



Barwon Month of Action

Stop Men's Violence Against Women and Children

www.monthofaction.com.au

27th Oct – 25th Nov 2017

Activity Registration & Information

Guide

Barwon Month of Action in a Snapshot

About the Barwon MOA:

A month-long campaign that aims to raise awareness and educate our community about men's violence against women and children. For more information, head to page 3 of this booklet.

When:

From Friday 27th October 2017 “Reclaim the Night” to Saturday 25th November 2017 “International Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women”

Key messages:

1. Freedom from violence is a basic human right.
2. Violence against women and children is a gendered crime.
3. The primary cause of violence against women and children is gender inequality.
4. Violence against women and children is preventable and it is everybody's business.
5. We prioritise the safety and well-being of women and children.
6. Violence against women and children occurs in all communities irrespective of age, cultural identity, ethnicity, ability, sexual identity or socio-economic status.
7. Actions to prevent violence against women include;
 - challenging violence supportive behaviours,
 - challenging gender stereotypes,
 - promoting women's voices in decision making,
 - strengthening equal and respectful relationships.

Support us by:

- **Attending an event:** Check out the BMOA calendar: <http://www.monthofaction.com.au/>
- **Hosting an event:** Find out more within the booklet and head here to register.
- **Using Social Media:** Use the hashtag #BarwonMOA when posting about events.

 <https://www.facebook.com/BarwonMonthOfAction/>

 [@BarwonMOA](https://twitter.com/BarwonMOA)

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Section 1: Barwon Month of Action

What is the Barwon Month of Action?

The Month of Action is a local month-long campaign that aims to raise awareness and educate our community about men's violence against women and children. It provides an opportunity for individuals, groups and organisations in the Barwon region to unite in their commitment to ending men's violence against women and children by hosting or participating in an event or activity.

The Barwon Month of Action runs from [Reclaim the Night](#) (last Friday in October) until the [International Day For the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#) (25th November). This important day is also referred to as [White Ribbon Day](#), and marks the beginning of the [16 Days of Activism](#), - a global movement addressing violence against women.

Background to the Barwon Month of Action

The concept of a 'Month of Action - No Violence Against Women' arose from the activities and planning around Reclaim the Night which was organised by the Geelong Rape Crisis Centre and Domestic Violence Outreach Service (DVOSS) in the mid-1990s. Nancy Donkers, from the Geelong Reclaim the Night, has the following to say about the history of Reclaim the Night:

"Reclaim the Night began over 30 years ago in Geelong after having begun overseas and then in Melbourne in 1978. The initial focus was on sexual assault and rape of women, but soon broadened to all violence against women, particularly focusing on the impact of family violence and sexual assault on women and children by creating awareness of these issues and engaging and empowering women to act against them. Reclaim the Night held many rallies and marches on the last Friday of October in Geelong"

The Month of Action was then coordinated by the Geelong Women's Action Coalition (GWAC). Some years later, it broadened to 'No Violence Against Women and Children' reflecting a greater understanding of the effects of violence on women *and* children. The Month of Action waxed and waned over the years, however, it made a resurgence about 10 years ago and has established itself as a regular part of the Barwon region's calendar and activities, with a renewed emphasis on ending men's violence against women.

Why participate in the Barwon Month of Action?

Through raising awareness, it's hoped the prevalence of violence against women in the Barwon region will be reduced. The Month of Action introduces the wider community to information, resources and services that seek to prevent violence, as well as provide information and support to women either at risk of, or experiencing, violence.

Section 2: Violence Against Women

What is Violence Against Women?

The United Nations defines violence against women as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (UN General Assembly 1993). It can include physical, sexual, emotional, social, financial and spiritual abuse. The World Health Organisation identifies violence as an abuse of power, and 98% of violence experienced by women is perpetrated by men.

What do the statistics tell us?

Research from the 2012 ABS Personal Safety Survey and Australian Institute of Criminology shows that women in Australia experience substantial levels of violence.

