



# FREE FROM VIOLENCE

Victoria's strategy  
to prevent family  
violence and all  
forms of violence  
against women



### **Family violence services and support**

If you have experienced violence or sexual assault and require immediate or ongoing assistance, **contact 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)** to talk to a counsellor from the National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline. For confidential support and information, contact Safe Steps' 24/7 family violence response line on **1800 015 188**. If you are concerned for your safety or that of someone else, please contact the police in your state or territory, or **call 000** for emergency assistance.

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### **Aboriginal Acknowledgment**

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples, Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely. We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in addressing, and preventing family violence and join with our First Peoples to eliminate family violence from all communities.



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# PREMIER AND MINISTER'S FOREWORD



We are proud to share with you *Free from violence*, Victoria's strategy to stop family violence before it starts.

The ground-breaking work of the Royal Commission into Family Violence focused on the need to improve services for victims, strengthen early intervention and hold perpetrators to account. But it also recognised the need for a statewide Primary Prevention Strategy to address the attitudes and behaviours leading to violence in the home.

The Victorian Government is implementing every single recommendation from the Royal Commission. In our 10-year plan – *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change* – we set out our approach to stopping violence. This includes the creation of a prevention agency with dedicated and enduring funding. In *Free from violence* we now set out in greater detail how we will change attitudes and behaviours over time.

Our approach to preventing family violence will be similar to other world-leading Victorian prevention initiatives, such as the anti-smoking campaign led by VicHealth and the Transport Accident Commission's work to make our roads safer.

Family violence remains highly complex. While a lot of research has been done to understand what drives a person to commit violence against someone they are supposed to love, we still do not have all the answers.

But we do know that a large part – the part in which women and children are the predominate victims and men the perpetrators – is driven by gender inequality. That is why we launched Victoria’s first Gender Equality Strategy, *Safe and Strong*, setting out a framework for sustained action to end gender inequality.

*Free from violence* builds on that work, developing public awareness campaigns aimed at changing the social norms, structures and practices that endorse violence. We will do what other bold governments have done – recognise that changing behaviour takes a generation and must be elevated beyond the usual whims of electoral and budgetary cycles.

This Strategy represents the culmination of nine months of intensive work with victim-survivors, prevention experts and service providers. It builds on a range of efforts made across our state, especially by women’s organisations, to prevent family violence. Their knowledge and wisdom provided the basis for our Strategy and we are very grateful for their contributions.

Preventing family violence and violence against women is everyone’s business.

It begins with respect and equality in all areas of our lives and across our state.

Every one of us needs to ask ourselves how we are promoting equality and respect. Every one of us plays a role.

Because only together will we make Victoria *Free from violence*.



The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP  
Premier of Victoria



The Hon. Fiona Richardson MP  
Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence  
Minister for Women

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Victorian Government would like to thank the Ministerial Taskforce on the Prevention of Family Violence and other Forms of Violence Against Women for its time and involvement in the creation of this Strategy. The Taskforce was assembled as an expert reference group for the development of the Strategy, and comprised leading specialists in primary prevention, violence against women and family violence. Their expertise, knowledge and perspectives provided an invaluable contribution to the Strategy.

This Strategy was also developed in consultation with key advisory bodies, including the Family Violence Steering Committee, the Aboriginal Family Violence Co-Design Forum and targeted consultations with key Aboriginal leaders, the Diverse Communities and Intersectionality Working Group, the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council and the LGBTI Taskforce. The Victorian Government would like to thank these committees for their extensive contributions to the development of the Strategy.

Expert guidance was also provided by others, including experts in health promotion, public health, behavioural insights and social change, to help us learn from long-term public health efforts in areas such as smoking, road safety and obesity prevention, and to understand new and emerging approaches in behavioural insights, collective impact and social innovation. This ensures the strategy we are building for the primary prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women in Victoria is truly world leading.



# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

.....  
**This Strategy fulfils Recommendation 187 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. *Free from violence* forms an integral element of the Government's broader family violence system reform. This Strategy is a key part of the 10-year plan, *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*.**  
.....

## SCOPE AND CONCEPTUAL APPROACH OF THIS STRATEGY

All forms of violence are unacceptable. Violence can manifest in many different ways, including interpersonal violence that occurs between two strangers, between neighbours, or in crowds in public spaces. This Strategy only seeks to address certain specific forms of violence: family violence and all forms of violence against women. In doing so it does not suggest that the other forms of violence are not important, but rather acknowledges that different approaches are required to prevent and respond to other forms of violence, many of which are being developed and led through other strategies and policies.

The focus of this Strategy is on preventing two different but overlapping and related forms of violence.

The first is **family violence**, as defined in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic). In line with *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*, the Strategy approaches family violence as a deeply gendered issue. While family violence takes many forms and affects many in our community, structural inequalities and unequal power relations between men and women mean women are more likely to experience family violence.

The second is **violence against women**, as defined by the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), and *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia*.

While much violence against women occurs in a family or relationship context, violence against women is broader than what is covered by the term 'family violence', for example, sexual assault and harassment perpetrated by someone other than a partner or family member.

While both these forms of violence can stem from gender inequality and discrimination, inequalities resulting in racism, ageism, ableism and heterosexism can also on their own, or in combination, influence the patterns of violence perpetrated in society.

The recognition of both of these points underpins the use of **gendered language** throughout this document as well as our commitment to addressing other forms of **discrimination** and **inequality**. For ease of reading, this document uses the term 'violence' interchangeably and as an umbrella term, together with both 'family violence', and 'all forms of violence against women'. While family violence is often used interchangeably with **domestic violence**, this Strategy will not use that phrase.

The Strategy recognises that both family violence and violence against women have serious impacts for children. This includes children who experience family violence, witness or are exposed to such violence.

Scope of this Strategy



Scope of *Change the story* and international evidence base

This Strategy includes a particular focus on **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**, who experience significantly higher levels of family violence, especially women and children. The violence used against Aboriginal victim survivors is perpetrated by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men, and compounded by experiences of racism and marginalisation. While this violence also has gendered patterns, disproportionately affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, there are other factors at play, deeply rooted in the impacts of colonisation and violent dispossession, particularly the loss of land and culture and the high levels of intergenerational trauma experienced by Aboriginal women, men, children, families and communities.<sup>A</sup>

## LANGUAGE IN THIS STRATEGY

**Family violence**, as described in *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*, occurs when a perpetrator exercises power and control over another person. It involves coercive and abusive behaviours by the perpetrator that are designed to intimidate, humiliate, undermine and isolate, resulting in fear and insecurity. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and spiritual violence, and financial/economic abuse and control. While both men and women can be perpetrators or victims, intimate partner violence by men against women is the most common form of family violence.

**Family** means different things to different Victorians. Our use of the term 'families' is all-encompassing. It acknowledges the variety of relationships and structures that can make up family units and kinship networks, and the range of ways family violence can be experienced, including through family-like or carer relationships and other interpersonal relationships, and across all genders and sexualities.

<sup>A</sup> The evidence and research that have informed this Strategy relate mainly to family violence in Victorian Aboriginal communities. For this reason we usually refer to **Aboriginal peoples and communities** rather than to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In doing this, we do not intend to exclude Torres Strait Islanders from the Strategy.

## THE ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Royal Commission into Family Violence was established in the wake of a series of family violence-related deaths in Victoria. The Royal Commission report was tabled in parliament on 30 March 2016. The report outlined the value of prevention as a key part of the response to family violence. Recommendation 187 of the Royal Commission's report was that:

The Victorian Government ensure that the [Royal] Commission's recommended Statewide Family Violence Action Plan includes a **primary prevention strategy** [within 12 months] that should:

- ... be implemented through a series of three-year action cycles
- ... refer to actions to be taken and be accompanied by performance measures
- ... guide and be guided by the Victorian Government's Gender Equality Strategy
- ... be supported by dedicated funding for family violence primary prevention.

This Strategy is part of *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*.

The definition of **family violence for Aboriginal people** is broader than that for non-Aboriginal people. The Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force defined family violence as 'an issue focused around a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. It extends to one-on-one fighting, abuse of Indigenous community workers as well as self-harm, injury and suicide.' The definition also acknowledges the spiritual and cultural perpetration of violence by non-Aboriginal people against Aboriginal partners which manifests as exclusion or isolation from Aboriginal culture and/or community.

**Violence against women**, as defined by the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), is any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial and others) that are gender-based.

**Intersectionality** – Diversity within the Victorian population means that people’s lives are complex and not defined by any single factor. People’s experiences are shaped by the intersection of a number of social conditions such as gender, class, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, gender identity, religion and age. Each of these factors, or identity attributes, influences and has an impact on our lives and our experiences. Social structures and systems, and the way they intersect, play a large role in creating social conditions that result in power and privilege or discrimination and oppression, thus shaping the ways in which people experience inequality, disadvantage and violence.

This Strategy outlines a **primary prevention** approach – that is, a long-term agenda that aims to prevent violence from ever happening in the first place. Primary prevention works by identifying the deep underlying causes of violence – the social norms, structures and practices that influence individual attitudes and behaviours – and acting across the whole population to change these, not just the behaviour of perpetrators. Primary prevention is distinct from **early intervention and crisis response** activities (also known as secondary and tertiary response) that aim to stop violence from escalating or recurring. An effective primary prevention approach will support and complement early intervention and crisis response efforts activities by reducing pressure on these other parts of the system.

For more detail about the terms in this Strategy, refer to the glossary (pp. 54–58).

THE CONTINUUM OF PREVENTION	Primary prevention	Secondary prevention (early intervention)	Tertiary prevention (response)
What it is	Preventing violence before it occurs	Intervening early to prevent recurring violence	Preventing long-term harm from violence
What we need to focus on	The population as a whole, and the range of settings in which inequalities and violent behaviour are shaped, to address factors that lead to or condone violence	Individuals and groups with a high risk of perpetrating or being a victim of violence, and the factors contributing to that risk	Those affected by violence, and on building systemic, organisational and community capacity to respond to them and hold perpetrators to account
What we need to do	Build social structures, norms and practices that prevent violence from happening or reduce the risk of it occurring	Challenge the impact that exposure to the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence has had on individuals	Contribute to social norms against violence by demonstrating accountability for violence and women’s right to support and recovery

 Scope of this Strategy



# THE URGENT NEED FOR CHANGE

.....  
**In Australia, violence in intimate relationships contributes more to the disease burden for women aged 18 to 44 years than any other risk factor like smoking, alcohol use or being overweight or obese.<sup>B</sup>**  
.....

Violence is unacceptable and inexcusable, yet family violence and violence against women are prevalent and pervasive, shattering lives, families and communities across Victoria.

While there is no comprehensive data on all people who experience or report violence, we know that one in three women over the age of 15 has experienced physical violence, one in four has experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner and one in five has experienced sexual violence. Some groups of women are disproportionately affected, including those with a disability and Aboriginal women. Forty-nine per cent of men over the age of 15 have experienced violence; most of the perpetrators of this violence are male and are strangers to the victim.

**B** Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (30 October 2016). A preventable burden: Measuring and addressing the prevalence and health impacts of intimate partner violence in Australian women: Key findings and future directions. Sydney: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). Retrieved from <<http://anrows.org.au/publications/compass/preventable-burden-measuring-and-addressing-the-prevalence-and-health-impacts>>.

**Every 2 minutes** family violence results in a **police call-out across Australia**<sup>1</sup>

Both women and men are more likely to experience violence at the hands of men, with around 95 per cent of all victims of violence in Australia reporting a male perpetrator. The personal impacts of family violence can be crippling for the families involved.

The impacts are far-reaching and can include deteriorated physical and mental health, loss of housing, loss or limited access to employment, precarious financial security, isolation and alienation of extended family/ social support, and in extreme cases death. Violence also has profound impacts on the overall development of children who witness it or are victims themselves. In addition to these personal impacts, the wider social and economic costs of failing to act to prevent this violence in Victoria are substantial and borne by the whole community. Estimates suggest that the annual cost of family violence in Victoria, in 2014–15, was approximately \$3.1 billion.<sup>C</sup>

**C** Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and recommendations (2016), Parliamentary Paper No. 132 (Session 2014–16).

# 5x

**Women are 5 times more likely than men to require hospitalisation due to family violence**<sup>2</sup>

**1** Blumer, C. (2015). Australian police deal with a domestic violence matter every two minutes. Australia: ABC News website. Retrieved from: <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-29/domestic-violence-data/6503734>>.

**2** Mouzos, J. (1999). Femicide: An overview of major findings. Australian Institute of Criminology 1–6. In Kathy Au Coin, ed., Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile (2003), 21–32. Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

Further, if we don't stop violence from happening in the first place, children will continue to experience and witness family violence – with impacts crossing generations.

