

**SWAN HILL DISTRICT
GENDER EQUITY NETWORK**

Promoting Gender Equity in the Swan Hill District

GUIDING DOCUMENT



Promoting Gender Equity in the Swan Hill District

DEVELOPED BY THE SWAN HILL DISTRICT GENDER EQUITY NETWORK

December 2019

We would like to acknowledge the community members involved in the Network and thank them for their contributions in promoting gender equity in the Swan Hill District.



The current Swan Hill District Gender Equity Network formed from a working group established under the Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership Swan Hill Health and Wellbeing Partnership to focus specifically on gender equity and the prevention of family violence.

This is an open network currently facilitated by Southern Mallee PCP and chaired by Swan Hill District Health, with members representing a variety of sectors, including but not limited to; Health and Welfare, Education, Community, and Local Government.

There are a number of ways you can be involved in the Network, including attending meetings, receiving meeting information, planning specific initiatives, attending community events or starting conversations with your family and friends.

Contact

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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Elders past, present, and emerging.

Introduction

It is our pleasure to introduce **Promoting Gender Equity in the Swan Hill District**. Developed by the Swan Hill District Gender Equity Network (the Network), this document provides guidance to move us forward towards a more gender-equitable community.

Recently established, the Network has a long way to go, and acknowledges that we are still learning. We also acknowledge that changes in attitudes and behaviours require a long term approach.

We are all on this journey together. The issue of gender equity is everybody's business and everybody's responsibility. We need to work as a whole community to create a more equitable Swan Hill District.

Equity needs to be the focus of our work in this space. More information on the difference between equity and equality can be found in this document, but essentially equity means a focus on fairness rather than sameness. It means some of us who may possess unfair privileges and power may need to recognise that to achieve a fair and just society, some of that privilege and power may need to be redistributed. There is no shying away from this.

We know however, that a more gender-equitable community benefits us all. Gender equity has economic as well as social benefits. The Victorian Government acknowledges that Australia's GDP would increase by 11% if the gender employment gap was closed. The Australian economy would gain \$8 billion if women transitioned from tertiary education into the workforce at the same rate as men. Family violence also costs our society, not only with one woman a week killed by her current or former partner, but with family violence taking up 40% of police work and costing the Victorian economy over \$3 billion a year.

The Swan Hill local government area has some of the highest rates of family violence incidents in the state. This is a statistic we want to change. We hope you read this document and engage with this important work.

Together we can make real change.

Swan Hill District Gender Equity Network



Network members at the 2019 16 Days of Activism Event

“...everybody's business and everybody's responsibility.”

The why

Family violence is a serious and systemic issue in Australian society, with currently one woman a week killed by her current or former partner. Swan Hill Rural City has some of the highest rates of family violence incidents in the state. The time to act is now.

We know that gender inequality is a key driver of family violence, particularly violence experienced by women. The Swan Hill District Gender Equity Network is committed to preventing violence before it occurs, and creating a community where all people are free from the constraints of gender inequality and live healthy, happy, and productive lives.

Gender inequality is a root cause of violence against women. **Our Watch** outlines the four main drivers of violence against women as:

- condoning violence against women
- men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence
- rigid gender roles and stereotypes
- male relationships that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women

“...gender inequality is the core of the problem and it is the heart of the solution - **Our Watch**”



