Safe in our homes
Safe in our communities

City of Whittlesea Family Violence Strategy 2014-2018
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Mayor’s message

I am pleased to present the City of Whittlesea Safe in our homes, Safe in our communities Family Violence Strategy 2014-18. This is a whole-of-Council strategy outlining the strategic actions that Council will take to address family violence from the perspective of prevention, early intervention and intervention.

A family violence response is an identified community need due to the high prevalence rates of family violence in the municipality, and through identified priorities in the Council Plan and Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan as well as in Council’s Connect: A municipal plan for children, young people and their families 2013 – 2018.

Family violence is a focus for state and federal governments, who have worked with health and wellbeing and other peak non-government bodies to develop state/national frameworks for preventing and responding to family violence.

Council has a role as advocate, facilitator and provider of services and the actions in the plan reflect these various roles. The prevention of family violence and the provision of support services is a key advocacy issue for Council.

Many other local organisations including women’s health organisations, not for profit agencies, state government departments and partnership groups are also working in various ways to prevent and address family violence. Progress will only be made with sustained partnership and collaborative efforts.

Cultural change is required in gender roles and relationships and in attitudes to violence. By role-modelling gender respect and equity, supportive work environments and a zero tolerance approach to violence against women, Council can take a lead role and send a strong message to community partners. In addition, Council provides a range of community services, safe public spaces and community facilities which can be used as platforms to influence change.

This strategy is the result of extensive consultation with community stakeholders and across all Council departments.

I commend this strategy and encourage everyone to play a role in tackling family violence.

Cr Ricky Kirkham
Mayor
Executive Summary

A family violence response has been identified as a community need due to the high prevalence rates of family violence in the municipality, and through identified priorities in the Council Plan and other endorsed strategies and plans.

The rate of reported family violence in the City of Whittlesea is 1,316 per 100,000 population, compared to 1,129 per 100,000 for Victoria. This is the highest rate of reported family violence in the Victoria Police Northern Division 5 (Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik and Whittlesea LGAs). In 2013/14 there were 2,359 family violence incidents reported to Victoria Police, and in 897 of these incidents children were present (rate of 500.4 per 100,000 population compared to 387.00 per 100,000 for Victoria). It is understood that less than 20 per cent of women who experience violence report it to authorities therefore it is likely that in reality these rates are actually significantly higher.

By role-modelling gender respect and equity, supportive work environments and a zero tolerance approach to violence against women, Council can take a lead role and send a strong message to the community and our community partners. In addition, Council provides a range of community services, safe public spaces and community facilities which can be used as platforms to influence change.

Development of the Strategy was overseen by a working group comprising internal Council representatives. The Strategy is structured such that work in prevention, early intervention and intervention is clearly identified as well as linking actions across target population areas. The Strategy also highlights key linkages to Council’s Gender Equity Strategy.

This Strategy has been developed across the continuum of prevention, early intervention and intervention responses to family violence. Strategies and actions have been developed as they relate to population groups at particular risk, and priority settings for action.

Council has a key role as an advocate, facilitator and provider of services and these roles have been articulated in the strategy. Most actions are cost neutral and business as usual, however others require resourcing or external funds and this is highlighted in the Strategy.

Consultation

All Council Directorates have been involved in the development of the Strategy as demonstrated through manager and director representatives on the working group and direct consultation with managers from departments involved in implementing strategic actions in the strategy.

The following external groups and organisations have also been formally consulted in the development of the Strategy:

- Whittlesea Community Futures
- Whittlesea Family Violence Taskforce
- Whittlesea Early Years Family Violence Working Group
- Whittlesea Youth Commitment
• Whittlesea CALD Communities Family violence Project steering group
• Whittlesea Family Violence Network
• Whittlesea Early Years Partnership
• Women’s Health in the North
• Victoria Police
• No To Violence

Policy and legislative context
Family violence is a focus for state and federal governments, who have worked with health and wellbeing and other peak bodies to develop state/national frameworks for preventing and responding to family violence.

The prevention of family violence and the provision of support services is a key advocacy issue for Council and the development of this Strategy is another step in Council advocating for this critical health and social issue.
Introduction and background

Family violence including sexual assault in the City of Whittlesea is a significant health and safety issue that requires a multi-faceted response and significant resourcing from all levels of government and local agencies to reduce the incidence and impacts on women and children in particular, and the community in general.

The City of Whittlesea is committed to preventing family violence through the

- **Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017**:  
  **Council Goal 5.2** Council will support action to prevent family violence and sexual assault by addressing the underlying causes of gender-based violence and promoting equal and respectful relationships in the community.
  
  **Action 1.1**: Improve Council and partners understanding of the causes of and contributing factors to family violence in the local context.
  
  **Action 1.2**: Adopt a strategic framework for whole of Council action to prevent family violence and sexual assault.

- **Connect: A municipal plan for children, young people and their families in the City of Whittlesea 2013–2018**
  
  **Strategic Direction 2: Family Strengthening – Addressing Family Violence**:  
  With partners, work to increase the capacity of the service system to respond to family violence.
  
  Improve understanding as to the causes, and contributing factors of family violence in the City of Whittlesea.
  
  Identify opportunities within Council’s role to respond to the prevention and alleviation of family violence.

- **Endorsement of the Building a Respectful Community Preventing Violence against Women: A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011-2016**:  
  **Vision**: To build a community in the northern region in which violence against women is unacceptable; where communities, cultures and organisations are non-violent and gender equitable; and one in which all relationships are equal, respectful and non-discriminatory.
  
  **Goals**: To create a safe community for women through the promotion of non-violent and non-discriminatory social norms; to encourage gender-equitable, safe and inclusive communities and organisations; and to develop equal and respectful relationships between women and men.
The City of Whittlesea: who we are

The City of Whittlesea is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. The population is expected to exceed 250,000 by 2030, with growth concentrated in the developing areas of Mernda-Doreen, South Morang, Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook. In 2013, the City’s population was approximately 176,000 (50.4% female) and is expected to increase by 19% over the next four years.

The City of Whittlesea is located 20km north of Melbourne’s CBD. Covering 490 square kilometres, it is a large municipality containing established urban, growth and rural areas.

The City includes the major rural centre of Whittlesea, the rural localities of Beveridge, Donnybrook, Eden Park, Humevale, Kinglake West, Wollert, Woodstock and Yan Yean as well as the established and growing urban suburbs of Bundoora, Doreen, Epping, Lalor, Mernda, Mill Park, South Morang and Thomastown.

The Wurundjeri Wilam people are the original inhabitants of this area and the Traditional Owners of this land. The Aboriginal community is one of the fastest growing communities within the City, with an increase in residents of 24 per cent between 2001 and 2006, and 33 per cent between 2006 and 2011. The City currently has the fourth highest Aboriginal population in Metropolitan Melbourne with 1,125 people, and is the second highest in terms of the percentage of Aboriginal people compared to the total number of residents with 0.73 per cent of the total population being Aboriginal.

The City of Whittlesea is a diverse community. With migrants from more than 140 countries, 30% of residents come from a country where English is not the first language (double the Victorian average) and 43% speak a language other than English at home. The most common languages used other than English are Italian, Macedonian, Greek, Arabic and Vietnamese.

It is estimated that 20% of Australians have a disability, which translates to 35,000 people in the municipality. This number is expected to grow in line with the growing population and as the population ages.

There are 60 births in the City each week and a high proportion of households with children (68.6%). Approximately 146 new residents move into the City each week and 65 residential building permits per week are issued. There is a high proportion of the population under 25 years of age (34.5%) and 27.1% of residents are aged 50 years old and above.

