



MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA



Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) Webinar

Recorded at the MAV 14 March 2019

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

How do I influence senior and executive management to consider and implement culture change and WER?

- 1) **Build** on current workplace efforts to address gender equality and start a conversation around the prevalence and seriousness of violence against women.
- 2) **Use data** and evidence examining the link between gender equality and violence against women, referencing the important role workplaces have in supporting equality and respect within the community. Have this data and evidence ready when engaging leaders.
- 3) **Ensure leaders** have an opportunity to interact with others working in gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. This can include attending forums or presentations where they can engage with people working in the sector.

With the WER implementation process, step one talks about introductory training.

Does this need to occur before the deployment of staff surveys?

Prior to surveying your staff across the organisation, two training sessions are recommended for managers, implementation staff, HR and other leaders needed to drive the change.

- 1) **Response Training:** Response training will help relevant staff members understand violence against women and how to safely and appropriately respond to disclosures that may arise when undertaking violence prevention related work. This is important, as once the conversation about gender equality and preventing violence against women begins, disclosure of experiences of family violence can occur. Staff need to know there is support available, who to speak with and how to safely refer.

The level of response will depend on the questions asked. It is strongly recommended that at least two (2) people within an organisation are designated as support staff to manage any family violence disclosures or provide assistance. Response training is usually available regionally and is often listed on The Lookout website. You can contact your Regional Integration Coordinator for further details.

- 2) **Leadership Training:** The leadership training will delve deeper into the discussion around the drivers of violence against women and gender inequality, why it occurs and what it is. It is important that organisation leaders and HR understand the drivers of gender inequality and violence against women.

WER Training opportunities will commence mid-2019. Please contact Kellie Nagle at knagle@mav.asn.au if you have any questions relating to training available to local government.

Will WER standards become accredited?

There is currently no intention for the WER standards to become accredited and was not part of the original discussion surrounding the development of the tools. The most important reason Our Watch does not want to WER standards to be accredited is that accreditation incurs a cost to the user. WER standards are to remain free, ensuring organisations can use them as a flexible and adaptive tool.

How can non-binary and inclusive language be used in the standards?

The current standards use binary language, referring to men and women. Initially, this language was used to recognise that family violence is a gender inequality issue and focus on the prevention of violence against women and their children. Our Watch are currently revising the resources to use non-binary and inclusive language to ensure all persons are recognised in the documents.

How do I encourage buy-in from HR to ensure WER and gender equality focus is legitimately addressed as core business, rather than being a part of general workplace approach to respect (i.e. bullying, racism etc.)?

A potential barrier is that HR staff have not had the opportunity to unpack the impact of gender inequality and violence against women in the workplace. It is suggested to raise the [benefits of WER](#) and how it positively impacts staff wellbeing and further benefits the entire organisation.

If you or your organisation have or know of resources to support HR engagement, please share with the MAV and Our Watch.

How do I engage councillors in the process of incorporating WER?

Councillors have the opportunity to engage with community members and should be briefed on WER and its uptake by the organisation. Some councillors, particularly if gender equality and prevention of violence against women is a keen interest, may want to consider undertaking training. As councillors may be short on time, it would be beneficial if you were able to find the time to have a discussion about WER and provide some key messages. Furthermore, you may offer to assist in developing speaking notes if a councillor is going to be discussing the matter further with community members or at a speaking engagement.

When will the introductory training become available?

Currently, Our Watch is working on endorsing people to provide training. For training enquiries, contact Our Watch at <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Contact-Us>

[Our Watch WER Standards: Training and Resources](#)