

**IN THE MATTER OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION
INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE**

ATTACHMENT AS-12 TO STATEMENT OF ANGELA MAREE SINGH

Date of document: 16 July 2015
Filed on behalf of: State of Victoria
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This is the attachment marked '**AS-12**' produced and shown to **ANGELA MAREE SINGH** at the time of signing her Statement on 16 July 2015.

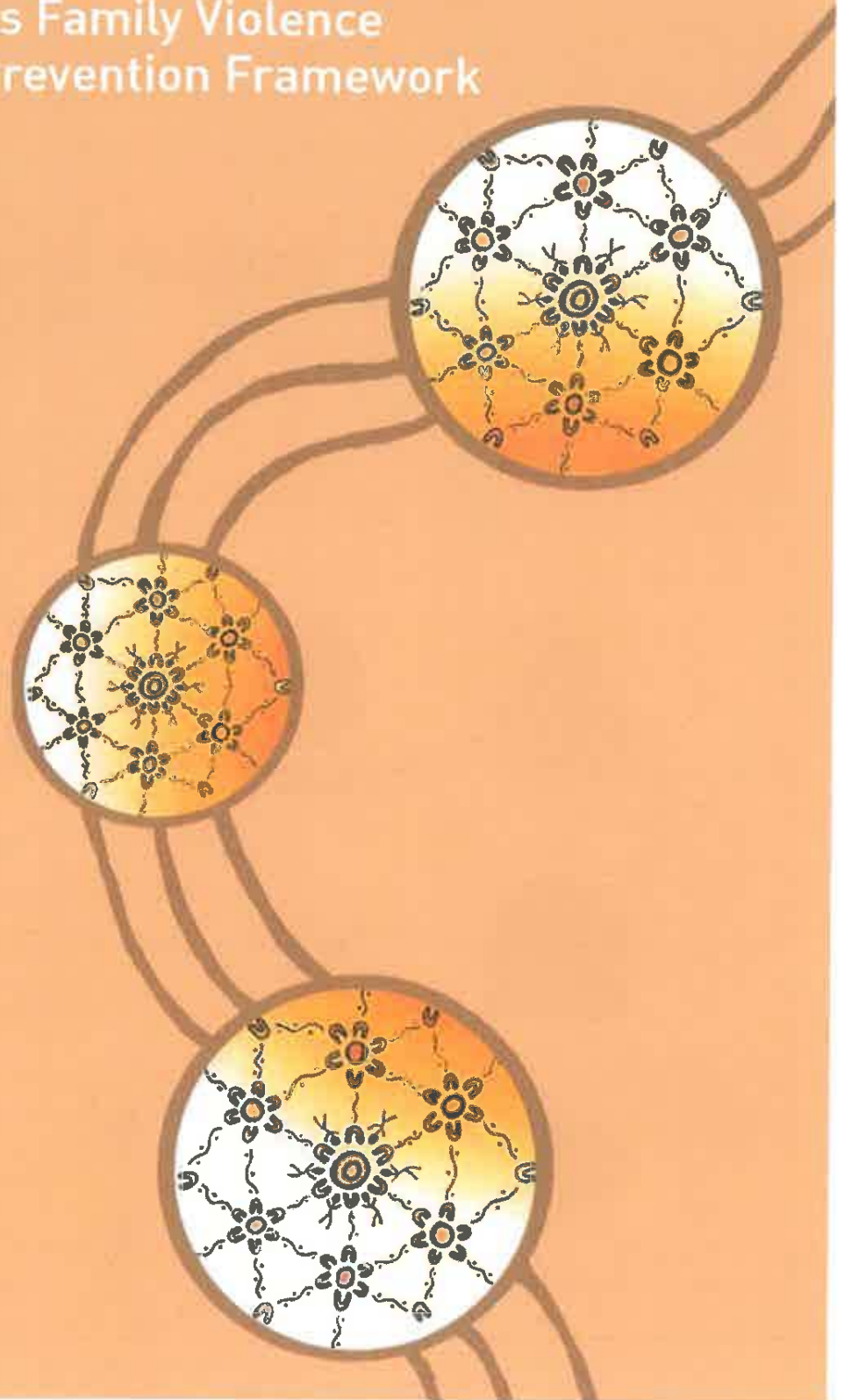
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Attachment AS-12

Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework

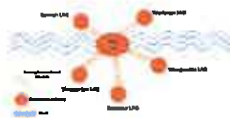


INDIGENOUS FAMILY VIOLENCE

PRIMARY PREVENTION FRAMEWORK



East Gippsland Indigenous
Family Violence Strategy



INDIGENOUS FAMILY VIOLENCE REGIONAL ACTION GROUPS



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FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW: WHY AND WHO

Purpose

This Framework meets the commitment made to develop an Indigenous specific prevention framework for family violence identified in *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families. Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities Ten Year Plan*¹

The Framework is designed to support:

- Primary prevention capacity building
- Effective, sustainable activities
- Ownership and leadership within Aboriginal communities

The Framework also provides evidence of the range of community led initiatives that are contributing toward the prevention of family violence in Aboriginal communities in Victoria.

Audience

The intended audience of this Framework is two-fold

The Framework is a resource for Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group Chairpersons and members, and Regional Co-ordinators to guide the development and evaluation of prevention initiatives.

It is also a tool for mainstream organisations and government partners who may be working or be intending to work in the prevention of Aboriginal family violence

Language

The term Aboriginal is used throughout this document to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