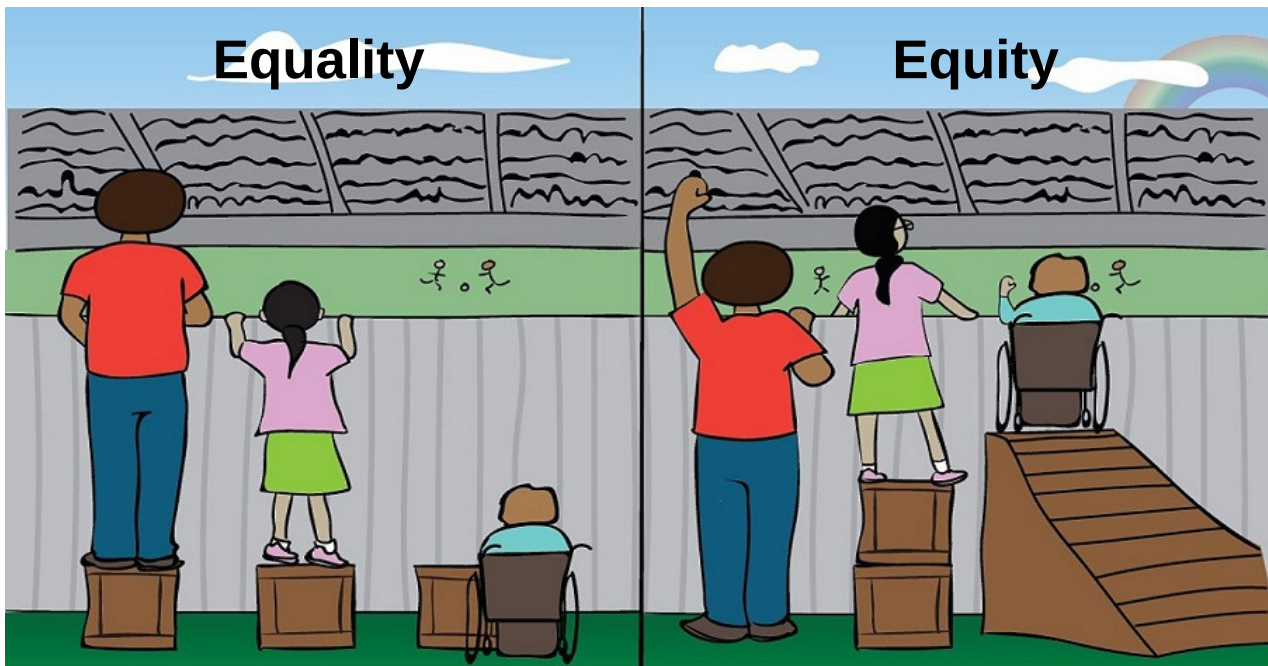
Language

Gender equity

Gender equity recognises that we don't all start on a level playing field. Within all communities access to power and resources differs according to many factors, of which gender is just one.

Equity is about fairness, recognising these differences and working to correct them. Gender equity can be seen as the process, with gender equality as the outcome. To get to a place where all genders have equal access to power and resources, we must act to correct the imbalances that exist, which may require treating people differently, taking into account their starting point.

Equality vs equity



Treating everyone the same

Giving everyone what they need to achieve the same outcome

Family violence

Throughout the Guiding Document and our work, we will refer to 'family violence' which we acknowledge is an overarching term that can include a number of different types of violence.

All violence is unacceptable and we need to work towards the elimination of all forms of violence in our community. However, given the varying drivers of different types of violence, different approaches will be required. This document, and the work of the Network, relates to violence with gendered drivers (that is those that relate to gender). Definitions of specific terms such as family violence and violence against women are provided at the back of this document. Many of these terms overlap.



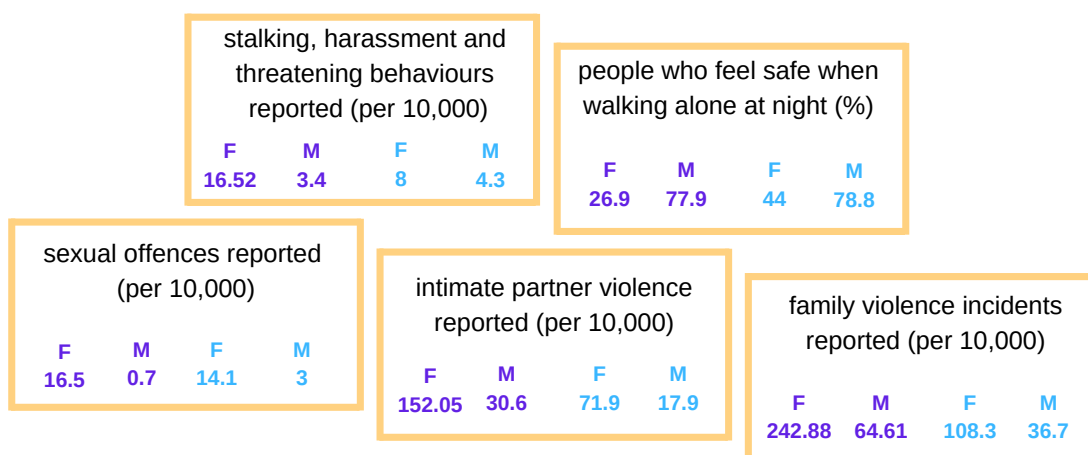
Types of violence

physical	stalking	spiritual	intimidation
kicking, pushing, punching, slapping, hitting	following, tracking, checking emails/social media	not allowing someone to practice their beliefs	threats, standing over, smashing things
emotional	social	sexual	financial
undermining someone's sense of self, name calling, put downs, humiliating and degrading comments	isolation, not allowing someone to see friends or family	rape, pornography, forced pregnancy/abortion	not allowing someone to work, taking control of money

Statistics

Safety

Safe communities can foster community participation and connectedness, encourage physical activity and improve the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors. The following information shows how safety can be experienced differently by females and males within the **Swan Hill Rural City**, and how they compare with **Victoria**.



