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Summary Report on Outcomes and Learnings



Prepared for the Community Crime Prevention Unit,
Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation, by Our Watch

This summary report provides a snapshot of the key outcomes and learnings of the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children Grants program and its group of eight projects. This summary is based on a detailed report produced by Our Watch on behalf of the Community Crime Prevention Unit within the Department of Justice and Regulation.

Background

From 2012–2015, the Community Crime Prevention Unit administered a one-off grants scheme under the Community Crime Prevention Program, targeted at community-based partnerships to help reduce violence against women and their children. This was known as the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children grants program.

The funding amount directed to the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children grants program was substantial, in the order of \$7.2 million over three years. There were two components to this allocation:

- \$4.8 million was allocated to support prevention partnerships in each of the eight regions of the Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation
- \$2.4 million was allocated for a Koori Community Safety Grants component of the scheme (managed by the Koori Justice Unit, on behalf of Community Crime Prevention Unit, supporting projects in four Koori communities).

This summary report (and the full report on which it's based) is focused on the first component, the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children (RVAWC) grants program and the projects implemented in each of the Department of Justice and Regulation regions.

The purpose of the RVAWC Grants program was:

- to support *primary prevention* partnership projects across community service organisations and local government which delivered outcomes at the regional or subregional levels
- to support *secondary prevention* partnership activities, or initiatives that move beyond the general population to provide early interventions to individuals, groups or contexts for which there exists a higher risk of violence occurring, with outcomes again at the regional or subregional levels.

Support for *tertiary prevention*, or actions to stop reoccurrences of violence for those who have already experienced it, was *not* within the scope of the RVAWC Grants program.

The aims of the RVAWC Grants program were to:

- enhance collaborative and integrated working arrangements with relevant agencies at the local level, including local government, related agencies and local networks
- help build the evidence base for primary prevention and early intervention to preventing violence against women and their children.

Overview of the projects delivered

An ‘at a glance’ summary of the eight RVAWC-funded projects, their regional coverage, and the key action areas or areas of influence is presented below.

Project	Region	Grant recipient	Key action areas or areas of influence
Gippsland Regional Preventing Violence against Women Strategy	Gippsland	Gippsland Women’s Health Service	Develop a regional preventing violence against women strategy Work with a range of settings (e.g. local government, workplaces) to coordinate region-wide prevention action
Hume Regional Preventing Violence against Women Strategy	Hume	Women’s Health Goulburn North East	
United: Working Together to Prevent Violence against Women in the West	North and West metropolitan	Women’s Health West	Leverage an existing regional strategy to shift organisational culture and embed violence prevention and/or gender equity within the workplaces of partners
Act@Work	Grampians	Women’s Health Grampians	Influence structural and systemic organisational change to promote gender equitable/non-violent workplace cultures
Loddon Mallee Takes A Stand	Loddon Mallee	Women’s Health Loddon Mallee	Influence structural and systemic organisational change to reduce the acceptance of violence-condoning attitudes and behaviours, and to strengthen positive bystander behaviour Develop a regional preventing violence against women strategy
CHALLENGE Family Violence	Southern metropolitan (subregional)	Casey City Council in partnership with Dandenong City Council and Cardinia Shire Council	Work in local government and faith-based settings to train and build the capacity of male leaders in preventing violence against women
Baby Makes 3	Eastern metropolitan	Carrington Health	Promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women during the transition to parenthood
Baby Makes 3 Plus	Barwon South West (subregional)	Warnambool City Council	Undertake professional capacity development activities with sector professionals

Table 1 – The eight RVAWC-funded projects ‘at a glance’

The projects can be organised into three categories based on the type of intervention and the projects' main focus.

Group 1: Region-wide primary prevention partnerships and settings for primary prevention action

Three projects focused on region-wide prevention partnerships and settings for primary prevention action. These were Gippsland Regional Preventing Violence against Women Strategy, Hume Regional Preventing Violence against Women Strategy, and United: Working Together to Prevent Violence against Women in the West. One common thread running through these projects was the leadership of regional women's health services: Gippsland Women's Health, Women's Health Goulburn North East and Women's Health West respectively. What differentiated these strategies, however, was that they reflected different stages in regional strategy development. The Hume and Gippsland strategies were fairly early in the development and nurturing of their strategy partnerships, while United sought to leverage a strategy that already existed (and which was in fact the first regional prevention strategy for Victoria).

