



Submission to the
Royal Commission into Family Violence

Wyndham City Council

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1. Introduction

Wyndham City welcomes the Victorian Government's commitment to establishing the Royal Commission to investigate and identify recommendations to address family violence consistent with the Commission's goals to:

- foster a violence-free society
- reduce and aim to eliminate family violence
- prevent the occurrence and escalation of family violence
- build respectful family relationships
- increase awareness of the extent and effects of family violence
- reinforce community rejection of the use of family violence
- ensure the safety of people who are or may be affected by family violence, by:
 - facilitating early intervention before violence occurs
 - providing fast, effective responses to those who report family violence
 - providing effective protections to adults and children who have been affected by family violence in the past, and remain at risk of family violence
- support adults and children who have been affected by family violence
- hold those who have been violent accountable for their actions
- help people who use or may use family violence to change their behaviour.

Local government has a significant role to play in preventing violence against women particularly in the spheres of primary prevention and early intervention. Our submission focusses on specific areas informed by our current role. It aims to:

- highlight the specific characteristics of Wyndham as a growth area which compounds the impact of violence against women
- identify population groups which are particularly at risk of family violence
- demonstrate examples of policies, programs and practices which have positively addressed family violence.

Our submission has been developed with input from:

- Wyndham Community Safety Roundtable
- Wyndham Wellbeing Portfolio Committee
- Wyndham Preventing Family Violence Sub-committee
- Western Region Integrated Family Violence Co-ordinator
- Wyndham City staff.

Wyndham City has contributed to a range of submissions including: Bringing Justice to Wyndham; Wyndham H3 Alliance; the Interface Councils Submission; Wyndham Humanitarian Network; and Women's Health West / Health West – Preventing Violence Together United.

2. Summary of Recommendations

1. The Royal Commission's goals are enhanced in the following way:
 - That Goal One is enhanced to 'foster a *gender equitable* and violence free society'.
 - 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.
2. The State Government undertake a state-wide review of the current distribution of funding to family violence and related support services with the aim of developing a more equitable distribution of resources based on population and need.
3. Support the funding and development of essential infrastructure and services in outer growth municipalities with a focus on improved availability of safe, appropriate and affordable accommodation, accessible and safe court facilities, legal services and holistic health services for women. In particular, support the development of:
 - an integrated justice precinct in Wyndham
 - a crisis intervention and service hub in Wyndham
 - a new women only crisis facility in the Western region.
4. Fund primary prevention initiatives that have a strong and clear focus on redressing the determinants of violence against women and work towards long-term outcomes. As part of this approach particular priority should be given to developing:
 - gender equity/respectful relationships programs in all educational settings (including preschools, child care primary schools and secondary schools)
 - collaborative approaches with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
 - gender equity initiatives in the workplace.
5. Continue to fund and work with local government (at a state, regional and local level) recognising that it is well placed to work in partnership with local communities, across sectors and in a range of settings.
6. Resource regional partnerships and initiatives which:
 - increase the focus on the development and delivery of effective and tailored primary prevention initiatives in a range of settings
 - promote the integration of relevant services and organisations across the continuum from primary prevention, early intervention , crisis response and post response.
7. Recognise the value and diversity of women's (and men's) experiences of family violence in the ongoing development of responsive and inclusive policies, programs and practices to prevent and address family violence.

8. Support the ongoing development of regular training and professional development to front-line workers about the prevention of and responses to, family violence. Particular groups which should be given priority include:
 - Victoria Police
 - Maternal and Child Health staff and v family services staff
 - youth, health and community services
 - schools

9. Encourage leadership and involvement of the private sector to support policies, programs and initiatives that:
 - promote and encourage gender equity in the workplace and community
 - develop and implement policies and programs to assist their clients who may be affected by family violence.

10. All levels of government undertake a gender audit which encompasses measures and analysis of:
 - gender equity
 - funding and program equity;
 - specific commitments to addressing family violence (i.e. recognition of family violence orders on the day to day operations where relevant).

11. Provide dedicated ongoing funding to Domestic Violence Victoria to develop a primary prevention branch which will act as the peak advocacy body for Victorian prevention activity, including funding of Regional Prevention and Integration Coordinators.

12. Implement a state-wide education/awareness campaign which builds on existing research and evidence to:
 - raise awareness and promote changes in attitudes and behaviour of individuals (of all ages and backgrounds), organisations and communities in regard to violence against women
 - develop a strong partnership approach across all levels of government, the private sector and community.

13. Develop more systematic data collection, monitoring and analysis of the incidence and impact of family violence and promote more sharing of data across agencies throughout Victoria.

14. Fund and develop evaluation approaches which build a more comprehensive evidence base on the effectiveness and impact of primary prevention and early intervention approaches in redressing gender inequity and preventing family violence.

2. Overview

In developing its submission, Wyndham City acknowledges the compelling evidence that demonstrates the seriousness of violence against women in Australia. Such evidence also provides a sound basis from which strategies can be developed to prevent and respond to family violence.

The nature and prevalence of violence against women and its impact is significant.

Violence against women occurs across all cultural and socio-economic groups and encompasses economic, psychological and emotional abuse, through to physical and sexual violence.

Although men are among the victims of family violence, the vast majority of victims are women. Compared with male victims of relationship violence, women are:

- Three times *more likely* to be injured as a result of violence
- Five times *more likely* to require medical attention or hospitalisation
- Five times *more likely* to report fearing for their lives.¹

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 – 44 years.²

Violence against women is preventable

The prevention of violence against women is possible but it requires gender inequity to be addressed.

International evidence shows countries with high levels of gender equity which value women's participation and representation and where there are fewer economic, social or political differences in power between men and women have significantly lower levels of intimate partner and sexual violence.³

The key determinants of violence against women and children include:

- Unequal power and control between men and women
- Peer and organisational 'cultures' and attitudes that support violence
- Belief in rigid 'stereotypical' gender roles and/or weak support for gender equality.

Violence against women is not the result of one single factor

Violence against women is a complex interaction of personal, situational and socio-cultural factors. The determinants of violence against women are often compounded by contributing factors which means there are certain population who are more at risk of violence.

¹VicHealth 2004, The health costs of violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence

²Ibid.

³ United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2010 Investing in Gender Equality: Ending Violence against Women and Girls

Local government has a key role in preventing violence against women

The key role of local government has been identified by the State Government and VicHealth. Furthermore, 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 is well placed to prevent family violence as it is the closest level of government to communities and it works in partnership with many of the settings where prevention approaches can be implemented such as sport and recreation, health and community services, local workplaces and schools.

