

Closeout Report

theDVproject:2650



Statement of commitment to First Nations Peoples

The City of Wagga Wagga (Council) acknowledges and respects that Aboriginal people were the first people of this land and the Wiradjuri people were the first regional custodians of the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area (LGA). This recognition includes acceptance of the rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal people to participate in decision making.

Council acknowledges the shared responsibility of all Australians to respect and encourage the development of an awareness and appreciation of each other's origin. In so doing, Council recognises and respects the heritage, culture, sacred sites and special places of Aboriginal people.

Council is committed to developing programs to improve the wellbeing of all City of Wagga Wagga residents as well as facilitating reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Council recognises that social justice and reconciliation are fundamental to achieving positive changes. Council will continue to actively encourage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to work together for a just, harmonious and progressive society.

Council recognises that the richness of Aboriginal cultures and values in promoting social diversity within the community.

Acknowledgement of Country

theDVproject:2650 as part of Wagga Wagga City Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land, the Wiradjuri people, and pays respect to Elders past, present and future and extends our respect to all First Nations Peoples in Wagga Wagga. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection with the land and rivers.

Artwork by Owen Lyons and Teisha Robinson as part of the Wiradjuri and First Nations Youth engagement project.



Foreword

When the founding sisters established the Wagga Women's Health Centre on the never-ceded lands of the Wiradjuri nation, they anticipated that their advocacy and practical support for women, and that of the feminist movement in Australia and abroad, would lead to such political and societal change that it would eventually render itself redundant. Yet 42 years on, its services are needed more than ever.

Many of the early clients of the Centre sought assistance for 'domestic violence', although the term had yet to be widely adopted. Notwithstanding the broad social and economic advances in the status of women since the 1970s, including growing awareness and action around gender violence, its prevalence remains alarming.

Until recently, despite the Centre and other local services had been working in the domestic abuse space for decades and the existence of national and general research on the issue, there was no local research. We did not have a clear picture of what domestic abuse looked like in the Wagga Wagga Local Government Area, nor the knowledge and attitudes held by our community.

In 2015, the Centre used \$10,000 from a donation made by the Wollundry Rotary Club to commission academic research, based on the premise that we could not solve the problem unless we understood it. The research gave us a baseline, something that would help us determine whether future interventions have changed anything.

theDVproject:2650 report revealed that Wagga Wagga's rate of domestic and family violence was 29 per cent higher than the NSW average. This rate in fact increased 40 per cent between 2013 and 2018. The research provided insights into attitudes held by residents about domestic abuse. Many respondents did not recognise the emotional, psychological, sexual, and financial forms of abuse, with people aged under 24 less likely to see repeated criticism and controlling of finances as abuse. One in 25 residents said that domestic abuse was 'okay', and many felt it is a private matter leading to lower rates of intervention and reporting in our region.

The research also revealed some very deeply entrenched beliefs about gender stereotypes. One in four residents stated that men should be dominant in relationships. In addition to believing that men should be the head of the household, many respondents stated that men are better leaders and women belong in the home. We know from national and global research, that there is a strong correlation between the beliefs someone holds, either explicitly or implicitly, and the likelihood of them perpetrating domestic abuse.

With the \$1.2 million funding provided by Women NSW as part of the innovation fund, the Centre was able to take *theDVproject:2650* to the next stage in partnership with Wagga Wagga City Council (Council) and Murrumbidgee PHN. Because gender inequality is at the core of the problem of gendered violence, gender equality must be at the heart of the solution. *theDVproject:2650* aims to help our community understand the causes of violence against women and their children, promote gender equality and respect for women, and challenge rigid gender roles and stereotypes.

This multi-faceted primary prevention program has been running for the past three years, seeking to change the attitudes, social norms and structures that support and enable domestic abuse. The overall objective of the whole-of-community approach is for community members to increase their knowledge and capability, their investment in the issue and ultimately become agents of change. It has become even more important with the outbreak of COVID-19, with research indicating an intensification of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic and family abuse.

The overall objective is for everyone in our community to understand what domestic abuse is, the forms it takes, why it occurs, and what to do about it. In essence, we want to create change in our community, to eliminate the scourge of domestic abuse. People deserve to be safe. In their homes, their communities, across the country.

Some of the specific initiatives undertaken during the past three years include the Reflect Respect campaign, We Do Respect campaign, as well as education programs engaging school students, athletes, employees of companies and other organisations. It is about grassroots advocacy and action. After all, unless we all work together to tackle everyday sexism, the best policies and initiatives aimed to achieve gender equality and prevent domestic abuse will not deliver the progress we need.

This is a pivotal moment in our community and nation's history, offering so much opportunity to work together to change the story around gendered violence and inequality. The Centre would like to commend its partners, particularly Council on the conduct of this project. We are confident that the success of this initiative will continue to be felt over the months and years to come, with many activities focusing on our young men and women, helping to make our community safer and better for everyone.



*Jenny Rolfe-Wallace
President, Wagga Women's Health
Centre Management Committee*

Foreword

Designed as a grassroots primary prevention project, theDVproject:2650 was implemented to promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life. A plan was created to develop dynamic, creative campaigns, engage with regional business and education sectors and to create organisational change within Council.

As the largest regional city in NSW, there was a strong obligation to shift the rate of domestic and family violence that was nearly 30% higher than the NSW average. The motivation was to encourage the community to implement long-term primary prevention initiatives to begin to change the narrative of Wagga Wagga's domestic violence rates.

If we look at where Wagga Wagga started on this journey in 2016, it's clear to see we have made positive strides forward. Community members are more aware of the impacts of domestic violence and other forms of abuse, there is increased knowledge on where to find support, and community attitudes are shifting towards more positive views of relationships.

Community awareness and culture change is an evolving process, but the takeaway message is that while it will take generations to prevent violence against women and their children, it's important to start and not get discouraged.

Council's commitment to this project and primary prevention of domestic and family violence is one that will carry on in Wagga Wagga. I would like to see everybody embrace the uncomfortable conversations and continue to drive action in the community as ambassadors for change.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. J. Conkey".

*Mayor of the City of Wagga Wagga
Councillor Greg Conkey OAM*

Introduction

While living free from violence is everyone's right, reducing violence is everyone's responsibility.¹

Research shows gender inequality is the fundamental driver of violence against women. This violence is pervasive and has profound consequences for individuals and society in general.

theDVproject:2650 was a three year (July 2018 – June 2021) primary prevention initiative with an aim to reduce domestic and family violence in the City of Wagga Wagga. The project was implemented in partnership with Wagga Women's Health Centre and funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

The project was focused on creating attitudinal change within the community through primary prevention activities such as policy review, training and educational workshops, presentations, major community advertising and messaging campaigns, development and distribution of supporting resources and targeted community projects.

This report summarises key project activities that were implemented under the following three focus areas: Organisational Change | Sector Engagement | Community-Wide Campaigns.

The recommendations included in this report are based on the learnings from the project activities, previous research and best practice programs nationwide. Project findings also recognise the importance for prevention designed and delivered activities to be inclusive in practice and in particular an understanding of culturally appropriately developed and delivered activities with First Nations and culturally linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

Throughout the project there has been authentic engagement across the community and with project stakeholders to convert community attitudes, to empower people to step up, and to speak up when they see or hear disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour. There has been a very clear message that we all have a role to play in creating an inclusive and equitable Wagga Wagga for all.

Council as the auspice organisation to deliver this project, embraced its role as the level of government closest to the community and the fact that local government plays an essential role in promoting gender equity in the prevention of violence against women. Councils can lead this societal change through the services and multiple streams of community engagement they deliver, through partnerships, as a large local employer, and most importantly through leadership in the community.

In reviewing the three-year funded project, a comparative Community Attitudes Survey has been conducted indicating that there is a significant positive improvement in attitudes towards more power equality in relationships across the Wagga Wagga community between 2016 and 2021.

¹ National plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010-2022.

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Acknowledgement

Council acknowledges the Wagga Women's Health Centre as the project's partner, their proactive engagement with our community on the issues of Domestic and Family Violence and their continued commitment for this project.

Council also acknowledges the members of the Wagga Wagga DV2650 Steering Committee for their participation in the project:

- Councillor Greg Conkey, Mayor of City of Wagga Wagga
- Jenny Rolfe-Wallace, President, Wagga Women's Health Centre
- Gail Meyer, Manager Wagga Women's Health Centre (till December 2020)
- Dr Joe McGirr, MP Independent Member for Wagga Wagga
- Aaron McDonnell, proxy for (M. McCormack, MP)
- Julie Redway, COO, Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
- Mark Calverley, CEO Southern Sports Academy
- Andrew Crakanthorp, CEO, Riverina Water
- Dr Stacey Jenkins, Acting Head of School at Charles Sturt University
- Belinda Crain, CEO, Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga
- Andrew Stockman, Department of Regional NSW
- Fiona Piltz, Head of People and Culture, Catholic Education, Diocese of Wagga Wagga
- Phil Malligan, District Inspector and Winston Woodward, Detective Chief Inspector, Riverina Police District

The project has also valued the engagement and support from Council's senior management and senior leaders across the organisation. Thanks, is also extended to the staff members who acted as ambassadors and took independent action, promoting key messages within the wider community to prevent violence against women.

Council and Wagga Women's Health Centre acknowledge the strength and resilience of adults, children and young people who have experienced family violence. We pay respects to those who did not survive and acknowledge friends and family members who have lost loved ones to this preventable and far-reaching issue.

We also acknowledge the work that local and national specialist services provide (early intervention and crisis response) to the Wagga community and acknowledge the importance of that work being appropriately funded. The importance of primary prevention initiatives being front of mind is essential for our community in reducing instances of violence against women, whilst at the same time there still remains the importance of having resourced services to respond and care for community members experiencing domestic and family violence.

Council thanks the State Government, the Department of Communities and Justice, through Round 2 of the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund for funding this project, as without this financial contribution and support to innovate with a focus on primary prevention, this project would not have been possible.

Community awareness and culture change is an evolving process, but the takeaway message is that whilst it will take generations to prevent violence against women and their children, it's important to start now.

Proudly funded by



theDVproject:2650 Project overview

theDVproject:2650 began with research conducted by Wagga Women's Health Centre (WWHC), based on the premise that the problem cannot be solved unless it is understood. Although Wagga Wagga services have been working on domestic violence for decades and there is much national and general research on the issue, there was no local research.

