

## Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021



### Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention

*A community where everyone is valued and safe*





*The Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Plan 2019-2021, Whitehorse City Council, Melbourne.*

19 October 2019

Council acknowledges the contribution of members of the Whitehorse Prevention of Family Violence and Violence against Women Collaborative Action and Networking Group and Reference Group.

The Victorian Government contributed to the development of this Action Plan through funding of Council's Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention Project, a Free from Violence initiative.

Enquiries about the Action Plan may be directed to the Community Development Department of Council, telephone 9262 6334.

Whitehorse.  
A community where everyone is  
valued and safe.





## Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention

*A community where everyone is valued and safe*



# Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021

## Summary

*Whitehorse City Council says no to violence.*

*Council is committed to working together with the community to model and promote equal and respectful relationships.*

*We want a community where everyone is valued and safe.*

(Council Statement on Prevention of Family Violence and  
Violence against Women and Children, 2019)

The *Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021* is an action plan of the *Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*.

The *Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021* (the Action Plan) articulates the key priority partnership actions that Council and the community will implement to prevent family violence. The Action Plan emphasizes prevention of violence from happening in the first place – also known as primary prevention – but also includes priority actions for early intervention and response.

This two-year Action Plan adopts a socio-economic and settings-based approach to the problem of family violence, recognising the gendered nature of family violence and violence against women and working to tackle the root causes of the problem.

Reducing the prevalence of family violence contributes to building a safer and more secure environment in the City of Whitehorse. Implementing a broad range of activities which complement and reinforce the impact of one another will be more likely to achieve results and sustain change.

By taking action in line with with Federal, State and regional policies, we are contributing to long-term change whereby people in Whitehorse, and more broadly:

- Hold attitudes and beliefs that reject gender inequality and family violence
- Actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence
- Have homes, organisations and communities that are safe and inclusive
- Live and practise confident and respectful relationships

The Action Plan was developed following comprehensive internal Council staff and external community stakeholder consultations across a diverse range of programs and services. In developing this Action Plan, Council has articulated how it will work alongside the community to promote gender equity and in turn prevent family violence. Local government plays a role as both a setting and a leader for action.

*Many areas of Council play a role in family violence prevention*



A number of themes emerged through community and Council consultations for the Action Plan. Those consultations confirmed that efforts to reduce and prevent family violence can take place in many different settings and environments. The actions are primarily collaborative in nature, involving the combined efforts of different Council departments and partner organisations. An overview of Action Plan highlights is provided on the follow pages.

While the City of Whitehorse has almost half the rate of recorded family violence incidents of Victoria as a whole, there is no reason to be complacent. Family violence affects people from all backgrounds and walks of life. As a community we all pay the human, financial and social costs.

Family violence, and violence against women, is preventable. Read the full Action Plan to learn more about how Council and community will work together on the prevention of family violence.

## Plan Highlights

### Community-wide Actions

- *Coordinate and deliver a program* of community capacity building activities and communications
- *Provide targeted education and information* about family violence and recognising abuse for women in CALD communities, women living with disability and older women.
- *Consider ways to improve support* for LGBTIQ+ residents and Rainbow Families of Whitehorse

### Early Years Settings

- *Identify opportunities to further integrate a whole of service approach to gender equity*
- *Further develop approaches to service provision and communication* with Chinese background families

### Schools and Universities

- *Support implementation* of RRE and similar programs in Whitehorse schools
- *Develop partnerships and formulate a best approach* for the prevention of violence and promotion of mental health of international students and young migrants living in Whitehorse

### Sport Settings

- *Maintain promotion* of women's inclusion and leadership in sporting clubs
- *Conduct baseline survey* of sports facilities utilization
- *Seek opportunities to implement* best practice gender equity projects in sporting clubs

### Faith Communities

- *Support the Whitehorse Interfaith Network* and members in prevention initiatives
- *Pursue opportunities* to progress outcomes of the Inner East Interfaith Networks Unite for Safety and Respect Project

## Advocacy

- *Advocate for a stronger, more accessible and coordinated service response*
- *Educate and advocate to increase equity of access to family violence and support services for people with a disability and people who identify as LGBTIQ+*

## Gender Equity in the Built Environment

- *Consider ways to implement gender equity and family violence prevention lens in planning for new developments*
- *Increase consideration of gender differences when conducting safety initiatives in high-use areas*

## Council Leadership and Capacity-building

- *Continue to collaborate in TFER Regional Partnership and Strategy*
- *Coordinate the Whitehorse FV&PVAW Collaborative Action and Networking Group, and Reference Group*
- *Support front-line staff with identification, response and referrals for women and children, and older people experiencing violence or those at risk*
- *Review and assess current systems, policies and practices in relation to gender equity*
- *Raise awareness and increase knowledge of Council staff about PVAW, gender equity and unconscious bias*
- *Consider future opportunities to advance gender equality and respectful relationships in the workplace*

## Communicating with the Community

- *Improve access to and broaden reach of FV and prevention information*
- *Develop consistent and reliable messaging and communications for FV prevention*

## Promoting Women's Leadership and Voices

- *Explore and implement ways to increase diverse women's access to business leadership and mentoring programs and opportunities*
- *Ensure women's voices are heard by incorporating survivor/ advocate's participation and stories in activities*



Whitehorse City Council acknowledges  
the support of the Victorian Government





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## Introduction

The *Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021* is an action plan of the *Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*. These two plans have identified priorities, objectives and partnerships to address both prevention of family violence and response to family violence. Reducing the prevalence of family violence contributes to building a safer and more secure environment in the City of Whitehorse, and we know that implementing a broad range of activities which complement and reinforce one another will be more likely to achieve results and sustain change.

Further, the Victorian Government's *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women*<sup>1</sup> sets out clear, shared outcomes that have guided the development of this Action Plan. Victoria's prevention strategy outcomes include:

- Victorians hold attitudes and beliefs that reject gender inequality and family violence – Victorians understand the causes and forms of family violence, who is affected by violence, and the impact on victims.
- Victorians actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence – Victorians discuss and condemn violence through challenging rigid gender roles, gender inequality, sexism and discrimination, to break the cycle of violence.
- Victorian homes, organisations and communities are safe and inclusive – the prevalence of violence is significantly reduced for all Victorians equally and people live free of fear.
- All Victorians live and practise confident and respectful relationships – Victorians are equipped with the knowledge and skills that inform and shape healthy, safe, equal and respectful relationships.

This two-year Action Plan adopts a socio-economic and settings-based approach to the problem of family violence. It recognises the gendered-nature of family violence and violence against women and to tackle the root causes of the problem. The impetus for the development of the *Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021* was the State Government funded Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention project, one of the many locally-based initiatives arising from recommendations of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.<sup>2</sup> The Action Plan was developed following comprehensive internal staff and external community stakeholder consultations across a diverse range of programs and service delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> State of Victoria. 2017. *Free from Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women*, pp.50-51, State of Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet), <https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/prevention-strategy.html>

<sup>2</sup> State of Victoria. 2016. *Royal Commission into Family Violence Final Report and Recommendations*. Available: <http://www.rcfv.com.au/Report-Recommendations>

## Definition of family violence

The Victorian Family Violence Protection Act 2008 defines family violence<sup>3</sup> as:

Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person that:

- is physically or sexually abusive
- is emotionally or psychologically abusive
- is economically abusive
- is threatening
- is coercive
- in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person
- includes behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of behaviour referred to in these ways.

Further [definitions](#) relevant to this Action Plan are included in the last section of this document.

## Policy context

Nationally, Australia's efforts are guided by The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022.<sup>4</sup> At the state level, the 2015 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence recognised the seriousness of family violence and its consequences for individuals, families and communities. Recommendation 94 of the Royal Commission final report requires that Local Government Councils “report on the measures they propose to take to reduce family violence and respond to the needs of victims”. This requirement is aimed at increasing the focus on family violence prevention and applies to 2017-2021 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

Since 2015, Victoria has developed legislation, policies and programs to address the drivers of family violence. In May 2017 Victoria released the first state-wide primary prevention strategy, *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent violence and all forms of violence against women, action plan, 2018 – 2021*.<sup>5</sup> This strategy puts into practice a series of short and long-term initiatives to build the infrastructure and systems to prevent family violence. Councils are expected to align with these Victorian government plans.

