

The Victorian Medical Women's Society

Founded 1896

Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 3

July 2005

President's Report



Welcome all to the second newsletter of the year. We on the committee have been rather busy trying to modernize our processes to the point where the organization can be managed using an internet-based system. This will have a lot of benefits for internet-savvy members and committee members, as well as cost savings in the administrative

department (we hope!), although for communications with the membership our traditional paper-based methods will still also be employed.

On the 2nd April 2005 AFMW held a strategic planning weekend in Sydney. This was attended by Dr. Deb Colville and me. There are a number of important news items that have arisen from this meeting.

Firstly, by now most of you should be aware of the great news that Australian Dr. Gabrielle Casper is currently the MWIA President. She is also still acting as AFMW President, as the AFMW Committee were loath to let her step down given all the changes we hope to implement over the coming months. More of that later.

Secondly, there is the not-so-good news that our sister organizations in South Australia and Tasmania are having trouble keeping themselves operational. Tasmania does not have a functioning committee, and South Australia is on the cusp of collapsing for similar reasons. It seems incredible that we can simultaneously be providing the MWIA President and having Societies disappear, whilst there is the highest number of medical women graduating ever. Even Victoria's membership base is only a small proportion of the now around 4,000 medical women statewide – and we are hoping to at least maintain the same membership as last year. This all begs the question of how relevant the organization is to younger medical women, and what we should be doing to keep the organization going if we think it is worthwhile. If you have any views or think you can help, please contact the secretariat.

This brings me to the news about our communications. Our website is once again lurching forward. We have a new e-mail: vic@afmw.org.au. People with ideas, feedback or offers of help can contact us either on this address or by contacting a committee member personally.

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Upcoming Events

Lyceum Club Lunch

Wednesday, 13th July 2005

12 noon

The Lyceum Club

Ridgeway Place (off Little Collins Street), Melbourne

An informal lunch and a chance to catch up with your colleagues in a relaxed environment.

Children welcome.

Cost: \$15.00(student members) \$20.00

MEMBERS ONLY

RSVP: 6th July

Clinical Update

New Guidelines for Cervical

Screening

Wednesday, 10th August 2005

7:30pm for 8:00pm

Speaker: Dr Stella Healey

Victorian Cytology Service

The Lyceum Club

Ridgeway Place

Melbourne

CME points being arranged.

Finger food provided.

Cost: @@

RSVP: 3rd August

Thursday 8th September

Time:

Speaker:

Venue:

Cost:

RSVP: 2nd September

Leadership Skills for Medical Women

November 12+13th, 8:30-17:00.

See attached flyer.

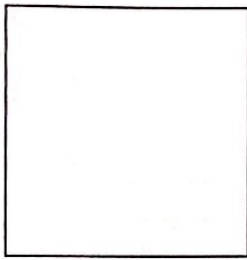
Please RSVP by the date mentioned to the

Secretariat:

Ph: 9419 4644

Email: vic@afmw.org.au

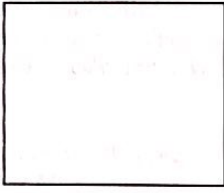
**Victorian Government
News:
Online Consultation On
Work and Family
Balance April 2005
www.women.gov.vic.au**



On International Women's Day week this year, the Minister for Women's Affairs, Mary Delahunty, launched an online consultation asking Victorian working mothers to share their views and experiences on balancing work and family. More than 1,000 responses were received, mainly from working mothers. The fully report is available from the website, but some individual comments to come out were:

WHAT WORKING WOMEN SAID – THE GOOD NEWS:

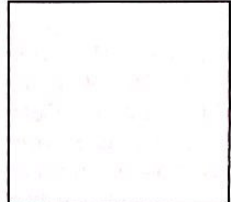
Flexibility is the key for working mothers!



- "My employer allows me to work from home during school holidays and student free days."
- "I use informal flexitime – i.e. time off to care for kids made up on other days."
- "My company is very flexible and allowed me to come back to work early working from home and set me up on a laptop and mobile phone – fantastic."
- "I negotiated with my manager to work longer hours three days per week and being flexible to attend some after-hours to enable me to pick up my daughter from school two afternoons a week."