The research provided a baseline, something that would help to determine whether future interventions were effective or enabled change at a local level.

In 2016, the WWHC undertook a Community Attitudes Survey in Wagga Wagga, which identified that many community members:

- Hold low support for gender equality.
- Adhere to rigid or stereotypical gender roles.
- Hold attitudes and beliefs that justify or excuse, trivialise or minimise domestic and family violence, and blame the victim.

Stakeholder research also conducted in 2016, found that all attempts to address DFV in Wagga Wagga focused on crisis response and tertiary intervention, with a lack of primary prevention programs and activities.

In response to the 2016 Community Attitudes Survey findings and stakeholder research WWHC applied and received \$1,259,075 funding in September 2018. This funding was received from the Department of Communities and Justice, through Round 2 of the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund to conduct theDVproject:2650 over three years. WWHC then partnered with Council to auspice and lead the project.

Wagga Wagga has a domestic and family violence rate that is 29.4% higher than the NSW state average – a rate, which has increased 40 per cent in the last five years.

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 2016

Approach

theDVproject:2650 (project) was implemented as a whole of community primary prevention program aimed at changing the attitudes, social norms and structures that drive DFV; and increase support for gender equity.

Recognising that violence against women is primarily driven by gender inequality and reinforced by a number of other factors, the project applied multiple prevention activities simultaneously across the City of Wagga Wagga of which was adapted and strengthened from the 'Generating Equality & Respect' (GEARs) program run in Victoria.

Like GEARs, the project used multiple prevention approaches that spanned across multiple settings at the same time. This approach allowed both broad reach (through community-wide campaigns) and deep change (through organisational changes within Council and sector engagement) to saturate the Wagga Wagga community.

The project was aimed to achieve a ripple effect within Council, key stakeholder groups and the wider community. This flow on would inspire other organisations to lead their own initiatives and to take part in a prevention activities within their respective organisations, community groups, social or private lives.

Using evidence-based guidance as a foundation, programs and activities were focused in three key priority areas: organisational change, sector engagement and community campaigns. Each area focused on an educational approach outlining the drivers of DFV, promoting gender equity and respect for women, and challenging rigid gender roles and stereotypes.

Aim

The project objectives were to work in the primary prevention space to shift community attitudes and beliefs, recognising that rigid gender stereotypes and norms, and gender inequality are the main drivers of violence against women.

Objectives

- Create attitudinal change in the community.
- Promote and normalise gender equity and respect in public and private life.
- Increase support for gender equality.
- Change attitudes and beliefs that create a violence-supportive environment.

If we do not focus on primary prevention, we will find ourselves always in the position of responding to tragedy.

The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022

Focus areas

The project has been focused on three pillars simultaneously. Each pillar's project activities are described in more detail later in the report: The total funded budget included all staff and implementation costs.



Organisational change



Sector engagement



Community-wide campaigns

Timeline

2016

WWHC undertook Community Attitudes Survey and stakeholder research on domestic violence in Wagga Wagga as part of phase one of theDVproject:2650.

June 2018

WWHC received funding from the Department of Communities and Justice, through Round 2 of the Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund.

Sep-Oct 2018

Partnership between WWHC and Council established.

Project team recruited.

15 Nov 2018

Project start.

3 - year project implementation.

30 June 2020

Project finish.

Community statistics

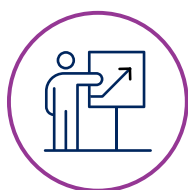
TheDVproject:2650 began with research, based on the premise that we cannot solve a problem unless we understand it. Although Wagga Wagga services have been working on domestic violence for decades and there is much national and general research on the issue, there was no local research.

We didn't know what domestic violence looked like in Wagga Wagga or the knowledge and attitudes held by our community. We also needed research to provide a baseline, something that would help us determine whether future interventions have changed anything. WWHC conducted a 2016 Community Attitudes Survey to capture local data and of which informed a pre project base line. The same survey was repeated at the end of the three-year project in March 2021 for post comparative analysis.

This report illustrated some positive shifts in domestic violence attitudes in the Wagga Wagga community. The information available in this report is useful to recognise the areas where prevention efforts towards domestic violence in the Wagga Wagga community requires continued investment.

Attitudes are one way of measuring progress in addressing the factors leading to violence against women. A positive trend in people's understanding of violence against women was identified in the recent Community Attitudes Survey that measured people's attitudes towards domestic violence. This change in attitudes around gender equality and attitudes to violence against women suggests that Wagga Wagga community is making some progress to achieving positive changes in these factors. Continued effort is needed to ensure that these changes are ultimately reflected in reductions in violence, and that gains are not lost to negative influences.

Key shifts between 2016 and 2021 Wagga Wagga Community Attitude Surveys



Knowledge of domestic violence

Above 90% of people recognise 8 out of the 9 behaviours that constitute DV compared to only 5 of the 9 behaviours in 2016.

People (55+) more likely to recognise domestic violence behaviours compared to people under 24 years old.



Attitudes towards domestic violence

People were **2 times as likely** to agree **controlling access to money** is a form of DFV than in 2016.

People were **3 times more likely** to believe the main cause of DV is to **maintain power and control** rather than **men being under stress** (2016).



Attitudes towards gender roles and power dynamics

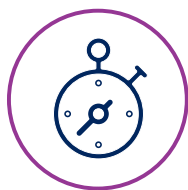
1 in 7 men believe men should be dominant in relationships compared to **1 in 4 men** in 2016.

Only **1 in 13** people believed **woman need to have children to be fulfilled** compared to 1 in 5 in 2016.

1 in 83 people believed a **university education is more important for a boy**, compared to 1 in 12 in 2016.

1 in 19 people believed men make better leaders compared to 1 in 6 in 2016.

1 in 16 people believed discrimination against women is no longer a problem in the workplace compared to 1 in 7 in 2016.



Over the last 12 months approximately

50% of people shared related social media posts that promote gender equality and respect.

For more information: please see attached **Changing Our Story brochure with the key findings.**

Understanding primary prevention

Primary prevention aims to stop violence before it starts.

Primary prevention approaches work across communities, organisations and society as a whole to address the deep, underlying drivers of violence against women (related to gender inequality), so that violence does not happen at all.

Some primary prevention strategies focus on changing behaviour and/or building the knowledge and skills of individuals.

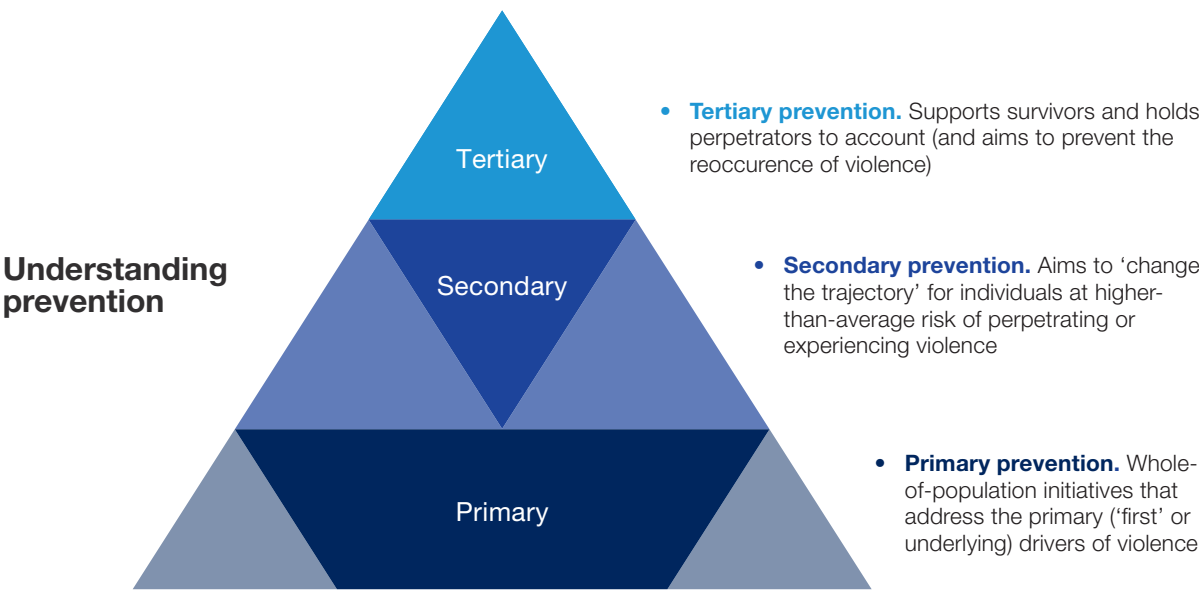
If you think of the way in which efforts and resources have been moved to focus on creating awareness and educating the community on the impact of smoking, not wearing sunscreen or hats, or driver safety with seatbelts and the use of mobile phones - that's similar to what the project was trying to achieve.

Violence against women is preventable and the evidence on proven and promising approaches to prevention is growing. Australia's national framework to prevent violence against women, *Change the Story*, outlines the characteristics of effective or promising practice, and of less effective or harmful practice (Our Watch et al. 2015), and principles for the effective implementation of prevention techniques (Our Watch et al. 2015).

Examples of effective primary prevention programs include:

- Primary and secondary schools teaching boys and girls about respectful relationships
- Workplaces, sporting clubs and other community groups educating their members about gender equity and DFV

***Change the Story** is a long term framework to end violence against women. Released in 2015 and based on extensive research, it sets out essential action to bring about the social and cultural change needed to end violence against women.*



Project Pillars



Organisational change

Creating an equitable and respectful workplace within Council.



Sector engagement

Collaborating with businesses, organisations, educational institutions, and sporting clubs across Wagga Wagga.



Community-wide campaigns

Engaging with Wagga Wagga residents of all demographics.



Organisational change

Culture	Education	Resources	Internal campaign and events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal equity and respect branding and promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Watch – ‘Change the Story training’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive language guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do Respect campaign
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual gender audit and equity survey as part of organisation culture improvement action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconscious bias and inclusivity training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender decoder for job advertisements Revision & recommendations to new organisational EEO Plan/ EEO Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live internal landing page and regular e-project messaging and resource updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workplace Equity Strategy and workplace action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active bystander training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy review guide Family Room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important celebratory and reflection events e.g. International Women’s Day/NSW Women’s Week Harmony Day, Movember Women’s Health Week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted team workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NRL’s Voice Against Violence workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental leave and flexible working arrangements booklets 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project engagement sessions with Directors and Level 3 Managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and delivery of education program and six eLearning modules linked to induction of new employees and supervisor/ team training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A toolkit for managers and supervisors: a step-by-step guide to assist an employee experiencing domestic and family violence + how to access resources 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women in Council Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Protective Equipment for women process Equity and Respect workplace toolkit 2021 	

Promoting gender equity and respect in the workplace is an important factor in preventing violence against women. In addition to legal obligations to provide a safe and equitable workplace, an organisation's duty of care to employees extends to workplace responses to domestic and family violence (such as providing domestic violence leave, workplace safety plan). But most importantly, workplaces should do everything practicable to support employees to retain their employment.