### Household types (ABS 2011 Census data)

- **43.0%** Couples with Children (33.6% Greater Melbourne)
- **22.9%** Couples without Children (23.5% Greater Melbourne)
- **14.8%** Lone Person (22.3% Greater Melbourne)
- **12.7%** One parent families (10.4% Greater Melbourne)
Family Violence in the City of Whittlesea

Principles underpinning the Family Violence Strategy

Violence against women occurs across all cultural and socio-economic groups and can occur on a spectrum of economic, psychological and emotional abuse, through to physical and sexual violence. Although men are among the victims of family violence, evidence suggests that the vast majority of victims are women and that women are more vulnerable to its health impacts.

Compared with male victims of relationship violence, women are:

- Three times more likely to be injured as a result of violence;
- Five times more likely to require medical attention or hospitalisation;
- Five times more likely to report fearing for their lives.

Family violence is most commonly perpetrated by men against women who are their intimate partners however it also occurs against children, young people and older adults. The term family violence is used to describe violence in family-like relationships and includes intimate partners, children, young people and older adults.

Principles underpinning the development:

**Upstream:** A focus on upstream prevention approaches which address the social determinants of health.

**Early in life:** Responding early in life to achieve better outcomes for children, young people and their families.

**Inclusion and equity:** Acting to reduce health inequalities across age, gender, culture, language and disability, and ensuring equity of access for indigenous, refugee and economically and geographically disadvantaged communities.

**Evidence:** Evidence informed planning responsive to local needs.

**Partnerships:** Working in collaboration and integrating planning across Council, agencies and the community.

**Safety and security:** Safety for women and children is the primary objective.
Definitions

**Family violence**

Family violence is defined in accordance with section five of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008, as:

(a) Behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour

(i) is physically or sexually abusive or

(ii) is emotionally or psychologically abusive or

(iii) is economically abusive or

(iv) is threatening or

(v) is coercive; or

(vi) 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; or

(b) Behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to in paragraph (a).

**Elder abuse**

Elder abuse is defined in accordance with the Victorian Government as:

Any act occurring within a relationship where there is an implication of trust, which results in harm to an older person.

This definition is consistent with Australian and international agreement about what constitutes abuse of older people and defines a relationship where trust is the sole connection. It excludes relationships that, for example, are based on the exchange of money for services.

**Gender equity**

Gender equity is an important social justice goal. The concept recognises that within all communities, women and men have different benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities. Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men by recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all. A gender equity approach therefore acknowledges it is often necessary to have different strategies for women and men.

**Gender equality**

Gender equality means equal participation of women and men in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is about society giving equal value to the similarities and differences between men and women, and the varying roles they play. The experience of inequality is by no means confined to women. Differences occur between both sexes on, questions of race, sexuality, class, age, disability and geography. But on key questions of economic security, health, wellbeing and participation – within and across cultures- women more commonly experience greater disadvantage and discrimination relative to men.
Family violence: key points

Family violence is prevalent, serious and preventable.

- One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence and one in five have experienced sexual violence.  
- Violence is the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in Victorian women aged 15-45 years old.
- Violence contributes 9 per cent to the total disease burden in Victorian women aged 15-44 years and 3 per cent to all Victorian women, more than tobacco, alcohol and obesity.
- One in four children has witnessed violence against their mother or step-mother.
- Women over the age of 65 years are two to three times more likely to experience violence than men of the same age, and their adult children are most likely to be responsible for the abuse.

Violence has wide-ranging effects on women’s and children’s health. Women who have been exposed to violence have a greater risk of developing a range of health problems including mental health issues. They report poorer physical health overall, are more likely to engage in practices that are harmful to their health and experience difficulties in accessing health services.

In regard to men who use violence, in order for men to become and remain non-violent, they need to change on a number of levels: in their thinking, feeling, attitudes and behaviour. They also need to learn new skills, and to practise and integrate these in their lives. Men in this process need support to consolidate and maintain change. The change process is gradual and takes time. In the process, men need support and encouragement to explore their behaviour and learn unfamiliar, and sometimes confronting, new ways of knowing themselves and others. This is best provided in the context of an invitational approach to behaviour change which simultaneously:

- Reminds men that there are real and meaningful reasons for them to work towards change.
- Focuses on men’s potential to be better men, partners and fathers, and
- Continually focuses on the need for men to take responsibility for their behaviour.

We also understand family violence to include family and family-like relationships. As well as violence between current and separated intimate partners, abuse and violence in our community also occurs among family members and those in family-like relationships. It can include violence by young people against their parents or other family members, abuse of elderly people by family members, abuse in same sex relationships and abuse of men.
A City of Whittlesea issue

The rate of reported family violence in the City of Whittlesea is 1,316 per 100,000 population, compared to 1,129 per 100,000 for Victoria. This is the highest rate of reported family violence in the Victoria Police Northern Division 5 (Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik and Whittlesea LGAs). In 2013/14 there were 2,359 family violence incidents reported to Victoria Police in 897 of these incidents children were present (rate of 500.4 per 100,000 population compared to 387.00 per 100,000 for Victoria). It is understood that less than 20 per cent of women who experience violence report it to authorities therefore it is likely that in reality these rates are actually significantly higher.

Over the past five years the number of incidents reported to police in the LGA has almost doubled (1,270 in 2009/10 to 2359 in 2013/14, Figure 1).

Figure 1: Victoria Police family violence incident reports (offences), City of Whittlesea 2009-2014

On average, 45 incidents of family violence from residents are reported to police every week, and 74 per cent of victims are aged between 15 and 44 years old. Consistent with Victoria, where Whittlesea victims reported they were fearful or very fearful, 84 per cent were female.

On average 4 sexual assault offences are reported in the Whittlesea LGA every week. There were 49 reported rapes in the LGA in 2013/14; this is a rate of 27.3 per 100,000 population (compared to 35 per 100,000 for the NMR and 37 for Victoria). Males comprise 100 per cent of alleged offenders, females comprise 82 per cent of the victims and 87 per cent are aged less than 35 years old.

Research into family violence after the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009 by Women’s Health in the North and Women’s Health Goulburn North East identified an increase and escalation of family violence.
Priority population groups

There are population groups that are at an increased risk of violence. Through local evidence and the VicHealth Framework, priority populations for focus have been identified:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children

From an Aboriginal perspective, the experience of family violence must be understood in the historical context of white settlement and colonisation and their resulting (and continuing) impacts: cultural dispossession, breakdown of community kinship systems and Aboriginal law, systemic racism and vilification, social and economic exclusion, entrenched poverty, problematic substance use, inherited grief and trauma, and loss of traditional roles and status. Victorian family violence statistics reveal that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are five times more likely to be assaulted by a family member than other women. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more than twice as likely to be a victim of family violence. The rate of sexual assault for Aboriginal women is 16 to 25 times higher compared with non-Aboriginal women. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-Aboriginal women. In Victoria, Aboriginal children are 12.9 times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be on care and protection orders.

Children aged 0–4 years

Children aged 0–4 years comprise approximately 40 per cent of the children recorded by police as ‘present’ at incidents of family violence. Just below 30 per cent of all affected family members in finalised intervention order applications, are aged 0–4 years old. Intervening early in the life-cycle provides the opportunity to interrupt trajectories which might otherwise result in perpetration or victimisation.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women

Women who are marginalized by age, culture, ethnicity and visa status are more vulnerable to violence and are less likely to have the resources to act to report it. Language and cultural barriers also limit access to support services for many immigrant and refugee women. Women without Australian citizenship or permanent residency, who are dependent on their spouse or partner to remain in Australia, are particularly vulnerable. The fear of losing the right to remain in Australia and the fear of losing custody of their children is a powerful disincentive for women to seek support.

There is no conclusive evidence that CALD communities experience a greater level of family violence, however they are more vulnerable to the impacts of violence when it does occur. This is due to a range of barriers to disclosing violence, finding assistance and early intervention, and accessing and identifying supports.

