

# Evaluation of the role of local government in preventing violence against women

June 2017



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# 1

## Executive summary

### Local government can drive social change to achieve a society free from violence against women.

Research shows gender inequality is the fundamental driver of violence against women. This violence is pervasive and has profound consequences for individuals and society in general.

Change is needed across all levels of society. Individuals, organisations, government and society at large need to understand and address gender inequality. Social norms need to change by building knowledge and skills, practices and structures. These changes will help overcome entrenched gender inequality in our community and help prevent violence against women in the long and short term.

As the level of government closest to the community, local government can play a pivotal role in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women (PVAW). Councils can lead this societal change through the services they deliver, their organisational structure and operations, and most importantly through leadership in the community. There are opportunities for leadership on gender equality across the wide range of council responsibilities, including maternal and child health, kindergartens, cultural and arts activities, special events, the management of libraries and sporting grounds, and importantly through organisational policies and procedures. In the past ten years, local government has been a strong leader in Victoria promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women. Councils have been building their capability and capacity in this space and steadily driving change. Engagement is now at an all-time high.

As the peak body for local government in Victoria, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) has been instrumental in supporting councils to effectively and efficiently work towards gender equality and strategies that prevent violence against women. The MAV has played a key role by connecting councils with State and Federal governments, providing leadership, representing local government at a vast array of forums, discussions and events, and facilitating knowledge exchange. Councils highly value the MAV's work in gender equality and PVAW.

Limited funding constrains the amount of work that can be undertaken by councils and the MAV, as continued pressure to do more with less becomes the operational norm for local government. This pressure is evident - fewer councils have increased their funding allocation to PVAW in recent years.

Local government has made great progress on the journey towards creating a more equitable society - one that does not tolerate violence against women. However, there are key components that need to be addressed to fully realise the potential of the sector.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

Long-term commitment by Federal, State and local government is necessary for councils and the MAV to be able to realise opportunities for increasing gender equality and PVAW. This includes sustained funding, leadership and partnerships. Specifically:

- Sustained State and Federal funding is needed to support the long-term program investment required to build knowledge and change attitudes.
- Sustained positive leadership is needed in the local government sector that supports and drives gender equality.
- Sustained partnerships are required to provide continuous and evolving service delivery that can steadily foster community change.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

Councils need greater support to build **capability and capacity** to embed an equity lens for effective leadership on gender equality and PVAW. This is a particular challenge since gender equality is difficult for individuals to discuss. Specifically:

- There is a need to embed a gender equity lens across local government to genuinely and effectively model and lead gender equality and PVAW.
- Capability and capacity building is required that is comprehensive, sustained, and accountable.
- Local government is uniquely placed to lead these mutually-reinforcing activities and iterate, due to its close and diverse connections with the community.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

With government support, the MAV can further strengthen the work of local government in gender equality and PVAW. This includes supporting council leaders, officers, and the local government PVAW community. Specifically:

- The MAV can continue to support local government leaders in building capability and capacity in a way that is thorough, genuine and consistent.
- The MAV can support local government officers to clearly articulate the learning and intended outcomes of their work by providing best practice examples.
- The MAV can support the local government PVAW community by facilitating a more strategic approach to programs, funding and collaboration.

Collaboration is key to supporting gender equality and preventing violence against women. Through a sustained and strategic approach, collaborating within and across sectors, local government can drive the social change necessary to achieve a society free of violence against women.

### In the 2017 MAV Local Government Gender Equality and PVAW Survey\*

- 82%** of respondents (councils) increased recognition of VAW and the role council can play in prevention in the past twelve months, and **18%** of respondents had about the same level of recognition of VAW
- 98%** of respondents indicated that they had dedicated staff time to preventing violence against women and gender equality work
- 80%** of respondents dedicated funding, separate to staff time, to preventing violence against women and gender equality work
- 91%** of respondents participate in PVAW activities on a regional level
- 91%** of respondents recognised or participated in the Victoria Against Violence Campaign in 2016
- 83%** of respondents indicated that they had benefited from the MAV PVAW communications.

#### In addition:

**78** of Victoria's 79 councils have included a family violence clause in their EBA

**615** subscribers to the MAV PVAW email updates, including 354 from across all councils

\*At the time of publication, 59 councils had responded to the survey

# 2

## Project scope

The MAV is leading the effort to strengthen the important role of local government in promoting and embedding gender equity and PVAW. This effort recognises the unique and place-based leadership that local government can contribute to the broader, whole-of-government approach to end violence against women.

The Victorian Government funded the MAV to conduct this work through the Local Government Preventing Violence Against Women (LG PVAW) Project (2016-17). The aims of the project are:

### Support

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To support the continuation and strengthening of existing networks, leadership groups and programs that enhance and develop the capacity of councils to promote and embed gender equity and prevention of violence against women within local communities

### Manage

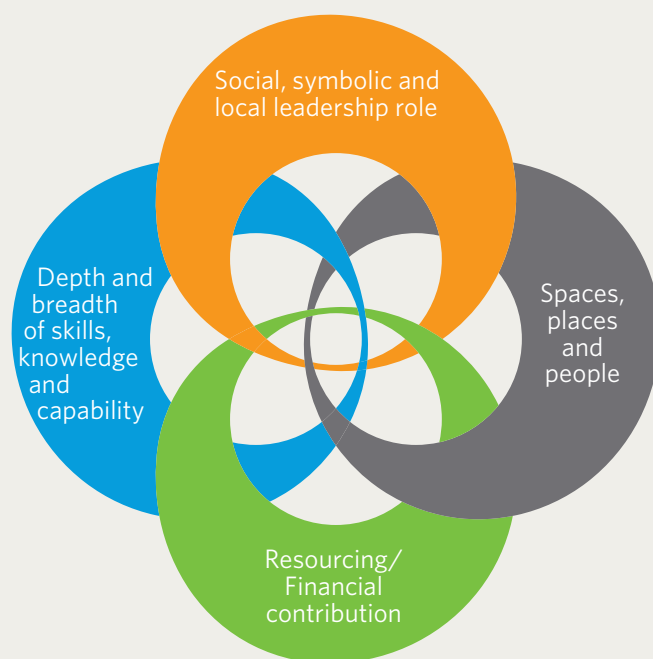
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To manage a grants process for a small number of councils to deliver time-limited prevention of violence against women and/or promotion of gender equality initiatives

The Victorian Government has funded the MAV to undertake a concurrent evaluation as this project is running. The MAV commissioned Nous to conduct this evaluation of each of the above two components. By commissioning this evaluation at the same time the LG PVAW Project is running, there is an opportunity to gain maximum value out of the project and consider more broadly the unique leadership role that local government has.

This evaluation explores the role of local government in gender equality and PVAW from the perspective of four themes, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Themes encompassing the role of local government in gender equality and PVAW



The evaluation included a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. These include:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Workshop</b>          | The evaluation included an initial workshop with the MAV and the group of councils funded through grants.   |
| <b>Literature review</b> | The evaluation reviewed a wide range of relevant policy documents. A full list is available in the Reference section at the end of the report.  |
| <b>Interviews</b>        | The evaluation included one-on-one and group interviews with individuals involved in PVAW both within and outside local government. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Council officers from three metropolitan and two rural councils</li><li>• Local government leaders on the MAV Board</li><li>• Women’s Health Services leaders</li><li>• Our Watch director</li><li>• MAV staff</li></ul> |
| <b>Project reports</b>   | The evaluation included the final project reports from the ten grant funded projects (Appendices A and B).  |
| <b>Survey</b>            | The evaluation included interim results from the 2016-2017 local government gender equality and PVAW survey conducted by the MAV. At the time of publication, 59 councils had participated (Appendix C).  |

## HOW SHOULD THIS REPORT BE USED?

If you would like to look at the summaries of the ten grant funded projects, please go to page 43.

Or read on for a broader exploration of how local government contributes to supporting gender equality and preventing violence against women.

# 3

## Preventing violence against women requires changing attitudes and behaviours, which local government is well-placed to lead

### What is violence against women?

Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (UN 1993).

Violence against women is too common and has profound, preventable impacts.

**One in three** Australian women have experienced physical violence, with one in four experiencing it by an intimate partner<sup>1</sup>

**Intimate partner violence** contributes to death, disability and illness in women age 15-44 more than any other preventable risk factor<sup>2</sup>

The **social, health and economic impacts** of violence against women together cost the Australian economy 21.7 billion a year<sup>3</sup>

Rural Challenge project run by Macedon Ranges Shire Council  
Photo credit: Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Training Officer + cleaning the toilets  
Boys jokes "make me a sandwich"  
Taps - tightened  
Men relax / women cook/care outside jobs (men) / inside (women).  
Different uniforms (shorts/dresses)  
'Not allowed for women to wear shorts'  
Hair length - tied up

Brainstorming stereotypes

- Diversity + diff. opinions
- develops supportive culture + safe
- create equality
- increase membership
- helps influence/shape behaviours
- improves culture
- broader skill sets
- want to reflect community
- prevents violence against women
- it's FAIR

Question posed: Why is gender equality good?

<sup>1</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>2</sup>VicHealth 2007, <sup>3</sup>PwC, Our Watch and VicHealth 2015

## 3.1 Gender inequality is pervasive

Societies globally perceive women and men unequally<sup>4</sup>. Gender inequality is evident in how we value each other, treat each other, and construct our lives. For example:

One in five Australians think men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household<sup>5</sup>

Australian women account for 92% of primary carers for children with disabilities and 70% of primary carers for parents<sup>6</sup>

Australian women earn on average \$238 less than men each week (full-time earnings), representing a national gender pay gap of 18%, which has remained 15-18% for 20 years<sup>7</sup>

### A story of gender bias

Two students apply for a job. They have the exact same resume. The only difference is their names: Jennifer and John.

Managers assess the two candidates' identical resumes and conclude that John is more competent and hireable, while Jennifer is more likeable. They offer less career mentoring to Jennifer and a starting salary that is \$4000 per year (13%) lower than that which they offer John. Female and male managers make similar decisions.

While Jennifer and John are fictional, the managers and their responses are real. A high profile study published in 2012 highlighted this 'subtle gender bias', clear in a double-blind experiment<sup>8</sup>.

Respectful relationships program at City of Port Phillip  
Photo credit: City of Port Phillip



<sup>4</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>5</sup>Ibid, <sup>6</sup>AHRC 2014, <sup>7</sup>Ibid, <sup>8</sup>Moss-Racusin et al. 2012



## 3.2 Gender inequality is the key driver of violence against women

Gender inequality is directly linked to violence against women (VAW). Research led by Our Watch has identified four gendered drivers of VAW<sup>9</sup>. These include:

- 1 | Condoning of violence against women
- 2 | Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence
- 3 | Stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- 4 | Disrespect towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression

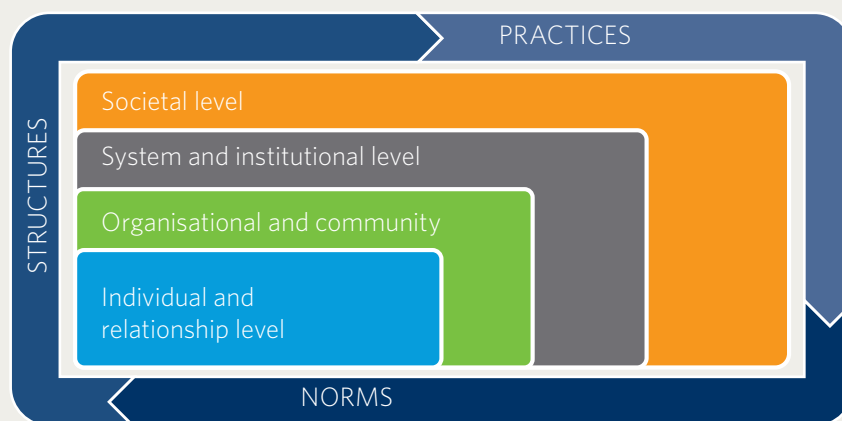
Research indicates that gender inequality is the key determinant of violence against women and is influenced by other forms of inequality<sup>10</sup>. Some women may be at an increased risk of experiencing violence due to overlapping forms of discrimination and power imbalances, such as women with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) backgrounds.

