

Victorian Medical Women's Society

e-Newsletter

Founded 1898

Celebrating our history, advancing our future

August 2015

afmw.org.au/vic

Volume 13 Issue 4



President's Report

A/Professor Deb Colville

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to our Newsletter.

As usual, VMWS is busy providing activities for you, and advocating on your behalf.

In promoting medical women, VMWS recently hosted a successful session on how to submit nominations for Queen's Birthday and Australia Day Awards. Do you know that anyone can nominate? Do you know that some organizations nominate one woman a year? Do you think we ought to adopt this move?

In working on individual and collective strategies against bullying, sexual harassment, discrimination and victimization, VMWS have contributed sessions on bullying to the MD Expo for the new University of Melbourne medical school curriculum, to the Australian Medical Students Association held in Melbourne in July, and to the AMA round table sessions in Melbourne. I am astonished at the number of medical students who hear that women 'can't do' various areas of medicine if they want to marry or have children. We need to keep these issues 'on the boil' and encourage young doctors to have the confidence and courage to make good choices that include recognizing sexism and discrimination against them. Dr Caroline Tan addressed us at our annual Lyceum luncheon, role modeling how to stay resilient in the face of long-standing discrimination.

I believe it is only by sharing stories that we will empower one another with enough strategies against bullying to lead a satisfying medical career. As well as working at a systemic level, of course. I encourage you to come along to our AGM day. We are offering a members-only workshop before our Annual General Meeting on November 7th, and I urge you all young and old to contribute. This is a panel discussion on individual strategies and tips. Then at our AGM, we will vote on the wording of a resolution against bullying and harassment, and not just in surgery. Come along and have your say on this complex issue. We will hear our annual

Constance Stone Lecture, this year by Dr Ann Myers, who went to a woman only medical school in United Kingdom and came to Melbourne to do Sexual Health. Hear her story!

This Saturday I am bushwalking with our VMWS COCO Group - Connect Over Coffee. I commend these COCO events to you too. I find our young medical students and doctors inspiring. I look forward to the fresh air and fresh ideas.

Finally, join into our VMWS committee work and have your say. We are looking for women to fill the Sponsorship Officer role, for instance, but do volunteer your own talents to improve our work. And I suggest you jot Vienna, Austria July 2016 in your diary for our forthcoming MWIA world meeting.

Best regards,

Deb Colville
VMWS President

VMWS Committee 2015

A/Professor Deborah Colville
Dr Rosalie Cooper
Dr Marissa Daniels
Position Vacant
Dr Kate Duncan
Dr Skye Siskos
Dr Sarah Lonie
Dr Zoe Dorevitch
Dr Francesca Bridge
Dr Magdalena Simonis
Dr Desiree Yap
Dr Rosalind Terry

Dr Raie Goodwach
Dr Allison Hепенstall
Dr Elysia Robb
Dr Natalie Yap
Dr Adelle Storch

Ms Hui Ling Yeoh
Ms Nishani Nithianandan
Ms Michelle Li
Ms Ashleigh Clark
Ms Emma Kelso
Ms Jade Tregoweth
Ms Sylvia Ye
Ms Tiffany Lin
Ms Anisha Haseeb
Ms Annie Rose
Ms Anne Stanaway
Ms Cara Beck
Ms Emma-Leigh Rudduck
Ms Aurora Killey
Ms Kelly Hughes
Ms Asika Pelenda

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Events Calendar 2015

VMWS AGM

Saturday 7th November
Avant Offices
543 Bridge Road
Richmond

AFMW AGM

Saturday 21st November
Sydney

Committee Meetings

Monday 5th October
Monday 7th December

CONGRATULATIONS

to

[A/Professor Jan Coles](#)

who received

The Dean's Award for
Excellence in Education
(Innovation in Teaching)



AGM

Victorian Medical Women's Society

would like to announce our

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7 November 2015

Avant Offices

543 Bridge Road, Richmond 3121

Parking available on Bridge Road and Palmer Street

A members only Free Event

[RSVP to AGM](#)

