

BULOKE FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROJECT

BACKGROUND

Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership (SMPCP) Buloke Strategic Health and Wellbeing Partnership (BSHWP) was established in 2012 in response to local agencies identifying a greater need to build on their local relationships and work at a local government area level.

The BSHWP platform, facilitated by SMPCP, creates opportunities for the local Buloke agencies to collectively plan, create change and action initiatives, such as the Buloke Family Violence Prevention Project.

Family violence causes significant harm to mental and physical wellbeing and is the leading cause of preventable illness, disability and death for women aged 25-44.¹ Between 2016 and 2017, the number of family violence incidents reported in the Buloke Shire increased by 11.6%.

Recognising family violence as a serious health and wellbeing issue that affects the local community, the SMPCP Buloke Strategic Health and Wellbeing Partnership 2017 – 2021 Action Plan identified preventing family violence as a key priority area. Being an isolated rural community, it is important that Buloke community members have the opportunity to participate in primary prevention initiatives locally.

The project was developed for the rural communities of the Buloke Shire; Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Charlton, Donald, Birchip, Berriwillock, Culgoa, Nullawil, Nandaly and Watchem. It sought to involve 400 people and work to create change within a minimum of ten settings across these communities. The primary aim of this work is to create an equal and respectful Buloke community, free from family violence, through the implementation of an evidence-based, co-designed partnership prevention action plan. To achieve this, the following objectives were identified:

- To build commitment, knowledge and capacity among Buloke agencies and project partners in the primary prevention of family violence
- To develop an evidence-based, co-designed SMPCP Buloke Partnership Prevention Action Plan for the primary prevention of family violence with partner agencies and the Buloke community
- To build community awareness, knowledge and skills about the links of gender inequality and family violence through the implementation of the SMPCP Buloke Partnership Prevention Action Plan.

PARTNERS



East Wimmera Health Service, Buloke Shire Council, Mallee Track Health & Community Service, Women's Health Loddon Mallee, Wycheproof Community Resource Centre

METHOD

The Buloke Family Violence Prevention Project built upon a collective impact approach and used a co-design philosophy to work together to reduce the rate of family violence incidents, and create an equal and respectful Buloke community. The project was led by SMPCP Partnership Prevention Project Officer, who coordinated all aspects of the project including establishing the Working Group and facilitating meetings, community consultation and engagement, developing, implementing and evaluating the action plan, supporting partners and establishing new networks to deliver project initiatives.

With a strong prevention focus and gender equity approach, the project has enabled the community to build their inclusiveness and resilience through the implementation of a shared localised Action Plan.

OUTCOMES

The Project has successfully created conversations within communities about family violence and helped to identify the gender drivers and link of gender inequality to family violence.

The project has also strengthened local partnerships, built connections with new agencies and created links with organisations to local service providers. The project has also created communication platforms for local agencies to promote key messages of gender equality and respect.

Action Plan initiatives have reached a large portion of the Buloke population targeting multiple settings:

- ‘North Central Football League Stands Up to Family Violence’ prevention clip - reached over 50,000 people online.
- Gender neutral book donation to early learning centres – 20 early learning centre facilities received a shared of 180 books
- ‘Why Can’t I? Real Talk about Equality’ event – 150 community members attended
- Buloke United Walk – 240 community members attended
- Buloke Workplace Gender Equality Workshop – 15 people attended from 7 organisations

The establishment of the *Buloke Wellbeing and Equity Network* confirms the commitment of the Project Working Group to continue to address family violence and implement the Action Plan.

Working Group members have experienced a change in their attitude towards gender equality and family violence:

“I have become a lot more informed and have used this information to develop awareness and programs in the community and started many conversations” **Project Working Group member**

“It has helped me identify that gender stereotyping is an enabler of family violence. That a multiagency, social clubs and education approach, laying of messaging and working together is very important” **Project Working Group member**