



# Preventing Violence against Women:

Stories of achievement  
from Melbourne's north

2011–2017



**WOMEN'S HEALTH  
IN THE NORTH**  
voice • choice • power



# ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

*Preventing Violence against Women: Stories of achievement from Melbourne's north* highlights key achievements and projects from the northern metropolitan region (NMR) of Melbourne, over the period 2011–2017. The region covers the municipalities of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra. As the regional women's health service, funded by the Victorian Government, WHIN leads a regional approach to preventing violence against women. WHIN has prepared this publication on behalf of our partner organisations who undertake prevention work across the NMR. The publication draws on a review of policy and practice from across the region. Organisations that are members of the Northern Metropolitan Region Preventing Violence against Women Committee (the NMR PVAW Committee) were invited to submit articles highlighting innovative projects and programs that are grounded in evidence-based practice.



Women's Health In the North acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.



Women's Health In the North acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we provide our services. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and recognise the ongoing living culture of all Aboriginal people. We express commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and our hope for reconciliation and justice.

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## FOREWORD

Violence against women has come to the fore as one of the most significant issues of our time. There is an urgent need to take action to create a gender equitable and non-violent community where women and girls are valued, respected and safe.



Preventing violence against women has been firmly on the agenda for many organisations in Melbourne's north for more than six years and there have been significant advances made in this work. Local government, health, and community organisations in the northern metropolitan region (NMR) of Melbourne have a long history of working together and have applied this approach to strengthen the work across the region. This has been evident in their commitment to *Building a Respectful Community – Preventing Violence against Women – A Strategy for Preventing Violence against Women in the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011–2016*, and the subsequent iteration, *Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017–2021*.

Organisations in the NMR have been forging ahead and trialling new approaches and techniques across many settings, including workplaces, schools, early childhood settings, sports and infrastructure, and by working directly with community members. Women's

Health In the North has led the regional approach and development of the regional strategy and evaluation, and will continue to lead and advocate for an evidence based, whole-of-community approach to primary prevention of violence against women.

This document is a retrospective look at highlights from 2011 to 2017, recognising some of the ground-breaking work that organisations are undertaking in Melbourne's north. Looking forward, we will be continuing to consolidate and strengthen the work across the region as well as expand the work with new organisations and settings.

Everyone has a role to play in preventing violence against women. I hope this document will serve to inspire, inform and ignite action to create a gender equitable and non-violent community where women and girls are valued, respected and safe.

**Helen Riseborough**  
CEO, Women's Health In the North

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“Everyone has a role to play in preventing violence against women.”

## HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Violence against women is a prevalent and serious human rights abuse that causes significant harm to individuals, families, communities and society. In Australia, one woman is killed by her partner or ex-partner every week, on average. In the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne, family violence reports to police are increasing every year, with 12,149 incidents recorded in 2015-16.

One of the earliest initiatives aimed at influencing attitudes to violence against women in Melbourne's north was the Week Without Violence Campaign, with events run by family violence workers in the NMR since 1999. In another sphere, many local governments in the region also leveraged the White Ribbon Campaign to raise awareness of violence against women, selling ribbons and holding events since 2005.

In 2007, VicHealth launched a framework for a primary prevention approach to violence against women that aimed to address the social and economic causes—identified as gender inequality and rigid gender roles—and community and health professionals in the NMR were quick to take up this progressive approach.

Awareness-raising activities gradually evolved into action to promote equal and respectful relationships between women and men and address structural gender inequality. Preventing violence against women became a dedicated role within several local government and community health services, and specific projects and plans started to be developed. In 2008, a review by WHIN identified 14 distinct projects or programs in the NMR to prevent violence against women.

WHIN, having worked to address violence against women since it formed in 1991, embraced a leadership role in advocating for primary prevention approaches. In consultation with local government, WHIN developed *Building a Respectful Community – Preventing Violence against Women – A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011–2016*. In 2012, WHIN formed the NMR PVAW Committee and in 2013 held an event where 50 organisations endorsed the vision and goals of the regional strategy.

