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# Gender Equity Coalition

Newsletter - November 2025

Welcome to this edition of the Greater Bendigo Gender Equity Coalition 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.



As we mark the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**, we are reminded that gender equity is not only about fairness, but also about safety, inclusion and opportunity for all. This global campaign is a time to reflect, speak out and take action to prevent violence and promote respect in our homes, workplaces and communities. There are lots of events happening across the region - check out the brilliant calendar from Coalition members **Women's Health Loddon Mallee: [Regional Calendar](#)**.

We are thrilled to mark this important campaign, and contribute to the conversation by holding an event: **Power in Partnership: Advancing Equity Through Sport and Community**.



Hosted by the Gender Equity Coalition, this event celebrates the strength of partnerships in driving gender equity, featuring insights from local leader and advocate Tricia Currie and the Bendigo City Football Club. Together we'll explore how sport, community and collaboration can power lasting change.

*Date: Monday 1st December, 4.30–5.30pm*

*Location: Bendigo Library*

**RSVP: [Power in Partnership: Advancing Equity Through Sport and Community](#)**

We look forward to seeing you there and to continuing this shared journey toward a gender equal Greater Bendigo.

Mandy  
Gender Equity Coalition  
Leadership Governance Group Chair

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### Gender Equity Coalition

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

[Join the Gender Equity Coalition.](#)

*Please use this link to update your contact details.*

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## Gender Equity Coalition Updates

We are so pleased to be bringing you news of the work the interim/confirmed GEC Leadership Governance Group has undertaken over the last 12 months and look forward to extending our GEC membership and engagement in Greater Bendigo:

- The Coalition held a strategic planning workshop in October 2024 to reset the Coalition's strategic direction, partnership model and plan. The Interim GEC Leadership Governance Group has put together resources and structure to support the work going forward.
- Bendigo Community Health Service have accepted the auspice of the Gender Equity Coalition and have employed a part-time Project Worker, Alice Henderson.
- The GEC Leadership Governance Group has been confirmed for 2025–26, with all 12 positions filled. Mandy Hutchinson (CEO, Bendigo Community Health Service) will serve as

Chair and authorised spokesperson, supported by Deputy Chair Eileen Brownless (Community Member).

- The GEC Leadership Governance Group have formulated and approved a Terms of Reference with a focus on promoting Gender Equity, collaborative leadership, accountability and sustainability.

## 2025 – 2026 Leadership Governance group

We would like to warmly introduce the newly elected GEC Leadership Group for 2025–26:



**Mandy Hutchinson - Bendigo Community Health Service  
Chair of the Gender Equity Leadership Governance Group**

As CEO of Bendigo Community Health Services, I've seen first-hand how gender equity transforms workplaces, families and communities. Chairing the City of Greater Bendigo Gender Equity Coalition is an opportunity to bring people and organisations together around that shared purpose; creating a community where everyone feels safe, respected and valued. I'm passionate about turning our collective commitment into action, supporting members to build their capacity, learn from each other, and lead change that makes gender equity real across Greater Bendigo.



**Angie Dredge - Chief Executive Officer  
Heathcote Health**

Heathcote Health is a small rural health service. My substantive role is Director of Clinical Care, although I am currently the Interim Chief Executive Officer. I wanted to be part of the Gender Equity coalition as I believe gender equity is fundamental to delivering fair, effective, and person-centered care. The promotion of gender equity in health can foster trust, particularly in the area of domestic violence, and improve overall community wellbeing.



**Belinda Buck - Director of Strategy, Programs and Partnerships Women's Health Loddon Mallee**

As a current member of the Gender Equity Coalition Leadership group, I bring almost four years of experience advancing women's health and gender equity initiatives in the Loddon Mallee region. Being part of the GE Coalition is important to me because I am committed to advancing gender equality and driving meaningful change in our community. My involvement is motivated by a strong belief in collective action that addresses systemic barriers to gender equity and the positive impact it has on creating a more equitable future for everyone.



**Dale Park - Diversity and inclusion Manager Bendigo TAFE**

At Bendigo TAFE, I lead our work to embed gender equity and social justice across the organisation. With the reach we have into students, staff, and industry partners, there's a real opportunity to create positive change that extends beyond our campuses and into the broader community. I believe achieving gender equity means tackling all forms of discrimination and oppression, including racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, religious discrimination, ageism, and socioeconomic inequality, so that everyone can participate fully and safely in community life.



