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Gender Equity Coalition

Newsletter - February 2025

Welcome to this edition of the Gender Equity Coalition Greater Bendigo Newsletter; a way for us to connect, celebrate progress, and share opportunities to advance gender equity across our community.

The Coalition brings together local government, businesses, education, community and health organisations, community groups and individuals who share a simple but powerful goal: to create a Greater Bendigo where everyone feels safe, respected and valued. Together, we're building momentum for real change, through collaboration, shared learning, and collective advocacy.

If you are passionate about creating a fair, safe and more inclusive Greater Bendigo

[Join the Gender Equity Coalition.](#)

Please also use this link to update your contact details.

Gender Equity Coalition Updates

The Gender Equity Coalition Leadership Group had a busy end to 2025, with a 16 days event, the development of a new logo, and a dedicated webpage. The webpage provides an overview of the coalition, our members the leadership group and details upcoming events. We are in the process of incorporating a gender equity resource library that people can access. If you have any gender equity resources, links, key documents, local case studies etc. that you think would be valuable to this online 'library' please forward them to: Genderequitycoalition@bchs.com.au

To access the Gender Equity Coalition webpage please head to: [Gender Equity Coalition - BCHS](#)

Our new logo uses a simple, yet effective design and incorporates colours from our letterhead. Please find the logo below.



Community Engagement sessions

The Gender Equity Coalition Greater Bendigo will be holding two Free sessions for anyone in the community who is interested in:

- Sharing information about initiatives and projects currently working to advance Gender Equity.
- Sharing ideas about initiatives and projects that could advance Gender Equity.
- Joining a GEC Community Engagement Group to further Gender Equity

Sessions will also include: a short introduction to Gender Equality, and the Prevention of Gender Based Violence. Goldfields Bendigo library – Activity Room 1

Tuesday 3rd March - 12.30 - 1.30 – Click to register: [Gender Equity Coalition Community Engagement Session](#)

Thursday 12th March 5.30 - 6.30 – Click to register: [Gender Equity Coalition Community Engagement Session - Thursday](#)

Bendigo Magazine

The coalition was lucky to be in the most recent issue of the Bendigo Magazine. Please find the article below from page 24 in Bendigo magazine.

[Bendigo Magazine - Issue 81 - Summer 2026 by Bendigo Magazine - Issuu](#)



Coalition Member Spotlight

Zonta Club of Bendigo

Zonta Club of Bendigo is a member of Zonta International, a leading global organisation of individuals working together to build a better world for women and girls. A world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman can achieve her full potential. In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men.

Zonta Bendigo is an active member of the Gender Equity Coalition, with two Zonta members, Sue Clarke and Ember Chittenden sitting on the Leadership Group. For more than 44 years, Zonta Bendigo's advocacy has consistently been underpinned by two core commitments: promoting gender equity and eliminating violence against women.



Zonta Bendigo's advocacy focuses on:

- *Gender-based violence prevention*, with particular emphasis on International Women's Day and the global *16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence* where we have focussed on 'Zonta Says No'.
- *Gender-equal climate action*, promoted locally through participation in the Zonta Says NOW campaign and sustainability-focused community engagement.
- *Women's participation, education and leadership*, highlighted through activities and advocacy linked to International Women's Day (8 March), Earth Day (22 April), International Day of Women and Girls in Science (11 February), and International Day of the Girl Child (11 October).

These activities encourage women and girls to participate widely in education and employment, celebrate achievement, and address systemic barriers to equality.

Zonta:

- Provide *six scholarships annually* to promote equity in education.
- Support women into leadership and decision-making roles through the Young Women in Public Affairs Award and leadership mentoring initiatives such as *The Girl I Am*.
- Advocate for gender equity through membership of the *Gender Equity Coalition Greater Bendigo* and consistent use of publicity, media and social media channels.
- Partner with organisations including *Women's Health Loddon Mallee, Bendigo Community Health Services*, and a wide range of women's support services to strengthen cross-cultural understanding and promote women's rights.
- Are an active leaders in 16 Days of Activism campaigns.