Workplaces have a lot to offer to prevent violence against women, especially addressing underlying causes of violence, namely by promoting gender equity and building cultures of respect.

The activities implemented by the project were focused on raising awareness and challenging the underlying contributors to violence and strengthen the conditions that work against violence occurring, such as violence-supportive attitudes, sexist cultures and practices, rigid gender roles and stereotyping.

Council was both a strategic partner and a workplace 'site' for organisational change. The 'whole-of-organisation' approach, utilised multiple strategies designed to initiate change at multiple levels within Council from an individual, collegial and management level, and for multiple outcomes.

This project pillars components for the organisation aimed at working to enact change within Council through the following areas:

- Culture
- Education
- Resources
- Internal campaigns and events

The above targeted staff knowledge and attitudes, formal policy and practices, and campaigns to influence culture and behavior.

Culture

Internal equity and respect branding

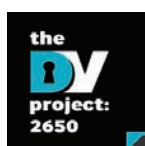
The organisational component of the project was focused on a very broad target audience and the various demographics at Council.

There was a clear objective to ensure this was not viewed as a female issue in isolation and alienate 50% of intended audience, being males.

Internally the Equity + Respect brand was established to engage staff on the topic of gender equity and to minimise the risk of staff prematurely disengaging from the project (implying the project's aim is to support victims of domestic violence).

It was important to introduce a positive project name to address issue of engagement, while also conveying the seriousness and urgency of the issues that the Equity and Respect project was aiming to address.

This highly effective brand become a valuable tool to reinforce and effectively communicate the reasons and purpose of the project.



Gender audit and equity survey

We need to improve flexibility, allow role sharing, promote part-time jobs and keep encouraging men to be carers."

Workplace Equity Survey response, Wagga Wagga City Council

An annual internal equity survey has been used as a tool to measure and track attitudinal change within the organisation over the three-year life of the project.

By introducing and conducting this survey, Council collected valuable feedback from staff about their workplace experiences in relation to workplace culture, parenting and caring responsibilities, flexible work arrangements, gender-driven problems at Council, and participation in equity and respect activities.

The survey findings have been used as a resource to assist organisational culture planning, initiatives and improvements, particularly addressing gender equity, respect and inclusiveness during the project life and for future organisational planning past the lifespan of theDVproject:2650.

2019	2020	2021	Categories
81%	93%	97%	of respondents understand how inequality and disrespect can lead to DFV.
78%	82%	83%	agreed that sexual harassment is not tolerated in our organisation (making jokes, suggestions or unwelcome remarks of a sexual / sexist nature, inappropriate physical contact).
74%	77%	79%	of respondents believe that Council supports diversity .
51%	53%	79%	of responses indicated that problem(s) experienced at work are not gender related (respondents were able to select more than one issue).
*	70%	75%	of respondents stated that they have had a conversation about equity, diversity , inclusion, respect or prevention of violence against women.
*	52%	64%	of respondents prepared to call out inappropriate behaviour or attitude .
*	51%	54%	of respondents feel empowered to be ambassadors for equity and respect .
27%	17%	Only 15%	of respondents reported sightings of another staff member being harassed because they were perceived to be different.

Note: * these questions were not part of the questions in the 2019 Equity survey.

Workplace Equity Strategy and workplace action plan

To highlight Council's formal commitment to a workplace culture, a Workplace Equity Strategy (WES) was developed to promote diversity and inclusiveness, build respect, and recognise employee's experiences in the workplace.

Data collected from the initial annual equity survey in 2019 and subsequent workshops contributed to the development of a workplace action plan, which underpinned the WES.

The strategy set a framework and conveyed not only Council's vision, but also commitment to the development of an equitable and respectful workplace.

Five pillars of influence were identified to enact long-term change within Council:

- Education and training
- Internal campaign
- Language and accessibility
- Events and promotion
- Leadership and culture

The following pillars of influence were adopted:

- 1. Education program** – educating and training staff on gender equity and respect for preventing violence against women. This resulted in the development of the formal education program (factsheets, eLearning and induction modules).
- 2. Internal campaign** – We do Respect. This campaign was originally intended to have an internal focus, however after the development of the end product this was so strong that the concept was externally implemented and grew to a wider reach and uptake.
- 3. Language and accessibility** – review of internal policies and procedures. This review included the development of a parental leave and flexible working arrangements booklet, introduction of personal protective equipment for women process, inclusive language guide for recruitment practices, policy review guide, review of the Customer Service Charter and Statement of Business Ethics brochures, Equal Employment Opportunity Plan and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, job decoder, best practice guide for managers and supervisor on how to support employees experiencing domestic and family violence.
- 4. Events and promotion** – workplace celebratory and reflection days scheduled annually i.e. International Women's Day and NSW Women's week, Harmony Day, Men's Health week, Women's Health week, Movember. (In 2020/21 these activities were more significantly affected by the COVID-19 restrictions and e-messaging replaced face to face where appropriate).
- 5. Leadership and culture** – development of action plans by senior managers to drive key initiatives relating to equity and respect throughout their division and teams. An award-winning program was developed in partnership with Equity team to increase participation of women in running for Council in September 2021.

The model of change implemented was a targeted approach to shift attitudes, behaviours, and accepted social norms to increase support for gender equality and disrespect, to values of equity and respect.

Education

Education was one pillar of influence used to enact behavioural and attitudinal change, alongside, multiple mutually reinforcing strategies within the organisation.

Gender equity can be taught. It can be taught through whole of organisation/workforce training approach, information sharing, events and communication. By using this approach, the project focused on delivering training at an organisation level, through education factsheets and key messages to embed knowledge on gender equity in the workplace and to increase support for gender equality with staff as the 'ambassadors for change'.

Our Watch – 'Change the Story training'

'Change the story' training presented the evidence and a conceptual approach for preventing violence against women and their children in Australia. It is a framework for a shared understanding and collaborative action. The training was delivered by Our Watch facilitators. Our Watch is the leading organisation, established to drive nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and power imbalances that lead to violence against women and their children.

As organisational leaders and role models it was important that the senior management team was equipped with the knowledge and understanding of the prevalence of violence against women and its main drivers and the impact it has on the workplace.

It was crucial for the success of the project that the senior leadership team was committed and empowered with knowledge to influence changes within their respective teams.

The training was very fact based and quite confronting, but I feel that based on the topic it needed to be so that all in the room could fully understand the extent of the problem.

Wagga Wagga City Council staff member



The leadership team from Council and key project stakeholders attending Our Watch – Change the Story training session

Unconscious bias and inclusivity training

Council partnered with Charles Sturt University to deliver Unconscious Bias and Inclusivity training to the executive and leadership team.

This training directly aligned with the project's aim to build an equal, respectful and inclusive workplace, improving behaviour and attitudes of staff, whilst challenging beliefs (both conscious and unconscious) in relation to gender in particular as it applies to recruitment practices.

Active bystander training

The active bystander training was the last component of the education program. All previous activities including (workshops, group presentations, internal educational events) designed to build staff knowledge base and understanding in preparation.

Face-to-face active bystander training was planned to be delivered to staff in June 2020, however due to restrictions associated with the COVID -19, the decision was made to deliver these workshops online and create an eLearning module that would be available to all staff on an ongoing basis.

A prevention specialist was involved in the development of this online training package.

The overall learning objectives for this training were:

- Increase participant's recognition of behaviours that support violence against women.
- Increase participant's confidence and skill in responding to behaviours that support disrespect and violence against women.
- Engage participants in taking action to create a culture of equality and respect.

The self-directed eLearning module gives participants the information they need to understand violence against women, bystander action and a range of possible bystander strategies.

It addresses participant's fears or doubts about taking bystander action and generates peer support for active bystanders.

Individual and Group Project updates

Alongside the internal live landing page and e-messaging, regular face-to-face project updates were delivered to different teams across the organisation. This communication method was valued by staff as it provided an opportunity for two-way discussions in a safe environment.

The focal point of these discussions was to encourage employees to challenge gender stereotypes and roles, promote respectful relationships, challenge behaviours that excuse or tolerate violence, and empower both men and women to take actions in their professional and private lives.

NRL's Voice Against Violence workshops

Engaging a diversity of staff and demographics across the workplace was crucial to the internal organisational change deliverables.

The NRL Voice Against Violence (VAV) workshops aimed to increase awareness and understanding of gender-based violence and instill a sense of responsibility and empowerment to stand up, speak up, and take action against disrespectful behaviour.

The VAV workshops promoted the project messages and the importance of respectful relationships and active bystander actions in the prevention of gender-based violence.

VAV program facilitator and NRL Ambassador Alan Tongue, delivered workshops across the organisation.

Using the well-known sportsperson as the facilitator was an effective way of engaging male-dominated groups of staff. This approach was also considered in the environment of our regional city that has a strong sporting following and culture across the community.

Following the workshop, the project team received overwhelmingly positive written and verbal feedback from the attendees.



Council staff participating in NRL's Voice Against Violence workshop.

Education program and e-learning modules

An education program was developed to equip staff with a deeper understanding of the gendered drivers of violence, and what can be done on an individual and societal level to prevent violence against women. The educational program was purposefully designed and included topics that assisted staff in building understanding between gender inequality and violence against women.

It was designed not only as an education tool, but to prepare staff as ambassadors for change in the wider community, taking the learnings and principles from each module and applying them into their professional and personal lives.

Topic structure

The program structure was designed to shape employees understanding of the role equity and respect play in reducing violence against women, while linking to Council's code of conduct of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

Topic structure was intended to provide staff with a broad understanding of gender inequality and the specific gendered drivers of violence, leading them to the final topics which prompt action-focused behaviour.

