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Claire Rooney WHG with her poster presentation at the AWHC

At the AWHC a number of **WHG presentations** were being mentioned on **Twitter....**

@AdeleMurdolo

Shannon Hill:

Research results from rural women's health services survey show huge barriers to accessing SRH services.
 #awhc

@womenshealthbsw

Take opportunities to stretch your work, even if it's beyond what stakeholders are ready for now - Annie Douglass
 #awhc

Women's Health Grampians

Conference Edition Australian Women's Health Conference 7-10 May
 White Ribbon Australia Conference 13-15 May

In this edition WHG will share highlights from the Australian Women's Health and White Ribbon Day conferences recently held in Sydney. We were delighted to have the opportunity for 5 of our team to present work at the Australian Women's Health Conference (AWHNC) covering topics relating to: gender equity, gender in local government and planning, digital citizenship and access to family planning services. Both conferences were a celebration of the incredible work happening in the women's health

The value of care work

Despite gender equality advancements in Australia, women still hold the burden of unpaid care work. In 2009-10 the unpaid care sector was worth 21.4 billion hours equivalent to 11.1 million full time positions and \$650.1 billion, the majority of which is undertaken by women. In comparison the federal, state/territory and local governments spent a mere \$136 billion dollars on care in the same period; where would we be without the unpaid work of women?

The *National Women's Alliance* presented at the 2013 AWHNC on the work they are undertaking to make visible the contribution of women's unpaid work to the nation, families and individual recipients of care. What is evident is that the unpaid care contribution of women far exceeds that of fiscal investment from government.

Further, the undervaluing of women's contribution to paid care continues to present itself. The number of women employed in the paid care industry is 3 times that of men and women in the paid care sector earn 84 cents for every dollar earned by their male counterpart's; evidently gender stereotypes and social expectations are alive and well.

To see true gender equality advancements in the care sector, paid and unpaid, we must continue to advocate for action by all levels of governments to restructure social systems and challenge the gender stereotypes that confine women to care roles, and potentially prevent men from embracing them. WHG engagement of local governments across the Grampians region on gender equity and the prevention of violence against women aims to build the capacity of local governments to consider how they can create the said social change and challenge gender inequity and gender stereotypes. WHG look forward to progressing this work.

For more information on this research visit <http://www.security4women.org.au/>

When sleeping women wake, mountains move.



Shannon Hill WHG 'star-struck' in the presence of such amazing women! **Australian Women's Health Network Chairperson Marilyn Beaumont, Conference Convenor Denele Crozier and Deputy Chair Dr Gwendolyn Gray** who was recognised with an award for her service, taking action on women's health for 25 years.

Equity is not a vision it's a responsibility.

Media and Communication

One of the newer initiatives in women's health presented at the AWHN conference was the effective use of new technologies by women's health services. Services are using new technologies and a social media presence to as a tool in their advocacy and promotion work.

Gippsland Women's Health has a dedicated communications officer, Michelle Hoare, who presented on their social media strategy including Facebook and Twitter. Michelle is able to track demographic data which indicates who is viewing their sites and posts, including age, geographic location, and gender of their audience, also showing what information attracts the most interest and is shared most broadly. Gippsland Women's Health uses their social media presence as a conversation tool and focuses on posts which align with their key priorities. They use Twitter to cross promote with their Facebook page and reported that their followers include local media and politicians.

As Women's Health Grampians is currently working on their marketing and communication strategy including developing a social media presence, the work already done by other women's health organisations provides an invaluable framework to build upon. To check out some examples of women's health online visit: <https://twitter.com/GippslandWomen> or <https://www.facebook.com/DestroyTheJoint>



@AFMW.org.au Women's health organisations can promote digital citizenship, encourage challenging stereotypes & promote diversity -Michelle Hunt #AWHC

Intelligence or rage on their own is not enough.

National Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy

At the AWHN Conference Keynote speaker Dr Gill Greer, CEO of Volunteer Service Abroad New Zealand, posed the questions:

- "Why would a national sexual and reproductive health strategy make a difference?"*
- "Sex happens 125 million times per day globally. Why do we feel we can't talk about sex? Do we deserve the judgement and stigma associated with making reproductive choices?"*
- "Are we giving information to people in time for them to use it?"*
- "Do we, or should we, need to rely on the kindness of strangers to get access to services?"*

Dr Greer shared many examples where a national strategy has been successful. The UK Teenage Pregnancy Strategy combining education and youth friendly services is reported to have prevented 60,000 conceptions since 1998, and, a 35% reduction in conceptions leading to birth over past 10 years.

Dr Greer reminded us that we still have many opportunities to improve, sharing the closing remarks in the UN Commission's report against Australia that call for us to reduce the disparity for those who are poor, of ATSI descent, or disabled, as well as improving the services and information available to young people. Dr Greer compelled us all to remember that **leadership at all levels is critical**, and that **if we are to have a national strategy for sexual and reproductive health what will be needed is 'intelligent rage'!**

WHG aims to inspire ideas, strategies and leadership to improve rural and regional women's access to family planning services and information. Connecting with state, regional and local health services we are currently exploring opportunities to develop mutually beneficial partnerships to build capacity and improve access to services and information across the Grampians region.



**Annie Douglass and Claire Rooney
WHG**



@kristineolaris

Great partnerships in VIC working to prevent #VAW & promote #genderequity incl @VicHealth, MAV, local govt & Women's Health Sector #AWHC



Michael Kauffman co-founder White Ribbon, Jackson Katz creator and co-founder of the Mentors in Violence Prevention program and Kate Souter WHG

White Ribbon Australia Conference May 13 – 15 2013

Kate Souter and Michelle Hunt attended inaugural White Ribbon Conference in Sydney celebrating then years of White Ribbon in Australia. The conference hosted some of the most prominent voices on the prevention of violence against women, including White Ribbon Co-Founder Michael Kauffman. The conference also raised the profile of White Ribbon Australia's work alongside the ethical and feminist questions around White Ribbon Australia and violence prevention.

Issues discussed included the use of language when discussing violence prevention; with some voices at the conference advocating strongly for the use of the term "men's violence against women" in preference to "violence against women"; noting that gendered language is used to name the victim, but not to name the perpetrator.

White Ribbon Co-Founder Michael Kauffman discussed the intention of the campaign from its inception was for men to *work alongside* women in addressing the issue of violence against women in our communities. The theme of men working alongside women, and, men taking collective responsibility for men's violence against women and its relationship to male power in our societies systems, structures and culture were strong themes throughout the conference.

For our work at WHG, the conference provided further evidence of the essential role women's services have in leading the work in the prevention of violence against women. As well as making connections and contacts with other workers and thinkers in this area, the conference also provided an opportunity to reflect on the role WHG has in leading the development of work in the prevention of men's violence against women.



Michelle Hunt WHG