



# Literature Review

## Prevention of Violence Against Women

July 2021



We proudly acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Peoples, Traditional Owners and custodians of the lands and waters on which our work occurs. We acknowledge and respect the wisdom, living culture and unique role that Aboriginal people hold, and which has seen them thrive for thousands of years. We also acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community. As First Peoples, our Aboriginal communities are best placed to determine their own culturally appropriate path to gender equality.

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# Violence against women (Australian context)

## Background

Violence against women and their children is a health and welfare issue, having significant social, economic, and health implications impacting the individual, family, and community (AIHW, 2020). Violence takes a profound and long-term toll on an individual's health and wellbeing, relationships, education, and economic and housing security<sup>1</sup>. Gender inequality is a driver of violence, the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunity create social conditions of discrimination and disadvantage that enables violence against women to occur.<sup>2,3</sup> Gender equality is a fundamental human right that when realised prevents family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls; and improves community participation and economic prosperity – for all. Primary prevention requires social and cultural change by focusing on building social structures, norms and practices that prevent violence from happening or reduce the risk of it occurring.<sup>4</sup>

## Key statistics on violence

### National

In 2016, Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey reported 7.2 million people aged 18 years had experienced violence since the age of 15, including 42% (3.8 million) of men and 37% (3.4 million) of women.<sup>5</sup> Since the age of 15, women were nearly three times more likely to have experienced physical violence by a current or previous partner than men (17% or 1.6 million; 6.1% or 547,600, respectively) and eight times more likely to experience sexual violence by a current or previous partner than men (5.1% or 480,200;

0.6% or 53,000, respectively). The prevalence of intimate partner violence experienced since the age of 15 was reported as 23% (2.2 million) of women and 7.8% (703,700) of men. Since the age of 15, an estimated 23% (2.2 million) of women and 16% (1.4 million) of men reported experiencing emotional abuse by a current or previous partner. Between the two-year period of 2014–16, there were 198 domestic homicide incidents, including 129 female and 89 male victims.<sup>6</sup> Of those domestic homicide victims, 64% of female and 28% of males were killed by an intimate partner.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Health impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-impacts-family-domestic-and-sexual-violence>

<sup>2</sup> Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood and James Long. "From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls". *The Lancet* 385, no. 9977 (2015): 1580-1589, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(14\)61683-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(14)61683-4)

<sup>3</sup> Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety and VicHealth. *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, (Melbourne, VIC, 2015), 79 <https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/21025429/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Department of Premier and Cabinet. *The cost of family violence in Victoria*, (Melbourne, VIC, 2017) <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-05/Cost-of-family-violence-in-Victoria.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Australia Bureau of Statistics, *Personal Safety Survey, November 2017*, (Canberra, ACT, 2017) <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>

<sup>6</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019*, AIHW cat. no. FDV 3. (Canberra, ACT, 2019). 164, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-australia-2019/contents/summary>

<sup>7</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Australian Burden of Disease Study: impact and causes of illness and death in Australia 2015*, AIHW cat. no. BOD 22. (Canberra, ACT, 2019). 220, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/burden-of-disease/burden-disease-study-illness-death-2015/summary>

## State

In Victoria between 2019-20, there were a total of 88,214 family violence incidents reported to Victoria Police, with a 6.7% increase from the previous year.<sup>8</sup> Of the reported incidents, 60% occurred between a current or previous partner. In 2019, intimate partner violence reports were four times higher for females (n=42,642) than males (n=10,205).<sup>9</sup> In 2019, sexual violence reports were five times higher for females (n=7,439) than males (n=1,375). The Victorian offence rate for sexual violence is 14 per 10,000 persons for females and 3 per 10,000 persons for male victims.<sup>10</sup> Of those 2018-19 reported sexual offences, more than 70% were committed by a perpetrator known to the victim (75.5% female, 72.2% male).<sup>11</sup> Between 2000-2010, there were 288 family violence related homicides, including 47% (n=136) relating to an intimate relationship, 26% (n=75) by parent-child, 12% (n=34) other familial, 8% (n=22) non-familial, and 7% (n=21) other sexual relationship.<sup>12</sup>

