

Carmel Tebbutt MP

Deputy Premier | Minister for Health

eA1633744
M11/205

7 MAR 2011

Dr S Laverty
Older Women's Network NSW Inc
87 Lower Fort Street
MILLERS POINT NSW 2000

Dear Dr Laverty *Samia*

Thank you for your invitation to give my views on a number of health-related issues of concern to the Older Women's Network.

I commend the Older Women's Network for the valuable work it does in supporting the rights and opportunities for older women, particularly in challenging and exposing discrimination against older women. I share the Older Women's Network's concern to ensure that the health needs of older women are appropriately recognised and acknowledged in Government policy and strategic planning in NSW.

Ageism

Ageism, as workplace issue, is a matter for the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The NSW Department of Health adopts policies issued by the Department of Premier and Cabinet and applies them to the public health system workforce.

Health

The NSW Government is committed to developing services tailored to the needs of the community and responsive to community members' changing requirements.

Within these principles, the importance of considering the effect of gender on health experiences and health needs is well recognised and reflected in service policies.

It is also true that the best health service planning and policy development processes take into account a wide range of factors that can influence health needs and moderate the effect of single characteristics such as gender. For example, age, place of residence and socio-economic status can be more powerful determinants of health need than gender.

Prevention of Violence

The NSW Government has instituted a number of strategies that relate to preventing violence against older women.

The Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) is a significant state-wide provider of violence related education and training services for and on behalf of NSW Health. ECAV manages the Intersectoral Domestic and Family Violence Education Training (IDFVET) project that is one of the five key interagency projects under the Government's commitment to better coordinate responses to domestic violence.



ECAV provides a range of specialised domestic violence training courses including *Not Seen or Heard: Recognising and Responding to Abuse of Older People*, and the course tailored for Aboriginal communities, *Uncovering the shame: responding to abuse of Aboriginal older people*.

The courses cover abuse of all older people, which includes men. Risk assessment and management forms part of the training; safety planning is one aspect of this. Both courses were offered once in 2010. Additional courses may be provided in 2011 in response to need.

The NSW Government is committed to working with the Older Women's Network NSW Inc on projects to prevent violence against older women. In 2010, funding was provided for a project with general practitioners on violence against older women. NSW Health encourages the Older Women's Network NSW Inc to continue to submit applications for funding for projects.

Volunteering and Carers

In July 2010, the Premier, the Hon Kristina Keneally MP, approved the transfer of responsibility for carers policy, planning and funding from the NSW Department of Health to Ageing, Disability and Home Care, Department of Human Services NSW (ADHC). ADHC is well placed to take the lead in addressing the needs of carers into the future. This role is integral to ADHCs core business.

The NSW Government is committed to making a difference for carers through continuing to deliver on the priorities for action in the NSW Carers Action Plan 2007 – 2012 (CAP) and through meeting our responsibilities under the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010. The NSW CAP recognises that primary carers are most likely to be 45 years and over and that 72 per cent of primary carers are women.

The NSW Department of Health continues to have lead responsibility for mental health and health policy and service provision, including the Family and Carer Mental Health Program, the NSW Carers Program and the Local Health Network Carers Support Services. The Local Health Network Carer Action Plans demonstrate the implementation of the CAP across the NSW public health system, including strategies to better identify carers and respond to their needs, to involve families and carers in assessment, care planning and discharge planning and to increase support services to families and carers

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these issues.

Yours sincerely



Carmel Tebbutt MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Health