

Women's Health Grampians

Australia's First Female PM

By: Michelle Hunt, Project Manager (Act @ Work)

As we say good bye to Australia's first female prime minister, here at WHG we have been pondering the legacy that Julia Gillard's leadership has left the nation.



First and foremost, an Australian female prime minister has set a new precedent and possibility for girls and women in this country. Whilst legally women in Australia have been able to enter Federal Parliament since 1902, it was not until 1943 that the first women were elected to parliament and not until 2010 that a woman has held the position of prime minister. Julia Gillard has provided the young women of Australia the first concrete example that the position of prime minister of your country is possible. It has set for this country a new norm and not without a great deal of discussion and debate.

Since Julia Gillard's term as prime minister, Australia has been having a nationwide conversation about gender and misogyny. This has included debate about the level of sexism and male privilege that still exists in modern Australia. Regardless of your thoughts on this issue, a healthy national discussion that encourages us to consider our conscious, and unconscious gender bias is healthy. As a women's health service we hope that this conversation continues and grows.

When discussing her term as prime minister, Ms. Gillard stated that the issue of her gender did not explain everything, did not explain nothing, but did explain some things about people's reaction to her leadership. She encouraged us to think about those shades of grey between everything and nothing. In addition to the gains of the NDIS, carbon pricing and education reform, Ms. Gillard stated that her experiences as Australia's first female prime minister would make it easier for the next woman who has the job, and easier still for the next.

Ms. Gillard's term as the nation's leader has also made the girlhood dream of being prime minister of Australia seem just that little bit more achievable for school girls throughout the country. As a nation we have a role to ensure the public's reaction to females in leadership will protect that girlhood dream and continue to be something young women will aspire to.



On 24 June ABC Statewide Drive

covered a story based on statewide research developed by Women's Health Grampians and the regional women's health services. Our research highlights there are still considerable barriers for women in rural Victoria in trying to access family planning services like contraception and abortion.

The interview with **Patty Kinnersly, CEO WHG**, explored the impact of concerns about privacy, availability of services, difficulties with travel or transport and a lack of information.

WHG would like to thank **Dr Claire Pickett from Ballarat Community Health Sexual Health Clinic** who was also interviewed, providing a first hand account of some of the challenges for local women, in particular young women, in trying to access confidential services and affordable contraception.

Thank you also to **Lily Partland and Nicole Chvastek from ABC Ballarat** for their engaging discussion on this important topic. We encourage you to read the article, share the story, and listen to the interviews now available online at

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2013/06/25/3789251.htm?site=ballarat>



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Contact Us

2 Drummond St South

PO Box 414W

Ballarat West 3350

Ph 1800 013 432

Fax 5332 8980

Email adminb@whg.org.au

Website: www.whg.org.au

EVENTS IN THE REGION

Wimmera Football League

White Ribbon Round

in the WFL

Round 14 — July 27th

SEXrurality

**Conference 19-20 August
Shepparton, Victoria**

Inviting rural practitioners, policy makers and advocates to listen to presentations about current rural projects, evidence and research improving sexual health and wellbeing

Registrations close: 31 July

www.etches.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=65394&

In the media:

'Rural women's health services groundbreaking research'

Newsletter

WHG is currently reviewing its marketing and communication, including the monthly newsletter. If you have feedback you would like to provide about our newsletter please contact

adminb@whg.org.au or call us on **03 5322 4100**

WHG announce our work on cyber education, specifically the webWise project, has drawn to a close.

In 2008 we commenced working in this area, recognising that the use and experience of information communication technologies is influenced by gender.

In 2011 WHG were funded by the Department of Human Services to deliver cyber education within a prevention of violence against women framework. The project advocated for respectful relationships and actively sought to use content that did not support socially constructed gender stereotypes, or reinforce ideas about male dominance and power.

WHG worked closely with Phoenix P-12 Community College enlisting 10 students to take on the role of project leaders and peer educators, deliver cyber training and information to over 500 people in the Ballarat region.

The students described being part of the project as a positive experience and stated that they gained "a larger awareness of cyber safety as well as better communication and team work skills". Phoenix have also worked closely with WHG to develop innovative curriculum for cyber education that considers gender.

We would like to say a special thank you to all the peer educators involved, as well as the broader Phoenix community for their support and commitment to the webWise project.

WHG acknowledge our project worker Michelle Hunt, thanking her for the enthusiasm, dedication and knowledge she contributed to this project, Michelle is now leading the Act @ Work Project for WHG.

In concluding our work in cyber education, WHG reflect and have valued the opportunity to apply a gendered lens to the use of information communication technologies. We also encourage schools to consider the work undertaken at Phoenix and how it can be integrated into the curriculum.



The prevention of violence against women remains a priority area of action for Women's Health Grampians. A new report released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) this month reminds us of why the prevention of violence against women is an important area of work for women's health organisations.

World Health Organisation:

Global and regional estimates of violence against women:

The report described violence and sexual violence against women as a major public health problem that affects more than one third of women globally; that violence perpetrated by intimate partners is the most common form of violence experienced by women; and that violence against women at a global level is "extremely common". The report also detailed the health impacts of violence against women including:

- Women who experience violence are nearly twice as likely to experience **depression**
- Women experiencing intimate partner violence are almost twice as likely to have **alcohol problems**
- Women who experience physical or sexual intimate partner violence are 1.5 times more likely to acquire **syphilis, chlamydia or gonorrhoea**
- Women experiencing physical and/or sexual partner violence are twice as likely to have an abortion

Given the increased demand by women experiencing violence for health services, the report made recommendations for service provision including:

- **Training for health care professionals** in the identification of intimate partner violence
- **Increasing integration** between intimate partner and sexual violence response and health services

In addressing the prevalence of violence against women, the WHO report highlighted the need to address the underlying causes: the social and cultural factors behind violence against women; gender inequality.

The full report is available at: <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/>