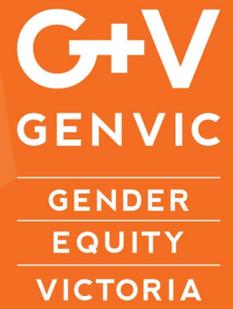


Media Communique: Women's Health Services Council 10.5.21



Embargoed: Monday 10 May 2021

Women's Health Services call for urgent funding in pandemic

The Women's Health Service Council, an advisory council of CEO's from 12 Women's Health Services across metropolitan and regional Victoria are urging the State Government to support their bid for increased funding to assist women during the pandemic.

"We would be devastated if, for the fifth year in a row, Treasury would enable an effective cut to women's health services by refusing to redress the historic funding anomaly in this sector.

Women's health funding has eroded from \$4 per woman upon commencement in 1988, to \$2 per Victorian woman today. That is an effective cut of 50 per cent due to population growth having to be absorbed by under pressure women, staff and governance committees.

This leads to burnout, compromises service provision, and threatens poor health outcomes in key local government areas because of the lack of investment."

The Women's Health Services Council is also calling for the State Government to ensure funding tied to the implementation of the Mental Health Royal Commission include dedicated resources for women.

"Women in Victoria have higher rates of mental illness than men. In all but two local government areas across the state, anxiety and depression rates amongst women are significantly higher, with 4 rural and regional LGAs with over 50 per cent of women diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

We were therefore disappointed to see that the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Mental Health failed to identify the gender gap or apply a gender lens to solutions.

Allocations of funding to implement the Royal Commission recommendations must include dedicated investment for women's mental health. Our services must play a part in supporting mental health prevention and early intervention, as well as driving the new service system".

Members of the Women's Health Services Council

Tricia Currie, CEO, Women's Health Loddon Mallee; Chair Women's Health Services Council

Kit McMahon, CEO, Women's Health in the South East, Chair Gender Equity Victoria

Dianne Hill, CEO, Women's Health Victoria

Adele Murdolo, CEO, Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Leah Van Poppel, CEO, Women with Disabilities

Emma Mahony, CEO, Women's Health Barwon South West

Kate Graham, CEO Gippsland Women's Health

Kristine Olaris, CEO, Women's Health East

Robyn Gregory CEO, Women's Health West

Helen Riseborough, CEO, Women's Health in the North

Marianne Hendron, Women's Health Grampians

Amanda Kelly, CEO, Women's Health Goulburn North East