



THE LODDON MALLEE ACTION PLAN
*for the primary prevention of
violence against women*

2016 - 2019



Acknowledgements

The development of this Action Plan was funded by the Department of Justice through the Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand project and the Office of Women's Affairs via Women's Health Victoria (lead organisation). Women's Health Loddon Mallee spent over 12 months formally and informally discussing regional planning opportunities, priorities and concepts with groups, networks, organisations and individuals across the region. Workshops and presentations were held to deepen understanding of primary prevention and consultations were held to test suitability of concepts, ideas, governance structure and priorities. The wisdom of over 40 groups informs the structure and detail of the Action Plan.

We acknowledge the deep and detailed knowledge of women's experiences of violence held by specialist services and networks – in particular the members of the Mallee Family Violence Executive and the Loddon Campaspe Integrated Family Violence Consortium. They and their community and welfare partners – both government, government agencies such as Victoria Police, the Courts and not-for-profit organisations – bring a thorough knowledge of the supports and systems that respond to violence. This knowledge keeps the focus of violence against women on track and grounded in experience.

Organisations with the opportunity to influence community culture – through workplace, recreational and other grass roots settings – have enthusiastically contributed through identification of their opportunity to guide attitudes, behaviours, codes and practices that have a profound influence on everyday behavior. The AFL, CFA, local government, community groups, faith organisations and others have demonstrated understanding that they can make a difference and preparedness to provide leadership.

All of our regional local governments have shown great willingness to put prevention of violence against women on their agenda and a willingness to take further steps within the scope of their role.

We thank the Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand reference group and our Women's Health colleagues across the state for their support with the thinking and conceptualisation behind the document. We thank our staff and consultants, Jan, Jane and Natalie and the Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand team – Marnie and Vida for their excellent work.

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Date of Publication, March 2016



WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS
*prevalent and serious in the Loddon
Mallee Region.*

We recognise that while any person can be a victim or perpetrator of violence, violence is predominantly perpetrated by men, and in family violence situations, women are predominantly the victims. We understand that the underlying drivers of violence against women are gender inequality, rigid gender stereotypes and cultures that accept or excuse men's violence. We commit to working in our own organisations and in partnership with others to end violence against women. We will do this by creating communities, organisations and cultures that are non-violent, gender-equitable, non-discriminatory and that promote respectful relationships. In this way we will address the underlying drivers of violence against women and create a safer community.





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Setting the scene

Why have a regional action plan for the prevention of violence against women?

Violence against women is an international phenomenon. It happens across cultures, countries and socio-economic groups. Levels of violence against women in our region are too high. While we work to respond to the needs of women and men involved in violence we have an opportunity to prevent violence through collaborative and influential action. To prevent violence against women we need to understand the universal gendered drivers of violence as well as the local context in which that violence occurs. We need to change attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that allow violence against women to occur. This needs to happen at the individual, local, regional and state level. To create change the whole community needs to work together in coordinated and collaborative ways. The Loddon Mallee Regional Action Plan uses the broad national and state frameworks to propose achievable actions and ways of working to prevent violence against women in our local region.

In Australia, violence against women is called many different things, including domestic violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, sexual harassment and sexual assault. Some stakeholders in our region will include violence against women within a broader focus on family violence, lateral violence, public violence or domestic violence. This plan focuses on violence against women in order to hold a gendered analysis at the centre, without which efforts to prevent violence against women will not be successful.

What is violence against women?

The Loddon Mallee Action Plan defines violence against women in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993. Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of harm, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty in public or private life.¹

Different forms of domestic violence²:

FORM OF ABUSE	CHARACTERISTICS OF BEHAVIOUR
Physical abuse	Threatening or physically assaults, including punching, choking, hitting, pushing and shoving, throwing objects, smashing objects, damaging property, assaulting children and injuring pets
Sexual abuse	Any unwanted sexual contact, including rape
Psychological abuse	Emotional and verbal abuse such as humiliation, threats, insults, swearing, harassment or constant criticism and put downs
Social abuse	Isolating partner from friends and/or family, denying partner access to the telephone, controlling, monitoring and restricting partner's movements when going out
Economic abuse	Exerting control over household or family income by preventing the other person's access to finances and financial independence
Spiritual abuse	Denying or manipulating religious beliefs or practices to force victims into subordinate roles or to justify other forms of abuse

¹ UN United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993.

² <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/07.html>



KEY FACTS:

- 657 domestic violence matters are dealt with every day by Australian police.
- Every week at least one woman is murdered in Australia by her current or former partner.
- Interpersonal violence contributes to more preventable death, disability and illness for women between the ages of 15 – 44 in Victoria than any other preventable risk factor.
- Men's violence against women is present in all parts of society.

SHARED VALUES:

Non-violence is a fundamental social value that must be promoted. Violence against women is not acceptable in any relationship, community or culture. Violence against women is serious, prevalent and preventable. Violence Against women requires a gendered response.

Gendered drivers of violence against women are:

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

THE DESIRED FUTURE:

A Loddon Mallee region free of violence against women and their children is one where all women and men, girls and boys have equal opportunity to reach their full potential and are respected and valued in both private and public life. In this future Loddon Mallee region, relationships are healthier, happier, more equal and respectful, with decisions between partners made jointly. Women and men, girls and boys develop personal identities based on their individual character, not constrained or dictated by limiting and stereotypical models of what it means to be a man or women³. Respectful attitudes towards women include valuing women and men equally in work, public life, as leaders and with family roles. Women are visible as decision makers and in the full range of possible roles.

Actions that will prevent violence against women⁴:

- Challenge condoning of violence against women
- Promote women's independence and decision-making
- Challenge gender stereotypes and roles
- Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships
- Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life

Mutually reinforcing actions are needed through legislation, institutional, policy and program responses:

- By governments, organisations and individuals
- In settings where people live, work, learn and socialise
- Tailored to the context and needs of different groups.

³ Our Watch, 2015, Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia., P19

⁴ Our Watch, 2015, Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia., P10

What is 'Primary Prevention'?

Primary prevention seeks to remove causes of problems before there is evidence of those problems emerging. Primary prevention often uses population wide approaches that seek to alter culture, systems and behaviour and at times refers to 'upstream' approaches.

Going "upstream"

To help explain the difference between primary, secondary or tertiary prevention think about this example. Let's say you are the mayor of a town near a river used by kids and adults alike for swimming. One summer, you learn that people are developing serious and persistent rashes after swimming as a result of a chemical irritant in the water. You decide to take action.

