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## MEDIA RELEASE

# Regional sporting clubs and associations rally to prevent violence against women

Last night's sold-out Change Makers Dinner event at Alexandra Oval Ararat, hosted by Women's Health Grampians (WHG) in partnership with Sports Central, Grampians Community Health and Ararat City Council, brought more than 120 people together to connect over a shared interest in preventing family violence in the regions.

The event was expertly MC'd by **David Hosking**, President of the Ararat FNC opened by **Ms Martha Haylett MP Member for Ripon**, representing Ros Spence Minister for Prevention of Family Violence and Community Sport. Guests heard from **Paul Kennedy**, ABC journalist, author of *Funkytown* and determined advocate for healthy masculinities on and off the sports field; **Belinda Duarte**, former track and field superstar, current CEO of Culture is Life, and proud Wotjobaluk and Dja Dja Wurrung woman; **Kim O'Reilly**, victim/survivor of intimate partner violence and passionate campaigner for change; and Scott Arnold, President Minyip Murtoa Football Netball Club and a panel of regional sporting identities and advocates.

Marianne Hendron, CEO Women's Health Grampians, said:

*"We were truly honoured by our extraordinary speakers, who all shared their lived experience and passion with such vulnerability and courage. By the end of the night, there was a palpable sense throughout the room that this occasion would be a real catalyst for change."*

*"The feedback from the community has been that people left with a renewed determination to take meaningful action to prevent violence against women and promote gender equality in our region. As we know, our sporting clubs, Leagues and Associations play an important role in shaping attitudes and beliefs in our regional communities, and we look forward to the conversations that will no doubt be had as a result of this event."*

Community sport has been identified as a crucial touchpoint to engage the regions in violence prevention. In 2019, the local Ararat community came out in large numbers to support the annual Over Forties Football and Netball Fundraiser. The game raised \$10,000 dollars which was provided to Grampians Community Health in aid of prevention of family violence in the region. This event was supported by those funds – a true community investment in making our community safer for all.

WHG leads the regional primary prevention partnership to prevent violence against women (the CoRE Alliance (Communities of Respect and Equality), and this event was part of a Leading Change series aimed at connecting and inspiring sporting clubs and associations with an interest in gender equity.

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