In addition to the gendered drivers of violence, there are reinforcing factors of VAW. These factors do not cause violence on their own, but can increase its frequency or severity when interacting with the above drivers. Reinforcing factors can include financial pressures, alcohol and drug misuse, mental illness and social and economic exclusion<sup>11</sup>.

There are three mechanisms that underpin these complex patterns of violence against women. These mechanisms impact individual women, families, communities and organisations, and society at large (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Socio-ecological model of violence against women<sup>12</sup>



<sup>9</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>10</sup>Ibid, State of Victoria 2016, <sup>11</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>12</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015

**One woman is killed each week by family violence**

**Break the silence**  
For more information on family violence support services visit City of Port Phillip

[www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/family-violence.htm](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/family-violence.htm)

Data obtained from State Government Measuring the Toll: The Family Violence Index 2015

**1 in 3 women experience family violence**

**Break the silence**  
For more information on family violence support services visit City of Port Phillip

[www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/family-violence.htm](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/family-violence.htm)

Data obtained from VicHealth: Australia's Attitudes to Violence Against Women: Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey 2014

Posters created by City of Port Phillip  
Photo credit: City of Port Phillip

Working to address gender inequality and violence against women can exist in a catch-22. Resistance, hostility or aggression from some groups undermines gender equality or violence prevention strategies. Backlash can include attempts to discredit arguments about gender inequality or the gendered nature of violence, and efforts to preserve existing gender norms and hierarchies.

Gender inequality is not a generational problem Australian society will outgrow. The National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) found that, compared to their parent's generation (aged 35-64), young people (age 16-24) were less likely to have a good understanding of VAW and more likely to hold attitudes tolerant of VAW<sup>13</sup>. This may relate to personal experience with sexualised media at a younger age, institutional cultures perpetuating gender stereotypes in leisure (e.g. sport), and a society context in which the women's rights movement is perceived to have been won<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup>Harris et al. 2015, <sup>14</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015

### 3.3 Local government has a pivotal role in supporting gender equality and preventing violence against women

Gender equality and a society where women are free from violence are attainable with a comprehensive and sustained effort. Strategies to prevent violence against women seek to build the skills and knowledge of individuals and change behaviour, preventing violence before it occurs. These strategies can be aimed at the whole community or a particularly vulnerable group that may be at higher risk of experiencing violence in the future<sup>15</sup>.

The National Prevention Framework, Change the Story, developed by Our Watch, ANROWS, and VicHealth, recommends a comprehensive approach in which mutually-reinforcing strategies address the individual, community and societal levels across all sectors and settings<sup>16</sup>.

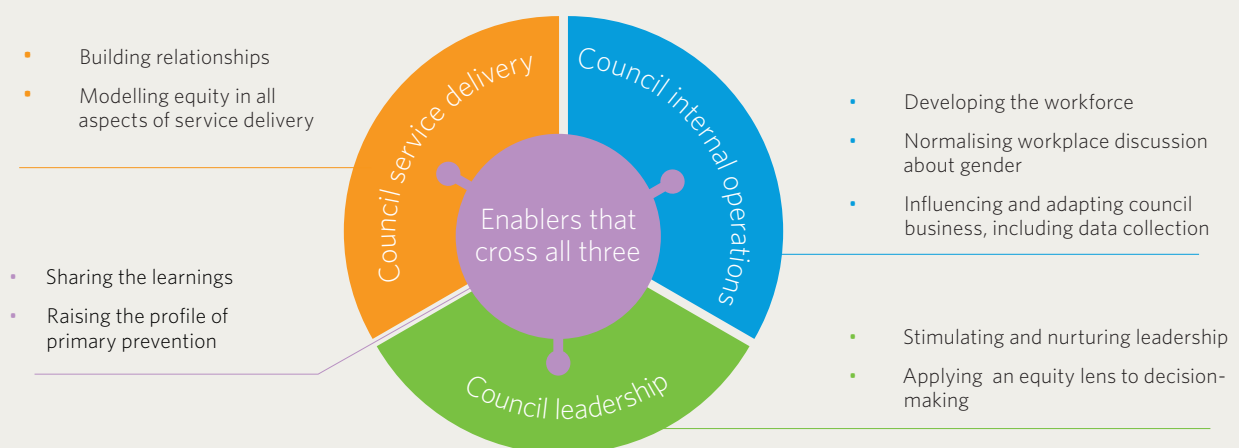
Local government is well-placed to lead a comprehensive approach to preventing violence against women, in line with the framework in Change the Story. Specifically, local government already implements the following aspects of the framework:

<b>Approach</b>	Local government tailors initiatives to the audience, delivers programs to communities of multiple disadvantages, and works across the life course.
<b>Priority settings</b>	Local government works across almost all of the priority settings, such as education, sports, health, infrastructure and workplaces.
<b>Techniques</b>	Local government runs direct participation programs with the community and organisations, community mobilisation programs, communications, and advocacy.

Local government connects with people throughout their day and across their lives, managing the spaces where people live, work and play from birth to old age. Councils are civic leaders and large local employers. These close and diverse connections with the community present unique opportunities for local government to build knowledge and raise awareness of individuals, communities and organisations, an important contribution to ending violence against all women.

Local government can model and lead gender equality and PVAW through mutually-reinforcing strategies across their external service delivery, internal operations, and civic leadership role (Figure 3). The MAV Leadership Statement provides guidance to local government by specifying strategies for councils' involvement in gender equality and PVAW<sup>17</sup>, as shown in Figure 3. Councils are at different stages with implementing these strategies, depending on resource availability, the social norms in their communities, and the priorities of their leaders.

Figure 3: Strategies for local government involvement in preventing violence against women<sup>18</sup>



<sup>15</sup>VicHealth 2007, <sup>16</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>17</sup>MAV 2012, <sup>18</sup>Adapted from MAV 2012

There has been notable growth over the past decade in supporting gender equality and PVAW (Figure 4). The VicHealth PVAW framework developed in 2007 catalysed local government involvement in PVAW, which then grew to the State funding the MAV LG PVAW Project to provide overarching coordination and leadership starting in 2011. This has recently expanded to Change the Story in 2015, and legislated requirements in 2017 following the Royal Commission into Family Violence requiring all councils to report on measures. Local government has played an important role in implementing these changes within the community.

“ We’re talking generational change and we’re 8-ish years in ”

Meanwhile, across society there remains much work to be done, and local government is an appropriate place to lead this work.

“ Some of the stuff that comes out of young parents’ mouths- I think, did I just hear that? It demonstrates how entrenched [traditional gender norms] are. How do you retrain that? ”

“ Local councils have so many touch points with the community. [They are] well placed to tackle the whole problem ”

**Gender equality and PVAW work in Macedon Ranges Shire Council**  
Photo credit: Macedon Ranges Shire Council



Top: PVAW discussion at a recovery meeting  
Bottom: Family Violence After Natural Disaster Action Planning workshop

Elephant in the Room

Figure 4: Timeline of PVAW in local government and non-local government

# Timeline of key PVAW milestones

## Local government

Addressing Family Violence in Moreland Strategy launched

VicHealth fund 29 small PVAW projects, incl. 5 for LG

Maribyrnong is the first council to develop a dedicated PVAW strategy

VicHealth fund five scaled-up projects (two based in councils)

VicHealth PVAW framework developed

Surf Coast Shire is the first organisation globally to include FV clause in EBA

MAV LG PVAW Network established

The State funds the MAV to deliver the LG PVAW Project for an initial 2 years: continued year by year to the present day

State Government funds the LG cluster project involving 9 councils 2011-2014

National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children 2010-2022

The MAV PVAW Leadership Statement launched

60 councils include PVAW in their 2013-16 MPHWP

Our Watch established

Darebin is the first council in Australia to fund a full-time permanent PVAW officer position

23 councils have a stand-alone PVAW strategy

Macedon Ranges is the first council to develop a PVAW in Emergencies Action Plan

Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence

Victoria Against Violence campaign launched

Work commences on developing a Family Violence Index

Royal Commission into Family Violence. State commits \$572m in the budget towards delivering on all 227 recommendations.

The State funds 10 LG PVAW projects (2016-17) administered through the MAV

Council MPHWP to include actions to address family violence (RCFV Rec. 94)

Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change

Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy

Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women

\$1.9b in the State budget to continue implementation of the RCFV recommendations, including \$50.7m for prevention

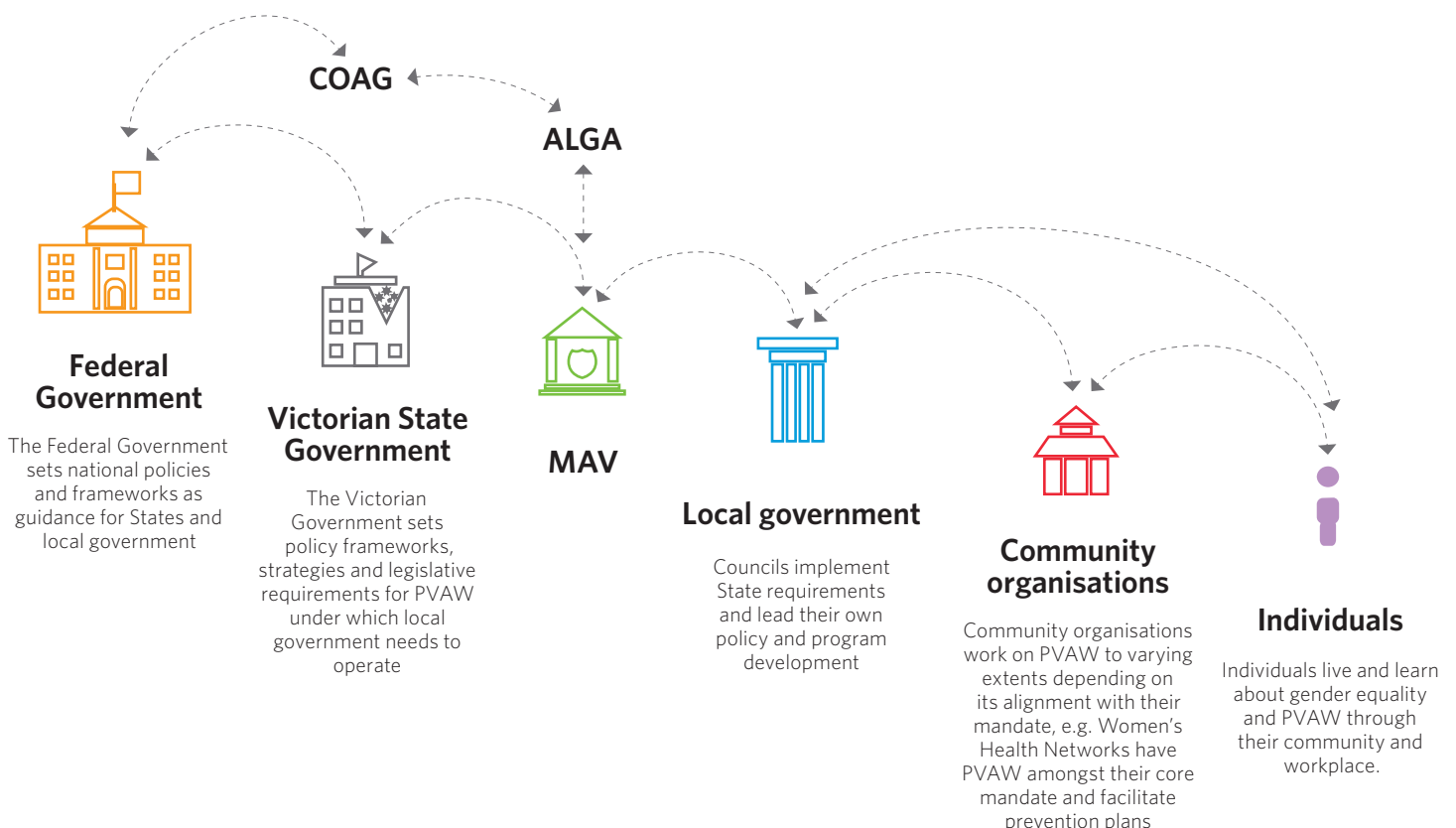
## Non-local government

# 4

## The MAV plays a pivotal role in supporting local government in their gender equality and PVAW work

The gender equality and the PVAW ecosystem is complex. This is evident in the roles of each group, described in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Gender equality and PVAW ecosystem



\*COAG: Council of Australian Governments  
ALGA: Australian Local Government Association

A multi-sector approach to gender equality and PVAW is needed, with mutually-reinforcing strategies and consistent messaging<sup>19</sup>. This requires close collaboration and frequent communication between all of these players.

