



Communities of Respect and Equality

A plan to prevent violence against women
and their children in the Grampians Region

2016 - 2020



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- Ararat Rural City Council
- City of Ballarat
- Ballarat Community Health Centre
- Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault (Wimmera)
- Child and Family Services Ballarat
- Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership
- Central Highlands Family Violence Committee
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Golden Plains Shire Council
- Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Co-op
- Grampians Community Health
- Grampians Integrated Family Violence Regional Action Group
- Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership
- Hepburn Shire Council
- Hindmarsh Shire Council
- Horsham Rural City Council
- Moorabool Shire Council
- Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Pyrenees Shire Council
- West Wimmera Shire Council
- Western District Integrated Family Violence Partnership
- Wimmera Primary Care Partnership
- Wimmera Uniting Care
- Women's Health Grampians
- WRISC Family Violence Support
- Yarriambiack Shire Council

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Foreword

The momentum for change around the issue of violence against women has never been stronger in Victoria and Australia wide. When the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence released its groundbreaking report in March 2016, Premier Daniel Andrews stated "This is everyone's issue and challenge and must have everyone's investment."

The Royal Commission report calls on leaders in the economic, social and civic spheres of our community to be engaged in building awareness of gender-based violence and determining the initiatives which are going to work best for their local areas and how they should be pursued. These strategies should be targeted to all places where people live, learn, work and play: workplaces, sporting clubs, faith communities and other social networks; all settings need to be environments that challenge violence-supporting attitudes and promote respectful relationships. The report also emphasises the role local councils occupy as a key platform for supporting community action.

This Plan, the outcome of a committed process of collaboration, embodies these principles and aspirations, being developed collectively by local government, primary care partnerships, community health and other key representative agencies across the Grampians. Drawing on current evidence and data, the Plan provides a framework for action which harnesses the potential for social connectedness and resilience within rural and regional communities and expresses a commitment to addressing the culture and attitudes that support violence against women. It articulates a vision where every girl and boy in the Grampians grows up to be equally valued, heard and respected, with equal access to opportunities.

The Plan is the outcome of the first stage in a process and is just the beginning. We encourage all those who support its vision to become involved and to take action through this tangible opportunity to make a difference.

Marianne Hendron

*CEO, Women's Health Grampians
May 2016*

Executive Summary

The Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Plan has been developed to provide a clear framework for action to prevent violence against women and their children in the Grampians region. All organisations, businesses, clubs and networks who share the vision for “A safe, equal and respectful society for everyone” and who want to take action towards this are invited to become part of the Grampians CoRE Alliance. Through the Alliance, we can move in the same direction, independently and collaboratively within a supportive network to collectively achieve this vision.

The development of the CoRE Plan was led by Women’s Health Grampians (WHG), as part of the *Women’s Health Services Leading Regional Action to Prevent Violence against Women and Children Project*. WHG engaged a Reference Group representing key organisations across the Grampians through a consultative process to develop a strategy for the region that will guide action on preventing violence against women and their children before it occurs.

The prevalence of violence against women in the Grampians is clearly an issue of grave concern. Such violence has far reaching and severe negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of women, children, families and communities and far beyond. It also inflicts a significant economic burden on our region. For Aboriginal women and communities, the rates are significantly higher and further compound the impact of disadvantage and intergenerational trauma.

In the Grampians, the past decade has seen the problem of violence against women shift from a private, invisible matter into the criminal justice and public health domains: it is now being recognised as a serious crime and a fundamental human rights issue. While the data sets continue to indicate that several areas in the Grampians record rates of family violence significantly higher than the state average, the CoRE Plan sets the only acceptable level of violence as zero.

The four elements of the vision of the CoRE plan are:

- A safe, equal and respectful society for everyone
- Communities can be better places to live if we take action to promote change
- Violence against women is unacceptable
- The main driver of violence against women and children - gender inequality - will not exist.

The focus of the plan is on primary prevention; this means addressing the underlying causes of men’s violence against women. Research indicates the key drivers of such violence include beliefs and behaviours reflecting disrespect for women, low support for gender equality, and an adherence to rigid gender roles and identities¹. To address these drivers and encourage transformative change requires a population level approach. It is not sufficient to challenge these attitudes and beliefs in isolation; rather we also need to address the structures, policies and practices supporting them. This involves men and women working together to achieve the shared vision for an equal and safe society. The Plan is directed towards systems level change and recognises that primary prevention is long-term work requiring integration, coordination and leadership.

The Plan is based on the principles that together we do better and that every contribution towards the shared vision is valued and valuable. Many strong and effective partnerships, alliances and plans already exist in the Grampians. The CoRE Plan provides an overarching framework to help ensure that all plans, actions and investment of resources are compatible and will enhance our likelihood of making a difference together. It offers an opportunity for consistency in messaging and mutually reinforcing strategies and activities, delivered at a local and regional level, to enable an efficient, effective and consistent approach to address our goals.

The Plan has been developed through a consultative, partnership process which has strived to also reflect the values it espouses, including trust, openness, clear communication and respect for difference in order to build a common understanding of the underlying determinants of violence against women and the aspirations we share for our communities. It will be implemented in this spirit through the leadership of the CoRE Alliance Governance Group, resourced and coordinated by Women’s Health Grampians.

The success of this Plan relies on the conversion of its vision and commitment to strategies and actions that impact upon the reality of those most at risk; it is therefore vital to ensure meaningful partnership and engagement with these people is prioritised. The CoRE Alliance Governance Group will champion the Plan across the region, communicating progress and increasing engagement. It will optimise progress against the strategic goals, ensure adequate measures for monitoring and evaluation and plan for sustainability. The work of the CoRE Alliance going forward will be guided and enabled by the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and the opportunities it will provide.

