

The Whittlesea Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities Family Violence Project (WCCFV Project) works to support CALD communities, newly arrived migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to break the cycle of family violence and to confront the challenges of preventing violence against women and children. It requires an ongoing annual funding commitment to continue its positive impact.



Investment needed

- **\$150,000 in ongoing annual funding is needed to support this innovative and effective program.**

This funding will support phase two of the WCCFV Project, which focuses on building the capacity of community and faith leaders to better respond to family violence through targeted and early intervention programs, grants, community education and men's behaviour change programs. Funding a project of this type is supported by the Royal Commission into Family Violence Recommendations for Faith Communities (Recommendation 165).

Recommendation 165 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence:

Faith leaders and communities establish processes for examining the ways in which they currently respond to family violence in their communities and whether any of their practices operate as deterrents to the prevention or reporting of, or recovery from, family violence or are used by perpetrators to excuse or condone abusive behaviour.

A best practice, place-based, transferable model

- **The WCCFV Project is based on known local needs and international best practice.**

In 2012 the Scanlon Foundation funded a scoping exercise involving extensive engagement with survivors of family violence, community representatives and support agencies, as well as a review of international literature. Local evidence and research revealed that existing services in the City of Whittlesea did not meet the complex needs of CALD women experiencing family violence.¹ The scoping exercise resulted in the model below under which the WCCFV Project operates today.

- **The WCCFV Project reflects a local model that is well-researched, evaluated and transferable.**

The model contributes to the evidence base on CALD-specific family violence prevention and support and is available to other organisations interested in doing similar work.²

We have a strong need for specialised CALD family violence support

- **We have a large CALD population among our rapidly growing population.**

The City of Whittlesea is diverse, with a large proportion of residents born overseas (35.5 per cent) and a larger proportion born in non-English speaking countries (32 per cent) compared to Greater Melbourne.³ Forty-four per cent of residents speak a language other than English at home, compared to the Greater Melbourne average of 32 per cent.⁴ The municipality also has a large proportion (36.4 per cent) of people who speak a language other than English and speak English not well or not at all.⁵ We have a significant number of new arrivals, such as refugees, people seeking asylum, and skilled migrants. These residents have limited understanding of legal and health and human service systems.

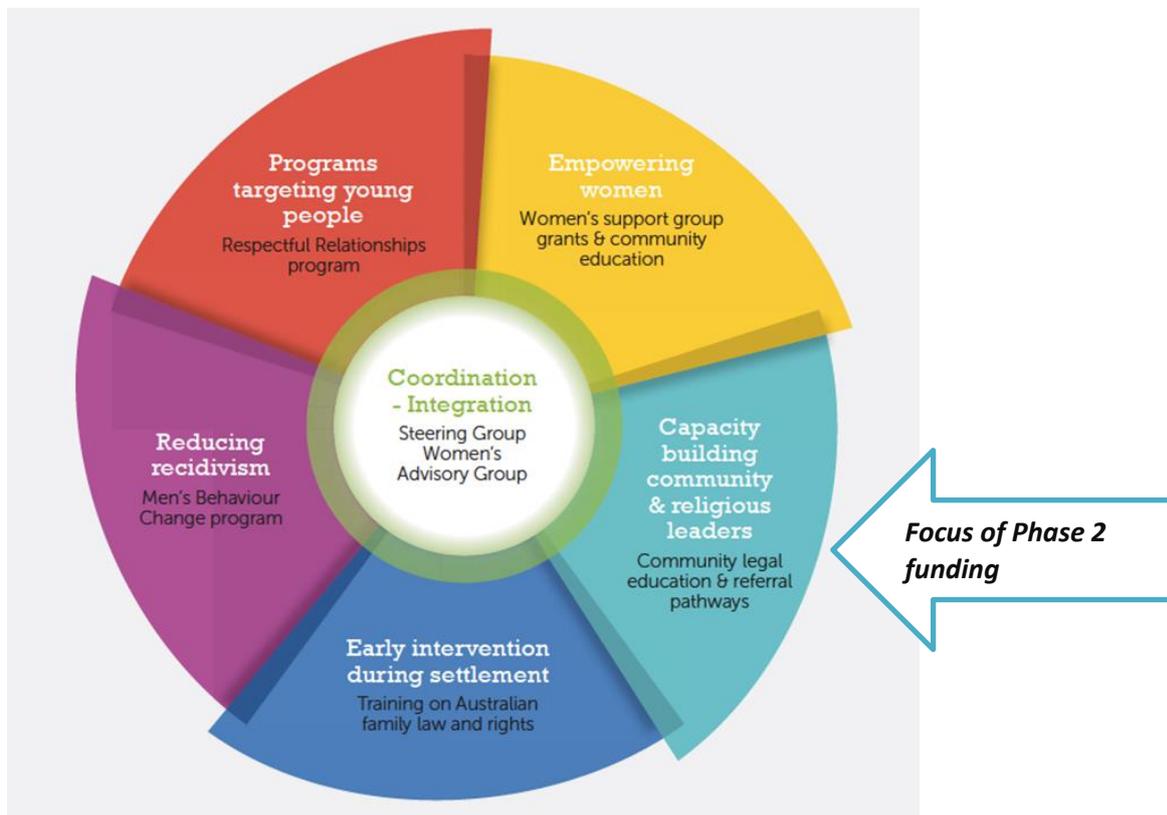
- **CALD communities are more vulnerable to the impacts of family violence and need specialised support.**

