



## MINUTES

### PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 12 October 2018 at 10.30am in Civic Room 1, Melton Civic Centre

**Present:** Cr Bob Turner, Mayor, Melton City Council  
Cr Ken Hardy, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Cr Melissa De Santis, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Cr Lara Carli, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Matthew Wilson, Manager Community Planning, Melton City Council  
Christine Levy, Coordinator Family Services, Melton City Council  
Liz Smith, Acting Coordinator Social Planning and Wellbeing, Melton City Council  
Shelley Tait, Health Promotion Officer, Melton City Council  
Rachel Phillips, Settlement Social Worker, MiCare  
Sergeant Natalie McFarlane, Victoria Police  
Patrizia Favorito, Women's Health West  
Mary D'Elia, General Manager Community Programs, MacKillop Family Services  
Jamie Massouris, Hope Street Youth and Family Services  
Joan Eddy, Manager Counselling, Djerriwarrh Health Services

Massouris

**Chairperson:** Cr Bob Turner, Mayor, Melton City Council

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#### 1. Welcome

Cr Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### 2. Apologies

Cr Michelle Mendes, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Cr Steven Abboushi, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Cr Goran Kesic, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Cr Sophie Ramsey, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Cr Kathy Majdlik, Councillor, Melton City Council  
Peter Webster, Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation  
Helga Jennings, Department of Health and Human Services  
Stephanie Dziunka, Department of Justice and Regulation  
Gehan Shehab, Department of Justice and Regulation  
Inspector Kathy Rudkins, Victoria Police  
Sergeant Ken Anderson, Family Violence Liaison Officer, Victoria Police  
Glen Ludbrook, Lawyer, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre  
Alice Harris, Assistant Principal, Melton Specialist School

#### 3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil.

#### 4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

October meeting minutes noted.



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### 5. Business Arising

- 5.1 S Tait circulated the Working with Fathers Forum Invitation with the Committee in July.
- 5.2 S Tait to liaise with P Webster around opportunities to link Council's Engaging Dads Project with the Kirrip Men's Shed Program and share learnings.
- 5.3 S Tait included 'meeting frequency' on the October Committee meeting agenda.
- 5.4 No committee members contacted S Tait expressing their interest to work together to recognise the 16 Days of Activism for 2018.
- 5.5 P Webster sent the Young Love program flyer with S Tait who shared it with the Committee.
- 5.6 S Tait included 'action planning workshop' on the October Committee agenda.
- 5.7 L Smith to organise for an invitation to be sent to Respect Victoria to attend a Committee meeting in 2019

#### Action

S Tait to liaise with P Webster around opportunities to link Council's Engaging Dads project with the Kirrip Men's Shed program and share learnings

#### Action

L Smith to organise for an invitation to be sent to Respect Victoria to attend a Committee meeting in 2019

### 6. General Business

#### 6.1 Free From Violence grant application

L Smith shared with the Committee that Council had been successful in its application to Free From Violence grants and received \$33,252 to implement the Baby Makes 3 program in the City of Melton. The program will be delivered from February 2019, in partnership with Carrington Health and will engage up to 288 new parents in a three week discussion based program. The program aims to strengthen positive and respectful relationships between new parents, raising awareness of the power imbalances within a relationship that can occur during pregnancy and/or after a baby is born. The program is held in the evening to accommodate working parents to attend, and each session is facilitated by a man and a woman.

10.45am P Favorito arrived at the meeting.

#### Action

S Tait to share the Baby Makes 3 facilitator position advertisement with the Committee when it is available.



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### 6.2 Engaging Dads project

S Tait provided an update to the committee on the Engaging Dads project. The first milestone for the project was the delivery of a four week program at the Melton Library and Learning Hub. Twisted Science ran science workshops for kids and their dads/male caregivers over four Tuesday evenings throughout October. The program booked out quickly and evaluation from the first week showed that fathers enjoyed themselves, felt extremely welcome, and were interested to participate in similar events held in the evenings in the future. For some fathers it had been their first time to the library, or a library event. The project seeks to deliver programs and activities across the municipality in 2019 to engage more fathers/male caregivers and their children.

### 6.3 Support and Safety Hub advocacy

M Wilson informed the Committee that a letter had been sent to Minister Natalie Hutchins and Special Minister of State Gavin Jennings about viable sites for a future Support and Safety Hub for the government to consider.

10.55am Cr Carli arrived at the meeting.

