

Preventing Violence Together

Implementation Committee Member

Orientation Pack



PREVENTING
VIOLENCE
TOGETHER
UNITED

Working Together to Prevent Violence
Against Women in the West

PVT Implementation Committee
November, 2013

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Introduction

Dear new member,

Welcome to the *Preventing Violence Together* (PVT) Implementation Committee!

This Orientation Pack has been designed to support new members commencing the role as their agency representative on the Preventing Violence Together Implementation Committee (PVT IC). This committee oversees the implementation of a range of actions to prevent violence against women, within each partner agency.

The Orientation Pack was developed out of a need identified by current PVT IC members that information, guidance and support would be helpful for new members when joining the PVT IC.

Included in the Orientation Pack is a range of key documentation pertaining to the PVT partnership, including a copy of:

- *Preventing Violence Together: Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women*
- Preventing Violence Together Implementation Committee, Terms of Reference
- PVT United Governance Structure – chart
- PVT Resource Hub Policy and Procedure
- Violence against women: a gendered problem
- Violence against women: prevalence and impacts
- Violence against women: levels of prevention

In addition, the pack also includes more general information related to the PVT IC, and the support available to you as a member of the committee.

If you have any further questions about anything contained in the Orientation Pack, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We look forward to working with you.

Kind Regards,

Stephanie Rich and Ellen Kleimaker

Women's Health West

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What is *Preventing Violence Together*?

Background: The prevention of Violence Against Women

Violence against women is a human rights concern of unparalleled proportion, and its impact on women, children, families and communities is deep and shattering. Violence against women takes many forms and affects all communities, irrespective of class, ethnicity or culture. In Australia, approximately one in three women will experience physical violence during their lifetime, and nearly one in five will experience sexual assault¹

The 1993 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines violence against women as

any act of gender-based violence that results in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life²

Violence against women is indeed a concern for the western region of Melbourne. Victoria Police data for reported family violence incidents highlight that for the majority of the western region, rates of reported family violence incidents have continued to increase over the last five years. Notably, in 2013, two of the seven municipalities in the western region had a higher rate of reported family violence incidents, than for the state level.

Table 1: Rate per 100,000 of reported family violence incidents in the Western region

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Melbourne	719.7	689.7	821.0	999.0
Hobsons Bay	585.5	630.8	697.2	920.7
Maribyrnong	424.6	541.1	755.7	997.4
Wyndham	687.3	856.2	917.3	1,124.3
Brimbank	759.6	898.2	969.7	1,004.3
Melton	719.9	828.5	1,164.3	1,217.0
Moonee Valley	556.3	582.9	645.8	826.1
Victoria	658.5	742.6	896.3	1,071.0

Source: Victoria Police, 2013, Corporate Statistics, Victoria Police, Australia
(Data extracted from LEAP on 18 July 2013 and subject to variation)

While improvements to family violence reporting systems and increased awareness raising of family violence are likely to have influenced the increase in reported family violence rates across Victoria, it is important to note that violence against women remains a significantly under-reported problem. As such, it is likely that any statistics

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2006, *The Personal Safety Survey*, Cat. No. 4906.0, ABS, Canberra.

² United Nations General Assembly, 1993, United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, United Nations General Assembly, Geneva.

on reported family violence are a gross underestimate of the true incidence of family violence.

We do know however, that violence against women is preventable (VicHealth, 2007). By focusing on the known gendered causes/determinants of violence against women – unequal power relations between women and men, and adherence to rigid gender roles and gender stereotypes – it is possible to change the factors that cause violence against women and prevent it from happening in the first place. The work to prevent violence against women before it occurs (that is, primary prevention), is the focus of the *Preventing Violence Together* partnership.

Preventing Violence Together: Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women

Preventing Violence Together, or PVT as it is commonly referred to, is the western region action plan to prevent violence against women. Preventing Violence Together was developed for and by community health services and local governments in the western region, with Women's Health West as the lead agency. It is designed as an enabling and coordinating action plan for member organisations in the western region to support and progress their work to prevent violence against women.