Recommendation

Given the evidence about the nature of violence against women, Wyndham City suggests that the Royal Commission's goals be revised in the following way:

- That Goal One is enhanced to '*foster a gender equitable and violence free society*'
- 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.

3. The City of Wyndham

Local Context

Wyndham has experienced the largest and fastest growth in all Victorian local government areas and is the third fastest growing in Australia. As of June 2014 the population was 199,715 and it is estimated to increase by 91% to exceed 384,000 by 2036. Wyndham is a young municipality with approximately 37% of its population being under 25 years of age. On average, 11 babies are born each day.

Wyndham is also a diverse community, with around 34% of its residents born overseas. Main overseas countries of origin include India, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Philippines and China. The main languages spoken at home (other than English) are: Filipino, Italian, Mandarin, Hindi and Arabic.⁴

Family Violence in Wyndham

Family violence is a significant issue in Wyndham; it is experienced across culture, age and socio-economic status. There were 2,278 reports of family violence in Wyndham during the 2013-2014 financial year, the highest number of incidents of any of the Western region LGAs.⁵ The rate of reported family violence in Wyndham is 1,201 (per 100,000 population) compared to 1,129 (per 100,000 population) for Victoria.⁶

Wyndham's population growth has meant that the number of family violence incidents grew more quickly in Wyndham than in almost any other area in metropolitan Melbourne between 2008 and 2012⁷. While reporting has increased, in part, due to increased awareness, violence against women is one of the most under-reported crimes. Data on family violence reports is still considered to under-estimate the number of actual incidents.

The Growth Context

Community and social infrastructure is not keeping pace with the needs arising from Wyndham's rapid growth and development. The limited availability of services impacts on residents' health and wellbeing. Wyndham residents, like many people living in outer growth areas are time poor due to the amount of time spent commuting to and from work. Also, Wyndham has one of the highest rates of mortgage stress in Australia –15% compared to 10% nationally, according to the last census.

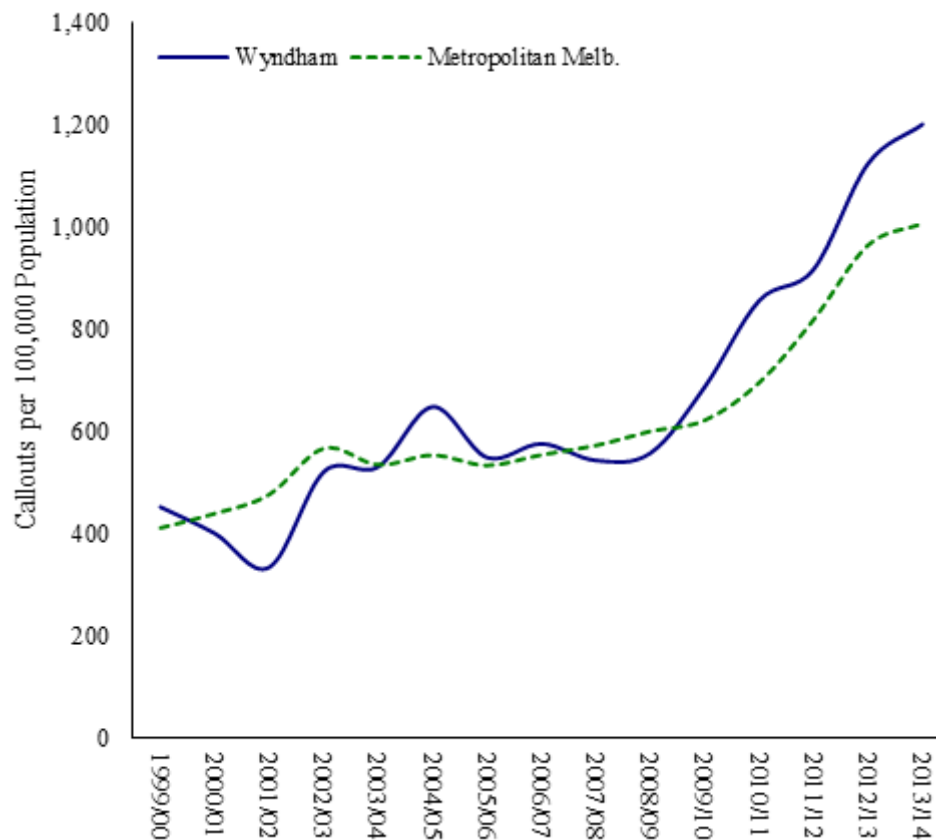
Also, the lack of social connection experienced by some families living in newly established suburbs, combined with financial stress can contribute to the increased risk of family violence.

⁴<http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/aboutwyndham/wyndhamcity/demographicsandpopulation/suburbs>

⁵http://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/aboutwyndham/pubmedia/media/2015/january_2015_-_media_releases_/preventing_family_violence_a_priority_for_wyndham

⁶ Interface Councils Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2015

⁷Victoria Police Violence Incidence Reports, 2011-12.



The *Interface Councils Submission* highlights some key statistics to illustrate the prevalence of family violence in growth areas:

- Growth area LGAs make up 40% of all family violence incidents for metropolitan Melbourne (despite being only 6 LGAs out of 24)⁸.
- Four of the five LGAs with the highest incidence of family violence in metropolitan Melbourne are growth area LGAs.
- Of the growth area LGAs with the highest reported number of family violence incidents – Wyndham, Casey, Hume and Whittlesea – Wyndham has recorded the highest percentage growth in numbers over the most recent five-year reporting period (from 2008/09 to 2012/13)⁹.
- Growth area LGAs make up 44% of all family violence incidents where children are present, for metropolitan Melbourne.
- Growth area LGAs are over-represented in the available data on violence against parents. Wyndham's data equates with other growth areas with high incidence of family violence.

Lack of Services

The lack of available and accessible services in outer growth municipalities reduces the capacity to both prevent family violence and to respond to it once it occurs. Wyndham City asserts that the allocation of resources for services to support people at risk of or experiencing family violence

⁸ Interface Councils Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence 2015.

⁹ Victoria Police, Family Incident Reports 2008/09 - 2012/13,

should be based on current needs (and populations levels) as opposed to historical approaches which have resulted in an inequitable distribution of (family violence) funding and services across metropolitan Melbourne. There is also a need to increase funds for services that address contributing factors to family violence such as mental health services, alcohol and other drugs, youth services and financial services.

Recommendation

The State Government undertake a state-wide review of the current distribution of funding to family violence and related support services with the aim of developing a more equitable distribution of resources based on population and need.

