



**Women's Health  
in the South East**

# AGM & Special General Meeting 2020/2021

## Proposal to Members

Amendments to the WHISE Constitution

*The Board of WHISE are proposing to members that a change to the organisation's constitution occur to ensure that WHISE is inline with recent exemption to the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 provided by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal to WHISE.*

*This change would result in WHISE making membership available to persons of all genders.*

### Proposed Resolution for Members Consideration

That the constitution of WHISE be amended as recommended to:

- Ensure that WHISE acts in keeping with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and the exemption provided
- Allow people of all genders to join WHISE.

### Background

In April 2021, WHISE applied again to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal to receive an exemption to the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

Our initial application was heard at a hearing of the Tribunal on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July where oral and material evidence were reviewed. From this hearing, the Tribunal was satisfied that Women's Health in the South East could be granted exemption to the act for sections 16, 44, 107 and 182 of the Act.

This exemption allows WHISE to:

- Employ only women at Women's Health in the South East and
- Appoint only women to the Board of Management as Directors

### Current WHISE constitution

Given the 2021 exemption and, also, the expanding work of WHISE, the proposal to members is that the clauses in our constitution that limit membership to only women be modified to allow all genders to join WHISE as members.

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### A note on WHISE's current and future work with Community

Members are advised that in the last 12 to 18 months we have:

- Expanded our work to prevent violence against women by targeted and working with men to redress poor gender stereotypes in both men and women, that can lead to violence against women. This has included being more inclusive of men in our work
- The launch and commencement of the Pride Centre in Southern Metropolitan Melbourne (St Kilda) as enabled WHISE to consider how it may be more inclusive of gender and intersectional experience of our LGBTIQ+ community through our work. Our hope is to develop a strong collaborative partnership with the Pride Centre and align our work to the activities of the Centre and LGBTIQ+ community

The proposed changes to the constitution would suitably reflect the changed exemption status of WHISE, but also, the increased level of inclusivity and participation of all genders in our work

### Current Wording

The current WHISE Constitution expressly states in section 4 that membership is for women and organisations where women are put forward to represent said organisations at the AGM.

See note below highlighted for reference.

#### 4. Membership

##### 4.1 Eligibility for Membership

##### 4.1.1 The following are eligible to be Members of the Association:

(a) a woman who is at least 18 years of age who resides, works or studies in the South East and supports the Statement of Purpose; and

(b) organisations including women's groups, agencies and community organisations located in the South East that share the visions and goals of the Association as set out in the Statement of Purpose. Each organisation Member is entitled to appoint one female representative who is eligible to submit one vote on behalf of the organisation Member.

##### 4.1.2 The following are eligible to be Associate Members of the Association:

(a) women or organisations with an interest in and commitment to women's health who do not meet the criteria for membership in rule 4.1.1 and who are endorsed by a Member; and

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(b) staff members employed by the Association.

### Proposed Wording Changes

The wording change proposed to accommodate the new environment is as per below (track changes highlighted)

#### 4. Membership

##### 4.1 Eligibility for Membership

4.1.1 The following are eligible to be Members of the Association:

(a) ~~a woman~~ a person who is at least 18 years of age who resides, works or studies in the South East and supports the Statement of Purpose; and

(b) organisations including women's groups, agencies and community organisations located in the South East that share the visions and goals of the Association as set out in the Statement of Purpose. Each organisation Member is entitled to appoint one female representative who is eligible to submit one vote on behalf of the organisation Member.

4.1.2 The following are eligible to be Associate Members of the Association:

(a) women individuals or organisations with an interest in and commitment to women's health who do not meet the criteria for membership in rule 4.1.1 and who are endorsed by a Member; and

(b) staff members employed by the Association.

### Prepared by

Kit McMahon, CEO WHISE 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021

### Put Forward by

Robinette Emonson, Chair Women's Health in the South East on behalf of the Board of Women's Health in the South East.