The MAV plays a central role in facilitating information exchange among all of these partners, supporting this multi-sector approach for increased effectiveness and efficiency of gender equality and PVAW programs in Victoria (Figure 5). Specifically, the role of the MAV in PVAW is three-fold:

- 1 | It connects local government with State and Federal governments and community agencies for consultation or information exchange
- 2 | It represents local government amongst diverse stakeholders
- 3 | It supports local government to deliver gender equality and PVAW work across the community.

The MAV is unique in playing this role, with no other organisation in Victoria providing this singular central link or point of contact for connecting local government with State and Federal governments or community agencies.

“  
Working in this space,  
things don't change  
overnight- you need  
everyone on board- State  
government, women's  
health services, police,  
and all need to [work  
together]  
”

#### MAV PVAW Network meeting activity

Photo credit: MAV



<sup>19</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015

## 4.1 The MAV connects the State and Federal government with local government for two-way information exchange

With 79 councils in Victoria, it is a considerable task for the State and Federal governments to share and receive information across this large network. The MAV helps negotiate the large scale of local government by:

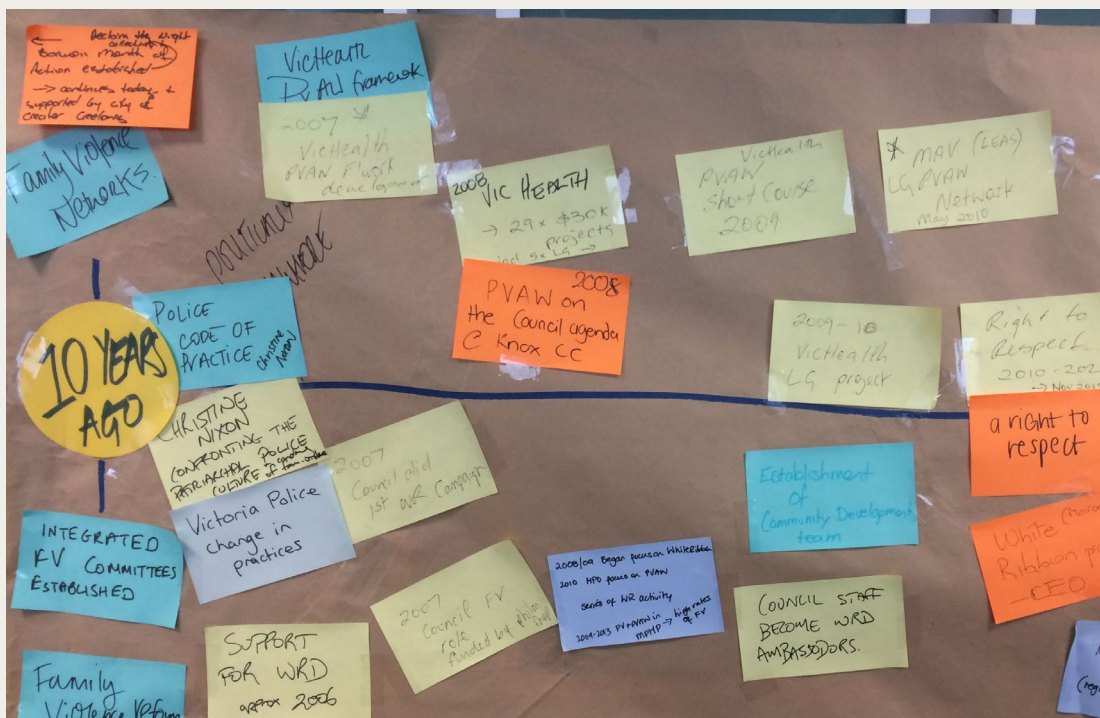
- Providing a single point of contact through which the State or Federal governments can efficiently connect with all 79 councils
- Informing councils of opportunities to engage directly with State and Federal governments
- Providing leadership to support councils with new and emerging challenges.

Councils highly value the advocacy and liaising role the MAV performs. In a recent survey of councils, respondents ranked the MAV's roles in advocating and liaising with the State and Federal governments as 4.7, on a scale of 1-5<sup>20</sup>.

“ We consider the MAV as a partner [and] the MAV's opportunity to network. The fact it creates opportunities for councils to come together and share opportunities is really valuable. ”

“ If you're providing \$200k for one service, your catchment is relatively small, like a pebble. Funding a network position is funding one person who in turn has a huge ripple. The funds are going much further because they can touch 79 councils ”

Timeline of local government gender equality and PVAW work created at a MAV PVAW Network meeting  
Photo credit: MAV



<sup>20</sup>MAV 2017; At the time of analysis, 59 councils had responded to the survey.



## 4.2 The MAV represents local government amongst diverse stakeholders

The 79 councils mean 79 local contexts, with both common and diverse needs. The MAV represents these groups and their shared interests through its participation on regional and State committees and through direct consultation. For example:

MAV staff represent local government on committees that are supporting implementation of the family violence reforms. This includes the Family Violence Steering Committee, Industry Taskforce, Ministerial Taskforce on Prevention of Violence Against Women (and associated working groups), Victorian Gender Auditing Working Group, Respectful Relationships in Early Years Working Group, Information Share Working Group, RAMPS Working Group, CRAF Review Working Group and Elder Abuse Prevention Working Group.

The MAV PVAW Policy Adviser represents local government on project advisory groups. This includes the Our Watch Workplace Equity and Respect Project Advisory Group, the Respectful Relationships Education in Schools Project Advisory Group, ANROWS National Community Attitudes Survey Project Advisory Group, the Domestic Violence Victoria Eliminating Violence against Women in the Media Action Group, and the Safe Steps Pets in Crisis program.

The MAV PVAW Policy Adviser is often consulted regarding local government activities by organisations and State departments working on local, regional and State level prevention activities.

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## 4.3 The MAV supports local government to deliver gender equality and PVAW programs across the community

Through its core role in information exchange, the MAV supports local government to effectively and efficiently deliver gender equality and PVAW programming. This is done directly by increasing information exchange and supporting officers, and indirectly through the MAV's strong brand. This drives key enabling strategies (for example, Share the learning and Raising the profile of primary prevention), as well as supporting other strategies (e.g. Building relationships; Figure 4). Survey responses indicated that the effectiveness of coordination of the MAV Network has been a 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5<sup>21</sup>. Further, respondents indicated the MAV had increased their understanding of how councils can contribute to gender equality and PVAW, ranking this 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5<sup>22</sup>.

### **The MAV PVAW Network facilitates knowledge transfer, providing opportunity to inspire and efficiently inform programs**

The network facilitates information exchange so officers learn what other councils are doing. Newsletters and network meetings enable officers to keep up to date with what is occurring across other councils and at the State level.



*[It means we're] not reinventing the wheel—if a council has already put in place a program and you think, 'that's something we can do', you can learn from their [successes and] mistakes*



<sup>21</sup>MAV 2017, <sup>22</sup>Ibid.

The MAV PVAW Network facilitates relationship building, creating a community of professionals working in this space. Through quarterly meetings, council officers build relationships with colleagues in other councils. This is particularly advantageous for developing networks between rural and metro councils or non-neighbouring metro councils. Over the past 18 months, 50 councils have attended at least one network meeting.

*The MAV knows the history of the projects, knows what we're up to and what we're capable of—alerting us to where existing connections [may be] for us, a project we may be interested in, or acting as a sounding board*

*Without MAV involvement you lose that connection point. You've got your own networks (in your local area) but some of the smaller ones would just drop off*

Through the PVAW Policy Adviser, council officers receive advice customised to their local context. The MAV PVAW Policy Adviser has expertise and knows the specific context of each council. Council officers rely on conversations with the adviser to test new ideas, avoid duplication, learn from the past, and explore options that would best fit their workplace and community.

Councils benefit from this knowledge transfer. In the 2017 council survey:

- 86% of survey respondents indicated they benefited from information from the newsletters and 71% from information from network meetings. Survey responses indicated that 26% of councils did not participate in the PVAW network, with the majority of them citing location and logistical challenges. Video conferencing has not been available to date and would overcome this limitation for rural councils.
- 74% of respondents said they had benefited from the MAV networks and contacts.
- 67% of respondents said they had benefited from information learned in conversations with the PVAW Policy Adviser<sup>23</sup>.

### **The MAV PVAW Network provides peer support for PVAW officers**

Council officers working in PVAW are highly driven and passionate but can be isolated and sometimes lack support for their work within councils. The PVAW Network meetings provide officers with “nourishment”.

*As far as you get wins, it's really frustrating and it's a heavy subject... If you're working in that space all the time, it's hard to shut off from it. The MAV Network meetings are a safe space for the councils involved to chat about their wins and frustrations*

### **Local government leaders trust the MAV brand**

Ideas promoted by the MAV get more buy-in from local government. Council leaders receive MAV communications and forward them to managers in councils. By comparison, communications by council officers working on PVAW are less frequently disseminated to a wide audience in council.

*If a CEO at a council gets a letter from the MAV CEO- they'll act. It gives more weight*

<sup>23</sup> MAV 2017

# 5

## Local government is closest to the people, enabling a diverse approach to PVAW in the community

Local government has a wide reach across the community since councils are located where people live, work, play and learn. They are in a unique position to take a place-based participatory approach, embedding PVAW across all of these community settings and services (Figure 6). Councils engage the community and provide local leadership in gender equality and PVAW work through their roles as deliverers of services, large local employers and civic leaders in the community. While local government is itself a 'setting' for PVAW<sup>24</sup>, it is also an arm of government with reach across settings.

Figure 6: Councils' reach for PVAW programs across the community<sup>25</sup>



<sup>24</sup>VicHealth 2007; OurWatch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>25</sup> MAV and VicHealth 2013

## 5.1 Local government is an arm of government with scale and reach through their delivery of services

Councils' diverse connections with the community enable them to adopt the necessary approach (e.g. tailoring to the community and reaching across the life course) in priority settings, and with the recommended techniques (e.g. building knowledge to raising awareness)<sup>26</sup>. Councils connect with people from birth through to older age, across personal, recreational, and professional aspects of their lives. They operate assets such as libraries and sporting grounds and run community events, all of which provide opportunity for building knowledge and awareness of gender equality and PVAW with a wide and diverse audience.

### **Councils have a close connection to the community and can tailor programs accordingly**

Best practice gender equality and PVAW programs address both the population at large as well as groups of high vulnerability<sup>27</sup>. Councils are well-placed to deliver programs at these two scales as they know their communities well and are accustomed to adapting programs to their local demographic.

Gender equality street art project supported by Darebin City Council

Photo credit: Darebin City Council



“

*We're not just running business units. Councils do know their communities, their players, working formal and informal networks*

”

“

*Start where people are and tailor initiatives to who you're working with. The State level can't do this. It needs to do strategies in a relatively abstract way*

”

<sup>26</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>27</sup>VicHealth 2007



The 16 ways in 16 Days Facebook Campaign by Latrobe City Council  
 Photo credit: Latrobe City Council

Priority groups for prevention programs include those with other sources of inequality and social disadvantage, arising from race and ethnicity, disability, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, or rural location. Research indicates that these groups may be more vulnerable to violence against women, as driven by the social practices, norms and structures of wider society and not factors within these groups<sup>28</sup>. Local government is well-placed to meet the needs of more vulnerable groups as they work to address all forms of inequality. Meanwhile, survey results indicate greater need for integration of gender equality and PVAW with other council plans aiming to address needs of vulnerable groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities, multicultural communities, and LGBTI<sup>29</sup>.

