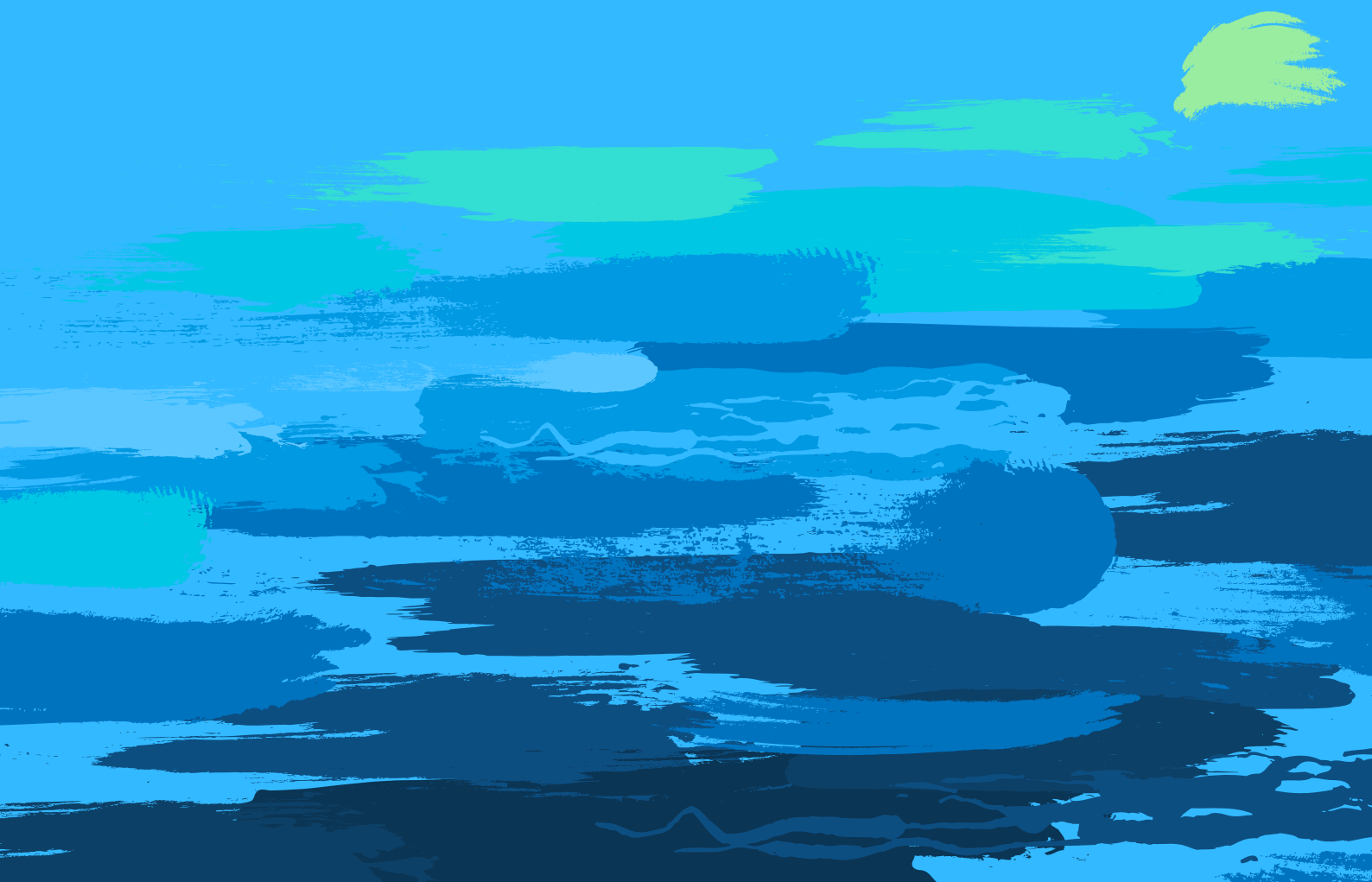


MASCULINITIES AND MEN **IN PREVENTION OF** **FAMILY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**



A Theory of Change for Victoria



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The Women's Health Services Network, The Men's Project – Jesuit Social Services and Safe and Equal all acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional and ongoing custodians of the lands on which we live and work, and we pay respects to Elders past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded and recognise First Nations peoples' rights to self-determination and continuing connections to land, waters and community.



