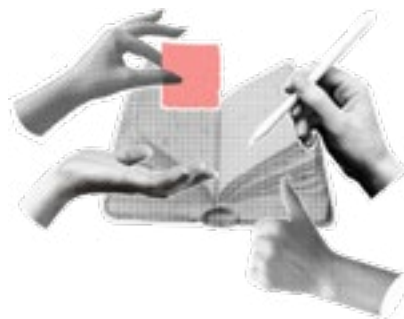




APRIL 2025 | ISSUE 4 | THE GIPPSLAND SERVICES EDITION
KNOWLEDGE FOR SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM



ARE YOU COVERED



Behind This Issue

Issue 004

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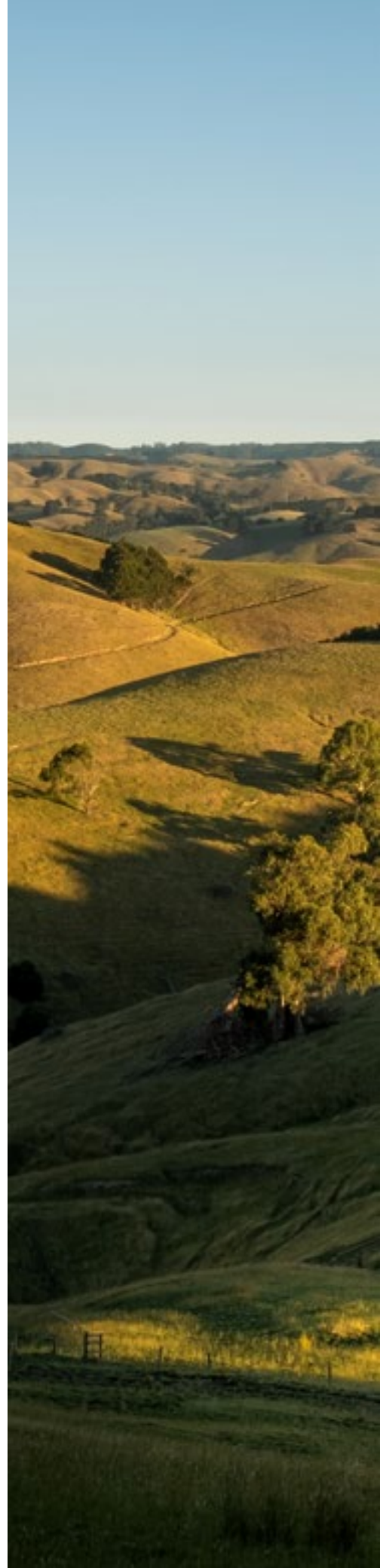
Submissions

Are You Covered accepts sexual and reproductive health related advertisements, photo and story submissions, however acceptance is subjective to approval by the Content Director.

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Acknowledgement

Gippsland Women's Health acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Owners of Country and pay our respects to Elders past and present for they hold the stories, traditions and culture.

Gippsland Women's Health acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded and commit to respectful truth telling and working in partnership to improve the health and well-being and security and safety of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Gippsland Women's Health acknowledges and recognises the women and children who have died or been traumatised as a result of gendered and family violence and those who continue to live with violence. Gippsland Women's Health acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



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GOOD



SEX



yes

ESSENTIALS



WELCOME BACK!!!

Hello! It is truly lovely to be back for Issue 4 of the Are You Covered Magazine. It always brings the team here at Gippsland Women's Health such joy when readers spot us around Gippsland and tell us how much they enjoy the magazine. If you are new here, thanks for joining! You can access our past issues by visiting www.gwhealth.asn.au/are-you-covered-magazine

You will see throughout the magazine there will be links and a QR codes that direct you to a very short feedback form. As much as we love your verbal feedback, we need your written feedback to ensure we can keep the magazine going and make sure it continues to be relevant to the Gippsland community's needs.



We would love your feedback! Scan the QR code to complete our short survey.

gwhealth.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eJofoWqn5Lq54Bo

Content warning: This magazine discusses sensitive topics relating to sexual and reproductive health and relationships openly. A list of support services can be found via our website: gwhealth.asn.au/services-and-partners/find-help

The Are You Covered Magazine was created for general information purposes only. Readers should speak with a medical or health care professional for specific advice and/or treatment. The contents do not constitute legal advice, are not intended to be a substitute for legal advice and should not be relied upon as such.

All reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information provided at the time of its initial publication. The copyright owner accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the information after two years following its original publication.



What our readers had to say about Issue 3

"The articles and information in these magazines are very informative and relate to women and girls of all ages. I have not seen a publication with so much relevant information in the one place. It is wonderful that the articles included are not only clinical information but are shared experiences of real women across Gippsland. Once I started reading, I could not put it down."

"There is limited, if any regional women's health magazine that connects, the authenticity of experiences jumps off the pages. I also love having the printed version and keep these on my bookshelf or coffee table for when friends visit to share regional women's health experiences. Often women can feel alone in their experiences good or bad. I also go back to the magazine as a reliable source of truth for sexual and reproductive health information."

"Useful information from an authoritative source, delivered without melodrama, on topics that are very hard to find good information on."

ARE YOU COVERED?

Are You Covered? (AYC) Reflects Gippsland Women's Health Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) strategy. AYC started back in 2015, a safe sex campaign focusing on condoms and consent. Since then, the AYC brand has evolved and is now used to improve health literacy and increase confidence around all aspects of sexual reproductive health regardless of gender, age or sexuality. Whether you want to find out more about reproductive rights, know where to access SRH services in Gippsland or understand the impact of menopause on daily life, we have got you covered!

Want to stay covered? You can sign up to our quarterly email using the feedback form or follow us on Instagram [@AreYouCovered](#)

Follow [@GippslandWomensHealth](#) on our socials or visit our website to learn more about our work www.gwhealth.asn.au

What Are We Covering in Issue 4?

Issue 4's theme is around Gippsland-based sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. We hear both positive and negative experiences around accessing care in Gippsland, highlight hero services, provide tips on how to self-advocate for your SRH needs, and links to more resources. We also explore the menstrual cycle, share book reviews, and offer waiting room recommendations to help pass the time. We take a neutral approach to these topics and hope the articles serve as a starting point for you to access resources and deepen your understanding.

