



QUEENSLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK NEWS

APRIL 2014 *Celebrating 20 years of strengthening links between women & providing access to information*

WOMEN & SAFETY

Stalking is a crime that affects 1 in 10 Australian adults with women making up 75% of stalking victims. Anyone can be a victim of stalking, regardless of age, occupation, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The majority of those reporting stalking are pursued by someone they know – very often an ex-partner.

Stalkers, especially those whom you know, often want to exert their power over you – to 'punish' you for leaving a relationship or rejecting them, or simply to control your life.

If someone's behaviour makes you feel scared, unsafe and uncomfortable, even if it is someone you know like a boyfriend, ex-partner or family member, it is not OK and you have every right to seek help and support to stay safe and be free of harassment.

While stalking can often be a distressing and disruptive experience that leaves you feeling anxious, you can take steps to increase your sense of safety. There are services available that can offer you emotional support as well as practical advice and assistance. It is important to seek out the support you need as soon as possible.

MYTH: *It's my fault.*

REALITY: *Women often feel guilty and blame themselves for the stalking. You are not to blame for the behaviour of the stalker, whatever your relationship is or was to them. Remember that the stalker is solely responsible for his behaviour, not you. You have every right to live free from fear.*



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What is stalking?

Stalking is when a person repeatedly contacts, harasses or spies on you, and it causes you fear or distress. Stalkers may also threaten and harass your family members, pets, friends or workmates. If they are unable to harass you (e.g. due to a court order), stalkers may enlist their friends or family to do so on their behalf.

You can be stalked physically as well as through technology (cyber stalking), such as:

- your mobile phone, computer or iPad
- the Internet on Facebook and other social networking sites
- closed-circuit TV (CCTV) cameras and Global Positioning System (GPS) devices.

Stalking is a crime

Stalking is a crime in all Australian states and territories ...

Physical stalking includes:

- approaching or following you, loitering outside your home, workplace or public venues
- interfering with or damaging your property
- making direct or indirect threats to harm you or your family or friends
- leaving or sending letters, notes, faxes, 'gifts' or other unwanted material
- ordering or cancelling goods and services on your behalf
- starting false legal actions against you to maintain contact with you
- physically assaulting you or your family or friends (or attempting to).

Cyber stalking includes:

- sending repeated emails, text messages, and voicemail messages
- using Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices or tracking apps, such

as phone-finder apps or 'Find My Friends' apps, to track your physical location and follow you without your permission

- keeping you under surveillance using devices such as closed-circuit TV (CCTV) cameras
- harassing, humiliating or threatening you through social media sites such as Facebook or Myspace, or through other online networking sites including blogs, chat rooms, games or dating sites
- hacking into your email or internet accounts to impersonate you and send or post malicious or offensive content to your friends and family
- emailing or posting abusive, sexually explicit or humiliating comments, photos or videos about you on the internet
- emailing or posting private information or false accusations about you on the internet
- intercepting your emails, changing your passwords and permission settings without your knowledge or your permission
- tracking your internet use and email or installing spyware on your computer.

IMPORTANT: Stalked for over 2 weeks? Contact the police immediately! *If you are stalked for more than 2 weeks, chances are your stalker will persist for 6 to 12 months. Long-term stalkers typically become violent, so it is very important for you to be proactive and seek police advice and assistance ...*

What to do if you're being stalked

It is important that you seek help and support to manage the stalking and its impact on your life. Family and friends can also be adversely affected, particularly children, and should be encouraged to seek help if needed.

You can take action:

1. Avoid contact with the stalker
2. Increase your personal safety
3. Inform close family and friends
4. Collect evidence
5. Contact the police
6. Apply for an intervention order.

Getting support

You are not alone and not to blame. Getting support is an important way to protect yourself and your sense of well-being. Talking to a counsellor or calling an anonymous service like WIRE Women's Information [Victoria] can help you deal with your emotions in a safe and totally confidential environment.

USEFUL CONTACTS

If you are in immediate danger, you should always call the police on **000**. If it is not an emergency you can call your local police station.