Older adults

Older people are more at risk due to dependence, frailty and cognitive impairment. The abuse they suffer may be perpetrated because of ignorance, negligence or deliberate intent. Abuse is typically carried out by someone close to an older person, with whom they have a relationship implying trust, including family members or friends. Often an older person is dependent on the perpetrator, for example, where an older person is frail or...
incompetent and the perpetrator is the principal carer. Mental impairment (for example, dementia), physical frailty or economic circumstances may force an older person to depend on another for housing. However, dependence is not a defining characteristic of abuse - the older person might not be dependent, and may actually be supporting or providing a caring role for the perpetrator.\(^{40}\)

**Pregnant women (pre and post pregnancy)**

The risk of violence is high in pregnant women and in the period following the birth of a child; 42 per cent of women who responded to the Australian Women’s Safety Survey, who reported experiencing violence at some time in their lives, were pregnant at the time of the violence.\(^{41}\) Pregnancy is a time of particular vulnerability to the impacts of violence. It is also a time where couples have increased contact with services providing opportunities for intervention.\(^{42}\)

**Women in rural and remote areas**

Some studies have identified that rates of intimate partner violence are highest in very remote regions of Australia.\(^{43}\) Some rural communities have been recently affected by rapid economic and demographic change and natural disaster. These experiences are said to increase exposure to known contributing factors to violence against women such as poverty and unemployment.\(^{44}\)

**Women with disabilities**

Women with disabilities experience high levels of family violence and sexual violence. They can often experience the same kinds of violence experienced by other women but also ‘disability-based violence’. Gender-based and disability-based discrimination intersect and increase the risk of violence for women with disabilities. Women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence from many perpetrators, usually male.\(^{45}\) 90 per cent of women with an intellectual disability have been subjected to sexual abuse, with more than two-thirds of women (68%) having been sexually abused before they turned 18 years old.\(^{46}\)

**Young women**

Internationally, for young women the risk of violence by a male intimate partner can be three to four times higher than the risk for women across all age groups. In Australia 12 per cent of women aged 18 to 24 years had experienced at least one incident of physical and/or sexual violence. It is estimated that one in seven young women and girls in Australia aged 12 to 20 years have experienced sexual assault or rape. A survey in 2009 of Year 10 and 12 students found that 38 per cent of sexually active young women had experienced unwanted sex at least once.\(^{47}\)

One in four 12 to 20 year olds surveyed were aware of violence against their mothers or step-mothers by their fathers or step-fathers.\(^{48}\)

In family violence when the perpetrator is an adolescent against a parent or step-parent, males are more frequently perpetrators of violence and victims are more likely to be mothers or step-mothers. Female adolescent perpetrators are more likely to be violent to their mothers than their fathers.\(^{49}\)
Among women with an established mental illness, relationships between the illness and experience of violence/abuse can be complex. Women with mental illness are often vulnerable to abuse and violence, particularly when acutely unwell and if they are poor, homeless or living in unsafe housing. Women with mental illness often find it difficult to access support services and to exercise their legal rights, including ending abusive relationships.

Determinants and contributing factors

There is no single cause of family violence: rather it appears to arise from a complex interaction between individual attitudes towards women, and social and cultural practices and values across our society and communities. These attitudes and practices can foster unequal and abusive power relations between men and women, gender stereotypes and can often exist in broader cultures of violence. Addressing gender inequity has been identified as one of the key strategies in the prevention of violence against women.

International evidence shows countries with high levels of gender equity - which value women’s participation and representation and where there are fewer economic, social or political differences in power between men and women - have significantly lower levels of intimate partner and sexual violence. The strongest predictor of high levels of violence against women at the population level is unequal power between men and women.

The City of Whittlesea has already made significant progress in integrating gender equity work in a number of areas. The City of Whittlesea is committed to working to advance gender equity, as a major employer, service provider and advocate for the community. Local government plays an important role in creating and supporting environments that enable the community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. Reducing gender inequality is a key strategy in achieving this goal, as it allows for a more just, inclusive and fair society for everyone. Addressing gender inequity is also one of the key strategies in the primary prevention of violence against women. The City of Whittlesea’s Gender Equity Working Group (GEWG) chaired by the CEO provides leadership and support to embed gender equity principles and practice in the core business of Council. The Gender Equity Strategy articulates the priorities for advancing gender equity across the organisation.

Determinants of violence against women and children include:

- Unequal power and control between men and women;
- Peer and organisational ‘cultures’ and attitudes that support violence;
- Belief in rigid ‘stereotypical’ gender roles and/or weak support for gender equality

Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) results show:

- Most Australians recognize that violence against women includes a wide range of behaviours designed to intimidate and control women – not just physical assault.
- Although more Australians are now aware of the many different forms violence against women can take, there is still more work to do to emphasise that it can be more than...
physical violence. Of concern is that most people see violence against women as due to some men being unable to manage their anger.

- Young people’s attitudes remain an area of concern. Young people have somewhat more violence-supportive attitudes than others but their attitudes are gradually improving over time, particularly among young men, with fewer young people in 2013 holding attitudes at the extreme end of the spectrum.

- People’s understanding of violence against women and their attitudes to gender equality have significant impacts on their attitudes to violence against women.

The national survey highlights some concerning attitudes held by proportions of the community, who believe there are circumstances in which violence can be excused. Additionally compared with physical violence and forced sex, Australians are less inclined to see non-physical forms of control, intimidation and harassment as ‘serious’.

**Contributing factors** which are known to be **correlated** with men perpetrating family violence include:

- A history of violent behaviour
- Threats of, and/or previous use of violence against current or former partners, children, pets, other family members
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Stalking and harassment
- Obsessive and controlling behaviour
- Separation
- Weak social connections and social cohesion
- Limited access to systems of support
- Women’s financial dependence\(^{55}\).

There is also evidence that problem gambling impacts on family relationships and can increase family conflict\(^{56}\).
Diagram: Causes and contributing factors of violence against women in City of Whittlesea

These factors may contribute to violence, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient to cause violence in themselves. They become relevant when coupled with support for gender inequality and rigid gender roles. For example, alcohol abuse only increases the likelihood of violence perpetration for men who already hold attitudes and beliefs that condone/support violence, gender inequality or rigid gender roles. In addition, such men are also more likely to see violence more frequently and with more severe impacts when they have also abused alcohol.

As seen in this diagram the contributing factors are wide in nature and the City of Whittlesea has a large range of contributing factors such as potentially weak social connections/social inclusion, limited access to systems of supports in our new growth and established areas,
high pockets of financial vulnerability such as financial hardship, gambling and unemployment.

Whilst we cannot blame contributing factors on our high rates of family violence nor can we ignore them. Multiple strategies are needed to overcome both the core determining factors and the contributing factors.
**Policy context**

There are a wide range of enablers in the policy context for this *Safe in our Homes, Safe in our Communities City of Whittlesea Family Violence Strategy*. More detail is included in Appendix 4 and these are summarised in the following figure.

**Figure 3: Policy context**

### Safe in our Homes, Safe in our Communities
City of Whittlesea Family Violence Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive Partnerships</th>
<th>Local Supporting Strategies</th>
<th>State, Federal Government Policy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whittlesea Community Futures</strong> and cluster groups:</td>
<td><strong>Council</strong></td>
<td><strong>Federal Government</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whittlesea Early Years (Best Start) Partnership</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Whittlesea Youth Commitment</td>
<td>Shaping Our Future Whittlesea 2030 Strategic Community Plan</td>
<td>First Action Plan: Building a Strong Foundation 2010-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disability</td>
<td>Disability Action Plan 2013-2016</td>
<td><strong>National</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) Communities</td>
<td>Multicultural Action Plan 2014-2018</td>
<td>Our Watch Five Year Strategic Plan 2014-2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advocacy</td>
<td>Connect: A municipal plan for children, young people and their families in the City of Whittlesea 2013–2018</td>
<td><strong>Victorian Government</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whittlesea Family Violence Taskforce</td>
<td>Gender Equity Strategy</td>
<td>Victoria’s Action Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children 2012-2015: Everyone has a responsibility to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Integrated Family Violence Services</td>
<td>Family Violence Workplace Support Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whittlesea Early Years Family Violence Working Group</td>
<td>White Ribbon Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Region Prevention of Violence Against Women Advisory Group</td>
<td>Best Start Early Years Action Plan</td>
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<td><strong>Northern Region</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Building a Respectful Community Preventing Violence against Women: A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011-2016</td>
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Developing the Family Violence Strategy

The strategy sets out actions across prevention, early intervention and intervention as outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Continuum of responses to address family violence.