## Local

In the Barwon South West (BSW) region, between 2019-20, there were a total of 5,758 family violence incidents reported to Victoria Police, with an increase of 8.4% from the previous year. For the Great South Coast (GSC), there were 1,571 family violence incident reports made, with a decrease of 0.82% from the previous year; however, there were up to 25% increase in some local government areas. In 2020, intimate partner violence reports were over four times higher for females (n=3,297) than males (n=785) for BSW.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the GSC intimate partner violence reports were also over four times higher for females (n=822) than males (n=201), consistent with the state average. In 2020, there were a total of 576 and 159 sexual violence reports for the BSW and GSC, respectively. For sexual violence, the BSW offence rate was 23 per 10,000 persons for females and 3 per 10,000 persons for male victims. For the GSC region, the offence rate

was 26 per 10,000 persons for females and 3 per 10,000 persons for male victims. Of those 2019-20 reported sexual offences in the BSW, more than 75% were committed by a perpetrator known to the victim (75.7% female, 76.6% male). For the GSC region, 87% of females reported the offence being committed by a perpetrator known to the victim, compared with 73% for males.

## Health impacts of violence

Violence against women and their children is a health and welfare issue, having significant social, economic and health implications impacting the individual, family, and community.<sup>14</sup> Violence takes a profound and long-term toll on an individual's health and wellbeing, relationships, education, and economic and housing security.<sup>15</sup> The Australian Burden of Disease Study 2015 causally linked six diseases to the exposure of intimate partner violence and estimated that complete elimination of intimate partner violence [towards females aged 15 and over] would see: 41% less homicide and violence; 18% less early pregnancy loss; 19% less suicide and self-inflicted injuries; 19% less depressive disorders; 12% less anxiety disorders; and 4% less alcohol disorders.<sup>16</sup>

Violence against children has a significant long-term impact; data from the Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health found that women who had experienced childhood sexual abuse were more likely to report poorer mental and physical health and pain compared to those that had not experienced sexual abuse during childhood.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, poorer outcomes were observed for those that had experienced both childhood sexual abuse and adult violence.

<sup>8</sup> "Victoria Police family violence incidents," *Crime Statistics Agency Victoria*, 2020, <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/family-violence-data-portal>

<sup>9</sup> "Number of affected family members where an intimate partner relationship was recorded by police region, LGA and sex - January 2019 to December 2019," *Crime Statistics Agency Victoria*, 2019, <http://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/>

<sup>10</sup> "Victim reports for selected offences by region, LGA and sex of victim - January to December 2019. Category: A30 Sexual offences," *Crime Statistics Agency Victoria*, 2019, <http://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/>

<sup>11</sup> "Victim reports for selected offences by region, LGA and sex of victim - January to December 2019. Category: A30 Sexual offences."

<sup>12</sup> C Walsh, S-J McIntyre, L Brodie, and S Hauge, *Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths – First Report*, Coroners Court of Victoria, (Melbourne, Victoria, 2012), <https://www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-11/vsrfvd%2Bfirst%2Breport%2B-%2Bfinal%2Bversion.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> "Number of affected family members where an intimate partner relationship was recorded by police region, LGA and sex - January 2020 to December 2020," *Crime Statistics Agency Victoria*, 2021, <http://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/>

<sup>14</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Health impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence*, (Canberra, ACT, 2020). <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/health-impacts-family-domestic-and-sexual-violence>

<sup>15</sup> *Health impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence*, 2020

<sup>16</sup> *Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019*, 164.