To the people who have contributed to this magazine, either by submitting a story, completing a survey or sharing their expertise, we cannot thank you enough. Story telling is a powerful tool. We hope you enjoy this collaborative effort.

AYC Recommends



Cheeky Conversation Cards

www.itsnormal.com

52 questions crafted by Hannah Ferguson of Cheek Media to help you have better conversations about sex, dating and relationships. Great to reflect with alone, with a partner or to normalise healthy conversations around sex and relationships with friends.



Queerstralia

*Docuseries
ABC iview*

This three-part docuseries, hosted by comedian Zoë Coombs Marr, uncovers the untold and often overlooked stories of queer history in Australia. With a mix of humour and heart, it highlights voices from across the community, including 78ers, First Nations icons, and people from multicultural backgrounds. It's smart, moving, and well worth your time.



Fake

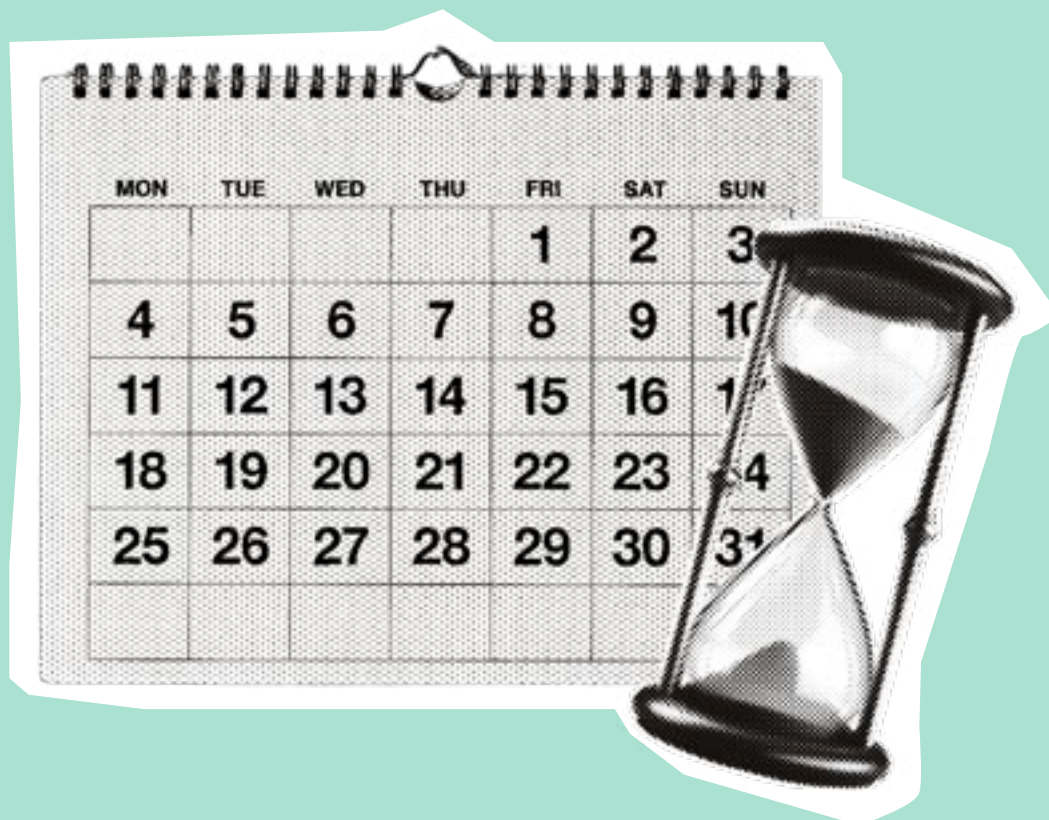
*TV series
Paramount+*

Fake explores the messy reality of trust, red flags, and emotional abuse in relationships. Based on a true story and starring Asher Keddie, it offers a powerful look at gaslighting and how easily someone can lose their sense of reality. Gritty, emotional, and a strong reminder to trust your gut, even when it's hard.

LOCAL STORIES ON ABORTION AND ACCESS IN GIPPSLAND

Access to abortion is a fundamental healthcare right. While some doctors choose not to provide assistance with early medical abortions, the law requires that all doctors refer patients to a qualified doctor who can prescribe the necessary medications or provide a surgical referral. Unfortunately, this referral process is not always followed as it should be.

The stories that follow clearly illustrate the impact proper support can have on patients seeking abortions, as well as the significant room for improvement that is required to achieve this level of care as a standard throughout Gippsland.



Barriers to Timely Care

"When I missed my period and had five positive home pregnancy tests, I visited my regular GP. Upon expressing my desire for an abortion, my GP instructed me to take a blood test to confirm the pregnancy. After completing the test, I received a call to schedule an appointment for the results, but the soonest available slot was a week later, by which time I was already two weeks past my missed period. During that appointment, my GP confirmed the positive test and stated that I would need an ultrasound to establish my pregnancy dates. I explained that I was aware of when I conceived, as my husband works away and there was only one encounter that could have resulted in pregnancy. However, my GP insisted that an ultrasound was necessary.

I scheduled the ultrasound and tried to emphasise its urgency, but they could not accommodate me for nearly two weeks. I was informed that the report would take a few days, so I should book an appointment with my GP the week after my scan. By then, more than four weeks had passed since I missed my period. At my next appointment, my GP informed me that I was approximately eight weeks and four days pregnant. If I wanted a medical

abortion, I needed to schedule an appointment with a different clinic within the next three days, or it would be too late. When I inquired about getting a prescription from them, I was told they could not provide it and I would have to go elsewhere.

I asked for recommendations on where to go, but my GP was unsure, suggesting I might find a clinic in Melbourne for around \$500.

"Frustrated and stressed, I couldn't believe I had not been informed about this sooner during my initial visit a month prior."

I took to Google and found a 1800 number to call. They provided me with details about a nearby clinic, not in Melbourne, where I could obtain my prescription. It was disheartening to realise that such a clinic had existed all along, and my doctor had not mentioned it. While I ultimately received the prescription I needed, I felt let down by my GP and have decided not to return to that clinic."