WHAT WORKING WOMEN SAID – THE CHALLENGES:

• "More acceptance by management towards flexibility in working days especially in terms of school holidays [are] very difficult to manage in terms of care to my children."



• "Although some lip service is paid to allowing workers to take time for emergency or other reasons, you are seen to be bludging."

- "It has come as quite a shock that I am paid 3 days per week and yet am loaded with a 5 day workload. On my days off I still handle calls and emails. I am also quite annoyed with co-workers who glare at me when I leave the office at 4.45pm each day as I have to catch a train to pick up my child from crèche."
- "One of the difficulties for working parents is that our sick leave is used up by our kids – then when we get sick...we have no paid leave left. Our workplace is considering pooling sick leave collectively so that workers with children have access to sick leave that other staff are not using."
- "Management have kept making greater demands on my time – extra study, more evening meetings, weekend seminars, seminars during holiday periods. They preferred to push me out of the job."

Victorian Honour Roll of Women

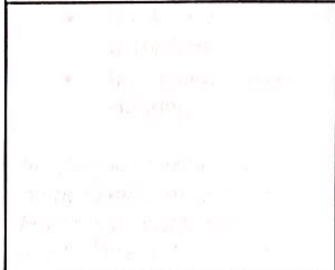
Applications for the Victorian Honour Roll of Women 2006 are now open. The Roll acknowledges the achievements of women from all walks of life who have made an outstanding contribution in their particular field and who have empowered other women.

It represents the diversity of women's accomplishments in a broad range of professions and social policy campaigns, as well as involvement in ethnic and Indigenous communities.

If you know someone who should be honoured on the roll, nominate them. Recipients will be announced as part of International Women's Day celebrations in March 2006.

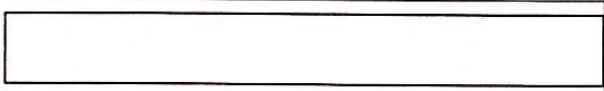
See www.women.vic.gov.au for details.

Annual Premier's Women's Summit



The Summit is an opportunity for up to 200 women to gather to talk with the Premier, Government Ministers, Members of Parliament and other women active in their communities. It is held in September each year.

The event is 'extremely successful in creating positive outcomes for women', such as the Governments Work & Family Action Agenda which stemmed from the 2002 Summit. The Summit also provides excellent networking opportunities for participants. If you wish to attend, please check the website for contact details.



Better Work and Family Balance Grants Program (Vic Gov)

This program assists organisations to adopt practices that improve the work and family balance of their employees. Research shows that businesses that provide flexible workplace practices are rewarded with improved productivity, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and the ability to attract and retain the best possible talent.

Victorian businesses and local government organisations with less than 200 employees are invited to apply for grants of up to \$50,000. Innovative projects that suit the individual needs of the organisation are encouraged, as the program seeks to promote a diverse range of initiatives through pilot projects. Successful projects will be publicised as models of progressive work and family practices. For further information on the current funded projects, contact the Program Manager on: (03) 9651 8158.

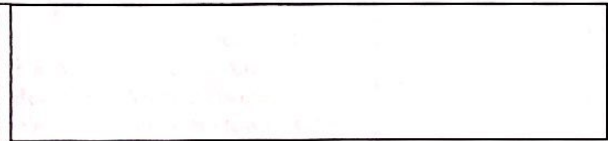
Medical Update: Hormone replacement therapy for preventing cardiovascular disease in post-menopausal women.



A systematic review of evidence in the latest release of The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews has concluded that "hormone therapy has no heart-protective benefit to healthy postmenopausal women or to those with heart disease."

The 10 clinical trials which were analysed included 2 trials involving healthy women and 8 involving women with heart disease. Altogether the trials included about 24,000 women who had been randomly assigned to take either hormones or placebos every day for up to five years. The largest of these studies, involving more than 16,000 women, was part of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study.

