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CITY COUNCIL

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GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN POLICY

Date first adopted: 24 July 2018

Date last amended: 2 September 2025

Next review date: July 2029

Policy owner: Director Community Wellbeing

Approved by: Council

Policy category: Category 2- Discretionary Council Policy

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PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN POLICY

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1. TITLE

Prevention of Family Violence and Violence Against Women Policy

2. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to outline the principles guiding how Council will meet its obligations to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women before it happens.

3. BACKGROUND

Council is a committed community leader in the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women. Council recognises that violence against anyone, in any form, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Council acknowledges that family violence can happen to anyone, however, predominantly affects women and children, often occurring in the home and witnessed by children and that all forms of violence against women are serious prevalent, and preventable, abuses of human rights. Family violence and violence against women extends beyond physical and sexual violence and may involve emotional or psychological abuse and economic abuse.

Council has a role in influencing behaviours and attitudes and contributing to a violence-free community by promoting non-violent, equitable and respectful gender relations.

This Policy is reflective of our strong commitment to:

- promote an understanding of the underlying gendered drivers and causes of family violence and violence against women.
- create a safe, gender equitable, respectful and inclusive community through our policies and practices.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to Councillors, all Council employees, contractors, agency staff and volunteers. It sets out the guiding principles of Council's role, responsibility and actions in the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women in our community. Council staff impacted by family violence are supported by Council's *Family Violence Support Policy* and the *Family Violence Resource Kit*.

5. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Council	Glen Eira City Council
Family violence	also known as domestic violence/abuse or intimate-partner violence, is defined under the <i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)</i> as behaviour by a person towards a family member that is any of the following: physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive; threatening; coercive; or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person. It also includes behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of such violence. Family violence can look very different depending on the type of relationship and the cultural context in which it occurs. It may be shaped by cultural norms,

intergenerational dynamics, or community expectations, and can occur in any family or family-like relationship.

The *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)* outlines the following examples of family violence:

- Assaulting or causing personal injury to a family member, or threatening to do so.
- Sexually assaulting a family member or engaging in another form of sexually coercive behaviour, or threatening to do so.
- Intentionally damaging a family member's property, or threatening to do so.
- Unlawfully depriving a family member of their liberty, or threatening to do so.
- Causing or threatening to cause the death of, or injury to, an animal (whether or not the animal belongs to the family member) to control, dominate or coerce the family member.

Family member	- can mean a person who is, or has been, a spouse, domestic partner, or in an intimate relationship; a dependent including children and step-children; a parent or step-parent; a sibling or step-sibling; a relative or member of an extended family; or involved in intergenerational, family-like, or carer relationships.
Gendered drivers	<p>- describe 'the specific elements or expressions of gender inequality that are most strongly linked to violence against women. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life. The gendered drivers are the underlying causes required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.' (<i>Victorian State Government</i>)</p> <p>There are four factors that evidence has shown most consistently drive violence against women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condoning of violence against women. • Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity. • Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control. • Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life. (<i>OurWatch</i>)
Gender inequality	'A major driver of family violence in our community is gender inequality – that is, the unequal distribution of power, resources, and choice based on someone's gender identity.' (<i>Safe and Equal</i>)
Gendered violence against women	- is violence that is specifically 'directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.' (<i>OurWatch</i>)
Intersectionality	<p>- recognises that the causes of disadvantage or discrimination do not exist independently, but intersect and overlap with gender inequality, magnifying the severity and frequency of the impacts. (<i>The Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector</i>)</p> <p>A person may experience overlapping forms of discrimination or disadvantage that may be compounded based on attributes that include, but are not limited to, age, religion, Indigenous identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, isolation, cultural and linguistic background, disability, addiction and mental illness. (<i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>)</p>
Primary prevention of violence against women	'A primary prevention approach addresses the underlying, gendered drivers of violence against women. The aim of primary prevention is to stop violence before it happens.' (<i>OurWatch</i>)

Examples include:

- promoting gender equality.
- education on respectful relationships.
- challenging community attitudes towards family violence and violence against women.

