

Networknews

A Newsletter from the Australian Women's Health Network



DECEMBER EDITION 2009

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK

Online Women's Health News Bulletin December 2009

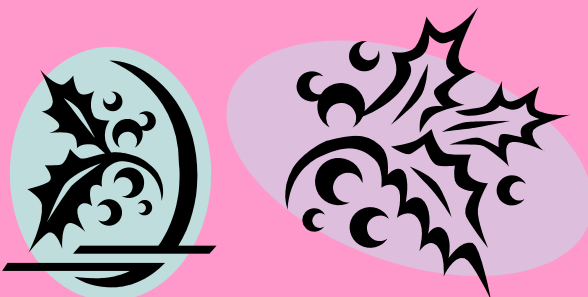
www.awhn.org.au

Dear Members

The AWHN Network News will be sent to all members three times a year (February, August and December). The AWHN Committee values your input and invites submissions for consideration. Contact details for submissions are provided at the conclusion of this newsletter.

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PO Box 1160, Melbourne, Victoria, 3001

AWHN CONVENOR'S REPORT, December, 2009.

2009 has been AWHN's busiest year yet and our membership is higher than ever before -- and growing. A warm welcome to all our new members!

As well as organising the Conference, we have been disseminating information to members and other relevant national groups, lobbying and making submissions for the new National Women's Health Policy (NWHP) and managing a major project, the AWHN Aboriginal Women's Talking Circle Project.

The New National Women's Health Policy

Both the consultation and submission processes for the New National Women's Health Policy are now complete. It remains for us to wait to see what the policy holds and, in the meantime, to do some lobbying to try to gain support for our submission. At this stage, we are not sure when the Policy will be released but we understand it will be in the first half of 2010.

If you haven't seen the women's consultation discussion paper, "Development of a New National Women's Health Policy, consultation discussion paper, 2009", it is available on the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging website at <http://www.health.gov.au/womenshealthpolicy>

The first national Men's Health Policy is due to be released in the very near future. It will be interesting to see the extent to which it complements our concerns.

The Sixth National Women's Health Conference

A separate report appears below from conference Convenor, Kelly Bannister. From AWHN's point of view, things are shaping up very well, with a record number of over 240 abstracts, 65 of which were from Aboriginal women. The overall standard of the extracts was exceptionally high. This wonderful response demonstrates that information about AWHN and its work is reaching deeply into the women's health community. The abstract bonanza augurs well for a most

interesting Conference. The only disappointment so far is that efforts to raise sponsorship money have been spectacularly unsuccessful in the present economic climate.

Advocacy Work

AWHN has undertaken a range of advocacy work during the year, as time has allowed. Recently, we wrote to the Queensland Premier and relevant Queensland politicians and also to selected Commonwealth politicians, pointing to the difficulties created for Queensland women's health services by the insecure funding arrangements under which they were operating. We are pleased that funding has now been secured until the end of 2010, providing a modicum of certainty in which to operate.

We are working to disseminate information about our submission to the NHWP and to gain support for it. I urge you to do the same. It will be great if people can contact State and Territory Health Ministers and their staffs. Writing a letter or trying to make an appointment both help to get our ideas across. The policy will be national -- but it will need to be endorsed by all of Australia's health ministers. It is crucially important that the AWHN position figures prominently in the final document.

Marcia Williams, from the ACT Women's Centre for Health Matters, Jilpia Jones and I had a meeting at Parliament House with members of the Labor Women's Caucus Committee. We circulated, and spoke to, an abbreviated version of our submission. This condensed version of our submission is on our website, under submissions, if you want to use it for lobbying -- <http://www.awhn.org.au/>

Jilpia Jones presented a briefing on issues in Aboriginal women and birthing. There was interest in ways of delivering and paying for women's health services and in Jilpia's submission about choice and informed consent and the importance of giving birth in one's own land. The overall response was positive.

An appointment has been arranged, through Minister Plibersek's office, to meet with staff at the Office for Women to explain and promote our submission on 8 December, 2009. Dorothy Broom and I will attend for AWHN. We have also been in touch with Nicola Roxon's chief of staff to try to arrange an appointment. There is to be a Community Cabinet Meeting in Townsville on 8 December. Cathy Crawford from The Women's Centre will attend on behalf of AWHN.

New Administrative Arrangements

The new administrative arrangements, commenced in 2008, whereby AWHN contracts with Women's Health Victoria to keep our membership and contact lists updated and to manage our finances, are working very well. We benefit from having up-to-date lists which allow us to contact our members and interested

groups efficiently and at short notice. The big administrative job of keeping AWHN accounts was moved to Women's Health Victoria at the end of the last financial year.

Website

For new members, you will find a lot of information on our website. Our submission to the NHWP is there along with a number of submissions from other groups. You will also find our most recent newsletters. Under the submission heading, is a copy of the papers that we presented to the Labor Women's Caucus Committee. The website is kept up to date by Patty Kinnersly and her very capable offsider, Nikki Greenway.