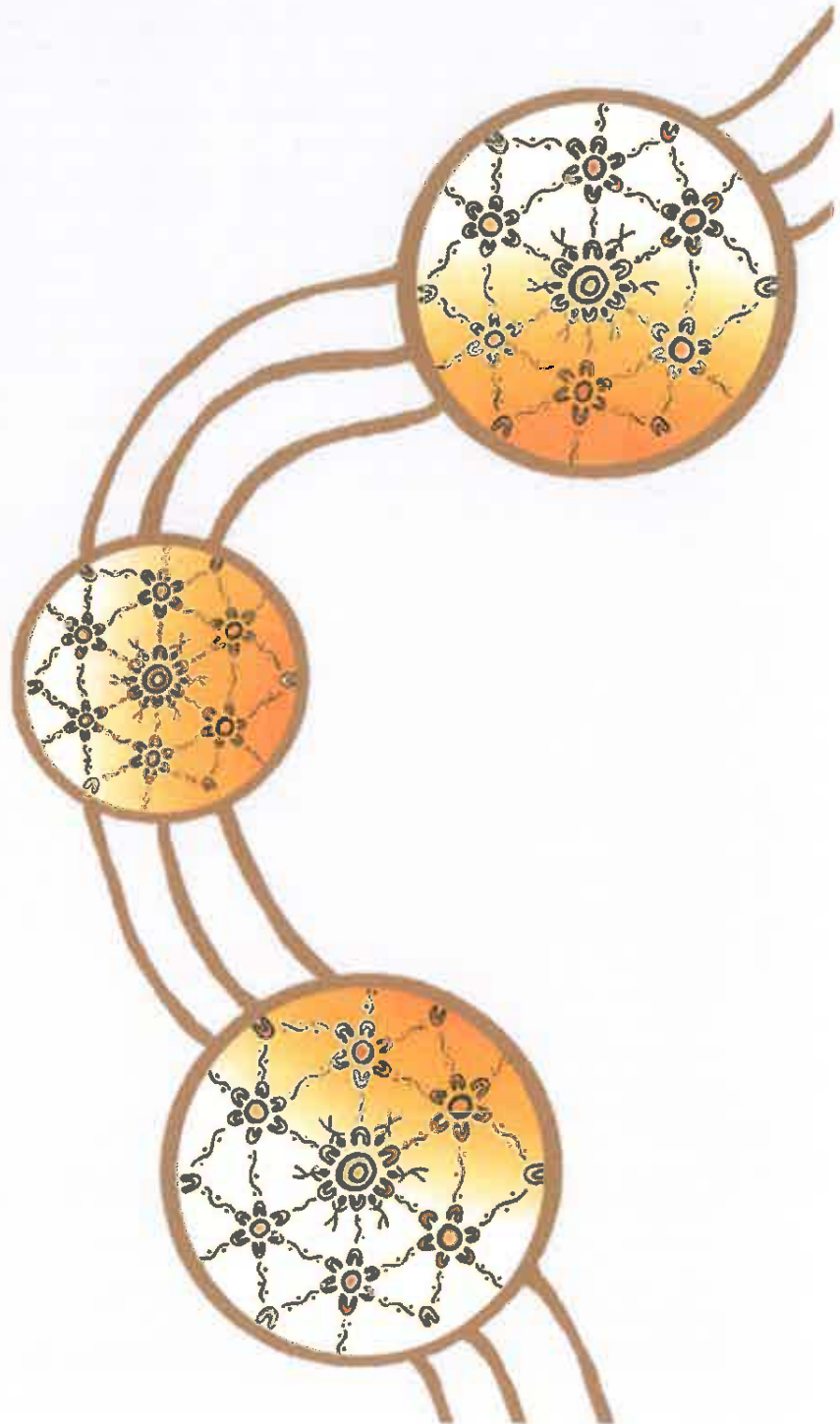
Inside this document

Inside this document you will find

- Background on the development of the Framework including evidence of primary prevention activities across Victoria
- Framework for Primary Prevention
- Practice Tips to assist those involved in or thinking about primary prevention activities and a list of useful references for further reading.

¹ Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities (Second Edition), Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2008 Victorian Government, Melbourne, Victoria Action 3.1.3

BACKGROUND



INTRODUCTION

Family violence has been an issue of serious concern to Aboriginal people, families and communities in Victoria for a number of years. In 2003, the Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force Report identified that it is widely recognised and acknowledged that family violence adversely affects the social, cultural, health, emotional, and economic well being of Aboriginal people, families and communities. Aboriginal definitions of the nature and forms of family violence are broader and more encompassing than those used in a mainstream context.

The Task Force Report affirmed the need to build on the strengths of Aboriginal families and communities and encompass Aboriginal concepts to effectively address family violence within Aboriginal communities. This resulted in a community led partnership between the Aboriginal communities of Victoria and government to address family violence together.

*Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities Ten Year Plan*² (the Ten Year Plan), identified the commitment to develop an Indigenous specific prevention framework for family violence which links to the wider prevention framework developed by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.³

Many of the areas of social disadvantage and risk factors which contribute to violent offending behaviour, including violence against women and Aboriginal family violence, are the same for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, but in many cases the risk factors occur more often in Aboriginal communities and there are often multiple risk factors present.⁴

Background issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (colonisation, dispossession, loss of traditional land and language, loss of culture, loss of traditional social structures and controls including child rearing practices, and break down of traditional gender roles, and racism) contribute to the ongoing social and economic disadvantage within Aboriginal communities, which in turn is linked to the risk factors for violent behaviour.

From an Aboriginal perspective, racism is one of the causes of family violence because it is a contributing factor to high levels of distress within Aboriginal communities, which may lead to substance abuse, self-harm and violence.⁵ This means that ongoing racism limits the effectiveness of prevention activities.

Working through the covert and overt racism is critical
East Gippsland consultation participant

2 *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities*, (Second Edition), Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2008 Victorian Government, Melbourne, Victoria

3 Vic Health, *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A Framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria* 2007

4 Merrimott et al. 2001, Merrimott et al. 2006, Reconciliation Australia, Productivity Commission, 2009, Taylor et al. 2004, Willis & Moore, 2008

5 *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities; 10 Year Plan* (Second Edition), Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2008 Victorian Government, Melbourne, Victoria

HOW THIS FRAMEWORK WAS DEVELOPED

Working with the Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups was the cornerstone of the approach undertaken to develop the Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework. Additionally, the Framework was developed in reference to the 10 year plan.

Eleven consultations were held in Victoria Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups with the support of Indigenous Family Violence Regional Coordinators provided valuable assistance in setting up consultations, which enabled a wealth of information to be gathered to inform the development of the Framework. Approximately 138 people had direct involvement in the consultations including many members of Aboriginal communities throughout Victoria.

Other groups represented at the consultations include: Aboriginal Co-operatives, Aboriginal and mainstream family violence services, healing and time out services, Aboriginal legal services, local community organisations and services; community health services, government departments including Departments of Human Services, Justice, and Education and Early Childhood Development, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, local government and a range of sporting clubs and associations.

It's about generational change
Of ongoing consultation participation

INDIGENOUS FAMILY VIOLENCE REGIONAL ACTION GROUPS

Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups (IFVRAGs) have a leadership role in implementing community led responses that educate, prevent, reduce and respond to family violence in the Aboriginal community. The IFVRAGs are an inclusive mechanism for the Victorian Aboriginal community to develop local responses to family violence matters, ensuring they are responsive and culturally relevant to Aboriginal individuals, families and communities. Regional action plans have been developed by the IFVRAGs to identify and prioritise community initiatives or strategies to prevent and address family violence in Aboriginal communities.

The regions and their Action Groups are:

- Barwon South West Regional Action Group
- Eastern Metropolitan Regional Action Group
- Gippsland Central Regional Action Group
- Gippsland East Regional Action Group
- Grampians Regional Action Group
- Hume Regional Action Group
- Northern Loddon Mallee Regional Action Group
- North and West Metropolitan Regional Action Group
- Southern Loddon Mallee Regional Action Group
- Southern Metropolitan Regional Action Group

Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups receive funding through the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) for projects relating to Aboriginal family violence. In 2010 the Community Prevention Initiatives Fund (CPIF) provided further funding for three-year primary prevention projects in each region. The projects are required to support and address the family violence prevention priorities as identified by the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups. They are also intended to foster partnerships within local communities for the prevention of violence, and strengthen the capacity of Aboriginal organisations and communities to address family violence at a local level.

Descriptions of the CPIF projects appear on pages 13-15.

LINKING THE FRAMEWORK

The commitment to develop this Framework was articulated in *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities Ten Year Plan*.



The Aboriginal community has identified that the Framework must also link to a range of other frameworks that exist or may be developed in the future, and that primary prevention activities link with work across the spectrum of responses to family violence.

In particular, strategies, projects and activities that aim to work towards the goal of preventing Aboriginal family violence should seek opportunities to link and connect with Aboriginal family violence services, integrated family violence services and centres against sexual assault. This may be through the development of partnerships and joint projects, collaborative effort to promote and improve cultural respect, and including elements of this Framework in Aboriginal and mainstream regional action plans.

There is a strong need to also create linkages with:

- Aboriginal and mainstream education settings including local primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions such as TAFE and Universities
- Aboriginal and mainstream housing settings such as the Aboriginal Housing Board and the Office of Housing
- Aboriginal and mainstream justice settings such as Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, and Victoria Police
- Aboriginal and mainstream income support and employment settings such as Centrelink

Linking the Framework Continued

Victorian and National strategy and policy documents, both existing and future, provide a further opportunity for linkages. Some relevant existing documents include:

Victorian

- Wannik Education Strategy for Koorie students (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-12 (Departments of Human Services and Health)
- Victorian Aboriginal Suicide Prevention and Response Plan 2010 - 2015 (Departments of Human Services and Health)
- Koori Alcohol Action Plan (Departments of Human Services and Health)
- Aboriginal Justice Agreement (Department of Justice)

National

- National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children
- *Closing the Gap: National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy for Indigenous Australians*
- National Partnership Agreements

Opportunities such as referencing the Framework and including actions that support the Framework into other business and strategic planning documents will strengthen the ability to achieve the goals of the Framework and will enable a more holistic approach.

A holistic approach means we need to work together.

North West Metropolitan consultation participant

Case Study: Reaching out to the community through White Ribbon Day

Each year in November many communities are engaged in activities connected to White Ribbon Day*. Many Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups use the impetus of the White Ribbon Campaign to focus on increasing community awareness about family violence. These activities take many forms such as talking with and supporting men to become White Ribbon Ambassadors, family days and community walks.

