

Royal Commission into Family Violence
Submission: Monash City Council



COM123

28th May 2015

Dear Commissioner Neave AO

Monash City Council applauds the establishment of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Commission.

Monash City Council, MonashLink Community Health Service and VicHealth are currently delivering a globally innovative place-based initiative which has attracted significant local and international interest in the prevention field. The program, Generating Equality and Respect, aims to prevent violence against women in the Monash community by addressing its underlying determinants – lack of equal and respectful relationships between men and women, unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women and adherence to rigid gender stereotypes – recognising the international evidence on primary prevention.

Generating Equality and Respect is a three and a half year, \$1.08 million program which reaches people where they live, work and play, aiming to build communities, cultures and organisations that are gender equitable and promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women. Generating Equality and Respect has been recognised for its innovative program design, evidence-based approach and organisational support and commitment to the prevention of violence against women. The Program received the 2014 VicHealth *Improving Mental Wellbeing* Health Promotion Award and recently presented at the inaugural Asia-Pacific Conference on Gendered Violence and Violations.

Local government and community health services are extremely well placed to prevent violence against women through their roles in delivering a diverse range of services to local communities; their leadership roles in local communities; their planning and policy functions; and the extensive reach and partnerships they have across the community, including workplaces, sporting clubs, the media and schools, which are all identified by VicHealth as critical settings to create the attitudinal and behavioral change needed to prevent violence against women.

While funding for the Generating Equality and Respect program concludes in December 2015, its partners – Monash City Council and MonashLink Community Health Service - see our journey towards gender equity as only just begun. As leaders in preventing violence against women in Victoria, we are pleased to share with you our insights and lessons to date in this emerging area of policy and practice.

We submit several recommendations for the Commission to consider in its deliberations.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Fund primary prevention programs that have a clear focus on addressing the determinants of violence against women and work to promote gender equality.
2. All primary prevention initiatives adopt a socio - ecological approach in recognition that violence against women, inclusive of family violence, is caused by the complex interplay of many factors across multiple levels of personal, community and social life.
3. Ensure a framework for the primary prevention of violence against women, encompassing family violence prevention, is adopted consistently by primary prevention initiatives, with workforce capacity building and consistent communications to support the implementation of the framework.

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4. All preventing violence against women initiatives include adequate planning, resourcing and capacity building to evaluate the impacts and outcomes of the activities, unpinned by a strong evidence base and theory of change.
5. That Goal Four is enhanced to 'build respectful and gender equitable relationships between individuals, families and communities', in acknowledgement of the underlying determinants of violence against women.
6. Fund tailored primary prevention initiatives that support and address the specific needs and contexts of culturally and linguistically diverse women.
7. That Goal One is enhanced to 'foster a gender equitable and violence free society'.
8. Preventing violence against women initiatives need to integrate gender expertise into all elements, including planning, implementation and evaluation.
9. Continue funding local governments and community health services to prevent violence against women, recognising these sectors are extremely well placed to prevent violence against women and by working together in partnership can have significant and complementary reach and collective impacts on local communities.
10. Primary prevention initiatives need to incorporate partnerships, investment in workforce capacity and mutually reinforcing multi-sector, multi-setting and multi-layered activities.
11. That further research is commissioned on the correlation between family violence and problem gambling.
12. Primary prevention initiatives are underpinned by a clear theory of change, which articulates how their prevention initiative contributes incrementally to changes in the underlying determinants of violence against women.
13. Preventing violence against women initiatives should be designed to contribute to the evidence base. With dedicated planning and evaluation phases, sharing of lessons, impacts and outcomes should be explicit in all prevention initiatives, and funded accordingly.
14. The Victorian Government should develop a long-term policy, action plan and evaluation framework to prevent violence against women, with bi-partisan support. The policy should be inter-sectoral, intersectional and evidence based.
15. All levels of government undertake a gender audit of existing and new legislations, policies, and regulations over which it has jurisdiction and implement changes to promote gender equality.