Violence against women and children is extensive, damaging and unacceptable



1. Introduction

Violence against women is pervasive, damaging and preventable. It affects families, individuals and communities all over Australia and Victoria; the Grampians Region is no exception. According to any measure or standard, violence against women is unacceptably prevalent.

Communities of Respect and Equality: A plan to prevent violence against women and their children is for all organisations, businesses, clubs, groups and networks in the Grampians Region that share a vision for safe, equal and respectful communities is to work together to achieve this vision. The Plan. With the combined leadership, influence, authority and action of those committed to the Plan, we will build a new future for our region, its cities, towns and communities, in which gender inequality and violence against women is an issue of the past. This Plan has been developed to help guide and direct individual and collective work in building communities of respect and equality, and prevent violence against women before it occurs.

The focus of the Plan is on preventing violence against women and their children. While men can be victims of violence and no level of violence is acceptable, the overwhelming majority of acts of rape and sexual assault are perpetrated by men against women. Women are at least three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner; five times more likely than men to require medical attention or hospitalisation as a result of intimate partner violence; and five times more likely to report fearing for their lives.² Acknowledging the gendered nature of violence against women, where the biggest single risk factor is being a woman, is crucial to start to addressing the drivers of this violence.

This Plan has been developed to support strategies at a primary prevention level. This means we are aiming to prevent 'the first' incident of violence happening. While preventing the re-occurrence of violence is also crucial to curbing the overall prevalence of violence, and primary prevention strategies may also assist in reducing repeat offences, the aim is to change the cultural context in which violence against women occurs. Violence is ultimately an extreme form of control and an exertion of (perceived) power. To change the cultural context in which this occurs means understanding what we view as 'normal' for men and women in terms of roles, capabilities and potential, how this view of 'normality' is shaped, how it impacts on our beliefs and behaviours, and the interaction of these with concepts such as power and control. In striving for cultural change, we shall apply the learnings from other major social changes, such as smoking and seatbelts, which have involved leadership and change across legislation, policy, government, communities and individuals.

2. Why this plan?

The *Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE)* Plan has been developed to enhance the capacity and ability of organisations, businesses, clubs, groups and networks in the Grampians Region to work effectively, collectively, and genuinely towards the eradication of violence against women. It has been developed to elicit broad engagement and commitment from all organisations in the region wanting to take action towards the vision and goals expressed in this Plan. It provides an overarching framework to connect locally based messages, initiatives and actions across the Grampians that are mutually reinforcing and reflect a collective impact model.

This Plan helps organisations to identify their own roles in ending violence against women in the Grampians. It is envisaged it will provide a platform whereby organisations that believe in building communities of respect and equality are better able to pursue those values in their everyday core work. While activities and efforts may be undertaken independently, the measures and outcomes will be developed collectively and gathered and collated to reflect regional level achievement and progress.

The Plan is intended to facilitate inclusion and participation according to capacity. In other words, it recognises that organisations and groups are at varying stages of readiness and levels of capacity to engage in this work and it will be flexible to accommodate this.