Alongside direct advocacy, Zonta Bendigo provides practical support to reinforce advocacy messages, such as toiletry packs for women escaping family violence and financial support for rehousing.

Through sustained advocacy, strategic partnerships and practical action, Zonta Bendigo continues to advance gender equality, eliminate violence against women, and promote a more just, safe and inclusive community for women and girls. Zonta are welcome people of all genders to join them.

To find out more about Zonta Bendigo please go to: [ZONTA CLUB OF BENDIGO INC - Home](#)



16 Days of Activism in Bendigo

In 2025 Greater Bendigo held a host of events to acknowledge 16 Days of Activism Against Family Violence. The 'Respect Is' display was expanded, with messaging located throughout multiple public locations in Greater Bendigo; a host of free online training was offered, including 'Men as Allies' and 'Introduction to Gender Equality', and a Violence Prevention Cricket match was held.

The launch of 16 Days was held at Bendigo library, showcasing exhibitions & displays from local support services, storytime and children's activities that highlighted the importance of gender equity and respect, and 'coffee with a cop'. Across the 16 Days Zonta and Anglicare brought attention to the experience of family violence through public film and documentary screenings; and Wire and the City of Greater Bendigo held sessions to build the connection between gender based violence and economic inequality.



Women's Health Loddon Mallee, City of Greater Bendigo, Thorne Harbour Country and Greater Bendigo Against Family Violence hosted a 'Preventing Violence Beyond the Binary' webinar, exploring how individuals and workplaces can play a meaningful role in preventing gender based violence. Alongside this, Simone O'Brien, a survivor, advocate and speaker of family violence gave a powerful presentation sharing her lived experience, speaking with courage and hope, to inspire change.

On Day 6 of 16 Days, about 40 people gathered at the library for an event hosted by the Gender Equity Coalition Greater Bendigo 'Power in Partnerships – Advancing Gender Equity through Sport and Community'. This event demonstrated the impact gender equity in sport can have in the wider world, and the strength of partnerships in driving gender equity.

BCHS CEO and Gender Equity Coalition Chair Mandy joined gender equity champions Tricia Currie and Alice Henderson, plus Bendigo City Football Club reps Jess Howard, Ruby Flanagan and Glen Springate to share and reflect on the club's experience of levelling the playing field. "We're not asking for anything more for girls– we're just asking for exactly the same as boys", shared Glen.

The event showcased a short documentary 'Too Far Offside' by filmmaker Bronte Flanagan. It highlights the inequities in women's sports and explores the actions a community sporting club can take to impact gender equity.

"When gender equity is prioritised, it challenges the inequality and disrespect that drive violence against women, and fosters safer, more inclusive communities free from family violence, gender-based harm, and discrimination," said Mandy.

"Together, we're building momentum for real change, through collaboration, shared learning, and collective advocacy."

Events & Training

Our Watch offers free webinars to introduce and build skills in Change the Story, their evidence-based framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and children.

- [Change starts here](#) - 90 minute session - high level overview of Change the story, covering the vision for a safe, respectful, equal world, what gets in the way of us achieving this and actions you can take to prevent violence against women.
- [Change starts with us](#) - full day online workshop - offering introductory skills and knowledge to use the framework.

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- [Changes to Gender Equality Requirements for Business | Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) - A webinar presented by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) - 17th of February.
- [An Update on Respect@Work | Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) - A webinar outlining the latest developments, strategies for fostering a respectful work environment, legal requirements - 10th of March.

WELA 2026 National Leadership Program

In response to finding a response to the environmental crisis Australia faces, WELA have developed the [2026 National Leadership Program - Women's Environmental Leadership Australia](#). Focussing on empowering women and gender-diverse changemakers to lead for our environment and climate.

