



02 December 2020

Bass Coast employers say yes to Respect

Four of the largest Bass Coast employers have teamed up to raise awareness about Gender-Based Violence supporting the Respect Women: 'Call It Out' campaign that coincides with the United Nations (UN) initiative 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, 25 November - 10 December 2020.

The theme of this year's campaign is 'Respect Is...' and messages of equality and respect will be highlighted by Bass Coast Shire Council, Westernport Water, Phillip Island Nature Parks and Bass Coast Health who have committed to use their collective influence to spread this important message and prevent family violence.

Bass Coast's 16 Days of Activism commenced with a virtual gathering of employees from across the four organisations as well as the South Coast Primary & Community Partnership with a whopping 191 attendees who came together to raise awareness of the impact of violence against women and to endorse the theme of Respect.

The Bass Coast community has come together in the past to support each other in a time of crisis, and is doing so again to raise awareness of violence against women, family violence and gender inequality because women and men deserve the same opportunities and outcomes in life.

Findings released by the Crime Statistics Agency paint a worrying picture of the impact coronavirus (COVID-19) has had on rates of family violence.

- The number of family violence incidents increased 11.7% percent between April-June 2020 compared to the same period in 2019
- Women aged 30-34 were most often recorded as victim-survivors in the April-June 2020 time period
- Males aged 35-39 made up the biggest demographic group of family violence perpetrators
- June 2020 saw the biggest monthly increase in family violence from 2019-20.

All 79 Victorian councils as well as 18 specialist non-government organisations are involved in the state-wide Respect Women: 'Call It Out' campaign. The Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV) and Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) are also partnering with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to provide their expertise.

Quotes Attributed to Ali Wastie CEO of Bass Coast Shire Council

"This is a time to actively promote gender equality and take a stand to end men's violence against women."

"We are working closely with our networks such as women's health services, family violence networks, libraries and local businesses to spread this important message and prevent family violence."

"Everyone deserves to be treated with respect, I like the old saying 'treat others the way you would like to be treated'," said Ms Wastie.



Quotes Attributed to Jan Child CEO of Bass Coast Health

“Playing a part in prevention of violence against women is important work for Bass Coast Health.”

“We know that family violence is a health issue and hospitals can be the first place women disclose. We are working to train all our staff to understand the importance of recognising and responding to women who are victims and survivors of family violence.”

“Prevention of family violence is our ultimate goal and we value the shared partnership in working toward prevention.”

Quotes Attributed to Peter Quigley Managing Director of Westernport Water

“Workplaces have a pivotal role to play in addressing the underlying causes of gender-based violence, by promoting respect and addressing gender inequality.”

“Gender inequality is one of the key drivers of violence against women and we have the opportunity to prevent this in the workplace and support our community to take action by calling out and responding to inappropriate behaviour, harmful comments and attitudes.” Alternative ending: employees by creating a safe and caring workplace culture.”

“Our commitment to prevent and respond to Gender-Based Violence is unwavering. As with any social change effort, they must be sustained and ongoing to make a difference.”

Quotes Attributed to Catherine Basterfield CEO of Phillip Island Nature Parks

“Violence against women is a terrible act of disrespect, and this lack of respect is heavily driven by gender inequality, which is entrenched in many facets of our lives.”

“We are working hard to promote gender equality in the workplace by challenging sexist gender norms and behaviours, and we hope that in doing so, we can support our staff and our community to identify and call out inappropriate behaviour, harmful comments and attitudes.”

For more information, visit the Bass Coast Shire website and the [Respect Victoria website](#).

If you are experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence, help is available. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 000.

You can access help 24/7 by calling [Safe Steps](#) on 1800 015 188 or by visiting the Safe Steps live chat function [safesteps.org.au](#).

If you are worried your behaviour might be harming your partner or family members, call the Men’s Referral Service on 1300 766 491 to speak to a specialist counsellor.

ENDS

Media enquiries to Manager Communications and Engagement on 1300 720 711 or email | communications@westernportwater.com.au

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn, the Bunurong People. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.