<sup>17</sup> Jan Coles et al., "Childhood Sexual Abuse and Its Association With Adult Physical and Mental Health: Results From a National Cohort of Young Australian Women," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 30, no. 11 (2015): 1929–1944. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260514555270>

## Cost of violence

The cost of violence against women is high and increasing.<sup>18</sup> In 2015-16, over 1 million Australians experienced family violence, with an estimated cost burden of \$22 billion.<sup>19</sup> The costs borne by victim survivors were an estimated \$11.3 billion (52% of the total costs) and were associated with pain, suffering, and premature mortality. The Australian government, state and territory governments bear an estimated total cost of \$4.1 billion (19% of the total costs). The costs borne by the community and broader economy were an estimated \$6.5 billion (29% of the total costs).

In 2015-16, there were over 160,000 Victorians that experienced family violence, contributing to an estimated cost burden of \$5.3 billion.<sup>20</sup> The costs borne by victim survivors were an estimated \$2.6 billion and were associated with long-term pain and suffering, increased risk of mental ill-health, property damage, costs of time off work, and support for children. The costs borne by the Victorian government were an estimated \$1.8 billion and were associated with costs of prevention, early intervention response, and crisis response services. The costs borne by the Victorian community and broader economy were an estimated \$918 million and were associated with costs to businesses (e.g., absenteeism due to family violence), transfer costs (e.g., income support, victim compensation), and other economic and non-economic costs.<sup>21</sup>

A Pricewaterhouse Cooper report<sup>22</sup> estimated the average annual cost associated per victim of violence is approximately \$27,000 per person. If no further action is taken to prevent violence against women, it is estimated that costs will accumulate to \$323.4 billion over a thirty-year period (from 2014-15 to 2044-4).<sup>23</sup> Reducing the prevalence of intimate partner violence in Australia (27%) to that of Denmark (22%) is estimated to prevent 6,000 intimate partner violence related illnesses, 74 deaths, and 5,000 disability adjusted life years.<sup>24</sup> The 5% reduction of intimate partner violence could save an approximate \$38 million in health sector costs and total productivity gains of \$333 million.<sup>25</sup> Primary prevention activities, such as community mobilisation and direct participation programs have been found to have quantifiable benefits.<sup>26</sup> Community mobilisation and strengthening are aimed at mobilising and supporting communities to address violence against women and children and the social norms that make it acceptable to build gender equitable, respectful and violence free communities.<sup>27</sup> Direct participation programs provide education, support and skills development to individuals or groups of people and can be targeted at building knowledge and skills for equal and respectful relationships, shifting attitudes and norms, strengthening equitable parenting, and responding to the impacts of prior exposure to violence.<sup>28,29</sup> Based on the evidence of other community mobilisation and direct participation programs, the estimated lifetime benefits would range from \$35.6 to \$71.1 million and \$2.2 to \$3.6 billion, respectively.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, (Australia, 2015), 62, <https://www.pwc.com.au/pdf/a-high-price-to-pay.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Department of Social Services, *The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia*, (Camberra, ACT, 2016), [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08\\_2016/the\\_cost\\_of\\_violence\\_against\\_women\\_and\\_their\\_children\\_in\\_australia\\_-\\_summary\\_report\\_may\\_2016.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2016/the_cost_of_violence_against_women_and_their_children_in_australia_-_summary_report_may_2016.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, 62.

<sup>21</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, 62.

<sup>22</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, 62.

<sup>23</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, 62.

<sup>24</sup> Cadilhac et al., (2009) "The health and economic benefits of reducing disease risk factors – Research report" (Melbourne, VIC, 2009), 317, <http://dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30020085/magnus-reducingdiseaserisk-2009.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Cadilhac et al., (2009) "The health and economic benefits of reducing disease risk factors – Research report," 317.

<sup>26</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, 62.

<sup>27</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>28</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>29</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, 62.

<sup>30</sup> Pricewaterhouse Coopers Australia. *A high price to pay: the economic case for preventing violence against women*, 62.

