

Great South Coast Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children



- Strengthening Leadership
- Working Together
- Working Better

A joint commitment to promote non-violence, gender equity and respect



2013 – 2017



Great South Coast Strategy to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children

The ‘Great South Coast Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women and Children’ (the Strategy) is the result of many people and organisations working together over a hundred people from 52 organisations contributing to its development. The Strategy is based on committed partnerships, sound research and diverse input, all of this has informed our understanding of how to prioritise and progress action over the next five years.

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- Women’s Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West, with funding from the Victorian Department of Health
 - Regional Development Australia Barwon South West
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Executive summary

About this Strategy

The Great South Coast Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2013–2017 is a joint commitment made by councils, health and community organisations, state government departments and regional networks across the Great South Coast.

Through this Strategy, we aim to work together to address the impact of violence against women and children, and to promote peaceful, equitable and inclusive communities, organisations and relationships.

Policies for the prevention of violence against women and children already exist at a national and state level. The Strategy brings the Great South Coast into synergy with this work, and positions us well to access potential funding opportunities and the support that would provide.

As we implement this Strategy we have a wealth of good practice examples and existing initiatives to build on, both within the region and elsewhere. This Strategy is based on committed partnerships, sound research and valuable diverse input – over a hundred people from 52 organisations were involved in its development.

Who are the Strategy partners?

The Strategy partners are:

- The five councils of the Great South Coast: Glenelg, Corangamite, Moyne, Southern Grampians and Warrnambool
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West
- Regional health and community services
- Regional family violence and sexual assault services
- Regional and local organisations working with Aboriginal communities, people with disabilities, or other population groups
- Regional networks, such as Primary Care Partnerships
- Victorian government departments
- Victoria Police

Violence against women and children: the issue

Violence against women and children is prevalent, serious and preventable. Most violence against women and children occurs in the home or in private, and is not reported.

- More than half of Australian women have experienced a form of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16.
- Intimate partner violence – including physical, emotional and sexual violence – is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health in Victorian women aged 15-44.
- One in four young people have witnessed violence against their mothers or step-mothers.

- Research shows the profound and long-term toll violence takes on women and children's health, on families and communities, and on society in general.
- Apart from the immeasurable cost to those affected, violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion in 2009, including \$3.4 billion in Victoria alone – much of this borne by local and regional services.
- The incidence of violence across the Great South Coast is higher than Victoria in some local government areas and is rising across the whole catchment.

How can violence be prevented?

The Strategy focusses on preventing violence before it occurs, that is, by addressing its underlying causes.

VicHealth research has identified the underlying causes of violence against women as:

- **Unequal power between men and women**
- **Adherence to rigid gender stereotypes**
- **Broader cultures of violence**

The Strategy addresses these factors through a strengths-based approach that promotes positive, gender-equitable and respectful attitudes, behaviours and practices. We will begin by building the capacity of our own organisations to implement and model such positive change, and work across a number of settings in our communities including workplaces, schools and early year's services.

Working together. Working better

Councils, organisations and networks in the Great South Coast already do a great deal with limited resources.



Preventing violence against women and children requires long-term effort, working sustainably and efficiently over the years to come to achieve change. Through this Strategy, we commit to working better with what we've got: to build prevention into our existing work, to use our growing knowledge and capacity to refine our policies and programs, and gain more leverage from our existing resources. We also want to work better together: coordinating efforts between Strategy partners, harnessing the strengths of individual agencies and others working in the prevention sector, sharing practice and experience, and, where possible, scaling up effective interventions across the region.

Our vision

Our vision is for a Great South Coast where women and children are valued, respected, and live free from violence, and where our homes, communities, schools, sporting clubs and workplaces are inclusive, equitable and safe.

Our five-year goals

At the end of the five-year period of the Strategy, we want to see:

1. An increase in awareness, among partner organisations and within the settings and population groups with whom we work, of the factors that contribute to violence against women and children and how to prevent it.
2. An increase in the number of partner organisations that are recognised as leaders in the prevention of violence against women and children, developing innovative programs.
3. An increase in the number of Great South Coast schools, sporting clubs, workplaces, and other settings and organisations that promote gender equality and non-violence.
4. A substantial knowledge base to assist us to plan for the next stage of work and sustainability.

Our strategic areas for action

Our strategic areas for action over the next five years are:

1. Strengthening leadership and internal capacity (Years 1 - 2)
Partner organisations will show leadership by embedding gender equity and promoting non-violent norms in our own organisations. Our workforces will understand the causes of violence against women and how to build prevention into our core business. We will strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones to drive a coordinated and staged approach. We will also 'build the case' – collecting data and establishing methods to measure our progress and demonstrate the importance of primary prevention activity.
2. Working with our communities (Years 1 - 5) We will support our local communities to promote gender equity, inclusion and non-violence. We will begin by developing, implementing and evaluating innovative programs with first time parents, women with disabilities, and in workplaces and schools. As our knowledge builds and we secure further resources, we will expand initiatives to other settings such as sporting clubs, or emergency management.
3. Building the evidence for future planning (Years 1 - 5) We will address the underlying causes of violence against women and children through an evidence-based approach, evaluate the process and outcomes of our initiatives and share the learnings.

Our immediate actions

A range of actions have been identified that we can undertake with existing resources and capacity, including:

- Engage Ambassadors in each council and partner agency as champions for non-violence, respect and gender equity.
- Develop and endorse organisational policies that promote and improve gender equity.
- Continue to build the knowledge, commitment and capacity within our organisations and across the community through professional development and social marketing.
- Implement and evaluate the Baby Makes 3 Plus program for first time parents.
- Deliver and embed Living Safer Sexual Lives program and Enabling Women leadership program, by and for women with disabilities.
- Deliver the Take a Stand bystander program in selected partner workplaces.
- Pilot a respectful relationships education program in selected Great South Coast secondary schools.
- Form prevention of violence against women and children action teams in partner agencies to develop community-based activities for key events such as White Ribbon Day.
- Investigate ways to increase more equitable access to and participation of women and girls in diverse sports.
- Acknowledge and link the work from this Strategy with other initiatives focused on improving health and wellbeing of our communities.

