

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

Preparing for Action

The City of Greater Geelong has been looking with interest at what is happening in the PVAW sector before implementing a particular strategy.

In preparing for activity in this area the City has done a significant amount of work in setting up systems that enable our council to be best placed for more work in this area.

In order for the City of Greater Geelong to undertake more work in this area it was decided that there needed to be a strategic framework for action. This meant reviewing current documents that relate to the City including the City's Municipal Health Plan, the Local Safety Plan and other relevant documents that have the potential to include the Prevention of Violence Against Women (PVAW) in them.

While over the years the City has supported events such as Reclaim the Night and been involved in others such as White Ribbon Day, however there is no strategic commitment to Preventing Violence Against Women with which to align this work.

The first stage was to review if PVAW was already in any of our documents and then to identify opportunities for including the issue in future council and non-council documents.

PVAW is now included in the municipal Health Plan as a standalone strategy. It states that COGG will

TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES THAT DECREASE THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

- *Establish a Community Accord to promote the safety and wellbeing of women.*
- *Support and participate in the activities of the G21 Violence Against Women Working Group as well as other key networks*
- *Produce an Action Plan to reduce the level of violence against women.*
- *Work with the Geelong Safety Committee and the Victoria Police in creating strategies for enhancing safety in the community.*

In addition the Health Plan recognises the VicHealth determinants approach to Health.

At this stage we have been able to ensure that PVAW is now a key feature of the Greater Geelong Local Safety Plan with a significant section on PVAW. In addition we have ensured that the issue is reported back to the committee three times a year in order to keep people up to date with what is happening.

Council staff are engaged in other committees as well and have the opportunity to raise the issue of PVAW and lead discussions about including the issue in related plans and strategies. In Geelong this has translated to PVAW or Family Violence now being recognised in the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Community Plan 2009 - 2013. Again this means that the issue is not just a line item in a larger plan but it is listed for discussion at bi-monthly Crime and Safety Sub-committee meetings.

Part of the planning has been to ensure that PVAW is not only represented in regional plans but that it also translates into action on the ground. That is why there is an emphasis on making sure the issue is then raised at meetings as a standard agenda item.

As identified earlier PVAW is a key component of the strategic plan for the regional planning group, G21. Recently G21 have adopted the VicHealth model as the guiding framework for the G21 Health Promotion & Community Strengthening Strategic Plan. This has led to the development of the G21 PVAW working group who are focused solely on prevention work. This will include capacity building, networking and support for projects over the next three years.

Currently the priorities for the City are finalising and promoting the Accord (based on the Knox accord). This follows a very successful 2008 event where the City hosted a public signing of the United Nations petition calling for an end to VAW.

Recently we were able to start some discussions with our Interfaith committee who are looking for opportunities to get engaged.

We have lots of ideas about work the City can do, how we engage our partners and the importance of providing leadership in the area of Preventing Violence Against women.

**We've set the foundations,
now for the real work....**

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