We wish you a happy and peaceful holiday season and very best wishes for 2010, a big year, the year of Australia's Second National Women's Health Policy and the Sixth National Women's Health Conference!

Gwen Gray
Convenor
1 December, 2009.



TAKING ACTION TO PROGRESS THE NEW AGENDA

CONFERENCE REPORT

Women's Health: The New National Agenda

6th Australian Women's Health Conference

Letter from the Conference Convener

Dear AWHN Members

The Preliminary Program has generated a lot of interest and excitement since its release. The feedback received has been terrific, with a corresponding jump in registrations, and suggested changes have been accommodated as much as possible. If you have reviewed the program recently, you would have noticed that Dea Deleaney-Thiele has been added as our eleventh Keynote Speaker. Dea is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and will talk about the opportunities and benefits of cooperation and collaboration between NACCHO and AWHN, and the AWHN Talking Circle in particular.



Along with the more academic Program, significant progress has also been made in the development of the arts/cultural and social programs. Uniting Aged Care have provided \$40,000 funding to support the expansion of the *Knitting Room Project and Exhibition*, and Salamanca Arts Centre contributed another \$5,000 sponsorship by waiving their usual gallery hire fees. I am delighted we are able to include the *Knitting Room Exhibition* in our program, and as you'll see from the project Coordinator's description below, it will be a definite 'must do' event while at the Conference.

The Knitting Room

Tasmanians have combined their talents, and memories, to knit, stitch and crochet a magnificent life-size walk thru display reminiscent of a 1950's home. Visitors to the exhibition are transported back to an era when the young, newly crowned Queen Elizabeth toured Australia and Elvis was king!



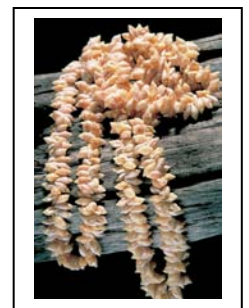
Residents of Strathaven, an aged care home run by Uniting Aged Care, began the project in 2003. The idea ignited many imaginations. Soon family, friends, volunteers, staff and community groups throughout southern Tasmania were caught up in the challenge and delight of remembering, then turning those

memories into knitted or crocheted objects. In more recent times, all five Uniting Aged Care homes in Southern Tasmania as well as other nursing homes and community groups have joined the project.

From wallpaper to crocheted cups and cakes, this is one of the few creative community projects in which the residents of nursing homes have led the way. The 'old' skills are being given renewed value to a whole new generation, through fun, good humour and through each person 'doing their bit' to contribute to the whole, amazing exhibition. To stand in The Knitting Room is to be transported and uplifted.

A Tasmanian Aboriginal Shell Necklace Exhibition showcasing the stunning work of well known Australian artists Jeanette James and Auntie Corrie Fullard will also be launched during the Program and displayed at the Conference venue.

Jeanette is a Tasmanian traditional shell necklace stringer and jewellery maker who uses shells and echidna quills to producing a range of traditional and contemporary jewellery pieces that have been exhibited throughout Australia, Singapore and Alaska. Her work has also been recognised with an award from the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Telstra Art Awards.



Auntie Corrie is a respected Tasmanian Elder and traditional shell necklace stringer and contemporary jewellery maker. She has passed on her knowledge to her daughter and spends many hours with her collecting the shells for their work. Mother and daughter have run numerous workshops at cultural events, including the Dreaming Festival, Lake Macquarie Art Gallery and Alutiiq Museum Alaska, and Auntie Corrie's work has also been featured in exhibitions throughout Australia. The work of both artists has been acquired by museums and private collectors in Australia, Europe and America.

If you enjoy a more hand-on approach to art, there will be an opportunity to work with artist **Gwen Egg** to create a spiral installation in the foyer of the conference venue, as a metaphor for the processes at work when good people committed to a common cause gather to contribute their unique perspective AND work together to understand and improve the big picture. Working together and with Gwen, delegates will create an impressive spiral form within which they as individuals can create 'eddies' of delicate and personal detail. The spiral itself will become a walking meditation.



Gwen is a textile and fibre artist whose exhibition work celebrates nature with understated technique and eloquent forms. What began as a passion for weaving with natural materials has become, for her, a language with which to explore texture and form in familiar

landscapes – *“I work at stitching the colours and textures that sustain me ...weaving familiar territory.”*

Gwen has experienced the power of art spaces to engage delegates at a deep and personal level within a conference program. She believes that people listen and think very deeply when quietly engaged in working with their hands while they listen. Gwen will create an opportunity for individuals to pause, make, talk and laugh together and mentally refresh within the context of the busy and important conference agenda.

Media promotion of the Conference has continued over the past few months with the release of a number of media releases, although with media attention fixed on election and Party politics recently it has been difficult to get traction with an event that will be held next year. As we get closer to the time however, receive confirmation of attendance from Government Ministers and some other, high profile invitees we are working on, I anticipate we will attract a significant amount of coverage, both before the Conference and during the daily media calls.