- Shared Anonymously

The Care I Deserved

"My abortion story makes me feel so proud and privileged for my right to access reproductive healthcare locally and with dignity. I simply searched "abortion clinic near me" online, and booked via Hot Doc straight away.

"The abortion nurse was pragmatic, straightforward and approachable - she did not question my motives or my feelings behind my decision - just affirmed the decision I was making because I was pregnant and didn't want to be."

I felt like she had so much time for me and she armed me with so much information and support, talking me through what will happen with my medical termination, as well as discussing ALL my contraception options going forward.

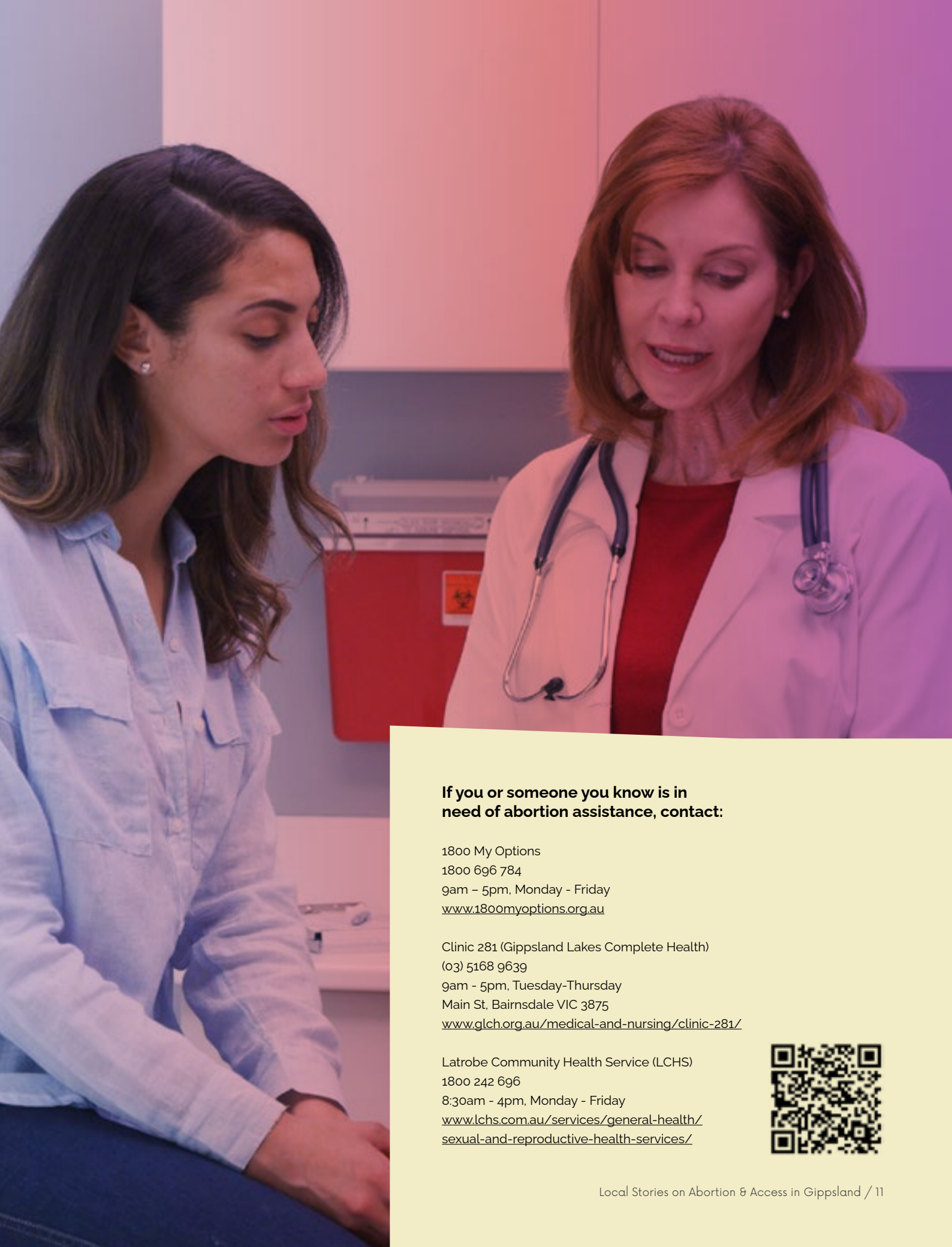
I opted for Implanon and I was booked in for the procedure during our appointment. A doctor had to approve the prescriptions and sign off on the decisions made by my nurse and I, and I really appreciate that the nurse informed me before she called for him that the doctor was a tall man with a deep voice. This wasn't a problem for me but I felt empowered knowing that the clinic and its staff are vigilant about potential triggers for patients regarding gendered violence. The doctor signed off on the scripts, acknowledging that I am in control and know what's best for me and that his role was not to undermine the nurse's competence; it was just the legal process.

When I brought my script for the abortion pills to a local chemist, the chemist's language made me feel like she thought it was something shameful - although she still did her job checking I was informed and safe. The chemist wanted to know where the script was from and relaxed when I told her I'd been to the abortion clinic in Morwell. She told me now that any GP can prescribe this medication, that chemists must check that it is being prescribed correctly and for the right reasons.

I don't take for granted that I had access to reproductive healthcare - free of charge - provided with such respect and safety. Everyone deserves that!"

- Shared Anonymously





**If you or someone you know is in
need of abortion assistance, contact:**

1800 My Options
1800 696 784
9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday
www.1800myoptions.org.au

Clinic 281 (Gippsland Lakes Complete Health)
(03) 5168 9639
9am – 5pm, Tuesday-Thursday
Main St, Bairnsdale VIC 3875
www.glch.org.au/medical-and-nursing/clinic-281/

Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS)
1800 242 696
8:30am – 4pm, Monday - Friday
www.lchs.com.au/services/general-health/sexual-and-reproductive-health-services/



CHEAT SHEET

Advocating for Your Sexual and Reproductive Health Needs

Going to see a health professional can be daunting, especially when you have previously sought help and you didn't feel you were listened to, you're experiencing a chronic illness, or it is just really hard and expensive to get an appointment. Please don't give up, you know your body better than anyone else and you deserve to feel well, be heard, and get the assistance you need. Here are some tips to navigating health services and the overload of information out there.