### 6.4 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence

Council's Health Promotion Team is partnering with a number of internal departments to deliver and promote the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence campaign activities for 2019. These include:

- The Caroline Springs Library will host an author talk by Susannah McFarlane, 'Feisty Fairytales' on Saturday 24 November 1-2.30pm.
- The Recreation Team has partnered with Djerriwarrh Health Services and Leisure Networks to hold a Women In Sport Breakfast on Tuesday 11 December 7.30-9am at Tabcorp Park.
- A social media campaign will be developed in partnership with Council's Communications Team, posting material on the Healthy City of Melton Facebook page throughout the campaign relating the content to the Preventing Violence Together regional campaign led by Women's Health West.

S Tait is working with Women's Health West to support the update of the Preventing Violence Together regional online 16 Days of Activism campaign. This campaign provides an online platform for communities across the west and beyond, to participate in 16 days of action to deepen their understanding of the prevention of violence against women.

Women's Health West are currently awaiting to hear if they have been successful with a Victoria Against Violence grant application to deliver a roving documentary pod to key 16 Days of Activism events across the western region. If successful, S Tait will support the implementation of this project across the west.

Cr Carli asked whether Council will display white ribbons during the 16 days campaign at Caroline Springs or Melton facilities. L Smith confirmed that Council has a commitment to promoting and engaging with the community in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender



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Based violence instead of White Ribbon Day, and that this approach is in line with Victoria Against Violence, Preventing Violence Together 2030, and state and local government contexts.

Cr Carli raised the suggestion of promoting the 16 Days of Activism on the flags that are on display along High Street in Melton and along Caroline Springs Boulevard in Caroline Springs. L Smith explained that the flags are booked out for all of 2019. M Wilson noted that there is currently no budget for the street flags.

Cr Carli asked if it would be possible to organise a display of 16 Days promotional material through large posters, flags and online during 25 November to 10 December.

J Eddy raised whether the Committee could source philanthropic funding to support these kind of initiatives. L Smith suggested that the Committee could consider these kind of approaches for possible inclusion in the Equality and Respect 2030 Strategy during the action planning component of the meeting.

### Action

S Tait to share the Women In Sport Breakfast flyer with the Committee.

### Action

S Tait to explore the options for displaying flags and/or other promotional material in recognition of the 16 Days of Activism campaign in 2018.

## 6.5 Gender Equality Bill

Representatives from Council's Health Promotion Team, Legal and Governance, and People and Culture teams were represented at the Gender Equality Bill Stakeholder Consultation Forum on Wednesday 12 September 2018. Components of the draft Bill were workshopped in small groups and participants were able to provide feedback as to what they felt would work well and what would present a challenge, within their own organisation, considering organisational size, structure, readiness and other items. The Bill, if passed in mid 2019, would require all government departments and organisations of 100 or more fulltime staff, to plan, promote, and report on gender equality. Further timelines proposed through the Gender Equality Bill are:

- Mid 2020 - all government departments to implement a Gender Equality Action Plan
- Mid 2021 – all organisations of 100 or more fulltime staff (i.e. local governments) to implement a Gender Equality Action Plan
- Mid 2022 – Gender Equality Bill procurement guidelines to take effect.

To further inform the consultation process, a Citizens Jury was brought together over two days to dissect current international research, data and evidence around the implementation and outcomes of the use of gender quotas in the workplace. The jury presented their final report to Minister Natalie Hutchins and recommended gender



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representation of 40:40:20, being 40 per cent women, 40 per cent men and 20 per cent flexible.

### Action

S Tait to share the Citizens Jury Report of recommendations with the Committee.

### 6.6 Respect Victoria

On Thursday 4 October, Minister Natalie Hutchins announced that Respect Victoria had been established as an independent Statutory Authority, since its opening on 1 August 2018. Respect Victoria will work across regional and rural Victoria, within community settings to lead research and evaluation and community engagement around the prevention of family violence for all Victorians.

Respect Victoria has recently delivered a community campaign known as *Respect Women: Call It Out*, featuring ads on commercial television that prompt men to call out their peers who disrespect women.

### 6.7 Direction of the Committee for 2018-19

L Smith shared the original Terms of Reference with the Committee to inform the discussion about the future direction of the Committee now that it is fully established. L Smith acknowledged that this discussion was related to items 6.8 and 6.9 on the agenda.

