

# RESEARCH SUMMARY

## Gender equity in Hobsons Bay



**Our health is determined by much more than genes and lifestyle decisions. It is determined by the circumstances in which we are born, grow, live, work and age.**

Through its various functions, local governments play a major role in protecting, improving and promoting the health of its residents. As the closest level of government to the community, local governments work to understand the populations they serve and ensure all residents are provided with an environment which allows everyone to equally achieve the best personal health and wellbeing possible.

This research summary is aimed at providing information about the social and environmental conditions that affect the health and wellbeing of Hobsons Bay residents.

### **How does gender impact our health and wellbeing?**

The World Health Organisation identifies gender as the factor most likely to dictate position or status in society, and therefore one of the most powerful drivers of health and wellbeing inequality.

Gender equity recognises that within all communities, women, men and gender diverse people have different needs, benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities (Gender Equity in Local Government Partnership, 2012).

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women, men and gender diverse people by recognising diversity and disadvantage and

directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equitable outcomes for all (Gender Equity in Local Government Partnership, 2012).

It is understood that the adherence to rigid gender stereotypes and an unequal balance of power between men and women can result in men experiencing greater elements of control, both physical and psychological, which in turn can lead to violence against women.

Violence against women is seen as the worst outcome of gender inequity. Male intimate partner violence contributes more to the disease burden for women aged 18 to 44 years than any other well-known risk factors like tobacco use, high cholesterol or use of illicit drugs (Webster, 2016 cited in VicHealth, 2016).

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Research has found that a substantial proportion of lesbians (23 per cent) and gay men (26 per cent) reported verbal abuse in the past 12 months. These rates increase significantly for trans women (37 per cent) and trans men (47 per cent) (AHRC, 2014).

Women and girls with a disability are twice as likely as women and girls without a disability to experience violence throughout their lives (Women With Disabilities Australia et al, 2013).

The ABS Personal Safety Survey (2016) found there is an inverse relationship between age and the experience of violence. Twelve per cent of women aged 18 to 24 years experienced violence in the previous twelve months, compared to four per cent of 35 to 44 year old women and 1.2 per cent of women aged 65 years and over.

In 2014-15, the national hospitalisation rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence-related assaults was 530 females per 100 000 female population, 32 times the rate for non-Indigenous females after adjusting for differences in population age structures (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision, 2016).

Achieving gender equity improves the economic and social environment. For example, the Grattan Institute has found that a six per cent increase in female participation in the workforce (which would bring Australia to similar levels to Canada) would increase Australia's Gross Domestic Product by \$25 billion (Daley et al, 2012).

Historically, women have had lower participation in education and work. As a result, the opportunities to shape the way they live have been restricted. In addition, women have traditionally been seen as carers and this has extended beyond the care of their own children to the care of other family members (AHRC, 2017).

### What do we know about gender equity in Hobsons Bay?

At present there is limited information collected for gender diverse people therefore the data presented here refers to female and male.

Data from the 2016 Census<sup>1</sup> shows that there are 45,146 females in Hobsons Bay, comprising 50.9 per cent of the population. Twenty-eight per cent are aged 0 to 24 years, 44 per cent are aged 25 to 44 years and 28 per cent are aged 55 years and over. These proportions are largely consistent with the Greater Melbourne average, with the exception of 12 to 24 year olds (13.2 per cent in Hobsons Bay and 16.2 per cent in Greater Melbourne).

Approximately 31 per cent of females in Hobsons Bay (or 13,941 people) were born overseas. Just under 19 per cent of females born overseas (2,624 people) are newly arrived to Australia, having arrived between January 2011 and August 2016.

In relation to English language proficiency, a higher proportion of females (5.5 per cent, or 2,497 people) speak another language and English not well or not at all, compared to males (4.2 per cent or 1,841 people).

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all statistics in this section are sourced from ABS, Census of Population and Housing

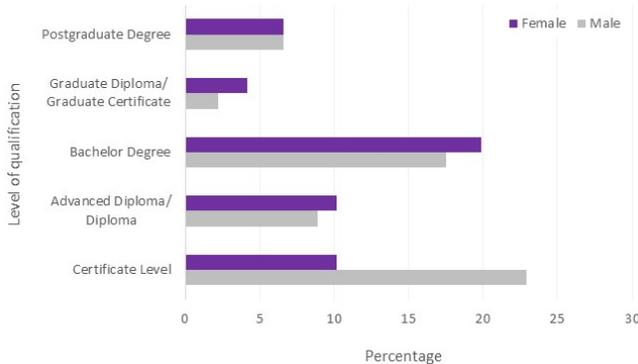
(2016), compiled and presented in profile.id, <https://profile.id.com.au/hobsons-bay>

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In 2015, it was estimated that 18.9 per cent of females in Hobsons Bay had a disability. The rate of disability increases with age, with 53 per cent of females aged 70 to 84 years and 81 per cent of females aged 85 years and over having a disability. Of those females with a disability, 3,147 people (35 per cent) had a profound disability, five points higher than the rate for males (ABS, 2015). This likely reflects the higher proportions of women in older age groups.

