

Background to the MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network

The Network was established as the MAV Preventing Violence Against Women Network in mid-2010, and has convened quarterly since. The MAV Preventing Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women Project, including this Network, has continued to enjoy the expertise and financial and in-kind support of the State Government since 2011. In 2020 the name of the Network was changed to the Gender Equality (GE) and Preventing Violence Against Women (PVAW) and all forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Network to better reflect the increased attention to gender equality in the policy and practice context of local government's work and the role of people of all genders in preventing violence and achieving equality.

The name has again been changed in 2022 to the MAV Gender Equality and Preventing Family Violence and all forms of Violence Against Women Network (MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network) to more closely align with the Free from Violence Strategy which provides funding for this Network and other local government activity as a key pillar of the Second Free from Violence Action Plan. Whilst the MAV and this Network are not funded to directly support councils' implementation of the Gender Equality Act (2020) it is appreciated that this is an important aspect of councils' work in this space that cannot be separated from prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women. The Network endeavours to incorporate this consideration where resourcing allows.

The Network has seen increasing attendance and engagement from a growing number of councils since its inception and has actively sought to improve accessibility of the Network for regional, rural and remote councils by offering web conferencing alongside face-to-face meetings since 2018. Meetings have been held entirely online since June 2020 with an average of 58 participants per meeting between September 2021 and June 2022.

Statement of Commitment

The MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network is committed to the promotion of best practice in working towards gender equality and the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women. This includes a commitment to strive for inclusion, diversity and intersectional practice in all that we do, as well as continuous reflection on our own practices to identify personal and structural biases and privilege that may perpetuate inequality of all kinds.

Purpose of the MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network

The purpose of the Network is to provide opportunities for collaboration and leadership amongst the local government sector in gender equality, PFV and PVAW by:

- sharing knowledge, practice wisdom, successes and challenges of gender equality, PFV and PVAW work in local government
- building understanding of the role and responsibilities of local government in gender equality, PFV and PVAW to improve outcomes in local communities
- supporting members to develop skills and expertise in gender equality, PFV and PVAW through guest speakers and professional development opportunities
- providing networking and peer support opportunities to build the capacity of the sector

- encouraging local government partnerships with each other and other sectors to drive change
- providing a conduit for information exchange with regional partners via the Network Executive
- promoting intersectional approaches to our work.

Membership of the MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network

The Network is an inclusive group of local government organisational representatives, who are considered “full members”, and key stakeholders representing state-wide and regional interests (e.g. sector peak bodies, regional women’s health services, organisations representing the interests of diverse groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, multicultural women, women with a disability or LGBTIQ people, and government representatives), who are considered “associate members”. Councillors are also able to join as associate members.

Full members are the primary target audience for this Network, while associate members are important for promoting leadership, strong partnerships and the development of best practice of GE, PFV and PVAW work in local government. Further information about full and associate membership with regards to meetings is detailed below.

People wishing to join the Network should contact the MAV PVAW Policy Adviser.

Membership of the MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network MS Team

The MAV GE, PFV and PVAW Network MS Team is a professional online space established in March 2020 to provide council Network members with the opportunity to connect and share between meetings. The MS Team is governed by this Terms of Reference and will be intermittently monitored by the MAV. Posts that are not relevant to the purpose of the group, are unprofessional or disrespectful will be deleted and the person posting may be removed from the platform.

The views expressed on the MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network MS Team are those of the individual contributors, and they do not represent the views of the MAV. The MAV is not able to verify the accuracy or sufficiency of the information posted by individual contributors.

Network Executive

The Network Executive is elected every two years in September, with the option to step down after one year, and consists of a local government representative from each of the nine Victorian regions listed below. Potential candidates will be representatives from the local government sector who are active participants in the Network and their respective region. The Executive assists with meeting planning and supporting broader network activity.

Responsibilities of the Executive include:

- Chair quarterly Network meetings (rotated amongst members)
- Actively contribute to the development of meeting agendas
- Actively participate as a sector leader in the Network meetings and other Network activities
- Participate in meeting debriefs via web conferencing following quarterly meetings
- Liaise with and provide advice about sector needs to the MAV PVAW Policy Adviser as required
- Promote the Network as appropriate

- Act as a conduit for information to flow from the Network to regional prevention partners.