Strategic actions have been shared across the continuum for the priority population groups:

- Children
- Young people
- Families
- Women
- Men
- Communities

Primary prevention initiatives can take a number of forms, separately or in combination, including:

- Research, monitoring and evaluation
- Direct participation programs
- Organisational and workforce development
- Community strengthening activities
- Communications and social marketing
- Advocacy, legislative and policy reform

The strategic actions in this strategy have been grouped in reference to these key areas to articulate the response across the continuum of prevention, early intervention and intervention. The key evidence based strategies, outlined in the following table have also been drawn upon, so that a holistic strategy can be developed that work towards addressing both the determinants and the contributing factors in Council’s role as a provider, advocate and facilitator.
### Key social and economic determinants of violence

#### Theme for action: promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual and relationship</th>
<th>Community and organisational</th>
<th>Societal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Belief in rigid gender roles and identities and/or weak support for gender equality</td>
<td>• Culturally-specific norms regarding gender and sexuality</td>
<td>• Institutional and cultural support for, or weak sanctions against, gender inequality and rigid gender roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Masculine orientation or sense of entitlement</td>
<td>• Masculine peer and organisational cultures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Male dominance and control of wealth in relationships</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Key contributing factors

#### Theme for action: promoting non-violent norms and reducing the effects of prior exposure to violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual and relationship</th>
<th>Community and organisational</th>
<th>Societal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attitudinal support for violence against women</td>
<td>• Neighborhood, peer and organisational cultures that are violence-supportive or have weak sanctions against violence</td>
<td>• Approval of, or weak sanctions against, violence and/or violence against women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Witnessing or experiencing family violence as a child</td>
<td>• Community or peer violence</td>
<td>• Ethos condoning violence as a means of settling interpersonal, civic or political disputes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exposure to other forms of interpersonal or collective violence</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Colonisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use and acceptance of violence as a means of resolving interpersonal disputes</td>
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</table>

#### Theme for action: improving access to resources and systems of support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual and relationship</th>
<th>Community and organisational</th>
<th>Societal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Social isolation and limited access to systems of support</td>
<td>• Weak social connections and social cohesion and limited collective activity among women</td>
<td>• Support for the privacy and autonomy of the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Income, education or employment</td>
<td>• Strong support for the privacy of the family</td>
<td>• Unequal distribution of material resources (e.g. employment, education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Relative labour force status</td>
<td>• Neighbourhood characteristics (e.g. service infrastructure, unemployment, poverty, collective efficacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Alcohol and illicit drug use*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Poor parenting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Personality characteristics and poor mental health*</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Relationship and marital conflict</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Divorce or separation</td>
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*Denotes increased risk of perpetration only.
Strategy development and consultation

This strategy was developed by a Strategic Family Violence Working Group consisting of a wide range of representatives of senior management and subject matter experts employed by the City of Whittlesea.

Concurrent to the development of this Safe in our Homes, Safe in our Communities Family Violence Strategy the Gender Equity Working Group also identified many complementary actions through the development of its strategic objectives to address inequity between genders (Appendix 3). These objectives are:

1. The City of Whittlesea is an employer of choice, with a respectful organisational culture that values gender diversity, strives for gender balance and embeds gender equity in all workplace policies, practice and procedures.
2. The City of Whittlesea’s services, programs and policies, are inclusive and gender equitable.
3. The City of Whittlesea’s places and spaces facilitate community connection and are safe, welcoming, respectful and inclusive of all genders.
4. The City of Whittlesea is facilitating equitable opportunities for civic and economic participation and advancing gender equity in our community.

Relevant key stakeholders across government, non-government agencies and the community are an essential part of a whole of community approach to addressing family violence and sexual assault.

In the development of this strategy a broad range of Council and external stakeholders were involved or consulted. Appendix 2 outlines the groups involved in the development and below is a list of external stakeholders consulted:

- Internal City of Whittlesea departments responsible for implementing the actions
- Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership
- Whittlesea Family Violence Taskforce
- Whittlesea Early Years Family Violence Working Group
- Whittlesea Youth Commitment
- Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project steering group
- Whittlesea Family Violence Network
- Whittlesea Early Years Partnership
- Women’s Health In the North
- Victoria Police
- No To Violence
Strategy monitoring and review

Responsibility for monitoring of this strategy will be shared by the Family Children’s and Young People and Health, Access and Bush Fire Recovery departments of Council. The Health Access and Bush Fire Recovery department will be responsible for monitoring the strategic actions relating to prevention and the Family, Children’s and Young People department will monitor the early intervention and intervention focussed strategic actions.

Reporting on the progress of implementing this strategy and review of the strategy will be undertaken on an annual basis.
Family Violence Strategy Actions

Preventing Family Violence

What is prevention?

Primary prevention strategies seek to prevent violence before it occurs. Primary prevention strategies focus on:

- Changing attitudes, behaviour and/or building knowledge and skills across the community;
- The structural, cultural and societal contexts in which violence occurs; and
- Addressing the underlying causes of violence against women, such as gender inequality.

City of Whittlesea family violence prevention desired outcomes and objectives

The following table outlines the desired outcomes this strategy is working towards and the specific prevention objectives it will work on over the next four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Prevention Objectives</th>
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</table>
| **Children** live in homes and communities that are respectful, equitable and free from violence; and these behaviours are modelled in all their environments | • Increase the opportunity for children to participate in activities that promote positive role modeling of equal and respectful relationships  
• Establish and build on mechanisms to give children a voice |
| **Young people** see positive respectful relationships modelled within their social context and have the confidence, and are supported, to respond to a range of behaviours that perpetuate gender inequalities | • Establish respectful relationships education programs in schools in the municipality  
• Build equal and respectful relationships and positive representation of gender in all environments  
• Provide youth friendly accessible services and supports for young people so they feel well-connected to their families, friends and communities |
| **Families** are safe places, free from violence and demonstrate equal and respectful relationships | • Increase the capacity of parents, services and key settings to model respectful attitudes and behaviours and integrate this into program delivery  
• Increase families’ understanding of the impacts of gender inequality and stereotyping on children as they are forming their identity and behaviours |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Prevention Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Women** are leaders in the community, their rights are respected, they have no barriers to civic, economic or recreational/social participation and feel safe and supported in their homes and communities | • Decrease barriers to women’s economic participation e.g. transport, local employment, childcare  
• Increase women’s economic security through improved financial literacy skills  
• Increase opportunities for women to build and participate in supportive social networks and group activities  
• Build the capacity of women to become leaders in their communities and advocates across a range of settings |
| **Men** have positive, respectful relationships and these are modelled within their social context; they have the confidence, and are supported, to respond to sexist and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours | • Increase opportunities for social connection among men including peer modeling of respectful and equitable relationships  
• Encourage workplace cultures that support family friendly arrangements and work environments for men and women  
• Increase understanding among men in the community that the use of violence is not acceptable |
| **Community members and groups** have knowledge about the local prevalence and impacts of family violence, and are empowered to speak out against family violence and support others | • Increase awareness of the needs of the City of Whittlesea in relation to family violence for National, State-wide and Local reforms  
• Plan and implement timely resources and services across the municipality  
• Increase the understanding of the local context and trends to inform actions  
• Plan for the built environment to promote community connections and safety and link priorities to infrastructure planning  
• Increase awareness about the prevalence and impact of family violence on women and children and work towards decreasing community attitudes that contribute to gender inequality  
• Develop gender equity and inclusion in Council and community settings to decrease gendered barriers to participation  
• Establish mechanisms and reporting on gender participation (civic, economic, recreational/social) |
### Family violence prevention strategic actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Council Responsible Departments</th>
<th>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($) Business as Usual (BAU)</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Implementation Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research, monitoring and evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Regularly monitor and report on the prevalence and trends of family violence through the life span in the City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>Health Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>*Regularly monitor participation and involvement in sporting, recreation clubs and community groups and ensure a gender analysis is applied</td>
<td>Leisure &amp; Community Inclusion Organisation Improvement</td>
<td>N $</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Regularly monitor “father inclusive” practice in Council and non-Council service provision and develop ongoing review mechanisms</td>
<td>Community Services Planning Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>*Identify barriers and opportunities for women’s local economic participation</td>
<td>Economic Development Organisation Improvement</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>*Regularly audits of gender equity and respectful relationships and behaviour among staff, by council as a major employer</td>
<td>People and Culture Organisation Improvement</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes Gender Equity Strategy
## Prevention Strategic Actions