In relation to **sponsorship**, we have had both good and bad news. The good news is that we have an additional \$20,000 confirmed in sponsorship package sales. Negotiations are continuing with others who have expressed an interest in taking up sponsorship and we are also specifically targeting publishing houses, universities and training organisations that we so far haven't already approached. The bad news is our request to the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) to support low income women from around the country to attend was unsuccessful (although it should be acknowledged that DoHA previously provided some funding for general Conference administrative costs). As yet I haven't received a response to a similar request to the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, so am still hopeful in this regard.

In an effort to support the **promotion of women's organisations** and their services, we are offering trade booth to them at a significantly reduced rate. A Not-For-Profit Trade Booth, which could be shared by more than one organisation, costs \$1095 incl. GST and includes; one 3 x 2 metre exhibition booth; one full conference registration; logo recognition in the conference handbook, conference signage and conference website; a link to the organisation's site from their logo on the conference website; and a delegate satchel insert. Given a full registration is worth \$875, the cost of the booth and other promotional items is actually only \$220 and I think well worth considering.

Thanks to those who volunteered to **Chair concurrent sessions**. Allocation will be made early in the New Year and I will be in touch with you soon after.

Although Early Bird **Registration** has now closed please don't wait to register if you haven't already. The previous conference, that was in Melbourne, sold out in

advance we had to turn some people away and although we have allowed for increased numbers in 2010 it would be disappointing if any members missed out.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and safe holiday period,

Kelly

Kelly Banister
Convener ~ 6th Australian Women's Health Conference
18-21 May 2010 Hobart, Tasmania

AWHN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S TALKING CIRCLE REPORT

The Australian Women's Health Network Aboriginal Women's Talking Circle was funded by the Australian Government through the Women's Leadership and Development Program to

- produce a submission to new National Women's Health Policy.
- strengthen the Aboriginal Women's Talking Circle
- develop and announce an Aboriginal Women's Health Strategy.

A Working Group to manage the project was formed at an Adelaide meeting of the Talking Circle in April 2009.

The working group employed Ms Sandra Angus, who travelled to every State and Territory and consulted with over 400 women. This was an enormous achievement in the very short timeframe and Ms Angus would very much like to thank all the women who participated. AWHN and the Talking Circle would like to thank Sandy Angus for her very hard work and strong commitment to the project

A submission, which was workshopped and discussed by the Talking Circle working group, was presented to the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing at the end of September, 2009.

In July, Jilpia Nappaljari Jones and Gwen Gray met with Ms Dea Delaney Thiele, Executive Director, and several women staff members from National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHO), as requested by the Adelaide meeting. The meeting was informal, constructive and enjoyable. A further meeting with NACCHO took place in Darwin, on 11 November. See report below under Northern Territory report.

The objectives of the rest of the project are to strengthen the Talking Circle and to develop a Strategy to improve the health of Aboriginal women, their families and communities. The Strategy will be presented at the Conference in Hobart.

If you would like to be on the Talking Circle working group, on which we have a couple of vacancies, or if you would like to join the Talking Circle, please contact Gwen Gray on 0261253584 or 0405193584 or on my e-mail at Gwendolyn.Gray@anu.edu.au

Gwen Gray
Convenor, AWHN

STATE ROUND UP

VICTORIA

Victorian report: November 2009

***A Right to Respect:
Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women
2010–2020.***

After decades of hard work and advocacy, the Victorian Premier, the Attorney General and the Minister for Women's Affairs recently launched the *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010-2020*. Copies available on www.women.vic.gov.au

Vision

Victorian communities, cultures and organisations are non-violent and gender equitable. Relationships are respectful and non-discriminatory.

Goals

1. A significant reduction in violence against women.
2. Non-violent and non-discriminatory social norms.
3. Gender-equitable, safe and inclusive communities and organisations.
4. Equal and respectful relationships between women and men.

Strategies

1. Establish partnerships across government and non-government agencies and accountable leadership structures for sustainable prevention.
2. Strengthen community leadership to drive change.
3. Build capacity and tools for organisational change and workforce development.

4. Implement multiphase communications campaigns and programs, engage champions and undertake media advocacy to promote equity and non-violence.
5. Develop and strengthen systems and programs that build respectful relationships skills and influence social norms, attitudes and behaviours.
6. Research, evaluate and monitor policy and programs for continuous improvement.
7. Improve policy, regulation and legislation to embed prevention of violence and gender equity.

10 point plan for Victorian Women's Health 2010-2014 Developed by Victorian Women's Health Services

Victorian women and Victorian Women's Health Services have a notable history of successfully advocating for, and acting to improve, women's health outcomes. In 2006 the Women's Health Association of Victoria developed a comprehensive document, *'Women's Health Matters: From Policy to Practice – Setting an Agenda for Victorian Women's Health 2006-2010'* that included a 10 point plan. It was endorsed by almost 30 women's services and associated organisations and was used to influence government and other political parties in the lead up to the November 2006 elections.

