



## **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: INFORMATION AND FACTS 2015-2016**

According to the Victorian *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*, family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member that is physically or sexually abusive; emotionally or psychologically abusive; economically abusive; threatening; coercive; or in any other way controls or dominates the family member, causing them to fear for their safety or wellbeing or that of another family member; or behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of behaviour referred to above.

Whittlesea has a population of 195,397, of which 97,985 are women (65,462 are women aged 25 and over) and 66,888 are children and young people aged 24 years and under (32,523 female).<sup>1</sup>

In Whittlesea, family violence incidents increased from 2,755<sup>2</sup> in 2014-15 to 2,868 (an increase of 4.1%) and the rate increased from 1,409.9 per 100,000 to 1,427.6 per 100,000.<sup>3</sup> In comparison, in Victoria, family violence incidents increased by 10% from 70,902<sup>4</sup> in 2014-15 to 78,012 in 2015-16, and the rate increased from 1,194.15<sup>5</sup> per 100,000 to 1,288.7 per 100,000.

### OFFENCES FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

In the 12-month period of 2015-16, in Whittlesea, family violence was the context for almost two thirds (63.2%) of all recorded assaults. Family violence was the context for half (50%) of all sexual offences.

#### OFFENCES ARISING FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE REPORTED INCIDENTS IN WHITTLESEA, 2015-16

|                                    | Number of offences from family violence | Proportion of all corresponding Whittlesea offences |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Assault and related offences       | 709                                     | 63.2%   |
| Rape and Indecent Assault offences | 109                                     | 48.4%   |

Source: LEAP Database provided by the Crime Statistics Agency (where numbers are shown as  $\leq 3$ , 2 was used for calculation purposes).

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

This section presents of family violence statistics for Whittlesea obtained from Victoria Police records of reported incidents during 2015–16.<sup>6</sup>

Many women experiencing family violence do not report this to the police; therefore, the Local Government Area (LGA) figures from Victoria Police are likely to underestimate the extent of the problem.

### Whittlesea Family Violence Reported Incidents for 2015–16

- On average, 55 incidents of family violence are reported to police every week.
- The total number of incidents reported in Whittlesea was 2,868. The total number of reported incidents in the Northern Metropolitan Region (NMR)<sup>7</sup> was 12,149 and 78,012 in Victoria.
- This is a rate of 1,427.6 per 100,000 population, compared to 1,206.8 per 100,000 for the NMR and 1,288.7 per 100,000 for Victoria.<sup>8</sup>
- Females (74.4%) made up the majority of victims.
- Males (80%) were the majority of perpetrators.
- Where Whittlesea family violence victims reported that they were fearful or very fearful, 83% (1,059) were female.
- 70% of victimised women were aged between 15 and 44 years.
- Children were present at 1,081 reported incidents (37.7%) – a rate of 538.1 per 100,000, compared to 454.4 for the NMR and 425.5 in Victoria.<sup>9</sup>
- Charges were laid in 1,075 cases, giving a rate of 535.1 per 100,000 (compared to 482.5 in the NMR and 511.5 in Victoria). A combined total of 857 Family Violence Intervention Orders (IVOs) and Family Violence Safety Notices (FVSNs) were issued, giving a rate of 426.6 per 100,000 (compared to 374.2 in the NMR and 378.1 in Victoria).<sup>10</sup>

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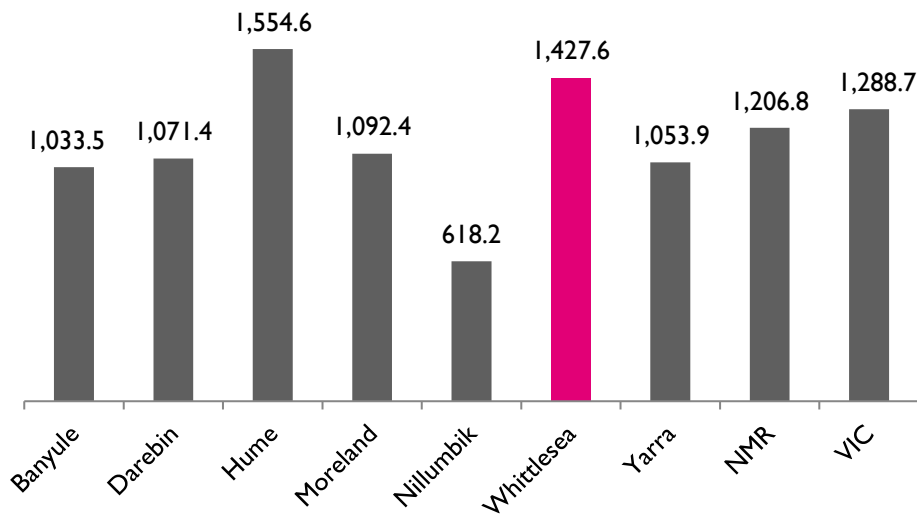
## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Although the proportions of male victims and female perpetrators of family violence seem to correspond, it is incorrect to assume that this represents males victimised by their female partners as:<sup>11</sup>

