



Media Release

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Improving safety of psychiatric wards for women a crucial step

Victorian women's health policy experts and advocates have today commended the Coalition's \$4m promise to improve safety for women in psychiatric care.

Executive Director of Women's Health Victoria, Ms Marilyn Beaumont, said that segregation and designated women's space had been part of their ten point plan to improve women's health in the state.

"The fact that women can face harassment, assault and rape in an institution of care has to be addressed by giving women the tools and protection to receive treatment without that threat," Ms. Beaumont said.

"Just as we have seen recent reports of doctors violating the patient-doctor relationship, women in psychiatric care are even less equipped to deal with the threat of violence and violence-supportive attitudes in their environment.

"The Coalition has shown important initiative in the area of mental health and women's health more broadly, and we look forward to hearing more from Victoria's main parties at our Women's Health Forum on Monday 11th October, where we will be hearing policies and platforms that address core issues from our ten point plan.

"Research has shown that the reporting of sexual assaults by inpatients in psychiatric care is as low as 50 percent, due to negative responses from mental health providers. This proposal recognises the need to support women and work towards minimising the risk of assault.

"It is clear we need to address women's health in a way that supports them to recover and regain their health in a safe and respectful environment. The Coalition's plan is a step in the right direction," Ms Beaumont said.

For more information on the Ten Point Plan for women's health see:
<http://whv.org.au/publications-resources/publications-resources-by-topic/post/10-point-plan-for-victorian-women-s-health-2010-2014/>

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