Monitoring and evaluation

Because the prevention of violence against women and children before it occurs requires long-term sustained effort we will monitor and evaluate our progress, measuring shifts in attitudes, behaviours and practices that we know contribute to violence.

A Performance Monitoring Framework will guide our work. Annual reports on the progress of the Strategy against selected indicators will be submitted to the Great South Coast Board, Great South Coast Regional Justice Committee and other relevant networks and alliances.

Governance and accountability

Implementation and monitoring of the Strategy will be overseen by a Great South Coast Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Working Group, co-chaired by a senior representative from a nominated Council and Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West.

A member of the Great South Coast Strengthening our Communities Pillar Group will be a member of the working group, ensuring regular communication to the Pillar and Great South Coast Board. A schematic of the Proposed Governance Structure and Relationship Map can be found on page 22.

Strategy partners

- Five councils
- Women's Health & Wellbeing Barwon South West
- Health and community services
- Family violence and sexual assault services
- Organisations working with Aboriginal communities, people with disabilities, or other population groups
- Regional networks, such as Primary Care Partnerships
- Victorian Government Departments
- Victoria Police

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- Intimate partner violence – including physical, emotional and sexual violence – is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health in Victorian women aged 15-44.
- Domestic violence is the most commonly recorded parental characteristic in substantiated child protection cases. One in four young people have witnessed violence against their mothers or step-mothers.
- Research shows the profound and long-term toll violence takes on women and children's health, on families and communities, and on society in general.
- Apart from the immeasurable cost to those affected, violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion in 2009 including \$3.4 billion in Victoria alone – much of this borne by local services.

How can we prevent violence?

International and Victorian research has shown that violence can be prevented by addressing its underlying causes. For violence against women, these are:

- Unequal power between men and women
- Adherence to rigid gender stereotypes
- Broader cultures of violence

SOURCE: VicHealth (2007) Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria

Strategic Area

1. Building Leadership and Internal Capacity

- Leadership and Governance
- Workforce Development
- Information Systems
- Partnerships
- Financing

2. Working with Our Communities

- School
- Workplaces
- Emergency Services
- Sporting Clubs
- Women with Disabilities
- First time Parents

3. Building the Evidence for Future Planning

- Collect Data
- Define Progress
- Evaluate
- Analyse & Report

Time

Overview

Violence

... where women and children are not respected, and live in fear and where our homes, workplaces, sporting clubs and communities are not safe, equitable and safe.

Our communities

- First time parents
- Women with disabilities
- Employers and employees
- Students and teachers
- Sporting club members and officials
- Emergency management professionals and volunteers
- Indigenous communities
- Young people
- Arts and culture audiences
- Service users

Goals for Action

Goal 1

An increase in awareness, among Strategy partner organisations and the settings/population groups with whom we work, of the factors that contribute to violence against women and children and how to prevent it.

Goal 2

An increase in the number of Strategy partner organisations that are recognised as leaders in prevention of violence against women and children, developing innovative programs for adoption by other regions.

Goal 3

An increase in the number of Great South Coast schools, sporting clubs, workplaces, and other settings and/or organisations that promote gender equality and non-violence.

Goal 4

A substantial knowledge base to assist us to plan for the next stage of work and sustainability.

About this Strategy

The Great South Coast Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2013–2017 is a joint commitment to promote nonviolence, gender equity and respect, made by councils, state government departments, organisations and regional networks. The Strategy is based on committed partnerships, sound research and valuable diverse input – over a hundred people from 52 organisations were involved in its development.

Policies for prevention of violence against women and children already exist at national and state levels, and in other regions and local government areas across Victoria. We have a wealth of good practice examples and support to draw on as we implement this Strategy.

Our immediate actions

A range of actions have been identified that we can undertake with existing resources and capacity, including:

- Engage high-profile people in each council and partner agency as champions for non-violence, respect and gender equity
- Implement and evaluate the Baby Makes 3 Plus program for first time parents
- Deliver and embed Living Safer Sexual Lives program and Enabling Women leadership program, by and for women with disabilities
- Deliver the Take a Stand bystander program in selected partner workplaces
- Develop and pilot a respectful relationships education program in selected secondary schools
- Form prevention of violence against women and children action teams in partner organisations to develop community-based activities for events such as White Ribbon Day
- Investigate ways to increase more equitable access to and participation of women and girls in diverse sports

About the Strategy

What is this Strategy?

The Great South Coast Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2013-2017 is a joint commitment to promote nonviolence, gender equity and respect, made by councils, state government departments, organisations and networks across the Great South Coast.

This regional commitment enables us to take advantage of economies of scale in the sharing of knowledge and practice models, to coordinate effort, jointly measure progress, and see real results for our communities. It contributes to the *Great South Coast Regional Strategic Plan*, particularly to the objective of strengthening our communities so that everyone can feel safe.

Who are the Strategy partners?

The Strategy partners are:

- The five councils of the Great South Coast consist of Glenelg, Corangamite, Moyne, Southern Grampians and Warrnambool
- Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West
- Regional health and community services
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- Regional networks, such as Primary Care Partnerships
- Victorian Government Departments
- Victoria Police

We commit to this Strategy as partners in leading and coordinating prevention of violence against women and children across our catchments. To do this we will work with schools, workplaces, sporting clubs and other groups and settings.

