

SWAN Advocacy Against Gender-Based Violence

SWAN has had a long-standing concern about domestic and family violence. Since its inception, members have participated in countless campaigns, voicing their demands for legislative change and increasing community awareness and support, to address this critical human rights issue.

This includes:

- Between 1996-2005 SWAN members campaigned for the release of Heather Osland who was unjustly convicted of the murder of her violent and abusive husband.
- Guest speakers have presented at SWAN meetings about their personal experience of domestic violence and of their efforts to raise awareness and take action to achieve systemic change, including Irene Bolger, Dr Carolyn Taylor, Hannah Jay, Rosie Batty AO.
- SWAN has hosted several events to raise community awareness and promote action to address family and domestic violence. Examples include: a '*Peninsula Forum*' at which several women spoke about domestic violence, homelessness, palliative care and abuse; a public seminar entitled '*Women Against Domestic Violence*' co-presented by Chisholm TAFE; and a '*Domestic Violence Seminar*', run jointly by Mornington Peninsula Shire.
- SWAN members have joined other local community groups to facilitate street marches and other community awareness raising activities on the Peninsula as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign initiated by United Nations in 2009 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/16-days-of-activism>

Despite advancement in some areas, gender-based violence remains serious and widespread <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts>

Building on this long-term advocacy, in 2024, SWAN formed the *Women Against Gender-based Violence* group as part of our campaign to seek justice for women. Activities include:

- Met with Jodie Belyea, Federal MP for Dunkley, to highlight issues facing women experiencing violence and homelessness;
- Sent articles and letters to the local media to draw public attention to these critical concerns;
- Wrote to local MPs and put candidates in Council elections on notice, to show that constituents want to know how they will work to address such escalating injustice.
- Guest speaker at the SWAN General Meeting in November 2024 is Dr Helen Keleher, who has extensive experience in promoting gender justice. This presentation leads into this year's *16 Days of Activism for the Prevention of Violence* campaign on the Peninsula.
- A March Against Gender-based Violence is being held at Mornington Park on 1 December 2024.