The lack of services and infrastructure in Wyndham is well illustrated by the three key areas:

- Court services
- Family violence and related support services
- Housing

Court services in Wyndham

The *Bringing Justice to Wyndham* submission comprehensively documents the serious problems relating to the inadequacy of the Werribee Court. However, to reinforce the seriousness of the issue we have highlighted some key points.

The current court is inadequate. It does not have the capacity to accommodate the people, staff and support services required for a functional, safe court:

- The court is consistently overcrowded and does not have the capacity to deal with the number of cases related to Wyndham's growing population. There is no protected persons' space which means that victims and perpetrators may often be within sight of each other. The current Magistrate has publicly raised her concerns about the potential security risk to clients and staff.
- The absence of a Court Network Service is solely due to lack of space.
- As for all people across the Western region, Wyndham residents must travel to Melbourne CBD to attend the Federal Circuit Court on any family law matters requiring resolution.
- There is no Victoria Legal Aid office in Wyndham and the community legal service – Wyndham Legal Service – struggles to meet demand.

Family violence and related support services

- All people involved in family law matters (with few exceptions) must first attempt mediation. Although there are two mediation services in Wyndham, they are not free. People must travel to Sunshine for a free mediation service, but with the likelihood that the waiting time may be 2-3 months.
- The availability of services to support women is inadequate. Women's Health West, which is based in Footscray, provides a specialist family violence outreach service (1.8 EFT is dedicated to Wyndham of 9 EFT regionally) to Wyndham and is place-based two days a week – one day at the Werribee Court supporting women undertaking court proceedings and one day at Uniting Care Werribee Support & Housing. Women's Health West's children's

counsellor is placed at ISIS Primary Care one day a week (2.4 EFT regionally). Due to this lack of funding, women's health services are funded as regional services rather than on a local area basis, consequently there is no permanently located women's health service in Wyndham.

- The closest Children's Contact Centre is Deer Park – and a person may wait up to 6 months before being able to access the service.
- Of the limited number of relationship counselling programs that are available in Wyndham, most are unaffordable to the majority of families.
- The current men's behaviour change programs available in the Western region are consistently full, so there are few options for referral and there are long waiting periods.

Housing

Crisis accommodation

Over a quarter of homelessness service users in Australia cite violence or abuse in the home as the reason for their experience of homelessness¹⁰. The Western Local Area Services Network's one-day snapshot report showed that 63% of clients accessing homelessness support services in the Western region have experienced family violence. At present, there is no emergency accommodation in Wyndham.

Families and young people are particularly affected by the lack of crisis accommodation facilities in the Western region. Young people are choosing to sleep rough rather than go to the nearest available youth crisis accommodation in Melbourne CBD. Other 'options', such as couch surfing living or living in rooming houses are inappropriate for children and families. The lack of crisis accommodation exacerbates the problems associated with family violence, including:

- People staying in inappropriate accommodation due to no other options
- People not accessing early intervention services due to a lack of infrastructure in the Western region
- Dislocation from community and personal supports
- Dislocation from schools and employment.

Wyndham City supports the *H3 Alliance's* submission to the Commission, which recommends:

- That a fully funded crisis intervention and service hub should be established in Wyndham run by the H3 consortia of local agencies
- That a new women-only crisis facility be established in the Western region due to population growth and demand¹¹. This facility would provide crisis accommodation for women and their children, women's-only safe spaces and meeting rooms, and counselling and therapy rooms.

Affordable housing

The lower cost of housing in growth areas comes at the expense of a lack of basic living needs in a local area, including health services, education, affordable transport, healthy food and employment. Families are forced into car dependency and are vulnerable to rising costs of petrol. There is a need for more services to respond to (and ideally prevent) homelessness in Wyndham. In particular, there

¹⁰ Council to Homeless Persons(2014) Homelessness in Victoria – Key statistics

¹¹ <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/the-brutal-price-of-domestic-violence-20140426-37b3s.html>

is an urgent need to consider how to respond to women and children in the local area who are at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

There are limited housing options for families experiencing violence in the home after periods of crisis. A recent report indicated that Melton is the only suburb where a woman on an average weekly wage (\$842 per week) can rent a two-bedroom home and not be in housing stress (which is defined as spending more than 30% of household income on housing). The report also noted that renting a house in Werribee – the next most affordable suburb after Melton – would tip a woman on the average weekly wage into housing stress¹².

Local housing and homelessness services report that single parents are strongly represented in their client group. They also report that clients often access services due to housing and living affordability issues, including:

- Mortgage foreclosure
- Unemployment or reduction in working hours
- Housing stress due to high rental costs
- Inability to afford medications
- Inability to afford utilities.

Recommendation

Support the funding and development of essential infrastructure and services in outer growth municipalities with a focus on improved availability of safe, appropriate and affordable accommodation, accessible and safe court facilities, legal services and holistic health services for women. In particular, support the development of:

- an integrated justice precinct in Wyndham
- a crisis intervention and service hub in Wyndham
- a new women only crisis facility in the Western region.

The cost of living and leaving

Increasingly, economic abuse is being recognised as a form of family violence. The causes of economic abuse, like other forms of family violence, are linked to the broader issues of gender inequity. It occurs in a context where women are already economically disadvantaged compared to men. As of March 2014 the pay gap between men and women was 17.1% (which equates to \$262.50 per week).¹³

Economic abuse is a form of violence that negatively impacts on a person financially and undermines their efforts to become economically independent. For example, it may include withholding financial support, coercing a partner to relinquish control of assets or denying a person their financial

¹² Council to Homeless Persons(2015) <http://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/150429- family-violence-housing-affordability.pdf>

¹³ Workplace Gender Equality Agency <https://www.wgea.gov.au/>

autonomy¹⁴. For some women the option to leave is not available if they do not have an independent income – for women who do leave the negative financial impact is significant.

A recent report by Wyndham Legal Service and Good Shepherd provides some compelling case studies on the impact of economic abuse. The report recommends the need to:

- Work collaboratively across sectors such as financial services, energy and telecommunications to develop better policies and procedures to ensure consistent, fair treatment for people experiencing economic abuse and; to ensure access to essential services for clients faced with relationship breakdown and family violence.
- Include economic abuse in information about intervention orders so that women who experience this abuse understand that they can include it when applying for orders.
- Increase collaboration between family violence support services, financial counselling services and emergency relief services to provide more co-ordinated responses to clients experiencing economic abuse.
- Recognise a family violence order as a trigger for financial hardship which could be taken into account when women are faced with various payments due or perhaps are faced with having to pay fines. For example, recognition of the financial hardship experienced by a woman in a family violence situation could be considered in Council policy when priority for child care places is being considered and with other financial matters such as rates collection or local government fines.¹⁵

Wyndham City would like to cite the example of Telstra’s Safe Connections initiative which provides free pre-paid mobile phones to women leaving family violence situations. This initiative provides an example of how the private sector can demonstrate leadership in responding to family violence.