Over the last five years, organisations across the NMR, particularly local government, community

health and community service organisations, have significantly advanced work to prevent violence against women and develop a shared understanding of primary prevention. In 2013, 81 per cent of NMR local government and community health services included prevention of violence against women actions in their 2013–2017 public health plans. In 2016, a review by WHIN found that the work to prevent violence against women in many organisations had become so integrated that it was difficult to put a figure on the number of distinct projects or programs, however, it is estimated at more than 60.

Advances at a national level have included the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, the formation of the national prevention agency, Our Watch, and the release of *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (Our Watch et al., 2015). The Victorian Government has been especially active in addressing family violence, with the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015, followed by *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's plan for change* (2016), *Safe and Strong: A Victorian gender equality strategy* (2016), and *Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* (2017).

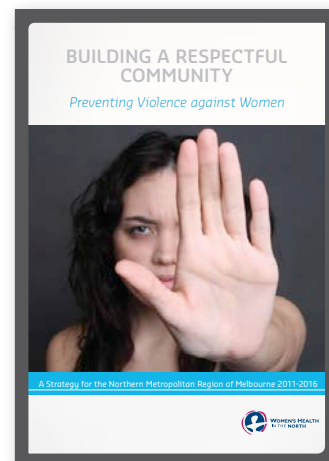
In 2017, WHIN worked with the NMR PVAW Committee to develop *Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017–2021*, the second iteration of the regional prevention strategy. Grounded in the evidence from *Change the Story*, the new strategy seeks to consolidate and advance the region's work to prevent violence against women. Organisations across the NMR will continue to work together to achieve the shared goals of *Building a Respectful Community 2017–2021*.

# A REGIONAL APPROACH: HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2011–2017

## THE NORTH COMMITS TO BUILDING A RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY

In 2011, Women's Health In the North launched *Building a Respectful Community – Preventing Violence against Women – A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011–2016*. This was the first regional strategy to prevent violence against women in Melbourne's north and provided a framework, rationale and guidance for organisations working on this issue. An event held in 2013 brought together 50 organisations to endorse the vision and goals of the regional strategy and commit to taking action to prevent violence against women. All organisations included in this publication were signatories to the strategy.

For information on the new regional strategy (2017–2021) see page 17.



## Organisational Commitment and Investment



**3 councils** included a commitment to gender equity in their 2013–2017 Council Plans.



included actions to prevent violence against women in their 2013–2017 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.



have a specific plan to prevent violence against women/family violence.



have a specific gender equity strategy.



**COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**



**PRIMARY CARE PARTNERSHIPS**

...included **PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN** as a priority area in their 2013–2017 Integrated Health Promotion Plans.



## Key Areas of Action across the North

### WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS

Moreland, Darebin and Whittlesea Councils, Dianella Health

### COMMUNITY MOBILISATION PROJECTS

Good People Act Now, Hume CREW, Hamdel Project, Living in Harmony, Moreland Council grants

### RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION

Good Samaritan Inn, Northern CASA, Merri Health, Plenty Valley CH, healthAbility, most councils

### GENDER EQUITABLE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Whittlesea, Darebin and Moreland Councils

### GENDER EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Majority; especially Merri Health and Yarra and Whittlesea Councils

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Whittlesea, Moreland, Darebin and Yarra Councils

### INTERFAITH PROJECTS

Darebin Council

### SOCIAL MARKETING

All councils and community health services

### EVALUATION

Inner North West PCP's INCEPT Project



# A REGIONAL APPROACH: HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTION AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2011–2017

## Evaluation of the Regional Strategy

In 2016, an evaluation of *Preventing Violence against Women – A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011–2016* and the regional approach was conducted by Dr Deborah Western from Monash University's Gender Leadership and Social Sustainability Research Unit. It reinforced the value of having a regional approach and noted the NMR PVAW Committee and the support and leadership of WHIN as key successes.

“Overall it is great to have a northern regional strategy and approach to guide the work as well as a supportive network of peers with which to sound out and share ideas.”