Symptom diaries, start recording what you're experiencing in a journal or the notes app in your phone to have ready as a reminder at the appointment. This could be writing down things like; how many days your period lasted for, was it painful? What did the pain feel like? How many times do you have to change your period product on the heavy days? Also write down any questions you may have for the health professional.

When booking online, check what the GP specialises in, e.g. Women's Health, Sexual Health. Often the GPs bios will also state what extra specialist training they have completed, book according to your concern. If you live in Victoria, you can also use the 1800 My Options service to find specific SRH services in your area that fits your needs such as contraception options, abortion or STI screening. They can also specify if that service is LGBTQIA+ sensitive, Youth Friendly or has a Female doctor or Bilingual health worker available.

Book a longer appointment if you have multiple concerns or symptoms.


Know that it's okay to seek differing opinions, we don't have to stick the family doctor anymore. If you exhausted your options in your area, or want specialist advice, a telehealth appointment online or over the phone is a great option without the need to travel. Jean Hailes for Women's Health have a broad range of women's health services. Sexual Health Victoria provide Cervical Screening and Medical Abortion via telehealth

Seek information from reputable sources, we love Jean Hailes for Women's Health, The Better Health Channel and Sexual Health Victoria.

Open conversations with family and friends and dedicated online groups are a great starting point for knowledge sharing.

Be wary of social media influencers and creators' advice, despite the number of views and followers they have, they may have no formal training and could be using their platform to sell their own product or service.





CHEAT SHEET

- ♥ Keep a symptom diary
- ♥ Check GP specialties
- ♥ Book a longer appointment
- ♥ It's okay to get a second opinion
- ♥ Use reputable information sources
- ♥ Talk to people you trust
- ♥ Be cautious with social media advice

THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE

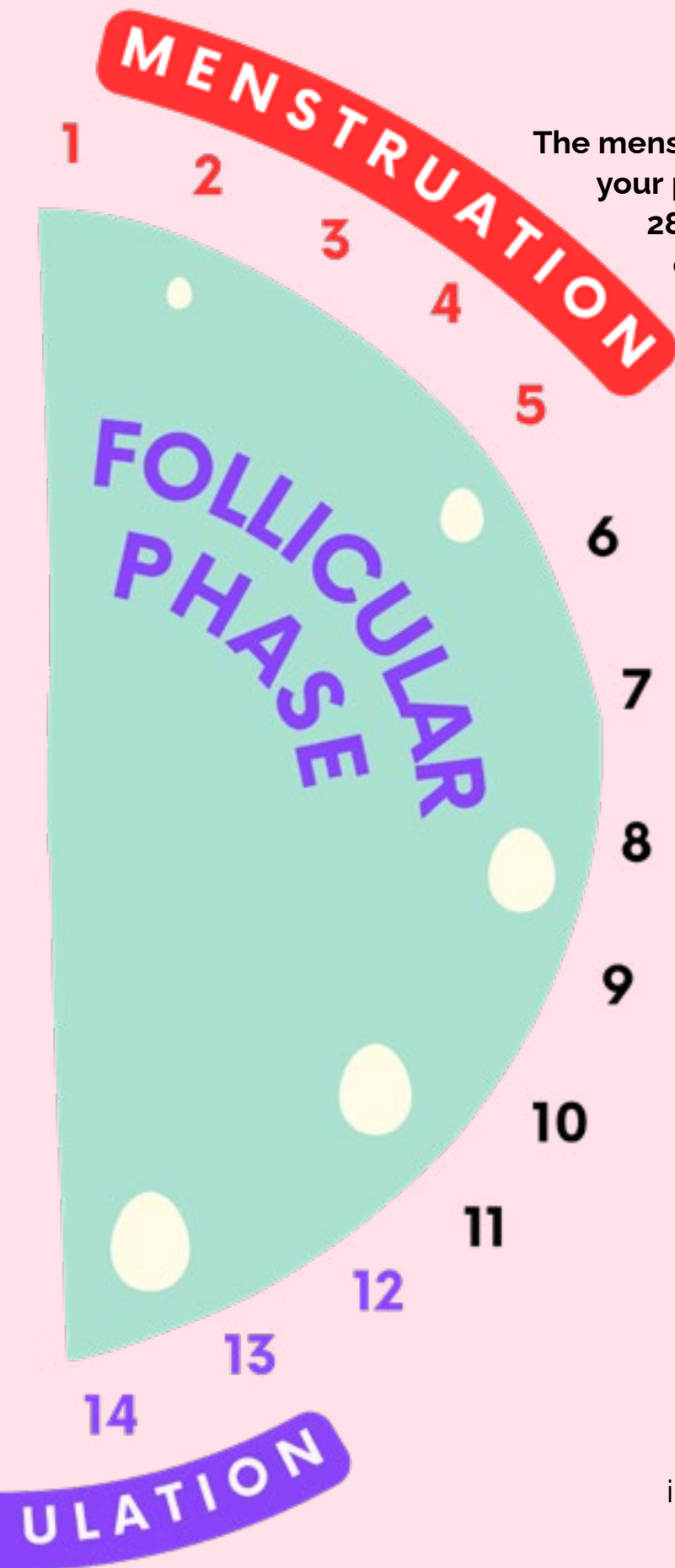
The Luteal Phase comes after ovulation, when an egg begins to move to the uterus. After the egg is released, there's a big increase in progesterone and a drop in oestrogen, so you'll likely feel more fatigued or a bit sluggish. If you're healthy and well, and a pregnancy hasn't occurred, the menstrual cycle begins again.



Ovulation occurs roughly in the middle of a cycle, when a mature egg is released from an ovary.

During this time, oestrogen levels peak, leading to a boost in energy and strength, along with an overall feeling of well-being. Big slay!



