



MEDIA STATEMENT

Women's Health Victoria welcomes renewed funding for women's health services in the Victorian State Budget 2024-25

MELBOURNE – 8 May 2024

Women's Health Victoria welcomes the announcement made on Tuesday in the 2024-25 Victorian State Budget of renewed funding to provide preventative health promotion and education to Victorian women, as well as a range of other important funding commitments for women's health.

The renewed funding for the 12 Victorian Women's Health Services (WHS), including Women's Health Victoria, will provide \$18.3 million of sustained funding over the next two years ensuring that our collective work and impact in gendered health promotion, primary prevention and gender equity can continue.

Judith Ridgeway, Interim CEO of Women's Health Victoria, said, "in this tight fiscal environment, the confirmation of renewed funding acknowledges the significant value of the work of Women's Health Victoria, and all the Women's Health Services, in improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of Victorian women. Additionally, we know that the collective impact of our work also fosters more inclusive communities, reduces cost pressures on the health care system, and improves workforce participation. Investment in the WHS is an investment in the whole of Victoria."

Ridgeway adds, "At Women's Health Victoria we expect this funding will enable us to continue our substantial impact advocating for equity in women's health, providing expert health information and resources, and operating vital support services to the community so that all Victorians have the opportunity for optimal health and wellbeing, free from bias and discrimination."

Over the last two years the additional funding has enabled WHV to drive equity in health for Victorian women (cis and trans inclusive) and gender diverse people through a range of activities and resources benefiting the sector and the wider community. This includes advocacy and policy submissions to the government, such as expert engagement in the

Federal Senate inquiry into Universal Sexual and Reproductive Health Access, a submission to the End Gender Bias In Australia's Healthcare System consultation, and a submission (with the WHSN) to the Federal Senate inquiry into issues related to menopause and perimenopause. It has also supported the creation of widely used community resources such as In My Prime – an online platform that provides tailored health information and resources for women over 50, and gender-inclusive updates to existing health literacy resources such as the Labia Library, which receives over a million visitors each year. Crucially, it helps to build gendered violence primary prevention knowledge in the sector and wider community through specialised training courses created and delivered by WHV.

Tuesday's budget announcements included a raft of other measures addressing critical areas of women's health and wellbeing, including:

- \$42 million over three years towards further research into violence prevention initiatives, and continued delivery of perpetrator case management programs
- \$5.9 million on improving cancer outcomes through the Health Equity project, which will help overcome barriers to care for vulnerable patients experiencing disadvantages due to gender, age, race, intergenerational trauma, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation
- Focus on addressing the gender pain gap through an ongoing inquiry, which WHV will be contributing to.

Along with other organisations in the WHS Network, Women's Health Victoria is supportive of the Gender Equality Budget Statement, particularly the move to embed gender responsive budgeting into legislation, and the government's acknowledgement that there is still a long way to go in the fight towards equality.

We look forward to working with the Victorian Government to continue to influence policy, culture, attitudes – and importantly, outcomes – for Victorian women (cis and trans inclusive) and gender diverse people, by driving gender equity in health.

Quotes attributable to Judith Ridgeway, Interim CEO, Women's Health Victoria

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About Women's Health Victoria

Women's Health Victoria is a statewide, feminist, non-profit organisation working with government, the health sector, and the community to improve health outcomes for women (cis and trans inclusive) and gender diverse people. We advocate for healthcare rights and access, deliver health promotion resources, and operate vital information and support services, so that all Victorians have the opportunity to access optimal health and wellbeing, free from bias and discrimination.

For more information, visit whv.org.au