“It has been very helpful in our prevention work in the region to refer to the regional strategy as a guiding document. We have confidence about many of the organisations we partner with knowing that they are also members of the PVAW Committee and/or signatories to the strategy.”

## The NMR PVAW Committee



**MEMBER  
ORGANISATIONS**

**Has met quarterly since  
2012 (22 regular meetings).**



**of prevention workers**  
surveyed said the NMR  
PVAW Committee was the  
most helpful aspect of the  
'regional approach'.

## Participants summed up the Committee's importance in this way:

“Ensuring the issue remains on the agenda, building knowledge and skills, keeping us all informed and up-to-date, [providing] reassurance and advice re own work agenda, [and] contributing to creating an authorising environment around the issue.” (2016 evaluation participant)

“The PVAW Committee has provided a network and home or base for the workers to regularly and consistently gather and ensure cross exchange of information, but further it has help create a place and space for some of this rich knowledge and practice outcomes to be “held”.” (2016 evaluation participant)



## Regional Events and Campaigns:

**‘THE NORTH COMMITS TO BUILDING A RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY’** (2013):



... including **44** from the leadership level (CEOs, directors, general managers or mayors).

**‘LEADING CHANGE FROM WITHIN’** (2015):



... including **20** from the leadership level.

- Week Without Violence Campaign
- 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign
- Joint submissions to the Royal Commission into Family Violence
- Joint submission to the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy

## The Role of Women’s Health In the North:

“ WHIN provides expertise in the space of PVAW and [has] an excellent approach to leading this work [...] it’s powerful and it’s so important that it comes from a women’s feminist organisation. ” (2016 evaluation participant)

“ WHIN has the expertise, and dedicated resources by staff and materials, to propel other organisations and groups to more eagerly, and easily, make the steps of investing and prioritising this work. ” (2016 evaluation participant)

# STORIES OF ACHIEVEMENT

The following pages describe a range of innovative and evidence-based projects that contribute to preventing violence against women across Melbourne's north. These articles were submitted by members of the Northern Metropolitan Region Preventing Violence against Women Committee. Please note that this is a collection of highlights; beyond these pages there is a vast amount of other work occurring.

All projects in this publication address one or more of the Essential Actions to Prevent Violence against Women as outlined in *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (Our Watch, ANROWS & VicHealth, 2015):

- 1** Challenge condoning violence against women.
- 2** Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships.
- 3** Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- 4** Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- 5** Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

The actions addressed by each project are noted using the circled numbers that refer to the actions listed above.

## **2** Merri Health Gender Equity Project

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'Gender Equity, Respect and Non-Violence in Merri Health' is a comprehensive workplace project that aims to promote gender equity and make the organisation a more equitable, safe and inclusive workplace.

Merri Health developed the project in recognition that gender inequality is the key driver of violence against women and that workplaces are an important setting for addressing attitudes, behaviours and systems that foster inequity.

Established in 2013, the project began by developing and implementing audit tools, including a staff survey, policy audits and physical environment (site) audits. This provided baseline data and informed a two-year action plan.

Key actions have included gender equity training for staff, an extensive communications strategy, increased access to baby change tables, improved lighting in car parks and updates of staff policies. Merri Health is currently working on completing the follow-up audit.

### Key learnings:

- A champion in human resources and/or senior management is critical to drive organisational change.
- Providing regular updates and ongoing communication to all staff is important for maintaining momentum.
- Incorporating processes into everyday tasks helps to build sustainability and embed changes.
- A business case and action plan with specific and practical tasks can assist progress.
- A reflective logbook is helpful for maintaining skills and knowledge during staff turnover.

“The process of undertaking such a comprehensive project in the workplace has ensured that gender equality is on everyone's radar, and that making our workplace more equitable has been a team effort.”  
*Nigel Fidgeon, Merri Health CEO*

## 1 Hume CREW

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The Hume Community for Respect and Equality of Women (Hume CREW) is an alliance of community members, stakeholders and professionals from different sectors working together to build a culture of respect and equality for women in the City of Hume.

