

Hobart Women's Health Centre

The Hobart Women's Health Centre adopts the World Health Organisation's model of Health: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." In line with this definition the Hobart Women's Health Centre operates under the following principles:

- Women will be involved in, and have control of, decisions about their bodies
- Women will have access to a wide range of information, and be assisted to fully comprehend this information, to enable them to make informed choices
- Women have a right to be treated with dignity and respect
- Women will be guaranteed confidentiality
- Women will be offered affordable and accessible health care
- Women will be offered a safe and supportive environment
- The Centre will adopt a holistic approach to women's health
- The Centre will focus on preventative approaches to women's health
- The Centre will actively promote strategies to maintain and improve women's health

Women's health and wellbeing is vital to a healthy society and is important in its own right. However despite significant changes to society, women still remain the primary carers of children and young people, people with a disability, their partners and their parents. For this reason their influence on society's health and well being as a whole cannot be overestimated.

With the State election looming in March the following issues are emerging for us. We are seeking the views of each party on the following. The order of this list does not necessarily reflect any particular order of importance

- A gendered approach to Women's Health policy (the Australian Government is developing gender based policies at present)
- Continued investment in Women's health including a significant increase in funds for HWHC in its role in health promotion and prevention in Tasmania

- The continuing societal, environmental, economic and structural barriers to women's participation in employment, housing, education and training and health and well being
- The ageing population trends, the fact that women live longer and suffer more chronic conditions, social isolation and often with fewer resources
- The dilemma of competing demands of the investment in health promotion and prevention and the immediate needs of primary health service delivery
- The lack of separate facilities for women in mental health facilities and gynaecology units
- The continued high incident of violence, including sexual violence against women and the lack of services available for protection, shelter and support given the long term debilitating effects of these crimes and the huge, social and economic costs to society
- Lack of emergency accommodation for all women who are homeless.
- Lack of coordinated approach to respectful relationships and sex education in schools
- The lack of eating disorders information and services in Tasmania
- Body image issues in the media and the trends of some schools and government to concentrate on weight and obesity instead of a healthy lifestyle
- Lack of coordinated educational and other support for women in prison and the lack of post release services for women
- Lack of GPs especially female GP s and bulk billing services throughout Tasmania
- The particular health needs of women in rural Tasmania

We would be delighted to hear your party's views on the issues we have raised and we would be delighted to share your responses with our Board and staff, members, partners and friends.

We would value a response to this request by 15th February 2010 on glynis@hwhc.com.au or ring 62313212 if you would like to discuss this further.