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PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 24 October 2017 at 6.00pm 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
Cr Michelle Mendes, Councillor, Council
Matthew Wilson, Manager Community Planning, Council
Christine Levy, Coordinator Family Services, Council
Liz Smith, Team Leader Health Promotion and Planning, Council
Sarah Grace, Health Promotion Officer, Council
Sergeant Stephen Phillips, Family Violence Liaison Officer, Victoria Police
Sergeant Ken Anderson, Family Violence Liaison Officer, Victoria Police
Mary D'Elia, General Manager Community Program, MacKillop Family Services
Marlene Dixon, Principal Lawyer, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre
Patrizia Favorito, Director Family Violence Integrated Services, Women's Health West

Chairperson: Matthew Wilson, Manager Community Planning, Council

1. Welcome

M Wilson welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land. M Wilson noted that he was the interim Chair until the Terms of Reference are finalised and an ongoing Chair be appointed. Introductions of all members took place.

2. Apologies

Cr Bob Turner, Deputy Mayor, Council
Cr Steven Abboushi, Council
Cr Goran Kesic, Council

3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil.

4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

Motion

August meeting minutes moved by Cr Majdlik and seconded by Cr Carli.

5. Business Arising

5.1 L Smith organised a donation to be sent in recognition of Minister Richardson.



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- 5.2 L Smith included 'Western Region prevention and response services', 'Direction and purpose of Advisory Committee' and 'Roles and representation of members' to this agenda.
- 5.3 L Smith sent the draft Terms of Reference to members for feedback.
- 5.4 Councillors are yet to finalise the decision of committee Chair.
- 5.5 L Smith sent calendar invitations for meetings until June 2018.

6. General Business

6.1 Recap of inaugural meeting

L Smith provided a recap of the inaugural meeting held on 25 August 2017. L Smith noted that the committee is very much still in the establishment phase and it is important that the committee takes the time to develop and identify where it is best placed to have the most impact. Kellie Nagle from the Municipal Association of Victoria was a guest presenter and highlighted that councils are best placed to invest in the primary prevention of violence against women and the promotion of gender equity. There was member agreement that the committee needed to focus on prevention and gender equity to produce the most change. L Smith explained that the Terms of Reference have been updated to reflect the discussion at the inaugural meeting.

Cr Ramsey asked why the Committee was called Preventing Family Violence Advisory Committee and not Preventing Violence against Women Advisory Committee. Cr De Santis explained that the term family violence is inclusive of all family members who may experience violence.

6.2 Purpose and direction of Committee

This discussion merged into agenda item 6.3.

6.3 Finalisation of Terms of Reference

M Wilson took the Committee through the draft Terms of Reference which had been updated to reflect the discussion at the inaugural meeting. There was a discussion about whether the title change to include prevention would overlook response and M Wilson explained that it won't preclude the Committee from doing response but its primary focus will be on preventing violence before it occurs. P Favorito wanted to ensure that response wouldn't be lost given the high levels of family violence in the City of Melton.

Members outlined which organisation and which community groups they were able to represent on the Committee. There were a number of requested changes to the Terms of Reference which include:

- The purpose to include the 'development of strategies'
- The purpose to include 'those affected by family violence'
- The responsibility to include 'the identification of priorities, development of strategies, make recommendations for advocacy to Council'
- The membership to be updated to include five new members: Migrant Resource Centre, Kirrip House, disability sector, Hope Street and a representative from the South Sudanese community.
- The quorum to be changed to 30%
- A regular report to be provided by Council officers



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- A requirement of members to regularly attend meetings.
(Please see attached draft Terms of Reference for more detail.)

The selection of Chair is yet to be finalised. Cr Ramsey explained that it is protocol for the Mayor to be Chair. Cr Carli recommended that Cr De Santis be selected as Chair given that the establishment of the Committee stemmed from her Notice of Motion.

L Smith will distribute the updated Terms of Reference for final feedback. If no feedback is provided, the Terms of Reference will be finalised as is.