**Violence is
always about
power and
control**

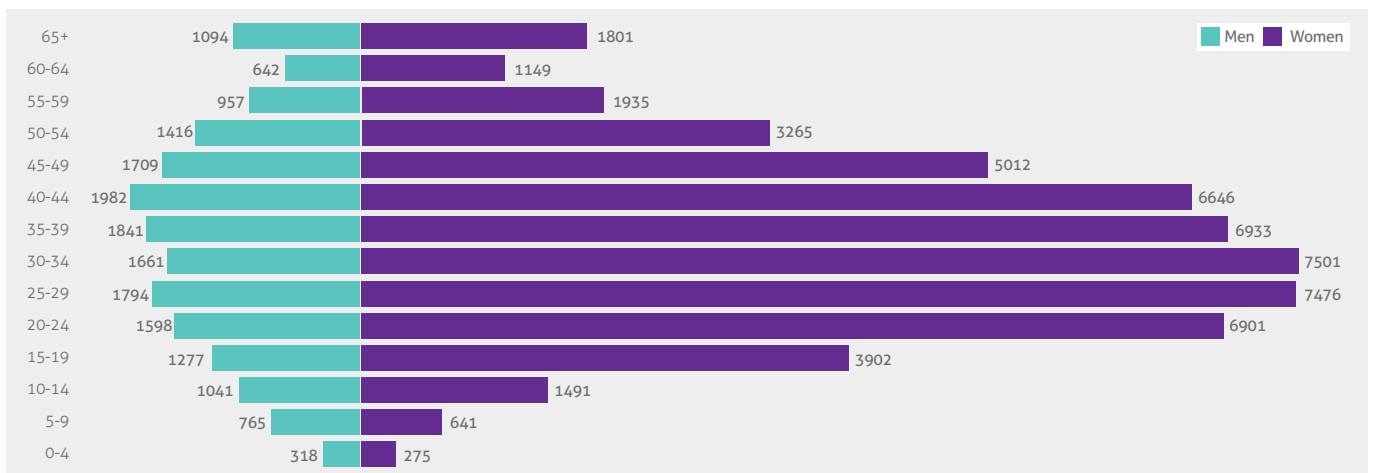


3. The Nature of Violence against Women and Children

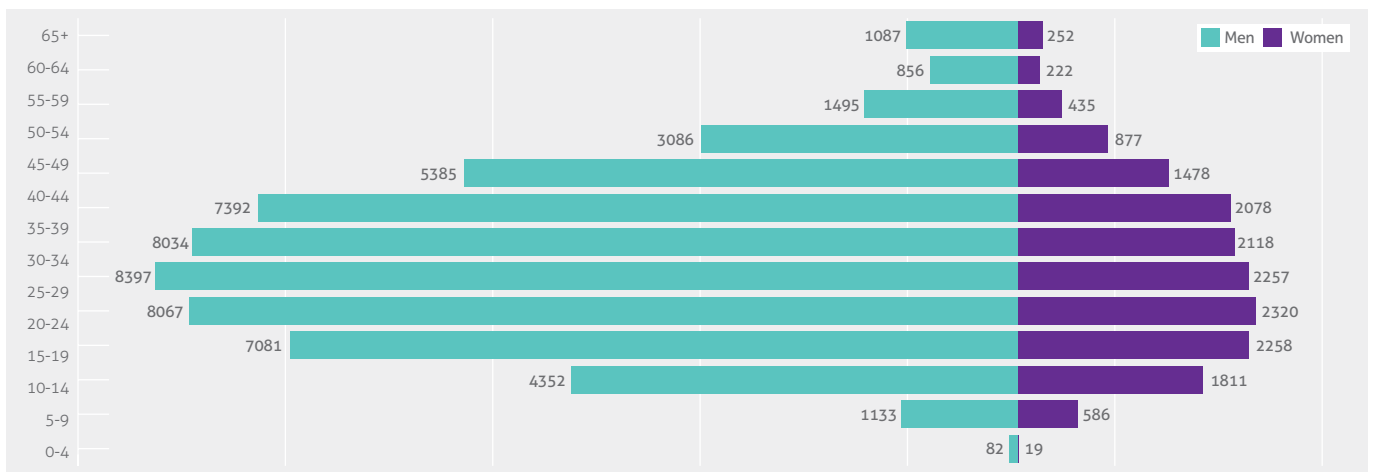
Violence against women is a complex social problem, yet one that is preventable. Women experience violence in any number of contexts, settings, locations and forms, including physical, sexual, emotional and financial. It is pervasive and not linked to age, socio-economic context, or location. It occurs at home, at work, in clubs, social settings and in the community. Overwhelmingly, it is violence inflicted by men.

In 2015 in Victoria, police responded to over 74,000 family incidents, an increase of 9.2% on the previous year.³ That equates to over 1,400 per week, and over 200 per day. Of these, 75.0% (55,779) of the victims were female (24.6% were male).

Affected family members by age and sex, January 2015 to December 2015



Perpetrator by age and sex, January 2015 to December 2015



While 75% of victims are female, 77% of perpetrators are male.

The prevalence of violence in Australia experienced by women is high. A national survey of 17,000 adults by the Australian Bureau of Statistics found that since the age of 15...


1 in 3
 Australian women had experienced physical violence⁴


1 in 5
 Australian women had experienced sexual violence⁵


1 in 4
 Australian women had experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner⁶

Some women face additional risk of violence and disadvantage when faced with other systems of discrimination or oppression. These include:

- Aboriginal women
- women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds⁷
- women with disabilities⁸
- women from rural and remote areas⁹
- older populations, particularly those who experience multiple vulnerabilities¹⁰

The issues and conditions contributing to these heightened risks are varied and can shift according to individual circumstances. However, all these factors are underpinned by imbalanced power relationships at individual and societal levels. Common factors often relate to the availability of culturally safe community facilities, underlying cultural expectations, lack of anonymity (required for safe reporting of violence), or reduced ability to communicate effectively.

Aboriginal women

Family violence impacts on Aboriginal people at vastly disproportionate rates and has devastating impacts on Victorian Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal women are at the highest risk of family violence. In comparison with other women, Aboriginal women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised from family violence and almost 11 times more likely to be killed as a result of violent assault^{11 12}.

A prevention strategy for the Grampians region must recognise the context of family violence in our Aboriginal communities, in particular that, from an Indigenous perspective, the causes of family violence are located in the history and impacts of white settlement and the structural violence of race relations since then.

It is vital that the CoRE Alliance prioritises effective engagement with Aboriginal communities through the Grampians Integrated Family Violence Regional Action Group and other key representative organisations and ensures adequate resources for this to happen effectively.

Impact on Children

As well as being direct victims of violence, children are also impacted by violence by overhearing or witnessing violence, intervening on behalf of a parent, experiencing the aftermath of violence such as being cared for by a distressed or withdrawn parent, helping to care for a hurt or distressed parent, visibly seeing injuries or property damage, helping clean up damage, visiting the doctor or hospital with an injured parent, being present when police and/or emergency services attend, and/or being asked not tell anyone the details of the event¹³. Children generally experience more than one type of exposure to family violence¹⁴. This exposure is traumatic. It can increase children and young people's vulnerability to a range of negative impacts. They may experience fear, disruption and instability which can result in behavioural and mental health problems, homelessness, poverty and intergenerational family violence. Children in the Grampians and everywhere, have the right to live free from violence and fear.