Group 2: Organisational-level change through the delivery of settings-based workplace program

Two projects focused on influencing organisational-level change through the delivery of settings-based workplace programs. These were Loddon Mallee Takes A Stand and Act@Work. Once again, a common thread running through these projects was the leadership of regional women's health services: Women's Health Loddon Mallee and Grampians Women's Health respectively. What differentiated the projects, however, was the workplace programs they utilised and their approach to resourcing settings-based workplace partners for organisational change. Loddon Mallee Takes A Stand delivered an existing workplace program and engaged with multiple workplaces in the region, aiming for breadth (reaching a wider variety of workplaces); Act@Work developed its own promising practice workplace program and worked closely with a smaller number of workplaces in their region, aiming for depth (embedding cultural change in all aspects of the workplace).

Group 3: Direct participation and individual skills development

Three projects focused on building the skills of community members through direct participation programs. These were CHALLENGE Family Violence (Casey City Council), Baby Makes 3 (Carrington Health) and Baby Makes 3 Plus (Warrnambool City Council). Community members included male community leaders and male and female faith leaders for CHALLENGE Family Violence, and first time parents for the two Baby Makes 3 projects.

'It's been one of the greatest three years of my professional life... I look at the world differently'.

– RVAWC project practitioner,
November 2015

Key findings

The projects produced enormous benefits for their communities.

Together, they:

- met their stated objectives and through this took their communities one step closer towards stopping violence against women from occurring in the first place
- established (and in some cases sustained beyond the three year implementation period) effective partnerships for prevention, including region-wide prevention structures and specific settings-based action groups or collaborative working arrangements
- worked closely with over 40 workplaces and achieved organisational change in the direction of improved gender equity
- reached over 1,600 first time parents through a group-work program for improved gender equality in relationships
- generated assets by way of numerous resources for primary prevention
- trained around 170 facilitators, mentors and leaders for local prevention activities, and ignited the leadership of many others in their communities.

The projects also generated important insights for future design and implementation of primary prevention projects. Key themes included:

- prevention partnerships require capacity development in themselves
- strong relationships with settings-based partners are essential and can make all the difference
- direct participation programs activities can be transformational and ought to be measured for this
- deep organisational transformation requires commitment and time
- communicating consistent messages is a critical success factor
- prevention projects generate many transferrable assets that can be used to continue the work of primary prevention.

The grants program successfully met its aims and objectives. In particular, the design and administration of the RVAWC Grants program was extremely effective in supporting or contributing to community engagement and prevention partnerships, workforce capacity development, and the evidence base for primary prevention. The enabling factors that helped the grants program to meet its aims included:

- formulating and implementing a nuanced two-stage application process that ensured funding went to applicants with the best possible prevention partnerships and capacity for evidence-based and evidence-building practice

‘Yes, it’s been worth it in our region, we’re in a different place. It’s no longer our service [Women’s Health] on its own on the prevention of violence against women.’

– RVAWC project practitioner,
November 2015

- taking measures to grow the workforce capabilities of the prevention sector - the funding of a Community of Practice for the RVAWC-funded projects, and the benefits this initiative delivered to participants, were particularly noteworthy
- contributing to the evidence base by establishing processes to ensure the successes and lessons learned of RVAWC-funded projects, and the effectiveness and insights of the RVAWC Grants program, were widely shared (including commissioning and distributing this report on outcomes and learnings).

‘Our focus was on building the evidence base. That means having room to learn...’

– Department of Justice and Regulation staff member, December 2015

Conclusions

Together, the RVAWC Grants program as a whole and its individual projects have made a significant impact on the primary prevention landscape. Their legacy lies in the knowledge they bring to:

- primary prevention techniques (for example, direct participation programs and organisational capacity development activities)
- the prevention infrastructure (for example, the Community of Practice and feminist leadership)
- the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders, including government departments and agencies.

These are all key elements of the recently published, evidence-informed national framework for primary prevention, *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*¹. Thus, the most important contribution of the RVAWC Grants program and its projects lies in what they tell us about programming and practice in the context of this new framework for primary prevention.

¹ Our Watch, Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth 2015, *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne. Available: [http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-\(1\)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework)

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