The 2006 document was influential in driving priority setting for women's health within government, and in developing a common set of agreed priorities across the women's health sector. It argued for a new approach, integrating women's health policy with other areas of government policy in a coordinated way, embedding gender in the 'social determinants' approach to health policy and practice.

Much of the argument and rationale behind the priority setting for the 2006 plan remains relevant for 2010 and beyond. Progress has been made in many areas, however, there remains significant scope for improvement in women's health outcomes and in the ways that key women's health programs and services are delivered to make them more accessible and responsive to the diversity of women across Victoria.

The *10 point plan for Victorian Women's Health 2010-2014* builds on the 2006 document and reiterates the call for a whole of government strategy and action plan for improving women's health. It calls for initiatives to be developed in close collaboration with the women's health sector, with a strong emphasis on outcomes that can be measured, monitored and reported on in a transparent manner.

The *10 point plan for Victorian Women's Health 2010-2014* will be available on the AWHN website early in December, however the ten points are based on the following 10 point:

- Social determinants
- Gender equity
- Human rights
- Social inclusion

Diversity
Women's specific services
Cross-government leadership
New funding
Inclusivity
Priority area focus
Women in a changing society
Sexual and reproductive health
Prevention of violence against women
Mental wellbeing and social connectedness

A snapshot of good work from Victoria: Women's Health Victoria

The Selection Board for the Australian Government Australian Institute of Criminology Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards has commended the **Women's Health Victoria** project '*Working Together Against Violence*' and awarded \$5,000 and a Certificate of Merit. WHV's corporate partner in this project is Linfox and the project funder is VicHealth. The award is in the Projects 2009 State/Territory Category for Victoria. This is a great achievement for work that so many WHV women (past and present) have contributed to, not just in the last two rounds of funding we have received from VicHealth but the advocacy which led to getting primary prevention of violence onto the agenda now of so many agencies.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Vicki and Dot have been busy working on the Aboriginal Women's Talking Circle which has involved meeting with Aboriginal women earlier in the year in Adelaide and assisting with their women's health submission.

Womenspeak meetings have also been attended regularly throughout the year and Vicki recently presented a brief overview of the national women's health submission paper process. There has been considerable discussion over the new alliance model and many of the group attendees have indicated they will submit to form an alliance.

Vicki recently attended a talk on Honour Killings (eg. Women shame husband) by a UWA academic and will provide a summary of this at a later stage.

Women's Health Centre's- Mandy Stringer

Women's Health Centres still have no clarity regarding contracts beyond June 2010.

The Department of Health "Five year Planning Framework 2004-2009" for Womens' Health centres is due for review. Clearly this will be an opportunity for

the sector to discuss the development of a State-wide Plan for WA women's health. The potential to learn from Victoria's 10 point plan and replicate something similar in WA is critical if we are to keep the social determinants and gender on the agenda!

National Women's Health Policy – Consultations extended by women's health centres

Café Dialogue

WOMEN'S Healthworks, Ishar Multicultural Women's Health Centre and with the support of the Government of Western Australia, Department for Communities combined resources to offer local women the opportunity to input into the development of a new national women's health policy. Located in the northern suburbs of Perth, the two women's health centres were also supported in this initiative by the City of Wanneroo who provided "in kind" support to the consultation process.

Over 100 women of varying ages and ethnicity attended the forum. Dr Lebbie Hopkins, Co-ordinator of the Women's Studies Program at Edith Cowan University, provided three short multi-media presentations to provide background information and stimulate discussion. Subsequent to these presentations, participants were invited to discuss set topics at their tables and these discussions were then reported back to the larger group.

Participants at the Café Dialogue were very engaged in the process and enjoyed the opportunity to contribute their ideas and views. Despite the breadth of ideas presented there was also a good deal of consistency regarding some of the main themes.

Domestic violence and sexuality / reproductive health were two of the seven priority health issues identified in the 1989 National Women's Health Policy. There was consensus at the forum that these two areas in particular require an ongoing focus.

There were a significant number of ***women from a CaLD background*** at the consultation. They represented a significant and growing number of CaLD communities in the northern suburbs of Perth. There were a number of issues reported at almost all of the discussion tables including social isolation resulting from language and cultural barriers, the need for more accessible interpreter services, and the need for health information produced in alternate languages and formats.

Mental health and self harm was an issue recorded by 70% of the Café Dialogue participants. It was suggested that the high rates of anxiety and depression for women in the 0-65 year age bracket may in part be explained by

women's loads increasing with responsibilities in the workplace, home front, in their communities of origin and as carers for aging parents and families.

Again there was considerable consistency when considering the **barriers to accessing health care**. The cost of dental care, the need for more women's health centres and greater provision of alternate therapies were all high priority considerations. Equally important however was the need to make much better use of nurse practitioners and greater consideration given to the development of health related infrastructure in new suburbs.

