

## **Social Prescribing Initiatives: Women's Association of South East Melbourne Australia (WASEMA) | Friendship Cafes**

WASEMA aspire to provide a safe, welcoming environment for isolated women in South East Melbourne to come together, relax, connect with others, make new friends and contacts, share experiences, learn new skills, find pathways for training, employment and entrepreneurship, access necessary services, and receive support and referrals. These Cafes are currently provided in a virtual (online) environment and it is hoped to extend this in the near future to a Hybrid model (onsite and online simultaneously).

WASEMA began as an informal network at the end of December 2015, where twenty women's groups came together in collaboration, working collectively to achieve each individual group's particular aims and goals.

Through trust and common vision, the informal network took the decision to incorporate on 28th July 2019, so as to be able to deliver services and activities more effectively in the communities that their women's and community groups represent.

WASEMA's purpose:

- Establish and run Women's Friendship Cafes to provide culturally appropriate education, mentoring, and well-being opportunities for women across Victoria;
- Provide information about women's issues and opportunities to engage in community programs, including in collaboration with other women's welfare agencies and service;
- Provide a safe space for women to work together on common projects, grants, events and activities;
- Advocate around issues relevant to the welfare of women of multicultural backgrounds;
- Provide a network for women's groups to share activities, experiences and challenges.

Nine (9) WASEMA Friendship Cafes are presently operating in South East Melbourne:

- City of Greater Dandenong (Springvale Neighbourhood House, North Dandenong Neighbourhood House, Wellsprings for Women)
- City of Casey (Endeavour Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Strathaird Children's Centre, Brentwood Park Neighbourhood House)
- Shire of Cardinia (Bridgewood 'Our Place' Primary School, Cockatoo Community House, Emerald Community House)

Please visit <https://wasema.org.au/friendship-cafes/>

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