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Strathbogie Shire Council urges community to call out disrespect towards women

Strathbogie Shire Council urges our community to call out gender-based violence, sexism, harassment and disrespect towards women.

The 16 Days of Activism is a global campaign dedicated to raising awareness about violence against women and the impact of gender-based violence.

The campaign starts on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and concludes on 10 December, International Human Rights Day.

Strathbogie Shire Council has partnered with Respect Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria to advocate for gender equity and respect in its workplace and in the local community, promoting the theme Respect Women: Call It Out. This campaign encourages people to call out sexism, sexual harassment and disrespect towards women when it is safe to do so.

Council acknowledges disrespect towards women can be a difficult topic to bring up in conversation, especially in relationships, communities and in settings where attitudes and beliefs about traditional gender roles may be strongly held.

There are many ways you can respond to sexism, harassment and disrespect towards women, depending on the context and your level of confidence. These can be grouped into four key categories:

- > **Diffuse:** Make light-hearted comments or give disapproving looks
- > **Check in:** See if the target is okay
- > **Call it out:** Declare the statement or behaviour offensive and explain why it is harmful
- > **Report:** Access incident reporting systems or report to management where applicable.

'Calling it out' does not mean physically intervening when you witness violence and does not include hostile or aggressive responses. It is important that when you react to behaviours that may be deemed as sexist, sexual harassment, disrespectful and abusive towards women, you do not put yourself or the person that the inappropriate behaviour is directed towards at risk.

Before responding, you should assess safety and risk of escalation. It is also important to stay within your comfort zone and be pragmatic about your level of skill or confidence. As with any bystander intervention, your safety is paramount.

Strathbogie Shire Mayor Cr Amanda McLaren said bystander action is an effective way to stamp out sexual harassment and disrespect towards women.

"We stand united with our community to advocate for gender equity and respect," Mayor McLaren said.

"Everyone has a role to play in preventing family and gender violence – individuals, schools, workplaces, churches, sporting clubs and government."

If you or someone you know needs help or support please contact 1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 732. It is a 24/7 service for national sexual assault, domestic and family violence.

-ENDS-

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