



WORKING TOGETHER WITH TRUST AND RESPECT

# Community Health *Matters*

**BANYULE**  
Community Health

## Celebrating Women!

Over one hundred women gathered on Saturday 8 March to celebrate International Women's Day in style!

Transforming Bellfield Community Hall, the International Women's Day Dinner was the culmination of twelve months planning by a dedicated group of local women involved in the **Women of West Heidelberg** group. The group is supported by Banyule Community Health and West Heidelberg Neighbourhood Renewal – which was established after last year's International Women's Day.

Celebrating local women and the contribution they make to their community, the evening was designed to bring women from a range of backgrounds together to share and celebrate what they have in common and their differences.

**Proud Women of West Heidelberg** was the inscription on the pens given as a gift to everyone who attended and the night certainly embraced this atmosphere.

Those who attended the dinner enjoyed great food, music, entertainment and lots of laughter and dancing! A special part of the evening was the launch of a DVD titled **Celebrating Women of West Heidelberg** which has been created to capture and celebrate the roles of local women in our community. This DVD is just one part of the Women's Stories project that the Women of West Heidelberg group are also working on.

As part of the evening women were asked to write down what makes them proud to be women in their community. These snapshots will be compiled into a story book to complement the DVD and will be launched later this year.

The night was enjoyed by all who attended, with plans already underway for a bigger event next year. The success of the night reflects the hard work and contribution made by local women. These women certainly have a lot to be proud of!



*Shamsu Ali & Arcade Sopoaga celebrate International Women's Day*

The **Women of West Heidelberg** group continues to meet monthly to share stories, afternoon tea and to celebrate women. The group is supported by Banyule Community Health and West Heidelberg Neighbourhood Renewal and has received additional funding from Banyule City Council and the Combined Churches Association.

For more information about the **Women of West Heidelberg** group, contact Neighbourhood Renewal on 9450 2622.

Autumn 2008



## Breast Cancer - What you need to know!



CEO Jim Pasinis with BCH President Melinda Brooks.

## From the CEO

I welcome BCH members to the 2008 year.

I am pleased to announce that the Minister for Health has finalised his decision on the new Banyule Community Health Board of Management. Denis Swift, Sr Frances Baum, Peter Ogden & David McKenzie (elected by the members) are joined by Cassandra Kemp, Melinda Brooks, Bill Barber, John Ferraro and Abdalla Ahmed. The new team is of the highest quality and will represent the needs and expectations of the Banyule community.

Our Strategic Plan continues to guide us in our work, under three key areas: delivering quality services; building stronger communities; and ensuring Banyule Community Health is the workplace of choice for the best staff in the community health industry.

The Autumn issue of Community Health Matters takes a specific focus on Women's Health. In light of International Women's Day on 8 March, we are reminded that women are central to communities around the world, and at BCH we celebrate their role in our community.

Women's health is addressed through a variety of our services, only some of which are showcased in this issue of Community Health Matters.

I'm sure you will find the work inspiring, educational and a healthy reminder for what's needed to keep good health.

**Jim Pasinis**  
Chief Executive Officer

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting women in Australia with approximately 3,000 Victorian women (and 20 Victorian men) diagnosed each year. Some members in the community have a higher risk of breast cancer, including:

- women over the age of 50
- women with a strong family history of breast cancer
- women who have had breast cancer previously
- women who have certain breast diseases

It is important that women are familiar with the normal look and feel of their breasts and check them regularly for changes that could be a sign of breast cancer. These include:

- thickening of the breast tissue
- a lump or a lumpy area
- discharge from the nipple
- an inverted nipple, that has not previously been inverted
- puckering or dimpling of the skin
- a change in the shape of the breast or the nipple
- breast pain

If you notice any of these symptoms, you should see your doctor or specialist to investigate. Initial tests may include a physical examination, mammogram or an ultrasound – with further tests if there are any concerns. Remember that nine out of ten breast changes are not breast cancer!

Treatment for breast cancer will depend on things such as the type of cancer, how advanced it is, and the results of any tests taken – but may include hormone treatments, radiotherapy, chemotherapy or surgery.

