

## Vera Drake

You are invited to a screening of Vera Drake

**When:** Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2005  
**Time:** 4.30pm for best seats, 5.00pm screening  
**Where:** Swanpool Cinema,  
Midland Highway Swanpool  
**Cost:** \$ 10 Ticket available at  
Women's Health

A **delicious supper** is provided and you are welcome to stay on and watch ***The Heart of Me*** the second movie screening for the night

Please pre-purchase (or order) your ticket so we can cater for you.

**Vera Drake** is written and directed by Mike Leigh. Starring Imelda Staunton and Phil Davis.

Nominated for 3 Academy Awards, Winner of 3 British Awards

Imelda Staunton gives the performance of her career as Vera Drake, a sweet, neighbourly mother and wife living in 1950's Britain who, out of the kindness of her heart, performs abortions. The strength of Vera's character is that she doesn't struggle with a moral dilemma – she simply feels that she is helping young girls who have nowhere else to turn. A quietly compelling study that addresses this controversial subject.

Reviews on Vera Drake  
[http://sunday.ninemsn.com.au/sunday/film\\_reviews/article\\_1709.asp](http://sunday.ninemsn.com.au/sunday/film_reviews/article_1709.asp)

<http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2005/614/614p21.htm>

[http://www.pdgv.com.au/news/2005-02-22\\_00.html](http://www.pdgv.com.au/news/2005-02-22_00.html)

## International Women's Day

8<sup>th</sup> March brought around International Women's Day where women around the world come together to celebrate achievements and to promote empowerment

Over forty women in Wangaratta squashed together for breakfast at Scribblers café on Thursday. Suzanna Christison provided background guitar music while women chatted and ate breakfast.

Ann Wearne the new CEO of Ovens and King Community Health Centre reflected on the history of the Family Clinic in Wangaratta from its establish in the 80's to its current location at O&K Community Health Centre.

Ann outlined the continuing need for young women to have access to contraceptive and sexual health information.

The clinic was first established when a group of young women saw the need and agitated for it.

The clinic was free and often the doctor was able to provide women with the pill for free as Pharmaceutical companies donated them.

Anne reflected that there is still a need in Wangaratta as bulk billing by doctors is not readily available.

Thank you for your support on International Woman's Day and we encourage you to continue the celebration by attending the Vera Drake screening and inviting others.

### Double standards – alive and well!

A young, well educated professional woman from Melbourne told us that when men in her workplace leave right on 5.00 to pick up the children, comments are, "Isn't he a good father". When a woman leaves work at 5.00 to pick up the children, comments are that she is "not committed to the job"!!!



## Abortion debate

The abortion debate has raised its head in the media. WHGNE Research worker Deb Parkinson compiled some facts for us. Women's Health Victoria also has a six page summary of the issues and is continually updating information on their website (<http://www.whv.org.au/topical/abortion.htm>)

- φ **Abortion is never an easy choice** for a woman. Workers report that women even *contemplating* abortion suffer distressing emotional and sometimes physical trauma regarding how the pregnancy happened (unwanted sex, failure of contraception, under the influence of drugs/alcohol at time of conception) and regarding the issues they currently face such as abandonment by male partner or disowned by family. The issues are exacerbated by living in a rural area or by youth.
- φ **Contraception is the responsibility of two people** – a woman cannot become pregnant without a man. Abortion is not a matter of 'convenience' for women – there is a known failure rate with even the most effective contraceptions and not all women have the freedom to say no to unwanted sex.
- φ **Access to abortion is difficult for rural women** because:
  - there is a perception of little confidentiality for women when seeking help or advice
  - obtaining a termination usually involves travel to Albury or to Melbourne
  - in most cases theatre and non-medical costs range from around \$200 to \$700 and are not covered by Medicare.
- φ **Women** or couples seeking an abortion **are counseled**, at least once, sometimes twice – by the referring agency and the clinic.
- φ **Before 1971 abortion was a major cause of maternal deaths in Australia.** The World Health Organisation reports that the risk of maternal death from unsafe abortion is 100 to 500 times greater than the risk under safe conditions.  
<http://www.whv.org.au/Articles/Abortion-issues-paper.pdf> Women rarely die from legal abortions. According to the most recent statistics available in Australia there have only been 3 abortion related deaths in the last 15 years. That is 3 in over 1.2 million patients. Abortion has not always been so safe. Before abortion was legalised many women died or had serious medical problems after attempting to induce abortions on themselves or going to untrained practitioners who performed abortions in unsafe and unsanitary conditions.  
<http://websites.golden-orb.com/plannedparenthood/100187.php>
- φ **Abortion is not an increasing problem.** In the 12 month period to June 2004, there were 18,713 Medicare funded abortive procedures in Victoria

and Tasmania. This is 2,719 fewer than the 21,432 procedures reported 10 years ago. (Health Insurance Commission figures)