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<sup>3</sup> State of Victoria. Family Violence Protection Act 2008 No. 52 of 2008. Available: [http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web\\_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/083D69EC540CD748CA2574CD0015E27C/\\$FILE/08-52a.pdf](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/Domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubStatbook.nsf/f932b66241ecf1b7ca256e92000e23be/083D69EC540CD748CA2574CD0015E27C/$FILE/08-52a.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Council of Australian Governments. *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* Available: <https://www.dss.gov.au/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>

<sup>5</sup> State of Victoria (Department of Health and Human Services). *Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women First action plan 2018– 2021*. Available: [https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user\\_files/Documents/fv/1710039\\_Free%20from%20Violence%20First%20Action%20Plan%202018-2021%2016.pdf](https://www.vic.gov.au/system/user_files/Documents/fv/1710039_Free%20from%20Violence%20First%20Action%20Plan%202018-2021%2016.pdf)

International, national and state strategies recognise that family violence is driven by gender inequality. Therefore, much of the work of this Action Plan is about supporting sustained positive change in gender relations. This Action Plan is strongly informed by the detailed work undertaken by the world-leading work of Our Watch and their approach to change set out in the Framework called *Change the Story*.<sup>6</sup>

The City of Whitehorse is a partner in Together For Equality & Respect (TFER)<sup>7</sup>, a collaborative, cross sector partnership of organisations working together to prevent violence against women in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region. Over 25 organisations are members of the Partnership.



The TFER Partnership and Strategy have, over time, strengthened the Region's ability to prevent violence against women by supporting a shared vision and alignment of mutually reinforcing initiatives.

The TFER Strategic Directions for the Eastern Metropolitan Region 2016-2021 are to support and enable integration and coordination in order to:

- Lead and achieve change
- Adopt and contribute to the evidence base
- Build organisation and workforce excellence
- Strengthen partnerships.

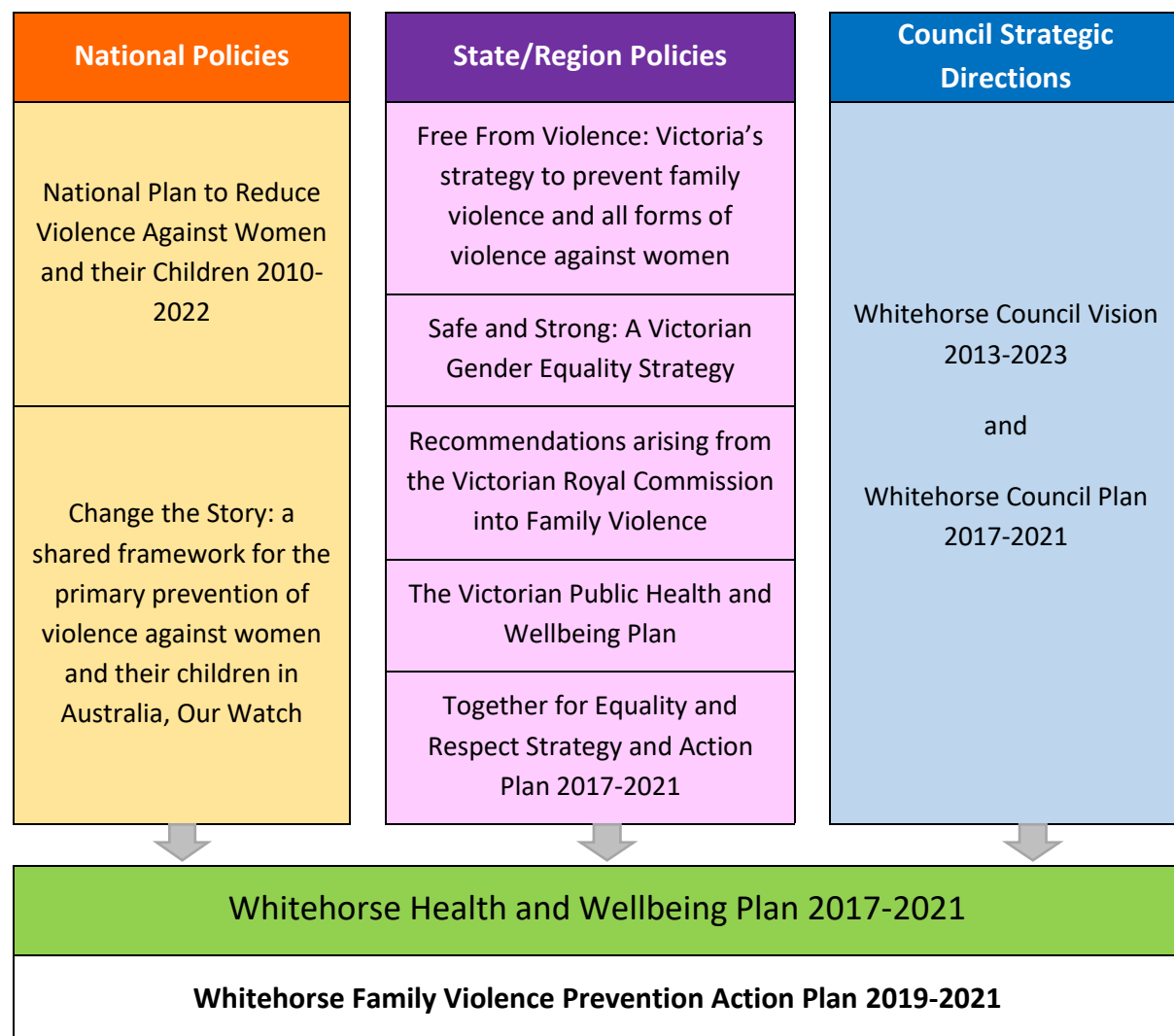
This Action Plan, which sits beneath the Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan, aligns with Council's Strategic Directions as well as these national, state and regional policies and plans (Figure 1):

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<sup>6</sup> Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia. Available: <https://www.ourwatch.org.au>

<sup>7</sup> Together for Equality and Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2017-2021, Women's Health East, Melbourne. <http://whe.org.au/tfer/strategy-overview-document/>

Figure 1: Alignment of Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021 with National and Victorian policies



## Extent of the issue – family violence in the City of Whitehorse

Family violence affects people from all backgrounds and walks of life. As a community we all pay the human, financial and social costs.



- Every week, at least one woman is murdered in Australia by a current or past partner.
- Children are present as victims or witnesses in about a third of all incidents reported to police.
- Women with a disability experience higher risk of violence.
- In 2017-2018, there were more than 76,000 incidents of family violence reported to police in Victoria.

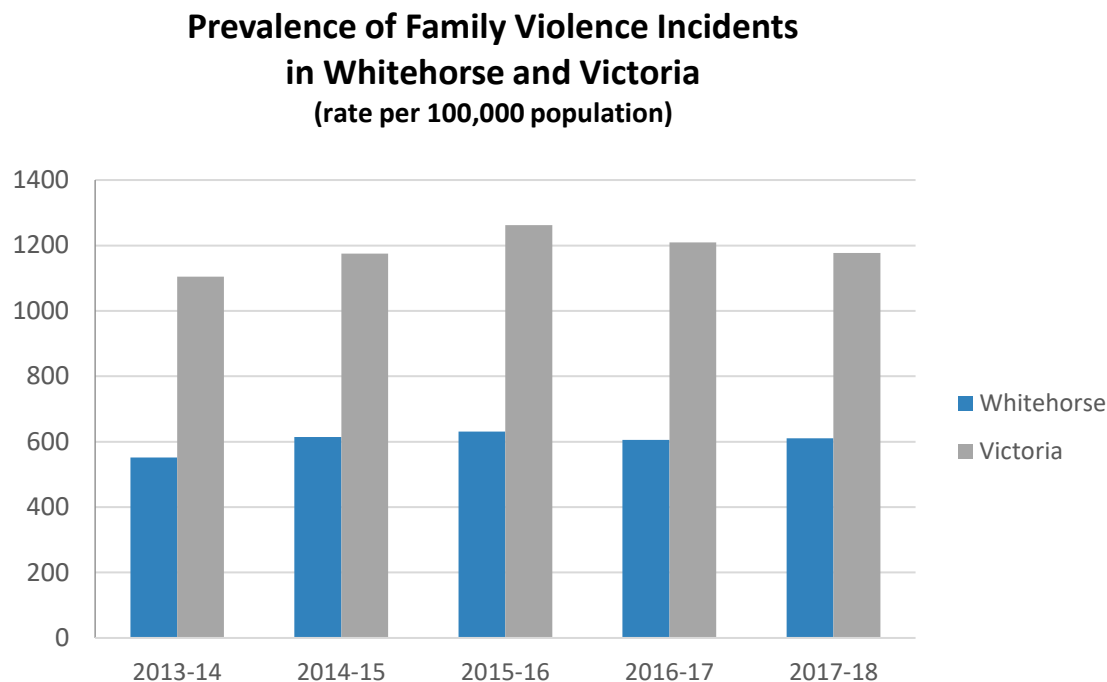
While the City of Whitehorse has almost half the rate of recorded family violence incidents for Victoria (Figure 2), there is no reason to be complacent. In the City of Whitehorse, 1,077 family violence incidents were reported in 2017-2018; on average 21 incidents every week.<sup>8</sup> It is estimated however, that only 25% of family violence incidents are reported to the police<sup>9</sup> so the true annual number of family violence incidents in Whitehorse may be closer to more than 4,300 per year, equating to 82 incidents per week.