4. Violence against Women in the Grampians

Violence against women is as pervasive in the Grampians Region as it is at state-level, in fact the overall rate is higher. Of the 75,385 family incidents reported by Police in 2015, more than 3,705 of these were in the Grampians region, or five per cent of the state's total.¹⁵ The Grampians region contains approximately four per cent of the Victorian population.¹⁶

Research indicates that women living in rural and regional areas have an **increased risk** of family violence and often experience **barriers** that make it more difficult to report violence. They include:

Geographic isolation The geography of rural areas can increase vulnerability to family violence due to physical isolation and lack of visibility which enables a lower potential for scrutiny and accountability of perpetrators. Geography can also exacerbate the social isolation that accompanies and supports family violence; it is more difficult to develop informal support networks when there are not many people nearby. While rural and regional communities are often renowned for their close-knit sense of community, for those outside those networks it can be particularly isolating.

Access to services and support: It is more difficult to access formal reporting mechanisms when they are not nearby. The cost and availability of appropriate transport can exacerbate this isolation. Many rural areas have limited alternative housing options to enable children to remain in their local community for schools, sporting clubs and other networks that are important for their stability.¹⁷

In smaller communities, victims can be more **visible** to their perpetrators. For instance, if a victim were to leave an intimate partner who is abusive, there is a greater chance the perpetrator would be able to locate the victim; this can discourage victims from reporting.¹⁸ Furthermore, lack of anonymity around reporting, fear of shame and stigma, and the desire to protect children from being perceived as 'different' from their peers, are well documented as deterrents to seeking help and reporting. There is a common view in many rural communities that **'family problems' are not talked about**, which can serve to silence women's experience of domestic and family violence and deter them from disclosing violence and abuse.

Conservative attitudes: For those inside networks based on old school ties, kinship, farming and other associations there can be barriers associated with traditional gender roles that

are difficult to challenge. A sense of loyalty within a tight community can make it difficult to rock the boat. In smaller communities, victims of violence are more likely to have social connections with those responsible for managing the formal networks of accountability and support, such as social workers, police, and health professionals.¹⁹

Higher levels of **gun and weapon ownership** in rural areas can increase the levels of fear experienced by women, exacerbating a sense that any threat of violence and control can be acted upon with the most drastic of consequences.²⁰

The experience of **natural disasters** can increase the risk of family violence. Victims of violence feel less able to report for fear of appearing 'disloyal' to men experiencing stress, and who may have been held up within their communities as heroes during disaster response and recovery.²¹

Multiple Disadvantage: For many women, the impact of family violence is compounded by the way in which gender-based discrimination interacts with other experiences of inequality. Essentially this means many women are subjected to multiple, simultaneous forms of discrimination or oppression, including violence, the impact of which can be exacerbated by the challenges of living in rural and regional areas. The situation for Aboriginal women has been highlighted above, and these multiple layers of disadvantage are compounded by rurality. This is illustrated for other groups of women in the following examples:

Culturally and linguistically diverse: Women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds living in non-urban communities face unique barriers. Frequently they do not have access to the education and employment opportunities typically offered to males and are isolated through lack of traditional support networks such as extended family and cultural networks. They experience barriers to accessing family violence support services due to a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity among service providers, language barriers, cultural isolation, xenophobic attitudes and fears about residency/visas^{22 23}.

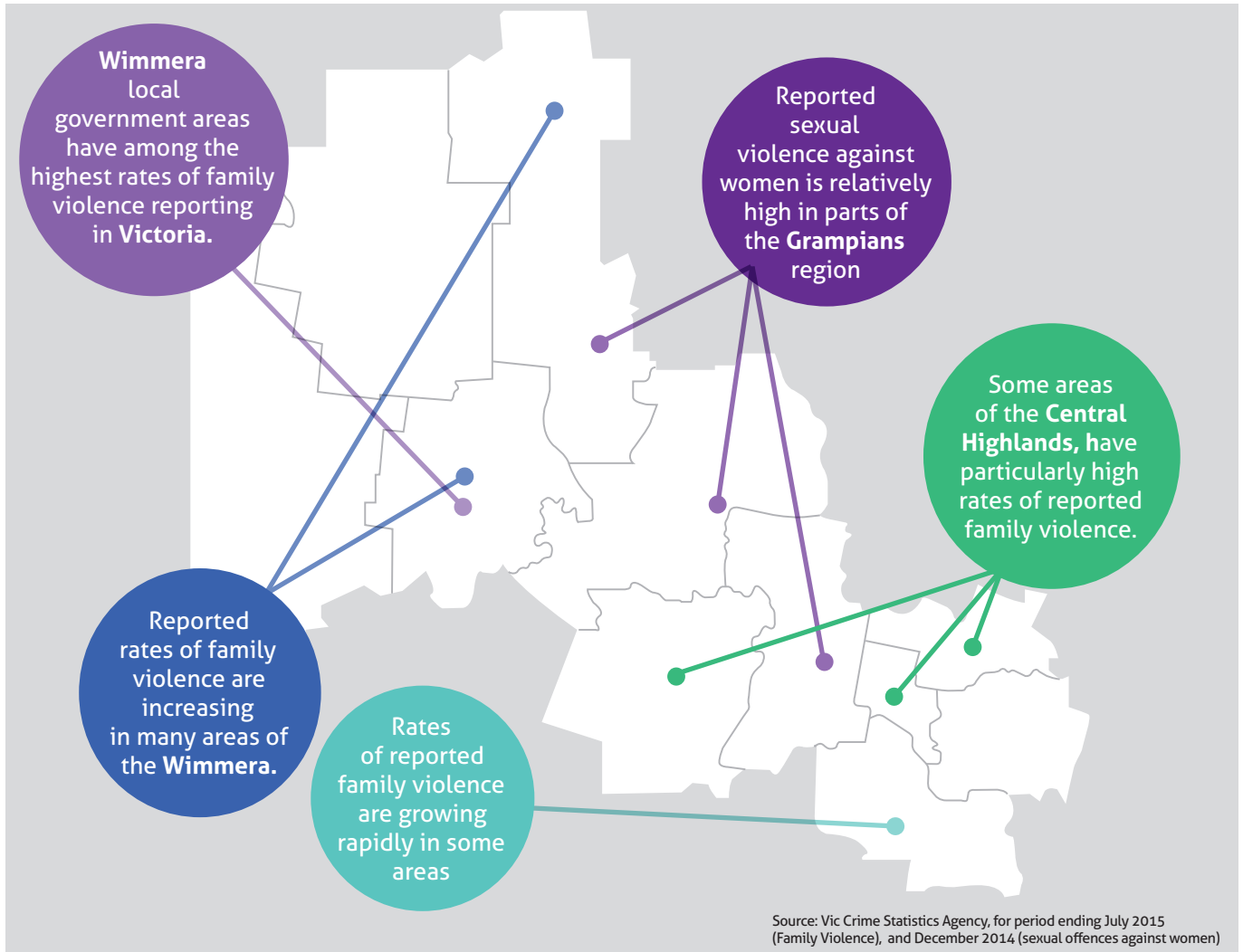
Disabilities: Women with disabilities are additionally disadvantaged and isolated in regional, rural and remote locations with limited access to transportation and specialist services²⁴. In the Grampians region women and girls with disabilities are twice as likely to experience violence as those without.²⁵