- **Australian Stalking Information and Resource Centre**
www.stalkingresources.org.au
- **Cybersmart** 1800 880 176
www.cybersmart.gov.au
- **Lifeline** 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au
- **Stay Smart Online**
www.staysmartonline.gov.au
- **DV Connect** 1800 811 811
- **Women's Legal Service Queensland:**
Legal Advice Line
(07) 3392 0670 or
1800 677 278 (outside Brisbane)
Rural, Regional & Remote Legal Advice Line 1800 457 117
- **Legal Aid Queensland**
1300 651 188
(anywhere in Queensland for legal information and referral) or 1300 650 143
(for legal information and referral for Indigenous people).
- **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal & Advocacy Service**
1800 442 450
- **Immigrant Women's Support Service** (07) 3846 3490
- **Your nearest women's health service.** See the QWHN website for a list of women's health services at: www.qwhn.asn.au

APRIL NEWSLETTER TOPIC

'WOMEN & CANCER'

DO YOU OR YOUR ORGANISATION HAVE EXPERTISE IN THIS AREA?

Share your insights with over 400 health & community organisations, and other women in Queensland.

We welcome articles, news items, and other non-profit submissions.

Please contact us in advance at: coordinator@qwhn.asn.au for full submission guidelines.

DEADLINE: 6 JUNE 2014

This article is comprised of extracts from 'STALKING: A WIRE WOMEN'S INFORMATION BOOKLET'.

Reproduced by kind permission of WIRE Women's Information [Victoria]. QWHN highly recommends reading the full booklet at: <http://www.wire.org.au/information-resources/violence/> or visit:

www.wire.org.au



Helping women make the right connections

Women's Information

Safe sex an age-old dilemma

Although they're easily preventable, sexually transmitted infections are on the rise and young people aren't the only ones at risk. **By Joanna Egan.**

In the past decade, rates of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) have surged in Australia. The infections, which are spread via skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity or by the exchange of bodily fluids ... predominantly affect teenagers and young adults – three-quarters of all reported cases occur in people aged from 15 to 29. However, recent figures indicate older Australians are becoming increasingly at risk.

Between 2004 and 2010, reported cases of chlamydia more than doubled in women aged between 40 and 64, and diagnoses of genital warts and genital herpes increased. While these trends could partly be attributed to more people being tested, they nevertheless confirm that STIs are a major public health issue in Australia. Chlamydia has reached epidemic levels – national infection rates have more than tripled since 2001, with the highest rates of diagnosis consistently being recorded in Queensland. In 2010 alone, almost 20,000 Queenslanders were diagnosed with the infection and 14 of these were aged 85 and older.

Why are STI rates increasing in older people?

Social shifts

Increased longevity, coupled with higher rates of divorce, mean people are living longer, healthier lives and many are becoming single and seeking new sexual partners later in life. Internet dating, improved long-distance travel and pharmaceutical aids for sexual function (such as hormone-replacement and erectile-dysfunction medications) have made it easier for people to start new sexual relationships, regardless of their age. However, older people are often overlooked when it comes to STI prevention, care and treatment services. Many received limited sexual-health education in their youth and because today's campaigns exclusively target teenagers and young adults, their awareness of safe-sex practices is lacking.

Risky sexual behaviours

Research suggests older people are less likely than young people to use a condom, female condom (a latex

sheath that fits loosely inside the vagina) or dam (a thin sheet of latex placed over the vulval or anal area during oral sex). Many women may view condoms primarily as a form of birth control, so when they are no longer concerned about becoming pregnant, they may not insist on their use. Other women may find it challenging to introduce the topic of condoms to a new sexual partner; they may feel that raising the topic of condoms could lead to rejection; or they may feel nervous about negotiating condom usage for the first time in many years. Some older couples may also experience fears about condom use exacerbating erectile dysfunction.

Biological factors

As women age, their susceptibility to contracting an STI can increase. Not only does the immune system naturally become less effective with age, but physiological changes that can make women more vulnerable to infections occur during menopause. For example, decreased lubrication and the thinning of vaginal tissue can increase the risk of micro-tears during sex, allowing easier transmission of bacteria and viruses. The symptoms of some STIs, such as vaginal soreness and irregular bleeding, may also be mistaken as normal signs of ageing, which can delay detection and treatment, and potentially increase the spread of the infection.

How can women protect themselves?

