

Primary Prevention in Schools - Preventing Violence against Women and Children

Whittlesea Community Futures is seeking State Government support to implement a pilot program in schools with a focus on gender equity and respectful relationships to help prevent violence and sexual assault against women and children

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. Of these, 84% were to recidivist addresses,^{iv} the highest number for the Northern Division 5.

How can we build a better future?

There is a powerful rationale for embedding education about gender equity and respectful relationships in schools to prevent violence against women and children^v. Early interventions with children and young people can have a lasting effect on their relationships in the future. Schools are logical sites for violence prevention education because of the volume of young people they engage.

www.whittleseacommunityfutures.org.au

How much will it cost?

Pilot	Resources	Cost (per annum)
Preventing family violence and sexual assault: Program targeting young people (whole-of-school program)	Project worker	\$100,000
	Project materials and resources	
	School expenses	\$30,000
	Evaluation	\$15,000
TOTAL (per annum)		\$145,000

How will the community benefit?

Children and young people spend much of their time at school. They are a captive audience for teachers and professionals to deliver programs to improve understanding of gender equity, sexual assault and family violence.

By intervening early in life in a universal setting, violence-supportive attitudes and gender stereotypes are challenged and de-normalised. Schools become environments that value and support non-violent norms by building and modelling respectful and equitable gender relations. The entire school community is supported to develop greater connection to formal and informal support and is encouraged to take action to address violence. In the long-term the community benefits from improved safety and reduced rates of family violence and sexual assault that comes from valuing gender equity and respectful relationships.

The prevention of family violence has enormous economic benefits:

- The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (2009, p.4) state that reducing all forms of violence against women by 10% by 2012-22 could amount to \$1.6 billion in savings^{vi}.
- VicHealth (2009, p.64) state that eliminating intimate partner violence would save the health sector \$207 million per year and save \$1.8 billion in production and leisure costs annually^{vii}.

What objectives does this help us to 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

- The City of Whittlesea has the highest rate of reported family violence in the Victoria Police Northern Division 5.
- 2110 family violence incidents were reported in 2012-13 to Victoria Police including one homicide (an increase of 35% on the previous year); in 743 of these incidents children were present^{viii}.
- 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)^{ix}.
- On average 3 sexual offences are reported in the municipality every week.
- An average of 40 incidents of family violence are reported every week.
- More than half (56%) of all assaults arose from family violence.

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

^v VicHealth Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria 2007

^{vi} National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their children, The costs of violence against women and their children, FACHSIA 2009

^{vii} Victorian Health Promotion Foundation The health costs of violence: measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence: a summary of the findings VicHealth 2004

^{viii} Victoria Police Family Incident Reports

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

^{ix} Women's Health In the North Family Violence Fact Sheet Whittlesea LGA 2012-2013