Understanding and awareness



Equality Vs. equity



Stereotyping and bias



Casual sexism

Action - focused behaviour change



Respectful relationships



Active bystander action



Prevention of violence

Program delivery

The program has been delivered through hard copy fact sheets and online eLearning modules, which were integrated into a Learning Management System (LMS) to encourage organisation wide uptake and completion. The suite of eLearning modules have been integrated into Council's induction process and as a resource for senior managers to use for on-going staff education and training. Integrating key eLearning modules as a mandatory component of induction ensures new employees are committed to the organisations overarching values to equity and respect from the beginning.

The accumulative impact of the education program was evident through the final internal equity survey findings indicating increase in staff understanding of the link between gender inequality and how it links to violence against women, the prevalence of violence against women and an increased commitment to taking action.

What have we learnt from the equity survey?
Positive trend

2019	2020	2021	Categories
81%	93%	97%	of respondents understand how inequality and disrespect can lead to DFV

"I can see a shift in peoples understanding towards gender equality and violence against women. It is a positive trend and people start talking about these topics and challenge others if they see or hear disrespectful behaviour."

Equity survey participant



These resources were also circulated outside of the organisation as part of the Equity and Respect Toolkit (see attached) for other employers across our community.

Case Example: Implementation - Women in Council Program

One pillar activity of the project was to increase women representation in the elective body.

In partnership with Council's Governance and Risk team the Equity team developed a pre-election program with the aim of achieving an equitable, diverse and culturally inclusive Council, which incorporated initiatives to increase the participation of women in the upcoming NSW Local Government elections and overall community leadership.

This program won the Employment Diversity – Regional category in the 2020 Ministers' Awards for Women in Local Government program. The program was due to be implemented in the lead-up to the September 2020 elections through a range of activities and workshops, however the NSW Local Government elections were postponed due to COVID-19. Therefore; the program was rolled out in April 2021 and May 2021 prior to the September 2021 elections.

People with a passion for their community learnt more about local government in the lead-up to the 2021 elections at three information seminars. The seminars provided community members with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the role and responsibilities of an elected member of Council and provide them with the information they needed to make a considered decision.

One of the three free workshops was aimed at women candidates and was a step towards achieving Australian Local Government Women's Association's (ALGWA) objectives of reaching a gender balanced Council that represents the diversity of the community.

Please see additional resources:

<https://www.algwa.net.au/>, <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/>,
<https://www.law.unsw.edu.au/pathways-politics-program-women-nsw>



Resources

Inclusive language guide

Normalising gender equity in public and private life was one of the primary focus areas. An inclusive language style guide was developed and rolled out internally. This guide ensures language in internal and external communications is gender neutral and inclusive.

Gender decoder for job advertisements

Academic research into language shows that some words are 'coded' as masculine and feminine, reflecting existing societal bias about genders. This linguistic gender-coding shows up in job advertisements and discourages women from applying for jobs with masculine-coded language.

To counteract that risk, all job advertising is tested against an online tool, ensuring the use of gender neutral and inclusive language.

Policy review guide, EEO Management Plan and EEO Policy

A policy review guide was developed to provide managers with clear instructions on how to review documents and policies with a gender-neutral focus.

To ensure organisation wide uptake the guide was included as a mandatory part of the policy checklist, which is required to be completed by policy owners prior to submission for approval.

Face-to-face briefing meetings run by the Governance and Risk team covered the expectations and instructions on how to apply a gender lens when reviewing policies.

Revision and recommendations have been made to the EEO Policy and EEO Management Plan and submitted to People and Culture team for application.

A toolkit for manager and supervisors

A step-by-step guide for supervisors to assist an employee experiencing domestic and family violence. This document outlines how managers and supervisors can support employees and access relevant workplace and external support, including managing disclosures, safety planning and referrals.

Documents and processes reviewed with an equity lens

This review included the development of a parental leave and flexible working arrangements booklet, introduction of PPE for women process in partnership with the Procurement and People and Culture teams, review of the Customer Service Charter and Statement of Business Ethics brochures. Recommendations were made to change gender charged terms in a number of Council's policies.

Equity and Respect workplace toolkit

A step-by-step guide was developed and shared with multiple organisations (including Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils) to share the project's learnings on embedding best practice equity and respect actions into the workplace.

Family Room

A family room was constructed in the Civic Centre arcade, making it a convenient, comfortable and welcoming space for Council employees and the community to feed and change young children.

The name 'Family Room' was carefully selected to remove barriers and perceptions associated with the parenting facilities only being available to women. The project was fully funded by Council with the Equity team coordinating the build.

The Family Room has been awarded a five-star rating from the Australian Breastfeeding Association.

Councillor Vanessa Keenan and Mayor Greg Conkey OAM at the opening ceremony of the Family Room.



Internal campaign and events

Campaigns and awareness days related to gender equity and women were used by Council to inspire understanding, promote and celebrate women's achievements and increase engagement with the project in the workplace.

An annual program of events has been implemented and key messages to support the informal learning and capacity building, such as celebrating International Women's Day/NSW Women's Week.

By linking back to Council's wider goals and values, awareness days helped to promote a culture of inclusion and demonstrate Council's commitment to a workplace that is inclusive, respectful and supports everyone to reach their full potential.

The project team have actively promoted key celebratory and awareness days such as:

- 16 Days of Activism
- International Women's Day/NSW Women's Week and Women of the Year Award (lead by Independent MP)
- Women's Health Week
- Harmony Day and
- Collaborated with other teams within Council (Workplace Health and Safety team to celebrate Movember) and People and Culture to host and run events for all staff.

Celebration days present an opportunity to link to relevant education topics and other resources to support the organisational message and increase staff knowledge and understanding of equity and respect.



Council celebrating International Women's Day.



Sector engagement

“To change the attitudes and behaviours often ingrained in sport, we need to create programs, which provide learning opportunities and skills that will not only benefit them in their sporting careers, but also in their personal development as community ambassadors.”

Southern Sports Academy Chief Executive Officer, Mark Calverley

Sector Activities

Enlighten for Equity

Wiradjuri and First Nations Youth Project

Southern Sports Academy

Wagga Wagga Business Chamber

NRL's Voice Against Violence workshops (high schools, sporting clubs)

NRL's Inspire Respect workshops (primary schools)

Steering Committee

DVNSW and Local Government NSW

Presentation for the NSW Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Hon. Mark Speakman

Project presentations to local businesses, schools and organisations

Multicultural Council Social support – Safe place to land

Plug and Play Mentoring program for young musicians

There is substantial evidence that violence against women and DFV is driven by gender inequality and other forms of discrimination that give rise to power imbalances.

Messages of prevention engage people and communities through the many different environments where they live, work, learn, socialise, and play. Effective prevention measures require the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders in order to be effective. Throughout the three-year project Council engaged with multiple key sectors in Wagga Wagga, to embed activities that would generate meaningful ongoing action and cultural change. Education and powerful messages underpin the principles of challenging societal barriers to create action.

Primary prevention efforts are most likely to be effective when a coordinated range of mutually reinforcing strategies is targeted across different levels of influence and different sectors (such as sport, business, education).

There is a role for everyone in preventing violence against women: different organisations, community groups and institutions bring different skills and benefits to prevention activities.

Strategies for the primary prevention of violence against women, include education programs and awareness raising campaigns to address violence supportive attitudes and behaviours.

This Pillar's activities recognised that different sector campaigns and training programs would help to build awareness and ownership of positive behaviours, eliminating toxic and violence supportive cultures.

Enlighten for Equity

Enlighten for equity brought together creativity and education through a youth-based project, working with primary and high school students from schools across Wagga Wagga.

First phase - this stage included engagement with the eighteen primary schools and stage three primary school students who developed posters with the support from an "Artist in Residence" and the Equity team. The posters reflected what equity and respect means to them and the Wagga Wagga community, incorporating many visual components and instructions for their ideas to be transformed into standalone lighted sculptures. The development of the students work was undertaken in a supported framework with teachers of the students and an 'Artist in Residence' approach.

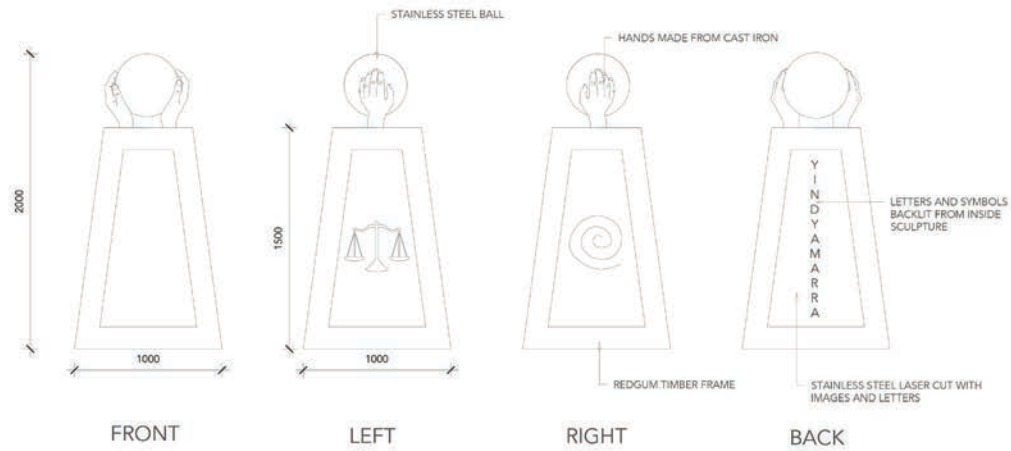
Project reach: 849 primary school students participated in phase one (with two schools dropping out due to COVID-19 restrictions).



Second phase - this stage included the design and technology high school students from five Wagga Wagga High schools creating designs and 3D mock-ups, using the concepts and ideas from the primary school student's posters, for manufacturing interactive installation pieces for placement at Council's re-developed Riverside precinct. Council's recreation staff have then transferred those high school designs into engineering construction design plans and the oversight of the manufactured pieces in readiness for placement as an Equity walk at the finished Riverside open space redevelopment precinct that is due for construction completion in December 2021. The Enlighten pieces and their placement in the Riverside precinct is for the community to enjoy and reflect upon for years to come.

Project reach: 105 students and 10 teachers participated in phase two.