There is a lot of planning involved, particularly as knowledge of the White Ribbon Campaign has grown rapidly in the past few years. Many Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups link up with other organisations such as Aboriginal sporting clubs, mainstream community organisations, local justice and educational agencies, and Victoria Police members to join in activities, run concurrent activities and to share resources.

The White Ribbon Day events are great activities for reaching out to the whole community, and the events take place across the community. Information packs, t-shirts and caps with messages about not tolerating family violence also feature in White Ribbon Day activities.

Photographs are often taken to record the events and feedback from participants about the activities is used in planning events for the following year. Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups also share good ideas for planning events as well as using the outcome of these activities to build on and learn from each other. The White Ribbon Day primary prevention activities often create momentum for future partnerships and prevention activities.

*The White Ribbon Campaign is a national violence prevention campaign that aims to raise awareness among Australian men and boys about the roles they can play to prevent violence against women. The campaign calls for men across Australia to speak out and take an oath swearing never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. The campaign culminates on White Ribbon Day, 25 November each year, when men and women across Australia are called to wear a white ribbon or wristband as a visual symbol of their commitment and oath.

DEFINITIONS

It is important to understand and acknowledge the definitions of family violence and primary prevention agreed upon by the Aboriginal community. The following definitions are taken from *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities 10 Year Plan* and the CPIF Guidelines respectively.

Family violence

Aboriginal definitions of the nature and forms of family violence are broader and more encompassing than those used in the mainstream.

The Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce defined family violence as: an issue focussed around a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. It extends to one-on-one fighting, abuse of Indigenous community workers as well as self-harm, injury and suicide⁶

Aboriginal family violence encompasses a range of acts that are criminal, such as physical and sexual assault, and non-criminal such as emotional and spiritual abuse. Community violence, or violence within the Indigenous community (often between Aboriginal families), is also an emerging concern for local areas in Victoria. This violence contributes to overall levels of violence reported by Aboriginal people and the trauma experienced within families and kinship networks.

Family violence includes intergenerational violence and abuse, affects extended families and kinship networks. An individual can be both a perpetrator and a victim of family violence.⁷

The Aboriginal definition is consistent with the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* which defines family violence as behaviour that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, threatening or coercive, or in any way controls or dominates the family member and that causes that family member to fear for his or her safety, or well being or for the safety or well being of another person.

We can't deal with family violence in Aboriginal communities without dealing with trauma and loss.

Barwon South West

We need to get to the underlying issues - dealing with people who are generationally traumatised, so when something goes wrong, they are re-traumatised.

Gippsland Central

⁶ Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force Final Report, 2003 p 123

⁷ Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities, 2008 p 11

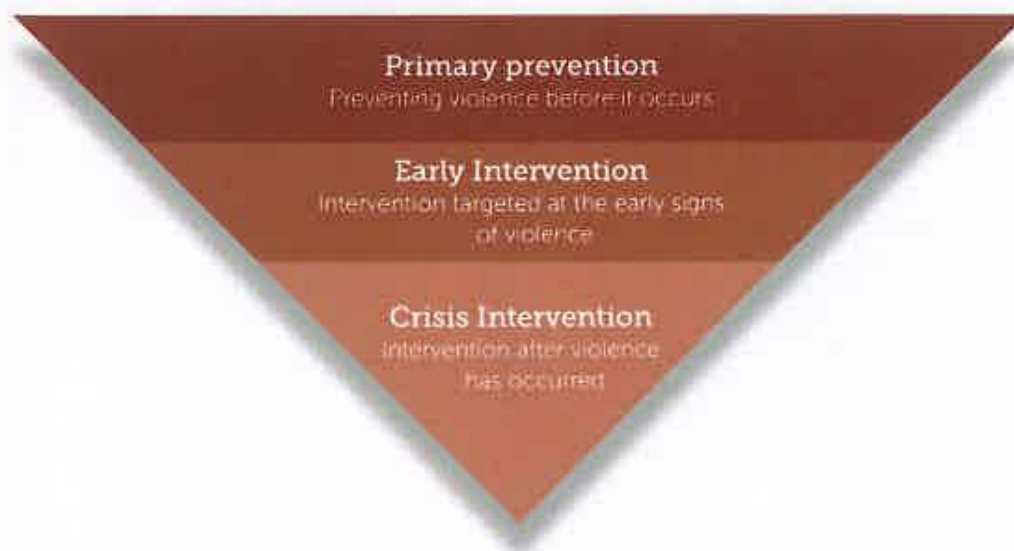
Definitions - Family Violence Continued

Primary prevention

Primary prevention should not be seen in isolation from a broader spectrum of responses to family violence. It is important to recognise the interplay between responses and the need for responses to occur at all levels. These responses can reinforce and build on each other helping to create safer families and communities.

There are commonly three levels of response that together provide a comprehensive approach.

- Primary prevention – preventing violence **before** it occurs. This includes a broad range of activities involving a range of population groups and conducted in a range of settings.
- Early intervention – taking action on the **early signs** of violence, sometimes called secondary prevention. This includes behaviour change programs for those displaying and using abusive behaviours.
- Crisis intervention – intervening **after** the violence has occurred, sometimes called a tertiary response. This includes women's responses, men's case management, time out services, children's responses.



Definitions - Primary prevention Continued

Primary prevention strategies commonly focus on changing attitudes and behaviour, building knowledge and skills, and structural, cultural and societal contexts in which violence occurs

Effective primary prevention activities can involve the whole population (universal) and/or particular groups who are at higher risk of using and/or experiencing violence in the future (targeted/selective).

Targeted prevention activities focus on **key population groups** including:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| • Men | • Young women and girls |
| • Women, including pregnant women | • Young men and boys |
| • Adults and children with a disability (intellectual and physical) | • Elders |
| • Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex | • Families |

Settings where prevention activities occur in order to be most effective include:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • Across community | • Media and arts |
| • Schools/TAFE | • Aboriginal women's response services |
| • Healing and time out services | • Aboriginal and mainstream organisations, e.g. integrated family violence services, Aboriginal men's time out services |
| • Playgroups or parenting groups | |
| • Family Centres | |
| • Community organisations | • Sporting clubs |

Primary prevention provides an opportunity to design activities that overlap between different population groups and settings.

Case Study **Using camps as a powerful setting for primary prevention**

An important setting for Aboriginal communities' work in the primary prevention of family violence is the use of camps. Camps are used by Aboriginal communities in many diverse ways to target specific groups within community and to focus on specific strategies. Camps for young men or for young women might focus on confidence building and leadership skills. Family camps can be used to address issues of grief and trauma from past wrong doings. Camps for males can focus on cultural strengthening and addressing violent behaviour.

Sometimes it can be challenging to provide follow up for camp participants. The community consultations used to inform this Framework identified how important it is to keep connected with the camp participants and that messages of non violent behaviour need to be reinforced after the camp. In a number of regions, support groups have been formed following a camp, allowing participants to continue to build connections and networks, receive mentoring and gain access to support services.

The community consultations also stressed that it is important to ensure that camps can involve young people with challenging behaviour but must also allow opportunities for young Aboriginal men and women with strong leadership potential to build their skills and abilities.

EVIDENCE OF PRIMARY PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

Literature about the types of interventions in Aboriginal family violence that are most likely to be effective in preventing violence indicate the following best practice elements are essential for effective primary prevention activities. The activities must:

- Be led by Aboriginal communities
- Include a whole of community approach and community strengthening
- Be grounded in cultural respect and cultural strengthening
- Promote non-violent social norms and strengthen protective factors in communities
- Improve access to resources and systems of support
- Include timelines, accountability and evaluation

The consultations held across Victoria to inform this Framework revealed a vast amount of prevention activity underway within local Aboriginal communities, much of which is based on the best practice elements above. While many of these activities are not formally documented they provide evidence of the capacity and ability of the Victorian Aboriginal community to garner support for prevention activities.

The range of activities also highlights the spectrum of responses to family violence from intervention to primary prevention, and that responses to family violence, once the violence has occurred, must happen alongside responses to prevent the first instance of violence

There is a lot of anecdotal evidence, but it's really hard to get or do formal evaluation, so we have no evidence to back up our good work. And if we did, who and what would we feed the evaluations in to?

