



VICTORIAN WOMEN'S TRUST

14 November 2016

RE: LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR A VICTORIAN GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

The Victorian State Government deserves congratulations on taking the initiative to develop a Gender Equality Strategy.

In March of this year the Victorian Women's Trust made a policy submission to this Strategy. When it came across my desk I thought it represented an unmissable opportunity for women and girls in Victoria to push forward on achieving gender equality in this State.

Gender inequity, created and maintained across centuries of systemic disadvantage and discrimination against women and girls, is at the heart of women's lack of access to life's resources and opportunities. Achieving gender equality is a huge and serious task, requiring great effort from people in all walks of life and across government, business and community. Gender equality is not an esoteric notion. Recent data from the World Health Organisation and the UN Commission on the Status for Women demonstrates that "countries where women have greater political and economic power have a lower incidence of violence against women", as do countries that prioritise pay equity, reproductive rights and equal access to education.

Since 1985, we have explored, and continue to explore, a myriad of ways to assist the status of women and the quest for gender equity across many issues such as the superannuation and gender pay gaps; childcare; women's leadership; women's political representation; and many facets of women's health and wellbeing.

We think it is vital to endorse and assist in the realisation of the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy and its vision in which: All Victorians live in a safe and equal society and have access to equal power, resources and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

Achieving gender equality in our lifetimes will require a ramped up effort by all of us. We need to be working on this goal from the grassroots all the way to the top of State and Federal Government, coming together and making real change in Victoria. A Gender Equality Strategy which is fully resourced and supported by our community is one way in which we can progress forward.

Mary Crooks AO
Executive Director
Victorian Women's Trust