

Conversation starter

Amplifying the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Melbourne's east



16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2024

Why we developed this conversation starter

The [Together For Equality and Respect](#) partnership in Melbourne's east are promoting conversations focusing on action for equality and respect for all women, as part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

The messages, questions and list of suggested resources were co-developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Melbourne's east.

We encourage organisations and staff, community groups and families to use these to have conversations about equality and respect during the 16 Days of Activism.

Here are some ideas to get you started

- Add a question to a team meeting and ask everyone to answer for themselves. Then end with a team-based answer or follow up action.
- Organise an event for your organisation or community group: you might create an art work in response to the messages and questions, show a video or use a resource to get others involved.
- Whatever you do, take a photo and share it (with consent), to inspire others and to draw attention to the importance of amplifying the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank:

- Adam Frogley, Sarah Joyce and current and former staff from Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service
- Kristy Nocker, Coral Green and Christine Wilson for their ongoing support to WHE and their commitment to bringing awareness to gender-based violence through a cultural lens
- [Amanda Wright](#), proud Palawa woman living in Melbourne's east for the art work.

Messages from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Melbourne's east

Step forward and step up. Be an ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, communities and services. Bring your team, your organisation, your family and friends with you.

Take the next step: be open to deep listening and hearing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their communities. Practice being silent to make space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices. Encourage and resource Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices to be heard and shape their story.

Support self-determination by allowing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities to lead in bringing change to gender-based violence within their communities.

Respect our Cultures. Respect our Elders. Respect our knowledge. Respect Self-determination. Learn from us.

Teach others and help build communities where everyone can learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and history. In supporting education and awareness about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture, community and history, you provide a safe space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their communities, which strengthens their culture and community.

Step forward and step up to amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's and children's voices across Melbourne's east.

Build two-way relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities that add value to them, recognising the cultural load that each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman and community carries.

Words, language, and actions matter. Be mindful of the words you choose, what you say, and how you engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities. Every interaction has an impact.

Conversation starter questions

- What can I do/what can we do to amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women?
- What is one step I can/we can take to learn and be more open to learning?
- What is one step I can/ we can take to strengthen our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Community Controlled Organisations and communities?
- How can I/we contribute to the goals/work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, organisations and communities?
- Are we being Culturally safe in our work and are we being active in our respect and responsibilities towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture and community?

Resources

Videos

Djirra - Videos that share and promote messages relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women including *Djirra Hidden Figures Video* paying tribute to the NAIDOC 2018 theme of “Because of Her, We Can!” and Sisters Day Out sharing stories from Djirra’s prevention work done in partnership with organisations including Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Services across the state.

Videos-Healing Foundation Video Showcase- The Healing Foundation is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation that partners with communities to address the ongoing trauma caused by actions like the forced removal of children from their families. The videos includes the story of *Healing Foundation, How We Heal and Collective Healing*.

Yajilarra nhingi, mindija warrma (from dreams, let’s make it reality) animation

Websites

Website- Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service (BWAHS) - Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service (BWAHS) is the lead specialist Aboriginal specific family violence service that provides a service in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, covering both Inner and Outer East.

Website: the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women’s Voices) project - the Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women’s Voices) project brought together over 900 First Nations women and girls to a National Summit in 2023 for decision-making, innovation and celebration. The statements, videos and papers provide principles for amplifying and contributing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women’s leadership and strength.

Website- Maggolee - Developed by Reconciliation Australia, Maggolee celebrates good practice in Victorian local government and aims to bring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, local communities and the councils that serve them together. Topics include Cultural safety, equitable outcomes and addressing historical injustices.

Acknowledgements

In 2024 Respect Victoria and Safe and Equal are working together to support local community engagement with the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

Women’s Health East has been funded under Respect Victoria’s grassroots initiative in 2024. This has contributed to the development of resources and activities undertaken in Melbourne’s east by the Together For Equality and Respect partner organisations and communities.

The resources are available to view and download at whe.org.au/tfer/16-days/

Key documents

Creating Change Through Partnerships - An introductory guide to partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations in child and family services developed by SNAICC – National Voice for our Children.