## Gendered drivers of violence

Violence is a gendered issue, whereby there are overwhelmingly higher rates of violence perpetrated by men than women.<sup>31</sup> Men who engage in violence against other men are more likely to perpetrate violence towards women.<sup>32</sup> The most constituent element of violence against women are factors of gender inequality, these are known as the gendered drivers.<sup>33</sup> The unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunity create social conditions of discrimination and disadvantage that enables violence against women to occur.<sup>34</sup>

Gender-based violence is described as being situated in the socio-ecological model framework and acknowledges the dynamic interrelation between the individual, organisational, community, systemic and societal levels.<sup>35</sup> The structures, norms, and practices influence all levels of the social ecology. The social norms associated with the ideas, values or beliefs that are common or dominant in a society or community that reinforce rigid gendered roles and stereotyping perpetuate higher levels of violence.<sup>36</sup>

The socially constructed ideologies about masculinity perpetuate men's violence against women - control, toughness, strength, and sexual dominance are frequent masculine ideologies or rigid gendered stereotypes reported within the literature.<sup>37</sup> Individual attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours influence the degree to which a man endorses or adheres to rigid gendered stereotypes, particularly in intimate relationships, leading to unequal power, decision-making, dominance and control over women.<sup>38,39</sup>

Preventing violence against women requires addressing the gendered drivers and other forms of intersecting oppressions (e.g., racism, ableism, sexism, classism) that further compound the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities. Research has consistently identified four main drivers contributing to higher levels of violence against women include: [1] Condoning of violence against women; [2] Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships; [3] Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity; and [4] Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>32</sup> Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood and James Long. "From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls". 385

<sup>33</sup> Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood and James Long. "From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls". 385

<sup>34</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>35</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>36</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>37</sup> Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood and James Long. "From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls". 385

<sup>38</sup> Beniamino Cislighi and Lori Heise, (2019). "Using social norms theory for health promotion in low-income countries," *Health promotion international*, 34 no. 3 (2019):616–623, <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/day017>

<sup>39</sup> Rachel Jewkes, Michael Flood and James Long. "From work with men and boys to changes of social norms and reduction of inequities in gender relations: a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls". 385

<sup>40</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

## Addressing gender inequality and violence against women

Primary prevention approaches use whole-of-population initiatives to address the underlying gendered drivers – or causes – of violence.<sup>41</sup> This means that to stop violence against women from occurring, we need to take action to address gender inequality in its many forms across individual, community, and societal levels. To address the gendered drivers of violence, mutually reinforcing actions are needed to promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life. This can be achieved through legislation, institutional, policy and program responses by governments, organisations and individuals in settings where people live, work, learn and socialise.<sup>42</sup>

### International

#### Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)

On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981. Australia signed the treaty in 1980 and ratification was complete in 1983. It is a legally binding instrument that defines discrimination against women, outlines forms of such discrimination, and establishes an agenda for national action to end all forms of discrimination against women.

#### The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)

The declaration was adopted in 1993 and recognises “the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings”. The declaration provides a framework for analysis and action at the national and international levels.<sup>43</sup>

### Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all”. The SDGs were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly and are intended to be achieved by the year 2030. Goal 5 is ‘Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls’ and includes targets focused on ending all forms of discrimination and eliminating violence against women and girls. Additional targets aim to increase women’s participation and decision-making, economic resources, and access to sexual and reproductive health rights.<sup>44</sup>

### WHO global plan of action

The World Health Organisation has a global plan of action to “Strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children”.<sup>45</sup> The global plan of action recognises that health systems can play a role in preventing violence against women and girls; however, to adequately prevent and respond to violence there needs to be a comprehensive multisectoral prevention effort. The plan’s vision is “A world in which all people are free from all forms of violence and discrimination, their health and wellbeing are protected and promoted, their human rights and fundamental freedoms are fully achieved, and gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are the norm”.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>42</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>43</sup> United Nations. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 48th session, agenda item 111, (1993), <http://www.un-documents.net/a48r104.htm>

<sup>44</sup> “The Global Goals,” United Nations, 2020, <https://www.globalgoals.org/>

<sup>45</sup> World Health Organisation, *Global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children*. (Geneva, Switzerland, 2016), 76, <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/252276/1/9789241511537-eng.pdf?ua=1>

<sup>46</sup> *Global plan of action to strengthen the role of the health system within a national multisectoral response to address interpersonal violence, in particular against women and girls, and against children*, 76.