*Denotes Gender Equity Strategy

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Target Group</th>
<th></th>
<th>Implementation Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. *Investigate opportunities to monitor local community attitudes to violence against women and gender equity with data disaggregated by priority populations (e.g. National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence Against Women)</td>
<td>Organisation Improvement Community Services Planning</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Develop place profiles identifying gaps in service and support data for children, young people and their families, seniors and people with a disability</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People Aged and Disability Organisation Improvement LCI</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. *Develop indicators of gender equity within the organisation and inclusion of projects within departments business plans</td>
<td>Organisation Planning</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Council service provision and planning

<p>| 9. *Ensure Council’s work with young people encompasses respectful relationships and gender equity principles | Family, Children &amp; Young People | C | x |  | x | x | x | x |  |
| 10. *Conduct a youth accessibility audit of Council facilities and ensure a gender lens is applied | Family, Children &amp; Young People Major Projects | C (BAU) | x |  |  |  |  |  | X |
| 11. *Apply a gender lens to City of Whittlesea owned facilities, being built and upgraded, to ensure equitable access for women and girls | Major Projects Leisure and Community Inclusion | C (BAU) | x | x |  |  |  |  | X |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Council Responsible Departments</th>
<th>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($) Business as Usual (BAU)</th>
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<th>Implementation Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. *Utilise gender analysis and sex disaggregated data in planning and advising on the public realm, land use, facilities planning, parks and open space. (refer Gender Equity Strategy)</td>
<td>Community Services Planning</td>
<td>N (BAU)</td>
<td>x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
<td>x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. *Council’s Urban Design Framework (to be developed) includes consideration of urban design principles that promote gender equity.</td>
<td>Strategic Planning and Design Health Access and Bushfire Recovery Leisure and Community Inclusion</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
<td>x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Implement the processes of the Growth Area Social Planning Tool to identify programs and facilities, ensuring a safety lens is applied to their development and design</td>
<td>All planning areas</td>
<td>C (BAU)</td>
<td>x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
<td>x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Provide training for Council services and partner agencies/services in “father/male inclusive practice” and fostered throughout council and partner agencies and embed in service delivery</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People Aged and Disability</td>
<td>N (BAU)</td>
<td>x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
<td>x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Facilitate the development of playgroups for fathers and young parents</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>x  x  x  x  x  x</td>
<td>x  x  x  x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 17. *Ensure Economic Development Strategy is informed by a gender analysis | Economic Development         | N                                                   | x  x  x  x  x  x             | x  

*Denotes Gender Equity Strategy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Council Responsible Departments</th>
<th>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($) Business as Usual (BAU)</th>
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<th>Implementation Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Children (Ch)</td>
<td>Young (You)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Council organisational and workforce development

18. **Support the Gender Equity Working Group to embed gender equity in Council policy and practices**
   - Council: Community Services Planning
   - Current (C) BAU
   - Needs funding ($) N (BAU)
   - Target Group: Children (Ch), Young (You), Family (Far), Men (Me), Women (Wo), Council (Cor)
   - Implementation Year: 2014 / 2015

19. **Apply gender equity and flexible and family friendly practices to Council HR and staff management processes**
   - Council: Human Resources People and Culture
   - Current (C) BAU
   - Needs funding ($) N (BAU)
   - Target Group: Children (Ch), Young (You), Family (Far), Men (Me), Women (Wo), Council (Cor)
   - Implementation Year: 2015 / 2016

20. **Implement gender equity training and support the rollout and embedding of the Gender Analysis Tool**
   - Council: Community Services Planning People and Culture
   - Current (C) BAU
   - Needs funding ($) N (BAU)
   - Target Group: Children (Ch), Young (You), Family (Far), Men (Me), Women (Wo), Council (Cor)
   - Implementation Year: 2016 / 2017

21. **Implement workplace awareness raising activities that promote equal and respectful relationships and build on current initiatives through the Wellbeing@Work program**
   - Council: Health Access & Bushfire Recovery People and Culture
   - Current (C) BAU
   - Needs funding ($) N (BAU)
   - Target Group: Children (Ch), Young (You), Family (Far), Men (Me), Women (Wo), Council (Cor)
   - Implementation Year: 2017 / 2018

22. **Scope opportunities to support and implement ‘bystander’ intervention programs both in the City of Whittlesea workplace and in the community**
   - Council: Health Access and Bushfire Recovery Leisure Community Inclusion Community Cultural Development People and Culture
   - Current (C) BAU
   - Needs funding ($) N (BAU)
   - Target Group: Children (Ch), Young (You), Family (Far), Men (Me), Women (Wo), Council (Cor)
   - Implementation Year: 2014 / 2015