<sup>8</sup> Crime Statistics Agency. 2018. Victoria Police Data Tables 2017-18. Available:

<https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/family-violence-data-portal/family-violence-data-dashboard/victoria-police>

<sup>9</sup> Hutcheson, E. 2017. Family Violence in the Southern Metropolitan Region – a data analysis. Executive Summary. Southern Metropolitan Region Integrated Family Violence Executive Committee, <https://southsafe.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Family-Violence-in-the-SMR-Summary-Documents-v3.pdf>

Figure 2: Reported Family Violence Incidents



Men can be victims of family violence, but research shows that men are mostly the perpetrators of intimate partner violence and family violence. Violence against women is now accepted across the world as one of the most serious issues we face. Its impacts are damaging and far reaching.

While family violence is serious and common, we can stop it from happening in the first place. The *Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021* identifies the key actions that Council and partner organisations will undertake over the next two years to address the problem of family violence.

## What we know about preventing family violence

Family violence is gendered in nature. While both men and women can be victims and perpetrators of family violence, most family violence and the most severe violence, is perpetrated by a man against a women. Violence against women is primarily driven by gender inequality.

Gender inequality is based on social and cultural norms that reinforce dominant ideas about women and men in society. These norms ensure that women and men do not have equal power, resources or opportunities, and that their voices, ideas and work are not valued equally by society.<sup>10</sup> Gender inequality underpins economic structures (such as the pay gap between men and women), and organisational, community, family and relationship practices.

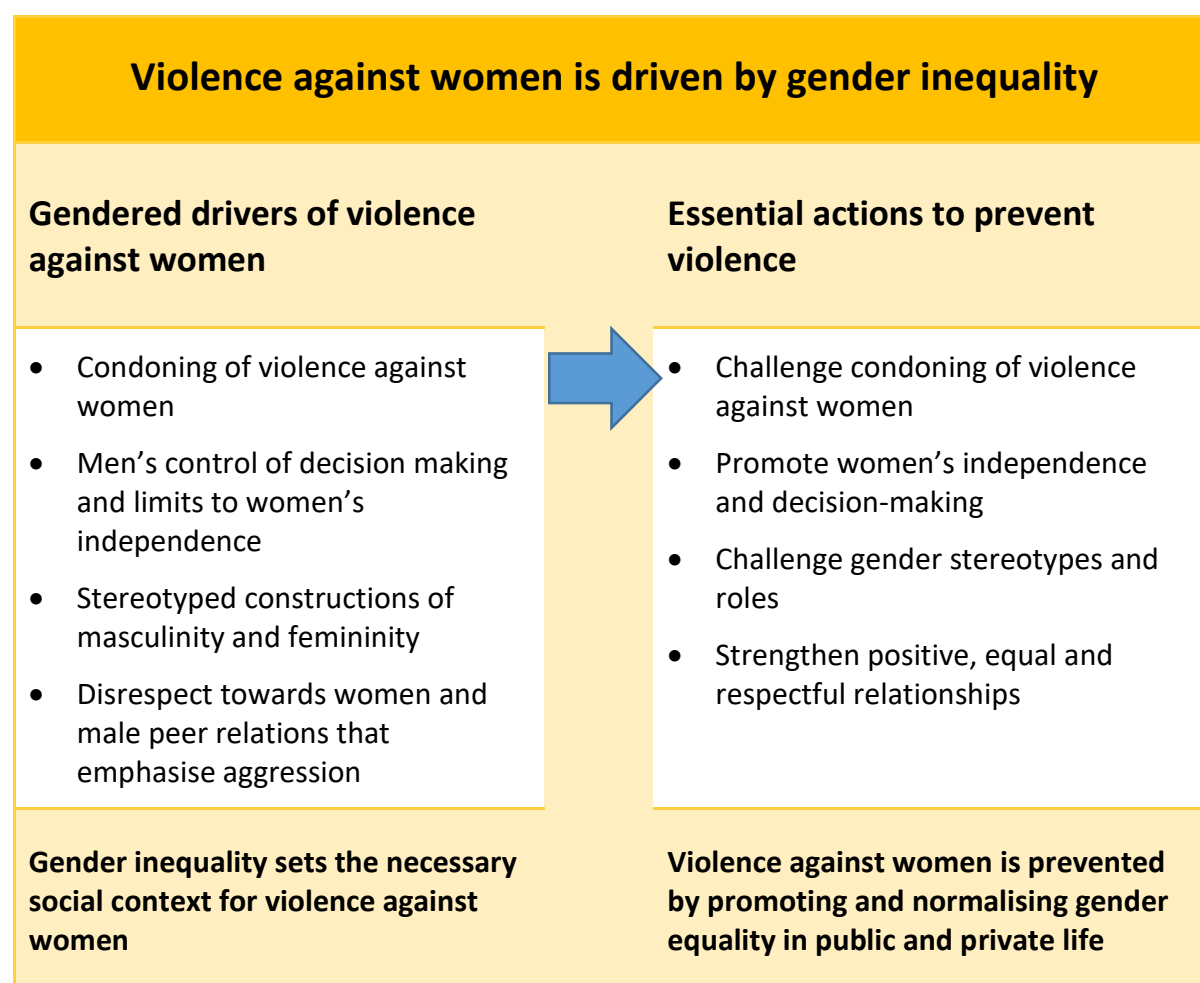
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<sup>10</sup> Our Watch. Preventing Violence, What You Can do, Women. Available: <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Preventing-Violence/Women>



This broad social context of gender inequality produces specific gendered ‘drivers’ of violence against women (Figure 3) together with reinforcing factors which are known to increase the severity of violence. These gendered drivers inform the essential actions necessary to prevent violence against women from happening in the first place, known as ‘primary’ prevention. Together, the gendered drivers and essential actions provide a framework for the prevention of family violence.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 3: Essential actions for primary prevention of violence against women and family violence



Our Watch found that the gendered drivers of violence against women are consistently reinforced by the following factors:

- the harmful use of alcohol which can weaken pro-social behaviours
- backlash factors which occur when male dominance, power or status is threatened, and
- previous experience of, or exposure to, violence against women, child abuse, racist and community violence.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Our Watch, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia. Available: <https://www.ourwatch.org.au>

Whitehorse City Council services, such as maternal child health, report that alcohol, drugs and mental health issues are factors present in many family violence cases they are involved with. While these factors may exacerbate or reinforce violence, they are not the underlying causes.<sup>12</sup> The Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan includes strategies to promote men's and women's mental health and wellbeing, reduce people's isolation and increase community connectedness.

The probability of violence against women is higher when the consequences of gender inequality intersect with the impact of other forms of inequality and discrimination including racism, discrimination against people with disabilities or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>13</sup> Further, where a person has a low level of support for gender equality, they are more likely to hold attitudes supportive of violence against women.<sup>14</sup>

Attitudes to violence against women differ across population groups.<sup>15</sup> For example, young people and people from some CALD backgrounds are more likely to hold violence-supportive attitudes than other segments of the population.

Particular risk factors for violence affect varying groups differently. Populations of interest in the City of Whitehorse include multicultural communities, new parents, children and young people; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex or queer (LGBTIQ+), people with a disability, older people and international students. The prevalence of violence against women is higher in Aboriginal groups than in the general population. Women with a disability also have an increased vulnerability to violence.<sup>16</sup>



Family violence looks different for groups experiencing intersectional discrimination and disadvantage. For example, we know that an underlying driver of elder abuse is ageism. Social and cultural norms where elder abuse is tolerated arise when older people are regarded as less valuable, are unable to make decisions for themselves, and are considered a burden on resources. The intersection of ageism and gender inequality may make older women at higher risk of abuse. Elder abuse is most often intergenerational, perpetrated by an adult child or other family member against a parent. Parent-child relationships have unique dynamics that influence a person's help-seeking behaviour. People who experience elder abuse may be reluctant to seek help because they fear consequences, including retribution from the perpetrator, or losing or damaging family relationships

<sup>12</sup> Our Watch, *How to report on violence against women and their children – 2019 National edition*, [https://d2bb010tdzqaq7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/09000510/OW3989\\_NAT\\_REPORTING-GUIDELINES\\_WEB\\_FA.pdf](https://d2bb010tdzqaq7.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/09/09000510/OW3989_NAT_REPORTING-GUIDELINES_WEB_FA.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

<sup>14</sup> ANROWS. The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS). Available: <https://ncas.anrows.org.au>