## National plans

### The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022

The National Plan is a 12-year framework that was developed in partnership with all states and territories with a long-term focus on building respectful relationships, working to increase gender equality to prevent violence from occurring in the first place and holding perpetrators accountable. The Plan is delivered through a series of four, three-year Action Plans that build on each other time.<sup>47</sup> 'Turning the Corner 2019-22' is the final action plan in the series and anticipates a reduction in the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault, reduced proportions of children witnessing violence, and an increased proportion of women who feel safe in their communities.<sup>48</sup>

### Our Watch Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Our Watch was established in 2013, by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments as a response to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. Our Watch is Australia's leader in the primary prevention of violence against women and their children and work to embed gender equality and prevent violence where Australians live, learn, work and socialise. The 'Our Watch Strategic Plan 2019-2024' has a vision of an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence.<sup>49</sup> Our Watch are National Plan Partners and will be involved in the development of the Second National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.<sup>50</sup>

### Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia

Change the story was published in 2015 and provides an evidence base for primary prevention of violence against women and their children. The framework was endorsed by all governments across Australia under the Third Action Plan of the National Plan and is a world first for a consistent and integrated national approach. Change the story is a framework for a shared understanding and collaborative action, with six interrelated elements, all of which need to be in place to achieve the objective of preventing violence against women and children, these include: [1] An explanatory model of violence; [2] Key actions to prevent violence; [3] Approach, settings, and techniques for prevention; [4] Prevention infrastructure; [5] Stakeholder roles and responsibilities; [6] Stages of action and expected outcomes.<sup>51</sup>

### Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children

Changing the picture was published by Our Watch in 2018 and is a national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.<sup>52</sup> The resource was informed by the voices, experiences, and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to identify the three main underlying drivers of violence, including: [1] The ongoing impacts of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and families; [2] The ongoing impacts of colonisation for non-Indigenous people and society; [3] Gendered factors. The practice framework has been designed to be used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people, communities, organisations and all levels of government in the primary prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.

<sup>47</sup> Department of Social Services, *The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009-2021*, (Canberra, ACT, 2009), [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2012/background\\_paper\\_to\\_time\\_for\\_action.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2012/background_paper_to_time_for_action.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> Department of Social Services, *The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 - 2022: Fourth Action Plan*, (Canberra, ACT, 2019), [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08\\_2014/national\\_plan1.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2014/national_plan1.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>50</sup> "Our Watch welcomes announcement of Second National Plan," *Our Watch*, 2020, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/our-watch-welcomes-announcement-of-second-national-plan/>

<sup>51</sup> *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, 79

<sup>52</sup> *Our Watch. Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*, (Melbourne, VIC, 2018), 80, <https://media.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-picture/>

## **Victorian policy and legislation**

### **Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020**

The Act requires the Victorian public sector, local councils, and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality. Defined entities are required to develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan, publicly report on their workplace gender equality progress, promote gender equality in policies, programs and services that impact the public, and complete gender impact assessments.<sup>53</sup>

### **Royal Commission into Family Violence**

Australia's first Royal Commission was completed in 2015 following numerous family violence-related deaths in Victoria. The Commission made 227 recommendations to reduce the impact of family violence in Victoria, in which the Victorian Government committed to implementing all recommendations.<sup>54</sup> As of 30 November 2020 the Victorian Government have implemented 167 recommendations.<sup>55</sup>

### **Prevention of Family Violence Bill 2018**

The Bill was passed in August 2018, establishing Respect Victoria as a Statutory Authority and provided the authority to hold both government and communities to account on taking action to stop violence before it starts, and to demonstrate how this can be achieved.