Please contact Jane Torney, the Program Manager, for further information, [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
CR PAUL KLISARIS

Mayor

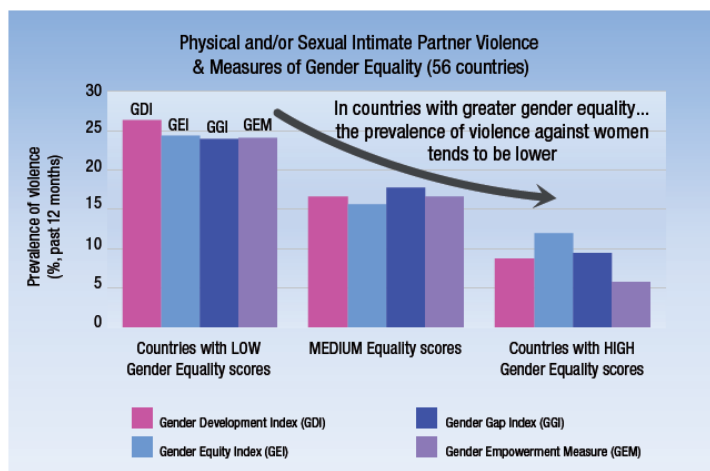
Introduction

Violence against women has profound impacts on the health and wellbeing of women, families and communities. VicHealth research shows that violence perpetrated by a current or former intimate partner is the leading preventable cause of premature death, disability and ill health for Victorian women aged 15 – 44¹. While violence against women is prevalent and serious, it is preventable.

Monash City Council, MonashLink Community Health Service and VicHealth are currently delivering a globally innovative, place-based preventing violence against women program, which has attracted significant local and international interest in the prevention field. The program, [Generating Equality and Respect](#), aims to prevent violence against women before it occurs in the Monash community by addressing the underlying determinants of violence against women – lack of equal and respectful relationships between men and women, unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women and adherence to rigid gender stereotypes.

In Australia, family violence is the most prevalent form of violence experienced by women. The majority of those who experience family violence are women and the majority of perpetrators are men². This submission is based on the assumption that by working to influence and change the underlying causes of violence against women, alongside addressing known risk factors, we will reduce family violence. Approaches which recognise the gendered nature of violence are in keeping with international good practice³.

The prevention of violence against women involves long term change. Based on international research, our program design and practice is based on the premise that gender equitable environments have less violence against women. Data available shows the inverse relationship between gender equality and violence by an intimate partner, with countries with greater equality between women and men tending to have lower levels of violence against women, based on the leading global indices for gender equality. This is illustrated in the table below⁴.



¹ VicHealth, [The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence](#), 2004.

² Australia's National Research Organisation on Women's Safety, *Key Statistics on Violence Against Women*, 2014.

³ Our Watch, Policy Paper 3, *International Evidence Base*, 2014.

⁴ United Nations Development Fund for Women, *Investing in Gender Equality: Ending Violence against Women and Girls*, 2010.

The primary prevention approach

The Generating Equality and Respect program, and our practice, is underpinned by national and international evidence on the prevention of violence against women. This evidence includes frameworks, research, theories of change and previous program evaluations. The key evidence is outlined below.

- [Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria \(VicHealth\)](#)
- Socio-ecological framework of violence against women (originating from [Heise in 1998](#) and used widely, including by VicHealth, the World Health Organisation and [Our Watch](#)). This model supports us to understand how the determinants of violence against women occur across all levels of influence - individuals, families, communities and societies. The framework supports individuals and organisations working to prevent violence against women to know where we must focus our attention to create attitudinal and behavioural change.



- Utilising a theory of change. Change takes time and we acknowledge that individuals and organisations are at different places on the change continuum. When deeply entrenched attitudes and social norms, particularly those about gender roles and identity, are challenged, we are likely to encounter resistance. Given that, the Generating Equality and Respect program have utilised a conscious design to support changes in attitudes, norms and behaviours, not just to raise awareness. We have also ensured that organisational cultural change, with supporting policies, process and structures, has been occurring simultaneously with attitudinal and behavioural change focused on individuals, fostering a mutually reinforcing environment of gender equality and respect.
- Many of the key activities of the Generating Equality and Respect Program have been previously tried and tested by VicHealth in the same or similar settings in Victoria as part of the [Respect Responsibility and Equality funding stream](#).

Monash City Council recognises the complexities involved in delivering primary prevention of violence against women initiatives to a diverse population of women. Women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities can face specific challenges and in addition to gender inequality, can experience discrimination on the basis of skin colour, religious affiliation, ethnic origin and other identity characteristics such as dress codes. The intersection of gender inequality and adherence to rigid gender stereotypes with other issues that women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities can face, can compound the risk, experience and impact of violence⁵.

