

# OUTRAGE TO DETERMINATION...

REAL  
WOMEN

RIGHT  
ON



VWMHN  
ACTION  
FOR  
CHANGE

Concept +  
Words + Illustration by JULIE DEMPSEY



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1

# PSYCHIATRY ENTERS UNISEX ERA

Cut off Long Hair

EQUALITY WITH MEN

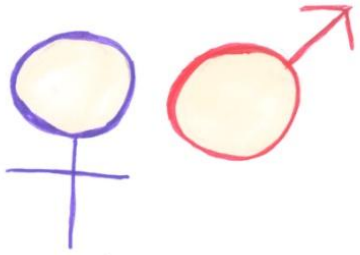


Women's Liberation

Burning of Bra's



This is the Age of Aquarius ...



Hey Man, have a joint

Grow Long Hair

## 1960's: SOCIETY MORE "PROGRESSIVE"

2

### MIXED GENDER WARDS CREATED TO MIRROR COMMUNITY

MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTIONS POLICY  
REVIEW BOARD



Having females around will calm the male patients

We must Modernise ... MODESTY IS DEAD

3

### EXTREME SITUATION RESULTS



"I DO NOT CHOOSE TO LIVE LIKE THIS AT HOME"



WOMENS RIGHTS REGRESS IN SHARED WARDS

"YOU HAVE NO CHOICE THIS IS WHERE YOU HAVE TO STAY"

© John Drayton

YEARS PASS BY 8

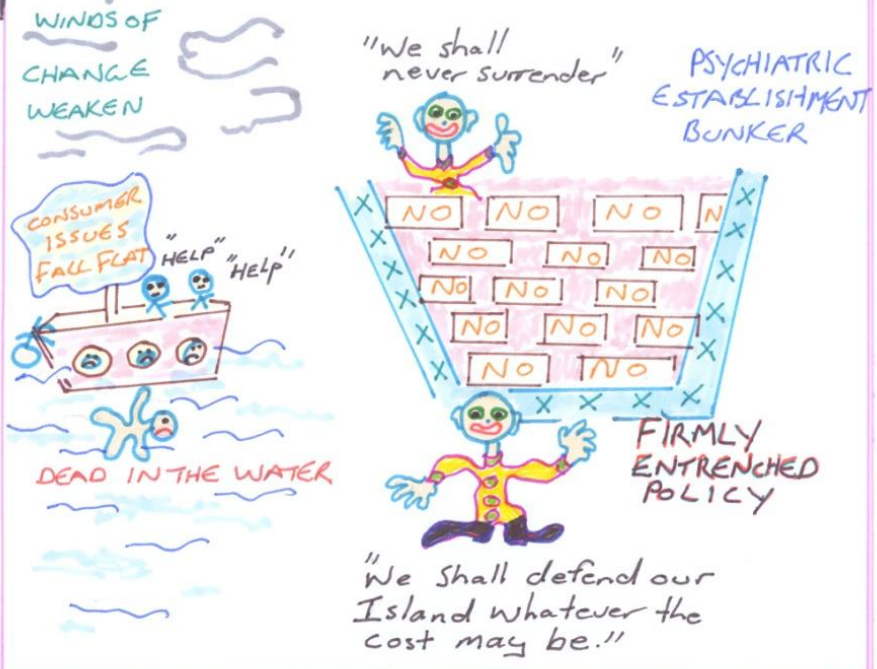
4 1997 WVMHN BOOKLET "SPEAKING OUT" LAUNCHED



WOMEN'S LEGACY OF BEING SUBJECT TO ABUSE IN MIXED WARDS CONTINUES...