A total of 57.4 per cent of women in Hobsons Bay have completed Year 12 or an equivalent, compared to 55.3 per cent of men. However there are differences when post school qualifications are considered. Figure 1 shows that a higher proportion of women aged 25 years or above are more likely to possess a university level qualification (31 per cent) than men (26 per cent). However men are more likely to possess certificate level qualifications which likely reflects a higher propensity to work in trade related occupations.



**Figure 1: Level of post school qualifications, persons aged 25 years and over, by sex - 2016**

A total of 4,165 women (33.6 per cent) in the 20 to 39 year old age group care for their own children, compared to 2,947 men (23.4 per

cent). Furthermore, 3,110 or 81.5 per cent of single parent families were headed by women compared to 710 or 18.5 per cent headed by men.

The full-time average weekly earnings of Australian women are 15.3 per cent less than equivalent earnings for men, which is equivalent to 85 cents in every dollar (WGEA, 2018). In 2013-14, the average amount of superannuation savings for males aged 15 and over was \$98,535 compared to \$54,916 for females. This disparity decreased over the two years to 2015-16 (ASFA, 2017).

Figure 2 shows that females aged 15 years or over do more unpaid domestic work than males, with almost 30 per cent of females doing more than 15 hours per week, compared to just nine per cent of males.



**Figure 2: Proportion of unpaid hours of domestic work, by sex - 2016**

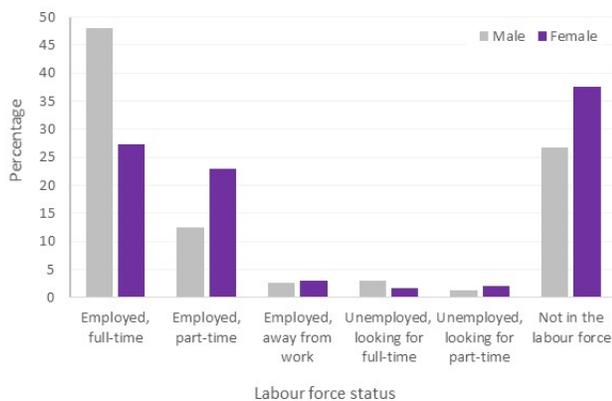
Women also provide more unpaid assistance to a person with a disability (14.3 per cent) compared to men (9.8 per cent).

There are significant differences in the labour force status of women and men. Figure 3

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shows that men aged 15-64 years are more likely to be employed full-time (48.1 per cent), compared to just 27.3 per cent of women. Conversely, women are more likely to be employed part-time (22.9 per cent) compared to men (12.6 per cent). Unemployed looking for full-time work, more men were looking for full time work compared to women, who were predominantly looking for part time.



**Figure 3: Labour force status, by sex - 2016**

Additionally, more women (37.5 per cent) are not in the labour force, when compared to men (26.8 per cent). Of those who are unemployed looking for work, more men were looking for full time work compared to women, who were predominantly looking for part time.

Women and men also to have different occupations, as shown in Figure 4. Women are more likely to be employed in professional occupations, as well as community and personal care workers, and clerical and administrative workers. Compared to males they are far less likely to be employed as

technicians and trades workers, and machinery operators and drivers.



**Figure 4: Occupation, by sex - 2016**

In relation to physical and emotional wellbeing, police call outs for family incidents<sup>2</sup> have increased in Hobsons Bay over the past decade, as they have in many parts of metropolitan Melbourne.

Data from the Victorian Crime Statistics Agency shows that the number of call outs for family incidents reached a peak of 1,146 in 2015-16. However since that time it has decreased slightly, reaching 971 in 2017-18. Despite this, the raw numbers remain high and represent a key challenge to gender equity.

### What Government policies relate to gender equity issues?

#### International

#### The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

interfamilial-related sexual offences, and child abuse are reported to police.

