

Municipal Association of Victoria
Preventing Violence Against Women Network
Terms of Reference

Evidence

With approximately 1 in 3 Australian women experiencing physical violence and 1 in 5 experiencing sexual violence since the age of 15 (Cox 2015) the health, social and economic costs of violence against women are profound. Compared with other risk factors, intimate partner violence is the top ranking contributor to preventable disease and premature death among women aged 15-44 (VicHealth, 2004).

PwC and Our Watch estimate that reported incidents of violence against women cost the Australian economy approximately \$21.7 billion annually (2015), and this figure is projected to rise if action is not taken (National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children).

Given this evidence, Victorian councils are increasingly acknowledging their role in the prevention of violence against women (PVAW), particularly given their involvement in creating healthy and safe communities. The approach of the prevention workforce in Victoria, including councils, is being informed by Our Watch who have developed the national evidence based primary prevention framework: [Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia](#).

This framework identifies local government as a key influencer of change and acknowledges gender inequality as the key driver of violence against women. This persistent inequality is widespread across Australian society, industry, and culture, where there is still a 15.3% gender pay gap (Workplace Gender and Equality Agency, 2018) and where 50% of women report experiencing discrimination due to pregnancy, parental leave, or return to work (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014). In addition to this, there continues to be low levels of female representation in elected positions and executive leadership. Key to preventing men's violence against women is addressing the deep seated drivers of inequality, including rigid stereotypes and the unequal value afforded to women and men.

Context

In Australia, and particularly within Victoria, there is a significant level of momentum behind creating meaningful change in the prevention of violence against women and addressing the gender inequality that drives it. Gender inequality can play out within families and households, institutions and social structures and in 'Change the Story', Our Watch has articulated a framework for a consistent and integrated national approach to preventing violence against women and their children. All regional women's health services now have regional primary prevention strategies in place to coordinate and reinforce activities of partners, allowing for increased cohesion and synergy of efforts across regions. In the MAV Local Government Prevention of Violence and Promotion of Gender Equality Survey 2017, 48% of councils identified having a stand-alone PVAW plan or strategy, and 26% that they had a gender equity plan or strategy.

This momentum has further increased with the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and the State Government's commitment to enact all 227 recommendations (2016), with local government a key

partner and stakeholder in a number of the reforms. This commitment to the prevention of violence against women is further reflected in the development of a Victorian Family Violence Prevention Plan, 'Free from Violence: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women' (2017) and the subsequent 'Free from Violence: First Action Plan 2018-2021'. In addition, the Victorian Government has developed Victoria's first Gender Equality Strategy, 'Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy' (2016) as well as a Family Violence Strategy, 'Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change' (2016), and 'Building from Strength: 10 year industry plan for family violence prevention and response (2017). These sit alongside the Commonwealth Government's commitment to ending violence against women and the 'National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022' and subsequent rolling action plans.

In 2017, all Victorian councils developed new Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plans. In accordance with the implementation of Recommendation 94 from the Royal Commission into Family Violence all councils are now required to include measures they are taking to prevent family violence and respond to the needs of victims in their plans.

Background

The MAV PVAW Network was established in mid-2010 (initially known as the Leadership Evaluation and Sustainability Network), and has met quarterly to meet an expressed need identified by council officers whose work includes the prevention of violence against women. The MAV Preventing Violence Against Women Project, including the MAV PVAW Network, has continued to enjoy the expertise and financial and in kind support of the State Government since 2011.

MAV PVAW Network Purpose

- share knowledge, practice wisdom, successes & challenges of PVAW work in local government
- promote local government as a demonstrated leader in PVAW
- advocate for the role and responsibilities of local government to PVAW and improve gender equity in local communities
- support members to develop skills and expertise in PVAW through guest speakers and professional development opportunities
- provide networking and mentoring opportunities to build the capacity of the sector
- encourage local government partnerships with other sectors to drive change
- liaise with relevant government departments regarding PVAW related work.

MAV PVAW Network Membership

The Network is an inclusive group of local government representatives and key stakeholders (for example: women's health services, family violence peak bodies, government representatives), who work collaboratively to promote and progress the work of leading communities in the prevention of violence against women.

People wishing to join the Network should contact the MAV PVAW Policy Adviser.

Chair and Executive

The Network membership will select an bi-annual Executive Group in September every second year. In 2019/2020, the Executive Group consists of a maximum seven members. The Executive assists with meeting planning, the development of meeting agendas and support broader network activity. The Chair and notetaker of action items will be open for rotation between the Executive. Potential Executive Group candidates will be representatives from the local government sector and active participants in the Network. Executive Group members will be self-nominated. If nominations exceed places available, the Executive Group membership will be decided by the Network membership voting. If Executive positions become available prior to the bi-annual review of the Terms of Reference, network members will be given the opportunity to self-nominate.

Nominations need to be sent to the Policy Adviser by email.

Responsibilities of the Executive include:

- Chair quarterly PVAW Network meetings
- Record items for action and key decisions as relevant
- Actively contribute to the development of a quarterly meeting report for the MAV Gender Equity Leadership Group
- Actively contribute to the development of meeting agendas
- Participate in meeting debriefs via teleconferencing following quarterly meetings
- Liaise with MAV PVAW Policy Adviser as required
- Promote the PVAW Network as appropriate

Administrative support for the PVAW Network will be provided by the MAV PVAW Policy Officer. If unable, the Network Executive will coordinate necessary administrative support.

In 2019/2020 the Executive Group consists of:

- 1) Elizabeth Carroll, Whittlesea City Council
- 2) Liz Smith, Melton City Council
- 3) Liam Bantock, Latrobe City Council
- 4) Tracey Egan, Monash City Council
- 5) Samantha Bender, Mitchell Shire Council
- 6) Suzi Hayes, Knox City Council
- 7) Joel Board, Greater Shepparton City Council

Meeting records

A member of the Executive will record items for action and key decisions/directions as relevant throughout the meeting. A report from the Executive will be tabled at the MAV Gender Equity Leadership Group and /or Human Services Committee meeting each quarter.

Meeting Protocol

The MAV PVAW Network meetings aim to provide a supportive and safe environment for members to discuss relevant issues and share information. As this may involve the discussion of sensitive topics, participants agree to:

- alert those at the meeting and the note taker when sharing potentially sensitive information
- exercise judgement when discussing the content of the meetings outside the meeting space.

Meetings

Will be held quarterly commencing at 10am and concluding at 12.30pm with networking lunch to follow. Meetings will be held at the Municipal Association of Victoria, Level 11, 60 Collins Street Melbourne (corner Exhibition Street). The meeting room is booked to 1.30pm, to enable further networking if required.

Meeting date remaining 2018:

- Wednesday 12 December 2018

Meeting dates for 2019

- Wednesday 20 March 2019
- Wednesday 19 June 2019
- Wednesday 18 September 2019
- Wednesday 11 December 2019

Meeting dates for 2020

- Wednesday 18 March 2020
- Wednesday 17 June 2020
- Wednesday 16 September 2020
- Wednesday 9 December 2020

For more information about the MAV PVAW Network, please contact Kellie Nagle, Policy Adviser - Preventing Violence Against Women via knagle@mav.asn.au or 9667 5585 or visit www.mav.asn.au/genderequality.