[RSVP to Dinner](#)

[RSVP to Workshop](#)

Schedule

4.30-5.30pm Workshop: 'Counter bullying: practical individual strategies'

Panel Members including Dr Lorraine Baker and Dr Sally Cockburn aka Dr Feelgood

5.30pm AGM Pre-Drinks

6-6:45pm Annual General Meeting

6:45pm Stone Oration for Constance Stone,

Dr Anne Myers speaks on "My medical career from the outset in London UK to my most rewarding job here in our VD Clinic"

7:00pm Dinner



Victorian Medical
Women's Society
Inc.



Intern Year: “The worst year of your life, but also the best”

By Ms Emma-Leigh Rudduck
Melbourne University

I had a meeting the other day with a female physician that I had never met before, who agreed to be my mentor for as long as I need her. A wonderful offering, but I had no agenda for the coffee meet-up we had organised. However, along the way, we seemed to nut out what was *really* scaring me.

Next year I start Internship at a primary care facility in Victoria. I'm worried as the culture of bullying is well known, and I myself have experienced it combined with overt sexism, over my time there. My female colleagues have many stories to tell about the doctors, mostly male surgeons, who say interesting things like “So, what are we going to do about all these women in Medicine?”, “Hey, Barbie called, she



wants her clothes back”, and “Think about GP as a specialty – then you can pick up your kids!”. The latter was to me – I don't have kids, and I don't intend to have any. I think the conversation can be brought up if and when I choose to. Considering the way the world is going downhill, and that my career is my first priority, it may be a long time before I consider bringing another generation into this. Besides, when did these sexist comments become rife in modern conversation? It seems like since the dawn of time, women have been battling the mother role; forever fighting for higher degrees.



Even when we get there, we're still seen as a uterus, and nothing more. As sexism and the bullying culture of medicine are already being exploited by the media, I won't prattle on, but it is a factor in the anxiety that I have for next year.

In the midst of our conversation about each other's lives, the physician eyed me and said, “What are you *really* scared about next year?” A flurry of answers filled my brain, to the point where I had no fluid answer. I stared away and felt slightly uncomfortable. I have a *lot* of worries. Here's a few I know my colleagues and I are all pondering...

- Medications lists – knowing all the medications known to man.
- Drug charts – what are the doses of a particular drug? How often should I give it? Is this patient on too many and they're interacting with each other? How will I have time to know all this?
- *Not* killing a patient would be lovely...
- I would *really* like to not be yelled at
- Will I find time to eat? What about exercise? Will I hate my job because I won't have time outside to breathe?
- How does one even prepare for night shifts? Is the first night always the same as I have experienced – nausea, followed by headaches, anxiety and general anger at the requirement to be awake at 4 o'clock in the morning, waiting for something to happen just to peel my eyelids open?

So many unknowns...

When considering these sorts of issues, I wonder if I'll cope. A lot of us feel like that, it seems, when I talk to my colleagues. Burn-out is something spoken about by few doctors, and even some of my friends who are now registrars say you need to keep on top of your mental health in order to avoid it. Easier said than done, when the projected number of hours the first year out are more than 50 a week, and they only increase as you progress through the ranks.

Towards the end of the conversation, I did get a glimpse of the silver lining around the dark, grey cloud that is Intern year. Speaking to the physician, she played netball, was a regular attendee of sewing classes, and fostered a hobby of running.

The end of the conversation was concluded with a, "Well, my Intern year was good fun, but

it was *really* hard..." followed by a long pause and a glance away into the distance. Then a wry smile: "It gets better!"

Here's hoping.

Newsletter Editor 2015
Dr Skye Siskos

Please contact me if you have any feedback, articles, photos or advertisements you would like to contribute to the newsletter.

PO Box 202
East Melbourne
Victoria, 3002

vic@afmw.org.au

VMWS Newsletter is going
GREEN
and moving towards an electronic newsletter platform.