Why is it important?

Violence against women and children has a profound and devastating effect on families and communities.

The seriousness and prevalence of such violence is significant; across Australia, a woman is killed almost every week by a male partner or ex-partner, often post-separation, and thousands are injured every year. In addition to death and physical injuries, intimate partner violence alone contributes more to depression, anxiety and other mental health issues in young and middle-aged Victorian women than any other factor. Domestic violence is also the most commonly recorded parental characteristic in substantiated child protection cases. The social, psychological and economic effects of violence can become entrenched across generations and communities.

Reported rates of family violence and sexual assault across the Great South Coast are high and increasing but most violence against women and children is not reported: it is a largely hidden abuse that occurs at devastating rates. An estimated one in three women has been a victim of intimate partner violence, and one in four young people have witnessed it. While there is a continued need to improve our response to those reporting violence,

Violence against Women

The United Nation's Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women 1993, defines violence against women as:

any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

The *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* defines 'family violence' as behaviour that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, threatening or coercive, or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to fear for his or her safety or wellbeing or for the safety or wellbeing of another person.

Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual behaviour that causes humiliation, pain, fear or intimidation, and includes verbal sexual harassment. Violence against women can be both criminal and non-criminal in nature and it is, in the main, behaviour intended to exercise power and control over women.

we must also work to stop this violence before it starts.

We now know that violence can be prevented. Research has shown that just as levels of smoking and drink driving have been reduced by public health-based strategies to change attitudes and behaviour, such action can prevent violence.

Councils, community and health sector organisations are the key drivers of such change – we are the closest organisations to our communities and provide the most immediate contexts for the expression of attitudes and behaviours that support or challenge violence in people’s daily lives. We can tailor initiatives to meet local needs and demographics, and promote healthy, equitable relationships through existing policies and programs, in areas such as early year’s services, sports and recreation, youth and disability services, planning and infrastructure.

How will it lead to action?

The Strategy sets out our vision, objectives and key strategic areas for action aiming to reduce levels of violence against women and children and ultimately prevent it.

Through this Strategy we aim to influence social norms, promote community leadership and embed a much stronger culture of equal and respectful relationships between men and women, boys and girls across the Great South Coast.

Having an agreed regional framework helps us work together to prioritise what we need to do first, in order to achieve our vision. Clear identification of these priorities will help us secure local, State and Federal government resources and funding to strengthen implementation. What we can achieve over the longer, five-year period, will depend on the outcomes of our activities over the first two years, as well as future resourcing. For this reason, we are beginning with a Two-Year Action Plan that will set out exactly what activities we are committing to in the shorter-term, and how we will

Prevention

Prevention means identifying and addressing underlying causes of a problem, rather than focussing on its results or ‘symptoms.’

This Strategy takes a public health approach to prevention, which entails an evidence and population-based way of identifying various ‘determinants’ of violence: the range of behavioural, attitudinal, socio-economic / socio-political and environmental factors that determine – contribute to or mitigate against – the occurrence of violence.

Actions and strategies are then developed to address these contributing factors and promote protective factors; as well as evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of interventions for continuous improvement.



measure progress. The Strategy and the action plan are not rigid, but will remain ‘living documents’ capable of continuously improving as we develop our commitment, skills, practice and evidence base and secure further resources.

What do we want to see for our communities?

Our ultimate aspiration is for women and their children across

the Great South Coast to live free of violence and the threat of violence, in their homes, communities, schools, sporting clubs and workplaces.

The Great South Coast Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women and Children is based on sound research that has informed our understanding of where to start and how to prioritise and develop our action over the next five years.

We know from the research that to achieve this vision we need to address the underlying causes of violence, identified as *unequal power between*



men and women, adherence to gender roles and stereotypes, and broader cultures of violence. We also understand that we will not achieve this vision of violence-free communities without also addressing other forms of discrimination and stereotyping, such as that on the basis of (dis)ability, Aboriginality, sexual orientation, immigrant or refugee status, socio-economic class or age.

In the Great South Coast we want to take a strengths-based approach, and work to promote gender equity, inclusiveness, peaceful communities

in the school yard and staff room. We want our daughters and our sons to learn how to treat everyone fairly and equally, and to build skills in communication and non-violent conflict resolution.

As they get older, we want them to understand how to create healthy, respectful relationships for themselves, how to recognise and respond to the signs of violence, and how to identify and reject sexist, discriminatory or violence-supportive messaging that they might encounter, whether among peers, in popular culture, social media

be able to play the sports they choose, regardless of gender or age. We want the sports that our daughters choose to be valued as highly as the sports that our sons choose.

We want our sporting clubs to welcome girls and boys, women and men equally, for them to be equally represented in coaching, officiating and leadership, and to have equal and fair access to facilities such as change rooms, equipment and playing fields. We want our communities to be places where neighbours, colleagues and friends have the courage and skills to intervene when they hear sexist or discriminatory attitudes expressed. We want our public spaces to feel inclusive and safe, and to be accessible to everybody.

We want our families to be places where love and support is never shadowed by the threat of violence.

and respectful relationships. Our aspiration for a Great South Coast community free of violence is, first and foremost, one where women and men are treated equally, where everyone's thoughts, ideas and opinions are heard and respected, and where discrimination and stereotyping is a thing of the past.

We want our schools to model and promote gender equity and non-violence, not just in the classroom, but

or from other sources.

We want our workplaces to be places where women and men are equally valued and represented in leadership positions, where they receive equal pay for equal work, where both men and women are able and willing to take time off to be with children and enjoy family-friendly arrangements, and where everyone can work free from any form of gender-based harassment, bullying or discrimination. We want our daughters and sons to

We want our relationships and families to be places where each person's thoughts, ideas and opinions are heard and respected, and where their choices and goals are celebrated and supported. We want intimate partners to make decisions together, allow each other to be independent and have separate interests, and to reject rigid gender roles in their relationships. We want parents to take equal roles in childcare and housework, and for children to learn about equality and respectful relationships by watching the

adults in their lives. Above all, we want our families to be places where love and support is never shadowed with the threat of violence.