Initiated by Dianella Health in October 2015, with the support of Hume City Council and Women's Health In the North, the Hume CREW seeks to prevent violence against women through a whole-of-community approach. Through community mobilisation and education, the Hume CREW seeks to address the five gendered drivers of violence against women as outlined in *Change the Story*.

Hume CREW was launched as part of the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' in 2016. The launch saw 11 speakers from sports clubs, youth groups and community organisations sharing behaviour and attitude changing activities to 'strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations



among women and men, girls and boys' and 'foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles'.

Hume CREW has mobilised action across different settings in the City of Hume including sporting clubs, women's groups, youth groups and community organisations. Various strategies have been used, including education, training, workshops, print messaging and social media campaigns.

More recently, Dianella Health and Sunbury Community Health met with the intention of establishing a Sunbury chapter of Hume CREW to strengthen this alliance.

## 1 Good People Act Now

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Good People Act Now (GPAN) is a youth-led prevention of violence against women project coordinated by Banksia Gardens Community Services in Broadmeadows. The program was launched in 2014 and each year delivers youth action training to new participants, supporting young people to become champions for prevention in their communities.

Over the past year 'GPANers' have delivered numerous awareness raising actions in Hume. These included performances at local schools and events, facilitation of 'gender equity and inclusion in sport sessions' to youth sporting clubs in Hume, a youth forum for the 16 Days of Action against Gender-Based Violence campaign, and numerous other creative advocacy activities.

The 2017 team completed their training in May, covering topics such as: introduction to prevention of violence against women, gender norms and stereotypes, male privilege, respectful relationships,



responding to disclosures, and bystander action. Participants were also supported to grow their skills in public speaking.

For their first project, the new team are creating an interactive film on the dangers of sexting. The film will feature on the GPAN website and serve as a resource to educate other young people on bystander action. Check out GPAN's website (newly updated) at [www.goodpeopleactnow.org.au](http://www.goodpeopleactnow.org.au) and find them on Facebook at 'GPAN Project'.

“It was great to be around other young people who were passionate about the same issues as me. Even though we were talking about some really intense and sometimes scary topics, I always felt safe, and always had a good time.” GPAN participant



## 2 5 Levelling the Playing Field in Darebin

Local government plays a vital role in addressing the gendered drivers of violence against women. Darebin City Council has a specific focus on increasing participation in sport and recreation for women and girls. This is part of Darebin's work to support the right of women to engage and participate fully and equally in all aspects of life. By 2020, Darebin aims to achieve the following targets:

- A 15 per cent increase in female membership in organised sport
- At least 30 per cent of organised sport participants are women or girls.

In Victoria, around 9 per cent of females take part in organised sport (Australian Sports Commission, 2010). Darebin City Council aims to increase the availability of formal and informal participation opportunities, with a focus on providing free and low-cost sport and physical activity options. The *Darebin Leisure Strategy 2015–2020 Action Plan* guides this work.

Key initiatives include:

**Darebin's Women's In Sport Network**, a council-supported network that informs the council about female sport and leisure initiatives.

**Darebin's Sporting Fees, Charges and Occupancy Agreement Policy**, which applies appropriate fee subsidies to clubs that implement strategies to increase access and equity.

**Levelling the Playing Field**, a resource that highlights the benefits of involving women and girls in sport and recreation.

**Audits of sports and recreation facilities**, to analyse and make recommendations on improvements that will increase participation of women.



## 2 3 4 5 Gender Equity in Design Guidelines

The City of Whittlesea's *Gender Equity in Design Guidelines* is a new resource to inform the design of community facilities. Developed and trialled over several years, it brings together an understanding of community facility settings, key design elements and gender equity principles. It provides guidance on how to apply a gender equity lens during the feasibility, master planning and design phases of new community facilities, or in the redevelopment of existing ones.

Building design can have a significant impact on the capacity of a community facility to be inclusive, safe, welcoming and respectful. Bad design can disproportionately impact women and girls by either directly or indirectly encouraging their exclusion from community spaces. It can also contribute to the reinforcement of gender stereotypes. Good design enables engagement and participation for all.