Figure 1

In rural and regional Australia	
Women living in rural areas are more likely than women in urban areas to experience family violence and face additional barriers to reporting and escaping abuse	
<p>Increased risk is associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of visibility (geographical isolation); • Community attitudes and norms relating to tradition, gender stereotypes and unequal power relationships - reinforced with long held traditions such as passing land ownership down to sons etc.; • Increased gun ownership; • Exposure to natural disasters which can strengthen and reinforce gender stereotypes. 	<p>Increased barriers to reporting and escaping are related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distance in seeking help (geographical isolation); • Lack of access to public transport (abuser can have control have private transport); • Community attitudes that accept unequal power relationships and normalise abusive behaviour; • Lack of anonymity and fear of stigma, shame and community gossip in small communities • Lack of anonymity and fear for safety if continuing to live in small community/the need to move away from town and uproot children etc. • Complicated financial arrangements which can limit access and financial independence • Limited alternative and crisis accommodation to escape to; limited access to other services required such as legal and healthcare; and • Women with additional vulnerability and disadvantage are at an even higher risk and face even more barriers to reporting.

References: George & Flood, 2014; Campo & Tayton, 2015

Map 1: Violence against Women in the Grampians



A note about data

There is no 'league table' of better or worse performing areas in relation to violence against women. By *any measure or standard, violence against women is unacceptably prevalent*. Data should not be read as indicating success or failure, rather should be used as an indicative guide to some of the main issues facing the region as a whole, and the areas within it.

In general, there has been an increase in the number of recorded family incidents in recent years. This is in part due to improved recording of incidents at Victoria Police. Since 2011, initiatives such as the Family Violence Code of Practice have been put in place by Victoria Police to improve the recording of family incidents, the individuals involved and the offences committed.

The increase in the number of recorded family incidents may also be in part due to shifts in community awareness and attitudes regarding family violence. It shows that the

messages about family violence are getting through, and are being taken more seriously by citizens and institutions with more women and more community bystanders reporting incidents to Police.

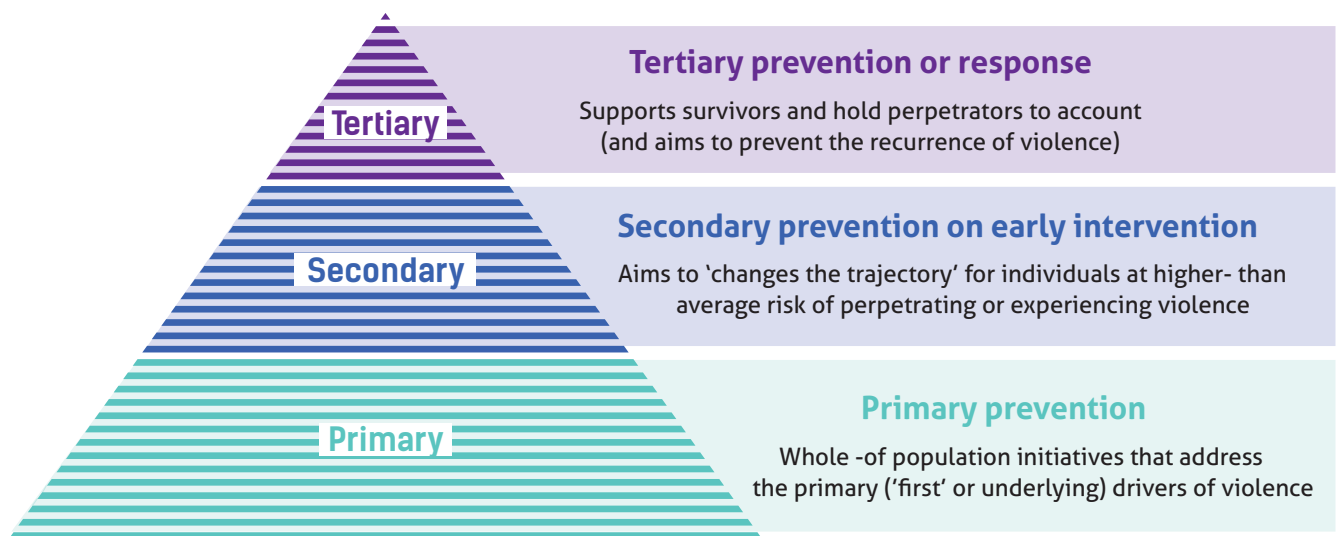
It should be noted research suggests the true incidence of family violence is significantly higher than the figures reported to police, with most incidents going unreported²⁶.