Recommendation

Encourage leadership and involvement of the private sector to support policies, programs and initiatives that:

- promote and encourage gender equity in the workplace and community
- develop and implement policies and programs to assist their clients who may be affected by family violence.

¹⁴ Camillieri, O. Corrie, T & Moore, S. (2015) Restoring Financial Safety: Legal Responses to Economic Abuse, Good Shepherd Australia and New Zealand

¹⁵ *ibid.*

5. The Role of Local Government in Addressing Family Violence

As the level of government closest to the community, local government has the capacity to influence the determinants that promote optimal health, safety and wellbeing of its community.

Local governments are bound by legislation which aims 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 build a fair and inclusive community for women and men.

Local government approaches to family violence are largely focussed on primary prevention and early intervention. At the same time it recognises the importance of working in partnership with a range of organisations including those which provide crisis support. Wyndham City believes that local government should be supported to develop a range of primary prevention and early intervention initiatives.

Recommendation

Continue to fund and work with local government (at a state, regional and local level) recognising that it is well placed to work in partnership with local communities, across sectors and in a range of settings.

This section identifies the pivotal role of Wyndham City in four key areas:

- Governance and partnerships
- Leadership in the workplace
- Strategic policy and planning
- Working with communities.

Governance and partnerships

Wyndham City recognises the value of embedding a commitment to gender equity and family violence in governance structures and working collaboratively with local and regional stakeholders. It has developed various initiatives to address gender inequity and family violence which include:

- Establishment of the ***Preventing Family Violence Sub-Committee*** in 2014. Although in its early stage of development, the Sub-Committee will work in partnership with local organisations to facilitate and support ongoing strategic and locally based interventions to reduce the impact and incidence of family violence in the Wyndham community. The Sub-Committee has high level support. It is chaired by a Councillor and has broad representation from local agencies. Priorities will be developed in the next six months. It is intended that

there be a focus on developing and implementing a gender equity focus, recognising the importance of primary prevention.

- Convenor of the **Wyndham White Ribbon Working Group** to lead local White Ribbon campaigns and raise awareness of violence against women, which coincides with the appointment of two Councillors as **White Ribbon Ambassadors** to provides leadership and support to the issue.
- Being a **signatory to Preventing Violence Together United(PVT), a regional partnership** to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in the Western region. In seeking to end men’s violence against women, the PVT regional partnership, involving 18 partner organisations, demonstrates a promising model to advance the primary prevention of violence against women.
- Endorsement of the **Victorian Local Government Women’s Charter**, which has as its three principles:
 - **Gender equity:** That women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions.
 - **Diversity:** The inclusion of different experiences and perspectives in local governments and community decision-making strengthens local democratic governance and helps build cohesive communities. Councils and communities encourage and welcome the participation of all women.
 - **Active citizenship:** Local governments will work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life.
- Convenor of the **Wyndham Family Violence Committee** which is a mechanism to develop and support partnerships amongst key stakeholders based in and working in Wyndham, and to facilitate collaborative efforts in preventing and addressing family violence locally.

Workplace leadership and capacity

Wyndham City recognises that there is enormous scope to address gender inequity and family violence within the workplace. It is a large employer in its own right having over 1,200 staff.

Greater commitment and investment is required in all workplaces to embed gender equity into organisational culture: to include it in planning and policy, governance structures, codes of conduct, training and workplace conditions. While there have been various workplace initiatives to increase awareness of family violence, there is much scope for workplaces to also encourage attitudinal and behavioural change; and to redress gender inequality.

Two specific workplace initiatives developed by Wyndham City include:

- Development of a **family violence clause in Wyndham City’s Enterprise Bargaining Agreement** which provides paid leave should any staff members be experiencing family violence.

- **Training for Maternal and Child Health staff** is provided on how to discuss family violence and respond to disclosures. It is recognised that such training could be extended to other areas of Council that directly deliver services.

Recommendation

Support the ongoing development of regular training and professional development to front-line workers about the prevention of and responses to, family violence. Particular groups which should be given priority include:

- Victoria Police
- Maternal and Child Health youth and family services staff
- Health and community services
- Schools

Strategic planning and policy

Local government plays a key role in strategic policy and planning to improve the health and wellbeing of its communities – through infrastructure and facilities, programs and support services.

Examples of Wyndham City taking a gendered approach to policy and planning include:

- A key action of the **Wyndham Community Health, Wellbeing and Safety Plan 2013-2017** is ‘Reducing the incidence of family violence including intimate partner violence and elder abuse’¹⁶.
- Developing strategies to increase the participation of women and girls in sport/recreation including development of more **gender neutral infrastructure and the increased availability of sports/recreational activities that are preferred by women**. Wyndham’s sports facilities have no branding of change facilities, provide for male and female umpires, and include unisex toilets and showers. Also, Wyndham City has just developed a *Sports Facility User Guide* which requires clubs to demonstrate responsible citizenship; equity; and healthy sporting environments which provides safe, supportive and meaningful opportunities to participate, free from discrimination and fear of violence.
- Undertaking a service planning project for the **Wyndham Integrated Justice Precinct**. The proposed precinct will significantly improve the availability of a broad range of justice and related services for the community as a whole, taking into account the particular needs of women (affected by family violence).
- Considering the **needs of women in urban design and planning**. There is potential to embed a more gendered approach in developing safe, vibrant and inclusive communities. In particular the design and maintenance of community infrastructure, public spaces and the development of new suburbs provide opportunities to incorporate the needs and experiences of women.

¹⁶ Wyndham City (2013) Wyndham Community Health, Wellbeing and Safety Plan 2013-2017

To be responsive to the needs and experiences of women requires building an evidence base that includes gendered data. Increasingly Wyndham City has identified the value of capturing gendered data in surveys, consultation and evaluation to inform its strategic planning and policy development.

Recommendation

Fund and develop evaluation approaches which build a more comprehensive evidence base on the effectiveness and impact of primary prevention and early intervention approaches in redressing gender inequity and preventing family violence.

