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Victorian Men's Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Department of Health

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Introduction

Women's Health West (WHW) is the regional women's health service for the western metropolitan region of Victoria. Our services include research, health promotion, community development, training and advocacy around women's health, safety and wellbeing. Since 1994, WHW has hosted the region's largest family violence crisis support and prevention program. These two main arms of the service place WHW in a unique position to incorporate women's experiences directly into our research, health promotion and project work, ensuring that we clarify the connections between structural oppression and individual experience. As a feminist organisation we focus on redressing the gender and structural inequalities that limit the lives of women. WHW's work is underpinned by a social model of health and, as such, we recognise the important influence of, and aim to improve, the social, economic and political factors that determine the health, safety and wellbeing of women and their children in the western region.

Informed by the vision of equity and justice for women in the west, WHW work is guided by the following five strategic goals:

- Delivering and advocating for accessible and culturally appropriate services and resources for women across the region
- Improving the conditions in which women live, work and play in the western region of Melbourne
- Putting women's health, safety and wellbeing on the political agenda to improve the status of women
- Recognising that good health, safety and wellbeing begins in our workplace
- Working with others to achieve our goals

Women's Health West would like to endorse the submission by Women's Health Victoria. That submission sets out a strong, evidence-based argument for a series of eleven recommendations, set out below:

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Men's Health and Wellbeing Strategy reflects the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan by using the social determinants of health as its framework

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Men's Health and Wellbeing Strategy address the impact of gender on men's health and wellbeing

RECOMMENDATION 3: The strategy should be based on the notion that gender impacts on health. The effect of gender inequity on men's health should be clearly stated

RECOMMENDATION 4: That funding be allocated to build workforce capacity across policy and service delivery to connect gender inequity and health

RECOMMENDATION 5: That masculinity and its impact on health be explained in the strategy in relation to each of the health issues discussed

RECOMMENDATION 6: That strategies that promote alternative forms of masculinity are supported and developed

RECOMMENDATION 7: That gender stereotyping be challenged, or discussed in terms of how it impacts on health and reinforces gender inequity

RECOMMENDATION 8: Gender analysis is applied to the statistics which are placed in their broader social context

RECOMMENDATION 9: That violence against women be included in the Men's Health and Wellbeing Strategy

RECOMMENDATION 10: That challenging and eliminating violence supportive attitudes and behaviours, and promoting respectful relationships, should be included in the strategy

RECOMMENDATION 11: That sexual and reproductive health be included in the Men's Health and Wellbeing Strategy