

VISION

A society where all women are free from violence, where every boy and girl grows up to be equally heard and respected.

MISSION

Through collective effort, we will build a system that provides safety and justice to all women and children experiencing FV in our region; and we will work to build an equitable society that prevents violence against women and their children, their families and communities in all its forms.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

Commitment to using evidence based & best practice

Relationships are valued

Innovation & willingness to identify new ideas & a place for problem solving

Collaborate & support with other regional & state-wide initiatives

Strategic Plan 2015-2018



DRIVERS/ PRIORITY AREAS



Safety
Accountability
Prevention
Diversity
Children

STRATEGIC PILLARS





Regional Family Violence Partnership Three Year Strategic Plan 2015-2018

The RFVP Executive Committee held a strategic planning day in September 2014.

We acknowledge with thanks the ongoing work of the people and organisations who together, give substance to the RFVP. We also acknowledge that work to prevent and respond to family violence and sexual assault in the Eastern Region is strengthened every day by the many Regional Family Violence Partnership members and other committed organisations, even where this work is not specifically captured in this Strategic Plan.

As the RFVP continues to build on the achievements of the last eight years, it will seek to build links to and the capacity of emerging structures and service provision models in our region to broaden and deepen the region's ambition, systems and processes to identify, respond to and prevent family violence.

Executive Summary

1. Background on the Regional Family Violence Partnership

Established in 2007, the Regional Family Violence Partnership (RFVP) is a partnership of organisations committed to working together in the Eastern Metropolitan Region to address family violence. Since its establishment, the RFVP's core goal has been to provide an integrated family violence response to support women and children's safety and agency and hold perpetrators of family violence accountable for their behaviour. The RFVP comprises representation from a range of specialist family violence services, support agencies and government department representatives who provide family violence responses to women, children and/or men in the region.

As the RFVP evolves, its work will explore the intersections between integrated family violence responses, and broader issues relating to violence against women, including sexual assault and other forms of violence that women and their children in our communities' experience. It will also work to incorporate work to prevent violence against women and children into its strategic directions.

2. Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

The RFVP wishes to pay respect to the traditional custodians, the Wurundjeri people, their Elders past and present, all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia. Through the efforts of this strategic plan and ongoing partnership building, the RFVP looks forward to working in solidarity with the EMR Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group and affirm our commitment to building a future that is respectful of, values and embraces the heritage and culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and provides justice and equality for all.

3. About the Executive Committee

Central to the RFVP's governance structure is the Executive Committee (RFVPEC). The RFVPEC hold the responsibility for driving and monitoring the implementation of family violence integration at a regional level. The RFVPEC provides the cross-sector leadership required to develop the strategic plan and guide its implementation through meeting monthly and advising the working groups. The monthly meetings are facilitated by an Independent Chair whose role is to maintain focus on the mission and principles of committee and guide decision-making by consensus.

The committee is coordinated by the Regional Integration Coordinator and the Independent Chair and is comprised of representatives from the following key sectors:

- Women's Sector – EDVOS
- Eastern Men's Behaviour Change Consortium
- Children's Services Sector –Australian Childhood Foundation
- Victoria Police Family Violence Advisor Division 2
- Victoria Police Family Violence Advisor Division 1
- Ringwood Magistrates' Court – Senior Registrar
- Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group – Chair
- Indigenous Services Sector-Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service
- DV East Network (Family Violence Crisis Accommodation Sector)
- Inner East Integrated Family Services Alliance- Connections UnitingCare
- Outer East Integrated Family Services Alliance-Anglicare
- Department of Human Services
- Child Protection (DHS)
- Disability- Systemic Advocate
- Community Corrections Services – Department of Justice, South Eastern Region

- Women's Health Sector-Women's Health East
- Community Legal Sector-Eastern Community Legal Centre
- Sexual Assault Services Sector-ECASA
- Homelessness Sector- Wesley

People who are elected as chairs of the working groups at the Annual Membership Forum also sit on the Executive Committee for their one year term.

