

The Fijian Community Association Victoria's
Tagimoucia Project

EMPOWERING THOSE WITHOUT VOICES



FCAV acknowledges and pays our respects to the traditional owners and custodians of the lands on which our organisation is located and where we conduct our activities, the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation. We also acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of country across Australia and pay our respects to them, their cultures and their Elders, past, present and future.

The Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc. is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.



Contents

Summary	4
About the Fijian Community Association Victoria	6
The Tagimoucia Project	8
Understanding family violence.....	14
The drivers of violence against women in the Fijian community.....	15
Preventing family violence.....	16
The Tagimoucia Project: feedback	18
Further resources and information	22
If you or someone you know needs help	22
How to get in touch with us.....	22
Acknowledgments	22

Summary



The purpose of this resource is to introduce the Fijian Community Association Victoria (FCAV) and to summarise the activities and learnings of the Tagimoucia Project, a family violence prevention project delivered by FCAV.

This resource:

- engages the reader through pictures and text
- is intended to start conversations within families about preventing family violence
- is limited to the thoughts and opinions of the project's participants, who are members of the Fijian community in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- in no way claims to be an educational resource about the prevention of family violence.

About the Fijian Community Association Victoria

The Fijian Community Association Victoria Inc. (FCAV) is a not-for-profit organisation that was established in 2014 in Melbourne, Australia.

FCAV was formed by a group of committed volunteers who were inspired to establish an association that unites Fijians living in Australia irrespective of their gender, age or religion.

The FCAV represents a significant cohort. Australia is home to the largest Fijian-born population outside of Fiji. According to the 2016 census, 61 thousand Fijian-born people call Australia home, with 10 thousand of those living in Victoria. As indicated by the 2011 and 2016 censuses, this number is rising.

Overview of FCAV's work

The Fijian Community Association Victoria provides community support services to Fijians living in Victoria, which include:

- providing education and training
- addressing spiritual and community welfare
- targeting families and young people
- working to improve the quality of life of Fijians living in Victoria.

FCAV also:

- advocates on behalf of the Fijian community to the relevant state and federal stakeholders
- raises awareness of the social and economic issues facing this community
- hosts social events throughout the year to celebrate Fijian culture, language and traditions.

FCAV's mission

FCAV's mission is to transform the Fijian community in Victoria by inspiring members of this community to open their minds, accept differences in the community, achieve their full potential, and to earn a reputation as a welcoming, caring, united, and respectful community.

More information about FCAV can be found at www.fcav.org.



LEFT: FCAV Tagimoucia project team receive training around Changing the picture prevention frameworks and intersectionality from Monique Hameed (Senior Practice Advisor, Intersectional Practice – Our Watch) and Audrey Walker (Senior Practice Advisor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women – Our Watch)

The Tagimoucia Project

PREVENTING
VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
AND CHILDREN
BEFORE IT
STARTS



Background of the Tagimoucia Project

The Fijian Community Association Victoria received funding in February 2021 to develop and deliver workshops, campaigns and projects that connect with the Victorian Fijian community, with the aim of breaking the taboo of family violence for Fijian women. This set of initiatives was called the Tagimoucia Project and was part of Our Watch’s Connected Communities: Leading Approaches to Prevention project funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS) under the National Plan of Action to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, Fourth Action Plan.

Our Watch CEO Patty Kinnersly has said the Connected Communities Project was about championing community-led approaches in order to broaden the reach and engagement of primary prevention work in Australia. This community-led approach to ending violence against women in Australia aims to broaden the reach of, and deepen women’s engagement with, primary prevention work. This work involves driving change to the practices, norms and structures that lead to violence against women and children.



“This funding is an opportunity for our grassroots organisation to explore the taboo topic of family violence with the Fijian women in our community. The project will help our association engage further with our women and hopefully help the participants to gain awareness of gender equity and the impact on family violence.”

Sylvia Coombe, President, Fijian Community Association Victoria

Purpose of the Tagimoucia Project

The Tagimoucia Project aims to start conversations within the Fijian community about the causes of family violence and the gendered drivers of violence (see page 15 of this booklet).

Tagimoucia Project workshop

One of the key deliverables of the Tagimoucia Project was to develop and deliver a workshop for Fijian women living in the west and southeast suburbs of Melbourne.

The aims of the workshop were:

1. to bring women together to connect to, and learn from, each other, and to give women the space to talk about their ideas and share what they know
2. to increase understanding of primary prevention and its role in stopping violence against women.