The full systematic review is on the Cochrane Website: Gabriel Sánchez R, Carmona L, Roque M, Sánchez Gómez LM, Bonfill X. Hormone replacement therapy for preventing cardiovascular disease in post-menopausal women. The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2005, Issue 2.



WONCA

WONCA has produced a monograph and literature review as part of their strategic planning, addressing the experience of women in varying areas of the medical practice, with a specific focus on women in family practice. It was prepared by the WONCA Working Party on Women and Family Medicine (WWPWF). The aim of the document is to provide an evidence-based statement on the place of women as family physicians and in the broader medical profession. Although the authors acknowledge some limitations, the document as a whole is well considered and thorough. Many points raised are not relevant only to the area of family medicine, but also apply to other specialties. Each section is supported by a detailed individual bibliography, which also provides an excellent starting point for anyone else performing research in this area. The six sections are:

- Women in training
- Women in practice
- Women in Academic Medicine
- Women in Organizational Medicine
- Women family doctors caring for themselves and others
- Women family physicians in the doctor-patient relationship

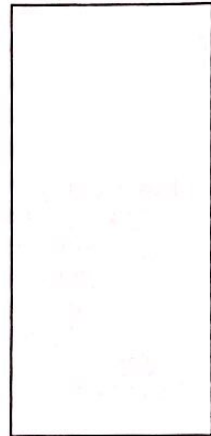
The full document is available on their website: www.womenandfamilymedicine.com

Our Federal Government and Their Woman Friendly Budget

www.windowonwomen.gov.au/wdw/index.jsp

See the Government's Website for a fairly detailed run-down on policies they feel are women friendly in the most recent budget. These are categorized as:

- Measures to assist women and their families
- Assistance for Carers
- Family Law
- Welfare Reform
- Health
- Aged Care
- Superannuation
- Women's Leadership and Development
- Women's Safety
- Working Women/Women in Business
- Indigenous Women and Housing



In other news, the name of the department has been changed once more, from @@@ to @@@. The department has been moved from under the umbrella of Prime Minister and Cabinet to being within the Department of Family Services. @@@@. This has also entailed a physical move, and the staff are now in a separate building on the outskirts of Canberra, rather than being housed with their new masters, with a new (reduced) budget under their direct control.

One other matter of notice from the government's website is the restructuring of The Women's Leadership and Development Programme, which now 'consolidates and replaces four previous programmes: Other Women's Programmes, Informed Choices for Australian Women, Women's Development Programme and the National Leadership Initiative'. It will be interesting to see the overall effect this will have on funding.

AFMW

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Other Upcoming Events

**Impact of Global Issues on
Women and Children**

Third International Conference

February 12-16, 2006
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Co-sponsored by McMaster University, Canada and State
University of Bangladesh.

The Conference Secretariat for the Third International
Conference on the Impact of Global Issues on Women and
Children invites you to participate in an exciting exchange
of knowledge, expertise, and experience on issues relevant
to positive and negative effects of globalization on
children and women.

Abstract submission is now open:

Email: ic2006@mcmaster.ca

Website: www.fhs.mcmaster.ca/slru/ic2006/main.html

**8th Western Pacific
Congress and 56th Annual
Convention of the
Philippines Medical
Women's Association**

10 - 12 November, 2005

The Manila Hotel, Roxas
Boulevard, Manila Theme:
"Golden Health Care towards the
Silvering Years"

E-mail: pmwa2004@yahoo.com.

WIRE Free Seminars

Both: 12:15pm to 1:30pm

Heritage Room,
Ground Floor

Queen Vic Women's Centre
210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne
Contact WIRE: (03) 9921 0878

Monday 18 July

Facing Family Violence: When someone you love is
living with domestic violence.

Friday 29th July

How the Boys in Blue are There for You: The New
Domestic Violence Code of Conduct.

Index of Australian National and Regional Women's Organisations

nwic.org.au

At the website above, there is a detailed list of
organisations dealing in various aspects of women's lives
in Australia at the moment. Future newsletters will
continue on from 'A', but for more comprehensive details,
see the links and contact details on the site.

