

International Women's Day 2008

This year, Victoria will celebrate the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote. This hard earned victory did not include all women, as most Indigenous women did not fully participate until the 1960s.

Chris Bonaci honours the traditional owners of the land

Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) hosted a gathering of almost 100 women to celebrate International Women's Day for 2008 on Friday the 7th March. The event was held at TREAD in Wangaratta. "Welcome to Country" was delivered by local Aboriginal woman, Chris Bonacci and Leonie Brien sang and led the women in a group harmony.

Maz McGann, Chair of the WHGNE Board, spoke to the gathering about this year's celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage in Victoria. [Maz McGann, Chair of WHGNE, speech...](#)

WHGNE will participate in this year long event by collaborating with members of the Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation, Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative and the North-East Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group in a project to bring young Aboriginal women together with older Aboriginal women to hear how they felt about voting for the first time in the 1960s.

The project, 'Our Vote Counts' will result in a book and DVD to be distributed in Aboriginal and non Aboriginal communities. International Women's Day, as celebrated by WHGNE, brings together local women from all parts of our community, to reconnect, celebrate women's achievements and to discuss ongoing issues for women at the local and global levels.

Susie Reid, Executive Officer of WHGNE, spoke passionately about the Victorian Law Reform Commission's *Review of Termination of Pregnancy*. An important challenge for everyone is ensuring MPs are urged to support the upcoming removal of abortion from the Crimes Act.

"Our message is a simple one. It is vital that any abortion law reform results in the removal of all possibility of criminal prosecution within the bounds of good medical practice. It's that simple. As with women voting, the sky didn't fall in when we got the vote. Nor will it if abortion is removed from the criminal code. But to do it we must act now. It's up to you."



Leonie Brien leading community singing





Women enjoying the community singing



Mother and daughter enjoying breakfast

