

Mountains Men Against Violence (MMAV)

Terms of Reference

1. Acknowledgement of Male Privilege

"The men of MMAV, acknowledge the unearned advantages we hold in a society, and systemic injustice shaped by patriarchy. We recognise that male privilege can silence, exclude, and harm others — especially women and gender diverse people. We acknowledge that gender-based violence work has been led for decades by women, feminist advocates and specialist women's services. MMAV does not replace this leadership. We commit to being guided by feminist expertise, centring women's voices and ensuring men do not recentre themselves in this work. We commit to listening, learning, and using our position to challenge violence and inequity wherever it exists."

2. Purpose

2.1 MMAV engages men and community members in the Blue Mountains LGA to reduce gender based violence and challenge harmful gender stereotypes. We recognise that meaningful change requires confronting beliefs and biases to foster respectful relationships and promote gender equality. Our vision is to support community education and advocacy that address the root causes of gender based violence.

2.2 Gender based violence is sustained by complex interactions between societal systems and personal attitudes about gender roles. The most prevalent and harmful form in Australia is men's violence against women, which causes profound physical, emotional, social, and economic harm. This violence is rooted in patriarchal structures that uphold male privilege and perpetuate inequality through cultural norms, institutional practices, and interpersonal behaviours.

2.3 MMAV is committed to challenging these norms and systems. Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, we aim to promote gender equity, accountability, and respectful relationships. We work to dismantle harmful stereotypes and power imbalances by encouraging critical reflection and solidarity with feminist movements.

2.4 MMAV encourages its members to think beyond the binary nature of masculinity and femininity models to better address the historical ways of relating that reinforce hierarchy, dominance and oppression. Breaking from gender norms allows men to embrace more ethical perspectives and improved social and individual viewpoints. Removing binary

language allows space for those who identify as non-binary to become a greater part of the conversation.

3. Intersectionality

3.1 MMAV recognises that gender based violence is influenced by intersecting identities and experiences, including gender identity, race, class, sexuality, disability, and culture. These intersectional influences compound patriarchal structures, which in turn reinforce inequality.

3.2 We commit to inclusive, culturally responsive education and advocacy that reflect the diversity of our community. By engaging men from varied backgrounds and acknowledging how patriarchy influences masculinity and attitudes toward violence, MMAV promotes tailored strategies that advance equity, inclusion, and respectful relationships.

4. What MMAV is Not

4.1 MMAV is not a therapeutic or behaviour-change group and does not provide clinical interventions or individual support services. Participation is not a substitute for professional counselling, perpetrator programs, or other supports.

4.2 MMAV explicitly distances itself from men's rights groups and "manosphere" movements that deny gender based violence or undermine gender equity.

4.3 We align with a profeminist framework that centres the safety, dignity, and rights of women and others who have experienced abuse, encouraging new thought through critical reflection.

5. Statement of Values

5.1 MMAV believes all people deserve to live free from violence, fear, and oppression. Gender based violence is rooted in systems of power and inequality, and men have a critical role in dismantling these systems.

5.2 We acknowledge:

- (a) The historical and ongoing impact of patriarchy, which privileges men and disadvantages women and gender diverse people.
- (b) Male privilege affords men unearned advantages in personal, social, and professional contexts.
- (c) Violence includes more than physical acts, encompassing multiple forms (see Appendix B).
- (d) Building safety requires collective action, cultural transformation, and accountability.

6. Our Values:

6.1 Our values provide the ethical foundation that guide members to challenge harmful gender norms and challenge patriarchal structures. They describe how we will be accountable and promote inclusive behaviour, creating a safe space where respect, empathy, and justice are central to all interactions.

6.2 Our shared values are respect, accountability, integrity, solidarity, empathy and equity.

6.2.1 Respect: Treat all people with dignity and compassion, fostering safe and inclusive spaces.

6.2.2 Accountability: This is centred on our accountability to CAVA, local feminist and gender diverse organisations, as well as the broader feminist and gender diverse movements. We will take responsibility for our actions and commit to change in accordance with our purpose (see Section 2).