**Dave Burton - Executive Officer Goldfields LLEN**

I have over 25 years experience in developing community capacity through education, arts and technology initiatives internationally, and have a strong passion for gender equity across all age groups. If we are going to make meaningful change in gender equity, we need to start with education. Through the Coalition, I see an opportunity to develop community advocacy and understanding through the capacity development of local leaders, educators, and businesses.



**Eileen Brownless - Deputy Chair - Community Member**

As the Executive Officer of Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership I became a foundation member of the Gender Equity Coalition at its inception in 2019 working with the strong recognition of the gendered nature of violence and driver of Family Violence. My background work is nursing, women's health and community services, community development, and leadership roles in community health. My passion is working collaboratively in partnership to achieve social change and to develop thinking to support system change to make it happen.



**Ember Chittenden – Head of Programs  
Bendigo Tech School/ Latrobe University**

With over 20 years of leadership in education, I champion gender equity through reform, inclusion and collaboration. I lead programs that create equitable pathways for women and girls in STEAM. As a Zonta Bendigo member, I support global initiatives for women. I serve on international committees, including those linked to UN Women and Women in Science. I joined the Coalition to support a united, place-based movement for lasting cultural and structural change. Being part of the Leadership group allows me to work alongside others committed to building a safe, respectful and inclusive Greater Bendigo.



**Jess Howard - Director, Healthy Communities and  
Environments - City of Greater Bendigo**

My role currently involves overseeing key community services such as maternal and child health, immunisation, early learning centres, environmental health, local laws, sport and recreation, climate change resilience, and emergency management. My work also includes the City's work in the gender equity space, as part of the community partnerships team. The City is proud to support the work of the Gender Equity Coalition.



**Kate Mannix - Chief Executive Officer  
AFS & Associates Accounting and Consulting**

I am passionate about inclusive leadership and regional advocacy, especially in private enterprise. I am Regional Chair and board director for the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. I also sit on the Bendigo Health Foundation Board and contribute to the AICD Loddon Mallee committee. I lead workplace gender equity initiatives and support community-led change across business sectors. Joining the Coalition reflects my commitment to practical reform through collaboration and advocacy. I believe equitable workplaces and communities are key to long-term prosperity and resilience.

**Margaret Augerinos - Chief Executive Officer  
Centre for Non-Violence**

The Centre for Non-Violence (CNV) provides family violence response, recovery and prevention programs for victim survivors and people who use violence across the Loddon Region. Being part of the Gender Equity Coalition is a key priority for CNV. Gender based violence is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality, so engaging with the important work of the



coalition supports our efforts to achieve gender and social equality.



**Mark Hands - Chief Executive Officer**  
**Goldfields Libraries**

I am a Bendigo local who loves what libraries represent in terms of a space for everyone. It's a place where the idea of equality is valued. My involvement in the Coalition is linked to the values we hold at the library and my own belief that we all should have the right to choose what we want to be without the hindrance or pressure of gendered stereotypes.



**Sue Clarke**  
**Zonta Club Bendigo INC.**

I represent Zonta Club of Bendigo Inc., which has been part of the Bendigo community for 45 years, working to support and empower women and girls. Zonta works to build a better world for women and girls by advocating for policies that promote equality, providing scholarship in many male-dominated fields, and raising awareness about issues like violence against women and climate justice, which disproportionately affect women.

## Project Worker Update

I am excited to step into the Gender Equity Coalition project officer role and bring my background in health promotion to the Coalition. Most recently, I worked in women's health, supporting organisations, businesses, and community groups to prevent gendered violence and work towards gender equity. Prior to this I supported women and children experiencing family violence and helped implement changes from the Royal Commission into Family Violence in sexual assault services. My experience includes developing policies, working with CALD communities, and driving systemic change.

It has been a busy first month in the role!



I have spent time learning all about the Gender Equity Coalition, its past achievements and future plans, organised a 16 Days of Activism event and pulled together this newsletter. I am thrilled to be part of this work and look forward to connecting with you all as we continue promoting gender equity across Greater Bendigo.

*Alice Henderson*

*Project worker Gender Equity Coalition*

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## Coalition Member Spotlight

### Women's Health Loddon Mallee

#### Gender Equity Toolkit - Empowering communities for a healthier future

Women's Health Loddon Mallee (WHLM) has launched a new resource, designed to support local government authorities (LGAs), community health services, and other organisations across the region to take meaningful actions to progress gender equality.

