

PREVENTING
VIOLENCE
TOGETHER

Western Region Strategy to
Prevent Violence Against Women

**Preventing
Violence
Together 2030:**

Western Region
Strategy to
Prevent Violence
Against Women

Acknowledgements

The Preventing Violence Together partnership acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, the people of the Kulin Nation, and we pay our respects to Elders and community members past and present. We recognise the prevalence of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is related to and compounded by the impacts of colonisation, ongoing trauma from displacement and dispossession from traditional lands and kinship groups, the removal of children from families, racial discrimination, and institutionalised violence (Department of Planning and Community Development 2008).

Preventing Violence Together 2030: Western Region Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women is a truly collaborative effort, and would not be possible without the ongoing commitment and hard work of partner organisations. We would like to thank the members of the Preventing Violence Together Executive Governance Group and Implementation Committee, representing all current partner organisations, for their hard work in developing and implementing the strategy:

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Cohealth	Moonee Valley City Council
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Hobsons Bay City Council	Western Bulldogs
Inner North West Primary Care Partnership	Western Integrated Family Violence Committee
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Executive summary

Men’s violence against women in Australia is a pervasive human rights violation, with 39 per cent of women having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a male perpetrator (Cox 2016). Men’s violence against women has a profound impact, causing numerous poor health, social, cultural and economic outcomes for women, their children and our community.

Violence against women is a gendered problem, with the majority of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and family violence in Australia perpetrated by men against women (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012). It is a problem rooted in gender-based power inequalities between women and men. Importantly, violence against women is not inevitable; it is preventable. By taking action to redress the gendered drivers of violence against women, namely gender inequality, we can predict the occurrence of violence and work to prevent it (Our Watch et al. 2015)

Preventing Violence Together is the regional partnership and strategy that guides the primary prevention of men’s violence against women across Melbourne’s west. Established in 2010, it was Victoria’s first primary prevention regional partnership to prevent violence against women. Evaluation findings have shown that the partnership functions as an effective mechanism for realising its vision by providing partners with an enabling and coordinating context to undertake primary prevention actions in and across the region (Women’s Health West 2016).

Building on the momentum and achievements of the first regional plan (2010–2016), *Preventing Violence Together 2030: Western Region Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women* draws on key evidence and theoretical frameworks to ensure a strategic and evidence-based approach to preventing men’s violence against women across Melbourne’s west. Preventing Violence Together 2030 also seeks to align with key state and federal government policy frameworks and platforms related to advancing gender equality and preventing violence against women.

Consultation with partners, specialist services and communities of interest informed the development of the strategy, to ensure it is relevant and tailored to the unique needs and context of Melbourne’s western region. For more information about the consultation process and development of the strategy, please refer to the accompanying publication, *Preventing Violence Together 2030: Western Region Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women — Background paper*.

Preventing Violence Together 2030 includes a variety of mutually reinforcing strategies to be implemented within partner organisations and in collaboration with communities. All actions in the strategy are evidence based and work to redress the gendered drivers of men’s violence against women. The strategy will be implemented through an accompanying annual action plan and evaluation plan, and governed by the Preventing Violence Together partnership’s Executive Governance Group.

Importantly, all strategy partners have a key role to play in preventing violence against women and advancing gender equity. This new regional strategy marks an increased commitment across partner organisations to undertake the long-term work required to prevent and eliminate men’s violence against women. Preventing Violence Together 2030 launches a new strategic, coordinated, action-based approach to preventing violence against women across Melbourne’s west.

How to use this strategy

There are a variety of ways partner organisations can use Preventing Violence Together 2030 to guide and support their work to prevent violence against women, including:

- As an advocacy tool to provide an evidence-informed rationale to putting preventing violence against women on their organisation's agenda
- To engage organisational leaders in preventing violence against women and advancing gender equity
- Drawing on the goals, objectives and strategies of Preventing Violence Together 2030 to guide their organisation's primary prevention work
- Referencing the partnership and Preventing Violence Together 2030 strategy in their organisation's strategic and operational plans, Municipal Public Health Plans, and Integrated Health Promotion plans
- Working together as a region through committing to initiatives in the Preventing Violence Together 2030 annual action plans
- Encouraging other organisations in Melbourne's west to join the Preventing Violence Together partnership, to support an integrated and coordinated regional approach to preventing violence against women

Vision

Women and girls across Melbourne's west live free from violence and discrimination and have equal status, rights, opportunities, representation and respect.

Principles

Preventing Violence Together 2030 is guided by the following principles.

Primary prevention

Violence against women is not inevitable; it is preventable. The partnership commits to undertaking primary prevention action to prevent violence against women from occurring.

Human rights

Violence against women is a human rights violation. The partnership supports the right of all individuals to live free from violence and discrimination regardless of their sex, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, age, ability or religion.

Gender equity

Gender inequality is both a cause and consequence of men's violence against women. The partnership commits to redress the key gendered drivers of men's violence against women and the realisation of gender equality, through undertaking a gender equity approach.