6.2.3 Integrity: Act consistently with principles, maintaining transparency and ethical practice.

6.2.4 Solidarity: Stand together with those who have experienced gender based violence, support their calls for change, and align with feminist movements.

6.2.5 Empathy: Actively recognising and listening to the lived experiences of women and gender diverse people who face systemic gender-based violence, disadvantage, discrimination, and/or exclusion. This involves listening without judgment, validating the struggles, and committing to actions that challenge the gender norms and patriarchal systems that cause harm.

6.2.6 Equity: identifying and addressing systemic barriers and power imbalances that disadvantage women, gender-diverse people, and other marginalised groups of people. Unlike equality (which treats everyone the same), equity focuses on providing the resources and support needed to achieve justice and genuine inclusion, recognising that different groups start from unequal positions due to entrenched patriarchal norms.

6.3 MMAV commits to ongoing learning, reflection, and action. We strive to build a community where men support one another as allies, advocates, and agents of change.

7. Objectives

7.1 Objectives 7.2 to 7.6 are what MMAV aims to achieve within the group membership. 7.6 have internal and external relevance and 7.7 identify plans for future external activity.

7.2 Education and Awareness

MMAV will:

7.2.1 Promote understanding of the causes and impacts of patriarchy and gender based violence.

7.2.2 Share critical knowledge-informed resources and campaigns that encourage self-reflection and challenge harmful norms.

7.3 Personal Accountability and Growth

MMAV will:

7.3.1 Develop an understanding of the need to be accountable to women and people of diverse gender.

7.3.2 Support empathy, emotional literacy, gender awareness, and non-violent communication skills.

7.3.3 Provide opportunities for peer learning and mentoring.

7.3.4 Promote workshops and discussions on the influence of patriarchy, power, and respectful relationships.

7.3.5 Encourage members to reflect on their behaviours and attitudes.

7.4 Safe and Inclusive Group Culture

MMAV will:

7.4.1 Maintain a respectful, inclusive, and non-judgmental environment.

7.4.2 Ensure members feel safe to share, learn, and grow.

7.4.3 Uphold confidentiality, consent, and mutual respect.

7.4.4 With a focus on safety for all, the above statements do not exclude challenging misogyny and sexism, whether intended or unintended. Challenging views should be conducted with a caring and understanding attitude of learning and development for all members.

7.5 Accountability and Integrity

MMAV will:

7.5.1 Hold members accountable to the group's values and code of conduct (Section 14).

7.5.2 Respond appropriately to behaviours that undermine violence prevention.

7.5.3 Ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making and operations to CAVA, aligned organisations, and the local community.

7.6 Advocacy and Cultural Change

MMAV will:

7.6.1 Challenge norms and systems that perpetuate inequality and violence.

7.6.2 Advocate for policies that support gender justice and survivor safety.

7.6.3 Amplify voices of those impacted by violence and other marginalised communities.

7.7 Future Plans

7.7.1 Create partnerships with local organisations, schools, and services.

7.7.2 Participate in public events, campaigns, and advocacy efforts.

7.7.3 Actively support activities such as *Reclaim the Night* and *16 Days of Action* in consultation with CAVA and feminist partner organisations.

8. Partnerships and organisational alignment

8.1 MMAV recognises that women's organisations and feminist partners should not be expected to carry the emotional labour of supporting men's learning. Members commit to taking responsibility for their own learning and will seek guidance from partner organisations in ways that are mindful of their time, boundaries and capacity.

8.2 MMAV receives community support from:

- (a) Coalition Against Violence and Abuse (CAVA), led by the Blue Mountains Women's Health & Resource Centre (BMWHR).
- (b) Blue Mountains City Council.

8.3 MMAV intends to apply to become an organisational member of the MenEngage Alliance. This is a global network working to transform patriarchal systems and harmful norms of masculinity through intersectional feminist approaches, partnerships and advocacy.