Shepards Park



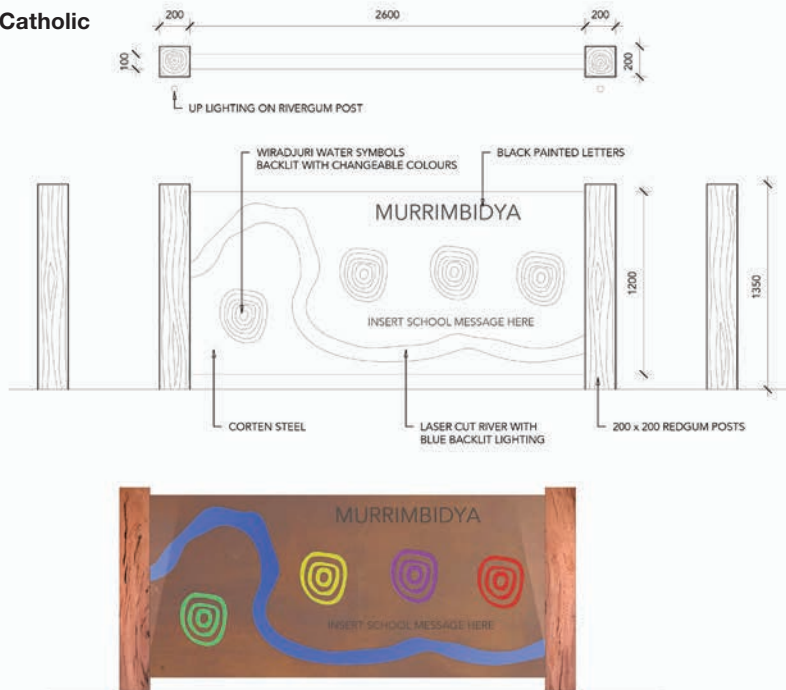
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ref	date	amendment
1	19.02.2021	PROPOSAL
client	WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL	
location	SHEPARD'S PARK WAGGA WAGGA, NSW 2650	
date	FEB 2021	job no
scale	1:20 (A3)	sheet no
		J0000 1-1

Kildare Catholic School



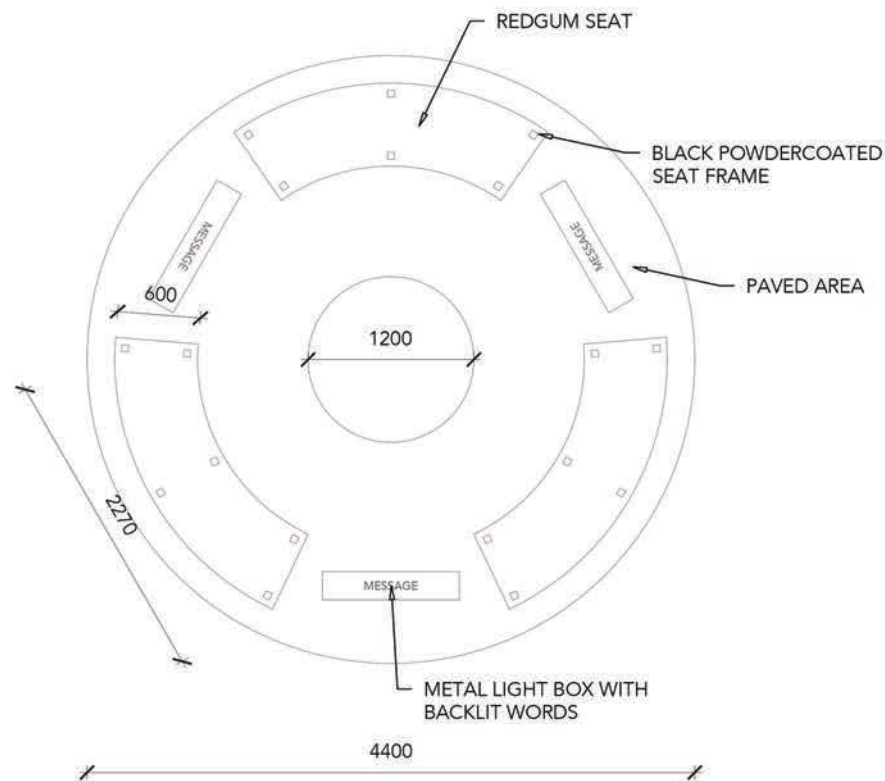
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ref	date	amendment
1	19.02.2021	PROPOSAL
client	WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL	
location	KILDARE CATHOLIC COLLEGE WAGGA WAGGA, NSW 2650	
date	FEB 2021	job no
scale	1:20 (A3)	sheet no
		J0000 1-1

Mater Dei Catholic School



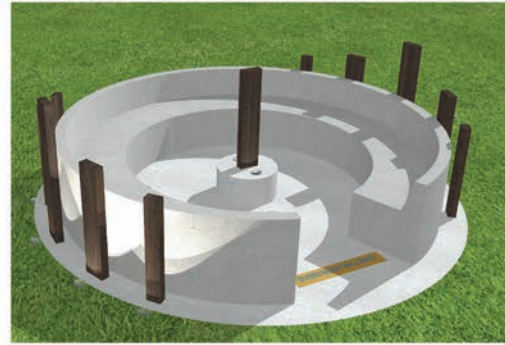
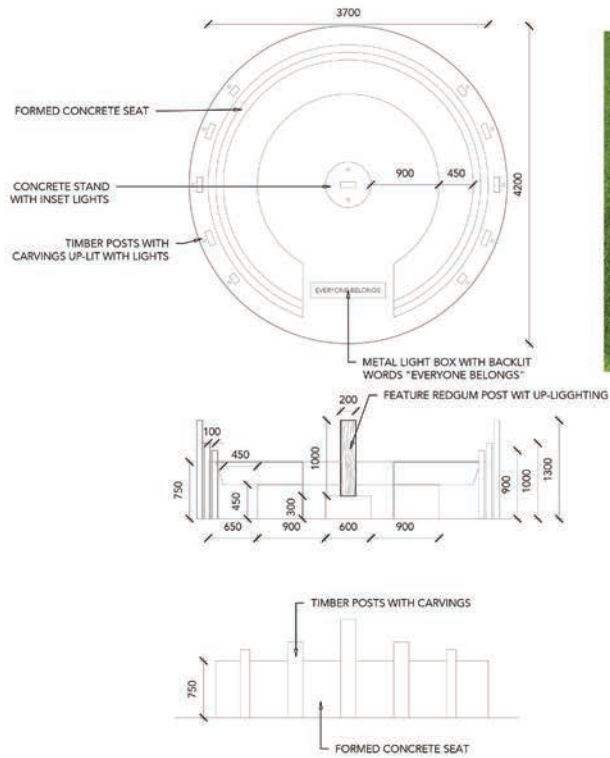
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DIAL BEFORE
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ref	date	approved
18/02/2021	18/02/2021	PROPOSAL
client	WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL	
location	MATER DEI HIGH SCHOOL WAGGA WAGGA, NSW 2650	
date	FEB 2021	job no
scale	1:40 (A3)	J0000 1-1

Mt Austin High School

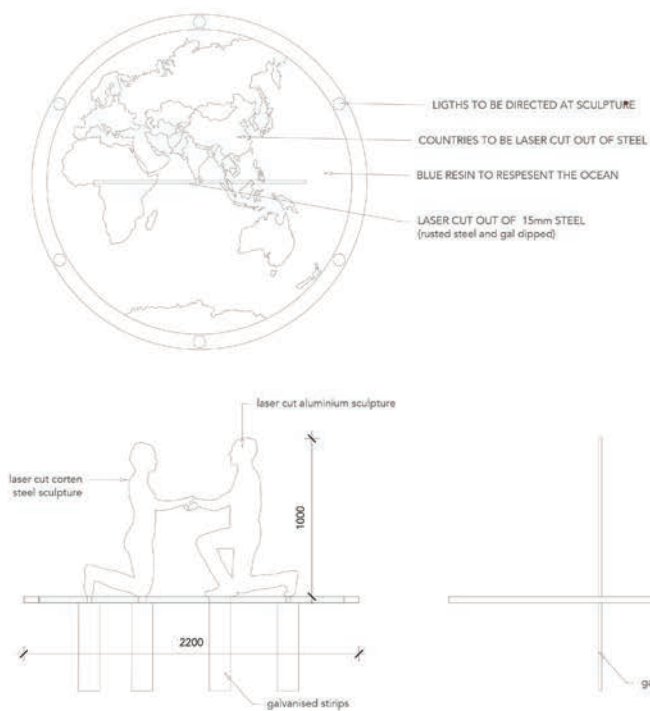


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ref	date	amendment
1	19.02.2021	PROPOSAL
client	WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL	
location	MT AUSTIN HIGH SCHOOL WAGGA WAGGA, NSW 2650	
date	FEB 2021	job no
scale	1:20 (A3)	sheet's
		J0000 1-1

Wagga Wagga High School



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ref	date	amendment
1	19.02.2021	PROPOSAL
client	WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL	
location	WAGGA HIGH SCHOOL WAGGA WAGGA, NSW 2650	
date	FEB 2021	job no
scale	1:20 (A3)	sheet's
		J0000 1-1

Wiradjuri and First Nations Youth Project

This project engaged Wiradjuri and First Nations youth between the ages of 14 - 17, to engage and provide a space for those young people to have a say on equity and respect from their perspective and how they see this within and for our Wagga community. The project was to have a Wiradjuri and First Nations youth arts design that could be placed at a highly visible place, again as part of Council's Riverside Wagga Beach re-development precinct, especially around the existing basketball court that is also being refurbished as part of this area, as we were aware this was a highly attended space for youth.

Consultation

Consultation with Wagga Wagga Elders and other community members pointed the project team to engage with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (representatives from high schools). Through this connection the team also consulted more broadly with Wiradjuri and First Nations youth across Wagga Wagga high schools. Feedback from this engagement process was that young people felt it was important to reflect equity and respect through sport and Indigenous cultural representations. The location for the final design installation, i.e., the basketball court near Wagga Beach, was reaffirmed by youth as a popular place for young people to spend time. Wagga Beach also has a high visitation rate by the general community and visitors alike.

Workshops

The project team engaged two Wiradjuri artists (Owen Lyons and Teisha Robinson) who were recommended and endorsed by the First Nations consultative committee Mawang Gaway.