Gender equality

It is recognised that all genders have different experiences throughout their lives. The following information shows how particular aspects of gender equality impact differently on females and males within the **Swan Hill Rural City**, and how they compare with **Victoria**.

	Swan Hill		Victoria	
	female	male	female	male
completed year 12 or equivalent (%)	29	22.8	40.4	35.2
employed - part time (%)	46.3	16.2	47.2	20
employed - full time (%)	41.8	72.1	40.8	69
unemployed (%)	4.8	5.3	5.7	5.9
earning below minimum wage (%)	43.9	31.3	45.7	32.5
chief executives, general managers and legislators (per 10,000)	4.4	16.5	11.8	32.5
low support for gender equality in relationships (%)	39.2	37.7	25.6	41.5

Health and wellbeing

Other aspects of health and wellbeing can also differ by gender. The following information shows a series of measures of health and wellbeing for females and males within the **Swan Hill Rural City**, and how they compare with **Victoria**.

Looking at these topics with a gendered lens can help us to explore where gender might play a role in influencing some of our behaviour. For example, is there something about identifying as male that makes you more likely to experience harm from alcohol? Why do people who identify as female eat more vegetables daily?

daily fruit consumption (%)

F	M	F	M
45.7	40.8	51.9	41.5

daily vegetable consumption (%)

F	M	F	M
12.9	3	11.6	2.5

chlamydia cases (per 10,000)

F	M	F	M
25.26	17.49	20.8	18.1

alcohol related harm (%)

F	M	F	M
43.4	79.7	52.4	72.2

sufficient physical activity (%)

F	M	F	M
53.7	35.4	39.8	43

community connectedness (0 - 100)

F	M	F	M
81	79.7	76.2	74.2

pre-obese and obese (%)

F	M	F	M
46.8	74.1	44	60.1

anxiety and depression diagnosed (%)

F	M	F	M
23.7	11.7	25.2	15.9

current smoker (%)

F	M	F	M
8.5	21.7	13	16.2

Our network

“*Vision: To create a respectful and equal Swan Hill District, free from family violence*”

Purpose

- To support collaboration between organisations, communities and individuals interested in the promotion of gender equality and prevention of family violence
- To build awareness, knowledge and skills and provide practical actions to increase understanding about the links between gender inequality and family violence
- To share information, data and research relating to gender equality and family violence and increase capacity of organisations and community members to work in this space and advocate for change



Principles for action

Whole of community approach

We will aim to engage people of all genders, including boys and men, in our prevention work. We recognise that gender inequality negatively impacts men too and we need to work with the whole community to achieve meaningful change.



Working across the lifespan

Behaviours and norms which contribute to an environment of gender inequality start from the beginning and therefore so must we.



Recognising intersectionality

The power and privilege related to gender is just one imbalance which exists in our society. In our work we aim to recognise the many factors which impact how a person moves through life and the other inequalities they may face due to things like their cultural and linguistic background, Aboriginality and ability.

“Gender inequality does not impact on all people in the same way - **Safe and Strong**”

Grounded in evidence

The Network condemns all forms of violence and recognises victims of all genders. We also recognise that the evidence shows clearly gendered patterns of violence, including that violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. This evidence and knowledge base on the causes of violence and how to prevent it, informs our work.

95% of victims of violence (whether male or female) experience violence from a male perpetrator

- (Australian Bureau of Statistics data cited in *Change the Story*)

Partnerships

We will work in genuine partnership to achieve our goals, working together to make the most of our shared knowledge, skills and resources. We will encourage and model openness, mutual benefit, courage, equity and diversity.

Our priority together

Gender equity is a relatively new concept which has gained much needed attention in recent times.

Our priority as a Network at the start of our journey, is to explore how we promote gender equity in the Swan Hill District, which will require strong engagement with the community and a focus on **capacity building**.