4. Description of the Strategic Planning Process

Strategic planning time line:

- Consult with members and practitioners at the Practitioners' Forum (June 2014)
- Review progress of current strategic plan and Executive Committee members to consult working groups/sectors to gather information and make recommendations leading up to planning day. (June – September 2014)
- Executive Committee Strategic Planning Day (September 2014)
- Draft Plan tabled at Executive Committee meeting for discussion (November 2014)
- Executive Committee members to engage with sectors and working groups on draft Plan, and inform work planning (November – February 2015)
- Final Strategic Plan endorsed by the Executive Committee (February 2015)

Input from multi-agency practitioners:

In this strategic planning process it is important for practitioners across the various sectors involved in responding to family violence to contribute directly to system reform. It is their direct experience and knowledge that informs how we create responses to the issues and gaps

in service integration. Throughout the year, practitioners are able to directly contribute to family violence system reform through the working groups, sector groups and by participating at our events including the Annual Membership/Practitioner Forum.

To manage practitioner and service input from across the wide-ranging sectors involved in the RFVP, the Executive Committee were provided with a strategic planning framework to assist them in this process of driving the development of the plan and seeking input from those participating in the RFVP more broadly leading up to planning day.

The Plan was then built on the following inputs:

- Previous 2011-2014 strategic plan
- Key statewide and national policy, plans and initiatives
- Analysis of current trends and issues in family violence reform
- Recommendations from the current RFVP working groups and sector representatives on the Executive Committee
- Feedback from practitioners at the Annual Membership/Practitioner Forum

The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan is the fourth plan developed since the inception of the Regional Family Violence Partnership. This plan sets the agenda for the RFVP over the next three years.

5. What's in the Plan?

- **Vision**
- **Purpose**
- **Drivers/Priority Areas**-These inform and drive everything we do.
- **Strategic Pillars** –Flowing on from the focus areas the strategies are the four overarching areas of action for the RFVP over the next three years
- **Critical Success Factors**-Definition of the underpinning factors needed to achieve the plan.

6. Action Plan

The action plan details how the RFVP will achieve its strategic priorities. This is documented separately and as a companion to the strategic plan.

Review:

As the action plan is a living document, it will be reviewed and updated annually to check progress and modify as necessary to maintain the plan's relevance and integrity.

The first review of the action plan will be in August 2015.

For further information about the RFVP or this strategic plan, please visit: www.easternfamilyviolencepartnership.org.au

Or contact the Regional Integration Coordinator:

Regional Family Violence Partnership, EMR
PO Box 701 Heathmont VIC 3135
Telephone: (03) 9259 4200

Strategic Plan 2015-2018

Vision

A society where all women are free from violence, where every boy and girl grows up to be equally heard and respected.

Purpose

Through collective effort, we will build a system that provides safety and justice to all women and children experiencing family violence in our region; and we will work to build an equitable society that prevents violence against women and their children, their families and communities in all its forms.

Drivers/Priority Areas

Building on the EMR RFVP's previous achievements and Memorandum of Understanding, the Strategic Plan focuses on five key priorities to underpin strong, systemic purpose to drive our work to respond to family violence and sexual assault, and to prevent it before it occurs in our communities.

They are:

Safety

For every woman, this means something unique to her experience of violence, her identity and her life circumstances. The strength of our partnership and our collaborative effort is in its capacity to see and hear each woman and support her path to safety.

Accountability

For people who use violence in the family context, our partnership works to build better understanding and more effective ways to hold them responsible and accountable; and to support them to stop using violence.

Diversity

Effective family violence systems are sensitive to the unique circumstances of individuals, families and communities. For women, children, men and families to have access to safety and justice; to have opportunities to build equitable relationships and communities, our system must understand and address diverse perspectives, identity, knowledge, experiences and culture.

Prevention

At the core of our partnership's long term vision for women and children living in our region, is that they live without violence and fear of violence. Our work must focus on building communities and organisations that uphold gender equity and respectful relationships. For that reason, the Partnership endorses *Together for Equality and Respect* and works to support its aims.

Respect the individual rights and needs of children

The effects of any form of violence and trauma in the family context has profound implications for children and young people's development, safety and well-being. All children have the right to be safe, to be equally valued and heard and to have equal access to life's opportunities. The Partnership's work is underpinned by a commitment to respect and give form to these rights and opportunities.

