

Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project

Whittlesea Community Futures requests State and Federal Government support to implement an integrated early intervention and prevention service model to respond to family violence in CALD communities

What is happening right now?

- 2,110 family violence incidents in 2012-13 were reported to Victoria Police including one homicide (an increase of 35% on the previous year); In 743 of these incidents children were present.ⁱ
- An average of 41 family violence incidents are reported to Victoria Police every week.
- More than half of all assaults (56%) arose from family violence.
- Family violence was the context for 46% of all rapes and 15% of all other sex offences (95% of the victims were female; 100% of the alleged offenders were male).ⁱⁱ
- Significantly more referrals (3618) to the regional family violence service from Victoria Police for women from the Whittlesea municipality than from *any other municipality* in the Northern Metropolitan Region (NMR).ⁱⁱⁱ
- In September 2013, Victoria Police attended 170 call outs to family violence incidents in the Whittlesea LGA^{iv}. Of these, 84% were to recidivist addresses,^v the highest number for the Northern Division 5.

The City of Whittlesea is diverse, with a large proportion of residents born overseas (34%) and a larger proportion born in non-English speaking countries (32%) than the Melbourne statistical average^{vi}.

Over 40% of residents speak a language other than English at home, compared to the Melbourne average of 29%. The municipality also has a large proportion (22.4%) of people who speak a language other than English and speak English *not well* or *not at all*^{vii}.

Local evidence and experience reveals existing service responses in the municipality are not meeting the complex needs of CALD women experiencing family violence. A research and scoping exercise was undertaken by the Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership in 2012 and has informed the development of a new approach that focuses on the additional barriers to accessing support and services experienced by CALD women – the *Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project*^{viii}.

www.whittleseacommunityfutures.org.au



How can we build a better future?

The Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Project (WCFVP) is delivering an integrated service model to local CALD communities. The aim of the model is to support CALD communities, newly arrived migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, to break the cycle of family violence and empower these communities to respond to the challenge of preventing violence against women.

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 growth rate as well as the geographic isolation of some areas due to the urban/rural interface. The experience of family violence within CALD communities is complex and requires an appropriate mix of tailored prevention and early intervention strategies be adopted.

Several elements of the WCFVP are currently funded and underway including:

- A grants scheme for women's groups to increase social connectivity and women's knowledge of and confidence to access supports and services
 - Six groups received funding in round one
 - 16 group leaders received training in identifying family violence and managing disclosures
 - Family violence legal education sessions delivered to all the groups; 20% of participants accessed family violence support following completion of the sessions and in addition to this, two people not in these groups accessed support after receiving information from friends/family who attended these sessions.
- Partnering with community and religious leaders to prevent family violence
 - Consultations held with six religious leaders representing four faith institutions
 - A 'Families Free from Violence' forum held with 110 members of the Chaldean Catholic community, with further community education sessions to follow
 - Exploring roll-out of this forum to other groups.
- Partnership with inTouch Inc, Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence to deliver Arabic-language Men's Behaviour Change program in the Whittlesea municipality
 - Supporting two Arabic-speaking facilitators to complete course in Men's Behaviour Change at Swinburne University in 2014 (see *Family Violence Fact Sheet 5*).
- Adaptation of Victoria Legal Aid's 'Settled & Safe' training model to suit the municipality's CALD community's needs.
- Partnership with Monash University's Gender, Leadership and Social Sustainability Unit to develop and implement a robust evaluation of the project.

How much will it cost?