8.4 MMAV will collaborate with local organisations and networks committed to ending gender based violence.

8.5 Partnerships will be based on shared values, mutual respect, and ethical practice.

8.6 Formal partnerships will be listed in this section as they develop.

9. Membership

9.1 Membership is open to individuals who support MMAV's aims and values and reside or work in the Blue Mountains LGA.

9.2 All members must adhere to the Code of Conduct (see Appendix A).

10. Meetings

10.1 Meetings will be conducted online via the Microsoft Teams platform. This is open to change to meet the needs of the group and its members.

10.2 Ordinary member meetings will be held bi-monthly to share learning, plan activities, and provide mutual support.

10.3 The Leadership Circle will meet on alternate months to address organisational matters.

10.4 Sub-groups may meet face to face or online.

10.5 Special meetings may be convened for campaigns, training, or community engagement.

11. Governance and Structure

11.1 MMAV operates under a collaborative governance model that prioritises accountability, transparency, and alignment with profeminist, anti-violence principles.

11.2 Leadership Circle

11.2.1 The Leadership Circle is the governing body of MMAV and is supported by an independent consultancy group and women from CAVA (see 11.3)

11.2.2 Responsibilities include strategic direction, decision-making by consensus, and coordination of meetings, events, and communications.

11.2.3 The Leadership Circle is determined through nomination by a MMAV member. Voting will occur if required. All nominees will be assessed or interviewed by the consultancy group as an essential part of the process.

11.2.4 All positions will be for a term of twelve months. No position holder can be re-nominated for the following year. It is preferred that a person not renominate for the same position for a period of two years after completing a year of service in a particular role. This is open to the discretion of the Leadership Circle and the consultancy group if there are not sufficient members to allow for a two year break from a position.

11.2.5 A person can continue to be part of the Leadership Circle in a different role from their previous term.

11.2.6 The Leadership Circle will have a maximum of ten members and will consist of the following positions:

- (a) Two co-chairs, one male and one female.
- (b) A secretary who will be responsible for minute-taking or delegating this role at a meeting.
- (c) An educator who will be responsible for providing specific discussion points at meetings.
- (d) A media liaison who will be responsible for identifying and organising media opportunities for promotion of the group, and articulation of its purpose and objectives within the broader community. The media liaison should proactively seek opportunity to promote MMAV's messages.
- (e) An Ex-Officio member of CAVA to be determined by CAVA management.
- (f) Up to four ordinary Leadership Circle members. This is to provide a space for development and growth of the membership.

11.3 Independent Consultancy and Advisory

11.3.1 MMAV maintains accountability to an independent consultancy group for expert advice and leadership selection processes.

11.3.2 Rationale for Independent Consultancy

Mountains Men Against Violence operates from a profeminist perspective and is committed to challenging gender based violence and promoting respectful relationships. To ensure accountability, transparency, and alignment with best practice standards, an independent consultancy group is essential. This external oversight provides objective guidance, mitigates risks of bias, and supports the group in maintaining integrity, credibility, and adherence to critical knowledge informed approaches within the broader community and sector.

11.3.3 The consultancy group will be made up of a maximum of ten people:

- (a) An anti-violence consultant
- (b) A women's consultant
- (c) An LGBTQIA+ consultant
- (d) A First Nations consultant
- (e) a men's consultant
- (f) up to 5 CAVA members to act as additional women's consultants. This is also to identify MMAV's commitment of transparency to CAVA.

11.4 CAVA

11.4.1 Further to 11.3(f), MMAV consults with women from CAVA on policies and

activities, affirming that the gender based violence sector has historically been led by women and committing to support—not replace—this leadership.

11.4.2 MMAV will have a representative to report back at all CAVA meetings. This person will ideally be one of the co-chairs but may be any designated member of the Leadership Circle.

11.5 Sub-Groups

MMAV may form sub-groups focused on education, advocacy, partnerships, or events, encouraging participation from group members.