5

CALLS FOR CHANGE STONEWALLED



MORE YEARS PASS BY 8

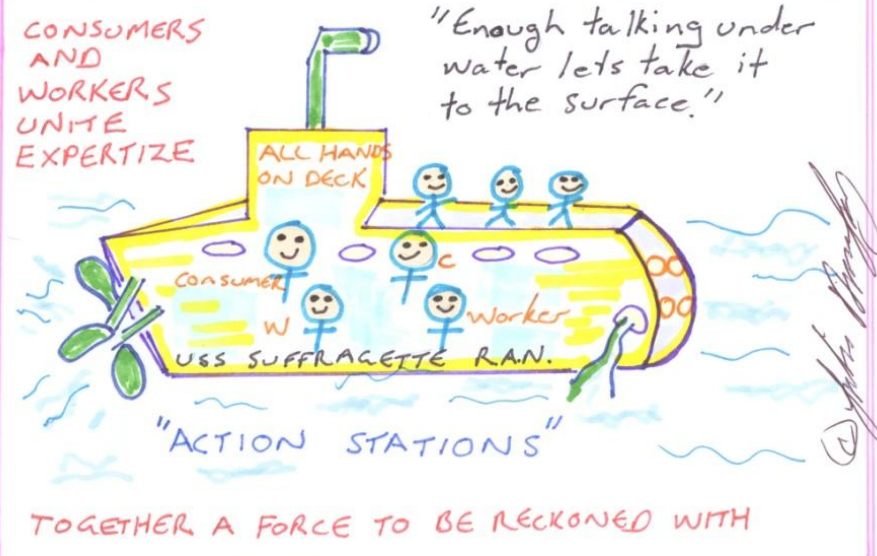
6 2005 WVMHN "WOMEN ONWARDS" FORUM CONCURS "HORROR" SITUATION



"We are living a NIGHTMARE Hospital has to be survived"

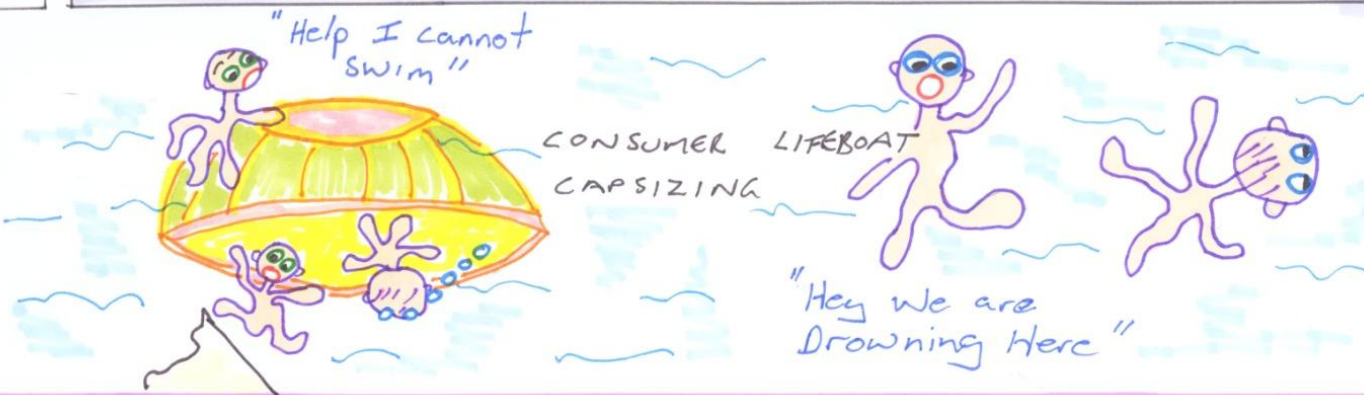
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OUTRAGE BECOMES FIVE DETERMINATION



8

# PHASE I BATTLEPLAN LAUNCHED 2006:



VWMHN SEND OUT SURVEYS TO TEST THE WATER... A RATHER UNPLEASANT TASTE...

61% of interviewees identified harrasment

9

# SURVEY RESPONSE DAMNING



CURRENT GENDER DIVISIONS INEFFECTUAL

FLOOD OF CALLS FOR REVIEW

PSYCHIATRIC FACILITIES ...

A BROKEN SHIP IN THE NIGHT

10

# VWMHN CONSOLIDATE AIMS

NOT ON THE MAP

DECLARATION OF INTENTION OF

- ① New Wards - Incorporate female only spaces for sleeping, lounge and recreation areas, and bathroom facilities into new building designs.
- ② Existing Wards - Review of space to achieve above criteria in current mental health facilities.
- ③ Policy Development - creation of Mental Health Branch guidelines to promote safety in Acute Inpatient Units.
- ④ Culture Change - Raise awareness of gender issues with staff.

