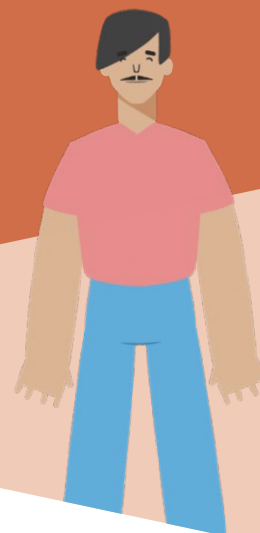


Fact sheet 11.

Council as a community connector



Council's role as community connector

Councils can lead by example by modelling gender equality and respect, providing supportive work environments and zero tolerance to violence against women, thus sending a strong message to their partners, stakeholders and the community. Councils have significant reach within the community and existing mechanisms, structures, networks, partnerships, relationships and infrastructure can be utilised to generate a [whole-of community](#) approach.

Councils can apply a prevention focus through their networks and partnerships, and through community prevention campaigns and awareness-raising activities such as 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence (including White Ribbon Day), Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and others.

Councils can also provide the infrastructure to connect diverse community partners through existing networks or by creating and supporting new collaborations that focus on the prevention of violence against women. For example, the City of Greater Bendigo [Coalition for Gender Equity](#) is a diverse collective of 42 member organisations and groups in the public, private and community sectors dedicated to advancing gender equity and the prevention of violence against women. Coalition members collectively employ over 8,500 staff in Greater Bendigo and have direct and regular contact with the community through the delivery of programs, services and facilities.

Key questions

- What partners does council work with, and are they doing any work to promote gender equality or prevent violence against women?

- How can you learn from others doing prevention work (including other councils)?
- Are there opportunities to partner with other organisations or neighbouring councils on joint initiatives?
- Are there local community-based organisations that have specialist services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities or LGBTIQ communities that you could engage with?
- Who are the family and domestic violence response agencies that you can engage with to ensure the work council does is safe and appropriate, and to ensure support services are available for staff who make a disclosure?
- Are there cross-sector groups or networks you can join for information and knowledge-sharing (local, statewide, national)?
- Have councils engaged with their Local Government Association on this work?

Case studies

- The [City of Parramatta](#) has been working to prevent domestic and family violence within their council and their community for many years. They facilitate community partnerships and action, and advocate for the importance of prevention. This work includes partnerships with many different stakeholders in community: community-based services and organisations; national and community-based sports clubs; businesses, corporations and social enterprises; other

government agencies; paid and voluntary workers; and community leaders and members. Council funds services and organisations through a grants program to deliver additional programs for their clients. The City of Parramatta has also played a leading role in establishing and coordinating a statewide primary prevention network in New South Wales, in partnership with Domestic Violence NSW.

- In NSW, Cumberland Council's [Domestic and Family Violence Action Plan](#) was the winner of the 2021 Addressing Violence against Women and Their Children Award.
- [Local Government Association of Queensland](#) 'community of interest' networks bring together local government officers who are 'champions' for the issue of domestic and family violence. Two networks, representing the community officers and human resource sectors of local government, ensure that there is both an internal and external focus. Forty-four councils are represented across both groups, with the Community Officer Network having representation from 28 councils and the Human Resource Network having representation from 25 councils.
- MAV's [Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence and All Forms of Violence against Women Network](#) was formed in 2010 and is an inclusive group of local government organisational representatives and key community partners. Its purpose is to provide opportunities for collaboration and leadership in the local government sector by sharing knowledge, developing skills and expertise, and providing networking and peer support opportunities to build the capacity of the sector.
- Central Goldfields Shire (Vic) – [Changing Our Story](#) video, about the council's whole-of-community approach.
- Hobsons Bay City Council (Vic) – gender equity [initiatives in the community](#).
- Yarra Ranges Council (Vic) – gender equity [initiatives with the community](#).
- Mackay Regional Council (Qld) – [Mackay Draws the Line campaign and White Ribbon accreditation](#).
- Mount Isa City Council's (Qld) involvement in and support of [Healthy Families Yarn](#).
- City of Wagga Wagga's (NSW) [theDVproject:2650](#) aimed to educate the community on the causes of violence against women and their children, to promote gender equality and respect, and to challenge rigid gender roles and stereotypes. This included a campaign developed in conjunction with the City of Wodonga (Vic) titled [Reflect Respect – A modern day guide for gentlemen](#) that aimed to challenge social norms, attitudes and behaviours to promote respectful relationships in the community.
- Townsville City Council (Qld) and the Queensland Police Service created a united front against domestic and family violence by signing a [Statement of Commitment](#).
- Cardinia Shire Council (Vic) – [Together We Can](#) program focused on preventing violence against women in workplaces across the shire. Council partnered with local non-profits, governments and small and medium businesses (both their employees and customers), to work on prevention programs.
- [Mornington Peninsula Shire](#) (Vic) and [Hobsons Bay City Council](#) (Vic) are two examples of councils that have worked in conjunction with the Jesuit Social Services' [The Men's Project](#) to implement the [Modelling Respect and Equality \(MoRE\) program](#). The program builds people's skills and knowledge to create change around issues of respect and equality in their community in places that shape the cultures of boys and men, such as sporting clubs, groups, schools, workplaces and other organisations.