



Frequently Asked Questions

Voices against Violence

What is Voices against Violence?

Voices against Violence (VAV) is a non-formal learning program for boys and girls that has been developed by UN Women and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). The initiative is designed to help young people learn to talk about violence, understand its root causes, recognise their rights and develop the skills and confidence to access those rights for themselves and others.

The program is interactive, child and youth centred and provides opportunities for our Guides to talk about relationships, gender equality and abuse within a safe and supportive environment.

The curriculum is divided into four age groups each supported by specific program with age appropriate activities and sessions.

- “Early” (aged five to seven),
- “Young” (aged eight to 11),
- “Middle” (aged 12 to 16) and
- “Older” (aged 17 to 25).

As part of the world movement, our mission is to empower girls and young women to become confident, self-respectful, responsible community members. With the issue of violence against women and their children prominent in our community, Girl Guides Australia is proud to be supporting a great volunteer team to roll out this program for our members and community.

When will the program be available in Australia?

With the approval of the National Board and all State Commissioners, a national project team has been formed to plan for delivery of this program, ensure that the right policies and procedures are in place, that risks are mitigated and that the program is adequately resourced.

This team currently consists of members from the Victorian, NSW/ACT and Queensland organisations who will focus on creating the right approach for Australia.

The program will be piloted in Australia mid to late 2016 and then after that we plan to roll it out more widely. It is really important that we pilot the program first in order to ensure that all resourcing, skills and support mechanisms are in place for this innovative program.

Will leaders have to run Voices against Violence?

No. Leaders of course can decide to take part in the program with their unit, but to support leaders GGA is developing a specific skilled network of volunteers to run this for our movement. We have heard clearly the feedback from our volunteers that they need more support and assistance. We have also heard from our parents that they are keen for Australian Guiding to start to deliver programs in a range of issues that are facing contemporary Australia (Free Being Me is one of these!)

With this in mind, and being aware of the specific nature of the content that the program delivers, GGA is going to create a specific team consisting of:

- A National Manager



- A network of coordinators - one in each state - that will run the day to day implementation of the program
- A network of volunteers who will implement and deliver the program to girls and young women, in partnership with unit leaders where appropriate
- A network of evaluators that will ensure that we are properly measuring the success of the program and following up

How can I ensure that my unit is involved?

Even though we are piloting in 2016 and then anticipating broader roll out in 2017 Leaders are encouraged to reach out to Girl Guides Australia directly to register interest now - Leaders who are keen to make sure that their unit is part of the roll out can contact the team via

voicesagainstviolence@girlguides.org.au

The pilot in 2016 will be occurring in Victoria, NSW ACT and Qld and if you want to find out more please also email the team at voicesagainstviolence@girlguides.org.au

Who do I talk to about Voices against Violence? Is there a state or national representative?

Yes!

The national team is:

- Velia Nicholls - State Commissioner, Girl Guides Qld and Board Sponsor
- Kit McMahon - CEO and Project Manager
- Great Keating - Girl Guides Queensland
- Katherine Gorton - Girl Guides Queensland
- Emily Milton Smith - Girl Guides NSW and ACT
- Kate Jenkin - Girl Guides NSW and ACT
- Orla McGovern - Girl Guides NSW and ACT
- Claire Bickell - Girl Guides Victoria
- Erin Wicking - Girl Guides Victoria
- Sharon O'Brien - National Assistant Program Manager (Program Team Representative)

The best way to contact the project team via the national email address which is

voicesagainstviolence@girlguides.org.au

How can I, as a Leader, get involved with Voices against Violence?

In the short term, reaching out to the team via the national email address

(voicesagainstviolence@girlguides.org.au) is the best way. In the middle term, you can keep up to date via the website. GGA will also be sending out articles and information through your local State Girl Guide Organisation. You can also contact your State Commissioner and State Program Team representative who can reach out directly to their colleagues nationally as well. Opportunities to join the pilots will be forthcoming in 2016 so stay tuned for announcements!

Over the next 12 months we will also be releasing campaigns that Guides can get involved with to start to raise awareness about the impact that everyone can make to address Gender Based Violence. Campaigns such as the United Nations #16Days and #OrangetheWorld can be implemented now. Over time, the project team will customise these to support the Voices against Violence project in Australia and provide opportunities for our Guides to deliver their take action projects.



The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts has also released the resource “I am Valuable” to coincide with the 2015 world #16 Days of Activism. which runs from the 25th November - 10th December, for 2015. The pack takes all ages through a journey of understanding that gender inequality is the root cause of violence against girls and young women, and that if girls were valued we would be a step closer to ending the violence.

Leaders can make the activities available now to their Guides, have a conversation and then share all of this with their colleagues across the world through the [Girls Are Valuable](#) Tumblr page.

But violence isn't really an issue in my community. Why would I want to be involved/ have my unit participate in this program?

The reality is, that it is an issue across Australia. Statistics tell us that it doesn't matter where you live, how much you earn, how much you are educated, women and girls are impacted by Gender Based Violence.

Research from the ABS Personal Safety Survey in 2012 tells us that 19% of women in Australia have experienced sexual violence since the age of fifteen (1 in 5) with 34% (1 in 3) experiencing physical violence at some time in their lives.¹

In addition, Australian research² demonstrates that children exposed to domestic and family violence are likely to experience a range of difficulties including, but not limited to low self-esteem, poor mental health, impaired cognitive function, school difficulties and increased likelihood of substance abuse.

As a movement whose mission is empowering girls and young women, the Board of Girl Guides Australia and all State Commissioners are of one view - we cannot deliver to our mission if we don't take action. As a leader that is part of this movement, you have made a commitment to the mission, to world guiding and to our code of conduct. In our view, as part of a movement that is charged to make a difference to the lives of Girls and Young women, we need to be a part of the solution and delivering this program is part of this. In our view, when you understand the impact of gender based violence on girls and the opportunity we have to help girls change the attitudes that underlie this violence, you will want your girls to take part.

Isn't this topic a little much for girls at a young age?

No.

Whilst GGA have decided not to implement the program for girls aged 5 to 7 years until we have evaluated the pilot, we do agree with the research that says that it is important to start talking with young people about this issue. Addressing gender based violence starts with addressing the core of the problem – gender inequality. This is what the Voices against Violence program does in age appropriate ways. We know that children start to learn about stereotypes and roles very early in their lives from the media, from music, from TV and movies and also from their peers parents and guardians. We know from the age of 9 years, children start to have an understanding of culturally accepted gender roles. (Find out more about this research and information [here.](#)) Our role in Girl

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4906.0 - Personal Safety, Australia, 2012

² Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence in Australia, Kellie Richards, 2011 Australian Institute of Criminology.



Guiding is to seek out learning opportunities in a safe, informed and supported way that can assist young people to “understand influences on identity, relationships and decision making”.³

This is what Voices against Violence does.

Want further information?

The team at Our Watch have put together more FAQ's on the subject of Violence against Women which you can see here - <http://www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/FAQs-about-the-issue>

Some further information on the myths, beliefs and attitudes that share and influence behaviours on violence against women can be found here <http://www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/Myths-about-violence>

As further information becomes available we will add to these FAQs.

³ <http://www.theline.org.au/discussing-gender-stereotypes-at-home>