If you approach the company upstream that is discharging the chemical into the river and make it stop, you are engaging in primary prevention. You are removing the hazardous exposure and preventing rashes in the first place.

If you ask lifeguards to check swimmers as they get out of the river to look for signs of a rash that can then be treated right away, you are engaging in secondary prevention. You are not preventing rashes, but you are reducing their impact by treating them early on so swimmers can regain their health and go about their everyday lives as soon as possible.

If you set up programs and support groups that

teach people how to live with their persistent rashes, you are engaging in tertiary prevention. You are not preventing rashes or dealing with them right away, but you are softening their impact by helping people live with their rashes as best as possible.

For many community problems, a combination of primary, secondary and tertiary interventions are needed to achieve a meaningful degree of prevention and protection. However, as this example shows, prevention experts say that the further "upstream" one is from a negative health outcome, the likelier it is that any intervention will be effective.⁵

This Action Plan is focused on primary prevention.

Our Watch describes the Primary Prevention approach as seeking to change social conditions, such as gender inequality, that excuse, justify or even promote violence against women and their children. A primary prevention approach works across the whole population to address the attitudes, practices and power differentials that drive violence against women and their children.⁶

⁵ Institute for Work and Health, <http://www.iwh.on.ca/wrmb/primary-secondary-and-tertiary-prevention>

⁶ Our Watch, 2015, Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia., p 17



Frameworks for action

Family violence and the prevention of violence against women are priority issues for National and State Governments in response to growing community pressure for a response to the high rates and severity of violence against women.

The integrated strategies contained in this Action Plan enable individuals, groups, organisations and agencies to demonstrate alignment with National and State frameworks and make a strong case for funding opportunities which are expected to flow from the findings of the current Royal Commission into the Prevention of Family Violence.

Across all of these International, Australian and Victorian frameworks, initiatives have been tested to see what works. With funding support from government and non-government agencies, activities to change attitudes, behaviours and practices have been trialled in schools, workplaces, sporting organisations and councils. These projects have shown that the 'upstream' causes of violence are amenable to change.

These frameworks are clearly stating that the time has come for an evidence-based 'road map' to show us how to pull this work together and coordinate effort to create real change – not just for some, but across the whole population. This Action Plan is our opportunity to do this in Loddon Mallee.

There are a number of key frameworks at a State, National and International level that this Action Plan recognises and is guided by. Much of the rationale, learning and knowledge that this Action Plan is built on and is regionally implementing, is based on these Frameworks (links provided on last page of this document).

Internationally

Internationally we are guided by the United Nations (UN) **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women**, 1993 and subsequent work by international organisations such as the World Health Organisation, the European Commission and the United Nations that have reinforced and built on the evidence base.

Australia

The **National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022**⁷ involved a staged approach based on four three – year action plans. Building primary prevention capacity was identified as a priority in the First Action Plan (2010-13) which committed Commonwealth, state and territory governments to the following key actions:

1. Implementing social marketing and awareness campaigns targeting young people's attitudes to relationships;
2. Working towards the inclusion of Respectful Relationships education in the National Curriculum;
3. Developing a media code of practice for reporting violence against women; and
4. Developing and implementing gender equality indicators (FaHCSIA, 2013).

A Second Action Plan 2013-16 was published in September 2014 and is the second of four stages of the National Plan.

⁷ The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, 2010 – 2022, FAHCSIA;

Nationally 'Our Watch' has been established to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours and attitudes that lead to violence against women and children. The purpose is to provide national leadership to prevent all forms of violence against women and their children. In 2015 Our Watch launched 'Change the Story, A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia⁸'. The National Framework provides the guidance and support to make this happen. The Framework:

- outlines the latest evidence on what causes violence against women and their children
- shows what works to prevent it, in different sectors and from the individual to societal level
- looks at how different forms of disadvantage and discrimination can interact, and how prevention activity should take this into account
- articulates the elements of a coordinated approach to prevention across jurisdictions and sectors.

- Presents a way forward for a coordinated national approach

Please go to www.ourwatch.org.au to explore this knowledge and understanding further.

Victoria

The report from the current **Victorian Family Violence Royal Commission** is due to be delivered to the State Government in early 2016 and will generate high visibility for the issue and compel policy responses and action.

In Victoria, in 2007, Vic Health launched 'Preventing Violence before it occurs – A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria'. This Framework identified the underlying determinants and drivers of violence against women as gender inequality and unequal gender roles, and hence this is a key focus of the Loddon Mallee Action Plan.

This Framework also established a number of sectors and contexts for regional action. These include:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| › Community Services | › Arts | › Justice |
| › Corporate | › Sports and recreation | › Academic |
| › Faith | › Media and popular culture | › Military/like institutions |
| › Education and training | › Local Government | › Government agencies |
| › Workplaces | › Health | › Emergency Services |
| › Cultural institutions and networks | › Cyberspace / new technologies | |

Vic Health also has a long history of informing the evidence base of effective population health approaches and used it's Family Violence Royal Commission submission to articulate how family violence could be strategically addressed in this way.⁹

Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework, 2012

This framework was developed in response to 'Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities' Ten Year Plan June 2008. The framework is a resource for Aboriginal communities to guide the development and evaluation of prevention initiatives. It is also a tool for mainstream organisation and government partners who may be working or be intending to work in the prevention of Aboriginal family violence.

⁸ Our Watch, 2015, Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia., P17
⁹ [http://www.rcfv.com.au/getattachment/7DD9FDF2-61CA-4E43-BBBA-3F76DF518A44/Victorian-Health-Promotion-Foundation-\(VicHealth\)](http://www.rcfv.com.au/getattachment/7DD9FDF2-61CA-4E43-BBBA-3F76DF518A44/Victorian-Health-Promotion-Foundation-(VicHealth))



The Loddon Mallee regional context

Regional incidence of family violence

The Loddon Mallee region has the second highest regional incidence of reported family violence in the state. We have three of the ten local government areas in the State with the highest incidence of reported family violence, and six of the Loddon Mallee local government areas have an incidence rate higher than the State average¹⁰.