Many older women are reluctant to seek information about safe-sex practices from their doctor because they either feel they should already possess the knowledge or they fear being judged. However, it is important for women to have regular sexual check-ups and learn about safe-sex practices. A check-up can be performed by a doctor, or at a sexual health or

family planning clinic. Barrier protection (condoms and dams) should always be negotiated when having sex with a new or casual partner, or with a partner whose previous sexual habits are unknown. Keeping condoms/dams in a convenient location and discussing their use prior to sexual activity can make it easier to use them.

What are STIs?

STIs are infections caused by bacteria, viruses and parasites. They are spread via the exchange of body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal secretions and saliva, or through skin-to-skin contact during sexual activity. STIs include chlamydia, genital herpes, HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) and HPV (human papillomavirus).

Since many people experience no obvious symptoms, it is possible to have an STI and not realise it, or to be infected from somebody who seems perfectly healthy.

Women should be tested for STIs regularly, particularly if they have engaged in unsafe sexual activity, sexual activity with a new partner or with a partner who may have other partners. While many STIs are curable, if left undetected and untreated, they can lead to serious health complications including genital, heart and brain damage; pelvic inflammatory disease; ectopic pregnancy; infertility; chronic abdominal pain; cirrhosis; cancer; and an increased susceptibility to other infections such as tuberculosis and meningitis.

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Safer Living

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) Safer Living program provides practical personal safety advice that aims to maximise your safety and enhance your quality of life.

Safety out and about

Protecting your money and valuables

- Keep cash and valuables you carry to a minimum.
- Avoid leaving your bag in a shopping trolley, on the back of a chair ... or on the hook of a door in a public toilet.
- Use ATMs located in public view.
- Check the front of the ATM to ensure there are no signs of tampering.

Safety on public transport

Buses

- Sit wherever you feel the most comfortable and safe. If the bus is empty, or nearly empty, consider sitting near the driver.
- If the driver is threatening your safety, take details of the bus and the driver and report the matter to police and/or the bus company.

Taxis

- Book a taxi in preference to hailing one. A record is kept by taxi companies of all bookings made.
- Don't get into a taxi if the driver makes you feel uncomfortable ...
- Take note of the taxi company and fleet number (displayed on the inside front windscreen or the left and right guards, adjacent to the doors).

In the taxi

- Sit wherever you feel most comfortable and safe. The left rear, diagonally opposite the driver is recommended.
- You are entitled to specify the route you wish to take to reach your

destination. Speak up if the driver takes a different route ...

- Stay alert to your surroundings and avoid disclosing personal information to the driver. Let the driver know if you feel the conversation is inappropriate.
- If your safety is being threatened by the taxi driver ask the driver to stop. You may choose to make up an excuse to do so or leave when the taxi stops at a traffic sign or lights ...

Safety in the social scene

Spiked drinks

Drink spiking is when alcohol or another substance is added to someone's drink without them knowing, often leaving them seriously vulnerable to abuse within a very short period of time.

Tips you might consider to minimise the risks of drink spiking:

- take your own drinks to parties
- avoid leaving drinks unattended
- only accept drinks from trusted people
- don't accept an open container of drink from anyone
- if you feel very drunk in a disproportionate amount of time to the amount of drinks that you have consumed, immediately tell a friend or someone in authority
- drink spiking is an offence and should be reported to police.

Reporting

Some people are reluctant to report incidents, such as those described



[above], to police. The QPS encourages all people who have been a victim of crime or witness to a crime to contact police at their earliest opportunity. Further personal safety information and advice:

- Visit the Queensland Police Service website: www.police.qld.gov.au
- Contact your District Crime Prevention Coordinator via your local police station
- Arrange for a free Personal Safety Awareness Workshop.

This article has been adapted from Safer Living © 2011 Queensland Police Service. The full booklet is available at: <http://www.police.qld.gov.au/Resources/Internet/programs/cscp/personalSafety/documents/SaferLiving_Website_Lowres.pdf>.

How does our food become unsafe?

Overall, Australia has a reliable, safe and nutritious food supply. Many of the food poisoning cases that occur in Australia could be avoided by practising simple habits. We all want to avoid becoming one of the estimated 5.4 million cases of food poisoning that occur each year!

