

# PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: STORIES OF ACHIEVEMENT FROM MELBOURNE'S NORTH 2020



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

BUILDING A   
**Respectful  
Community**



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



Women's Health In the North acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we provide our services – the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation – and pay our respects to their Elders past and present and emerging. WHIN acknowledges that Aboriginal sovereignty was never ceded and expresses hope for justice and reconciliation.

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Suggested Citation: Women's Health In the North. (2020). Preventing Violence against Women: Stories of achievement from Melbourne's north: part two. Thornbury: Women's Health In the North.

Cover Image: Women's Health In the North and the Building a Respectful Community Partnership's social media campaign for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign 2019. To see WHIN's 16 Days of Activism Toolkit for 2019, visit <https://www.whin.org.au/resources/preventing-violence-against-women-resources/>.

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## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a prevalent and serious human rights abuse that causes significant harm to individuals, families, communities and societies. In the northern region of Melbourne, organisations across the health, government, community and education sectors have been working together for 10 years to create the long term societal change needed to end this violence.

The Building a Respectful Community Partnership is an alliance of 24 organisations, led by Women's Health In the North, that share a commitment to preventing violence against women and promoting gender equity. This work is guided by the [Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017–2021](#).

*Preventing Violence Against Women: Stories of achievement from Melbourne's north 2020* is a sample of the work occurring across diverse settings. This collection of case studies has been compiled by Women's Health In the North to promote evidence-based practice and assist prevention workers to share learnings, challenges and successes.

Case studies come from partners and associate members of the Building a Respectful Community Partnership. Significantly, this is only a small sample of the vast work occurring in the region.

As per the principles of the Building a Respectful Community Strategy 2017–2021, the Building a Respectful Community Partnership is committed to work that is:

- Human rights-based
- Feminist
- Gender transformative
- Intersectional
- Accountable
- Informed by local content
- Engages with men
- Evidence-based.



## STORIES OF ACHIEVEMENT

These case studies showcase work across various settings and population groups that can illustrate these principles being put into action. As a core component of evidence-based practice, projects are required to align to the key Australian frameworks for the primary prevention of violence against women, Change the Story and Changing the Picture.

Many of these projects show how the concept of intersectionality is being put into practice, a key area of development since the previous publication of case studies in 2017.

As the backbone organisation for the Building a Respectful Community Partnership, Women's Health In the North provides leadership, coordination, workforce capacity building, evaluation and evidenced-based practice guidance to organisations and staff across the region.

Women's Health In the North is honoured to be leading a partnership implementing such an impressive range of work, as we work together for a gender-equitable, safe and respectful community.

Thank you to all organisations who submitted case studies for this publication.

For more information on the Building a Respectful Community Partnership, go to [www.whin.org.au/brc](http://www.whin.org.au/brc)

## Whittlesea Community Connections

# Women's Group Grants Program

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The 'Women's Group Grants Program' was established in 2014 as a key component of the Whittlesea Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Family Violence Project and an intentional intersectional approach to prevention of violence against women. The 'Women's Groups Grants Program' supports women from diverse backgrounds to build social connections, share stories and experiences, and support each other to connect to support services, particularly in relation to family violence. Women participate in family violence training which enables them to explore and reflect upon the drivers of family violence within their own family and community. Women's groups are supported through other self-identified needs and opportunities that build their understanding of family violence, in addition to fostering leadership skills and connections to the broader community.

Responsibility for reviewing and approving grants is held by the Women's Advisory Group, a group of women from migrant, refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds who provide advice and community connections to improve local efforts in the prevention of family violence, particularly in multicultural communities.

To date, \$130,000 has been brokered, helping to establish and strengthen 45 multicultural women's groups.

An evaluation of the program (2014–2018) identified that women developed positive relationships and strengthened their confidence and skills, and this was particularly the case for newly arrived women. Women reported increased awareness of family violence in all its forms and increased awareness of the support services available to them following the community education component of the program. Based on evaluation findings, the program continues to be modified addressing identified needs which include strategies to recognise the multiple roles women play in their lives, and to engage extremely isolated women.

Project funded by: Sunshine and Crocodiles Pty Ltd.

Most women didn't know anything about family violence before this - things that they thought were normal actually came under family violence.

- Whittlesea Community Connections

Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (Austin Health)

## Supporting Schools to Implement Respectful Relationships Education

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Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (Northern CASA) has been active in the Respectful Relationships space for over ten years. NCASA recognised the 2016 release of the Department of Education's Respectful Relationships curriculum and its state wide implementation in Victorian schools as a significant prevention opportunity. Northern CASA has actively sought to support and to build the capacity of school staff to provide curriculum that would ensure cultural change for all young people in the areas of ending gendered violence.

The project addresses all of the essential actions to prevent violence against women cited in *Change the Story*. It provides education and support to school staff and students using current statistical data, resources and targeted activities to address negative stereotypes and victim blaming views held within the community. This education is used to empower staff and students to identify and respond appropriately to gender-based violence, promoting cultural change and a safer society for all.

It is vital to strengthen skills in facilitation and genuine listening when exploring sensitive or confronting topics with young people such as gender-based violence.

