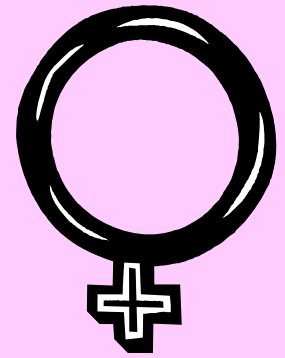




Country Women Strong Women



Most country women would not want to live anywhere else. Whether a woman lives on a large cattle property, in a small rural town, a tribal community, in a mining, grazing or agricultural area, there is a bond between themselves, the land, the countryside and the way of life. Rural women come from a range of different backgrounds. They are married, single, partnered and unpartnered. Their families have lived here for generations, for thousands of years, or were born in other countries. They may or may not speak English. Country women are resourceful in their various roles as mothers, farmers, carers, students, organisers, workers, community members, neighbours, friends and partners.

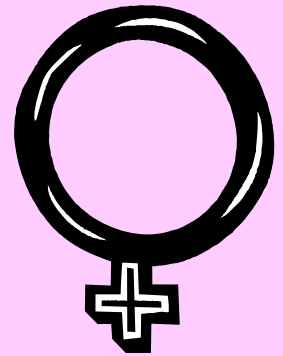
Country women need to be resourceful. Each area of the country has challenges for those who live there. Apart from the ever present good years and bad years – to do with the weather, government decisions, and the local economy – distance from other people and other places affects country women wherever they live.

For a rural woman who experiences violence from her partner, both geographical distance and fear of a lack of confidentiality can work to keep her socially isolated. In some communities everyone knows everything about everyone, and it can take great courage to reach out for assistance to change her situation. Fear can be the most powerful weapon. The decision to leave a violent partner is not a simple matter. It can be extremely difficult for a woman to walk away from land, friends, and familiar life. Local services may be an option for support, however there are also confidential Statewide Services she can contact. It may take time to find the right person, but for most women there is a friend, person in their family or member of the local community who can listen, believe her and support her decisions.

All women have the right to live in a safe place free from fear. All rural women can support this right through knowledge and action.



Country Women Strong Women



It is often in hard times that the strength of rural communities is most obvious. No-one likes to believe that Domestic Violence exists in their own community, but it does. Rural communities can work towards an end to Domestic Violence in the following ways:

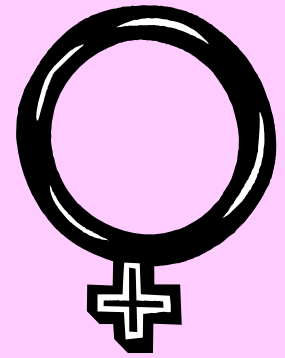
- Breaking the silence is the first step. Each of us has a responsibility to inform others that Domestic Violence is a serious and widespread crime.
- Be prepared to acknowledge that this form of violence is occurring in your community.
- Don't allow jokes about Domestic Violence to be made in your presence. It isn't funny.
- Support local services or groups working to stop Domestic Violence.
- Invite someone to your social club, CWA meeting or church group to speak out about the issue.
- Learn more about Domestic Violence, particularly the laws relating to it.
- Phone the police when you are concerned for the safety of a woman or children. It's hard, but get involved.
- Support Domestic Violence programs, especially those aimed at community education and training.
- Participate in the White Ribbon campaign (www.whiteribbon.org.au).
- Be clear that a person is responsible for their own violent behaviour. A woman is not to blame for the violence against her.
- Understand the difficulties women experiencing Domestic Violence face in rural communities.
- Listen to women's stories and hear between the lines. An invitation to share may be the opening a woman needs to reach out for information and assistance.

We thankfully acknowledge Women's Health Loddon Mallee for permission to reproduce this content, originally produced by their service funded by the Office for the Status of Women in 1997.





Women's Family Violence quick reference guide



The Law in Australia

It is against the law to be hurt by any member of your family, including your husband, children and in-laws. This is called family violence. Family violence includes:

- Any type of physical violence, such as slapping or punching
- Forcing you to do sexual things, even if you are married
- Making threats or calling you names
- Preventing you from having access to money without your permission

It is also against the law for children to be hit, or to see or hear violence in the home.

Never believe the violence is your fault.

When family violence happens, Police can issue a Safety Notice to remove a violent person from the home for up to 72 hours.

Family Violence Hurts Children Too

It is against the law for children to be hit, see or hear violence in the home. Children and young people are scared by family violence. Children have the right to feel safe and not live in fear.

Exposure to violence can cause long term harm to children.

If you do not feel safe call the Police 000.

Planning to leave?

If you want to leave it will be easier if you have these things with you:

- Money
- Any form of identification
- Visa / Passport
- Keys
- Medications
- Change of clothes

TURN OVER FOR SERVICES IN YOUR AREA THAT MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST YOU

For more info:

www.wdvcs.org.au

www.dvrcv.org.au

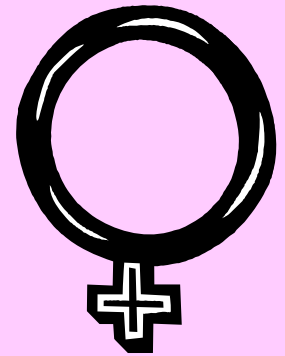
www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au





Women's Family Violence quick reference guide



Statewide Services Available

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service
1800 015 188 (24 hours)

Centre Against Sexual Assault
1800 806 292 (24 hours)

Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence
Service 8413 6800

Elizabeth Hoffman House Aboriginal
Women's Service via 1800 015 188 (24 hours)

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and
Legal Service 1800 105 303

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
1800 064 865 or 5831 5840

Women's Legal Service Vic 9642 0877

Victoria Legal Aid 1800 677 402

Women's Information & Referral Exchange
(WIRE) 1300 134 130

Family Relationship Advice Line
1800 050 321

Centrelink Access Line 13 17 94

Child Protection 1300 369 536 or
131 278 (after hours)

Directline (24 hour drug counselling)
1800 888 236

1800 calls from mobiles charge at applicable rates

For more info:

www.wdvcs.org.au

www.dvrcv.org.au

www.familyviolence.vic.gov.au

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

Parentline 132 289

Lifeline (24 hours) 13 11 14

Men's Referral Service 1800 065 973

Kids Help Line 1800 551 800

Strathbogie Services

Family Violence Help
1800 015 188 or 1800 656 463

Community Legal Service
Hume Riverina 1800 918 377 or 6057 5000
Goulburn Valley 1800 639 121

Magistrate's Court Benalla 5761 1400
Shepparton 5821 4633 Seymour 5735 0100

Housing Help
Rural Housing Network 5735 2000
or 1800 825 955 (after hours)

Community Health
Mitchell Community Health 5784 5555
5735 7655 or 5735 7689 (after hours)
Violet Town 5736 6366
Primary Care Connect 5823 3200
Family Care Shepparton 5823 7000

Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative
General 5820 0000
Family Services 5831 2010

Child FIRST (family services) 1800 705 211

Police Stations Euroa 5795 2017
Nagambie 5794 2526 Violet Town 5798 1316