Contamination occurs when:

- Foods are not kept at the right temperature (bacteria can grow to unsafe levels when in the "Temperature Danger Zone" between 5°C and 60°C)
- Raw foods aren't separated from cooked and ready-to-eat foods
- Food preparation tools aren't cleaned properly
- The people preparing food are unwell and don't follow good hygiene practices.

How do you know if you have food poisoning?

Symptoms can begin within an hour or weeks after eating contaminated food. They include stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache and fever. The good news is that most healthy people recover quickly. Those more at risk are pregnant women, infants and older people and those with a weakened immune system. A copy of 'Listeria and Food Advice for people at risk' can be viewed here: <<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/safety/listeria/documents/listeria-1.pdf>>



food files

with
Maria Packard

NUTRITION MANAGER, HEART FOUNDATION

What are some simple habits to practise?

- Wash your hands before and after food preparation.
- Keep cold foods cold and frozen foods frozen! As soon as possible after purchase keep foods like meats, dairy, vegetables, salad ingredients, etc. in the refrigerator at or below 5°C. Use an esky, insulated bag or box with an ice pack if you need to travel more than half an hour from your home or if it's hot outside.
- Wash your fruit and vegetables before using them.
- If in doubt, throw it out!

Where to go for more information:

www.foodstandards.gov.au
www.foodsafety.asn.au
www.eatforhealth.org.au



The Internet has increasingly become part of our daily life. It provides a way for us to connect and communicate with the outside world from within our own home.

These benefits come with risks and challenges and it is important that you and your family are protected. Securing your computer, being aware of the hazards and practising safe online behaviour are ways you can minimise your exposure to online risks.

Secure your computer

It's important to secure your computer properly — otherwise you may be putting yourself and possibly your family and friends at risk. If malicious software infects your computer it can stop it working properly, can delete or corrupt your files and can allow others to access your computer and your confidential information.

Protecting your identity

You can never completely protect your personal information from falling into the wrong hands, but you can reduce the risk.

The **'Protecting Your Identity' guide** contains information on how to prevent becoming a victim of identity theft and what to do if your identity has been stolen.

Tips for protecting your identity:

- Secure your personal documents at home, when you are travelling and if you need to destroy them.
- Secure your mailbox with a lock and when you move, redirect your mail.
- Be cautious about using social media ...
- Secure your computer and mobile phone ...
- Learn how to avoid common scams by visiting the **SCAMWatch** website.
- Be cautious about requests for your personal information over the internet, phone and in person ...
- Investigate the arrival of new credit cards you didn't ask for or bills for goods and services that aren't yours.
- Be alert for any unusual bank transactions or missing mail.
- If you are a victim of identity theft, report it to the police and any relevant organisations.
- Order a free copy of your credit report from a credit reporting agency on a regular basis, particularly if your identity has been stolen.

The **'Protecting Your Identity' guide** is available to download. A summary is also available in other languages.

For further information <<http://www.ag.gov.au/RightsAndProtections/IdentitySecurity/Pages/Protectingyouridentity.aspx>>

Attorney-General's Department
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Backing-up your data can ... help you recover your information if a virus destroys your files, or your computer is stolen or damaged.

Top tips

- Install security software and update it regularly. Install and activate anti-virus, anti-spyware software and install a firewall.
- Turn on automatic updates so all your software receives the latest fixes. New viruses and spyware are created every day, so it is important that your software is up-to-date and can detect new threats.
- Set strong passwords, particularly for important online accounts and change them regularly ...
- Be suspicious of emails from people you don't know, particularly if they promise you money, good health or a solution to all your problems. The same applies for websites.
- Stop and think before you click on links or attachments in emails. Spam emails often look legitimate but they can be used to carry viruses and other malicious software.
- Stop and think before you share any personal or financial information—about you, your friends or family. Don't disclose identity information (drivers licence, Medicare No, birth date, address) through email or online unless you have initiated the contact and you know the other person involved.
- Before disposing of your computer, remove all traces of your personal data. Special wiping software can be downloaded or purchased to help you clean your hard drive.
- Keep yourself informed about the latest online safety and security risks. Subscribe to email notification services that keep you informed about the latest online safety and security risks and solutions.