To promote social activism in schools on the essential actions to prevent violence against women, project activities include the creation of an anti-violence slogan. Teachers and students then use these slogans to create posters, artwork or t-shirts that they can display during Week Without Violence or the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. These slogans have also been used to make promotional posters, postcards and badges by Northern CASA that have been featured in online campaigns and distributed throughout the community.

Project funded by: Department of Health and Human Services.



Poster created in project activities.

City of Whittlesea

## Gender (in)Equity in Employment in Melbourne's Outer Growth Suburbs

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Families move to growth areas for affordable housing and the security this brings, but these residential areas are a long way from jobs. Once they have moved in families can find themselves making trade-offs between work and family life that reinforce unequal gender roles. Women trade their career and financial independence for lower skills/paid jobs close to home to be available for caring responsibilities. Men trade their caring responsibilities and time with their family for long commutes to maintain finances and careers.

To explore this issue, the City of Whittlesea commissioned an analysis of Census employment data. The resulting [interactive data dashboard](#) reveals that local employment in Melbourne's outer growth areas does not match women's skills and qualifications. Women living in growth areas are more likely than men living in growth areas to have tertiary qualifications, yet are less likely to be in a job that reflects their skills and qualifications compared to women living in inner and middle suburbs.

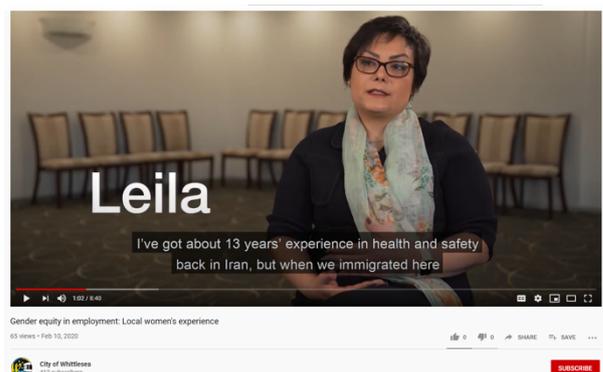
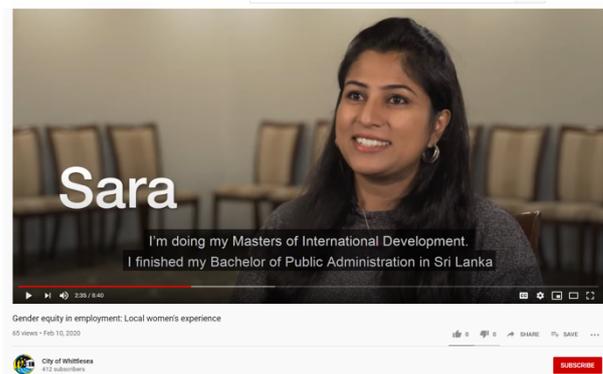
Complementing the data review, consultations were held with women from the local area which informed the development of composite case studies. These reflected the common themes: local employment not matching women's skills, gender roles that perpetuate gender stereotypes, transport barriers, and limiting workplace practices.

Two short films were developed to bring women's experiences to the forefront of conversations about inequity in employment, and to bring the employment data to life. The films were screened in February 2020 at the forum 'Work and Life: How do we build gender equity in outer growth suburbs?'

The event connected local government, employment and community stakeholders to workshop ideas to promote gender equity in employment practices, grow high-skill employment in Whittlesea and increase the number of women who can work locally in roles which reflect their level of qualification.

The City of Whittlesea's *Gender Equity and Employment Project Report* (to be released in 2020) provides evidence and recommendations for future action to progress gender equity, through advocacy on structural gender equality issues such as access to quality childcare, recruitment practices and strategic approaches to enhance local employment. The short films can be accessed here: [Local women's experiences](#) and [Laura's story](#).

Project funded by: The Victorian Government and the City of Whittlesea.



Screenshots from the short film 'Local women's experiences'.

## Banksia Gardens Community Services

# Good People Act Now (GPAN) Project

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The 'Good People Act Now (GPAN) Project' is a youth-led action group based in Broadmeadows, working to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women. 'GPAN' focuses on peer-to-peer bystander action, equipping young people with tools to safely challenge harmful beliefs and attitudes that proliferate a culture of disrespect. Since 2014, 'GPAN' has trained over 100 young people, delivering a free six-week training course to recruits from Hume and surrounding areas each year.

In the training course, 'GPANers' cover topics such as: the link between gender inequality and violence against women, respectful relationships, intersectionality, gender stereotypes, responding to disclosures of gender-based violence, influencing and how to manage backlash.

Many 'GPANers' choose to volunteer beyond their first year and the opportunity to pay young people for their contributions as either permanent staff or for contracted work, has allowed the 'GPAN' project to be authentically youth-led. Participants are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to be active bystanders in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women in their communities. Over the past year, 'GPAN' Youth Action Group has been raising awareness across Hume, including performances at local schools and events, the establishment of 'GPAN' hubs in local schools, and workshops on respectful relationships.

An ongoing challenge 'GPAN' has faced is the lack of engagement from boys and men, with only 2-3 young men participating in each year's training.

An enabling factor has been the groundswell of support and commitment to achieving gender equality and ending violence against women by the Victorian Government and the wider community.