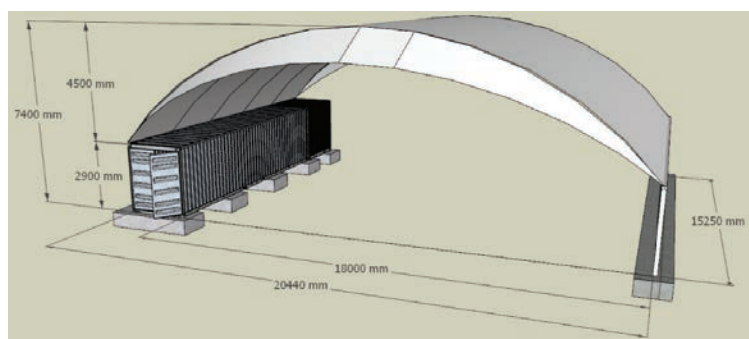
The initial workshops with the five local high schools were completed in February and March 2021. The schools that participated were Mount Austin High School, Mater Dei Catholic College, Kildare Catholic College, Koorinal High School and the Indie School. The diverse experiences of both artists facilitated a discussion about equity and respect, sharing their own experiences and discussing significant symbols used in the creative processes of First Nations peoples.

Project reach: 63 students and 15 teachers participated in the workshops.

The final artwork will feature prominently beside the Riverside basketball court which is set to undergo a major upgrade. The artwork is being reproduced on a vinyl wrap and installed on a modified shipping container, to be located alongside two new 3x3 basketball courts, and to be utilised at competitions and other events at the Wagga Beach precinct during the year.

The significance of the river, culturally and to country, is highlighted in the design along with young people's thoughts of respect and equity. This space provides our youth to engage in sport, reflect on the design and have real social connection in this space.

Left: sample image provided by Champion League basketball Right: Artwork by Owen Lyons and Teisha Robinson as part of the Wiradjuri and First Nations Youth engagement project.



Southern Sports Academy

Why sport?

Primary prevention activities led by sporting clubs or institutions, have the influence to create a positive culture, particularly among boys and men. As an influential sporting institution, Southern Sports Academy (SSA) in partnership with Council developed a suite of three eLearning modules for young athletes to increase support and understanding of gender equality in sport.

Education as a foundation

Strategies for the primary prevention of violence against women, include education programs delivered to young adults to address violence supportive attitudes and behaviours. In the sporting sector, campaigns and training programs help to build awareness and ownership of positive behaviours, eliminating toxic, violence supportive cultures. The modules provide learning opportunities and skills, that will not only benefit the junior athletes in their sporting careers, but also in their personal development. With a focus on real topics and scenarios in an age-appropriate setting, the modules cover respectful relationships, how to challenge set gender stereotypes and norms, and how to enact bystander actions on and off the field.

Long term impact and behaviour change

The suite of eLearning modules has been offered to all regional academy network members (Regional Academies of Sport – RASi) as part of their mandatory code, and forms part of SSA's code of conduct, highlighting their genuine commitment to gender equality through a supported framework. With each new intake of athletes, parent orientation sessions were held to further extend the reach of positive behaviour change in young people, at home, at school and in the community.



Mark Calverley

Chief Executive Officer -
Southern Sports Academy
and Project Manager

Wagga Wagga Business Chamber – We do Respect campaign

Campaign launch

A community-wide campaign designed to empower individuals to speak up when they see or hear disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour was launched in early in 2021.

The We do Respect campaign used ambassadors from the community and a range of industries to capture and encourage Wagga Wagga residents to be active bystanders in the workplace, at home, at school and on the street.

We know that disrespect towards women doesn't always result in violence. But all acts of violence against women start with disrespectful behaviours.

We do Respect aimed to increase bystander actions in our community, by providing a safe response for individuals when they hear disrespectful comments or statements, no matter the setting.

Local ambassadors have lent their voices to the campaign, showing that it takes a whole community response to begin to change the conversation around disrespect and inappropriate behaviour.

Partnering with the Wagga Business Chamber was a great opportunity to engage with the business sector to extend We do Respect campaign messages. The We do Respect campaign has been a positive and successful collaboration between two organisations/ sectors with the first event being attended by the cross-sector business leaders. By acknowledging the prevalence of violence against women and its impact on workplaces and challenging existing workplace culture and norms, leaders have the unique power to ensure their workplaces are safe, respectful and inclusive.

Second targeted event

In partnership with the Equity team the Business Chamber organised a targeted city-wide forum, We do Respect event with the Hon. Bronwyn Taylor MLC Minister for Women and Stephanie Cooke MPG, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Member for Cootamundra. The forum focused on discussion on creating equitable and supportive workplaces, the role everyone has to play and how safely speak up and challenge casual sexism, gender stereotypes and acts of disrespect. The conversation also took place about coercive control, creating strong legislation and a framework of delivery.

Reach: 98 business leaders attended both events (the numbers were limited to due COVID-19 restrictions).

"It has been such a positive experience for the Chamber and our business community. The engagement and discussions that came from the launch breakfast in January still continue. We have head offices ring us offering to support the campaign, members tailor training packages to deliver training that promote respectful work environments and best of all we have heard the conversations about raised awareness".

Serena Hardwick, Business Manager Wagga Wagga City Business Chamber



Mackenna Powell, Vice President, Wagga Business Chamber (left),
Janice Summerhayes Director Community, Wagga Wagga City Council (centre),
Hon. Bronwyn Taylor MLC Minister for Women (right).

NRL's Voice Against Violence (high schools, sporting clubs) and Inspire Respect Workshops (primary schools)

These workshops focused on increasing participants' awareness and understanding of the serious issue of gender-based violence. Participants were provided with insights into what violence is, the different forms it takes, the consequences, why it occurs and what we can do as a community and individuals to prevent it.

The NRL Inspire – respect, health and wellbeing and inclusion/diversity program aim to provide interactive learning experience that inspire young people. The aim is to Inspire primary school-aged children to develop and apply the knowledge and understandings, skills, attitudes and values that are central to these three focus areas – using the game of rugby league as both a background to and the vehicle for engaging learning experiences.



Red Hill primary school students participating in Inspire Respect workshop with NRL's Alan Tongue.



David Shillington, Kori-Paige Carr, 17 Mount Austin High School, and Alan Tongue at the Voice against Violence workshops.
Image: Annie Lewis

Participating schools were:

- Shepherds Park (twice)
- South City Bulls (Junior NRL Club)
- Koorringal High and primary schools
- Mt. Austin High school and Clontarf Academy
- Southern Sports Academy athletes
- Indie School
- Red Hill Primary School
- South Wagga Primary School

Program reach:

- **737** Students
- **36** Teachers

In Conversation with Elizabeth Broderick, AO

A call to action against gender inequality has shone a light on the everyday struggles many women face in the workforce.

Community leaders and women from all walks of life were invited to hear from Australia's longest serving Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, who spoke of the link between gender inequality and violence against women.

"Regardless of where the violence is taking place, or the form of violence, at the core of all violence against women is inequality between men and women," Ms. Broderick said.

The event was targeted towards stakeholders of theDVproject:2650 and active industry representatives, looking to further understand and drive primary prevention change in the community.

With the strong focus on the project's strategic outcomes the project team selected Elizabeth as the keynote speaker based on her wealth of knowledge in the area of gender equality and her inspiring work with the 'Champions of Change' framework.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions this event was a hybrid event with attendees and livestreamed to targeted organisations, such as Charles Sturt University, Business Chamber, TAFE NSW, Council's leadership team including the People and Culture team. Further engagement, on recommendation by Elizabeth Broderick took place between the project team and Lisa Pusey and Amanda Hede to discuss the Gladstone Shopping Centre initiative and possible future implementation in Wagga Wagga, possibly led by Wagga Women's Health Centre.

Livestream views: 117 views

Participants at the forum: 52

"It was an eye-opening experience and has enlightened us to the severity and prevalence of some of these issues. I didn't realise just how common domestic violence was in Wagga.

I also found the discussion about everyday sexism and 'banter' quite provoking as it is something, I think all organisations can strive to eliminate from the workplace. I have discussed the event with executive management at Kurrajong and we hope to take many of the key points discussed on board."

Kurrajong, Manager People and Culture, Mitchell Tinnock



Elizabeth Broderick AO addresses business and community leaders.
Image: Michael Frogley.

Steering Committee

A cross-sector Steering Committee was established to support and promote the activities of the project, while also committing to implement change and drive advocacy efforts in Wagga Wagga. The focus on primary prevention of domestic and family violence has been incorporated into each committee member's business operations and networks, which has been fundamental to the project's success.

The Steering Committee members provided invaluable input and guidance through quarterly meetings over the life of the project. Members promoted events and provided reinforcing messages through their own networks and by being community ambassadors for the project.

DVNSW and Local Government NSW

The team was asked to prepare a case study on theDVproject:2650 activities, for a DVNSW and LGNSW training webinars. These webinars covered the prevention of sexual harassment and domestic and family violence to NSW Councils. The case study covered the primary prevention activities of the project to share the knowledge and learnings with other organisations. The project team has packaged resources and materials, to assist other organisations in their journey towards implementing primary prevention activities, within their respective Local Government areas.

Presentation for the NSW Attorney General and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Hon. Mark Speakman

The presentation included an overview of the three key pillars of the project: organisational change, sector engagement and community-wide campaigns. The presentation was supported by Steering Committee members, who contributed to a wider discussion about the project's importance to the community and their involvement as community leaders. The key message from the project was the importance of primary prevention efforts theDVproject:2650 is delivering in our community and for other communities if as a Nation we are to make change.

Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga

Social support – A Safe Place to Land

Aim: To develop a solid friendship group across different culturally and linguistically diverse CALD language groups.

Structure: Women are invited to come together to meet and support each other, to create and share messages that value cultural identities, promote respectful relationships and prevent family violence.

The underpinning concept of this project is through friendship and mutual respect an expanded social support circle will be developed. If a woman needs to leave the family home because of domestic or family violence she has a safe supportive place to land.

It is expected that regular meetings will occur with activities, guest speakers or demonstrations, and catering to enhance the networking opportunity. It is expected that these activities will create safer pathways for women and their children to create awareness of and access mainstream crisis and support services if required.

Through these informal activities' women will become empowered to act, make changes and support each other.

Young Creative Collective- Wagga Wagga Art Gallery

A series of creative workshops were set up in partnership between Young Creative Collective and the Wagga Art Gallery, who provided mentoring.

The group of young women from Young Creative Collective were keen to create a safe and creative space for young women to socialise as an alternative to a traditional night out experience.