Councils also connect with people across their life journey, including at particularly vulnerable or challenging times. Childhood and adolescence are critical phases for gender equality and PVAW, when gender roles are formed, and in the latter case, intimate partner relationships develop<sup>30</sup>. Older age may also be a vulnerable time, when women may have less financial independence and may be in relationships or social environments with prevailing 'traditional' gender norms<sup>31</sup>. Through their work in Maternal and Child Health, youth services and aged services, councils can specifically support gender equality and PVAW with these groups.

“ We touch people at all their vulnerable stages [of life]... maternal and child health, kindergartens, aged care ”

In addition, councils are well-placed to target programs at particularly challenging periods for individuals and the community, such as following a natural disaster. Macedon Ranges Shire Council is a leader in PVAW in the emergency management sector, having been involved in the recovery following the Black Saturday bushfires where they identified the need to assist families directly impacted and female volunteers and staff in the sector.

<sup>28</sup>Webster and Flood 2015, <sup>29</sup>MAV 2017, <sup>30</sup>Webster and Flood 2015, <sup>31</sup>Ibid



## Local government PVAW grant funded projects focused on vulnerable communities or stages include:

### STRENGTHENING THE CALD COMMUNITIES BY PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Ballarat Council, in partnership with Women's Health Grampians, developed and delivered a series of workshops to CALD communities to raise awareness and support the community to take actions supporting equal participation of men and women in public and private life.

### PROMOTING POSITIVE GENDER NORMS IN THE EARLY YEARS

Darebin City Council, in partnership with Women's Health in the North, developed and delivered gender equity training to early years educators. This included the development of tools and resources for local government to provide gender equitable early years programs and services.

### BABY MAKES 3 ANTENATAL PROGRAM TO HELP EQUIP NEW PARENTS TO NEGOTIATE THEIR GENDER ROLES

Frankston Council, in partnership with Carrington Health and Peninsula Health, piloted the Baby Makes 3 program in an antenatal setting. Baby Makes 3 supports new parents to negotiate their gender roles during the transition to parenthood. The program builds knowledge and skills in equal and respectful relationships to change social norms.

Please see Appendix A for more information on these projects.

## Councils can build knowledge and increase awareness of gender equality and PVAW through their communications with the community

Through their reach across the community, councils can facilitate communication and education of gender equality and PVAW through printed messaging and social media. Raising awareness is considered a foundation of prevention, since it engages individuals and the community in gender equality and PVAW, even if not visibly reducing VAW itself<sup>32</sup>. In the recent MAV survey, 91% of councils indicated they had participated in the Victoria Against Violence campaign, including 16 days of Activism Against Gender Violence, International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women, or White Ribbon Day<sup>33</sup>.

Victorian councils have built knowledge and awareness of PVAW using a diversity of communications mechanisms. Examples include:

Darebin City Council placed "Violence against women stinks" messages on garbage trucks, and Knox City Council placed messages on signs up around the community, such as "Knox says no to family violence". This received positive feedback from the community, in residents calling and saying "Nice to see councils doing this". These signs started a conversation.

Latrobe City Council uses social media to promote gender equity. For the 16 days of Activism, Latrobe highlighted 16 individuals on their Facebook Page who are challenging gender norms in their everyday life, e.g. a female fire fighter or male nurse. Community members' positive comments on the posts demonstrated their appreciation and engagement.

## Local government connects with people through a diversity of public spaces and events

Local government can also build knowledge and raise awareness of gender equality and PVAW through councils' management of public spaces and events. Libraries have a key role to play in promoting gender equality in the community, particularly given their use by children and young families. Libraries can promote

<sup>32</sup>WHO 2010, <sup>33</sup>MAV 2017

positive gender norms through their selection of books, speakers and toys, as well as their messaging on flyers and posters. Local government officers actively work to ensure libraries promote best practice gender equity.

Sporting facilities and clubs are also a focal area for gender equity messaging, in which local government has a prominent role. Sporting grounds perpetuate gender norms and there is appetite for change<sup>34</sup>. As managers of sporting facilities, councils have both carrots and sticks. Councils can work to ensure sporting grounds provide gender equitable access and sporting clubs behave in accordance with council's gender equity values if wanting access to the grounds.

There is a perception amongst some councils that leisure and sporting clubs have been burdened by the 'championing nature' of the White Ribbon campaign. This may limit their engagement in PVAW to meeting a minimum awareness standard while not implementing measures to encourage women's participation or safety. To address this, councils have developed incentives for effective sporting club engagement with gender equality and PVAW. Examples have included:

- Councils only allow sporting clubs access to grounds or allow clubs to pay half-fees if they demonstrate engagement with gender equality and PVAW as per certain criteria
- Councils make funding of infrastructure updates contingent on gender equality and PVAW engagement
- Councils restrict access to grounds on the basis of behaviour that demeans women.

“  
*Sport is a big area [for PVAW]. Sport needs local government in [Victoria]*  
”

In addition, some councils have updated facilities to be more inclusive of women. This includes installing women's changing rooms where they didn't previously exist, as women were changing in shared spaces or cars. While this is a start, there is still work to be done in embedding PVAW across these spaces.

“  
*It's interesting that that's the one space women get. There's still the men's photos on the wall*  
”



Under 10's from Belgrave Junior Football Club  
Photo credit: J. Barrett

<sup>34</sup>VicHealth 2015



**Local government PVAW grant funded projects focused on equity in spaces and places include:**

**OUR CODES, OUR CLUBS:  
CHANGING THE STORY TO  
PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY  
TOGETHER**

Maroondah Council, in partnership with other councils and organisations (Knox City Council, Yarra Ranges Council, Inspiro Community Health, Together For Equality and Respect Partnership (TFER) and Outer East Children and Youth Area Partnership (OECYAP) Steering Group) developed a video featuring 9 local sporting clubs discussing their stories and practical actions towards building gender equality. This was complimented by a research report highlighting key messages and a Gender Equity Audit for sporting clubs in the three municipalities.

**EMBEDDING  
GENDER EQUITY  
IN COMMUNITY  
FACILITIES**

Whittlesea Council, in partnership with JMA Architects, completed Gender Equity in Design Guidelines for new or redeveloped community facilities. The guidelines will also be used to audit existing facilities and identify opportunities for improvement.

**RURAL CHALLENGE**

Macedon Ranges Shire Council, in partnership with City of Greater Bendigo, Women's Health Loddon Mallee, CFA District 2, AFL Central Victoria and AFL Goldfields worked with CFA brigades and football-netball clubs in the area to build capacity of male and female community leaders through workshops and mentored action planning.

**Please see Appendix A for more information on these projects.**

**International Women's Day Event in Macedon Ranges**

Photo credit: Macedon Ranges Shire Council





Additionally, councils are creative in using visual and performing arts to communicate the importance of gender equality and PVAW. This medium can target a different audience than that of the libraries and sporting facilities and has potential to connect with community members on an emotional level. Examples include:

Darebin

Darebin City Council has run a street art subsidy program to incorporate elements of gender equality and PVAW into art and create opportunity to counter negative visual perceptions. This includes encouraging different use of words and language, as well as visuals.

Knox

Knox City Council has run installations and performances at events to engage the community with PVAW. This included 'The Locker Room' project, run at a community festival that attracts 20-30,000 people over a weekend. This project used a shipping container fitted out as a performance space, where a local survivor told her story about leaving a family violence situation. Council acknowledged that the exhibit may be confronting, and so had councillors on site and safety measures in place to support attendees. The feedback from this event was positive. "It challenged people but got a conversation started." Knox City Council also included the play 'SL\_T', a monologue that deals with body image, sexuality, and things that impact and support negative stereotypes and social norms.

Maribyrnong

Maribyrnong City Council has supported Raw Elements, a youth hip-hop program, to produce and perform "Respect, Courage, Integrity" - the song reflecting Council's corporate values<sup>35</sup>.

The Locker Room Project run by Knox City Council  
Photo credit: Knox City Council



**Exhibit X: Holding Water**  
The Locker Room

*'I am completely out of my depth.  
My nervous system is  
on the surface of my skin.'*



<sup>35</sup>MAV 2015b

## 5.2 Local government is a tier of government and councils have collective responsibility as large local employers

Local government is itself a 'setting' for prevention<sup>36</sup>. Councils are among the largest single employers in their communities. Their investment in supporting gender equality and PVAW within their internal operations can then have widespread implications across their large workforce and to the community. Specifically, councils can build skills and awareness in their employees, leading to positive impacts in the community through their professional interactions with community members. Councils can also adapt their systems and processes to support gender equality and PVAW for staff.

“  
*It is not one of our core roles, but to be socially responsible as an organisation, we need to look at this (PVAW). We have a moral role, but we don't get funded for it*  
”

“  
*The attitude of whole council change ripples out into the community*  
”

### Councils can lead change by building capability of their employees

Councils can lead change through building the knowledge and skills of their workforce. Ensuring their staff uphold gender equity as a core value and align their service delivery with these principles helps to create a positive community environment and educate community members on appropriate behaviours and practices. Council officers asserted that building capability in their workforce is the most important lever councils have for influencing positive change since the attitudes of staff cascade into the services they deliver.



### Local government PVAW grant funded projects focused on building capability of their workforce include:

#### FAMILY VIOLENCE AND GENDER EQUITY E-MODULE TO ASSIST IN PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

City of Port Phillip, in partnership with many local organisations (City of Bayside, City of Kingston, City of Stonnington, City of Monash, City of Glen Eira, Women's Health in the South East and Southern Metropolitan Primary Care Partnership) developed an eLearning module focused on building knowledge and understanding around preventing family violence.

#### WIMMERA ACT@WORK TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Horsham Rural City Council, in partnership with West Wimmera Shire Council, Yarriambiack Shire Council, Hindmarsh Shire Council, and Women's Health Grampians, has developed an education program for local government staff that involves baseline attitude survey, active bystander training, organisational assessment and the development of an action plan to guide council's work in gender equality and PVAW.

**Please see Appendix A for more information on these projects.**

<sup>36</sup>VicHealth 2007; Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015

## Local government can lead change through implementing systems and processes that support gender equality and PVAW

For councils to genuinely lead by example, they must have their house in order. This includes aligning council systems and processes to support gender equality and PVAW across their large workforce. Councils may have more flexibility than the State Government in implementing such processes.

There are many ways in which councils integrate gender equality and PVAW into their workforce planning and management. Examples include:

- Council policies and plans, including integrating PVAW into Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing (MPHW) Plans or regional health plans. In a recent survey, 78% of respondents indicated PVAW was a priority in their 2013-2016 Council Plan and or MPHW<sup>37</sup> plan. In 2017, all councils are required to state what measures they propose to take to prevent family violence to support the implementation of Recommendation 94 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence report.
- Additionally, in a recent survey 50% of councils have a stand-alone PVAW strategy or plan and 27% had a gender equality strategy or plan<sup>38</sup>.
- Data collection and management, including sex-disaggregating employment data to enable equity analysis and reporting. In a recent survey, 24% of respondents indicated they use separate data for men and women to inform policies, service planning, implementation and evaluation. Further, 64% of respondents indicated they sometimes collect sex-disaggregated data<sup>39</sup>.
- Enterprise Agreements, integrating specific family violence leave. As of 2017, 78 of 79 councils have family violence leave as part of their Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

“

*Everyone has their priorities. In government, there's a lot of measures and things need to be measured quickly. It's difficult to engage a team that needs to report on outputs that are very precise... when you're working at qualitative, longitudinal space*

”



### Local government PVAW grant funded projects focused on developing council systems and processes include:

#### GENDER ANALYSIS TOOL TO APPLY ACROSS COUNCIL

Latrobe City Council, in partnership with Gippsland Women's Health, developed the Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit to assist councils to analyse and respond to gender inequality in their delivery of events, information, programs, projects and services.