Violence against women and children has been present in our community for a long time and is embedded in many of our attitudes, behaviours, and social structures – addressing these requires long-term effort. But it can be done, and with this Strategy, we are making a start. The Strategy aims to get us to the point where we have the skills and organisational capacity to prevent violence through our core work areas, and with our partners across the community, health, education and business sectors. We are not starting from nothing.

Behind this document lies the work of local and regional organisations and individuals who are already beginning to drive prevention of violence against women and children in their own work areas. Their effort has given us models to draw from and a base upon which to build this shared vision, objectives, and strategic areas for action.

Violence against Children

Violence against children is defined by article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as:

all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse.

Children and young people may directly experience physical, sexual and psychological violence in their homes, schools or communities. Children and young people can also witness violence (especially domestic violence) against their mothers or other female caregivers. *The Family Violence Protection Act 2008* recognises the vulnerability of children to forms of violence against women: it includes: *causing a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, family violence as an example of family violence in itself.*

Working together. Working better

Strategy partner organisations across the Great South Coast, like many in regional Victoria, already do a great deal with limited human and financial resources.

Activities aiming to create equitable and inclusive organisational or community environments, challenge discrimination and harassment (especially on the grounds of sex), and promote healthy and respectful relationships, all address the underlying causes of violence and contribute to its prevention. Councils and organisations and the Great South Coast Regional Justice Committee have prioritised work to prevent violence against women and children.

But we can do more. With this Strategy, we commit to working better with what we've got: to 'build prevention in' to our existing work – use our growing knowledge and capacity to refine our policies and

programs, and gain more leverage from our existing resources. One-off programs and 'add-ons' are not enough to achieve sustainable change for such a deeply-entrenched problem. We also need to implement mutually-reinforcing strategies and messages across the many environments where attitudes and behaviours are influenced, such as schools, sporting clubs, workplaces and media.

We also want to work better together: coordinate efforts between Strategy partners, harnessing the strengths of individual agencies and others working in the prevention sector, sharing practice and experience, and, where possible, scaling up effective interventions across the region.

The role of Strategy partners

This Strategy provides the framework through which many organisations and networks commit to working together toward the shared goal of preventing violence against women and children, while also acknowledging that to do so, we each have many and different roles.

Councils

The five councils will take the lead in driving and coordinating the Strategy's activities across local government areas.

Councils can work externally with our communities through services and settings such as youth services,

What is gender equity?

Gender equity means the equal distribution of opportunities, of access to resources and of decision-making power between women and men, boys and girls in society.

Gender equity goes beyond formal provisions that ensure women and men are accorded equal treatment (such as sex discrimination legislation), and aims to achieve substantive or 'on the ground' equality between men and women in everyday life.

This is an important goal of prevention activity, as it addresses one of the key underlying causes of violence against women, namely unequal power between the sexes.

libraries, and sports clubs – supporting prevention activity through policy and programming. As major employers, councils can also work internally, promoting gender equity in the workplace, and embedding prevention of violence against women in policies and plans.

- Raise the profile of primary prevention
- Share the learning
- Develop the workforce
- Normalise workplace discussion about gender equity
- Influence and adapt council business

The Municipal Association of Victoria's Promoting Gender Equity: MAV Prevention of Violence against Women Leadership Statement identifies the following strategies that councils can implement, in order to fulfil their responsibility to their communities in preventing violence:

- Build relationships
- Stimulate and nurture leadership

Councils will link this work with their existing Health and Wellbeing governance structures to develop a multi-stakeholder prevention work plan for each local government area, coordinating implementation of the immediate actions of the Strategy, monitoring progress and identifying next steps.

Guiding Principles

- Everyone has the right to safe and respectful relationships and to live free from violence.
- Violence can affect anyone, but factors such as class, Aboriginality, sexuality, ethnicity and disability shape women and children's experience of violence.
- To prevent violence against women and children we will address its underlying causes, particularly unequal power relations, gender stereotyping and broader cultures of violence.
- Non-violent men play a positive and essential role in shaping respectful, gender-equitable attitudes and behaviours among peers, colleagues, children and friends.
- Everyone is responsible for developing a culture of non-violence, respect and equity. Community consultation, ownership and meaningful participation are central to our initiatives.
- Our work is informed by research and practice wisdom, and we will evaluate our efforts to contribute to the evidence base.
- Prevention of violence against women and children is a long-term endeavour: our initiatives are designed for sustainability of impact and future action.
- Our prevention initiatives are accompanied by accessible and appropriate systems of support for those already experiencing violence, guided by the expertise of the crisis response sector.
- The engagement of new partners across all sectors in which we live, work, learn and play are critical to our success
- Work to prevent violence against Aboriginal women cannot be separated from efforts to address racism, dispossession and intergenerational trauma. We are guided by the learnings and the principles of Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families 10-year plan and the Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Framework.

Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West

Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West promotes women's independence, health and wellbeing by working in partnership with communities to deliver a range of evidence-based initiatives.

Providing support for the prevention of violence against women and children through this Strategy is an inaugural priority for the organisation. This will be achieved through:

- Delivering training and capacity-building opportunities
- Partnering to develop and implement evidence based practice
- Supporting partners with advice on prevention policy and program development and delivery, and brokering specialist assistance where necessary

Regional networks

Regional networks include Primary Care Partnerships, the Regional Justice Group, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group, Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee, and other networks such as those for early years, sports and leisure, youth and disability services.