Home consultation participant

Case Study **Aboriginal designed puppets**

Aboriginal designed puppets convey strong messages to children, young people and families

Using puppets is a creative way of engaging children and families in talking about family violence and reinforcing strong messages about inappropriate touching, bullying and family violence. Puppets can also provide an opportunity for sharing personal stories about violence in a safe and non-threatening environment.

Puppet shows and activities bring together children, young people, males and women in a fun and non-threatening environment. The puppets are specifically designed for Aboriginal communities so that children and families can relate to them. They allow families to think about the issues of family violence and messages for healthy, respectful relationships together that can be reinforced at home.

In Victoria, puppet shows and activities occur in a variety of settings including schools, Aboriginal sporting clubs and community organisations via the sponsorship and funding of the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups.

Evidence of Primary Prevention Activities Continued

Some examples of Aboriginal primary prevention activities in Victoria

Across Victoria, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups sponsor, coordinate, fund and conduct a range of primary prevention activities.

Some target the **whole community** including

Community awareness raising through community walks and White Ribbon Day activities	Community information and education through networks, information, positive messages at sporting festivals	Addressing underlying issues through programs at healing and time out services, healing camps, and employment opportunities
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Some target **families** including:

	Family strengthening and resilience building by holding family days and camps, parenting programs	
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Some target **women**, including

Cultural strengthening through retreats and camps, cultural programs	Self esteem and resilience building by bringing women together to share and learn, holding treat and pampering days	Parenting programs to share positive experiences and build positive relationships
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Some target **men**, including

Cultural strengthening through men's groups connecting men with traditional cultural ways	Education, challenging and changing behaviour through men's group programs	Self esteem and resilience building through men's camps and programs, leadership and White Ribbon Ambassadors
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Some target **children and young people**, including

Education and awareness raising through healthy relationships programs, puppet shows like Yarramundi Kids	Cultural strengthening by holding programs that help young people connect with their communities, camps and cultural dance groups	Self esteem and resilience building through camps and sporting activities
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Evidence of Primary Prevention Activities Continued

Community Prevention Initiative Fund projects

South West Victoria Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Men's Coordinator Program

The program acts as a resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to prevent family violence. The project conducts culturally appropriate workshops, activities that provide information on how to seek support and advice on personal, family and community development issues to prevent family violence. The project operates in Glenelg, Southern Grampians, Moyne and Warrambbool Local Government Areas of south west Victoria.

Barwon South West Region

Working Together Standing Together

This program runs forums around family violence to highlight the issues and aims to prevent further violence. It involves young men and school aged children to build in prevention. The project links with current services and builds new relationships with services and organisations.

Southern Loddon Mallee Region

Sisters Serenity Retreat

Two day retreats for women with workshops on self esteem, strengthening cultural identity, protective behaviours, healing and prevention of family violence in their lives and within their community.

Gippsland East Region

Aboriginal Women's Collective Project

This project is developing a framework in relation to family violence issues from an Aboriginal women's perspective. The Collective will build on the systems and networks required to support an independent council of Aboriginal women. This Council will support and voice the values and dreams of Aboriginal women in the region in tackling family violence.

North and West Metropolitan Region

Community Prevention Initiative Fund projects Continued

Healesville Cultural Strengthening Project for Young People

This project is for children and young people who have been affected or at risk of family violence. The project will include dance and singing with messages about no violence. It is run in a culturally safe environment and includes healthy meals. The outcome for young people is to become more resilient, build their self esteem, create awareness and to assist in breaking the trans-generational cycle of family violence.

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Strong Warriors Black and Deadly Say No to Family Violence

This project offers a range of mentoring and leadership activities for young people and provides them with tools, life skills and information. It features a one-stop event, a youth forum with all services in the family violence circle raising awareness. The forum is a platform for youth to come together and feel free to discuss the devastation of family violence. The forum includes learning from Elders who are survivors of family violence.

The aim of this project is to overcome the cycle of violence and stop things from escalating; to break the cycle of learned behaviour about family violence being the norm and part of our culture.

Northern Loddon Mallee Region

No More Violence

This project works to raise the profile of family violence across the Hume region through events such as NAIDOC, White Ribbon Day, Week of No Violence etc. Information is distributed using various means and activities to get the message out about family violence, including available services. The primary focus is on the children across the region.

Hume Region

Family Retreat Project

This project provides a series of retreats for families within the Grampians region. The family members participate in an intensive program with several focus areas such as: what causes violence, role models within the family, healing, healthy lifestyles, building cultural skills, knowledge and pride.

Grampians Region

Community Prevention Initiative Fund projects Continued

The Journey of Change

The project involves a Strong Elders Group who are educated and supported to provide a role model to young people within the community. An Elder's camp prepared the ground for establishing two groups of young people, male and female, to meet on a fortnightly basis.

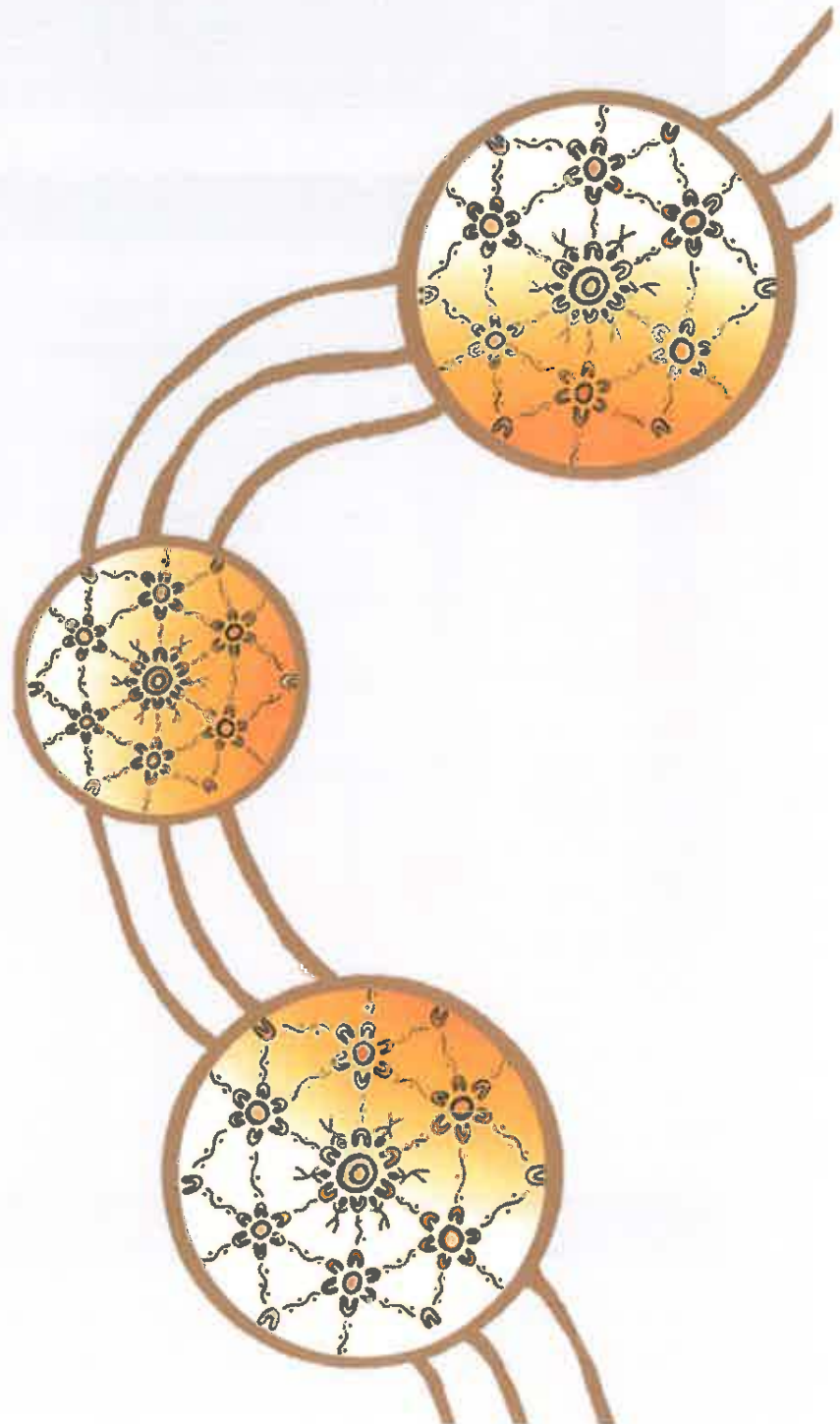
Gippsland Central Region

Kangoo Bambadin Youth Prevention Projects

The project supports, develops and implements activities across the region to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth to educate them about family violence. Projects include a variety of activities such as cultural activities, life skills programs and healthy and respectful relationships. The focus on family violence is educational and aims at working with young people to prevent the cycle of family violence.