If you opt to still receive your VMWS newsletter via post, please contact us at
vic@afmw.org.au

or contact Senior's Representative
Dr Rosalind Terry on
0427 366 516

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Dr Miranda Norquay
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Lyceum Luncheon 2015: Event Report

By Dr Skye Siskos
GP Registrar
VMWS Newsletter Editor

On July 15th I was lucky enough to attend the VMWS annual Lyceum Luncheon. This year's theme was "resourcefulness in the face of sexual harassment in the training workplace" with special guest speaker Dr Caroline Tan.

The day began with champagne, sandwiches and chatter amongst young and experienced VMWS medical women. Caroline then addressed the group with a brutally honest description of her struggles with sexual harassment whilst training to be a neurosurgeon.

"This incident in 2005 nearly annihilated my career", "I couldn't let that happen"
- Dr Caroline Tan.

During her opening statements she revealed that she first heard about her story going 'public' after a friend told her to listen in on a radio show. Her response was "What could a radio show tell me about sexism in medicine I already didn't know?" She tuned in and that's where her public rollercoaster began, but now we know, it had begun long before the media were involved.

Caroline went on to tell us about her frustration in not being able to find a posting, despite being an excellent surgeon. One story she shared was about a posting that a particular hospital was 'desperate' to find someone for. Despite this fact, and that Caroline had fabulous referees, she did not secure the position. She asked for feedback and was told "after speaking with colleagues interstate we cannot give you this position" she recalled. The peculiar thing was - none of her referees were ever contacted. Infuriating!

Caroline shared stories of her time as a neurosurgeon in Dunedin and coming back to Australia, building up her private practice to the successful business that it is today. She still has not been able to secure a public hospital posting and expressed her disappointment that she cannot give back to the public health system and its patients.

Caroline finished her address expressing her resentment for the unfair treatment she has received saying, "When I think back to what I went through in my surgical training, I wish things could have been different" and "I never envisaged doctors could treat their colleagues how I have been treated."

The VMWS audience and I were captivated by Caroline's address. Question time was filled with support for Caroline and women sharing Caroline's frustration.

Some comments included:

"Your stand has given me the opportunity to stand up and push harder"

"We need to be more aware and protect ourselves from being vulnerable"

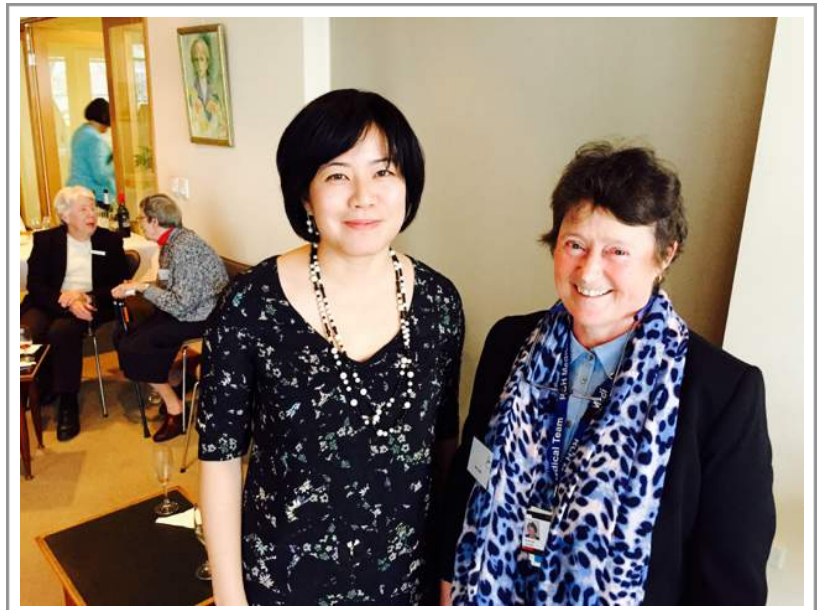
"How can anyone say that they are serious about this when you don't have a position at a public hospital?"