Protect yourself

Many of the things we do online — banking, shopping, chatting with family and friends or even making new friends — involve us giving out personal and financial information. You need to know

who you are providing your information to and be confident they will treat it securely and appropriately.

You also need to know how to recognise scam and hoax emails and websites to avoid your information being stolen or being misled into paying money for fake causes, prizes or products.

Top tips

- Don't give your email address out without needing to. Think about why you are providing it, what the benefit is for you and whether it will mean you are sent emails you don't want.
- Limit the amount and type of identity information you post on social networking sites. Don't put sensitive, private or confidential information on your public profile.
- When shopping online use a secure payment method such as PayPal, BPay, or your credit card. Avoid money transfers and direct debit, as these can be open to abuse. Never send your bank or credit card details via email.
- When using a public computer, don't submit or access any sensitive information online. Public computers may have a keystroke logger installed which can capture your password, credit card number and bank details.
- Encrypt sensitive information. If you keep personal or financial information on your computer, consider taking steps to encrypt and protect sensitive files and folders.

Secure your mobile phone

The features that make your phone 'smart' also make it susceptible to viruses and malicious software. If your phone isn't secure and it is lost or stolen, your personal information, including passwords, banking details, emails and photos could be used to access your money or to steal your identity.

For further information about safety on the Internet, visit the Australian Government's

Stay Smart Online website at:
<www.staysmartonline.gov.au>.

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what's on?

Important Events and Conferences



**1 MAY
2014**

EXERCISE AS TREATMENT FOR CHRONIC DISEASE: WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? – GOLD COAST

The conference aims to: provide the evidence and rationale for the different types of exercise for different clinical conditions; discuss practical tips on the 'how to' of different disease-specific exercise regimes; provide evidence of a variety of clinical conditions where exercise has been found to be most effective.

FOR INFORMATION visit: www.exerciseastreatment.net.au

**9–12 JULY
2014**

JOINT WORLD CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WORK, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – MELBOURNE

Promoting social and economic equality: responses from social work and social development

This Conference will provide opportunities for you to talk with colleagues about your interests in health, disability, mental health, child and family welfare, gender, human rights, migration and refugees, and other current issues. Given the Australian context, there will be a focus on Indigenous voices from around the world, as well as consumer voices, throughout the entire Conference Program.

FOR INFORMATION visit: www.swsd2014.org

**25–26 AUG
2014**

15th INTERNATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE – SURFERS PARADISE

Mental Health: Innovation | Integration | Early Intervention

The conference will focus on Suicide, Dementia, Depression, Personality Disorders and Trauma. Keynote addresses, submitted papers, workshops and case studies will examine how approaches and techniques can be incorporated into daily practice.

FOR INFORMATION visit: <http://anzmh.asn.au/conference>

**13–15 OCT
2014**

2014 INDIGENOUS CONFERENCES – CAIRNS

The National Indigenous Women Conference

The aim is to provide a platform for Indigenous Women to celebrate their achievements in life within their home, family, community and workplace. The women's conference presents a unique opportunity for delegates to participate in an event which is devoted to the sharing of information and the empowering of women. This gathering will highlight some of the existing Indigenous women's groups and programs currently implemented in Aboriginal and Torres Straits communities and provide a unique opportunity for delegates and speakers to see the power of people networking together in one place, at one time with similar goals.

FOR INFORMATION visit: www.indigenoushealth.net/indigenouswomenconference.htm

The National Indigenous Men Conference

The aim is to provide a platform for Indigenous Men to celebrate their achievements in life within their home, family, community and workplace. The event will focus on empowerment, strong leadership and self-determination.

FOR INFORMATION visit: www.indigenoushealth.net/indigenousmenconference.htm



Women's health on the net

Hot Spots on the Internet for Women

SCAMwatch

www.scamwatch.gov.au

Have you ever received an email that looks genuine but you're not sure if it's safe to open it? Or an offer that sounds 'too good to be true'? If this happens it is worth visiting the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission's SCAMwatch website.

The site provides current information on the latest scams including: banking and online account scams; chain letter and pyramid scams; health and medical scams; identity theft scams; investment scams (get-rich-quick); job and employment scams; lottery and competition scams; mobile phone scams; money transfer requests; and small business scams.