12. Funding

12.1 MMAV receives no formal funding. The fundamental costs of the functioning of the group will be incurred through local organisations that support the purpose of MMAV.

12.2 Leadership Circle members are to be transparent with their employing organisation regarding their time and any use of equipment or resources for the purpose of MMAV.

12.3 MMAV may make formal requests to any supporting organisation if funding is required for a particular activity. MMAV will be subject to the processes of the organisation from whom funding is being requested.

12.4 MMAV may apply for community or other grants to conduct activity or to support internal education programs.

12.5 MMAV will not apply for any grants without consulting the consultancy group to ensure such an application is most relevant to MMAV and not to another feminist aligned organisation. Any plans for grant applications will be discussed openly as part of monthly reporting to CAVA.

13. Screening and Integrity

13.1 Membership is conditional on adherence to the Code of Conduct (Appendix A).

13.2 MMAV is aware that people may join with a purpose not in alignment with the group's purpose. If a member or potential member joins and it is clear their intention is not aligned but rather to disrupt activity, they may be asked to leave the group.

13.3 Any person who has previously been asked to leave the group may return should they identify to the Leadership Circle that they are prepared to adhere to the purpose and code of conduct. In these circumstances, the scenario will be put to the consultancy group prior to readmission.

13.3 Leadership nominees must:

- (a) Undergo an assessment or interview with the consultancy group and/or CAVA representatives.
- (b) Obtain a *Working with Children Check* (WWCC) and consent to a police check.

14. Accountability

14.1 MMAV is committed to transparency and fairness in addressing concerns about member conduct or group activities. All MMAV activities are accountable to CAVA.

14.2 MMAV is accountable to local women and gender diverse people, as these are the people who have experienced violence and discrimination by men. As part of demonstrating this accountability, MMAV is to take into the consideration the views of these people. Any issues arising should be raised with the consultancy group.

14.2 Leadership Accountability

- (a) Leadership members are held to the highest standards of integrity and behaviour.
- (b) A confidential, non-punitive process will allow members to reflect and step aside if their lifestyle conflicts with MMAV's mission.
- (c) Encourages personal growth and accountability.
- (d) May include peer dialogue or external referral.
- (e) If a Leadership member violates the Code of Conduct, including engaging in violence or behaviour inconsistent with MMAV's mission, they may be dismissed.

14.3 Accountability standards ensure leadership positions uphold MMAV's principles and maintain trust within the community.

14.4 Should there be a lack of clarity around accountability, standards or code of conduct, MMAV will refer to the consultancy group, CAVA, and the MenEngage Alliance documents referred to in Appendix D.

15. Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Amendments may be proposed and adopted through group consensus.

Appendix A: Code of Conduct

MMAV members commit to behaviour that reflects the group's mission to reduce gender based violence, particularly men's violence against women. This includes fostering respectful relationships, promoting gender equality, and challenging harmful attitudes and behaviours. MMAV adheres to the accountability standards outlined in Appendix 1.

12.2 Ordinary Member Expectations

- (a) Demonstrate respectful, non-violent behaviour in all interactions, being mindful of power imbalances.
- (b) Be willing to learn how to challenge sexist, misogynistic, or violent attitudes and behaviours when safe to do so.
- (c) Engage in ongoing self-reflection and learning about gender equality and violence prevention.
- (d) Respect confidentiality, safety, and dignity; do not disclose personal information without consent.
- (e) Avoid behaviour that could bring MMAV into disrepute or undermine its mission.
- (f) Treat all members and individuals fairly and equally.

12.3 Leadership Circle Expectations

- (a) Demonstrate integrity, accountability, and transparency in all MMAV activities. Avoid any behaviour—online or offline—that could be coercive, discriminatory, or harmful.
- (b) Declare conflicts of interest affecting their role or decisions.
- (c) Cooperate fully with the interview process conducted by the consultancy group.
- (d) Respond promptly to concerns about member conduct or group safety.
- (e) Complete required training (including First Nations cultural awareness) and additional development as needed.
- (f) Seek guidance when facing ethical dilemmas and consult feminist leaders or experts.
- (g) Remain self-aware and open to learning from mistakes.
- (h) Uphold and enforce the Code of Conduct fairly and respectfully.