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

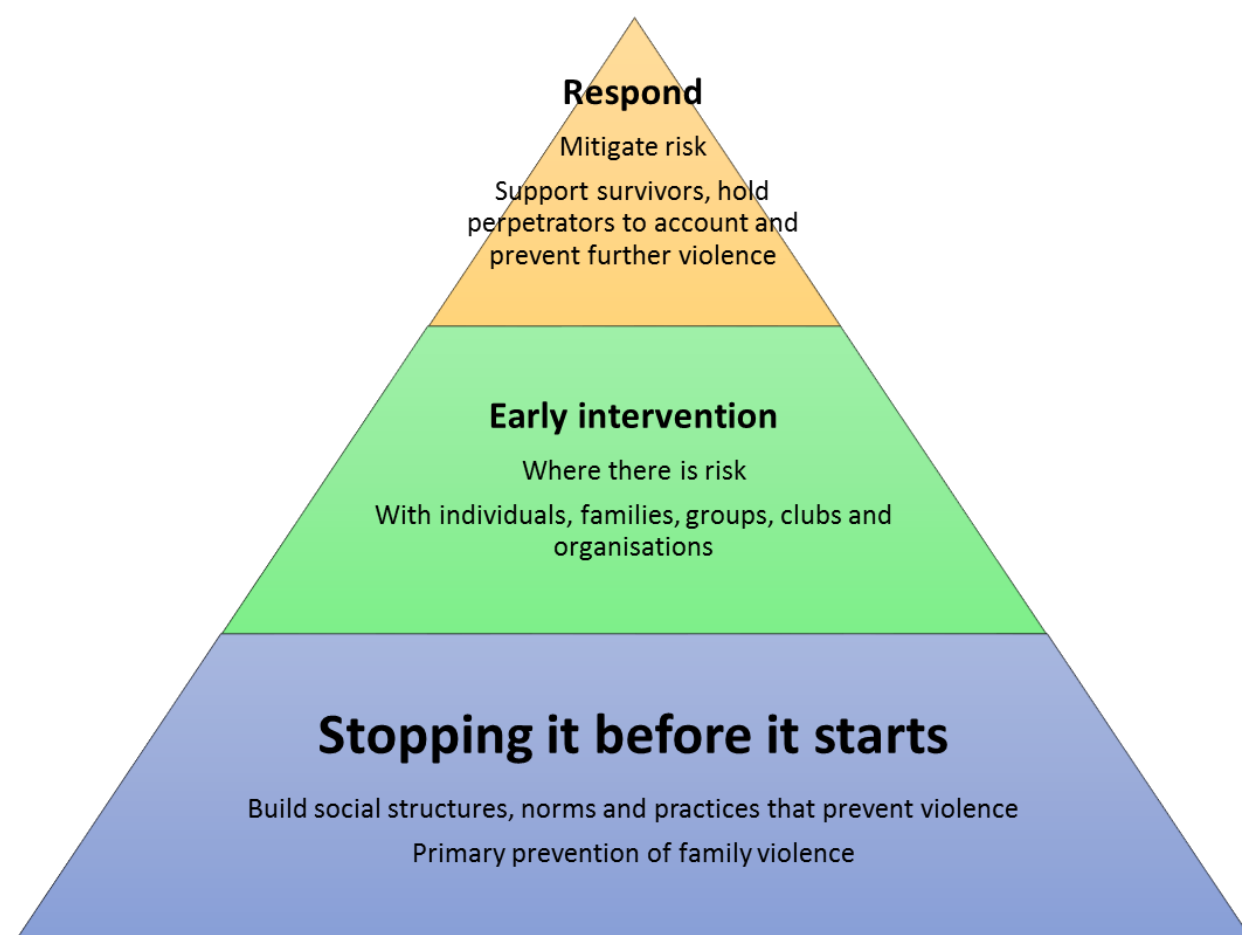
<sup>16</sup> Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia

(with the perpetrator and others). They may also worry about what the consequences will be for the perpetrator.<sup>17</sup>

## Our approach

The *Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021* articulates the key priority actions that Council and the community will implement to prevent family violence. The Action Plan emphasizes preventing violence from happening in the first place – also known as primary prevention – but also includes priority actions in the areas of early intervention and response. The Action Plan’s emphasis on primary prevention is illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Family Violence Prevention pyramid



Effective practice in the prevention of family violence uses a variety of strategies applied in the settings in which people live, work, learn and recreate, such as sport, education, workplaces and the community. These are environments that:

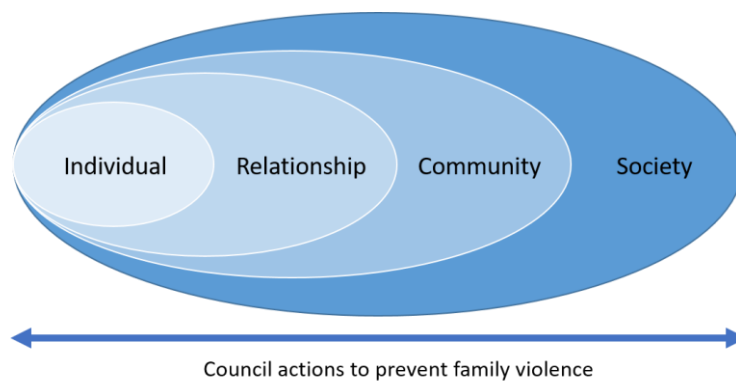
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<sup>17</sup> Senior’s Rights Victoria 2018. Elder Abuse as Family Violence Discussion Paper , Melbourne. Accessed at: <https://seniorsrights.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Elder-Abuse-as-Family-Violence-FINAL.pdf>

- Have a key role in transmitting attitudes and social norms about family violence and gender equality
- Have the potential to reach a large proportion of the population in the course of people's day-to-day lives
- Have the potential to reach priority populations
- Are suitable for prevention interventions which can be feasibly implemented and sustained.

Local government plays a role as both a setting and a leader for action. Family violence prevention can be directed at four spheres of social life where we want to see change, as illustrated in the socio-ecological model of prevention (Figure 5):

*Figure 5: Socio-ecological model of prevention of family violence*



- The **Individual** level relates to Council services that have direct contact with residents such as Maternal and Child Health Services and Local Laws teams. It also looks at changes in individuals (awareness, knowledge, attitudes, behaviour) to promote equality and respect.
- The **Relationship** level relates to those settings and programs that seek to promote gender equity and healthy relationships between people. Programs for new parents that look at shared domestic and parenting responsibilities or respectful relationships programs for children and adolescents are examples of these. These initiatives are about promoting safety and equality among the next generation and equipping them with the skills to form healthy and respectful relationships in adulthood.
- The **Community** level relates to changes to the structures, policies, cultural norms and behaviours in settings such as schools, sporting venues, workplaces and neighbourhoods where social relationships develop.
- The **Societal** level relates to health, economic and social policies which drive structural reform for gender equity, and communications that shape community attitudes and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity.

Local Government's wide and deep reach, influence and access to the local community is reflected in the various services and functions that Council provides. This was reflected in the breadth of staff consultations for the Action Plan. (Figure 6). The reach of Council and potential for influence is reflected in the actions detailed further in this Plan.

*Figure 6: Many areas of Council play a role in family violence prevention*



## The journey so far

Whitehorse City Council has a strong history of innovation and partnership for the prevention of violence against women. Council was the original trial site and contributor to the *Baby Makes 3 Program* in partnership with Carrington Health, and a partner in the early primary prevention *Preventing Violence Against Women Project* in 2010-2011 in collaboration with Cities of Monash, Manningham and Boroondara, Women's Health East and the Inner East PCP. Whitehorse City Council was also the instigator of the *Stop Working in Silence Forum* in 2014 which addressed the impacts of violence against women who have a disability, originate from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds or experience elder abuse.

The prevention of family violence and violence against women and children is a priority of the *Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*. Council's continuing commitment to the prevention of family violence is demonstrated by the following actions:

- Adoption of Statement for Prevention of Family Violence and Violence against Women and Children.
- *Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention Project* involving action planning, awareness raising, learning and participation opportunities for local people. A reference group of community stakeholders provide advice to this project.
- Facilitator of the Whitehorse Collaborative Action and Networking Group.
- Contributing partner in the [Together for Equality and Respect Partnership](#) and [Eastern Elder Abuse Network](#).
- Documented review of effective local practice related to local government for the prevention of violence against women.
- Collaborative projects to promote equality and respect in community settings, such as the Faith Networks and Sporting Clubs.
- Application of equity measures in sports ground use
- *Whitehorse Celebrates Equality and Respect* program over 16 days in November and December, information and activities focusing on stopping violence against women from happening in the first place. Whitehorse and Manningham Libraries run their annual Gender Equity Storytime sessions during this time.
- Women's Leadership and Business Programs.
- Engaging fathers and promoting gender equity in Maternal and Child Health and Early Years Services.
- Parenting Information Forums to support healthy and respectful relationships in families.
- Funding of Community Grants that align with Council Strategic Directions and Health and Wellbeing priorities.
- Ongoing capacity development of Council's workforce to recognise, respond and refer in cases of elder abuse and child abuse, as well as other forms of family violence.

- Employee Flexibility Policy and Family Violence leave provisions accompanied by Family Violence Resource kit for staff.