Almost all women at the consultation believed that **prevention was the key to improved health for all** and that not enough was currently being done in this area.

Minister for Women's Interests

Robyn Mc Sweeney MLC - Minister for Child protection, community services, seniors and volunteering; *women's Interests* has announced the new women's advisory council. Ann Deanus, Director of Women's Health Services is one of twelve nominations accepted.

The latest Women's Report Card "Measuring Women's Progress" by the Department for Communities highlights that despite some improvements in many aspects of women's lives, there has been no improvement in the gender pay gap, self employment rates, sexual and reproductive health and unpaid work of older women. The most recent Womens Report Card from the office is now available www.communities.wa.gov.au.

Mandy Stringer

TASMANIA

(See conference report).

QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – November 2009

Women's Health Services form Alliance



Some of the members of the newly formed Women's Health Services Alliance (Qld) who attended a meeting in Gladstone recently.

Front Row (from left to right): Kris Saunders, Logan Women's Health & Wellbeing Centre; Vicki Lahtinen, Women's Health Information & Referral Service (Rockhampton); Ruth Tidswell, Gympie & District Women's Health Centre; Cathy Crawford, North Queensland Combined Women's Services.

Back Row: Jenny Cockerill, Women's Health Awareness Group (Gladstone); Selina Utting, Children by Choice; Kathy Faulkner, Women's Health Queensland Wide; Maree Hawken, QWHN.

(Other members not pictured: Greta Brennan, Wide Bay Women's Health Centre; Belinda Hassan, Mackay Women's Centre; Cathy North, West Moreton Women's Health Service.)

Women's health services from across Queensland gathered in Gladstone recently to network, share ideas and form the Women's Health Services Alliance (Qld). Queensland Women's Health Network Inc (QWHN) was nominated to act as the Secretariat organisation for the group.

Alliance members include Statewide and regional services funded to provide women's health services in Queensland. They provide essential services of community support, health promotion, early intervention and prevention, and are utilised by marginalised communities and vulnerable women and families who may not access other health services.

Service Coordinators have been meeting regularly for some years and recently decided to progress the arrangement by forming the Alliance. This agreement will enable members to collaborate on various projects, develop cooperative

responses to key issues in State and Federal policy, and provide a statewide capacity to take full advantage of strengths in regional delivery, on issues affecting women's health in Queensland.

As Secretariat QWHN will act as an initial contact point, assist with communication and correspondence, and provide a link and a voice at the national level as a State Representative of the Australian Women's Health Network.

Maree Hawken

**Coordinator - Queensland Women's Health Network Inc
AWHN Queensland Representative**

NORTHERN TERRITORY

NORTHERN TERRITORY UPDATE FOR AWHN DECEMBER 2009

AWHN AT NACCHO

Julie Wright (Aboriginal Women's Health Worker for Barkly Region for Department of Health and Families (DHF) and Talking Circle member) and Megan Howitt (DHF Manager Women's Health Strategy Unit and AWHN member) represented AWHN at the National NACCHO (National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations) Meeting on Thursday 12 November 2009 in Darwin.

We explained that AWHN sought to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have an autonomous voice about their health through the AWHN Talking Circle. We described the process of the Talking Circle being funded to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women regarding the development of the new National Women's Health Policy.

We then emphasised that AWHN and particularly the Talking Circle sought a strong working relationship with NACCHO to engage on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's health and develop ongoing two-way communication.

Unfortunately women delegates at the meeting had not received copies of Sandy's report so Julie and I re-sent this to the NACCHO secretariat for distribution.

Overall the meeting was a very positive one where we were able to explain what AWHN does, the upcoming (May 2010) Australian Women's Health Conference in Hobart and the development of the new National Women's Health Policy. We

also sent the NACCHO secretariat links to the AWHN website and the DoHA website for NACCHO to provide information to members about AWHN, the Conference and the National Women's Health Policy.

There were two recommendations that came out of the meeting:

- i) That NACCHO seek support from the Department of Health and Ageing or other Commonwealth funding agencies to increase capacity to develop women's health policy within their organisation. NACCHO members noted that ATSIC previously employed Pat Turner as a National Women's Health Coordinator along with State Women's Health Coordinators and workers and that these positions had never been replaced since the demise of ATSIC.
- ii) That NACCHO nominate a key contact person to continue to liaise with AWHN particularly with the Talking Circle regarding women's health matters.

Both Julie and I will continue to liaise with NACCHO to monitor the progress of these recommendations and feedback to AWHN.

WOMEN'S and MATERNAL HEALTH WORKSHOP

A significant women's and maternal health workshop will be held Monday 7 – Wednesday 9 December 2009 in Darwin involving staff from the Health Development Branch in the Department of Health and Families (DHF) working in women's and maternal health. This includes Women's Health Educators, Coordinators of the Strong Women Strong Babies Strong Culture Programs and Remote Outreach Midwives.