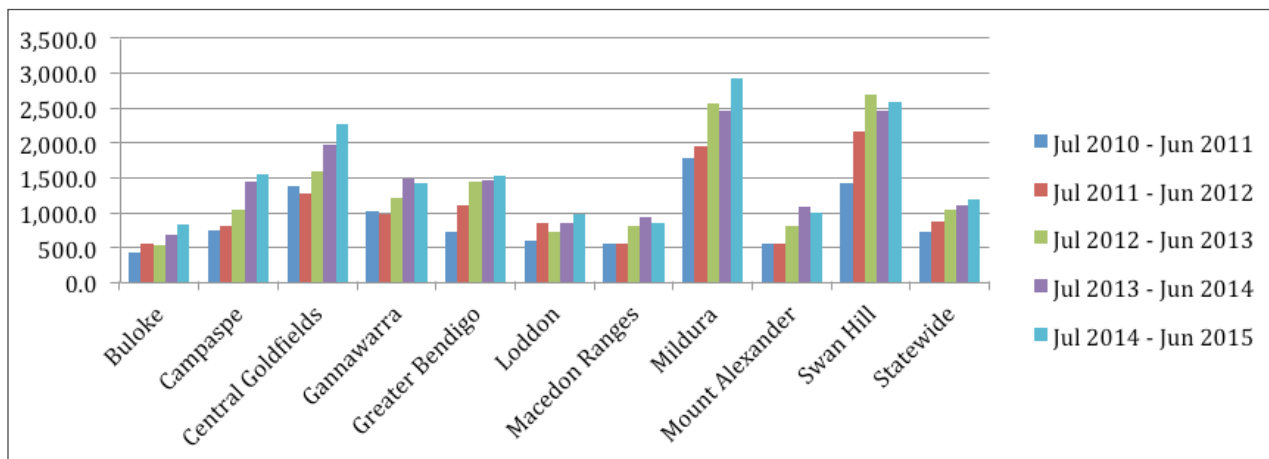


Chart 1: Family Violence Incidence Rate per 100,000 by Local Government Area¹¹.

Population groups most at risk in Loddon Mallee

Violence against women occurs in all areas of society, regardless of location, socioeconomic and health status, age, ability, ethnicity or religion. Some population groups of women, however, experience violence at higher than average rates.

These include:

Young women

Young women (18-24 and 25-34) are more likely than older women to experience physical or sexual violence.¹² Young people (16-24) also have a lower level of understanding of violence against women and are more likely to excuse it. They are more likely to endorse relationships where men exert power over women.¹³

Pregnant women

During pregnancy and when parenting commences it a particularly vulnerable time. Pregnant women are at higher risk of violence than other women, particularly from their partners. More than one third of Australian women (36%) who have experienced violence by a previous partner, and 15% by a current partner, report that the violence occurred during pregnancy as well as at other times. (ABS. 2006; Morgan and Chadwick, 2009).

¹⁰ April to June quarter 2015, Family Violence Incidents, Crime Statistics Agency, Victorian Government. Oct 2015

¹¹ 2010 2015, Family Violence Incidents, Crime Statistics Agency, Victorian Government, Oct 2015.

¹² ABS 4906.0 Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2012

¹³ VicHealth 2014, Australians' attitudes to violence against women. Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS), Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are living with the trauma of race-based oppression and the legacy of colonisation. They experience higher rates of physical violence than other women. Recent research identified that Aboriginal women are 35 times more likely to suffer family violence and sustain injury requiring hospitalisation, and ten times more likely to die due to family violence than other women in Australia.¹⁴

Women with migrant and refugee backgrounds

Around 10% of Loddon Mallee's population were born outside Australia. Refugees from Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, Iraq, Sudan and other emerging refugee communities are resettling in regional communities such as Bendigo, Swan Hill, Mildura and Castlemaine.¹⁵

Women who have recently arrived in Australia can be particularly vulnerable and reluctant to disclose acts of violence because of threats of deportation relating to their visa conditions. Many refugee women have experienced trauma related to armed conflict and exposure to violence in their country of origin.¹⁶

Women with disabilities

Women with disabilities are very vulnerable to both domestic violence and other institutionalised forms of violence, and are at particular risk of severe violence especially when perpetrators are carers and/or are in a position of exerting control and power.

Our existing structures

In the Loddon Mallee there are a number of existing structures in which gender equity and violence prevention work is embedded in ongoing action or being addressed specifically as a priority.

- Mallee Family Violence Executive and the Loddon Campaspe Family Violence Consortium each have strategic plans that include a commitment to primary prevention, in addition to the ongoing priorities of improved service coordination and increased response options. The MFVE has committees in Mildura and Robinvale which brings many local organisations together. The IFVC has an Advisory Group that similarly brings a wide range of organisations together.
- Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups. The Northern Mallee and Loddon IFVRAGs are each working to address their planned actions with specific focus on the multilayered challenges for Aboriginal communities and individuals.
- Primary Care Partnerships – are voluntary alliances of health and community service organisations who work together to improve access to services and provide continuity of care for people in their community. PCP partner organisations focus on better coordination among services, management of chronic disease management, integrated prevention and health promotion, and strong partnerships. Each PCP has issue focused groups that enable cross organisational activity.

¹⁴ 2006, Family Violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra.

¹⁵ Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan 2015-18, P46

¹⁶ National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their children, the Costs of Violence Against Women and their Children, Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2009.



- Youth and Children Area Partnerships – the Department of Health and Human Services has established Mallee and Loddon networks comprising organisations which contribute to youth and child wellbeing. The goal is to work at the subregional level to more effectively join-up social services to support better outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families. Family Violence has been acknowledged as a significant contributing factor.
- Collective impact alliances for place based approaches. Go Goldfields and the Northern Mallee Community Partnership are each utilising collective impact processes to focus resources and action of organisations, state and local government and community. Each have identified investment in early child development as a key focus and violence against women and children as a significant priority.
- Local Government – the ten Local Government Authorities are mandated to produce a Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan within 12 months of a council election. Increasingly LGAs are combining the health and wellbeing plans into their council plans. Health Promotion funded organisations such as Women’s Health Loddon Mallee, Community Health Services, Primary Care Partnerships and some others are required to integrate planning with local governments to enhance impact of the investment. Violence against Women has recently been included in the State Health Plan and can therefore be explicitly addressed as a priority.
- Regional Management Forum – Loddon Mallee has had a strong collaboration of regional heads of state government departments and agencies and local government strategically focusing on key regional issues. The LM RMF has recently begun to focus on family violence. In July 2016

this structure will transfer to a new Regional Partnership Structure which will introduce a subregional focus with two bodies, also incorporating not for profit or business CEOs to similarly address significant regional priorities.