23. **City of Whittlesea’s Consultation and Engagement Framework has a gender equity lens applied to ensure priority population groups needs are considered in planning and policy development**
   - Council: Organisational Planning
   - Current (C) BAU
   - Needs funding ($) N (BAU)
   - Target Group: Children (Ch), Young (You), Family (Far), Men (Me), Women (Wo), Council (Cor)
   - Implementation Year: 2014 / 2015
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Council Responsible Departments</th>
<th>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($)</th>
<th>Business as Usual (BAU)</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Implementation Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Denotes Gender Equity Strategy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Include children and young people’s voices as key stakeholders in the Consultation and Engagement Framework in line with Child Friendly Cities and Communities framework</td>
<td>Organisational Planning Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>N$</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>(2014/2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Provide training for Council staff in consulting with children</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>(2015/2016)</td>
<td>(2016/2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Include young people’s voices in the development of settings and community buildings including implementation of the Spaces 8 to 12+ Creating Engaging Spaces for Young People into planning, delivery and advocacy</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People Planning</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>(2017/2018)</td>
<td>(2016/2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community strengthening</strong></td>
<td><strong>Leisure &amp; Community Inclusion</strong></td>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Refer action 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Identify opportunities to support and promote women’s peer networks, lifelong learning, recreation and sport</td>
<td>Leisure &amp; Community Inclusion Community Services Planning Community Cultural Development</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>(2014/2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Increase participation of families in Council events and promote services at these events</td>
<td>Community Cultural Development, Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>C (BAU)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>(2014/2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. *Consider gender equity in the City of Whittlesea Community Development Grants program processes and allocation of funds</td>
<td>Leisure and Community Inclusion</td>
<td>N (BAU)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevention Strategic Actions</td>
<td>Council Responsible Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Develop a Community Building Strategy which applies a gender lens, targets at risk groups and focuses on social connection for community members</em></td>
<td>Community Services Planning</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td>2014 / 2015</td>
<td>2015 / 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Strategic Actions</td>
<td>Council Responsible Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advancement of Councilmen</td>
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<td>2014 / 2015</td>
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<td>2017 / 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32. *Advocate for funding for whole of school, best practice respectful relationships education and sexual assault prevention programs in schools</td>
<td>Health Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Keep Councillors, Local, State and Federal members of parliament abreast of local issues in relation to Family Violence</td>
<td>Health &amp; Bushfire Recovery Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>C (BAU)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Conduct regular updates to the Family Violence Advocacy Fact Sheets to ensure City of Whittlesea’s advocacy strategies are in line with relevant local issues and key stakeholders are engaged</td>
<td>Health, Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>C (BAU)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Advocate for early provision of community development and service provision in growth areas to prevent vulnerability and retrospective provision in established communities</td>
<td>Advocacy Community Services Leisure and Community Inclusion</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Sector Facilitation and Partnerships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36. Work with early childhood education and care providers, networks supported by Council to promote positive role modelling of equal and respectful relationships</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>N (BAU)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Strategic Actions</td>
<td>Council Responsible Departments</td>
<td>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($) Business as Usual (BAU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Work in partnership with schools around the importance of respectful relationships and gender equity</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>N$ (BAU)</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Support policy and professional development opportunities for schools and teachers, to build school capacity and readiness to implement whole of school respectful relationships education and sexual assault prevention programs</td>
<td>Health, Access and Bushfire Recovery Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. *Scope opportunities to pilot a program with peak sporting bodies and sporting clubs, to build gender equity and promote equal and respectful relationships</td>
<td>Leisure &amp; Community Inclusion Health Access and Bushfire Recovery</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. *Facilitate implementation of evidence-based equity and inclusion programs in sporting and recreation clubs such as ‘Everyone Wins’ and ‘Healthy Sporting Environments’ to embed in usual business</td>
<td>Leisure &amp; Community Inclusion Health Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery Refer Action 2</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. *Facilitate improved opportunities for women’s local economic participate and financial capability</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Identify financial literacy skills training for women, currently being delivered in the municipality and identify opportunities to support the delivery for priority population groups</td>
<td>Community Cultural Development Community Services Planning</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Council Responsible Departments</td>
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43. Engage service providers and NGOs with major precinct development so they can plan for service delivery (e.g. Mernda Town Centre, Wollert, Donnybrook/Woodstock)  
   Council Services Directorate | C (BAU) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |

44. Resource and support Whittlesea Community Futures (including Advocacy Group) and associated cluster groups to advocate and promote family violence prevention strategies across all cluster group focus areas  
   Community Services Directorate Advocacy | C (BAU) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |

45. Investigate opportunities and leverage points to increase women-only programs (social, recreational, sporting, cultural etc.) to reduce the barriers and improve access to participation for women  
   Community Service Planning | N (BAU) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 |
Responding to the early warning signs

What is Early Intervention?

Early Intervention is targeted at individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of perpetrating violent behaviour or of being at risk of experiencing violence:

- At the individual level, early intervention can seek to address behaviours before they escalate or become established patterns
- Early intervention strategies can also be targeted where there are strong signs that violence may occur, for example, peer groups.

The Family Violence Working Group also identified and expanded this definition to include “Early intervention is to use local knowledge to identify risk factors and target early responses.”

City of Whittlesea family violence early intervention desired outcomes and objectives

The following table outlines the desired outcomes this strategy is working towards and the specific early intervention objectives it will work on over the next four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Intervention Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Early Intervention Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Children** live in safe and supportive settings without fear, are equipped with skills and knowledge for healthy relationships and are surrounded by advocates | • Build the capacity of early childhood professionals and schools to have knowledge of and identify the early warning signs of family violence  
• Increase the knowledge of parents and the community about the impacts of family violence on children and their development |
| **Young people** live in safe and supportive environments, are equipped with skills and knowledge about how to respond to the early warning signs of family violence and are surrounded by advocates | • Increase skills, knowledge and capacity of teachers and other professionals to identify and respond to the early signs of family violence, including young peoples’ violence against a family member and in young people’s peer relationships  
• Increase young peoples’ awareness of early warning signs of violence and the supports available for family violence and violence within their own peer relationships  
• Increase young people’s ability to seek help when the family violence first occurs |
| **Families** have the skills and resources they need to be resilient with access to services and support networks in times of stress | • Increase accessibility and awareness of support services for times of vulnerability  
• Improve access and the utilisation of data about the early warning signs of family violence to enhance service provision |
| **Women** have the skills and knowledge to identify early warning signs of violence and have access to support | • Increase awareness of the types of family violence, potential early warning signs and their ability to take action  
• Increase access to safe, local housing options with a focus on improved choices for women and children  
• Increase the level of supports available for women in vulnerable life stages |
| **Men** have positive, respectful relationships and these are modelled within their social context; they have the confidence and are supported to respond to sexist and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours | • Increase opportunities for the detection of early warning signs and for appropriate responses.  
• Increase the availability and accessibility of culturally appropriate services and education for men |
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Intervention Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Early Intervention Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Community members and groups</strong> have local knowledge about the prevalence and impact of family violence, and are empowered to speak out about family violence.</td>
<td>• Increase the capacity of community members to speak out about the early warning signs of family violence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Family violence early intervention strategic actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Intervention Strategic Actions *Denotes Gender Equity Strategy</th>
<th>Council Responsible Departments</th>
<th>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($) Business as Usual (BAU)</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Implementation Year</th>
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<td>49.</td>
<td>Advocate for children and young people’s needs in consultation processes, planning and policy development. This may involve but is not limited to community consultation, survey development, research, data collection etc.</td>
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<td>51. *Implement a pilot program to roll out a father inclusive project after the birth of a child through our MCH service</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
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<tr>
<td>52. Embed identification of family violence warning signs and foster positive role modelling and respectful relationships content into existing programs, activities and services e.g. new parent groups/Family Day Care/seniors’ clubs/PAG/Home and Community Care etc.</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People Aged and Disability</td>
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</table>
| 53. Create opportunities for families to meet other families at vulnerable life stages through:  
  • Supported Playgroup and Parent Groups Initiative funding targeting vulnerable families, community playgroups, MCH, New Parent Groups  
  • Connecting Children and Families in Epping North Early Intervention Project | Family, Children & Young People | C (BAU) |                |                |                |                |                |                |          |          |          |
<p>| 54. MCH has a focus on early intervention and conducts projects targeting vulnerable families and children through the Right@Home Sustained Home Visiting program and the Streamlining Antenatal-4 Services for Vulnerable Children and Families Project | Family, Children &amp; Young People | C (BAU) |                |                |                |                |                |                |          |          |          |</p>
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<tr>
<td>55. Provide training, education and reflective practice to City of Whittlesea staff interfacing with community members, in particular priority population groups, to provide the skills to respond to the early warning signs of family violence and make appropriate referrals</td>
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<td>Human Resources Family Children &amp; Young People</td>
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| 56. Develop training and awareness raising for Council staff in the importance of male inclusive practice e.g. being inclusive of fathers/males in the language used |
| People and Culture | N $ |

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<th>Community strengthening</th>
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<tr>
<td>57. Work with partners/ community leaders to increase awareness within existing groups and programs of the early warning signs of family violence</td>
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<td>Community Cultural Development Leisure &amp; Community Inclusion Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
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</table>

