

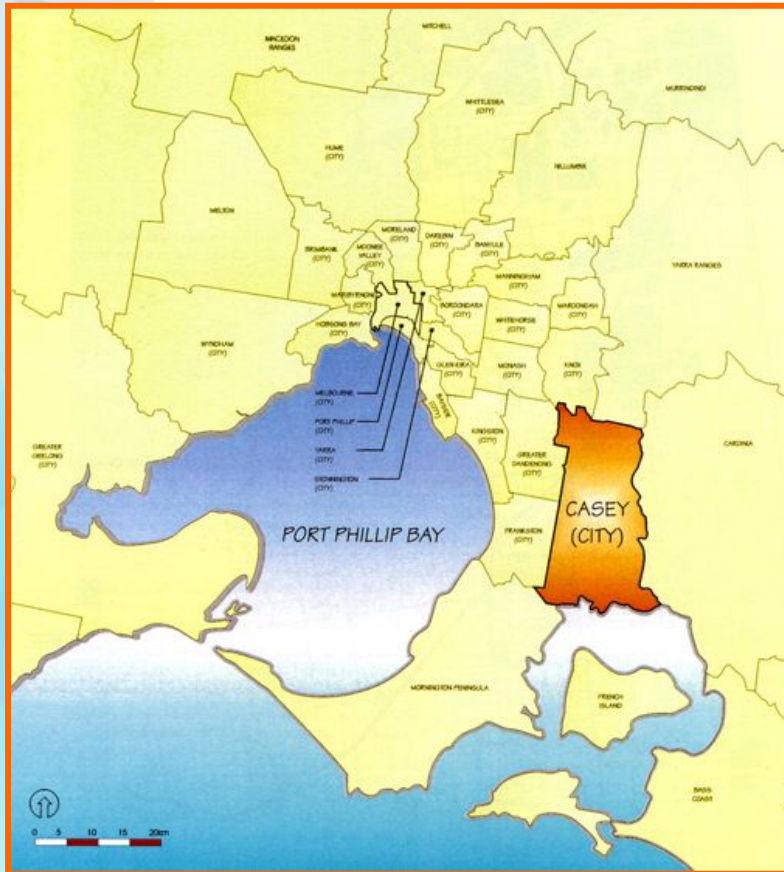
# Local Laws - Preventing Violence Against Women

**Rod Bezanovic Team Leader Local Laws**

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# City of Casey Profile



- Situated 40km south east of Melbourne
- Victoria's largest municipality 400 km<sup>2</sup>
- Current population 260,000 growing at 120 per week, 6000 per year
- Future population projected at 450,000 by 2036

# Casey Demographic

- Over 88,000 residents were born overseas
  - Top 4 countries: United Kingdom, Sri Lanka, India and New Zealand
  - Top 4 languages other than English: Sinhalese, Dari, Arabic and Hindi
- 29% of Casey's population is aged under 18  
19,962 children are aged 0-4 years
- 126,931 women live in the municipality

# What is Family Violence?

- Family Violence is a pattern of behavior where one person (usually male) in an intimate relationship attempts by physical or psychological means to dominate and control the other (usually female). Family Violence is typified by the victim feeling fearful
- Family Violence is recognised as gender based
- Family violence affects the entire community and it occurs in all areas of society regardless of geographic location, socio-economic status, age, culture and ethnic background, religious belief, sexual preference and ability/disability

# Family Violence in the Community

- One in three Australian women will experience physical or sexual assault from a male in their lifetime
- Violence is the leading contributor to illness, injury and preventable death for Victorian Women aged 15 – 44 years Economic costs: (\$13.6 billion in Australia)
- More than one Australian woman every week is killed by her partner or ex partner
- Children are victims of family violence including being used as weapons of control and being subjected to direct harm to punish the woman
- Where family violence is occurring in a home, it is likely that animal abuse is also occurring

# Family Violence in Casey

- The City of Casey has the highest incidences of family violence reports to Police in the state with 3172 callouts in 2011-2012.
- 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
- 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
- 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
- Recently established the Casey Men's Action Team - preventing violence against women:  
Team Leader Local Laws is a foundation member

# 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



# Local Laws – How Practise Changed

- Partnership formed with Councils Health Promotion Team and Victoria Police
- 2 hour training session for all Local Laws officers in family violence prevention
- 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

# Model continued

- Male Officers wearing white ribbons in the community
- Officers have Family Violence information to give to community members when required
- Officers are acting as active bystanders
- Safety of women is always a paramount consideration when actions are undertaken

# What Did We See?

- 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
- Improved partnerships: Collaboration with Police in field to support Local Laws
- Model for other Councils/Local Laws
- Easily applied to other Council service areas

# Thank You!

- Any questions?
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