

# MEDIA RELEASE

+ WOMEN'S HEALTH GOULBURN NORTH EAST

(03) 5722 3009

whealth@whealth.com.au



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### State budget must be a gendered one - WHGNE

**With the pandemic continuing to set back gender equality gains in what has been dubbed an Australian “she-cession”, Women’s Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) has joined Victorian gender equity organisations to call for dedicated investment in gender equality initiatives as part of this year’s state budget.**

The past 12 months have been tumultuous for Victorian women. They have incurred a greater rate of job loss than men, carried the burden of essential care and domestic work, and seen their superannuation balances plummet as they’ve dipped into them to make ends meet.

As such, WHGNE chief executive officer Amanda Kelly said Women’s Health Services across the state were coming together to advocate for a state budget that centred on gender equity principles, with priority investment in economic, public health and social support systems that were designed to benefit all.

“Women’s Health Goulburn North East was one of 42 women’s health and gender equity organisation across the state to provide input to a budget submission created by our peak body, Gender Equity Victoria,” Ms Kelly said.

“And our input was based on the things we’ve seen happening in our communities during the pandemic – things like disproportionate numbers of women losing their jobs or facing precarious work situations; women shouldering increased care burdens because of the gendered stereotypes that exist around domestic work; our family and domestic violence networks being stretched to the limit due to the shadow pandemic of increased gender-based violence.”

“As a result, our submission to the state government focuses on six key areas: gender-equal job creation; boosting women’s health services; gender responsive budgeting architecture; imagining a care economy; creating a gender and disaster workforce; and strengthening gender equal communities.”

The gender equality sector’s budget submission calls for investment in the order of \$271.2 million, with WHGNE specifically requesting a boost to its funding, of \$732,000 over four years to enable it to better respond to the shifting needs of a changing demographic in its focus communities.

Other WHGNE budget requests include:

- \$749,000 over four years for WHGNE to establish and provide leadership and capacity building for sexual and reproductive health programs throughout the Goulburn Valley and north-east Victoria region;
- \$200,000 core funding over two years for WHGNE’s Prevention of Violence Against Women Partnerships across the region, to strengthen collective, intersectional gendered violence prevention;
- \$40,000 over four years to enable WHGNE to lead local health promotion campaigns aligned with the state’s 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign;
- \$422,000 over four years, for WHGNE mental health for women programming, including activities that apply a local, intersectional gender lens on existing service provision in the local area; and
- \$364,000 over five years to scale up WHGNE’s award-winning Gender and Disaster Pod for state-wide application, in anticipation of future disaster preparedness, early intervention and response.

“The beauty of gender responsive budgeting is that, by ensuring those people who are most disproportionately impacted by the pandemic are well supported, we actually end up better supporting the Victorian population as a whole, and creating systems that are inclusive, accessible and fit for all,” Ms Kelly said.

For more information on the WHGNE and gender equality sector’s state budget submission, visit [www.whealth.com.au/research/victorian-budget-submission-2021/](http://www.whealth.com.au/research/victorian-budget-submission-2021/)

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For more information or further comment contact:

**Amanda Kelly**

**WHGNE chief executive officer**

0418 856 345

a.kelly@whealth.com.au