#### GENDER EQUITY EMPLOYMENT ANALYSIS TOOL

Nillumbik Shire Council, in partnership with Banyule City Council, developed a gender equity tool to be applied across Council's internal employment practices.

**Please see Appendix A for more information on these projects.**

<sup>37</sup>MAV 2017, <sup>38</sup>Ibid, <sup>39</sup>Ibid

## 5.3 Local government leaders strongly influence gender equality and PVAW work in their community

### Councils are trusted civic leaders

Councils have a strong leadership role in the community, and their leaders are critical to upholding and guiding that role. In a recent survey of councils, 82% of respondents indicated that their council had increased recognition of the role local government could play in PVAW. Further 29% of councils formally acknowledged this role through an explicit leadership statement<sup>40</sup>. Strong leadership commits councils to taking action.

Council leaders are critical to this leadership in gender equality and PVAW. These leaders include elected and non-elected members, such as the Councillors, Mayor, CEO, executives and managers. Local government leaders can steer communities and community attitudes.

### The values of council leaders can strongly impact PVAW programs

The values that leaders hold affect their decisions and the culture of their organisations. There is great variation between council leaders in regards to support for PVAW across regions and across time.

Interviewees from across various positions gave examples of when change in leadership in council had notable and immediate impact on the PVAW programs. For example, one council had a change to a Mayor and a CEO who both strongly support PVAW, and "it has gone from nothing to 50% in 3 months". Another council had been trying for a couple of years to get a family violence policy through and the HR manager was resistant. After this manager came back from parental leave, they were completely supportive and quickly implemented the policy. With buy-in at the senior level, programs can take off quickly.

Altogether this indicates that cultivating change within council can be about patience and timing. As long as officers have the capability to implement PVAW programs, they can take advantage of supportive leaders and resources once these align.

Meanwhile, council officers try to make the case for change to their leaders by leveraging competition. For example, officers would choose initiatives that other councils are doing to assert that they need to be in that space as well.

“

*It's about civic leadership and promotion of that role. Local government still very much has that trusted broker role of bringing the people together*

”

“

*Different councils have different levels of capacity to be able to sit with [gender equality] as a topic. You see a change of CEO to a more conservative or more enlightened CEO will funnel its change through the organisation*

”

“

*Sometimes it's about planting those seeds and being frustrated but waiting for the timing*

”

<sup>40</sup>MAV 2017

## Building leadership capability and capacity would assist in promoting PVAW

There can be a large difference between staff and council leaders in terms of genuine commitment to PVAW. For councils to effectively embed PVAW across their workforce and through the community, it requires both staff capability and leadership support. It is critical to build capability and capacity of leaders such that leadership support can match or even drive staff capability in gender equality and PVAW programming.



*Develop your leadership capacity; not unpack your structures and systems*



### PVAW messaging on council vehicles and infrastructure

Photo credit: Hume City Council and Maribyrnong City Council



# 6

## Current funding constraints require local government to do more with less

Councils are investing in gender equality and PVAW but are operating in an increasingly constrained fiscal environment. Rate capping and funding changes have reduced income to councils at the same time as responsibilities on them are increasing. Councils have historically accommodated resource constraints by building on each other's successes and relying on partners. Nonetheless, increased funding pressures now put councils in a position where they need to redefine their roles and refocus priorities. This constraint affects the ability of councils to deliver gender equality and PVAW across the community, including particularly vulnerable groups.

Gender equality street art project supported by Darebin City Council  
Photo credit: Darebin City Council

PVAW signs on garbage trucks in Darebin City Council  
Photo credit: Darebin City Council



## 6.1 Local government PVAW programs are financially constrained, with recent funding changes increasing pressure

### This sector has grown from early funding support but remains highly financially constrained

Early funding opportunities built substantial momentum in several councils. For example, councils who had received 3 years funding as part of the Cluster projects in 2008 reported that this seed funding had been critical to building a case for further work by allowing them to test ideas and build momentum for change.

Nonetheless, funding is generally short-term and remains a constraint to gender equality and PVAW program delivery. Recent survey results indicate that almost all councils who had responded to the survey had dedicated staff time to PVAW in 2016/2017<sup>41</sup>. However, in most cases this was not through a dedicated position, with 0.4 FTE being the average allocation. Further, councils rely on grant funding, which can be a net cost if preparing applications that are not successful. In the recent survey, 76% of councils reported that they had applied for grant funding to assist in their work in the past year, with 64% reporting the grants were successful<sup>42</sup>.

“ The real result of the Cluster project won't be realised for a while yet. It really just started change, [although the] councils involved have gone on with no secure funding. We'll all point back and say that's where it started. ”

Limitations imposed by short-term or lack of funding include:

- Rural engagement is limited when staff can't travel to sites, including MAV PVAW Network meetings
- PVAW staff roles are operational rather than strategic
- Short-term programs build up expectations in the community for services and community education programs that are at risk of discontinuing.

### Rate capping reduces the funds available to councils from their community

In 2015, the Victorian Government introduced rate capping. This capped the revenue councils can collect through general rates and municipal charges<sup>43</sup>, set at 2% for 2017-2022. This contrasts with the past decade when rates increased on average 6% per year<sup>44</sup>. While this change is aimed at alleviating cost of living pressures on Victorians, it will constrain councils. Rates usually make up about half of councils' incomes<sup>45</sup>. This policy will force councils to reconsider their role in delivering many community services.

This increasing constraint on councils is evident in the recent local government PVAW survey results. In 2015, 65% of councils reported that they had increased their resourcing to PVAW over the past year<sup>46</sup>. By contrast, in 2017, 41% of councils reported increased resourcing over the past year<sup>47</sup>.

### The transfer of responsibilities from the state to local level puts increasing resource pressure on councils

Independent of rate capping, councils are finding that they are increasingly responsible for program delivery that had previously been managed by the State Government. Meanwhile, this transfer of responsibility is not accompanied by funds to support the activities. This puts further pressure on councils to do more with less.

Altogether, these funding pressures have always been a constraint but are intensifying. It will be important to monitor changes in funding allocation and evaluate their impact on council program delivery to ensure the available funds are most strategically allocated.

<sup>41</sup>MAV 2017, <sup>42</sup>Ibid, <sup>43</sup>ESC 2016, <sup>44</sup>DELWP 2017, <sup>45</sup>State of Victoria 2015, <sup>46</sup>MAV 2015a, <sup>47</sup>MAV2017

## 6.2 Councils are coping with increasing funding pressures by building off the successes of each other and relying on goodwill

### Councils are borrowing and adapting ideas from each other and partnering for increased efficiency

Councils have wide networks of partners in their communities, regions and across the local government sector with which they collaborate in gender equality and PVAW work. In a recent survey, 91% of councils reported that they participate in PVAW activities on a regional level, and 76% participate in local family violence prevention networks when they are available in the local area<sup>48</sup>. Councils are highly effective at leveraging these networks to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their programs.

First, councils build off each other's ideas. For example:

- Darebin had put PVAW signs on garbage trucks. Knox City Council chose to adapt this idea in putting up signs around the community.
- Latrobe City Council has borrowed ideas from across councils, including gender equitable library cataloguing, to quickly launch their PVAW programs.

Second, councils also work together and with partners for economies of scale. Examples include:

- Port Phillip Council partners with a range of stakeholders including police, community support services and other local and regional networks to prevent and respond to PVAW related issues in the community.
- Several councils partner with local businesses from running community events to providing training sessions. For example, Latrobe partnered with local community organisations in a community march linked to the 16 days of Activism. Further, Knox speaks to local businesses about PVAW as a safety issue. In most cases, this arises when the business approaches council because they know they have an issue amongst on their staff.

*We do not necessarily need to be doing all the doing but identifying partners we could work with to get the message out*

*We organised a 2 day training course in all aspects of PVAW with people from various councils. Because of the network we could hire a venue and facilitator. We wouldn't be able to do that on our own*

Respectful relationships program at City of Port Phillip  
Photo credit: City of Port Phillip



<sup>48</sup>MAV 2017



## Much of the gender equality and PVAW work across councils is unfunded

Gender equality and PVAW work survives off the commitment of individuals. Much of the existing local government work in this space is supported by staff who are voluntarily taking time out of their day for it. For example, in Latrobe City Council, there is now a staff working group consisting of 20 council staff volunteers who aim to be 'champions' for change by building their awareness and advocacy, and tapping into opportunities for creating positive change in their respective areas of council. This could present a challenge to the sustainability of programs if participant turnover is high.

“ There are a few of us who are passionate and try to build it into the work that we do ”

“ The people who run [this program] do it outside work hours. It's not a funded activity ”

“ The staff who run the White Ribbon program meet early in the morning for their meetings, before work ”

Gender equality and PVAW work in libraries at Moreland City Council

Photo credit: Moreland City Council



## 6.3 Councils are finding the need to redefine their roles and refocus priorities

**Councils need to be responsive to funding opportunities when they arise, which can compromise momentum and a strategic approach**

Funding opportunities have been few and far between for working in PVAW, so when they arise, as with the recent Royal Commission, there is high competition. Councils find they need to maximise the opportunity to grow their programs when resources are available even if it does not align with their current program.

This becomes a challenge for councils trying to strategically address PVAW in their communities, as well as for the sector overall. Councils reported that, in response to recent funding opportunities, community organisations have been branching out to include other services that were already being addressed by other groups. This potential duplication is a challenge for a sector so tight on resources.

### **The limited funding requires a refined focus**

Funding limitations necessitate that councils redefine priority activities to a smaller subset and focus efforts accordingly. Across the sector, this refined focus has tended to be on the intersection of family violence and PVAW, i.e. women who are affected by intimate partner or other family member violence. Councils report that this refined focus may mean more advocacy and facilitation at the response end, rather than primary prevention.

Altogether refined focus risks excluding particularly vulnerable groups. This could include groups with other forms of inequality or disadvantage, e.g. ATSI, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, rurality and socio-economic status<sup>49</sup>.

“ Organisations and peak bodies are all struggling—if there’s a funding opportunity you have to take it. But that might set you off in a different direction. It’s not about overlap and duplication—it’s more complicated than that ”

“ There could be more discussion or collaboration with some groups... if you want to do something on respectful relationships, how aware are you of what’s happening more broadly and how could you fit in ”

“ Because of the money from the Royal Commission—I see a sector that’s been together split- everyone is trying to look after their own patch. When that starts to happen, the people who miss out are those who are vulnerable. Money has the risk of doing that- trying to get the bigger bit of the pie ”

<sup>49</sup>DPC 2016b

# 7

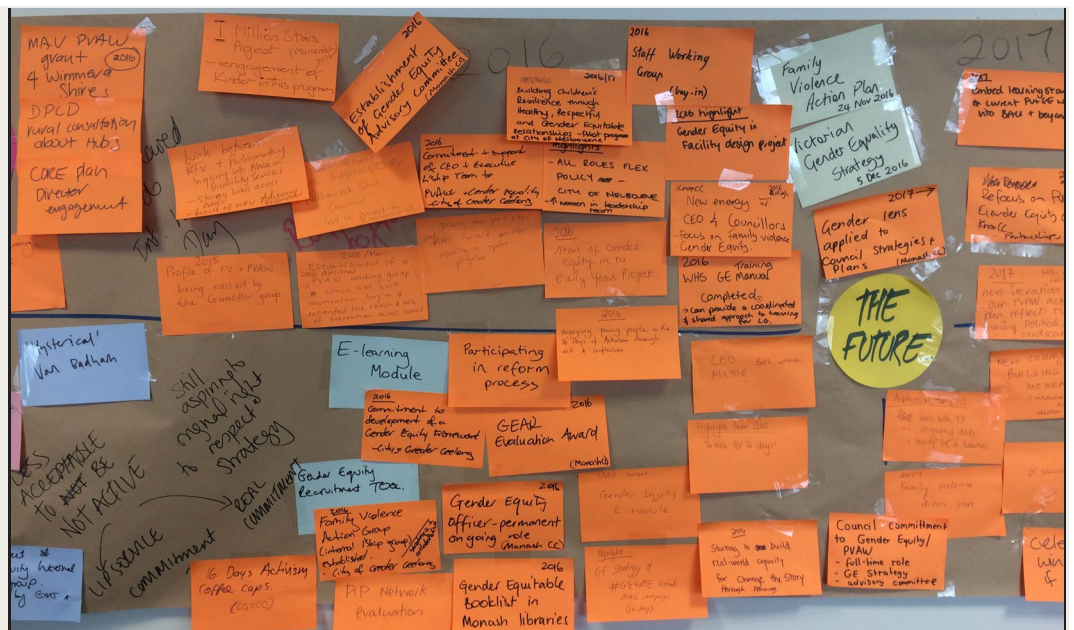
## Sustained commitment, with ongoing capability and capacity building are needed to facilitate more inclusive, effective and efficient social change

Effectively addressing prevention requires a strategic approach from all players. Long-term commitment would enable both local government and the MAV to lead efforts to contribute to lasting change. In working directly with the community, local government can adopt an equity lens to help ensure that gender equality and PVAW are fully integrated into all of their operations and service delivery. The MAV can support councils through providing best practice guidance for leaders and officers, and coordinating a strategic approach to ensure local government sector collaborates most efficiently.