As a partnership, we hold ourselves responsible for:

- Providing pathways for all women and their children to safety;
- Mechanisms to hold men accountable for their use of violence
- Respecting the individual rights and needs of children
- Working in ways that are culturally safe, respectful of diversity and effective for the individuals and families we work with

Strategic pillars

The four strategic pillars represent our effort to:

- build a holistic and seamless system for women, children, men and families experiencing and perpetrating family violence
- build equitable and inclusive communities and organisations that will lead to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and their children

Strengthening risk management

Despite a decade long trend of increased reporting of family violence in the EMR, many women live in our midst who continue to live with family violence, and do not disclose it to anyone. The reasons for this are many and varied – but for many fear of reprisals, of further violence, and systemic barriers to disclosure are amongst the factors preventing women from seeking support.

When women do seek support, our system must take responsibility for their safety and long term recovery.

For that reason, embedding and strengthening the consistency of our system’s responses to reports of family violence, shared language and understanding, a shared evidence base, and a shared and evidence based approach to identifying and managing risks facing women is a key strategic pillar of this Strategic Plan.

Within this imperative, the partnership will focus on two issues:

The first is deepening and broadening the **capacity of practitioners and organisations** across the region to identify when a woman and her children are experiencing family violence. This means that where ever a women discloses her experience of violence (such as to her GP, MCHN, Police, or housing service) – those services have the capacity to identify family violence, understand and act on the immediate actions needed to both minimise the risks associated with disclosure and build safety around her.

The second is to improve the way in which **information needed to manage risk is shared** effectively with relevant service provides and the justice sector. Information sharing assists in building a more comprehensive picture of risk which in turn informs actions to support a woman and her children’s path to safety and recovery, and men’s path to accountability. This is crucial in responding to women and children in imminent danger and those who are at risk.

Workforce and organisational development

Related to the focus on strengthening regional capacity to identify and manage risk more effectively and consistently across the region will be a focus on building deeper and wider competence across regional workforces to identify and manage risks facing both women and children. This includes:

- Further embed CRAF training across sectors in the region
- Improve understanding of when information can be shared to better manage women and their children’s safety
- Responding to women’s disclosure of family violence and responding in ways that do not compromise her safety or re-traumatise or re-victimise her
- Improve capacity for sectors in the region to work with perpetrators of family violence, in ways that both hold them to account and support effective risk management of his use/perpetration of violence.

At an organisational and partnership level, support a clear and strong authorising environment for information sharing to improve risk management in our region with a focus on both the risks of women and children experiencing violence, and of those who use it.

Key workforce and organisational development directions will include:

- Building capacity of regional service providers to work more effectively with children to support both their safety and recovery
- Expanding understanding of primary prevention to prevent violence against women and their children in our region, and
- Embedding gender equity capacity within member organisations to build respectful work places

Advocacy

Systemic cohesion is what underpins efforts and focus on building the capacity of the partnership to provide seamless services and justice responses to women and children experiencing family violence.

Drawing on the evidence and what we know works to realise these outcomes, we will work constructively and collaboratively with partners across the region to build shared understanding, resolve and commitment to realise our vision.

The partnership will promote gender equality as a necessary step to prevent violence against women and their children.

As well as a systems approach, the partnership will support women to advocate as individuals and work to improve women, children, families and communities agency to prevent and respond to their experiences of family violence, sexual assault and other forms of violence against women.

In 2013, the Committee developed an Advocacy Framework to guide advocacy priorities. Further work to develop routine engagement with community leaders will form part of the Partnership's ongoing efforts.

Data

As the work of the partnership encompasses multiple systems and sectors, there is no single or consistent data source that supports a current picture or measure of women and children's safety in our region.

While this is a challenge at state and national levels, the partnership will explore ways to create a data picture for our region that, alongside the work of other issue leaders in our region, focuses on:

- equipping the Eastern region to better identify and manage risks,

- informing integration efforts, and
- improving understanding of the diversity of women and children's experience of violence in our region to inform how the partnership can underpin efforts to provide paths to safety for all women, children, families and communities in our region.