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PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

held on 20 July 2018 at 10.30am in Civic Room 1, Melton Civic Centre

Present: Cr Bob Turner, Mayor, City of Melton
Cr Ken Hardy, Councillor, City of Melton
Cr Sophie Ramsey, Councillor, City of Melton
Cr Melissa De Santis, Councillor, City of Melton
Cr Lara Carli, Councillor, City of Melton
Cr Kathy Majdlik, Councillor, City of Melton
Christine Levy, Coordinator Family Services, Melton City Council
Liz Smith, Team Leader Health Promotion and Planning, Melton City Council
Shelley Tait, Health Promotion Officer, Melton City Council
Peter Webster, Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation
Sergeant Ken Anderson, Family Violence Liaison Officer, Victoria Police
Glen Ludbrook, Lawyer, Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre
Alice Harris, Assistant Principal, Melton Specialist School
Sharon Horton, Coordinator Child First, MacKillop Family Services

Chairperson: Cr Bob Turner, Mayor, City of Melton

1. Welcome

Cr Turner welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced apologies together with L Smith.
Cr Turner gave an acknowledgement of country.

2. Apologies

Cr Michelle Mendes, Councillor, City of Melton
Cr Steven Abboushi, Councillor, City of Melton
Cr Goran Kesic, Councillor, City of Melton
Matthew Wilson, Manager Community Planning, Melton City Council
Helga Jennings, Department of Health and Human Services
Stephanie Dziunka, Department of Justice and Regulation
Inspector Kathy Rudkins, Victoria Police
Patrizia Favorito, Women's Health West
Rachel Phillips, Settlement Social Worker, MiCare
Joan Eddy, Manager Counselling, Djerriwarrh Health Services
Mary D'Elia, General Manager Community Programs, MacKillop Family Services

3. Declaration of interests and/or conflict of interests

Nil.

4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting

April meeting minutes noted.



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5. Business Arising

- 5.1 J Eddy to share the Djerriwarrh Health Services family violence report with the Committee.
- 5.2 L Smith sent an invitation to Minister Natalie Hutchins to attend a future Committee meeting.
- 5.3 L Smith sent an invitation to Minister Natalie Hutchins to attend the launch of Equality and Respect 2030.
- 5.4 S Grace sent Safe and Strong report card to Committee.
- 5.5 S Grace sent information about fine exemptions for victims of family violence to Committee.
- 5.6 S Grace sent Free from Violence 'Respect Women: Call It Out' Ad campaign to Committee.

Action

J Eddy to share the Djerriwarrh Health Services family violence report with the Committee.

6. General Business

6.1 Equality and Respect 2030 – L Smith

L Smith provided a brief presentation on the key elements of Council's *Equality and Respect 2030: A Strategy to prevent violence against women by promoting gender equity in the City of Melton*. She explained that since the last meeting the Strategy had been officially launched by Minister Natalie Hutchins on Friday 8 June at the Caroline Springs Gallery. L Smith shared that the Minister congratulated Council on the Strategy's strong primary prevention approach and focus on gender equity, which is in line with the state government approach to the issue.

L Smith commented how the Strategy was developed as a long term document to align with the regional strategy *Preventing Violence Together 2030*, led by Women's Health West. This long term approach to the Strategy also aligns with the current state and national policy environment. The Strategy has a strong focus on promoting gender equality and will be delivered both internally with council staff and externally to the community. The Strategy speaks to the fact that gender equality benefits everyone. The Strategy will be implemented through two year rolling action plans.

L Smith explained that the action planning workshops will take place in December with staff from across council departments. This Committee will also have the opportunity to feed into the action planning process.

L Smith asked the Committee if they would like to contribute any actions to the action plan, and whether members see implementing actions as part of the Committee's role. The overall response from Committee members was positive. L Smith mentioned that there is currently no money attached to this Committee to implement actions. Action planning will be continued with the Committee at the next meeting.

L Smith confirmed that the Strategy is strongly aligned to State and National policies and frameworks in violence prevention. She mentioned how the new state government



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organisation, Respect Victoria, will be launched in the coming weeks, undertaking research, evaluation, and community engagement in the primary prevention of violence against women. Cr Hardy suggested inviting a representative from Respect Victoria to attend a future committee meeting and L Smith noted that an invitation will be sent for 2019.

Action

L Smith to include an Action Planning Workshop as an agenda item for the next Committee meeting.

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

6.2 Free From Violence grant application – L Smith

L Smith shared that Council put in an application for the Department of Health and Human Services' Free From Violence grant round to implement the Baby Makes 3 program. All Victorian councils were invited to apply for up to \$100,000. The funding is for implementation within the 2018/19 financial year.

Baby Makes 3 engages first time parents and promotes equal and respectful relationships between parents, acknowledging the changes that are common once a new baby arrives. Baby Makes 3 has been highly successful across other municipalities. Council applied for \$35,000 and if successful the program will be supported by Council with a financial co-contribution.

6.3 Engaging Dads project – S Tait

S Tait explained that Council has been successful in obtaining \$17,500 in funding through the Department of Health and Human Services to implement a project that aims to engage more dads in Council's services. The Engaging Dads Project will work with dads and male care-givers during 2018-19 to:

- build their understanding of gender equity through challenging gender stereotypes and norms
- foster positive relationships between male carers and children
- increase male carers understanding, awareness and participation in council services and programs.

