



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

20 APRIL 1989

I have today launched Australia's first National Women's Health Policy at Westmead Hospital, Sydney.

Based on the views of more than one million women around Australia, the policy provides a blueprint for improving the health and well-being of Australian women into the twenty-first century.

The seven major issues identified by Australian women during one of the widest consultative processes undertaken in this country are : reproductive health and sexuality; the health of ageing women; women's emotional and mental health; violence against women; occupational health and safety; the health needs of women as carers; and the health effects of sex role stereotyping.

It is proposed that a National Women's Health Program cost-shared with the States will address these concerns through five key action areas :

- . improvement in health services for women;
- . provision of health information for women;
- . research and collection of data on women's health;
- . training of health care providers; and
- . women's participation in decision-making on health.

The policy recognises the special needs of women who may be disadvantaged through age, low income, urban or rural isolation, by having a disability, or because they are from non-English speaking backgrounds.

All of its recommendations aim to provide affordable, accessible, appropriate and acceptable health services for women.

My Government is committed to the policy and working towards its full implementation in conjunction with the States. State Health Ministers gave their in-principle endorsement to it last month.

This bipartisan approach acknowledges that implementation of policies and programs designed to improve women's health, well-being and life opportunities must be one of Australia's major goals in the closing years of the twentieth century.

The National Women's Health Policy is a major component of the National Agenda for Women, my Government's blueprint for improving the status of Australian women towards the year 2000.

The release of this policy complements, from a health perspective, the measures announced in the tax package last week, of which many Australian women will be major beneficiaries.

The policy has been developed over the past three years, coordinated by the Department of Community Services and Health, and with the assistance of a special consultant to the Minister, Ms Liza Newby.