Appendix B: Definitions of Violence

Violence includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) **Physical:** Assault or threats of assault, destroying property, or harming pets.
- (b) **Verbal:** Insults, threats, intimidation, or coercion through language.
- (c) **Sexual:** Any unwanted sexual act or contact, including rape, sexual assault, harassment, and reproductive coercion.
- (d) **Psychological/Emotional:** Actions that harm mental health or self-esteem, such as criticism, humiliation, isolation, manipulation, and gaslighting.
- (e) **Financial:** Controlling or restricting access to money or resources, including preventing employment or access to accounts.
- (f) **Social:** Isolating someone from friends, family, or support networks; controlling social interactions.
- (g) **Stalking/Surveillance:** Harassing or intimidating through monitoring, following, or repeated unwanted contact.
- (h) **Neglect:** Failing to provide necessary care for health, comfort, and safety.
- (i) **Coercive Control:** A pattern of intimidation, isolation, and manipulation aimed at domination.
- (j) **Religious/Spiritual:** Using beliefs or practices to control or harm someone.
- (k) **Technology-Facilitated:** Harassment or control via technology, such as hacking, tracking, or sharing private information without consent.
- (l) **Honour-Based:** Violence committed to protect or defend perceived family or community honour.
- (m) **Structural violence:** Social structures or systems that systematically harm or disadvantage certain groups by restricting access to resources, rights, or opportunities. It's often invisible and embedded in institutions, policies, and norms rather than direct physical harm.

Appendix C: Statistics on Domestic and Family Violence in Australia

- (a) 1 in 6 women (around 1.6 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner, compared to 1 in 16 men [Mission Australia, 2024; Our Watch, 2024].
- (b) 27% of women have experienced violence, emotional abuse, or economic abuse by a cohabiting partner since age 15 [Our Watch, 2024].
- (c) 22% of women have experienced sexual violence since age 15, including 20% sexual assault and 5.5% sexual threats [Our Watch, 2024].
- (d) Nearly 48.4% of women report experiencing some form of intimate partner violence, including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse [Our Watch, 2024].
- (e) On average, one woman is killed by a current or former partner every nine days in Australia, with 37 women killed in 2024 [Australian Institute of Criminology; Our Watch, 2024; ABS, 2024].
- (f) Women with disabilities are 1.8 times more likely to experience abuse [Mission Australia, 2024].
- (g) Indigenous women are 32 times more likely to be hospitalised due to domestic and family violence [Mission Australia, 2024; Our Watch, 2024].
- (h) Domestic and family violence is a leading cause of homelessness: 75% of those seeking specialist homelessness services due to DFV identify as female, and 48% are single parents [Mission Australia, 2024].

Sources:

Mission Australia (2024). *Domestic and Family Violence statistics*.

Our Watch (2024). *Quick facts about violence against women*.

Paul Ramsay Foundation (2025). *Impact of domestic violence on women's employment and education*.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Recorded Crime – Victims, 2024*.

Appendix D: MenEngage Alliance Principles and Standards

MMAV aligns with the global MenEngage Alliance framework, which promotes accountability and ethical practice in gender justice work. Key resources include:

- (a) Core Principles – Shared values and commitments of MenEngage Alliance.
<https://menengage.org/resources/core-principles-of-menengage-alliance>
- (b) Code of Conduct – Behaviours and practices members commit to uphold.
<https://menengage.org/resources/code-of-conduct-of-menengage-alliance>
- (c) Accountability Standards – Institutional commitments for transparency and responsibility. <https://menengage.org/resources/accountability-standards-of-menengage-alliance>
- (d) Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedures – Guidelines for prevention and response.
<https://menengage.org/resources/menengage-alliance-sexual-harassment-policy-and-procedures>