
Greetings friends of WAM.
We are delighted to present
our latest newsletter,
highlighting some changes
and some exciting news for the future.

EMPOWERING MORE WOMEN

An important day in celebration of women's achievements throughout history, International Women's Day is also a day to reflect on how far we have come towards gender parity and inclusivity.

However, there is still a lot more work to do in reaching equitable treatment of women and men.

Research demonstrates the unique differences between male and female offenders and contributing factors to offending and sentencing outcomes. Women are more likely to be incarcerated for non-violent crimes and a high proportion demonstrating a significant level of disadvantage, with histories of alcohol or drug misuse, multiple types of abuse, mental illness and economic and social deprivation.

The majority are victims themselves of abuse, domestic violence or exploitation, with "87% of women prisoners ... victims of sexual, physical or emotional abuse prior to entering the criminal justice system" (*Discover why women are committing crime, WAM, 2017*).

It's through this lens that WAM provides a mentoring program as early intervention support, to empower women to navigate the often-complex courts system and access the supports to better manage the additional health and social needs that may have contributed to their involvement in the justice system.

With recent funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board, WAM is expanding its service delivery to receive referrals from women who have contact with the Neighbourhood Justice Centre, Sunshine Magistrates Court, Heidelberg Magistrates Court and Melbourne Magistrates Court.

Our goal is to ensure criminalised women are better informed and better equipped to deal with challenges in their lives; and over the next three years we will work with over 200 women to have greater capacity to make informed decisions about their lives.

WAM IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

Come find us on Facebook and be a part of our online community. 'Like' and share our page to build our community and keep up to date with news and events.

www.facebook.com/WomenAndMentoring/



WOMEN AND MENTORING

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FUNDRAISING & EVENTS – MOVIE NIGHT

A dark comedy starring Kristin Scott Thomas, Patricia Clarkson, Cillian Murphy and Timothy Spall, *The Party* starts with a champagne pop but ends with a bang!

Our Fundraising & Events Working Group have put together a fantastic calendar of events for this year, with both a fundraising and community strengthening goal. We kicked off by inviting our Friends of WAM to attend our first event for the year, a movie night at Cinema Nova to see *The Party*. Every seat in the comfy cinema was booked out and we all enjoyed some refreshments during this clever and biting film, that prompted a lot of discussion afterwards.



Thank you to all who attended, and we look forward to seeing you at another event this year.

LAW WEEK 2018



This year our theme is “**Tough on the Causes of Crime**” to be held at *The Bowl* nab Melbourne, on **Tuesday 15th May**, from 5.30pm.

Our guest speakers will present on a desire to keep the community safe with prison sentences and punishment for criminal behaviours, set against the view of better understanding and dealing with the underlying causes of offending, including homelessness, family violence, drug & alcohol issues, mental health issues and social isolation.

One of our panellists will be the Victorian Ombudsman, Deborah Glass, who will share findings from her report “*Investigation into the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners in Victoria*” (September, 2015).

This presentation will detail how the Victorian justice system currently manages women’s offending, and what strategies are being implemented to reduce reoffending.

For more information, please

email: admin@womenandmentoring.org.au



A MESSAGE TO OUR MENTORS

I am now the Mentor Program Coordinator which will essentially involve; the recruitment of volunteers, professionalisation of the



volunteer workforce, team building amongst the volunteer group and management of mentor matches and relationships.

We have held an information session for new recruits on the 20th of February and training was held on the 27th of February and 6th of March, 2018.

Feel free to contact me if you or anyone you know would like any information about how to become a WAM volunteer. We plan to have a calendar of training and information sessions to be held throughout the year.

Sharlene Farrugia

volunteers@womenandmentoring.org.au

A key goal and mandate of WAM is to empower women that we engage with. We train our mentors not to direct or push the participants into making changes; rather we equip them to walk alongside their mentee, offering encouragement and support, and empowering their choices.

Erica*, a participant, has achieved a longstanding goal of completing her Certificate qualification. Just days before Christmas, she excitedly contacted her mentor to share the good news. With support from her mentor in ways such as talking through assessments, managing deadlines,

and doing fun and inspiring activities together, Erica has reached her goal, and expressed immense pride in achieving this.

Alongside the achievement of this goal, there have been other benefits for Erica. With this qualification behind her, Erica now has choices such as pursuing further study or joining the workforce - a choice that so many of us have taken for granted.

This is just one story of the women WAM works with, illustrating the power of a conversation, of human relationships, and women supporting women.

Clarissa Wood

**identifying information has been altered to protect the privacy of our participant*