As recommended in the *Preventing Violence Together United* submission there is a need for continued funding is available for critical data sets such as the Census of Population and Housing and the VicHealth Community Attitudes Survey. Relevant data also needs to be shared across various services at a state, regional and local level¹⁷.

Recommendation

Develop more systematic data collection, monitoring and analysis of the incidence and impact of family violence and promote sharing of data across agencies throughout Victoria.

Working with Communities

VicHealth has identified that primary prevention efforts to address gender inequity and family violence are most likely to be effective when a co-ordinated range of mutually reinforcing strategies are targeted across multiple levels of community life.¹⁸ Cross sector partnerships have also been recognised as integral in order for primary prevention efforts to be effective and comprehensive¹⁹.

The diversity of Wyndham's community demands that we adopt a multi-faceted approach. There are many programs, events and initiatives which are not necessarily focused on family violence but help build the commitment, resilience and capacity of local communities to respond to issues at an individual and community level.

Some examples of Wyndham City's pivotal role in increasing awareness of violence against women and building capacity of community include:

- Implementation of the ***Building Blocks Program community leadership*** in partnership with Victoria University. There have been six programs involving 150 people. The program has been a platform for people to build networking and community leadership skills. Interestingly, the stated motivation for some women to participate was to be able to

¹⁷ Preventing Violence Together United submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence, 2015

¹⁸ VicHealth 2007 Preventing violence before it occurs a framework and background for prevention of violence against women in Victoria, VicHealth, Melbourne, Australia

¹⁹ *ibid*

increase their skills and capacity to respond to family violence in their own (cultural) community.

- Conducting the **Wyndham White Ribbon Business Breakfast** involved over 70 local businesses which publicly pledged their commitment to prevent violence against women in a range of ways.
- Supporting local settings where people go for recreation such as **sports clubs and leisure settings**. Such settings potentially could play a much stronger role in providing opportunities for role -modelling of respectful relationships and helping to change behaviour in relation to family violence. Many sports clubs in Wyndham are part of the Australian Drug Foundation's Good Sports Program which supports clubs to set standards on a range of health issues and there could be potential for this type of model to be extended to encompass gender equity.

Recommendation

Fund primary prevention initiatives that have a strong and clear focus on redressing the determinants of violence against women and work towards long-term outcomes. As part of this approach particular priority should be given to developing:

- gender equity/respectful relationships programs in all educational settings (including preschools, child care primary schools and secondary schools)
- collaborative approaches with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities
- gender equity initiatives in the workplace.

6. The impact of family violence on specific groups

It is recognised that specific population groups are at greater risk of family violence because of a range of contributing factors. In this section we focus on some of those groups and identify possible responses to support them, recognising that women may experience multiple levels of disadvantage.

We have focussed on:

- Children
- Young people
- Older women
- People from multicultural backgrounds
- Aboriginal communities.

Recommendation

Recognise the value and diversity of women's (and men's) experiences of family violence in the ongoing development of responsive and inclusive policies, programs and practices to prevent and address family violence.

Children

As of 2015, there are 43,985 children (aged 0-12 years) residing in Wyndham City. It is projected that by 2036 there will be 34,140 children aged under 4 years and 31,067 children aged between 5-9 years residing in Wyndham in comparison to 9,212 and 8,789 children for the same age groups in 2006.

Given the age profiles of growth area LGAs, such as Wyndham it is not surprising that the growth areas make up nearly 50% of the total number of reported family violence incidents with children present for the North and West Metropolitan Region²⁰.

Given the number of young families in Wyndham and the impact of family violence on children, this is an important policy and program priority. Young families also have increased contact with services providing opportunities for intervention. Because of local government's requirement to follow up on each birth notification and provide/coordinate MCH services for local parents, MCH nurses have a unique opportunity to build relationships with families in a non-judgmental and non-threatening environment.

Discussion with Wyndham City's Family Services and Maternal and Child Health programs indicated that:

- For those families and children who present with complex issues, family violence is only one of the issues. They are also likely to be affected by one or more of the following: financial hardship, mental health issues, social isolation, unemployment and or drug and alcohol issues and they may also be responsible for a child/children with additional needs or a disability.
- Families are often too embarrassed and/or scared to disclose that family violence is occurring in their home.
- The impact on children is significant and can be demonstrated through behaviours such as: aggression/aggressive behaviours, withdrawal, self-harm and depression with a substantial increase of all named behaviours in pre-school aged children. Such behaviours are evident at playgroups, kindergarten, long day care services and within the school environment. School disengagement is evident at times even beginning at primary school.
- For children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the impacts of exposure to violence may be compounded by cultural differences from the mainstream community, increasing their sense of vulnerability and isolation. Particular CALD groups at risk were identified; these included the Indian, Karen and other communities from Burma and African communities.
- Some primary school aged children are displaying and perpetrating abuse towards parents and carers.
- Women and children are often required to repeatedly recount their stories to services, which results in re-experiencing the violence.
- The availability of primary prevention programs need to be increased. As one example, men's groups/ dad's groups with babies to promote gender equity and provide a 'safe place' for men to reflect and explore gender roles

²⁰ Interface Councils submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

- There is a need to embed gender equity in pre-school programs and primary schools through the curriculum and adopt a whole of workplace/organisation approach

Examples of approaches being applied in Wyndham City's family services policy and programs include:

- Maternal and Child Health have **family violence posters and information help cards** displayed at every centre and also in various languages.
- **Supported playgroups** are perceived as a safe space for women to attend with their children as they are informal and give women opportunities to form social relationships. Currently, a specialist worker attends playgroup sessions to support workers and assist in the referral process. There is scope to trial and evaluate MCH staff, social workers and /or psychologists attending playgroups with a view to scaling up this approach.
- Due to the increase of family violence **every mother is now screened at each Maternal and Child Health check-up**, which has led to an increase in disclosures and provided an opportunity for support and discussion. Also, an enhanced MCH service has enabled longer visits and more support to be provided and this has meant more opportunity to discuss issues such as family violence.
- Once a family is identified as being affected by family violence, Council policy and process mandates that two staff members must visit that home or that the woman and child attend a Centre for MCH visits. This provides safety for the staff and also gives the woman a safe place to further discuss and seek support.
- The **Baby Makes 3** program is about to commence in three locations within the municipality. This program has a strong evidence base, having been piloted and evaluated in other LGAs. It provides support to new parents which can be a particularly vulnerable time, with a focus on gender roles.
- **Community Connections pilot** (funded through Best Start) based at Wyndham Park Primary School, has adopted an '**enrolling the whole family approach**'. Such an approach provides the opportunity for the support needs of families to be identified in a more holistic way and also streamlines the collection of information from families, so that they are not having to provide their details multiple times.

