

Local Laws - Preventing Violence Against Women AIAM 15 October 2015 - Townsville

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Family Violence in Casey

- » The City of Casey has the highest incidences of family violence reports to Police in the state with 4,089 callouts in 2013-2014. (raw data)
- » It is estimated that 70+% of cases are not reported
- » The Number 1 priority issue for Victoria police (40+% of work)
- » There is a dedicated Victoria Police Family Violence Unit based in Cranbourne
- » Family Violence is a significant public health issue for the City of Casey

Family Violence in Casey

- » Charges laid 2013-2014 = 1758
- » Children present = 1452
- » IVO and Safety Notice issued = 1098
- » More than 40,000 women in Casey are estimated to have experienced violence from a male in their lifetime, and even more children

Family Violence Prevention at the City of Casey

- » Extensive work with faith communities: “Promoting Peace in Families Project”
- » Input to State policy, planning and member MAV network
- » Received Dept of Justice Grant \$600,000
Primary prevention in partnership with Cardinia, Greater Dandenong & Southern Health
“Challenge Project”

Continued

- » Casey Men's Action Team - preventing violence against women: Team Leader Local Laws is a foundation member and ambassador
- » Consists of senior staff in Council from various departments
- » Purpose is to increase the capacity across Council to prevent violence against women by men taking responsibility and action within their spheres of influence
- » Through involvement in the group, local laws decided to look at ways to prevent violence against women

Local Laws in Family Violence Prevention

- » Trigger point – white ribbon breakfast
- » Heard several prominent speakers including Sgt of Family Violence Unit – Vic Police
- » Light bulb moment – Local Laws Officers and Police interact with same offenders/victims
- » Local Laws Officer not trained or equipped to ‘recognise’ signs of FV in its various forms

Local Laws in Family Violence Prevention

- » Local Laws officers interact with perpetrators and victims
- » Local Laws officers are exposed to violent behaviour or the signs
- » Identified a correlation between family violence and violence toward pets
- » In many cases pets are present, vast majority are dogs/cats.

What local laws staff saw

- » Looking back over Local Laws cases it became clear that on several occasions women disclosed fear of harm by their partner, at the time of intervention with an officer, and that they were assaulted by a male partner after an animal was impounded, seized or search warrant executed.
- » Local laws realised that they could take responsibility to ensure that their actions resulted in women being safe, by preventing violence occurring.

FV IT MUST STOP



Local Laws – How Practise Changed

- » Partnership formed with Councils Health Promotion Team and Victoria Police
- » Training session (CRAF) for all Local Laws officers in family violence prevention (including administration staff)
- » Standard Operation Procedures updated with specific sections dedicated to Family Violence being included within the Animal Management, OH & S and Traffic sections. Debriefing occurs following an incident
- » Team Leader Local Laws accepted as a White Ribbon Ambassador

What has changed?

- » Awareness has been raised so more incidences are noticed, responded to
- » Staff are better resourced when faced with this issue, that they can make a difference, adds value to work, increased professionalism
- » Better community profile
- » Broadened role from enforcement to include public health
- » Improved partnerships: Collaboration with Police in field to support Local Laws
- » Model for other Councils/Local Laws
- » Easily applied to other Council service areas

Examples of changed practice

- » disclosure to LLO in field
- » traffic infringement notice: dealing with the male
- » dog attack: dealing with son of property owner (mother victim)

Next Stages

- » Evaluation
- » Continuing to improve the model
- » Further training and support
(higher level)
- » Sharing the model with other Councils

Any questions?

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