VMWS Public Officer, Dr Kate Duncan thanked Caroline saying, "I do thank you for everything you have done for everybody else by persevering."

Sexual harassment is real. It is happening every day. Some may be able to brush it off, but I think "why should we have to?" The culture in medicine is changing, but not quickly enough. Stories I have heard from senior VMWS members are not dissimilar to stories I hear happening with my colleagues in medicine today. When will it stop? Maybe never. But does that mean we as medical women have to put it up with it? I don't think so.

We need to support and look out for one another. It is understandable that medical women may be afraid to talk about their experiences; a passing comment from a senior staff member, inappropriate sexual innuendos, etc, because of the potential consequences like not securing a training position. However, Pandora's box has been opened by courageous medical women like Dr Caroline Tan. It is up to us to ensure this important issue in medicine is not forgotten or swept under the carpet.

Some photos from VMWS Lyceum Luncheon



**VMWS would like to thank our sponsor for Lyceum Luncheon
Avant**

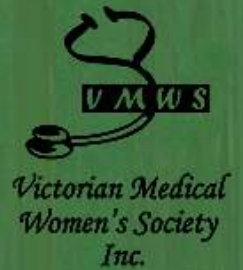
The Victorian Medical Women's Society invites you to...

Connect Over Coffee, or a bushwalk...

Ferntree Gully, Dandenong Ranges NP

'Living Nature Walk'

3km, 1.5hr medium-grade



Where female medical students and female medical practitioners can exchange experiences and support

**Saturday 15th August
9:30am**

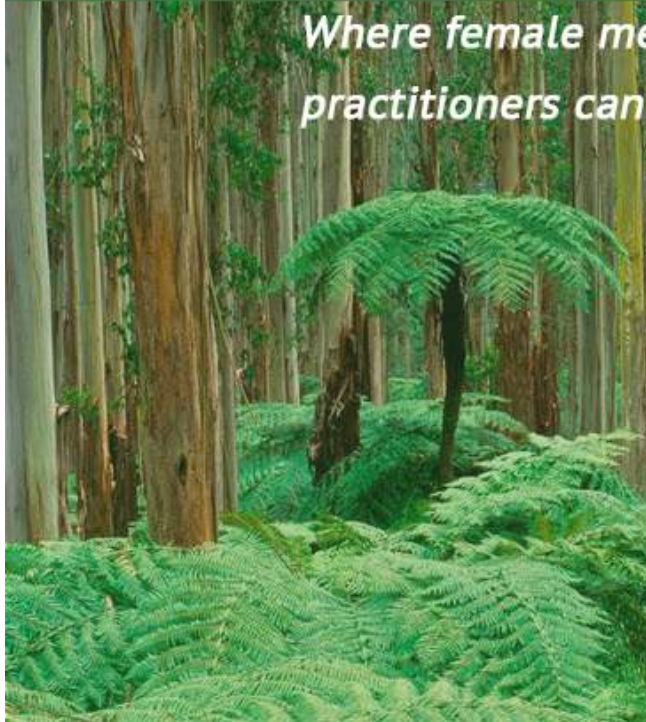
Ferntree Gully Picnic Ground

Look for someone holding a green & purple flag

RSVP and important info:

Anne, 0431 663 467

annemkruse@gmail.com



Women in Australia are flocking to cosmetic surgeons, health professionals and local beauty salons in an attempt to change the appearance of their genitals through surgery, piercing, waxing and shaving.

Is this the new normal?

Jean Hailes is going to find out. In the most comprehensive study of its kind, Jean Hailes' researchers are seeking to understand the social, cultural and aesthetic motivations behind female genital cosmetic surgery and modification.

Dr Maggie Kirkman from the Jean Hailes Research Unit, Monash University, says, "Women's genitals are as varied in appearance

and symmetry as faces. The 'normal' vulva is as difficult to characterise as the 'normal' face and equally subject to cultural and social expectations. Nevertheless, there appears to be limited knowledge of genital diversity".

