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## **The Young Men's Christian Association of Victoria (Inc)**

### **Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria)**

#### **Executive Summary**

The YMCA of Victoria congratulates the Victoria Government on the establishment of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to The Commission. Since 2012 YMCA Victoria has been actively engaged in the primary prevention of men's violence against women<sup>1</sup> through a partnership with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and the Australian Research Centre into Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS). This partnership resulted in the implementation of the Y Respect Gender Project, a three-year pilot project that explored the role of workplaces in addressing the social norms and attitudes implicated in the occurrence of men's violence against women. The results of this project have provided an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of doing prevention work in workplaces and this learning will be the primary focus of our submission.

YMCA Victoria currently operates at over 150 sites across Victoria with further operations in South Australia, New South Wales and the ACT. We employ approximately 6000 staff and work with a further 1500 volunteers. The majority of our staff is female (around 70%) and young. Our staff and volunteers interact with tens of thousands of people every week in recreation centres, childcare facilities, sports stadiums, skate parks, camps, schools, at swimming lessons, youth activities, parent's groups, and other community activities and events. This contact with significant numbers of our population creates both an opportunity and a responsibility to ensure that everything we do fosters attitudes and behaviour which will work towards the reduction and even elimination of men's violence against women. It is our conviction that all workplaces, no matter their size, bear the same responsibility to create a society where women and men can live free from the fear of violence.

YMCA Victoria notes the suggestion of the Royal Commission into Family Violence that submissions take into consideration the questions posed by the Issues Paper of The Commission. Our submission is therefore framed around a number of these questions as identified below.

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<sup>1</sup>While the focus of the Royal Commission is into family violence, our submission will refer to the broader issue of men's violence against women, which was the focus of our project. We do so in the understanding that family violence forms a large component of men's violence against women and, for the purposes of this report, can be considered contingent to men's violence against women.



At the time of writing, the project mentioned in this report, the Y Respect Gender Project, has concluded and the work of the project is being taken up within YMCA Victoria by a new strategy on building capacity for equality, diversity and inclusion. At the same time, the national body of the YMCAs of Australia is commencing a pilot project to take the learning from the Y Respect Gender project and apply it across the other Australian YMCAs. This initial pilot phase of this project will be completed in early 2016. YMCA Victoria encourages the Royal Commission into Family Violence to contact YMCA Australia about the results of this pilot.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the current and subsequent Victorian governments establish a long-term funding commitment to the prevention of men's violence against women.
2. That the Victorian governments commitment to prevention include continued funding to Our Watch and other initiatives established under the COAG National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.
3. That initiatives to prevent men's violence against women before it occurs (primary prevention) are recognised as an integral part of the prevention continuum and are funded appropriately.
4. That workplaces are recognised as a significant setting for primary prevention initiatives.
5. That the Victorian government or a designated partner develop guidelines and resources to assist all workplaces to implement primary prevention initiatives.
6. That all workplaces be encouraged to develop employment entitlements and/or policy to support staff whose employment security is impacted by family violence.
7. That the Victorian government encourages Our Watch to take steps to build up and support primary prevention practitioners, including the recruitment and support of practitioners who are male.



## **Response to questions from the Royal Commission into Family Violence Issues Paper**

### ***Question Three. Which of the reforms to the family violence system introduced in the last ten years do you consider most effective? Why? How could they be improved?***

YMCA Victoria recognises that reforms to the family violence system over the last ten years have targeted different aspects of the prevention continuum. As an organisation that is concerned with the health promoting choices that people make, we consider that reforms to improve the primary prevention of men's violence against women are the most effective way to achieve long-term reduction of this violence. At the same time we recognise the importance of response services that target those experiencing the immediate effects of violence. In relation to these services, we consider that the most effective reforms are those which place the responsibility for change on the perpetrators of the violence rather than on the victims. For example, programs which enable the victim to stay in the family home and the perpetrator find other accommodation, or which enable the victim to remain in their employment, or which require the perpetrator to seek professional assistance in changing their behaviour.

### ***Question Four. If you or your organisation has been involved in programs, campaigns or initiatives about family violence for the general community, tell us what these involved and how they have been evaluated.***

Our Y Respect Gender Project was a pilot project funded and directed under the auspice of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, VicHealth, as part of both their *Creating Healthy Workplaces Program*<sup>2</sup> and their *Preventing Men's Violence Against Women* program. This project commenced in February 2012 and ran until June 2015<sup>3</sup>.

Y Respect Gender was developed using the VicHealth *Framework for the Prevention of Men's Violence Against Women*<sup>4</sup> and the World Health Organisation's *Healthy Workplaces: A model for action, for employers, workers, policy-makers and practitioners*<sup>5</sup>. Following these frameworks, the project was designed to use the workplace as a setting to address the social determinants of men's violence against women, namely unequal power between women and

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2013. *Creating Healthy Workplaces: Early insights from VicHealth pilot projects*. Carlton: VicHealth.

<sup>3</sup> An interim internal report on the project has been written and is incorporated into this submission. VicHealth will be publishing further reports on this project in late 2015 / early 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2007. *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*. Carlton: VicHealth.

<sup>5</sup> World Health Organisation 2010. *Healthy workplaces: a model for action for employers, workers, policymakers and practitioners*. Geneva: WHO.



men, rigid adherence to gender stereotypes, and violence supportive norms.<sup>6</sup> Y Respect Gender used a universal approach – it was not aimed at people at risk as victims or perpetrators, but targeted the whole staff and volunteer population of our organisation from an organisational cultural development perspective. Through this impact on our staff and volunteers and on the organisation as a whole, we also hoped that the project would have a secondary indirect impact on the broader community who made use of our facilities and interacted with our people.

VicHealth's funding of this project allowed for the employment of a full-time<sup>7</sup> coordinator to oversee the development and implementation of this project. This coordinator was based at the head office of YMCA Victoria and for most of the project was part of the People and Culture team. Funding was also allocated to La Trobe University's Australian Research Centre for Sex, Health and Society, ARCSHS, to evaluate the project. A Project Team consisting of staff from across the organisation was established to assist the project coordinator with the implementation of the project, and a Reference Group chaired by the CEO and consisting of both internal and external representatives was formed to provide a higher level overview.

At a practical level, the Y Respect Gender project explored strategies and actions relevant to three ways in which the social determinant of men's violence against women are active in workplaces: the relationships between women and men in the workplace; the role of women in leadership and influence; and the nature of impact of working conditions. These strategies and actions included:

- Information published in internal newsletters and on-line platforms to raise awareness of any issues related to gender equality, respectful relationships, gender stereotypes, men's violence against women and other related topics
- Presentations made at staff meetings and other internal events to raise awareness of topics as listed in the above dot point
- Training provided to groups of staff to increase their capacity to behave in ways that were respectful and equitable, did not reinforce gender stereotypes, and supported an equitable and respectful workplace culture
- Training and other capacity building activities for senior leaders to build their capacity to exercise leadership and influence in building an equitable and respectful workplace culture and working conditions, including activities which would increase women's leadership and influence
- Information and guidance provided to senior managers to encourage structural changes which would build equitable and respectful working conditions and embed a gender lens throughout decision making processes

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<sup>6</sup> See also the evidence review Chung, D., Zufferey, C and Powell, A. 2012. Preventing violence against women in the workplace: An evidence review: full report. Carlton: VicHealth.

<sup>7</sup> Although in fact for most of the project the coordinator worked a 33 hour week.



- Social marketing activities aimed at building a workplace culture in which gender equality and respectful relationships were seen as part of the core organisational values

As a further test of the effectiveness of the above activities, four YMCA Victoria centres were chosen to function as Pilot Sites for the project. These centres received extra support and training to encourage them to use an action-learning model in addressing the goals of the project within their particular locality. As an extension of this process, five further sites within the children's services area also received special attention as part of a focus on our staff working in the early learning environment. Finally, as well as the above activities, the coordinator of the project actively participated in networks, communities of practice, forums and other events in order to build links with stakeholders that would strengthen our commitment to the project goals.

A mixed group of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to evaluate the project. These included a pre and post survey, focus groups, observations both of sites and of meetings, interviews and document audits. The evaluation process was conducted as part of the project implementation, with interim reports being made to the project coordinator, project team and reference group including recommendations on how to improve the project as it was being implemented.

Over the course of the three years of the project Y Respect Gender achieved the following outcomes:

- An increase in the numbers of staff and volunteers who knew about the project
- An increase in the numbers of staff and volunteers who were aware of the connection between gender inequality and men's violence against women
- An increase in the numbers of staff and volunteers who reported that they experienced the workplace as respectful
- An increase in the numbers of staff and volunteers from the Pilot Sites who reported that their interactions with clients were respectful
- Staff and volunteers reported increased opportunities to discuss issues of gender inequality, gender stereotyping and respectful relationships
- Staff and volunteers reported more robust conversations about these issues
- Senior leaders reported a greater awareness of what it meant to operate with a 'gender lens' over their work
- Changes were made to some policies, procedures and other systems to embed a gender equitable processes at an organisational level, including the development of a Workplace Response to Family Violence Policy and Procedure
- Numerous small changes were made at specific localities to build a more equitable, respectful and less stereotyped workplace culture
- Managers and middle managers reported a greater confidence to show leadership that built an equitable and respectful workplace culture
- The organisation's reputation for promoting gender equality increased, as did the capacity of the organisation to play an advocacy role in this space



- A small number of partnerships between the organisation and other stakeholders in the gender equality and preventing violence sector were established
- To quote the CEO, the 'DNA' of the organisation changed, including the appointment of three women to a management level which previously had no women

It should be noted that many of the above outcomes were modest in their overall impact, or had an impact in some sections of the organisation but not in others. With the conclusion of the project and the departure of the project coordinator, it remains to be seen if these outcomes persist over time or if there will be a return to the pre-project culture. Further, the project did experience major challenges, including:

- Communicating the project goals in ways that did not produce defensive reactions or which alienated people from the project
- Defensive responses from some senior staff, particularly some male staff
- Competition for time and attention with the operational agenda and requirements of the organisation
- Numerous changes to the line management of the project and project coordinator
- Challenges related to the size and geographical spread of the organisation, as well as the high percentage of casual and part-time staff

Notwithstanding the above comments, it is the belief of our organisation that Y Respect Gender was a successful and important piece of work. We believe that the project demonstrated the following learning:

- Although Australian society has seen many improvements to laws, attitudes and behaviours relevant to gender-based discrimination and stereotyping, it is still the case that gender inequality, gender stereotyping, and violence supportive attitudes exist in every part of our society, including in workplaces
- Addressing these underlying drivers of violence is therefore important and necessary if we are to see significant changes to the rates of men's violence against women<sup>8</sup>
- Activities designed to address these drivers by promoting gender equality, changing our understanding of gender and gender stereotypes, and challenging violence supportive behaviour can be effective

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<sup>8</sup> For further information on this approach see also:

Quadara, Antonia and Wall, Liz 2012. What is effective primary prevention in sexual assault? Translating the evidence for action. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault; Walden, Inara and wall, Liz 2014. Reflecting on primary prevention of violence against women: The public health approach. Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault; Wall, Liz 2014. Gender equality and violence against women: What's the connection? Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.