Staff	- means Council employees, contractors, agency staff and volunteers.
Violence against women	<p>- '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.' (<i>Article 1, UN Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women 1993</i>)</p> <p>It encompasses not only family violence but 'all forms of violence, harassment, abuse and coercive control that women (and often young women and girls) experience, violence that is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men (both known and trusted, and strangers). These forms include physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, financial and technology-facilitated violence or abuse (including image-based abuse), and stalking.' (<i>OurWatch</i>)</p>
Women	Includes women, girls and all people who identify and live as a woman/girl, including cisgender and trans women/girls, and may also include people who identify as gender diverse or gender non-confirming.

6. POLICY

Council recognises that family violence and violence against women are experienced differently across diverse communities, relationship types and cultural contexts. This policy is structured to provide a strong foundation for Council operations that is responsive, adaptable and inclusive of the unique and nuanced ways violence can manifest.

- 6.1 Council understands that local government has a specific, important and unique role in the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women.
- 6.2 Council's approach to family violence and violence against women focuses on primary prevention. Primary prevention works to prevent violence before it occurs by addressing the underlying causes and gendered drivers that lead to family violence and violence against women.
- 6.3 Council will work towards preventing family violence and violence against women as an employer, as a leader and decision-maker, as a connector of the community and as a service provider. It will progress primary prevention and promote gender equality in both the workplace and the community and will work with people of all gender identities and cultural backgrounds to achieve this.
- 6.4 Council will take an intersectional approach and consider the ways in which gender inequalities for women and girls intersect with other attributes. Experience of multiple inequalities can result in an increased risk of experiencing family violence and can expose overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation, creating different or compounded experiences of discrimination while also affecting the perpetration and experience of violence.
- 6.5 Council will educate and build the capacity of staff to model respectful and equitable behaviour, and to recognise, respond to, and support those in the community (including Council employees) impacted by family violence and violence against women. This includes strengthening staff expertise and knowledge to better identify the varied ways family violence can present across different relationship types and cultural contexts, acknowledging the nuanced experiences of diverse groups such as First Nations peoples, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, younger people, and people living with disability.

- 6.6 Council will seek advocacy opportunities where possible that will strengthen efforts to prevent family violence and violence against women.
- 6.7 Council will maintain its commitment to address family violence and violence against women through the inclusion of commitments and actions for its prevention within Municipal public health and wellbeing planning and seek opportunities to include actions in other key Council strategies and plans.
- 6.8 Council will educate and inform Glen Eira's diverse community on family violence and violence against women prevention, including promoting respectful relationships, challenging harmful gender norms, raising awareness of the different forms family violence can take across cultures and relationship types, and providing information on support services and legal protections under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)*.
- 6.9 Council will work in partnership with the Australian and Victorian Governments, family violence services, prevention agencies, specialist community organisations and other community services to prevent family violence and violence against women.

7. LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

This Policy has been assessed as being compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*.

In line with the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*, a Gender Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy.

8. ASSOCIATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS

Advocacy Policy

Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct

Community Engagement Policy

Community Safety Plan 2022-2025

Community Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

Council Plan 2021-2025

Equal Opportunity & Respectful Workplace Behaviour Policy

Family Violence Support Policy

Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021-2025

Prevention of Sexual Harassment Policy

9. EXTERNAL REFERENCES/RESOURCES

Australian Government:

[Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2022-2032*](#)

[Our Watch, *Change the Story: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women and Their Children in Australia* \(second edition\)](#)

Victorian Government:

[Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

[Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)

[Family Violence Protection Act 2008 \(Vic\)](#)

[Gender Equality Act 2020 \(Vic\)](#)

[Municipal Association of Victoria - Local Government Guide for Preventing Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women 2023](#)

[Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 \(Vic\)](#)

[State of Victoria, Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2024-2026](#)

[Victorian Government – Free from Violence: Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence](#)

Regional:

[Women’s Health in the South East, Promoting Respect & Equity Together 2021-2025, A Strategy to End Gendered Violence in the Southern Metropolitan Region](#)

10. APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT HISTORY

Date amended	Description of amendments	Approved by
July 2025	Updates in line with contemporary State frameworks and relevant legislation. Removal of operational elements supported by our strategic planning.	Council



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