

MEDIA RELEASE

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SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Yarram and District Health Service (YDHS) is proud to be shining a spotlight on violence against women by participating in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

The annual campaign, which runs from 25 November to 10 December, encourages all Victorians to work together to prevent and end gendered violence.

In Australia, more than one in three women has experienced men's violence and on average, a woman is killed by a man she knows every 10 days.

The Wellington Shire ranked within the top five Victorian municipalities for family violence incidents in 2022-23 and this year's local campaign is focussed on raising awareness of the impacts within Yarram and surrounding districts.

According to YDHS Manager Community Health Alison Payne, campaigns like the 16 Days of Activism help in highlighting this important issue and the role we all have to play in ending gendered violence.

"Unfortunately, safety for women is not a given in any community, and neither is respect," Ms Payne said.

"But it doesn't have to be this way; violence against women is preventable and we have to work together towards a future where all women are safe, equal and respected".

A key element in addressing this issue is combatting ingrained attitudes and behaviours in men.

"We need to really address the harmful attitudes and behaviours that fuel violence and we all have a role to play in doing that," Ms Payne said.

"That means that if you hear a comment or see a behaviour from a friend, a colleague or someone you know that's demeaning or sexist, you should call it out".

A series of events are planned across Yarram throughout the 16 Days organised by a Committee comprising representatives from Yarram Neighbourhood House, Yarram Anglican and Uniting Churches, Rotary, Yarram Red Cross, the Yarram Progress Association, Yarram Secondary College and Gippsland Women's Health.

The events include a screening of the film *Battle of the Sexes* (the Billie Jean King Story), a men's breakfast, a women's morning tea, a photo exhibition and a community walk and barbecue.

The Walk for Respect will begin at 5.15pm on Monday 25 November 2024 at Yarram Secondary College. It will include a tour of the photo exhibition and end at the Yarram Memorial Park at 6pm with a smoking ceremony, a free barbecue and a candlelight vigil to remember those lives lost to family violence.

Ms Payne is encouraging locals to attend the events being hosted over the 16 Days and to engage with the issue of gendered violence.

"Campaigns like this are a really important opportunity for us all to reflect on what we can do to contribute towards a world where all women are safe, equal and respected," she said.

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