

# Partnerships improving rural women's sexual and reproductive health

## Overcoming barriers for rural women accessing family planning services

Issue 6 December 2014

Acknowledging Key Partners: The Royal Women's Hospital  
Family Planning Victoria  
Grampians Medicare Local  
Ballarat Community Health

### welcome

Women's Health Grampians (WHG) along with our key partners have been **developing regional partnerships seeking to increase women's access to timely and appropriate family planning services in the Grampians region.** By publishing this quarterly newsletter we **aim to inspire ideas and action to improve rural women's sexual and reproductive health.**

We welcome your feedback, contribution and collaboration to both this newsletter and developing regional partnerships.

### regional update

Using the information captured in our regional service mapping project earlier this year, Women's Health Grampians in consultation with our regional partners and service providers have developed a Regional Sexual Health Services Guide. It is hoped that the guide will assist in creating clearer referral pathways and increase women's access to timely and appropriate family planning services in the Grampians region.

The Grampians Pyrenees PCP Sexual and Reproductive Health Working Group continues to meet on a monthly basis. Working collaboratively to review and refine a Sexual Health Referral Guide for the Grampians Pyrenees catchment, a consumer test form was developed by the group. Members used this to gain feedback on the guide's content and format from a variety of respondents including: young people, general community members, GP's and other health professionals, intake workers and health service reception staff.

This feedback has considered and amendments have been made where necessary to both the regional, and sub regional, guides. The guides are now ready for distribution and will be shared amongst our partners this month.

These will be ever evolving documents so if you are a provider of sexual health and/or family planning services and would like to be included in the guides, we would still be keen to hear from you. We would like to thank all listed agencies for their assistance in developing this guide.

To launch the guide and celebrate International Women's Day 2015 a community education and capacity building event is planned to be held on 11 March 2015 in Ararat. The evening event will feature Nelly Thomas renowned Australian comedian, author and health ambassador.

Based on her ground-breaking sexual health and ethics DVD "The Talk" Nelly will host a fun and informative evening for parents and carers about how to have 'The Talk' with their kids. We would also encourage anyone who works with young people to come along. Stay tuned for further details.

Women's Health Grampians would like to sincerely thank our partners for their contribution to improving sexual and reproductive health across the Grampians region in 2014. We wish you all a very Merry Holiday Period as well as a happy and healthy new year. We look forward to working with you again in 2015.

## SAVE THE DATE

### 11 MARCH 2015

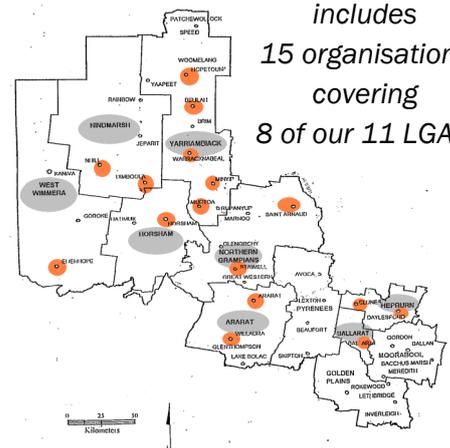
INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY  
EVENT FEATURING



# NELLY THOMAS

7-9 PM • ARARAT • VENUE TBA

*Our network includes  
15 organisations  
covering  
8 of our 11 LGA's*



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## in the Grampians region

Working across the region we often learn about initiatives improving women's sexual health and wellbeing. This is an opportunity to profile the latest findings.



### Headspace Ballarat Youth Sexual Health Clinic

In partnership with Ballarat Community Health a Sexual Health Clinic is now available to young people aged 12-25 at Headspace Ballarat.

The clinic, ran by a Sexual Health Nurse from Ballarat Community Health is operating Monday afternoons from 2-5pm at the Camp Street centre.

Young people are able to access free, confidential, professional, non judgemental, counselling, treatment and advice. Services offered at the clinic include: STI Checks, Contraception, Sexual Health Counselling, Unexpected Pregnancy Counselling.

Headspace Ballarat manager Ben Gillet says quite a number of young people have accessed the clinic since it began operating only a couple of months ago. He attributes this to Headspace already being a place where young people feel comfortable to accessing appropriate health care.

Appointments for the clinic are preferred but not essential.

Headspace is located at 28 Camp St, Ballarat. Phone: 03 5304 4777



## new research and publications

We hope to inspire local ideas and action across the region by sharing sexual and reproductive health information.

### The Second Australian Study of Health and Relationships

*The Australian Study of Health and Relationships* (ASHR) is conducted once a decade and provides a snapshot of the sexual health and wellbeing of Australians.

The survey provides information essential for the delivery of sexual and reproductive health programs across the country.

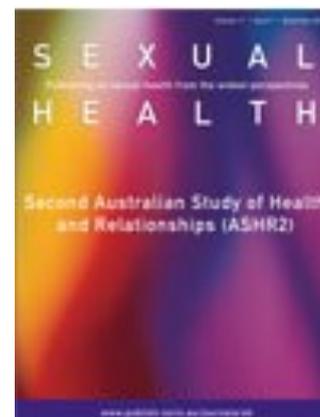
Based on a sample of more than 20,000 people aged 16-69 years, the second study (ASHR2) has provided useful insights into sexual health and behaviour. Some notable findings include:

- **Couples are having sex less often** than a decade ago – the average frequency of sex in heterosexual relationships fell from 1.8 times a week to 1.4 times a week.