The Royal Commission found that for too long, the overwhelming and necessary demand for family violence response and crisis services have eclipsed efforts in prevention. In committing to addressing all 227 recommendations made by the Royal Commission (including those recommendations related to prevention), the Victorian Government has signalled that the time for change is now.

Thanks to the work of a small but focused group of prevention practitioners and experts in a range of different sectors, including family violence specialists and women's health services, there have been efforts to eliminate violence in workplaces, schools and sports clubs. In the media there has been a noticeable shift in the way violence is understood and increasingly rejected, and the way in which gender equality and fairness are addressed.

Prevention is one of the many important elements within a broader family violence reform agenda. This is why this Strategy is a priority within *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*.

## Exposure to violence can harm the behavioural and emotional development of children<sup>3</sup>

The call to end family violence has also come from the community, which plays a critical role in prevention. All sectors of the community, including prevention and response sectors, will need to work hand-in-hand to deliver meaningful and lasting change. Reform efforts must happen simultaneously and cohesively to achieve Victoria's vision of ending family violence.

- 3 Frederick, J. & Goddard, C. (2007). Exploring the relationship between poverty, childhood adversity and child abuse from the perspective of adulthood. *Child Abuse Review*, 16: 323–341; and Humphreys, C. & Houghton, C. (2008). The research evidence on children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. In Humphreys, C., Houghton, C. & Ellis, J., Literature review: Better outcomes for children and young people affected by domestic abuse – Directions for good practice. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.
- 4 PricewaterhouseCoopers (November 2015). A high price to pay: The economic case for preventing violence against women. Australia: PwC. Retrieved from <[www.pwc.com.au/pdf/a-high-price-to-pay.pdf](http://www.pwc.com.au/pdf/a-high-price-to-pay.pdf)>.
- 5 *ibid.*
- 6 *ibid.*
- 7 *ibid.*

\$3.4

billion per year

COST TO THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY<sup>5</sup>

\$7.8

billion per year

COST TO THE TAXPAYER<sup>6</sup>



VIOLENCE AGAINST  
WOMEN COSTS  
AUSTRALIA

\$21.7

billion per year<sup>4</sup>

\$10.4

billion per year

COST OF PAIN,  
SUFFERING AND  
PREMATURE MORTALITY<sup>7</sup>

## THE CASE FOR PRIMARY PREVENTION

### Violence against women costs the Australian economy \$21.7 billion per year.

This Strategy builds on the long-term work of the family violence and prevention sectors and has benefited from the leadership of victim survivors, VicHealth, women's health services, Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, local government, prevention advocates and organisations, and academics. The Victorian community has made significant headway in challenging the long-held notion that violence is inevitable.



### UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS

To experience gender inequality and discrimination is to be denied your human rights. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* states the following principles:

- ... Human rights are essential in a democratic and inclusive society that respects the rule of law, human dignity, equality and freedom.
- ... Human rights belong to all people without discrimination, and the diversity of the people of Victoria enhances our community.
- ... Human rights come with responsibilities and must be exercised in a way that respects the human rights of others.
- ... Human rights have a special importance for the Aboriginal people of Victoria, as descendants of Australia's first people, with their diverse spiritual, social, cultural and economic relationship with their traditional lands and waters.

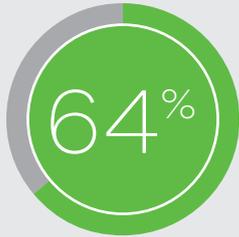
Preventing family violence is about upholding human rights. Failure to act now would allow this violation of rights to continue.

Family violence  
is the leading driver  
of homelessness  
for women<sup>8</sup>

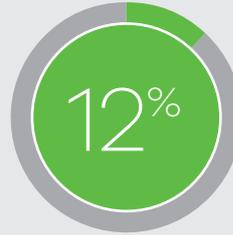
This Strategy draws from *Change the story*, developed by Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth and released in 2015. This framework has been an important milestone in consolidating the evidence on this issue and providing a conceptual model and practical approach to the prevention of family violence perpetrated against women and their children. The Strategy does, however, deviate from the evidence base and approach in *Change the story* in some places, to ensure all forms of family violence are addressed.

The 'primary prevention' of family violence means stopping violence from occurring in the first instance by identifying the underlying causes and acting on them. Primary prevention requires a whole-of-community approach to drive social and cultural change across a wide range of settings. It is typically delivered through a combination of settings-based universal approaches, including in workplaces, schools and other common settings where we interact in our day-to-day lives, and more intensive interventions (that is, more targeted) with specific communities and groups.

<sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2012). Specialist homeless services data collection 2011–12. Cat. No. HOU 267. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.



64% OF AUSTRALIANS  
THINK VIOLENCE  
IS CAUSED BY MEN BEING UNABLE  
TO CONTROL THEIR ANGER <sup>9</sup>



12% OF AUSTRALIANS THINK  
VIOLENCE IS CAUSED BY MEN BEING  
UNDER FINANCIAL STRESS <sup>10</sup>

**More than half of women  
who experience violence  
have children in their care <sup>11</sup>**

This means that everyone in the community has a role to play in prevention – men, women, children and young people. Prevention is not just a task for those affected by violence, nor is it simply the role of family violence services. Rather, prevention requires all kinds of individuals and communities to act on the underlying causes in everyday places, to promote respect and equality and to reject violence in all its forms.

*Change the story* shows that the individual behaviours we are seeking to prevent need to be understood not only at an individual level but at a social/societal level. This means that any activities to address violence cannot only focus on the individuals who are perpetrating such violence; we must also address the social structures, norms and practices that influence individual attitudes and behaviours which lead to violence.

Targeting the structures, norms and practices at a society, community, organisation and individual level, in both universal and more tailored ways, will ensure that the prevention message reaches everyone and is consistently reinforced in all settings.

Everyone has a right to live a life free from violence. This right is clearly enshrined in many international human rights agreements and in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights. The only way we can ensure that this right is upheld for all is to prevent violence from happening in the first place.

9 Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, the Social Research Centre & the University of Melbourne (2014). Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS). Melbourne: VicHealth website. Retrieved from <[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/2013-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/2013-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey)>.

10 *ibid.*

11 Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (2014). Violence against women: Key statistics. Sydney: ANROWS website. Retrieved from <[www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf](http://www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf)>.



The complex and deeply entrenched causes or 'drivers' of family violence mean that an equally comprehensive and long-term approach to ending it is needed. We must begin this work immediately.

To stop family violence once and for all will require all Victorians – as individuals, as partners, as members of families, communities, organisations, institutions and society as a whole – to not only say no to violence, but to challenge and reject the drivers of violence, and to uphold respect and equality for all.

Never before has there been such strong and widespread support to end family violence. It is time to work together for a Victoria free from family violence.

#### WHAT DOES THE DATA SHOW?

There is a growing body of research on the attitudes and beliefs that support and contribute to the causes of violence against women. The National Community Attitudes Survey is the best available tool at present to measure the beliefs, knowledge and attitudes held by the community about violence against women, relationships, acceptable behaviour and men's and women's roles in society. This is the most important data to track when looking at the effectiveness of prevention strategies, as it is data that can best reflect and measure improvements in attitudes across the whole population.

Throughout this Strategy we will note victim and perpetrator demographics, and Australians' experience of violence. This does not include administrative data, such as police attendance statistics, which only provides an indication of reported family violence incidents across Victoria. This data is important to track when looking at the effectiveness of, and confidence of the population in, the response system. Administrative data only provides a small part of the overall picture, because many incidents of violence are never reported to police or other services.

<sup>12</sup> Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, the Social Research Centre & the University of Melbourne (2014). Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS). Melbourne: VicHealth website. Retrieved from <[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/2013-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/2013-national-community-attitudes-towards-violence-against-women-survey)>.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*



# 2

## THE CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

**Violence is complex and no two experiences are the same. Violence takes many forms and is experienced in different ways, but abuse of power and the exercise of coercion and control are at the heart of all violence.**

The social conditions that lead to violence are what we call 'drivers' or 'causes' of violence: these often reflect underlying inequalities in social or economic power among different groups of people. Understanding the drivers of violence is key to knowing how to prevent it.

Knowing how different social conditions intersect to drive violence against different individuals or groups is critical to ensuring that the prevention strategies we develop are effective for all people across our diverse Victorian community.

- 14 Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) (February 2015). Homicide in Australia: 2010–11 to 2011–12: National Homicide Monitoring Program report. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology; and Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013). Personal Safety Survey Australia 2012. Cat. No. 4906.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).
- 15 Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (2014). Violence against women: Key statistics. Sydney: ANROWS website. Retrieved from <[www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf](http://www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf)>.

16 *ibid.*

**One woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner** <sup>14</sup>

### THE DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The most common form of family violence is male intimate partner violence against women.

There has been extensive international and national research into the drivers of violence against women and *Change the story* gathers much of this evidence together. It identifies the expressions of gender inequality that the international evidence has shown to be most consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women:

- ... condoning of violence against women
- ... men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence
- ... rigid gender roles and identities
- ... male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.



**1 IN 5 AUSTRALIAN WOMEN HAS EXPERIENCED SEXUAL VIOLENCE** <sup>15</sup>



**1 IN 3 AUSTRALIAN WOMEN HAS EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL VIOLENCE** <sup>16</sup>



**1 IN 4 AUSTRALIAN WOMEN HAS EXPERIENCED EMOTIONAL ABUSE BY A CURRENT OR FORMER PARTNER** <sup>17</sup>



**1 IN 4 AUSTRALIAN WOMEN HAS EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE FROM A PARTNER** <sup>19</sup>



**1 IN 7 AUSTRALIAN MEN HAS EXPERIENCED EMOTIONAL ABUSE BY A CURRENT OR FORMER PARTNER** <sup>18</sup>



**1 IN 19 AUSTRALIAN MEN HAS EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE FROM A PARTNER** <sup>20</sup>

*Change the story* notes that gender inequality is a social condition characterised by an unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunity between women and men, leading to women being less valued in society. Gender inequality affects all women in some way, whether it be in relation to equal pay, access to education (particularly in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics or STEM), discrimination, lack of political representation, lack of financial independence and economic security (particularly in relation to superannuation), lower pay levels in female-dominated industries, expectations around social and familial care responsibilities, access to leadership positions and decision-making positions, or equal participation, recognition and reward in sport.

<sup>17</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013). Personal Safety Survey Australia 2012. Cat. No. 4906.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Cox, P. (October 2015). Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey 2012. Research report. Sydney: Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). Retrieved from <<http://media.aomx.com/anrows.org.au/s3fs-public/Compass%20-%20Violence%20against%20women%20in%20Australia%20-%20Additional%20analysis%20of%20t....pdf>>; and Woodlock, D. et al (2014). Voices against violence paper one: Summary report and recommendations. Women with Disabilities Victoria, Office of the Public Advocate and Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria.

<sup>20</sup> Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (2014). Violence against women: Key statistics. Sydney: ANROWS website. Retrieved from <[www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf](http://www.anrows.org.au/sites/default/files/Violence-Against-Australian-Women-Key-Statistics.pdf)>.

## SAFE AND STRONG: A VICTORIAN GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY

*Safe and strong* addresses gender inequality in all its forms and includes a series of founding reforms – including a gender equality act, targets for women in leadership and on boards, progressive introduction of gender audits in the Victorian Public Service, introduction of gender budget statements and a Ministerial Council on Women’s Equality – to lay the groundwork for enduring and sustained change over time.

Gender audits identify how factors – such as culture, policy, systems and practices – either promote or work against workplace gender equality. The Victorian Government will progressively introduce gender auditing to measure progress in five key areas: equal pay for comparable work, recruitment and promotion, leadership development and mentoring, flexible working, and organisational culture.

*Safe and strong* also recognises that gender equality cannot be achieved by the Victorian Government alone. It is the responsibility of everyone – individuals, families, schools, communities, workplaces, sporting clubs and the media and arts – to build a culture of respect and equality. For this reason *Safe and strong* also identifies six areas for early action: education and training; work and economic security; health, safety and wellbeing; leadership and representation; sport and recreation; and media, arts and culture.

The development of *Safe and strong* was driven by recognition of the key role gender inequality plays as a cause of violence against women; the economic costs to Victoria that result from gender inequality; and the importance of gender equality as part of human rights and social inclusion.

The Royal Commission also called for a Victorian gender equality strategy to serve as the platform for this prevention strategy.

Gender inequality creates the necessary social environment that enables violence against women to occur. The gendered drivers for this violence arise from the broader gender-discriminatory political, social and economic structures and institutions, social and cultural norms, and organisational, community, family and relationship practices that together create environments in which women and men are not considered equal, where disrespect for women is the norm, and where violence against women is tolerated or even condoned. In 2016, the Victorian Government released its first ever Victorian gender equality strategy, *Safe and strong : A Victorian gender equality strategy*. *Safe and strong* seeks to ensure that Victoria is a place where everyone is equally valued in all aspects of life. This Strategy builds on the efforts of *Safe and strong* and focuses on the drivers of the most extreme form of gender inequality – violence against women.