- Violence Prevention Groups and networks – several groups exist in the region that seek to raise community awareness and support better service provision. Most of these comprise workers, however some are community based.

This plan acknowledges the important role of existing structures and seeks to build on their actions and roles, aligning efforts to prevent violence against women and children.

Stakeholders to the regional action plan have varying types of focus on violence against women. These include:

- Organisations funded to respond to and/or prevent violence against women eg DV organisations, police
- Organisations with other key purposes but who contribute to violence prevention because of the major impact is has on their client group eg welfare organisations
- Organisations who contribute to violence prevention by virtue of being a member of a partnership with violence prevention as a shared priority eg PCP member organisations
- Organisations with a role that enables them to reach many people for an unrelated purpose and which can influence culture, social dynamics and attitudes eg CFA, sporting groups, media, Universities
- State and local governments who set policy, allocate funds and otherwise determine priorities for social change investment.

Examples of recent action in our region:

To date there have been a number of primary prevention actions taken in Loddon Mallee to address gender equality and primarily prevent violence against women. They include:

- **‘Preventing Violence against Women and Children in Our Community’** a pilot project in three of our shires; Mt Alexander, Macedon Ranges Shires and the City of Greater Bendigo. This three year project focused on local government leadership, workplace considerations and projects in the community. Activities included awareness raising and training of staff, policy development for internal and external purposes and innovative remodeling of some services in response to awareness of impacts on women experiencing violence.
 - **Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand – Bystander Training.** Training workers to prevent violence against women through challenging attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the problem.¹⁷ Over 2,500 workers in the Loddon Mallee region have received training, including organisations such as Gannawarra Shire in which almost 100% of staff and councillors were trained.
 - **Conferences, Forums and Roadshows** including: Violence Prevention – It’s Everybody’s Business Conference
 - School resources include **Solving the Jigsaw**, designed by the Centre for Non-Violence to promote knowledge and cultures that address power and control. WHLM has developed a whole school approach building on Healthy Together Victoria frameworks to embed
- P-12 health education across curriculum, all teaching areas and the school community with Ouyen and other Mallee schools.
- The majority of our Local Government Authorities have endorsed the **Victorian local government women’s charter**.
 - Regional **White Ribbon Day** - White Ribbon Australia observes the International Day of the Elimination of Violence against Women, also known as White Ribbon Day, annually on November 25. White Ribbon Day signals the start of the 16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence against Women, which ends on Human Rights Day (December 10). Victoria Police, local government authorities and community members in many parts of the region conduct White Ribbon events and seek accreditation as a White Ribbon ambassador or organisation.
 - Mallee Family Violence Executive supported a **radio campaign** to raise awareness of family violence.
 - Women’s Health Loddon Mallee has developed a number of tools:
 - › **Gender Equity Standards - Resource for Organisations** is a guide to improving gender equity using a Quality Assurance Framework. Organisations are guided through assessing equity, prioritising areas for improvement and developing systems that address governance, capacity building, culture, remuneration and promotion, working conditions that support flexibility for staff and working with clients and consumers.

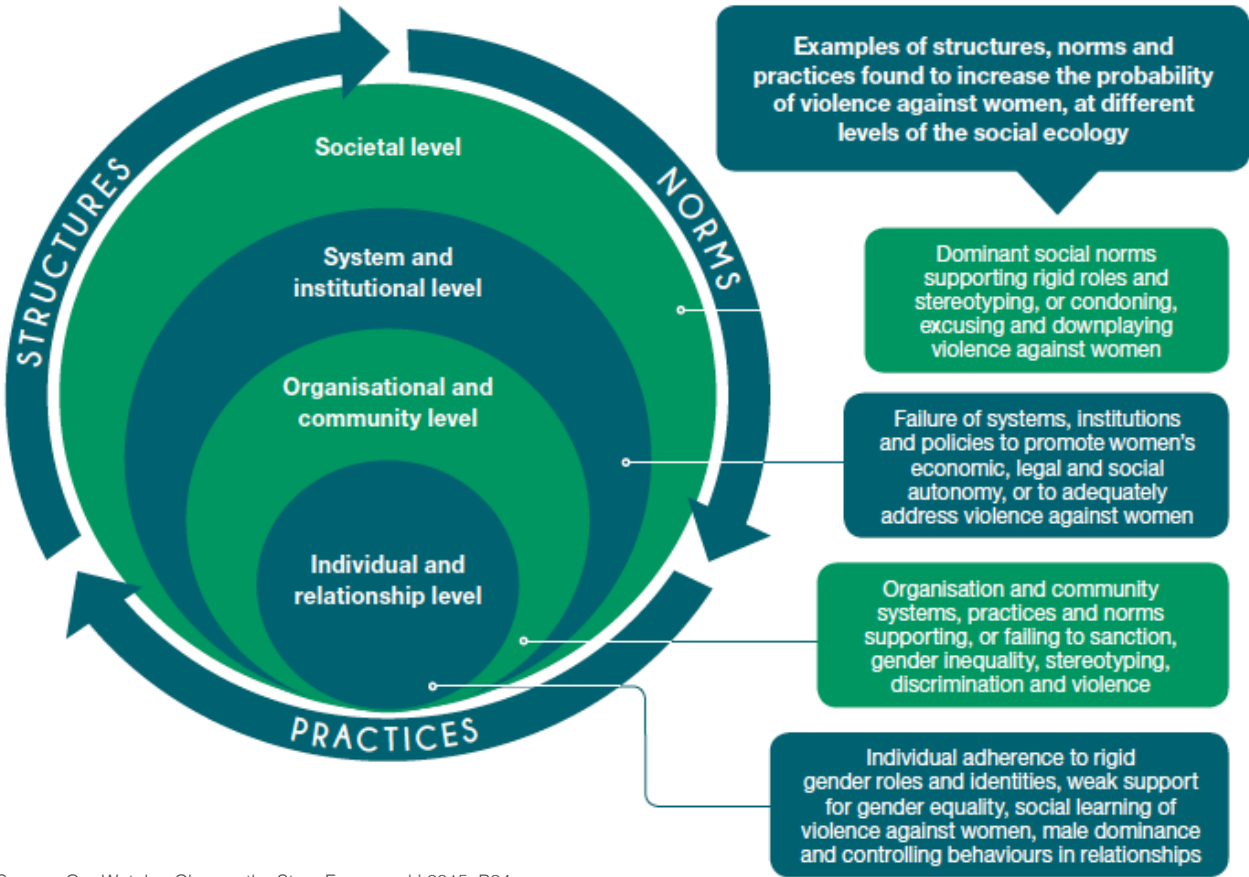
¹⁷ Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework, 2012, Victorian Government, Melbourne, Victoria



