

Grampians Community of Practice for the Prevention of Violence against Women

Session 8: Equality and Respect for Everyone: Supporting Diversity & Inclusion: Discussion Paper

27 July 2017

Art Gallery of Ballarat, Ballarat Central



A Community of Practice (CoP) is an effective way for people to share experiences, identify common challenges, solve problems and learn – thereby maximising opportunities to improve evidence-based practice in real time.

The GCoP-PVAW aims to:

- Assist people to access resources to improve their practice
- Translate research into relevant and accessible knowledge
- Facilitate the exchange of skills and knowledge
- Provide opportunities for people to support each other develop working relationships and share problem-solving strategies with one another



Helen Macpherson Smith Trust

The Grampians Community of Practice for the Prevention of Violence against Women (GCOP-PVAW) is led by WHG and supported by the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.

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Background

This Grampians Community of Practice for the Prevention of Violence against Women (GCoP) explored the topic of diversity and inclusion, acknowledging there are many factors and identities that contribute to a person's experience. To truly achieve gender equality and prevent violence against women, we must consider what equality looks like for ALL women, including women from diverse groups. During this session participants:

- Looked at the ways diversity affects people's experiences
- Considered how we can make our own practices more inclusive
- Heard local stories
- Shared useful tools and resources
- Met others working in this area

Overall 54 people attended this GCoP, an increase of 20% from last session. We had representation from 33 different organisations from diverse settings including education; state departments; government, justice and legal; community health services; and local council. The reach of the messages from the session will therefore make a significant contribution to cultural change.

Participants said the most enjoyable aspects of this GCoP were:



Section 1: Sector and Regional Update

1. Sector and Regional Update (Marianne Hendron, WHG)

Grampians Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Alliance

There are now 62 registered members of CoRE, including 4 new members who have signed on in the past month.



12 months following the launch of the [CoRE plan](#), we have developed an evaluation plan that will inform the new plan in 2020. The evaluation will include a combination of traditional research methods and action research to look at the progress that has been made so far. The evaluation will collate local stories of CoRE actions, review WHG and CoRE Alliance Governance Group processes, and establish baseline data on gender inequality in the Grampians region.

Royal Commission into Family Violence

The Royal Commission into Family Violence acknowledges that if we are going to have a real impact on family violence, we need to be inclusive in our practice, as a one size fits all approach will not work. The Commission's 'Terms of Reference' included a requirement to consider the experiences of diverse groups, including children; seniors; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; people within culturally and linguistically diverse communities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (LGBTI); people living in rural, regional and remote communities; and people with a disability. To understand more on how we can promote equality among these groups, see below:

OurWATCH 'Putting the Prevention of Violence Against Women in to Practice: How to Change the Story':
<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/getmedia/a8d9dc3d-2291-48a6-82f8-68f1a955ce24/Putting-prevention-into-practice-AA-web.pdf.aspx>

The Royal Commission report recommendations can be found at:
<http://www.rcfv.com.au/Report-Recommendations>

Particular recommendations regarding the prevention of violence against women from diverse groups are included in Report V: Family Violence and Diversity, which is available at:
<http://www.rcfv.com.au/MediaLibraries/RCFamilyViolence/Reports/Final/RCFV-Vol-V.pdf>

One of the recommendations made by the Commission was the development of an Industry Plan for family violence prevention and responses. This plan will consider the workforce needs required to effectively address family violence, and ensure that appropriate training and staff are provided. A taskforce has been created to oversee the development of the 10-year plan, which is expected to be released in late 2017.

Ministerial Taskforce on the Prevention of Family Violence and Other Forms of Violence against Women

The Ministerial Taskforce provides specialist advice regarding the prevention of violence against women before it occurs, and is now in the implementation phase. The taskforce includes 5 working groups:

- Structure of prevention entity
- Scaling up and building on what works
- Innovate and inform
- Research and evaluate
- Engage and communicate with community

For more information on the Ministerial Taskforce please visit:

<http://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/committees-for-change/ministerial-taskforce-on-the-prevention-of-family-violence-and-other-forms-of-violence-against-women.html>

State Budget

The Victorian State budget for 2017/2018 included an unprecedented investment in family violence (\$1.9billion). Of this amount, however, only 2.6% of funding is specifically for primary prevention projects.

Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention (CPPP) Grant

The Community Partnerships for Primary Prevention Grant supports community partnerships aimed at preventing family violence. 34 grants were awarded state wide.