It is important to note that while the Generating Equality and Respect program utilised a whole of population approach to prevention, Council also recognises the need for primary prevention initiatives to target specific communities, including women and men from culturally and linguistically

⁵ Our Watch, Working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities,
[http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-\(1\)/Culturally-and-Linguistically-Diverse-Communities](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/Culturally-and-Linguistically-Diverse-Communities)

diverse communities. Council advocates for the future prevention initiatives to take a tailored approach to be inclusive and sensitive to the needs and supports required by the culturally and linguistically diverse women, in addition to a complementary whole of population approach.

Recommendations:

1. Fund primary prevention programs that have a clear focus on addressing the determinants of violence against women and work to promote gender equality.
2. All primary prevention initiatives adopt a socio - ecological approach in recognition that violence against women, inclusive of family violence, is caused by the complex interplay of many factors across multiple levels of personal, community and social life.
3. Ensure a framework for the primary prevention of violence against women, encompassing family violence prevention, is adopted consistently by primary prevention initiatives, with workforce capacity building and consistent communications to support the implementation of the framework.
4. All preventing violence against women initiatives include adequate planning, resourcing and capacity building to evaluate the impacts and outcomes of the activities, unpinned by a strong evidence base and theory of change.
5. Fund tailored primary prevention initiatives that support and address the specific needs and contexts of culturally and linguistically diverse women.

Our responses to the questions posed in the Royal Commission into Family Violence March Issues Paper are detailed below.

Question One: Are there other goals the Royal Commission should consider?

The Generating Equality and Respect program recommends that the following goals of the Royal Commission are broadened to acknowledge the gendered nature of family violence and the underlying causes of violence against women. We recommend the following goals:

6. That Goal Four is enhanced to 'build respectful and gender equitable relationships between individuals, families and communities', in acknowledgement of the underlying determinants of violence against women.
7. That Goal One is enhanced to 'foster a gender equitable and violence free society'.

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

Context to the development of the Generating Equality and Respect program

Since 2007, VicHealth has invested in the [Respect, Responsibility and Equality Program](#) with the aim of building safer, more respectful environments for women. VicHealth uses a primary prevention approach to prevent violence against women before it occurs. This approach seeks to address the underlying causes of violence against women and builds stronger, more equal and respectful communities for all.

Through each of the five phases of the Respect, Responsibility and Equality Program, VicHealth has collected evidence on what works to prevent violence against women. This has included funding five large scale projects since 2007 in local government, workplaces, schools, health and community

organisations and faith communities. Together, the five projects have contributed significantly to the evidence base of what works in primary prevention in Victoria.

As the fifth phase of this investment, in 2012, VicHealth developed a pilot program, now known as *Generating Equality and Respect*, to implement several of the previous primary prevention projects in one selected community and measure the impact of this work. The program was established by VicHealth with the explicit purpose of trialling a site-based saturation approach to the prevention of violence against women, where activities engage as many settings and population groups as possible (supporting program breadth) and with the intention of establishing and embedding the site and key program initiatives well beyond the funding period (supporting program depth). For further information on this approach, see [here](#).

Drawing from VicHealth's decade of research and activity, *Generating Equality and Respect* is a three and a half year, \$1.08 million program, which reaches people where they live, work and play. The program aims to build communities, cultures and organisations that are gender equitable and promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women. Trialling a site-based approach to the prevention of violence against women, where one community in Melbourne's East receives multiple, mutually reinforcing program activities, *Generating Equality and Respect* has been recognised for its innovative program design, evidence-based approach and organisational commitment. The program has had considerable reach into diverse settings within the local community.

The *Generating Equality and Respect* program has a vision for an equal and respectful Monash community where women are free from violence. Its goals are to:

1. Build communities, cultures and organisations that are gender equitable and value and support non-violent norms
2. Foster respectful and equal relationships between men and women
3. Realise sustainable primary prevention through strong collaboration with established and new partners
4. Pilot an innovative model for the primary prevention of violence against women that is transferrable and informs practice

Generating Equality and Respect program setting areas

The *Generating Equality and Respect* program works in the following areas:

- MonashLink Community Health Service and Monash City Council are undergoing organisational culture change to promote gender equality within the workplace and extending this into the broader Monash community through their service delivery, policy, planning and practice;
- A local Partners in Prevention Network supports youth practitioners to deliver good practice respectful relationships education and promote gender equality through their programs and services with young people; and
- A partnership with a local male dominated corporate workplace to support gender equality and respectful relationships through training and organisational cultural change; and
- Baby Makes 3, a program delivered through Maternal Child Health Services which promotes equal and respectful relationships between first time parents during the transition to parenthood.