- Workplaces offer significant opportunities to implement these types of activities and are therefore a useful and important location for primary prevention<sup>9</sup>
- A whole of organisation approach assists in this process by ensuring that activities to drive change are mutually reinforcing
- Leadership support and influence is vital to the success of this work of building a new culture
- Support of managers to facilitate their own actions in specific settings can lead to increased changes in those settings
- Tools and resources, including communications resources, need to be developed carefully to ensure that the complex and confronting aspects of this work are dealt with as best as possible
- Primary prevention work to address the drivers of men's violence against women is slow and resource intensive, requiring a significant commitment from the organisation if long-term changes are to be achieved

More detailed information about the Y Respect Gender Project can be found in the internal project report released in March 2015 and provided with this submission.

***Question Six. What circumstances, conditions, situations or events, within relationships, families, institutions and whole communities, are associated with the occurrence of persistence of family violence?***

YMCA Victoria endorses the research within Victoria and elsewhere which strongly suggests that within relationships, families, institutions and whole communities there are underlying factors which provide the environment in which men's violence against women is more likely to occur, and secondary factors which will set off and / or exacerbate the occurrence and persistence of this violence.<sup>10</sup> These underlying factors are unequal power relationships between women and men, rigid adherence to gender stereotypes, and violence supportive norms. The appearance of these factors will look different in different contexts, but they nonetheless are almost always present where men's violence against women exists. For example, in relationships these factors might present as controlling behaviour on the part of a male partner toward the female. In families, they might present as a set of expectations that the males will earn the money and the females stay home and look after the children. In institutions they might present as biases toward the recruitment and promotion of women.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For more on the role of workplaces see also Holmes, Scott and Flood, Michael 2013. *Genders at Work: Exploring the role of workplace equality in preventing men's violence against women*. Sydney: White Ribbon Australia.

<sup>10</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2007. *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*. Carlton: VicHealth.

<sup>11</sup> Recent Victorian reports on these issues include:

Sojo, Victor and Wood, Robert 2012. *Resilience: Women's fit, functioning and growth at work: Indicators and predictors*. Carlton: Melbourne Business School, Centre for Ethical Leadership.



And in whole societies they might present in the form of marketing that reinforces stereotypes about the roles of women and men. In all these circumstances an expectation about male entitlement and privilege is reinforced, and women's value and rights are deemed less important, and it is this environment that sets the scene for men's violence against women. Alongside these underlying factors are a range of secondary factors which work to either set off the violence or exacerbate it. There are many things that seem to fall into this category – economic stress, addictions, witnessing violence as a child, unemployment, relationships tensions, and pregnancy to name a few. The common thread in all these factors is that they invoke in the male a sense that the expected environment of male entitlement and privilege has been challenged. When this happens the target of male rage and frustration becomes women, who have already been characterized as lesser and as being 'against' men.

***Question Seven. What circumstances and conditions are associated with the reduced occurrence of family violence?***

It follows from the above analysis that the circumstances and conditions that are associated with the reduced occurrence of men's violence against women also fall into two categories. The first of these are those conditions that address the secondary factors listed above. These conditions are ones that either deal with people at risk of either being perpetrators of victims, as well as conditions dealing with people who have already experienced violence. An example relative to workplaces is the existence of workplace policies to assist employees who are experiencing violence.<sup>12</sup> Such policies have as their aim the continued employment and financial independence of the affected partner (usually the female) and the safety of the affected partner while at work. When implemented effectively, such policies create the conditions where victims or at risk people have the financial ability to make changes which will reduce the occurrence of violence.

The second group of circumstances and conditions are those that address the underlying factors implicated in men's violence against women. These are any actions which promote greater equality between women and men, or which reduce the impact of gender stereotypes on the lives of women and men, or which create environments in which violence of any sort is less tolerated. Such actions can be implemented in a huge variety of locations and with diverse groups of people. The Y Respect Gender project described in some detail in question four above is an example of actions undertaken in the setting of a workplace to address these factors

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Whelan, J. & Wood, R. 2012. Targets and Quotas for Women in Leadership: A Global Review of Policy, Practice, and Psychological Research. Carlton: Melbourne Business School, Centre for Ethical Leadership.

<sup>12</sup> McFerran, Ludo 2011. Safe at home, safe at work? National Domestic Violence and the Workplace Survey. Sydney: University of New South Wales, Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project.



***Question Eight. Tell us about any gaps or deficiencies in current responses to family violence, including legal response. Tell us about what improvements you would make to overcome these gaps and deficiencies, or otherwise improve current responses.***

The appallingly large cases of men's violence against women and the growing awareness of the impact of this violence has rightly shone a light on the communities efforts to protect women and girls who are at risk, hold perpetrators to account, and lower rates of recidivism. YMCA Victoria supports all these efforts and believes that other organisations are better placed than us to describe the gaps and deficiencies in these responses. While these efforts must not be watered down, it is also true that we will never see a significant change in the occurrence of this violence until there is an equal focus on preventing the violence before it occurs. While primary prevention has had a growing focus over the last decade, it is still not getting the attention it needs. The long term nature of prevention activities means that organisations such as ANROWS and Our Watch need to know that they have access to funding over many years if they are going to achieve the results we anticipate they can. Such funding would also enable the development of a dedicated and skilled workforce of practitioners who can lead this work over the next decades and the development of appropriate evidence and resources to drive this work.

The experience of YMCA Victoria in implementing the Y Respect Gender Project is that cultural change can be achieved as a pathway to the long-term elimination of men's violence against women. However it is complex and slow work and not easily amenable to the usual short-term measures that characterize both political and workplace decision making cycles. Any improvements to current responses to men's violence against women therefore need to always include recognition of the time commitment that will be needed to see the community achieve the changes we are seeking.

***Question Eleven. What are some of the most promising and successful ways of supporting the ongoing safety and wellbeing of people affected by family violence? Are there gaps or deficiencies in our approach to supporting ongoing safety and wellbeing? How could measures to reduce the impact of family violence be improved?***

YMCA Victoria's experience in supporting the ongoing safety and wellbeing of people affected by men's violence against women involves the role of the workplace in this support. A critical factor for women experiencing violence is their ability to secure financial independence. Maintaining employment is therefore crucial. At the same time, the impacts of the violence may compromise the victim's ability to get to work and meet agreed expectations at work. This creates a conflicting dilemma for women seeking to escape the impact of violence – at the time they most need their work they are most danger of losing it. In recognition of this issue we developed a workplace response to family violence policy and procedure to give our managers the confidence and knowledge they need to appropriately ensure the ongoing employment of any of our staff affected by violence. This policy is now being incorporated



into our EBA<sup>13</sup> as a clause that regulates leave entitlements for those experiencing violence. From our experience with this process we suggest that all workplaces should have some type of similar policy in place and that appropriate training be available to managers in the application of such policies.

***Question Seventeen. Are there specific cultural, social economic, geographical or other factors in particular groups and communities in Victoria which tend to make family violence more likely to occur, or to exacerbate its effects? If so, what are they?***

YMCA Victoria supports the current research in this area which strongly suggests that the *drivers* of men's violence against women exist across all groups and communities in Victoria in such ways that there is little variation in the rates of *occurrence* of this violence in different groups. However, there are then also a range of factors which can exacerbate the effects of this violence, and these may exist in different ways in different groups in ways that influence the onset, frequency and severity of this violence. For example, some new and emerging cultural groups in Australia have experienced significant amounts of violence as a result of terrorism or other acts of discrimination prior to arriving in Australia, and the resulting normalization of violence may impact rates of men's violence against women in their communities. Where there is high male unemployment there may be increased levels amongst men of a sense of denied entitlement and this may increase rates of violence against women. For similar reasons the research suggests that some men interpret their partner's pregnancy as a loss of their own entitlement, as this results in increased rates of men's violence against women during this time. Women are also at higher risk of violence when they are in the process of leaving, or have just left, a relationship because some men likewise interpret this as an affront to their entitlement. It should also be noted that the effects of men's violence against women will often be exacerbated if it is not possible for both victims and perpetrators to access support services which can assist them in dealing with their situation, and that these support services tend to be less readily accessible in non-urban areas and on the fringes of our major cities.

***Question Eighteen. What barriers prevent people in particular groups and communities in Victoria from engaging with or benefitting from family violence services? How can the family violence system be improved to reflect the diversity of people's experiences?***

YMCA Victoria recognises that our society needs a robust legal response to men's violence against women in order to ensure that perpetrators are dealt with in ways that will minimize their recidivism, and to send a strong message to our society that this violence is never acceptable or excusable. However, when the legal response is emphasized more strongly than other responses this may have the effect of suggesting that men's violence against women is solely a crime issue rather than also, or even more so, a relational and health issue, and this

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<sup>13</sup> The most recent EBA is currently in the final stages of being negotiated.



may prevent some people – in particular perpetrators and potential perpetrators - from accessing services in a timely and beneficial way. We therefore suggest that services to respond to and prevent this violence need to be framed in ways that have a particular emphasis on promoting healthy relationships and a safe society for all people. By doing so, the aim is to encourage people to access these services as early as possible in the cycle of violence and relationship stress. Primary prevention activities – which are universal programs that target whole of populations with services that build gender equality and respectful relationships – are the front end of this approach and therefore need to be a part of the support systems. All services also need to be available in languages and localities that ensure a high degree of accessibility across the diversity of our Victorian population.

***Question Twenty. Are there any other suggestions you would like to make to improve policies, program and services which currently seek to carry out the goals set out above?***

Many of the points made in this submission align with the work being undertaken as part of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, including the development of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), and Our Watch. Therefore the final suggestion of this submission is that the current and future Victorian governments should continue to be strongly supportive of these national initiatives, including appropriate funding to support them.