Women's Health Grampians was successful in its application for the CPPP grant. The grant will be used to engage with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities, as well as sporting groups, to promote the prevention of violence against women. This will include the 'It Takes Courage' program run by Shiree Pilkington, supporting women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to build their develop skills in photography, creative writing and prevention of violence against women, while building their confidence and networks. The program is currently at capacity with 22 women from a range of cultural backgrounds participating.

Women's Health Grampians Update



Since the last Community of Practice, WHG has welcomed a number of new staff – including Kate Diamond-Keith as a health promotion worker, and Sascha Davies who is on a 6-month student placement position for her Master's Degree in Social Work. Louise Feery has now finished her secondment, and we would like to thank her for all of her work and support. We are happy to welcome back Darlene Henning-Marshall as Program Manager.

WHG will be facilitating the 'Enabling Women Leadership' program alongside Women with Disabilities Victoria. The program runs once a week for six weeks and supports women with disabilities to have a voice about issues that relate to them and other women with disabilities.

2. Local Case Study (Greg Anders, Ballarat Golf Club)

We were fortunate to have Greg Anders, President of the Ballarat Golf Club (BGC), explain the lengths Ballarat Golf Club are going to with promoting gender equality. Greg, who is the Director of Assets and Amenities at Golden Plains Shire Council; as well as a member of the CoRE Reference Group and Alliance Governance Group; is committed to moving BGC towards a more equitable space with full support from the Board of Directors and the club more broadly. Greg decided to use his knowledge and history with Prevention of Violence against Women from his work with White Ribbon, Golden Plains Shire, and CoRE to champion change within the Ballarat Golf Club.

Previously in the club’s history, there was only one female board member to nine male representatives. Women were restricted in their access to the golf course on Saturdays, and the membership of the club was overwhelmingly made up of more men than women. With BGC creating its first strategic plan recently, Greg saw this as an opportunity to formally prioritise gender equality. The club developed a leadership statement for PVAW, and has publically committed to all members being treated equally and equitably.

Key Actions taken by Ballarat Golf Club

- Establishment of a gender equity working group with equal numbers of male and female members
- Became a member of CoRE
- First female Vice President elected
- New membership categories created to recognise different lifestyles and attract people from diverse groups
- Development of a Leadership Statement on PVAW
- Plans to implement targets for women in leadership

Challenges

- Lack of uptake by women to apply for the Board (possibly due to lack of support, intimidation, perception of lack of skill)
- Resistance to change by both male and female members

Opportunities

Recognising the benefits of improved gender equality will lead to:

- Increased membership base
- Better utilisation of the golf course on days other than Saturday
- Increased revenue

It was encouraging to see that Greg’s persistence and determination to promote gender equality within BGC were reasons for success, this was commented on by a number of participants during the pulse check activity, and further reinforces the role of leadership and commitment in creating social change. Greg is an example that one passionate person can make a significant difference.

Section 2: Understanding Diversity and Inclusion

1. Panel Discussion (Shiree Pilkington, WHG)

The panel discussion looked at the lived experiences of women from diverse groups, and considered the barriers to inclusion they have faced. The panel was facilitated by Shiree Pilkington from WHG.

The panel participants included:

- **Philomena Horsley** – Senior Lecturer at University of Melbourne
- **Akua Ed Nignpense** - Refugee Nurse at Ballarat Community Health
- **Jo Richie** – Occupational Therapist and Project Consultant
- **Joanne Harrison-Clarke** – Cultural Competency Trainer and Family Violence Case Manager at Grampians Community Health

Many of the panellists conveyed instances where they have faced discrimination based on their Aboriginality, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and physical capabilities. For these scenarios to still occur in 2017, suggests more focused efforts around diversity and inclusion are required for all women to feel valued, equal and welcomed. In conjunction with promoting gender equality we also need to be challenging racism, homophobia and other negative attitudes in society that prevent diverse individuals from participating fully.

Some of the key messages from panellists around the changes that need to occur for everyone to be equal include:

1. **Removing assumptions** – even when people have good intentions, being made to feel different is discrimination, for example Jo Richie described her experience of being a woman with mild cerebral palsy and people assuming because she has a disability she cannot undertake tasks therefore tasks are not allocated to her.
2. **Grassroots Education** – for change to occur, women of diversity need to be at the table. The Government needs to work with and consult First Nation people, Aboriginal groups, and other women of diversity.
3. **Consultation** - For a multicultural country, there is currently far too little multicultural representation at a decision making level in Australia
4. **Awareness** – when promoting gender equality we constantly need to ask the question ask ‘who are we excluding here, and why?’

