

Act@Work is an organisation-wide cultural-change program which enables workplaces to respond to violence against women while also addressing the underlying causes: the beliefs and attitudes that support gender inequality, sexism and discrimination.

Act@Work was developed by Women's Health Grampians (WHG) in partnership with Child and Family Services (CAFS) Ballarat, WRISC Family Violence Support and the City of Ballarat and funded by the Victorian State Government Department of Justice and Regulation from 2012-2015. An independent evaluation of the program was conducted over this time and the results are summarised in this paper. As of April 2016, four organisations have completed the program and it is in progress with a further six. It continues to be delivered by Women's Health Grampians.

The program aims to:

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| 1. Increase <i>knowledge</i> of sexism, discrimination and violence against women | 2. Increase <i>awareness</i> of the impacts of these behaviours and the costs of not taking action | 3. Develop <i>skills</i> for individuals, and <i>workplace capacity</i> , to take action to intervene safely and effectively |
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Act@Work has two core components:

- 1. An organisation-wide strategy to support sustainable changes in the workplace**
Engaging management in the program
Appointing an internal Action Group to develop and implement an action plan to lead change

Induction program
Organisational needs assessment
Internal and external communications
Environmental audit
Policy review

- 2. Training for staff on bystander action and community responsibility**
Training covers the drivers of violence against women and how we can each take action.

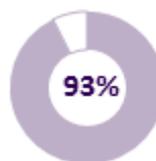
Knowledge
Challenge sexism
Bystander training
Understand unconscious bias
Active bystander

EVALUATION

Act@Work participants (workplaces 1-7) had increased knowledge, skills and willingness to be an active bystander after completing the program.



97% of participants were 'very happy' or 'happy' that their organisation was participating in the Act@Work project



93% of participants would recommend the training to all staff



98% of participants were 'very likely' or 'quite likely' to take action to address sexist or discriminatory behaviour in the workplace



96% of participants were 'very likely' or 'quite likely' to speak out against family violence

“Very thought provoking and provided a wide range of ideas about what violence is, there were some things I have never considered”
Act@Work participant

Source: White Ribbon Day Survey Pre and Post from Workplaces 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

The Act@Work program showed a significant positive shift in **knowledge, skills, attitudes and willingness to be an active bystander** from pre-program results in all workplaces.

Question	Pre-program	Post-program	Shift
% of participants survey who thought telling of sexist jokes was 'never ok' in social settings	29%	46%	↑ 17%
% of participants surveyed who thought telling of sexist jokes was 'never ok' in work settings	43%	57%	↑ 14%
% of participants surveyed who believed they would say or do something to show they didn't approve if told a sexist joke	41%	61%	↑ 20%
% of participants surveyed aware of policies and practices in place to educate or inform employees about what is acceptable behaviour towards women	48%	67%	↑ 19%
% of participants surveyed who were 'very confident' that their workplace would take action if made aware they had treated a woman unfairly	34%	45%	↑ 11%

Table 1. A snapshot of data from the evaluation report, workplaces 1-7.

Example of participant feedback:

1. After completing Act@Work have you witnessed sexism towards women?

Situation: "My brother's comments about a woman that had been involved in domestic violence and how she was to blame because she kept going back to him."

What did you do?: "I spoke out and said what a difficult position she is in and how hard it is to leave a relationship like that."

Why did you take action?: "I felt confident and educated about the facts."

2. After completing Act@Work have you witnessed sexism towards women at work?

Situation: "Young male staff talking about women they had met at a hotel in an unflattering manner."

What did you do?: "Told them the conversation wasn't appropriate."

Why did you take action?: "Because I now understand how it can impact culturally on others"

IMPLEMENTATION

Evaluation of the Act@Work programs impact in workplaces showed the keys to success are:

The extent of **Leadership being actively engaged in the program**

and having an **Action group that involves the 'right'**

people - employees with access to resources

(executive/managers) and people willing to take on the role

of being an **internal 'champion'**

The influence of Act @Work **resources and expertise,**

and the impact and reach of **community conversations.**

“Leadership and courage is needed to create cultural change”
Act@Work participant

For more information about the Act@Work program contact Women's Health Grampians
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