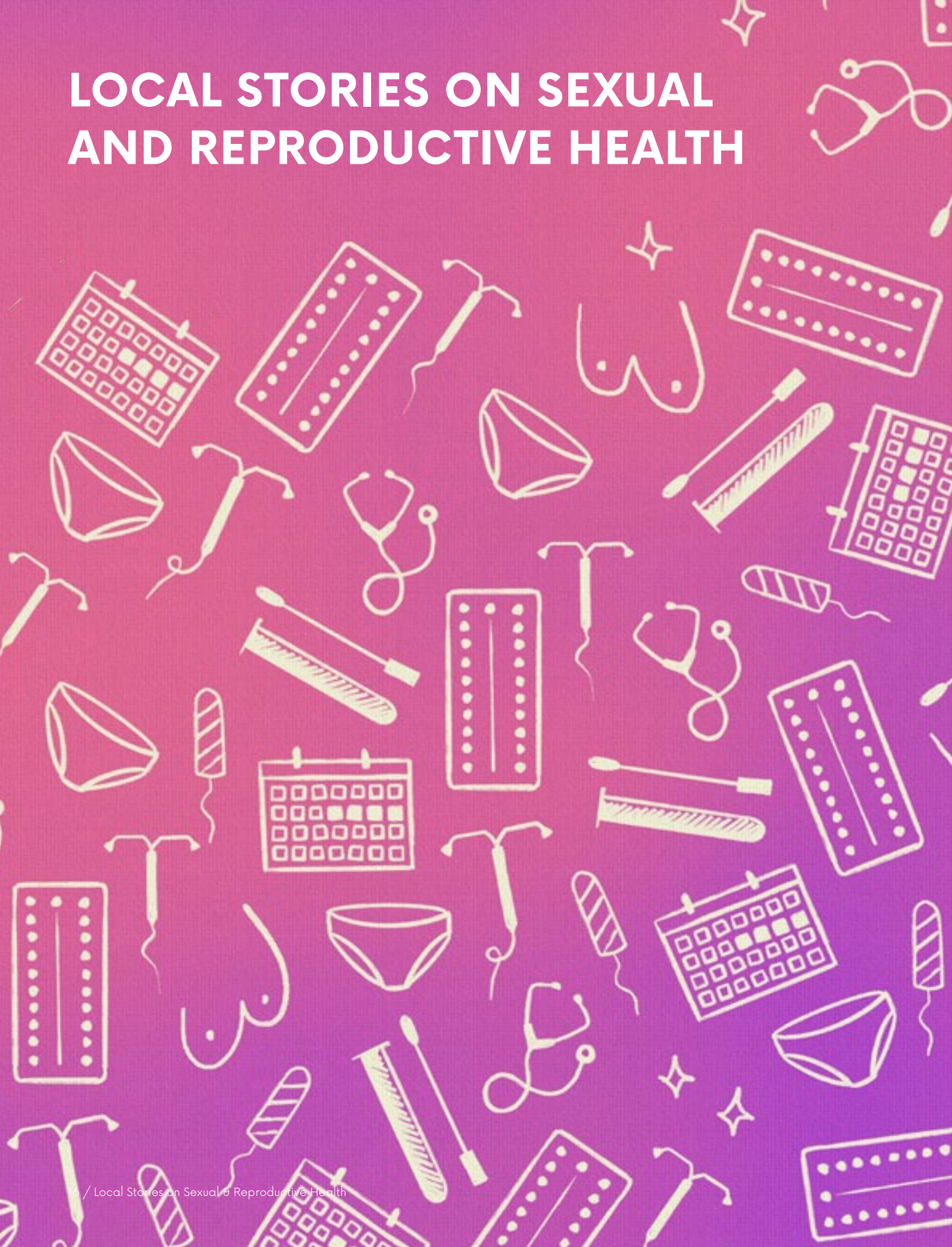


The menstrual cycle begins with ***menstruation*** - your period - which generally occurs every **28 days**, however this can differ between each person. Hormones oestrogen and progesterone are at their lowest during, which can cause a dip in energy. You'll likely feel fatigued and a need for rest.



During the ***Follicular Phase***, follicles begin to **develop**. A follicle will transform into an egg, and more oestrogen is produced and released. As oestrogen levels rise, you'll tend to experience an increase in energy and feel more active.

LOCAL STORIES ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



Understanding My Cycle

"Growing up from prepuberty and into early adulthood I didn't have a solid understanding of the menstrual cycle apart from that once a month I would bleed and this was considered a bad and inconvenient thing, something that we had to accept happens but don't make a big deal out of it, just get on with it. I was mostly able to do this, my periods were regular and the pain only lasted 1 to 2 days, so in my teenage years I thought this was the shared experience, I didn't know what Endometriosis or Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) were until my 20's and sadly I had no idea some of the closest people in my life were experiencing these conditions the entire time. Which still brings me guilt and shame.

There was also a time when I was on the pill, so I thought about my cycle even less as I wasn't experiencing the hormone fluctuations. The only inconvenience was getting a script and waiting 30 minutes for a 1-minute consultation at a Bulk Bill GP. Upon reflection it would have been good if the doctor took the time to do a full consultation, discuss other contraception options, offer cervical or STI screening while I was there or even ask if I had any questions or concerns.

Post pill, my period remained regular but my skin, which was the main reason I went on the pill in the first place, flared up and lead me to feel sad and anxious and spend a lot of money on Chinese medicine and greens powder promoted by influencers.

Acknowledging all social media's shortfalls, which there are many, over the years it has provided me profound insights and understandings, particularly regarding sexual reproductive health and relationships. From discussions around how much blood is considered a heavy period, signs of coercive control and the call out to remove the goods and services tax (GST) from period products. The biggest takeaway for me has been the accounts and videos directed to the phases of the menstrual cycle and while most were made for fun, it did make me look into it a bit deeper. I started to track my cycle using an app on my phone. The app explains the phases and how I might be feeling on that day depending on where I am at on my cycle and what may help. Whilst it felt a little lame to 'honour my cycle' things did start to make a lot more sense and positively impact my physical, mental and social health. The



week leading to my period (Luteal Phase) I usually become quite fatigued, I couldn't lift weights as heavy in the gym, my emotions were heightened, and I had very little (no) interest in sex. I have learnt in that week that rest is the most important thing for me, and I will prioritise sleep and low impact exercise such as walking and Pilates and avoid alcohol where I can. I now know that after menstruation my skin will flare up and I have tools in place to manage it but know it may never be flawless.