The Health Development Branch provides specialist information, training and support to staff and clients in remote communities regarding a wide range of primary health issues including women's and maternal health. The branch is restructuring to increase coordination and collaboration in the planning, delivery and evaluation of these women's and maternal health services for remote communities.

There are also a large number of initiatives happening in remote health service provision in the Northern Territory regarding sexual health and maternity services and updates will be provided as these projects and activities are confirmed.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE – Mandatory Reporting in the NT

DHF has released a new social marketing campaign to educate the community about Domestic and Family Violence, in particular about the amendments to the Domestic and Family Violence Act that makes it mandatory for all adults to report to police any incidents or potential incidents of serious harm arising from domestic and family violence. To view these advertisements and more information about the Northern Territory Government's responses to these issues

go to the website

http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Domestic_and_Family_Violence/index.aspx

MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN'S HEALTH IN THE NT

The Office of Women's Policy and the Women's Health Strategy Unit partnered to do a short review of Migrant and Refugee Women's Health in the Northern Territory. The report is still being prepared so watch this space for more information.

AWHN NT CONTACT

Please contact Megan Howitt Manager Women's Health Strategy Unit on (08) 8985 8018 or megan.howitt@nt.gov.au if you have any questions about this NT AWHN update.

NEW SOUTH WALES

AWHN. December 2009 State Report New South Wales

2009 is soon to come to an end without finalisation of:

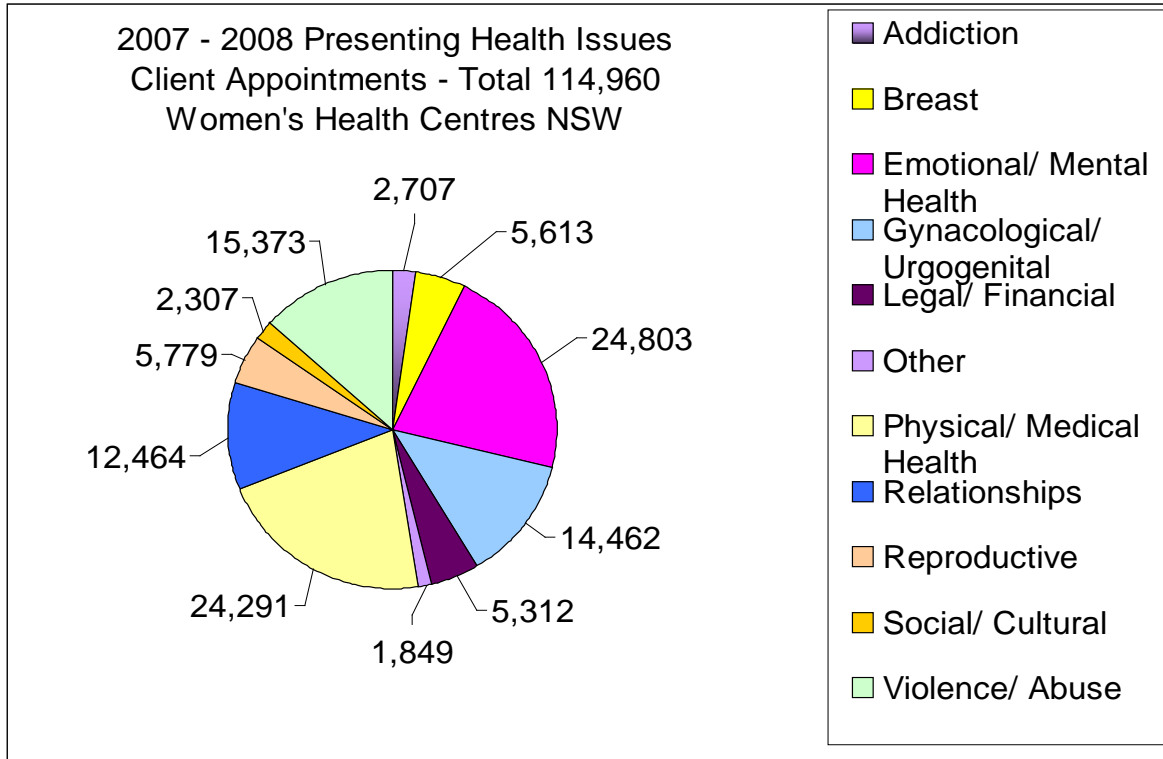
NSW Women's Health Plan 2009 – 2011 – still embargoed by NSW Health

NSW Health NGO Program Review – final report not yet released

NSW Domestic and Family Violence Strategy – final report not yet released

Women's Health NSW – Successful State Wide Data Collation

All NGO women's health centres have contributed to the collation of statewide data which has resulted in the first snap shot of 'presenting health issues' of women using community women's health services in NSW. *'We hope to publish yearly reports on basic demographic information, presenting health issues and practitioner type'* said Denele Crozier, Executive Officer, Women's Health NSW who believes this is the first time such a range of information from services provided within a context of a social model of health have been published in NSW.



