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FAMILY VIOLENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 25 August 2017 at 10.30am in Civic Room 2, Melton Civic Centre

Present: Cr Sophie Ramsey, Mayor, Council
Cr Melissa De Santis, Councillor, Council
Cr Kathy Majdlik, Councillor, Council
Cr Lara Carli, Councillor, Council
Cr Ken Hardy, Councillor, Council
Kate Waters, Coordinator Social Planning and Wellbeing, Council
Christine Levy, Coordinator Family Services, Council
Liz Smith, Team Leader Health Promotion and Planning, Council
Sarah Grace, Health Promotion Officer, Council
Kellie Nagle, Policy Advisor Preventing Violence against Women, MAV
Sergeant Ken Anderson, Family Violence Liaison Officer, Victoria Police
Joan Eddy, Manager Counselling, Djerriwarrh Health Services
Helga Jennings, Area Manager, Department of Health and Human Services
Mary D'Elia, General Manager Community Program, MacKillop Family Services
Gehan Shehab, Manager Court Practice, Department of Justice and Regulation
Stephanie Dziunka, Advanced Case Manager, Department of Justice and Regulation

Chairperson: Kate Waters, Coordinator Social Planning and Wellbeing, Council

1. Welcome

K Waters welcomed everyone to the inaugural Family Violence Advisory Committee meeting. K Waters noted that she was the interim Chair in M Wilson's absence and until an ongoing Chair was appointed through agenda item 7.1. Introductions of all members took place.

2. Apologies

Cr Bob Turner, Deputy Mayor, Council
Cr Steven Abboushi, Council
Cr Goran Kesic, Council
Cr Michelle Mendes, Council
Inspector Kathryn Rudkins, Victoria Police
Patrizia Favorito, Director Family Violence Integrated Services, Women's Health West
Ben Zika, Director, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre
Matthew Wilson, Manager Community Planning, Council

3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil.

4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

Motion

This was the inaugural meeting therefore there were no previous minutes.



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5. Business Arising

Nil.

6. General Business

6.1 Establishment of the Family Violence Advisory Committee

K Waters explained the background of the Family Violence Advisory Committee, including Cr De Santis' Notice of Motion on 6 February 2017 which related to the establishment of a Family Violence Advisory Committee. A subsequent Council report was presented at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 3 April 2017 with a proposed model and draft Terms of Reference. It was at this meeting that all nine councillors nominated to be members of the Committee.

K Waters explained that as this was the first meeting it will be important for the Committee to build a shared understanding and take its time to develop and identify where its leadership role is best placed.

Cr De Santis noted the recent passing of Minister Fiona Richardson and asked if Council could please send a card and flowers and that the Committee observed 30 seconds of silence in recognition of Minister Richardson.

Action

L Smith to organise for flowers and a card to be sent in recognition of Minister Richardson.

6.2 The role of Local Government in the prevention of violence against women

K Nagle from the Municipal Association of Victoria was a guest speaker to talk to the Committee about what local government's role is in the prevention of violence against women. K Nagle spoke of how impressed she was with the level of senior representation on the committee.

The presentation covered family violence statistics, the role of local government and the MAV to address the issue, primary/secondary/tertiary levels of prevention, policy context, promising practice examples and opportunities. The key points from the presentation were:

- gender inequality sets the necessary social context for violence against women to occur
- a dedicated Gender Equity Officer is needed at all councils to progress this work (MAV's key recommendation to the Royal Commission into Family Violence)
- councils are best placed to invest in the primary prevention of violence against women and the promotion of gender equity
- local government can influence the social context that allows family violence to occur.

K Nagle provided a number of best practice examples that other councils have implemented and showed a powerful video that demonstrates how attitudes shape social norms and influence behaviour. The video can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/8E7RGjk69T4>. K Nagle's PowerPoint presentation will be circulated to committee members.

Cr Ramsey expressed an interest in exploring a dedicated Gender Equity Officer at Melton City Council. She also noted that the current Council budget allocated to preventing violence against women may not be enough to support the Committee. Cr Hardy thanked K Nagle for her presentation and agreed that prevention must be the focus of the Committee's work.



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Cr Ramsey and Cr Hardy left the meeting at 11.45am.

6.3 Melton City Council's work to prevent violence against women

L Smith spoke about what Melton City Council has been doing in response to family violence, including Council developing its first Preventing Violence against Women and their Children Strategy in 2013 and is now in the process of developing the next iteration of this to be more focused on primary prevention and gender equity. The new Strategy will be launched in early 2018. L Smith also made reference to the White Ribbon Action Team and White Ribbon Day activities, and awareness raising initiatives such as the Coffee Cup Campaign.

6.4 Western region prevention and response services

This agenda item will be carried over to the next meeting due the Women's Health West being an apology.

Action

L Smith to carry this agenda item over to the next meeting.

6.5 Melton Family Violence Network

C Levy explained the role of the Melton Family Violence Network. The network is supported by Council and is made up of local service providers. Its primary function is to enable direct service practitioners to have information about changes to legislation, service structures, and hear about what services are available to clients. The network has also auspiced prevention activities.

6.6 Work and direction of Family Violence Advisory Committee

K Waters led a discussion around the ongoing purpose and direction of the Committee. H Jennings suggested that the Committee could be inclusive of the LGBTIQ community and questioned what role the Committee might have in relation to males and specifically to perpetrators. Cr Majdlik raised the question of whether there are men who are perpetrators that might be looking for support to change their behaviour. H Jennings also suggested that an additional member from the education sector would be useful. M D'Elia highlighted that family violence also includes adolescent violence and elder abuse and not only intimate partner violence. J Eddy reiterated K Nagle's presentation by saying that focusing on gender equity is important as it is the approach that will produce the most change. K Anderson agreed that education and prevention is key especially with young people e.g. respectful relationships education in schools. The discussion was limited due to time constraints therefore it will be added to the next meeting's agenda. K Waters reinforced that this was only the first meeting and that the Committee needs to better understand where it is best placed to have maximum impact and avoid duplication.

Action

L Smith to add 'direction and purpose' discussion to next meeting agenda.

7. Other Business

7.1 Review of Terms of Reference

K Waters took the Committee through the draft Terms of Reference. Members agreed to review and make changes via email. Prior to Cr Ramsey leaving the meeting, she suggested the Chair should be the Mayor or the Mayor's delegate.



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Cr Carli suggested Cr De Santis could be the Chair as it was her Notice of Motion that led to the establishment of the Committee. It was agreed that the Councillors would make this decision.

Action

L Smith to send draft Terms of Reference to the Committee for feedback.

Councillors to decide who will be the Chair.

7.2 Review of membership

Additional members were suggested including Kirrip House, Migrant Resource Centre, seniors, Hope Street and the education sector. It was agreed that the number of members needs to be manageable and that some groups may be invited to attend as guest speakers. It was also discussed that certain members may represent a number of different groups but that it would be helpful to clarify which members can speak on behalf of which groups. This will also be useful when recruiting new members during the lifespan of the Committee. It was agreed that at this stage no new members would be invited until the Committee established its clear direction and purpose.

Action

L Smith to add roles/representation to the next meeting agenda.

7.3 Future meeting dates and times

The quorum was reviewed and agreed that it would be 50% of the membership plus one in addition to one Councillor and one Council Officer. It was also agreed that for the next 9-12 months the meetings would be bi-monthly and rotate between day (school hours) and evening to give Councillors, who work during the day the opportunity to attend.

Action

L Smith to set up meetings until June 2018.

8. Next Meeting

L Smith to schedule next meeting for mid-October or early November 2017.

9. Close of Business

The meeting closed at 12.40pm.