Young People

Wyndham is a young municipality with approximately 37% of its population being under 25 years of age. Adolescence is a very formative stage in a person's development; the needs of young people must be seen in the context of their family situation.

Discussion with Wyndham City's Youth Services team indicated that:

- Often the first sign of violence in the home with young people is disengagement from school. They may move between schools, truant, or act out behaviours learned at home. Issues of family violence are often revealed after deeper discussion. Young people who escape abuse in the home want to remain in education and training but have few options; often the decision to leave leads to homelessness.
- The experience of school can be confusing for young people because it models different behaviour than that exhibited and modelled at home. Young people can find this disparity of

values difficult to navigate, and can be played out through conflict at school or within the home. Schools are generally not adequately resourced to support young people experiencing violence in the home.

Other concerns included:

- The influence of alcohol and other drugs, more recently Ice, in contributing to family violence
- Adolescent males being violent towards their parents and siblings
- Intergenerational abuse / violence which makes it difficult for the cycle of violence to be broken
- Issues of sexual identity
- Complexities in relation to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Young people as carers for a parent may increase their risk of abuse
- Young people with a disability and/ or with mental health issues
- Young women are particularly vulnerable and are at higher risk of sexual assault
- Parents blaming themselves but often lacking the tools to deal with the violence.

There is a need for:

- Co-location of services such as a service hub in the model of the **Wyndham Youth Resource Centre** to foster integration and co-ordination. Such co-location:
 - Provides opportunities for collaboration and referral – and a safe space
 - Strengthens links between crisis and other levels of support
 - Promotes consistency in service continuity and cross-pollination of approaches.
- Relationship-based approaches which encompass one-on-one case management and mentoring which helps foster trust and enables young people to experience good role models.
- School-based programs which give young people the opportunity to learn and to explore issues of gender equity and respectful relationships. Also, training for teachers is required not only to respond to disclosures of family violence but to also respond to perpetrators as most incidents will not meet the threshold criteria for disclosure.
- Allied services that are available and accessible following the crisis point; these enable a support network to be formed for a young person.
- Counselling for young parents.
- Specialist adolescent services in the Western region to respond to young people who are impacted by family violence - either as perpetrators or victims.

Some examples of good models to be considered:

- **Wyndham City's Youth Services Mentor program** which employs a part-time worker to provide individual support to young people 12-25 years who may be at risk of, or have been victims or perpetrators of family violence. Referrals come from schools and parents but there is a waiting list of 6-8 weeks. There is scope to expand this model as it has demonstrated its effectiveness in supporting young people. The counselling and personal development programs run by Youth Services also complement the mentor program.

- Wyndham City in partnership with Wyndham Family Violence Committee sponsored '**Say No to Violence School Arts**' project for senior secondary students.
- Women's Health West delivered **Girls Talk Guys Talk: A whole of school health promotion program** to secondary schools in Melbourne's west for several consecutive years. This program works closely with one school at a time over a full year to implement and embed healthy relationships and comprehensive sexuality education that is relevant to their context. It is supported by a framework that values the whole school as a setting and works with students, teachers, school nurses and parents to implement actions across the 'three Cs' of curriculum, community and culture.
- The **Respectful Relationships Education in Schools Project** in four of our local secondary schools. The project will trial and evaluate the implementation of the new Department of Education and Training resource, *Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping Out against Gender-Based Violence*.
- The **School Lawyer Project** is a recently established partnership between Wyndham Legal Service, The Grange P-12 College (located in Hoppers Crossing) and key community agencies in the western suburbs. The project involves employing a 'School Lawyer' with a community development background to work closely with students, parents/guardians, families and teachers at The Grange to enable them to engage more effectively with the justice system.

The project seeks to assist vulnerable secondary school students who are experiencing issues with family violence, homelessness and non-participation in school. It will establish an inclusive relationship with the school community that goes beyond the traditional solicitor/client relationship with the aim of improving the stability of school families and the attendance and performance of the school students. This innovative model is the first of its kind in Australia and although it has only recently commenced it will be evaluated and potentially offers a useful model²¹.

- **Anglicare's 'Men and Boys' program** was a relationship based mentoring program which was seen as very effective but unfortunately is no longer funded. Workers spent 'healthy time' with a young person and their significant male. Healthy expectations of interactions were mediated by workers, who modelled respectful relationships.

Older Women

Older women, like younger women, can experience physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse at the hands of their partners. Family violence that a woman may have experienced throughout her life evolves and changes but does not necessarily cease as she reaches a mature age. As women age, there is also increased vulnerability to abuse from adult children, grandchildren and carers which is often referred to as 'elder abuse'.²²

For some older women, family violence is an entrenched part of their life which they have endured over a long period of time. They may not have ever sought assistance and may therefore be

²¹ Wyndham Legal Service submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence: School Lawyer Project (2015)

²² Domestic Violence Victoria available at <http://www.dvvic.org.au/>

reluctant to access services or support. The pathway for referral and response for older women can be fragmented.

Local government's role as key providers of HACC services to older people is critical to identifying and responding to elder abuse. For older people who are HACC clients there is the opportunity through the intake, assessment and referral process to identify if they may be experiencing family violence. However, there is a need to develop a more systematic approach to responding to elder abuse.

People from multicultural backgrounds

The cultural profile of Wyndham provides an important context for the needs of women from a diverse range of cultures. Cultural diversity increases every year in Wyndham, with new residents bringing with them different languages, faith traditions, and customs. Council values our identity as a multicultural community and the rich cultural, linguistic and faith diversity that our community brings.

The latest Census data indicates that 34% of Wyndham's population was born overseas, and that between 2006 and 2011 the number of people from non-English speaking backgrounds increased by 21,407 to 41,114 (108%). Importantly, the rates of growth of newly-arrived residents from culturally diverse backgrounds have increased markedly between 2006 and 2011.

Karen people born in Burma and Thailand represent the greatest number of people arriving as humanitarian entrants. There are hundreds of asylum seekers currently living in Wyndham, with Iran being the most common country of origin. The *Wyndham Humanitarian Network* submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence provides a valuable perspective on the particular needs of people from humanitarian backgrounds and we have used its submission as a reference point.

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are particularly vulnerable to the effects of violence and face barriers in seeking assistance or disclosing their experience. Barriers may include: a limited understanding of English; lack extended family and community support; difficulties in accessing services owing to language and cultural differences and a reluctance to disclose. Alongside these considerations, it is important to consider how 'Western' culture perpetrates violence, but considers culturally diverse communities as a 'special case'.