### Reduce Your Risk

Being proactive can reduce your risk of breast cancer:

- maintain a healthy lifestyle and stay within your recommended weight range
- check your breasts regularly and be aware of any changes
- seek medical advice promptly if there are any changes present
- if you are over 50, have a mammogram every two years

There are many support services available in the community if you are diagnosed with breast cancer. Many hospitals have a breast care nurse to provide specialist support, and organisations such as The Cancer Council, BreaCan and the Breast Cancer Network provide information, advocacy and support to cancer patients.

At Banyule Community Health, we offer a Breast Cancer Support Group which meets in West Heidelberg on the first Monday of each month, from 10am. You can contact Elischka on 9450 2023 for more information.

Find out more about the breast cancer support services by visiting our website at [www.bchs.org.au](http://www.bchs.org.au)

## About International Women's Day

March 8 is celebrated across the world as International Women's Day (IWD) and provides an opportunity to recognise the achievements of women and their contribution to society.

On this day, women can celebrate the progress that has been made but also contemplate those areas of women's lives where more can be done. Women's access to education, health care and paid labour has improved, and legislation that promises equal opportunities for women and respect for their human

rights has been adopted in many countries.

However, nowhere in the world can women claim to have all the same rights and opportunities as men, and until we all work together to secure the rights and full potential of women, lasting solutions to social, economic and political problems are unlikely to be found.

You can find out more about International Women's Day by visiting [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)

# Stories of Motherhood

Banyule Community Health's MUMS Wellbeing Group (Mums Understanding Mums) was established in 2005 to support women with or at risk of post natal depression. The group provides support, social connection and guidance to new and expectant mums in the community.

Wanting to share their experiences with the wider community, the mothers involved in this group have used artwork to capture their individual stories which is now featured in **Stories of Motherhood**, an art exhibition currently on display in our West Heidelberg building.

Through painting, sculpture, drawing and stories, the women have collected their experiences and are reaching out to other women who may feel that they are facing motherhood alone.

At the launch of the exhibition in March, over forty people gathered to view the artwork and connect with the women behind it. The exhibition runs until 16 April and can be viewed Monday to Friday between 8:00am and 6:00pm.

Our MUMS Wellbeing Group meets weekly in Greensborough and is supported by a Psychologist and one of our Community Midwives. If you'd like to know more about the group and how you can become involved, contact Anna or Sharleen on 9433 0923.

*Stories of Motherhood has been made possible by funding provided by the Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund.*



## Let's Do It!

The Let's Do It group offers women in the community a safe place for friendship, social connection and positive opportunities. The group offers time out from your four walls and provides assistance to plan and achieve some personal goals.

Let's Do It offers the chance to learn new skills, opportunities for employment and training, as well as social and recreational opportunities for women and their children. Participants can access other services and supports with health and welfare needs, while making new friendships and connections in the community.

The Let's Do It group meet weekly at West Heidelberg and are supported by Cynthia. For more information about the group and how you can be involved, contact Cynthia on 9450 2052.



## The Machine and Me

Gambler's Help Northern, Women's Health in the North and Brunswick Women's Theatre have collaborated to offer women affected by problem gambling the chance to explore the issues related to problem gambling through a series of workshops called "The Machine and Me".

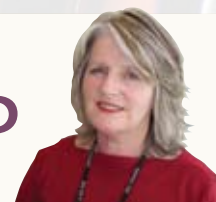
The workshops, which will be facilitated by Brunswick Women's Theatre, will increase women's knowledge and awareness of the issues related to problem gambling as well as helping to reduce the stigma and sense of shame experienced by women affected by it. Through the workshops, women will learn that the things that have been our shame can become our power.

Using creative and interactive storytelling, participants will come together to share their stories and struggles with problem gambling. The workshops offer a chance for women affected by problem gambling to connect in a safe and supportive environment, to gain confidence with self expression and learn that their stories have meaning and importance for others in the community.