Given these factors, and knowing there are particular barriers to reporting in rural areas, a lower Family Violence Incident Report rate *should not* necessarily be considered a 'positive' result in a particular community. That is, a low rate does not imply family violence is not occurring, instead may indicate reporting rates are low and barriers are high. Potential barriers may include geographical isolation, prevalent local community attitudes, access to police (and their response and attitudes), poor access to other services such as legal, transport, housing and health care, and lack of anonymity.

5. A Primary Prevention Approach

To prevent violence before it occurs, a primary prevention approach is required. This means targeting change at the population level, addressing the underlying gendered drivers and conditions in which violence occurs. The diagram (figure 2) illustrates how primary prevention fits within a broader model of prevention.

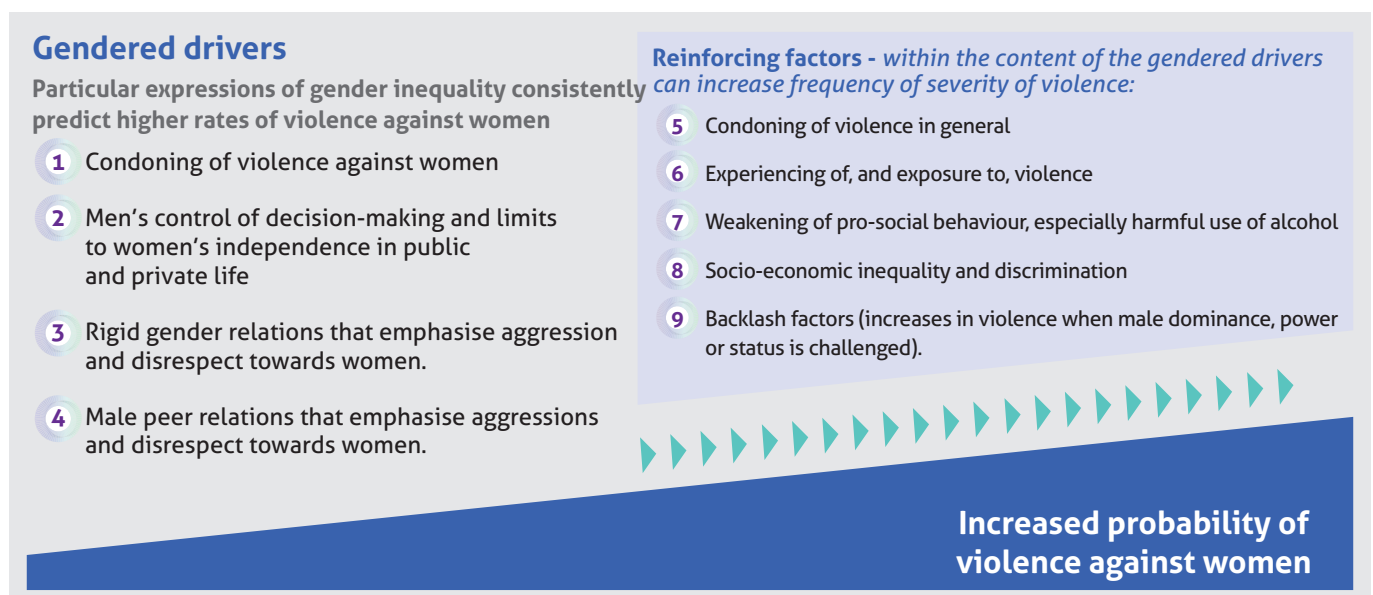
Figure 2 The relationship between primary prevention and other work to address violence against women



The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence Report (2016) notes, "There is no doubt that violence against women is deeply rooted in power imbalances that are reinforced by what we consider 'normal' or 'expect' regarding roles and behaviour for men versus women."

This is supported by the 2015 national framework 'Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia' which provides an evidence-based approach and conceptual model for action for the primary prevention of violence against women. The framework is based on local and international literature and clearly articulates the link between gendered violence and gender inequality. The diagram below (figure 3) notes the four gendered drivers and the five reinforcing factors that contribute to a higher probability of violence against women. They note reinforcing factors are only relevant when the gendered drivers are also present.

Figure 3 Higher probability of violence against women



The Drivers of Violence Against Women

Condoning violence against women is evident by attitudes such as justifying, excusing, trivialising, downplaying, or shifting blame from the perpetrator to the victim.

Men **limiting the independence** of women. There are some notions of masculinity that represent male dominance and control as normal and inevitable. This is often reinforced in popular culture and in the systems and structures we inhabit. Limiting women's independence can send a message that women have a lower social value and are less worthy of respect. It can make women more economically dependent on men, and so less able to leave violent relationships. Having fewer women involved in public sphere and in positions of formal decision-making can reduce the emphasis on issues of women's safety.

Stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity, for instance where men can be considered typically insensitive, with the suggestion that men are 'naturally' more violent than women and have uncontrollable sexual urges.²⁷ Some stereotypes suggest women are 'naturally' more passive than men, and others present women as inherently deceitful and unfaithful. These deep-seated and often unquestioned ideas can combine to create environments in which notions that men are entitled to and have a responsibility to 'control' women.