Dr Kirkman (along with researchers from The Australian Federation of Medical Women, Deakin University, Family Planning Victoria, Monash University and Women's Health Victoria) will be investigating the reasons behind, and attitudes toward, female genital cosmetic surgery and modification in the "Down Under: Attitudes" survey.

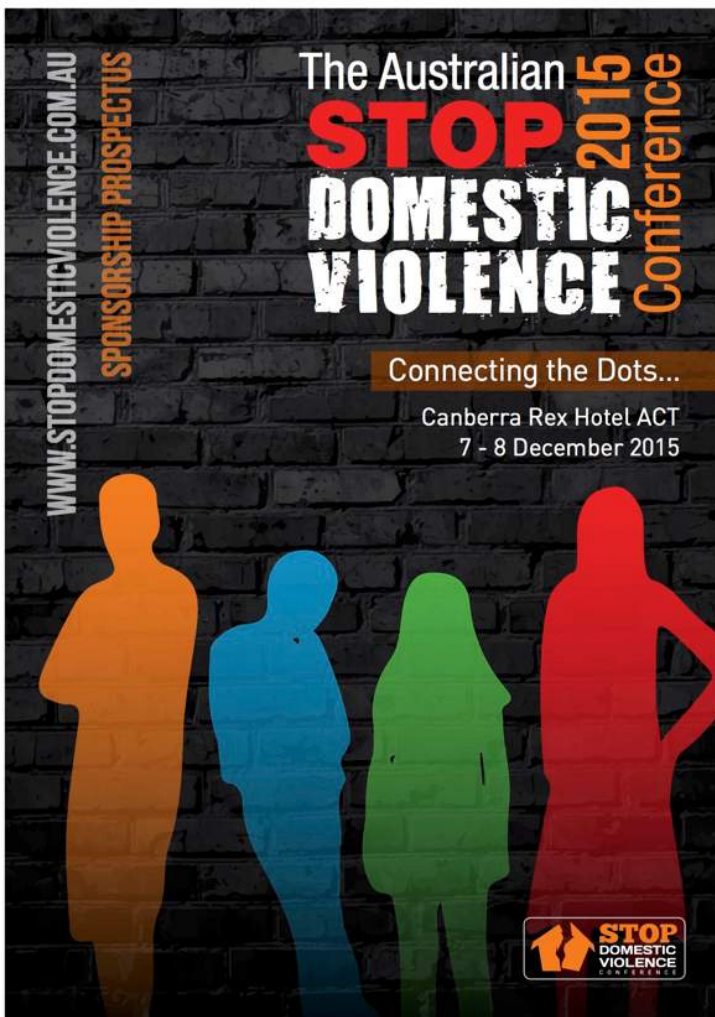
Get Involved: The research team are looking for women and men in Australia who are over the age of 18 to share their opinions about female genital cosmetic surgery for this survey. All information will be confidential.

For more information on the study, visit [Monash University's website](http://MonashUniversity's_website) or email fgcs-project@monash.edu.



RACGP has released “Female genital cosmetic surgery - A resource for general practitioners and other health professionals.” This resource provides information on what female genital cosmetic surgery is, the factors that are driving demand and practical recommendations on how to manage women requesting referral for female genital cosmetic surgery or those who are expressing concern regarding their genitalia. A copy of the resource can be found at <http://www.racgp.org.au/your-practice/guidelines/female-genital-cosmetic-surgery/>

The author of this valuable resource is VMWS Immediate Past President Dr Magdalena Simonis. We congratulate Magdalena on her hard-work, dedication and passion for women’s health.



The Australian and New Zealand Mental Health Association (ANZMHA) are pleased to host the inaugural 2015 Australian STOP Domestic Violence Conference 7-9 December at the Rex Hotel in Canberra.

There has been national attention to domestic violence with the release of the Senate’s Interim Report on Domestic Violence in Australia and the Government’s National Domestic Violence Order scheme. The Conference will create a unified voice, on a national level, of organisations and professionals working within the sector and experiencing the increasing strain DV issues have on resources.