Since its inception in 2014, the 'GPAN' initiative has highlighted that young people are best placed to influence their peers.

Increasing engagement with online spaces has enabled 'GPAN's' reach to grow and has increased community awareness of the program. Check out 'GPAN's' website

<https://www.goodpeopleactnow.org.au>

Project funded by: Victorian Government  
Prevention Practice Initiatives.



GPAN Youth Action Groups: 2018 and 2019.

## Banksia Gardens Community Services

# The Eurydice Dixon Gender Equity Champions Award

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The rape and murder of young Melbourne woman Eurydice Dixon in June 2018 was an event which the 'GPAN' Youth Action Group (see page 8) felt required a strong and meaningful response. Eurydice's death was particularly felt amongst the team, not just because she was a young person like themselves and moved in similar social circles, but because the perpetrator Jaymes Todd is a 19-year-old local Broadmeadows man. The team, together with the Steering Committee, wished to send a strong message that the young people of Broadmeadows care deeply about preventing violence against women, say no to any form of violence, and are actively working with other young people in Hume to create positive change in this space.

In 2018, the 'GPAN' team ran a fundraiser in memory of Eurydice Dixon and the other Australian women who had lost their lives to violence since her death. Over 100 people attended, and the feminist-inspired trivia questions on women in history, sport, the arts and politics fuelled discussion about the important contribution women make to society and why gaps in our knowledge about that contribution exist. The following year, the Youth Action Group hosted another fundraiser that reflected the interests of the team at the time, a Trivia Night and Art Showcase, which was the most successful GPAN event to date

With the blessing of Eurydice's family, the 'GPAN' team nominated to use the money raised to establish the *Eurydice Dixon Gender Equity Champions Award*, offering two \$500 scholarships each year to other young people in Hume who were championing gender equity in their own lives.



2018 recipients Bree Dodd and Kaitlyn Childers.



2019 recipients AJ Brennan and Aria Nanai, pictured with Banksia Gardens Community Services ambassador Ta Tapou (middle).

Over the last two years as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, 'GPAN' has awarded four young people with the *Eurydice Dixon Gender Equity Champions Award*. In 2018, award recipients Bree Dodd and Kaitlyn Childers were recognised for their commitment to gender equity through their active participation in Hume City Council's 'Stand Up, Speak Out' program. In 2019, Aria Nanai and AJ Brennan were celebrated for their commitment to the 'GPAN' Hub at Hume Central Secondary College. These four young women have used the scholarship funds to progress their professional development in dance, music and film.

Project funded by: Victorian Government  
Prevention Practice Initiatives.

## Banksia Gardens Community Services

# Gender Equity Working Group

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Banksia Gardens Community Services (BGCS) is in the Hume region which has the highest rates of family violence in northern metropolitan Melbourne. To address these high rates of family violence, BGCS has chosen to focus on gender equity as a means of preventing violence against women and creating a more equitable and fair community for all. The promotion of gender equity and the prevention of violence against women has been important to BGCS for some time, as demonstrated through its championing of and commitment to the Good People Act Now Project (page 8).

In 2019, BGCS staff nominated gender equity as one of the five key strategic areas for the 2020–24 Strategic Plan. From this, the Gender Equity Working Group was formed. Through bi-monthly meetings, the group is responsible for creating organisation-wide change to promote gender equity.

Members of the Gender Equity Working Group have a strong understanding of gender equity, violence against women and related topics. Members are responsible for representing a gender equity viewpoint through their individual roles in the organisation. This includes fostering positive personal identities and challenging gender stereotypes and roles, which is particularly important with young people that frequent BGCS.

In the last nine months, the working group has:

- Appointed a Gender Equity Coordinator and Gender Equity Officer
- Created the organisation's first Family Violence Policy and Gender Equity Policy
- Conducted a gender audit of 43 other workplace policies
- Conducted an Our Watch 'Workplace Equality and Respect' staff survey to gather baseline data
- Sourced training opportunities to upskill staff.

A challenge in this work has been competing priorities. With passionate staff working across many important sectors, such as education and training, youth justice and environmental change, having gender equity chosen as one of five key strategic areas was not a straightforward decision. However, this decision has enabled gender equity to receive special focus from BGCS over the next five years. Future goals of the working group include Rainbow Tick accreditation, gender-inclusive bathroom signage, parent room facilities and a menstruation station.

Project funded by: Banksia Gardens Community Services.

It is pivotal that all stakeholders – staff members, volunteers and services providers – be engaged with this work in some way to ensure real impact and real change takes place.

## Merri Health

# Count Me In Too

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Delivered in partnership with Moreland City Council, 'Count Me In Too' aimed to support women and girls from culturally diverse communities to get involved in various sports to improve mental health and social connections. The project was funded following the delivery of 'Count Me In', which engaged culturally diverse communities and children in sport, and found that girls were underrepresented and faced additional barriers to participation.

Programs were designed in consultation with women and girls and most sessions were delivered in women-only and child-friendly environments, with women coaches and support staff. Activities enjoyed by participants included tennis, cricket, lawn bowls, golf, football and netball.

