 or email limbriano@whe.org.au.

WHE Board Member position available

Within a feminist framework, Women's Health East works in partnership with key health and community service organisations in the region to address women's health issues through research, advocacy for systemic change, training and external capacity building.

The WHE Board is seeking a new Board member, and particularly invites interest from women from culturally diverse backgrounds, and/or women with an area of expertise which matches our strategic directions or priority health promotion areas, and an interest in women's health. Women who live, work or study in the eastern metropolitan region of Melbourne are eligible for Board membership.

For more information about this Board position, please contact Kristine Olaris on (03) 8873 3700 or email admin@whe.org.au. For information about WHE, please visit our website www.whe.org.au.

International Women's Day 2012 ● ● ●

International Women's Day is held in March each year and globally celebrates the economic, political and social achievements of women in the past, present and future. The day also provides an opportunity to recognise women's achievements, raise awareness of women's issues, and encourage continued action to redress inequalities.

This year Women's Health East held an 'International Women's Day' event at Ringwood Bowls Club on Wednesday 7th March 2012 to celebrate the contribution that local women have made to their community through their voluntary work around preventing violence against women, encouraging social connection and advocating against sexual assault.

We had over 50 women who volunteered through our organisation last year attend the event. The evening included a game of lawn bowls, a sit down dinner cooked by Karen women from Burma and presentations by survivor advocates of sexual assault and family violence.

Feedback from the event was extremely positive and a similar event will be organised next year. Women's Health East would also like to take this opportunity to thank all people making International Women's Day a visible day to remind us what we are striving for: **gender equity**.

Some snap shots from the event



We would like to thank the following International Women's Day sponsors



SOUVLAKI STATION



Welcome Anna Stewart! ● ● ●

WHE would like to extend a warm welcome to Anna Stewart, the new Project Coordinator for the Preventing Violence Against Women in Our Community project. This project is a partnership between Knox City Council, Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council and seeks to develop a whole-of-community approach to the prevention of violence against women. WHE looks forward to working with Anna.

“Investing in Women” Update ● ● ●

WHE is now well underway with the third phase of the project – the Investing in Women Grants Program.

The aims of the grants program are:

- To address barriers to being socially connected
- To improve women’s mental health and wellbeing
- And to encourage women’s engagement with their peers in the community.

Twenty-eight social connection initiatives have been established across the region. Each initiative has been offered journals and disposable cameras as a way to try and capture meaningful information about how initiatives like this are able to impact on women’s wellbeing. We hope that the journals will enable us to gauge how the project influences the women involved, in a way that statistical data cannot. We look forward to sharing some of these amazing stories with you mid year.

The fourth phase of the project has also begun – the Evaluation stage. Pre, post and 6 month follow-up evaluation questionnaires were given out to the women who attended the social connection workshops.

WHE is undertaking an in depth evaluation of the project because it wants to find out whether this approach to social connection is the most beneficial to women in the community.

We again would like to thank the funding bodies who have supported the project.



Prevention of Violence Against Women Update



In 2011-2012, the Victorian Government is investing over \$75 million to a range of services and programs that are aimed at tackling family violence and sexual assault. The investment is also being used to address the underlying causes of this violence against women and to stop it from occurring.

As a part of this commitment the 'Addressing Violence against Women and their Children Action Plan Consultation Framework' was released in January 2012. Office of Women's Policy also launched a period of consultation (which finished on 23rd March) to gain feedback from experts in the field as well as from women who have experienced violence. This will help inform the development of a three year Victorian Action Plan to address violence against women and children. This will include the prevention of violence, early intervention as well as responding effectively to violence after it has occurred.

During the month of March, WHE provided feedback to the Office of Women's Policy regarding the Action Plan Consultation Framework. WHE participated in two consultation sessions; including one general session and another specific to primary prevention, and also submitted a written response. WHE look forward to seeing the outcomes and future development of the Action Plan.

To access the full framework click on the following link

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/686526/owp_actionplanconsultationframework_20012012.pdf

WHE Data Book



Women's Health East released a Data Book on women in Melbourne's eastern region. The Data Book includes statistical information extracted from a range of reputable population and health data sources in order to build a comprehensive profile of women across the local government areas. It serves as a resource for gender-specific population health and wellbeing planning in the region.

The Data Book brings together (into one resource) current statistical information about women in Melbourne's east, thereby providing planners with the impetus to find out more about women's needs, determine gaps, and develop appropriate program and service responses.

Please visit the WHE website to view/download the Data Book. Hard copies of the Data Book are available to purchase for \$25.00 which includes postage.



Request for Research Support

Visit the WHE website to view current research studies. If you are a researcher seeking WHE's support to publicise your research study, invite participants, or disseminate information about your research, please complete our [Request for Support Form](#) and email it to health@whe.org.au.

Office Space Available

Women's Health East's has one office space (with two desks) available.

If you are interested in renting this space or would like more information please contact WHE on 8873 3700.

Robyn Murray Meeting Room for Hire

**Address:**
Suite 5/37
Heatherdale Road,
Ringwood 3134

**Phone:**
(03) 8873 3700

**E-Mail:**
health@whe.org.au

**Website:**
www.whe.org.au

Women's Health East's Meeting Room is available to be hired.

Costs for use of the Meeting Room during office hours;

- \$100 (up to 3 hours)
- \$120 (4-6 hours)

This price includes;

- Tea/coffee making facilities
- Disposable cups and napkins
- Use of resources including large LCD television, digital data projector and whiteboard for presentations.
- Tables and chairs

If you are interesting in hiring the Meeting Room please visit www.whe.org.au for the Hire Agreement and Application form.

**For more information about
Women's Health East please visit our website.**



[Click here](#) for Women's Health East's Annual Report 2010-2011