“ If people understood the gender equality context, they would see the link between where we’re going and what we’re trying to achieve. People think we’re mad feminists ”

Timeline of local government gender equality and PVAW work created at a MAV PVAW Network meeting

Photo credit: MAV



## 7.1 Long-term commitment by State and local government is necessary for councils and the MAV to be able to realise opportunities for increasing gender equality and PVAW

A key success factor to capability and capacity building is that it is sustained<sup>50</sup>. In order to realise the full potential of local government in increasing gender equality and PVAW, there needs to be sustained funding, leadership, and partnerships.

The short-term nature of funding constrains the potential of local government work in gender equality and PVAW. Given the long-term program investment required to build knowledge and change attitudes, it can only be solved through long-term funding investment. While funding support for short-term projects has been valuable, the full benefit of these projects cannot be realised.

“

*What happens after May [when our 6-months of funding ends]? We'll have gotten groundwork done, but what next?*

”

There is a need to ensure sustained positive leadership in the local government sector supports and drives gender equality. Given that elected officials will change regularly, this sustained leadership for council officers and communities can be created by building knowledge in all leaders to ensure their social norms and practices support gender equity. In addition, local government can focus on building the leadership capacity and gender equality knowledge of their senior executives and managers.

Partnerships are critical to local government increasing reach and most efficiently delivering gender equality and PVAW programs. Building strong and effective partnerships requires investment across diverse aspects, from developing relationships to aligning databases. For greatest efficiency, it is important that local government can grow and sustain partnerships that provide continuous and evolving service delivery that can steadily foster community change.

In acknowledgement of the importance of long-term commitment, the Victorian government has created 10 year strategies for certain key issues, such as Ending Family Violence - Victoria's Plan for Change<sup>51</sup>, and the associated prevention strategy, Free from Violence<sup>52</sup>, along with Victoria's first ever gender equality strategy, Safe and Strong<sup>53</sup>. Long-term investment specific to preventing violence against women, including that which occurs outside of the family, would build respectful relationships and safe communities that could benefit all members of society. Local government is well-placed to lead this effort by leveraging their collective responsibility, reach across the community, and perseverance.

<sup>50</sup>Center for Disease Control 2014, <sup>51</sup>DPC 2016a, <sup>52</sup>DPC 2017, <sup>53</sup>DPC 2016b

## 7.2 Councils need greater support to build capability and capacity to embed an equity lens for effective leadership on GE and PVAW

### Council officers report that staff have difficulty discussing gender equality

Since gender equity is core to preventing violence against women, it is a clear focus of prevention messaging. Council staff consistently report that gender equity is much more difficult to discuss than PVAW with their colleagues and the community since it connects to every individual and can challenge their core values.

“ You can talk about PVAW and people are okay in that space because it’s a step away from them. When you talk about gender equality, breaking down gender stereotypes and power imbalances that play out as part of everyday society, that starts to challenge people and you get barriers up ”

“ The way I try to talk about it with [men] is ‘how safe do you feel walking at night. Would that be different if you were female?... It’s about how it affects your life and not your work—that’s where we need to engage people ”

“ When talking about gender equality, it’s pushing it to a new level, and the resistance across the whole domain, not just local government, is high. We talk about how we’re just trying to nudge... there’s no point pushing too far as then it’s off the table ”

### There is a need to embed a gender equity lens across local government to genuinely and effectively model and lead gender equality and PVAW

Gender equity is the necessary lens through which to address violence against women<sup>54</sup>, and yet this approach continues to be an uphill battle. There is a need to build knowledge and skills in local government and the community to genuinely integrate and promote gender equality.

Research indicates that, in order to be effective, capability and capacity building must be<sup>55</sup>:

Comprehensive

Sustained

Accountable

<sup>54</sup>Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015, <sup>55</sup>Center for Disease Control 2014

**Comprehensive** capability and capacity building requires building the knowledge and skills of both leaders and officers, in order to change attitudes and behaviours across the workforce and beyond. As reviewed above, addressing leaders is of particular importance given the disproportional impact their values and decisions have on the norms, practices, and structures within local government and the community. In parallel, local government needs to help build capability and capacity in its community for citizens to support gender equality.

**Sustained** capability and capacity building requires ongoing investment that is strategically allocated. Longer-term funding for gender equality/prevention-focused staff and programs would enable council to develop expertise and follow through with multi-year programs that can steadily drive change in the community.

**Accountable** capability and capacity building means monitoring and evaluation in order to ensure the allocated time and effort are contributing to the intended outcomes. Measuring prevention is wrought with many methodological challenges, including the long time scale needed to see change and uncertainty over reporting rates, that currently do not align with funding programs. Nonetheless, there could be interim capability and capacity building metrics, such as the number of training sessions attended, or the proportion of council's plans that have been updated to include gender equality, that could drive accountability.

Altogether, the potential for local government impact on gender equality and PVAW is great, and with the right leadership and capability could achieve a gender equitable society. This requires a combined



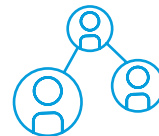
#### SOCIAL NORMS

Mindsets shared via a culture change process such that all council staff and leaders genuinely understand, support and fully espouse gender equitable values in their interactions and decisions.



#### SOCIAL PRACTICES

Skillsets built through appropriate training and funding whereby council staff are able to develop and implement best practice gender equity and PVAW programs, and of council leaders able to speak to these issues



#### SOCIAL STRUCTURES

Toolkits that include a framework for ensuring an equity lens is implemented across council by paying disciplined attention to gender in all councils' activities from developing programs, analysing issues, exploring solutions and defining outcomes

### Local government is uniquely placed to lead these mutually reinforcing activities and iterate

Local government can quickly learn how to genuinely lead culture change in gender equality through councils' close connection and direct involvement with the community. Local government can implement small changes across many settings, which may be more effective for slowly driving gender equality than large high-level changes.

In addition councils learn quickly about what works with the community and have the flexibility to adapt programs as needed. This can provide valuable insights on community responses to different prevention techniques, informing how other levels of government approach high-level policy design. Councils can lead this bottom-up change, building gender equality from individuals and communities to society at large.



*[There's an] opportunity to rethink how we build community. I think we forget that*



## 7.3 With government support, the MAV can strengthen the work of local government in gender equality and PVAW

### **The MAV can continue to support local government leaders in building capability and capacity in a way that is thorough, genuine and consistent**

A core role of local government is to provide civic leadership. The MAV can take a leading role in building capability and capacity of local government leaders to thoroughly understand the issue of gender equality and PVAW, and the necessity of genuinely engaging across council and the community. This could look to the international best-practice example of SASA in Uganda, which used a leadership-based model where those with influence were identified and trained on the issues, changing social norms by influencing those they have influence on<sup>56</sup>.

Part of supporting local government leaders is leading by example. Since council leaders trust and respect the MAV, it is essential that the MAV leads by example by getting PVAW into all of the spaces within its policy work. As a council officer stated about the PVAW training they provide to other organisations, "It's really important when stepping into that space that the organisation you're coming from is on that page as well."

In addition, it is important to ensure consistent messaging in PVAW across sectors – from the State, MAV and local government, and community organisations. Given its role in connecting State and local government, the MAV is well-positioned to facilitate this consistency. The MAV can ensure all local government leaders receive information that is consistent with other levels of government, with other councils, and with the information their staff are also receiving.

“The MAV is able to challenge [council leaders] more than [officers] can at the local level”

“It's added strength to have the MAV involved. From a facilitation perspective- the scope they have to engage all 79 councils”

### **The MAV can support local government officers to clearly articulate the learning and intended outcomes of their work by providing best practice examples**

There is a lack of good data to inform best practice in gender equality and PVAW programs. Since prevention is aiming to build knowledge and change behaviours, this can take years to accomplish and to measure. Further, while it is well known that VAW interacts with other social factors, the evidence base for these interactions is lacking. This lack of data on what works well and what are confounding factors for VAW constrains the sector in most comprehensively addressing the issue.

The MAV can help councils identify ways of modifying their existing data collection to be more informative to gender equality and PVAW within the confines of short-term data collection. This can include, for example, sex disaggregated data, which some councils are already collecting. Increased data quality informs planning and enables better decisions regarding service delivery in council. Further, MAV can help identify data sources from partners that will together contribute to comprehensive data collection, and facilitate the building of these strategic partnerships.

<sup>56</sup>Raising Voices 2016; Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth 2015

In addition, the MAV can provide research and templates that help to define:

What does good look like?

How do we measure it?

How do we communicate it and to whom?

“ Councils are used to working to principles the State government gives in relation to accessibility and multi-use. We are used to thinking about our buildings and facilities in a different way. But there are not a lot of good examples that are shared

Councils could use templates to emulate and understand principles of good design. For example, the MAV could provide best practice templates for women-friendly and family-friendly buildings, including sporting facilities, or lighting and lines of sights in safety planning.

#### **The MAV can support the local government PVAW community by facilitating a more strategic approach to programs, funding and collaboration**

The MAV can identify priority areas for PVAW work and help allocate this work among councils for a more coordinated approach. This could include a broader regional approach in which projects align with best practice principles while enabling regions to adapt to their own needs, thereby balancing consistency and flexibility.

“ We need that specialist knowledge and can't just come in with a mainstream service. But by the same token, we need to get out of the cottage industry as well.

“ Local government aren't going to do all of the work across all the platforms. We need intelligent design— how we build on the strengths we have in local government and how to share that information to roll out further.

This could also include a more strategic approach to funding allocation. For example, with sufficient resources, rather than providing 10 competitive grants to 10 councils, the MAV could choose 2-3 strategic priorities or regions and provide a comparatively larger State-funded grant to each.

Further, the MAV could support councils to leverage work in interrelated areas, such as disability or gambling, for a more holistic approach. This could be facilitated by staff in MAV working across these areas within the MAV as well as supporting councils to do the same, ensuring consistent messaging.