In 2019, 'Count Me In Too' supported more than 600 women and girls from diverse cultural backgrounds to participate in sports, many of whom undertook leadership opportunities within the program. Women and girls who participated in the program reported strengthened mental health outcomes, social inclusion and self-identity, in addition to enabling positive role-modelling for their children, challenging traditional gender roles and positively influencing how boys view and value girls.

Participating sports clubs have made positive changes to become more inclusive and accessible to women and girls including:

- delivering women-only and child friendly social programs
- sourcing women coaches
- offering low-cost social and family memberships
- designating women-only timeslots
- extending children's programs to provide mothers and women an opportunity to play alongside
- supporting the establishment of women's sub-committees
- providing space for prayer.

A number of promotional materials for the program were developed, links to which can be found here:

<https://www.merrihealth.org.au/get-involved/health-initiatives/sport-participation-for-multicultural-women-and-girls/>

Check out the Active Moreland website here:

[www.activemoreland.com.au](http://www.activemoreland.com.au)

Project funded by: Supported by the Victorian Government, the Australian Government Department of Social Services and Tennis Victoria.



Local women participating in project activities.

For a number of years, Haig Fawkner Cricket Club has struggled to engage with the changing communities around them; but thanks to the networks and dedication of the staff at Merri Health, the connection between club and community in that pocket of Fawkner is now stronger than ever.

- Cricket Victoria

Darebin City Council

## Applying Gender Equity to Community Safety and Public Place Upgrades

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Public places and spaces are not gender neutral. Gender inequality can be enforced and reinforced by the way our cities and public places are designed. Women, girls and gender diverse people are still prevented from accessing certain public spaces, due in part to a culture that has normalised harassment from men and made these spaces unsafe or feel unsafe. An individual's experience of a public space is further compounded by an intersection of factors such as sexuality, age, ability and race.

Local government is responsible for much of the management and design of these public places. Therefore, local government can play a role in enabling the full and equal participation of all community members by improving perceptions of safety. This subverts dominant narratives that hold women and girls responsible for their own safety.

In 2018, Darebin City Council (Council) participated in the Victorian Government's 'Gender Equality Map' pilot project. The online platform allowed community members to pinpoint instances or tell stories of gender inequality / equality in the municipality. Council is using the results of this pilot to support the application of a gender lens in the prioritisation and improvement of public safety and infrastructure upgrades.



Lighting design by ARUP.

Following this work, Council was awarded a grant from the Department of Justice and Community Safety to improve perceptions of safety for women and girls in Oakhill Village, Preston. Council worked in partnership with ARUP (lighting design consultants) to use human centred design to make lighting and amenity improvements. Council's community consultation integrated learnings from an interactive night walk with community members and a workshop with the Darebin Women's Advisory Committee, resulting in a concept design for the streetscape that brings together research and the lived experiences of community members.

These projects form part of Darebin City Council's ongoing efforts to embed gender equity in public places. Council implements community safety audits on an ongoing basis which engage women and marginalised community members. These consider various factors that make users of a place feel safe or unsafe, which might include lighting, sightlines, how the place is used and accessibility. Learnings from these audits support Council to evaluate the impacts of its efforts on an ongoing basis, ensuring women, girls and gender diverse people feel included, valued and safe in the community.

Projects funded by: The Department of Justice and Community Safety and The Department of Premier and Cabinet, as one of the early actions under Safe and strong: a Victorian gender equality strategy.

## Baby Makes 3:

# Building Gender Equality in the Transition to Parenthood

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The transition to pregnancy and new parenthood are times of increased risk for gender inequitable behaviours and violence against women. Developed by Carrington Health in 2008 (now healthAbility and Carrington Health), the 'Baby Makes 3' program is designed to influence attitudes and social norms about equitable parenting, addressing the rigid gendered expectations of parents and building new parents' knowledge and skills to foster equal and respectful relationships. 'Baby Makes 3' also works in antenatal and postnatal settings to influence practices, structures and systems that reinforce the rigid gendered expectations of parenting.

The 'Baby Makes 3' program has been delivered to thousands of new families including women, men and non-binary parents. Over the past 10 years, Carrington Health has partnered with 32 Victorian Local Government's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services to embed the 'Baby Makes 3' program in to the universally delivered first-time parents groups. In 2018, Carrington Health partnered with eight antenatal services, including the Northern Hospital, to trial the inclusion of a 'Baby Makes 3' module within the 'Childbirth and Parenting Education' program. Northern Health delivered 47 antenatal 'Baby Make 3' sessions to 407 first-time parents over a six-month period.

Over the past twelve months, the focus of the antenatal project has shifted to a co-design process to identify additional intervention points and trial strategies that embed the gender equality messages more broadly into the existing practices and structures of the antenatal setting.