***Question Twenty-one. The Royal Commission will be considering both short term and longer term responses to family violence. Tell us about the changes which you think could produce the greatest impact in the short and longer term.***

In the short-term the changes that are needed to respond to men's violence against women are those which will:

- Ensure current victims are protected from violence when necessary
- Ensure that current victims are supported in all necessary ways that empower them to make the choices they need to make to reduce the impact of violence in their lives
- Ensure current perpetrators are supported in ways that will reduce rates of recidivism and empower them to live in violence free ways
- Ensure that the media and political commentary on this violence is clear about the drivers of the violence, including the gendered nature of the violence, and avoids victim blaming of any type

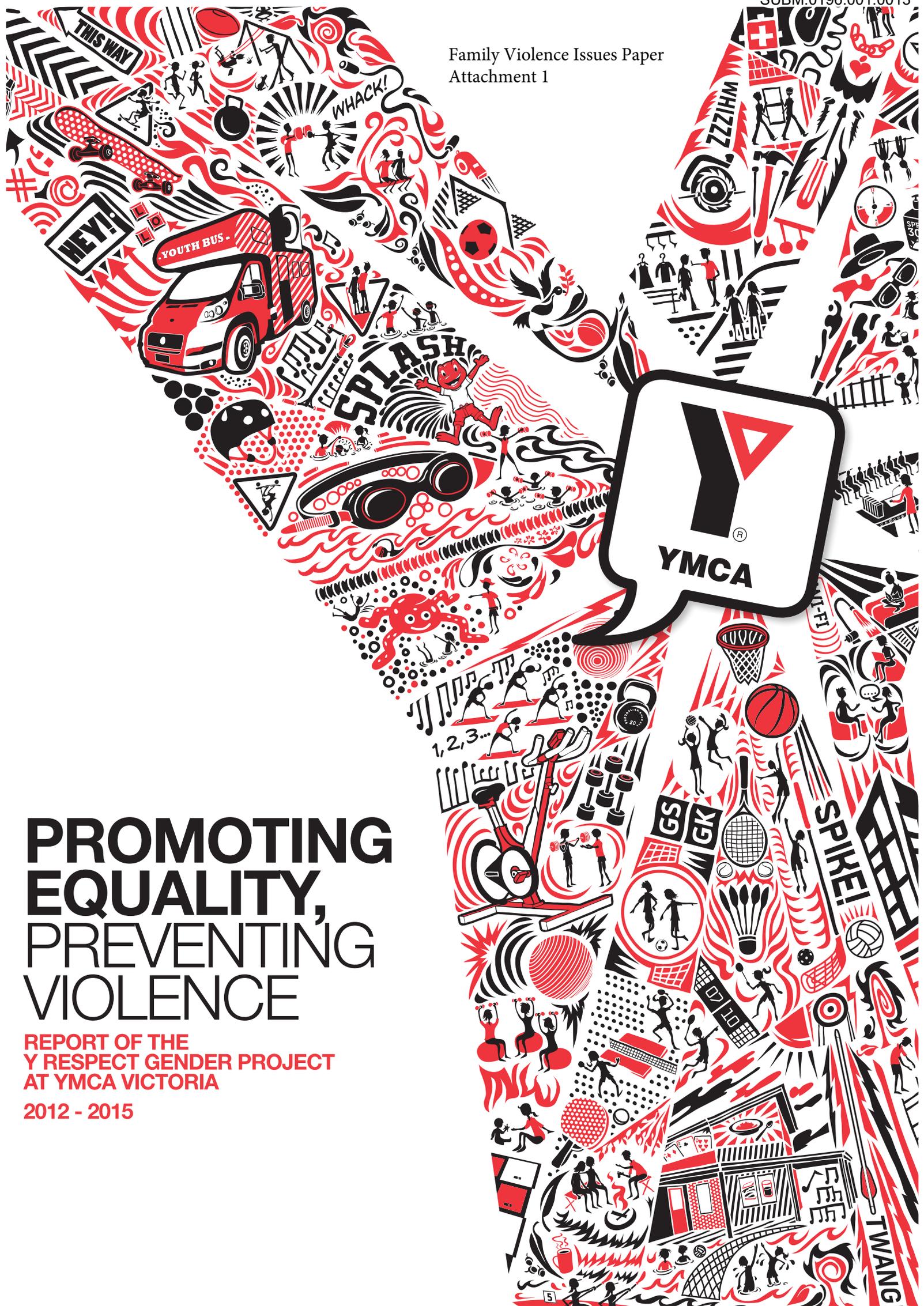
Victoria is in the fortunate position of being the recipient of world leading research into the prevention of men's violence against women through the role of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation. This research has used a health promotion approach to identify strategies and approaches that will prevent this violence before it occurs. As stressed already, this work of building a society in which the drivers of men's violence against women are



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removed from our midst is not work that will happen overnight. A long-range view is needed in which all sections of our society work together to promote a mutually reinforcing message of a society in which women and men have equal opportunities and support, where one's sex or gender identity are not a cause for discrimination or mistreatment, and where violence of all forms is never accepted. These are the longer-term changes that we need to aim for. They are lofty, but not out of reach.

YMCA Victoria is pleased to have begun our own work in committing our organisation to these long-term changes. We commend the work of the Victoria Royal Commission into Family Violence and encourage The Commission to aim high.



# PROMOTING EQUALITY, PREVENTING VIOLENCE

REPORT OF THE  
Y RESPECT GENDER PROJECT  
AT YMCA VICTORIA

2012 - 2015





## PROMOTING EQUALITY, PREVENTING VIOLENCE

### A Report on the Y Respect Gender Project at YMCA Victoria 2012 – 2015

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March 2014

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YMCA thanks and recognises the contribution of VicHealth as funder of this program. This report in its current form is for internal YMCA purpose solely and is not to be distributed externally. YMCA, Latrobe University and VicHealth hope to publish this report publically in 2015.



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# Introduction

In 2011 YMCA Victoria entered into a partnership with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University to implement an innovative health promotion project.

The Y Respect Gender Project aimed over three years to explore what could be done within a workplace to build a more gender equitable and respectful workplace culture and to equip women and men to relate more equitably and respectfully. Building gender equality and respectful relationships has been identified as a significant way society can address the causes of men's violence against women, and workplaces provide an ideal environment for actions that do this.

*Promoting Equality, Preventing Violence* is a report on the goals, actions and outcomes of the Y Respect Gender Project. The report covers the three years of the project implementation from the commencement of the Project Coordinator in February 2012 until January 2015 and forms part of the transition of Y Respect Gender from an externally funded project to an ongoing program within YMCA Victoria.

YMCA Victoria has been proud to be the workplace partner for this project. As an organisation with a long history of promoting health and well-being we understand the significant cost of men's violence against women and the importance of preventing this violence before it occurs. We are proud that Y Respect Gender has changed us for the better and hope this report will encourage other organisations to take the journey of gender equality that we continue to be committed to.



**PETER BURNS**  
CEO  
March 2015





**YMCA VICTORIA** has been operating since 1853 and is part of the worldwide YMCA Movement founded in the UK in 1844. With our partner associations across Australia YMAC Victoria's mission is to empower young people, promote healthy living, and have a positive social impact. We do this through our work in a variety of sectors, including recreation centres, camping, student accommodation, youth work, swimming lessons, health promotion and child-care. Across 160 sites we employ around 6000 people and engage with over 1500 volunteers. Most of these staff and volunteers are young people, and approximately 70% are female. YMCA Victoria regularly partners with other like-minded stakeholders, such as VicHealth, to enhance our capacity to achieve our goals and build a healthier world.

### **VICHEALTH (THE VICTORIAN HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION)**

was established in 1987 and is the world's first Health Promotion Foundation. Through research, interventions and campaigns, VicHealth aims to promote good health and prevent chronic disease. For over 10 years VicHealth has been involved in research and action to prevent violence against women before it occurs. In 2012 VicHealth launched its Creating Healthy Workplaces program in order to build evidence of good workplace health promotion practice<sup>1</sup>. Five organisations were chosen to implement five different health promotion interventions – one at each organisation. Preventing violence against women was one of these health areas with YMCA Victoria the organisation chosen to implement the pilot project<sup>1</sup>.



**VicHealth™**

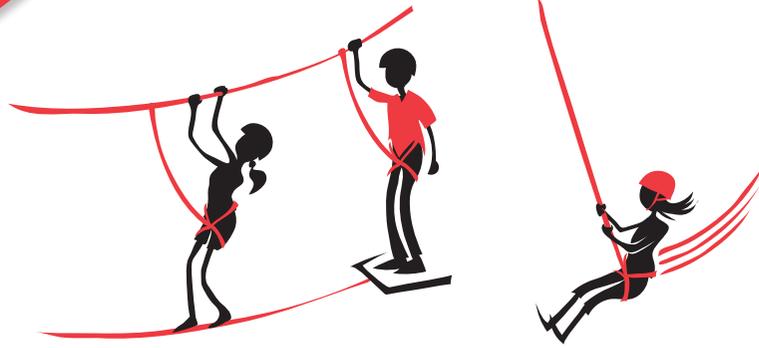
### **THE AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH CENTRE IN SEX, HEALTH AND SOCIETY (ARCSHS)**

was founded in 1993. The Centre's mission and aims provide a framework for a diverse range of research projects, bringing together staff from a variety of disciplines – sociology, psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, epidemiology, gender and sexuality studies, public health and community education. ARCSHS is a centre for social research into sexuality, gender and health, and the social dimensions of human relationships, including preventing violence against women. It works collaboratively and in partnership with communities, community-based organisations, government and professionals in relevant fields to produce research that promotes positive change in policy, practice and people's lives.

Australian  
Research Centre  
in Sex, Health  
& Society



# Chapter 1



## UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND TO EQUALITY RESPECT GENDER

*Victoria Building a safe world for women + children*

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Around the world men's violence against women is finally getting the recognition it needs as one of the foremost social justice and health issues<sup>iii</sup>. Whether it is sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or other forms of domestic violence, men's violence against women affects a significant number of the world's female population (see below for statistics). The impact of this violence is significant and includes physical, psychological, social, financial and spiritual harm to women and to their children<sup>iv</sup>. While men are also occasionally the victims of gender based violence, the evidence clearly indicates that in the vast majority of cases men are the perpetrators and women the victims<sup>v</sup>. In Australia there has been a growing political and social commitment to preventing this violence. Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children<sup>vi</sup> is the first of its kind in the world. It is supported by plans in most of the Australian States and Territories and by two national organisations – ANROWS (the Australian National Research Organisations for Women's Safety) and Our Watch (End Violence Against Women and Their Children). Victoria has been leading the way in this work, particularly through the efforts of VicHealth, along with the Office of Women's Affairs, Department of Justice, and the many organisations supporting women and women's health. Together, these various responses are coalescing into a unified effort to transform our society into one where women can live without fear of violence<sup>vii</sup>.