Administrative support for the Network will be provided by the MAV PVAW Policy Officer and MAV PVAW Support Officer.

Regional Executive representatives whose perspectives may be underrepresented such as people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people who are culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTIQ+ people are particularly encouraged to nominate.

Nominations should be sent to the MAV PVAW Policy Adviser by email: knagle@mav.asn.au.

For the period 2022-2024 there will be nine members of the Network Executive Group, corresponding to the nine regional women’s health services catchment areas in Victoria. The nominated members are:

Eastern Metro Prabha Bogoda Arachchige, Yarra Ranges Council	Western Metro Laura Coady, Moonee Valley City Council	Grampians Sandy Bevan, Northern Grampians Shire Council
Northern Metro Rebecca Tipper, Yarra City Council	Barwon South West Rhiannon Tanner, Greater Geelong City Council	Hume (Goulburn North East) Denise Pirko, Wangaratta rural City Council
Southern Metro Mandy Roche, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	Gippsland Emily Harris, Bass Coast Shire Council	Loddon Mallee Felicity Beissmann & Taylor Nally, Greater Bendigo City Council

If Executive positions become available before September 2024, the MAV Policy Adviser will contact the network key contacts for the relevant region and seek nomination from a replacement representative. If a position becomes available due to the representative taking extended leave (e.g. parental, bereavement or sick leave) the region may nominate an interim representative, however, the original representative will be offered their position back upon returning to their role in council.

At the end of the two-year term all Executive positions will become vacant to encourage rotation of leadership. Individuals who have previously held a position on the Executive can be renominated to represent their region.

If more than one Network member is nominated for a region the MAV Policy Adviser will work with nominees to negotiate an appropriate arrangement.

Meeting Records

The MAV will record meeting minutes to be circulated to the Network contact list after the meeting. Presentation slides will be available on the MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network webpage, with the presenter’s consent. When consent is provided, meeting presentations may be video and audio recorded and published online.

Meeting Protocol

The MAV GE, PFV and VAW Network meetings aim to provide a supportive and safe environment for members to discuss relevant issues and share information. As this may involve the discussion of

sensitive topics, participants agree to be mindful of confidentiality and respectful, low-impact disclosure related to specific workplaces, people etc. Participants also agree to:

- alert those at the meeting and the minute taker when sharing potentially sensitive information
- exercise judgement when discussing the content of the meetings outside the meeting space.

Meetings

Two 1.5 hour meetings are scheduled per quarter on the dates listed below, commencing at 10am. These will usually be held in an online format with the December meeting (ideally) held in person to reflect on and celebrate the year’s achievements. This will be a single three-hour meeting instead of two 1.5 hour meetings.

When there are two meetings in a quarter, the first meeting will be open to both full and associate members, while the second will be open to full members only. The purpose is to provide a space where local government representatives can share in-depth discussion and learnings focussed on their specific needs in local government. When there is a single meeting for a quarter, all members will be invited.

In person meetings may be subject to capacity limits per council/organisation. More than one person per council is welcome to attend online meetings.

The dates below are provided to ‘hold the date’ and assist with planning. Changes may be made by the Executive Group during planning.

Meeting dates remaining 2022:

- Wednesday 15 September (councils only)
- Wednesday 7 December 2022*
- Wednesday 14 December 2022 (councils only)*

Meeting dates for 2023:

- Thursday 9 March 2023
- Thursday 16 March 2023 (councils only)
- Wednesday 7 June 2023
- Wednesday 14 June 2023 (councils only)
- Thursday 7 September 2023
- Thursday 14 September 2023 (councils only)
- Wednesday 6 December 2023*
- Wednesday 13 December 2023 (councils only)*

Meeting dates for 2024:

- Wednesday 13 March 2024
- Wednesday 20 March 2024 (councils only)
- Thursday 13 June 2024
- Thursday 20 June 2024 (councils only)
- Wednesday 11 September 2024
- Wednesday 18 September 2024 (councils only)
- Thursday 12 December 2024*
- Thursday 19 December 2024 (councils only)*

**Please note: meetings in December will be combined as a single face to face end of year celebration, two dates have been listed to ‘hold the date’ in the event this is not possible.*