Action framework

The Network will focus on a whole of community approach, which requires action in settings such as:

COMMUNITY | COMMUNITY GROUPS | WORKPLACES | FAMILIES | HOUSEHOLDS
SPORTS AND RECREATION | ARTS AND CULTURE | HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
AGED CARE | EARLY LEARNING CENTRES | EDUCATION
EMERGENCY SERVICES | MEDIA

We commit to:

Have the conversation

Listen

Acknowledge what we don't know

Raise awareness

Build capacity

Be advocates for change

Take time

Respond to community

“**Community capacity building** is the process of increasing people's knowledge and abilities to empower them to be able to achieve the outcomes they want for themselves - **OurWatch**”

Creating change together

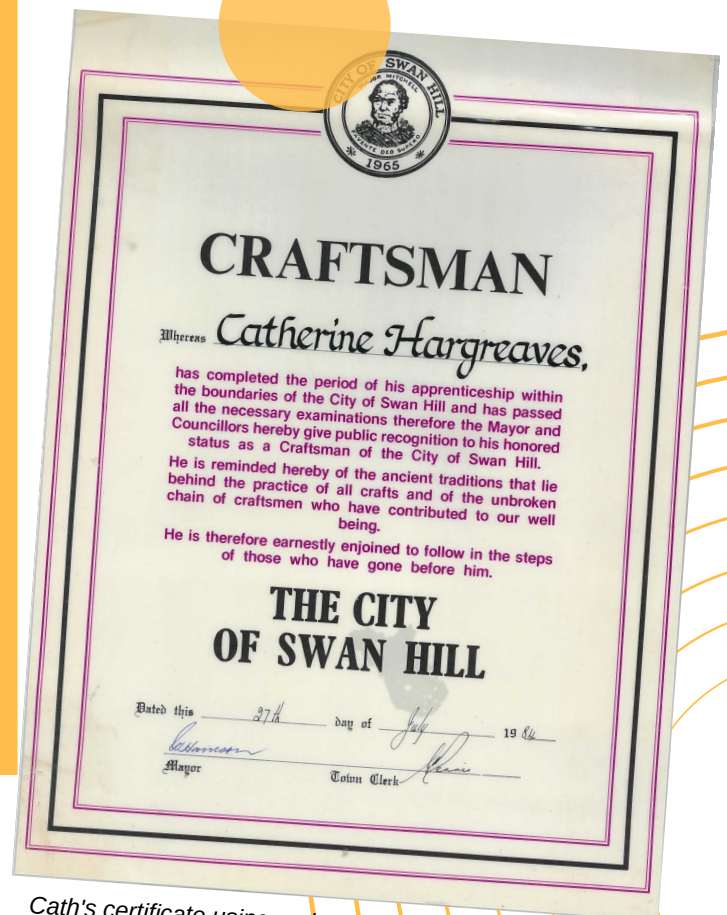
Stories of change

As a community we have come a long way in terms of gender stereotypes and rigid gender roles. While we must keep our eye on the future where people of all genders are free from stereotypes and violence, looking at where we have come from not only shows us that change can happen, but inspires us to continue the work of those that have come before us.

CATH'S STORY

“ I started an apprenticeship in 1978. I was the first female apprentice ever put on, so there were a lot of hurdles - Cath ”

- Not allowed to wear pants, only dresses or skirts to the knees
- I was told I was fortunate to get the job, given I wouldn't last long as I would get married and have babies - then it was expected you leave work, no maternity leave, no flexible hours
- Trade school had accommodation for males only, therefore I had to stay in a hostel full of unsavoury characters by myself at 15 years of age in Melbourne
- I was put on with another apprentice at the same time, who was male. Morning and afternoon cups of tea and coffee were made by the front office staff (all females) and taken to each staff member at 10am and 3pm respectively. I was on that roster to assist, yet my male apprentice counterpart was not. When I questioned why, I was told that it isn't the role of a male to make tea and coffee
- On completing my apprenticeship in 1984 I moved to Canberra. At each interview I was asked when I was going to have babies as that would affect the interview outcome



Cath's certificate using male pronouns throughout

What can we do?

Watch OurWatch's *Let's change the story* video

Practice calling out gender inequality when you see or hear it

Understand the link between gender equity and the prevention of family violence

Look at the resources and support information at the back of this document

Identify one change or action that you can take to improve gender equity in your community

Check out OurWatch's Know Your A-Z poster

Learn about the common misunderstandings around family violence

Explore the local statistics around family violence prevalence and gender equity

Begin conversations around gender equity with your family, friends, colleagues and community

Share this Guiding Document with someone

Ask about what's happening locally and how you can be more involved

What's happening now

A number of initiatives relating to gender equity are happening across the Swan Hill District:

- 16 Days of Activism
- Respectful Relationships
- Organisational Gender Equity Audits/Workplace Equality and Respect
- Southern Mallee PCP Gender Equity Forum



Swan Hill Rural City Council - 2019 saw the first female mayor and a majority female councillors elected to represent our community.