Local government has a pivotal role to play in ensuring that community spaces are designed to promote equitable access to community resources and are conducive to equitable participation in community life. These guidelines will be embedded into the City of Whittlesea's community facility planning and design processes and provided to design consultants and construction companies tendering for projects.

The guidelines aim to:

- Provide clarity on how to apply a gender lens when designing community facilities.
- Increase capacity of local government to consistently influence design outcomes for gender equity.
- Develop a shared language (among council departments and external design consultants and construction companies) that incorporates gender equity principles but can be practically applied in design and building.

“ Building design can have a significant impact on the capacity of a community facility to be inclusive, safe, welcoming and respectful. ”

# 1 Whittlesea CALD Family Violence Project

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Established in 2013, The Whittlesea Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Family Violence Project (WCFVP) developed an integrated, place-based approach to preventing and responding to family violence in the City of Whittlesea. Coordinated by Whittlesea Community Connections, the project brought together nine services and organisations in an interagency Steering Group.

The Steering Group designed a localised model that works across the continuum of prevention, early intervention and response to address family violence.

The model consists of six key elements (shown in the diagram below). Each element has its own set of strategies that are implemented in an integrated and coordinated way.

Two elements of the WCFVP that have been particularly successful include the CALD Women's Grants Program and the Hamdel Project – see boxed text.

The strength of the WCFVP is the integrated, flexible and community-informed model design. The WCFVP is currently seeking funding to continue rollout of its family violence model.

## 1 CALD Women's Grants Program

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These grants support the establishment and growth of groups that build social connection and encourage participation. The groups provide a safe, welcoming space for women to share their experiences and support each other to connect to services and support, particularly in relation to family violence.

## Hamdel Project

In 2014, a consortium of Whittlesea Community Connections, Salvation Army Crossroads and Women's Health In the North received Our Watch funding for the Hamdel Project. This project worked with the local Iranian community to build community capacity to prevent violence against women. Specifically, it used a women-centred planning model and a community working group to strengthen knowledge about gender equity and respectful relationships. Activities included empowering women as preventing violence against women advocates, a respectful relationships soccer program with young men, and family activity days. For more information see *Community based prevention of violence against women and their children: A toolkit for practitioners* (Our Watch, 2016).



## 1 Collingwood Living In Harmony

'Collingwood Living In Harmony' was one of the first projects in Australia to apply a place-based, community strengthening approach to the primary prevention of violence against women in a culturally and linguistically diverse community.

The project was delivered by cohealth (formerly North Yarra Community Health) at the Collingwood Public Housing Estate over 2011–2014. Its goal was to 'empower culturally diverse communities on the Collingwood Public Housing Estate to promote non-violent norms and to value equal and respectful relationships between men and women, boys and girls'.

The project recruited 16 facilitators from the Vietnamese, Chinese and Horn of Africa communities, who participated in an extensive training program, delivered by DVRCV and Victoria University. Drawing on their training, the facilitators ran 23 activities, engaging more than 800 community members. These included



information sessions, art-based activities, special events (such as White Ribbon Day, 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence, and International Women's Day), health programs, and women's empowerment activities (such as car maintenance and gym days).

The project found that community members engaged by the facilitators reported an increase in understanding of respectful relationships and gender equity. Another key success was that the project had built the skills and capacity of the facilitators to take an ongoing leadership role in their communities. There were also many challenges, including tailoring initiatives to each cultural community, and engaging with a population where many people are occupied with the challenges of daily life.

## 2 Women's Economic Equality

Access to economic resources is a key determinant of women's health and wellbeing and directly addresses the gendered drivers of violence against women. Women's economic capability is a key priority area for Women's Health In the North (WHIN). This work involves tackling the structural economic discrimination that women face as well as working directly with women to increase their financial literacy.

Over 2012–2015, WHIN worked with Women's Health Goulburn North East on the *Living Longer on Less: Women, Paid Work and Superannuation in Victoria* research project. The report built the evidence base about the inequities women experience in terms of superannuation and poverty in retirement. This report was recognised as an important piece of evidence in the 2015 Senate Inquiry into Economic Security for Women in Retirement.