Southern Metropolitan Region

A FRAMEWORK FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION

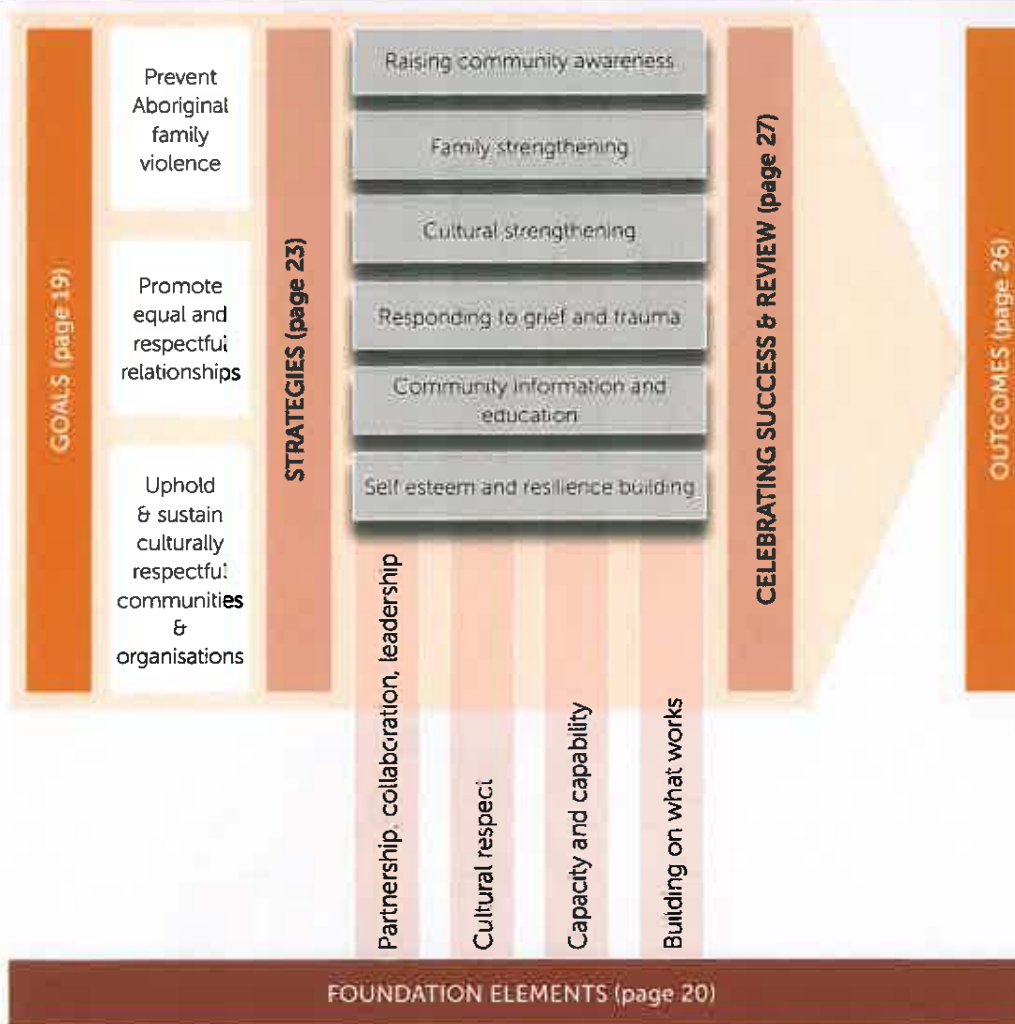


VISION

Families are our heart and soul. They generate dreams and values, ideas and visions for our children. Actions and programs strengthen, honour and respect Aboriginal individuals, families, communities, cultural heritage and cultural practices.

We are committed to the prevention of Aboriginal family violence. The Aboriginal community and the Victorian government, in partnership, will lead the development of a safer Victoria for all Aboriginal families and communities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES (page 18)



VISION, PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

The vision and guiding principles for this Framework echo the wording of *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities 10 Year Plan*.

Vision

Families are our heart and soul. They generate dreams and values, ideals and visions for our children. Actions and programs strengthen, honour and respect Aboriginal individuals, families, communities, cultural heritage and cultural practices.

We are committed to the prevention of Aboriginal family violence. The Aboriginal community and the Victorian government, in partnership, will lead the development of a safer Victoria for all Aboriginal families and communities.

Principles

- 1 Aboriginal culture.** Aboriginal Victorians are the First Peoples of our state. We recognise the uniqueness and diversity of Aboriginal culture, society and history in Victoria and promote reconciliation that gives proper recognition and respect to the Aboriginal people of Victoria. We acknowledge Elders as keepers of the rich history and we value, respect and protect them. The Aboriginal community and Victorian Government agencies work together in a respectful manner to effectively develop integrated and culturally competent responses to family violence in Aboriginal communities that incorporate Aboriginal history, values and parenting experience.
- 2 Family violence is not part of our culture.** As stated in our Vision, 'Families are our heart and soul. They generate dreams and values, ideals and visions for our children'. Family violence is a crime and is unacceptable within the Aboriginal community. Safety and security for victims of violence is our number one priority.
- 3 Holistic healing approach to family violence in Aboriginal communities.** We appreciate the importance of a holistic healing approach to family violence in Aboriginal communities based around family and Aboriginal community strengthening, collaborative approaches, appropriate resources and flexible program and service delivery arrangements.
- 4 Early intervention, prevention and education.** Aboriginal community and Victorian Government responses to family violence in the Aboriginal community are based on our support for early intervention, prevention and education.
- 5 Complex nature of family violence within communities.** In an Aboriginal community context, family violence includes a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural and economic abuses that can occur within families, extended families, kinship networks and communities.
- 6 Empowering Aboriginal communities.** In recognition of the principle of Aboriginal self-management and self-determination, we recognise, advocate and promote the need for Aboriginal people to lead the process at all levels.
- 7 Local solutions to local problems.** We recognise the requirement to support, empower and enable communities to develop solutions to prevent, reduce and respond to family violence in Aboriginal communities through the core leadership of the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups and Partnership Forum.

Vision, Principals and Goals - Principals Continued

- 8 Partnership, transparency and accountability.** Honesty, mutual respect, trust, accountability, transparency in decision making and shared recognition of each partner's role and responsibilities enable the partnership between the Victorian Government and the Aboriginal community. To maximise the effectiveness of all service provider and partnership arrangements, members of the Partnership Forum actively promote transparency and accountability in all work on Aboriginal family violence.
- 9 Adequate resources.** The provision of adequate funding and resources is an essential element in the prevention and elimination of family violence in the Aboriginal community. We ensure these resources achieve long term, sustainable improvements in the Aboriginal community and Victorian Government practice.

Goals

Three main goals guide the Framework

- Prevent Aboriginal family violence
- Promote equal and respectful relationships
- Uphold and sustain culturally respectful communities and organisations

PRACTICE TIP

Planning primary prevention activities: before you start.

Resources for planning prevention activities may come from various sources. In particular, there may be activities that you hear about from another region which you think might also work well in your region.

Documents which may assist you in planning prevention activities include:

- Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group Action Plans from other regions in Victoria.

Identifying priorities for primary prevention activities will make the best use of any available funding. The priorities may come from Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Plans, issues identified by the community or a particular need to address an emerging issue. Sometimes a number of organisations will share similar priorities, creating possibilities for partnerships and sharing resources.

