

PREVENTING  
VIOLENCE  
**TOGETHER**

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Western Region Strategy to  
Prevent Violence Against Women

**Preventing  
Violence Together:**

Partnership  
agreement

**August 2019**

# Acknowledgements

The Preventing Violence Together partnership acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, the people of the Kulin Nation, and we pay our respects to Elders and community members past and present. We recognise the prevalence of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is related to and compounded by the impacts of colonisation, ongoing trauma from displacement and dispossession from traditional lands and kinship groups, the removal of children from families, racial discrimination, and institutionalised violence (Department of Planning and Community Development 2008).



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# 1

## Background

**Preventing Violence Together (PVT): Western Region Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women** is Melbourne's western region partnership and strategy to prevent violence against women before it occurs. PVT's vision is that women and girls across Melbourne's west live free from violence and discrimination and have equal status, rights, opportunities, representation and respect.

PVT is led by Women's Health West which is funded by the State Government to lead collective regional action on the primary prevention of violence against women. The partnership comprises partner organisations that include all women's and community health services, primary care partnerships and local governments in the west, sports and education institutions, essential services, and several services that respond to violence after it has occurred.

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# 2

## Partnership statement

The PVT partnership subscribes to the following partnership statement:

- The expertise, knowledge, skills and system (workforce, infrastructure) for primary prevention are unique from, and distinct to, those required to respond to violence after it has occurred
- No single organisation can do primary prevention alone; cross-sector partnerships and action are integral for primary prevention efforts to be effective
- Women's services, such as Women's Health West, which have specialist expertise in gender equity are critical in leading and coordinating cross-sector partnerships for primary prevention
- Capacity building, collective learning and integration of primary prevention action across Melbourne's west are crucial for collective impact.

# 3 Partnership objectives

The PVT partnership exist to:

- Lead and prioritise primary prevention action across the western region, including collective action as well as action within individual partner organisations
- Enhance individual organisations' primary prevention efforts
- Reduce gender inequality as a key driver of men's violence against women
- Create environments that promote gender equity and respectful relationships
- Build knowledge, skills and capacity and enhance cross-sectoral primary prevention action
- Maintain the integrity of primary prevention and recognise its place on the intervention spectrum
- Engage, partner and co-design primary prevention initiatives with the communities we serve
- Action state, national and international primary prevention practice, research and evaluation at a regional level
- Share knowledge and build the evidence-base through effective monitoring and evaluation for best practice in primary prevention
- Sustain the commitment to the long-term work required to redress violence against women.

# 4 Preventing Violence Together principles

## 4.1 Partnership practice principles

The PVT partnership principles are to:

- Respect each other's strengths, expertise, experience and resources that we each bring to the partnership and value what the partnership brings to each partner organisation
- Act towards each other with honesty and trust
- Communicate with each other openly and respectfully
- Work together in a constructive manner by valuing our different points of view and managing disagreements in a respectful and timely way
- Understand that we each have responsibilities, constraints and obligations to our own organisations, as well as to the partnership
- Acknowledge and celebrate our individual and collective successes
- Commit to evaluating the partnership and be a 'learning partnership'
- Role model gender equitable and respectful relationships, processes and practices.

## 4.2 Primary prevention principles

The PVT partnership principles are to:

- Violence against women is a gender-based human rights violation
- Violence against women is a preventable public health problem
- Action to prevent violence against women needs to occur at all levels of the ecological model across various sectors and settings
- Primary prevention action must redress the key driver of violence against women, which is gender inequality
- Primary prevention must be intersectional and recognise intersecting power inequalities that increase risk of violence against women and its impacts
- Primary prevention evaluation measures and indicators must be focused on redressing the key drivers of violence against women.

## 5 Documents guiding the partnership's work

The PVT partnership is guided by a regional high-level strategy, an action planning process and an evaluation framework to enable collaborative, integrated primary prevention action across Melbourne's west.

The **PVT regional high-level strategy** is *Preventing Violence Together 2030* which sets the strategic vision and priorities for primary prevention action in Melbourne's west and is a regional interpretation of the national framework *Change the Story*. This functions as a framing document for the partnership to support decision-making for action.

The **action planning** process supports partners to identify primary prevention initiatives in priority themes, settings and/or techniques that they will focus on regionally or sub-regionally for any given period and commit to contributing annual resourcing and evaluation data for that year.

The **PVT Evaluation Framework** focuses on measuring collective regional impact as aligned to evaluation indicators on the drivers of violence against women.

# 6 Partnership structure

The PVT partnership structure includes a strategic arm (the Executive Governance Group), an operational arm (the Implementation Committee) and working groups which design, implement and evaluate primary prevention action. This partnership structure is illustrated in **Appendix 1**.

PVT has a two-tiered membership structure that consists of:

- **Full implementing partners** which undertake and resource primary prevention actions, participate in PVT governance and implementation structures and other decision-making forums
- **Associate partners** which are part of the primary prevention system and participate in PVT's operational and capacity building structures. Associate partners can attend the Executive Governance Group but not participate in decision making.