These include:

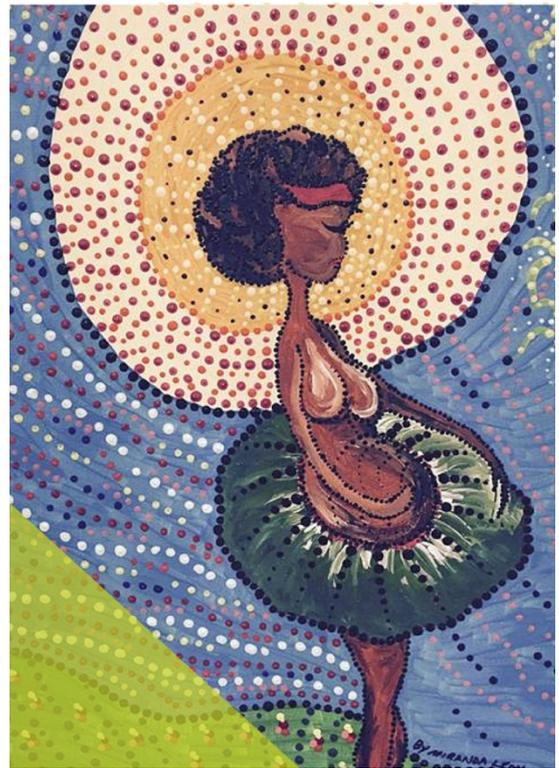
- Parents' access points: at clinical appointments, within the 'Childbirth and Parenting Education' program, and through a take-home activity provided to all parents at the 34-week antenatal visit.
- The physical environment: development of an audit tool used across antenatal clinics, birthing suites, education rooms, postnatal wards and general hospital environments.
- Policies and procedures: gender equality information included in the orientation pack for all maternity service staff, and workforce development opportunities.

### KEY LEARNINGS

- Recognise that all antenatal services are different in both models of care and decision making processes
- Allow ample time to build partnerships both between individuals and organisations
- An internal champion within the antenatal setting is critical for trialling the strategies for gender equality
- Embedding gender equality activities and messages into existing child birth and parenting education programs is an effective strategy to engage parents
- Acknowledge that public maternity services are busy and dynamic organisations and there is a need to work together respectfully around competing demands and priorities
- Recognise the contribution of this work to the evidence base in supporting systems-change and shaping the ongoing investment of a gender equality approach in the antenatal setting.

## ENGAGING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES

The 'Balit Booboop Narrkwarren', Building Strong Families program is a culturally adapted model of 'Baby Makes 3' designed by Aboriginal and Torres Islander communities. Carrington Health staff have worked with the Koori Maternity Service at the Northern Hospital to embed the key messages of the 'Balit Booboop Narrkwarren' program into antenatal and postnatal services to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families birthing at Northern Health. To date, two Koori Maternity Service midwives and one health worker have received 'Balit Booboop Narrkwarren' training and commenced trialling activities in April 2019.



Artwork by Miranda Madgwick, Woromi.

## CREATING SAFE, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAM FOR RAINBOW FAMILIES

In consultation with Rainbow Families Victoria, a LGBTIQ+ lens was applied to the 'Baby Makes 3' program to create an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for the diversity of families participating in first time parent groups and 'Childbirth and Parenting Education' programs.

In 2019, the 'Baby Makes 3' group manual was updated to be more inclusive of diverse families. The *Baby Makes 3 facilitator guidelines: creating an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for rainbow families* were developed and disseminated to all 'Baby Makes 3' facilitators via a Community of Practice series across Victoria.

Project funded by: Victorian State Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office for Women.



Participants of the 'Baby Makes 3' program engaging with program facilitator.

Your Community Health

## Building an Internal Gender Equality Foundation: Workplace Equality and Respect

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In 2019, Your Community Health made an organisational commitment to participate in the 'Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect Program'. The program seeks to promote gender equality in the workplace and across the community by supporting organisations to meet key standards in ensuring gender equality and respect.

In partnership with Women's Health In the North (WHIN), the initial stages of the 'Workplace Equality and Respect Program' involved consultation and engagement with staff members through two primary platforms: a self-assessment workshop and staff survey. The use of internal engagements, coupled with an internal review and benchmarking, enabled a feminist approach which has and will continue to be critical in reviewing and understanding internal power structures moving forward.

As a next step, the Workplace Equality and Respect Committee will develop a Gender Equity Action Plan. This plan will be based on 15 recommendations identified through staff engagements and will utilise baseline data collected from staff survey results and Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) measures to capture project impact.

Commitment from organisational management has been a key enabler in supporting this work, including representation on the internal Workplace Equality and Respect Committee. A barrier which will continue to be addressed, involves considering how to bring the whole organisation on this journey during a process of organisational change as Your Community Health considers merging with EACH.

This project highlights the importance of partnerships and collaboration in applying an evidence-based model such as the Workplace Equality and Respect Standards. The partnership with WHIN has been invaluable in supporting this work, and our internal collaborations will continue to be essential moving forward.

Project funded by: Department of Health and Human Services.

## Sunbury Community Health Centre

# Stand Up, Speak Out

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Launched in 2018, the 'Stand Up, Speak Out' program works with young women leaders providing knowledge on how to take action against gender inequality and violence against women.

In 2018, 'Stand Up, Speak Out' engaged 10 young women (aged 12-19) in a 16-week program focused on gender equity and bystander action, delivered in partnership with Hume Youth Services and Dianella Health (now DPV Health). In 2019, the program materials were altered for a shorter school-based delivery, and a six-week program was delivered to a group of eight students from Sunbury Downs College in partnership with Hume Youth Services. Elements of co-design were incorporated in the content planning, ensuring that the themes explored remained relevant to participants at each stage of the program.