CALD communities experience a complex web of additional barriers to accessing family violence services which often means they are more vulnerable to the impacts of violence and less likely to seek support. While family violence occurs in all communities, it is critical to provide specialist family violence services with a CALD focus in the City of Whittlesea given the high CALD population, the current and projected population growth rate as well as the geographic isolation of some areas due to the urban/rural interface.

- **In the first six months of 2017, 158 new people presented with family violence to the lead agency of the WCCFV Project.**

In 43 per cent of 158 cases this was their first contact with a support agency. Over the past three years, 83 per cent involved multiple forms of abuse. In 44 per cent of cases children were present.⁶

WCCFV Project model



The WCCFV project is helping to break cycles of family violence

- **Participation in the WCCFV Project is resulting in CALD women seeking and receiving support.** Brokerage grants funded by philanthropic agencies since 2014 have supported 18 local CALD women's groups and provided family violence information and community legal education to 295 women. One in three women later accessed family violence support from the lead agency of the Project and many reported feeling confident to support friends and family to access support services. Six women from these groups went on to form the WCCFV Project's Women's Advisory Group, a group established and supported to provide ongoing input into the project to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of CALD communities.

- **Early intervention support was provided to 38 women and 13 men during their settlement process through implementation of Victoria Legal Aid’s Settled and Safe program.**

The scoping exercise highlighted research identifying that newly arrived communities often experience increased vulnerability to family violence, particularly those arriving with limited support and high settlement needs. The settlement process itself was found to present a range of pressures and stressors that could impact families and relationships. This information and early intervention support is now integrated into Whittlesea Community Connections’ settlement support groups.

- **The Women’s Advisory Group has a pivotal role in the WCCFV Project - enabling local needs and cultural complexities to inform the WCCFV Project’s development and implementation.**

In turn, information and ideas from the WCCFV Project are taken back into communities in order to support women and their children and to undertake educational and awareness-raising activities about family violence.

- **The first fully accredited Arabic-speaking Men’s Behaviour Change Program was developed.**

The City of Whittlesea, inTouch, Whittlesea Community Connections and Salvation Army Crossroads financially supported the pilot of an Arabic-speaking Men’s Family Violence Group. Two bilingual Arabic-speaking facilitators were recruited and in 2014 completed the Graduate Certificate in Social Science-Male Family Violence, which enabled them to become accredited Men’s Behaviour Change Program facilitators. The successful implementation of this pilot in 2015 provided valuable learnings for a fully accredited Arabic-speaking Men’s Behaviour Change Program in 2016 and the program continues to be implemented by Uniting Kildonan. All the women and men believed having an Arabic-speaking program was very important. The men identified the ability to communicate in their language and for the cultural implications to be understood, as critical. To our knowledge this is the first program of this kind in Victoria.