While gender inequality is always influential as a driver of violence against women, it cannot be considered in isolation. *Change the story* notes that when other forms of systemic social, political and economic discrimination and disadvantage, such as racism, ageism, ableism and homophobia, intersect with gender discrimination, they can increase the likelihood, frequency or severity of violence against particular groups of women.

For this reason, both gender inequality and the other systemic and structural inequalities in our society must be addressed if we are going to succeed in preventing violence against women. It will take a systematic and broad whole-of-government approach, and this Strategy and *Safe and Strong* will play a key role.

## OTHER SOCIAL CONDITIONS THAT LEAD TO FAMILY VIOLENCE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

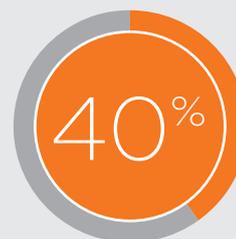
People’s lives and identities are not one-dimensional; because of this, many Victorians are subjected to discrimination based on factors beyond their gender, and sometimes, multiple forms of discrimination and inequality. There are many forms of inequality that can intersect with gender inequality to drive perpetration of violence against different groups of women (and the acceptance of this violence). The same is true of other forms of family violence, where non-gender related power inequalities may play a more significant role (for example, inequalities based on ageism in the case of elder abuse).

**More than 70% of women with disabilities**  
have been victims of sexual violence  
at some time in their lives <sup>21</sup>

One part of the population subjected to higher levels of violence is people with a disability. For people with a disability, the leading causes of violence are the social norms, structures and practices that continually reinforce and encourage attitudes that privilege people without a disability, while discriminating against people with a disability. The intersection of these societal factors creates a social environment where it is acceptable to discriminate against and marginalise people with a disability. This can affect their ability to participate in everyday life and can socially isolate them. This can mean that people with a disability are more likely to be subject to the perpetration of violence than others. In particular, for women with a disability, the intersection of these different factors means they continue to be undervalued, and their experiences of violence are ignored or poorly understood.

In this section, we describe what we know so far about other drivers of family violence more broadly. One of the objectives of this Strategy is to increase this knowledge, and we will be investigating the particular ways in which different social conditions lead to other forms of inequality, both by themselves and in combination, and how this leads to the perpetration of family violence and violence against women. The drivers and context for violence against Aboriginal people is described in a separate section of this Strategy, in recognition of the fact that Aboriginal people experience entrenched and systemic forms of inequality. These long-standing and structural inequalities often mean that society and the service system can be unsafe for Aboriginal people and increase the risk of Aboriginal women, men and children experiencing discrimination, marginalisation and family violence.

- 21 Frohmader, C. (2014). 'Gender blind, gender neutral': The effectiveness of the National Disability Strategy in improving the lives of women and girls with disabilities. Prepared for Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA). Retrieved from <[http://wwda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/WWDA\\_Sub\\_NDS\\_Review2014.pdf](http://wwda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/WWDA_Sub_NDS_Review2014.pdf)>.
- 22 Brownridge, D. (2006). Partner violence against women with disabilities: Prevalence, risk, and explanations. *Violence Against Women*, 12(9): 805–822.
- 23 Australian Law Reform Commission (November 2010). Family violence – a national legal response. Final report. Sydney: Australian Law Reform Commission. Retrieved from <[www.alrc.gov.au/publications/family-violence-national-legal-response-alrc-report-114](http://www.alrc.gov.au/publications/family-violence-national-legal-response-alrc-report-114)>.



**WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES  
ARE 40% MORE LIKELY TO BE THE  
VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE THAN  
WOMEN WITHOUT DISABILITIES <sup>22</sup>**



**90% OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN WITH  
AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY HAVE  
BEEN SUBJECTED TO SEXUAL ABUSE,  
WITH MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS (68%)  
HAVING BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED  
BEFORE THEY TURN 18 YEARS OF AGE <sup>23</sup>**

In Australia, structural and systemic race and gender inequality and discrimination contribute to a social environment that condones violence against members of immigrant, asylum and refugee communities, including women. These social conditions perpetuate rigid ideas about what it means to be a man or a woman, as well as racial stereotypes and racist attitudes that influence and drive the perpetration of violence. Where racial discrimination intersects with gender discrimination, we can see compounding impacts on women's experience of violence.

**Older people** are at particular risk of **economic abuse**<sup>26</sup>



Elder abuse, or violence against older women and men, is caused in part by society's marginalisation of older people, affording them less power and social status and seeing them as less able to make decisions for themselves. This is caused by public attitudes and practices that view ageing as a negative process associated with decline, loss and frailty, and view older people as less valuable in society. While family violence against older people can be perpetrated by their partners, it can also be perpetrated by adult children and grandchildren, as well as other relatives and carers. It may occur in the community, institutional care, or residential services.

Gender inequality can also intersect with ageism to drive violence against older women, making their experiences of marginalisation and disadvantage even worse. For example, a lifetime of lower wages, part-time work and time out of the workforce to raise children means that women are much worse off financially in older age than men. This can increase their dependence on others and the probability of abuse and violence.

24 Bedar, A., Matrah, J. E. & Lotia, N. (2011). Muslim women, Islam and family violence: A guide for changing the way we work with Muslim women experiencing family violence. Melbourne: The Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights. Retrieved from <<http://ausmuslimwomenscentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/women-oppose-violence-workers-guide.pdf>>

25 ibid.

26 Bagshaw, D. & Chung, D. (2000). Women, men and domestic violence. Report produced with Partnerships Against Domestic Violence. University of South Australia. Retrieved from <[www.xyonline.net/sites/default/files/Bagshaw,%20Women,%20men%20and%20domestic%20violence.pdf](http://www.xyonline.net/sites/default/files/Bagshaw,%20Women,%20men%20and%20domestic%20violence.pdf)>.



The forms of discrimination and violence perpetrated against people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (and gender diverse) or intersex (LGBTI) at an individual and community level reflect the broader societal-level acceptance and condoning of discrimination and violence against LGBTI people. Where heterosexuality and rigid gender roles and identities are the social norm, these factors can exacerbate and compound the likelihood of perpetration against LGBTI people, both in family contexts and elsewhere.

In the family context, LGBTI people, particularly young people and older adults, can be at significant risk of abuse and violence from family members such as parents, siblings and children. This disproportionate, lifelong exposure to violence, prejudice and discrimination has led to this population having poorer health overall than the general population, as well as a greater distrust of health and support services, including the police.

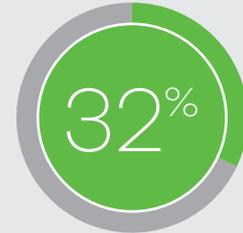
Initial efforts in prevention have made significant headway to understanding the impact of rigid social constructions of gender, gender roles, sex and sexuality in driving violence against women. Violence against all LGBTI people – whether within or outside the family context – shares some of these drivers. In this way, the prevention of violence against all LGBTI people is likely to be partly aided by strategies addressing the gendered drivers of violence against women, outlined above, because they seek to challenge such rigid constructions. There are other distinct factors driving violence against LGBTI people that need further research and different approaches and strategies. There is, for example, less understanding of the drivers of family violence for those in same-sex relationships and trans and gender diverse people.

This Strategy recognises the need for specialised approaches to preventing violence in same-sex relationships, which means we need to explore and research this to get a better understanding of what drives it.

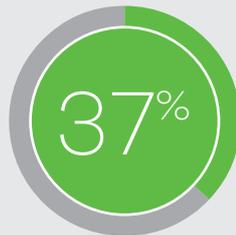
27 Pitts, M. et al (2006). Private lives: A report on the health and wellbeing of GLBTI Australians. Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria & the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University. Retrieved from <[www.glhv.org.au/files/private\\_lives\\_report\\_0.pdf](http://www.glhv.org.au/files/private_lives_report_0.pdf)>.

28 *ibid.*

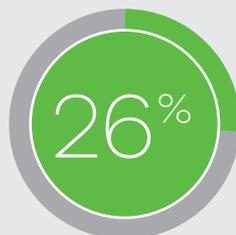




32% OF VICTIMS OF  
SIBLING VIOLENCE  
ARE MEN <sup>31</sup>



37% OF VICTIMS OF  
PARENT-ON-CHILD VIOLENCE  
ARE MEN <sup>29</sup>



26% OF VICTIMS OF  
CHILD-ON-PARENT VIOLENCE  
ARE MEN <sup>30</sup>

We also know that men are victims of family violence, although not to the same extent as women. Nevertheless, we need to get a better understanding of what is driving this violence. It is not difficult to appreciate that if unhealthy and rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity create social norms and conditions that drive violence against women, they can also drive violence against men. From the data currently available to us, we know that violence against men is often perpetrated by other men; however, women can and do perpetrate violence against men. Why and in what circumstances this happens needs to be better understood. In fact, it is critical that we better understand and directly address all the social conditions that lead to family violence in our society, or Victoria will continue to be burdened by the trauma of this violence.

29 Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and recommendations (2016). Parliamentary Paper No. 132 (Session 2014–16).

30 *ibid.*

31 *ibid.*

## REINFORCING FACTORS

A range of additional factors can increase the frequency or severity of violence when they intersect with the drivers discussed above. They do not, on their own, predict violence, but they do play a role, and need to be considered in any holistic prevention strategy. These 'reinforcing factors' are better understood for violence against women, but are likely to play a role in other forms of family violence too.

*Change the story* outlines the reinforcing factors of violence against women. The extent to which these factors may also apply to other forms of family violence, in what circumstances, and how, needs further research. Some of the factors that can interact with the gendered drivers to increase the probability, frequency or severity of violence against women include:

... **Condoning of violence in general:** Violence can be condoned informally, through the way families, friends and communities respond to violence, and formally, through laws that impose weak punitive measures for violent crimes. Condoning violence reinforces ideas about gender, increasing the risk of family violence. For example, believing that violence is sometimes warranted, and understanding violence as a natural part of masculinity, can increase the risk of violence.

... **Experience of, and exposure to, violence:** Witnessing violence against women, directly experiencing violence and long-term exposure to other forms of violence can contribute to a belief that violence is normal. This can include exposure to abuse as a child (either directly, or as a witness), or racist violence, peer violence and situations of war or armed conflict.

... **Weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol and/or drugs:** The harmful use of alcohol and other drugs can increase the likelihood of violence. As well as these substances, reinforcing factors include anything that might erode or weaken pro-social behaviour (meaning behaviour that benefits other people), heighten the tendency to be individualistic or self-serving, or be less concerned about others and the consequences of actions. When weakening of pro-social behaviour occurs in the context of power imbalances, this can increase the risk of family violence.

... **Socio-economic inequality and discrimination:** The risk of violence against women is higher when gender inequality intersects with other forms of inequality and discrimination, such as racism, discrimination against people with disabilities or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Any factor that limits access to services, or to social and economic power, can increase the probability of violence.

... **Backlash factors (when male dominance, power or status is challenged):** Resistance to changing gender roles or relations may increase the risk of violence. Violence may be used as a way to maintain existing power relations, particularly when these power relations are being challenged.



## OTHER FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

In addition to the reinforcing factors for violence against women, there are other factors which can increase the frequency and severity of family violence. While we work to address the drivers of violence, it is critical that we also limit the ability of these factors to make violence even worse.

For people who require care, such as those with disabilities or older people, the reliance on carers and assistance provided by others can increase the risk of violence.

These additional factors include geographic and social isolation. Geographic isolation can be exploited as a way to control people, making people more vulnerable to violence. Social isolation can also exacerbate the drivers of violence as it can, for example, put women in the position of being dependent on male partners, which can reinforce men's sense of power over women.

Historically, mental ill-health has been mistakenly thought to be a driver of family violence against women. While this is not true, it does feature in many cases of violence against women, and can definitely be a result of experiencing violence. It remains unknown to what extent, if any, it contributes to the prevalence of violence. Through this Strategy, we will work with experts in the field of mental health and with mental health services to better understand the link between mental ill-health and perpetration of violence.

## HOW FAMILY VIOLENCE AFFECTS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

There is more to learn about the drivers of family violence against children and young people. However, as in adult relationships, control and abuse of power are at the heart of the problem.

Children and young people are victims of family violence, whether they experience violence directly or witness it.

ANROWS' analysis of the ABS Personal Safety Survey shows that since the age of 15, more than half a million Australian women who experienced partner violence had children in their care. As described in *Change the story*, witnessing violence against their mothers or other caregivers causes serious, lasting harm to children, with potential impacts on attitudes to relationships and violence, as well as behavioural, cognitive and emotional functioning, social development, education and later employment prospects.