### **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008**

The Act requires the state and local governments to develop public health and wellbeing plans that aim to support the Victorian Government's vision: A Victoria free of the avoidable burden of disease and injury so that all Victorians can enjoy the highest attainable standards of health, wellbeing and participation at every age. The State and municipal public health and wellbeing plans are to be prepared sequentially every four years.<sup>56</sup>

## **Victorian government strategies**

### **Ending Family Violence: Victoria's plan for change 2016-2026**

Victoria's 10-year action plan outlines the Royal Commission's 227 recommendations, outcomes and initial targets to prevent and respond to family violence. The outcomes of the plan include [1] Family violence and gender inequality are not tolerated; [2] Victim survivors, vulnerable children and families, are safe and supported to recover and thrive; [3] Perpetrators are held to account, engaged and connected; [4] Preventing and responding to family violence is systemic and enduring.<sup>57</sup>

### **Free from Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women 2018-2021**

The Free from Violence strategy was developed in response to recommendation 187 from the Royal Commission. This strategy focuses on changing the social norms, structures and practices that condone family violence and all forms of violence against women. Short- and long-term initiatives are included to build the infrastructure, systems, and support for primary prevention in Victoria. The strategy recognises that family violence – the most common form of violence against women – is closely linked to gender inequality.<sup>58</sup>

### **Safe and Strong**

The Victorian Government's Gender Equality Strategy, Safe and Strong sets out a framework for enduring and sustained action over time to progressively build the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and deliver gender equality. The strategy calls on six settings for state-wide action, including education, work and economic security, leadership, health, safety and wellbeing, sport, and media.<sup>59</sup>



## Victorian government agreements and plans

### Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way

Dhelk Dja is built upon the foundation of Aboriginal self-determination and articulates the long-term partnership and directions required at a state-wide, regional, and local level to ensure that Aboriginal people, families and communities are violence free. Dhelk Dja is supported by a 10-year investment strategy that will guide and influence the policies, funding, programs, and practices for Aboriginal services, mainstream services, and government.<sup>60</sup>

### Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response

The Building from Strength Plan was developed in response to recommendation 207 from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. The plan covers the workforce requirements of all government and non-government agencies, and services that prevent and respond to family violence. The plan aims to sustainably strengthen and improve family violence prevention and response workforce and systems.<sup>61</sup>

### Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023

The state outlines ten health priority and focus areas to direct Local Government planning for the upcoming four-year period. Preventing all forms of violence is identified as one of the ten areas, with a vision to ensure: [1] Women, men, girls and boys are treated equally with respect and dignity; [2] All parts of the community are engaged in practical and creative ways to learn about respectful, safe and equitable relationships; [3] Women and children are resourced, supported and empowered to make decisions regarding their safety and wellbeing; [4] All Victorians feel safe and empowered to take a stand against family violence.<sup>62</sup>

## Victorian intersectional evidence

### Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities

Pride in Prevention was released in 2020 by Rainbow Health Victoria as an evidence guide in the primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities. The guide seeks to address critical evidence gaps, strengthen understanding of the drivers of violence and provides recommendations for priority interventions to address them.

### Intersectionality Matters: Guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women

Intersectionality Matters was released in 2017 by The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health as a guide inform primary prevention approaches, strategies and activities in a way that effectively engages immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women.

### Women with Disabilities Victoria: Workforce resources for action

Women with Disabilities Victoria have developed multiple resources to support primary prevention of violence against women with disabilities. The Workforce Resources for Action have been developed to expand upon the important work of Change the Story by placing a disability lens over the gendered drivers of violence and the essential actions to prevent gendered violence.

<sup>60</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, *Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way - Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*, (Melbourne, Victoria, 2018), 56, <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-07/Dhelk%20Dja%20-%20Safe%20Our%20Way%20-%20Strong%20Culture%2C%20Strong%20Peoples%2C%20Strong%20Families%20Agreement.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Family Safety Victoria, *Building from strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response*. (Melbourne, Victoria, 2017), 52, <https://www.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-05/Building-from-strength-10-year-industry-plan-for-family-violence-prevention-and-response.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> "Public health and wellbeing planning," Department of Health and Human Services, 2019, <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/public-health-wellbeing-plan>