These networks all have primary goals that are distinct from, but related to, prevention of violence against women and children. Their role is to identify where the primary goal of the network aligns with particular activities or objectives of the Strategy, and integrate these into their planning, coordination and implementation processes.

State Government regional offices

Regional offices of Victorian Government departments will play an important role in the Strategy's implementation, for example through:

- Advising other Strategy partners on alignments with state government policy and initiatives
- Identifying opportunities for funding the Strategy's activities through State and Federal government funding streams
- Considering where the Great South Coast could lead on or pilot relevant state government-led initiatives

"The Strategy should be implemented by partner organisations best able to deliver on particular activities, in consultation with target populations".

Community member



We want the sports that our daughters choose to be valued as highly as the sports that our sons choose.

Community and health services

Health and community services are key entry points for direct interaction with communities, families and individuals.

Health and community services in the partnership will work to integrate prevention into strategic planning, organisational development and community outreach programs. Like councils, they will play a role in identifying opportunities to integrate gender equity, respectful relationships and prevention of violence into existing and planned programs and, where appropriate and possible, initiate new programs in settings or with population groups that have not previously been engaged.

Community and health services are also among the best placed to identify

We want our schools to model and promote gender equity and non-violence. Not just in the classroom, but in the school yard and staff room.

and intervene early with families and individuals at risk of violence, providing psycho-social support, referrals and social protection. For example, next to a friend, women are most likely to disclose their experience of violence to a health professional. These services will therefore work to ensure that prevention activity is supported by a health and community sector with the capacity and skills to respond to

disclosures of violence or its early-warning signs.

Crisis response sector

Our crisis response services, South Western Centre against Sexual Assault and Emma House, have long-standing experience in issues relating to violence against women and children.

Their expertise and commitment communicating issues of violence against women and children, creating and strengthening partnerships with generalist agencies, and translating specialist knowledge into 'mainstream' models of practice, will be an invaluable contribution to the Strategy's implementation.

Priority work areas and settings

Strategy partner organisations have a reach across many of the settings where prevention activity has been shown to be most effective, such as sporting clubs, schools, and workplaces.

We also work with people at different stages of life, and with groups such as first-time parents or people with disabilities. This means we are well-placed to implement prevention activities across multiple settings in a coordinated way, and also develop tailored initiatives for different populations. Our priority work areas and settings for the Strategy, and their different roles, are outlined in the following.





We want our public spaces to feel inclusive and safe, and to be accessible to everybody.

Workplaces

Workplace environments that are safe and inclusive of women and encourage their participation and leadership are essential for the prevention of violence against women in the workplace itself, and can create and reinforce broader social norms of non-violence and equity.

Initiatives encouraging organisations to develop and implement respectful relationships and gender equity policies and programs are key to prevention work in this setting.

Disability services

Women with disabilities experience violence at a significantly higher rate, and in different forms, than other women, and they may have greater difficulty in accessing support services.

Further, many women with disabilities are isolated and marginalised from participating in various mainstream

settings (e.g. educational institutions, workplaces and sporting clubs) and so it is vital that agencies and clients of disability services, specialist schools, and residential facilities are also engaged in developing and implementing prevention strategies.

Education, training and youth services

Programs aimed at building children and young peoples' skills in the development of respectful and equitable relationships, and to help teachers and other school staff recognise and respond to violent behaviour are key to preventing violence against women and children.

While we will prioritise work with secondary schools in the initial stages of this Strategy, partnerships with other educational institutions such as primary schools, TAFE and universities, youth transitions and youth work settings, specialist education settings and Adult and Community Education will also be explored later in the Strategy's implementation

Maternal and child health and early childhood

Maternal and Child Health and early childhood services provide various entry points for both primary prevention of violence and early intervention.

There is a focus on respectful relationships already included in the service models with referrals to outside agencies where appropriate. The Maternal and Child Health 4-week Key Age and Stage visit includes a question to women on their feelings of safety, designed to identify potential family violence and provide referrals for women. Enhanced Home Visiting Services of Maternal and Child Health are also designed to provide services to vulnerable families, including support and referrals in cases of family violence and child abuse/neglect.

An existing initiative already being implemented across the Great South Coast is the Baby Makes 3 Plus program. This program is focused on supporting men and women during the transition to parenthood and encouraging equal and respectful relationships.

Men as partners in prevention

Primary prevention of violence against women and children requires changes in culture, society and social norms: it involves everyone. Working with men is a critical part of the Strategy.

Non-violent men have a positive role to play in helping end men's violence against women, and shaping the attitudes and behaviours of children and other men, including peers, colleagues and friends.

Sports and leisure facilities

Participation in sports can help build skills and positive behaviours such as teamwork and cooperation, but the existence of sexist peer cultures in some male team sports has been associated with violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours.

Prevention of violence against women and children activities led by sporting clubs can potentially reach large numbers of adults and young people, particularly men and boys, and build a positive and violence-free sporting (and wider) culture. Promoting women's and girls' access and participation in diverse sports is central to building equitable and non-discriminatory sporting cultures.

Emergency management

Recent research in Australia and internationally suggests that violence against women (and potentially children) increases in the aftermath of natural disasters such as bushfire or flood.

Services are stretched in disaster recovery periods, and family violence risks being ignored, excused (on the basis of the pressure men are also under) and unrecorded. Emergency management teams therefore have a key role to play in ensuring that the different ways in which risk is experienced by women and men during and following disasters is taken into account.