A Broken Ship in the Night  
 ©

11

PHASE 2 NOVEMBER 2006

POSTCARD CAMPAIGN MAKES IT POLITICAL

Postcards for hope from the psychiatric abyss

Minister's office inundated with 2000+ postcards requesting action on Women's Issues



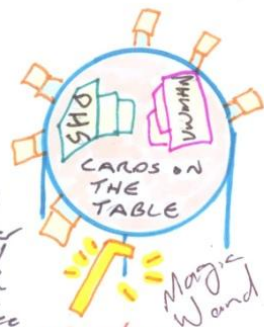
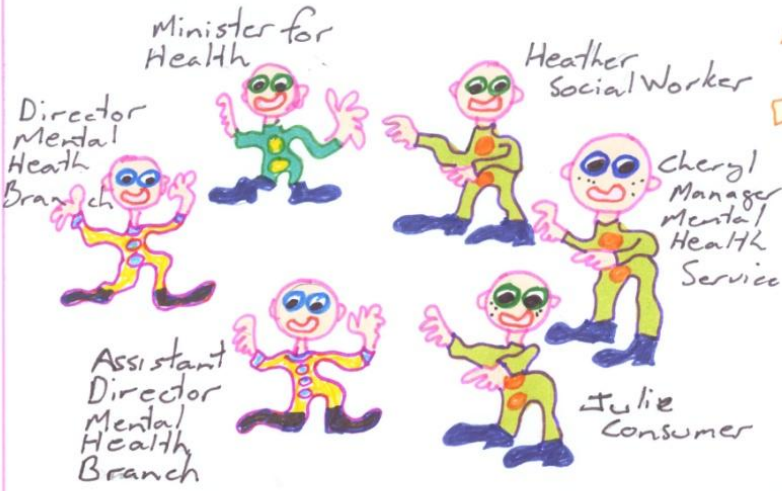
Shedding light on the Minister

VWMAN distribute postcards to Mental Health services users/workers/general public to forward to Minister for Health in lead up to Victorian State Election

12

AUDIENCE WITH MINISTER GRANTED

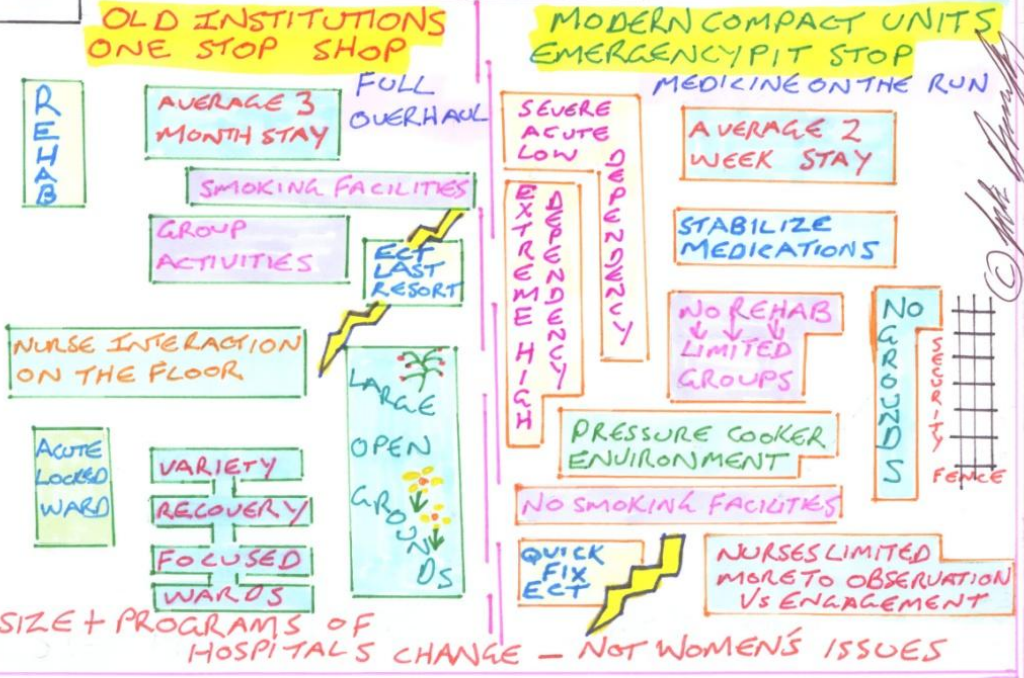
LATE 2006



Meeting potential for working some future magic ...

13

JULIE OUTLINES TYPICAL EXPERIENCES SINCE 1982



14

# NO CHOICE OF FEMALE NURSE PROMPTS PAST HORRORS

"DON'T MAKE A FUSS ..."

It is just us here"



"WHERE IS THE FEMALE NURSE?"

"CAN I HAVE A SHEET?"