*The value of the *Generating Equality and Respect* partnership approach*

'Many of the factors influencing violence cross boundaries traditionally existing between government departments, disciplines and settings and between the government and non-government sectors⁶'.

The unique and key role for local government and community health services in preventing violence against women has been identified by the State Government and VicHealth. VicHealth highlights that work to prevent violence against women is most effective when a number of reinforcing strategies are implemented across multiple levels of community life.

Local government and community health services are extremely well placed to prevent violence against women through their roles in delivering a diverse range of services to local communities and their planning and policy functions. They play a key leadership role in local communities and have extensive reach and partnerships across the community, including workplaces, sporting clubs, the media and schools, which are all identified by VicHealth as critical settings to create the attitudinal and behavioral change needed to prevent violence against women.

Local government and community health services often have strong established partnerships with women's health services, family violence services and other organisations working to ameliorate and prevent family violence. In addition, as large employers in the local community, they can drive workplace change to enhance gender equity, such as provisions to encourage flexible working environments for men and women and provide opportunities to support women into leadership roles.

The role of local government in preventing violence against women

As the arm of government closest to the community, local government has the capacity to influence many of the determinants of health and wellbeing, including gender. Monash City Council plays a significant role in creating environments that promote the optimal health, safety and wellbeing of all community members. This role is legislated under the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)* and the *Local Government Act (1989)*, mandating councils to provide services that are 'accessible and equitable' and 'foster community cohesion and encourage participation in community life'.

Local governments are also bound by legislation which aim to eliminate gender discrimination and promote gender equity, such as the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*. Additionally, compliance with the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* requires Councils to uphold the human rights of all members of its community.

Given its role in planning, providing community facilities and public spaces, service delivery and partnerships which cut across the social, economic, environmental and cultural domains of civic life, local government is well placed to integrate gender equity into its work using a whole-of-council approach. Through utilising existing structures, networks, partnerships, relationships and infrastructure, local government can also generate a whole-of-community approach to promote gender equity and prevent violence against women.

The collective impact of the partnership

Monash City Council and MonashLink Community Health Service have a longstanding history of partnership on health promotion and community development initiatives. Specifically relating to the

⁶ VicHealth, [Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria](#), 2007.

prevention of violence against women, the two organisations worked on an Inner East Primary Care Partnership funded [Inner East Prevention of Violence Against Women Project](#).

There is a collective impact and reach that can be achieved with local government and community health services as partners given their complementary functions, reach into local community and local and regional partnerships. International promising practice demonstrates the importance of inter-sectoral involvement in the prevention of violence against women⁷.

The value of content expertise

A unique feature of the program is the role of the funding body, VicHealth, as a partner. This provision of expertise and knowledge of the evidence-base for the prevention of violence against women, capacity-building for the program team and providing technical advice and feedback fosters learning and promotes sustainability. In developing responses to prevent violence against women before it occurs, multiple sectors and agencies should be involved and programs should be customised to suit different cultural settings and population groups⁸ and guidance should be sought from those with gender expertise to develop practical, relevant and effective initiatives⁹.

Transferrable program elements

Generating Equality and Respect is distinguished from other current primary prevention initiatives in that it features both depth and breadth of activity, with one community receiving many mutually-reinforcing program activities across many settings. As highlighted in VicHealth's, *Preventing Violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*, 'primary prevention efforts are most likely to be effective when a coordinated range of mutually reinforcing strategies is targeted across these levels of influence.'

From the outset of the program, the strategic intention has been to seed activities and create change that live beyond the funding period. We are investigating and documenting those elements of the program that are transferrable, hence adding value to primary prevention practice in Victoria and more broadly. Based on our experience and measured impacts so far, the following elements have emerged as fundamental to program success:

Partnerships

Partnerships operating at both governance and operational levels of the Generating Equality and Respect program have increased commitment by partner agencies and collective impact in the community. Features of the partnerships that have been established include:

- Memorandum of Understanding;
- Partnership Agreement and Review process;
- Executive Committee with representation of all partners, at both senior management and practitioner level; and

⁷ Hayes, T, *Gender, Local Governance and Violence Prevention: Learning from International Good Practice to Develop a Victorian Model*, University of Melbourne, 2006.

