

Respect, Responsibility and Equality: Preventing Violence against Women Program – May 2007

Linking investments with evidence

Respect, Responsibility and Equality: Preventing Violence Against Women, is part of a body of work aimed at supporting the development of sustained changes in policy and practice to prevent violence against women.

A total of 29 projects have been supported by VicHealth to undertake a range of health promotion strategies to prevent this violence. The main focus of the projects will be on strengthening communities and organisations to create environments which value and support norms that are non-violent and build respectful and equitable gender relations.

The projects supported reflect the evidence identified in a review undertaken by VicHealth: *A framework to guide the primary prevention of intimate partner violence*. This framework has been developed to guide primary prevention planning and program development across sectors.

Funded Projects:

The following section identifies the evidence base for the relevant groupings of projects recently recommended for funding under the VicHealth small grants program.

1. Projects with a focus on working with the Media

The evidence review conducted by VicHealth highlights the role of media in shaping social norms and attitudes, with some evidence of attitude changes occurring through the use of the media.

In response to this evidence, the following projects are being supported to work with the media to help build a society where there is strong support for the prevention and prohibition of violence in public and private contexts:

- **Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service** – a state wide media advocacy project which will 1) support women who have experienced violence to speak with the media, and 2) work with other organisations to develop messages as a means of influencing community perceptions and attitudes towards violence against women.

- **Domestic Violence Victoria: 'Family Violence Prevention Media Awards'** – a state wide media awards program aimed at influencing community attitudes towards violence against women by encouraging journalistic quality in the reporting and description of individual incidents of family violence across Victoria.

As a separate strategy, VicHealth is currently working with the Australian Football League (AFL) in development of a far reaching community education campaign focusing on 1) the need to develop respectful and responsible relationships, and 2) encouraging men to take responsibility for reducing violence perpetrated against women.

2. Projects working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD)

Whilst whole of population approaches are integral in the prevention of violence perpetrated against women, the evidence review indicates that there are clear benefits in targeting and delivering more intensive interventions to certain groups in the population on the grounds that they have a high risk of perpetrating or being subject to violence. CALD communities are included in the list of groups identified for selected (ie targeted) interventions. In particular the evidence shows that:

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- CALD communities have poor attitudes towards violence against women
- CALD faith communities have influence on attitude formation in both positive and negative ways, and
- CALD communities need to be engaged in creating solutions in addressing violence against women

In response to this, the following projects are being supported to engage with CALD communities, and in some instances, faith communities, in addressing violence against women.

- **Northern Migrant Resource Centre: 'Men don't do Violence!'** – a regional metropolitan project aimed at engaging community and religious leaders in the development of media material featuring men from different faiths and ethnic backgrounds taking a stand on preventing violence against women.
- **Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service** – a project engaging multicultural and faith communities from 4 communities including Sudanese, Vietnamese, Chinese and Arab speaking communities to support these communities to develop and implement activities to prevent violence against women.
- **Horn of Africa Communities Network** – a project engaging members of the Horn of Africa community in the development and implementation of a community strategy for and by Horn of Africa Communities aimed at preventing violence against women.

- **Federation of Indian Association Victoria** – a project engaging members of the Indian community in Victoria to undertake activities to raise awareness and increase understanding of issues relevant to violence perpetrated against women.
- **Vietnamese Women’s Association:** “Speak Out: Preventing Violence against Women” – a project engaging Vietnamese women and the broader Vietnamese community in education activities to raise awareness of issues pertaining to violence against women and develop strategies to prevent this violence.
- **Darebin City Council:** “Darebin Interfaith Council Taking Responsibility” – a project to engage faith leaders in the development of a ‘Declaration against Family Violence’. The process will include training forums for faith leaders to raise their awareness and understanding of issues related to preventing violence against women within their communities.

3. Projects with a focus on working with men and boys

The evidence review identifies the link between attitudes to gender and violence. Interventions targeting men in highly masculinized environments such as some sporting sub-cultures, college fraternities and the military are particularly important given both their potential to reach men as well as evidence that these contexts are characterised by a relatively high degree of cultural support for violence and that men associated with them have a greater likelihood of perpetrating violence.

The evidence highlights the importance of effective primary prevention that:

- engages ‘good’ men in violence prevention,
- undertakes early intervention with young men, and
- captures men at key relationship states (eg becoming a father)

In response to this, the following projects are being supported:

- **Victorian Women’s Trust:** “Living in a Man’s World” – a state wide project engaging older men as champions/group leaders to work with younger men in challenging cultural perspectives of masculinity supporting violence against women.
- **Glenview Community Care:** “Kicking goals for Health Relationships” – a project engaging the local rural community and football club to promote respectful relationships between men and women. Activities will advocate and support change in football club practices and policies.
- **Yarra Council Sports:** “Welcome to Yarra Sport” – A project being undertaken in conjunction with the AFL and ADF to engage local sports clubs in the City of Yarra in the development of policies and skill development programs to create safe and welcoming environments for women.
- **Whitehorse Community Health:** “And Baby Makes Three – Promoting Safety and wellbeing Among New Families” – a project building upon existing partnerships to engage with first time fathers to focus on the development of respectful and responsible ways of relating at this stage of life.