<p>| 58. Build the capacity of Council staff to raise awareness and build links between men and services and/or local community groups to improve social connections |
| Community Cultural Development Leisure &amp; Community Inclusion Family, Children &amp; Young People Health &amp; Bushfire Recovery | N |</p>
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<tr>
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<th>Council Responsible Departments</th>
<th>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($) Business as Usual (BAU)</th>
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<tr>
<td>59. Implement leadership training for community leaders in family violence early intervention</td>
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<td>60. Promote resources for young people to increase their awareness of early warning signs in their own peer relationships</td>
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<td>Advocacy</td>
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<td>61. Advocate for increased service provision to support young peoples’ wellbeing and mental health</td>
<td>Advocacy, Family Children &amp; Young People</td>
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<td>62. Advocate for safe and affordable housing options for community members and vulnerable groups including young people, in particular a Youth Foyer model of housing</td>
<td>Advocacy, Family Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>C (BAU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>63. Advocate for more services for men in the municipality</td>
<td>Advocacy Health, Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery</td>
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<td>Service Sector Facilitation and Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>64. Support the development of a resource kit for Early Childhood Education and Care services, schools and other professionals working with children and young people on how to identify and respond to early warning signs of family violence and violence in peer relationships</td>
<td>Family Children &amp; Young People Health, Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery Communications &amp; Marketing</td>
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<td>Early Intervention Strategic Actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>65. Include identifying family violence sessions in training offered by Council’s Family, Children and Young People Department for professionals including those working with children and educators and promote widely</td>
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<tr>
<td>66. Support the implementation of the Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project</td>
<td>Health, Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery</td>
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<td>67. Continue to promote the use of the Northern Region Family Violence Help Cards and identify initial contact points for women experiencing family violence and other local supports</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
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<td>68. Work with agencies and networks interfacing with community members (with a focus on the priority at risk populations and community members at risk of contributing to violence in the home) to develop training and supports about the early warning signs and appropriate responses and build the capacity of the service system to facilitate access to services</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People Leisure and Community Inclusion Health Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery</td>
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Responding to Family Violence

What is Intervention?

Intervention involves providing support and treatment to women and children who are affected by violence or to men who use violence. Intervention strategies are implemented after violence occurs. They aim to create safety for victims and deal with the consequences of their experiences, and to ensure that it does not occur again or escalate. Intervention strategies can include:

- Crisis accommodation and support for victims;
- Health and mental health services;
- Therapeutic interventions for perpetrators; and
- Criminal justice responses.

City of Whittlesea family violence intervention desired outcomes and objectives

The following table outlines the desired outcomes this strategy is working towards and the specific intervention objectives it will work on over the next four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Intervention Objectives</th>
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</table>
| Services in the family violence and related sectors meet the unique needs of children experiencing family violence in the home | • Increase knowledge of early years professionals about referral pathways and entry points of family violence related services  
• Increase the City of Whittlesea’s knowledge base about the needs of children experiencing family violence  
• Facilitate collaborative relationships among family violence related services and other professionals across the community with a focus on children |
| Services in the family violence and related sector meet the unique needs of young people experiencing family violence | • Build the capacity of services to support young people experiencing family violence  
• Increase City of Whittlesea and service staff knowledge about the needs of young people experiencing family violence  
• Facilitate collaborative relationships among family violence related services and other professionals across the community with a focus on young people |
| Families experiencing family violence are identified and receive relevant and responsive support services | • Increase the reporting of family violence  
• Increase the knowledge of family services staff and other professionals across the community of the referral pathways and entry points of family violence related services  
• Increase the City of Whittlesea and services staff knowledge base about the needs of families experiencing family violence  
• Facilitate collaborative relationships among family violence related services and other professionals across the community with a focus on families |
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<tr>
<th>Intervention Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Intervention Objectives</th>
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</table>
| **Women** experiencing family violence are safe in their homes and safe in their communities and can get the support they need | • Advocate for relevant and responsive support services in the City of Whittlesea  
• Increase the knowledge of services and other professionals across the community of the referral pathways and entry points of family violence related services.  
• Increase Council’s staff knowledge base about the needs of women experiencing family violence  
• Facilitate collaborative relationships among family violence related services and other professionals across the community with a focus on women |
| **Men** perpetrating family violence have access to effective programs and do not continue to perpetrate violence | • Increase the knowledge base about successful perpetrator intervention programs  
• Men have access to effective programs E.g.; behavior change, development, anger management and recidivist  
• Increase the range of relevant and responsive support services in the City of Whittlesea for male perpetrators |
| **Community members** know where to go to when family violence occurs | • Increase awareness across the community of family violence related services  
• Increase local professional’s awareness of identification of risk of violence and encourage policies and procedures to respond to disclosure that reflect current best practice  
• Facilitate collaborative relationships with Victoria Police |
# Family violence intervention strategic actions

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<tr>
<th>Intervention Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Council Responsible Departments</th>
<th>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($)</th>
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<th>Target Group</th>
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69. Regularly document the available specialist and non-specialist family violence services in the municipality and promote these to early years professionals such as Maternal and Child Health and Early Childhood Education and Care Services

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<th>Family, Children &amp; Young People</th>
<th>N (BAU)</th>
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70. Improve City of Whittlesea and partners’ understanding of the local experiences of family violence and sexual assault to facilitate identification of the needs tailored for priority population groups

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<th>Community Services Planning, Family, Children &amp; Young People</th>
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71. Conduct regular mapping exercise of family violence services in the City of Whittlesea to explore differential access when compared with the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne and promote evidence base for advocacy

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72. Promote the collation of information between networks about family violence incidences and support provided, to better understand the local environment

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<td>73. Develop and disseminate information for the community about how to respond to family violence and support people experiencing family violence</td>
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<td>74. Explore and implement data collection mechanisms for Elder Abuse with partner agencies to inform service provision (e.g. Home and Community Care etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>75. Facilitate training for all City of Whittlesea staff about identifying family violence and tailoring training for staff interfacing with community members in the identification of Family Violence and appropriate responses and referral pathways for (not limited to):</td>
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<td>Intervention Strategic Actions</td>
<td>Council Responsible Departments</td>
<td>New (N) Current (C) Needs funding ($) Business as Usual (BAU)</td>
<td>Target Group</td>
<td>Implementation Year</td>
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<td>76. Provide support for employees experiencing family violence through the continued implementation of the City of Whittlesea Family Violence and Workplace Support Policy and associated procedures including, safety planning and employee entitlements</td>
<td>Human Resources, Health Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>77. Raise community members’ and services’ awareness of family violence supports available</td>
<td>Community Services Directorate, Communications and Marketing</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>2015 / 2016</td>
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<td>78. Conduct local forums to highlight key advocacy issues as relevant</td>
<td>Community Services Directorate</td>
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<td>79. Develop and implement advocacy strategies for justice services such as a family violence specific court to be located in the City of Whittlesea</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
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<td>2017 / 2018</td>
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<td>80. Develop and implement advocacy strategies for equitable access to local specialist family violence services for men, women and children</td>
<td>Advocacy, Health Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery</td>
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<td>81. Promote through existing networks appropriate supports for children and young people experiencing family violence</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
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<td>82. Work with local agencies, the police and relevant partners to collect evidence about the prevalence of and response to children and young people experiencing family violence.</td>
<td>Family, Children &amp; Young People</td>
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<td>83. Participate in and support existing relevant intervention networks such as the Whittlesea Family Violence Network, North East Family Violence Network and the Northern Integrated Family Violence Services</td>
<td>Community Services Directorate</td>
<td>C (BAU)</td>
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<td>84. Facilitate Whittlesea Community Futures and associated cluster groups, the Early Years Family Violence Working Group and the Family Violence Taskforce</td>
<td>Community Services Directorate</td>
<td>C (BAU)</td>
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<td>85. Support the implementation of a targeted Men’s family violence program as part of Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project</td>
<td>Health Access &amp; Bushfire Recovery</td>
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<td>86. Advocate for funding for a locally based family violence support worker to work with Victoria Police</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
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Appendix 1: An ecological approach to understanding violence against women

(VicHealth 2007)

**Societal**: the cultural values and beliefs that shape the other two levels of the social ecology

**Community/organisational**: the formal and informal social structures that impact on a person

**Individual/relationship**: the developmental experiences and personality factors that shape a person’s responses to stressors in the environment.