- the definition of family violence is broader than 'intimate partner violence' (IPV) and includes a range of relationships such as elder, father-to-son, and mother-in-law to daughter-in-law abuse, and
- where women do perpetrate violence against their intimate partner, the violence is not an equal violence.<sup>12</sup>

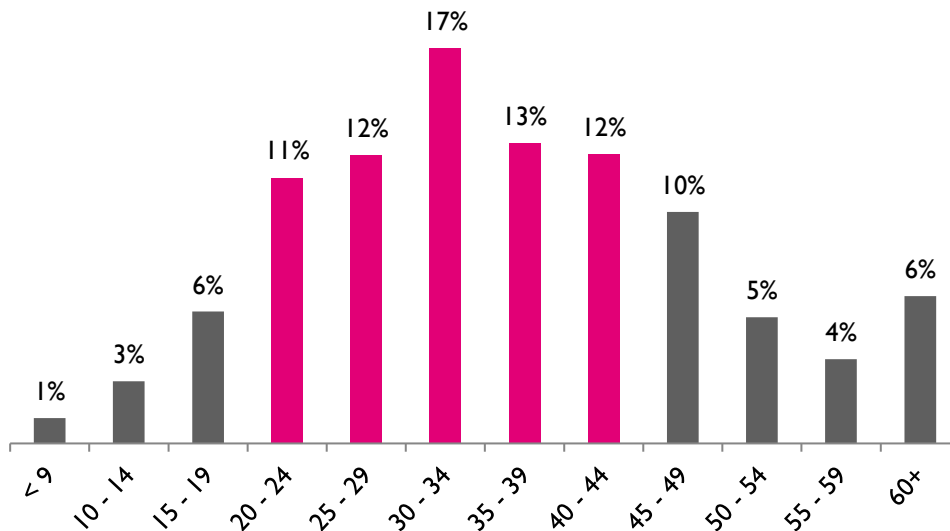
When Victoria Police family violence statistics are limited to IPV<sup>13</sup> in four out of every five incidents, the victim is female. In 2015–16, in the NMR, 14,920 persons were involved in IPV. Half, or 7,435, were noted as the Affected Family Member (AFM), of whom 82.3% were female. The other half were noted as the 'other party' (or perpetrator) and 82.1% of these were male. Totals include 23 AFMs and 53 other parties whose sex is not specified. In Whittlesea, 1,445 males were perpetrators (81.5%) and 1,460 females were victims (82%). 83.6% of victimised women who suffered IPV were aged between 15 and 44 years.

CHART 1: FAMILY VIOLENCE REPORTED INCIDENTS RATE PER 100,000, 2015–16



Source: Crime Statistics Agency (2016). Data tables – Family Incidents.

CHART 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE VICTIMS IN WHITTLESEA, 2015-16



Source: LEAP Database provided by the Crime Statistics Agency.

<sup>1</sup> S Sex-disaggregated population data accessed 03/10/2016 from: (Cat. 3235) Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2015. <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3235.02015?OpenDocument?OpenDocument>

<sup>2</sup> Crime Statistics Agency LEAP data is subject to variation from year to year due to QA measures and outcomes from the justice system.

<sup>3</sup> In order to be consistent with the population data used by the Crime Statistics Agency, all rates are calculated using figures from the Victoria In Futures program, August 2015. The population figure for Whittlesea in this data is 200,894.

<sup>4</sup> As Crime Statistics Agency LEAP data is subject to variation, the figure for 2015/16 provided in the current statistics is different to the 2014/15 figure in the police data provided in 2014/2015

<sup>5</sup> As above.

