

## Media Release

### TACKLING GENDER INEQUALITY THROUGH THE ARTS

Artists, game-developers and performers are teaming up with their local councils to promote gender equality in their communities thanks to more than \$630,000 in VicHealth funding.

Seven arts projects have got the green light as part of the health promotion foundation's [Gender Equality and the Arts grants](#), including a musical theatre production for kids about respectful relationships and a "game jam" where game developers will build games that act on gender equality.

Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams said the new VicHealth initiative would harness the transformative power of the arts to push for real change on gender equality.

"We want every Victorian to enjoy the benefits of good health and wellbeing, and their gender should never be a barrier to that," Minister Williams said.

"However we know that women are more likely than men to experience family violence and abuse at the hands of their partner, which can have an enormous toll on their physical and mental health.

"This initiative will see councils partnering with cutting-edge female artists to deliver exciting new art and theatre works which give voice to local women and girls' experiences and push for change."

VicHealth Acting CEO Dr Lyn Roberts said it was important that women were empowered to have a voice and claim their space in the community.

"Since the #MeToo movement we've seen an outpouring of anger and grief from women who've experienced sexism, harassment and violence at the hands of men. We've also seen immense courage and optimism from many women pushing to change things for the better," Dr Roberts explained.

"One way of changing things is to provide greater information, knowledge and skills for the public about why gender equality in our community is good for everyone. Art enables people to walk in the shoes of others, it validates the experiences of people who might not have been heard or who have been marginalised.

"These projects will provide an opportunity for councils to work with artists and local women to share their experiences and challenge the harmful attitudes and stereotypes about gender holding us back.

"The funded projects will explore a range of themes including promoting gender equality in male-dominated industries like technology and politics, celebrating Aboriginal women's stories and teaching kids about how to have positive, healthy relationships.

"We're really looking forward to seeing how these projects will bring local communities together in forging gender equality for women and healthier, more respectful communities for us all.

More information about the gender equality and the arts projects can be found at <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/gender-equality-through-the-arts-and-creative-industries>

**Project details:**

<p><b>Bayside City Council</b> w/ Artist Ponch Hawks, playwright Hayley Lawson-Smith</p>	<p>Art for a Better Democracy</p>	<p>Art project encouraging more women to participate in local democracy through a creative exploration of the gendered nature of Bayside’s local government history. The artists will create new portraits of Bayside women to replace historical portraits of past Mayors.</p>
<p><b>City of Port Phillip</b> w/ Star Health, Girl Geek Academy, The Arcade</p>	<p>Gender Equality Game Jam</p>	<p>This project will see Victorian game developers build games to act on gender equality in a world-first Gender Equality Game Jam. Game Jam teams will create a game from beginning to end in less than 48 hours.</p>
<p><b>Melbourne City Council</b> w/ QueerTech, Drum Youth Services, Sound School, Oz African TV, Melbourne Knowledge Week, City Marketing and Affairs, various artists</p>	<p>Female Futures</p>	<p>Female Futures will empower and upskill young women as creative leaders in their community. The project will work with female and female-identifying young people to produce a digital art project that explores gender and technology.</p>
<p><b>South Gippsland Shire Council</b> w/ Local artists, FReeZA group, Yooralla Community Hub, Drift Media, Gippsland Women’s Health, Respectful Relationships in Schools</p>	<p>Reclaim the Lanes: Girls Own Space</p>	<p>Girls Own Space invites young women of all abilities from the South Gippsland Shire to take part in a creative participatory project to reclaim a laneway or public space in their own town, through art.</p>
<p><b>Yarra Ranges Council</b> w/ Healesville Indigenous Community Services Association, HICSA, Wandooon Estate, Tarrawarra Museum of Art, Wurundjeri Land Council, Cultural Development Network, Worowa Aboriginal College</p>	<p>Balit Bagurrk: Strong Aboriginal Women of the Yarra Ranges</p>	<p>This community project will find, explore, celebrate and share the stories of Aboriginal women who have shaped the local community in the past, their descendants and women leaders in the contemporary Aboriginal community of the Yarra Ranges.</p>
<p><b>Knox City Council</b> w/ Hotham Street Ladies artist collective, Anglicare, Relationships Australia, Swinburne University, Her Place Museum, Boronia Mall Traders, Eastern Regional Library, local schools and artists</p>	<p>Framed by Gender</p>	<p>This project will feature co-designed community art projects, in an interactive art gallery space. Art, performance and events will be held exploring gender roles and gendered spaces. Another art project titled Words for Change will also feature handwritten expressions screen-printed onto banners, digital screens and light boxes as installations throughout Boronia Mall.</p>
<p><b>City of Yarra</b> w/ Social Mind Australia, Bridget Knol, Sharni Page, Mollison Leightley Agency</p>	<p>Musical Sprouts – Start Upstream</p>	<p>A musical theatre show for young children that explores empathy, respectful relationships and gender equity. The show will be delivered in childcares, kindergartens and primary schools and feed into the social emotional curriculum. In addition, there will be resources and a workshop developed for educators.</p>