Both *Change the story* and the UN Women's *Framework to underpin action to prevent violence against women* highlight evidence that suggests that children who witness or experience violence are at greater risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life. Given the extent to which Victorian children are exposed to violence, preventing it will also prevent associated harm and other consequences for children and young people, including intergenerational harm caused by such violence. This is particularly urgent in relation to Aboriginal children, their families and communities.





# 3

## THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

### STRONG ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND CULTURE

Aboriginal communities in Victoria have consistently led the way in the development of strategic priorities and actions to prevent family violence. This is demonstrated through strong whole-of-community engagement initiatives that focus on reconciliation and reunification, and bring together women, men, children and Elders to collectively break the cycles of violence. Victorian Aboriginal communities are driving a range of prevention programs aimed at strengthening the factors that protect against family violence. Initiatives include respectful relationships programs focused on Aboriginal young people and men; targeted and local campaigns to build strong families and communities; initiatives to strengthen the connection of Aboriginal children, young people, women and men to community and culture; and self-determination models in individual and institutional contexts.

Aboriginal culture is founded on a strong social and cultural order that has sustained up to 50,000 years of existence. Family violence is not and has never been a part of Aboriginal culture. Rather, the impact of white settlement, colonisation and the violent dispossession of land, culture and children has displaced traditional Aboriginal roles and resulted in an accumulation of trauma across generations.

# 11x

**Aboriginal women are 11 times more likely to die** as a result of family violence<sup>33</sup>

Historical experiences of systemic and structural discrimination continue to reverberate across Aboriginal communities today, as a result of deeply rooted structural inequalities, including poverty and social exclusion, unequal power distribution and relations, low rates of economic participation, high rates of criminalisation and incarceration, and institutionalisation. These inequalities affect the daily lives of Aboriginal people, with detrimental impacts on self-determination, health and wellbeing, self-identity and self-esteem, sense of belonging and connectedness, and ability to seek support and assistance. The cumulative effects of individual, institutional and societal violence and racism over the generations have contributed to the pervasiveness of family violence and the severity of its impact on Aboriginal people today.

In shifting the societal attitudes that give rise to family violence against Aboriginal people, Aboriginal leaders have emphasised the critical importance of government, schools, workplaces and communities strengthening their understanding of Aboriginal history and embracing Aboriginal culture as a source of pride for all Victorians. They have also emphasised the need to challenge racism and negative perceptions or stereotypes about Aboriginal communities. This includes recognising and respecting the inherent strength and diversity of Aboriginal people, families and communities across Victoria.

# 34x

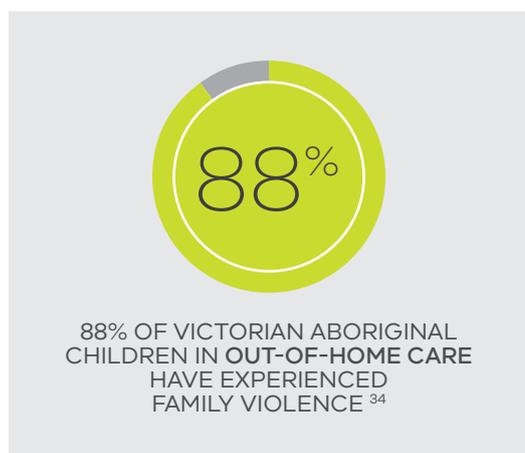
**Aboriginal women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised** as a result of family violence<sup>32</sup>

32 Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2014). *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2014*. Canberra: Productivity Commission.

33 Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and recommendations (2016). *Parliamentary Paper No. 132 (Session 2014–16)*.

## A DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT

Violence is perpetrated against Aboriginal people by both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people, and is experienced within intimate relationships, families, extended families, kinship networks and communities. Violence against Aboriginal people encompasses a wide range of abuses and can include physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse as well as inter- and intra-group violence and lateral violence.



Spiritual and cultural violence is also perpetrated against Aboriginal women and men when non-Aboriginal partners or family members exclude or isolate the Aboriginal person from the strength of their culture or community.

As shown in the data below, violence against Aboriginal people disproportionately impacts women and their children, who undoubtedly experience violence at much higher rates than other Victorians. Aboriginal women and children are one of the groups at highest risk of family violence in Victoria, regardless of whether they live in rural, regional or urban areas.

Given the disproportionate levels of violence against Aboriginal women by men, there can be little doubt that gender inequality and discrimination play a critical role in the perpetration of this violence. However, for Aboriginal women this is further compounded by the historical oppression of Aboriginal women as a result of colonisation, the Stolen Generations and the loss of land and culture. These intersections combine to create greater levels and severity of family violence against Aboriginal women and their children.

A higher proportion of Aboriginal people in Victoria have been directly affected by the Stolen Generations than in any other state or territory. The grief and trauma resulting from child removal policies are profound, and should not be underestimated in any analysis of the drivers of family violence for Aboriginal people. Past experiences of family violence and trauma are perpetuated today, as Aboriginal children continue to be removed from families as a result of exposure to violence.

In Victoria, the Royal Commission into Family Violence acknowledged the contemporary effects of multiple forms of discrimination on Victorian Aboriginal communities, and the additional service barriers this creates for Aboriginal people experiencing, or at risk of, violence.

<sup>34</sup> Commission for Children and Young People (October 2016). Always was, always will be Koori children. Systemic inquiry into services provided to Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care in Victoria. Melbourne: Commission for Children and Young People.

<sup>35</sup> Biddle, N. (2013). Indigenous and non-Indigenous marriage partnerships. CAEPR Indigenous Population Project: 2011 census papers. Canberra: Australian National University, 12. Retrieved from <[http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck\\_indigenous\\_outcomes/2013/11/2011CensusPaper\\_15.pdf](http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_indigenous_outcomes/2013/11/2011CensusPaper_15.pdf)>.

## COMPOUNDING EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

Ms Dhu is a 22-year old Aboriginal woman who died in police custody in Western Australia from injuries related to family violence, after being imprisoned for unpaid fines. Coroner Ros Fogliani found that her death could have been prevented if the illness caused by her untreated family violence injuries had been diagnosed in the days before her death.

The inhumane and horrific treatment of Ms Dhu by her partner, police and hospital staff shows how multiple forms of discrimination can intersect to cause violence and, in this case, death. For Ms Dhu, this was an intersection of the impacts of colonisation, racism, gender inequality and condoning of violence in the form of institutional abuse.

The Royal Commission made a number of recommendations to address these issues. This Strategy will complement these efforts, by addressing the drivers of violence that lead to institutional discrimination and racism.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People says that 'States shall take measures, in conjunction with Indigenous peoples, to ensure that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.' Upholding and securing the cultural rights of Aboriginal people is consistent with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights. The Charter explicitly protects cultural rights, including the rights of Aboriginal people to enjoy their identity and culture, maintain and use their language, maintain their kinship ties, and maintain their relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which they have a connection under traditional laws and customs. Ending family violence against Aboriginal people and their communities will require a holistic healing approach and an investment in community-led prevention approaches.

## BUILDING ON EXISTING EFFORTS

The Victorian Government is committed to Aboriginal self-determination and an enduring community-led response to violence against Aboriginal people, underpinned by a strong Aboriginal community-controlled sector and genuine partnership approach. We will draw on the unique experiences and expertise of Aboriginal people, ensuring that any prevention initiatives focused on Aboriginal communities are developed in partnership with Aboriginal people and reinforce positive capacity-building approaches with Aboriginal communities.

This Strategy will build on the foundations of existing efforts to address family violence against Aboriginal people in Victoria, including:

- ... **Framework for the development of the Victorian Indigenous family violence strategy** developed in 2002. This framework describes a partnership approach between Aboriginal people in Victoria and government. As part of this framework, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups were established across the state. These action groups were instrumental in the development of the 10-year plan to prevent family violence.
- ... The Indigenous family violence 10-year plan, **Strong culture, strong peoples, strong families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities**, which was released in 2008. This plan sets out the community-led response developed by and for Aboriginal Victorians. Associated prevention efforts have focused on three core elements: education and awareness raising, self-esteem and resilience building, and cultural strengthening.
- ... **Indigenous family violence primary prevention framework**, released in 2012. The development of this prevention framework was led by Aboriginal people and was based on a whole-of-community approach grounded in cultural respect and strengthening cultural connection. The framework has three goals:
  - preventing family violence experienced by Aboriginal people
  - promoting equal and respectful relationships
  - upholding and sustaining culturally respectful communities and organisations.



# 4

## OUR VISION FOR CHANGE

Our ultimate vision is to create a Victoria free from violence, where all Victorians:

- ... experience equality and respect in all of their relationships, particularly within their families and with intimate partners
- ... are empowered and respected at home and everywhere
- ... are supported in their relationships to reach their full potential.

People will live free from violence and the fear of violence, at home and everywhere. Communities and organisations will foster equality, inclusion and respect, including Victorian workplaces, schools, sporting clubs, faith communities, public spaces and places of care such as nursing homes and assisted-living facilities. Our systems and institutions will ensure accountability for violence and discrimination, and address social inequalities and discrimination.

In this Victoria, everyone understands that violence is a result of gender inequality, combined with multiple forms of discrimination, power and control. People have the knowledge and skills to recognise and speak out against controlling behaviours, victim-blaming, sexism and justifications for violence, with the support of our political leaders, public institutions, employers, the media and peers. Everyone is active in challenging these inequalities where they exist, and in creating a better, and more equal, society for all.

Achieving this vision will require a multilayered approach, consisting of multiple strategies to address the complex social conditions that drive violence in the first place. This should be delivered in everyday settings and across the whole spectrum of people's lives, with a momentum that counteracts the size and scale of the problem.

## CURRENT AND FUTURE STATE SCENARIOS

### CURRENT

A leading Victorian newspaper reports that a student in the US was allegedly raped by her boyfriend at a prestigious university college. The article states that the rape occurred after the young woman had been binge drinking at a college party and that her boyfriend had been upset with her 'flirting' with other young men. The investigation piece sparks an ongoing frenzy of speculation in the media over the victim's character and behaviour.

Over breakfast, a couple of students at a university in Melbourne discuss the alleged rape featured in the paper. The conversation turns to a discussion of the victim's behaviour. One of the students says that binge drinking always leads to sexual assault and that's why she's always careful when she drinks. They all conclude that women should be careful in the future not to lose control with alcohol. They are also concerned that a criminal sentence could ruin the alleged perpetrator's life, and that the victim therefore shouldn't have reported it to police.

### FUTURE

A leading Victorian newspaper reports that a student in the US was allegedly raped by her boyfriend at a prestigious university college. The article states that the case is being investigated and the victim is being supported through this traumatic and disturbing event. The investigation piece focuses on the facts surrounding the sexual assault, the behaviour of the alleged perpetrator and the university's response of condemning sexual assault and intimate partner violence.

After finding out about the alleged sexual assault, students at a university in Melbourne are shocked and express their grief and concern for the victim. They do not discuss the victim's behaviour or what she could have done to avoid this situation. They're aware that to do so would be unfair and wrong. If they hear their classmates discussing the background of the victim, they pull them up on the implicit victim-blaming.

### CURRENT

Tracy is deaf and uses Auslan. She sometimes requires assistance from her partner, Charlie, to translate for her at social engagements. Tracy and Charlie are invited by a couple of his friends to a dinner party, but Charlie says he doesn't want Tracy to come because he wants a 'night off' from translating. Tracy is upset but agrees not to go, because she doesn't want to feel like a burden. This becomes a regular pattern of behaviour, and Tracy begins to feel she lacks control in the relationship and becomes socially isolated.

### FUTURE

Charlie knows that Tracy is at times reliant on him to translate for her. Charlie assists his friends by teaching them to sign, so that Tracy is always included in conversations. Tracy feels like she is connected to her friends, and has support from Charlie's friends too. She feels socially connected and supported in her relationship.