C Levy mentioned that the benefit of coming together is the opportunity for the Committee to raise its collective voice and provide feedback and submissions to State Government and other policy makers, on issues of gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. P Favorito and S Tait shared their concerns about the development of joint submissions given the bi-monthly meeting schedule.

J Eddy and M D'Elia both agreed that continuing on a bi-monthly meeting schedule would be useful to contribute to the local dialogue around the primary prevention of violence against women, and sustain a dialogue directly with Council on a consistent basis.

11.20am Cr Hardy left the meeting.

### 6.8 Committee meeting frequency for 2018-19

The Committee decided to continue to meet bimonthly, during business hours and on Friday mornings.

### Action

S Tait to set meeting dates for 2018-19.



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### 6.9 Equality and Respect 2030 Strategy action planning

L Smith gave a short presentation on the Equality and Respect 2030 Strategy, outlining the focus, goals and objectives, and the process leading up to Council's internal action planning workshop on Tuesday 4 December 2018. L Smith shared that she and S Tait were currently delivering an Equality and Respect 2030 roadshow to all internal Council departments, introducing the Strategy and encouraging departments to think about how they could implement actions within their own work.

L Smith asked the Committee, in relation to the Terms of Reference, what role the Committee could play in contributing to the Strategy. P Favorito asked whether the Committee could receive regular updates about the implementation of the Strategy. L Smith noted that Equality and Respect 2030 would become a standing agenda item for meetings going forward.

P Favorito suggested that the Committee's role could be to advocate to State government, and M Wilson agreed. L Smith added that advocating or campaigning as a collective group, the Committee would have good reach and strength in its approach. Cr De Santis seconded L Smith's comment.

C Levy asked whether the Committee could build relationships and engage with local businesses on the issue of preventing violence against women. M D'Elia supported this suggestion.

M D'Elia suggested the Committee could host a business breakfast to engage the local business community on this issue. Cr De Santis added whether the back of Council rates notices could be used to promote messages of prevention. P Favorito suggested that this conversation could feed into a 16 Days campaign for 2019.

12pm R Phillips left the meeting.

L Smith clarified a summary of actions for inclusion within the Equality and Respect 2030 Action Plan with the Committee. The actions are:

- Advocacy to state and federal government
- Awareness raising.

#### Action

S Tait to include Equality and Respect 2030 as a standing agenda item going forward.

#### Action

S Tait to include 16 Days of Activism as a standing agenda item going forward.

### 7. Other Business



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### 7.1 Member reports

#### Hope Street Youth and Family Services

Hope Street assists clients to access stable housing options. J Massouris shared that Hope Street had received 91 referrals within the City of Melton within the past six months. J Massouris shared that 16-25 years old are most at risk of experiencing homelessness due to escaping family violence in the home. J Massouris raised the need for a strengthened awareness among the Committee for the issue of homelessness in the City of Melton, especially that experienced by young people.

#### Women's Health West

P Favorito mentioned that work is taking place across the sector in working with LGBTIQ victim/survivors and perpetrators of family violence. P Favorito added that a number of organisations have undertaken the Rainbow Tick Accreditation Program and Women's Health West have received funding to undertake this program. Women's Health West have recently been funded to provide a face-to-face after hours service, in addition to the previous after hours phone service. Women's Health West have also received funding to support children in refuges, and can share that a new refuge will open in Werribee, auspiced by Safe Futures. P Favorito asked whether Council required advocacy support to advocate for a crisis refuge in Melton and M Wilson confirmed that Council is currently talking to the State Government about this need.

12.15pm Cr De Santis and J Massouris left the meeting.

#### Victoria Police

N McFarlane shared the recent report for incidents of family violence within the City of Melton for September 2018 (below). M McFarlane shared that a large part of their work in the City of Melton is responding to family violence incidents. N McFarlane shared that the majority of victim/survivors were women and representative of all age groups, though most were over the age of 18 years. N McFarlane shared that alcohol, drug use and issues of mental health were present within most incidences.

#### MacKillop Family Services

M D'Elia shared that MacKillop Family Services had received 82 L17s in September 2018.

#### Melton City Council Family Services

C Levy shared that various Council departments had been trained in the new information sharing laws, to improve referral, case management and safety outcomes, in particular for victim/survivors of family violence. Council departments included in the information sharing pathways include Family and Children's Services, Maternal and Child Health and Housing Services.



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**8. Next Meeting**

Friday 14 December 10.30am – 12.30pm.

Civic Room 1, Melton City Council.

**9. Close of Business**

The meeting closed at 12.30pm.