The Conference theme *Connecting the Dots* will look at domestic violence holistically and developing collaborative approaches within the sector. This multi-disciplinarian program is suitable for administrators, program coordinators, social workers, therapists and all external providers impacted by DV. The co-occurrence and prevalence of mental health and domestic violence will also be addressed.

The Conference will attract delegates from a wide range of backgrounds including: Policy Makers, Government, Practitioners, NGO’s, Councillors, Academics, Mental Health specialists, Service Providers, HR Professionals and Victims Support Groups from Australia and New Zealand.

For more information please visit <http://stopdomesticviolence.com.au/>

Meet The Committee

Each newsletter will feature a bio about each of our amazing committee members so you get to know your VMWS.



Dr Rosalind Terry

VMWS Senior Members' Representative

VMWS AMA Representative



Rosalind was born in 1940 and undertook her secondary education at MLC, she states only because she won a scholarship and girls didn't go to University, but Commonwealth Scholarship allowed B.Sc (Hons) in Biochemistry and Microbiology. She spent two years undertaking post graduate studies at Melbourne University on Tb. Rosalind moved to USA for three years, working in diagnostic microbiology at Passavant Memorial Hospital in Chicago, research Biochemistry in Madison, Wisconsin. She returned to Australia and researched parasitology, aiming to eradicate hydatid disease, in Launceston. Finally she ventured into medicine, ten years older than my fellow students and worked in Biochemistry at Royal Melbourne Hospital nights and weekends. After graduation, Rosalind spent two years at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, then two years at St Vincents Hospital in Sydney as first female surgical registrar. She was sent on rotation to PNG and stayed ten years covering surgery, obstetrics, tropical medicine and once a week trips to remote areas, dealing with anything that came her

way. She spent two years on Norfolk Island dealing again with all fields of medicine. Rosalind came back to Melbourne in time to turn 50, and worked a mix of Alfred Emergency, surgical assisting and GP sessions until Werribee Mercy Hospital opened January 1994. Rosalind was the first Director of Urgent Medical Care and held this position for four and half years and was then invited back to Alfred Emergency and stayed there until her retirement at 74. Rosalind has been widowed for 11 years and has one daughter and five grandchildren.

Ms Emma-Leigh Rudduck

VMWS Student Representative

University of Melbourne

Emma-Leigh Rudduck is a final year medical student at The University of Melbourne, and next year will be an Intern at The Royal Melbourne Hospital. After completing high school on the Gold Coast, Queensland, she proceeded to a Bachelor of Biomedical Science and took a year off thereafter to work in an I.T. support company whilst studying for the GAMSAT. Having wanted to start Medicine to become a Reconstructive Plastic surgeon, she was made aware quickly that the surgical field is dominated by men, and unfortunately the glass ceiling is very much still a reality in all societies. She aims to work outside the Medical field, in policy drafting and possibly politics, in order to alter the thoughts and processes so ingrained in the current Australian system. In addition to gender equality, her passions lie with environmental sustainability and health in the global context.



Ms Asika Pelenda

**VMWS Student Representative
University of Melbourne**

Asika is a third year medical student at the University of Melbourne and prior to her medical degree, she completed a Bachelor of Biomedicine. She has been involved in a number of organisations during her time at university including AMSA Global Health as one of the National Exchange Officers, Community Health Advancement and Student Engagement (CHASE) as a mentor where we educated high school students on physical, sexual and mental health and AMSA as one of the Gender Equity Officers. In her spare time, Asika enjoys dancing! Asika is a part-time dancer trained in Indian Classical Dance and Bollywood. She has always had a strong interest in issues relating to gender, but especially the interplay of gender and race – an interest born out of her experiences as a woman of colour.

Ms Tiffany Lin

**VMWS Student Representative
Deakin University**

Tiffany is a Deakin University medical student, currently in her second year, with a background in Biomedicine from the University of Melbourne. She is currently Publications Co-Chair for the Deakin Medical Students' Society. Tiffany was inspired to be a part of the Victoria Medical Women's Society to meet courageous and inspiring women in medicine who are making a difference to gender inequality in medicine. In her spare time, Tiffany enjoys listening to podcasts, reading, and trying out different cuisines.