The vision for the action plan is to create communities, cultures and organisations in the western region that are non-violent, non-discriminatory, gender equitable and promote respectful relationships.

The action plan (enclosed in this pack) includes a number of actions over seven strategy areas, each designed to complement and reinforce one another. Each partner organisation has committed to implementing a number of actions. The actions draw on the VicHealth evidence-base and respond to the determinants of violence against women, that is, the factors that cause men to commit violence against women in the first place.

The Preventing Violence Together Partnership

The PVT Partnership is composed of agencies in the western region working to prevent violence against women, including community health, local government, women's health, primary care partnerships and family violence services.

The following organisations are partners in the Preventing Violence Together Partnership, and have endorsed the PVT regional action plan to prevent violence against women:

Brimbank City Council	Maribyrnong City Council
City of Melbourne	Melton City Council
Djerriwarrh Community Health Services	Moonee Valley City Council
Doutta Galla Community Health Service	Western Integrated Family Violence Committee
HealthWest Partnership	Western Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group (IFVRAG)
Hobsons Bay City Council	Western Region Health Centre
Inner North West Primary Care Partnership	Wyndham Council
ISIS Primary Care	

Women's Health West (WHW)

WHW is the women's health service for the western region of Melbourne. WHW has two program areas: family violence services and health promotion, research and development.

WHW is the lead agency for the prevention of violence against women portfolio for the western region, and is the lead agency for the *Preventing Violence Together* Partnership.

WHW are responsible for coordinating the PVT regional action plan, and for providing secretariat support to the PVT partnership and its various governance structures.

All partners have committed to implementing a number of strategies that are designed to prevent violence against women and to promote gender equity.

Your key contacts from Women's Health West for the PVT Partnership are:

Ellen Kleimaker	Stephanie Rich
Health Promotion Worker	Health Promotion Worker
Prevention of Violence Against Women	Prevention of Violence Against Women
Ph: (03) 9689 9588	Ph: (03) 9689 9588
Email: ellenk@whwest.org.au	Email: stephanier@whwest.org.au

The Preventing Violence Together project, *United: Working Together to Prevent Violence Against Women in the West*

In October 2012, the *Preventing Violence Together* (PVT) partnership was awarded funding from the Department of Justice through their Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children (RVAWC) grants program, for the implementation of the *United* project over the next three years.

United was a collaboratively developed project by all partner agencies. Building on the *PVT* regional framework, *United* seeks to progress regional implementation of the action plan and build organisational capacity among partners to embed sustainable, evidence-based strategies for the primary prevention of violence against women before it occurs within each partner organisation.

The *United* project aspires to build organisational capacity to implement prevention strategies within partner agencies, as both workplace settings and as conduits to their communities.

The objectives of *United* include:

1. Eliminate/decrease/ redress gender inequity
2. Embed and drive cultural change across all partner organisations to redress the determinants of violence against women
3. Increase awareness and build capacity building of partner organisations and the community to create safe and inclusive environments where men and women can participate equally
4. Increase awareness and understanding of violence against women across workplace setting and the broader community
5. Document and disseminate the lessons and challenges of the primary prevention activities including the development of proxy indicators of success

United includes a suite of strategies that work towards achieving the project objectives. Importantly, the *United* strategies have been developed in order to tackle the key determinants of violence against women. Your organisation has selected a number of the *United* strategies to implement within your agency over the next three years (until late 2015).

Women's Health West is the lead coordinating agency for the *United* project, and we are here to work with and assist you and your organisation.

Governance of *Preventing Violence Together* and the *United* project

The Preventing Violence Together and United partnership is guided by a governance structure (see chart enclosed), and is composed of three main governance mechanisms.

1) The PVT United Executive Governance Group (EGG)

The purpose of the Executive Governance Group is to provide high-level governance to the implementation of the *United* project, which sits within the broader framework of *Preventing Violence Together: The Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women*.

Women's Health West provides coordination and secretariat support to the Executive Governance Group.