### PROMOTING EQUALITY, PREVENTING VIOLENCE

Central to the contemporary strategies to prevent men's violence against women is the recognition that the best prevention is that which works before the violence occurs in the first place<sup>viii</sup>. To achieve this requires knowing what are the social and personal factors that create the context in which this violence is more likely to happen<sup>ix</sup>. Research conducted in Australia and overseas consistently points to gender inequality and rigid gender stereotypes as the key factors to be addressed<sup>x</sup>. Violence is about power and control. It is social norms and attitudes which position men in charge and women as less valuable that justify this unequal power and create the context in which men's use of violence to control women is condoned and perpetuated<sup>xi</sup>. Therefore, to prevent this violence before it occurs requires a change in these social norms and attitudes so there is equality and respect between women and men. Such change will require a long term commitment to work across multiple social structures in order to achieve large scale change which will, over the long term, create a society in which men's use of violence against women is reduced or even eliminated<sup>xii</sup>.



## WORKPLACES AS LOCATIONS FOR PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Around two thirds of Australians spend up to a third of their day in the workplace. Workplaces are therefore one of the significant social structures where equality focused prevention strategies can be targeted. As well as their potential to communicate messages about gender equality and respect to large numbers of people, workplaces also often demonstrate the sorts of norms and attitudes that need to change in order to build an equitable and respectful society. For example, women continue to be significantly underrepresented in senior leadership roles in most organisations<sup>xiii</sup>. They continue to experience sexism and discrimination<sup>xiv</sup>. And workplace culture is often predicated on masculine culture and stereotypes. When workplaces commit themselves to building an equitable and respectful workplace culture they are not only changing their own workplace, but contributing to changing the broader society in which their workers and clients live<sup>xv</sup>.

### Y RESPECT GENDER – a workplace project promoting equality in order to prevent violence

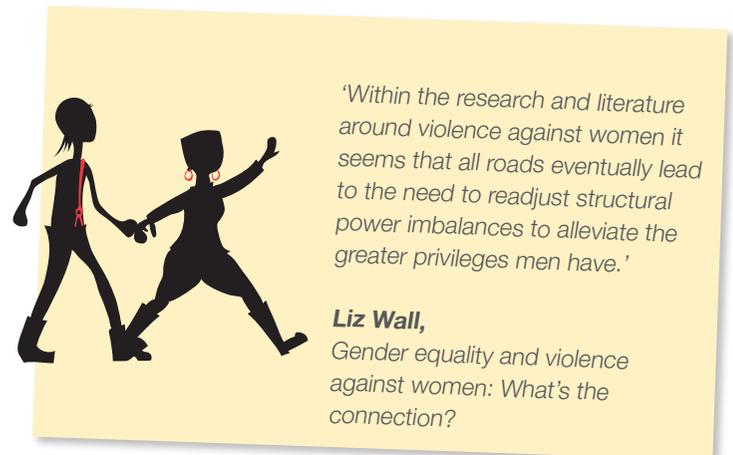
Y Respect Gender is a three year project that aimed to implement a variety of actions within the workplace of YMCA Victoria which would address the social norms and attitudes that contribute to men's violence against women. By promoting equitable and respectful relationships between women and men at work, increasing women's influence and leadership, and building equitable working conditions and culture, Y Respect Gender sought to generate positive change amongst our own staff, and through our staff to our clients and the broader community. In partnership with VicHealth and ARCSHS, Y Respect Gender has also contributed to the growing evidence base of what works to prevent men's violence against women.

### EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation is a means of documenting what has happened, identifying what worked and what didn't work, assessing outcomes and in the longer term, the impact of the program. Numbers can provide some insight changes that occur over the course of the program, however, Y Respect Gender is a social program and people are more complicated than numbers. In social programs it is important to know more than what has changed and by how much. Process evaluation tells the 'story' behind the program; outcome evaluation focuses on the effects of the program – the extent to which goals and objectives have been met and any unexpected outcomes. Impact evaluation reports on the long term results of a program, analysing, for example, whether changes have been maintained. Evaluation science has come a long way since the days when the evaluator was seen as an objective scientist' who stood outside of a program to judge what worked and what did not work.

The method used in the evaluation of Y Respect gender is constructivist evaluation, a method which works to redress power imbalances and expand learning for everyone involved. This does not limit the kind of research tools available to the evaluator but does provide opportunities for continuous improvement through feedback. This kind of evaluation contributes to planning by

providing feedback on progress and is also a way of checking accountability, continually improving the program as it develops, increasing organisational and personal capacity to deliver the program and promoting a better understanding of the issues that emerge. The method still allows different phases of the program (processes, outcomes and impact) to be evaluated, and employs the range of research techniques available to the evaluator. Whole of staff surveys were conducted at the beginning of the project and after the third year to understand changes over time. During the course of the program interviews were conducted with a range of staff and board members from pilot sites and head office, observations were carried out at various sites and a range of meetings were regularly attended as the project developed.



### CURRENT STATISTICS ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

available from [ourwatch.org.au](http://ourwatch.org.au)

- A woman dies at the hands of a current or former partner almost every week in Australia. Some research suggests this rate is much higher
- One woman in three has experienced physical violence, since the age of 15
- One woman in five has experienced sexual violence
- One woman in four had experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner
- Women in Australia are three times more likely than men to experience violence at the hands of a partner
- Almost half of the women who experience violence by an ex-partner said children had seen or heard the violence
- Young women (18 – 24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups
- There is growing evidence that women with a disability are more likely to experience violence. For example, 90% of Australian women with an intellectual disability have been subjected to sexual abuse
- Indigenous women experience disproportionately high levels of family violence

# Chapter 2



## BUILDING EQUITABLE AND RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

*A respectful relationship is a healthy relationship*

### RELATIONSHIPS IN THE WORKPLACE

Women and men's expectations of how they will relate to each other are influenced by a large number of factors – the examples of parents and family, their experiences as children, the influence of media and advertising, the ideas and practices of groups they belong to such as religious groups, scouts, or sporting associations, to name just a few. While most men and women rate respect and equality as important, our actual relationships often fail to show this. Sexist jokes, disrespectful language, gender stereotypical assumptions and discriminatory decisions are just some of the ways our relationships fail to reflect our ideals<sup>vii</sup>. In the workplace relationships between women and men are further complicated by our job roles and place within the organisational hierarchy, as well the systems and policies which govern working relationships. To build equitable and respectful relationships between men and women in the workplace requires: raising awareness about what equality and respect look like – and don't look like; building a workplace culture that has clear expectations about these relationships; providing opportunities for staff to develop their interpersonal skills; and ensuring that policies and procedures reinforce the culture that is wanted.

### ACTIONS TAKEN BY Y RESPECT GENDER

- Regular articles on gender equality and respectful relationships in the weekly Staff and Volunteer e-newsletter, weekly Management e-newsletter, and quarterly People and Culture e-newsletter
- Four YMCA centres were engaged as Y Respect Gender pilot sites and used an action-learning approach to developing local actions to build their culture
- Presentations on gender equality and respectful relationships made at managers forums, regional leadership meetings, and other leadership gatherings
- Training on understanding gender, gender stereotyping, and gender equality provided for staff groups at pilot sites and other YMCA centres
- Information on YCMA Victoria's expectations for staff relationships included in the central induction process
- Centres encouraged to hold activities on White Ribbon Day and International Women's Day, plus centralised events also held on these days
- Training on what it means to be pro-active bystander when you witness sexist or discriminatory behaviour
- Development of video to be displayed on TV screens at YMCA centres and uploaded to centre Facebook pages
- Development of marketing material that encouraged equal and respectful relationships
- Implementation of a 'roadshow' to reinforce key messages of the Y Respect Gender Project at YMCA centres

### EVALUATION FINDINGS

Cultures with high levels of gender equality have much lower levels of violence against women, while those with low levels of gender equality have higher levels of violence against women (British Medical Journal 2015). While the ultimate goal of the Y Respect Gender project is preventing violence against women the way to achieve this is to promote equal and respectful relationships throughout society. Workplaces where people spend time together and are therefore excellent locations for programs to promote equality and respect.

The evaluation focused on the implementation process of Y Respect Gender and subsequently the outcomes of the program in the pilot sites and across the whole of YMCA Victoria. We found that:

### Communications:

Effective communication is important, particularly given the dispersed nature of the YMCA in Victoria. This included electronic, print and personal forms of communication. The quality of communications about Y Respect Gender was demonstrated in the increase in knowledge about the project across the organisation between 2012 and 2014. In 2014, staff members were more than twice as likely to have heard about Y Respect Gender than those surveyed in 2012. They were also more likely to have heard of the project from a variety of sources than in 2012. Staff and management news, Y Net and the senior project officer were the most commonly mentioned source of information about Y Respect Gender in the survey.

### Cultural change:

Does not just happen. It requires a whole of organisation approach, supported by organisational values, management and staff commitment. It requires champions and drivers for change. A significant group that assumed responsibility for monitoring the project as it was implemented was the Project Team. Made up of staff members who volunteered or were invited to participate, this group met monthly throughout the life of the project. With the authority of the YMCA board and senior management the Project Team gradually found its feet and became more assertive and engaged in the implementation process.

### Workplace change processes:

We established early in the project evaluation that the YMCA is an organisation in which staff members value respect and believe in gender equality even if putting these into practice is not always easy. Although the senior project officer took a whole of organisation approach to communications, the pilot centres were where intensive work happened, and where the evaluation focused.

The action<sup>xvii</sup> learning approach used in the implementation phase of the project demonstrated the importance of a facilitated approach to change and to change as a process which is managed and controlled by staff in their own work areas. Distinct phases were apparent in the implementation process: in the early phase it was important for the establishment of relationships and establishing understandings and expectations about Y Respect Gender. The second phase of the project involved the senior project officer withdrawing intensive support and the pilot sites assuming responsibility for implementing changes in their own time and ways. It was in this phase that creative changes started to occur in pilot centres, each in its own way and at its own pace, knowing that the Senior Project Officer was available when needed for advice and support.



## Workplace response to Family Violence policy

Australian workplaces make provisions for a range of entitlements and allowances - such as annual leave, sick leave, carers leave - to ensure their workers remain physically and mentally healthy. Until recently, however, there were no provisions for workers who were facing the impacts of family violence. These staff - predominantly women - face a range of issues which impact their ability to hold down a job precisely at a time when financial independence is vital to their well-being<sup>xviii</sup>. Acknowledging this issue, many Australian workplaces have begun to introduce policies which aim, as much as possible, to provide workplace support to victims of family violence that enables them to maintain their employment. This support may include leave entitlements, a safety plan, and access to counselling. In recognition of the underlying aims of the Y Respect Gender Project, YMCA Victoria implemented a Workplace Response to Family Violence policy in the first 12 months of the project's commencement. In 2015 this policy will be further supported by a clause in the latest EBA.