Since the age of 15:



1 in 3 Australian women had experienced **physical violence**.



1 in 5 Australian women had experienced **sexual violence**.



1 in 6 Australian women had experienced **physical or sexual violence** from a current or former partner.



1 in 4 Australian women had experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or former partner.

The very real cost of violence against women...



In Victoria, world-first research by VicHealth has identified that intimate partner violence is the largest contributor to death, disease and disability for women aged 15 – 44 (VicHealth 2004).

Evidence shows that violence against women in the home is the largest contributing factor toward homelessness amongst women and children, as well as to youth homelessness and to early school leaving.



Recent estimates suggest that violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy 22 billion dollars annually (KPMG, 2016).

How do we make sense of men's violence against women?

We now know there is no single cause of violence against women. However, research has shown that there are core drivers or social determinants that enable violence against women to occur:

1. **Gender inequality** - the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women. The fact that women and men do not have equal power or resources and that their voices, ideas and work are not valued in the same way.
2. **Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence** - Violence by men against women is caused by the misuse of power and control within a context of male privilege. Male privilege operates on an individual and societal level to maintain a situation of male dominance, where men have power over women and children. Men's violence against women is a consequence of the inequalities between men and women, rooted in patriarchal traditions that encourage men to believe they are entitled to power and control over their partners.
3. **Rigid adherence to gender roles and stereotypes** - for example, the idea that women and men should act in certain ways or are better at certain things based on their sex. As a society, we have constructed norms about how women and men should behave, what their interests or expectations should be etc. From this, we create values, expectations and roles that lead to stereotypes around 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. Society tends to value masculine traits more than feminine traits.
4. **A broader culture of violence** - the attitudes, norms, behaviours and practices that support violence and disrespect towards women. For example, the idea that violent acts are ok in certain circumstances, the idea that some violent acts are not serious, and that violence is a normal way of resolving conflict.

Men's violence against women is preventable

There is a growing evidence base to support the notion that violence against women and children can be prevented. **Primary prevention** is about challenging the deeply ingrained attitudes, beliefs and inequitable values that give rise to men's violence against women. It also means engaging the institutions that – through their policies, practices or lack of action – may reinforce these beliefs or allow them to continue.

Themes for action on preventing violence against women and children:

- Promoting women's independence and equal and respectful relationships between men and women
- Challenging rigid gender stereotypes and sexism
- Promoting non-violent social norms and challenging a violence supportive culture
- Improving access to resources and systems of support

Attitudes to violence against women need to change

The [National Community Attitudes Survey](#) (VicHealth) identified the following:

- 1. Financial and emotional abuse are not as highly recognised as forms of abuse**
25% of people did not identify controlling a partner by denying them money as abuse.
1 in 5 people saw yelling abuse at a partner as not that serious.
- 2. Gender**
22% of respondents believe domestic violence is equally perpetrated by men and women.
This figure has increased significantly since 1995.
- 3. Belief that violence can be excused**
18% of respondents believed that anger causing "loss of control" excused violence.
22% believed violence could be excused if the perpetrator regretted it afterwards.
- 4. Belief that claims of domestic violence and rape are often false or exaggerated**
49% of respondents believe that women make up or exaggerate domestic violence claims to improve their cases in custody battles.
26% (1 in 4) or respondents disagree that 'women rarely make false claims of being raped'.
- 5. Perceptions that it is easy for women to leave/ lack of understanding around why they stay**
There is less understanding now around why women stay than in 1995.
Half of respondents believed a woman could leave a violent relationship if she really wanted to. This was most likely to be men and young people.
- 6. Knowing where to go for help**
1 in 3 respondents said they would not know where to go for help if someone they knew was being abused.
- 7. The strongest predictors for overall violence supportive attitudes were being male and having a low support for gender equity/equality**
Age also influenced perceptions of violence – younger respondents were less likely to rate some physical forms of violence as very serious.

