



MEDIA RELEASE

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Empowering consumers to call out sexism in advertising

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Men are strong and capable, they're the authorities and experts, while women are domestic goddesses or sex objects. Many consumers are tired of seeing these kinds of gender stereotypes in advertising but feel powerless to change them.

A toolkit released today by Women's Health Victoria (WHV) and the City of Melbourne empowers consumers to take action.

The *Reporting Sexist Advertising* toolkit informs consumers about how ads are regulated in Australia, the rules advertisers are supposed to follow, and how to make a complaint.

The resource was developed in response to [recent research](#) that showed that many community members are concerned about the impacts of stereotyped and sexualised advertising.

The study by RMIT University and WHV found that while community members are worried about gender portrayals in advertising, they are so common that they have become desensitised to them. Most were unaware of where to take their complaints.

WHV CEO Dianne Hill said: "Community members have good reason to be concerned. Advertising has a powerful influence on social norms and attitudes. The evidence shows that advertising portrayals pressure women and men to conform to narrow stereotypes, have harmful impacts on women's mental health and support attitudes that contribute to violence against women."

The toolkit is part of a larger project, *Advertising (in)equality*, which aims to address sexism in advertising. WHV and the City of Melbourne, along with members of the advertising industry, businesses, academics, activists and community members are partners in the project, which is funded by the Victorian Government.

Ms Hill said: "We can all play a role in change. By supporting consumers to speak up, we can improve the way women and girls are portrayed in advertising and promote their health and wellbeing."

-ENDS-

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About Women's Health Victoria

Women's Health Victoria (WHV) is a not-for-profit, state-wide women's health promotion, advocacy and support service, focused on improving the lives of Victorian women. WHV collaborates 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 whv.org.au**