Image: Swan Hill Rural City Council

The community came together to remember Sam Fraser (who grew up in Swan Hill) by tying white ribbons around trees and letterboxes.

Image: Swan Hill Guardian Facebook



Victoria Police (pictured) along with Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Mallee Domestic Violence Service and the Department of Justice and Community Safety have celebrated the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence annually with a community BBQ.

Definitions

Gender

The socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity. Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.

(Source: *Change the Story*)

Gender equity

Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.

(Source: *Safe and Strong*)

Gender equality

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and trans and gender-diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

(Source: *Safe and Strong*)

Violence against women

Any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or private life.

(Source: *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*)

Primary prevention

A long-term agenda that aims to prevent violence from ever happening in the first place. Primary prevention works by identifying the deep underlying causes of violence - the social norms, structures and practices that influence individual attitudes and behaviours - and acting across the whole population to change these, not just the behaviour of perpetrators.

(Source: *Free from Violence*)

Domestic violence

Acts of violence that occur in domestic settings between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse.

(Source: *Change the Story*)

Family violence

Is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members. This includes, for example, elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents. Family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful.

(Source: *Change the Story*)

Gender based violence

An umbrella concept that describes any form of violence used to establish, enforce or perpetuate gender inequalities and keep in place unequal gender power relations.

(Source: *Partners in Prevention*)

Support and resources

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000

Local support services

The Orange Door - Mallee Access Point Swan Hill

Ph: 1800 290 943

Address: 14-18 McCallum Street, Swan Hill, Vic 3585

Services offered:

- Women, children and young people's family violence services
- Child and family services
- Aboriginal services
- Appointments for Men's Family Violence Services can be arranged by phoning 1800 290 943

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Mallee Domestic Violence Service

Ph: 03 5033 1899
Address: 14-18 McCallum Street, Swan Hill, Vic 3585

Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS)

Ph: 03 5032 8600
Address: 70 Nyah Road, Swan Hill, Vic 3585

headspace Swan Hill

Ph: 03 4010 7100
Address: 11 Pritchard Street, Swan Hill, Vic 3585

Statewide/national support services

1800 respect

Ph: 1800 737 732

Website: 1800respect.org.au

Men's Referral Service

Ph: 1300 766 491

Website: ntv.org.au

Lifeline

Ph: 13 11 14

Website: lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue

Ph: 1300 22 4636

Website: beyondblue.org.au

Resources

Southern Mallee PCP Family Violence Prevention Matrix

This Matrix provides an outline of key plans, evidence, frameworks and initiatives relating to the prevention of family violence in Victoria.

Access:

smppc.com.au/ResourcesLinks/Preventingfamilyviolence

OurWATCH

OurWATCH is a nationwide organisation which aims to drive change in culture, behaviours and power imbalances that lead to violence against women and their children.

Access: ourwatch.org.au

Change the story framework

This framework provides evidence and conceptual approaches, for a shared understanding and action for preventing violence against women and their children in Australia.

Access: ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework

Let's change the story: Violence against women in Australia - Video

Access: [youtube.com/watch?v=fLUVWZvVZXw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fLUVWZvVZXw)

Respect Victoria

Respect Victoria is an organisation dedicated to the primary prevention of all forms of family violence and violence against women - stopping violence before it starts.

Access: respectvictoria.vic.gov.au

Gender Equity Victoria - GEN VIC

GEN VIC is the peak body for gender equity, women's health and the prevention of violence against women in Victoria.

Access: genvic.org.au



References

Victorian Women's Health Atlas - victorianwomenshealthatlas.net.au (Swan Hill Fact Sheets: Sexual and Reproductive Health, Violence Against Women, Mental Health, Avoidable Mortality, Gender Equality)

OurWATCH - ourwatch.org.au (Community based prevention of violence against women and their children: A toolkit for practitioners)

Free From Violence - www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence

Change the story framework - ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework

Safe and strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy - www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality

Partners in Prevention - partnersinprevention.org.au

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women -

www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ViolenceAgainstWomen.aspx

Greater Bendigo Coalition for Gender Equity Leadership Statement - bendigo.vic.gov.au/About/Document-Library/Gender-Equity-Statement

Partnership Brokers Association - partnershipbrokers.org

Victorian Government - Benefits of Gender Equality, <https://www.vic.gov.au/benefits-gender-equality>