

## Now's the time to **Act@Work**

Women's Health Grampians (WHG) will officially launch *Act@Work* next Wednesday (4 September).

*Act@Work* aims to build healthier communities with a culture of respect and non-violence, by encouraging workers and workplaces to speak up and oppose violence against women.

WHG is partnering with CAFS, WRISC and the City of Ballarat to deliver *Act@Work* with funding support from the Victorian Department of Justice under the *Reducing Violence against Women and their Children* grants program.

*Act@Work* will join with four workplaces across the Central Highlands region to reinforce healthy, respectful behaviour, centering on what people in the workplace can do to make a difference.

The Ballarat Courier and Ballarat Community Health (BCH) have signed up to be the first two participants in the project, and *Act@Work* is now looking for two regional businesses outside Ballarat to work with in 2014.

"We spend a lot of time at work, so introducing this program in the workplace not only improves the work environment it means people take what they learn into their homes and communities," said Patty Kinnersly, CEO of Women's Health Grampians.

*Act@Work* will help businesses and organisations build capacity, develop policies and procedures, and provide the practical tools employees need to play a role in preventing violence against women and children.

"At work or in the community we can't be silent bystanders, we need to step up and say something when we see sexism, discrimination and violence against women go unchallenged," Ms Kinnersly added.

Project Manager for *Act@Work* Michelle Hunt explains that where sexism, discrimination and violence go unchallenged they are effectively condoned.

"Silent bystanders are an untapped resource and they have a greater role to play in standing up to prevent violence, discrimination or other unacceptable or offensive behaviour against women."

Employees undertaking the program will focus on what they can do to change attitudes that support violence and gender inequality. They will learn that the benefit of a healthy and respectful workplace extends far beyond an office or factory, influencing families and the broader community.

Ends.

Note to editors: ***Act@Work* will be officially launched on Wednesday 4 September at the Ballarat Library starting at 10.00am, media representatives are welcome to attend.**

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***Change is possible and together we can reduce the rates of violence in our community.***

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*Act@Work is a program of Women's Health Grampians in partnership with the City of Ballarat, CAFS and WRISC. This project is funded by the Victorian Department of Justice.*