- φ **Tony Abbott's Australian figure of 100,000 is wrong.** The Medicare funded category for abortion includes other conditions such as miscarriage and stillbirth, and in 2004 was 73,000 (HIC).
- φ Those calling for a debate on abortion suggest they will look for ways to increase part time work opportunities. **Part time work for single mothers ensures they will live in poverty with their children.**
- φ The Governor-General, Michael Jeffery, has called for **better sex education for young people**. This is a sound approach supported by evidence in the US, the UK and the Netherlands. In the US, embarrassment and secrecy surround sex education and a focus on 'abstinence training' has led to increased rates of teenage pregnancy. The US has 53 births per 1,000 teenagers. In contrast, the Netherlands have 5 births per 1,000 teenagers. Germany, Norway, Sweden and Denmark have rates from 7 to 11 – all much lower than the US figure of 53. Their abortion rates are also the lowest in the world. The approach of these countries is to give comprehensive contraception information and establish clinics to provide advice and free contraceptives.  
[www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1213975,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1213975,00.html)
- φ **Making abortion illegal, or removing the medicare rebate for medical costs, will not stop abortion.** It will simply make safe abortion an option only for those who can afford private health insurance. Women who can't afford private health insurance are least able to financially support a child.
- φ **Changes to abortion laws are not supported by the Australian people.** The Age poll reported on 16 Feb 2005 indicated 56% believe laws are about right, and a further 16% believe abortion should be more accessible.

### Actions you can take:

- **Be alert** about what discussions are happening and what actions the Federal Government is taking.
- Use the above information to **inform others.**
- **Ask** your local Federal Politician where they stand. Members for our area are:  
**Sophie Panopoulos MP** Member for Indi  
035721 5377, [sophie.panopoulos.mp@aph.gov.au](mailto:sophie.panopoulos.mp@aph.gov.au)  
**Hon Fran Bailey MP** Member for McEwen  
035962 1255, [Fran.Bailey.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:Fran.Bailey.MP@aph.gov.au)  
**Hon Dr Sharman Stone MP** Member for Murray  
035821 5371, [S.Stone.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:S.Stone.MP@aph.gov.au)

## Book Reviews

### ***My Child is Gay: How parents react when they hear the news.***

Bryce McDougall

Allen & Unwin, Australia 1998

Reviewer: Anita J. Smith

This book contains letters from 50 parents from Australia and New Zealand. It provides an excellent insight into the range of reactions experienced by them. The main message from the book is that there is not predictable way parents react. The **strength of the book** is that it provides readers with a wide range of resources. The quote on the front of the book best sums up the overall message from the book "A dead-set must for every parent who wants their child to live a happy, fulfilled life."

### ***Life on a Roller Coaster: Living well with depression and manic depression.***

Madeline Kelly

Sim & Schuster (Australia) Pty Ltd, East Roseville, NSW 2000

Reviewer: Anita J. Smith

Wonderful book containing great insights as well as a wide range of practical information. The book is well organized and tackles a wide range of subjects for example Managing Money. It would provide an excellent reference book for anyone dealing with people with a range of mental health problems as well as those with depression and manic depression. It is **easy to read** and understand for both lay people and for professionals and does not get bogged down in complex terminology.

### ***The Straight Talk Manual: A Self-Esteem and Life Skills Workbook for Young People.***

Diane Brokenshire

Straight Talk Publishing, Fourth Edition 2000

Reviewer: Anita J. Smith

Definitely, a book to be used only by someone who has the professional qualification to administer the games and exercises in the book.

It states it is for parents but I would be loath to see parents viewing this book as a ways of testing their child.

For anyone dealing with young people on a professional basis the exercises would provide a helpful guideline.

### ***Women's Trouble: Natural and Medical Solutions,***

Ruth Trickey and Kaz Cooke, Allen & Unwin, 1998

Reviewer: Anita J. Smith

This is a very **informative and straightforward** book. It covers a wide range of subjects covering all aspects of a woman's reproductive life. The language of the book is easy to understand and the cartoons provide a fun way of illustrating specific areas.

The authors also provide options which allow you to either read all or some of the book which makes it less threatening to some readers who do not wish to get bogged down in complex jargon.

They also stress the need to seek expert opinion and be guided by professional consultation. One of the main themes through out the book is that it is to be used as a guideline.

The Useful Organization guideline in the back of the book is also helpful.

### ***Up The Duff: The real guide to pregnancy.***

Kaz Cooke First Published by Penguin Books

Australia, 1999

Reviewer: Anita J. Smith

This book provides an informative and comprehensive guideline to pregnancy. The first chapter "Getting ready for pregnancy:" provides an excellent introduction to the whole book. One of the strengths of the book is that it provides the reader with a **wide range of resources** and information so that they can consult other books and organization, which may be of assistance to them.