The EGG meets quarterly, and its remit is to undertake the following:

- Risk management oversight
- To act as high-level ambassadors for the United project with the CEOs and other executive managers of partner agencies
- Review of annual reports from the PVT/United Implementation Committee before they are submitted to the Department of Justice
- High-level advocacy for the western region Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) agenda with state government ministers and members of parliament
- Provision of strategic guidance to the Implementation Committee
- Budget oversight

Membership of the EGG includes:

Robyn Gregory – CEO, Women's Health West

Grant Hamilton – EO, Inner North West Primary Care Partnership

Gail O'Donnell – EO, HealthWest Partnership

Jenny Reimers – PVT Implementation Committee Chair, HealthWest Partnership

Stephanie Rich – Senior United Project Worker, Women's Health West

2) Expert Advisory Group (EAG)

The Expert Advisory Group is not tasked with general governance matters; the remit of the EAG is substantive content matters related to the particular activities and strategies implemented in the *United* project.

Essentially, the purpose of the EAG is to act as a 'brains trust' that the PVT partnership can contact on an as-needs basis, should the implementing agencies have particular questions within the field of expertise of one of the experts.

Members of the EAG include:

- Liz Murphy, VicHealth
- Helen Campbell, Office of Women's Affairs
- Prof Ann Taket, Deakin University
- Prof Bob Pease, Deakin University
- Prof Helen Keleher, (formerly Monash University)
- Robbie Lynch, Western Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group (IFVRAG)
- Keran Howe, Women with Disabilities Victoria
- Kellie Nagle, Municipal Association of Victoria
- Dr Victor Sojo, Centre for Ethical Leadership, Melbourne Business School
- Melba Marginson, Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition

3) PVT Implementation Committee (PVT IC)

As a new member of the PVT Implementation Committee, please refer to p.10 of the orientation pack for detailed information regarding the implementation committee and its operations.

The PVT Implementation Committee

The PVT Implementation Committee is the primary implementation mechanism for the PVT regional action plan and the *United* project.

The purpose of the Implementation Committee is to support signatory organisations to *Preventing Violence Together: Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women*, and in turn, the implementation of *United* strategies designed to prevent violence against women before it occurs. A detailed overview of the PVT IC and its agreed operating mechanisms are provided in the PVT IC Terms of Reference (enclosed in this orientation pack).

General information about the PVT Implementation Committee

Essentially, the Implementation Committee has two primary functions:

- To work in partnership with other agencies to implement region-wide actions contained in *Preventing Violence Together* and supported by *the United project*.
- To support member agencies to implement their chosen actions identified through the *United* project.

Membership

Membership of the PVT IC is drawn from partner organisations to the PVT regional action plan. Usually, members of the committee hold the prevention of violence against women, gender equity, health promotion, social policy or community health and wellbeing portfolio within their respective agencies.

Coordination

As the lead agency, Women's Health West provides coordination and secretariat support for the Implementation Committee. This includes tasks such as convening PVT IC meetings, producing and circulating meeting agenda's and minutes, coordinating regional PVAW activities related to PVT and United, and acting as a general 'hub' of information and coordination between partners that are PVT members.

Meetings

The PVT IC meets on a bi-monthly basis at Women's Health West (317-319 Barkly St, Footscray). Meetings are usually held from 1:30pm – 4:30pm, and are catered for with light refreshments. You are encouraged to contact Stephanie or Ellen from Women's Health West if you would like an item to be included on the meeting agenda, or if you will be an apology to the meeting.

As per the PVT IC terms of reference, the meetings are a space where members actively participate. We support an open, collaborative and learning environment to the Implementation Committee meetings, and encourage all members to participate.

Getting started

Being a new member to the PVT United partnership and Implementation Committee can sometimes be overwhelming; it can be a challenge to figure out what is most important to read first.

As such, the PVT IC has come up with a few suggestions on what we have found helpful in 'getting started'.

Who to contact

Due to various factors to do with staff turnover, WHW are not always aware when a new staff member within a partner agency has been given the PVT portfolio and responsibility of representation on the PVT IC.