We need fractured communities to get back together and build trust

Northern Loddon-Mallee consultation participant

FOUNDATION ELEMENTS

All primary prevention activities must be underpinned by the following foundation elements

Cultural respect

Cultural respect is necessary to enable the Aboriginal community to have equal access to services, and to be involved in the planning, development and participation in activities. Cultural respect is the responsibility of all agencies, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

Actions to encourage and embed cultural respect

- Encourage all individuals and agencies to demonstrate cultural respect at all times
- Encourage agencies to develop cultural protocols
- Support activities and projects that aim to promote cultural respect.

Partnership, collaboration and leadership

Preventing Aboriginal family violence is not the sole responsibility of any one agency, any one community or any one person. Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups have been developing partnerships over many years, within the community, across the community and with mainstream organisations. These partnerships and the leadership role of the IFVRAGs contribute to the success of primary prevention activities.

Partnerships and collaboration enable prevention activities to have a broader reach, and allow more people to share the load in designing, implementing and participating in activities.

Our strength in our regions is that we work well with mainstream services. We have educated, supported and helped mainstream services go in the right direction.

Southern Metropolitan consultation participant.

IFVRAGs have successfully partnered with other organisations to attract additional funding for prevention activities, and to secure funding for successful activities once the initial funding has expired.

Partnerships require significant effort and time to nurture relationships and to break down barriers. This cannot be underestimated.

Prevention activities targeting Aboriginal people are most successful when they are community led. They also create opportunities to nurture and build community leaders.

Actions to support partnership, collaboration and leadership

- Build on the partnerships of the IFVRAGs
- Continue to fund and support the leadership role of the IFVRAGs
- Mainstream organisations must consult with and seek advice from IFVRAGs
- Acknowledge, resource and appreciate the time needed to nurture relationships and to build partnerships
- Encourage Aboriginal and mainstream organisations to work together, apply jointly for prevention funding and share resources where appropriate

Capacity and capability

At present a small number of dedicated people is working with a limited pool of resources and funding in each region. Further investment is required to conduct prevention activities and to build skills for those implementing these. Currently there is limited capacity for follow up activities or evaluation of what participants and organisers learnt from involvement in prevention activities.

Partnerships between agencies, joint submissions for funds, adapting existing materials to suit local Aboriginal communities, and taking advantage of training and professional development opportunities all offer means of building capacity and capability.

Foundation Elements - Capacity and capability Continued

A range of tools is available to support those working in the area of prevention. Included amongst these is the literature review conducted to support this Framework. It identifies key research and commentaries by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and mainstream academics, social reformers, and health and well-being organisations.

Primary prevention is complicated and complex. We need to up-skill in this area. Workers need to be given the skills to create fundamental behaviour change in the community.

Eastern Metropolitan consultation participant

Two other significant sources of tools and information about prevention are the Australian Family and Domestic Violence Clearinghouse (with a dedicated section for Indigenous materials), and the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault; both can be accessed via the Internet.

Actions to support the building of capacity and capability

- Continue to provide funding for primary prevention activities
- Create opportunities for agencies to jointly apply for prevention funding
- Provide training for those involved in prevention activities
- Consider tailoring existing resources for use in Aboriginal family violence prevention.

Building on what works

Evaluating and finding out why things work well is important to achieving outcomes because it allows us to share the learning, to attract further funding and build new partnerships. Prevention activities are often transferable from one place to the next, and lend themselves to being adapted to local needs. Indigenous Family Violence Regional Coordinators create opportunities for sharing activities, however mainstream agencies could also benefit from learning about what is working in Aboriginal communities.

Universal prevention activities in particular lend themselves to collaboration between Aboriginal communities and mainstream communities. Community walks and White Ribbon Day events are other opportunities for learning and collaboration.

Actions to build on what works:

- Create opportunities to share learnings about prevention activities
- Consider mechanisms to support those evaluating projects
- Encourage CPIF projects to adopt an action research model to document and evaluate the projects

There are good practice models that could be adapted for this local setting.

Southern Loddon-Mallee consultation participant

PRACTICE TIP

Possible Partners: working out who else to involve

Possible prevention partners and stakeholders will come from a range of organisations. Some suggestions are provided below as a quick reference. There will be other people and organisations in each local area who will also be important partners and stakeholders for prevention activities. Most Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups will have a list of local Aboriginal services for support.

Foundation Elements - Building on what works Continued

POSSIBLE PARTNERS

AREA	POSSIBLE PARTNERS OR STAKEHOLDERS
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koori schools • Koori Education Support Officers • Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. • Aboriginal and mainstream childcare centres, primary schools, secondary schools, TAFEs and universities
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Housing Board • Local community housing agencies
Employment assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal income support and employment agencies • Mainstream income support and employment agencies
Family violence and sexual assault	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and mainstream family violence and sexual assault services • Healing and time out services • Mainstream prevention projects and agencies • Centres Against Sexual Assault • White Ribbon Foundation
Justice and legal services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees • Local Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees • Local Police representatives • Youth justice representatives • Aboriginal legal services
Health and community organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Cooperatives • Aboriginal community-based organisations • Aboriginal organisations working with suicide prevention • Locally-based Closing the Gap funded initiatives and agencies • Disability initiatives working with Aboriginal programs • Community Health Services • Aboriginal and mainstream sporting associations and clubs
Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal out of home care providers • Aboriginal and mainstream youth agencies
Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local council Aboriginal initiatives and officers • Local council mainstream community initiatives and officers

STRATEGIES

For the prevention of Aboriginal family violence, six mutually reinforcing strategies are identified as those likely to have the most positive effect in the primary prevention of Aboriginal family violence.

Strategy 1: Raising Community Awareness

Many people in community are unaware of what family violence is, and are unsure of the services that might be able to provide assistance. Having strong messages in community about what behaviour constitutes violence can help to shift attitudes and reduce tolerance of violence. The more people are aware, the better chance there is of reducing the occurrence of violence in community.

Primary prevention activities that aim to raise community awareness:

- **Target** the whole community
- Suit **settings** such as sporting festivals, family days and community walks that provide an opportunity to reach out to a broad range of people
- **Include** messages about respectful behaviour and information on the availability of services to assist those experiencing violence

One recent Victorian example of a community walk, the CommUNITY Walk in Gippsland East Region, an Aboriginal led project, was supported by a partnership of organisations. The Walk built trust and possibilities in the community, and created a groundswell to have conversations about family violence. Another example, the 'Say No to Violence' Walk in Northern Loddon Mallee Region, brought together a number of community members and organisations and included a great show of men from Robinvale and Swan Hill.

Strategy 2: Family Strengthening

As the vision for the 10 Year Plan and this Framework states, families are the heart and soul of Aboriginal communities. Supporting and strengthening family structures strengthens the whole Aboriginal community.

Preventing violence in Aboriginal communities starts with strong families.

- **Target** men, women, young people, children, families
- Suit **settings** such as families centres and Aboriginal meeting places
- **Include** information about the availability of services and support.

For example, the Easter Camp for families in the Northern Loddon Mallee Region is a big annual event that has a strong focus on strengthening families. Another example the Koorie Faces Program in Hume Region supports families' to find solutions to negative behaviours, such as family violence.

Strategy 3: Cultural Strengthening

Community consultations for this Framework strongly indicated that cultural strengthening is vital to prevention of Aboriginal family violence to address the loss of cultural identity for Aboriginal communities. Strengthening culture in Aboriginal communities helps to build the capacity to deal with problems of violence.

Prevention activities that aim at cultural strengthening:

- **Target** men, women, young people, children, families
- Suit **settings** such as healing and time out services, schools, Aboriginal meeting places
- **Include** learning traditional cultural ways, such as shield making and basket-making.

For example the Healesville cultural strengthening project for young people of Eastern Metropolitan Region, an arts and music hip-hop program, promoted the cultural norm of zero tolerance of family violence and worked particularly with primary school children. A further example, the Ramahyuck project in Gippsland Central Region, seeks to develop a Strong Elders Group who will be supported to provide role models to young people in community.