MEDICATION INDUCED

URINARY RETENTION - CATHETERISED REPEATEDLY EACH DAY BY MALE NURSE

15

# SEXUAL PREFERENCE ATTRACTS ABUSE

NO PRIVACY

HOMOPHOBIC SLURS



Leave us Alone

"WE ARE OUT IN THE OPEN HERE"

I WISH IT WAS SAFE TO HOLD HANDS



"Are you Sisters?"

"You just need a good screw"

"You have men's Balls You fat Pigs"



Black + White OF INTOLERANCE

16

# DISINHIBITED BEHAVIOUR TREATED DIFFERENTLY DEPENDING ON GENDER

SCENARIO 1

Hey guys Check me Out - I'm naked from the shower!!



"I DO NOT WANT TO SEE THIS"



"Go back to your room"

"This is the third time he has exposed himself"

SCENARIO 2

"Hey guys Do you think I'm Sexy??"



Sure Honey - Lets party in the bathroom!!



"She is a bit promiscuous"

"Lets lock her in HDU for her protection"



Heavy handed approach or safe nursing practice?

17 FEMALE PATIENTS EXPECTED TO ACCOMODATE INAPPROPRIATE MALE BEHAVIOUR

I'll f#\*!! you slut

You Scare Me - I am not Safe

Just ignore him - he is not well

This is no holiday for me - I am unwell too...

18 ACUTE DOES NOT MEAN INHUMAN

I AM NOT AN ANIMAL

Psychosis does not equal absence of feeling

19 SEX ON WARD - NO STAFF IN HDU AT NIGHT

"Okay no staff are around..."

"Lets get it on!!"

These hospital beds are a bit hard and narrow for creative sex!!

Hey guys - We had sex last night!!

"Pretend it did not happen"

DAY STAFF IN THE DARK →

Just ignore them"

There are no protocols to deal with this

20 ASSAULTS FREQUENT//RESULTS DEVASTATING

Friend 1: "He raped me... Now I am pregnant"

Friend 2: "I wish I had not agreed... what was I thinking?"

Friend 3: "I was raped in hospital"

I cannot live like this - GOOBYE"

NO WHERE TO BE SAFE

21 SEXUAL ABUSE TRAINING NECESSARY WHEN ISSUES ARISE

I came in here for protection

Hope is obliterated

I feel Invisible My 'crap' Ineffectual Life Continues

Do not be insensitive We could compound previous abuse issues

ABUSE CYCLE OF HUMILIATION AND SUBMISSION REPEATED IN ANOTHER ENVIRONMENT THAT SHOULD BE SAFE

22 EVEN BEDROOMS NOT A SAFE RETREAT

I want to be in that bed too!

What are you doing in my bedroom?

I wish I had an alarm buzzer to warn staff

Male patients enter female patients bedrooms uninvited

23 SHARED BATHROOM FACILITIES UNHYGIENIC

It is hard to aim when you shoot up!!

24 BASIC DIGNITY DESTROYED

The pants will not stay up

One Size fits all

You can see my breasts

You must wear ward pyjamas.

1st night in HDU Locked Ward

25 NEW PATIENTS - "Fresh Meat"

"The staff will not talk to me" ???

"What is this place? I guess terror is routine here!"

Older predatory males stalk young females

"Come with me... I'll show you the bathroom."

"How do things work around here?"

26 VISITORS MAGNET FOR OTHER PATIENTS & CONFRONTED WITH LACK OF PRIVACY, INTIMIDATION, AND AGGRESSION

"I WANT SEX"

"Where do you live?"

"Got a cigarette?"

"F#%k you"

"What religion are you?"

"I am God"

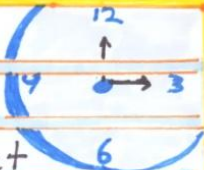
"You are damned"

Mum - Do Not Visit - It is horrible and unsafe in here...