# Fortune cookie anyone?

**A novel element of the Y Respect Gender project was the inclusion of themed fortune cookies as part of the communication and marketing strategies (see Case Study 2).**

**Each cookie contained one of five different messages. The messages used are the sub-headings for each of the chapters of this report.**

## **CASE STUDY 1: ASHBURTON POOL AND RECREATION CENTRE PILOT SITE**

Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre (APARC) is a large recreation centre located in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and is one of a number of sites managed by YMCA Victoria for the City of Boroondara. Consisting of a health club (gym), pool, sports stadium, crèche, café, group fitness rooms, and consultancy rooms, APARC is a vibrant and busy centre typical of the larger YMCA Victoria centres and was chosen as one of the Y Respect Gender pilot sites for this reason.

Y Respect Gender used pilot sites as a strategy to explore ways in which the goals of the project could be met at a local level in a sustainable fashion. Pilot sites were encouraged to use an action-learning model to respond to these goals. The action-learning model involved observing what was happening, reflecting on what this meant, planning actions in response to these reflections, putting these plans into action, and then repeating the cycle starting with observing. Pilot sites were provided with a short manual prepared by the Y Respect Gender Project Coordinator, and were asked to nominate a number of staff, including the centre manager, who would be responsible for implementing the action-learning model. Pilot sites were supported by the Y Respect Gender Project Coordinator as requested and were included on email lists for regular updates of resources and ideas.

In practice, the action-learning approach was not a model that aligned well with the busy operational contexts of the pilot sites, and a less methodical approach tended to prevail. Nonetheless, at each of the four pilot sites various actions were taken as part of an enthusiastic commitment to the work.

At APARC these actions included:

- Development of a dedicated information board in the staff room
- Distribution of articles and videos via internal emails
- Conversations at team leader staff meetings
- Workshop for team leaders provided by the Y Respect Gender Coordinator
- Inclusion of gender equality expectations as part of local induction
- Inclusion of gender equality expectations as part of position descriptions
- Exercises on respectful relationships and gender equality as part of annual whole of staff training
- Morning tea for staff and clients to observe White Ribbon Day

These actions resulted in a shift in the culture at APARC which was characterised by a greater openness to conversations regarding gender norms and stereotypes, and a greater awareness of areas for change. For example, APARC provided a service by which families could hold children's birthday parties at the centre. As part of this service, APARC would provide pre-printed birthday invitations – either a girls' birthday invitation card or a boys' invitation card. With the influence of Y Respect Gender, APARC staff questioned the reason for having separate cards, noted that separate cards reinforced gender stereotypes, and resolved to develop a new card appropriate for both boys and girls.

Influence was widely noticed in general conversation between staff where they became acutely aware of statements that may be perceived to be gender stereotypical. Examples of this filtered through in to general operations where examples such as assistance with stadium changes for different sports was not asked only of males but was slowly moulded to be asked generally of the whole group whenever this was to occur. The result did not necessarily mean that more females assist in court change overs but the deliberate change in language meant casual staff (both the asking and the asked of) were reminded of the importance of equal opportunity.

## CASE STUDY 2: COOKING UP GENDER EQUALITY: COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Although all of us live gendered lives, most of us are not used to talking about what that means, or may not have given much thought to our lived experience. While the feminist movements provided some women with the language to talk about these issues, most men have had little or no contact with any sort of movement that could do the same for them, and therefore are unfamiliar with much of the language and terminology associated with gender issues. Sex and gender are also highly personal and political issues. As such, they can often generate anxious and/or defensive reactions from both men and women. In this highly complex and charged context, how do we provide effective communication for a project such as Y Respect Gender? In particular, how can we engage with men in ways that invite their participation but without playing down the reality of gender inequality and sexist behaviour? This was the challenge for the communication and marketing aspect of Y Respect Gender.

At the commencement of the project a communications strategy was developed. This strategy reflected some of the initial organisational anxiety around the project, specifically that by taking it on the YMCA was admitting it had a 'problem' with gender equality. Messages in this strategy focused on ensuring that the reputation of the YMCA would not be compromised. At the beginning of the second half of the project, and with some different communications and marketing personnel in place, the communication strategy was revisited. This time there was a more robust conversation about the challenges and opportunities of effectively promoting the project actions and goals, including whether to drop the word 'gender' from the title, which did not happen. It was decided that a thematic approach would enable a more accessible strategy while at the same time allowing for 'plain speaking' messages. The theme that was chosen was that of menus and recipes. The initial resource to use this theme was one developed to assist YCMA Victoria centres in observing White Ribbon Day 2013. Designed to look like the type of blackboard menu you would see at a café, the resource consisted of four cards joined to make an A frame. Cards were titled, 'For Starters', 'Our Main Aim', 'Sweet Success', and 'Your Takeaway Options'.

The very positive reaction to this resource encouraged the continued use of this theme as much as possible. One of the subsequent resources to use this theme was the guidebook for centre managers, which was titled, 'Gender Matters: recipes for building Respect and Equality in Y Vic Workplaces.' The guidebook consisted of 13 'recipes' each of which included a description, a set of ingredients, a method, and a serving suggestion – see Appendix 1 for an example. Marketing resources used as part of the Y Respect Gender 'roadshow' in the second half of 2014 continued on with the theme. These consisted of a noodle box which contained a serviette marked, 'YMCA Victoria: Wiping away gender inequality', two fold up 'takeaway' cards, one with gender equality statistics, and the other with ideas for how to build a gender equitable workplace, and a fortune cookie containing a gender equality message!

Although there has been no attempt to measure the impact of this communication strategy, reactions to these resources suggests that the novelty of this thematic approach was an effective way to generate engagement with the project messages. As part of a much larger and complex set of Y respect actions, these communication and marketing approaches provided a recognisable and non-confrontational approach to a challenging and confronting topic.



# Chapter 3

## INCREASING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION, LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE

Go anywhere, do anything



### WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Women have been entering the workforce in ever increasing numbers since the middle of the 20th century. However their movement into senior leadership and other roles of influence has not kept pace with their presence in the workforce (see box on this page for details).

Increasing women's representation, leadership and influence in the workplace is crucial to building a more equitable world where women have the same opportunities and financial independence as men. The multiplicity of factors involved in explaining this low representation creates significant challenges for any organisation and in part is indicative of why these changes have been so slow to occur. These factors include:

- Gender stereotypes that impact women's education, career choices and planning
- Unconscious bias that impacts recruitment and promotion of women
- Working conditions that are not supportive of women during pregnancy, parental leave and return to work
- Working conditions that are not supportive of working parents
- Workplace cultures that make women feel unwelcome or threatened at work
- Women's over representation in primary care giving of children and of older relatives
- The cumulative impact on career development of women's over representation in casual and part-time employment
- Effect on career development of reduced finances related to the gender pay gap, and the low pay rates of female-dominated occupations
- Other forms of direct and indirect discrimination in the workplace
- Lack of commitment to change from male leaders
- Lack of workplace policies and procedures to address the above issues

### Women's workforce participation

Women currently<sup>xix</sup> comprise 45.8% of all employees in Australia. Women continue to be more highly represented in part-time and casual work, comprising 69.5% of all part-time employees, 35.5% of full time employees, and 54.8% of casual employees. Despite attaining educational qualifications at higher rates than men, they continue to be under represented in leadership roles. Only 17.3% of CEO roles are filled by women and 26.1% of key management personnel roles. In the top 200 Australian companies, only 18.8 % of directors are women, and 17 % of these companies have no women on their board. The current gender pay gap (annualised full time earnings) is 18.2%.

## Women at YMCA Victoria

Across the whole of YMCA Victoria women comprise approximately 70% of all staff. Over 80% of these women are either part time or casual, whereas for men the rate is around 60%. As with most other Australian organisations, women are underrepresented in the uppermost levels of the organisation. However, all indications are that this has begun to change. At Board level, women comprise 50% of directors, and the current and previous chairs are women.



### ACTIONS TAKEN BY Y RESPECT GENDER

- Newsletter articles, presentations and other actions to raise awareness about the relevant issues
- Information on unconscious bias incorporated into leadership training facilitated by the Learning and Development team
- Discussion paper on women's leadership prepared and circulated amongst senior staff
- VicHealth 'Leadership for Preventing Violence Against Women' forum arranged for senior YMCA Victoria staff – 20 in attendance
- Y Respect Gender Project Coordinator personally engaged with senior male staff on regular basis, including CEO and Executive Officers, to effect capacity building for their sponsorship of women's leadership
- Y Respect Gender Project Coordinator took responsibility for the completion of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency annual reporting
- Small number of senior female staff supported to attend relevant leadership courses
- Senior staff invited to attend White Ribbon Day and International Women's Days events as capacity building exercise
- Internal forum held on parental leave and return to work, including guest speakers from the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- Senior women actively engaged with the project team
- Minor amendments made to some policies and procedures to strengthen their support of gender equality principles

### EVALUATION FINDINGS

Increasing the number of women in leadership positions was a key goal for Y Respect Gender. We found that although there was strong support for increasing the number of women in senior management, during the three years of the evaluation this was not realised. (Toward the end of the project, and after the evaluation process concluded, two women were appointed to senior roles.) In part this was because the YMCA is a workplace with a low turnover of staff, so few positions became available during this time. Nonetheless, gender bias in employment practices is a factor that works against women being employed in senior positions<sup>xx</sup>. A further complicating factor when it comes to gender equity in the workplace is the phenomenon of 'stereotype threat'. This relates to common stereotypes about both women and men that suggests that abilities are related to gender. In workplaces, negative stereotypes about women not having the

stamina, the skills, or the time to carry out the tasks inherent in senior management roles may lead them to compare themselves negatively to male managers and believe that they cannot meet the demands of traditional male roles<sup>xxi</sup>. This was explored in the two surveys and found that women were more likely to be affected by stereotype threat than men in the YMCA. Stereotype threat can be overcome by providing positive images and models which challenge negative stereotypes. This issue is being addressed by the senior project officer in conjunction with the YMCA's communications and marketing department. However, more work is required in this area to ensure equity is achieved in women's representation, leadership and influence in the YMCA workplace.

Although it has been underway for many years, not all men or women are comfortable with changes in gender roles or with the idea of gender equity. This means that changes in the workplace are not supported by everyone, and this was true for the YMCA. From the start there was an undercurrent of dissent apparent in the evaluation data. Gender roles are deeply embedded and the pace of change in this area is not even, however, in the pilot centres where the Senior Project Officer facilitated a change process that focused on local ownership, gender equity and respectful behaviours it was apparent that it is possible to discuss and disagree amicably whilst challenging unacceptable behaviour. This facilitated change was supported by strong leadership support and the YMCA's stated values, and these are critical to ensure top down and bottom up change occurs.

A further factor in the change process is the use of a gender lens. This is a shorthand way of describing a way of thinking that should be used in all planning processes and day to day practices that takes into account how the diversity of women and men will be affected by decisions and actions. A gender lens does not come automatically to ways of thinking or planning because stereotypes about gender are so deeply embedded in our lives. The Senior Project Officer brought a gender lens to the work of Y Respect Gender in a myriad of ways, and encouraged others to similarly use this approach. This is apparent in the review of YMCA policies, and in planning processes which are increasingly using this approach.