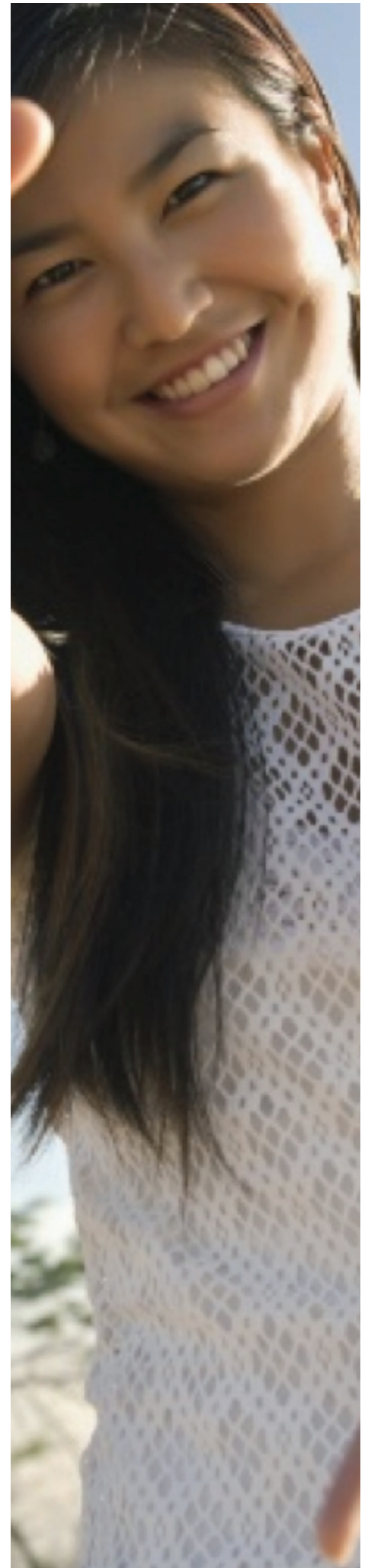
Media, Arts and Culture

Because the media, arts and popular culture can both reflect and challenge the society in which they are based, they can either reinforce or undermine the attitudes and norms that contribute to violence against women.

The representation of women and girls in popular culture, for instance in billboard and television advertising, can powerfully influence the way the role of women is viewed (particularly in relation to men). The media, arts and popular culture can also raise awareness of violence against women, its consequences and underlying causes. From community arts to mainstream media, new technologies and advertising, there is enormous potential to promote respectful relationships and build non-violent and equitable norms.

“Prevention of violence should be in across all council Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plans with a well-defined goal that can be evaluated within the four-year time frame”.

Community member



Strategic framework 2013–2017

Our vision

A Great South Coast where women and children are valued, respected, and live free from violence, and where our homes, communities, schools, sporting clubs and workplaces are inclusive, equitable and safe.

Our five-year goals

At the end of the five-year period, we want to see:

1. An increase in awareness, among partner organisations and the settings and population groups with whom we work, of the factors that contribute to violence against women and children and how to prevent it.
2. An increase in the number of partner organisations that are recognised as leaders in the prevention of violence against women and children, developing innovative programs for adoption and dissemination.
3. An increase in the number of Great South Coast schools, sporting clubs, workplaces, and other settings and organisations that promote gender equality and non-violence.
4. A substantial knowledge base to assist us to plan for the next stage of work and sustainability.

Our Strategic Areas for Action

Our strategic areas for action over the next five years are:

1. **Strengthening leadership and internal capacity (Years 1 - 2)** The first two years of the Strategy will focus on starting our leadership journey, establishing the organisational mandate and systems to support prevention, building internal capacity, and sourcing finances for the next stage. This Strategic Area of Action will comprise the 'lion's share' of our initial activities, as much future activity will depend on us demonstrating the necessary leadership and capacity. Strategy partner organisations will model a strengths-based approach to prevention by embedding gender equity and promoting non-violent norms in own organisations. We will develop the knowledge and skills of our own workforces on underlying causes of violence, and build prevention into our core business. We will strengthen existing partnerships to drive a coordinated and staged approach. We will also 'build the case', collecting sex-disaggregated data, and establishing methods to measure progress.

2. **Working with our communities (Years 1 - 5)** We will support our local communities to promote gender equity, inclusion and non-violence, in the settings where people live, work, learn and play. Existing resources will allow us to begin piloting and evaluating a limited number of innovative programs in the first two years of the Strategy, specifically with first time parents, women with disabilities, and in workplaces and schools. However we also recognise the need to establish a solid base of leadership and capacity internally (through Strategic Action Area One) to progress and 'build in' this work in a sustainable way. As our knowledge builds and we secure further resources, external work with our communities will grow. We will aim to develop and implement new initiatives in settings such as emergency management, or with sporting clubs, as well as expand the models piloted earlier across the Great South Coast.
3. **Building the evidence for future planning (Years 1 - 5)** We will address the underlying causes of violence against women and children through an evidence-based approach, evaluate the process and outcomes of our initiatives and share the learnings, in order to aid planning for the next phase and for ongoing sustainability.

Incorporating diversity and inclusion

Violence against women and children occurs across the Great South Coast community, however, some groups are less likely to be reached by whole-of-population strategies; have limited access to services or settings; and/or have specific needs that 'general' strategies do not account for.

The Strategy aims to prevent violence against all women and children, including those who are marginalised or in hard-to-reach groups. Prevention will only be effective for certain groups when it includes tailored strategies to address their specific contexts and risks. We will also ensure that all our strategies incorporate diversity, and are based on consultation, participation and consideration of the needs of different groups.

The issues faced by certain groups reinforce the need for community-led approaches to prevention. Many women with disabilities, for example, are isolated and marginalised from participating in various mainstream settings (e.g. educational institutions, workplaces and sporting clubs) and so it is vital that agencies like disability business services, specialist schools, community centres and neighbourhood houses are also engaged.