Wyndham City recognises the importance of specialist family violence services in delivering an appropriate response to the complexities and vulnerabilities faced by women from multicultural backgrounds who experience family violence. Wyndham City also encourages and supports 'mainstream' organisations and programs to build partnerships with specialist agencies.

Good practice principles outlined in the *Wyndham Humanitarian Network* submission are in alignment with preferences for working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds:

- Programs should be co-designed with the communities they are seeking to support.
- Programs should involve community leaders, recognising that leadership can also be 'informal'.

- Service provision should be guided by the expressed needs of the client. This includes a commitment to informed consent.
- Respecting and reinforcing the concept of human rights and women's rights – and educating on how these rights are enforceable in Australia's legal system.
- Acknowledgement that violence against women is gendered, especially in the design of preventive approaches.
- Programs should ensure cultural safety. This should include cultural relevance, sensitivity and understanding of the history and struggle of the service user. Language should not be a barrier to service provision.
- A comprehensive approach that pays attention to the individual, families, and community. Understanding the relationship between the social, physical and psychological worlds of the client.
- Approaches should aim to empower participants.
- Practical approaches are appreciated.

Examples of community strengthening initiatives such as leadership development programs with a specific focus on violence prevention in Wyndham include:

- Jagriti is a community forum established by leaders in Melbourne's Indian community who were concerned about the levels of family violence experienced by Indian families living in Australia. The Western Integrated Family Violence Committee has partnered with Jagriti to produce a community education resource that will help Indian community leaders in the western suburbs to direct families towards specialist help for family violence. Wyndham City understands that cohealth is furthering the value of this resource through its SHIFT (Stronger Healthier Indian Families Together) project.
- The STAMP and UPSCALE programs, tailored to African and Burmese communities, respectively – involved community leaders in their design, development and delivery. The focus of these programs was to educate community leaders in how to listen to their communities and to approach authorities, while concurrently empowering women and children to approach community leaders.

Aboriginal communities

The experience of family violence in Aboriginal communities must be understood in the historical context of colonisation and its resulting (and continuing) impacts²³. Such impacts have resulted in Aboriginal women being one of the groups most at risk of family violence in the community.

Wyndham City supports the principles outlined in the Victorian Government's *Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework*²⁴:

- Valuing Aboriginal Culture

²³ Aboriginal Affairs Victoria 2008, *Strong culture, strong peoples, strong families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities*, Department of Planning and Community Development, Victorian Government, Melbourne

²⁴ Department of Human Services (2012) *Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework* http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/718439/Indigenous-family-violence-prim-preventionframework.pdf

- Family violence is not part of Aboriginal Culture
- Healing approach to family violence in Aboriginal communities
- Respond to, and prevent, family violence
- Recognise the complex nature of family violence within Aboriginal communities
- Empowering Aboriginal communities
- Local solutions to local problems
- Work in partnerships
- Adequate resources

The North and West Metropolitan Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Plan 2012-2015 makes the link between the experience of colonisation and family violence²⁵:

*The prevalence of Family Violence within our communities can be directly related to the loss of land, culture, identity, self-respect, self-worth and the breakdown of traditional roles within communities*²⁶.

A local government approach to family violence in Aboriginal communities must address the causes of these community impacts and, where possible, provide remediation.

Wyndham City recently endorsed a Statement of Commitment as a foundation to the development of a four-year Reconciliation Action Plan, providing a set of principles that underscore how Council commits to work with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the context of reconciliation²⁷. The Reconciliation Action Plan will give effect to these principles with both symbolic and practical actions.

Wyndham City acknowledges the impact of the displacement of Traditional Owners to missions and reserves, the brutality of early occupation by some settlers and colonial officials, and that the breaking up of families through successive government policies led to Aboriginal people being dispossessed of their lands and culture.

Of relevance in the context of family violence as experienced by Aboriginal people and communities, Wyndham City acknowledges:

- Aboriginal people have endured discrimination, grief, loss, hurt and suffering since colonisation which has led to present-day disadvantages.
- Aboriginal people's identity, language, culture, and traditions have been adversely impacted.
- Discriminatory government policies and legislation have significantly contributed to the poorer health and wellbeing, education and employment outcomes experienced by Aboriginal people.

²⁵ Wyndham City suggests that the Commission refer to the *Preventing Violence Together United* submission for recommendations developed by Western Metropolitan Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group members from Community, Wayapa Wuurrk, and the Aboriginal Centre for Males (VACSAL); supported by associate members from Women's Health West and Relationships Australia (Victoria).

²⁶ North & West Metropolitan Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group, 2008, *North & West Metropolitan Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Plan 2012-2015*, Victorian State government.

²⁷ Wyndham City (2015) https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/residents/community/statement_of_commitment

Despite these impacts, Aboriginal culture and ways of living continue to remain strong. Aboriginal Elders and respected community leaders play a significant role within the Aboriginal and broader community.

Wyndham City supports:

- Aboriginal people to further strengthen their community connections, languages, cultures and identities in ways that they themselves determine.
- The active participation of Aboriginal people in decision-making regarding both broad community issues and Aboriginal-specific issues.
- Healing processes as determined by the Aboriginal community that address the hurt, oppression and pain they experience.
- Social justice initiatives that contribute to improved access, inclusion and equity outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Given the above commitments, there are significant implications with regard to supporting Aboriginal people to address family violence through the development of the Wyndham City Reconciliation Action Plan. One of the most significant is the recognition of government's legacy in creating the conditions for the inequities experienced by Aboriginal people and communities. This relationship has been identified as a cause of lateral violence in Aboriginal communities – also known as 'internalised colonialism'²⁸. The Australian Human Rights Commission recommends that the issues associated with lateral violence and this legacy of government can be tackled through "assertion of Indigenous agency and responsibility"²⁹.

The Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre project demonstrates Wyndham City's practical approach to remediation of this legacy through directly addressing key issues surrounding Aboriginal rights to restore connections to country, culture and community in order to establish just relations with non-Aboriginal Australia and its government at the local level. Through robust and open negotiation to reach agreements about land allocation, resource management and governance arrangements, Wyndham City is setting out to achieve a different partnership of equals with Aboriginal communities.

Respect for Aboriginal self-determination is integral to this approach. A key step is endorsing the growth of urban Aboriginal civil society and its capacity to support community leadership and governance, political participation, and culturally-safe services in Wyndham City.