FRIENDS OF VELLORE VICTORIA
warmly invites you to the

2015

Annual Dinner

Help us celebrate with a superb dinner, music,
silent auction and special guests.

Saturday 22 August 2015
6pm – 10pm
Queen's College
Junior Common Room
1-17 College Crescent, Parkville, VIC, 3052

Welcoming special guests
Professor Sunil Chandy
Director of Christian Medical College, Vellore
and
Clinical Associate Professor Nitin Verma AM
Head of Ophthalmology, Royal Hobart Hospital
with key note address
'Education in the 21st century: the global classroom'

Dress: After five
Tickets: \$110 Adults
\$50 Students / Clergy
RSVP 9 August 2015

Reservations via Ms Evelyn Lehmann
Email: fovventcoord@gmail.com
Telephone: (03) 5443 7069
Cash, cheque or direct transfer
Friends of Vellore Victoria BBL
BSB: 633000 Account: 139185151



If you cannot attend the fundraising dinner and would like to make a donation please contact FOVVtreasurer@gmail.com

Friends of Vellore are a group who support a large hospital in India, Christian Medical College and Hospital.

They are involved in fundraising to support medical care for the poor in India, sharing professional expertise, facilitating shipping to Vellore of any donated medical equipment and facilitating advanced training for medical and nursing staff from CMCH in Australia.

For more information please visit <http://australianfov.net.au/calendar-of-events/>



The Victorian Medical Women's Society Inc.

Membership Invoice 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016

ABN 67 120 250 797 - Inc A0061560B
(MEMBERSHIP PERIOD IS FROM 1 JULY TO 30TH JUNE)

Membership Eligibility: Full membership is open to registered female medical practitioners (FMP); non-registered FMPs can join as an associate member, and Student membership is open to female medical students.

(NOTE: this invoice becomes a tax receipt upon payment, please retain the top section for your records)

Full Members	Rural Members (>100km from GPO)	Senior Members	Retired Members (>65 yrs)	Student Members
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr \$176.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr \$77.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr \$132.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr \$132.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 yr \$38.50
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 yrs \$475.20	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 yrs \$207.90	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 yrs \$356.40		
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 yrs \$748.00	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 yrs \$327.25	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 yrs \$561.00		
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation: \$ _____				

Please complete and send the bottom section of this form to the VMWS Inc. via email or mail.

1. PLEASE TICK WHICH TYPE OF APPLICATION YOU WISH TO REQUEST:

- I am applying for new membership. Please complete the Membership Declaration and make payment.
- I am changing my membership category. Please complete the Membership Declaration and make payment.
- I am renewing my membership. Only renewal payment is required.

Date payment made:

2. MEMBERSHIP DECLARATION:

I wish to become a member of the Victorian Medical Women's Society Inc., and will support the purposes of the Association and agree to comply with the Rules of the Association (available here)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

3. MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

Membership Type: _____ Duration: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Title, First name & Surname: _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Email: _____

Specialty/Area of Practice: _____ Year of Graduation: _____

Car-pooling: Potential driver: Potential passenger:

NOTE: When you join the VMWS you get 3 memberships for the price of 1!: the Australian Federation of Medical Women (AFMW) and the Medical Women's International Association (MWIA). You will automatically be subscribed to all three mailing lists and your email address may be shared with other AFMW members.

VMWS newsletters are distributed electronically, unless you request otherwise.

4. Membership Payment: CHQ to Victorian Medical Women's Society. Post: VMWS Secretariat, PO Box 202, East Melb VIC 8002; Electronic Transfer to Victorian Medical Women's Society; BSB: 033 089; Act No: 297664. Please include your name in the transfer info.

Donations are gratefully received. Please advise if you wish for your donation to be used for a specific purpose.

<http://www.afmw.org.au/vic>

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