HONOURING VICTIM SURVIVORS

Safe and Equal acknowledges the strength and resilience of adults, children and young people who have experienced family violence and recognises that it is essential that responses to family violence are informed by their expert knowledge and advocacy. We pay respects to those who have not survived and acknowledge the lasting impacts of this preventable violence on families and communities.

CONTENTS

Introduction and context	4
What's in this document?	4
Why have this Theory of Change (ToC)?	4
What exactly is ToC?	5
Our ToC process	5
Two high-level discoveries	6
Core concepts and underpinning principles	6
Our ToC diagram	8
Our ToC narrative	10
How the narrative is structured	10
Our narrative in detail	10
What happens next?	17
Reference list with URLs	18

© 2025 Safe and Equal, Women's Health Services Network, Jesuit Social Services

Authored by:

Wei Leng Kwok, WLK Consulting;
Marina Carman, Amelia Ditcham, Meghan Cooper, Safe and Equal;
Kit McMahon, Rose Durey, Women's Health Services Network;
Matt Tyler, Sam Ware and Melanie Thomson, Jesuit Social Services

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

What's in this document?

This document contains a Theory of Change (ToC) for engaging masculinities and men in the primary prevention and early intervention of family and gender-based violence.¹ This ToC is the result of a highly iterative process that involved a partnership between one statewide network and two Victorian-based organisations, from February to August 2025. The partners were the Women's Health Services Network (WHSN), Jesuit Social Services – The Men's Project (JSS) and Safe and Equal. Through a series of customised workshops, partners were asked to 'think big' about what society, institutions, communities, organisations and interpersonal relationships could look like if oppressive, discriminatory systems – as the necessary social conditions for family and gender-based violence – did not, in fact, exist. Partners were then supported to consider the preceding or earlier results required to achieve these states in the context of working with masculinities and men in prevention, and to describe these for the ToC.

Importantly, the ToC process also included targeted consultations with a number of leading organisations that hold expertise in intersecting systems of power and oppression (for details, see 'Our ToC process'). Their input was sought to make sure that the partners' thinking was accurate, adequate and appropriate across the ToC.

Why have this ToC?

Engaging men in the change required to end family and gender-based violence has been a long-standing topic for communities, organisations, partnerships, practitioners, advocates and others. It is predominantly men who perpetrate family and gender-based violence, including violence against women (particularly bisexual and trans women) and LGBTIQ+ communities more generally. Men must be part of the solution in that addressing the social conditions for violence (including harmful masculinities) can't be done without them. Indeed, *Men in Focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women* states that prevention requires a *conceptual* focus on masculinities as well as a *practice* focus on engaging men (Our Watch, 2019).

Recently, there's been more urgent attention given to 'engaging men and boys' in prevention. The call has come from public discourse, governments and the sectors involved in family and gender-based violence. While welcome, these growing calls to engage men and boys have not always come with a parallel focus on masculinities: how to engage and support men and boys in recognising harmful expressions of gender and contribute to actions that counter these constructions on a large scale. What's also been unclear is whether the recent calls to action in engaging men and boys reflect an extension of prevention work or are suggesting a different direction to take.

The WHSN, JSS and Safe and Equal saw these developments as an opportunity to collaborate and contribute their collective thinking to the discussions – specifically in an effort aimed at providing conceptual and practice clarification on engaging masculinities and men, and on how these are part of prevention work. What are the connections between masculinities and men? What does it mean to engage and support men in these contexts? Where is the nexus between primary prevention and early intervention when it comes to masculinities and men?

The partners felt that a ToC was the right vehicle to explore these sorts of questions and arrive at a level of clarity – both for the partnership and as the means for productively contributing to the broader discussions. The ToC contained in this document reflects the first piece of shared thinking as a partnership of three that collectively holds significant expertise and experience in primary prevention, early intervention, unpacking harmful masculinities, and engaging men and boys.