Investment is needed for future progress

- **Our proposal builds on recommendations arising from the WCCFV Project’s evaluation**

An evaluation by Monash University informs the next phase of the WCCFV Project and provides recommendations to ensure it remains responsive to the needs of Whittlesea’s CALD communities.⁷

Phase Two will focus on:

- increasing knowledge and understanding of the particular role of cultural and religious attitudes, beliefs, contexts and community leaders in preventing family violence in CALD communities
 - developing a primary prevention approach and action plan with community leaders
 - in partnership with the Women’s Advisory Group and local CALD communities testing the approach to work out how this resonates, connects, engages and matters to them.
- **The following elements require funding:**
 - **Project officer:** The project officer resources all elements within the WCCFV Project and crucially, convenes the steering group and the Women’s Advisory Group.
 - **Capacity building community and religious leaders:** The funding will be used to engage community and religious leaders and CALD communities in community development activities to identify their capacity and needs around responding to and preventing family violence, and to encourage collaboration and the development of working partnerships and relationships that will reduce the damaging impact of family violence.

Funding model

The WCCFV Project requires \$150,000 per annum to fully implement the model. Four elements are fully funded for 2017/18, by non-government organisations and philanthropics.

Element of project	Funding required per annum	Current funding status
Coordination and service integration – Project Steering Group and facilitation of Women’s Advisory Group	Project Worker \$35,000 Administration and facilitation of steering group and grants program and coordination and support of Women’s Advisory Group Administration and evaluation of Women’s Advisory Group \$20,000	Outstanding
Capacity building for community and religious leaders - community legal and family violence education session and referral pathways	Project Worker \$60,000 Training and support \$20,000 Administration and evaluation \$15,000	Outstanding
Empowering women - Women’s Support Group Grants and community legal and family violence education sessions and referral pathways	Grants provision \$23,000 Coordination \$10,000	Philanthropic funding for grants confirmed 2017/18 Whittlesea Community Connections
Early intervention during settlement – Adaptation of Victoria Legal Aid’s Settled and Safe Training Program	Project Worker \$42,000 Administration and evaluation \$12,000	Whittlesea Community Connections Community Legal and Settlement Services
Reducing recidivism – Arabic Speaking Men’s Behaviour Change Program	Program implementation, administration and evaluation \$140,000	Uniting Kildonan
Programs targeting young people - respectful relationships education	Implementing Communities For Respect \$144,000 (over two years, 2016/17 – 2017/18)	Victoria State Government Medium Grants - Capacity Building and Participation Program 2016-2017, Office of Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship

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Updated October 2017

Steering group

The WCCFV Project steering group is comprised of leading agencies in the field of family violence prevention and support.



¹ Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Scoping Exercise Report 2012. Available:

<http://www.whittleseacommunityconnections.org.au/content/research-reports/> [accessed October 2017].

² Dr Deborah Western, Department of Social Work, Monash University, Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project Final Evaluation Report 2016.

³ Profile.id (2016). *City of Whittlesea Community Profile: Birthplace*. Available:

<http://profile.id.com.au/whittlesea/birthplace> [accessed October 2017].

⁴ Profile.id (2016). *City of Whittlesea Community Profile: language spoken at home*. Available:

<http://profile.id.com.au/whittlesea/language> [accessed October 2017].

⁵ Profile.id (2016). *City of Whittlesea Community Profile: Proficiency in English*. Available:

<http://profile.id.com.au/whittlesea/speaks-english> [accessed October 2017].

⁶ Whittlesea Community Connections 2017, Family Violence Monitor 1 January – 30 January 2017.

⁷ Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project 2017, *Model Summary and Implementation Lessons*.