<sup>6</sup> Purchased data extracted from Crime Statistics Agency LEAP on 18th July 2016 and subject to variation. Produced by Crime Statistics Agency, Victoria Police, July 2016.

<sup>7</sup> The NMR covers seven LGAs: Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Whittlesea, Whittlesea and Yarra.

<sup>8</sup> Crime Statistics Agency (2016); Data tables – Family Incidents. Retrieved from <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data/family-incidents-0> (accessed 18/10/2016).<sup>9</sup> Crime Statistics Agency (2016).

<sup>10</sup> Crime Statistics Agency (2016).

<sup>11</sup> VicHealth (2011). *Preventing Violence against Women in Australia: Research Summary*. Carlton South: VicHealth, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> There are very few indications that women subject their male partners to the same level of severe, continuing and escalating violence as that which men perpetrate against their female partners. World Health Organization (2002) *World Health Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: WHO, p. 94.

<sup>13</sup> The term 'intimate partner' is defined by the Crime Statistics Agency in the data purchased in August 2015 as including 'Boyfriend/Girlfriend, Defacto, Divorced, Married and Separated'.

<sup>14</sup> The Crime Statistics Agency (CSA's) definition of sexual offences is broad, including offences relating to sexting, pornography and child pornography.

<sup>15</sup> The use of the terms 'victim reports', 'sexual offence victim reports' and 'alleged offender incidents' is recommended by the Crime Statistics Agency. These are the most accurate terms as, for example, one alleged offender may have multiple incidents, and one victim may have multiple victim reports within the same reference period.

# SEXUAL OFFENCES

Police records of sexual assault offences<sup>14</sup> (including offences relating to sexting, pornography and child pornography) are another measure of the extent of violence against women. As with family violence, recorded offences are likely to underestimate the extent of the problem. For the period 2015–16 in Whittlesea:

- On average, 3 sexual assault offences were recorded by police every week.
- Females (81%) made up the majority of victim reports.<sup>15</sup>
- 48.8% of female victims were aged less than 25 years.
- Males comprised 97.6% alleged offender incidents.

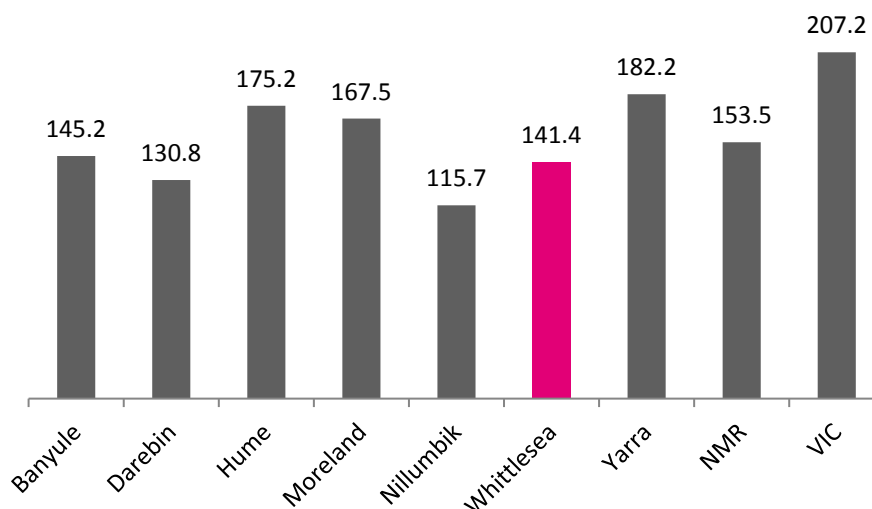
## Whittlesea Recorded Sexual Offences 2015–16

- There were 284 sexual offences recorded – this is a rate of 141.4 per 100,000 population, compared to 153.5 per 100,000 for the NMR and 207.2 per 100,000 for Victoria..
- The total number of recorded sexual offences in the NMR was 1,545 and 12,545 in Victoria.

## Whittlesea Rape and Indecent Assault 2015-16

- On average, 4.3 rape and indecent assault offences were recorded by police every week.
- Females (80.5%) made up the majority of victim reports.
- 48.3% of female victims were aged less than 25 years.
- Males comprised 97% alleged offender incidents.

CHART 3: SEXUAL OFFENCES RATE PER 100,000, 2015–16



Source: LEAP Database provided by the Crime Statistics Agency.