



PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE POSITION STATEMENT

Whittlesea Community Connections (WCC) is committed to the prevention of family violence and gender-based violence locally and state wide. Our work is informed by the evidence base, advocate-survivors experience and community. WCC are committed to being inclusive and accessible across the spectrum of prevention (Tertiary, Secondary and Primary) utilising an intersectional feminist approach and guided by the national frameworks and plan. Identifying the intersections of the gendered drivers of violence and racism, discrimination, ableism, classism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia and colonialism in tailoring our programs and projects and informing initiatives and wider advocacy for a community free from violence.

Definitions:

Family Violence:

The *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* states that family violence is a behaviour towards another family member that is:

- physically or sexually abusive
- emotionally or psychologically abusive
- economically abusive
- threatening
- coercive
- or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person
- or behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour listed above.

Gender based violence:

Violence that is used against someone because of their gender. It describes violence rooted in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination.

Overview of the issue:

Family violence and gender based violence is a prevalent, serious and preventable human rights abuse. The social, health and economic costs of family violence is enormous and more so for women. It is shown that one woman a week is murdered by a former or current partner and further alarming numbers of woman are also injured and living in fear. The prevention of violence is a whole of community issue and it is essential that there is a community wide shared understanding and approach to family violence. It is of importance in addressing family violence and gender based

violence that the gendered drivers are utilised in informing responses. It is shown that particular expressions of gender inequality consistently predict higher rates of violence against women. Furthermore, external factors impact on this such as natural disaster. Thus it is essential responses incorporate multiple elements that directly positively impact gender equality for women in Australia.

WCC recognise the importance in acknowledging that family violence can impact and make certain further cohorts more vulnerable due to further inequality and discrimination in accessing support and safety. This is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Refugee and Migrant women, women living with a Disability, lower socio-economic women, children and young people, transgender women and same-sex relationships.

Some of the wider evidence shows:

- 1 in 4 Australian women have experienced intimate partner violence compared to 1 in 13 Australian men
(2016 ABS Personal Survey).
- Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic 1 in 3 women experienced emotionally abusive, harassing and controlling behaviours
(2021 'At a glance: Respondents' experiences of intimate partner violence (IPV) since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic' [Fact sheet]. ANROWS).
- Intimate partner violence is the greatest health risk factor for women aged 25-44 years old
(2018 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare).
- Family violence is the leading cause of homelessness for children and women in Victoria
(2020 'Ending homelessness for Victoria's Children And Their Families'; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare).
- 13.4% of LGBTIQ+ adults living in Victoria experienced family violence. This proportion was significantly higher than the proportion in the heterosexual, nonLGBTIQ+ population (5.1%).
(2017 Victorian Population Health Survey, Victorian Agency for Health Information).

And locally from the City of Whittlesea data:

- In 2019-2020 the City of Whittlesea has the highest rate of family violence in the catchment area for the North Eastern Metropolitan Area (NEMA).
- A total of 3,329 incidents of family violence were reported to Police between July 2019 – June 2020.
- From 2018 – 2020 the City of Whittlesea has a higher rate of children present in family violence compared to NEMA area and Victoria.

Our Commitment:

WCC are committed to a community free from violence. We will do this by ensuring:

- Gender Equity is a priority across the organisation
- Strengthening internal capacity for taking an intersectional approach in safely engaging with the needs of our vulnerable cohort populations, including gender diverse and same-sex attracted community, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community, Refugee and Migrant community, and other vulnerable cohorts whom experience inequalities and discrimination.
- Facilitation of LGBTIQ+ inclusion amongst staff, volunteers, students, and external partners in service delivery.

- Continued key partnerships with specialist family violence providers to deliver locally based outreach services.
- Continue to develop partnerships with peak bodies from the family violence sector in supporting advocacy initiatives and strengthening the community sectors responsiveness.
- The organisation continues to align policies, training, and procedures with the *Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Management Framework, Family Violence Protection Act* and *Gender Equality Act*.
- Committed to capacity building of local practitioners thru the coordination of the local family violence network.

Related documents

Related procedures, guidelines, forms etc	
Related frameworks	
Related policies	Workplace Family Violence Policy
Relevant legislation or standards	Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (VIC)

Document Change History

<u>Version</u>	<u>Status*</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Ratified by</u>	<u>Date Ratified</u>
V1	Draft	Initial Statement	Belinda Leon – Manager Community Support		
V2	Draft	Edits	Emma Antonetti – Equity and Impact Manager		
V3	Endorsed	Updated format, edits, new title	Sandra Natale – Quality Consultant	Board	March 2020
V4	Endorsed	Updated	Katricee Bolden – Gender Equity Lead	Board	December 2023

* Valid values for this column are: DRAFT, ENDORSED, REVIEWED (no revision)