The Action Plan development involved community consultation and a partnership approach with stakeholder organisations. Population groups and key actions for inclusion in the plan were identified through:

1. Consultations and needs analysis for the Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021
2. Ongoing consultation with key informants who are members of the Whitehorse Prevention of Family Violence and Violence against Women Collaborative Action and Networking Group and the Reference Group
3. The Family Violence Prevention Community Action Planning Workshop conducted by Council on 2 May 2019

The Family Violence Prevention Community Action Planning Workshop engaged participants from both community and stakeholder organisations, who provided feedback on proposed strategic actions and explored the themes of: Women's Leadership, Community-Wide Action and Settings for Action.

## **Stop it before it starts: preventing family violence**

Community action planning workshop





## Action Plan

In developing this Action Plan, Council has articulated how it will work alongside the community to promote gender equity and in turn prevent family violence, in line with Federal, State and regional policies.

For ease of use, actions in the plan are grouped according to themes that emerged through community and Council consultation. Many of the actions are collaborative in nature, involving the combined efforts of different Council departments and stakeholder organisations.

The actions of this plan are aligned with Council's Strategic Directions, Council Plan Approach and the goals and objectives of the *Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*, building on the current activities undertaken by Council and partner organisations. This plan covers a two-year period so that its next iteration will align with the 2021-2025 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Figure 7 provides an overview of the key themes and actions. [Table 1](#) describes the Action Plan's detailed activity, partners and potential impacts, with referencing to strategic directions, goals and objectives using the classification detailed in [Appendix 1](#). Indicators available to measure impacts are also referenced, using the classification detailed in [Appendix 2](#).





Figure 7: Action Plan Themes and Key Actions

### Community-wide Actions

- *Coordinate and deliver a program* of community capacity building activities and communications about how to recognise abuse in relationships including sexual abuse and elder abuse, and promote gender equality, respectful relationships and bystander action.
- *Provide targeted education and information* about family violence and recognising abuse for women in CALD communities, women living with disability and older women.
- *Further develop ways of communicating* with Chinese background families
- *Consider ways to improve support* for LGBTIQ+ residents and Rainbow Families of Whitehorse
- *Continue to build partnerships* with key agencies in Whitehorse for primary prevention of family violence

### Early Years Settings

- *Identify opportunities to further integrate a whole of service approach to gender equity*
- *Promote whole of service approach* with parents and service staff
- *Further develop approaches to service provision and communication* with Chinese background families

### Schools and Universities

- *Support implementation* of Respectful Relationships and similar programs in Whitehorse schools
- *Develop partnerships and formulate a best approach* for the prevention of violence and promotion of mental health of international students and young migrants living in Whitehorse
- *Develop tailored information* for young renters and international students

### Sport Settings

- *Maintain promotion* of women's inclusion and leadership in sporting clubs
- *Conduct baseline survey* of sports facilities utilization
- *Seek opportunities to implement* best practice gender equity projects in sporting clubs

### Faith Communities

- *Support the Whitehorse Interfaith Network* and members in prevention initiatives
- *Pursue opportunities* to progress outcomes of the Inner East Interfaith Networks Unite for Safety and Respect Project

### Advocacy

- *Advocate for a stronger, more accessible and coordinated service response*
- *Educate and advocate to increase equity of access* to family violence and support services for people with a disability and people who identify as LGBTIQ+

### Gender Equity in the Built Environment

- *Consider ways to implement* gender equity and family violence prevention lens in planning for new developments
- *Increase consideration of gender differences* when conducting safety initiatives in high-use areas

### Council Leadership and Capacity-building

- *Continue to collaborate in* TFER Regional Partnership and Strategy
- *Implement and evaluate* Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention project
- *Coordinate* the FV&PVAW Collaborative Action and Networking Group, and Reference Group
- *Support* front-line staff with identification, response and referrals for women and children, and older people experiencing violence or those at risk
- *Review and assess* current systems, policies and practices in relation to gender equity
- *Raise awareness and increase knowledge* of Council staff about PVAW, gender equity and unconscious bias
- *Consider future opportunities* to advance gender equality and respectful relationships in the workplace

### Communicating with the Community

- *Improve access to and broaden reach* of FV and prevention information
- *Develop consistent and reliable messaging* and communications for FV prevention

### Promoting Women's Leadership and Voices

- *Explore and implement ways to increase diverse women's access* to business leadership and mentoring programs and opportunities
- *Ensure gender balance among presenters* at business and career development events
- *Ensure women's voices are heard* by incorporating survivor/ advocate's participation and stories in activities



Table 1: Action Plan Themes, Activity, Partners and Impacts

**THEME: Community-wide Actions**

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a, 1f	<p><i>Coordinate and deliver a program of community capacity-building activities and communications that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– promote gender equality, respectful relationships and bystander action,</li> <li>– dispel myths and misconceptions about family violence and,</li> <li>– inform about how to recognise abuse in relationships; including spectrum of sexual violence, technology abuse, elder abuse, abuse of people living with disability and abuse of people with LGBTQIA+ identities</li> </ul>	<p>Community Development</p> <p>TFER Partners</p> <p>PFV&amp;VAW Collaborative Action and Networking Group</p>	<p>World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and other activities</p> <p>IDAHOT day and other activities for LGBTQIA+</p> <p>Men's and Women's events</p> <p>Host annual Call to Action event, e.g. International White Ribbon Day Breakfast</p> <p>Regional campaign during the 16 Days</p>	Community awareness and activity	A C D E G H I

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
				of Activism (2019/20, 2020/21)		
1.1.3	1a	<i>Promote recognition of local community prevention activities</i>	Community Development Communications PFV&VAW Collaborative Action and Networking Group	Video (2019/20)	Acknowledgement of work in local community to prevent family violence	C H
1.1.3	1a	<i>Deliver local activities</i> as part of 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence awareness in line with regional and Victorian campaigns	Community Development WHE Neighbourhood Houses	Activities	Community awareness and activity	C H I
1.1.3	1g	<i>Provide targeted education and information</i> about family violence and recognising abuse to groups within the community, in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– women in CALD communities</li> <li>– women living with disability</li> <li>– older women</li> </ul>	Community Development	Information Education opportunities (2020/21)	Tailored information for women in the community	G

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1c	<i>Further develop ways of communicating with Chinese background families about family violence and elder abuse</i>	Community Development Victoria Police CHH DHS – Diversity Chinese Social Services ECLC	Consultations (2019/20)  Accessible communications (2020/21)	Additional access to information for Chinese background families	C G
1.1.3	1a	<i>Continue to build partnerships with key agencies in Whitehorse for primary prevention of family violence</i>	Community Development Health and Family Services PFV&VAW Collaborative Action and Networking Group	Partnerships	Broader engagement of Council with primary prevention of FV in Whitehorse	A B C
1.1.1	1a	<i>Increase access to family violence support in emergency response and recovery</i>	Compliance – Emergency Management	Recovery Directory includes FV agencies (2019/20)	Information about access to family violence support in emergencies	B

## THEME: Early Years Settings

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<i>Identify opportunities to further integrate a whole of service approach to gender equity</i> in early years services and maternal child health by identifying information gaps, gender biases, use of language and resources	Community Development Health and Family Services Carrington Health WHE	Consultation Opportunities identified (2019/20)	Services informed of opportunities for increasing whole of service approach to gender equity	C
1.1.3	1a	<i>Promote whole of service approach</i> that includes use of language, addressing gender bias and use of resources for challenging gender stereotypes, to reach parents and service staff (e.g. Level Playground, No Limitations, Book Lists)	Community Development WHE EDVOS Early Years Network WELS, MCH WML Carrington Health	Seminar or workshop conducted (2020/21)	Services informed of opportunities for increasing whole of service approach to gender equity	C
1.1.3	1g	<i>Source materials and inform</i> new parents, families and grandparents about respectful relationships	WELS MCH	Distribute information resources through	Information available	L

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
				usual and new channels		
1.1.1	1e	<i>Further develop approaches to service provision and communication</i> with Chinese background families about family violence, elder abuse and prevention	Community Development Health and Family Services - MCH, WELS WHACS WML Carrington Health CHH	Collaborative initiatives	Informed approach Additional information available	C
1.1.7	1f	<i>Consider ways to improve support</i> for LGBTQIA+ residents and Rainbow Families of Whitehorse	Community Development LGBTQIA+ Working Group	Strategies identified (2019/20)	Informed approach	C
1.1.3	1a	<i>Increase access</i> to the Arts Space for parents of young children	Arts and Culture	Recommendation (2019/20)	Feasibility of access to child care services known	B