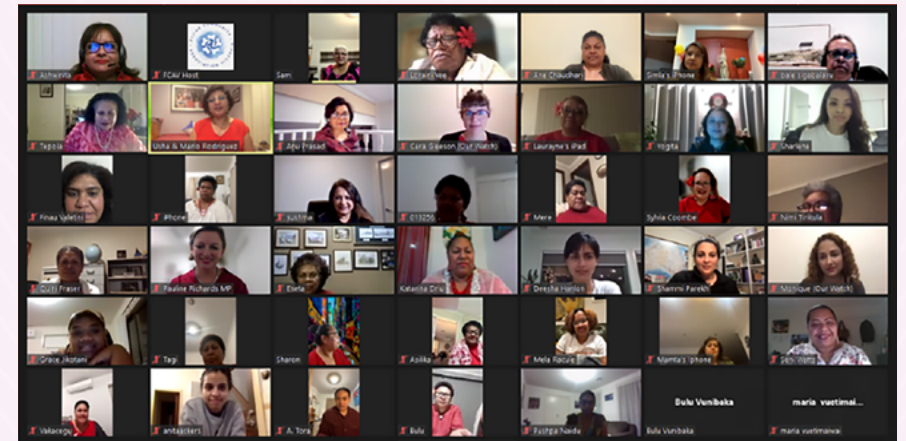
The workshop was held in Keysborough, Victoria, in February 2022, and was attended by 34 women.



Delivering the Tagimoucia Project in 2021

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions in Victoria in 2021, the delivery of the Tagimoucia Project had to be adapted:

- two zoom sessions were held with Fijian community leaders
- the project's launch event was held online
- two panel events and two 'talanoa' sessions were held online.



MEET THE PANEL – FIJIAN LADIES OF INSPIRATION



Panel Hosted by:
MC Trey



Special Guest:
Sassy



Jaya
Sharma



Lizzie
Wong



Safia
Sahib



Talei
Richards



Temalesi
Ratuyagone



Teresa
McGannon



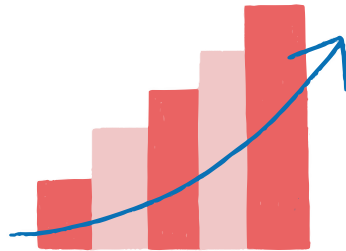
Yasbelle
Kerkow

Understanding family violence



ON AVERAGE, POLICE ATTEND A FAMILY VIOLENCE INCIDENT EVERY SIX MINUTES IN VICTORIA

CRIME STATISTICS AGENCY



FAMILY VIOLENCE IS INCREASING IN AUSTRALIA

VICTORIA POLICE



CHILDREN ARE PRESENT IN 30 PER CENT OF FAMILY VIOLENCE INCIDENTS ATTENDED BY POLICE

CRIME STATISTICS AGENCY



ONE WOMAN IS KILLED NEARLY EVERY WEEK DUE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

“Family violence is any threatening, coercive, dominating or abusive behaviour that occurs between people in a family, domestic or intimate relationship ... that causes the person experiencing the behaviour to feel fear ... Family violence is not just physical or sexual abuse”.

Safe Steps

The drivers of violence against women in the Fijian community

To prevent family violence, we need to uncover the root causes, or the drivers, of why family violence exists in communities.

People condoning violence against women

FOR EXAMPLE: Doing or saying nothing when they see family violence or when they know it is occurring.

Men’s control of decision-making and limiting women’s independence in public and private life

FOR EXAMPLE: Women having to ask permission from men before going out or spending money.

Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity

FOR EXAMPLE: Girls being brought up to do housework and boys being brought up to do outside work.

Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance, and control

FOR EXAMPLE: A group of boys whistling or calling out to girls as they walk past.

The ongoing impacts of colonisation for Indigenous people, and across Australian society

FOR EXAMPLE: The way our ancestors were treated by the colonists in Fiji has contributed to the way men have treated women for generations. There is often little understanding of the ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or value placed on the history, cultures, knowledge and perspectives of these communities.

The ongoing Impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities

FOR EXAMPLE: The impact of colonisation – which includes racism and the condoning of violence towards women – on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is similar to its ongoing impact on Fijian women across Australian society.

Preventing family violence

By addressing the root causes, or drivers, of family violence, we can prevent family violence occurring. This is known as the 'upstream' approach.

Preventing family violence:

- is everyone's responsibility; we all have a role to play
- is a long-term approach
- creates a safe and equal society for women and children
- involves social and community transformation.

"It is more important to prevent a problem rather than spending a lot of money, time, lives lost [and] children's lives destroyed in trying to correct the problem in the aftermath."

