

## #3

# CREATING LOCAL POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE



## WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM OUR PROJECT

- About 14 of Victoria's 79 local governments have violence prevention as a priority in either their Municipal Public Health Plan or Community Safety Plan, while many others are interested in incorporating violence prevention
- Local government-community partnerships need support from State government, particularly in areas of dissemination of best practice and training in policy and program development

## POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES

A policy is a plan of action, usually developed by a government, to tackle a problem that has been identified as a priority. A program is a specific time-limited action or activity undertaken by governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector, often deriving from a policy. A practice is a customary way of operation or behaviour.

## WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

In this project, we promote **gender mainstreaming** of policies, programs, and practices to prevent violence.

We use the definition of gender mainstreaming developed by the UN Social and Economic Council in 1997:

"...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

- *The City of Maribyrnong has used gender mainstreaming in its work with Leisure and Open Space Services to analyse new proposals for parks and recreation centres. Are they providing equal access to men and women? Are they providing equal services? Do budgets reflect needs of both men and women? Does evaluation consider different impacts on male and female users?*

## KEY LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN VICTORIA

### Municipal Public Health Plans:

In Victoria, these are mandatory local government plans to promote health. They can now be incorporated into Council Plans.

### Community Safety Strategies:

While never mandatory, about 30 of 79 local councils in Victoria either have a stand-alone community safety strategy or have incorporated community safety into their Municipal Public Health Plan

- *The City of Darebin's "Community Health and Safety Framework 2005-2009" incorporates public health, intentional injuries such as violence, unintentional injuries such as accidents, and substance abuse within its plan.*

**Council Plans:** Like Municipal Public Health Plans, these are mandatory plans expected every four years, in June of the following year after municipal elections have been held in November. They should include: strategic objectives; strategies for achieving those objectives over the next four years; Strategic Resource Plan; and Strategic indicators for monitoring the achievement of the objectives.

**Community Plans:** Community Plans often feed into Council Plans, and are simply a community consultation-driven strategy for setting strategic objectives for the local government

## WHAT DO GOOD POLICIES INCLUDE?

1. Statistics on incidence and information on risk factors
2. Key resources and unmet needs in the locality
3. Programs to be implemented along with responsible authorities and lead agencies
4. Monitoring indicators and evaluation strategies

## POSSIBLE POLICIES, PROGRAMS, PRACTICES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

1. **early childhood interventions to prevent child abuse**, usually aimed at parents
2. **school-based interventions**, developing norms of mutual respect and conflict resolution skills and also seeking to keep at risk kids in schools
  - *The Wyndham Family Violence Committee, an independent network of service providers and community representatives convened by Wyndham City Council, has conducted "Say No to Violence" projects since 2004, based in both primary and secondary schools*
3. **community economic development**, aimed at offering resources to at-risk youth, and also to adults who require income support to escape violent situations (eg., women, youth and older people abused in their homes);

4. **public awareness**, especially aimed at bringing 'hidden violence' into public discourse in streets and workplaces;
  - *In Bendigo, the Violence is Out of Bounds Project targeted young men aged between 15 and 30, through public information in football grounds and netball courts*
5. **community mobilization and capacity building** (eg., local leadership development);
  - *The Promoting Peace in Families project, a partnership between the City of Casey, Cardinia Casey Community Health Service and the Casey Pastors Network, helps faith leaders to raise awareness of family violence in the community; support women to be safe; and challenge violent behaviours*
6. **service coordination**, including coordinated intake and referral forms for victims of violence
7. **planning and design initiatives**, creating spaces that are accessible and safe
8. **policing and justice initiatives**, aimed at increasing trust in the justice system, increasing reports of 'hidden' violence through better response to violent incidents, and attaining more equitable and effective outcomes of criminal cases

