

..... taking care of **Women's Health**

Our Plan

Traditionally 'women's health' meant reproductive health but we now understand that women's health involves the entire body and is shaped by the biological, cultural and social differences between women and men. Our health system needs to apply the 'gender lens'. Here's why:

Women at all ages are more likely to be hospitalised and have higher utilisation of GP and primary care services than men.

Heart disease is the biggest cause of death for women and 1/4 of all deaths, but many women and health professionals are unaware that it strikes women later and symptoms, outcomes and treatment responses to are different.

Women are 2 to 3 times more likely to suffer from depression and are more likely than men to experience profound feelings of guilt, and to sleep excessively, overeat and gain weight. Women respond differently to medications, the proportion of Australian women drinking at risky levels has risen from 6% to 11% in the last decade. The proportion of women who smoke has stagnated.

The burden of caring for the sick and aged falls predominantly to women whose health declines as a result and one in four Australian women suffers family violence

Before the last election Labor promised a National Women's Health Policy. Two and a half years on, consultation is still underway.

- A national body within the Department of Health and Ageing for women's health which applies a **gendered lens** to improving the health of women and girls
- A new **National Women's Health Policy**
- Dedicated funding for **Women's health centers** and family planning centers
- More **training for GPs** in women's health issues
- Programs on **public awareness** of specific health risks for women and girls
- Increased funding for **violence prevention**, including
 - A public education campaign to challenge and eliminate violence-supportive attitudes and behaviour and to promote respectful relationships
 - Teacher training in providing programs for sexual health and respectful relationships, mental health and wellbeing, bullying, body image, self harm and depression
 - Training for medical, nursing and allied health personnel and for police
 - Strategies to address multimedia cyber bullying
 - More resources for crisis services, including refuge accommodation
- Secure and improved recurrent funding for **women's health promotion** and reproductive and sexual health programs
- Improved involvement of **women in decision-making**, particularly Indigenous, disabled and culturally and linguistically diverse women
- **Anti-smoking and responsible alcohol use** programs focused particularly on young women and pregnant women