<sup>2</sup> As defined by the Crime Statistics Agency, a 'family incident' is an incident attended by Victoria Police where a Risk Assessment and Risk Management Report was completed. The report is completed when family violence incidents,

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**Against Women** was ratified by Australia in 1983. The convention includes a comprehensive program to eliminate discrimination against women in public and private life. It is a mechanism for holding governments to account for ensuring all women in their community are treated equitably.

The United Nations' **Sustainable Development Goals** is a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. It includes 17 goals that universally apply to all countries. Goal five sets a range of targets for gender equality, including ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls, eliminating all forms of violence, and recognising and valuing unpaid care and domestic work.

### Commonwealth

**Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012** (which replaced the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*) promotes gender equality in employment, supports employers to remove barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce, and promotes the elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender in relation to employment.

The Commonwealth Government's **Office for Women** is located in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It works across government to deliver policies and programs to advance gender equality and improve the lives of Australian women. Current initiatives include grants and funding, leadership programs, international forums and women's safety projects.

**Towards 2025: An Australian Government strategy to boost women's workforce participation** addresses five key areas for action over the next decade: child care, workplace diversity and flexibility, jobs of the future, economic security, and financial incentives. It also highlights six particular groups of women who face additional or different barriers to participating in the workforce: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, mature age women, rural and regional women, women with a disability, and young women.

**The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022** provides the framework for action by the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to reduce violence against women and their children. It is comprised of four actions plans designed to build on each other over the 12 year period.

### State

The Victorian Government's **Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy** provides the vision that 'all Victorians live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness'. It sets out a framework for enduring and sustained action over time, progressively building the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and deliver gender equality.

The Victorian government committed to implement all 227 of the recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. **Ending Family Violence: Victoria's**

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**Plan for Change** is a 10 year plan which sets out the Victorian government's approach to stopping violence, and includes the creation of a prevention agency with enduring funding.

**Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women** is a key part of the Victorian government's 10 year plan Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change (see above). It aims to address the poor attitudes and behaviours leading to violence in the home.

The **Ministerial Council on Women's Equality** is a group of high profile, influential women who provide expert advice to the Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence.

**Victorian Local Government Women's Charter**, led by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), encourages greater participation of women in local government as Councillors and senior managers in recognition of the ongoing underrepresentation of women in these roles. Victorian local governments (including Hobsons Bay) have signed up to the three principles of the Charter: gender equity, diversity, and active citizenship.

VicHealth provide additional state direction with the **Gender equality, health and wellbeing strategy 2017-19**. VicHealth's vision for gender equality is a Victoria where everyone can realise their full potential for health and wellbeing, regardless of gender. VicHealth's work is about finding and delivering solutions that build the social, economic, political and cultural foundations that enable women and girls to participate fully and equally in all aspects of their lives.

**Gender Equity Victoria Strategy Plan 2018-2021** was developed by Gender Equity Victoria (GenVic), Victoria's peak body for gender equity, women's health and the prevention of violence against women. The Strategy includes four key priorities: advance gender equity, promote women's sexual and reproductive health, prevent violence against women, and build an influential and sustainable peak body.

### Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne

Led by Women's Health West, **Preventing Violence Together 2030: Western Region Strategy to Prevent Violence against Women** is a regional partnership and strategy that guides the primary prevention of men's violence against women across Melbourne's west. Hobsons Bay City Council is a partner organisation.

**Action for Equity: a sexual and reproductive health strategy for Melbourne's west 2018-2022** has been developed to address the social determinants of sexual and reproductive health inequities experienced by a range of communities in the region. The plan is supported by a collaborative partnership of 14 organisations, including women's and community health services, local and state government, ethno-specific organisations, a primary care partnership and primary health network.

### What is Council's role in relation to gender equity?

Council has been addressing issues relating to the prevention of violence against women since it was first included as a priority area within its Health and Wellbeing Plan 2007–11.

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Council's **Gender Equity Policy Statement 2014** outlines Council's role in addressing the social determinants of health through a gender lens, achieving an equitable community for all women, men and gender diverse people. Through the implementation of the policy statement, Council works towards 11 strategic directions related to organisational development, service delivery, partnerships and advocacy, communications, economic development, promotion of women in leadership, sport and recreation opportunities, libraries, community centres and cultural activities, buildings and community infrastructure, land use planning and design, as well as local laws.

Council is committed to identifying how it can better understand its leadership role in relation to factors such as gender equity. This includes gender diverse people who do not fall within the traditional binary notions of sex and gender.

**Updated 2018**

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