Domestic Homicide Review Board

Following on the work of the Advisory Panel established earlier this year, NSW State Government has announced a permanent Domestic Homicide Review expert panel is to be established chaired by the State Coroner. The panel will review all deaths - including cold cases - to analyse the system failures that led to the deaths and make suggestions for legislative and policy reforms to reduce the toll, the Minister for Women, Linda Burney, said last night.

All domestic violence deaths to be reviewed by State Coroner

RUTH POLLARD INVESTIGATIONS EDITOR

November 25, 2009

'Similar review panels throughout the US, Britain and Canada have since resulted in a significant reduction in domestic violence deaths, documenting inadequacies in services, legal impediments, training gaps and patterns of violence that indicate to authorities that a family is at increased risk. Risk factors included previous domestic violence, threats of or use of a weapon against a female partner, threats to kill a female partner, attempts to strangle a female partner, estrangement or the presence of a gun in the house, international reviews have found. Betty Green, a member of the review panel and convener of the NSW Domestic Violence Coalition, described the panel's establishment as a significant step forward.'

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South Australian Report

The South Australian Women's Health Action Plan

The South Australian Women's Health Action Plan Initiatives for 2010 and 2011 has just been released by SA Health. The Action Plan translates the South Australian Women's Health Policy into action. Emphasis is on improving the health of women who have had the least access and experience the worst health outcomes, in particular Aboriginal women. Priority groups for the *Action Plan* include:

- Aboriginal women
- women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including refugee women
- women with disabilities
- rural women
- women in prison
- women who are socially and financially disadvantaged.

Key initiatives within the Action Plan for 2010 and 2011 focus on:

- Gender influences on health – addressing social determinants approach
- Mental health
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Women's safety and impact of violence on women's health
- Chronic disease prevention and self management
- Aboriginal women's health

The South Australian Women's Action Plan Initiatives for 2010 and 2011 and the *South Australian Women's Health Policy* are available on the Children, Youth and Women's Health Service website under the Policy and Planning /Women's Health headings. www.cywhs.sa.gov.au

Southern Primary Health –Southern Women's celebrated her 25th birthday with a fabulous party in November

Dale Street Women's Health Centre is also 25 this year

Next year it is Women's Health Statewide's turn-30 years!

Upcoming Events

Domestic Violence Laws in Australia - Report

Attorney General Robert McClelland recently launched the report *Domestic Violence laws in Australia*. The report will shape Commonwealth Government's National Plan to reduce violence against women. The report can be downloaded from:

<http://tinyurl.com/yhlokt4>

2- 5 June 2010:

RENAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA CONFERENCE RSA 2010 — MAKING WAVES THROUGH RISING TIDES OF INNOVATION — CAIRNS QLD.

For more information visit: <http://www.rsa2010.org.au/>

14 - 16 July 2010:

DRUG AND ALCOHOL NURSES OF AUSTRALASIA 2010 CONFERENCE — GOLD COAST, QLD.

The Drug and Alcohol Nurses of Australasia (DANA) Conference aims to provide a professional forum for drug and alcohol nurses and other health professionals interested in the area, to come together to discuss innovations in the field and challenges for the future. The theme of this conference is 'Drugs and Alcohol: Every nurse's business'.

For more information contact:

Kim Thorne

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**National Campaign on Adjustable Height Examination Beds
By Carolyn Frohmader, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)**

For the past five years, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) has led a campaign to have the provision of adjustable-height examination beds made mandatory in the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) Standards for General Practices. The Standards form one of the benchmarks of quality and safety in Australian general practice and provide future directions for quality improvement. The Standards outline the aspects of general practice that support high quality and safe comprehensive care, including attention to the services practices provide, the rights and needs of patients, quality improvement and education processes, practice management, and the physical aspects of a practice (RACGP Standards for general practices, 3rd edition, 2005, p.3).

WWDA has worked on this issue alongside People With Disability Australia (PWDA) and in more recent times, the Physical Disability Council NSW (PDCN), and Council on the Ageing NSW (COTA), have joined forces in this national effort. Support for the campaign has also been given by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The campaign arose in response to research undertaken by Access for All Alliance, a Queensland based community group coordinated by WWDA board member Sheila King. In 2003 Access for All Alliance undertook a survey of all general practices around Australia to identify which provided access to adjustable-height examination beds. The survey showed that less than 5% of GP surgeries in Australia had access to an adjustable-height examination bed.

In 2005-06, in response to the advocacy campaign, the RACGP agreed to take action to improve the availability of adjustable-height examination beds including:

- mounting an education campaign to inform its members of the importance of having adjustable-height examination beds;
- working with the community sector to develop minimum technical requirements for adjustable-height examination beds;
- negotiating the availability of suitable adjustable-height examination beds through gpdirect at a price less than \$2000;
- including height adjustable examination beds as a non-mandatory requirement in the GP Standards; and
- clarifying that GP's accredited under the RACGP Standards could use funds available through the Practice Incentives Program (PIP) to assist in the purchase of adjustable-height examination beds.

