

Grampians Regional Strategy to end violence against women and children

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BARRIERS: Representatives from the 14 organisations that are part of a regional strategy to combat domestic violence. Picture: CONTRIBUTED

SENIOR staff from 14 organisations across the Grampians region met to commence planning

a strategic and co-ordinated approach to end violence against women and children.

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Research shows that women living in rural areas are at an increased risk due to their geographical and social isolation and other factors such as increased gun ownership.

There are also more barriers to reporting where lack of anonymity and fear of stigma and shame can inhibit women seeking help or leaving abusive relationships.

Building on the evidence documented in the new national framework for the prevention of violence against women Change the Story, the Grampians Regional Strategy will lay the foundation for integrated work in the primary prevention of violence against women by improving gender equity across the region.

“This is a watershed moment for this region,” Women’s Health Grampians chief executive Marianne Hendron said.

“If we are going to build communities of equality and respect, where women and children are safe, we need to start challenging the status quo - the stereotypes and norms we have around gender, the structural barriers inhibiting women’s independence. To do this - we need to have leadership, we need to be strategic, and we need to work together.”

Local government will also play a role in the strategy.

“I think this is an important step forward,” Ararat Rural City Council’s director of corporate strategy, risk and governance Colleen White said.

“Local government is in a unique position to ensure both women and men have equal access to all opportunities, and gendered stereotypes are challenged through the work that we do.”

Ms Hendron said she hoped more organisations would become involved.

“All local councils from across the region have been invited to be part of this strategy and we are encouraged with the response so far,” she said.

“We hope more organisations that share the vision for building communities of equality and respect to prevent violence against women and their children will join the regional strategy and further strengthen our local capacity as the plan develops.”



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