



**WHISE:  
Strength  
in Dignity,  
Choice,  
Diversity  
and  
Justice**

## **Letter to the Editor:**

### **History repeats itself through fear and Ignorance**

Melbourne has grown immensely in the past fifty years – both in size, and in diversity. Each wave of new arrivals has required our understanding and our welcoming – and our “moving over” to give them room to settle and contribute to our society.

We are all the richer for their arrival – and we have had to develop our ability to see each other as human beings first, and then as arrivals from this country or that.

Women’s Health in the South East (based in Dandenong) thoroughly enjoys our daily interactions with communities and clients of all backgrounds.

The appearance of intolerant and offensive leaflets in residents’ letterboxes in Frankston last week is all the more distressing and disheartening – but unfortunately is often the reaction of some people to change and to new arrivals.

I am reminded of the way in which new arrivals have often been vilified and abused, and then ultimately accepted within our society – and I ask myself: Why do we first reject, and then finally accept?

This kind of inflammatory flyer fails to recognize we are all human, that we all carries stresses and strains in life – how would we cope or behave if suddenly dropped into a very different country and culture – one that seemed to hold contempt for everything that we believed.

The actions of some of us are not worthy of the human race. For us to react aggressively against any new community to our country on the basis of color, gender race, ethnicity, language or any other differences, is distressing and demeans us all.

I would like to see in our media more attention given to the positive achievements of all of us who came from different countries to Australia – right from the original inhabitants, through the first wave of European arrivals, through to today’s arrivals. The majority of us have learnt to live and work cooperatively, and have contributed immensely to this vibrant society which we enjoy today. Let us learn to ignore the intolerant outpourings of those who do not want to share.

Tricia Elliott  
CEO  
Women’s Health in the South East



‘Yes ... we are  
a QIC accredited  
organisation’