Particularly in this area there is still work to do, for example, processes and strategies should be developed to ensure gender equity is addressed. This should include mentoring for all staff, training for managers and mentors to ensure they understand gender equity and unconscious bias, and career advancement pathways that are clearly understood and utilised by all staff should be implemented for women and men based on equal employment opportunity principles.



### CASE STUDY 3: Y RESPECT GENDER PROJECT TEAM

In order to strengthen and support the implementation of the Y Respect Gender Project a project team was formed. Efforts were made to ensure the team was representative of the organisation both in terms of staff from different organisational levels as well as staff from different sectors. A general invitation to join this team was sent out to all staff, but the majority of members were those who were individually approached about joining. Initially, many of these people were also involved in the original two day forum to develop a logic model and action plan for the project. Over the length of the project the composition of the team varied as people either decided to no longer remain, or left employment with the YMCA. Some of these people made efforts to find a replacement for themselves but mostly new appointments to the team were instigated by the Project Coordinator. At the end of three years only two of the original members were still involved, plus the Project Coordinator. Membership generally consisted of between 12 and 14 people, although it was rare for more than eight or nine team members to be present at the six-weekly meetings.

A deliberate effort was made to ensure that senior women in the organisation were involved in the project team in order both to gain insights from their experience and to strengthen their opportunities to be advocates for gender equality and respectful relationships. These women included the manager of Children's Services, the Manager of Communications, and the Manager of Health, Safety and Environment. Other women on the team were managers of large centres. The gender composition of the team was roughly 60% female, and this stayed stable across the three years.



Project team members were able to provide the project coordinator with insights into the structure and operations of the YMCA which were helpful in the implementation of project actions. Team members were also able to provide feedback on the reception of these actions. In the provisions of these insights and feedback there was occasional gendered differences, and this threw up further insights into the place of women within the organisation. For example at one meeting it was suggested by one of the men that the women present probably did not experience too much sexism. This was answered by the women with numerous examples of what they experienced day by day and the impact this had on them as leaders within the organisation.

Two of the women on the project team worked with the project coordinator to explore the possibilities of providing opportunities for women at the YMCA to attend women's leadership training. This action caused considerable debate at the Project Team meetings, with concerns about how such an opportunity would be viewed by both men and women, and what it hoped to achieve. Although this action did not eventuate in any outcomes, the conversations generated highlighted some of the complexities women face in seeking to promote women's leadership.

# Chapter 4

## CREATING A POSITIVE, RESPECTFUL AND EQUITABLE WORKPLACE CULTURE AND WORKING CONDITIONS

*Gender equality is everyone's business*



### GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Organisations and their workplaces have, traditionally, functioned on the assumption the average worker is a traditional male who is not a primary care-giver and whose values and self-expression are based on the dominant masculine norms. Hours of operation, leave arrangements, leadership models, social activities, and other workplace practices have all been influenced in this way. Despite women's presence in the workplace, the vestiges of this masculinist culture and working conditions are still present to a greater or lesser extent in many workplaces. For example, many offices and businesses still operate on a 9 – 5 model even though this makes school drop offs and pick-ups difficult for working parents. And leadership styles and language are still often characterised by an aggressive, dominating and hierarchical approach that aligns with traditional male norms and behaviours. Promoting gender equality and respectful relationships requires identifying the many small, and some not so small ways, that the workplace culture and working conditions reflects these assumptions and putting in place different systems and behaviours.

### ACTIONS TAKEN BY Y RESPECT GENDER

- Project Coordinated employed by the YMCA and located within the People and Culture team within the State Office, allowing for integrated responses to diverse workplace cultural issues
- Newsletter articles, presentations and other actions to raise awareness about the relevant issues
- Gender audit of policies conducted and draft report written
- Content on building equitable and respectful culture included in manager training on bullying and harassment
- Content on building equitable and respectful culture delivered (by the project coordinator) as part of the central induction program
- Development of Guidebook for Centre Managers on building respect and equality within YMCA centres
- Implementation of a 'roadshow' to reinforce key messages of the Y Respect Gender Project at YMCA centres
- Project coordinator engagement with Group Managers and other senior staff to build capacity for them to implement relevant changes
- Gender equality expectations included as part of organisational risk register
- Four YMCA centres were engaged as Y Respect Gender pilot sites and used an action-learning approach to developing local actions to build their culture
- Specific focus held to work with YCMA childcare facilities (see Case Study 4)



## EVALUATION FINDINGS

**Change over time:** The evaluation compared staff members' attitudes and knowledge in 2012 with those in 2014. This showed increased awareness about gender equity and an ongoing commitment to respect in the workplace from all levels of the YMCA. In the pilot centres, which were subject to facilitated change through action learning and support from the Senior Project Officer, it was apparent that this approach resulted in achieving the project's objectives to a greater extent than the broader communication approach that was used for the organisation as a whole. When comparing the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of staff in pilot centres with staff in other parts of the YMCA the evaluation found that staff members in pilot centres were more likely to feel that they could make mistakes and not be unfairly blamed, and to think that their workplace was inclusive and free from in-groups and cliques.

Early in the project the issue of clients in some recreation centres treating counter staff disrespectfully was raised. Although the focus of Y Respect Gender was on volunteers and employees in the YMCA rather than on service users, by the end of the evaluation that this phenomenon had diminished, particularly in pilot centres. Staff members in pilot centres were more than twice as likely to report that service users treated them with respect (52% compared with 22% in non-pilot centres). While it is not possible to attribute this change directly to YRG it appears that when staff members practice mutual understanding and respect with each other there may be a flow on effect to others.

One of the aims of Y Respect Gender was to change the way that gender assumptions and stereotypes operate in the YMCA workplace. There were some concerns among staff

members about the personal and professional implications of such changes, which were inevitably voiced in the evaluation. However, these concerns appear to have been balanced by the strong commitment among staff in the YMCA to respect in the workplace. The communication and activities of the project, combined with this commitment to respect, created a space in which individuals in workgroups could discuss issues and find creative ways of addressing concerns about gender and equity. Gender norms are deeply entrenched in our society, and as a result, change does not happen overnight, but by the end of the three years of the project there are signs that gender equality in the YMCA workplace is increasingly accepted.

Another sign that gender equity is becoming accepted was apparent in the high levels of understanding about of the project after three years. For many, the link between preventing violence against women and gender equity is not clear, and this was so for staff in the YMCA at the beginning of the project when 74% of those responding to the staff survey reported that the link was clear to them, after three years, 88% reported that the link was clear. In part this was because equity and respect were included in staff induction processes, and of the concerted efforts of the senior Project Officer to communicate about the issues and about policy and procedural change throughout the project. One innovation arising early in the project was the introduction of a Workplace Response Family Violence policy. In the 2014 survey participants were asked whether they were aware of the policy, and 44% reported that they were. Among this group individuals were more likely to believe that the YMCA is committed to respectful relationships in the workplace, has leaders who are committed to gender equity and who promote gender equity in employment practices.

## CASE STUDY 4: GENDER EQUALITY IN THE YMCA CHILDREN'S SERVICES SECTOR

YMCA Victoria operates a number of child care focused activities, including crèche and holiday programs at recreation centres, outside school hours care (before and after school care and holiday programs) services at primary schools and six Early Learning Centres including kindergarten programs. The Y Respect Gender Project focused on these six centres, with a particular focus on the Derrimut Community Centre. All six are located in the north western suburbs of Melbourne and are sited next door to the local primary school. All of them operate as community centres as well as child care centres. Derrimut was chosen as a pilot site for the Y Respect Gender Project because it is the largest of the six centres and the most active in terms of community activities.

The initial Y Respect Gender Project intervention across all six centres was to provide some basic training and information to the staff. This consisted of a short session focused on increasing capacity to understand the ways gender stereotypes are formed, the contribution that rigid gender stereotypes play in men's violence against women, and the opportunities child care workers have to reduce the impact of gender stereotypes in the way they work with the children as well as the ways they interact with each other. These training sessions were well received and in most cases generated spirited discussion. Managers of the centres reported changes as a result of this training, such as an audit of the toys and books, and ongoing conversations about how to incorporate gender equality principles into the play spaces and programming. There was also anecdotal stories of staff making personal lifestyle changes as a result of the training, such as women negotiating with their male partners to increase the hours the women were available for work.

At Derrimut this training was augmented by further work with the managers to assist them in identifying other ways that they could integrate gender equality principles into the management of the centre. Possibilities identified included an audit of the images used in marketing materials, amendments to policies and procedures, statements added to position descriptions, and an overarching philosophy review that impacts on the programming and evaluation of the daily program in each child care room. Managers also noted that this training was helpful in strengthening their capacity for handling challenging conversations with parents on gender topics, such as when parents complained about their boys coming home wearing hair clips.

Further support occurred at the management level of the six centres, including extra training offered to the kindergarten



Educators, and support of the Children's Services Manager. Importantly, this manager was a member of the Y Respect Gender project team (see Case Study 3) and a key ally of the work. A key response to this support was that one staff member at this management level took the initiative to contact organisations that provide training for child care workers to encourage them to consider including more content on gender equality issues<sup>xxiii</sup>.

Actions also commenced to explore ways in which the work happening within the child care area could be reinforced by actions within the community area. Meetings were held with other local community development stakeholders with a particular focus on the possibility of running the Baby Makes 3 program at Derrimut. Although this did not eventuate, the relationships forged by these meetings laid the groundwork for partnership in other areas. Conversations were instigated with the co-located primary schools to explore ways in which these schools could reinforce the gender equality interventions happening in the child care centres. The Y Respect Gender Project supported the work of Australian advocacy group Play Unlimited, which advocates for gender free marketing of children's toys. And some child care service managers also assisted the project coordinator with presentations at forums and conferences.

Despite child care being a highly female dominated sector, the Y Respect Gender Project work in this space identified numerous ways in which gender equality and respectful relationship principles could be strengthened, at a policy level as well as at an operational level. Although it was not possible to evaluate this specific aspect of the project separately to the overall evaluation, anecdotal evidence suggests that the work within the child care sector was effective in generating a range of changes that positively enhanced the workplace culture.

In Australian secondary schools there are numerous programs operating to promote gender equality and respectful relationships. Over recent years moves have begun to take this work into the primary school context. The experience of the Y Respect Gender Project's work with the YMCA Victoria children's services sector is that the early year's sector is also an important setting for this work. Early years educators observe daily the impact of gender stereotyping in the ways that children play and interact with each other. Appropriate interventions at this stage can prevent these stereotypes taking hold and persisting into adult life.