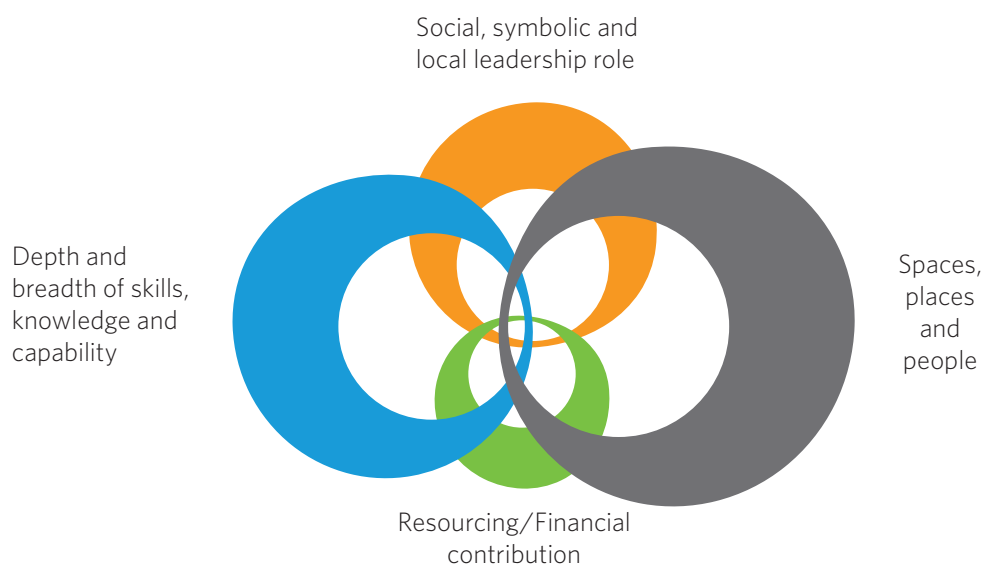


# 8

## Ending violence against women needs all levels of government working together

Local government has made demonstrable change in the past 10 years of involvement in gender equity and PVAW, and yet there is still much work to be done to realise its potential across all areas (Figure 7). Partnerships within and between sectors has been an important part of this.

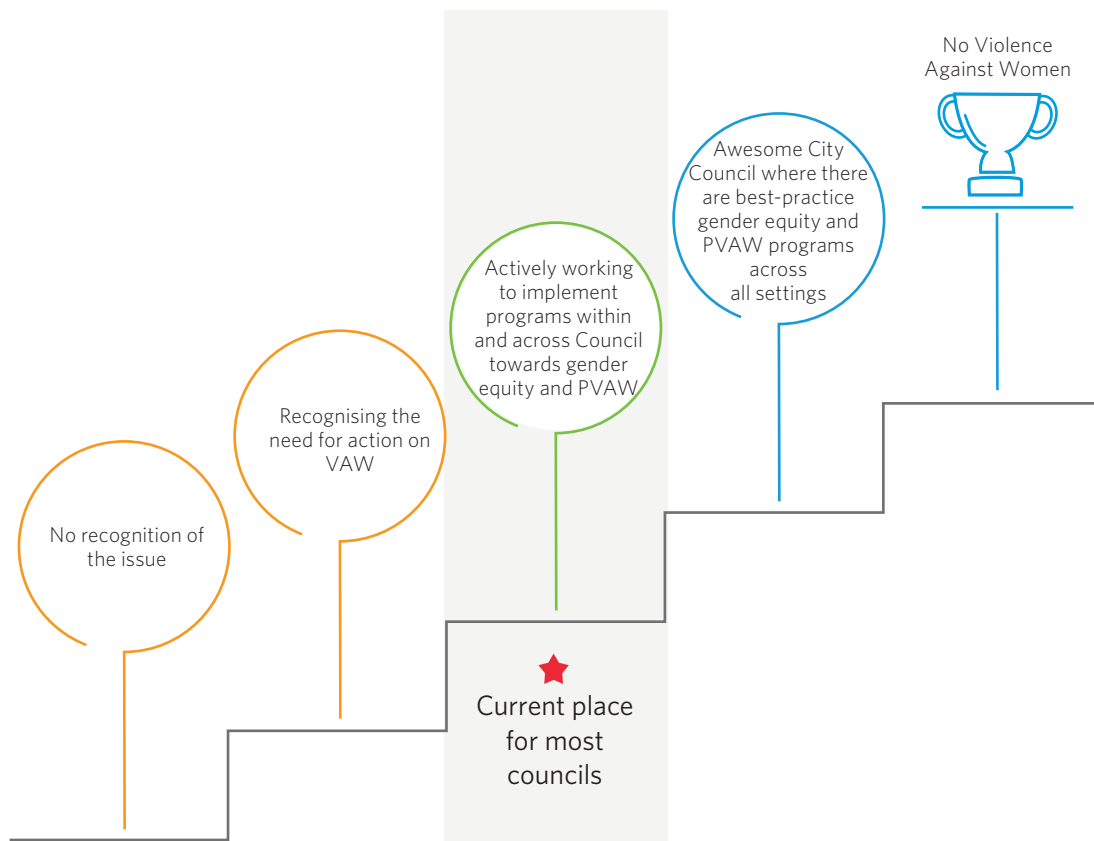
**Figure 7: Current status of four themes related to the role of local government in gender equality and PVAW**



Investment over the past decade has contributed substantial depth and breadth of skills, knowledge and capability among local government, enabling councils to leverage their spaces, places and people to support gender equality and PVAW. Local government’s social, symbolic and leadership role enables it to drive bottom-up change in communities, and yet this can be constrained by leader support. In addition, financial resources can limit the ability of local government to delivery gender equality and PVAW within the workplace and across the community. This can be particularly difficult for some rural councils.

Local government is on the journey towards no violence against women (Figure 8). Local government has the commitment to action on violence against women and knowledge on how to implement, as guided by Change the Story (national PVAW frameworks), State policies and the MAV. Comprehensive, sustained and accountable commitment will assist in building knowledge and changing behaviours, moving local government to the next step along the journey. Sustained collaboration by everyone in the community, all councils, and levels of government is required to realise this goal of a society free from violence against women.

Figure 8: Journey of local government in preventing violence against women



*"We're like a dripping tap-we just keep making incremental change. Two steps forward, one step back... We're determined not to give up."*

# 9

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# Appendix A

## MAV LG PVAW Grants – Summary of Projects

Further information on these projects and associated resources are available on the gender equality section of the MAV website:

[www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equality](http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equality)

### **Ballarat City Council – Strengthening the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities by Preventing Violence Against Women and Children**

The Ballarat project, delivered in partnership with Women’s Health Grampians, aimed to prevent gendered violence in the Ballarat CALD communities. This was done by raising awareness about the issue and supporting the community to take actions that support women and men to participate equally in all spheres of public and private life. The project delivered a series of workshops aimed at women and girls and men and boys respectively. Project development and delivery raised awareness across council about the role it has to play in preventing violence against women, and its responsibility to be more proactive about the safety of all residents, including those in the CALD community. The project increased perceptions of safety, agency, and empowerment for female participants through the provision of information and support options. The community workshops facilitated skill development and expression and facilitated a greater understanding of the causes of gendered violence.

### **Darebin City Council – Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years**

Creating Gender Equity in the Early Years aimed to strengthen and build the capacity of the early years to create gender equitable early years practices in Darebin. The key objectives of the project were the development of a resource for local government to foster equal and respectful relationships through the delivery of early years services, and to strengthen gender equitable skills and practices across Darebin early years centres. The project was undertaken and delivered with the support and expertise of Women’s Health in the North, and with guidance from a gender equity project team. It has successfully developed audit and assessment tools based on evidence on safe, inclusive, and gender equitable early years spaces. Each section of the resource for local government focuses on a theme or audience for improving gender equity in the early years, and is accompanied by a training video, additional resources and reflective practice questions.

### **Frankston City Council – Baby Makes 3 Antenatal Pilot**

The Baby Makes 3 Antenatal Pilot implemented an evidence based primary prevention program in partnership with Carrington Health and Peninsula Health. The program was designed to support new parents to negotiate their roles and to build knowledge and skills in equal and respectful relationships during the transition to parenthood. The Baby Makes 3 Antenatal Pilot aimed to build awareness and understanding within expectant first time parents of how gender roles affect relationship equality, the importance of gender equality in new families, and why gender equality is important in preventing violence against women. Baby Makes 3 was successfully transitioned into an antenatal setting in this project, with effectiveness and added value identified from being an existing Baby Makes 3 site. Responses and levels of engagement from participants were positive, and facilitators found that the antenatal setting made the project much more accessible to fathers.

### **Horsham Rural City Council – Wimmera Act@Work to Prevent Violence Against Women**

This project involved the roll out of the Act@Work program across the 4 Wimmera municipalities in partnership with West Wimmera Shire Council, Yarriambiack Shire Council, Hindmarsh Shire Council, and Women’s Health Grampians. It involved a baseline attitude survey active bystander training, an organisation needs assessment, and development of an action plan to guide councils’ work on the prevention of violence against women and gender equity. It enabled councils to provide support to women experiencing violence whilst also addressing the underlying causes of violence with a view to prevent their occurrence in workplaces and in the broader community. Throughout the development and delivery of the program across the 4 Wimmera municipalities, the Act@Work project promoted equal and respectful relationships between men and women and promoted gender equality by combatting rigid gender stereotyping, confronting workplace culture, beliefs and attitudes, and reducing discrimination against women.

### **Latrobe City Council – Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit**

Specifically designed for the local government setting, the Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit enables councils to incorporate gender analysis into the core business of local government. It has sought to do this in the same way that risk assessments are currently incorporated, with the toolkit being designed for council officers with no training in gender analysis and with an easy-to use feel that is not resource intensive. A successful partnership between Latrobe City Council and Gippsland Women’s Health, the project demonstrated the value of local government engaging external subject matter experts to assist in developing effective internal programs and processes. The resulting toolkit assists councils in analysing and responding to gender inequality in the delivery of events, information, programs, projects and services. Utilizing the toolkit to conduct a gender analysis of council processes and programs is now a requirement that is embedded in council and has successfully progressed internal conversations in specific teams and at the executive level.

### **Macedon Ranges Shire Council – Rural Challenge**

Rural Challenge worked with CFA brigades and football-netball clubs in the Macedon Ranges Shire and City of Greater Bendigo to enhance gender equality and prevent violence against women through organisational change. The primary aim of the project was the development of gender equity action plans for CFA brigades and football-netball clubs in the two involved municipalities that were focused on practical activities to embed the principles of gender equality and the prevention of violence against women through lasting organisational and cultural change. Individual transformational change of male and female community leaders was fostered throughout the project, and a ‘Rural Challenge Toolkit’ created to provide a replicable model to be used in rural and regional areas. Rural Challenge was successfully delivered by Macedon Ranges in conjunction with the City of Greater Bendigo, Women’s Health Loddon Mallee, CFA District 2, AFL Central Victoria and AFL Goldfields. At the conclusion of the project, the ten participating organisations have a strategic roadmap and commitment to make organisational change informed by an enriched understanding of gender equality and preventing violence against women. Rural Challenge demonstrated councils capacity to lead in this space, and to bring together diverse partners from a range of sectors to take a community development approach to this work. The availability of the toolkit provides a valuable resource for regional and rural councils and organisations wishing to undertake similar activities.

### **Maroondah City Council – Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together**

Our Codes, Our Clubs was an action research project involving 9 local sporting clubs from various codes within the municipalities of Maroondah, Knox and Yarra Ranges. The project – delivered in partnership with Knox City Council, Yarra Ranges Shire Council, Inspiro Community Health, Together for Equality and Respect Partnership, and Outer East Children and Youth Area Partnership Steering Group – sought to develop local sporting clubs’ understanding of the practical action they can undertake to promote and normalise gender equality and prevent violence against women in their communities. In developing this understanding, Our Codes, Our Clubs aimed to encourage local sporting clubs to increase the number of initiatives they implement to promote gender equality and to create long term, structural and cultural change within their clubs. A gender equity audit was developed and distributed to all local sporting clubs within the 3 participating municipalities and the stories of some of the participating clubs showcased in an educational video produced in an advertorial format. The video was accompanied by a research report and fact sheet highlighting practical actions that can be undertaken by sporting clubs to embed gender equity. The project demonstrated to the sporting and wider community the participating councils’ commitment to collaboration and their support of the adoption of gender equitable practices and positive cultural change across sporting codes.

