GenWest Gender Justice and Change.

GenWest Strategic Plan

2026-28

Acknowledgements

GenWest recognises that the land on which we work and provide our services always was and always will be Aboriginal land. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We proudly acknowledge the First Nations communities across Melbourne's west – the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their rich diversity, cultures, histories and knowledges, and the deep contribution they make to the life of this region.

We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation, as well as the strength and resilience of First Nations people, and express solidarity with the ongoing struggle for land rights, self-determination, sovereignty, and recognition of past injustices.



GenWest acknowledge in gratitude, the past advocacy and resilience of movements for equity by the LGBTQIA+ community that continue to be fought for today.

We express sorrow for the past prejudices, which continue to be experienced, recognising that historically gender-based violence has been diminished and rendered invisible, leading to greater risk, barriers to safety, supports and recovery.

We are committed to shifting our approach, to be guided collectively by the unique and different ways in which the LGBTQIA+ community experience gender and identity discrimination and oppression.



© Copyright Gender Equity West (GenWest) 2026

ABN 24 036 234 159

GenWest, 317-319 Barkly Street, Footscray VIC 3011
genwest.org.au | 1800 436 937 | info@genwest.org.au

Contents

About Us	**4**
GenWest's Values	**6**
Continuum of Family Violence: GenWest's Interventions	**8**
GenWest's Theory of Change	**10**
Focus areas, goals and enablers	**12**
Our strategic priorities and vision for the future	**14**

About Us

Our History

Since 1988, GenWest has worked to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of communities in Melbourne's west. The organisation was established as the Women's Health Service for the West, with an early focus on improving women's health by addressing the barriers experienced by women and their families living in Melbourne's western suburbs.

In the early 1990s we expanded our services to include a family violence outreach service and secure refuge properties for women and their children. Over the next four decades, the organisation has continued to grow, evolving in response to Melbourne's increasingly diverse and expanding western region.

In 2026, GenWest works across the entire continuum of family violence prevention, early intervention, crisis response and recovery. This includes preventing violence before it occurs, providing early support when concerns arise, delivering specialist crisis responses, and walking alongside people as they recover and rebuild their lives. Alongside this continuum of work, we undertake education and advocacy to drive lasting system change.

Women's health remains central to our work, reflecting the strong links between health, safety and wellbeing, and the ongoing barriers many people experience in the health system, particularly in relation to sexual and reproductive health. Our multilingual health education team supports equitable access to health information by delivering education in multiple languages and in formats and settings that improve reach, accessibility and effectiveness

GenWest's approach is grounded in an intersectional feminist tradition and a long-standing commitment to advancing the health, safety and wellbeing of women and gender diverse people. We recognise that people's experiences are shaped by a range of social, economic and structural factors, and that effective responses must reflect and respond to this diversity in the design and delivery of services. In all aspects of our work, we support people to have control over decisions about their own bodies, health and lives.

GenWest's Position in the Sector

Our work is grounded in a feminist understanding that gender inequality is a key driver of violence against women and a significant contributor to poorer health and social outcomes. We recognise that people do not experience inequality in the same way. Discrimination and disadvantage can be compounded by factors such as race, culture, disability, sexuality, gender identity, age, socioeconomic status and migration experience. This intersectional lens shapes how we understand people's experiences and how we design our services, partnerships and advocacy.

A feminist approach means working alongside women and gender diverse people to uphold their rights, autonomy and dignity. It means recognising that people are the experts in their own lives and supporting informed choice, safety and self-determination. Whether we are responding to family violence, promoting sexual and reproductive health, supporting community wellbeing or advocating for policy reform, our work is guided by the belief that everyone has the right to live free from violence, discrimination and inequity.

Four decades of practice has shown us that lasting change requires more than responding to individual need. It requires challenging the systems, structures and attitudes that create and reinforce inequality. By combining frontline practice, health promotion, prevention and advocacy, we work to address both the immediate impacts of inequality and its underlying causes. This enables us to influence systems, strengthen communities and contribute to lasting change that advances gender equity and improves health outcomes for current and future generations.