Funding was used to facilitate a series of workshops, demonstrations, performances and gallery experiences. All activities were developed by professional artists (for example, a female drummer/teacher gave a demonstration and provided hands on opportunity for the workshop participants). These evenings were alcohol free spaces, creating a safe social environment for women.

These evenings were broadly promoted, free events and were well attended.



Community-wide campaigns

Activities

My Story. Our Story (community event)

16 Days of Activism

Reflect Respect

We do Respect

Odette – Herald Tour

Raising awareness of the different behaviours that contribute and reinforce gender inequality is an important element in the prevention of violence against women. Heightened awareness is a first step in changing attitudes and behaviour that perpetuate or condone the various forms of violence.

Awareness-raising campaigns that make it clear that sexism and disrespecting women is never acceptable and encouraging bystander actions when people see or hear disrespectful behaviour was the focus for the two main project campaigns: **Reflect Respect** and **We do Respect**.

To emphasise the importance of key messages local ambassadors across different sectors were engaged in the **We do Respect** campaign, to make the campaign more personal and relevant for the Wagga Wagga community.

Launch of the Reflect Respect campaign: Mayor of the City of Wagga Wagga Councillor Greg Conkey OAM (left), Sebastian J. Thomas, aka the modern-day gentleman, Genevieve Fleming (Wagga Women's Health Centre), Janice Summerhayes (Wagga Wagga City Council).



My Story. Our Story (community event)

The first community event featured the story of journalist Ray Martin and had multiple aims: to create awareness of theDVproject:2650 commencing, to get people talking and thinking about DV concerns in our city and what action individuals could take and to fundraise for WWHC.



16 Days of Activism

Council developed and promoted the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign to encourage the community to get involved behind this global campaign.

Emphasising the link between violence against women and human rights, the campaign starts on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and finishes on 10 December, Human Rights Day.

The campaign further embedded the efforts of theDVproject:2650 to address the role equity and respect play in reducing domestic and family violence.

The campaign demonstrates a unified approach across the globe raising much needed awareness.

Reaching 300 million people globally across 187 countries, the 16 Days of Activism campaign is a call to raise awareness about gender-based violence against women at national and international levels.

Talking locally about campaigns like this will enhance our community's understanding of gender-based violence and serve as a reminder of our shared responsibility to make a long-term plan and commitment.

The campaign has emphasised the need for more education on the different forms of abuse which make up domestic and family violence. There are ten forms of abuse, which go far beyond physical violence, things like emotional abuse or controlling someone's finances.

The 2020 campaign was focused on the different forms of abuse which make up domestic and family violence.

The campaign has been promoted annually from 25 November to 10 December each year.



Reflect Respect

Reflect Respect – A Modern Day Guide for Gentlemen was initially launched in 2018 by Wodonga Council and the Wodonga Family Violence Taskforce to address the rates of domestic violence and increase support for gender equality within the Wodonga community.

Due to the success of the initial campaign, theDVproject:2650 partnered with Wodonga Council to build on the existing campaign, which saw the release of a second edition guide specific to the Wagga Wagga community. This was a positive example of the collaboration and active working relationship between two organisations, and two states, that benefited both communities.

The guide aimed to address the rates of domestic violence by challenging the subtle things we say and do, which lead to gender inequality and disrespect. Reflect Respect aimed to challenge social norms, attitudes and behaviours to help promote respectful relationships in our community.

Social media was an effective way of mobilising community and promoting discussion and reflection around respectful behaviour and gender equality. Hard copy campaign materials were disseminated across businesses, organisations and in Wagga Wagga pubs, clubs and hotels. To strengthen the uptake of the campaign materials, supporting television commercials, social media posts, signage at all major sporting venues and advertising on buses and taxis have been created to promote the campaign. The campaign reach was beyond Local LGA, with the requests received from Cootamundra Bulldogs, Tumbarumba Hospital, South Coast Correctional Centre NSW, Eastern Suburbs Domestic Violence Network, NSW Police, Temora to name a few.

Campaign reach:

- **375,809** thousand people being reached (the number of people who saw YouTube ads at least once).
- **2,742,179** – number of times the ad was shown on a search result page via Google. It is a number of times ad was 'seen'.
- **17,865 pageviews** (Reflect Respect website) – represents each individual time a page on the campaign's website was loaded by a user.
- **13,566 sessions** – sessions represent a single visit to Reflect Respect website. A single session can include many page views, if a user navigates to any other web pages on the Reflect Respect website without leaving.

The campaign on social media was especially effective as it has been conducted simultaneously alongside other prevention and awareness raising activities listed in the other two Pillars.

Reflect Respect webpage: <https://reflectrespect.com.au/>





David Barnhill, William Farrer Hotel Wagga
Supporter of the Reflect Respect campaign and
Ambassador for We do Respect campaign.

We do Respect campaign

We do Respect campaign was designed to empower individuals, to speak up when they see or hear disrespectful and inappropriate behaviour - at work, at home and in social settings.

The campaign aimed to increase bystander actions in the Wagga Wagga community, by providing a safe response for individuals when they hear disrespectful comments or statements.

We all have a role to play in creating an inclusive and equitable Wagga Wagga for all. It's about challenging casual sexism, gender stereotypes and acts of disrespect - speak up and say...

"In our city, We do Respect"

The campaign had an internal and external focus. The internal roll-out of the campaign involved developed educational materials. The external roll-out was supported by the ambassador video, a dedicated landing page, supporting interview videos to be used as an educational resources for workplaces and digital supporter kit.

We do Respect webpage: <https://wagga.nsw.gov.au/community/programs-and-initiatives/thedvproject>



Wagga Wagga City Councillors and members of the Executive team promoting the campaign.

Community-wide campaigns



Mayoral breakfast with the schools leaders May 2021.

"We strive to represent the values of Kapooka and uphold respect for each other and the community, in our training and in our work."

Colonel Jim Hammett and Lieutenant Kassanadra Hutchison





Image by: Michael Frogley

Odette - *Herald* tour Plug and Play mentoring workshop for young musicians

Odette was proudly presented by Council in recognition of the principles of Equity and Respect with ticket proceeds going to the WWHC.

The performance showcased the inimitable style that has seen Odette thrive in both the Australian and international music scenes, and forms part of the nation-wide tour for her latest album, *Herald*. The performance was scheduled to take place on Thursday 3 June but has been rescheduled to 7 July due to illness.

Wagga residents were encouraged to show support for local women in a truly direct manner, purchasing a ticket to see a performance with all ticket proceeds going to the WWHC. The project team was successful in negotiating for Odette to perform in the city, and to deliver a mentoring workshop to young musicians participating in the Civic Theatre's Plug and Play program. Odette was selected to celebrate female talent and also to draw attention to the fact that female artists are still underrepresented in the live performance industry – particularly as head liners.

Odette will work with the participants of the Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre's Plug and Play program. This is a mentoring framework of activities, workshops and performances designed to get young musicians from performing in their bedroom to performing on stage. The focus of this workshop is to empower young women as there is still a serious gender imbalance in the live music/performance world.



Project closure

Key learnings

Leadership

Harnessing the support from leaders and community ambassadors was critical for project implementation. For this project, this was the Project's Steering Committee members, Wagga Wagga City Councillors, executive team and senior managers. Leadership sets and reinforces the culture and tone for an organisation and across our community for embedding project activities and generally providing leadership on respect, equity and diversity actions. Demonstrating personal leadership across work, personal and social settings contributes to a positive culture that supports other individuals, groups and community media messaging. Leadership commitment to the project promotes gender equity awareness and the benefits of respectful relationships, as well as actively encouraging staff and the community to contribute to a positive culture free of DFV or other forms of bullying and harassment. Leading inclusively also requires active, intentional and on-going efforts to promote and engage a range of employees, stakeholders and partners.

Engagement

Workforce engagement: To foster a shift in mindsets, behaviours and practices a range of tools and approaches were applied in this project to respect differences amongst demographics in our workforce. The project identified early that there needed to be customised engagement approaches for different team knowledge levels, team configurations of gender and individual learning styles. However overall, the project prevention messages and resources remained evidenced based and were applied consistently across the workforce. By the use of consistent internal project branding for engagement, this assisted staff to easily recognise and relate to the projects aim and activities, whilst importantly increasing the buy in from staff over the life of the project and beyond through their own attitudes and behaviours.

Community and stakeholder engagement: Over the life of the project, we have continued to be amazed and humbled by the amount of support from our community. The willingness to be involved and contribute to this change from individuals, sporting groups, volunteer groups, small to medium business and large corporate organisations is truly incredible. Whilst this enthusiasm is overwhelming, scheduling, programming and understanding each stakeholder or partners' level of readiness and capacity to participate and/or implement gender equity initiatives was critical component to manage project aim alignment and available project resources.

Whilst the team was in a position to progress identified programs, launch a campaign or an education piece, it was important to be mindful of the needs and priorities of the other parties. This required the project team to apply different facilitation and engagement techniques to gain maximum engagement with a specific sector or specific population group. It was also important to respect and observe community protocols in reaching and engaging particular groups in our community for example First Nation Peoples.

Over the life of this project, it is worth noting that once the project generated a wider community dialogue and exposure around gender equality, there was varying community and individual reactions. Whilst these reactions were somewhat expected, when challenging existing social norms, and power imbalances within organisational, social and community structures, it is important for project practitioners to be prepared for resistant reactions and how to respond in an informed and factual way. The reactions to the project ranged from proactive ambassadors and collegial partners and colleagues, to those relieved there was an active dialogue and initiatives occurring to those just realising they wish to assist and get on board and that they had not paid much attention to the situation, to those who were resistant and to those who felt their community standing had been threatened.

Mobilising existing networks: Understanding existing networks that are influencers with other stakeholders and are able to extend the projects reach and messaging through their networks, was an important early engagement process of the project. Where networks have predominately operated in the secondary and tertiary response spheres, these agency networks were important alliances to reinforce the projects intent, being the primary prevention sphere, and not to take away from the important work and funding of secondary and tertiary response agencies. To address the existing gap of primary prevention activities in the Wagga Wagga community, establishing productive working relationships with the tertiary and secondary service providers through the membership and participation in the local Domestic Family Violence Liaison Committee ensured the project team had an ability to share a consistent messaging across wider networks.

Education and training

A strong education component supported by appropriate training delivery is critical in shaping attitudes that can prevent violence from occurring on the first instance.