- › **Gender Fairness – Conversations about Equity card set** is a beautifully designed set of cards developed in partnership with St Luke’s Innovative Resources. The cards are designed to introduce the topic of gender equity and encourage learning, sharing and understanding.
- › **Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand Workplace Resource Kit** – guide, templates and information about organisational policy and structures that support responding to and preventing violence through HR and other organisational systems.
- Application of **gender analysis in policy** – example is Macedon Ranges Community Safety Plan which specifically acknowledges violence against women as an issue and includes a focus on women in its actions against all focus areas. Macedon Ranges Shire also produced a Prevention of Violence Against Women in Emergencies 2015-2016 Plan.
- **Go Goldfields**, a comprehensive place based strategy focused on healthy early development of children has developed a Family Violence Strategy.
- Grass roots initiatives such as the **Men Can Bake Cakes** group of Castlemaine men, doing community activities to demonstrate how men can take responsibility for the prevention of violence against women in our community.
- North West Region Country Fire Authority have established an internal strategy to increase gender equity and ensure violence prevention within its organisation. The **Violence Prevention Advisory Group** has developed an action plan to develop cultures of non-violence; pave the way for positive change in keeping women and children safe; educate members and foster greater gender equity within the organisation.
- Victorian State Government has made a couple of notable contributions in our region to support improvements to gender equity. Policy requiring gender equitable appointments to statutory and advisory boards has lifted the participation rate of women in leadership roles higher than in other sectors. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning has an active focus on gender equity demonstrating improvements to gender equity throughout the organisation.
- Media awards. Our region has been active and successful in nominating and being recognised for leadership in good reporting of violence against women. Several journalists have won EVA awards and numerous are using the **Responsible Reporting of Violence Against Women guidelines**.
- Communities for Children (Bendigo) has recently adopted an Early Years Family Violence Prevention strategy and will ensure training is delivered to the relevant workforce.

Socio-ecological model

The following Socio-ecological model of violence against women explains and establishes different domains where change is needed.



Source: Our Watch – Change the Story Framework' 2015, P24.

Our Watch, in the Change the Story Framework 2015 has identified techniques that have demonstrated effectiveness or promise across other areas of social policy or public health including:

- Direct participation programs
- Community mobilisation and strengthening
- Organisational development
- Communications and social marketing
- Civil society advocacy.

International reviews¹⁸ have noted that to achieve the broad, deep and sustainable change needed to prevent violence against women and their children, discrete projects or programs are not enough.

¹⁸ Our Watch, 2015, Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia. P 50.



Coordinated interventions across settings and levels of the social ecology are needed to reinforce and sustain change, and these require an infrastructure that includes:

- Mechanisms for coordination and quality assurance
- An expert workforce
- Political, sector-specific and civil society leadership
- Policy and legislative reform
- Shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks.

The Loddon Mallee Action Plan acknowledges these lessons learned and strives to implement best practice by ensuring that our strategies address each of these lessons. Our plan describes strategic regional work, combined with relevant local work that are mutually reinforcing.

Dimensions of behaviour change

So how do we change? In response to this model, evidence has led us to understand that there are a number of dimensions of individual behaviour change where we need to be effective.

There needs to be:

AWARENESS	General awareness that men's violence against women is prevalent and serious
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	Knowledge and understanding of causes of men's violence against women
	Knowledge and understanding of the multiple systems of oppression, which lead to violence. This is referred to as intersectionality
ATTITUDES AND BELIEF	Changing the attitudes that condone men's violence against women
	Changing the attitudes that expect people to uphold rigid gender stereotypes
ABILITY	Our ability (including skills) to challenge attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence against women
BEHAVIOUR	Changing our behaviour

The Loddon Mallee Action Plan

The Action Plan structure

This action plan outlines a number of components including:

- Guiding principles that embody our approach
- A description of the key actors of the plan
- Prioritisation of action
- A Vision
- Intended outcomes and,
- Strategies and suggested actions to achieve these outcomes and vision

Endorsement of the Action Plan is indicated by organisations 'signing on' to the commitment statement and alignment indicated through uptake of strategies and participation in communication.

Guiding Principles

COLLABORATION	We work with our partners and others knowing that whole of community change is only possible through alignment of effort.
STRENGTHS BASED	We seek to strengthen existing structures and groups rather than re-invent or change. The Plan seeks to align effort building on the existing regional strengths.
CAPACITY BUILDING	We work to build the capacity of individuals, agencies, organisations and communities to understand and act to change the underlying drivers of violence against women.
INTERSECTIONAL APPROACH	We know that some groups of women are more likely to experience male violence due to the intersection of multiple types of structural and cultural oppression (e.g. colonialism, racism, able-ism, ageism) and we will listen to, learn from and work with these communities so that we may better understand and address these issues in our prevention strategies.
INNOVATION AND LEARNING	We recognise that primary prevention of violence against women is an emerging area of knowledge and activity that requires innovation and learning. This includes the sharing of knowledge and evidence through learning, knowledge creation and evaluation processes.
VOICE	Most affected populations of women are subject to layers of disadvantage. We strive to enable these women to have a voice and pursue opportunities to hear and share stories from survivors of violence and gender discrimination.
ACTING NOW	We have a choice. We can change the story that currently sees a woman murdered every week by a current or former partner. We can choose a future where women and their children live free from violence. We need to act now.



Loddon Mallee Action Plan - who is involved?