Strategies - Strategy 3: Cultural Strengthening Continued

Strategy 4: Responding to grief and trauma

Community consultations highlighted that prevention of Aboriginal family violence must give sufficient consideration and support to acknowledge the grief and trauma of past wrong doing. For Aboriginal communities, this is a critical aspect of preventing family violence.

Prevention activities that aim to respond to grief and trauma:

- **Target** men, women, young people, children, families
- Suit **settings** such as family centres, healing and time out services and camps
- **Include** acknowledgements of the impact of long term grief and trauma and what this means for generations of Aboriginal people

For example the Children's Art Therapy Group in Grampians Region focuses on healing through art therapy sessions

Strategy 5: Community information and education

Providing information to community about Aboriginal family violence services and other supports means that community members experiencing family violence are better connected and know where to go to get help. Educating people about family violence also means that Aboriginal communities have a greater capacity to prevent violence.

Prevention activities that aim to provide community information and education:

- **Target** the whole community, and groups within the community such as men, women, young people, children and families
- In **settings** such as family days, media, schools and art, and
- **Include** education and awareness of healthy relationships

For example, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Centre for Males in North and West Metropolitan Region provides support and information and helps to open doors for Aboriginal males in this region. A further example, the Health and Community Yarn Ups in Southern Metropolitan Region included information on lateral violence along with a fortnightly men's group. Another example, the Healthy Relationships program in Barwon South West Region educates young people about healthy relationships and seeks to raise their awareness of family violence and sexual assault

Strategy 6: Self-esteem and resilience building

Increasing self-esteem and resilience of Aboriginal people strengthens their ability to make positive choices about their lives, building the capacity of the whole community to say no to violence. This builds the resilience of the whole Aboriginal community, increasing the opportunities for Aboriginal owned and led prevention initiatives.

Prevention activities that are about self-esteem and resilience building:

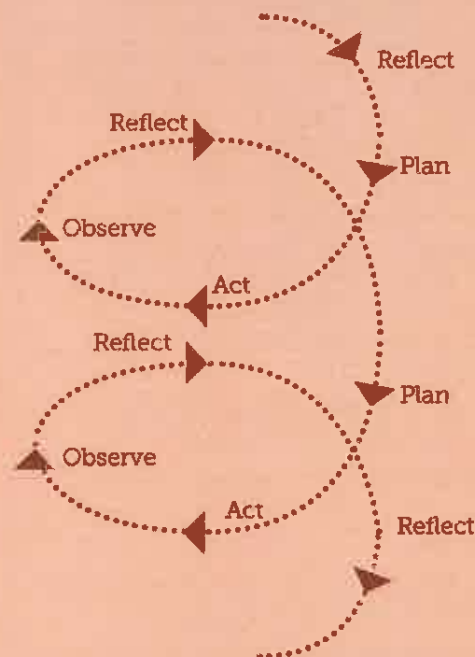
- **Target** particular groups such as men, women, young people, children and families
- In **settings** such as camps, sporting clubs, schools, family centres and days out, and
- **Include** building leadership skills and confidence as well as sharing knowledge.

For example, the Young Mum's Glamour Day in Gippsland East Region invited a group of young mum's to be pampered for a day to help build their self-esteem and feel pride in themselves and their babies. Another example, the partnership with Fitzroy Stars in North and West Metropolitan Region includes family days at football and netball games where the Club takes a stand and highlights different issues including strong messages about saying no to family violence

PRACTICE TIP

Evaluation using action research

Action research is a useful approach for evaluating primary prevention projects. It allows those responsible for the project to gain insight into the impact and processes of the project in its early stages and to contribute to a learning process. Action research follows a cycle of reflect, plan, act, observe, reflect, and so on.



Generally, questions are asked at various stages of the project to inform the ongoing implementation of the project.

Some questions to ask **during the project**:

- Where is the project up to?
- What has the process been like so far?
- What have you learnt about your project so far? About your target group?
- What is assisting the project being established? What is getting in the way?

Some questions to ask at the **end of the project**:

- Looking back over this project, what have you learnt? What do you think others involved have learnt?
- For the future, what's needed to implement this project again, or for others wishing to implement a similar project?
- What is likely to get in the way?

A host of great evaluation resources can be found on the recently launched Community Sustainability Engagement Evaluation Toolbox. The toolbox is specifically designed for community and local government organisations and includes templates, guides and tools for conducting a variety of evaluations. The link below will take you to the toolbox.

<http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/>

OUTCOMES

Three short to medium term outcomes are linked to the strategies and can be measured to gauge the effectiveness of activities.

- Increased community awareness and knowledge of services, support and culture
- Improved understanding of healthy and respectful relationships in Aboriginal families and community
- Increased confidence and leadership of Aboriginal people

These outcomes are intended to be realistic and achievable. They can support the gathering of evidence to support progress towards the goals of the Framework. They should be reviewed and revised as needed over the life of the Framework.

We're getting really good at writing submissions for grants, especially if we work together.

Barwon South West consultation participant

PRACTICE TIP

Measuring outcomes

it's not just about the numbers and reporting

- Many Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups take photographs of prevention activities such as community walks and festivals. This is a good way of demonstrating the number and diversity of people attending the event. Often the photographs depict the messages and slogans used to increase community awareness of family violence appearing on placards, t-shirts and caps.
- Asking participants what they found most useful about a primary prevention activity, or whether the activity changed (or increased) their understanding of family violence can be a useful way of knowing if an activity is having the intended effect.
- Some Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups acknowledge a growing level of confidence in young people following their attendance at a camp and may observe their increased willingness to participate in leadership opportunities.
- Listening to how people talk about family violence gives a good indication about whether their understanding is improving or where further activities might be planned.
- Collecting information on the number of people attending primary prevention activities, the number of other organisations involved, the number of men signing up to be White Ribbon Ambassadors are all good indicators of the impact of activities.
- Data on the numbers of people using, or referring community members, to services like a healing and time out service or a women's response service can be an indicator that more people know about the service and how they can help.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS AND REVIEW

Celebrating success

Celebrating the success of prevention activities allows those involved to reflect on achievements and acknowledge the effort of being involved in this work. It is important to celebrate the involvement, knowledge and contribution of local Aboriginal people and leaders.

A regular showcase should take place Aboriginal community, Aboriginal organisations and prevention partners should be invited to participate. Mainstream organisations should also be invited to hear about, learn, and share knowledge about the prevention activities across Victoria.

Local opportunities should also be considered to celebrate significant milestones, the contribution of local Aboriginal people, and achievements in projects.

Framework review

Reporting on the progress and achievements in relation to the Framework will be built into the regular reporting on the 10 Year Plan that occurs via the Partnership Forum on an annual basis.

The evaluation of the 10 Year Plan will incorporate an evaluation of the Framework.

PRIMARY PREVENTION ACTIVITIES

CHECKLIST

This is a guide to assist with planning, designing and implementing primary prevention programs and activities. It covers all the main points to consider when thinking about a prevention activity.

- Priorities:** What are the priorities for primary prevention in this community?
 - For IFVRAGs this may come from the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Plan
 - For other organisations, there may be other priorities in policy or strategic frameworks

- Activities that have a clear purpose in mind are likely to be more effective in attracting participation, encouraging partnerships and importantly achieving the desired effect.

Type of activity: What type of activity do you have in mind?

- Primary prevention activities can take many different forms. Some examples of prevention activities in Aboriginal communities are camps, community get-togethers, sisters' days out, community walks. There are many other types of prevention activities that may be useful to consider.
- For IFVRAGs some types of prevention activities might be included as priorities in their Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Plan.
- For other organisations, there may be other priority actions in policy or strategic frameworks.

Population: Who is the target group for this activity?

- All primary prevention activities should identify a clear target group. This might be the whole community (universal), or it might be a particular group (targeted/selective).
- The target group might be highlighted as a priority in the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Plan.

Setting: Where should this primary prevention activity take place?

- Knowing who the target group is will assist in identifying some of the settings that may be appropriate and who else could be involved.
- The setting might be highlighted as a priority in the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Plan, for example the IFVRAG might have identified that they want to do some prevention work in schools.

