

Promoting Girl's and Women's Independence and Decision Making in Melbourne's Outer East 2018-20

As a vital strategy to prevent violence against women, Eastern Health's Health Promotion team aims to promote girl's and women's independence and decision making in public and private life.

This strategy aligns with:

- Our Watch's National Framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children
- Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy – Safe and Strong.

The work focused on five strategies:

- Promote women's independence and decision making in public life.
- Promote women's independence and decision making in private life.
- Empower girl's and young women through schools to enhance their capacity for independence.
- Connecting women to facilitate peer based Support.
- Enhance and promote women's health and wellbeing.

Promote women's independence and decision making in public life.

Local Democracy in Action & the Journey Begins with Voices of Women

A capacity building program to achieve gender equality for female representation at Yarra ranges Council.

27 Women registered with the program in late 2018 and 13 women registered for the final year of the program in January 2020.

10 Education sessions were held over the calendar year in 2019, including a final celebration in November 2019. On average, 10 women attended each session.

71% of 13 participants agreed with the statement 'I know enough about local government to run for election in 2020' in the post program.

Getting Girls In – increasing participation in Female Football

3 Education sessions were held across the AFL Outer East and EFNL to inform and enable clubs to increase women and girls participation in football.

52 Football clubs attended the workshops.

97% Reported an increase in awareness and confidence to create environments that encourage girls and women's participation.

Promote women's independence and decision making in private life.

Taking it Step by Step Mentoring Women Program in Yarra Ranges

The program matched 20 women with the skills, capacities and wisdom to provide mentoring to other women in the community with a keenness to learn, engage and self-develop.

100% of the women who completed the program reported an increase in empowerment through achieving a personal/professional goal with the support of a well matched mentor.

Leading the Change – Women's Mental Health and Respectful Relationships

21 Education sessions were delivered in partnership with SALT to women in 13 football and netball clubs focused on mental health and wellbeing, reducing stigma about mental health and increasing awareness of family violence. More than 1 in 4 participants (31%) said they had experienced an abusive relationship.



Mentoring women gathering 2019

Empower girls in schools to enhance their capacity for independence

Unstoppable

A program to support Grade 5/6 girls to have access to empowered role models.

15 Grade 5/6 girls participated in the program delivered over 4 education sessions.

100% Of respondents reported increased physical empowerment and agency to maintain positive relationships with themselves or others.

Secondary school support

3 Years of the This Girl Can program was delivered to year 9 students at Healesville High School. This included health education, women's empowerment and self defence workshops featuring a range of female presenters.

Connecting women to facilitate peer based support

Eastern Health provided ongoing capacity building and support for the following community led women's groups.

Healesville Women 4 Women

A women's network formed in 2017 that has held International Women's Day events, social media campaigns and quarterly gatherings of women in Healesville for connection and empowerment.

Voices of Women

The group's mission is to empower and enable women to advocate for their own interests, needs and priorities at every level in society to access support that will assist them to transform their own circumstances, and establish structures that will enable women to manifest their ideas, projects and creative endeavours.

Women of Warburton

A newly formed women's network in the Upper Yarra to build connection between women.



Enhance and promote women's health and wellbeing

Supporting women to be physically active in recreation facilities - This Girl Can

16 Women participated in the This Girl Can program at Upper Yarra Centre in 2019. Women aged 16-81 years participated in the program delivered over 6 six weeks through a partnership with Upper Yarra Centre.

80% Of participants that completed the evaluation increased their motivation to exercise since starting the program.

The main strategies employed have included awareness raising, face to face education workshops, support for new structures and organisations and face to face program support for schools.

Recommendations

Eastern Health should continue to invest in priority initiatives that promote women's independence and decision making with a clear focus on:

- The primary school setting.
- The secondary school setting.
- Engagement with young women in sports with female participation including netball in partnership with the AFL Outer East.
- Women's civic participation in Local Government.
- Women's participation in leadership in sporting settings.
- Support for community led women's groups.

An intersectional lens should be applied to this work to facilitate women's independence and decision making in more vulnerable groups.

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