A primary consideration in the development of this project was to ensure participant safety and wellbeing. It was acknowledged during project planning that many of the topic areas would potentially touch upon the lived experience of participants. Clear safety guidelines were developed between the partner agencies and conveyed to participants at the commencement of the projects, and the use of multiple facilitators allowed staff to attend to any issues as they arose.

Evaluation of the 2018 initiative demonstrated that participants felt more equipped to identify and address instances of gender inequality and number of participants reported using the skills and knowledge they attained in the training to address behaviours amongst their peers or others, to challenge the gendered drivers of violence against women. Both programs culminated in a student-led event: in 2018 the group ran a Gender Equity Disco for 50 young people from Craigieburn and in 2019 students organised a lunch time activity for Week Without Violence. These events promoted a better understanding of gender equality among the community and extending the reach of the project to wider audience.

Project funded by: Department of Health and Human Services with support from Hume City Council Youth Services.

## Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Ltd (VACSAL)

# Resilience Camps: Preventing the Cycle of Violence

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In 2019-20, VACSAL ran a number of family camps in the northern metropolitan and Shepparton regions to support whole-of-family connection and healing. Funded by Family Safety Victoria for Aboriginal-specific family violence prevention, the program was informed by Our Watch's report, *Changing the Picture*, as well as VACSAL's internal family violence expertise and state-wide family violence role.

The approach of the program was based on Aboriginal cultural values, recognising the important role of mothers and fathers within the community and that family violence is not a part of Aboriginal culture. The program respects the great wisdom and roles of Aboriginal women, challenges violence/aggression towards women and builds respectful relationships. Program activities included a resilience workshop, aboriginal cultural awareness, discussions on respectful relationships and Yarning Circles, as well as possum skin art.

Mainstream frameworks are limited in addressing family violence for the Aboriginal community. Therefore, a solid, Aboriginal-based and evidence-based theoretical framework is required to address family violence enablers. Facilitation by Aboriginal staff who know the community and culture deeply was critical to embed trust and cultural safety into the program.

These camps have and will go a long way to support family and cultural strengthening, which are key objectives of the Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework. It is only through families and communities who are strong in themselves and in their culture that we will see a reduction in family violence.

Project funded by: Family Safety Victoria.

Aboriginal services are well-placed and well-qualified to lead responses and prevention of family violence. Community control, empowerment and respect for Aboriginal cultural values are vital underpinnings to the reduction of family violence in the Aboriginal community.



Family camp activities.



Possum skin art.



Encourage children to play with any toy they like, regardless of gender stereotypes.



Promote equality and shared decision-making in relationships.



Chat with an older person about changing gender roles and norms over their lifetime.



Reflect on who does certain chores in my household and why.



## DPV Health

# Social Media Cards: 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

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The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign that is working to end gender-based violence and to raise awareness on the impacts of violence against women. The purpose of this project was to present key messages of the 16 Days of Activism campaign to suit the local communities who may have low English proficiency levels and to make it relevant to the very diverse communities in the local catchment.

DPV Health had a key focus to both raise awareness of gender-based violence within the community and to provide education on gender inequality as a key driver of violence against women.

To help engage the community in a creative and visual way, DPV Health designed a social media campaign which involved the creation of four gender equity social media cards. Using the Building a Respectful Community's *16 Actions for 16 Days* resource developed by Women's Health In the North, DPV Health picked four messages that were best suited to the local community.

An important goal of the project was to reflect DPV's diverse community, including people of different genders, abilities and ethnicities, and to ensure that women were not represented using stereotypes. This was challenging, as many individuals had different ideas on what diversity and inclusiveness looks like in an image – and especially across only four tiles.

Overall, the social media campaign received great feedback and great engagement from the community, DPV staff and external stakeholders. The social media cards were visually engaging and representative of the community.

Project funded by: Department of Health and Human Services.

## Moreland City Council

# Local Dads Groups in Moreland

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The transition to parenthood provides challenges for new fathers as they navigate rapid change across their relationships, commitments and lifestyles. Moreland Council's Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Service is focusing on bringing new services and programs to fathers in their local community. The MCH Service has partnered with a positive fatherhood organisation, Dads Group, to better support new fathers in the transition to parenthood, foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.

The partnership between Moreland City Council and Dads Group has seen local Dads Groups established in Fawkner, Glenroy, Brunswick West and Coburg. Groups are led by local dads giving the members ownership of the initiative. The groups provide new fathers with an opportunity to meet others transitioning to parenthood, creating a peer support network to ask questions, to share and to learn from others.

New fathers participating in the Dads Groups report spending more time with their children, learning and sharing with other dads, stronger social connections and building strong support networks within their local communities. A common topic of discussion amongst fathers in the groups, is a strong understanding of the key role they play when it comes to domestic duties around the house, recognising the importance not only to be supportive and helpful to their partners, but to understand what their actions are modelling for their children.

Some key successes are that local dads are leading these support groups, they are spending more time with their children, learning and sharing with other dads, making friends in their neighbourhoods and have a support network of their own. Having an organisation like Dads Group oversee this is important as well as it provides the stability and support the group needs for sustainability.