⁸ World Health Organisation, *World Report on Violence and Health*, 2002.

⁹ Hayes, T, *Gender, Local Governance and Violence Prevention: Learning from International Good Practice to Develop a Victorian Model*, University of Melbourne, 2006.

- Cross-organisation team (featuring a Program Manager embedded within Monash City Council; a dedicated Senior Project Officer within VicHealth; and Prevention Practitioners embedded within Monash City Council and MonashLink Community Health Service).

Multi-sector, multi-setting, multi-layered activity

The Generating Equality and Respect program adopts mutually reinforcing program activities whereby behaviour change is supported through structural change (for example within the workplace and community organisation) and where there is ongoing reinforcement of positive attitudes for gender equality and respectful relationships (communications, codes of conduct and so forth), hence having a mutually reinforcing effect. Examples of primary prevention activities used in the Generating Equality and Respect program include:

- With individuals: Gender Equity, Preventing Violence Against Women, Unconscious Bias and Bystander training
- With couples: Baby Makes 3 Group Program to promote healthy and equal relationships in the transition to parenthood
- With the community: Communications and events, raising awareness of the prevention of violence against women, promoting gender equality and challenging rigid gender stereotypes
- With workplaces: Gender equity mainstreamed into planning and policy, gender equity governance structures, Family Violence leave provisions
- With various sectors working with young people: Professional development networks and resourcing for respectful relationships education
- With health service providers: Gender equity audit and planning processes, training clinicians on the relevance of gender equity to the provision of services
- With the Victorian and broader community: Contributing to the evidence-base

Investment in workforce capacity

The Generating Equality and Respect program has defined the workforce for gender equality as all people working within the partner agencies and in the settings of program activities, in recognition that we all have a role to play in preventing violence against women. If we truly want societal change, the influences for change need to be strong and sustained over time, and organisations and workplaces play a vital role in this.

The program has aimed to establish a collective understanding among those working in partner organisations and settings of the underlying determinants of violence against women. Adequate investment is required to move from awareness to action and to support the attitudinal and behavioural change for gender equality needed by individuals, organisations and communities. Examples of the skills or capacities we want the workforce to have in primary prevention, and that we have addressed in the program, include:

- Knowing how to respond when we witness sexism, harassment or gender inequity in the workplace or elsewhere
- Knowing our role and the actions our organisation can take to promote gender equity and respectful relationships
- Knowing what our responsibility is as an employer to help women affected by family violence to keep their jobs and maintain economic independence.

Investment in the evaluation capacity building for program teams is a unique feature of VicHealth's Respect, Responsibility and Equality funding stream, adding significantly to the evidence base for primary prevention in Victoria.

Dedicated planning and evaluation phases

A strong cross-partnership program management structure has supported rigorous planning and evaluation of the program, the results of which will be available in early 2016. Features of the program planning and evaluation are:

- Prevention Plan of Action and detailed Settings Implementation Plans
- Evaluation Framework
- Program Logic Model
- Communication Strategy
- Sustainability Plan
- Ongoing evaluation capacity building, using a participatory and learning-based approach.

Family violence and public health

Family violence and problem gambling

The relationship between family violence and problem gambling is complex and both Australian and international research has examined the co-occurrence of problem gambling and family violence in the last decade.

Monash City Council is a state leader in gambling prevention and public health advocacy, demonstrated by state-wide activism through the 2014 *Enough Pokies* system reform local government campaign which mobilised more than 70 Victorian local governments and legislative amendments to the Gambling Regulation Act. These amendments will be reviewed by the Victorian government in 2015. In 2014, Council also made a submission to a competitive state-wide tender process released by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation and successfully secured a \$205,000 local gambling prevention grant for the *Clayton CANVAS* program. *Clayton CANVAS* is an innovative, site-based gambling prevention program reaching people where they live, work, study and play. Clayton was identified as the target saturation site based on the density of poker machines in Clayton and the evidence of gambling harm to the community.

Recent Australian research describes high levels of family violence within families presenting for help at problem gambling services. The research found that family violence occurred in more than half of cases where there was help seeking for problem gambling. Of these respondents, 20% reported only victimisation, 10.8% reported only perpetration and 21.6% reported both victimisation and perpetration of family violence. Results indicated that there was a gendered basis to this violence, with female participants more likely to be the victims and less likely to report that they had not experienced family violence in comparison to males. The findings suggest that problem gambling can precede both victimisation and perpetration of family violence and that problem gambling contributes to family violence perpetration as a manifestation of financial stress and crisis¹⁰.