This Strategy is guided by the human rights principles of participation and empowerment, meaning that its actions and strategies will be applied in a way that supports and promotes self-advocacy and capacity building of marginalised groups rather than treating them as passive recipients of initiatives. We need to consider ways that power relationships and forms of discrimination operate for different women and children, and find solutions for them. Our prevention activities must:

- promote not only respectful relationships and gender equity, but also challenge negative stereotypes based on disability, sexuality, socio-economic class or ethnicity;
- identify population groups with specific needs or contexts within all initiatives developed to prevent violence against women and children;
- ensure representation of different population groups on steering structures and at key planning forums concerned with preventing violence against women and children; and
- help women from diverse groups to be involved in leadership roles.



Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring of the overall impact of the Strategy, and of its specific activities, will be critical for accountability and the process of continuous review and improvement.

Because prevention of violence against women and children requires long-term, generational change, we would not expect to see reductions in actual levels of such violence over the five-year term of the Strategy. Nor will we seek to measure progress by decreases in reporting of family violence or sexual assault to the police, as we know decreased reporting may in fact indicate decreased confidence in the system response rather than decreases in actual levels of violence. Instead, we will seek to measure our progress by shifts in attitudes, behaviours and practices that we know contribute to violence. For example, we would like to see:

- Greater levels of gender equity and inclusion/participation, more women in leadership positions, and greater satisfaction with responses to violence or discrimination, in organisations such as sporting clubs and workplaces (including our own);
- Shifts in community attitudes, behaviours and social norms away from gender stereotyping and the tolerance, excusing or justifying of violence; and
- Demonstrable improvements in interpersonal skills, family and gender relations that support respectful and non-violent relationships among community members participating in prevention programs.

Annual reports on the progress of the Strategy against the selected indicators will be developed by Strategy partners through the mechanism of Great South Coast Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Working Group (see next section), and submitted to the Great South Coast Board, Great South Coast Regional Justice Committee, Family Violence Regional Committee and Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group.

A Performance Monitoring Framework will help us not only monitor our own progress, but also show how our work in the Great South Coast supports broader state and national efforts, and thus help secure resources for future implementation. In order to measure change against such indicators, we will need to ensure that all our activities are robustly and evaluated, which is why a Strategic Action Area has been dedicated to building the evidence base.

Governance and accountability

Implementation and monitoring of the Strategy will be overseen by a *Great South Coast Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Working Group*, tasked with:

- Continuously reviewing the Two-Year Action Plan;
- Reviewing the performance monitoring framework and Strategy progress;
- Providing advice on annual Strategy work plans developed for each local government area;
- Seeking resources for and endorsing proposed regional initiatives;

- Hosting an annual Community of Practice Forum sharing learnings and initiatives;
- Providing regular updates to the Great South Coast *Strengthening our Communities Pillar* Group;
- Providing an Annual Report to the Great South Coast Board, Great South Coast Regional Justice Committee, Family Violence Regional Committee and Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group.

The working group will be co-chaired by a senior representative from a nominated Council and Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West. A member of the Great South Coast *Strengthening our Communities Pillar* Group will be a member ensuring regular contemporary communication to the Pillar and Great South Coast Board.

A schematic of the Proposed Governance Structure and Relationship Map, and its links to other regional and statewide structures, can be found on the following page (page 22).

Women and children in the Great South Coast live free from violence in their homes, workplaces, schools and sporting clubs

Strategic Area One (years 1 - 2)
Building leadership & internal capacity

Situation

Violence against women and children is prevalent and serious in the GSC. Reducing levels of future violence and ultimately preventing it is an achievable goal, but requires sustained efforts to create cultural change at every level, across many organisations and settings.

Initial Inputs

- Existing expertise of Strategy partner staff in own work areas
- PVAW&C expert advice, tools and assistance: WHWBSW MAV, VicHealth
- Existing PVAW&C research base and promising practice models
- Time dedicated to collaboration among Strategy partners, and integration of PVAW&C into core business
- Existing financial resources

Outputs	
Activities	Reach
<p>Leadership & Governance Engage senior executives and elected officials as champions and establish governance mechanisms</p> <p>Workforce Development Build skills of staff in partner organisations to better integrate PVAW&C into core business</p> <p>Information Systems Strengthen sex-disaggregated data collection and information systems to track progress</p> <p>Partnerships Strengthen or build partnerships with response sector organisations and across key settings</p> <p>Financing Identify opportunities to strengthen resource allocation</p>	<p>Senior executives of Strategy partner organisations</p> <p>Councillors and mayors</p> <p>Staff in different work areas of Strategy partner organisations</p>

Strategic Area One Outcomes / Next Stage I

- Increased expertise of Strategy partner organisations on PVAW&C and how to prevent it
- Mandate for work on PVAW&C through organisation policies and senior leadership
- Sex-disaggregated data and information on progress on PVAW&C to be tracked
- High-functioning organisational processes for PVAW&C at LGA and regional level
- Increased financial resources for PVAW&C and demonstration of capacity and capability



Assumptions

- That senior executives in partner agencies and elected officials will support efforts to PVAW&C
- That GSC organisations demonstrating leadership and organisational investment in PVAW&C during Stage One will attract further funding for Stage Two work

ee from violence, and our relationships, communities,
ubs are inclusive, respectful and safe.