Council's Health Promotion Team will work with Libraries, Maternal and Child Health, Family Services and Recreation to engage dads/male carers and children to participate in the key activities of the project.

Cr Ramsey raised the importance of continuity and sustainability of engaging fathers and male caregivers into council services beyond the project period. L Smith described that by working within existing Council services to engage dads through this pilot project, and with considered evaluation processes, Council will be able to identify methods to sustain the engagement of dads beyond the pilot project.

Cr Turner mentioned that Bunnings in Melton host workshops for dads and children and that this could be an avenue for Council to engage with dads. Cr De Santis mentioned that Council needs to promote services and programs to dads where they are currently meeting i.e. through sporting clubs.



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P Webster mentioned the Kirrip Men's Shed program which could be a good avenue to include Aboriginal dads and children in the pilot program.

S Tait mentioned an upcoming Working with Fathers Forum run by Relationships Victoria and the Salvation Army, being held at Taylors Hill. She offered to share the invitation with the Committee.

Action

S Tait to circulate the Working with Fathers Forum invitation with the Committee.

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.

6.4 Support and Safety Hub advocacy – L Smith

L Smith shared that Council has written to Minister Natalie Hutchins and Honourable Gavin Jennings to advocate for the Brimbank Melton Support and Safety Hub to be located in the City of Melton.

L Smith described some of the benefits of the Hub being located in the City of Melton which include:

- City of Melton has the fourth highest rate of family violence in metropolitan Melbourne
- City of Melton is growing at a rapid rate, more so than Brimbank
- City of Melton has limited access to specialist family violence services.

6.5 Direction of the Committee for 2018-19 – L Smith

L Smith described how the Committee has now been meeting for almost a year - since August 2017. As per the Terms of Reference, the Committee had been meeting bi-monthly for the first 12 months and is now scheduled to meet quarterly. Cr De Santis tabled that she would like the Committee to continue to meet bi-monthly. Cr Turner expressed a willingness to continue to meet bi-monthly but that the Committee needed to be mindful of partner agencies' capacity to continue to meet more frequently. L Smith suggested that the meeting frequency can be discussed further at the next Committee meeting when hopefully more members will be in attendance. When considering any change to the current meeting schedule, L Smith asked the committee to consider 'what will be the collective benefit of our engagement together and what we wish to achieve?'

Cr Ramsey commented that the next committee meeting held in October would be an opportunity to discuss the action planning process for the new Equality and Respect 2030 Strategy. She acknowledged that the outcome of that conversation may influence changes to the future meeting schedule, or prompt the establishment of working groups to implement actions related to the Strategy as required.

Cr Turner confirmed that any amendment to the Terms of Reference, including changes to the meeting schedule, will need to go to an Ordinary Council Meeting before the change can be implemented.

G Ludbrook shared the narrative around the need for more resources and services to support women and their families once intervention orders have been put in place against a perpetrator. Cr Turner suggested supporting G Ludbrook to advocate to the State Government on this issue.



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Cr Hardy left the meeting at 11.50am.

Action

S Tait include 'meeting frequency' to the agenda for the October Committee meeting.

6.6 Committee meeting frequency for 2018-19 – L Smith

As discussed in agenda item 6.5.

6.7 16 Days of Activism campaign – S Tait

S Tait shared with the Committee that the 16 Days of Activism campaign is held each year between 25 November and 10 December. Council recognises the campaign annually and focuses on recognising this international campaign as opposed to White Ribbon Day, to best align with the state government. S Tait acknowledged that last year a number of Committee members expressed interest in working together to mark the 16 Days of Activism. Members agreed to contact S Tait if they would like to work together to recognise the 16 Days of Activism.

Action

Committee members to contact S Tait if they would like to work together to recognise the 16 Days of Activism for 2018.

7. Other Business

7.1 Member reports

Victoria Police

K Anderson shared the most recent family violence statistics for the City of Melton and highlighted that recent and serious elder abuse had occurred within the municipality.

He shared that the incidence of family violence has risen across the municipality from June 2017 to June 2018.

Location	June 2017	June 2018
Melton	113	132
Caroline Springs	60	63
Total reports	173	195

K Anderson shared a similar narrative to G Ludbrook, in that families are having trouble understanding the language used in Intervention Orders and that navigating care arrangements of children between parents is complex. K Anderson reiterated that Police need opportunities to support and explain the orders to families and assist them through the process.

MacKillop Family Services

S Horton invited Committee members to send through appropriate information about programs, events and key services that they would like to share with families that come through Child First. She is also able to share information with their MacKillop Family Services professional networks.



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Kirrip Aboriginal Corporation

P Webster spoke about the Young Love Program, run by Djirra which commences on 30 July 2018. The program is designed to support 12-20 year old girls in understanding and navigating healthy relationships. Following its success, the program is in its fourth iteration. He mentioned that local high schools including the Special School will be engaged to invite girls to attend. Priority attendance will be given to Aboriginal girls, though non-Aboriginal girls are welcome to attend if there is capacity. The program runs for two hours, with a maximum of 15 girls and two female facilitators.

Action

P Webster to send the Young Love program flyer with L Smith to share with the Committee.

8. Next Meeting

Friday 12 October 10.30am – 12.30pm
Civic Room 1, Melton City Council.

9. Close of Business

The meeting closed at 12.00pm.