### **Nillumbik Shire Council – Gender Equity Employment Analysis Tool**

Nillumbik Shire Council's project involved researching, reviewing and developing a gender equity tool (including the development of a set of standards for gender equity) to be applied across Council's internal employment practices. The project aimed to create behavioural and cultural change within council by applying a gender equity lens to the way it recruits and allocates work, the way staff access conditions of the Award, EBA and organisational policies. The resulting product, delivered in partnership with Banyule City Council, is a simple, three-page, user-friendly equity tool that can help to identify barriers to achieving gender equity within the workplace. Additionally, it can be used annually to audit employment practices and systems for gender equity. The tool will be presented at the Council's next EO meeting where the committee determines the organisation's training needs and the corporate agenda. The project has also been an important conduit for professional development in gender equity (giving officers an opportunity to learn to apply a gender lens in the workplace), and has allowed for more discussion about the need for PVAW/Gender equity work in the organisation, including the HR/OD units. The tool has been designed to be used by other councils and community organisations.

### **Port Phillip City Council – Family Violence/Gender Equity eLearning Module**

The eLearning module was developed by the City of Port Phillip in conjunction with Women's Health in the South East, the City of Bayside, the City of Kingston, the City of Stonnington, the City of Monash, the City of Glen Eira and the Southern Metropolitan Primary Care Partnership. It aimed to build workforce capacity to implement a whole of organisation approach to the prevention of violence against women and to embed a gendered approach to workforce development, policies, and practices. Engaging multiple partners gave depth to the project and increased its applicability to a diverse range of audiences while simultaneously raising opportunities for its application to settings outside of local government. The eLearning module was also successful in reinforcing the importance of all staff having a strong foundation of knowledge on gender equity and family violence, as well as highlighting the role that a broad range of council departments can play in preventing or family violence through applying a gendered lens.

### **Whittlesea City Council – Gender Equitable Design of Community Facilities: developing a design guide**

Gender Equitable Design of Community Facilities involved the completion of gender equity in design guidelines for new or redeveloped council community facilities. In partnership with JMA Architects, the project aimed to ensure that Whittlesea's community facilities are designed and built as safe, welcoming, and inclusive places that are respectful of and able to be equitably accessed and used by people of all genders. The completion of the guidelines has created a tool to embed gender equity in community facilities and provides a resource to be shared, adapted, and built upon by all local governments. The development of the design guidelines provided a mechanism to highlight inequality in the allocation of council facilities and council budgets, and was useful for progressing conversations about gender equity and PVAW more broadly among staff. The guidelines have improved the knowledge base of where facilities need improvement, making it easier to council to take up funding opportunities that have a focus on increasing female participation.

# Appendix B

## Evaluation of the ten funded projects in terms of capability and capacity building

As part of the LG PVAW Project, the MAV facilitated a grants program over 2016/2017. In this program, ten councils were allocated funds to deliver gender equality and PVAW program over 6 months. Funding allocations ranged from \$15,000 to \$76,900. Below is an evaluation of the grants program focusing on three core elements:

- The links with evidence
- Their impact on building capability and capacity
- The overall project management of the MAV

These ten projects are described above in Appendix A. The projects include:

Ballarat Council	Strengthening Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities by preventing violence against women and children
Darebin City Council	Promoting positive gender norms in the early years
Frankston City Council	Baby Makes 3 Antenatal program to help equip new parents to negotiate their gender roles
Horsham Rural City Council	Wimmera Act@Work to prevent violence against women
Latrobe City Council	Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Rural Challenge
Maroondah City Council	Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together
Nillumbik Shire Council	Gender Equity Employment Analysis Tool
City of Port Phillip	Family violence and gender equity e-module to assist in preventing and responding to family violence
City of Whittlesea	Gender Equitable Design of Community Facilities - developing a design guide

### The projects closely link to the evidence base and demonstrate an understanding of the key drivers of VAW

The aims of the projects were all closely connected to the evidence base for gender equality and PVAW, as presented in Change the Story and the Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV). Almost all councils clearly articulated this link in their project reports, several explicitly referencing Change the Story or the RCFV.

All councils provided evidence of understanding the key drivers of violence against women. In several cases, councils did not explicitly frame their project in light of its direct connection to gender equality. This is most likely due to the concise reporting rather than a lack of understanding of the link, given the underlying drivers were presented.



## **The projects developed capability and capacity within council and have potential to build across councils**

Firstly, the grants projects all appear to have built capability and capacity across council through their development and implementation. This was a result of several factors:

- Training programs offered to staff as a part of the project
- Involvement of staff in project development or Steering Committees, increasing their exposure to the issue

As one council stated, "Conversations about [the project] within the organisation have ultimately raised the question of what else Council should be doing to ensure equitable access."

Further time is required to properly evaluate the impact of the funded projects on sustaining council commitment to gender equality and PVAW. Meanwhile, the clear focus on formal and informal training of staff or community members (such as the Rural Challenge project or Baby Makes 3 project) have strong potential to contribute to sustained commitment.

Secondly, the resources developed through these projects are highly transferable to other councils, with potential to build capability and capacity across local government. This includes the following:

- Gender equity in the early years gender assessment tools and videos
- Rural Challenge Toolkit including a facilitators manual, presentations and videos aimed at building capacity of male and female community leaders in sport and the CFA
- Gender analysis toolkits to apply across council in regards to its internal processes and service delivery
- Learning eModule aimed at raising awareness of key drivers of family violence among staff
- Guidelines for designing gender equitable facilities
- Gender Lens for Leisure to assess sporting club's understanding of gender equality.

Lastly, the extent of executive support for the projects cannot be evaluated across all projects due to reporting constraints and the projects were not asked to comment on this in written reports. Nonetheless, several projects involved their executive teams to provide overarching leadership through the project, implying that in these cases there was strong senior support.

### **The MAV's project management was strong**

Council officers consistently reported that the MAV managed the grants process well. Specifically, councils reported that:

- The process was straight forward
- Officers felt informed on processes and timelines
- Information exchange with other projects at the March 2017 PVAW meeting was beneficial
- The MAV provided support to ensure the applications aligned with the requirements
- The MAV provided advice on potential officers to recruit or steering committee members

# Appendix C

## Local government gender equality and PVAW annual survey

### Municipal Association of Victoria Preventing Violence Against Women and Promoting Gender Equality Survey 2017

Council name:

Type of Council:

Details of person completing this survey:

Name:

Position title:

Email address:

1. **Has your council increased its recognition of the issue of violence against women and the role it can play in prevention in the past twelve months?**
2. **Has your council formally acknowledged the role of local government level in preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality in any of the following ways? Please attach the relevant document/s.**
  - Leadership statement
  - Preventing violence against women strategy / plan
  - Gender equality strategy / plan
  - Other? (please specify)
3. **In the 2016/17 financial year did your council dedicate staff time to preventing violence against women and gender equality work?**
  - Approximately what FTE did this equate to?
4. **In the 2016/2017 financial year, did your council dedicate funding (separate to staff time) to preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality activities?**
  - How much funding did your council dedicate to activities in 2016/17?
  - Was this an increase or decrease of resources on the previous year?
  - Why did your resourcing change?
5. **In the past twelve months, has your council applied for any grant funding to assist in your work in the prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equality?**
  - Please specify
  - Was the grant funding successful?
  - Please provide any relevant comments
6. **Does your council convene a committee or network for gender equality, prevention of violence against women or prevention of family violence?**
  - Please provide any relevant comments

7. **Does your council collect and use separate data for men and women to inform policies, service planning, implementation and evaluation?**
  - Comments and/or provide an example of where you currently do or do not use sex-disaggregated data
8. **Was preventing violence against women a priority in your 2013-16 council plan and/or Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan? Please provide any comments required.**
9. **Is preventing violence against women expected to be a priority in your 2017 council plan and/or Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan? Please provide any comments required.**
10. **Is gender equality, preventing family violence or violence against women referenced in the following policies/plans?**
  - Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander
  - Disability
  - Multicultural
  - Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex
  - Comments
11. **In what ways has preventing violence against women and gender equality informed your council's policies, services planning and implementation in any of the following areas?**
  - Aged Services/Positive Ageing
  - Arts and Culture
  - Childcare/Kinder
  - Communications
  - Community Grants
  - Community Safety
  - Disability Services
  - Emergency Management
  - Facility Design
  - Festivals and Events
  - HR/Staff Induction
  - Library Services
  - Local Laws
  - Maternal and Child Health
  - Multicultural Services
  - Procurement
  - Professional Development
  - Sport and Leisure Services
  - Youth Services
12. **Can you describe any other area/s of council policy, service planning and implementation that references gender equality, preventing family violence or violence against women (for example, gambling policy)?**
13. **Has your council formally acknowledged the role it can play in preventing violence against women and promoting gender equality throughout its workforce?**
14. **Do you have a Family Violence clause included in your Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA)?**
15. **Does your council have a Family Violence Policy for staff?**
  - Please attach your policy if you are happy to share relevant documentation

16. **Does your council provide for family violence leave to staff? Please include any relevant comments below.**
- Please select the amount of family violence leave employees are eligible to take at your council.
- Comments?
- Please advise the number of days claimed under this provision in the past twelve months (this data will contribute to a single figure and will not identify councils).
17. **What workplace activity, structures and processes are in place to improve gender equality and prevent family violence and violence against women amongst your council's workforce?**
18. **Please indicate any of the following resources your council utilises:**
- MAV website
  - MAV Preventing Violence Against Women e-news
  - MAV Preventing Violence Against Women Leadership Statement
  - MAV Preventing Violence Against Women Information Sheets
  - Ten ways local government can advance gender equality (fact sheets)
  - Victorian local government Women's Charter
  - Regional Women's Health Service
  - Partners in Prevention Network
  - Our Watch resources and website
  - ANROWS resources and website
  - State Government Family Violence website
  - State Government Women Victoria website
  - Are there any other resources you utilise and would like to share?
19. **Has your council identified unmet needs in any of the following:**
- Councillor forums
  - Topic specific forums
  - Gender equity training
  - Prevention of violence against women training
  - Family violence in the workplace training
  - If you identified forums above, please specify areas and topics that would be useful to your work
20. **Does your council participate in any of the following:**
- Local family violence prevention network
  - Preventing violence against women activities on a regional level
  - As a partner in your regional preventing violence against women plan
  - Please tell us more
21. **In 2016, did your council recognise and/or participate in the Victoria Against Violence campaign (16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence that runs from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women through until 10 December, Human Rights Day)? For example, this could be by participating in the White Ribbon Day campaign)?**
- How?
22. **Which of the following have you benefitted from through the MAV PVAW role?**
- Networks and contacts
  - Information from newsletters
  - Information from PVAW meetings
  - Information from conversations with the MAV PVAW Policy Adviser
  - Please provide any relevant examples

23. **Please rank the below from 1-5; with 1 not important at all; 3 moderately important; 5 very important.**
- How important to you is the MAV's role in advocating and liaising with state and federal government on PVAW and gender equality issues?
  - Please tell us more
24. **A core component of MAV's Preventing Violence Against Women work is to coordinate the PVAW Network. Do you participate in the MAV PVAW Network?**
- Why not?
  - Please rank the below on a scale of 1-5; with 1 not effective at all; 3 moderately effective; 5 very effective.
  - How effective has the coordination of the MAV PVAW Network been?
  - To what extent has the MAV PVAW Network increased your understanding of how councils can contribute to gender equality and PVAW efforts?
  - To what extent has the MAV PVAW Network increased your confidence to advocate for greater attention to improving gender equality and PVAW?
  - To what extent has the MAV PVAW Network enhanced your capacity to implement gender equality and PVAW activity tailored to your local community context?
  - Please tell us more
- What is the most valuable aspect of your relationship with the MAV PVAW Network?
    - Provide networking and mentoring opportunities
    - Build the capacity and comradery of the sector
    - Celebrate successes and acknowledge challenges of PVAW work in local government
    - Encourage local government partnerships with other sectors to drive change
  - Please provide any valuable aspects you have identified, or any additional comments.
25. **Are there any untapped opportunities for the MAV to help your council increase efforts to prevent violence against women and promote gender equality? Please share your thoughts in the box below.**
26. **Do you have any words of wisdom for other councils regarding their PVAW/GE efforts? Please share below.**
27. **Any other comments you wish to make?**