All people in the Loddon Mallee are involved every day. It is our beliefs, attitudes, actions and behaviors that establish and effect gender relations and create an environment where violence against women exists. Some people in our society hold particular positions through which they can lead change. This Action Plan focuses on enabling all people and specific people holding particular roles in our society to change. Strategies need to be implemented at an appropriate scale and level to be effective. Within our region, at the local level there are very different realities and opportunities. Hence there is a need to tailor our strategies to these local contexts. To do this we will focus local efforts through local area partnerships. The key actors in our region and local area partnerships are expected to include:

Leadership:

- Organisations with a lead role in addressing violence against women: Mallee Family Violence Executive, Loddon Campaspe Integrated Family Violence Consortium, Northern Mallee and Loddon Campaspe Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups
- Organisations that have a lead role in a diverse array of sectors in the region – i.e. elected representatives
- Stewardship Group – a group of regional people will come together to provide leadership to the regional action. This group will be initially invited to participate and then can develop its appointment rules. The Stewardship group is a high level, skills based board. The term stewardship is deliberately chosen to convey that the group's role is to care for and manage the plan on behalf of the region

Local area and sub regionals networks, partnerships and organisations:

- Organisations involved in local and sub regional partnerships with a focus on violence against women: eg Sunraysia and Cobaw Community Health Services, Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre, Mallee Family Care, Northern Districts Community Health Service
- Organisations with a role in supporting coordination and collaboration: Northern Mallee Community Partnership, Southern Mallee, Bendigo Loddon, Campaspe and Central Victorian Primary Care Partnerships, Regional Development Victoria, Regional Management Forum, Regional Partnerships, Murray Primary Health Network
- Organisations with a role in working with community members: North West Region CFA, AFL Central Victoria, Mallee Sports Assembly and Sports Focus, churches, local government authorities, education institutions – schools, higher education, employers in a range of sectors, newspaper, tv, radio and social media organisations

Community

- Grass roots, informal groups of people: community groups who set up to run campaigns, marches, events and community groups. Reclaim the Night (Bendigo), Real Men Can Bake (Castlemaine) and others

Secretariat

- The scope of the secretariat role will depend on funding availability. At a minimum it will support the Stewardship group, convene a community of practice and establish a regional evaluation plan and as resources become available could undertake regional research, capacity building, planning support and advocacy. It will initially be supported by staffing contributed by Women's Health Loddon Mallee

Practitioners

- These are people skilled in gender equity and primary prevention of violence against women activities and will deliver the direct participation and workplace services

Engaged and emerging sectors

In the Loddon Mallee there are a number of sectors where gender equity and violence prevention work is already taking place.

- DV sector including Mallee Family Violence Executive and the Loddon Campaspe Integrated Family Violence Consortium have significant leadership roles with a history of service coordination and integration focus
- Indigenous Family Violence Networks
- Local Government
- Primary Care Partnerships - coordinating member organisations to coordinate violence prevention and response activity
- State government – through workplace initiatives (eg Gender equity in DELWP, Regional Management Forum, Gender equity in board appointments)
- Sport and Recreation – through regional bodies responding to head office programs eg AFL, codes of conduct in sporting clubs
- Emergency Services

Sectors with emerging roles are:

- Media
- Education
- Health

Desired Outcomes:

In the Loddon Mallee the intended outcomes that result from our work are that we have:

- Structural gender equality
- Freedom from gender stereotyping
- Non-violent communities
- Organisations are gender equitable
- Diverse women and men are represented equitably in leadership and public life
- Women are free from oppressive gender stereotypes
- Men are free from destructive gender stereotypes
- People treat each other with respect in all situations
- Leaders, individuals, organisations and communities take action to prevent violence against women and gender stereotyping



Vision

We in the Loddon Mallee are non-violent, gender equitable, non-discriminatory and have respectful relationships.
Women and children live free from violence.

Five strategies focused on action including:

Strategy 1. Strengthen and mobilise community leadership and groups to drive change to prevent violence against women, so that...

- The community and marginalised voices are more engaged in and initiating local PVAW and GE initiatives

Strategy 2. Workplace change - Embed gender equity and non-violent norms into organisation structures and cultures so that ...

- Organisations change their practice and there is an increase in staff capacity
- Organisations have gender equity and prevention of violence against women policy change
- Local agencies, organisations and groups have stronger relationships and are working together on prevention of violence against women and gender equity initiatives and collectively overcoming barriers

Strategy 3. Building skills and understanding through direct participation programs targeted at self-initiating individuals and groups so that...

- Target populations of individual women and men have increased knowledge and commitment to gender equity and increased capacity to prevent violence against women

Strategy 4. Leading and advocating on prevention of violence against women and gender equality so that...

- Leaders are championing and influencing social norms, behaviors and advocating for change at local and regional levels
- Initiatives are coordinated and aligned locally, across sectors and are intersectional



There are four strategies focused on support which are:

Strategy 6. Working through existing networks, build strong relationships and formal partnerships between local organisations. This will establish coordinated action at the appropriate scale and level.

Strategy 7. Build practitioner knowledge and capability to deliver gender equity and prevention of violence against women programs.

Strategy 8. Research, evaluation, improvement - Undertake research, monitoring and evaluation of policy, programs and this Action Plan, then implement findings to ensure improvement.

Strategy 9. Establish a Stewardship Group to lead, govern and monitor the Action Plan.

Strategy 5. Develop campaigns and communications to raise public awareness of the prevalence, seriousness and underlying drivers of violence against women and the need for change so that...

- Messages on the PVAW and Gender Equity are widely and consistently spread throughout the region
- General increase in our society's understanding about the importance and urgency of PVAW and GE, and a desire to bring about change
- Regional messages reinforce local initiatives

The Action Plan is designed for different actors to take action. Each of the nine strategies are focused on particular actors including:

- The community and community groups
- Workplaces
- Groups, organisations and agencies, sectors and services networking locally
- Individual leaders and representatives
- The stewardship group, secretariat, and practitioners regionally



**FIVE STRATEGIES TO
TAKE ACTION IN
LODDON MALLEE**



Strategy 1: Strengthening and mobilising Community

STRATEGY 1	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Strengthen and mobilise community leadership and groups to drive change to prevent violence against women	Community leaders	Local community leaders and groups take action by engaging community members through facilitating forums, workshops and events
	Community groups	Invite an expert to visit or organise your group to undertake capacity building on the gender equality and the prevention of violence against women activities
		Get involved in regional, state and national initiatives i.e. hold a White Ribbon Day event
		Access a grant for your community group to take action. Actively seek out funding to implement existing best-practice initiatives or to develop new ones
		Promote women's leadership
		Promote full and active participation of diverse women and girls in all aspects of community life
		Engage with marginalised community members giving them an opportunity to get involved and have a voice in decision making
		Support community groups in your local area to take action by providing training, resources or funding for initiatives to promote gender equity and prevent violence against women
		Seek to understand the lived experience of women in relation to gender inequity and violence

Promising Practice Examples: GippSport 50/50 Clubs; Think Women for Local Government; OurWatch's Respectful Relationships in Schools project and curriculum for students; Baby Makes 3; Media Advocates Project; Living Safer Sexual Lives

Strategy 2: Workplace Change

Some workplace change links to leadership opportunities outlined in Strategy 4.