2026 No to Violence National Conference

No To Violence (NTV) have announced Stan Grant and Grace Tame as the keynote speakers for their 2026 National Conference - Ending Men's Family Violence: From Local Practical to National Strategy. Hosted in partnership with Stopping Family Violence and SPEAQ, the conference will be held in Hobart from 11-12 March.

The event will connect local innovation to national strategy with a focus on how communities, civil society and government can work together to end family violence. Register [here](#).

Research & Resources

Resources supporting prevention and reconciliation



Preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children is a shared national responsibility. Please explore the Our Watch resource that support prevention informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership: [Changing the picture](#)

Understanding the link between climate disasters and gendered violence | Respect Victoria

As the climate crisis intensifies, natural disasters are increasing in frequency, severity, and duration. Climate disasters - like bushfires, droughts, floods or severe storms - can kill people and destroy homes and livelihoods.

These disasters, however, can impact different people in different ways. Women, children, elderly people, people living with disabilities, and Indigenous communities are often the most affected. The UN Development Programme found that women and children are 14 times more likely to die than men in climate disasters, and an estimated 4 out of 5 displaced people are women and girls.

This is because climate disasters can make existing inequality - like gender inequality, racism, ableism or ageism – worse. In doing so, they can also make it more likely that violence against women and other forms of gendered violence will occur.

Read more about why climate disaster is particularly risky for gendered violence and what you can do to inform yourself, friends, family and colleagues about the importance of preventing gendered violence - before, during and after disasters and emergencies occur.

Preventing Violence Beyond the Binary - 16 Days of Activism 2025

Preventing gender-based violence begins with building cultures of respect and ensuring everyone has the freedom to live and express themselves authentically.

In partnership with Greater Bendigo Against Family Violence, Zoe Belle Gender Collective, Thorne Harbour Country, and City of Greater Bendigo, Women's Health Loddon Mallee hosted a 16 Days of Activism webinar featuring keynote speaker Starlady from the Zoe Belle Gender Collective, alongside guests Julia Earley (Rainbow Health Australia), and Ellen Poyner (Our Watch). In this important conversation they share tools and explore how individuals and workplaces can play a meaningful role in preventing gender-based violence.

If you missed it, please view the [webinar recording](#) below and share it widely with your colleagues and friends.



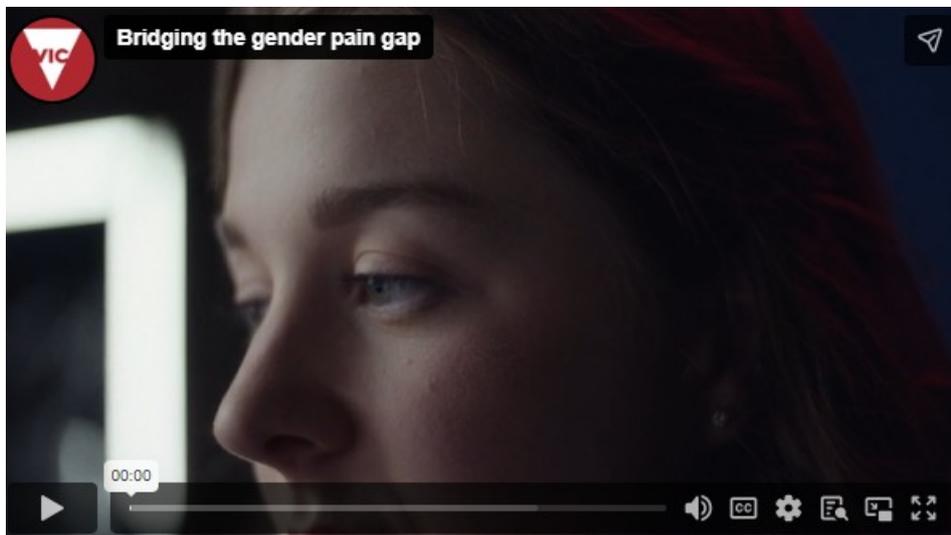
Bridging the gender pain gap women's health

Australia's first Inquiry into Women's Pain released its *Bridging the Gender Pain Gap* report has been release. More than 13,000 women and girls, their carers, health professionals and peak bodies contributed their experiences to reveal gender health gaps, experiences of medical bias, sexism and misogyny, and feelings of being ignored or dismissed.

