

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate distribution

Women's voices have finally been heard!

MELBOURNE – April 18, 2018

Women's Health Victoria welcomes the recent report handed down by the Community Affairs References Committee as part of the Senate Inquiry into transvaginal mesh implants and related matters.

Women have been speaking out about their struggles to be heard over many years and their anger and frustration about the lack of accountability and transparency about transvaginal mesh surgery. The lack of reporting and surveillance of adverse events and inadequate responses from the health care system to the issues and consequences of surgery, that for many have been life altering, has left many women traumatised. WHV acknowledges the courage and determination of affected women who shared horrific, personal stories for many years and during the enquiry.

In its report the Community Affairs References Committee said "we have been struck by the extent to which women who have had adverse experiences following transvaginal mesh surgery have struggled to be heard as they have sought to raise concerns about their symptoms". The report includes recommendations to strengthen oversight and accountability of the use of implantable mesh devices; credentialing of health professionals; better procedures around informed consent and improved reporting of adverse events. The report also recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of information and advice lines, financial and emotional support, specialist multidisciplinary units including pain management and expertise in the removal of mesh.

Women's Health Victoria is committed to ensuring women affected by transvaginal mesh surgery have their concerns and issues heard, validated and responded to", said Rita Butera, WHV Executive Director. WHV will do this through peer support workshops for women impacted by transvaginal mesh surgery in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. We acknowledge the Victorian Government for funding this response".

WHV will work with consumers, the Victorian government and other stakeholders to ensure that the voices of women continue to be heard and responded to. We will advocate for more accountability and transparency in the health care system through implementation of the committee's recommendations and better support and health care for Victorian women who are experiencing adverse effects from transvaginal mesh implants.

For more information about the TV Mesh workshops visit www.whv.org.au

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact:

Kylie Inserra, Communications Coordinator, Women's Health Victoria

Ph: 03 9664 9316

M: 0409 119 101

Email: kylie.inserra@whv.org.au

About Women's Health Victoria

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) is a not-for-profit, state-wide women's health promotion, information and advocacy service, focused on improving the lives of Victorian women. WHV works collaboratively with women, health professionals, policy makers and community organisations to influence and inform health policy and service delivery for women. The work of WHV is underpinned by a social model of health and a commitment to reducing inequities in health which arise from social, economic and environmental determinants.

For more information, visit www.whv.org.au