Monash City Council has an important role in preventing harm to their community both from violence against women and problem gambling and in creating environments that promote the optimal health, safety and wellbeing of all community members. Whilst problem gambling is consistently identified as a correlating factor with family violence, it is not a determinant or causal

¹⁰ Suomi et al. Asian Journal of Gambling Issues and Public Health 2013, 3:13

factor of family violence and as such, has not been addressed through the Generating Equality and Respect program. However, given the correlation between family violence and problem gambling, the leadership role that Monash City Council has played in preventing harm from both of these harms to our community is essential.

Recommendations:

8. Preventing violence against women initiatives need to integrate gender expertise into all elements, including planning, implementation and evaluation.
9. Continue funding local governments and community health services to prevent violence against women, recognising these sectors are extremely well placed to prevent violence against women and by working together in partnership can have significant and complementary reach and collective impacts on local communities.
10. Primary prevention initiatives need to incorporate partnerships, investment in workforce capacity and mutually reinforcing multi-sector, multi-setting and multi-layered activities.
11. That further research is commissioned on the correlation between family violence and problem gambling.

Question Five: If you or your organisations have been involved in observing or assessing programs, campaigns or initiatives of this kind, we are interested in your conclusions about their effectiveness in reducing and preventing family violence.

As noted by the World Health Organisation, rigorous evaluation should be an integral part of all initiatives to prevent violence against women¹¹. Evaluation has been built into every step of Generating Equality and Respect using a participatory capacity building evaluation approach, which involves capacity building and ongoing support for program staff workers as key evaluators of their own programs. This is led by the VicHealth Research Practice Leader and builds on the approach used in previous phases of Respect, Responsibility and Equality. [See here](#) for more information on the evaluation capacity building approach.

VicHealth's landmark *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*, which underpins all elements of the Generating Equality and Respect program, highlights that violence against women is caused by the complex interplay of many factors across multiple levels of personal, community and social life. The key determinants of violence against women – lack of equal and respectful relationships between men and women, unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women and adherence to rigid gender stereotypes – are deeply pervasive, longstanding and persistent in Australia and internationally.

The primary prevention of violence against women is highly theory driven. It rests on an extensive research base of the key determinants of violence against women, an explicit theoretical linkage between the impacts achieved by primary prevention initiatives which address these underlying determinants, their influence when accumulated and an eventual improvement in the prevalence of violence against women.

¹¹ World Health Organisation, *World Report on Violence and Health*, 2002.

As described in VicHealth's [Evaluating preventing violence against women initiatives: A participatory and learning-oriented approach for primary prevention in Victoria](#), 'shifting the root causes of violence against women is an undertaking requiring the combined effort of many initiatives over a sustained period of time. As with other health and social problems, the challenge of addressing violence against women is conceptualised as a long-term endeavour: reducing or ending violence against women is unlikely to be seen in the life of a project or program. This suggests that the effects of any primary prevention initiative can only ever contribute *incrementally* to change on the underlying determinants, and that this change in turn contributes *eventually* to ameliorating the problem'.

Acknowledging the significant time required to create social and cultural change, the Generating Equality and Respect program is evaluating the short and medium term impacts that are achievable within the program scope and timeframe. The evaluation seeks to understand impacts and outcomes which support the creation of gender equality. Our theory of change is articulated in the Generating Equality and Respect Program Logic Model (see Appendix One). The Program Logic Model sits alongside the detailed Evaluation Plan in which we align anticipated short and medium term impacts to measure change at the individual, organisational and community levels.

Program impacts and outcomes

The Generating Equality and Respect program will be developing tools and resources based on program lessons and findings to support the primary prevention of violence against women sector. This information will contribute to the emerging evidence base for primary preventing of violence against women in Victoria and internationally and will be available in early 2016.

As the program is currently moving into the final evaluation phase, only very preliminary results and practice knowledge are available at this stage. However Generating Equality and Respect has achieved sustained change in partner organisations and considerable reach with its program activities.