- **Mallee Sexual Assault Unit:** “Positive Relationships, Successful Lives” – a project involving police, education and the Australian Football League to work with young people in the Mildura region to prevent violence against women.

4. Projects engaging local and regional communities

The evidence review indicates that:

- a) attitudes and social norms about violence are related to violence perpetration;
- b) organisational development and community mobilisation initiatives have a sound theoretical rationale indicating relationship between – a) community efficacy and perpetration of violence, b) lower levels of violence in cities where people say they would intervene;
- c) implementation of local government and regional networks such as Primary Care Partnerships to support organisational and community change.

In response to the evidence, the following projects are being supported:

- **Knox Community Health:** “The Knox Accord” – will engage local organisations and businesses in the development and endorsement of a policy in the form of a commitment statement to reduce violence against women in the City of Knox.
- **Nillumbik Shire Council:** “Saying No To Violence: A Community Responsibility” – a project to engage men, local organisations and businesses in the development of a campaign promoting ‘Say No To Violence in the Nillumbik Shire’ culminating in a White Ribbon Day event.
- **Maribyrnong City Council:** “Gender, Local Government and Violence Prevention” – a project building on work previously undertaken to prevent violence against women. Project activities include professional development within Council and its Departments through review of policies and application of support for local community initiatives to prevent violence against women.
- **Colac Area Health:** “Family Violence Capacity Building Project” – A project to engage staff, management and broader community members in a ‘whole-of-organisation’ approach to address the issue of violence perpetrated against women to prevent its occurrence.
- **Women’s Health West** –a project engaging member agencies of the Western Metropolitan Primary Care Partnership to build their capacity to develop integrated health promotion actions aimed at preventing violence against women across the Western Metropolitan region.

5. School based projects

The evidence review indicates the effectiveness of school-based interventions targeted to young people in secondary school settings. School based programs target a population understood to be at high risk of perpetrating and experiencing violence and the evidence supports the effectiveness of early intervention programs such as school-based interventions.

In response to this evidence the following projects are being supported:

- ***Domestic Violence and Incest Resource Centre:*** “Partners in Prevention – Victorian Youth Violence Prevention Network”. This project will establish a network with schools and local community workers to increase their knowledge and skills in the delivery of violence prevention programs targeting young people
- ***Royal Women’s Hospital - CASA House*** – a project building on the schools program by CASA House to develop a whole-of-school approach to prevent violence against women. It will involve staff professional development and peer education programs to prevent violence against women.
- ***Wyndham City Council:*** “Wyndham Says NO to Violence Schools Art Project 2007” – a project building on current work to engage Years 7 and 9 students from four schools to produce artwork promoting messages related to preventing violence against women to be included in an exhibition during the White Ribbon Day campaign.
- ***Gippsland Women’s Health Service:*** “Schools Project” – a project engaging school communities and local family violence service providers in building the capacity of secondary school communities to develop strategies aimed at preventing violence against women.
- ***LaTrobe University:*** “Preventing Sexual Violence among University Students” – a project engaging tertiary students in peer education, marketing and community development activities aimed at preventing sexual violence against women by young male university students.
- ***Melton Shire:*** “Melton Says NO!” – a project working with students from primary and secondary schools to: 1) engage them in dialogue about development of respectful non violent relationships, and 2) develop a campaign to address the issue of prevention of violence against women by using media and art forms to influence attitudes of the community.

6. Projects with a focus on engaging Indigenous communities

The high rate of violence in Indigenous communities indicates a need for tailored interventions and, as indicated in the evidence review and the Indigenous Task Force report, Indigenous communities need to be leading the development of interventions.

For this reason, the following projects are being supported:

- ***Gunditjamara Aboriginal Cooperation:*** “Tracks to Stronger Communities – a project engaging the local Indigenous community in the development of workshops for men and women aimed at increasing their understanding of causes of violence against women and girls within the Indigenous community. A professional development program for key health and welfare providers will also be undertaken.
- ***Elizabeth Hoffman House for Aboriginal Women:*** “Keeping Booris Safe” – a project engaging young Aboriginal women and their children in activities aimed at developing strategies that will assist to prevent family violence.

7. Projects with a focus on the workplace

The evidence review indicates the effectiveness of undertaking workplace programs to prevent violence perpetrated against women.

In response to this evidence, the following projects have been recommended:

- ***URCOT Ltd:*** “Influencing and Development of Respectful Workplaces for Women” – a project building on earlier research with key union officials to develop and demonstrate interventions that highlight structural issues, and promote more cooperative and respectful workplaces for women.
- ***Moreland City Council:*** “Preventing Violence in Moreland is Everybody’s Business” – a project engaging local businesses in education and training activities to raise awareness and understanding of family violence and support changes in work place practices and policies to prevent violence against women.
- ***Women’s Health Victoria:*** “Working Together against Violence” – a project engaging a male dominated high profile industry to undertake activities to develop and implement organisational policies and programs designed to prevent violence perpetrated against women.