

Additional Local Specialist Family Violence Services

Whittlesea Community Futures requests State and Federal Government support for additional specialist family violence services and brokerage funds

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

The Whittlesea municipality has the highest rate of recidivist offending for the Victoria Police Northern Division 5^{iv}. In September 2013, Victoria Police attended 170 call outs to family violence incidents in the municipality. Of these, 84% were to recidivist addresses (where police have attended three or more times in the past 12 months).

Local evidence reveals existing service responses in the municipality are not meeting the complex needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities experiencing family violence. Thirty-four per cent of residents in the municipality are born overseas and over forty per cent speak a language other than English at home.

The local settlement service reports that in 2013 there were 277 cases reported to staff, an average of 23 per month^v. For most of these clients this was the first time they had ever reported the violence.

Currently, family violence services provide outreach from local non-specialist agencies. Due to funding limitations these programs are only available for a limited period each week (approximately 3 hours). With increased funding specialist services would be able to build on the current responses to Whittlesea residents and co-locate full-time case-worker/s at key local services to increase support provided to CALD women.

www.whittleseacommunityfutures.org.au



How can we build a better future?

Whittlesea Community Futures requests the State government to provide additional funding for local family violence specialist services which will:

- Increase immediate response from agencies to police referrals
- Provide services to women and children
- Provide secondary consultations to other local services
- Undertake case-work and therapeutic response for women and children.

How much will it cost?

Item	Cost (per annum)
Co-located specialist services and outreach to LGA	\$250,000
Brokerage	\$50,000
Total (per annum)	\$300,000

How will the community benefit?

Despite the increasing demand for services there has not been a proportionate increase to the workforce, program funding or additional resources in the family violence sector^{vi}. The already stretched services supporting women and children and holding men accountable for their violence are under severe amounts of pressure.

Family violence occurs in all communities; it is critical to provide specialist family violence services with a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (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 high rate of family violence incidents requires a comprehensive approach to not only address the critical issues arising currently but to meet future needs.

Element	Immediate impacts	Longer term benefits
Additional specialist funding and brokerage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improved response to police referrals and high-risk cases -Immediate response to women in crisis -Improved response to CALD women and children due to co-location with the settlement services -Provide secondary consultations to other services -Provide case work & therapeutic response to women and children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improved response to police referrals and high-risk cases -Improved capacity of non-family violence services to identify family violence in clients -Safety for women and children -Reduced violence against women and children

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

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
- Whittlesea Community Futures Partnership Action Plan 2011-2016
- Building a Respectful Community A Strategy for the Northern Metropolitan Region 2011-2016
- Department of Justice North Metropolitan Region Regional Community Safety Plan 2011

Key Messages

- Provision of and access to family violence services for the Whittlesea community is limited due to funding restrictions and stretched resources.
- Capacity of non-family violence services to respond effectively to reports of family violence will be built through the co-location of family violence case-managers.
- The municipality 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^{vii}.

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 Whittlesea Community Connections Family Violence Monitor Report #6 2013

^{vi} City of Whittlesea Draft Human Services Needs Analysis 2013

^{vii} Victoria Police Family Incident Reports

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