2. Translating Knowledge to Practice (Michael Walker, Department of Health and Human Services)

Michael Walker from the Department of Health and Human Services presented on Universal Design, which is an approach to actively encourage universal access to environments, services and products for diverse groups, by reviewing design principles that could potentially exclude individuals, unconsciously or purposefully. Universal Design can be applied to the physical environments and buildings, services, and products and is based on the concept of simplification – adapting or altering pre-existing structures and services without the need for specialised changes. For example, in order to accommodate the needs of people with wheelchairs most workplaces have ramps on either side of the main entrance, however by having ramps that are not included in the main entrance they are still reinforcing the idea that people with a disability are not of the norm or mainstream.

The principles of Universal Design are:

1. Equitable use (be fair)
2. Flexibility in use (be included)
3. Simple and intuitive use (be smart)
4. Perceptible information (be independent)
5. Tolerance for error (be safe)
6. Low physical effort (be active)
7. Size and space for approach and use (be comfortable)

Considering these design principles early in the development phase ensures environments are usable for everyone and potentially prevents changes which can add cost later on.

Michael discussed the difference between equality (which we can think about as sameness) and equity (which we can think about as fairness). When we promote equality, we promote the same treatment for everyone, no matter what their starting position may be. When we promote equity, we acknowledge that for a range of reasons, people are not starting from the same position. To promote equal opportunities for everyone we need to provide additional and different supports to some groups.

“Diversity is being invited to the party; Inclusion is being asked to dance”

Michael’s presentation provoked a lot of thought about how we can implement Universal Design within our own services, programs, and structures. For a full recap of Michael’s presentation please listen to the audio, which can be found here:

<http://whg.org.au/priorities-programs/community-of-practice-for-prevention-of-violence-against-women>

There are also a number of Universal Design resources available at:

<http://sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/design-everyone-guide/overview-universal-design>

Section 3: Supporting Inclusive Practice

1. Activity: Understanding the role of leadership in supporting diversity and inclusion

Participant worked in groups to brainstorm ideas across three topic areas to build on knowledge gained earlier in the day:

- **What key messages** about diversity and inclusion will you take back to your organisation?
- **What practical actions** can your organisation undertake to embrace diversity and inclusion?
- **What frequently asked questions** about diversity and inclusion do you need answers for?

What are the key messages you will take back to your organisation?

- Inclusion should emphasise dignity
- Universal Design means including users (from diverse backgrounds) from the beginning of a practice
- Total inclusion means a program or service is accessible to everyone
- Let's have conversations rather than making assumptions
- It's okay to learn as we go, we are all trying to evolve and improve our practice
- Who do we need to share these messages with? Our gender equality working groups, senior leadership, partners
- We need time to engage new diverse community groups well

What practical actions can your organisation undertake?

- Using Universal Design to make new buildings accessible to everyone
- How accessible are our documents? We need to consider literacy levels, language barriers, and the possibility of threatening language
- Listening to diverse voices at the start of a project, and throughout, rather than as an afterthought
- Asking questions rather than making assumptions
- Cultural competency training and social inclusion committees
- Speaking up and asking about the inclusiveness of our services

What frequently asked questions do you need answers for?

- Where and how do we hear the voices of diverse women?
- How do we engage those who are traditionally difficult to engage?
- What tools and auditing processes already exist?
- How do we go about engaging at our workplaces?
- What is in our strategic plan that can assist with input to Universal Design
- How can we engage workplace leadership to use Universal Design?

Acknowledgements

Women’s Health Grampians would like to thank our keynote speaker Michael Walker (DHHS), our local guest speaker Greg Anders (BGC), and our panellists Akua Ed Nignpense, Joanne Harrison-Clarke, Philomena Horsley, and Jo Ritchie. We also thank the organisations and staff that participated:

Government, Justice & Legal

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Education and Training
Department of Justice and Regulation

Education

Lake Bolac College
University of Melbourne
Federation University

Local Government

Pyrenees Shire Council
Moorabool Shire Council
City of Ballarat
Golden Plains Shire
Hindmarsh Shire Council

Community & Health Services

Central Highlands Community Legal Centre

Rural Northwest Health
Ballarat Health Services
WRISC
Child and Family Services
Sports Central
Grampians Community Health
Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)
Victoria Police – Ballarat
Grampians Community Health
Western Victoria Primary Health Network
Ballarat Golf Club
Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership
SalvoConnect Western
Ballarat Community Health
Child and Family Services
Handy Girl
Wimmera Primary Care Partnership
The Sovereign Hill Museums Association
Ballarat Health Services

For further information on this Community of Practice including film, audio recordings and presentation slides, please visit Women’s Health Grampians website: www.whg.org.au



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 more information on the Community of Practice

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