© Julia Dwyer



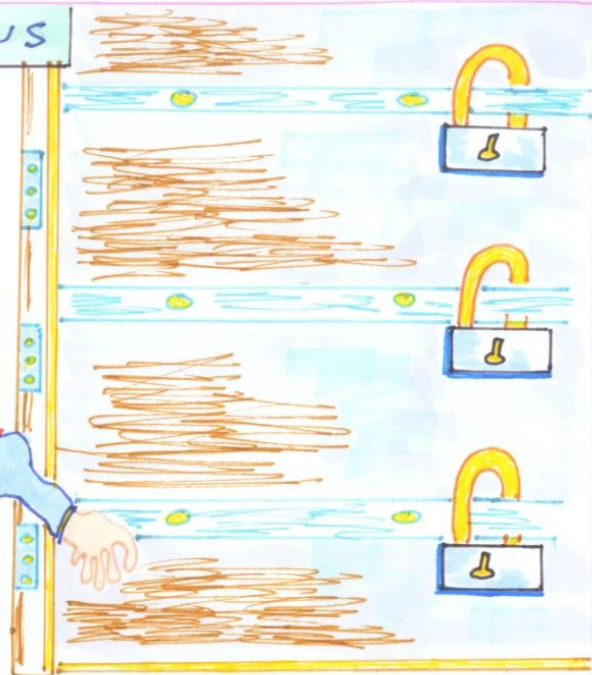
15 Minute Obs  
but no contact



"Everything 'looks'  
Alright"

PLEASE  
DO NOT MAKE  
ME  
NAKED

NO  
EXIT



HA!  
HA!

↓  
VOICES  
HAVE A  
FIELD  
DAY

"It will just  
be you and us  
voices locked alone  
in here with no  
distraction or help"



CHARGE  
NURSE

S  
R  
N

"If you  
keep struggling  
we will give  
you 2 injections  
instead of  
just 1."



USED MENS  
URINAL



Spidey

28

# MINISTER MOVED BY PRESENTATION

"I'm Listening"



"And Hearing"

MINISTER ALL EARS

VWMHN Staff + patient Representatives

Heather M.H. Worker



Cheryl M.H. Worker



Julie's examples are typical of women psychiatric patient experiences + Also acknowledged by workers

Julie Consumer of public psychiatric services



"Thank you for hearing our stories"

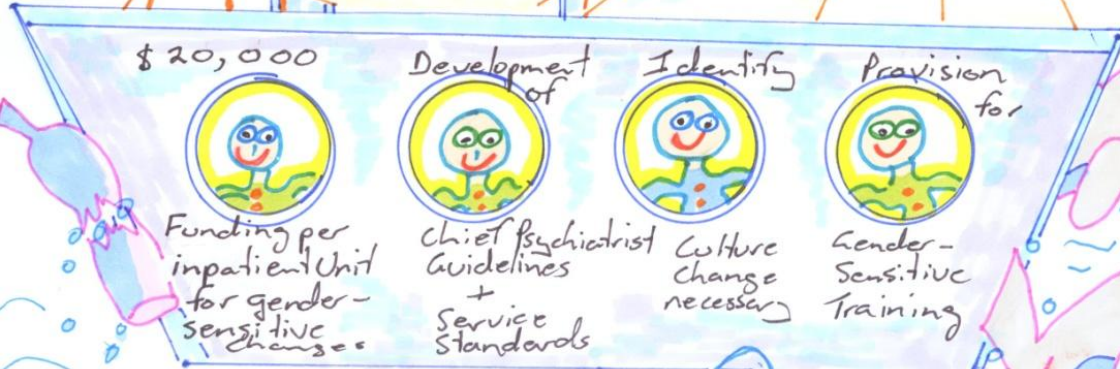
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# MINISTER COMMITS TO FUNDING GENDER-SENSITIVE INITIATIVES



DHS Increasing Gender-Sensitivity and Safety Project SETS SAIL

FULL STEAM AHEAD WITH WIND IN THE SAILS



Relaunch of Hope

MOVEMENT AT LAST

John Dumb

# PHASE 3

# IN 2007 WVMHN HOLDS 'LISTENING' EVENTS WITH FEMALE CONSUMERS

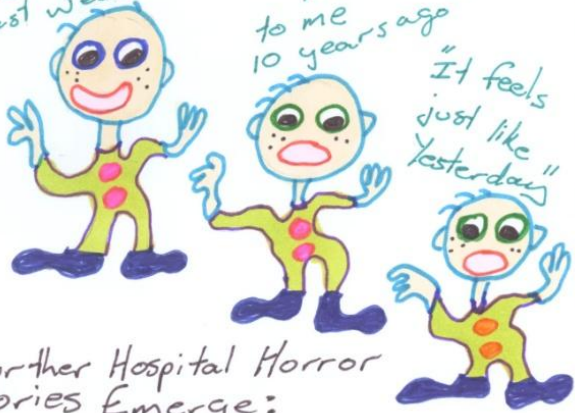
30

COMMON THEME →

"This happened last week"

"The same to me 10 years ago"

"It feels just like yesterday"



Further Hospital Horror Stories Emerge:

WOMEN BOND →

Talking Together

This treatment is not okay



Soothing Activity making postcards with messages for Area Mental Health Services

→ SOLIDARITY



Strength in common ground + numbers.

FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO FEEL SAFE TO TALK OPENLY ABOUT EXPERIENCES AND FEEL HEARD

# 31 FURTHER NEEDS BECOME APPARENT IN PLAIN BLACK AND WHITE

- Training to deal with previous abuse issues
- Training and support to deal with sexual incidents on ward
- Female Contact nurse
- Female presence when secluded
- Debriefing of patients after incidents whether patient is directly involved or witness to an incident

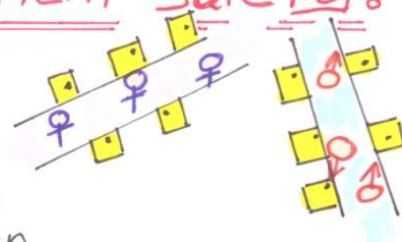


© Julia Dwyer

APRIL 2008

Womens' Ten Priorities for Improving Inpatient Safety:

1 Locate bedrooms in separate women's and men's corridors



2 Separate women's lounges, outdoor and family visiting areas



3 JANE'S BEDROOM



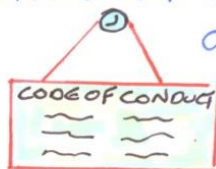
DONOT ENTER



Lockable bedroom and bathroom doors

4 Dedicated women's and men's bathroom facilities in both low dependency and high dependency units

5 Introduce Patient Codes of Conduct which clarify unacceptable behaviour



"That conduct is unacceptable. It is written."



6 "TIME OUT" Earlier intervention by staff to protect women and prevent escalating patient conflict



7 Better support by staff for women who experience harassment

8 staff to be aware of patients' previous experiences of trauma



9 To be treated by female staff where possible, particularly at night

"It's okay"



"I am a female night nurse"



"Let's sit and talk"

10 More opportunities for communication and therapeutic contact with staff

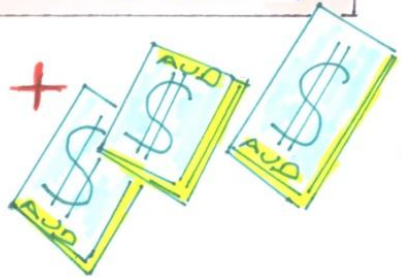
John Smith (C)

BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS NETWORK ATTRACTS FUNDING

2008 - 2009

MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA +

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPT. OF HEALTH AND AGING



FUND REPORT BY VWMHN

"Gathering Information About Clinical Mental Health Service Initiatives":

- a) 25 Psychiatric Inpatient Units **STEPS** Mixed Corridors  $\rightarrow$  Women Only Corridors **TO** Decline Majority Mixed Gender  $\rightarrow$  **SAFETY**  $\uparrow$  16 W.O. Corridors

- b) Women Only Spaces Created  Butterfly Room Women's Lounge Mildura
- c) Women's Outdoor Recreation Areas  Sensory Garden Children's Play Area  Castle Mural

- d) Locks On Doors
- e) Code of Conduct  Defining Acceptable Behaviour

- f) Nurse Call Buttons / Sensory Motion Detectors 

- g) Female Portfolio Positions / Gender Sensitive Practice 

On the Look-Out for Patients 

© Anita Smith

# 34 PHASE 4

## BUILDING ON ACHIEVEMENTS NETWORK ATTRACTS FUNDING

2008 - 2009 - 2010

### REICHSTEIN FOUNDATION FUNDING

WOMEN MAKING AN IMPACT

- ① Sustain Achievements
- ② Broaden Spectrum
- ③ Develop/Implement Strategic Plan
- ④ Promote Culture Change

MHCA + Dept. of Health fund  
 Training on Nurse Level at Inpatient Units  
 Doing the Conference Circuit + Area Clusters

Lets Fix This!!



Nailing the future

TUTOR  
 RECOVER  
 EMPLOY

A 2008-2009



Consumer Julie and Worker Cheryl  
 Travel Victoria during bushfire Season

B 2009-2010

500+ STAFF SEEN



New Blood - ongoing training with Consumer Jude and Worker Cheryl...

VWMHN  
 Keep on Driving the gender-sensitive message home in near and far away places...