The process affirmed that chronic pain (the top causes being menstrual, hormonal, endometriosis and musculoskeletal conditions) disproportionately impacts women, with more than 90 per cent experiencing long-term pain impacting on their daily lives, relationships, employment and overall wellbeing.

The report makes 27 recommendations, with the Victorian Government [announcing](#) a pilot for the use of the 'green whistle' for IUD insertion at 20 Sexual and Reproductive Health Hubs, the setting of a Women's Pain Standard to apply all public hospitals and health services starting with the health hubs, and a new special clinic in the Royal Children's Hospital for adolescents and girls.

Women's Health Advisory Council member and Head of the Department of General Practice at Monash University Professor Danielle Mazza says long-term chronic pain is complex and not dealt with well in emergency departments or short consultations.



To read the report, [click here](#).

The importance of promoting healthier masculinities report

The NSW Government has funded a state-specific analysis of the Jesuit Social Services Man Box research that refers to a set of social 'rules' that pressure men to behave according to rigid masculine norms, such as being dominant or emotionally closed off.

The NSW Man Box 2025 report has been informed by a survey of more than 1200 men. It shows that while most reject traditional male stereotypes, such as appearing tough and in control, those who strongly agree with these are more likely to perpetrate sexual harassment and intimate partner violence.

Report findings include:

- More than one-third of men reported sexually harassing a woman in the past month, with 18 per cent admitting to frequent harassment
- Almost one third of respondents aged 18-30 indicated that they had perpetrated physical or sexual violence against a current or former partner
- Violent pornography use was widespread, particularly among those who strongly endorsed rigid masculine norms
- One in four agreed or strongly agreed that "men should use violence to get respect if necessary"
- Men who most strongly endorsed Man Box beliefs were 7.5 times more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence and 10 times more likely to commit sexual violence against an intimate partner than men who rejected the Man Box beliefs. Those same men reported poorer mental health, and higher rates of problem gambling and risky drinking.

The report also shows that small shifts in attitudes towards healthier masculinities are associated with lower perpetration of intimate partner violence and sexual harassment.

Jesuit Social Services, Executive Director of The Men's Project, Matt Tyler suggests an early intervention approach to promoting healthy masculinity. "If we can intervene earlier, in schools, sports clubs, workplaces and other environments where men and boys are feeling these pressures, then we can demonstrate a range of healthy forms of masculinity and help men flourish, free from the restrictions of the Man Box. We can support men and boys to live fulfilling lives free from violence," Matt said.

[Click here](#) to read the report.

Listen

- [The Women's Agenda Podcast](#)
 - [Podcasts for Women in Business & Gender Equality](#)
 - [Mamamia Out Loud](#)
 - [Ladies, We Need to Talk with Yumi Stynes](#)
 - [The Gender Agenda](#)
 - [A Podcast of One's Own with Julia Gillard](#)
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Call to Action

Member Spotlight

You are invited to share your stories, projects, or actions, big or small, that are helping to create more inclusive, respectful spaces.

Your experiences can inspire others and highlight the collective progress we're making together. Let's highlight the amazing gender equity efforts happening across our region! [Contact Us](#)

Community Engagement Executive

To support Gender Equity in Bendigo, we are setting up a Community Engagement Executive group. Members of this group will engage broad coalition membership to support change as guided by coalition strategic directions; facilitate gender equity through activities and shared knowledge/resources and support the creation of a community where gender equity is prioritised in organisations and groups. If you are interested in being involved please: [Contact Us](#)



Community Engagement Groups

If you are interested in sharing information about initiatives and projects that are working to advance gender equity in Greater Bendigo, sharing a new idea or joining a group to further gender equity please come along to a community session or [Contact Us](#)



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