



making  
all the **difference**

# Does Combining Health Promotion and Feminist Frameworks Equal Better Health Outcomes for Women?



**WOMEN'S HEALTH**  
IN THE NORTH



# About WHIN

- Regional women's health service for NMR and one of 11 specialist services in Victoria.
- Underpinned by the 'dual strategy': National Women's Health Policy (1989).
- Catchment: Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra.
- Over 18 years' experience in providing services (established in 1992).



**Health  
Promotion**

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# Is feminism outdated?





**It's nice to have a girl around the house.**

Though she was a tiger lady, our hero didn't have to fire a shot to floor her. After one look at his **Mr. Leggs** slacks, she was ready to have him walk all over her. That male styling sure soothes the savage heart! If you'd like your own doll to

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# The reality of women's experience

- Women do not form the majority of any senior job position in any industry in Australia.
- The overall pay-gap between full-time male and female workers, based on average weekly earnings has risen to 17 per cent.
- Women make up 27 per cent of lower house MPs and 35 per cent in the Senate.

(Fenella Souter May, 2010)



**Dangerous!**



# 'Can't be tamed'








# Feminism is still relevant

- A feminist perspective is critical to understanding the position of women.
- The skills feminists have used to ‘read’, critique and question the position of women remain essential.
- Feminists prompt us to go directly to the ‘root-cause’ of women’s disadvantage.



# What is a 'gendered' perspective?

- Uses the term 'gender' instead of 'women'.
- Practiced in the health sector: within government, mainstream agencies and community health.
- Considers both men and women *and assumes* equality.
- Focuses primarily on sex-disaggregated data – without analysis.



A feminist approach is critical to ensuring that women's health and wellbeing needs are met.

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As women's health services, we need to develop a clear position around the use of gendered language and gendered or feminist approaches.





- Health Promotion & Feminism go beyond the physical body to consider the broader determinants of health.
- Health Promotion & Feminism approaches address structural influences on health.
- Health Promotion & Feminist practitioners aim to enable people to increase control over & improve their health.
- Health Promotion & Feminism are underpinned by a commitment to record, respond and work with community and grassroots voices.

It is essential for women's health services to adopt, retain and strengthen a feminist approach to health promotion practice.







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