Celebrating Success and Review - Checklist Continued

Partners: Who else can you involve?

- There may be other local people and organisations who will be important prevention partners for activities.
- Have a look at the Practice Tips: Possible Partners

Foundation Elements: What elements underpin your planned activity?

- All activities must be underpinned and supported by the foundation elements.
- Is your planned activity underpinned by:
 - ✓ Partnership, Collaboration, Leadership
 - ✓ Cultural Respect
 - ✓ Capacity and Capability
 - ✓ Building on What Works

Strategies: What does your planned activity aim to do?

- All primary prevention activities should align with at least one of the above strategies of the Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework
- Does your planned activity align with one or more of:
 - Raising community awareness
 - Family strengthening
 - Cultural strengthening
 - Responding to grief and trauma
 - Community information and education
 - Self-esteem and resilience building

Outcomes: What do you want to happen as a result of your prevention activity?

- Primary prevention activities can be monitored and evaluated in many different ways. For ideas about measuring and evaluating have a look at the Practice Tips about Evaluation and Measuring Outcomes.

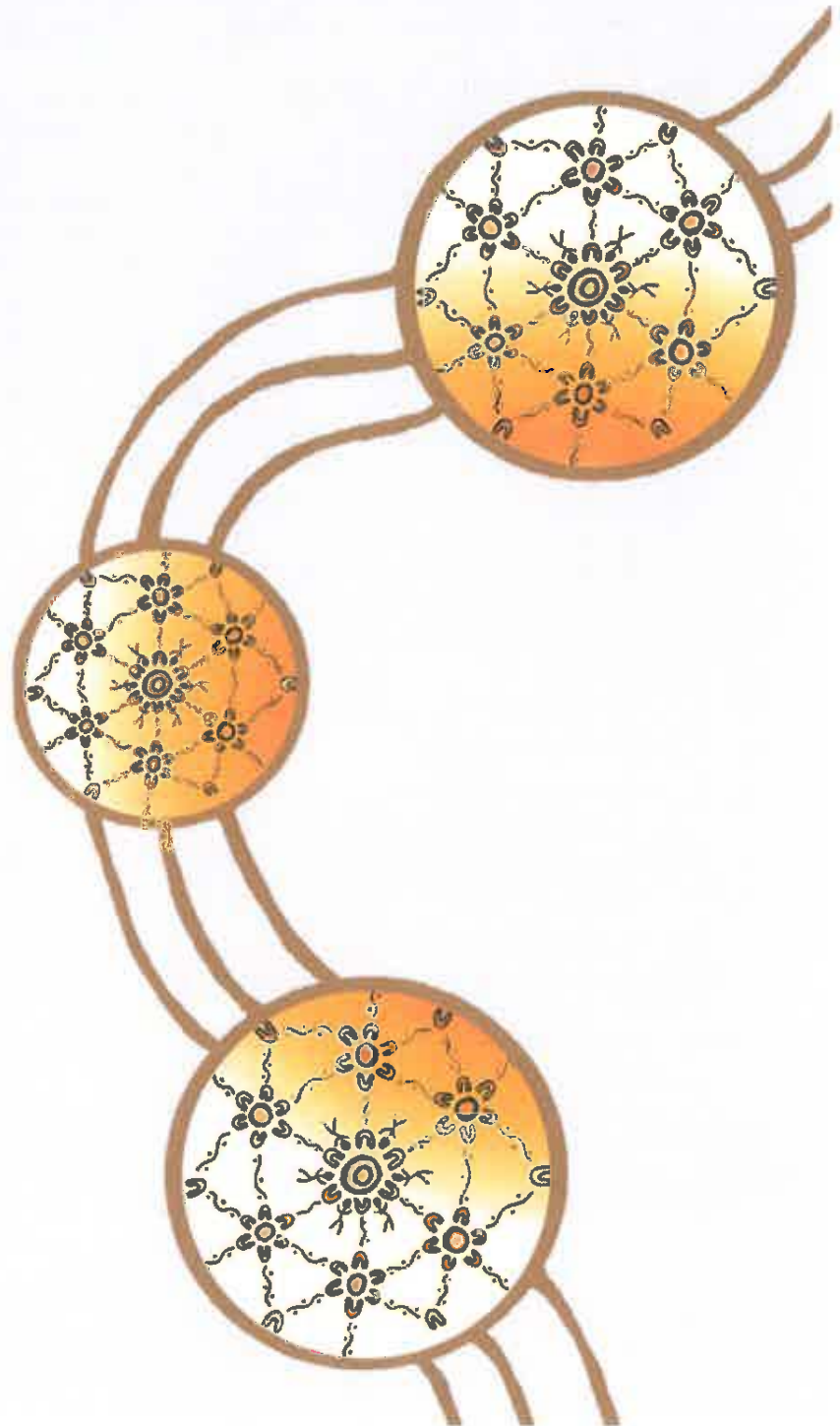
- Identifying which outcome you are trying to influence means you'll be better able to see how effective the activities were in achieving those outcomes:

- Increased community awareness and knowledge of services, support and culture
- Improved understanding of healthy and respectful relationships in Aboriginal families and community
- Increased confidence and leadership of Aboriginal people

- Regular monitoring and reporting should occur through the processes established by the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group and Coordinator

Celebrate success

REFERENCES



Essential Reference Documents

- Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group – Regional Action Plan; each IFVRAG will have its own action plan which guides its activities in response to Aboriginal family violence. Each action plan will have priorities for action, including for prevention activities
- *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities 10 Year Plan*

Other Reference Documents

This section lists the range of other frameworks, plans, legislation and documentation which this Framework needs to have a connection with, and which may be useful resources for those involved in prevention of Aboriginal family violence.

Victorian

- Victorian Indigenous Affairs Framework (Aboriginal Affairs Victoria)
- Government Response to Indigenous Family Violence Taskforce Report
- Victorian Aboriginal Suicide Prevention and Response Action Plan 2010-15 (Departments of Health and Human Services)
- Aboriginal Justice Agreement (Department of Justice)
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2011-12 (Departments of Health and Human Services)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*
- Wannik Education Strategy for Koorie students (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development)
- Victoria's Plan to improve outcomes in early childhood
- Elder Abuse Prevention Implementation Strategy

National

- *Closing the Gap. National Urban and Regional Service Delivery Strategy for Indigenous Australians*
- National Partnership Agreements
- *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children*

Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group contacts

The contact point for Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group is the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Coordinator who is located within the following regional offices of the Department of Human Services.

Region	Indigenous Family Violence Regional Coordinator regional DHS office address and general contact number
Barwon South West	Shop 2, 109 Lava Street, Warrnambool 3280 Tel. 03 5561 9444
Southern Loddon Mallee	74-78 Queen Street, Bendigo 3550 Tel. 03 5434 5555
Northern Loddon Mallee	253 Eleventh Street, Mildura 3500 Tel. 03 5022 3111
Gippsland Central	11 Hazelwood Road, Morwell 3840 Ph: 5177 2500
Gippsland East	7 Service Street, Bairnsdale 3875 Tel 03 5150 4500
Eastern Metropolitan	883 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill 3128 Tel. 1300 360 452
Hume	163 Wellsford Street, Shepparton 3630 Tel. 03 5832 1500
Southern Metropolitan	4 - 10 Jamieson Street, Cheltenham 3192 Tel 1300 555 526
North and West Metropolitan	145 Smith Street, Fitzroy, 3065 Tel 1300 360 408, TTY 9412 2647
Grampians	Cnr Mair and Doveton Streets, Ballarat 3353 Tel 03 5333 6530

General contact information for the Department of Human Services

- Telephone 1300 650 172
- TTY users - phone 13 3677 then ask for 1300 650 172
- Speak and Listen users - phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 650 172
- The DHS Central Office is located at 50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format please phone **9096 0225** using the National Relay Service **13 36 77** if required, or email: familyviolence@dhs.vic.gov.au This document is available as a Word document and PDF on the internet at: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/family-violence/indigenous-family-violence>

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ISBN 978-0-7311-6472-1 (online version)

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 50 Lonsdale St, Melbourne.

June 2012 (0120212)

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