Our values

Connection

Connection is fundamental to achieving our purpose. We believe in the strength of belonging, of being inclusive and working together to achieve change.

We build relationships that strengthen people, communities and systems. We foster belonging, collaboration and collective action, recognising our connection to each other, our communities and the land and environment.

Creativity

We embrace and nurture creativity and curiosity. We reflect critically, ask questions, listen and actively pursue learning. We see uncertainty as opening up spaces for new possibilities.

Freedom

We centre freedom from oppression, discrimination and violence in all our work. We respect and protect people's freedom to make decisions about their own bodies, health and lives. We take responsibility for our actions and are accountable for the decisions we make and their impact.

Resistance

We uphold human rights, and in solidarity, work together to disrupt injustice and transform lives. We unapologetically challenge systems that disempower while simultaneously acknowledging that we are part of these systems.

Continuum of Family Violence: GenWest's Interventions

Primary Prevention

Primary prevention initiatives seek to stop violence before it occurs. GenWest does this through education and guided exploration of gender inequality and the drivers of violence within the systems and cultures where we live, work, play and pray. This work takes our teams to many varied settings including workplaces, schools, prisons, sports clubs and more.

In primary prevention, GenWest acknowledges that gender inequality affects people of all genders and identities, with an emphasis on the impacts on women, girls, and gender-diverse people, who face a higher risk of family violence. Marginalised groups are also more likely to encounter barriers to accessing support services, which are all primary prevention methods and initiatives.

Early Intervention

Early intervention activities support communities and individuals who may be at higher risk of family and gender-based violence.

GenWest works with communities across Melbourne's west to improve access to health information and support services. We also help communities prepare for and recover from climate change and disasters, using an intersectional, gendered approach that recognises how different people experience risk and recovery.

Our workshops take place in institutions and community gathering places across Melbourne's west. They include in-language programs for migrant and refugee communities and social support groups for women and gender diverse people with disabilities. In these settings it is common for people to disclose violence they have experienced - our facilitators offer trauma-informed support and connect participants with specialist services.

We deliver consent and respectful relationships education as a key early intervention point for preventing violence before it occurs. By building understanding of consent, boundaries and respectful relationships, this work supports children and young people to recognise harm, develop safe behaviours and challenge the norms that underpin violence.

Response

At GenWest, response interventions address the needs of victim survivors and affected family members in times of crisis. We provide supports to help people stay safe and offer options that enable victim survivors to decide what safety looks like for them. This includes intake, assessment and referrals through The Orange Door in Brimbank/Melton and Western Melbourne. Outreach and case management provides victim survivors with advocacy, emotional support and ongoing safety planning.

GenWest manages secure refuges which offer victim survivors and their family a safe, stable place to recover. Flexible Support Packages and the Personal Safety Initiative improve access to financial support, housing and personal security, helping people regain control and make choices that support their wellbeing. GenWest does not directly support persons using violence, though we do offer referrals and guidance to find the right supports for the situation.

Recovery and Healing

We support recovery and healing through services that centre safety, dignity and the lived experience of victim survivors, recognising healing as long-term and individual.

GenWest's children's counselling service supports children and young people who have experienced family violence to heal and recover from their experiences. The service recognises that children and young people who are victim survivors are more likely to go on to experience family violence themselves later in life, and crucially, breaks this cycle of violence.

We are also trialling innovative, lived experience–informed approaches, including peer support models, that create opportunities for shared understanding, mutual support and connection with others who have similar experiences. These approaches are designed to reduce isolation, strengthen trust and expand pathways to recovery in ways that are responsive, flexible and grounded in what victim survivors tell us works.

Our work aims to restore choice, stability and connection, and to support healing within the context of relationships, community and self.

Advocacy and Education

We advocate for intersectional gender equity in areas where women, girls, and gender-diverse people experience the greatest barriers and marginalisation.

We advocate for the rights of women, girls and gender diverse people in workplaces and employment, health care and social support systems, education, participation in sport and recreation, social and cultural spaces, online spaces and more. We provide communities across our region with information, resources, and education on the impacts of gender inequality and the drivers of violence, drawing on *Our Watch's Change the Story* (2021), and its relationship to family violence.