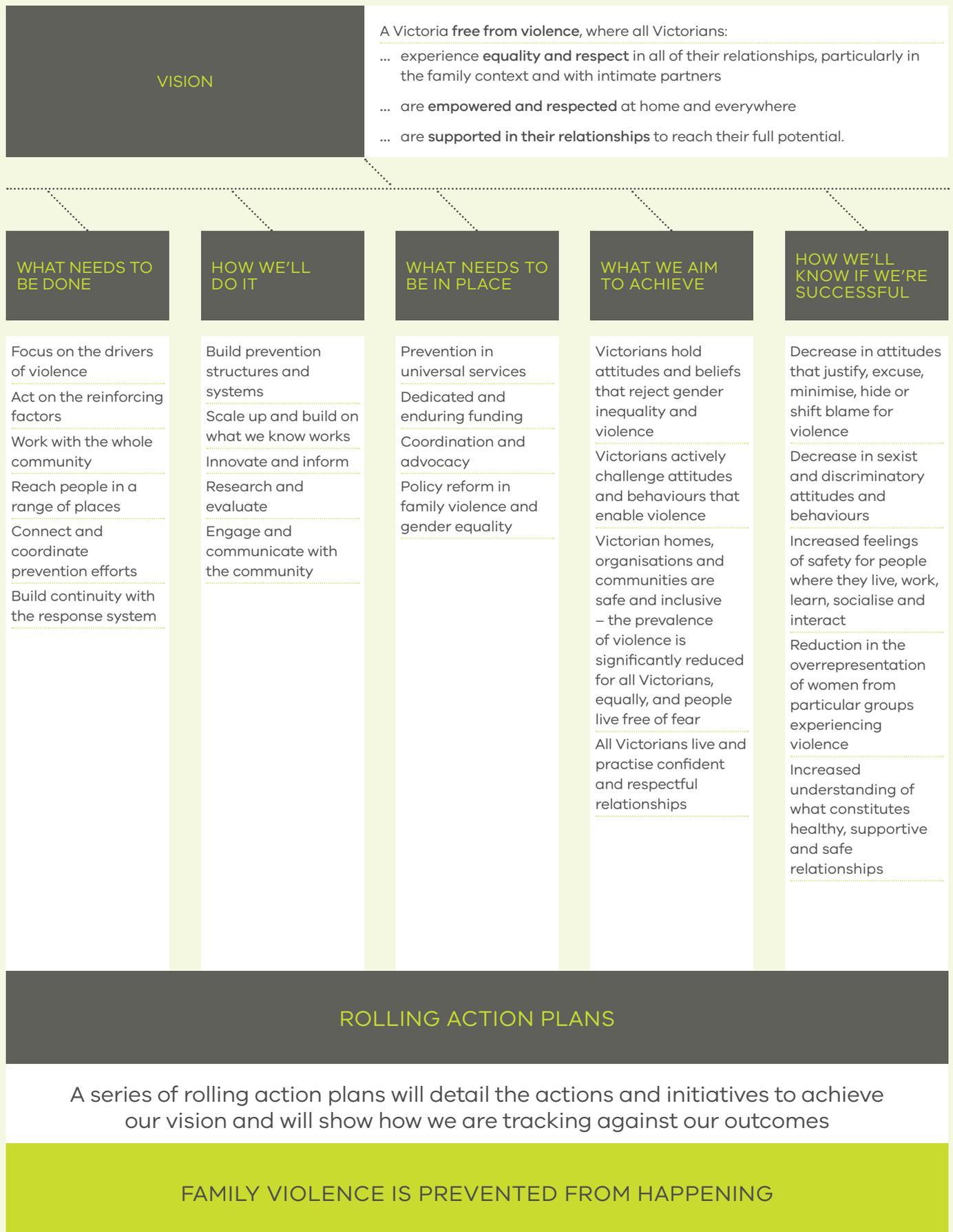
### CURRENT

Tom is retired and lives on a small pension. He has some money saved up that he wants to invest in order to get a good return into the future. Tom's son, Jack, tells him to invest his savings in Jack's friend's start-up business. Tom is reluctant, because he doesn't think the business will make a profit. However, Jack pressures him into investing in the business and Tom feels powerless to refuse.

### FUTURE

Tom tells his son Jack that he wants to invest some money in order to get a good return. Jack comes over to Tom's house and they research options together. While Jack has a few ideas of what would be a good investment, he is respectful and doesn't insist that Tom invest his money in any one venture. Tom feels as though he is supported to make an informed decision about his own finances.

# A VICTORIA FREE FROM VIOLENCE







## WHAT WILL HAPPEN

### A WORLD FIRST

Whole-of-community change and prevention of family violence efforts have not been undertaken on this scale before. As this Strategy aims to create long-term change over a number of years in all parts of the community, it needs to consider future trends that will affect the community and the settings where we will be taking action.

- ... Recent research into workplaces suggests three possible scenarios for what the future of workplaces will look like in the coming decade, fuelled by technological change, environmental change and demographic shifts across the globe. Each scenario will have different but significant implications for prevention action in the workplace setting.
- ... In relation to young people, a recent analysis of megatrends in the social, political, technological and environmental spheres highlights how every generation faces unique life circumstances and experiences, and that these megatrends need to be factored into planning and policy.

... The impact of technology and social media developments alone will continue to dramatically change the way government and other services are planned and delivered, and the way that communities are formed and sustained, and this will strongly influence prevention action into the future.

Given the major impact these future trends and challenges could have, we will continue to work with our industry and research partners to keep up to date with the latest information and ensure we adapt our actions and initiatives in response.

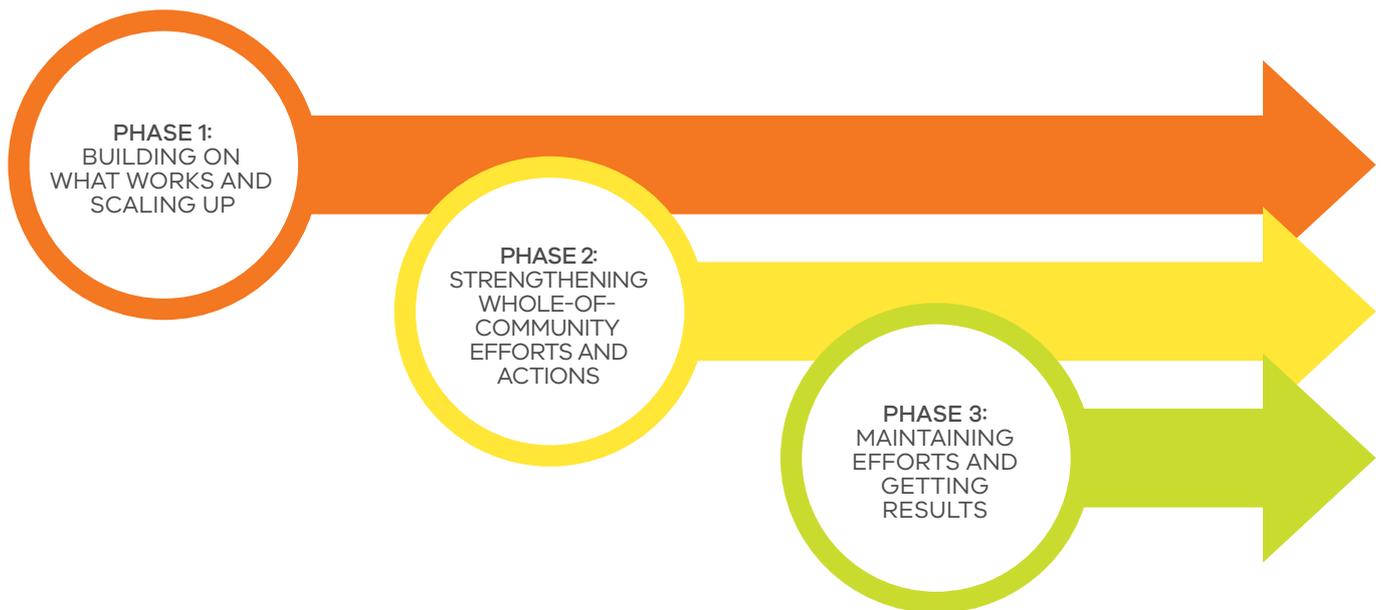
While we cannot currently predict every trend, there are a number of things that we are likely to see in Victoria as a result of these efforts. We can expect that change will be gradual, punctuated with resistance and backlash, and require a steadfast and sustained commitment to ensure the prevention of violence in Victoria in the longer term.

## PHASING OF EFFORTS OVER TIME

Ending violence and challenging its causes are a long-term endeavour that will require enduring focus and effort. Change will not happen overnight. Given the unprecedented focus on preventing family violence, we will take an incremental approach, testing and refining as we go. We will progress our efforts to prevent family violence in three key phases:

- ... building the infrastructure and systems for prevention and expanding what works
- ... strengthening whole of community efforts and actions
- ... maintaining these efforts while continuing to build and refine the approach as we go, so that phase one does not end as phase two begins, but rather each phase is added to the previous phase and builds on it, so that prevention efforts are strengthened and compounded.

Family violence rolling action plans will be released that will detail the actions, initiatives and investment necessary to achieve a Victoria free from violence. These will be based on the long-term reform agenda described in *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*. Rolling action plans will be developed approximately every three years, or as necessary, and will reflect new knowledge and evidence.





The first phase of this Strategy focuses on building the infrastructure for a much larger primary prevention platform in Victoria. This phase includes the strengthening of a skilled prevention workforce and increasing investment and expanding research, evaluation and monitoring. We will build and expand networks and partnerships in prevention activities, and engage and educate the community on the need to address gender inequality and discrimination.

We expect to see the building of evidence-based, innovative practice, greater saturation of prevention strategies and policies, and coordination of prevention efforts across Victorian communities. New leaders and champions of change in the prevention of violence will emerge to help mitigate anticipated backlash and resistance to social change. As more tangible signs of action and progress are visible, we anticipate that individuals and communities will begin to feel the effect of increased efforts to prevent family violence, and therefore, potentially, an increased perception of safety. Reporting of family violence may increase as a result of greater awareness by victims and a preparedness to take action.

The second phase of the Strategy will continue to build infrastructure and governance, and develop a greater level of sophistication and saturation of prevention activities across Victorian communities. This means tools and resources will be more easily available, and people will be more able to call out and challenge violent-supportive attitudes, behaviours and drivers, including discrimination and inequality. Building on the research and data, as well as the progress of *Safe and strong*, we will intensify efforts in workplaces, schools, organisational settings and cohort-specific organisations and communities, especially those that haven't already been engaged in prevention activities. We will make use of both quantitative and qualitative data, involve community in the design of solutions, and learn as we go.

Alongside governments, we expect to see civil society take greater responsibility for the prevention of violence, and the emergence of a stronger and more diverse network which can address backlash and resistance to social change. Primary prevention will become part of core business in all government sectors (including health, education, justice and environment) and for leaders in the private sector (as both workplaces and service providers). We expect to see attitudes that support violence becoming unacceptable and addressed in various settings and forums where Victorians live, work, learn, socialise and play.

We anticipate that women will begin to feel an increased level of safety, and alongside broader reform efforts individuals and communities will gain greater confidence in support service systems. Reporting on current, as well as historic, episodes of violence is likely to continue to increase, including from children and young people.

The third phase of the Strategy focuses on continuing to learn and innovate and maintain efforts in prevention. We expect to see noticeable gains in the third phase at individual, organisational and societal levels.

We anticipate that, as efforts build over the previous two phases, the social norms, attitudes, behaviours and systems contributing to violence will begin to shift. This means that these behaviours will be more widely recognised and considered unacceptable, and will be more confidently challenged by peers, friends and families, both in private and in public. This will also be demonstrated in a noticeable and measurable shift in the public debate and media representations of family violence and violence against women.

We expect that incidents of family violence and related deaths will start to decline for all Victorians. As the prevalence of family violence begins to fall, the economic and social benefits will continue to grow. We will begin to reduce the load on emergency services, including police call-outs, homelessness services, child protection and family violence services, and medical and health services.

In the longer term, as we sustain and continue to evolve our efforts, we will move towards a Victoria free from family violence, where all Victorians are equal, empowered and respected at home and everywhere. We will monitor, evaluate and report outcomes as we go.





# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

## OUR APPROACH

### FOCUS ON THE DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE

Family violence and violence against women are preventable, but only if direct action is taken to address the drivers of this violence.

In relation specifically to violence against women, this Strategy draws heavily from the evidence base and the conceptual and practical approach to prevention outlined in the national framework *Change the story*.

*Change the story* identifies five essential actions that must be taken in order to address the factors known to drive violence against women:

- ... Challenge the condoning of violence against women.
- ... Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and in relationships.
- ... Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles.
- ... Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys.
- ... Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

Through this strategy, and via *Safe and strong*, we will bring these essential actions to life.

We will also look to the broad power imbalances in the structures and systems that intersect with gender inequality and, in doing so, we will consider the disproportionate prevalence of violence against Aboriginal people, and prioritise strategies to prevent violence against Aboriginal women and their children.

Acting on the drivers of violence – in all its forms – will sit at the heart of our approach.

### ACT ON THE REINFORCING FACTORS

We know from *Change the story* that in addition to the gendered drivers there are a number of reinforcing factors that can, in the context of gender inequality, contribute to or exacerbate violence against women.

*Change the story* outlines five supporting actions to challenge these reinforcing factors:

- ... Challenge the normalisation of violence as an expression of masculinity or male dominance.
- ... Prevent exposure to violence and support those affected to reduce its consequences.
- ... Address the intersections between social norms about alcohol and gender.
- ... Reduce backlash by engaging men and boys in gender equality, building relationship skills and social connections.
- ... Promote broader social equality and address structural discrimination and disadvantage.