Project funded by: Moreland Council, Maternal and Child Health Team



Local Dads Group in Fawkner.

## Nillumbik Shire Council

# Gender Equity Advocates

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Building staff capacity to consider gender equity in local government programs and services is a key strategy for improving gender equity both in the workplace and the community.

Nillumbik Shire Council developed a program to train and support staff as Gender Equity Advocates, tasked with providing presentations and information to staff teams across the organisation on gender equity. With support from Council's Executive Management Team, 15 Gender Equality Advocates were recruited from all directorates and staff levels across the organisation. The Gender Equity Officer worked with consultants to develop a tailored training program, which was completed by the 15 Gender Equity Advocates and 11 other staff, including five of the executive team. The Gender Equity Advocates also completed two community of practice sessions about intersectionality and responding to backlash.

Working in pairs, the Gender Equity Advocates delivered 29 presentations on gender equity to 243 staff across Nillumbik Shire Council. The presentations all included Nillumbik's Gender Equity Policy Statement – which many staff reported they hadn't known about – as well as *Change the Story*,

Council's Family Violence Leave Policy, and the new intranet page on gender equity. A strength of the presentations was that the Gender Equity Officer supported the Advocates to adapt the presentations to each team. For example, for the Youth Team presentation they used the National Community Attitudes Survey youth data, Council's Open Spaces team had a plant diagram to explain equity and equality, and Council's Finance team used a video about the gender pay gap.

The staff capacity building has resulted in staff embedding gender equity principles into their practice. This includes gender equity in procurement, gender neutral language in the *Communications Writing Style Guide*, gender equity included in staff inductions, six gender equity items in the 2018–19 Annual Report, and gender equity being considered in the current Enterprise Agreement negotiations. Gender equity is now a standing agenda item for team meetings and the Gender Equity Advocates continue to be a contact point for teams.

Project funded by: Free from Violence project funded by the Office for Women with support from the Municipal Association of Victoria.



Gender Equity Advocates training.

Brotherhood of St Laurence

## Safer and Stronger Communities: Prevention of Family Violence Initiative

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In 2018, Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) was funded by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) to be one of five providers of the two-year Safer and Stronger Communities Prevention of Family Violence Pilot project. This pilot project aims to build the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce family violence and violence against women, and to build staff, organisational and community understanding of gender equality and intersectionality.

In consultation with specialist services and community leaders, the project team co-designs and delivers family violence prevention activities working with the Whittlesea Indian (Punjabi) and the Hume Afghan Refugee Community. Community activities have included:

- Establishment and mobilization of Community Advisory Group (CAG), Women's group, and Men's group to foster gender equality and respectful relationship.
- Delivery of regular education sessions and exposures to women in both communities to promote women's independence and decision making in public life and relationships.
- Engagement of women and men in campaigns/events including celebration of international days to challenge attitudes and behaviours that condone violence against women.
- Raising community awareness of family violence and legal services available to women

The project team also supports the BSL Gender Equality Working Group which is implementing the Our Watch 'Workplace Equity and Respect Standards' in alignment with the *MARAM Framework*.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE:

- Completion of the Workplace Equality and Respect staff survey
- Establishment of BSL Gender Equality Working Group
- Delivery of 'Workplace Equity and Respect Standards' training to management staff
- Development of guidelines, procedures and organisational commitment to the Workplace Equality and Respect Standards and intersectionality
- Initial work on a Gender Equity Action Plan, Gender Equity Strategy and Prevention of Violence Against Women Plan.

Project funded by: Multicultural Affairs, Department of Premier and Cabinet.

## Merri Health and The Long Walk

### Speak Up, Speak Out

Liz Phillips, Koorie Community Engagement Officer, Merri Health,  
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'Speak Up, Speak Out' (SUSO) was a pilot initiative delivered in partnership between The Long Walk Trust and Merri Health, funded by the Victorian State Government through the Aboriginal Family Violence Primary Prevention Fund in 2019. The pilot engaged 26 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander young people aged 9–12 years from Hume and Moreland areas.

Held at the Essendon Football Club and the Greenvale Football Club, the programs utilised fun, engaging activities, role play and group discussion to teach equal and respectful relationships education, gender equity and 'upstander' (active bystander) actions. The programs focused heavily on connecting the young people to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and community, exploring the Wurundjeri culture as matriarchal and learning about the importance of shared roles and equal responsibilities in Wurundjeri life pre-European settlement. Together, the group watched and reflected on a series of videos that emphasised positive, equal and respectful relationships, including this one called Healthy Relationships, which is made specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.



A Day on Country.

Evaluation data collected from the programs reflected improvements in knowledge, confidence and understanding in relation to the program objectives, and thus the program funding has been extended for another term.

A case study and a mini-documentary (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMzhi6ytiQ8>) were created from the pilot programs, highlighting some of the key achievements, challenges, learnings and recommendations which included:

- The importance of sharing stories related to cultural background to help form identity
- Engagement of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander facilitators
- Consultation with Aboriginal Elders to ensure culturally appropriate content
- Ensuring connection with schools and families through regular updates
- Maintaining flexibility
- Considering longer sessions and longer overall programs.