It also allows for individual records if the reader wishes to use this book as their major reference.

Unfortunately, the book is spoilt by the inclusion of the Diary section – Hermoine Harridan. In the first part of the book her pregnancy adventures are quite funny. Anyone, who has been pregnant, can relate to these experiences. Her unfortunate birthing experience and her negative reaction to the baby could easily cause anyone who is reading this and expecting a baby an adverse reaction.

The "Help" Section at the conclusion of the book provides a wide range of backup resources for anyone who experiences problems which somewhat helps to diffuse the negative sections.

### ***Kid-Wrangling: The Real Guide to Caring for Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers***

Kaz Cooke First published by Penguin Books

Australia Ltd 2003

Reviewer: Anita J. Smith

Excellent resource book, which attempts to cover most subjects and problems, encountered throughout these years. It is backed up throughout with extra resources for parents experiencing difficulty as well as suggestions and way to assist.

One of its **main strengths** is that it provides both positive and negative feedback on a wide range of areas for example the pros and cons of using cloth nappies. There is also a range of helpful hints throughout the book.

One of the main strengths of the book is that it is easy to understand. The book should be seen more of a resource book for parents which can be utilized over the number of years rather than a once off reading experience.

**Thanks to Anita** for reviewing these books. All these books and many others are available for loan from the WHGNE library located at our office. Members are welcome to review books from our library.

## Calendar

**24<sup>th</sup> April** – Vera Drake

**20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> April** – Women's Health Conference, Melbourne

**6<sup>th</sup> March – 17<sup>th</sup> April** – Eighteen: From Adversity to hope, Five photo essays on young Australians. Benalla Art Gallery

**5<sup>th</sup> April** – Sexual Assault –Open Discussion

**6<sup>th</sup> April** – Guardian Angels Support Group

**26<sup>th</sup> April** – PAMPA for Women –Wangaratta

**27<sup>th</sup> April** – PAMPA for Women - Wodonga

**June** – Picturing Motherhood exhibition, Bright Gallery

## Sexual Assault: An open discussion

**Upper Murray Centre Against Sexual Assault are providing an open discussion on sexual assault issues, in Wangaratta, facilitated by Lee FitzRoy and Kerry Burns.**

The aim is that workers who come into contact with sexual assault issues during their work are given an opportunity to share information, discuss issues, receive information, resources and support and ask '**difficult questions**'. A maximum number of twelve participants.

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2-4pm

The cost is \$10 to cover resources and afternoon tea. Please call Lee FitzRoy, Manager if you would like any further information about the discussion.

Tel: 57 22 2203 Email: [admin@umcasa.com.au](mailto:admin@umcasa.com.au)

## Keen-Agers Table Tennis Program !!

**Do you know any Older Adults who would enjoy recreational table tennis??**

**Do you work with Older Adults throughout the community??**

If so, these people can soon gain the physical, social and mental health benefits of the

Keen-Agers is a recreational program that focuses on having FUN, making new FRIENDS, being ACTIVE, and ENJOYING table tennis!!

Keen-Agers starts on Monday March 14 from 8.30 - 11.00am at the Wangaratta Table Tennis Centre, Evans St - and will be launched on Thursday March 17.

For more information please call Paul on 5721 0235, or email [paul.elshaug@thecentre.vic.edu.au](mailto:paul.elshaug@thecentre.vic.edu.au).

## Guardian Angels Support Group

If you are the guardian/primary carer of children from birth to 16 years, you are invited to meet for support, listen to guest speakers and have social contact.

Venue is Upper Murray Family Care, 36 MacKay Street Wangaratta, Time 10am – 12pm on the first Wednesday of each month. Bring a plate to share and tea, coffee and milo provided. For more information phone Julia on 5722 1115 or 0439 203 134

## Towards Collaboration

Towards Collaboration is a state wide initiative funded by the Department of Human Services, supported by Women's Health Goulburn North East in the Hume region.

On the 5th March 33 workers from both child protection and family violence services attended a forum held in Benalla and facilitated by Professor Jan Fook. The forum created the opportunity for child protection and family violence service providers from across the Hume region to explore current collaboration, and reflect on the recommendations from WHGNE research A Powerful Journey; women leaving violent relationships.

Towards Collaboration is designed to strengthen the relationship between child protection and family violence services and to promote a more integrated response to family violence and most importantly; it will lead to improved outcomes for women and children who have experienced family violence.

The discussions from the forum focused on four main areas, issues about collaboration, the commonalities that emerge, principles for collaboration and opportunities for future collaboration, with a commitment from each participant to explore future collaboration both individually and at a structure level.



Professor Jan Fook with staff members and Participants