

Joint Submission to the Royal Commission



*Transforming
lives for stronger
communities*

Preventing Family Violence

The problem

The City of Cardinia is experiencing alarming levels of family violence – and it is happening in front of and around children.

In the last five years, 2,142 children witnessed family violence incidents reported in the Shire with a corrosive impact on their lives. Last year, children were present at 41% of family incidents and the numbers of children affected are growing by the day, with six new intervention orders every week.

The vulnerability of these children to behavioural and learning difficulties and mental illness is profound, and the growing complexities are playing out in children's services and local classrooms across the growing catchment.

Nothing short of a paradigm shift is needed to build resilience and stop the abuse, but it must come from our community.

That is why Cardinia Shire Council and Family Life have come together with a sense of urgency in a ground-breaking Collective Impact project to prevent family violence from its root causes in our community.

What is Collective Impact?

The Collective Impact approach engages local families with lived experience of family violence with local government, community members, groups, organisations and institutions that have the same drive and commitment to reduce and prevent family violence.

It is a unique project that will hear the voices of children to help promote respectful relationships and protect children from harm.

Family Life is the Australian partner for [Map Your World](#) – a Google Map technology that supports children to share their stories and concerns on an interactive website and show young people how they can be the change agents in their communities. This technology will add to ensuring this cross-community collaboration is a bold approach to making change happen at a local level.

Who are the Partners involved?

This is a cross-community collaboration, with Family Life and Cardinia Shire providing the backbone support over the next three years, with a funding target of \$150,000 each year. Both organisations have committed funds, time and expertise. The Ross Trust is our first committed philanthropic partner.

This will fund the experienced facilitator, David Stewart, who has supported other Victorian and international community based social change, most recently the ***Geelong Ice Project***.

Family Life has many years of experience in grass roots community development and local leadership through their evaluated Creating Capable Communities program and engagement with the Collective Impact international learning community.

City of Cardinia Shire has extensive engagement with their community to support a broad participation process essential to cultural and normative change.

How can the Royal Commission help?

State Government support of \$150,000 (\$50,000 over three years) is sought to help catalyse change at the community level and reinforce the government's commitment to preventing family violence. This contribution will provide for

- Technical support for data collection and reporting as part of the developmental evaluation strategy
- External research partnership with Melbourne University Social Work Professor Marie Connolly
- Co-contribution to the Project Facilitator / Manager costs over the 3 years
- Web based project communications strategy.

These components are essential to community engagement, evaluation and outcomes measurement for public reporting and knowledge sharing to grow our wider understanding as a Victorian and Australian community about preventing family violence.

Timelines

The Project is ready to implement from June 2015 with appointment of a Project Facilitator and Manager.

Three year funding will enable Family Life to provide the back bone function and transition the project to local government for ongoing support and long term sustainability.

Lessons learned from this municipality could be shared and expanded to other local areas with high incidences of family violence.

The bleak statistics

Cardinia has the third highest reported incidence of family violence callouts in the Southern Metro Region - 45% result in charges laid

In last 12 months across Casey, Cardinia and Dandenong – one reported incident every 75 minutes

A 156% increase in family violence callouts in Cardinia since 2000