Project Element	Resources (staff, evaluation, administration)	Total (per annum)
Model Coordination/Integration Mechanism	0.8 EFT Project Worker (\$58,205) Administration costs (\$9,448)	\$67,653 Funded by Victoria Legal Aid for 12 months
The Empowerment of CALD Women	Social Support Group brokerage funds (\$40,000) Training and consultation (\$7,500) Materials and administration costs (\$5,000) Evaluation (\$1,500)	\$54,000 Funded by Scanlon Foundation and Victoria Women's Benevolent Trust
Building the Capacity of Community and Religious Leaders	Networking, training and administrative support (\$6,500)	\$6,500 Funded by Scanlon Foundation
TOTAL FUNDING (up to July 2014)		\$128,153
Elements requiring urgent Government funding:		
Women's Advisory Group	Meeting costs \$3,840 x 2 years- \$7,680 Training for group - \$1,000 Evaluation - \$1,000	\$9,680
Preventing Family Violence: Early Intervention in the Settlement Process	0.5 EFT Project Worker (\$42,000) Administration costs (\$10,000) Evaluation (\$2,000)	\$54,000
Preventing Family Violence: Programs Targeting Young People (whole-of-school program)	0.4 EFT Project Worker (\$28,000x2years) School expenses (\$30,000) Evaluation (\$15,000) Materials and administration costs (\$10,000)	\$111,000
Reducing Recidivism: Increasing Access to Behaviour Change Programs	3x 26 weeks (minimum 50 hours) Arabic-language programs (\$150,000) Evaluation (\$10,000) <i>Including evidence-sharing forum, publishing of findings and printing of report</i> Translation of program materials, administration costs (\$5,000)	\$165,000
Project total (per annum)		\$467,833

How will the community benefit?

The project aims to reduce violence against women and community acceptance of family violence through improved attitudes to gender equity and respectful relationships. CALD women will benefit from increased connectedness with the community and reduced barriers to accessing support services.

The project will:

- build an effective and culturally-responsive multi-level service system to reduce the incidence and impact of family violence in CALD communities;
- increase knowledge amongst CALD communities of what constitutes family violence;
- improve early-identification of CALD women at risk of violence;
- increase community safety and awareness of support services;
- assist to reduce recidivist violent offending for CALD men.

Family violence imposes a huge financial cost on the Australian economy.

- Access Economics estimates that family violence cost Australia \$8.1 billion in 2002-03^x.
- VicHealth report that eliminating violence against women would save the health sector \$207 million per year^x.

What objectives does this help us achieve?

Federal Government

- National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Their Children 2010-2022
- National Plan First Action Plan 2010-2013: Building A Strong Foundation

Victorian Government

- Everyone Has A Responsibility To Act – Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children 2012-2015
- VicHealth Framework for the Prevention of Violence Against Women
- Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children

City of Whittlesea

- Council Plan 2013-2017
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Connect: A municipal plan for children, young people and their families 2013-2018
- Building a Respectful Community A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region 2011-2016
- Department of Justice North Metropolitan Region Regional Community Safety Plan 2011
- Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership Action Plan 2011-2016

Key Messages

- Family violence in the City of Whittlesea is at an unacceptably high level and will continue to increase as the population grows.
- The City of Whittlesea has one of the highest reported incidents of family violence in the Northern Metropolitan Region.
- There has been a 249% increase in reported incidences of family violence in the municipality since 1999.
- Over 40% of residents in the municipality speak a language other than English at home, compared to the Melbourne average of 29%.
- It is critical to provide for cultural diversity within specialist family violence services given the City of Whittlesea's highly diverse population, the current and projected growth rate as well as the geographic isolation of some areas due to the urban/rural interface.

ⁱ Victoria Police Family Incident Reports

http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?a=internetBridgingPage&Media_ID=72311

ⁱⁱ Women's Health In the North Family Violence Fact Sheet Whittlesea LGA 2012-2013

ⁱⁱⁱ Police referrals received by NFDVS by LGA Financial Year Comparison July 2009 - June 2013

^{iv} Victoria Police Whittlesea Family Violence Unit discussion November 2013

^v where police have attended three or more times in the past 12 months

^{vi} Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census of Population and Housing

^{vii} Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census of Population and Housing

^{viii} Whittlesea CALD Communities Family Violence Scoping Exercise Report 2012

<http://www.whittleseacommunityconnections.org.au/content/research-reports/>

^{ix} Access Economics 2004, *The cost of domestic violence to the Australian economy: part 1*, Office of the Status of Women, Canberra

^x Cadilhac DA, Magnus A, Cumming T, Sheppard L, Pearce D & Carter R 2009, *The health and economic benefits of reducing disease risk factors*, VicHealth, Melbourne