© Julie King

# 35 SERVICE DELIVERY HAS POSITIVE IMPACT

Rejuvenates staff sensitivity to daily blunting accrued in Under-funded Under-resourced Under-staffed Working environment



**E** Patients are people too  
Staff are people too

↓

Create Environment of Dignity

↓

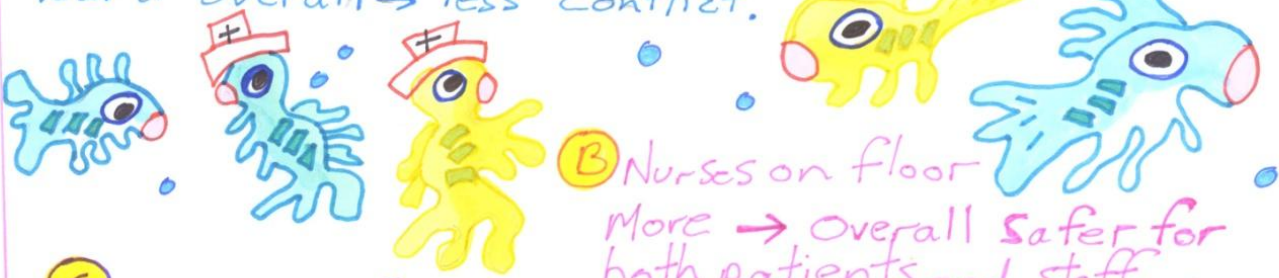
Develop Mutual Respect

NO-ONE SHOULD BE A BOTTOM FEEDER

# 36 STEPPING OUTSIDE THE FISHBOWL

INITIAL RESISTANCE TO GENDER-SENSITIVE CHANGES CREATES WAVES on Inpatient Units:

**A** Muddy Waters of Women Only Corridors being "logistically problematic" clears to "actually in practise → easier to manage ward overall → less conflict."



**B** Nurses on floor More → Overall safer for both patients and staff... ↓ Escalation lessened

**C** Separate toilet/bathroom/sleeping facilities → ↑ basic dignity/safety.. Obvious when male patient is in wrong area

**D** Female staff presence when Secluding... "Not just a job for the Boys"

DO NOT TAP THE GLASS IT UNSETTLES THE FISH

© John Campbell

# 37 ANOTHER ELECTION






A Z O T I O N A  
S T O O P  
C A R D



CAMPAIGN...

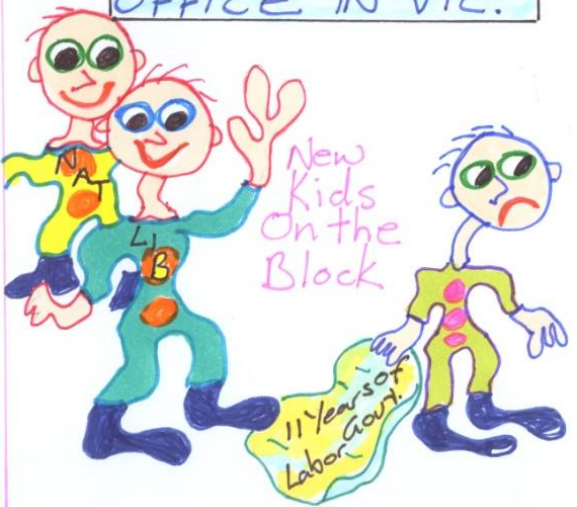
# 38

## VWMHN 5 POINT PLAN

1.  **New Design Guidelines** provide choice of **Single-Sex Environment**  
♀ issues in the Spotlight -
2.  **New Wards** Provide Adequate Separate Women's Areas  
↓  
Female Rooms  
↓  
Womens Lounge  
↓  
♀ Bathrooms  
↓  
Outdoor Recreation Space
3.  Establish **Women Only Corridors** in **ALL Adult acute Inpatient Units**
4.  **Restore Funding** for Women's Mental Health Consultants  
↓  
Establish **Statewide Women's Mental Health Coordinator** Position
5.  **Culture of U.S. Practice** Embedded in **Acute + Community Services**  
↓  
Supportive **Training for Staff**

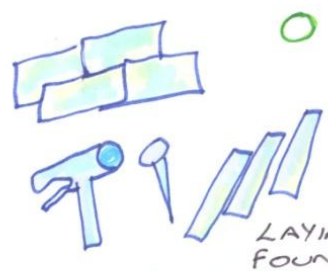
MEDIA BLITZ OF RADIO/PRINT/AND TELEVISION TO RAISE AWARENESS OF CAUSE...