It feels powerful to understand my body on this deeper level and how to navigate each cycle/season. I hope the momentum and evidence base continues to build and education and workplace settings expand their policies to allow flexible learning and working to get the best out of menstruators."

-Shared Anonymously

Menopause and the Care Gap

Menopause is a natural phase in every woman's life just like puberty, yet it is frequently met with silence and outdated advice. Women experiencing this transition deserve accurate information and support from their healthcare providers.

Menopause encompasses more than just hot flushes; it can bring a range of physical, emotional, and mental changes that require understanding, empathy, and appropriate guidance. Many women cope with mild menopausal symptoms, others are able to manage symptoms with a healthy lifestyle and for some women who experience symptoms that affect their quality of life, might choose to use medicines and therapies.

As highlighted in the following local account, many women feel dismissed or inadequately supported by healthcare professionals who lack the necessary training and insights to provide appropriate, patient centred care.

"I consulted a female GP listed on the Australasian Menopause Society's (AMS) website, who expressed disbelief in hormone replacement therapy (HRT). When I pressed the issue, she remarked, "I hope I don't see you in 20 years time with breast cancer." She refused to discuss treatment options or answer my questions, showing a lack of trust in the treatment guidelines provided by the Australian Medical Association (AMA), Jean Hailes, or the AMS. I was stunned and incredibly frustrated—feelings that linger.

As an AHPRA registered doctor and a member of the AMS, I chose not to disclose my background during the visit.

"If I, with my experience and training, have to struggle to obtain appropriate, evidence-based menopause care, I can only imagine how someone without my qualifications would feel after a similar encounter with this particular GP."

- Shared Anonymously



How health professionals can upskill with the latest evidence

Jean Hailes provides a free, CPD accredited, online Managing Menopause course. This course is designed to help general practitioners stay up to date with the latest evidence around the management of menopause and feel confident when providing patient centred care. Although this course has been designed for general practitioners, other health professionals are also welcome to participate.



www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-professionals/elearning-modules/managing-menopause



We touch on menopause in more depth in Issue 2 of the AYC Magazine Are You Covered Magazine: Issue 2 - Gippsland Women's Health.



What I Wasn't Told

We have always said that “knowledge is power” regarding personal health. However, many women often find themselves making significant decisions concerning pregnancy, childbirth, and reproductive health without a complete understanding of their options.

Whether it's being guided toward a single choice without awareness of all alternatives or not being given the opportunity to ask questions, many women end up feeling confused, pressured, and uncertain. Every woman deserves access to clear, accurate, and comprehensive information about her healthcare choices. From exploring various birth methods to understanding the risks and benefits of different procedures, it is crucial that women are empowered to make informed decisions about their bodies without feeling rushed or disregarded.

“I recently experienced a c-section for my third and final child. My doctor did not inform me prior to the scheduled c-section that I could have my tubes tied during the procedure. If I had known this was an option, I would have chosen to proceed with it. When I inquired later, they explained that they didn't offer it because I might change my mind about wanting another child. It is vital for women to be aware of all their choices and to have the right to select what is best for them.”

- Shared Anonymously

If you or someone you know would like to discuss your contraceptive options contact:

1800 My Options
1800 696 784
9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday
www.1800myoptions.org.au

Clinic 281 (Gippsland Lakes Complete Health)
(03) 5168 9639
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Latrobe Community Health Service (LCHS)
1800 242 696
8:30am - 4pm, Monday - Friday
www.lchs.com.au/services/general-health/sexual-and-reproductive-health-services/





Preventing Cervical Cancer Is In Your Hands

The introduction of the self-collection Cervical Screening Test means you can take your own vaginal sample using a small swab in a private space and it is just as accurate as a test taken by a doctor or nurse.



Cervical cancer is preventable and treatable if detected early. Choose how you do your next Cervical Screening Test with the Cervical screening Directory here www.cancervic.org.au/cervical-screening-test/where.asp

The directory allows you to find a cervical screening provider that suits your needs including location, preference of health care provider, language spoken by the provider and any disability access.

A Gippsland woman shares how a simple cervical screening brought peace of mind—and why rural and regional women shouldn't put it off.

"I had been meaning to book a cervical screening for months. It had been one of those things that lingered on my to-do list – an important task but always pushed to another day. It wasn't that I was afraid. Not really. I had cervical screenings before and remembered them being uncomfortable, sometimes painful and always awkward. So between those not-so-fond memories, work

deadlines, chasing after young kids and family commitments, I just never found the right time.

Until one day, scrolling through the news, I found out that GPs were now offering cervical self collection. It sounded so easy! So I finally picked up the phone and booked it.

Living in a small town in Gippsland, I was sceptical that the GP would actually offer me self-collection. It is a new initiative and we tend to get things later than our city friends.

I needn't have worried - The GP was friendly and knowledgeable and offered me the option to self-collect straight away. She explained what to do and offered me the option to self collect in the GP bathroom or in her office – I opted for the bathroom. It was totally painless and so easy and quick! The whole appointment took less than 5 minutes.

"I honestly don't know why I waited so long to book the appointment. Now I feel relieved knowing I've looked after myself."

This simple test can make all the difference. It's quick. It's free. And it could save your life."

- Shared Anonymously



WHO ARE WE?

Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault

GCASA is a community-based, non-profit organisation that provides a specialist support service across the entire Gippsland region. Professional staff are trained and experienced counsellors with qualifications in Social Work, Counselling, Psychology, and Community Development.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We provide a person-centred service to adults, children, young people, and anyone who has been impacted by sexual assault; whether the assault is recent or occurred in the past. We work within the community to create awareness and understanding about sexual assault with the aim of reducing the impact and frequency of this form of violence.

WHERE ARE WE?