Victim Survivors' Advisory Council,
Rolling Action Plan workshop,
August 2020

Change the story and Changing the picture are Our Watch's evidence-based frameworks to guide a coordinated national approach to preventing violence against women and violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. They outline the essential actions needed at all levels of society – from individuals to schools, from workplaces to governments – to address these underlying drivers and stop the violence before it starts.

"To end violence against all women, a one sized fits all approach doesn't work."

Our Watch

RIGHT: Illustration adapted from Changing the Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.





“No one is better placed to take the reins than community leaders themselves. We must listen, support and work with diverse communities.”

Our Watch

These are some of the thoughts from our Fijian community leaders about why family violence still exists in the Fijian community:

“We need to remove the idea that males are more valuable than women.”

“The root cause of family violence is that Fijians are losing the traditional way of life.”

“There needs to be an importance put on roles in the family network.”

“I feel that the most common reason for a bias in information regarding domestic violence is fear, and our culture of respect that has always stopped us from reporting domestic violence to the appropriate bodies.”

Feedback

Participants of the panel and talanoa sessions

“I am grateful to be part of this project, especially with community involvement and having to share and talk about the common problems that we face as Pacific Islanders. We need to break the culture of silence and to speak up if you or someone you know are facing these problems in their household. It is a great opportunity to learn and educate yourself and also to be a helping hand to friends and family going through violence.”

“I want to thank the project team for giving me the opportunity to learn and know things about family violence.”

“How the youth are able to actively participate in bringing awareness to this program amongst youth in our community. I would like to know if this project will also be implemented back home in Fiji.”

“We are still skimming around in the top layer. It will be great to drill down and find out more.”

“First Nations women, migrant and refugee women face sexism, whilst also having to grapple with other forms of discrimination such as racism, and the impacts of colonisation, which can further increase their risk of experiencing violence.”

Our Watch

Workshop participants

What did you learn at the workshop?

“There are resources available to help women in abusive environments.”

“I have learnt in this program that domestic violence doesn’t just mean physically hitting somebody.”

“Speak up and reach out to someone that needs help.”

“Prevention starts at home, and the cultural norms we have grown up with and what we show our children.”

“We need equality, men and women. There should be no stereotypes. Unconditional love is also the main thing in the family to keep the peace.”



My participation in this project has led me to leave the workshop thinking about how I can help prevent family violence. I'm thinking of doing ...

"Resources such as where and who domestic violence victims can contact for help."

"Helping to educate families' friends. It's time to stand up for people who are experiencing all types of abuse."

"Making sure that my family know that violence is not tolerated, not to be silent about it, that they can talk openly [about] it, nobody has to [live] in silence but voice it."

"Learn to listen more to others, and when I see signs, I should try to support them and encourage them to seek professional help. Continue to take part in the Tagimoucia Project in the hope that I can help my community in some way."

"My vision is to see all these conversations and solutions to family violence materialise in action. The solutions are not simple, but men and children must be involved in the stride towards resolution. It is a long road, but the sooner action is taken the sooner we will make fruitful awareness. Action to address primary prevention to start with cultural and traditional changes, starting with education in this matter of our children."

What do you want future workshops to cover?

"How to start the conversation with family and friends."

"More discussions on how to reach out to support services, how to deal [with] or support someone going through domestic violence."

"What active action can be formulated to put solutions into action. Include men in discussions. Ask what the men think about their behaviour in general, about their actions and activities at home and in the upbringing of children and supporting their spouses."

"Cover more on family violence, because it needs a lot of time for discussion for those who have been affected."

"Learn from each other about how they tackle their problems successfully by sharing it. If we could learn how to do more handicrafts, Fijian weaving and cultural meke, especially when we have older Fijian ladies among us, that still have the skills. I noticed that all ages were present at the workshop, 20–39 , 40–59 and 60–75 years old. It was a great and successful workshop! We all enjoyed everything!! Thank you so much for making it successful and enjoyable. Look forward to more in the future."

Further resources and information

We encourage you to educate and empower yourself, your family and community by reading information about preventing family violence. For example, resources are available at www.ourwatch.org.au.








If you or someone you know needs help

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, family or domestic violence, **call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732** or visit **www.1800RESPECT.org.au**. **In an emergency, call 000.**

How to get in touch with us

Fijian Community Association Victoria Incorporated

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-  [youtube.com/channel/UC7FJNGWzXJKPcyCZw_LgBeg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7FJNGWzXJKPcyCZw_LgBeg)
-  [@vicfiji](https://twitter.com/vicfiji)

Acknowledgments

Vinaka vaka levu, dhanyavaad, and thank you to everyone who contributed in some way to this resource.

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