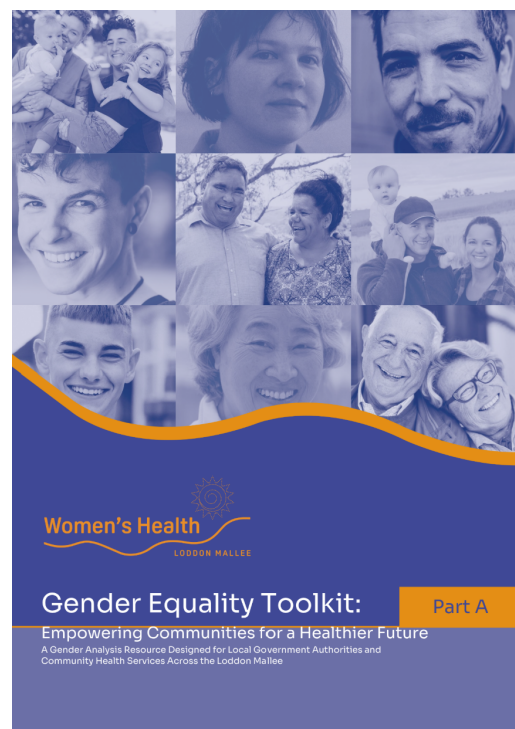
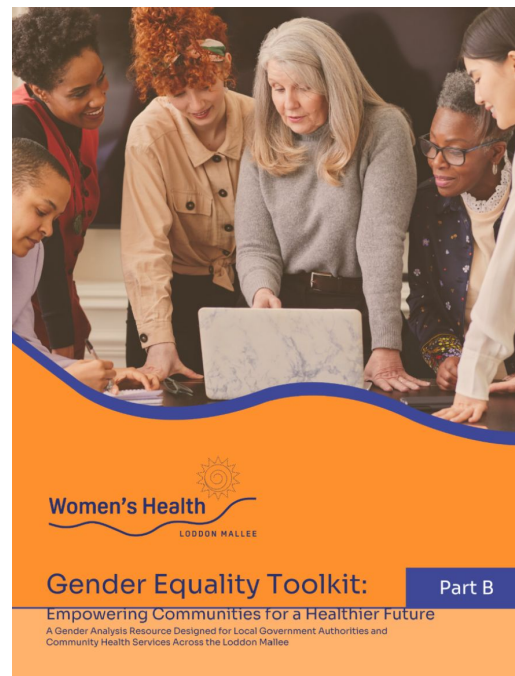
This two-part toolkit equips organisations with the knowledge and tools to:

- Understand the link between gender equality and health outcomes.

- Understand and adhere to mandates and requirements relevant to gender and gender equality.
- Embed gender and gender equality into their organisational culture and across communities.
- Conduct Gender Impact Assessments by providing gender disaggregated data and analyses of priority areas outlined by the Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Whether you're a policy maker, health professional, or community leader, this toolkit offers practical insights and actionable strategies to help you drive progress.

Access the resource [here](#).



## 16 Days of Activism

The 16 Day of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign led annually by [UN Women](#) to raise awareness and encourage communities to take action to end violence against women. It runs every year from 25 November (the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10th December (Human Rights Day).

You don't have to be a family violence service, or for gendered violence prevention to be your core focus to play a role in preventing violence against women. Every

workplace, organisation and community group and individual can be a part of upholding women's right to safety.

## Statewide events and toolkits

**16 Days of Activism Toolkit - Respect Victoria** - For workplaces, organisations and community groups. It includes information to help you coordinate meaningful and inclusive events and activities, and information to guide your messaging.

**Safe and Equal** - Hosting a range of capacity-building activities for those interested in getting involved in the campaign; provide resources to help design and deliver impactful campaigns and events; and a comprehensive list of statewide events.

## Greater Bendigo events and toolkits

Women's Health Loddon Mallee have established a regional campaign theme for 2025: We Can Change the Story Loddon Mallee. Choose Respect.

They have developed a **16 Days Toolkit** and set of resources to support organisations and communities in the region to participate and lead events and activities as part of the international campaign. The toolkit highlights starters to encourage raising kids free from limiting ideas about gender to support them to thrive and live with unlimited potential.

To check out and attend 16 Days Events in our region, go to the Women's Health Loddon Mallee: **Regional Calendar**.