## CASE STUDY 5: BASS COAST AQUATIC AND LEISURE CENTRE (WONTHAGGI) PILOT SITE

Across Victoria YMCA runs a large number of recreation centres, the vast majority of them managed on behalf of local councils. These recreation centres are extremely varied. Some consist of health clubs (gyms) only, others also have pools, either indoor, outdoor or both. Some may also have large stadiums for basketball and other indoor sports. Others may have crèche facilities and also operate school holiday programs. Some employ 250 + staff, and others are much smaller.

The Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre at Wonthaggi, two hours south east of Melbourne, was chosen to be one of the Y Respect Gender pilot sites because it was representative of a smaller, regional recreation centre. Wonthaggi comprises a health club, indoor pool, small indoor stadium and creche. It also oversees the operation of a nearby skate park. The centre is run with a small team of around 30 staff, mostly part time.

Y Respect Gender Project interventions at Wonthaggi consisted of three training sessions held with staff over the three years of the project, support of the centre manager to identify ways in which gender equality principles could be integrated into the management of the centre, significant engagement with White Ribbon Day, and support of one staff member to build her capacity to advocate for violence prevention (discussed in Case Study 6).

Wonthaggi was different to the other recreation centre pilot sites in that the small staff team meant that each Y Respect Gender Project training session was attended by almost all the staff. This was not possible at the other pilot sites where the staff numbered over 200. The three training sessions comprised:

- An initial introduction to gender equality, respectful relationships and the connection to men's violence against women
- A more in depth exploration of how gender stereotypes are formed and the ways that staff can address the impact of these stereotypes in the workplace
- A longer session on gender equality and being a proactive bystander when you witness inequality or sexism. This session used the Mentors in Violence Prevention training model and resources

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the context of this training at Wonthaggi resulted in greater changes to the interpersonal relationships between staff than was perhaps experienced at the other pilot sites. The small number of staff meant that issues raised by the training were more readily observable as real-life issues in their midst. Identifying issues does not, of course, guarantee that change will happen, but it is a step in the right direction.



# Chapter 5

## THE WORKPLACE AS A SETTING FOR THE PRIMARY PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

*You can't spell equality without the y*

### A WHOLE OF ORGANISATION APPROACH

The Y Respect Gender Project and other similar projects to prevent violence against women before it occurs are focused on changing the social norms and attitudes related to the way we think about gender and gender relationships. This is a major undertaking. These attitudes have been deeply embedded in our personal lives and social systems over generations and result in a high level of resistance to change. Contemporary attempts to address these issues have therefore drawn on the public health ecological model – see appendix 2. This model stresses the

interconnectedness of our individual, interpersonal, organisational, communal, and public lives<sup>xxiv</sup> and that in order to affect change mutually reinforcing interventions need to happen at each level of the model. This has two implications for the workplace as a setting for primary prevention. Firstly, it affirms the importance of the workplace as providing a location for interventions within the organisational level of the ecological model. Secondly, it enables us to think about each workplace as an ecological model within itself. In other words, each workplace can be understood as consisting of a personal level (the individual staff), the interpersonal (relationships between staff), the organisational (local operations and practices), the communal (the organisation as a whole), and the public (the organisation's public image and corporate relationships). For a project such as Y Respect Gender to be effective mutually reinforcing interventions need to be addressed to each of these levels.

### ACTIONS TAKEN BY Y RESPECT GENDER

Most of the actions already listed in the previous chapters of this report were ones which addressed the individual, interpersonal and organisational levels of the ecological model. The actions listed below are those which also attempted to address the communal (the organisation as a whole) and the public (the organisation's public image and corporate relationships).

- International Women's Day corporate events in 2013 (at Melbourne Museum) and 2014 (at Richmond Football Club) with attendance by external stakeholders and partners
- Senior staff in attendance at the White Ribbon Melbourne Town Hall Lunch 2013 and 2014
- 'Risk of failure to build a gender equitable and respectful workplace' included in the organisation's risk register
- Formulation of Project Reference Group, consisting of YMCA Victoria Board members, and representatives of like-minded organisations such as City of Melbourne and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. This group met half yearly
- Regular presentations about the Y Respect Gender Project to the YMCA Victoria Board
- Actions to connect YMCA Victoria staff and/or centres with other preventing violence projects, including at Casey, Bass Coast, and Derrimut
- Attendance by the Y Respect Gender project coordinator at network meetings and community of practice meetings, particularly the Municipal Association of Victoria Preventing Violence Against Women Network
- Presentations by the Y Respect Gender project coordinator to conferences and forums, including the No To Violence Conference, White Ribbon National Conference, Bendigo regional conference, and network meetings
- Integration of the Y Respect Gender Project into the organisation's business planning as part of the People and Culture sector
- Presentations about the Y Respect Gender Project made to senior staff at NSW YMCA and YMCA Australia.
- Presentations made at whole of organisation gatherings such as the manager's forums and children's services forum

## EVALUATION FINDINGS

YRG used a whole-of-organisation approach to build respectful relationships between men and women; increase women's representation and leadership in the workplace; and create a positive, respectful and equitable organisational culture and working conditions in the YMCA. To do this they used the Ecological Model which calls for change at three levels; in individuals, within communities or organisations and throughout society as a whole. Workplaces are settings where the majority of the population spend some time every week, and are excellent sites for promoting the kind of cultural change needed to reduce and eliminate violence against women. There are important lessons from change projects in others settings that also apply to workplace change, in particular the whole of school approach to promoting health and wellbeing<sup>xv</sup>. In this model it is important that the school's ethos an environment is supported by the schools' values, policies and practices, and that all members of the school community are committed to and put these values into practice. These principles were apparent in the objectives, applied in the implementation of YRG, and proved to be equally important in this workplace as a setting.

From the outset the YRG objectives reflected the principles for a whole of organisation approach and underpinned the planning and actions that followed. The organisation's core values were reflected in all YRG actions such as promoting understanding about equal and respectful relationships and building individuals' skills at all levels of the YMCA. It also included ensuring that all programs and services reflected these principles; actively involved leaders the project implementation; worked towards increasing women's representation and visibility; and developed the YMCA's profile as an advocate for equal and respectful relationships.

Many of the achievements of the project in relation to these objectives have already been discussed above, however, some key points from the evaluation include:

- The difference in findings between the pilot centres and the non-pilot centres suggest that facilitated change and local ownership can lead more effectively to positive cultural change than a broad communications approach alone (although both are important).
- Strategies to address gendered employment practices can be implemented by local leaders with initial education, skills building and support, and the authority of the organisation in policies and procedures.
- Workplace change may be hampered by a number of factors such as competing priorities, the time it takes to change established processes, and turnover of staff. These and other factors may mean that workplace change is slower than initially expected.
- While senior management in the YMCA was committed to change from the outset, this commitment was not necessarily understood or supported by middle managers. Greater attention to engaging middle managers and gaining their support and commitment to the core values of the organisation is essential. This requires attention to employment practices, education and training, and mentoring throughout the organisation.
- As has been noted above, increasing women's leadership in

the YMCA was an ambitious goal that was not achieved in the time of the project, although steps in that direction have been made as has a commitment to continue the work beyond the life of YRG. Nonetheless, progress has been made in terms of greater awareness about and support for gender equity and respectful workplace relations.

- Throughout the life of the project the senior project officer has been a strong and positive ambassador for the YMCA throughout Australia. He has received recognition in a number of areas, and has become established as an advocate for equal and respectful relationships and cultural change in the workplace. Other senior managers in the YMCA have recognised this and also become advocates in the wider community. This is an important factor both in the field where so many organisations are working to implement gender equity and for the YMCA brand. The importance of positive brand recognition cannot be underestimated for organisations undertaking the important work of preventing violence against women through promoting equal and respectful relationships at work.



### Y Respect Gender video

*With a geographically dispersed workforce, largely made up of part-time and casual staff as well as volunteers, an ongoing challenge for YMCA Victoria is how to effectively communicate messages across the whole organisation. For an organisational cultural development project such as the Y Respect Gender this was particularly pertinent. An observation made by one of the project team members early on in the life of the project suggested one approach. This person noted that the TV screens dotted around YCMA recreation centres to advertise class times and other information to clients were also watched as much by the staff. Could this be utilised to communicate some basic messages relevant to the project goals? Yes it could! In 2014 a short video combining animated and real objects was developed in partnership with Catch The Bird Studio. This was distributed to the centres and has been gradually uploaded to their video systems, websites and other media channels.*

## Engaging men in gender equality initiatives

A critical element in working toward gender equality is the role of men in this work. Men currently occupy a larger proportion of senior management roles in most organisations and therefore have a significant capacity to influence change processes. As partners, sons, fathers and friends of women, men also have much personally at stake in building an environment where men's violence against women is less likely. However, men's active engagement in gender equality initiatives is also challenging for men<sup>xxvi</sup>. It involves acknowledging the privilege and entitlement they have enjoyed, acting in ways that other men may be critical of, and questioning the ways they express and perform their gender identity. The Y Respect Gender Project encountered initial resistance of this type early in the project, but found over time that this lessened, perhaps due to the timeframe of the intervention.

### CASE STUDY 6: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION – BASS COAST YMCA

The Bass Coast Aquatic and Leisure Centre (Wonthaggi) YMCA was one of four pilot sites for the Y Respect Gender Project (see Case Study 5). As a result of the interventions implemented at Wonthaggi, one of the staff identified herself as very interested in contributing more intentionally to the work of primary prevention of violence against women. Fiona Passarin works at the Wonthaggi Centre as a health and wellness instructor. In order to build her capacity to become more involved in the work, Fiona undertook to complete a Certificate 4 in Training and Assessment, using presentations made at Wonthaggi as part of her assessment. During this time Fiona also completed the three day trainer the trainer course for the Mentors in Violence Prevention program (MVP), which was arranged by the Gippsland Women's Health Service<sup>xxvii</sup>. MVP is a program developed in the United States by Jackson Katz and has been in use there for over 20 years. MVP aims to assist individuals build both awareness and skills that will empower them to be pro-active bystanders when they witness sexist, discriminatory or violent behaviour. MVP uses an interactive workshop model that can be adapted to difference training contexts.

In the second half of 2014, having completed these courses, Fiona then encouraged the Wonthaggi YMCA to apply for a community development grant to the Bass Coast Shire Council to support the YMCA to run 10 MVP sessions for local community groups in the Bass Coast Shire area. This application was successful and Fiona commenced offering these sessions in late 2014. Sessions have so far been conducted with secondary students at two different colleges, health care staff, and state government parks staff.

At the beginning of 2015 Fiona was appointed to the role of community development officer within the Bass Coast YMCA (Wonthaggi, Phillip Island Recreation Centre and Phillip Island Camp). This will enable her to make further connections between the gender equality / preventing violence work and other community development projects. Fiona also remains well connected with the Gippsland Women's Health Service, who had arranged the MVP training, and who are responsible for the development of a local violence prevention strategy.