However, whilst these improvements were welcomed by the disability sector, they did not go far enough. Recent research undertaken by PDCN, and detailed

in the report *'Access to adjustable height examination tables by people with disability at general practitioners'* (2009) found that:

'while there appears to be Government and professional body support of equitable health outcomes for all Australian's the survey undertaken by PDCN shows that there has been little change in the availability of height adjustable examination tables and a continuing danger of inequitable health outcomes for patients with physical disability.'

In launching the PDCN report in late 2009, Commissioner Graeme Innes from the Australian Human Rights Commission said:

'...it is clear that despite 5 years of improvements since 2004, when Sheila Kings research showed only about 5% of GP's had height adjustable examination beds, people with a disability are still in danger of receiving poorer health care outcomes for the simple reason their Doctors cannot ensure adequate examinations and screening.'

Recently, WWDA, PWDA, PDCN and COTA (NSW) developed a joint Submission to the RACGP as part of the consultations for the Review of the RACGP Standards for General Practices. It is expected that following the Review, the next edition of the Standards will be finalised in late 2010. The Submission clearly articulated our long held position that the provision of adjustable-height examination beds be made a 'flagged' (mandatory) requirement in the RACGP Standards for General Practices. The current edition of the Standards, under Criterion 5.1.3, has the provision of adjustable-height examination beds as an 'un-flagged' item (ie: not mandatory).

The collective Submission to the RACGP from WWDA, PWDA, PDCN and COTA (NSW) was finalised in late November and endorsed by more than 200 organisations and individuals.

For more information:

A copy of the Submission to the RACGP is available from the WWDA website at:

<http://www.wwda.org.au/subs2006.htm> Alternatively, if you would like a copy emailed to you, please contact WWDA at: wwda@wwda.org.au

Background to the Issue can be found at the Australian Human Rights Commission website at:

http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/health/open0807.htm

A copy of the PDCN Research Report '*Access to adjustable height examination tables by people with disability at general practitioners*' (2009) can be accessed via the Publications section at: <http://www.pdcnsw.org.au>

FROM THE DEPUTY CONVENOR



Hi Everyone

I am really thrilled to be able to represent AWHN at the United Nations 54th Commission on the Status of Women in New York 1-12th of March 2010.

This event marks 15 years from the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) adopted at the 4th United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. It is an internationally agreed plan for achieving equality for women across 12 critical

areas – poverty, education and training, health, the economy, power and decision-making, human rights, armed conflict, institutional mechanisms, the environment, violence against women and the girl child.

This is a chance for women from around the world to gather and review the implementation of the BPFA and to share experiences, knowledge and practice. We will also work on overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges including those related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Office for Women reported to the United Nations on Australia's implementation of the BPFA in April 2009. Follow the link below to view the report

- [Australia's response to the UNESCAP Questionnaire on the implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women \(Beijing 1995\), April 2009](#)
- [Addendum to Australia's UNESCAP Questionnaire response, August 2009](#)

The Office of Women is holding a round table for NGO'S representatives early in 2010 to progress Australia's NGO preparation for the Commission. More detail can be found at <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/intengage> and <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>

If you have any questions or points you would like to talk about in relation to this, please feel free to contact me through the AWHN website.

Marion Edmondson
Deputy Convenor
AWHN

AWHN Bulletin is an online news digest from the Australian Women's Health Network, offering a combination of reporting on women's health topics and links to news stories and commentaries on issues in women's health. The bulletin is designed as a resource for an audience of policy makers, journalists, researchers, practitioners, and advocates. The bulletin aims to provide information and news on women's health issues. Contributions may be sent to Vicki Lambert at roates9@bigpond.com. All contributions are subject to editorial license to ensure that the AWHN'S principles are upheld through this bulletin.





Australian Women's Health Network Membership Form 2009-2010

ABN 84 238 300 000

TAX INVOICE

Please use this as your invoice as organisations will not be separately invoiced.
The information you provide us with will only be used for AWHN business.
Your contact details will not be sold or distributed to other organisations.

The following items are compulsory.

Email is the major form of communication with AWHN members.

Is this a membership renewal? <input type="checkbox"/>		Or a new membership? <input type="checkbox"/>	
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Signed: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Payment details (membership fee includes GST)		Amount
Individual	\$33	\$
Student/Concession	\$11	\$
Organisation	\$77	\$
Total enclosed		\$

Please note: Membership is for one year and is due on 1st July

Optional: Tick if you are an Aboriginal woman and would like to belong to the AWHN Aboriginal Women's Caucus.

More information is available at: www.awhn.org.au or email us at awhn@awhn.org.au

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