Male peer relationships that emphasise disrespect towards women are not uncommon. These are the attitudes expressed by men to each other, through conversations, jokes, on social media or email, where women are disrespected. This can have several effects, including an emphasis on aggression and sexual 'conquest', the privileging of relationships with other men over relationships with women, and a potential reluctance for men to take a stand against examples of disrespect, aggression or violence, for fear of being rejected by their male peers.

All these factors combine to create the social context within which violence is more likely to occur.

**Together, we must
take responsibility
as a society to
end violence
against women
and children**



Actions to Reduce Violence against Women

The *National Change the Story Framework* identifies five essential actions, aligned with the drivers, to reduce violence against women.

- 1. Challenge the condoning of violence:** reduce the tolerance for attitudes, beliefs, practices that justify, excuse or downplay violence against women and their children, or that shift the blame from victim to perpetrator.
- 2. Promote women's independence in decision making in public life and relationships:** the independence of women to make decisions and exercise control is not curtailed
- 3. Challenge rigid gender stereotypes and roles:** stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity are left behind, not perpetuated
- 4. Strengthen equal and respectful relationships** between women and men, boys and girls:
- 5. Promote and normalise gender equality** in public and private life

What do primary prevention initiatives look like?

Primary prevention initiatives are aimed at the whole population, not only at individuals, and are directed across multiple settings and across the life course. Some examples are:

- Policy and institutional change to support and resource specific prevention work but also to embed gender equality in our society
- Participatory programs to challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination, promote respectful, equal relationships and gender equality, for example in schools or for new parents
- Initiatives to change organisational cultures and practices in workplaces, sports clubs etc.
- Community-led initiatives to empower women, or engage men in the promotion of non-violence and gender equality
- Australia-wide public communications, social marketing, behaviour change campaigns. For example, the Australian Government's 'Respect' television and print advertising campaign, the *Our Watch* campaign '*The Line*' (www.theline.org.au)
- Engagement of the media for better reporting of violence and promotion of gender equitable norms

Prevention of violence is possible, but it requires fundamental changes to the social contexts and cultures that enable the gendered drivers of inequality and violence against women as highlighted above to thrive.

This CoRE plan provides the rationale and impetus for organisations, networks and individuals across the Grampians region to meaningfully enact these principles of gender equality, wherever they have influence, authority and interest.

6. The Plan Development

The Communities of Respect and Equality Plan was initiated by Women's Health Grampians and developed collaboratively by a Reference Group involving senior staff from 26 key organisations from across the Grampians region. They are:

- Ararat Rural City Council
- City of Ballarat
- Ballarat Community Health Centre
- Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault (Wimmera)
- Child and Family Services Ballarat
- Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership
- Central Highlands Family Violence Committee
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Golden Plains Shire Council
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- Grampians Community Health
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- Yarriambiack Shire Council

Covering a wide geographic area, stakeholders provided input through a variety of means including three video conferenced Reference Group meetings, email, telephone and one on one conversations over a three-month period. Meetings were facilitated by external consultants, Foresight Lane, who then drafted each stage of the Plan's development. Collectively a shared vision, principles and goals were developed and ongoing mechanisms for governance of the strategy established.

The purpose of the CoRE Plan is to lay the foundation for integrated work in the primary prevention of violence against women and their children and to improve gender equity across the region. The plan has been developed to provide a shared vision and clear strategic goals to support all organisations, clubs and networks in the region wanting to work collectively towards this vision.

The intention of the CoRE Plan is to:

- Reflect and support a **collective impact** approach
- **Promote a shared understanding** of the underlying causes of violence against women and children
- Facilitate the adoption of **evidence based strategies** and actions to address it
- Guide resources, activities and priorities to ensure all interested organisations are working in the same direction

The CoRE Vision

The vision comprises the following beliefs:

- A safe, equal and respectful society for everyone.
- Our communities can be better places to live, if we take action to promote change.
- Violence against women is considered unacceptable by any standard or measure.
- The main driver of violence against women and children – gender inequality – can be changed and our society can reflect equality for men and women in all spheres of civic and personal life.

The Audience

This plan applies to everyone. For success, *each and every person in each and every environment* needs to consider their role, responsibility and relationship to gender equality. It includes our roles in workplaces, clubs, schools, social settings, homes, families and elsewhere. The plan is concerned with systems level change, therefore it is primarily directed at organisations. Individuals have the opportunity to engage and influence by encouraging organisations they are part of, professionally and personally, to participate in the Plan.

**We can all help
to end violence
against women**



The Alliance

The CoRE Plan will be driven by the CoRE Alliance, a voluntary alliance of organisations, clubs and networks within the Grampians region working together towards a shared vision to prevent violence against women.

Strategic Goals

The CoRE Alliance will work both in partnership and as individual organisations towards this vision by achieving the following goals:

1. **Improved systems, structures, policies and practices** that address gender equality in organisations and collectively
2. **Increased ability to challenge** the drivers of gender inequality and violence in our social and professional settings, including sexism, discrimination and stereotypes
3. **Stronger partnerships** that include a broad range of participants, united to address the drivers of violence against women
4. **Better shared information** about what works and what doesn't, to inform and encourage continued action

The Principles

The following principles will underpin the work of the CoRE Alliance in working towards their strategic goals.

TRANSFORM

We aim to achieve transformative change in Grampians communities. We value the differences between men and women, and actively address the structures, norms and behaviours that reinforce gender inequality.