Among many negative effects domestic and family violence interfere with women's full and equal participation in the workforce. Organisations have a great opportunity to help shift social norms and attitudes towards women through educational programs and awareness campaigns that shape workforce understanding of the underlying factors that lead to violence against women.

Promoting gender equality and respect is a key action any organisations can take to prevent violence against women. The benefits of the workforce education will extend beyond individual organisations and into a wider community, benefiting everyone. Keeping this in mind an internal education program was developed to educate staff about behaviours that contribute to disrespect towards women, for example casual sexism, stereotyping and unconscious bias.

There is an increased need for community-wide youth-based education, both in the school system and incorporated into any large-scale or broad education campaign. This information should embed the importance of gender equity and respectful relationships among children and young people.

Demand for Reflect Respect campaign resources from high school students, school teachers, parents and Council's Social Planning team and other services, indicated that more education on primary prevention topics is needed. Well-developed educational resources will ensure consistency of delivery of primary prevention of domestic and family violence messaging for all ages across schools in NSW.

Any education or training needs to be understanding of cultural needs and developed in consultation with the targeted community to ensure ownership and engagement. This includes a commitment to cultural consciousness and training for mainstream practitioners.

Media

Message making and effective communication is the only way to achieve a broad community uptake. Every available communication tool was utilised for delivery of the project's key messages. This meant that the project team used a wide range of digital platforms, printed material, extensive television and radio campaigns, static signage on buses, taxis, billboards at sporting arenas and 'human billboards' promoting key messages on t-shirts.

The project team have also utilised council's internal expertise through collaboration with the Media and Comms team and utilising existing Council's platforms to extend the campaign's reach.

Social media: Social media can be an effective way of mobilising community discussion and reflection around respectful behaviour and gender equality. Social media also has a wide audience of demographics and can be worldwide in reach, past the confines of a regional city location. Campaigns on social media are especially effective when conducted alongside other prevention and awareness raising activities such as face-to-face meetings with Council's staff, internal educational modules and on-the-ground activities such as the engagement with the Southern Sports Academy.

Implementing the project

Workload awareness: While being active in the primary prevention space might sound like an easy task, it is necessary to be aware about what else is happening within organisations. Engagement, promotion and support for gender equality is what we strive for, but you don't want to overload staff or make the uptake feel like a burden. It is critical to integrate gender equality as part of the day-to-day business activities of an organisation, such as introducing eLearning modules as the compulsory part of new staff orientation and making other project resources easily accessible and relevant.

Project titling: The internal project title was changed from theDVproject:2650 to the Equity and Respect project. This change meant the project team was able to effectively communicate the reasons and purpose of the project to Council staff and reinforce the project intention – being a primary prevention activity. This decision was driven by feedback received from experts in the area of gender equity within Local Government Agencies in Victoria (including VicHealth GEAR project, Monash City Council, Municipal Association of Victoria) alongside feedback received from some Council staff.

Simultaneous delivery of project activities: This project had three pillars of delivery which did mutually reinforce key primary prevention messages and created a greater saturation across the community. However, given the three-year timeframe and the available resources that had to be spread across the three pillars, this meant the scope for each pillar had to be well defined and monitored carefully to prevent scope creep, along with managing expectations from community and partners for deeper and wider reach of projects and initiatives for our community.

Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery: The COVID – 19 restrictions tested the project's team ability to adjust to everchanging rules and regulations, especially in the early stages of the pandemic.

The restriction placed on organisations resulted in the adoption of more flexible approaches to deliver some of the planned activities. Where possible, face to face engagement was replaced with online delivery. For example, under the organisation pillar online delivery replaced face-to-face presentations for Active Bystander training and keeping other activities going through utilising virtual site tours (Riverside redevelopment) to assist high schools with the planning and creation of the interactive installation pieces (sculptures). Where there were some partners unable to participate due to their own organisational restrictions, there were other partners who were otherwise resourced and ready to engage with the project. Allowing for this flexibility kept the project progressing and forged unexpected extended reach through new partner networks for example the Wagga Wagga Business Chamber.

2021 Community attitudes to domestic violence survey

The patterns of responding for the 2021 respondents compared to 2016 highlights the need to provide information to the community on the contributing factors that lead to engaging in domestic violence behaviours, so they can be addressed to prevent future incidents.

Further education and awareness focusing on underpinning stereotypical attitudes and lack of knowledge and understanding of the nature and dynamics of domestic violence is still required.

Recommendations

1. Provision of Federal or State government prevention program funding alongside service response program funding for organisations already working in the Domestic and Family Violence sphere like the Wagga Wagga Women's Health Centre (WWHC) and other population targeted services that support First Nation peoples and CALD communities.

Long term sustainable funding

Recognising that no single initiative will prevent violence against women, longer-term prevention program funding is required to ensure maximum impact of the primary prevention projects and a long-term sustainable change being achieved. By supporting existing secondary and tertiary response services with recurrent longer-term prevention program funding, this enables consistency and continuity of prevention focused activities in a regional city, rather than one-off and pilot one-off unsustainable funded projects in the short term. For example, in our community this funding would benefit services like the WWHC, the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga and Riverina Medical and Dental Aboriginal Corporation, so as to address the impact of domestic violence on women's overall health and well-being.

Targeted interventions – populations at risk

There are some population groups that are particularly vulnerable, particularly Indigenous women, young women, women with disability, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds². A whole of population approach from mainstream organisations are not always as effective for these groups and might have a limited reach. The prevention of violence in these communities need to have more tailored and community led approaches with culturally appropriate practices and considerations i.e. First Nations Peoples and CALD communities.

There would also be some benefit from directing interventions specifically to young people under 24 years and people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and new migrants and refugees, as was identified through the 2021 Community Attitudes survey findings. This will ensure reach of multiple prevention strategies in addressing harmful attitudes towards domestic violence and protection of vulnerable individuals and communities.

2. Provision of a targeted 3-5-year National DFV Prevention Community-Wide Campaign recognising DFV as a serious public health and safety issue for Australia.

National campaign

A national prevention of violence campaign supported by state-wide campaigns through NSW Primary and Public Health services to reach all residents regardless of location is required to build knowledge and change attitudes. This approach considers DFV as a serious public health and safety issue and calls for a National and State response similar to how Australia has addressed other public health and safety campaigns for example: the prevention of drink driving, diabetes awareness and quit smoking campaigns.

Prevention campaigns are well placed within a primary health delivery model. The reach of local health services is well established, linking local services and systems aimed at improving the health and well-being outcomes of our regional and remote communities, as well as across the State.

Such a campaign would complement current campaigns that are in response to persons experiencing DFV and where to access support services. These campaigns can be further supported by local resources and activities that existing services or programs are already undertaking.

² Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia 2018, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-in-australia-2018/summary>

3. Local Government to strengthen and build on their leadership roles in communities for promoting and embedding gender equity.

Regardless of size, local Councils are well placed to strengthen and promote gender equity through their local leadership roles, networks, partnerships, services and as a significant community employer.

Recognising varying sizes of Council's in NSW and different maturity points for Gender Equity strategies, it is important that Councils are aware and are able to access Gender Equity shared resources. This will enable informed and evidenced based practice that will also meet legislative requirements. For example, EEO policy and management plans alongside or integration of Equity Strategies. Industry organisations like LGNSW are well placed to further support Council's in accessing resources and educational learning platforms to strengthen all Council's work in the gender equity area.

In addition, it is recognised that Council's are often working in an environment of constrained resources for delivery of multiple services and programs. Therefore, gender equity initiatives ought not to be thought of as an extra or add on, rather a process of embedment within existing systems and practices of the organisations culture. This means individual Councils are to develop their internal capacity of the workforce to lead and embed gender equity practice and prevention focused actions i.e. as part of leadership competencies, induction and training systems, organisational policies, procedures and code of conduct mechanisms.

4. Consistent and regular targeted primary prevention DFV programs across NSW schools.

There is an increased need for community-wide youth-based education, both in the school system and incorporated into any large-scale or broad education campaign. This information should embed the importance of gender equity and respectful relationships among children and young people.

Our project saw from across the region a high demand for information and Reflect Respect campaign resources from high school students, school teachers, parents and other services. Well-developed, consistent and age appropriate resources on primary prevention topics is needed across the education system when addressing primary prevention of DFV. By implementing comprehensive school-based primary prevention programs across NSW this will ensure consistency of messaging saturation. At present there is varying applied messaging and programming for respectful relationships and gender equity generally. For example, within a consistent program there is a focus on re-addressing the under-representation of women in traditional held roles by men, including leadership roles and how this goes some way to address stereotyping of gender to occupation and leadership roles.

5. Funding for the tertiary response sector.

DFV still remains across communities and across all demographics. Regardless of any prevention focus in the future, there will still be the need for appropriate levels of funding for the secondary and tertiary response sectors, to ensure women who are subjected to intimate partner violence have adequate and appropriate support.



Project Team:

Allana Condron – Equity Project Officer 19 November 2018 to 11 December 2019.

Juanita Golland – Communications & Campaign Officer 7 January 2019 to 17 September 2019.

Francesca Groves – Communications & Campaign Officer 2 December 2019 to 5 February 2021.

Isobel MacCallum – Equity Project Manager– 4 February 2021 to 30 June 2021.

Maryna Bilousova – Equity Project Manager 15 November 2018 to 30 June 2021.

Council Supervisors: Fiona Piltz – Manager People & Culture - July 2018 to July 2020 and **Janice Summerhayes** - Director Community - July 2020 to June 2021



Other Specialist Input:

Dr Nada Ibrahim, PhD (Criminology), Med (Guidance & Counselling), BHSc (Psychology), DipBusAcc. Project consultant: inspiredNAFSi Consultancy Pty Ltd

Kiri Bear, Kiri Bear Consulting (Facilitation and training in gender equity and violence against women).



Key Resources:

External

Our Watch: www.ourwatch.org.au

Gender Equity Victoria: www.genvic.org.au/about-us

Elizabeth Broderick: elizabethbroderick.com.au

Champions of Change: championsofchange.com.au

Internal

Equity and Respect Workplace Toolkit

Manager Guide Resources and Disclosures

Factsheets: Equity and Respect Project, Equality vs Equity, Stereotyping, Casual Sexism, Respectful Relationships, Barriers to Empowerment, Gender Equality is the Business of Everyone, Active Bystander, Prevention of Violence

Equity and Respect presentation materials



The Hon. Mark Speakman (centre) Attorney General, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence with the members of theDVproject:2650 Steering Committee and the project team.

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