## THEME: Schools and Universities

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<i>Support implementation</i> of Respectful Relationships Education and similar programs in Whitehorse schools through education of parents, teachers and broader community about respectful relationships and all forms of violence	Health and Family Services – Parent Support, MCH, WELS	Regular Education Seminars	Education about respectful relationship available in the community	L
1.1.3	1d	<i>Develop partnerships</i> to focus on health and social issues for International Students studying in the City of Whitehorse	Community Development Tertiary sector organisations All partners	Round table meetings and information sharing (2019/20)	Establishment of partnership	C
1.1.3	1d	<i>Formulate a best approach</i> with key stakeholders for the prevention of violence and promotion of mental health of international students and young migrants living in Whitehorse	Community Development Deakin University MSC CHH ECLC	Summit involving identified key stakeholders (2019/20)	Identification of best approach	C



Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.8	1g	<p><i>Develop information</i> for young renters and international students about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Health and wellbeing for success</li> <li>– The law and accepted behaviours</li> <li>– Council facilities and services</li> <li>– Where to go for help</li> </ul>	<p>Community Development Youth Services Leisure and Recreation ECLC</p>	<p>Information pack (virtual and hard-copy) (2020/21)</p>	<p>Information available to young people and students</p>	G L

THEME: Sport Settings

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<i>Maintain promotion</i> of women's inclusion and leadership in sporting clubs	Leisure and Recreation – Active Communities	Council's club development program	Awareness of benefits of gender equity in clubs	C E J
3.1.2	3a	<i>Conduct baseline survey</i> of sports facilities utilization	Leisure and Recreation – Active Communities	Baseline data (2019/20)	Information available to identify patterns and diversity of use	B
1.1.3	1a	<i>Seek opportunities to implement</i> best practice project/s in sporting clubs for gender equity	Leisure and Recreation – Active Communities  Community Development – Health and Wellbeing  Sporting Clubs	Project established (2019/20, 2020/21)	Sporting clubs engaged in gender equity project	B C

## THEME: Faith Communities

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<i>Support the Whitehorse Interfaith Network</i> and members in prevention initiatives	Community Development Whitehorse Interfaith Network	WIN prevention activity	Continued engagement of WIN members in prevention and responding to FV	M N O
1.1.3	1a	<i>Pursue opportunities</i> to progress outcomes of the Inner East Interfaith Networks Unite for Safety and Respect Project	Community Development Whitehorse Interfaith Network IE LGAs	Funding submission Project/ initiative established (2019/20)	Continued engagement of Faith Communities in prevention and responding to FV	C

## THEME: Advocacy

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<p><i>Advocate for a stronger, more accessible and coordinated service response for women and children affected by family violence, including both justice and legal responses as well as community support services, seeking</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sustainable funding streams for local FV services</li> <li>– Co-location of FV workers in Maternal Child Health settings</li> <li>– FV services engagement with Early Learning Centres, supported playgroups and playgroups, libraries.</li> </ul>	<p>Community Development</p> <p>RFVP ECLC EDVOS Mitcham Community House FV Program Kara House</p>	Advocacy activities	Additional access points to FV support	C
1.1.3	1e	<p><i>Provide information and education to relevant services about the distinct barriers facing people who live with a</i></p>	<p>Community Development</p> <p>DAC Disability Services</p>	Information distributed	Knowledge about needs of people with a disability and those who	Increased understanding of access barriers by FV services and

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
		disability or those who identify as LGBTQIA+ and ways to overcome these.	FAN Q-EAST Network ECLC	Educational sessions conducted (2020/21)	identify as LGBTQIA+	ways to overcome these
1.1.8	1g	<i>Increase capacity of people</i> who live with a disability and people who identify as LGBTQIA+ to advocate for equity of access to family violence and support services	Community Development DAC Disability Services FAN Q-EAST Network ECLC	Tailored support, information or education about accessing family violence and other support services	Understanding of how to access FV services	Increased knowledge of how to access FV services
1.1.3	1a	<i>Advocate for gender equity principles and practices</i> to be upheld across the community in a broad range of settings including but not limited to workplaces, recreation, education and social arenas.	Community Development TFER Partners WHE	Advocacy activities	Uptake of gender equity practices	C
1.1.3	1b	<i>Advocate with Regional Partnerships</i> to ensure safe houses/refuges and services for women are suitable for women and children with disabilities	Community Development DAC RFVP ECLC	Advocacy activities Self –assessments of Accessibility	Awareness of barriers to access	C

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<i>Advocate to reduce increased risk of family violence through harmful use of alcohol</i>	Community Development	Inclusion of harmful use of alcohol as a risk factor for FV in communications and initiatives	Understanding of link between FV and alcohol use	B

## THEME: Gender Equity in the Built Environment

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<i>Consider ways to implement gender equity and family violence prevention lens in planning for new developments</i>	Community Development – Special Projects	Conduct preliminary research into guidelines or tools for Consultation and Design Briefs (2020/21)	Understanding of available tools or guidelines	P
2.1.4	2b	<i>Employ guidelines for Sports Pavilions to encourage female participation</i>	Major Projects	Inclusion of separate change facilities, cubicle showers and other features in Sporting Pavilions	Redevelopments of Sporting Pavilions consider gender	P
2.1.6	2a	<i>Increase consideration of gender differences when conducting safety initiatives in high-use areas of the community</i>	Engineering and Environmental Services	Design of safety initiatives in Box Hill consider gender	Gender differences accounted for in safety initiatives at Box Hill Mall	P Increase perceptions of safety by female users of public space

2.1.6	2a	<i>Assess applications for new developments for community safety at the interface between development and public space</i>	Planning and Building	Applications are assessed for community safety	Perceptions of safety accounted for in new development assessments adjoining public space	P Increase perceptions of safety by female users of public space
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**THEME: Council Leadership and Capacity Building**

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.3	1a	<i>Continue to collaborate</i> in Together for Equality and Respect Regional strategy	Community Development	Contribution to TFER Evaluation Working Group and CoPs	Council acknowledged as active partner of TFER	A C P
1.1.3	1a	<i>Implement and evaluate</i> Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention project	Community Development PFV&VAW Reference Group	Project activities FV Prevention Action Plan Project Report Project Evaluation (2019/20)	Increased capacity of Council and Community to prevent family violence and VAW	A B C D E F
1.1.3	1a	<i>Coordinate</i> the FV&PVAW Collaborative Action and Networking Group, and Reference Group	Community Development	Meetings conducted Membership Information shared Collaborative actions	Maintain engagement and value of community stakeholders in collaborative action	A B C P
1.1.1	1e	Support Customer Service staff with identification, response and referrals for	Civic Services	Resources on hand	Front-line staff supported to	D F G K P

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
		<p>women and children experiencing violence or those at risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensure availability of Women’s Safety Cards.</li> <li>– Deliver training for Customer Services staff in identifying and responding to concerns of family violence</li> <li>– In consultation with family violence specialist service, review protocols and formal procedures around responding to family violence situations in Customer Service Centres</li> </ul>	Family Violence services	Training participation Procedures reviewed (2020/21)	identify and respond appropriately to people experiencing FV	
1.1.1	1e	<p>Support front-line Local Laws staff with identification, response and referrals for women and children experiencing violence or those at risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Women’s Safety Cards available for staff in the field</li> </ul>	<p>Compliance</p> <p>Family Violence services</p>	Resources on hand Training participation Procedures reviewed (2020/21)	Front-line staff supported to identify and respond appropriately to people experiencing FV	D F G K P

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Deliver <u>compulsory</u> training for Local Laws staff in identifying and responding to concerns of family violence</li> <li>– In consultation with family violence specialist service, review protocols and formal procedures around responding to family violence situations in the community</li> </ul>				
1.1.1	1e	<i>Implement refresher training</i> about Elder Abuse for staff of WHACS	WHACS	Refresher training	Front-line staff supported to identify and respond appropriately to people experiencing FV	D F G K P
1.1.1	1e	<i>Support continuous professional development</i> to strengthen the response and early intervention capacity of Health, Family and Youth staff	Health and Family Services	Professional development updates	Front-line staff supported to identify and respond appropriately to	D F G K P

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
					people experiencing FV	
1.1.3	1a	<i>Promote</i> family violence “recognize, respond and refer (3Rs)” information to all staff across Council.	Community Development Communications EDVOS	Communications via Intranet	Staff aware of 3Rs information	G
1.1.3	1a	<i>Promote</i> Council Statement for the Prevention of Family Violence and Violence Against Women to all staff across Council	Community Development Communications	Communications via Intranet	Staff aware of Council resolution	A
1.1.3	1a	<i>Review and assess</i> current systems, policies and practices in relation to gender equity	People and Culture	Use gender equity lens at time of review of People and Culture policies (2019/20)  Metrics for flexibility program (2019/20)	Understanding of current systems, policies and practices	P

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
				Method to undertake pay audit (2019/20)  Review of scope and membership of EO/HR Committee (2019/20)		
1.1.3	1a	<i>Raise awareness and increase knowledge</i> of staff about PVAW, Gender Equity and unconscious bias	People and Culture	A range of opportunities for staff to learn more about PVAW, GE and unconscious bias offered (2019/20, 2020/21)	Uptake of GE/PVAW online module; knowledge increase  Uptake of unconscious bias training; awareness increase	D G H I K M N O P
1.1.3	1a	<i>Consider future opportunities</i> to advance gender equality and respectful	People and Culture	Research and scoping undertaken	Opportunities identified and	P