Gender-transformative practice

The partnership commits to gender-transformative practice, which seeks to actively examine, challenge and transform attitudes, roles, structures, norms and practices that reinforce gender inequality, and to strengthen those that support gender equality.

Intersectionality

Intersecting systems of privilege and oppression (such as sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia, ageism or transphobia) increase the risk, severity and impacts of violence against particular women. The partnership commits to ending men's violence against all women, and to applying an intersectional approach to initiatives seeking to prevent men's violence against women. This includes tailored and responsive strategies for specific groups of women that, due to compounding forms of discrimination and power inequalities, are at greater risk of violence and its impacts.

Cultural safety

The partnership commit to cultural safety and working in equal partnership with the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the primary prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Evidence-based practice

Evidence-based practice is informed by rigorous evidence, research and theory. The partnership is committed to evidence-based practice, collective impact and contributing to the primary prevention evidence base through effective monitoring and evaluation efforts.

Collaboration and participation

The partnership acknowledges that to prevent violence against women we must work together in partnership with the communities we serve, and undertake collaborative and participatory processes to share our knowledge, skills, resources and influence.

Sustainability

The partnership recognises that to transform the deeply entrenched structures, norms, practices and attitudes that perpetuate violence against women, long-term and sustainable work is essential.

Accountability

The partnership is accountable to and informed by women's lived experiences of violence, sexism and gender inequality, as well as accountable to one another and the communities and individuals with whom we work.

Goals, objectives and strategies

The Preventing Violence Together partnership works together to build and maintain strong relationships with partners and communities across Melbourne’s west to achieve the following goals.

Goal: Eliminate the norms, practices and structures that condone men’s violence against women

Objective 1: Increase awareness and understanding of gender equality and the primary prevention of violence against women among individuals, organisations and the community

Strategy 1.1: Participate in evidence-based campaigns that increase awareness and understanding of violence against women and gender equality, including the application of a gender equity approach to campaigns that redress women’s experiences of racism, ableism, ageism, homophobia and transphobia.

Strategy 1.2: Develop initiatives that increase individual, organisational and community understanding of the links between gender inequality and men’s violence against women.

Strategy 1.3: Partner with communities and specialist organisations to co-design activities that increase awareness and understanding of gender equality and prevention of men’s violence against women with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and women of diverse gender and sexual identities.

Objective 2: Decrease violence-supportive attitudes, norms and practices among organisations and the community, that condone violence against women and perpetuate gender inequality

Strategy 2.1: Develop resources and activities that build the capacity of individuals, communities and organisations to understand and challenge myths about violence against women and victim-blaming.

Strategy 2.2: Identify and support community leaders to drive community actions that advance gender equality and challenge violence-supportive attitudes, norms and practices.

Strategy 2.3: Develop initiatives to build the knowledge, skills and capacity of individuals, communities and organisations to take bystander action to challenge sexism and the condoning of violence against women.

Goal: Promote and support women’s decision-making and independence

Objective 3: Increase women’s representation in leadership and decision-making roles in workplaces, community organisations, civic life and relationships

Strategy 3.1: Undertake strategies to increase women’s opportunities, skills and resources to participate in decision-making and leadership positions in organisations, local councils and community leadership roles.

Strategy 3.2: Work with communities and specialist organisations to develop initiatives that increase the leadership skills and opportunities of women with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and women of diverse gender and sexual identities.

Strategy 3.3: Implement gender equity strategies that redress structural barriers to women’s leadership and decision-making, including unconscious gender bias in the workplace.

Strategy 3.4: Develop primary prevention initiatives that are informed by and accountable to the leadership, lived experience and expertise of women in Melbourne’s west.

Objective 4: Redress structural and societal barriers to women’s independence and full economic, social and civic participation

Strategy 4.1: Develop gender equity strategies to redress the gender pay gap and barriers to women’s economic participation.

Strategy 4.2: Undertake initiatives that recognise and celebrate women’s and girl’s leadership, achievements and diversity.

Strategy 4.3: Develop strategies to redress the systems and structures that prevent the independent, full and active participation of a diverse range of women across a range of settings including education, employment, sports, and community and health sectors.

Goal: Challenge rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

Objective 5: Strengthen the commitment and capacity of individuals, communities and organisations to challenge rigid gender roles and gender stereotypes

Strategy 5.1: Work with local councils, community health services, primary care partnerships and other organisations to challenge gender stereotypes, including in organisational media and communications.

Strategy 5.2: Develop resources and undertake advocacy to challenge the objectification, sexualisation and denigration of women in media, advertising and popular culture.

Strategy 5.3: Engage with communities and community leaders to develop prevention activities that increase understanding of, and capacity to challenge, rigid gender roles and stereotypes.

Objective 6: Promote transformative notions of masculinity and femininity that support equality between women and men across organisations and the community

Strategy 6.1: Implement strategies and programs to promote gender-equitable parenting and caring practices among families.

Strategy 6.2: Work with individuals, organisations and communities to build understanding of the benefits, opportunities and capacity to promote transformative, healthy and diverse masculinities and femininities.