This financial and programmatic partnership between Bass Coast YMCA, Bass Coast Shire Council, and Gippsland Women's Health Service is an excellent example of the way a workplace commitment to health promotion can have a profound impact through the workplace into the local community. All levels of the ecological model discussed in Chapter 5 of this report are involved in this partnership in ways which reinforce the ultimate goal of preventing violence against women.





## CASE STUDY 7: LOOKING TO SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a key question for all time-limited funded projects such as Y Respect Gender. The challenge is twofold. At a practical level when an organisation has been receiving external funding to implement a project, and when, as in this case, this funding allows for the employment of a dedicated project coordinator, there is the question of how the organisation will resource the ongoing work when this funding is no longer there. At a psychological level there is a related but slightly different question of the organisation's perception of the value of the work and therefore of its commitment to it continuing.

The issue of sustainability is complicated further with projects such as Y Respect Gender which are concerned with workplace cultural change. This type of change is not always easily measurable and does not necessarily align well with the types of metrics used for more operational changes. Cultural change is also a long term process which requires a long term commitment, even though the outcomes of the change may not be immediately visible.

From the beginning the Y Respect Gender Project was conscious of the issue of sustainability in the development of its strategies and actions. In particular, the sorts of actions outlined in Chapter 5 above were developed to ensure that the key decision making and other influential bodies within the organisation were well acquainted with the goals and actions of the project. The Terms of Reference for the project team members were also written to reflect the goal of developing key stakeholders within the organisation who could carry the momentum of the project beyond the completion of the external funding period. Further, the strategy of having the project worker embedded into the organisation as a paid employee as opposed to being more of a consultant was also a strategy with an eye toward sustainability.

More intentionally, the sustainability of the Y Respect Gender Project has also been advanced through a deliberate campaign to transition the work from a 'project' to a 'program'. This transition is being implemented through a variety of means:

- The compilation and distribution of this report
- A half day forum for staff and volunteers of YMAC Victoria which will celebrate the achievements of YRG, mark the end of the 'project' phase and begin to develop a new strategic plan to keep the work progressing as an ongoing 'program'
- Development of the new strategic plan
- A forum for external stakeholders and partners to tell the story of the Y Respect Gender Project as a continuing component of the organisation's mission and culture

Finally, as well as the above approaches, the Y Respect Gender Project benefitted from internal changes within the organisation that saw an increase in the number of staff employed in the People and Culture sector and other improvements in the organisation's commitment to organisational development.





## CONCLUSION

The long history of actions to address men's violence against women began focused on actions that assisted women and their children who were already experiencing violence, or those who were at immediate risk of violence. This was followed by actions to strengthen the legal context, including such things as no-fault divorce and rape in marriage. More recently, there has been a focus on ways to assist perpetrators of violence to alter their behaviour. Now with projects such as Y Respect Gender there is a further shift to developing ways to prevent this violence before it occurs. This primary prevention of men's violence against women is an emerging field of work where there is much still to be learnt about how to do it in ways that are effective and achievable.

Workplaces come in many shapes and sizes. Regardless of their composition, the outcomes of the Y Respect Gender Project indicate that workplaces provide multiple opportunities for actions which address the social determinants of men's violence against women. These actions can be undertaken at various points across the organisation's structure and will be most effective when they are implemented in ways that reinforce the core message of gender equality and respectful relationships.

At their heart, actions to prevent men's violence against women are about changing centuries old attitudes and social norms about how we understand ourselves as gendered people and how this understanding translates into all of our relationships. These attitudes are deeply embedded into our personal and social identities and therefore do not change easily. At the very least it is to be expected that this type of cultural change will need a long-term commitment, persistence, and imagination if it is to be achieved.

The Y Respect Gender project has endeavoured to show how one workplace can be intentional about their commitment to this long-term cultural change process. It is hoped this report on the project will encourage other organisations to find their own ways to activate this intention. Any actions, large or small, can make a difference. And the more there are attempting to make a difference, the more likely we are to succeed.



# Appendix

## APPENDIX 1

### RECIPE 5: A WORKPLACE FREE OF GENDER STEREOTYPING

Throughout history, enforcing rigid ideas of appropriate gender behaviour is a significant way that women have been denied equality. In most cases this has been based on a belief that our gender – the social and cultural ideas about what is appropriate behaviour for women and men – is the same as our sex – our biological identity as male or female. However whereas our sex is something essentially fixed, gender is a fluid concept that varies across time and cultures. Gender stereotyping puts limits on the opportunities of both women and men, and contributes to a culture of inequality and discrimination. In the workplace, gender stereotyping can exist in all sorts of ways – from the images that appear on posters, to the expectations about who will clean up the staff room, or the expectations about who can manage to carry a heavy piece of equipment.

#### INGREDIENTS

- Staff and volunteer meetings, training sessions and other occasions when staff and volunteers are together
- Staff newsletters and other internal communications channels
- Always #Likeagirl
- Verizon Commercial 2014: Inspire her mind
- Exercises to encourage staff conversation about sex and gender
- Experiences of staff and volunteers
- Examples of advertising that reinforces stereotypical roles – can be easily found on the Internet

#### METHOD

1. Identify and implement opportunities to encourage staff and volunteers to discuss the impact of gender stereotyping in their own lives as well as in the workplace. See suggested ingredients for some ideas.
2. Use feedback from staff and volunteers to review work practices and procedures for any gender stereotypical patterns and expectations.
3. Promote stories and examples of women and men in roles that are non-stereotypical for their gender.
4. Take a moment at the end of meetings to review the meeting for any gender stereotypical behaviour. (Meetings are often occasions when women and men revert to stereotypical roles.)

#### SERVING SUGGESTION

Gender stereotyping concerns our expectations of men's behaviour as well as women's, but until recently most men had not given much thought to the ways they are socialised to behave. Much of the socialisation of men focuses on being 'not like a woman' ("you're crying like a girl") and reinforces men's discrimination of women. For this reason, it is important that conversations about gender stereotyping focus on men as well as women.



## APPENDIX 2

# ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF HEALTH



# End notes



- <sup>i</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2013. *Creating Healthy Workplaces: Early insights from VicHealth pilot projects*. Carlton: VicHealth.
- <sup>ii</sup> Two key documents that guided the development of this work are:
- Chung, D., Zufferey, C and Powell, A. 2012. *Preventing violence against women in the workplace: An evidence review: full report*. Carlton: VicHealth.
- World Health Organisation 2010. *Healthy workplaces: a model for action for employers, workers, policymakers and practitioners*. Geneva: WHO.
- <sup>iii</sup> World Health Organisation 2013. *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner violence*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.
- <sup>iv</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2004. *The health costs of violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence: A summary of findings*. Carlton: VicHealth.
- <sup>v</sup> Stathopoulos, Mary 2014. *The exception that proves the rule: female sex offending and the gendered nature of sexual violence*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.
- <sup>vi</sup> National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. Commonwealth of Australia, 2011.
- <sup>vii</sup> Quadara, Antonia and Wall, Liz 2012. *What is effective primary prevention in sexual assault? Translating the evidence for action*. Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.
- <sup>viii</sup> Known in the health promotion sector as primary prevention.
- <sup>ix</sup> Walden, Inara and wall, Liz 2014. *Reflecting on primary prevention of violence against women: The public health approach*. Melbourne: Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.
- <sup>x</sup> Wall, Liz 2014. *Gender equality and violence against women: What's the connection?* Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault.
- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2007. *Preventing Violence Before it Occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*. Carlton: VicHealth.
- <sup>xi</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) 2014. *Australian's attitudes to violence against women: Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS)*. Carlton: VicHealth.
- <sup>xii</sup> This work across multiple social structures is generally referred to as the ecological model of health, or sometimes the socio-ecological model of health.
- <sup>xiii</sup> For statistics and reports on the representation of women in organisational leadership see the work done by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) [www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au).
- <sup>xvii</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission 2014. *Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review – Report*. Canberra: Australian Human Rights Commission.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission 2012. *Working without fear: Results of the 2012 sexual harassment national telephone survey*. Canberra: Australian Human Rights Commission.



- <sup>xv</sup> Holmes, Scott and Flood, Michael 2013. *Genders at Work: Exploring the role of workplace equality in preventing men's violence against women*. Sydney: White Ribbon Australia.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Sojo, Victor and Wood, Robert 2012. *Resilience: Women's fit, functioning and growth at work: Indicators and predictors*. Carlton: Melbourne Business School, Centre for Ethical Leadership.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Zuber-Skerritt, O. 2001. Action Learning and Action Research: paradigm, praxis and programs. In: Sankara, S., Dick, B. & Passfield, R. (eds.) *Effective Change Management Through Action Research and Action Learning: Concepts, Perspectives, Processes and Applications* Lismore: Southern Cross University Press.
- <sup>xviii</sup> McFerran, Ludo 2011. *Safe at home, safe at work? National Domestic Violence and the Workplace Survey*. Sydney: University of New South Wales, Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project.
- <sup>xix</sup> Figures to follow taken from WGEA December 2014 fact sheet.
- <sup>xx</sup> Whelan, J. & Wood, R. 2012. *Targets and Quotas for Women in Leadership: A Global Review of Policy, Practice, and Psychological Research*. Carlton: Melbourne Business School, Centre for Ethical Leadership.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Von Hippel, et al. 2011. Stereotype threat: Antecedents and consequences for working women. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 41, 151-161.
- <sup>xxii</sup> This initiative resulted in an arrangement being made with one of these providers for a presentation to be made to their staff team by the Y Respect Gender project coordinator. The presentation was to occur after the publication of this report.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Different ecological models comprise different number of segments.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Flood, M., L. Fergus and M. Heenan, 2009. *Respectful Relationships Education: Violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian secondary schools*. Melbourne: Victorian Department of Education.
- <sup>xxv</sup> There have been a variety of recent reports in this area, including the following:
- Carmody, M., Salter, M. and Presterudstuen, G.H 2014. *Less to lose and more to gain? Men and boys violence prevention research project final report*. Sydney: University of Western Sydney.
- International Labour Office 2013. *Men and Masculinities: Promoting Gender Equality in the World of Work*. Geneva: International Labour Office, Gender Equality and Diversity Branch.
- Prime, Jeanine and Moss-Racusin, Corinne 2009. *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What change agents need to know*. New York: Catalyst.
- Prime, Jeanine, Moss-Racusin, Corinne, Foust-Cummings, Heather 2009. *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: Stacking the Deck for Success*. New York: Catalyst.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> For more information about the Mentors in Violence Prevention program see <http://www.mvpnglobal.org>.