Cr De Santis requested that Committee meeting minutes be made available to a broader network of people, beyond the membership. Minutes will be publicly available through Council Meeting documentation and C Levy said that an update would be provided at Melton Family Violence Network meetings.

Cr Hardy left the meeting at 7.20pm.

Actions

L Smith to send updated Terms of Reference to the Committee for feedback.
Councillors to decide who will be the Chair.

6.4 Roles and representation of members

This discussion merged into agenda item 6.3.

6.5 Western region prevention and response services

P Favorito explained that Women's Health West is the women's health and specialist family violence service for the western metropolitan region of Melbourne. The organisation has two arms 1) response and 2) health promotion/prevention. P Favorito talked about Preventing Violence Together which is the western region action plan to prevent violence against women and Council has been a signatory since 2010. She also informed the Committee of a new project called Keeping Safe Together which is for Melton and Wyndham families. The project trials a new whole-of-family therapeutic approach to try and keep families together – recognising that some women experiencing violence from their partner would like to stay with their partner if the violence stopped. Women's Health West are seeking a local office space to deliver this project in Melton. P Favorito will contact L Smith to further discuss office space. Women's Health West also run monthly information sessions about their service and Cr De Santis asked if these could be promoted on Council's website.

Actions

P Favorito to contact L Smith about office space in Melton for the Keeping Safe Together project.

P Favorito to send project referral details to L Smith to share with Committee.

P Favorito to send L Smith information session details to promote.

6.6 Council's Promoting Gender Equity to Prevent Violence against Women Plan

L Smith spoke about Council's new Promoting Gender Equity to Prevent Violence against Women Plan which will follow on from the Preventing Violence against Women and their Children Strategy which expired in 2016. The new Plan is currently being developed and L Smith said that a draft would be circulated to the Committee for feedback.



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6.7 Update on 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence campaign and White Ribbon Day

S Grace provided an update on the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence Campaign which runs from 25 November to 10 December. S Grace informed the Committee that it is an international campaign that encourages women and men to participate in raising awareness of violence against women whereas White Ribbon Day is a male-led campaign. Council is organising a number of events in recognition of the campaign:

- screening of Justice League at Reading Cinemas on 22 November to prompt a gender analysis of a mainstream film
- gender equity through the arts event on 9 December
- partner in 16 Days Activist Challenge led by Women's Health West.

This year a male-led working group are organising a White Ribbon Day event for Council staff.

M Dixon spoke briefly about Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre's plans to recognise White Ribbon Day. The organisation would like to have a stakeholder and community event to promote their services and discuss family violence and the law.

Action

S Grace to share 16 Days of Activism event promotional material with Committee.

6.8 Melton Family Violence Network

C Levy explained that the Melton Family Violence Network meet monthly and are currently reviewing its focus as a network. C Levy shared a Bapcare article 'Family violence in kinship care: it's been an absolute nightmare' and encouraged members to read it.

7. Other Business

7.1 Member reports

Cr Ramsey congratulated Cr De Santis on establishing the Committee. Cr De Santis thanked everyone for their support in establishing the Committee.

Sergeant Anderson outlined his role as Family Violence Liaison Officer which focuses on compliance, code of practice and risk management.

M D'Elia, through her participation on the Western Integrated Family Violence Committee, promoted an opportunity for Council staff to attend Identifying Family Violence training. L Smith will contact the Regional Integration Coordinator (RIC) for further details.

P Favorito shared that Women's Health West have been contacted by Family Safety Victoria to be a trial site for central information sharing.

Cr Carli suggested that the new Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence replacing Minister Richardson could be invited to a future meeting.



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M Wilson asked members if they had any information regarding the \$48 million announced for housing and Rita from SASHS was recommended to speak to.

Action

L Smith to contact Maureen Smith (RIC) about training opportunities.

L Smith to invite Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence to a future meeting.

8. Next Meeting

Friday 8 December 10.30am to 12.30pm at Melton Civic Centre.

9. Close of Business

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.