On the individual level, WHIN has also been working to promote women's independence and decision-making through financial literacy programs. This has included the development of *Managing Money: Every Woman's Business – A guide to increasing women's financial capability*, a resource for community educators

that provides financial information, activities and skill development tools.

More recently, WHIN has started a new project, 'Let's Talk Money', which will draw on the *Managing Money* resource to train bilingual community educators to deliver financial literacy education sessions in their communities. The program aims to increase women's capacity to access financial services and understand their financial and consumer rights.





### 3 Promoting Healthy 4 Gender Norms in 5 the Early Years

The early years are a vital life stage for preventing violence against women work to occur. This is a critical time when gender roles and stereotypical notions of what it means to be a girl or a boy are shaped, and when positive influences on children's and families understanding of gender norms can most easily be achieved.

Promoting positive and non-restrictive ideas about gender in the early years creates a necessary foundation for children to grow and develop their ideas and understanding about gender and to learn about equal and respectful relationships.

Several projects in Melbourne's north have been working to address gender norms in the early years. In particular, a project between Darebin City Council and Women's Health In the North has developed a new resource, *Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years: A resource for local government*. Funded by a Victorian Government grant, the new resource provides information and tools to create gender equitable early years services and is supported by a training video and reflective practice questions. These resources are relevant for local government, educators and early years professionals.

Moreland Council also worked with Women's Health In the North to deliver staff training and a forum for parents and community members on gender norms and stereotypes in early childhood. This work aimed to highlight the gendered nature of children's lives, and how we can all work to undo some of the constraints and limitations that gender stereotypes place on them.



### Active Dads Project in Moreland

The Active Dads Project in Moreland is a partnership between Kildonan UnitingCare, Merri Health and Moreland Council. The project's objectives are to increase the skills, confidence and levels of active engagement between maternal and child health nurses and fathers and to increase new parents' capacity to maintain a positive relationship and effectively deal with challenges during the transition to parenthood.

The project has run professional capacity-building sessions for maternal and child health nurses to promote father-inclusive initiatives in their work with families, such as father-friendly displays in centres and invitations to both mum and dad for visits and group activities.

A key feature of the project has been Fathers' Nights, co-facilitated by a nurse and a male facilitator, as part of new parent groups. A training manual for Fathers' Nights is now being developed. Further, Moreland Council has committed ongoing funding to contract male co-facilitators to continue Fathers' Nights and related activities in Moreland after the Active Dads Project ends in September 2017.

Kildonan UnitingCare has developed a website with information on father-inclusive practice: <https://www.kildonan.org.au/programs-and-services/child-youth-and-family-support/fathering/>

#### Comments from Fathers' Night participants:

*"It was good to hear about dads' experiences and hopes for the future."* (mum)

*"It was just great to talk and listen to others experiences, we're not alone!"* (dad)





## 1 A Whole-school Approach to Respectful Relationships

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Working with young people to promote positive, equal and respectful relationships is well documented as one of the most important areas of work to prevent violence against women. Good Samaritan Inn established its Respectful Relationships in Schools project in 2012 and has worked in-depth with six schools across the Darebin, Whittlesea and Nillumbik municipalities.

The key elements of the approach include: three-year partnerships with schools; use of a strength-based, critical pedagogy approach; co-design to accommodate each school's specific settings, resources and needs; and an unwavering commitment to a whole-of-school approach via leadership level strategic planning and capacity building.

In evaluation, Good Samaritan Inn's partner schools identify benefits that impact their strategic planning, school vision, values, staff capacity, policies, procedures, and

curriculum development. This creates the environment in which curriculum delivery is supported and can succeed.

Project cycles enable comparisons between different school settings, for example: between faith-based and state secondary schools, and between single-sex and co-educational schools. Catholic schools Parade College, Santa Maria College and St Monica's College participated in the project from 2012-2015.