Measurable, sustained change

Gender equity is embedded, where applicable, into the policy, planning, service delivery and practice of the Monash City Council and MonashLink Community Health Service, including:

- overarching Council planning documents such as the Monash City Council [Council Plan 2013 - 2017](#) and the [Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2013 – 2017](#);
- through organisational statements such as the [MonashLink Organisational Statement for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children](#);
- gender analysis integrated into policy development and review processes with the adoption of the MonashLink Gender Equality Workflow/Checklist and regular gender auditing and planning that additionally supports regional strategic plans and evaluation; and
- establishing structures within partner organisations, which will continue to support gender equity beyond the program period, such as the MonashLink Preventing Violence Against Women Sub-committee.

Reach into the local partners and community

The program has had considerable reach into the Monash community:

- 480 people consulted in planning, needs assessment and policy development to support the development of gender equitable organisations and communities.

- 735 people participated in programs or training to build their awareness and capacity to prevent violence against women and promote gender equity.
- Estimated over 1,000 people attended an event focused on preventing violence against women or gender equity.
- Estimated 15,000 people have seen the programs' social marketing message which explicitly draws the links between violence against women and gender inequality – Say NO to violence against women, Say YES to equality and respect.

Increased capacity for primary prevention of violence against women

Our activities have targeted staff and decision-makers in partner organisations and key settings to increase awareness of violence against women, understanding of the key determinants of violence against women and to increase people's confidence in promoting gender equality and challenging harmful gender stereotypes in their day-to-day work. Information is integrated into staff orientation programs so that the prevention of violence against women is a fundamental area of knowledge for health service practitioners.

Some preliminary findings from training held at Monash City Council found:

- Following training to support Council staff to respond when they witness sexism, harassment or gender-based discrimination, there was an increase in training participants reporting confidence in taking bystander action at work
- Following training to support Council staff to understand the causes and impacts of violence against women and design and implement activities to prevent violence before it occurs, there was an increase in participants' knowledge of, and confidence to use, frameworks to prevent violence against women.

Practice lessons so far

Some of the key lessons and reflections from the Generating Equality and Respect program include:

- Having visible organisational leadership and participation by men is crucial to the success of primary prevention initiatives. We acknowledge that it takes time and practice for everyone, including leaders, and women and men, to have the ability and confidence to champion for the prevention of violence against women and gender equality.
- Attitudinal, behavioural and organisational cultural change is supported when the program staff and activities are embedded within organisations and settings.
- The development of diverse communication approaches and messages to engage people in the prevention of violence is critical. We are continually looking for ways to help people make the link between violence against women and gender inequality and understand that everyone has a role in preventing violence against women.
- We must acknowledge existing and historical women's advocacy and action on violence against women, and work alongside and stay informed by secondary and tertiary prevention efforts. It is critical that any primary prevention activities or messages also include details of family violence services for those experiencing violence.

Recommendations

12. Primary prevention initiatives are underpinned by a clear theory of change, which articulates how their prevention initiative contributes incrementally to changes in the underlying determinants of violence against women.



13. Preventing violence against women initiatives should be designed to contribute to the evidence base. With dedicated planning and evaluation phases, sharing of lessons, impacts and outcomes should be explicit in all prevention initiatives, and funded accordingly.

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.

Violence against women is entrenched in Australian society. Preventing violence against women requires a long term, sustained approach by all levels of government and the community to address its pervasive, underlying causes. Ensuring that gender equity is embedded within all federal, state and local government policies and programs is essential, particularly those policies relating to the social determinants of health such as education, employment, housing, health and transport.

Recommendations

14. The Victorian Government should develop a long-term policy, action plan and evaluation framework to prevent violence against women, with bi-partisan support. The policy should be inter-sectoral, intersectional and evidence based.
15. All levels of government undertake a gender audit of existing and new legislations, policies, and regulations over which it has jurisdiction and implement changes to promote gender equality.

References

Australia's National Research Organisation on Women's Safety, *Key Statistics on Violence Against Women*, 2014.

Hayes, T, *Gender, Local Governance and Violence Prevention: Learning from International Good Practice to Develop a Victorian Model*, University of Melbourne, 2006.

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Our Watch, Policy Paper 3, *International Evidence Base*, 2014

Our Watch, Working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, [http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-\(1\)/Culturally-and-Linguistically-Diverse-Communities](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/Culturally-and-Linguistically-Diverse-Communities)

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World Health Organisation, *World Report on Violence and Health*, 2002.



Appendix One: Generating Equality and Respect Program Logic Model