There is information on how to protect yourself, and how to report a scam; a free 'Little Black Book of Scams'; victim's stories and latest news; plus you can register for free SCAMwatch email alerts.

ARE YOU A WOMAN WHO HAS NO CHILDREN AND AGED BETWEEN 25 AND 44 YEARS?

If so, we would love to hear from you!

We are conducting research about life in Australian society as a woman with no children.

If you would like to take part, please visit the following link to complete the anonymous online questionnaire, which will take only 20–30 minutes of your time!

www.surveymonkey.com/s/life-in-Australian-society-as-a-woman-with-no-children

This research will be conducted toward completion of a **Deakin University Honours student** research project. **Note:** The survey is open for a limited time and will close when the required number of participants has been reached.

For further information, please visit:

www.facebook.com/pages/Life-in-Australian-society-as-a-woman-with-no-children/592205344191162

or contact **Beth Turnbull** at eturnbul@deakin.edu.au

FNQ Medicare Local helps improve well-being for women and their families



FNQ Medicare Local operates within the large and diverse region from Tully in the south to the Torres Strait in the north and Croydon in the west. We run many health programs that help keep women, their families and their communities safe and well. Here are some examples.

Immunisation

The partnership and coordination happening between FNQ Medicare Local and Tropical Public Health Services has led to a massive increase in the quarterly immunisation rate for 12 to 15-month-olds from 89.57% to 91.77%. Our region is now above the 90% Department of Health target for all age groups. As we usually only see movements of around 0.2%, this is a welcome development and means that our whole community is better protected from vaccine-preventable diseases.

We have worked with the media to highlight the importance of immunisation in the 'back to school' period to raise parents' awareness of the need to protect children starting school and day care. We also highlighted the need for older children to keep up to date with shots, including the new HPV vaccination for boys, and to return forms sent home by the school to receive free immunisations.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment for the FNQ region

We've been talking to people in shopping centres throughout Cairns suburbs and Port Douglas and in locations as far-reaching as Tully, the Tablelands, Cooktown and the Torres

Strait. We want everyone to 'Have Their Say' about health needs in their community. The information we gather will help identify how work, family and community circumstances affect health outcomes and to strongly advocate to the Australian Government on a range of health issues unique to our region. There's also an online survey accessible via the coloured map on our homepage: www.fnqmedicarelocal.com.au So click on the link and have your say today!

Closing the Gap (CTG): Indigenous Outreach Worker engagement

Our outreach team was able to support a family to engage with Queensland Health so the mother could access antenatal care. The mother had gestational diabetes but was not attending health appointments. We arranged for her and her partner to accompany us to the antenatal clinic. They then accepted our support to attend all subsequent appointments. The outcome was a trouble-free delivery and the happy arrival of a healthy baby girl. Postnatal care was also supported by our team. We keep connected to this family to develop their confidence to continue attending appointments with services such as Housing and Centrelink. Trusting relationships have been established.

Closing the Gap (CTG): Homeless Outreach Services

We work with other services to visit homeless camps in various sites around Cairns. Each Monday we're provided with directions on which camps to visit. These visits enable us

Above L to R: Nathaniel Motlap, Daphne Naden, Thea Prasad, Wendy Sexton, Joy Harris from the CTG team

and the other services to assist homeless clients with healthcare and accommodation, Centrelink issues, etc. Our team promote the CTG program and assist clients with referrals for health checks to start their journey through the healthcare system. Every Tuesday the services connect again in the mall where homeless clients gather, giving another opportunity to improve coordination between services.

For more information:

Ph: **1800 684 357** or visit

www.fnqmedicarelocal.com.au

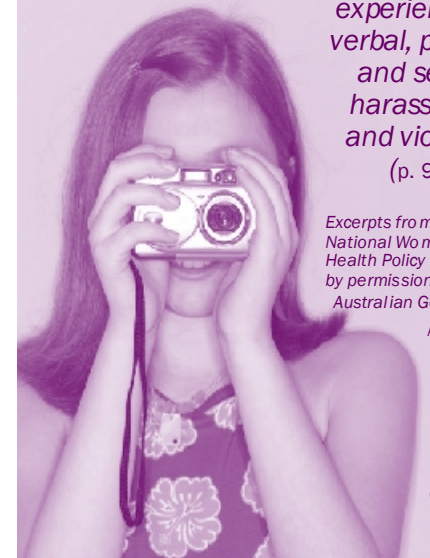
snapshot

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH POLICY

“ Women's safety and security can be undermined ... through experiences of verbal, physical and sexual harassment and violence ”
(p. 91).