A good idea is for you to contact Stephanie Rich (stephanier@whwest.org.au) or Ellen Kleimaker (ellenk@whwest.org.au) from Women's Health West, to introduce yourself and arrange an orientation meeting. Doing this will provide an opportunity for you to gain further general background information about PVT United, an update on where things are currently at with the PVT *United* project and, if useful, within your own organisation regarding PVT *United*. Importantly, it will also ensure that you are added to the PVT IC contacts list, so you will receive all emails including notification of meeting agenda's, any meeting documents to read, etc.

You may also like to contact other members from the PVT Implementation Committee – particularly if they are also working within the same sector as yourself (i.e. another community health service or another local government). Alternatively, you may wish to wait until your first PVT IC meeting where you will meet other members.

What to read

There is a significant volume of preventing violence against women and gender equity literature and policy documents available. Feedback from PVT IC members highlighted that when first joining the PVT committee, one of the key challenges was identifying what is most important and helpful to read first.

As such, we have listed some suggestions below of the key documents we believe will be helpful to begin your reading for working in PVAW and the PVT IC. All of these documents are available on the *PVT Resource Hub*. This online resource hub also contains a range of further reading materials in relation to gender equity and the prevention of violence against women. More information about the PVT Resource Hub is available on p14.

1. *Preventing Violence Together: Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women (republished 2013)*

This document outlines the preventing violence against women regional strategy for the west and includes a range of key actions that the PVT partnership has identified to undertake in order to prevent violence against women in the west.

2. *The United project plan and submission to the Department of Justice (2012)*

This project plan and submission outlines the rationale for the project, the implementation plan and the strategies that all partner agencies have selected to implement over 2013-2015. Your agency should have a copy of this already, but if not, contact Stephanie or Ellen from WHW and they can provide you with copies.

3. *Preventing Violence Against Women before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria (Vichealth, 2007)*

This is the key conceptual and theoretical framework utilised across Victoria for the primary prevention of violence against women. This framework provides the evidence-base that guides the work of PVT, the *United* project and the PVAW sector more broadly, so it is important to become familiar with the key concepts in this document (in particular, the key determinants of violence against women).

4. *Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children: Everyone has a Responsibility to Act (State Government, 2012)*

This document is the State government's action plan to reducing violence against women and their children. It includes primary prevention, secondary prevention (also known as early intervention) and tertiary response services and initiatives.

5. *The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australian Government, 2012)*

This is the federal government's key national policy document regarding the prevention of violence against women. It sets out a framework for action over the next 12 years, and includes primary prevention initiatives, including increasing gender equality.

What to be familiar with

In addition to making contact with the PVT partnership and having a look at the suggested key PVAW documents, it is also a good idea to become familiar with the following aspects:

- Where does the prevention of violence against women and promotion of gender equity sit within your organisational key plans and policies?

- Does your agency have a PVAW or gender equity policy and/or position statement?
- What key initiative has your organisation undertaken recently in relation to PVAW and gender equity?
- Which of the *United* project strategies has your agency selected to implement over 2013-2015?
- Which other staff at your organisation have been engaged in PVAW and gender equity initiatives? Who are your potential PVAW champions, allies and collaborators internally?

Again, if you have any questions at all about the project, please feel free to contact Ellen or Stephanie on 9689 9577.

The Preventing Violence Together Resource Hub

In late 2012, the Resource Hub was developed to support the PVT Implementation Committee to implement prevention of violence against women initiatives.

The Resource Hub is an online information bank of resources for the primary prevention of violence against women. It contains a range of resources that are categorised into logical, meaningful and useful categories that are easy to navigate. The materials included in the Hub cover a range of identified PVAW settings for action and key population groups, and are categorised to support the needs of PVAW practitioners.

To access the Resource Hub, please go to the following link address:

<http://pvahub.whwest.org.au/>

When you visit the Resource Hub, there are a range of helpful web pages that you may like to check out:

- Definitions
- The PVAW Model
- Key documents
- Facts and Statistics



The Resource Hub is a working resource for the PVT IC. It is updated with new materials that are approved as per the PVT Resource Hub Policy and Procedure (included in this pack).

The Resource Hub is managed by WHW. If you have any resources that you would like to share on the Resource Hub, or if you experience any difficulties in using the Hub or accessing resources, please contact Ellen or Stephanie from WHW.



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