**Relationship**: the intimate interactions a person has with others.
Appendix 2: Intersection of Council’s work to address family violence and sexual assault

**Strategic framework**
- Articulates Council and partner’s shared vision and rationale for action to address family violence and sexual assault across the continuum (including advocacy)
- LEAD DEPT. Health, Access & Bushfire Recovery

**Gender Equity Working Group**
- primary prevention
- advocacy
- embed gender equity in Council core business
- create action plan (e.g. M&CH new parent groups engaged and equitable parenting; applying a gender lens to infrastructure development; VicHealth’s Everyone Wins & Healthy Sporting Environments programs)
- internal focus, ongoing group
- LEAD DEPT. Policy & Strategy

**Family Violence Working Group**
- external focus
- develop family violence strategy
- define Council’s role as Provider, Facilitator, Advocate
- early intervention and intervention/response focus
- short-term group
- LEAD DEPT. Family Children and Young People

**Family Violence Taskforce**
- External group (Council to chair & perform secretariat function)
- Across the continuum (advocacy)
- LEAD DEPT. Health, Access & Bushfire Recovery
## Appendix 3: City of Whittlesea Gender Equity Strategy

### Desired Outcome: The City of Whittlesea is inclusive, respectful, fair and safe for all genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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| 1. The City of Whittlesea is an employer of choice, with a respectful organisational culture that values gender diversity, strives for gender balance and embeds gender equity in all workplace policies, practice and procedures. | a. Apply gender lens and embed gender equity within human resource management and organisational culture projects.  
b. Define, promote and equitably apply flexible/family friendly workplace strategies  
c. Address the gender equity of the leadership groups and strategic decision making processes  
d. Achieve and maintain pay & entitlement equity  
e. Review and ensure equity of opportunities for professional development and further study  
f. Ensure our workplace is safe, inclusive and culture promotes gender equity |
| 2. The City of Whittlesea’s services, programs and policies, are inclusive and gender equitable. | a. Policies and strategic documents conduct and respond to Gender Equity Analysis  
b. Increase use, collection & reporting of sex disaggregated data in services, programs and policy.  
c. Address gender equity of community consultations across the organisation  
d. Apply gender lens to the allocation of the City of Whittlesea’s resources (including community funding, facilities use)  
e. Utilise Gender analysis to decrease gendered barriers to participation and increase inclusiveness of City of Whittlesea’s services, groups and programs |
**Desired Outcome:** The City of Whittlesea is inclusive, respectful, fair and safe for all genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
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| 3. The City of Whittlesea’s **places and spaces** facilitate community connection and are safe, welcoming, respectful & inclusive of all genders. | a. Incorporate gender equity principles in design & function of public spaces, community facilities, parks and recreation  

b. Increase use of gender analysis and sex disaggregated data in planning and advising on the public realm, land use, facilities planning and parks and open space.  
c. Facilitate increased gender equitable inclusiveness of community settings |

| 4. The City of Whittlesea is facilitating equitable opportunities for civic and economic participation and advancing gender equity in our community. | a. Utilise media and communication opportunities to promote non-stereotype gender roles and raise awareness of gender equity  

b. Provide leadership and advocacy for improved gender equity within local government sector, local community, state and federal government settings  
c. Support and facilitate increased representation of women in community & civic leadership positions  
d. Facilitate improved opportunities for women’s local economic participation and financial security |
Appendix 4: Supporting Policies

Commonwealth government

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments worked with the community to develop a 12-year National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan).

Released in 2011, the National Plan explains what is being done to reduce violence against women and their children. The plans vision is that:

Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities.

Over 12 years the National Plan aims to achieve:

A significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children.

First Action Plan: Building a Strong Foundation 2010-2013


Second Action Plan: Moving Ahead 2013-2016


Our Watch

Our Watch, previously known as the Foundation to Prevention Violence Against Women and Their Children, is an independent national organisation established in 2013 by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. Now in their second year, Our Watch is joined by the Northern Territory and South Australian Governments and has just released their five year Strategic Plan. Over the five years their strategic program will focus on four mutually reinforcing areas of work:

1. Lead a sustained and constructive public conversation
2. Design and deliver innovative programs that engage and educate individuals and the community
3. Enable organisations, networks and communities to effect changes
4. Influence public policy, systems and institutions.

Five Year Strategic Plan 2014-2019

Victorian government

The Victorian Government’s plan reflects a commitment to preventing violence happening, holding perpetrators to account for their actions and providing support to women and children who experience violence. The Victorian Government’s initiatives to address violence against women and children fall within three streams:

- **Preventing violence against women and children** by educating to change attitudes and behaviours and to promote respectful non-violent relationships and engaging organisations and communities to promote gender equity and stop violence.

- **Intervening earlier** by identifying and targeting individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of violent behaviour or of being subjected to violence.

- **Responding through an integrated system** which provides consistent, coordinated and timely responses to women and children who experience family violence to protect and empower them to rebuild their lives and to get tougher on perpetrators and prevent re-offending.

Victoria’s Action Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children 2012-2015: Everyone has a responsibility to act.


Local government

Local government planning, service provision and partnerships cut across the social, economic, environmental and cultural domains of civic life. Council is well placed to lead action to address family violence using a whole of council approach, in partnership with the local community and agencies.

Local governments play a pivotal role in creating safe and healthy environments for the communities they serve. Local governments provide a range of community services, safe public spaces and community facilities which can be used as platforms to influence change. Local governments are also workplaces and in some instances can be the largest employer within a municipality. Local governments can lead change across policy, planning, programming, service delivery, partnerships, political influence and advocacy, social marketing and integrating gender respect and equity throughout all council business and as a whole of community responsibility.

**Strategic links to other City of Whittlesea plans**

- Disability Action Plan 2013-2016
- Multicultural Action Plan 2014-2018
- Connect: A municipal plan for children, young people and their families in the City of Whittlesea 2013–2018
- Gender Equity Strategy
• Family Violence Workplace Support Policy
• White Ribbon Action Plan
• Whittlesea Early Years (Best Start) Action Plan

**Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership**

The Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership (the Partnership) is a unique example of a mechanism for collaborative partnerships with Council on community issues. It has five cluster groups: Whittlesea Early Years Partnership, Whittlesea Youth Commitment, Positive Ageing, Disability, CALD Communities and in addition to the clusters an Advocacy working group. The Partnership and cluster groups have identified family violence as a high-priority and are working towards actions across a range of areas. Further information on the Partnership is available [http://www.whittleseacommunityfutures.org.au/](http://www.whittleseacommunityfutures.org.au/)

**Whittlesea Family Violence Taskforce**

Council hosted a family violence round table forum in 2013 with key agencies and government representatives to discuss the crucial action required from all levels of government and key agencies to address the high prevalence of family violence in the municipality. A key decision from this round table forum was to establish a time-limited, high-level taskforce to address the issue of family violence as a public health priority for the community and to coordinate collaboration between key agencies, including local, state and federal governments. The partners agreed Council would lead the taskforce.

The Whittlesea Family Violence Taskforce was established in 2014 to:

• Coordinate Council and partners’ advocacy to address family violence;
• Secure funding for appropriate place-based programs;
• Ensure current policy is effectively implemented at the local level;
• Improve Council and partners’ understanding of the causes and contributing factors of family violence in the local context.

The Taskforce strengthened the local advocacy campaign *Families on the Edge* to profile family violence in the City of Whittlesea as key priority issue leading up to the Victorian Government election November 2014.

**Northern Metropolitan Region**

Strategic links:

• Building a Respectful Community Preventing Violence against Women: A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne 2011-2016
• Northern Integrated Family Violence Service Strategic Network
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Our Watch End violence against Women And Their Children http://www.ourwatch.org.au/
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