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
		relationships in the workplace, for example, gender equity self-assessment (or impact) process in accordance with the with the Victorian Gender Equality Bill		(2019/20, 2020/21)	acted upon as assessed	

THEME: Communicating with the Community

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.8	1g	<i>Broaden the reach</i> of Council's Women's Safety Cards	Community Development	Women's Safety Cards adapted for LGBTQIA+ community and people of Chinese-background	Additional FV information	G
1.1.8	1g	<i>Strengthen communications</i> by the Local Laws Team for people at risk of FV: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– applicants seeking a waiver of infringements due to family violence</li> <li>– people with pets experiencing family violence</li> </ul>	Compliance	Women's Safety Card included in correspondence responding to waiver applicants  Advice provided about availability of shelter care for animals	Timely information about FV supports	G
1.1.8	1g	<i>Improve access to FV and prevention information</i> by developing central portal on Council website:	Community Development	Webpage	Additional access to FV and	B G

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Link to local and other services and resources (Orange Door)</li> <li>– Promote key messages and engagement opportunities</li> <li>– Communicate with parents, carers, young people, people of diverse gender and sexuality by linking to other websites/ networks</li> </ul>	Business/Digital Technology		prevention information	
1.1.8	1g	<i>Collaborate to develop consistent and reliable messaging</i> and communications for FV prevention that can be used across platforms and Council staff.	Business/Digital Technology Community Development	Collaboration Communications Plan	Consistent and reliable messaging about FV prevention used at Council	B
1.1.8	1g	<i>Effectively message and broaden reach</i> across the community about the prevention of family violence by employing tools, expertise, materials design and analytics.	Business/Digital Technology Communications	Marketing strategies Analytic reports Materials design	Improved reach and quality of communications about FV prevention	B



## THEME: Promoting Women's Leadership and Voices

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
1.1.8	1g	<i>Ensure women's voices are heard by:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– incorporating survivor/ advocate's participation in projects, tasks &amp; actions of Action Plan</li> <li>– promoting Speaking Out Program to women in Whitehorse</li> </ul>	Community Development  Women's Health East	Speaking Out Advocate presentations	Awareness of women's experience of FV Awareness of Speaking Out Program	D H
5.1.6	5a	<i>Coordinate and deliver Annual Whitehorse Women in Business event and plan ways to broaden inclusion of women from diverse backgrounds</i>	Investment and Economic Development	Women in Business Event  Method/s identified and trialed to broaden inclusion	Understanding of best approach to broaden inclusion	E
5.1.6	5b	<i>Ensure gender balance among presenters at business promotional events, speaking panels and career development events for students</i>	Investment and Economic Development	Events with gender balance in presenters	Visibility of women in business and leadership roles	E

Reference to Council Plan Strategic Direction and Approach	Reference to Health and Wellbeing Objective	Action	Partners (internal and external to Council)	Output	Impact	Indicator/s available
5.1.6	5a	<p><i>Explore and implement ways to increase access to business leadership and mentoring programs and opportunities for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Young women</li> <li>– Women with disability or with experience of mental health issues</li> <li>– Older women</li> <li>– Migrant women</li> <li>– Women in and out of the workforce</li> </ul>	<p>Community Development</p> <p>Investment and Economic Development</p>	<p>Collaboration</p> <p>Shared networks and information</p> <p>Tailored strategies and information trialed</p>	<p>Understanding of best approaches to increase access</p>	E

## Monitoring and evaluation

This plan is ambitious. Council will review the plan in consultation with contributing stakeholders and will carry forward actions if more time is required to ensure effective implementation.

Council will monitor the *Whitehorse Family Violence Prevention Action Plan 2019-2021* as an integral part of the *Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2021*. Monitoring will be supported through Council annual reporting cycles across each department and annual reports back to Council and community. Partnership actions will be reviewed by the Whitehorse Prevention of Family Violence and Violence against Women Reference group. An annual community update of key actions contributing to the prevention of family violence will be posted on Council's website.

The Victorian Government's *Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women*<sup>18</sup> sets out clear, shared outcomes that have guided the development of this Action Plan.

The Action Plan contributes to long-term change whereby people in Whitehorse, and more broadly:

- Hold attitudes and beliefs that reject gender inequality and family violence
- Actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence
- Have homes, organisations and communities that are safe and inclusive
- Live and practise confident and respectful relationships.

Whitehorse City Council is one of 35 Councils participating in the Victorian Government's Local Government Free from Violence Program. Indicators to assist in evaluating outcomes of the Free from Violence Program have been developed by the Victorian Government in collaboration with the Municipal Association of Victoria. Council has agreed to use six of these indicators for evaluation of the Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention.

In addition, the Evaluation Framework of the regional prevention strategy Together for Equality and Respect<sup>19</sup> lists a number of indicators relevant for this Action Plan.

Together these indicators provide a suite of options to measure the impact of a number of actions in this plan and to provide a line of sight to these regional and Victorian strategies aiming to prevent family violence and violence against women.

The full list of available indicators and classification used in the Action Plan are described in [Appendix 2](#).

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<sup>18</sup> Victoria State Government. 2017. Free from Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women, State of Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet), <https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/prevention-strategy.html>

<sup>19</sup> Together for Equality and Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2017-2021, Women's Health East, Melbourne. <http://whe.org.au/tfer/strategy-overview-document/>

## Partner agencies

Many individuals and organisations contributed to the development of the Action Plan, including members of the Whitehorse Prevention of Family Violence and Violence Against Women Collaborative Action and Networking Group:

Blackburn Football Club  
Box Hill South Neighbourhood House  
Carrington Health  
Clota Cottage Neighbourhood House  
Deakin University  
Department of Human Services – Multicultural Services  
Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault - Eastern Health  
Eastern Community Legal Service  
EDVOS – Specialist Family Violence Service  
Inner East Primary Care Partnership  
Kara House  
Kerrimuir Neighbourhood House  
Migrant Information Centre  
Mitcham Neighbourhood House - FV Program  
Nadrasca  
Respect and Responsibility Education Schools Project  
Victoria Police  
Whitehorse CC – Community Development, Health and Family Services, Men’s Action Group  
Whitehorse Manningham Library  
Women's Health East and TFER Partnership  
Yarra Valley Water

## Reference group

In addition to an internal project control group with senior representation from Human Services and People and Culture, the planning process was informed by a reference group with representatives of:

Carrington Health  
Deakin University  
Department of Human Services – Multicultural Services  
Eastern Community Legal Service  
EDVOS – Specialist Family Violence Service  
Inner East Primary Care Partnership  
Nadrasca  
Respect and Responsibility Education Schools Project  
Victoria Police  
Whitehorse CC – Community Development, Health and Family Services, Men’s Action Group  
Women's Health East and TFER Partnership

## Definitions

**Violence against women** is “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”.<sup>20</sup> It encompasses, but is not limited to, “physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.”

**Family violence** is when a person (perpetrator) uses coercive and abusive behaviours to exercise power and control over another member of their family (victim survivor) that causes harm and distress. The types of violence can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, spiritual and financial abuse. Family violence is used as a general term for abusive behaviours that occur between different members of the family including family-like, kinship or carer relationships. Family violence can affect anyone regardless of age, cultural background, education, sexuality or ability. Family violence may also be called domestic violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse, and elder abuse.

**Gender:** The socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.<sup>21</sup>

**Intersectionality:** A lens which recognises that women are affected by forms of marginalisation including racism, sexism and discrimination related to ethnicity, Aboriginality, sexuality or disability, which may make them more vulnerable to gender-based violence. Intersectionality recognises that social structures and systems, and the way they intersect, play a large role in creating social conditions that shape the ways in which people experience inequality, injustices, disadvantage and violence.

**Elder abuse** is any act that harms an older person and is often carried out by someone they know and trust such as an adult child, family member, partner, carer or friend. The abuse may be verbal, physical, social, financial, psychological or sexual and can include mistreatment and neglect.

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 1993

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework>, p 61.