Our advocacy takes many forms: social media campaigns, training workshops, policy submissions and position papers, and engagement through our strategic partnerships.

GenWest's Theory of Change

GenWest's purpose is to advance gender equity.

By working across the prevention continuum towards:

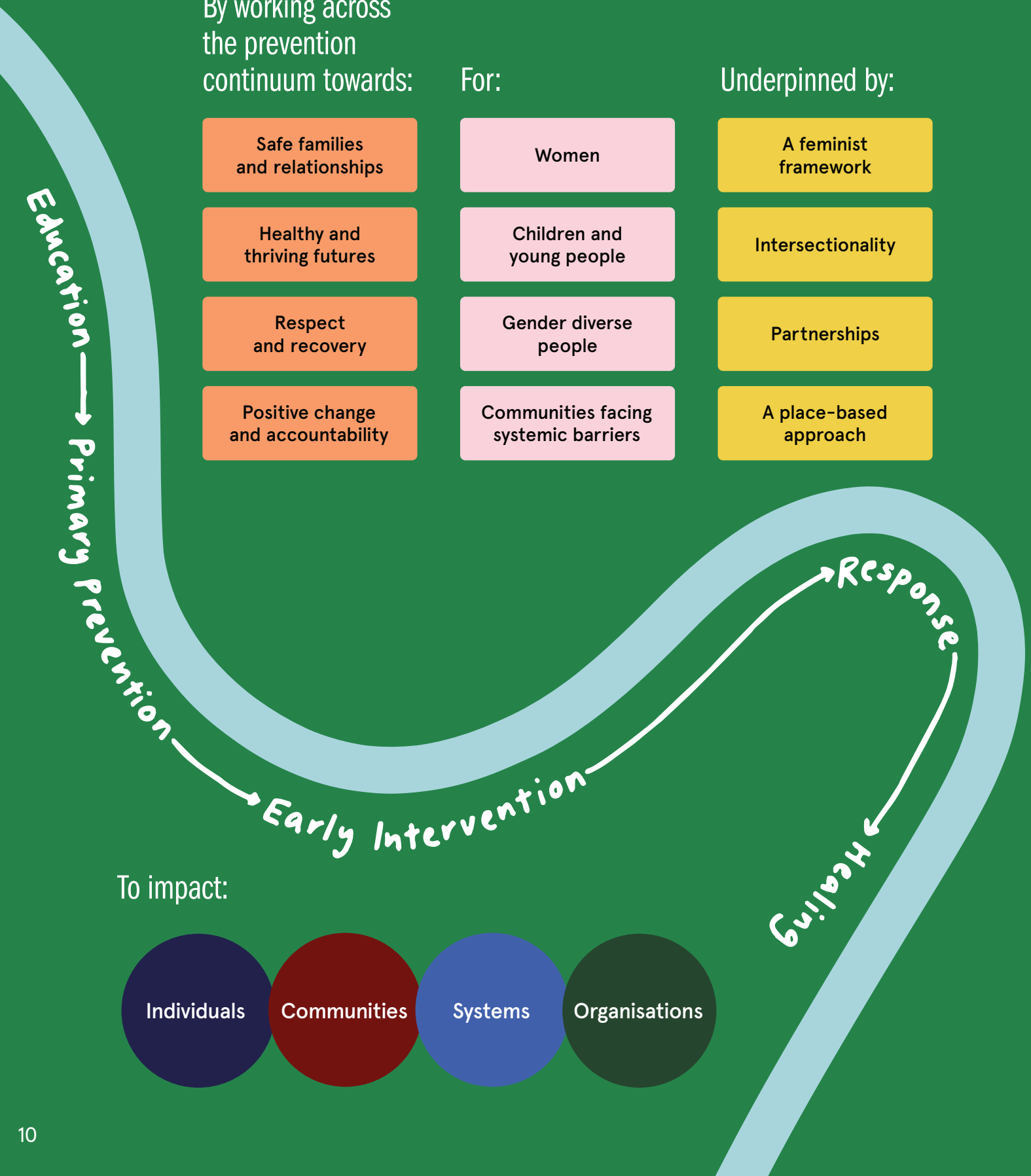
- Safe families and relationships
- Healthy and thriving futures
- Respect and recovery
- Positive change and accountability

For:

- Women
- Children and young people
- Gender diverse people
- Communities facing systemic barriers

Underpinned by:

- A feminist framework
- Intersectionality
- Partnerships
- A place-based approach



To impact:

GenWest's Theory of Change explains what we do, why we do it, and how we create change.

