

# Violence figures tell a sad story

By Alesha Capone

Wyndham has recorded the fourth-highest number of family violence incidents in the state, as reported to police in a 12-month period.

Last week, the Crime Statistics Agency released figures which showed there were 3014 family violence incidents recorded in Wyndham between July 2015 and June 2016.

The three municipalities which recorded a higher number of family violence incidents were Hume, Greater Geelong and Casey. Casey topped Victoria with 4369 reports.

In the previous 12 months, July 2014 to June 2015, Wyndham recorded 2473 instances of family violence.

Wyndham police Inspector Marty Allison said although family violence reports increased in most municipalities every year, police believed there was "... still a significant amount of under-reporting".

Inspector Allison said this was partially because some victims remained too scared or ashamed to come forward.

"We believe there is a lot of under-reporting in some new and emerging communities," he said.

"We, as police, have got to try and win their trust and confidence, because no one is immune from family violence."

Women's Health West chief executive Dr Robyn Gregory said that between July last year and April this year, the service received more than 8330 family violence referrals from police.

"It is important that women know that family violence is a crime and they will be taken seriously and supported when they report to police," Dr Gregory said.

Dr Gregory said if women did not want to involve police, they could contact services such as Women's Health West for help with access to

safe accommodation, counselling and support to attend court.

Last week the state government announced Women's Health West would receive \$135,000 for a family violence community prevention action plan. The government will also give Wyndham council, the Wyndham Community Education Centre and Drummond Street Services \$120,000 to develop a multicultural primary prevention program.

For assistance, contact Women's Health West on 9689 9588 between 9.30am and 4.30pm or the Safe Steps 24/7 family violence response line on 1800 015 188.

## Pur-fectly good idea

Lainie Flint is happy to admit that she is "crazy about cats". The Tarneit woman volunteers as a foster carer for 2nd Chance Cat Rescue, which is based in Melbourne's south east.

The not-for-profit organisation is a registered charity and is run by volunteers.

"It was started in July 2011 with the purpose of re-homing de-sexed, vaccinated and microchipped kittens to good homes," Ms Harley said.

"Seeing cats and kittens find their forever homes is what motivates a lot of our foster carers, myself included - it's a great feeling."

Ms Harley said it was important for Wyndham residents to realise the importance of de-sexing their pets, to help stop the number of unwanted kittens.

Ms Harley said people also needed to stop advertising kittens "free to a good home" on the internet.

"I dislike this so much because you never know who that kitten is going to, is it being used as bait or for training dogs to fight?" she said.

Ms Harley said people wanting a new pet should contact a reputable rescue group, rather than look online.

"I urge everyone that is looking for a kitten please adopt, do not shop," she said.

Ms Harley said she always welcomed donations of food, kitty litter, toys or scratching posts.

To donate to the 2nd Chance Cat Rescue, see [2ndchancecatrescue.com.au](http://2ndchancecatrescue.com.au) or [facebook.com/2ndchancecatrescuevictoria](https://www.facebook.com/2ndchancecatrescuevictoria).

Alesha Capone

Lainie Flint with some of her charges as a foster carer for cats and kittens. (Damjan Janevski)



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