

FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

WHAT IS REQUIRED

1. People who are experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) have immediate access to safe accommodation for themselves and their dependents, and the necessary support services to maintain a safe and secure future.
2. Perpetrators are provided with programs to prevent the risk of recurrence of behaviour.

Specifically what is required is:

- Provision of land, or a facility, within the northern suburbs of the City that includes
 - development of short-medium term supported accommodation for individuals (and their dependents) experiencing FDV; this facility should also include crisis accommodation
 - culturally appropriate wrap-around support services for people at risk of or experiencing FDV including a dedicated children's FDV counselling service
 - funding for capital and operating costs
 - facilitation of the delivery of the services
- Perpetrator behavioural change programs in the City

BACKGROUND

The City's 2021 Community Wellbeing Survey found that 28% of respondents identified 'positive family relationships' as a community priority. The City has a high proportion of family households, many being from diverse cultures. This, together with the impact of COVID-19 and changing economic factors such as housing stress and rises in the cost of living, has highlighted concerns around

increasing risk factors for, and incidents of, family and domestic violence.

Feedback received by the City from local service providers indicates that there is unmet need for 24/7 refuge and appropriate support services in the northern suburbs for people at risk of, or experiencing, family and domestic violence. Perpetrators requiring court mandated behaviour change programs, and those voluntarily seeking this service, are unable to access this locally creating risk of non-attendance and commitment to the program.

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 is a collaborative Australian, state and territory strategy that recognises the need for appropriately resourced and coordinated frontline services; access to crisis accommodation for women and children escaping violence; culturally safe and accessible services that support long-term recovery; and perpetrator interventions being available in community settings¹. Priorities of the Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020-2030 include ensuring victims have immediate, early and ongoing access to safety and are supported to recover; and connecting perpetrators with interventions to support behaviour change.

The State Government is supporting the establishment of FDV hubs in Kalgoorlie, Mirrabooka, Broome and Armadale and announced \$34.4 million for a range of FDV measures in the 2022-23 State Budget; however none of the funded facilities and services are in the north west sub-region of Perth. While the City welcomes the news that additional Family Safety Officers will be phased in over three years to enhance existing Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams (two of the 34 allocated will go to the Joondalup FDVRT), there is still a need for a substantial and integrated service response to meet the needs of the City's large and growing population.

KEY ISSUES

Within the City, there is high demand for FDV services that is unable to be met by local service providers; specifically crisis and short to medium term supported accommodation, wrap-around services including children's counselling, and perpetrator behavioural change programs.

Under the WA government FDV refuge framework which delivers metropolitan services in north, east and south

'corridors', the Patricia Giles Centre for Non-Violence (PGCNV) is the lead agency for the north corridor and provides a 24/7 refuge accommodation service based in Joondalup². This has capacity for seven families with a maximum intended stay of 48 hours; the average client is a mother and three children. The PGCNV also operates refuge accommodation in Ridgewood that is intended to provide a maximum stay of three months. Currently the service is highly over extended with two families needing to share a two-bedroom unit and with many families staying for 9-12 months. PGCNV also coordinates a roster of auxiliary services at Wandjoo Place based in Merriwa. The PGCNV reports demand exceeding supply across all of their services in the northern corridor.

Service data for the City provided by the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre (NSCLC) for 2021/22 shows that family and domestic violence was impacting over 44% of City residents who sought their assistance. WAPOL data for the Joondalup Police District shows significant increases between 2007 and 2021 in offences of Assault (Family), Threatening Behaviour (Family) and Breach of Family Restraining Order³.

Anglicare WA has delivered FDV services to support people residing in the North West sub-region of Perth since 2006. In 2017, they commenced delivering Connect and Respect, a state-wide, court-mandated, 4-month therapeutic, behaviour change program in partnership with Communicare. This region has the greatest number of referrals in WA; on average 130 referrals are received per annum from the courts. Acknowledging the impact this has on children in the region, Anglicare redirected discretionary reserves to fund their Young Hearts Children's Counselling Program for victim-survivors of family violence. From June 2020 to June 2022, 550 children experiencing family violence were supported in this region through Anglicare programs, with clients as far as Yanchep accessing this service. With no dedicated funding source for the Young Hearts children's counselling program beyond 2022, this program has ceased to operate and the demand far outstrips resourcing.

ALLIANCES

Primary Advocate:

- City of Wanneroo

Secondary Advocates:

- Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing
- WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS)
- WA Police Joondalup District

- WA Department of Communities Joondalup District
- WA Police and Community Youth Centres (PCYC)
- Patricia Giles Centre for Non-Violence
- Anglicare WA

ROLE

City of Wanneroo role is to:

- Advocate for the asks in partnership with others
- Provide localised data and other relevant information
- Act as a connector to local organisations and stakeholders

The State Government's role is to:

- Provide land
- Fund and maintain a suitable facility
- Fund operations
- Appoint provider(s) to deliver required services

CURRENT STATUS

Existing services are at capacity and no further funding has been committed to meet the level of demand in this region. There is no identified City-managed Crown land that would meet the size and location required for the facility.

EXPECTED COSTS

- Estimated \$6-8 million building costs for construction of a purposed designed 24/7 FDV refuge accommodation and services facility and ongoing operational funding commitment of \$1.5M per annum.
- Estimated \$700,000 per annum for voluntary and mandatory men's behaviour change program
- \$300,000 per annum ongoing operational funding for a dedicated children's FDV counselling service.

FUNDING STATUS

No land or funding has been allocated to this project to date.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on this project contact:
connectwanneroo@wanneroo.wa.gov.au

¹ National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

² Confirmed through conversation with Nicole Leggett, Executive Director, Office for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence on 20 July 2022

³ WAPOL Time Series Data retrieved from <https://www.police.wa.gov.au/crime/crimestatistics/#/>