- There has been **no significant decline in the median age of first intercourse**, with the age remaining at 17 years. Use of contraception at the time of first sex was high.

- Although most people reported having used a condom at some time in their lives, **few people used condoms in their recent sexual encounters**. Condom use during most recent sexual encounters was related to younger age, having sex with someone other than a regular partner, and not using other contraception.

- **About one in six people reported a lifetime history of a sexually transmissible infection (STI)**. Approximately one in six women and one in eight men said they had tested for an STI in the past year, and knowledge of the transmission and health consequences of STIs had improved substantially since the last survey.



Research articles from the ASHR have been published in the November issue of the journal *Sexual Health* available online [here](#) (free abstracts; paid access to full-text articles).

## Launch of Australia's First National Primary Care Guidelines for Sexually Transmissible Infections

After more than two years in the making, the first Australian guidelines for sexually transmissible infections (STI) for use by primary care professionals were launched in October.

The guidelines aim to provide general practitioners, nurses, and other primary care health workers with clear, concise and convenient access to everything they need to know while a patient is in front of them.

The guidelines are designed to be a fast and accurate way for nurses and doctors to identify an STI from

the symptoms, to find out the current clinical management recommendations for an STI diagnosis, and to know what to test for in particular population groups.

"Primary care providers around Australia will have access to the latest recommendations for best practice" said Emily Wheeler, project manager.

The Guidelines were overseen by the Australasian Sexual Health Alliance (ASHA) and funding was from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

The website also contains useful links and resources, such as an STI Testing tool, taking a sexual history and contact tracing, as well as patient fact sheets.

To view the guidelines see: [www.sti.guidelines.org.au](http://www.sti.guidelines.org.au)



*"This is a website that will be highly useful for GPs and primary health care nurses who may not deal exclusively with sexual health, but need to make confident management decisions."*

Taken from ASHA's media release for this project

Chlamydia

Overview

- The most commonly reported communicable disease in Australia
- Those <30 years are at greatest risk
- Frequently asymptomatic
- Simple to test and treat
- Immunity to new infection is not provided by previous infection.

Cause

Clinical presentation

Diagnosis

Management




## Facts about fertility



Your Fertility is a national public education program run by the Fertility Coalition and funded by both the Australian and Victorian Government Department's of Health.

The program aims to provide Men and Women with the facts on fertility, so they can make informed

and timely decisions about their reproductive health.

Healthcare professionals can also access information about key fertility factors like age, weight, smoking, alcohol use and timing of sex that can improve their patients and clients chance of conceiving and having a healthy baby.

To access videos, fact sheets and other resources see: [yourfertility.org.au](http://yourfertility.org.au)

## professional development

### Family Planning Victoria - 2015 Certificate in Sexual & Reproductive Health

An intensive and comprehensive course for doctors, providing education and training for excellence in the delivery of sexual and reproductive health in primary care.

Course dates 2015:

- 2 - 6 February
- 3 - 7 August
- 9 - 13 November

To enquire contact: CEU Course Coordinator T/03 9257 0129 or [ceu@fpv.org.au](mailto:ceu@fpv.org.au) alternatively for further information see: <http://www.fpv.org.au/>



[See here](#) for workshops, 2015 training dates and online presentations focusing on Continuing Professional Development for Pap Screen Providers

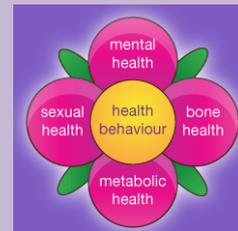
## other news

### Young female health initiative: Calling for participants

The University of Melbourne and the Royal Women's Hospital are looking for ways to improve the health of young women in Australia through a new study called the Young Female Health Initiative. The study will explore lifestyle, behaviour, nutrition, physical health and emotional wellbeing.

Females aged between 16 and 25 and living in Victoria are invited to join a comprehensive women's health study to help researchers understand the relationships between lifestyle, behaviour, physical health, and mental wellbeing. Participants will be compensated for their time.

For further details see: [www.yfhi.org](http://www.yfhi.org)



Please contact Women's Health Grampians if you would like to contribute ideas or feedback to this newsletter

### Grampians Region: Partnerships improving rural women's sexual and reproductive health

Women's Health Grampians along, with our key partners have been holding discussions about how to support regional services to improve women's sexual and reproductive health across the Grampians region.

Our focus is on family planning services including contraception, pregnancy counselling, abortion and the professional development needs of service providers.

We readily acknowledge that many organisations across the region have a long history of working hard to address these issues. With this in mind, the aim is to build on existing relationships, and develop new connections, to enhance current work, add capacity, and where relevant, provide a new range of initiatives.

We welcome opportunities to consider the sexual and reproductive health issues for women in our region.



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