Strategy 6.3: Undertake prevention activities that support and promote the gender-equitable division of unpaid care and domestic labour, among families and households.

Goal: Strengthen and promote positive, equal, gender-equitable, respectful relationships

Objective 7: Strengthen environments, cultures and capacity among individuals, organisations and communities that promote gender-equitable, respectful relationships

Strategy 7.1: Collaborate with regional partners to support the Victorian Government's effective implementation of respectful relationships education in education settings in Melbourne's west.

Strategy 7.2: Develop training and resources to build the skills and knowledge of individuals and communities to promote gender-equitable, respectful relationships.

Strategy 7.3: Engage with workplaces, sports clubs, arts and community organisations to develop structures, policies, programs and practices that promote gender equality and gender-equitable, respectful relationships.

Strategy 7.4: Work with partner organisations to build commitment and capacity to support cultural safety in undertaking primary prevention initiatives.

Objective 8: Decrease masculine norms, cultures and practices that accept and normalise disrespect, discrimination and violence against women among individuals, organisations, industries and communities

Strategy 8.1: Implement programs and strategies in traditionally male-dominated settings and workplaces to advance gender equity and prevent violence against women.

Strategy 8.2: Develop initiatives to increase men's capacity and commitment as allies in preventing men's violence against women and advancing gender equity.

Goal: Normalise gender equality in theory, practice and public discourse

Objective 9: Increase the commitment and capacity of organisations to undertake a whole-of-organisation approach to preventing violence against women and advancing gender equity

Strategy 9.1: Support organisations to develop organisation-wide policies, strategies and initiatives for gender equity and/or prevention of violence against women, to drive whole-of-organisational change.

Strategy 9.2: Develop and implement training on gender equity and prevention of violence against women to increase workforce commitment and capacity to take primary prevention action.

Strategy 9.3: Develop initiatives to build organisational leaders’ capacity for and commitment to advancing gender equity and preventing violence against women, to drive workplace and community change.

Strategy 9.4: Support organisations to develop tools and mechanisms to monitor progress towards gender equity and prevention of violence against women goals, such as gender audits, gender equity staff attitude surveys, gender-responsive budgeting, and collection of sex and gender-identity disaggregated data.

Goal: Contribute to the evidence base for the primary prevention of violence against women

Objective 10: Build and strengthen Preventing Violence Together as an effective and sustainable regional partnership for the primary prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equity

Strategy 10.1: Implement strong partnership governance and implementation structures to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach to primary prevention across Melbourne’s west.

Strategy 10.2: Develop partnerships and alliances with specialist services — such as Aboriginal, refugee and migrant, disability, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer specialist services — to advance partner organisations’ commitment, capacity and accountability to cultural safety and intersectional prevention practice.

Strategy 10.3: Undertake research, monitoring and evaluation of partnership initiatives to ensure measurement of collective impact contributes to the primary prevention evidence base.

Strategy 10.4: Work together with family violence intervention and response services (such as the Western Integrated Family Violence Committee) to promote safe, just and equitable communities in Melbourne’s West.

Settings and techniques for regional action

The gendered drivers of violence against women are deeply entrenched across all facets of society. The Preventing Violence Together partnership works to implement our regional objectives and strategies across a range of settings and techniques, in order to effectively create change and prevent violence against women.

Key evidence-based primary prevention settings include:

- Arts
- Education and care settings for children and young people
- Faith-based contexts
- Health, family and community services
- Legal, justice and corrections services
- Media
- Popular culture, advertising and entertainment
- Public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities
- Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces
- Universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions
- Workplaces, corporations and employee organisations (Our Watch et al. 2015)

Across these settings, our partnership implements a range of mutually reinforcing techniques that have proven effective or promising in redressing the drivers of violence against women (Our Watch et al. 2015), including:

- Civil society advocacy
- Communications and social marketing
- Community mobilisation and strengthening
- Direct participation programs
- Organisational development

Governance, implementation and evaluation

Preventing Violence Together 2030 is governed by the Executive Governance Group, the strategic arm of the partnership. Implementation of the regional strategy is driven by the Implementation Committee and its associated working groups, as the operational arm of the partnership. Women's Health West, as lead agency for the partnership, undertakes a leadership, coordination and secretariat role for the regional strategy.

Preventing Violence Together 2030 sets the strategic vision and priorities for primary prevention action in Melbourne's west, and is accompanied by annual action plans. The annual action plans support partners to identify and commit resources to primary prevention regional or sub-regional initiatives for a twelve-month period. The regional strategy and annual action plans will be evaluated through the development of the strategy's evaluation plan, which will collect process, impact and outcome evaluation data to measure the strategy's collective regional impact.

Preventing Violence Together 2030 is a long-term strategy, in recognition that the structures, norms and practices that drive violence against women are deeply and widely entrenched in society, and will require long-term work to achieve and sustain change. The strategy will be reviewed every four years, to ensure a current, strategic and innovative approach to preventing violence against women across Melbourne's west is sustained.

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