



## Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention

*A community where everyone is valued and safe*



# Free from Violence Project 2019

## Final report summary

The *Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention Project* aim was to increase the capacity of Council to strategically respond to prevent family violence and promote gender equality by embedding primary prevention principles and activity across Council, collaborating with existing and new partners and supporting community mobilisation and engagement for primary prevention. The project achieved its aim to a large degree. Five of the nine project objectives were fully achieved and three mostly achieved. Only one objective of the original plan was not achieved during the project period, December 2018 – December 2019.

The *Whitehorse Strengthening Local Action for Family Violence Prevention Project* was broad and ambitious; it focussed on building foundations in Whitehorse at three levels of the socio-ecological model described by Our Watch (2017).<sup>i</sup>

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### *At the System/Organisational Level*

- We developed a coordinated plan of action for the prevention of family violence (PFV) that engaged 87 Council staff. The PFV action plan is scheduled to go to Council in May 2020. The PFV action plan encompasses 32 key actions across 15 areas of Council, and in collaboration with 10 partner agencies.
- We raised awareness about policy, procedures and tools for gender equity and PFV to support best practice within Council. While our survey found 64.6% of staff were aware that Council has both a FV Resource Kit and FV leave, there is opportunity to further promote.
- We did not establish an ongoing sustained internal structure to implement the PFV action plan. The PFV action plan is fully integrated within the Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and the project manager will coordinate its implementation. The project manager has joined the internal Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Committee, which is currently under review in light of the new Gender Equality Act requirements.

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### *At the Community Level*

- We collaborated with the Whitehorse Prevention of Family Violence and Violence Against Women (PFV&VAW) Collaborative Action Working Group (CAWG) to develop a coordinated community plan of action for the PFV. Ten organisations regularly participated in six meetings of the Project Reference Group, designing the Community Action Planning workshop and contributing to partnership actions in the plan.
- We established a sustained external structure with Terms of Reference (ToR) to implement the action plan. Early on, two different groups with ToRs were established: one with a focus on collaboration and networking (the CANG), and the other a Reference Group providing strategic input into prevention action planning. In December the Reference Group agreed to re-join the groups. A review of the ToR in February 2020 ensured the group has a role in implementing partnership actions of the plan.
- We have increased the breadth and diversity of community organisations engaged in prevention, with membership of the CAWG increased to 23 organisations. A video highlighting their contribution to PFV was launched for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (16 DoA) with 333 views so far. We have engaged the community in co-design specifically with a local football club, a neighbourhood house and a major disability service provider, Nadrasca.

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### *At the Individual/Relationship Level*

- An integrated PVAW and Gender Equity learning program to increase awareness of what constitutes family violence and its primary prevention is now live and available to Council staff.
- We created seven opportunities for 124 individuals to gain knowledge and develop skills for PFV, including bystander actions. 90-94% of participants in training reported an increase in knowledge.
- Nearly 300 people were reached through five different opportunities to gain knowledge about violence against women and its primary prevention, including community groups engaging with activities during the 16 DoA. Members of the Project Control Group reported increased understanding of primary prevention of family violence as a result of the project.

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<sup>i</sup> Our Watch (2017) Change the Story: A shared framework for the prevention of violence against women and their children, Melbourne.