Key Messaging

The aim of these key messages is to give partners who are hosting a Month of Action event some statements to use when they are speaking publicly or to participants of their event.

1. Freedom from violence is a basic human right.

- * We uphold the principle that women and children have the right to live safely and reach their full potential and that violence is unacceptable.

2. Violence against women and children is a gendered crime.

- * Violence against women is predominantly perpetrated against women by their current or former partner.

3. The primary cause of violence against women and children is gender inequality.

- * Violence against women and children is driven by society's propensity to condone violence against women, men's control of decision making and limiting women's independence, stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity, disrespect towards women, and men's peer relations that emphasise aggression.

4. Violence against women and children is preventable and it is everybody's business.

- * We are collectively responsible for ensuring that women and children's lives are free from violence. We need to promote and normalise gender equity and challenge, at every opportunity, the beliefs and structures that allow violence against women and children to occur.

5. We prioritise the safety and well-being of women and children.

- * We acknowledge the importance of equipping the community to identify and respond to family violence and sexual assault by referring to specialist services who can undertake risk assessment, safety planning and provide appropriate support.

6. Violence against women and children occurs in all communities irrespective of age, cultural identity, ethnicity, ability, sexual identity or socio-economic status.

- * Some women experience overlapping social inequalities which increase the likelihood they will experience violence.

7. Actions to prevent violence against women include; challenging violence supportive behaviours, challenging gender stereotypes, promoting women's voices in decision making, strengthening equal and respectful relationships.

- * In all our actions we need to promote and normalise gender equality in private and public life.

Section 3: How to participate in the Barwon Month of Action

Some ideas for your organisation’s involvement....

When designing your activities consider how it supports gender equity, encourages respect and challenges gender stereotypes. For more information and support go to <http://www.monthofaction.com.au/> or contact Justine Devonport: (03) 42191211 jdevonport@womenshealthbsw.org.au

Where →	Workplace	Schools	Community	Sporting	Faith based
How ↓					
Direct Participation	Create an event - host a staff morning tea with guest speaker / information	Create an event for students & staff - a walk of respect, creating a human white ribbon, art workshop.	Create an event – river walk, forum, art workshop, morning tea with guest speaker.	Create an event – White Ribbon ambassador signing Gender equity round, host “You the man’ play	Gender Equity as a sermon topic. Create an event – morning tea with guest speaker, white ribbon event.
Workforce Development	Staff training day/sessions/plan covering gender equity, identify FV and active bystander training.	Staff training as per workplace.	Host a forum for general community members.	Training day/ sessions/ plan covering gender equity, identify FV and active bystander training.	Support or offer training to local groups and internal staff.
Community Strengthening	Morning tea awareness raising	Invite whole community to event	Host a whole community event	Provide support information. Invite community to sessions.	Participate in local events around PVAW. Provide links to support services
Communications & Social Marketing	Posters / Social media campaign	Posters/ Newsletter articles /Social media	Posters/ Newsletter articles /Social media	Posters/ Newsletter articles /Social media	Posters/ Newsletter articles /Social media
Advocacy	Request policy reform	Request GE training / Info on respectful relationships curriculum	Initiate a campaign to local member around PVAW.	Request gender equity in volunteer club roles.	Advocate for respectful relationships.
Research and Evaluation	Workplace surveys/focus groups	Include questions in school surveys that cover Gender Equity		Gender audit of club and facilities usage	

Interested in hosting an event? Here's what to do

1. Read the information provided and discuss it with clients and colleagues. Come up with an activity aimed at preventing or raising awareness of violence against women or the drivers of violence.
2. Register your event by completing the online form on the [website](#). For assistance in promotion and planning please register your event before **Friday 13th October 2017**.
3. Organise your activity or event. Keep us posted on your progress! Your event will be included in the Month of Action online calendar and promoted across the Barwon region.

Need help? For further information or support, please contact....

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