As part of our overall strategy, we will apply these supporting actions across multiple settings in Victoria to build a comprehensive approach to the prevention of violence against women.

We will also look beyond gender to identify and address additional reinforcing factors for forms of family violence other than violence against women.

## WORK WITH THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Everyone has a role to play in ending violence – not just victims and survivors, and not just police and family violence services.

Men, women, young people and children in all parts of the community can play an active role in prevention, in both their personal and professional lives. Prevention action is required in all the places where people live, work, learn, socialise and play – this includes everyday places such as sports clubs, workplaces, early learning centres and schools, arts precincts, community organisations and in the media. Prevention will only be effective when the whole community is involved in changing attitudes and challenging the cultures that can lead to violence.

To do this, it is critical that people have the skills to be able to challenge discrimination and marginalisation wherever they see it, whether by calling out a friend for a discriminatory joke, or by instituting a diversity and inclusion policy in their workplace.

There is a particular role for community and organisational leaders and influencers in championing change. This can include influential leaders in workplaces, sports coaches, faith leaders and peers. We will lead and co-design solutions with community members and will provide the tools for all Victorians to contribute to a society where everyone is respected and empowered.



## REACH PEOPLE IN A RANGE OF PLACES

*Change the story* highlights some key settings in which prevention activity and messages need to occur in order to effectively reach the whole population, engage both individuals and organisations, and change attitudes, practices and systems in relation to gender equality, relationships and violence. These settings are:

- ... education and care settings for children and young people
- ... universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions
- ... workplaces, corporations and employee organisations
- ... sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces
- ... the arts
- ... health, maternal and child health, family and community services
- ... community organisations
- ... faith-based and cultural contexts
- ... media
- ... popular culture, advertising and entertainment
- ... public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities
- ... legal, justice and corrections contexts.



While the online environment could be considered a setting in itself, it is better to look at digital technologies and online environments as part of each of the above settings.

Together these settings make up many of the places where people live, work, learn, socialise and play, and where social and cultural norms are created and reflected. They therefore present opportunities for significant influence over the social norms, organisational practices and institutional structures that drive individual attitudes and behaviours. This is reinforced by the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*, which requires that all organisations covered by the law take proactive steps to prevent discriminatory practices.

#### EXAMPLE OF A SETTING-SPECIFIC INTERVENTION – RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION IN VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

In 2015 Our Watch ran a pilot program for a whole-of-school approach (including curriculum, policy, professional learning for teachers and staff) to respectful relationships education in 19 Victorian schools. Key lessons from the pilot included the need for a long-term implementation period for schools and having project staff embedded within the Department of Education and Training, and these have been factored into the scaled-up model that are being rolled out across all of Victoria.

The statewide implementation will use a 'leading school' and 'partner school' approach, with schools supporting each other, and is being supported by additional staff, both centrally and in the Department of Education and Training's Local Areas. This workforce will help schools make Respectful Relationships part of their core operations, and ensure long-term school engagement. The Respectful Relationship initiative will increase the capacity of early childhood educators to promote respectful relationships.

## SCHOOLS AS SITES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Strong supports and improved community engagement are key to preventing family violence from occurring in the first place.

The Royal Commission recognised that schools and other universal services are key settings for prevention.

In some areas, schools working with co-located health, family and community services can increase collective impact.

Highlighting this approach, Doveton College in Melbourne's south-east, part of the Doveton Learning Centre, provides education, health and community services for families from the antenatal period to Year 9. The College employs an integrated learning model, which has a focus on building community partnerships and encouraging community participation in learning, across the life-span. Initiatives such as "Creating Capable Leaders" provide opportunities for parents to link to career counselling, mediation services, and literacy and English language programs.

Other examples around the state include Yuille Park Community College in Ballarat, Moe South Street Primary School in Gippsland, and Cowes Primary School in Phillip Island. These schools are co-located with a number of early childhood facilities such as occasional care, kindergarten, maternal and child health services, and specialist parenting programs, providing multiple, integrated services for their communities from a single site.

In these school-based sites, co-located services work together to encourage the development of respectful and positive parenting, in addition to promoting broader health and wellbeing.

## Take a targeted approach – work more intensively with some communities

While this Strategy aims to engage the whole Victorian population, some groups and communities are disproportionately affected by violence and will benefit from more specific and intensive effort and greater resources: specifically, those who are affected by multiple forms of disadvantage and discrimination, and who experience the cumulative effect of many drivers and reinforcing factors.

Other areas where it makes sense to direct additional effort and resources include places where values are influenced and built, such as faith-based settings. For Aboriginal people, this means embedding self-determination in institutions, to ensure we address the drivers of violence, including the historical and contemporary experiences of institutionalised racism.

### A FOCUSED APPROACH – SISTERS' DAY OUT

The Victorian Government is committed to building on community-led prevention activities underpinned by a strong Aboriginal community sector and community partnerships, and, where possible, led by Aboriginal-controlled organisations.

This will ensure interventions, through for example programs like Sisters' Day Out, which:

- ... build Aboriginal women's resilience and wider community capacity to reduce and prevent violence
- ... build connection to culture and a strong sense of identity
- ... provide knowledge and access to services ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal communities.

## CONNECT AND COORDINATE PREVENTION EFFORTS

### Build partnerships for prevention

To ensure we achieve the momentum and breadth needed, we will build and coordinate partnerships for prevention. Partnerships are critical for addressing the intersection of different drivers leading to violence as well as the reinforcing factors. In working to ensure approaches are relevant across diverse communities, partnerships must be formed with those working on addressing different forms of inequality and discrimination in our society, such as racism, homophobia and many others. This is particularly pertinent for the reinforcing factors of violence, such as drugs and alcohol, where we will integrate the efforts of violence prevention specialists and those working across other areas of policy, advocacy and service delivery.

We will mobilise and coordinate strategic partners across many sectors (such as business, state and local governments, faith-based communities and the community sector) and make use of established organisations and networks to drive whole-of-community change. This is crucial to an effective prevention strategy because:

... partnerships create reach – violence cannot be eliminated unless the whole community is engaged. Non-government partners have direct relationships with the Victorian community in their roles as employers, regulators, service providers and peak bodies, and within their own professional and industry networks

... networking and sharing of information, evidence and best practice are critical for ensuring a consistent approach, continuous improvement and workforce development.

### Coordinate action that challenges the drivers and reinforcing factors of violence

To create lasting change, this Strategy will support efforts that address the broader inequalities and social conditions that increase the likelihood or severity of family violence and all forms of violence against women. This will involve embedding a violence-prevention approach within other government programs, policy areas and initiatives that specifically seek to address those inequalities or other reinforcing factors such as harmful use of alcohol and drugs.

**The Generating Equality and Respect (GEAR)** demonstration project was a place-based prevention model funded by VicHealth. The demonstration project took place in Melbourne's south-east in partnership with Monash City Council and Link Health and Community. The GEAR project took a 'saturation' approach, running many mutually reinforcing programs and strategies in one local area, so that messages reached the community from many different places and angles. With a longer-term goal of preventing violence against women before it occurs by building communities and cultures that promote equal and respectful relationships between men and women, the GEAR program made significant headway towards building a sustainable, whole-of-community commitment to prevention.

The GEAR project involved many different programs and initiatives in schools, workplaces, youth agencies, local council services and maternal and community health services, as well as local media campaigns, engaging the whole community in saying 'no' to violence and 'yes' to respect and equality.

The GEAR demonstration project engaged over 15,000 community members through these activities, as well as hundreds of employees, leaders and professionals across workplaces, schools, local council, health services and other sectors. As a result of the project, both Monash Council and Link Health now have public statements and dedicated strategies to prevent violence against women and to lead the community in gender equality. This includes the development of a suite of tools and resources to assist others in adopting a whole-of-community model for prevention. The GEAR demonstration project is a key example of how building partnerships for prevention can challenge the drivers of violence in multiple settings and establish structures and systems for ongoing prevention work.

## RELATED POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS



### COMPLEMENTARY POLICIES AND FRAMEWORKS



#### Victoria

Strong culture, strong peoples, strong families 10-year plan

Absolutely everyone State disability plan 2017 to 2020 and the Victorian disability abuse prevention strategy (in development)

Roadmap for reform: Strong families, safe children

#### National

Change the story: A shared framework for the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women

Research from Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety

National plan to reduce violence against women and their children

### BUILD CONTINUITY WITH THE RESPONSE SYSTEM

Our primary prevention activities will not replace the activities of those who respond to violence that has already happened (whether by accessing crisis-accommodation services, guiding perpetrators through the justice system, or helping victim survivors and their families rebuild). Our activities will be undertaken in addition to and as a complement to these existing response system activities, and implemented in collaboration with those working in the response system.

Effective violence prevention activity will increase people's recognition of this issue and their confidence to talk about violence, and so will likely increase the number of disclosures, reports and requests for assistance. While this is a positive step, we acknowledge that, in the short term, it will increase pressure on the Victorian response system. It is therefore imperative that the response system has the resources and support it needs to provide comprehensive services and responses to all those experiencing or perpetrating violence. Primary prevention activities must be linked with response services to ensure the safety of all participants and to give people access to appropriate services.

In the medium to longer term, an effective primary prevention approach will reduce the demand for response systems and services. Addressing the drivers of violence through primary prevention is in fact the only way in which the overall prevalence of violence (and therefore demand for response services) can be reduced.

This has been demonstrated elsewhere in the world, albeit through small-scale projects. For example, in a study carried out in Kampala in Uganda, four communities were exposed to a dedicated primary prevention intervention that focused on increasing knowledge of human rights and gender equality, and addressing intimate partner violence. The study showed that in a five-year period (2007–2012), intimate partner violence was reduced by 52 per cent and there was a significant improvement in men's attitudes towards women.

Furthermore, in the medium term, primary prevention can contribute to a more effective response system by creating a supportive environment for activities aimed at people who are already perpetrating or 'on the path' to violence, such as early intervention and men's behaviour change programs. For example, primary prevention work to change workplace cultures, increase gender equality in sporting organisations and spread anti-violence and gender equality media messages all contribute to non-violent and gender-equitable social norms. This creates a social environment that supports and reinforces the work of individual behaviour change programs. Indeed, it is unlikely that individual behaviour change programs will be effective without the support of the broader social change approach that is primary prevention.

## TOBACCO CONTROL CAMPAIGN

The success of the tobacco control campaign over the past 40 years is the result of a clear and coordinated effort from governments, research groups and advocacy bodies. In 21 years, the smoking rate among Victorian adults has more than halved, from 34 per cent to 13.3 per cent in 2013. There was also success with lowering the rate of people taking up smoking. Between 2000 and 2010, daily smoking rates among early teens dropped from about 15 per cent to about 5 per cent.

*Australia's national tobacco strategy 2012–2018* sets out how success in tobacco control campaigns was achieved. It outlines the importance of agreeing on the role of each element of the response, including tobacco control programs, programs that address underlying drivers of smoking, action to create environments that discourage people from smoking, and the role of research in informing each of these elements. In line with this, the smoking campaign focused on three key methods:

- ... changing social norms, based on increased public awareness of the health risks of smoking and levels of public tolerance of being exposed to tobacco smoke
- ... increased unaffordability of tobacco products driven by government excise, customs duties and other charges and taxes
- ... high levels of tobacco control activities at multiple levels, including public spaces and in communities.

These areas of focus were informed by a strong evidence base on effective interventions. To change social norms, media campaigns sought to increase community understanding of the harms associated with tobacco smoking.

Non-government organisations played a central role in reducing smoking. The Cancer Council, the National Heart Foundation and the Public Health Association of Australia provided (and continue to provide) ongoing advocacy, research and support for the anti-smoking campaign.

## WHY THIS APPROACH IS LIKELY TO WORK

The approach we will take is similar to previous successful approaches to critical public health issues such as anti-smoking and skin cancer prevention campaigns, although the nature of change being sought is different. With smoking and skin cancer, the focus is primarily on changing what individuals find acceptable in relation to actions that affect their own health, while with family violence and violence against women the focus can include what is acceptable in society regarding how we treat and behave towards others. Both of these initiatives targeted all levels of society and were implemented across a range of settings where people live, work, learn, socialise and play, ensuring messages to end smoking or reduce skin cancer were reinforced at every possible opportunity. The case study above identifies the features of the anti-smoking efforts in Australia, which have seen substantial increases in the number of people quitting smoking or not taking it up in the first place.

There is also a growing evidence base within Australia and internationally for what works in primary prevention of violence against women. Much of this evidence can be found in *Change the story: Framework foundations 1: A review of the evidence on correlates of violence against women and what works to prevent it* and the *What works to prevent violence against women and girls* publication series.

Through this Strategy we will build on existing programs and approaches that have been shown to be effective.



