

Grampians Community of Practice for the Prevention of Violence Against Women

Discussion Paper

Preventing Violence against Women and Sector Reflections

Background

Due to the alarming rates of violence against women in the Grampians region of Western Victoria, representatives from 30 diverse and influential local organisations have committed to taking action to prevent violence against women in our community.

Led by Women's Health Grampians, the newly formed Grampians Community of Practice for the Prevention of Violence against Women commenced in June 2015 with quarterly meetings to be held across Ballarat, Ararat and Horsham. At each gathering, members will gain a better understanding and jointly address the issue of violence against women by sharing experiences, hearing from guest speakers, identifying common challenges and using local knowledge, networks and resources to work together.

In early 2015, Women's Health Grampians undertook extensive community engagement and consultation to identify level of interest and need for establishing this initiative (full report available).

Through this consultation, key challenges to implementing prevention of violence initiatives were identified by local stakeholders as being funding, staffing, limited knowledge (including limited knowledge of existing resources available), and lack of internal engagement and support.

These, along with other emerging issues will be the priority areas of focus for the network in the first 12 months.

Following each Community of Practice, Women's Health Grampians will publish a discussion paper covering the main topics and discussion from the day to ensure the information is available beyond the event.

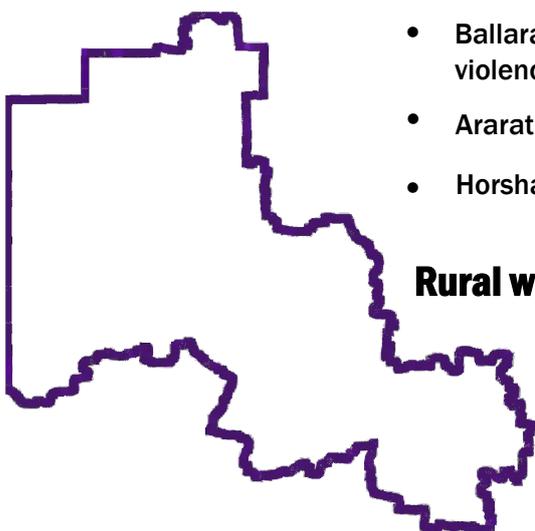
This initiative is generously supported by a grant from the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust.



Violence against women - the Grampians story

Family violence incidence rates in the Grampians region are significantly higher than the Victorian average.

Women in regional Australia face additional family violence risk factors such as traditional expectations about gender roles, lack of financial opportunity, social isolation, lack of privacy and confidentiality as well as higher rates of access to firearms among perpetrators.



- Ballarat rates are 50% higher (30 reported incidents of family violence each week)
- Ararat rates are 80% higher
- Horsham rates are 100% higher

Rural women and children in the Grampians region are at an increased risk of family violence

Community of Practice **CoP** for the prevention of violence against women

The first CoP session was held on the 24th June 2015 at the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and attracted representatives from a wide variety of stakeholders from across the Grampians Region. Over 30 diverse and influential organisations and individuals were involved.

The organisations that participated in the CoP are listed below:

Government, Justice & Legal

Department of Health and
Human Services
Department of Justice and
Regulation
Grampians Pyrenee
Primary Care Partnership
Victorian Police
Child and Family Services
Central Highlands
Community Legal

Local Government

Horsham Rural City Council
Ballarat City Council
Moorabool Shire Council
Hepburn Shire Council
Yarriambiack Shire Council
Pyrenees Shire Council
Golden Plains Shire Council

Business + Community

Ararat Regional Business
Association
AME Systems
Ballarat Foundation
MECU
YMCA Salvation Army
ShantiWorks

Health Services

Ballarat Community Health
Barwon Centre Against Sexual
Assault
Hepburn Health
The Victorian Women's Trust
Grampians
Community Health
WRISC

Please contact Women's Health Grampians for any inquiries regarding the Community of Practice

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This paper is split into three sections reflecting the round-table discussions from the event:

Current **Achievements**,
Opportunities
and **Challenges** to preventing violence locally

Community of Practice **CoP**
for the prevention of violence against women

Achievements

The achievements organisations recognised as significant during the round table discussions are listed below:

There has been an

Increase

in awareness e.g media and community taking note now, identifying and refining key messages to community

A strategic

Focus

on

specific settings e.g workplaces or schools

Using the same

Language

is helping to get everyone on the same page who is involved in PVAW

Successful and meaningful

Collaboration

between organisations because of increased awareness

Increase in

Willingness

to engage and act is a key achievement

The opportunities organisations recognised as significant during the round table discussions are listed below:

Strong themes emerged around opportunities, these included: funding, education and training and media

The partnerships between community services was also a strong theme with open dialogue between agencies deemed critical to this work

A move to more aligned and integrated planning is an opportunity

The Royal Commission is seen as an upcoming opportunity

Opportunities in the justice sector such as tracking bracelets, increased sentences for family violence and more family violence courts in the region

Funding

An increase in stable funding

Investigating new funding sources

Philanthropy funding

Skills transfer - donate skills - sharing resources

Education + Training

Educating people to be on the same page
i.e. definitions of family violence

Education in the community for the community

Consistent and available PVAW training

Men's Behaviour Change programs -
evidence based programs that work

Media

Raising more awareness

Media releases

Highlighting issues

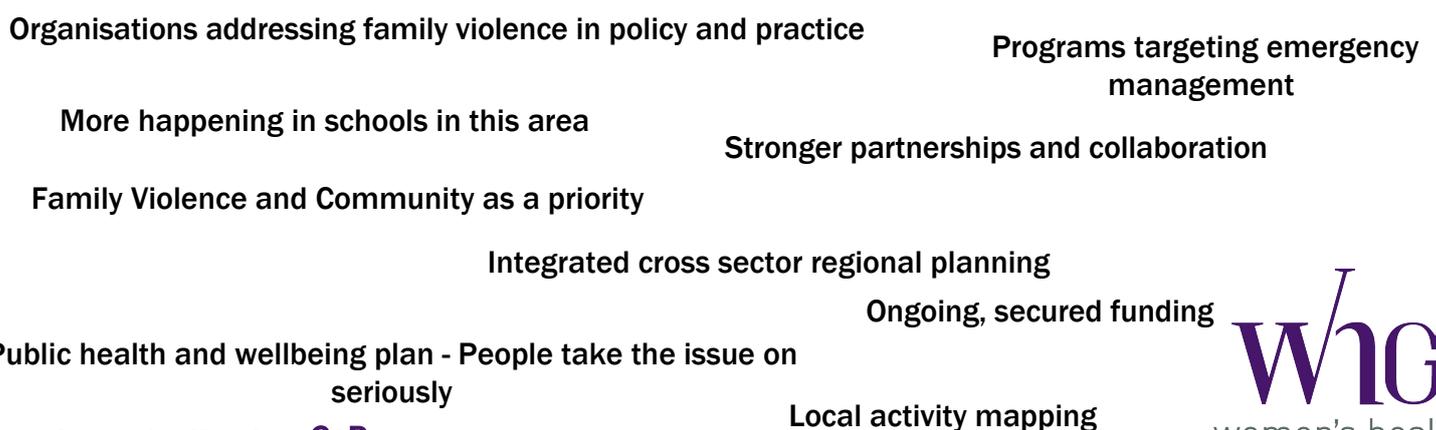
Maintaining networks with media agencies

Stronger voice

The challenges organisations recognised as significant during the round table discussions are listed below:



To finish the Community of Practice session each round table was asked to share their thoughts and ideas with the larger group. Below is a summary of the main points raised:



Thoughts, ideas & suggestions

Use the current leverage - media, policy

Please map all the amazing work in the region

'You the Man' bystander training in the whole region

Training around 'Gender' focusing on equity,
understanding policy and engaging the media

How to collaborate better

Acknowledge rural challenges

“ Listening to everyone’s ideas and hearing voices from all sorts of groups. Good cross sector of participants provides great opportunity for information sharing and networking ”

“ Great to be in a large group of people who get PVAW and are committed to it! ”

“ Networking opportunities and coming together as a region and seeing potential opportunities ”



About Women's Health Grampians

Established in 1991, Women’s Health Grampians (WHG) is one of 11 women’s health services operating in Victoria, funded by the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services. It covers 11 local government areas across the Grampians region, extending in a wedge from Bacchus Marsh to the South Australian border. WHG aims to drive and support systemic change that will impact positively on the lives of women in the Grampians region. WHG has two priority areas: sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of violence against women (PVAW).

WHG adopts a population based, primary prevention approach to reduce and prevent violence against women. WHG seeks to address the social and cultural factors underlying violence against women: that is, gender inequities and attitudes and beliefs that support gender inequality, sexism and discrimination. Working in this area for over eight years, WHG has gained significant knowledge and experience, particularly in terms of region specific issues, primary prevention, local-level engagement and a ‘whole of community approach’.

Please contact Women's Health Grampians for any inquiries regarding the Community of Practice

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