Our main office is based in Morwell, at the Gippsland Multidisciplinary Centre (MDC). We share the MDC with Victoria Police detectives from Sexual Offence and Child Abuse Investigative Team (SOCIT), Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection team), Windermere Victims Assistance Program (VAP) community health nurses (Latrobe Community Health Service), and forensic nurses (Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine).

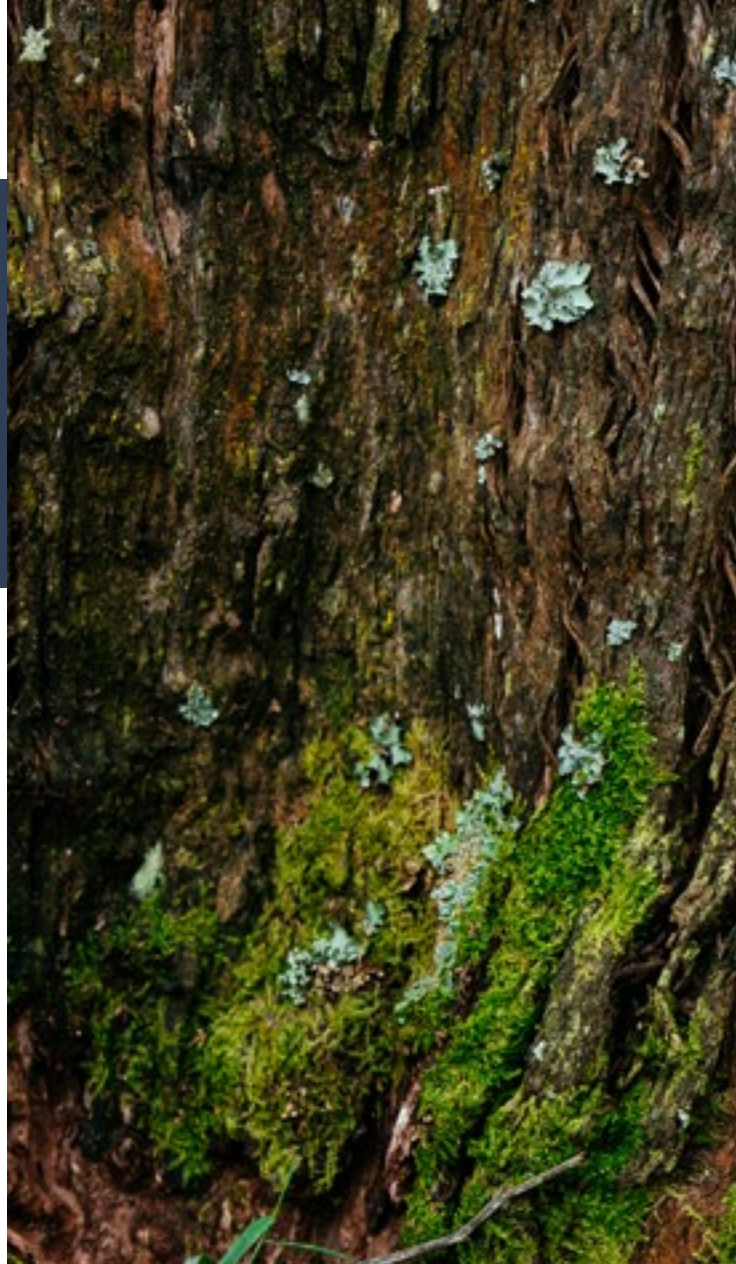
The MDC allows us to work together to help people who have been impacted by sexual assault. We also have sites in Bairnsdale, Warragul and Wonthaggi, and provide outreach services to several locations across the Gippsland region.

OUR SERVICE

We are a free and confidential service, available to anyone in Gippsland who has ever experienced sexual assault.

We can help by providing:

- Individual counselling
- Information, referral, support and advocacy
 - Counselling for children and young people (aged 18 or under) who have demonstrated problematic or harmful sexual behaviour
 - Support for families
 - Community education and prevention initiatives
- Therapeutic group work
- Research
- Community Development
- Professional training
- Specialist practice consultation
 - After hours crisis support for people who have recently experienced sexual assault and/or family violence



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Outreach service
provided from
locations across Inner
and Outer Gippsland.

AYC BOOKSHELF

Taboo by Hannah Ferguson

Sex (chapter) review by Emily Harris

What I love about this chapter, is how Hannah validates a spectrum of sexual experiences and identities. Whether discussing virginity myths, hookup culture, queer sex, or kinks, she avoids moral judgment and instead centres consent, communication, and self-awareness. She shares moments of vulnerability and curiosity, but always brings it back to a wider commentary on gender, media, and power.

This makes the chapter feel deeply inclusive and safe. It isn't about prescribing a "right" way to have sex, but about making space for women to forgive themselves, shed layers of shame and redefine what sex and pleasure means for them on their own terms. Hannah has this ability to weave personal narrative with cultural critique. There were so many moments through this chapter that felt like Hannah was writing directly from my own experiences.

***"We're told sex is either sacred or dirty
—rarely is it described as something
we can just enjoy."***

Hannah critiques the double standards that still exist: how sexual empowerment is often encouraged in theory but punished for women

in practice. Her writing reflects a keen awareness of how patriarchal systems commodify women's bodies while denying our self-agency.

All of us deserve to talk about sex without fear or judgement. Shame and silence only continue to harm and maintain double standards. *Taboo* has given us the permission to freely explore, heal and thrive in our sexuality in a way that's authentic to each of us individually.

Pleasure is not optional, selfish or taboo - it's important and it's yours to define and talk about! Read the book!!





Figuring Out Thirty **by Bridget Hustwaite**

Review by Sam Foat

Bridget Hustwaite - author of *How to Endo*, podcast host of *Figuring Out 30* - is back at it again with a book by the same name. "Figuring Out Thirty covers the big questions we ask ourselves as the defining decade looms. How do we know the decisions we're making for our futures are the right ones for us, and not what society expects of us? Is marriage still relevant, and how do we decide if we want to have children - and when? Do our dream careers have expiration dates? And why do our friendships hit different now?"