# 39 LIBERAL/NATIONAL COALITION WIN OFFICE IN VIC.



# 40 CONSTRUCTIVE 4 MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT IN CAPITAL WORKS OVER 4 YEARS

- Establish Separate ♀ spaces in Existing Psych. Facilities
- Build a PARC specifically for Women



LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

LET'S BUILD SOMETHING INTO THE FUTURE...

- Create 3 new **Mother and Baby Units** in Regional Victoria



© Judith Gandy

**41** COMMITMENT ACROSS GOVERNMENTS

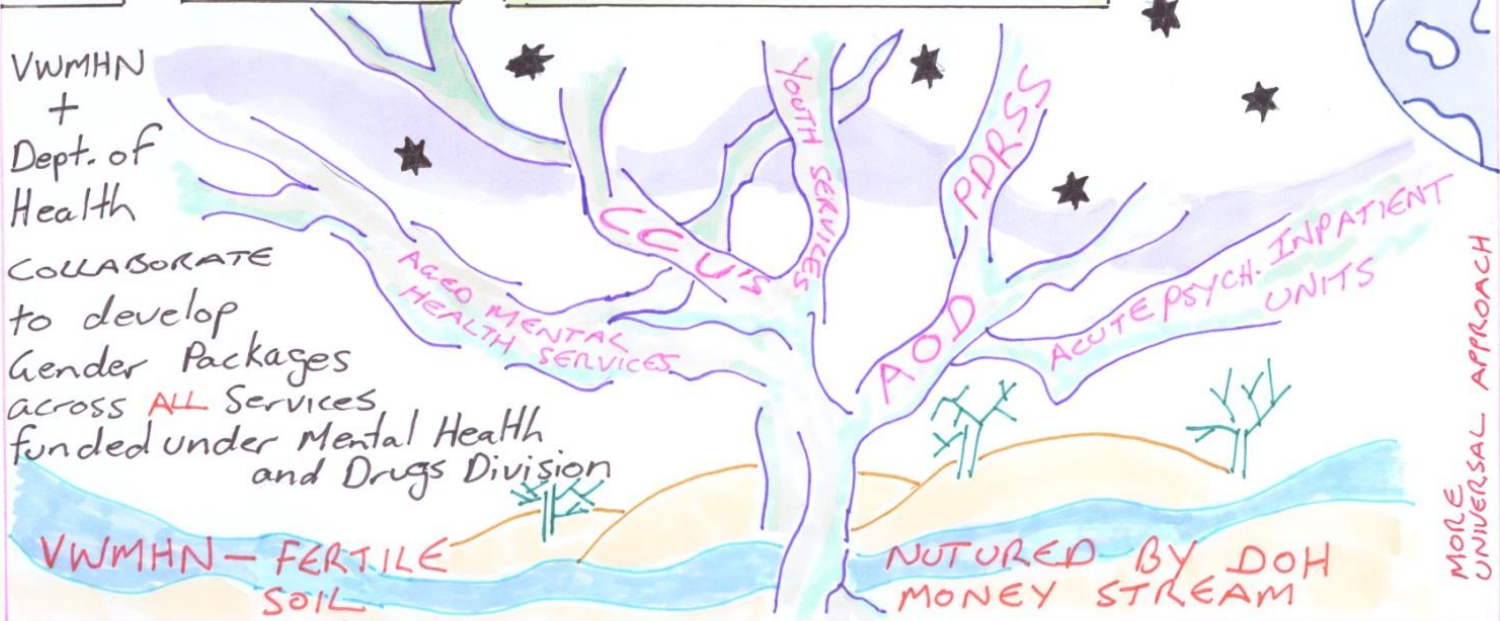
PREVIOUS HEALTH MINISTER INDICATED FUNDING OF \$100,000 TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING PACKAGE TARGETING MORE GENDER-SENSITIVE PRACTICE



VICTORIAN COALITION GOVT. HITS THE MARK COMMITTING TO FUND PROJECT

**42** PHASE 5 BRANCHING OUT

VWMHN + Dept. of Health COLLABORATE to develop Gender Packages across ALL Services funded under Mental Health and Drugs Division



MORE UNIVERSAL APPROACH



PLANTING THE SEEDS OF CHANGE

**43**

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AN ONGOING STORY OF HOPE AND COMMITMENT - PLEASE JOIN IN...



© Alpha Omega

# Victorian Women and Mental Health Network

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NHWMA