STRATEGY 2	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Embed gender equity and non-violent norms into organisation structures and cultures	<p>The key site of change here is Workplaces and their workforce including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government • Community Services • Schools, TAFE and Universities • Hospitals and health services • Government agencies • Non-profit/government organisations • Business and corporations 	Make a decision as an organisation to embed gender equity and non-violent norms into your organisation's structure
		Undertake an organisational gender equity audit
		Develop a gender equity and prevention of violence against women organisation change strategy
		<p>Implement strategy by undertaking some of the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make gender equity and or the prevention of violence against women goals part of some staff's key performance indicators • Have gender equity as a regular item on staff meeting agenda to ensure conversations about gender equity in the workplace are a regular occurrence • Start a Prevention of Violence Against Women working group within your organisation or workplace • Promote women's full participation – brainstorm what barriers women face in organisation and make an action plan for how to address them • Implement DV Policy and family violence leave • Consider ways to support both mothers and fathers to balance work and parenting responsibilities
		Invest in staff training in gender equality and the prevention of violence against women
		Implement the Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand - Bystander Training, workplace program in your organisation or workplace. Build HR capacity to understand gendered experiences of your workplace and typical gender dynamics to strategically address gender power dynamics in the workplace – culture and systems
		Use leadership and organisational position to influence others:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote gender equity and non-violent norms in contractors, suppliers and funded groups • Pressure other like organisations to embrace similar workplace change • Communicate your strategy and actions to your clients, colleagues and the community • Financially support others and community groups to take action • Use your influence to focus attention on more at risk populations • Set gender equity targets

Promising Practice Examples: 'Take a Stand against domestic violence' program for workplaces; Swan Hill Rural City Council implementation of domestic violence leave for those affected by family violence; WHLM Gender Equity Standards Tool, NWR CFA Action Plan to prevent violence.



Strategy 3: Building understanding and skills

This strategy can be implemented in many contexts and the suggested actions have proven success, most notably in schools, workplaces, community settings and collectives. These actions are the most effective when implemented in conjunction with organisational development strategies (see Strategy 2).

STRATEGY 3	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Direct participation programs that provide understanding and skills to targeted and self-initiating individuals and groups.	These programs engage and involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> men, women, children or young people at the individual, relationship or group level targeted population groups 	Peer education programs supporting individuals to educate peers to critique gender norms and attitudes that support violence against women
		Bystander skills training for individuals to take action on violence supportive or sexist attitudes, behaviours and practices
		Engage services and programs that work with the target population groups to deliver programs
		Programs that support young people to critically engage with media and popular culture about representations of women, men and gender relations
		Programs that emphasise and support men's roles as parents
		Programs, events and groups that support men's adoption of non-violent masculinities
		Parenting programs that build men's and women's skills in gender equal and non-violent parenting
		Capacity building and education tailored to early years and primary school settings
		Primary prevention training and education tailored to roles and settings, population groups or the public eg. gender equity training, identifying violence training
		Adopt relevant standards and provide training eg. in sporting clubs or volunteer organisations

Promising Practice Examples: Baby Makes Three; 50/50 Clubs, Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand Bystander Training, AFL Respect and Responsibility, Solving the Jigsaw, Respectful Relationships.

Strategy 4: Leading and Advocating

STRATEGY 4	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
<p>Leading and advocating on prevention of violence against women and gender equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals • Representatives • Participating groups, organisations and agencies 	<p>Be an effective champion and advocate for change by taking responsibility for leading action and undertaking the work required to be effective in this role. Take action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually with your family and friends • At your workplace by leading change • In local groups, sporting and other interests • On social media
		<p>Support women to be visible and encourage their leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage women to be leaders in their community, work and region by facilitating opportunities for them to network and advocate collectively particularly on issues and in contexts where they are under-represented • Support and encourage women from population groups that are most at risk to lead. i.e. Invite a Survivor Advocate to speak at your event • Support visibility of women's agency through promotion of role models, celebrations, use of stories and examples
		<p>Engage a diverse range of champions and leaders who are representatives of and respected within targeted communities and who hold both formal and informal positions of leadership</p>
		<p>Join the regional Champions of Change either individually or organisationally to lead regional efforts and campaigns to implement this Action Plan</p>
		<p>Establish mechanisms to ensure champions and public advocates do not have personal histories that undermine their position, such as a police record that indicates the perpetration of violence against women</p>
		<p>Advocate for equal pay, equal representation and greater and better visibility of women in the media</p>
		<p>Back women when they are standing up or experiencing push backs</p>

Promising Practice Examples: EVA Awards Guidelines; A Line in the Sand column (Bendigo Advertiser); DV Vic PVAW in the Media Practice Framework; Loddon Campaspe Media Advocacy Project, Safe Steps Family Violence Media Advocates Project (statewide)



Strategy 5: Campaigns and communications

STRATEGY 5	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Develop campaigns and communications to raise public awareness of the prevalence, seriousness and underlying drivers of violence against women and the need for change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Stewardship Group community leaders and groups organisations and agencies the media 	Develop and deliver consistent and effective messages based on best available evidence and align effort through consistent messages across strategies and actions at all levels, to raise public awareness of the prevalence, seriousness and underlying drivers of violence against women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get the message out – include messages of prevention on websites, banners, public placards, public computer backgrounds, and signs at mainstream events Work with prevention of violence against women specialists to develop key messages of prevention based on evidence
		Develop campaigns specific to our region that are rooted in community mobilisation and leadership at the grass roots and have multiple components
		Get involved in state and national campaigns i.e. White Ribbon Day etc
		Develop a media engagement strategy
		Engage with local and regional media to partner in prevention of violence against women by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage local media outlets to commit to a policy to follow the EVA standards for reporting on violence against women Make local media outlets aware of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Awards (Elimination of Violence Against Women in the Media Awards) and encourage them to strive for a nomination
		Develop and promote a local equity scorecard which captures key indicators of diversity representation for the community

Promising Practice Examples: ‘City of Greater Bendigo says NO to Violence Against Women’ statement; PVAW integrated into Council Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plans;

Four strategies to support ourselves to take action:

Strategy 6: Local area network partnerships

STRATEGY 6	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
<p>Working through existing networks, build strong relationships and formal partnerships between local organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government • Primary Care Partnerships • organisations and agencies • networks and committees 	<p>Using existing structures, where they exist (such as family violence networks, Primary Care Partnerships, local government networks, community networks) or create a local area partnership made up of a range of different sectors to build aligned action locally. Engage with government, non-government and accountable leadership structures locally to establish these local area partnerships</p>
		<p>Build relationships and collaboration between mainstream services and Aboriginal services, disability services, aged care services, and CALD services to develop ways to collaborate, integrate and support each other's work</p>
		<p>Ensure initiatives and efforts to prevent violence against women are guided by specific policy, frameworks and best practice tailored to at risk and marginalised population groups, i.e. Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework and VicHealth's Enabling Health Framework (for disability)</p>
		<p>Prioritise the voices of marginalised women, and expertise of the organisations which advocate for those women, in developing initiatives for specific population groups</p>
		<p>Get involved with regional campaigns and Champions of Change either individually or organisationally to lead regional efforts and campaigns to implement this Action Plan</p>
		<p>Support the establishment of, and participation of staff in, a prevention of violence against women community of practice network to support each other's prevention work. Link into the Loddon Mallee community of practice</p>
		<p>Mobilise resources that fund innovative activities eg. by supporting the Community Foundation Central Victoria Violence Prevention Fund or seeking funding for projects</p>

Promising Practice Examples: Mallee Family Violence Executive Prevention of Violence Against Women Action Group; MAV Prevention of Violence Against Women Network; Women's Health Association of Victoria, PVAW Regional Action Plan Community of Practice.



Strategy 7: Practitioner knowledge and capability

STRATEGY 7	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Build practitioner knowledge and capability to deliver gender equity and prevention of violence against women programs	Key actors include people that are delivering gender equity and prevention of violence against women services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations • Practitioners • Stewards 	Build practitioner knowledge and capability to deliver gender equity and prevention of violence against women programs (strategy 2 and 3) through train the trainer programs
		Support the establishment of a gender equity and prevention of violence against women Loddon Mallee community of practice. This is to focus on learning and knowledge generation by practitioners, stewards and other interested individuals
		Develop or adapt appropriate tools for practitioners to use in gender equity and primary prevention of violence against women work
		Share relevant research with the community of practice for knowledge generation and learning
		Ensure that all practitioners delivering prevention of violence against women and gender equity services are able to effectively respond to disclosures of family violence
		Build understanding of the intersectionality of at risk populations and the multiple social power imbalances in society that can lead to violence against women (such as sexism, racism, colonialism, able-ism, age-ism, homophobia)

Promising Practice Examples: VicHealth Prevention of Violence Against Women Shortcourse; WHLM Gender Fairness Card Training; CRAF training, Cultural safety training.

Promising Practice Examples: Indigenous FV Regional Action Group activities; Living Safer Sexual Lives program, In Touch Multicultural Family Violence Service Prevention Programs.

Strategy 8: Research, Evaluation and Improvement

STRATEGY 8	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Undertake research, monitoring and evaluation of policy, programs and this Action Plan, then implement findings to ensure improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stewards • Secretariat • Practitioners • Groups, organisations and agencies • Government 	Identify ways in which women's lived experiences can inform primary prevention
		Seek specific financial resources to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework and its implementation for this Action Plan
		Undertake, contribute to and share relevant research (from other regions, states, nationally and internationally) building an evidence base, learning and knowledge
		Facilitate and tap into research and evaluation by projects and programs that contribute to the implementation of this Action Plan
		Share evidence and learning in a diverse array of forums, newsletters and through networks
		Respond to evaluation and research findings with clear improvement decisions

Promising Practice Examples: Mallee Family Violence Executive Prevention of Violence Against Women Action Group; MAV Prevention of Violence Against Women Network; Women’s Health Association of Victoria, PVAW Regional Action Plan Community of Practice.



Strategy 9: Stewardship

STRATEGY 9	KEY ACTORS	SUGGESTED ACTIONS
Establish a Stewardship Group to lead, govern and monitor the Action Plan	Stewards - who are regional leaders that are taking a stand on the prevention of violence against women and gender equality	Establish a stewardship group to lead, govern and monitor the implementation of the Loddon Mallee Action Plan
		Develop and coordinate Loddon Mallee wide action including campaigns, communications, knowledge generation and capability
		Engage and mobilise key individuals, representatives, organisations, sectors to be aware of and take action on the prevention of violence against women
		Build local partnerships for action

Key resources and tools

Planning and capacity building resources:

- Equality and Safety for Women – online guide to prevention planning with evidence, tools, approaches and case studies.
<http://equalityandsafetyforwomen.org.au>
- Our Watch website www.ourwatch.org.au
National framework for violence prevention with approaches, tools, case studies
- VicHealth website – research, practice guides, case studies www.vichealth.vic.gov.au
- VicHealth Concise Guide for Evaluation of primary prevention of violence against women projects
www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/a-concise-guide-to-evaluating-primary-prevention-projects
- Media kits and Resources for Journalists
www.ourwatch.org.au/News-media
- OurWatch’s Respectful Relationships in Schools project and curriculum for students
[www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-\(1\)/Respectful-Relationships-Education-in-Schools-\(Vic\)](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/Respectful-Relationships-Education-in-Schools-(Vic))
- Victoria Local Government Women’s Charter – the charter, guide, tools and resources for increasing gender equity and numbers of women in local government. www.vlga.org.au/What-were-doing/Women-in-local-government/Victorian-Local-Government-Womens-Charter or www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equity/Pages/womens-charter.aspx
- UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women – or UN Women
www.unwomen.org/en
- National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022
- Australian Women Against Violence (AWAVA)
<http://awava.org.au>
- Australian Women’s Health Network (AWHN)
<http://awhn.org.au/>

Acronyms

AFL Central Victoria	Australian Football League – Central Victoria
IFVRAG	Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group
LCIFVC	Loddon Campaspe Integrated Family Violence Consortium
PCPs	Primary Care Partnerships
PVAW	Prevention of Violence against Women
RANCH	Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community Houses
RAP	Regional Action Plan
NWR CFA	North West Region Country Fire Authority
MFVE	Mallee Family Violence Executive
LGA	Local Government Authorities
WHLM	Women’s Health Loddon Mallee
Murray PHN	Murray Primary Health Network





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