GENERATE

We unleash the abilities of those who want to make a difference. We help people and organisations to identify their own roles and responsibilities within this broader belief.

COLLABORATE

We work interdependently on shared solutions, gaining strength from each other, but not shying away from our own responsibilities. We find, strengthen and listen to networks of influence, both traditional and unconventional.

LEAD

We demonstrate change by doing it in our own places and organisations. We make sure that our own practices model gender equality. We listen to those affected by violence and inequality to make sure we are doing the right things.

INNOVATE

We look for new solutions to old problems. We learn from previous mistakes, successes and use evidence about what is effective to keep finding new ways.

It is useful to be aware the implementation of this plan is taking place in the context of strategic actions at both national and statewide level, which aligns with and will reinforce and support actions at local and regional level.

7. The CoRE Plan

Communities of equality and respect: Preventing violence against women and children in the Grampians

Vision

We believe in a safe, equal and respectful society for everyone.

We believe that our communities can be better places to live, if we take action to promote change.

This means that violence against women is considered unacceptable by any standard or measure.

This means that the main driver of violence against women and children – gender inequality – will not exist.

Audience

This applies to everyone.

Each and every person in each and every environment needs to consider their role, responsibility and relationship to gender equality.

It includes our roles in workplaces, clubs, schools, social settings, homes, families and elsewhere.

Principles

TRANSFORM

We aim to achieve transformative change in Grampians communities. We value the differences between men and women, and actively address the structures, norms and behaviours that reinforce gender inequality.

GENERATE

We unleash the abilities of those who want to make a difference. We help people and organisations to identify their own roles and responsibilities within this broader belief.

COLLABORATE

We work interdependently on shared solutions, gaining strength from each other, but not shying away from our own responsibilities. We find, strengthen and listen to networks of influence, both traditional and unconventional.

LEAD

We demonstrate change by doing it in our own places and organisations. We make sure that our own practices model gender equality. We listen to those affected by violence and inequality to make sure we are doing the right things.

INNOVATE

We look for new solutions to old problems. We learn from previous mistakes, successes and use evidence about what is effective to keep finding new ways.

Goals

Together, and as individual organisations, we will achieve...

Improved systems, structures, policies and practices that address gender equality in organisations and collectively

Increased ability to challenge the drivers of gender inequality and violence in our social and professional settings, including sexism, discrimination, and stereotypes

Stronger partnerships that include a broad range of participants, united to address the drivers of violence against women

Better shared information about what works and what doesn't, to inform and encourage continued action

8. Implementation and Action

The transition from planning to implementation and action will be undertaken via the Grampians Communities of Respect and Equality [CoRE] Alliance, which organisations across the region are invited to join. Local councils, community organisations, small and large businesses, local sporting clubs and other groups and networks, can participate by undertaking an activity or activities that will support progress against one or more of the four strategic goals noted in the plan.

Membership of the Grampians CORE Alliance. requires formally committing to the vision, principles and goals of this plan by completing the Alliance Membership document, available from Women's Health Grampians.

Membership requires a commitment to:

- **Working collaboratively with other Alliance partners** to build momentum, gain strength, share knowledge, resources and ideas.
- **Integrating activities in line with achieving the vision and strategic goals** into the organisation's planning documents.
- **Resourcing action within the organisation** to enable activities identified to be undertaken and ensure meaningful participation in the Alliance.
- **Communicating with the Alliance and governance group** to monitor progress, identify challenges and to share information that will build the capacity of the Alliance to meeting the vision.

To help members with this, organisations will have access to the following support and resources provided by Women's Health Grampians:

- Advice and expertise to support organisations when undertaking planning, and associated actions (via individual meetings or membership on your committees or working groups)
- Leadership briefings to senior staff, councils, boards or committees to increase knowledge about violence against women, prevention strategies and the importance of, and potential for, leadership and activities within organisations.
- Appropriate, relevant and topical written resources.
- 'Community of Practice' sessions to build capacity of staff working on actions by increasing their knowledge and skills and providing a platform for sharing local stories and information.
- Training on a broad range of topics to support progress on activities identified.
- Support with workplace based programs such as Act@Work.

Governance and monitoring

The membership and work of the CoRE Alliance will be overseen by the Grampians CoRE Alliance Governance Group (CoRE AGG). The purpose of the CoRE AGG is to manage the implementation and strategic responsiveness of the CoRE Plan to optimize the outcomes.

Membership of the CORE AGG will be drawn from CORE Alliance member organisations and take into account the member organisation's core business and geographical coverage with the intention of maximizing the different types of organisations, and broad geographical representation. The Women's Health Grampians CEO will Chair the AGG through the establishment phase.

The CoRE Plan implementation process will seek to identify and recognise existing work being undertaken across the Grampians, and highlight actions that can be embedded within existing programs and policies and others that require additional input. It will also serve as a catalyst for increased coordination and collaboration of prevention activities in order to augment existing approaches, avoid unnecessary duplication and most importantly, ensure we are coordinating initiatives to achieve a mutually reinforcing effect towards the prevention of violence against women and children in the region.

The CoRE AGG will work together to ensure that evaluation forms part of all prevention of violence initiatives in the region, and that the impact of the work is monitored and measured. An evaluation framework will be developed in the next phase of activity under the CoRE Plan which will be resourced appropriately as a tool for learning and accountability.



If you are interested in becoming a member of the alliance, the commitment document and other resources are available on the WHG website and Women's Health Grampians staff are available to discuss and answer any questions you might have: www.whg.org.au

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