



# Preventing Violence Against Women And Their Children In Our City Policy

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<b>Endorsement</b>	Executive , 31 October 2013 Policy Review Panel, 2 December 2013
<b>Authorisation</b>	Council, 17 December 2013
<b>Expiry date:</b>	17 December, 2016
<b>Responsible officer:</b>	Manager, Community Planning
<b>Policy owner</b>	Community Health and Wellbeing Planner

## 1. Purpose

Melton City Council is a committed community leader in the prevention of family violence. Council recognises that violence against anyone, in any form, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Council acknowledges that the affects of family violence are predominantly felt by women and children, and whilst violence can occur in a range of settings, it most commonly occurs in the home, directed against women by men known to them and is often witnessed by children.

As an organisation, Council has a powerful role in influencing behaviours and attitudes, and can positively contribute to creating a violence-free community by modelling non-violent, equitable and respectful gender relations.

Council is strongly committed to this role and has developed the Preventing Violence Against Women and their Children Policy to address the impacts of, and raise awareness about, family violence prevention.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies across our community with Council and its officers when working in partnership with our community to implement preventative strategies to Preventing Violence Against Women and their Children through:

- Strong Partnerships;
- Council services creating supportive environments;
- Council as a violence prevention leader; and
- An informed and vocal community.

## 3. Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
<b>Family Violence</b>	The Family Violence Protection Act 2008 defines family violence as: (a) behaviour by a person towards a family member of that person if that behaviour – (i) is physically or sexually abusive; or (ii) is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or

	<p>(iii) is economically abusive; or</p> <p>(iv) is threatening; or</p> <p>(v) is coercive; or</p> <p>(vi) in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person; or</p> <p>(b) behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to in paragraph (a).</p>
<b>Violence Against Women (and their children)</b>	Violence Against Women is understood to occur on a continuum of economic, psychological and emotional abuse through to physical and sexual violence. It refers to 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life' (UN 1993).

#### 4. Policy

To prevent violence against women and their children, Council will:

1. Work in partnership with the community and key service providers to create a community that promotes gender equity, the right to a safe childhood and home, strong families and respectful relationships.
2. Provide leadership by raising community awareness about the causes and impacts of family violence, and particularly the gendered nature of family violence, most often directed at women and their children.
3. Foster respectful attitudes and gender relations in the workplace, and address family violence as a workplace issue through the Family Violence Staff Workplace Policy 2013.

#### 5. Responsibility / Accountability

5.1	<b>Councillors</b> Through engagement and promotion, support the implementation of this policy to influence community positive behaviours and attitudes.
5.2	<b>Employees</b> All employees of Council are responsible for operating in accordance with this policy, and for providing feedback to the policy owner. Staff are encouraged to take a stand against domestic violence.
5.3	<b>Manager, Community Planning</b> Responsible for administering, monitoring and evaluating this policy.

#### 6. References and links to legislation and other documents

- Melton City Council Family Violence Policy 2013
- Victorian Family Violence Protection Act 2008
- Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children 2012-2015
- Preventing Violence Together: Western Region Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women

- VicHealth Preventing violence before it occurs: Framework 2009