Gambler's Help Northern has played a key role in recruiting workshop participants and promoting the project throughout the region. If you would like to know more about the workshops or the services of Gambler's Help Northern, contact Emel on 9450 2081.

## Health for Life Tip

*What is Health for Life?*



As we know, diabetes has reached epidemic proportions in Australia. One million Australians have diabetes and half of these are not aware they have it. Many of these cases of diabetes are related to lifestyle factors – such as a lack of exercise, weight gain or eating unhealthy foods.

For women, the risk of developing pre-diabetes, diabetes and heart disease increase significantly at mid-life and beyond. You can reduce your chances of developing diabetes by making changes to your lifestyle, including:

- eating healthy food and maintaining a healthy weight
- asking your doctor to check your blood sugars, blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides on a regular basis
- exercising for thirty minutes daily
- cut out smoking

In this issue of Community Health Matters, we've included a Type 2 Diabetes Risk Test – a quick test you can complete to find out your risk of developing diabetes.

Banyule Community Health offers a range of services for people with diabetes, including the Health for Life program – a program to support people with chronic diseases, including diabetes. We develop an individual program for each person to assist them to focus on a healthier life for themselves.

If you would like to know more about Health for Life and discuss this in relation to your own health needs, please contact Carol on 9450 2051.

**Carol Phillips**

Health for Life Service Coordinator



## 20 Years of the CCs

The wonderful CC Variety Group is celebrating twenty years of entertainment and friendships. All are invited to attend a concert and afternoon tea to mark their twentieth anniversary!

### Twenty Years of the CC Variety Group Concert and Afternoon Tea

1:30pm, Wednesday 28 May

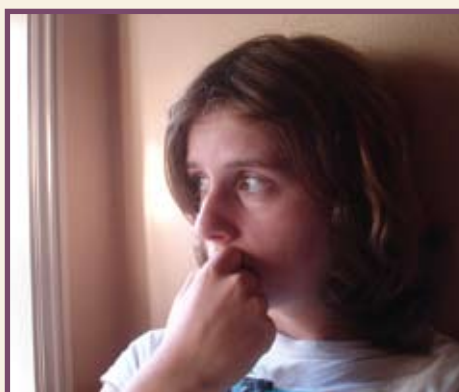
Thomas Rossell Room,  
Banyule Community Health  
21 Alamein Road,  
West Heidelberg

For details contact  
Shirley Hickey on 9459 1460.

## Parenting After Violence - Information Sessions

Struggling to pick up the pieces after experiencing family violence? Banyule Community Health, in partnership with Moreland Community Health, is offering a series of free information sessions for women dealing with the effects of family violence.

Over three weeks, the sessions will provide practical information and resources to assist you to cope with your children's trauma while dealing with your own stress as a parent.

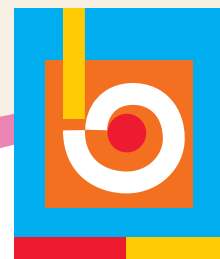


**Session 1:**  
**Family violence and its effects on you and your children**  
12:00pm – 3:00pm  
Wednesday 30 April 2008

**Session 2:**  
**Talking with your children about family violence, their behaviours, feelings and fears.**  
12:00pm – 3:00pm  
Wednesday 7 May 2008

**Session 3:**  
**Parenting after violence – practical information, strategies and self care.**  
12:00pm – 3:00pm  
Wednesday 14 May 2008

All sessions are being held at Banyule Community Health at 21 Alamein Road, West Heidelberg. A light lunch will be provided and the sessions are free to attend. For more information about the sessions and to register your place, contact Chris at Banyule Community Health on 9450 2000.



**BANYULE**  
Community Health

#### Banyule Community Health

21 Alamein Road    25 Grimshaw Street  
West Heidelberg    Greensborough  
Tel: 9450 2000    Tel: 9433 5111

Web: [www.bchs.org.au](http://www.bchs.org.au)

If undeliverable return to:  
Banyule Community Health  
21 Alamein Rd, West Heidelberg 3081

Community Health Matters

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