Abortion Rights Network of Australia *

Association of Non-English Speaking

Background Women of Australia *

Association of Women Educators *

Australian Breastfeeding Association *

Australian Church Women * Australian Council

of Businesswomen * Australasian Council of

Women and Policing * Australian Federation of

Medical Women * Australian Federation of

University Women * Australian

Feminist Law Foundation *

Australian Federation of Women's

International Zionist Organisations *

Australian Local Government

Women's Association * Australian National Bahai

Office for the Advancement of Women *

Australian National Committee on Refugee

Women * Australian Nursing Federation *

Australian Women's Health Network * Australian

Women in Agriculture * Australian

Women Lawyers * Australian

Women's Motorsport Network *

Australian Women Pilots Association

*** Australian Women's Party Australian Women's**

Studies Association

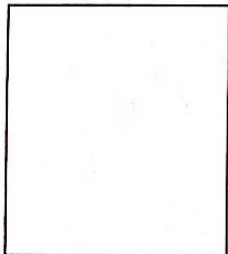
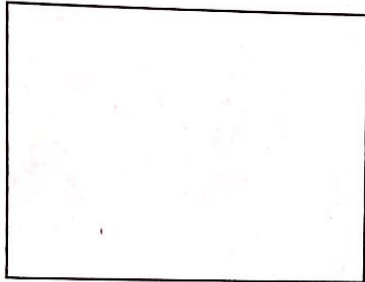
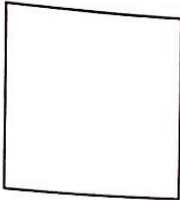
www.DoctorConnect.gov.au

DoctorConnect is an Australian Federal Government
initiative that aims to assist appropriately trained overseas
doctors to enter the Australian medical workforce. It is a
designed to provide 'authoritative, accessible and useful
information about working as a doctor
in Australia'.

The website aims to meet the needs of
a variety of users including overseas
trained doctors, their employers and
those advising them. DoctorConnect
provides information about such
issues as immigration requirements,
medical registration, the Australian health care system,
training arrangements and living in Australia.

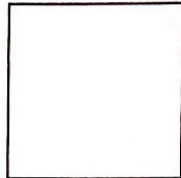
**Coercion and
Resistance: Women
Engaging with
Medicine**

Dr Jo Wainer, 31st May



UN News

www.un.org



Annan hails new law enfranchising women in Kuwait

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has hailed a new law in Kuwait which enfranchises women and advances gender equality in the country.

"The Secretary-General welcomes the passing by Majlis al-Umma, Kuwait's legislative body, of a law granting women for the first time the right to vote and run for parliament," a spokesman for Mr. Annan said. The statement also congratulated the people of Kuwait "on this historic step."

Women and the Media

During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes and behaviour, especially of children and young adults. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women. Some UN linked sites and programs found on the website at www.un.org/works/beijing+10 are:

UNESCO: "Women make the news" initiative

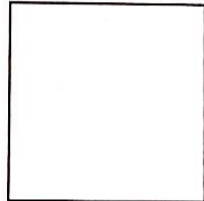
Through this initiative UNESCO seeks to give more visibility to women journalists, to their editorial work, as well as to women as voices in the media.

DESA/DAW: Participation and access of women to the media, and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women

Information on an Expert Group Meeting organized by DAW in cooperation with UN DPI, ESCWA and UNESCO.

Voices for change - Rural women and communication

FAO: Radio broadcasting for rural women and farm households



Private Lives is the 'biggest and most ambitious' research survey of the health and wellbeing of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people ever conducted in Australia. It is being carried

out through Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV) in partnership with the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University. The survey covers areas of general health, psychological wellbeing, health service utilisation, relationships, sexual and reproductive health, sexual activity, pregnancy and parenting, internet use and experiences of discrimination. It takes about 25min to complete and is completely confidential. Participants must be over 16 and should identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. No identifying information will be collected.

Go to www.whv.org.au for details.