If you've ever experienced the thrill of being asked "so are you married? do you have kids yet? [insert look of pity here]" by someone you barely know but have ran into down the street, then the chapter "To Baby or Not To Baby" may appeal to you. This chapter is a relevant and timely deep-dive into this complex life-stage/crossroad so many women and people in this age-group face.

"When I question the appeal of having children, I'm not questioning that feeling of love and joy a mother has. I imagine it to be like nothing else in this world. Rather, I'm considering the labour that is involved in raising a child and what I would have to 'give up'. Because even though society sanctifies motherhood, it does little to support mothers" (Page 147). Bridget refreshingly focuses the responsibility of society as a whole, pulling apart the expectations, lack of support and unnecessary pressure placed on women, and how this societal norm deeply impacts a woman's perceived self-worth.



All I Ever Wanted Was to Be Hot **by Lucinda 'Froomes' Price**

Review by Marleigh Andrews

Lucinda Price, better known online as Froomes, expertly blends personal experience with insightful social commentary, offering a humorous and honest look at the pressures of beauty standards and her own journey towards self-acceptance and body positivity. Froomes explores her personal journey over the past 30 years, grappling with body image, an eating disorder and cosmetic procedures in the relentless pursuit of hotness. She also examines the cultural impact of phenomena's such as the Victoria's Secret fashion show and extreme makeover television show 'Snog Marry Avoid' on women and girls. This book made me laugh at the deeply funny shared experiences but also incredibly sad and frustrated at the continued obsession for women to look thin, beautiful and forever youthful. As society appears to be winding back the small progress made addressing diet culture and body positivity, this book is a must read for anyone trying to navigate this incredibly image obsessed age.

WAITING ROOM RECS

In addition to the books we've reviewed in this issue, we've pulled together a few extra recommendations to help you pass the time in waiting rooms. Whether you're in the mood for a good listen, a calming playlist, or a compelling read, these podcasts, music picks and audiobooks are here to keep you company.



Library Lowdown

Did you know most public libraries offer free digital access to e-books, audiobooks, magazines, music and more? Sign up online to get a digital library card, then follow your library's instructions to access their digital collection through partnered apps like BorrowBox, Libby, Hoopla or Kanopy. It's free, easy, and ideal for passing time in waiting rooms!



Glass

Podcast Series
Shameless Media

In Glass, Shameless Media's Michelle Andrews shares her deeply personal experience with fertility, grief, and reproductive health. Raw, candid, and refreshingly unfiltered, this three-part podcast pulls back the curtain on women's health and tells a story that feels both intimate and widely relatable.



Cacophony

Album by
Paris Paloma

With haunting vocals and unapologetic lyrics, Paris Paloma's debut album dives into rage, survival, and the emotional load women carry. It's poetic, powerful, and quietly defiant.



Sex, Lies And Question Time

Political Memoir
by Kate Ellis

Former MP Kate Ellis lifts the lid on the sexism still alive in Australian politics. Through candid interviews with women from all sides of Parliament, she exposes the culture, the cost, and the courage it takes to speak up.



Doing IT podcast Ep #71 Drag Storytime

Podcast Episode
by Sexual Health Victoria

Performers Dean and Jacob share how Drag Storytime events bring together community, performance, and storytelling in a safe, inclusive space for all. Insightful and heartwarming.

RESOURCES

List of Services



Immediate Support & Crisis Services

Always Call 000 in an emergency

If you are in an unsafe situation or know someone who is experiencing violence please refer to the specialist agencies listed.

13YARN

Culturally safe crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

13 92 76 (Hours: 24/7)

www.13yarn.org.au

Safe Steps

Victoria's 24/7 family violence response centre

1800 015 188 (Hours: 24/7)

www.safesteps.org.au

1800 Respect

National Sexual Assault, Family Violence Counselling

1800 737 732 (Hours: 24/7)

www.1800respect.org.au

GCASA (Gippsland Centre Against Sexual Assault)

1800 806 292 (Hours: 24/7)

www.gcasa.org.au

Support Services & Navigation

The Orange Door – Inner Gippsland

Family violence, child and family support, and wellbeing services

1800 696 784

Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00am–5:00pm

163 Princes Drive, Morwell 3840

36 Williams Street, Warragul 3820

Email: iga@orangedoor.vic.gov.au

The Orange Door – Outer Gippsland

Family violence, child and family support, and wellbeing services

1800 015 188

Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00am–5:00pm

148–150 Main Street, Bairnsdale 3875

Email: oga@orangedoor.vic.gov.au

Sexual & Reproductive Health

Latrobe Community Health Service (Abortion Provider)

Sexual Reproductive Health Services

Appointments available via HotDoc

Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00am–4:00pm

1800 242 696

www.lchs.com.au/services/general-health/sexual-and-reproductive-health-services/

Clinic 281 (Abortion Provider)

Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

at Gippsland Lakes Complete Health, Bairnsdale

Hours: Tues–Thurs, 8:30am–5:00pm

5168 9639

www.glch.org.au/medical-and-nursing/clinic-281/

SHIP (Sexual Health in Practice) Service – Yarram

Yarram and District Health Service

5182 0222 (select option 2 and ask for a SHIP appointment)

Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00am–5:30pm

www.ydhs.com.au

SHIP (Sexual Health in Practice) Service – Cowes

Grandview Family Clinic

5951 1860

Hours: Mon–Fri, 8:30am–5:00pm

www.grandviewfamilyclinic.com.au

1800 My Options

Contraception, pregnancy and abortion options, and sexual health in Victoria

1800 696 784

Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00am–5:00pm

www.1800myoptions.org.au

Jean Hailes for Women's Health

Women's health services via telehealth and in-person

(Melbourne clinics): 03 9562 7555

Hours: Mon–Fri, 9:00am–5:00pm

www.jeanhailes.org.au



**Visit our online
services directory!**



gwhealth.asn.au/glossary/

Glossary of Terms

When it comes to navigating the health system and advocating for your own health, knowledge is power! Take a look through our glossary of key terms to make sure you are always in the know and build your own health literacy.





Your feedback is valuable. It allows us to know whether these resources are helpful and what we should include in the next issue. Please fill out this short survey:

[GIVE FEEDBACK](#)

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