## Abbreviations

CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CAWG	Community Action Working Group
CHH	Centre for Holistic Health
DAC	Disability Advisory Committee
ECLC	Eastern Community Legal Centre
FAN	Family Access Network
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/gender diverse, Queer Intersex, Asexual
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MSC	Migrant Settlement Committee
PFV&VAW	Prevention of Family Violence and Violence against Women
PVAW	Prevention of Violence against Women
RFVP	Regional Family Violence Partnership
RRE	Respectful Relationships Education
TFER	Together For Equality & Respect
WELS	Whitehorse Early Learning Services
WHACS	Whitehorse Home and Community Services
WHE	Women's Health East
WML	Whitehorse Manningham Library

## Appendix 1: Objectives of the Whitehorse Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-2020 supported by the Family Violence Prevention Action Plan



**Council Strategic Direction 1: Support a healthy, vibrant, inclusive and diverse community**  
**Health and Wellbeing Goal 1: Connected, safe, respected and resilient people, families and communities**

### Council Plan Approaches:

- 1.1.1 In partnership, plan and deliver high quality responsive services and advocate for our diverse community based on current and future needs
- 1.1.2 Encourage and facilitate connections across the diverse age groups through activities and social interaction in our community
- 1.1.3 Continue to work with the community and stakeholders in relation to community safety, including family violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol
- 1.1.4 Work with community organisations to encourage social connections and support community participation
- 1.1.5 Continue to encourage and support volunteering to enable community participation opportunities
- 1.1.6 Continue to provide opportunities for people to engage in the arts, festivals, recreation and sports leading to social connectedness and cultural diversity
- 1.1.7 Increase awareness of and celebrate the diversity of our community

### Health and Wellbeing Objectives:

- a) Collaboratively plan and deliver evidence-based strategies to increase capacity of Council and the community to respond to and prevent family violence and violence against women
- b) In partnership with community organisations, disability services, and other Councils develop strategies to prevent violence against women with a disability and children with disability
- c) Continue to safeguard the rights, dignity, health and independence of older people through action to prevent elder abuse
- d) Explore partnerships and opportunities for collaboration to prevent violence against women and promote the sexual health, safety and wellbeing of young people, in particular newly arrived young people, and the growing population of international students in Whitehorse
- e) Continue to enhance workforce capacity of direct service providers to respond to elder abuse, family violence and child safety concerns

- f) Coordinate regional activities to promote understanding about respectful relationships, gender and sexual diversity
- g) Increase health literacy for men and women in identified health and wellbeing priority areas, including mental health, harmful use of alcohol and violence prevention



**Strategic Direction 2: Maintain and enhance our built environment to ensure a liveable and sustainable city**

**Health and Wellbeing Goal 2: Accessible, safe and welcoming places for all people**

Council Plan Approaches:

- 2.1.1 Development which respects our natural and built environments and neighbourhood character while achieving a balanced approach to growth in accordance with relevant legislation
- 2.1.2 Advocate for greater housing diversity, including affordable and social housing
- 2.1.3 Advocate for enhanced transport accessibility and improved transport routes and modes (including active transport)
- 2.1.4 Maintain, renew and sustainably invest in our community infrastructure that is relevant, modern and accessible, and can accommodate multi-purpose usage
- 2.1.5 Maintain, enhance and create shared community spaces that promote the neighbourhood character and provide a safe and enjoyable meeting place for everyone
- 2.1.6 Provide and maintain an infrastructure network that meets the needs of development growth while supporting residents, businesses and visitors in their daily activities
- 2.1.7 Continue to encourage sustainable and quality retrofit of existing infrastructure (Council facilities, street lighting)

Health and Wellbeing Objectives:

- a) Increase community safety for residents, businesses and visitors of Whitehorse
- b) Plan for the needs of multiple users of Council managed facilities to promote a shared, welcoming community





**Strategic Direction 3: Protect and enhance our open spaces and natural environments**  
**Health and Wellbeing Goal 3: A sustainable environment and shared open spaces**

Council Plan Approaches:

- 3.1.1 Continue to sustainably manage, enhance and increase trees and vegetation in Council's streetscapes, parks and gardens, with species that enhance neighbourhood character, support biodiversity and are adaptable to a changing climate
- 3.1.2 Continue to retain, enhance and increase the amount of open spaces to meet the needs of our diverse community with amenities that encourage opportunities for shared use
- 3.1.3 Continue to educate and create awareness of the importance of sustaining our natural environment including the importance of trees and vegetation in an urban environment

Health and Wellbeing Objectives:

- a) Increase access to shared spaces for physical activity and sports participation, in particular for the sports of soccer and cricket
- b) Plan for the needs of multiple users of Council-managed open spaces to promote a shared, welcoming community



**Strategic Direction 4: Strategic leadership and open and accessible government**  
**Health and Wellbeing Goal 4: Communicating, actively engaged Council**

Council Plan Approaches:

- 4.1.1 Continue to ensure financial sustainability and continue business improvement programs
- 4.1.2 Promote and enhance good governance practices and conduct
- 4.1.3 Progress the implementation of the Local Government Act Review
- 4.2.1 Promote leadership and development opportunities for Council employees
- 4.2.2 Continue to maintain and develop a high performing workforce that supports Council's ability to deliver services efficiently and effectively
- 4.2.3 Continue to participate in the Resilient Melbourne Strategy; working collaboratively to deliver actions that will help make Whitehorse a viable, livable and prosperous city, long into the future

- 4.2.4 Continue to provide a high standard of customer service while improving the customer experience
- 4.3.1 Communicate Council services, facilities and initiatives through a wide range of accessible channels
- 4.3.2 Undertake a digital transformation that improves the customer experience, business processes and provides operational benefits

Health and Wellbeing Objectives:

- a) Communicate health and wellbeing information in community languages through Council customer services to increase health literacy and access to services.
- b) Continue to enhance the health and performance of Council's workforce through organisational development initiatives
- c) Support employees experiencing family violence in line with Collective Agreement



**Strategic Direction 5: Support a healthy local economy**

**Health and Wellbeing Goal 5: People in Whitehorse have economic opportunities**

Council Plan Approaches:

- 5.1.1 Working in partnership to support the development of a sustainable and growing local economy which contributes to economic activity and employment growth
- 5.1.2 Working in partnership to support the commercial, private and public sector investment opportunities
- 5.1.3 Working in partnership to support the growth of the health, education and commercial sectors
- 5.1.4 Maintain a regional presence through engagement with a range of Melbourne's eastern stakeholders
- 5.1.5 Encourage and partner with local businesses to work with the community to create, participate in, and sponsor events which promote a sense of place

Health and Wellbeing Objectives:

- a) Design and deliver affordable business skills education and mentoring opportunities for new and emerging business people, with a focus on women returning to the workforce, work-life balance and the promotion of entrepreneurship
- b) Continue to facilitate knowledge sharing for business people, including cross-cultural investment opportunities and the link between employee health and productivity

## Appendix 2: Indicators supporting the Family Violence Prevention Action Plan

Together the indicators below provide a suite of options to measure the impact of a number of actions in this plan and to provide a line of sight to the regional and Victorian strategies aiming to prevent family violence and violence against women.

### *Free from Violence Strategy<sup>22</sup>*

In 2019 Whitehorse City Council is participating in the Victorian Government's Local Government Free from Violence Program and has agreed to use the following six indicators for evaluation of the Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention:

- A. Increased public commitment to primary prevention initiatives in local government
- B. Increased collaboration and coordination within council
- C. Increased collaboration between local council and community working together to promote gender equality and violence prevention in local areas
- D. Increased knowledge among participants about the drivers of family violence and all forms of violence against women
- E. Increased support for gender equality
- F. Increased confidence for bystander action

### *Together for Equality and Respect (TFER) Strategy<sup>23</sup>*

Indicators from the Evaluation Framework of the regional prevention strategy Together for Equality and Respect 2017-2021 relevant for this Action Plan are:

#### *Community and Workforce*

- G. Increased awareness of the issue of family violence (including what constitutes family violence)
- H. Increased awareness of the link between gender inequality and violence against women
- I. Increased awareness of the issue of gender inequality
- J. Increased knowledge about gender equality
- K. Increased knowledge of the drivers of family violence and men's violence against women
- L. Increased knowledge of respectful and equal relationships
- M. Increased confidence in skills to undertake gender equitable action in relevant setting (live/work/play)
- N. Increased confidence in skills to challenge gender inequality in relevant setting (live/work/play)
- O. Increased confidence in skills to support and promote equal and respectful relationships

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<sup>22</sup> Victoria State Government. 2017. Free from Violence: Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women, pp.50-51, State of Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet), <https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/prevention-strategy.html>

<sup>23</sup> Together for Equality and Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2017-2021, Women's Health East, Melbourne. <http://whe.org.au/tfer/strategy-overview-document/>

## Organisation

- P. Increasing number of TFER partners that demonstrate achieving at least 50% of the ten quality criteria as outlined in TFER Gender Equity audit tool. These quality criteria are:
- people in senior positions demonstrate commitment to and leadership on gender issues
  - organisation has written policy/policies that affirm a commitment to gender equity
  - organisation has procedures that enact the policy/policies
  - budget allocation for staff training or other workforce development activity in gender equity
  - designated responsibility for promoting gender equity in the organisation
  - sex-disaggregated data is used for workforce/HR planning
  - action taken to recruit, mentor and retain a representative number of women on the board of the organisation or as local Councillors
  - sex disaggregated data used for planning projects, programs and services
  - gender impact of projects, programs and services monitored and evaluated
  - feedback from community consultation analysed by gender





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the support of the Victorian Government*