This is demonstrated through the establishment of a Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre Committee ('WACCC'). The target outcome for the WACCC is for the Wyndham Aboriginal Community Centre to be managed by and for a resilient Aboriginal community, with a capacity to engage local government and the non-Aboriginal communities. In this way, it addresses three priorities of sustainable reconciliation: amongst Aboriginal communities, between Aboriginal peoples and government and with non-Aboriginal people.

²⁸ Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (2011) *Social Justice Report 2011* https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/social_justice/sj_report/sjreport11/pdf/sjr2011.pdf

²⁹ Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner (2011) *Social Justice Report 2011* https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/social_justice/sj_report/sjreport11/pdf/sjr2011.pdf (page 102)

An identified outcome of the WACCC has been the development of positive relationships, trust and mutuality within the Wyndham Aboriginal community. This is enabled through an increasingly robust dialogue at community and committee meetings as participants create safety to deliberate and determine a shared vision. This increased capacity to resolve conflict includes identifying the impacts of lateral violence and then developing strategies for addressing it.

7. The Regional Context

It is evident that there is strong regional collaboration in the Western region and that some of the regional partnership models are useful examples of what could be transferable to, or strengthened, in other regions.

The **Western Integrated Family Violence Committee** (WIFVC) has played an important role in providing a central coordinating point for regional action and ensuring integrated and cross-sectoral alignment of efforts to respond to family violence. Importantly, the Regional Integration Coordinator role, which oversees the WIFVC has a level of autonomy and independence which is critical to implementing the national and state plans and being able to drive change in terms of system reform and response services at a regional level and not be 'tied' to any one agency. With primary prevention regional implementation partnerships currently being developed across Victoria, this work would be enhanced with funding to establish Regional Prevention Coordinators.

State-funded coordinator roles similar to the Family Violence Regional Integration Coordinators model (currently funded by the State Government) could be implemented. These coordinators would act as an advocate and conduit between local work and the peak body.

Recommendation

Provide dedicated ongoing funding to Domestic Violence Victoria to develop a primary prevention branch which will act as the peak advocacy body for Victorian prevention activity, including funding of Regional Prevention and Integration Coordinators.

The **Think Child Partnership Agreement** was developed in 2010 in recognition of the relationship between family violence, child abuse and child safety and wellbeing. The Working Group was established in 2011 to progress the Think Child Agreement at a local level. It facilitates collaborative working relationships between Child FIRST, family services, Child Protection and family violence services. It also enhances the priority actions outlined in the Think Child Agreement and promotes its principles in the work of all partners. The Agreement has helped to facilitate clearly defined and well understood collaborative relationships to ensure that children, young people, women and men receive services that will respond to immediate and longer term concerns about individual and family safety, rights, health and wellbeing.

The **High Risk Client Strategy** is an innovative and ground-breaking project that was piloted in the Western region between September 2008 and August 2010 to respond to women at extreme risk of death due to family violence. The Strategy is a coordinated, multi-agency and integrated rapid response that assessed and managed women's safety and welfare with the aim of preventing a

serious injury or death. Unlike other similar strategies, it places women at the centre by including them in all decisions and safety planning, so they attend the meetings to discuss their situation.

Similar to this strategy, Risk Assessment Management Panels (RAMP) approach takes a holistic approach and identifies women with complex needs. A panel of workers, who have come into contact with the victim meet and formulate a plan to keep them safe, fostering better collaboration and coordination.

The ***Preventing Violence Together United*** partnership referred to in the section on Governance and partnerships also provides a valuable model for garnering regional co-operation, collaboration and political will in embedding gender equity and promoting a preventative approach.

Recommendation

Resource regional partnerships and initiatives which:

- increase the focus on the development and delivery of effective and tailored primary prevention initiatives in a range of settings
- promote the integration of relevant services and organisations across the continuum from primary prevention, early intervention , crisis response and post response.

8. The State Context

The role of local government working in partnership with the State Government in prevention of violence against women is supported by the Victorian State Local Government Agreement signed in September 2014.³⁰

Victoria has been a leader in the prevention of family violence. However, there is scope for all levels of government to build on their leadership role to strategically identify to what extent their policies and programs work towards gender equality or create barriers to achieving it. The development of the next State Health Plan provides an opportunity to make explicit the joint commitment of State Government and local government to address family violence as a priority.

At a state level, the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Victorian Local Government Association play an integral role in advocacy and policy and program development. Continued support to such organisations is required to embed consistency across local governments throughout the state in their work to prevent family violence.

Currently there is an absence of a peak body for preventing violence against women at a state level. A funded peak body is required to specifically coordinate primary prevention action at local, regional and state levels and expand collaborative work with national organisations. It could also help: strengthen the links between the various spheres of the continuum primary prevention, early intervention and crisis response.

Recommendations

All levels of government undertake a gender audit which encompasses measures and analysis of:

- gender equity
- funding and program equity;
- specific commitments to addressing family violence (i.e. recognition of family violence orders on the day to day operations where relevant).

Implement a state-wide education/awareness campaign which builds on existing research and evidence to:

- raise awareness and promote changes in attitudes and behaviour of individuals (of all ages and backgrounds), organisations and communities in regard to violence against women
- develop a strong partnership approach across all levels of government, the private sector and community.

9. Conclusion

Given local government's role in planning, providing community facilities and public spaces, service delivery and partnerships which cut across the social, economic, environmental and cultural domains of community life local government it is well placed to prevent violence against women.

Wyndham City looks forward to continuing to work with the State Government to implement the findings of the Royal Commission in to Family Violence.

³⁰ Municipal Association of Victoria (2015) submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence

10. Glossary and definitions

Primary prevention refers to strategies aimed at preventing violence before it occurs. This includes changing behaviours and attitudes and building the awareness and skills of individuals. The central focus of work in primary prevention is on strategies that address the underlying structural and cultural drivers of violence against women, such as gender inequality and beliefs in rigid gender roles and stereotypes³¹.

Early intervention: Action targeting individuals or population sub-groups who are showing early signs of violent behaviour.³²

Response services aim to reduce the effects of violence once it has occurred and prevent its reoccurrence, through provision of support and redress to victims/survivors of violence and deal with the consequences of violence. Social support services, health care providers, the criminal justice system and crisis accommodation are all examples of settings through which tertiary services and programs are delivered.³³

Gender equity takes into consideration the differences in women's and men's lives and recognises that different approaches may be needed to produce outcomes that are fair.

³¹ VicHealth 2007 *Preventing violence before it occurs: a framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

³² *ibid*

³³ *ibid*