Project funded by: State Government of Victoria through the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Fund.



Project activities.

## Merri Health

# Gender Equality at Merri Health: A Workplace Gender Equity Initiative

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The 'Gender Equality at Merri Health' project started more than six years ago as a whole-of-organisation health promotion strategy aiming to make Merri Health a more equitable, safe and inclusive workplace. The initiative prioritises changing the norms, policy and environmental settings within the workplace to ensure they are equitable, inclusive and accessible to people regardless of their gender. The project focuses heavily on utilising leadership, communications and organisational policy change to prioritise and normalise gender equality in the workplace, with emphasis on ensuring proportional gender diversity within leadership positions across management, executive leadership and board structures.

The past two years of this project has seen a change in focus and implementation, with organisational efforts now directed towards the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) citation as an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality. Collaboration across teams and the incorporation of human resources, quality assurance and health promotion expertise has been critical to the success of obtaining Merri Health's second citation in 2020.



Merri Health CEO Tassia Michaleas signing on to the BRC Partnership.

### KEY ACTIVITIES IN THE MOST RECENT PHASE OF THE PROJECT:

- Updating workplace policies to reflect improved equity and flexibility
- Communicating transparently with staff on key workplace gender equality indicators, including: gender pay gap analysis, workforce demographics by gender, reports of gender-based harassment, utilisation of parental leave, and promotions and separations.
- Removing the eligibility period for primary carers accessing paid parental leave
- Developing a business case to support future workplace gender equality initiatives.

Applying an intersectional approach to this work is an ongoing priority and learning opportunity. As an organisational proudly committed to the Rainbow Tick, the project team has encountered a range of challenges with the WGEA's strict adherence to a gender binary and our organisational priorities around recognising and reflecting gender diversity. The team has made efforts to navigate these conflicts through partnering with the Merri Health LGBTQIA+ Committee to ensure strategies are inclusive.

Project funded by: Merri Health and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

## access all areas

Karen Ingram, Prevention Coordinator, and Meredith Drinkell, Health Promotion Officer  
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'access all areas' (aaa) is a collaboration of music industry, LGBTQIA+, community and women's health stakeholders to advance opportunities for gender equity, diversity and safety in music industry settings in Melbourne's north and west. 'aaa' recognises and seeks to shed light on the ways gendered violence and under-representation is shaped by structures such as colonisation, racism, ableism and more, which impact particular people in unique and compounding ways. 'aaa' aims to amplify voices of those who are working towards cultural and structural change in music industry settings.

Strategies used by 'aaa' to advance gender equity and increase participation of women and non-binary folks in performance, production, promotion and audiences across Melbourne's north and west include:

- A literature review identifying gender inequities in the music industry, unsafe practices and reported perceptions of safety in industry settings.
- 'aaa' bystander training targeted towards the music industry
- A reference tip sheet for bystander intervention and safety considerations
- A gender quota study of live music line-ups at venues in the central and northern regions of Melbourne, and an online music festival in response to COVID-19
- A video resource for online sharing amplifying the voices of those who experience marginalisation in the music industry.



Program participants.

'aaa' connects the work of the preventing violence against women sector and the music industry, consciously applying an intersectional approach throughout all stages of the project. While the overarching focus of 'aaa' is based on gender equity, it is recognised that we cannot address this inequity without also addressing racism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia.

Moving forward, a communications strategy will be developed to ensure the profile of the issues that access all areas aims to address will be better known and understood by a range of stakeholders. This strategy will link the existing evidence and propose calls for action by individuals, businesses, organisations and funding bodies for greater inclusion and equality in music industry settings.

Project funded by: cohealth and Integrated Health Promotion from the Department of Health and Human Services.



Karen Ingram presenting the aaa bystander approach tip sheet.

## Do Not Judge This Book By Its Cover

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Following the biennial Banyule Youth Summit in 2018, gender equity work was identified as a priority area for the Banyule Youth Team. After the event, young people across Banyule came together to create a book to highlight and build capacity of young people's experiences and expressions of gender, and to explore how they are challenging rigid gender stereotypes, binary gender identification and unhealthy expressions of masculinity.

Within the publication, written and visual art submissions highlighted voices of women, men and non-binary people, as well as young people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The book was separated into four chapters – Feminine, Masculine, Beyond the Binary and Being You. Each chapter explored how gender stereotypes can be confusing, limiting and unhelpful for young people as they develop their identity and sense of self. The final chapter explored the positive impact on wellbeing that people can experience when they are accepted and validated in their personal identity.

The book has been distributed to high schools, community centres and public libraries throughout the region, and is available online and at youth events. The book exhausted its first print run quickly and more books were printed at the request of the community and young people.

### KEY LEARNINGS:

- Young people display a deep knowledge of intersectionality and gender inequality
- Young people felt this was a safe platform to express their beliefs and attitudes of gender, gender inequality and gender stereotypes.
- Visual media was effective to both showcase positive personal identities of young people and challenge gender stereotypes and roles
- A longer time frame would have enabled deeper development of the content and an increase in community contributions to the publication



Do Not Judge This Book By Its Cover.