# HOW WE'LL DO IT

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

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**The priorities of the Strategy have been designed such that their coordinated and statewide application will generate significant traction toward eliminating family violence and other forms of violence against women in Victoria.**

.....

### 1. BUILD PREVENTION STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

#### **Establish a Prevention Agency supported by long-term funding**

To implement this Strategy effectively, we will need to ensure prevention activities are overseen and coordinated within and across government, local government, community agencies and the broader community.

As recommended by the Royal Commission, a new Prevention Agency will take on this role. It will provide a strengthened focus on prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women and will coordinate development of relevant partnerships between the public and private sectors.

It will:

- ... coordinate and oversee activities under this primary prevention Strategy
- ... monitor and provide advice on the achievement of prevention outcomes
- ... commission research and innovative programs into prevention methods and activities, including identifying those that have been successful in other countries
- ... fund, coordinate and support Local Prevention Alliances and architecture

... work with Australia's national primary prevention organisation, Our Watch, and other organisations working in the field of prevention to challenge the drivers of violence, both those that lie at the individual level (attitudes and behaviours) and those that lie in our social systems and structures.

#### **Support development of an expert workforce that understands and can embed prevention in our communities**

We need skilled people and organisations in order to both meet the existing demand for prevention activity, and expand the reach of current primary prevention activities. We will build on the skill-base of current prevention practitioners in Victoria, including those of women's health services, to ensure we have enough skilled prevention specialists to deliver this work. These specialists will have the necessary expertise to support, coordinate and build the skills and capacity of the 'generalist' prevention workforce in mainstream settings. This will also influence and implement wider prevention policy, research, practice and evaluation across Victoria.

A recommendation of the Royal Commission was the development of a 10-Year Industry Plan for family violence prevention and response in Victoria. This Industry Plan will consider issues of capability and qualifications, workforce diversity, professional development needs, career development, remuneration and workforce health and wellbeing.

The expert prevention workforce will have two main roles: directly working to prevent violence, and increasing the ability of non-specialists to carry out effective prevention as part of their usual work in everyday settings. It will focus on influencing public and organisational policy, community engagement and actions, and reorienting 'mainstream' services to include prevention. As part of our effort to embed prevention across mainstream services and community settings, we will build the skills of those who do (or will do) prevention work as part of broader roles within those organisations.

This work requires a different skill set from family violence response, including specialist expertise in conducting primary prevention activities with marginalised communities. Both workforces must be secure, well paid, safe, trained and resourced and supported to perform their roles. The 10-Year Industry Plan will address this need for a diverse specialist family violence workforce skilled in prevention, response and recovery.

### **Local-level partnerships for the effective implementation of prevention activity**

We will help build local-level prevention alliances and community partnerships that bring together the right people and resources to coordinate and deliver primary prevention initiatives at the local level. These alliances will help ensure that prevention activities are consistent and coherent and support consistent outcomes across the state. There are already a number of regional and local-level prevention partnerships across the state, led by women's health services, local governments and others. We will build on these to ensure effective local-level oversight and coordination of prevention activities.

Local councils are in a good position to engage and communicate with the Victorian community. Victoria's 79 councils have extensive reach within their respective communities and can tailor their approach to be meaningful to the people who live there, engaging them where they live, work, learn, socialise and play.

### **PREVENTION PARTNERSHIPS: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES**

#### **Creating gender equality in the early years**

The early years (from birth to age five) are a vital opportunity for preventing violence against women and promoting positive gender relations. Councils are already active in providing early years support and services across Victoria, and so are well placed to influence, challenge and make change, for example through their family services, immunisation and maternal and child health services.

Darebin City Council partnered with Women's Health In the North to offer professional development programs to local early years educators and create resources for them to use, including new programs that promote shared parenting and gender-equitable practices, play and learning in early childhood centres.



## 2. SCALE UP AND BUILD ON WHAT WE KNOW

There are already some prevention activities, programs and initiatives that have been proven to work. Some of these initiatives have only been done on a small or local scale, while others have had regional and statewide reach, but could not be continued due to lack of resources. These programs and approaches could lead to wider changes in attitudes towards violence if they had the resources they need and could be expanded. In order to fully succeed, these successful approaches need to be able to draw on the expertise of prevention specialists, while also becoming part of the everyday business of 'mainstream' settings and systems – such as the education, health and early childhood sectors, workplaces, organisations and sporting settings. This will allow all Victorians to benefit from truly universal, population-wide prevention activity in the places where they live, work, learn, socialise and play. The first step will be coordinating the replication and expansion of proven and promising prevention activities in high-priority settings across Victoria, ensuring that they are evidence based and that their effects are measurable and build upon each other.

## 3. INNOVATE AND INFORM

### **We will trial new, innovative approaches**

We will foster innovation in the design, implementation and evaluation of new techniques and programs so that we continue to build our knowledge of what makes for effective primary prevention in different settings and contexts. New approaches will be developed for diverse communities and applied in new settings so we can better understand what works to prevent violence.

We will build on successful programs and approaches to preventing violence against women that have been developed over the last decade, including those led by women's health services, local governments, VicHealth and others. We will also continue to use what we've learned from a wide range of other successful and ongoing public health prevention initiatives (for example, on issues such as skin cancer or road safety) as well as other social change campaigns (for example, those tackling racism or attitudes to mental health). We will incorporate the findings of new and emerging research evidence and program evaluations as we go. We will learn from other jurisdictions within Australia and internationally. Using this evidence and our own experience we will adapt our approach through each rolling action plan.

## WORKPLACE EQUALITY AND RESPECT PROJECT

The Victorian Workplace Equality and Respect project will deliver programs on prevention of violence against women, gender equality and respect in workplace settings across Victoria.

We anticipate that the project will directly reach more than 2000 employees across many different sectors, workplaces and geographical locations in Victoria, including industry groups, unions, peak bodies, employees' families and communities.

The Victorian Government has also given Our Watch funding to develop a framework, practice standards and transferable tools and resources that workplaces can use in their efforts to become more equal and free from violence. The standards and tools will be available more widely in 2017 and will underpin future work on family violence prevention in Victorian workplaces.

## 4. RESEARCH AND EVALUATE

### **We will undertake research and evaluation to build our knowledge and inform future practice**

While we have a sound evidence base for the prevention of violence against women (outlined in *Change the story*), we know less about what causes, and what works to reduce, other forms of family violence including elder abuse, violence against people with a disability, adolescent violence and violence within LGBTI communities.

A critical aspect of this prevention strategy is an ongoing commitment to and investment in research, monitoring and evaluation. Not only will we undertake research to build knowledge about how all forms of family violence and violence against women can be prevented, including those approaches that have been successful internationally, but we will evaluate prevention activity at a local and statewide level.

High-quality evaluations and a coordinated monitoring framework are a key priority area of this Strategy. Monitoring and evaluation ensure that we are learning from our current efforts, and that our approach to prevention is consistent and coordinated across all settings. Consistency of approach is necessary to get quality data that will inform the next phase of effort. By incorporating lessons from each previous phase, we ensure our efforts are always as effective as they can be.

This focus on monitoring and evaluation will help to generate high-quality violence prevention research and will position Victoria as a world leader in the field.

As a priority, we will partner with experts to build a sound research and evidence base about how to prevent all forms of family violence and violence against women, and to design and implement strategies that are consistent with emerging evidence.

### **Continuous quality improvement, learning and review**

Given that this is the first strategy of its kind it is vital that we review, learn and improve as we go. We will review our prevention efforts, incorporate lessons learned and continue to improve our approach over time, including through the development of more sophisticated education and training. In order to ensure the quality of prevention programs, our rolling action plans will be designed to be flexible to incorporate new lessons and evidence. The intrinsic link between investment in prevention and the measurable reduction in the prevalence of family violence and demand for response services will be continuously monitored as an indicator of success in line with world-best practice. An important tool in the evaluation process will be the Family Violence Index currently under development.



## 5. ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE WITH THE COMMUNITY

Directly engaging the Victorian community is key to the success of this Strategy. We must continue to communicate the changes we are seeing – whether at the level of individual attitudes and behaviours or organisational and structural changes – so that the community understands the value of this approach. Only with broad, ongoing community support will it be possible to create lasting change. We will use all the communication methods available, including online and traditional media channels, as well as face-to-face forums, to make sure messages on preventing violence reach everyone in our community, to draw Victorians together to take action, and to keep Victorians informed of our progress on prevention.



*Only with broad, ongoing community support will it be possible to create lasting change.*







# WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN PLACE

## THE FOUNDATIONS

There are a number of foundational elements that are crucial to the strength and successful implementation of this Strategy. Without these foundations, this Strategy and the activities in the three-year rolling action plans will not achieve their full potential and are likely to have only a limited impact on reducing the prevalence of family violence and violence against women. It is therefore critical that these foundations are in place while Victoria works to prevent this violence.

### PREVENTION IN UNIVERSAL SERVICES

In addition to development of a specialist prevention workforce, it will be critical that there is a sound understanding of prevention practices and that they are embedded into the Victorian workforce generally, and with the staff of widely used services such as teachers, community health workers, early learning teachers, and maternal and child health nurses, as they have such broad reach into all parts of the community. We will work with a range of workplaces and workforce bodies to ensure that workplaces are key settings and advocates for prevention.

### DEDICATED AND ENDURING FUNDING

For prevention activities to be successful in the long term they need sustained and enduring funding. Historically, prevention has been underfunded, and funding has been short term and often only provided for individual projects rather than ongoing strategies. The work of coordinating and building the capacity of mainstream partners is critical to a truly whole-of-community approach, and must be adequately resourced to ensure it can reach the entire Victorian population.

### COORDINATION AND ADVOCACY

Everyone has a role to play in preventing family violence and all forms of violence against women. This includes state and local governments as well as businesses, community organisations and the different places where people live, work, learn, socialise and play. However, to ensure these many different approaches are consistent and mutually reinforcing, and to achieve the maximum impact across Victoria, we will coordinate prevention activities at both the statewide and local levels. Advocacy, implementation and reform will happen across the state rather than in disparate ways relating to individual programs.

### POLICY REFORM IN FAMILY VIOLENCE AND GENDER EQUALITY

The success of this Strategy relies on a range of policy reforms in gender equality, family violence and violence against women. This includes policy and legislative reforms outlined in *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*. It is critical that prevention efforts are interwoven and aligned with family violence response services to ensure prevention messages are consistent and reinforced across the whole family violence system. Outside of family violence reform, the broader social policy and social service sector is undergoing transformation. It is important that the context of these reforms is reflected in any prevention initiatives. In addition to policy reform, legislative changes are being made to embed gender equality in Victorian systems and structures.



# 9

## WHAT WE AIM TO ACHIEVE AND HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

The Prevention of Family Violence Outcomes Framework (the Outcomes Framework) is an important accountability tool to ensure we are meeting our long-term goals and achieving genuine progress. Measuring outcomes allows us to see what works – and what doesn't – in creating lasting change. This will ensure that we focus our efforts on effective ways of influencing individual and community attitudes and behaviours.

This Outcomes Framework will measure:

- ... the vision (what we are working towards)
- ... the domains (cultural, attitudinal, behavioural and structural change)
- ... the outcomes (the changes we are working towards)
- ... the indicators (how we know whether we are progressing towards the outcomes).

This Strategy lays out a series of initial indicators, and further measurements will be developed in future rolling action plans to account for further research and evaluation as they occur, so that the Strategy remains meaningful as we build our knowledge and understanding of primary prevention.

It is important that the indicators we measure are meaningful for people from diverse communities. In the next phase of targeted development, indicators and measures will continue to be co-designed with people from diverse communities and refined through consultation.

*Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change* includes an outcomes framework that stipulates that in Victoria, family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated. The outcomes for this Strategy align with this overarching outcome and form a part of *Ending family violence: Victoria's plan for change*. This Strategy also draws on indicators from *Safe and strong*, the gender equality strategy.

We know that there is no quick fix to ending family violence. Prevention efforts will take time and consistent effort. We will use an outcomes framework to hold ourselves to account, to measure our progress and to work towards success.

# FAMILY VIOLENCE OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

FAMILY VIOLENCE  
AND GENDER  
INEQUALITY ARE  
NOT TOLERATED

All Victorians experience respectful relationships underpinned by human rights and gender equality – healthy relationship behaviours are celebrated and promoted.

Victorians do not tolerate family violence – family violence reporting rates reflect increased confidence in the system and intolerance of family violence, and eventually reflect sustained effort in prevention.

Victorians hold beliefs and attitudes that reject gender inequality and family violence – people recognise and reject all forms of family violence and gender inequality, and know how to challenge it when they see it. Individuals and systems do not minimise or deny family violence or blame victims, and stigma and discrimination are addressed.

Women and men, and girls and boys, are equal – gender inequalities where people live, work, learn and play are diminished.

## PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

### VISION

A Victoria free from violence

### DOMAIN

Violence is prevented from happening

### OUTCOME

1. **Victorians hold attitudes and beliefs that reject gender inequality and family violence** – Victorians understand the causes and forms of family violence, who is affected by violence, and the impact on victims
2. **Victorians actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence** – Victorians discuss and condemn violence through challenging rigid gender roles, gender inequality, sexism and discrimination, to break the cycle of violence

#### OUTCOME 1

### OUTCOME

**Victorians hold attitudes and beliefs that reject gender inequality and family violence** – Victorians understand the causes and forms of violence, who is affected by violence, and the impact on victims

### Indicators

- ... Increased awareness of what constitutes violence
- ... Increased recognition of the significant impact of violence on victim survivors
- ... Increased awareness and understanding of the extent and impact of gender inequality \*\*
- ... Increased culture of challenging gender inequalities, across all settings and across all life stages \*\*
- ... Decrease in attitudes that justify, excuse, minimise, hide or shift blame for violence
- ... Increased visible rejection of violence by public and community leaders and in media

#### OUTCOME 2

### OUTCOME

**Victorians actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence** – Victorians discuss and condemn violence through challenging rigid gender roles, gender inequality, sexism and discrimination, to break the cycle of violence

### Indicators

- ... Decrease in sexist and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours
- ... Increase in organisations and institutions with systems to support people who challenge sexism and discrimination
- ... Reduced reports of everyday stereotypes and sexism \*\*
- ... Increase in bystanders feeling supported to challenge sexism and discrimination
- ... Increase in positive bystander behaviour in the face of sexism and discrimination
- ... Increased confidence among men and boys to challenge their peer group when faced with disrespectful or hostile attitudes towards women

3. **Victorian homes, organisations and communities are safe and inclusive** – the prevalence of violence is significantly reduced for all Victorians equally, and people live free of fear
4. **All Victorians live and practise confident and respectful relationships** – Victorians are equipped with the knowledge and skills that inform and shape healthy, safe, equal and respectful relationships

### OUTCOME 3

#### OUTCOME

**Victorian homes, organisations and communities are safe and inclusive** – the prevalence of violence is significantly reduced for all Victorians equally, and people live free of fear

#### Indicators

- ... Increased feelings of safety for people where they live, work, learn and play
- ... Increase in people feeling able, safe and willing to report violence
- ... Increase in the number of people who feel safe reporting discrimination and bullying \*\*
- ... Reduction in people subject to family violence
- ... Reduction in women subject to violence
- ... Reduction in the over-representation from particular groups experiencing violence
- ... Increased confidence in the systems and structures dedicated to preventing violence
- ... Increased number of organisations and institutions who model and promote inclusive behaviour

### OUTCOME 4

#### OUTCOME

**All Victorians live and practise confident and respectful relationships** – Victorians are equipped with the knowledge and skills that inform and shape healthy, safe, equal and respectful relationships

#### Indicators

- ... Increased understanding of what constitutes healthy, supportive and safe relationships
- ... Reduced exposure of young people to violence
- ... Decrease in prevalence of reported sexism, sexual harassment and gendered bullying \*\*
- ... Decrease in acceptance of bullying or controlling behaviour
- ... Increased competence in interpersonal conflict resolution
- ... Reduction in experiences of discrimination

*\*\*Safe and strong: A Victorian gender equality strategy indicator*



# 10

## HOW WE'LL DELIVER ON AND REVIEW THIS STRATEGY

### PREVENTION ACTIONS AND INVESTMENT IN THE FAMILY VIOLENCE ROLLING ACTION PLANS

Over the next decade, the Victorian Government will deliver a series of rolling action plans, including significant whole-of-government investment, detailing the concrete actions and investment to implement family violence reforms over the short, medium and long term. This will include prevention actions in line with this Strategy as well as actions for the response system. Each rolling action plan will build on established efforts in family violence response and prevention, as well as refine, improve and develop new and innovative activities in line with new research, evaluations and evidence.

### MID-TERM REVIEW OF THIS STRATEGY

Given we are doing this work on such a large scale for the first time in Victoria, and indeed anywhere in the world, we will be constantly assessing our actions to see if we have got these right. To be sure this Strategy meets its objectives, we have committed to a formal mid-term review of our approach. In five years, we will undertake a formal evaluation, not only of the individual initiatives we are implementing to prevent violence, which we will be doing constantly as we go as a key priority, but also to the overall approach outlined in this Strategy. This evaluation will identify any gaps in the Strategy and allow us to adapt our approach to any other evidence emerging from other parts of the world.



# GLOSSARY

## BACKLASH

The resistance, hostility or aggression from some groups that undermine gender equality or violence prevention strategies. Backlash can include attempts to discredit arguments about gender inequality or the gendered nature of violence, and efforts to preserve existing gender norms and hierarchies.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

'Domestic violence' is sometimes used to refer to acts of violence between intimate partners and violence in the context of family relationships; it is used in legislation in other jurisdictions and in some parts of the service system in Victoria. 'Intimate partner violence' is commonly used to highlight that the predominant manifestation of the violence is in the context of intimate partner relationships.

See 'family violence' for a comprehensive definition, as this is the preferred term adopted by the Royal Commission and the Victorian Government.

## FAMILY MEMBER

The definition of family member under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)* is broad and includes relationships of a former or current intimate partner; genetic or kinship family member; or a family-like relationship, for example a paid or unpaid carer.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

Under the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)*, family violence is defined as the following:

1. **a.** behaviour by a person towards a family member that –
    - i. is physically or sexually abusive; or
    - ii. is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or
    - iii. is economically abusive; or
    - iv. is threatening; or
    - v. is coercive; or
    - vi. in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to feel fear for the safety and wellbeing of that family member or another person.
  - b.** behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of, behaviour referred to in paragraph (a).
2. Family violence includes the following behaviours:
    - a.** assaulting or causing personal injury to a family member or threatening to do so;
    - b.** sexually assaulting a family member or engaging in another form of sexually coercive behaviour, or threatening to engage in such behaviour;

- c. intentionally damaging a family member's property, or threatening to do so;
  - d. unlawfully depriving a family member of the family member's liberty, or threatening to do so;
  - e. causing or threatening to cause the death of, or injury to, an animal, whether or not the animal belongs to the family member to whom the behaviour is directed, so as to control, dominate or coerce the family member.
3. To remove doubt, it is declared that behaviour may constitute family violence even if the behaviour would not constitute a criminal offence.

There are a range of terms commonly used to describe family violence, including domestic violence, domestic and family violence, intimate partner violence. In Victoria our preferred term is family violence.

## GENDER

The range of social and cultural characteristics relating to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Gender is a different concept from sex, which refers to the physical and biological characteristics of a person.

## GENDERED DRIVERS

The specific elements or expressions of gender inequality that are most strongly linked to violence against women. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life. The gendered drivers are the underlying causes required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

## GENDER EQUALITY

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, trans (and gender diverse) and intersex people. Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

## GENDER EQUITY

Entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender, and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender-related imbalances.

## GENDER INEQUALITY

The unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and value afforded to men and women in a society, due to prevailing gendered norms and structures.

## GENDER STEREOTYPES

Simplistic generalisations about gender attributes, differences and roles.

## INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA

A form of historical trauma transmitted across generations. In Australia, intergenerational trauma particularly affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially the children, grandchildren and future generations as a result of the impacts of the violent dispossession of Aboriginal people from their land and culture, and historical and contemporary policies and practices, including, more recently, the forcible removal of children through the Stolen Generations. This is due to the legacy of colonisation and the violent dispossession and displacement of Aboriginal people from their families and communities.

## INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality describes how characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, religion, age or location can compound and interact on multiple levels to create overlapping forms of discrimination and power imbalances, which may increase the risk of experiencing family violence.

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Any behaviour by a person or people within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic partnerships, familial relations, or people who share accommodation) that causes harm to those in the relationship.

## LATERAL VIOLENCE

The damaging behaviours that come from within a particular community or population subgroup, such as bullying or physical violence. The term is used in particular by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, where such behaviour can be seen as a form of internalised colonialism because it arises from being an oppressed group of people.

## LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANS (AND GENDER DIVERSE) AND INTERSEX (LGBTI)

An umbrella term to collectively refer to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans (or gender diverse) and/or intersex. Each of the terms in this acronym is defined below.

## Lesbian

A lesbian is a person who self-describes as a woman and who has experiences of romantic, sexual, and/or affectional attraction solely or primarily to other people who self-describe as women. Some women use other language to describe their relationships and attractions, including gay.

## Gay

A gay man is a person who self-describes as a man and who has experiences of romantic, sexual and/or affectional attraction solely or primarily to other people who self-describe as men. Some men use other language to describe their relationships and attractions.

## Bisexual

A person who is romantically and sexually attracted to individuals of their own gender and other genders.

## Trans (transgender)

Trans refers to a person whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not align with their sex assigned at birth. In Australia, at birth children are classified male or female. Male children are raised as boys and female children are raised as girls. A person classified as female at birth who identifies as a man may use the label trans, transman or man. Similarly, a person classified as male at birth who identifies as a woman may use the label trans, transwoman or woman.

## **Gender diverse**

Gender diverse refers to people who do not identify as a woman or a man. In the same way that sexual orientation and gender expression are not binaries, gender identity is not a binary either. It is important to challenge our thinking beyond the binary constructs of male and female.

Some people may identify as a-gender (having no gender), bi-gender (both a woman and a man) or non-binary (neither woman nor man). There is a diverse range of non-binary gender identities such as genderqueer, gender neutral, gender fluid and third-gendered. It is important to be aware that language in this space is still evolving and people may have their own preferred gender identities that are not listed here.

## **Intersex**

Intersex refers to the diversity of physical characteristics between the stereotypical male and female characteristics. Intersex people have reproductive organs, chromosomes or other physical sex characteristics that are neither wholly female nor wholly male. Intersex is a description of biological diversity and may or may not be the identity used by an intersex person.

## **PRIMARY PREVENTION**

Whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary, or underlying, drivers of violence.

### **Secondary prevention**

Secondary prevention, or early intervention, aims to 'change the trajectory' for individuals at higher-than-average risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence.

### **Tertiary prevention**

Tertiary prevention, or response, supports survivors and holds perpetrators to account, and aims to prevent the recurrence of violence.

## **REINFORCING FACTORS**

Factors, behaviours or attitudes that become significant in the context of the drivers of violence. These factors do not predict or drive violence against women in and of themselves; however, when they interact with the drivers, they can increase the frequency or severity of violence.

## **SETTINGS**

Environments in which people live, work, learn, socialise and play, such as sports clubs, schools, universities and online.

## **SEX**

The biological and physical characteristics used to define humans as male or female, as distinct from 'Gender', which are the social and cultural characteristics generally relating to masculinity or femininity. Some people have both male and female sex characteristics, or neither male nor female characteristics.

### **Sexual violence**

Sexual activity that happens where consent is not obtained or freely given. It occurs any time a person is forced, coerced or manipulated into any unwanted sexual activity, such as touching, sexual harassment and intimidation, forced marriage, trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, sexual assault and rape.

## STRUCTURAL DISCRIMINATION AND DISADVANTAGE

The norms, policies and systems present in politics, the legal system, education, workplaces and health care that are intended to be neutral, but in effect present obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving the same rights and opportunities available to the majority of the population.

## VICTIM SURVIVORS

People, including children and young people, who have experienced family violence. The Victorian Government was guided in using this term by members of the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council. The Government recognises that not every person who has experienced or is experiencing family violence identifies with this term. The use of the term acknowledges the strength and resilience shown by people who have experienced or currently live with family violence.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Any act of gender-based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life. This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others) that are gender based.



FREE FROM VIOLENCE:  
VICTORIA'S STRATEGY TO PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE  
AND ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### **Publishing and further information**

*Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women* is the Victorian Government's primary prevention strategy to stop violence before it happens

### **Content coordination**

Office of Prevention and Women's Equality,  
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Editorial services by Red Pony and Department of Premier and Cabinet, Strategic Communication, Engagement and Protocol Branch

Design by Claire Ho Design and Department of Premier and Cabinet, Strategic Communication, Engagement and Protocol Branch with contributions from Hummingbelle

Illustrations on pages 30, 31 and 38 by &Mine

Images courtesy of Clever Deer Photography

### **Print production**

Printed by Complete Colour Printing, Cheltenham

This report is printed on Ecostar Uncoated.  
Cover pages 300gsm and internal pages 140 gsm

### **Accessibility**

If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format, please contact the department on 9651 5111

Information in this document is available at  
[vic.gov.au/familyviolence/prevention-strategy](http://vic.gov.au/familyviolence/prevention-strategy)

ISBN 978-1-925551-36-5 (Print)

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government

1 Treasury Place, Melbourne 3002

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