Strategic Area Two (years 2 – 5) Working with our communities

Inputs	Outputs	
	Activities	Reach
Partner staff on causes of	Workplaces Deliver and evaluate the Take a Stand bystander program in at least one GSC workplace	Employers and employees Women with disabilities
through prioritisation in partner executive support	Women with disabilities Deliver and embed Living Safer Sexual Lives and Enabling Women leadership programs	Students and teachers Sporting club members and officials
Information systems enabling	Schools Develop, implement and evaluate a respectful relationships education program (e.g. SAPPSS) in at least one GSC Secondary School	First time parents Emergency management professionals and volunteers
ed	Sports Identify avenues to increase equitable access to and participation of women and girls in diverse sports	Arts and culture audiences Young people
Partnerships to progress	Emergency Services Incorporate a gender equity and PVAW&C approach into emergency management	Local communities Service users
els	Other settings/ populations PVAW&C initiatives delivered with other settings and populations as identified through Strategic Action Area One	Indigenous communities
PVAW&C secured through commitment	First Time Parents Continue implementation and evaluation of Baby Makes 3 Plus program and advocate for the adoption of its approach by mainstream stakeholders	

Five Year Goals

1. An increase in awareness of the factors that contribute to VAW&C among Strategy partner organisations, and among the settings/ population groups with whom we work.
2. An increase in the number of Strategy partner organisations that are recognised as leaders in PVAW&C, developing innovative programs for adoption by other regions
3. An increase in the number of GSC schools, sporting clubs, workplaces, and other settings/ organisations that promote gender equality and non-violence
4. A substantial knowledge-base created to assist us to plan for the next stage of work and sustainability.

Evaluate

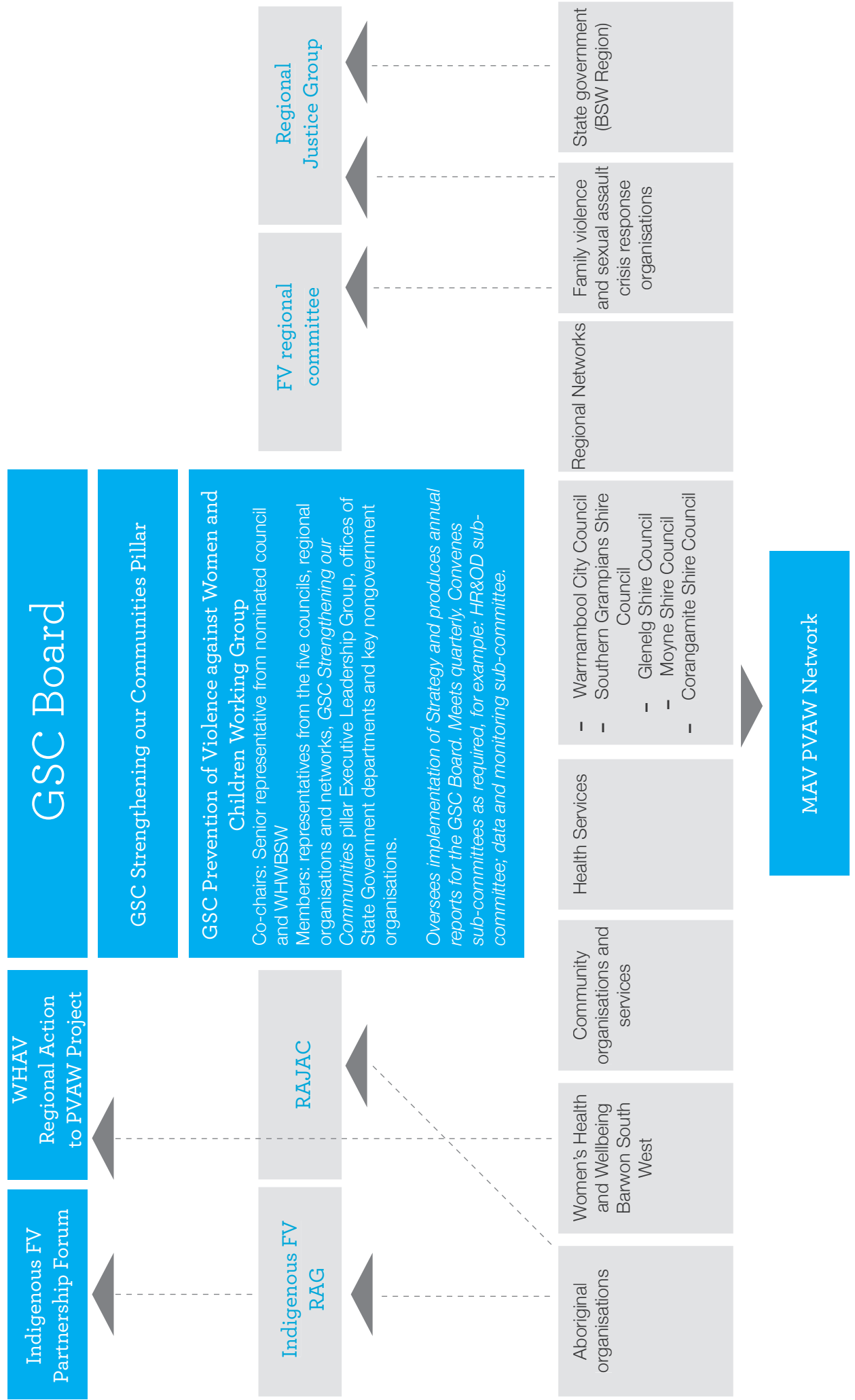
Analyse and Report

Using the evidence for future planning

External Factors

- Factors contributing to VAW&C beyond the influence of Strategy partners (eg broader media, popular culture) with impacts on attitudes, behaviours and perpetration trends
- Shifting political leadership at local, regional, or state levels

Proposed Governance Structure and Relationship Map





References

1. VicHealth (2007) Preventing Violence before it Occurs: A Framework and Background Paper to Guide the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria
2. This figure is calculated from the total number of female homicides divided by the percentage of those homicides listed as having a 'domestic' motive in the Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program reports
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Great South Coast
Strategy to Prevent
Violence Against
Women and Children



- Strengthening Leadership
- Working Together
- Working Better