It guides our planning, strategy, and decisions. It shows that GenWest is well placed to lead work on gender equity, because we work across many different areas and approaches – always guided by strong values and a focus on the people most impacted.

Our purpose

GenWest works to advance gender equity, especially for people who are most affected by unfair gender expectations and systems. We recognise that gender inequality can shape people's lives in different ways, and that gender can influence how someone experiences the world. We also know that gender equity benefits everyone, and this work is not about excluding anyone.

How we work – the continuum

We work across the continuum of family violence interventions:

- Prevention
- Early intervention
- Response
- Recovery
- Education and advocacy

The activities are integrated and complimentary to each other.

Our strategic domains

Our work spans across four domains that reflect our commitment to gender equity, these domains are:

- Safe families and relationships
- Healthy and thriving futures
- Respect and recovery
- Accountability and positive change

We believe long-term safety and wellbeing can only be achieved when social and cultural power imbalances are addressed and respectful, equal relationships are fostered.

Focus areas and goals

Lead practice excellence

We will aim to play a leading role in driving practice excellence across the sectors in which we work.

Expand reach and amplify impact

We will increase our impact and reach by growing our service offerings and building stronger partnerships in current and new areas.

Positively disrupt systems

We will support wider sector and systemic change through active advocacy, learning and knowledge sharing.

Partner with clients and communities

We will deepen our community relationships, elevate the voices of our clients, and work alongside them through collaborative co-design initiatives.

Enablers

Deepen skills and capability

We will enhance critical skills and capabilities across the organisation to better position ourselves to realise our strategic ambition.

Strengthen organisational resilience

We will strengthen our organisation's financial independence to ensure we remain resourceful and adaptable.

Our strategic priorities and vision for the future

Our primary focus

We work with communities in our region who are more likely to be negatively affected by family violence and inequity. Statistically, in the region we work that includes women, children and young people, gender diverse people and communities facing systemic barriers.

By understanding who is at the highest risk in our community, we are able to bring a strong focus to preventing violence before it occurs. Our primary focus is on addressing the underlying drivers of gendered violence and inequality through prevention, early intervention, and community-based approaches that build safety, respect and equality.

By providing responsive and specialist support for those experiencing violence we build our knowledge by listening to the voices of lived experience, recognising that prevention and response are deeply connected. This integrated approach allows us to work across the continuum of need, from early action through to crisis support and recovery, to reduce harm and create lasting change.

What underpins our work

All aspects of our work are grounded in the belief that people have the right to make informed decisions about their own bodies, health and lives. Whether supporting someone experiencing family violence, advocating for reproductive choice, or ensuring health decisions remain between a person and their healthcare provider, we work to uphold autonomy, dignity and agency.

Our approach is also grounded in an understanding that people's experiences are shaped by intersecting social, cultural and structural factors. Equity requires us to recognise and respond to these differences in how we design, deliver and evaluate our work, so that our services and advocacy are accessible, responsive and fair.

Children are clients in their own right. We recognise children and young people as active participants in their own lives, with distinct needs, rights and experiences. Our work is informed by their voices and prioritises their safety, wellbeing and recovery, ensuring they are not only considered within family contexts but supported directly and appropriately in their own right.

Our vision for the future

We envision a future where everyone can live free from violence and harm, with autonomy, dignity and the opportunity to thrive.

Our vision is for healthy, thriving communities built on equality, connection and accountability, where the drivers of violence and inequity are actively challenged and transformed.

Through partnership, prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, we work to strengthen systems and create lasting change so that everyone can live safely, fairly and well.