State secondary schools Diamond Valley College, Eltham High School (pictured) and St Helena Secondary College are participating in the project from 2016 - 2019. These partnerships were brokered with assistance from healthAbility and Nillumbik Shire Council and enable a place-based approach to be built into the project design. To view a short film about the project, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAbX0hEFDCs&feature=youtu.be>

## 1 Preventing Gendered Violence with Schools

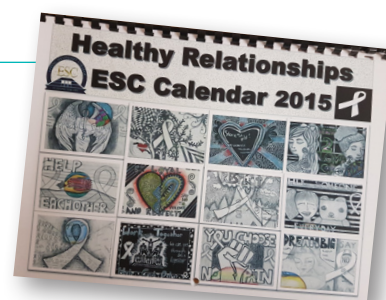
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Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (NCASA) has been providing its Respectful Relationships Program to students across Whittlesea, Darebin, Banyule and Nillumbik for the past 10 years.

As one particular example, in 2014, collaboration with Epping Secondary College resulted in a series of preventing violence against women activities which incorporated the whole school. As part of Week Without Violence that year, NCASA facilitated an activity with Year 10 students inviting them to decorate t-shirts using slogans they had created from the Respectful Relationships Program. Examples included 'Together we Stand, Together we make a Difference', 'Her Dress does not Mean Yes' and 'Epping Secondary Stands against Violence'.

Students from Years 7 and 8 were then keen to become involved. NCASA and Epping Secondary staff worked with students to develop art work which rapidly evolved into a student-designed 2015 calendar with a clear preventing violence against women theme. These activities created energy for a full day of activities for White Ribbon Day, involving students, staff, Victoria Police and NCASA.



“The Respectful Relationships Program helped me learn what I want out of a relationship and how I should be treated. I also learnt all about the support offered and that there is always a helping hand.” *student feedback*



## 1 Reclaim the Night

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Reclaim the Night is an annual international event that aims to empower all participants, while protesting against violence against women. The Reclaim the Night movement today is focused on empowering women to come together and change community attitudes. Local women (including family violence survivors) from the West Heidelberg community identified the need to make a strong community statement about violence against women. In 2014, they started a local Reclaim the Night walk through the streets of West Heidelberg which is now held annually.

The walk protests against violence to all and aims to promote a respectful community free of violence. The walk finishes at Banyule Community Health where the participants enjoy a barbeque together. The event is open to all who support peace and safety in the community, especially a women's right to walk safely at any time of the day or night.



## 1 Week Without Violence

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The Week without Violence is a worldwide community campaign that occurs in October each year that aims to raise awareness of family violence and challenge the condoning of violence against women. Across Melbourne's north, the campaign also incorporates the Clothesline Project, an activity that allows victims and others affected by family violence to paint messages on t-shirts to be displayed across the area.

The Neighbourhood Justice Centre in Collingwood has run Week Without Violence activities for the last five years, including t-shirt painting workshops. In 2016, in collaboration with community partners, it set up a series of 'pop up' information stalls across public housing estates in the City of Yarra. The stalls provided safety resources and other community information to residents, with the primary focus to provide support and information about family violence. Partners included the Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria Police, Berry Street, cohealth, Brotherhood of St Laurence and Wilson's Security staff.



## INCEPT (Inner North West Collaborative Evaluation Project)

INCEPT is a collaborative evaluation project of the Inner North West Primary Care Partnership. It aims to strengthen evaluation practice across the catchment through a consistent approach, and to develop evidence on the effectiveness of local initiatives to prevent violence against women. The primary focus is to develop a joint evaluation framework that supports

agencies to evaluate their initiatives. The framework includes shared indicators that agencies can use to collect data. Over time, this will create a local evidence base to inform future initiatives to prevent violence against women. For more information, see the INCEPT Evaluation Guide at <http://inwpcp.org.au/current-activities/prevention/incept-evaluation-guide-mar-2016>.



## 2 Yarra Gender Equity Strategy

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The vision of Yarra's *Gender Equity Strategy 2016–2021* is for Yarra City Council to be an organisation which positively and proactively demonstrates a gender-inclusive culture that encourages leadership, participation and contribution from a diverse workforce. The Strategy provides a clear commitment to a workplace where women and men are treated equally and are provided opportunities that encourage and support their professional development, growth and leadership.