Excerpts from the National Women's Health Policy 2010 used by permission of the Australian Government.

Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing
(2010)
National Women's Health Policy
2010, DoHA, Canberra.





Safe travelling

get the latest tips from **smartraveller**

All travellers may face risks overseas, but women, whether experienced international travellers or first-timers, may face greater risks in unfamiliar environments or cultures.

Before you go – be prepared.

- Read the travel advice
- Register before you travel
- Read about travel insurance

Staying healthy overseas

Health checks and vaccinations

Make an appointment with your doctor or travel clinic for a basic check-up at least six to eight weeks before you depart and find out if any vaccinations or health checks are required for your destination.

Medication

If you are taking medicines overseas, we recommend that you:

- discuss with your doctor the medication you'll need to take
- carry a letter from your doctor detailing what the medication is, how much you'll be taking with you, and stating that it's for your own personal use
- leave the medication in its original packaging so it's clearly labelled with your name and dosage instructions.

If you're travelling with medication, make sure it's legal in the countries you're visiting by contacting the relevant embassy or consulate in Australia.

Take enough medication to cover the length of your trip. If you need to purchase medication at your destination, be careful not to buy imitation or counterfeit medications and prescription drugs, and always check the strength of a medication with a doctor ...

Additional health tips

- Do not use or get involved with drugs.
- Be aware of the risk of hepatitis and HIV – avoid ear-piercing, acupuncture, tattooing, beauty treatments such as manicures and pedicures, or dental work while travelling in countries with lower health or hygiene standards.
- Practise safe sex. Never assume that your partner is free of HIV or a sexually transmissible infection. Carry a reliable brand of condom as they may not be available at your destination.
- Avoid temporary 'black henna' tattoos as they often contain a dye which can cause serious skin reactions. For further information see the Australasian College of Dermatologists website.
- Medical tourism, including cosmetic surgery and sex-change operations, is common in Asia. Be aware that while the range of medical and dental services available may be impressive at first sight, standards can be low, resulting in serious and possibly life-threatening complications.

QUEENSLAND WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK INC

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PO Box 1855, Thuringowa BC QLD 4817
Email: coordinator@qwhn.asn.au
Website: www.qwhn.asn.au

CHAIRPERSON &

Nth Qld Representative: Dr Betty McLellan
TREASURER/SECRETARY &

Central Qld Representative: Sue Manthey

Far North Qld Representative: Romina Fujii

West Qld Representative: Kim Hurlé

South Qld Representative: Karin Cheyne

HAVE YOUR SAY...



We are interested in your feedback on the quality of the newsletter, and issues and topics you would like to see in future editions.

Please contact the QWHN Coordinator Maree Hawken on (07) 4789 0665 or email us at: coordinator@qwhn.asn.au



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- Take feminine hygiene products and contraceptives if you're going to places where they may not be available or may be expensive.

Before you travel overseas get the latest information and register your trip at the **Smartraveller** website at:

<http://smartraveller.gov.au/>

This article is comprised of information from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website – www.dfat.gov.au

MEMBERSHIP

To become a member of QWHN, simply fill in this application and send to QWHN at PO Box 1855, THURINGOWA BC, QLD 4817

Membership of the Network is open to women's organisations and individual women who are in agreement with the Network's purpose and objectives.

Name:	NEW MEMBER? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Address:	
Phone:	Fax:
Email/Web:	
Profession / Organisation (if applicable):	
MEMBERSHIP FEES: Individual (unwaged or student) – \$5.50; Individual (waged) – \$11.00; Organisation – \$33.00	

Please find enclosed a cheque/money order for \$ for one financial year's membership (1 July 2014–30 June 2015)

Do you consent to your name, as part of the membership list, being distributed for networking purposes? YES NO

I/We hereby agree to abide by the Purpose, Objectives and Policies of the QWHN. (see website www.qwhn.asn.au)

Signature

Date

TAX INVOICE
ABN 11700374032