



Safe Respectful Workplaces Training for Organisations



The Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) was founded in 1856 and is the peak body for unions in Victoria. VTHC represents over 40 unions and over 450,000 workers in Victoria employed in every industry in the state.

In 2016 VTHC launched the **Stop Gendered Violence at Work Project** which aims to stop sexual harassment and other forms of gendered violence at work through community advocacy and workplace training. As part of this project VTHC has worked with and delivered family violence and gendered violence training at the Nillumbik Shire Council, City of Greater Dandenong and the Municipal Association of Victoria. We have also participated in and presented at numerous employer forums focusing on occupational health and safety.

Currently less than 2% of the Aussie craft trades workforce is female. Despite societal progress on gender equality, this number has remained stubbornly low for over 40 years. In 2019 the Minister for Training and Skills and for Higher Education for approved funding for **Women Onsite**.

Our mission at Women Onsite is to support committed women of all ages and from all walks of life into apprenticeships or traineeships. As the central contact point between unions, employers, policy and industry, we are uniquely positioned to drive positive change for Victorian Tradeswomen. We are committed to supporting women and employers to create real, measurable progress. As such, Women Onsite gives weight to practical elements that will support women's access to apprenticeships in areas such as construction, transport and renewable energy and other historically male dominated trades. Employers that choose to work with us know that a woman's place is in the trades and understand their role in ensuring she is a welcomed, supported and equally valued member of their workforce.

Part of our role in creating change is to work with the teaching systems and employers to build capacity and ensure they are meeting their OH&S requirements to keep women safe, including from gendered violence.

Gendered Violence is any behaviour, action, system or structure that causes physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm to a worker because of their sex, gender, sexual orientation or because they do not adhere to dominant gender stereotypes or socially prescribed gender roles.

Gendered violence includes:

- violence experienced by women because they are women;
- violence experienced by a person because they identify as LGBTIQ;
- violence experienced by a person because they don't conform to socially prescribed gender roles or dominant definitions of masculinity or femininity;
- witnessing gendered violence directed at someone else, such as a co-worker.

Gendered violence can be anything from a 'blond' or 'gay' joke in the lunch room; not being valued or respected in your role because you are a woman; through to sexual harassment and assault. It can be perpetrated by anyone regardless of their gender, sex or sexuality.

Examples of gendered violence may include: Offensive language and imagery; Intimidation / bullying; Stalking and intimidation; Rude gestures; Ostracism or exclusion; Put downs, innuendo/ insinuations; Sexual suggestions & unwanted advances; Physical assault, sexual assault and rape

Gendered violence causes physical and psychological harm and poses a significant risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of workers. The cost of this to a workplace is significant, including loss of morale, lower productivity, damage to organisational reputation, and costs associated with handling investigations and breaches of legislation.

Training Overview: Our training builds an understanding of gendered violence as a workplace health and safety issue. The training assists with identifying and implementing practical skills and strategies to effectively respond to incidents of gendered violence and prevent gendered violence at work from reoccurring.



The training draws on existing equal opportunity and discrimination legislation and policy, along with occupational health and safety legislation extending beyond this to focus on positive cultural change at all levels of the workplace. Training participants will develop an understanding of the drivers of sexual harassment and gendered violence and the ways workplace cultures can contribute to or help to



prevent gendered violence at work. Participants will also explore how they can ensure that their workplace is safe and inclusive for everyone including women and people who identify as LGBTIQ.

What the training covers:

- Our Organisation: Who are we? What do we do? What are our values?
- What kind of workplace do we want?
- What is gendered violence and why is it our business?
- Understanding the underpinning drivers of gendered violence and gender inequity
- The impact of gendered violence
- Planning for Change: What does best practice look like in our workplace?

How the training works:

- Facilitated conversations, practice, information, workplace case studies and evidence
- Challenging assumptions and learning from each other through respectful and structured discussions and activities
- Explore workplace policies and processes and consider ways to enhance or improve them
- What to do if you are feeling uneasy or uncomfortable; who to talk to and safety assurances

Maintaining Safety: It is common in most training sessions that at least one participant will disclose an experience of gendered violence or family violence. Ensuring the safety of participants is a key priority and the following steps will be taken in response to distressed participants or disclosures:

- Participants will be given referral information at the beginning of each training session
- At the beginning of each training session participants will be advised that if they feel upset/ distressed etc. that they can step out of the training room at any time
- Participants will be followed out by a trainer who will check in to see if they are ok
- Trainers will then check in with the participant again at the end of the day and make any necessary referrals.

Why Introduce Training?

Creating and maintaining an inclusive and supportive work environment is in the interests of all members of a workplace and the organisation as a whole. The costs of high turnover of staff are significant to an organisation, including the cost associated with loss of productivity, recruitment and training of new employees. Further, staff who feel that they are respected and valued at work are likely to demonstrate loyalty to their employer and a keenness to excel in their role which in turn can lead to a positive workplace in which staff enjoy safe, respectful and harmonious relationships.

Training Delivery: Our training is delivered by qualified trainers from the VTHC Team. Our trainers have expertise in prevention of violence against women and a wide range of experience in various aspects of gender equality, family and gendered violence and community and workplace training. Training takes place over 3-4 hours (preferably 10am-2pm) and each training group can consist of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 participants.

Focus Groups: As part of our tailored approach to training, we are also offering groups that have undertaken the initial half day training an opportunity to participate in a 1-hour focus group 4-6 weeks after the initial training session. This gives individuals the opportunity to feel supported to discuss what they learnt, and how they may have applied the skills and knowledge to their workplace.

More information

www.womenonsite.org.au

www.saferespectfulworkplaces.com

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