In addition, there is the Executive Leadership Group, which consists of the principal advisor from Women's Health West, the chair and deputy chair (members of the EGG). The role of this group is to support strong partnership governance, effective succession planning and partner capacity building. In addition to this, the chair and deputy chair can represent the partnership at external meetings and speak and make agreed public statements, on behalf of the partnership in tandem with Women's Health West.

Further details about each of the partnership structures are outlined in the committees' and working groups' terms of reference.

# 7 Roles and responsibilities of partners

**Full implementing partners** must:

- Participate in the partnership's decision-making forums which include the Executive Governance Group (EGG), the Implementation Committee (IC) and working groups
- Allocate and contribute resources, staffing and/or funding to support the partnership's work
- Participate in action planning forums and other planning mechanisms
- Endorse the implementation of identified primary prevention actions
- Commit to implementing their organisation's identified primary prevention actions for any given year that includes strategic actions determined by the EGG
- Participate in evaluation planning for identified primary prevention actions
- Collect and share data as part of the evaluation framework
- Represent and advocate for the partnership and what it stands for within their organisation, across Melbourne's western region and beyond
- Acknowledge the PVT partnership in gender equity and prevention of violence against women policy, law reform and funding submissions
- Commit to prioritising collective funding submissions for primary prevention that bring benefit to the partnership and communities of Melbourne's west
- Be acknowledged as a partner in PVT publications, submissions and other promotional materials.

**Associate partners** can:

- Attend PVT's Executive Governance Group and participate in discussion but not participate in decision-making
- Participate in PVT's operational decision-making forums which include the Implementation Committee, working groups, and capacity building forums
- Participate in PVT action planning forums, events and other planning mechanisms
- Provide expertise and advice to the PVT partnership, as appropriate
- Participate in primary prevention actions being undertaken by full implementing partners
- In addition, PVT and the Western Integrated Family Violence Committee (WIFVC) will share partnership correspondence, publications, workplans and action plans. The chairs and lead staff of PVT and the WIFVC will also come together yearly to share strategic and operational information, work plans and initiatives to reduce duplication and increase regional integration and collaboration across the two regional committees.

The **lead agency** Women's Health West, as a full implementing partner, must also:

- Coordinate and resource EGG, IC meetings and working groups, and chair meetings as appropriate
- Coordinate PVT regional campaigns, policy and funding submissions
- Coordinate the PVT action planning process and associated reporting requirements
- Coordinate the implementation of the PVT evaluation framework
- Maintain and update partnership committee membership lists
- Resource and act as a 'hub' of information and coordination between PVT partners
- Lead consultative, collaborative partnership processes and structures
- Produce progress reports and briefing documents for PVT committees, as required
- Represent the PVT partnership in key public and advocacy forums
- Lead the orientation of new PVT member organisations and their staff.

# 8

## Joining the partnership

Organisations wishing to join the PVT partnership should request this in writing to the lead agency, Women's Health West. Women's Health West will then arrange a meeting with a senior representative from this organisation and discuss the partnership, proposed membership level, and the roles and responsibilities outlined in the partnership agreement.

The membership request will be considered at the PVT EGG. A majority of full implementing partners will need to approve the request. Once the request is approved, WHW will set up an orientation meeting. The organisation's CEO or nominated delegate must sign the partnership agreement to officially become a PVT partner.

# 9

## Partnership dispute resolution processes

The PVT partners are committed to working in a constructive manner and will manage disagreements in a respectful way. When disagreement or conflict emerges that cannot be resolved, the following steps will be followed:

1. An extraordinary meeting of the EGG will be convened, with all members present, to explore mutually-agreeable solutions
2. Where differences remain unresolved after an extraordinary meeting, an independent mediator who is endorsed by the majority of partners will be sourced to facilitate the dispute resolution process. The mediator will facilitate a joint mediation session, with impacted partners present, to reach a mutually-agreeable solution
3. If differences cannot be resolved during the joint mediation session, the mediator will hold private discussions with each impacted partner to find common objectives that can assist in further negotiations. If common objectives are found, another joint mediation session will be held
4. When a dispute is resolved, the agreed solution will be final.

## 10 Failure to meet roles and responsibilities

In instances where partners fail to meet their roles and responsibilities or their organisation's commitments, the EGG will review the agency's participation in the partnership and initiate a resolution process. Resolution will be sought through discussion, mediation and conciliation. Dispute resolution process can be utilised if needed. In extreme circumstances, the EGG by consensus, can remove the partner from the partnership.

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## 11 Exiting the partnership

If circumstances occur that result in an agency withdrawing from the PVT partnership, written advice to the chair of the partnership is expected.

The EGG, where it is dissatisfied with the contribution of an individual representing an agency - that being failure to adhere to partnership principles - can request an alternative representative following effort to resolve the difficulty via discussion, mediation and conciliation.

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## 12 Monitoring and review of the partnership agreement

To align with many partners' individual planning and reporting cycles, the PVT partnership agreement will be reviewed every four years. A review of the agreement can occur prior to the four-year review if the PVT EGG quorum deem it necessary to the effective governance of the partnership.

# Preventing Violence Together Governance Diagram