### Key actions for 2016–2021 include:

- Seeking a leadership commitment to develop KPIs for all managers which prioritise their commitment to achieving gender equity at Yarra.
- Developing a suite of organisational policies on flexible work practices and procedures, including flexible work policies, parental leave, purchased leave and gender balance on all selection panels.
- Including gender equality as a key message for regular staff communications.
- Developing partnerships with large organisations in Yarra to address gender inequality in our community.
- Building on Yarra's staff mentoring program, with a particular focus on targeted leadership opportunities for women via secondments and acting roles.
- Conducting training and development, including unconscious bias in workplaces, family violence as a workplace issue, and gender equality awareness.



“The vision of *Yarra's Gender Equity Strategy 2016–2021* is for Yarra City Council to be an organisation which positively and proactively demonstrates a gender-inclusive culture that encourages leadership, participation and contribution from a diverse workforce.”

## 1 Establishing the Foundations for Prevention

Your Community Health (previously Darebin Community Health) has been working to establish the foundations for preventing violence against women work across the organisation for a number of years. Some of the important ground work includes making an organisational commitment, staff training and developing policies and procedures that create safe environments for women and children. In 2009, 'preventing violence against women' was made a priority in the organisation's Integrated Health Promotion Plan, and an internal Preventing Violence Against Women Working Group was established, which comprises male and female representatives at all staff levels.

In 2013, Your Community Health approved a *Family Violence Support Policy*, developed by the working group with the human resources. The policy demonstrates the organisation's commitment to create a safe

environment in which workers feel safe to disclose, and ensure that all workers can do their job in safety. It includes information about the roles of team leaders and managers, flexible leave arrangements, family violence leave entitlements and support services. Following this, the working group developed a *Responding to Family Violence Policy* and Procedure for working with clients, which was launched in conjunction with a mandatory 'Identifying and responding to Family Violence' professional development session for all staff.

While these policies are focussed on response and early intervention, they are important safety measures to put in place before undertaking further primary prevention work. Through the process of developing these policies, the organisational commitment can be articulated and key conversations started among staff.

# FUTURE COMMITMENT 2017–2021

In June 2017, organisations across the Melbourne's north stepped up their commitment to preventing violence against women by formally joining the Building a Respectful Community Partnership and signing on to *Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017–2021*. The second iteration of the regional strategy to prevent violence against women, developed collaboratively with the partnership, provides an updated review of the evidence base and policy context, and strengthens the focus on a primary prevention approach. As part of their commitment to *Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017–2021*, each partner organisation will be taking action under all five goals.

## **Vision:**

A gender equitable, safe and respectful community.

## **Mission:**

To work together across the northern metropolitan region of Melbourne to prevent violence against women.

## **Goals:**

1. Our workplaces are gender equitable, safe and inclusive.
2. Our services and facilities are gender equitable, safe and inclusive.
3. Our communities and neighbourhoods are gender equitable, safe and inclusive.
4. Our communications are gender equitable and inclusive.
5. A wide range of sectors and organisations take responsibility for preventing violence against women.

For a copy of *Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017–2021*, and to find out more, go to [www.whin.org.au](http://www.whin.org.au)

## **The Building a Respectful Community Partnership:**

Women's Health In the North (lead)  
Banyule City Council  
Darebin City Council  
Hume City Council  
Moreland City Council  
Nillumbik Shire Council  
Whittlesea City Council  
Yarra City Council  
Banyule Community Health  
cohealth  
Your Community Health (previously Darebin Community Health)  
healthAbility  
Merri Health  
North Richmond Community Health  
Plenty Valley Community Health  
Sunbury Community Health  
Whittlesea Community Connections  
Banksia Gardens Community Services  
Good Samaritan Inn  
Austin Health (Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault)  
Hume Whittlesea Primary Care Partnership  
Inner North West Primary Care Partnership  
North East Primary Care Partnership  
Eastern Melbourne PHN  
La Trobe University







**WOMEN'S HEALTH  
IN THE NORTH**



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