Respect is working  
together to  
prevent gender-  
based violence.

#16DaysOfActivism  
#RespectIsChallenge

Access a: **Quick guide to 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence**

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## Events & Training

Hosted by **Safe + Equal, PreventX** - Australia's leading conference on the prevention of family and gender-based violence. 24 - 26 March 2026 - in-person and online. Bringing practitioners together to reflect, connect and explore how storytelling can drive meaningful and lasting change.

**Women Deliver 2026 Conference (WD2026)** - Narm (Melbourne) April 2026. WD2026 will centre the leadership, knowledge, and resistance of feminists, activists, and First Nations leaders across the Oceanic Pacific, a region at the forefront of climate justice, gender equality, and decolonisation.

**Skills, Gender, Intersectionality and Equity Symposium** - Victorian Skills Authority. 11th December 2025 - Exploring key aspects of its mission to support inclusive growth and shared prosperity through skills.

**Introduction to Preventing Gender and Disability Based Violence** - Wednesday 3rd of December - Women with Disability is offering a free training session exploring how gender and disability inequality drive violence, and how we can all help prevent it.

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) are offering a number of free, online, courses:

- **Introduction to Gender Equality** - Supports the development of foundational knowledge to support further studies or work in gender equity and the prevention of violence against women.
- **Men as Allies** - First step in understanding your role as an ally in promoting gender equality and preventing gender-based violence and disrespect.

**Change Starts Here** - A short introduction to Primary Prevention - March & May 2026 - This foundational introduction is for people who are new to Change the story or primary prevention work.

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## Research & Resources

**Rainbow Health Australia | LGBTIQ Family Violence Prevention Project** aims to prevent family violence in LGBTIQ communities before it starts by addressing evidence gaps, understanding its drivers, and building capacity for effective, evidence-based prevention. [Click here](#) to access new evidence guide, practice guides, and pilot prevention projects.

**Discover Our Watch webinars** - a collection of recorded webinars about a variety of prevention topics:

- Our Watch's Changing the picture resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- Prevention in early years settings
- Resistance and backlash
- Developing an expert prevention workforce
- Respectful relationships education
- Preventing violence against women and girls with disabilities
- Men and masculinities
- Prevention in universities, sport, the media and local government

**Respect Victoria highlights how challenging outdated gendered expectations of parenting** can reduce relationship conflict and promote equal, respectful relationships in families. There's no rule book on being a dad, so many of us follow the patterns and roles we grew up with. But these patterns often don't suit modern families, resulting in imbalances in both the joys and the work of parenting.

**Jesuit Social Services: Attitudes to manhood and the behaviours of Australian men aged 18 to 45** This research explores young men's attitudes and behaviours across a range of topics. It highlights the need to increase awareness of the harmful impacts of the 'Man Box' norms to promote positive alternatives to improve the wellbeing of people from all genders. This research is closely linked with article: 'Young men rejecting 'cookie-cutter' masculinity but many still feel pressure to act tough'.

**Progress on gender equality at work is slow and uneven, new index finds**

Gender equity at work has barely improved over the last ten years, with paid work opportunities held back by women doing the bulk of unpaid work in the home, new research shows

New research from the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (BCEC) and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) was released in a national online launch. **Gender Equity Insights 2025: New Report release 14 October - BCEC**

Sally Hasler joins Samantha Sutherland to discuss gender equity in health systems, and Women Health Victoria's current focus on mental health, cancer, and sexual and reproductive health. **Sally Hasler: How Medical Misogyny Fuels a CEO's Mission - Samantha Sutherland**

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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.



## Community Engagement Groups

Membership of the Community Engagement Group is open to any GEC member and gives members flexibility to engage with initiatives as they're able. The Community Engagement Group will include existing, or newly formed, Working Groups facilitating initiatives or projects with a focus on gender equity in specific settings (e.g. education, sport, health), interest groups, organisations or in the community.

The Community Engagement Group and Working Groups will be supported and guided by the Community Engagement Executive.

If you are engaged in a gender equity initiative, have an idea for an initiative and would like support or would like to join a group or contribute to an initiative - please

**Contact Us.**

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## Gender Equity Coalition

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

**[Join the Gender Equity Coalition.](#)**

Contact Us: [Genderequitycoalition@bchs.com.au](mailto:Genderequitycoalition@bchs.com.au)

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