¹ Family and gender-based violence describes violence driven or informed by the gendered drivers as described in *Change the story* by Our Watch, and includes intimate partner violence, sexual violence, men's violence against women, men's violence against each other, and men's violence against children.

What exactly is ToC?

As a process, ToC is a well-evidenced planning tool that can help people who share an interest in ending an entrenched social problem to make strategic decisions about where to direct capacities, resources and efforts. It does this by starting with the ultimate result or vision being sought – usually the opposite to the current situation – then ‘backwards mapping’ through different levels of change (or preconditions) that must be achieved if the final vision is ever to be realised. Backwards mapping stops when the most immediate conditions (without which nothing else will be achieved) have been agreed upon.

As a product, a ToC shows the ultimate result as well as the levels of change that have been worked out through backwards mapping. Only the necessary and sufficient results or achievements that support the vision are included in the levels of change. The vision and accompanying levels of change are represented **diagrammatically** with an **accompanying narrative**, also a product of backwards mapping. Backwards mapping creates time and space for participants to contribute to the vision and share their reasons for the preconditions; it maximises the expertise of those involved and captures the knowledge they hold.

Our ToC process

The partnership engaged the services of an external Consultant with experience in ToC development, expertise in primary prevention and early intervention of family and gender-based violence particularly in the Victorian context, and subject matter expertise in intersectional feminism. The Consultant facilitated three workshops with the partners and led all but one of the external consultations, which Safe and Equal steered. All up, the consultation process gathered input from four individuals and three teams of community-led prevention leaders, in addition to the nine individuals in the partnership.

This process of engagement over a period of several months shows that a great deal of thinking went into developing the ToC found in this document. A great deal of care also went into the process, specifically in its alignments with core concepts and underpinning principles (see further below).

The engagement process involved:

-  a half-day introductory workshop on ToC in February 2025, to explore the uses of ToC, explain the development process, and confirm that ToC was the right fit for the needs of partners as their first piece of shared work;
-  a half-day backwards mapping workshop in March 2025 followed by a two-hour session to complete the thinking in May 2025;
-  consultations with Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health, Women with Disabilities Victoria, Zoe Belle Gender Collective, and Rainbow Health Australia.

The Theory of Change was also informed by Safe and Equal’s previous engagements with organisations for other major statewide prevention initiatives, among them *Foundations for Action: Understanding the primary prevention workforce in Victoria*, and *Portraits of Prevention*.

Following these engagements, the Consultant led two meetings with Safe and Equal in June 2025 to refine the emerging ToC and confirm the structure of this document. The Consultant then drafted the diagram and narrative, which was presented to all partners at a meeting in July 2025 and finalised upon receiving and incorporating feedback in August 2025.

Reputable resources were utilised to guide the backwards mapping process. Among them were *The Community Builder’s Approach to Theory of Change: A practical guide to theory development* and the *Facilitator’s Source Book: Source book for facilitators leading theory of change development sessions. A Theory of Change in Sexual and Reproductive Health for Victorian Women* was also utilised as a best-practice example to guide the write up of the ToC diagram and narrative.

Two high-level discoveries

Many discoveries were made through the backwards mapping process on what constitutes the necessary and sufficient results or achievements to include in the ToC. These discoveries are reflected in the diagram and accompanying narrative over the following pages.

Two high-level discoveries are worth noting at the outset. First, any focus on masculinities and men can and must be integrated with existing prevention endeavours. The conceptual focus on masculinities and the practice focus on engaging men are *already* part of primary prevention and early intervention. While improvements can always be made in strategy and effectiveness, the focus on masculinities and men is not separate from prevention as a whole. Second, it is necessary to maintain a conceptual distinction between primary prevention and early intervention as a means to planning, designing and evaluating the purpose and target of different components of our prevention effort. But it is equally vital to show their linkage points in a single ToC, and how they 'connect up' to the same vision. One ToC for primary prevention and early intervention is possible when engaging masculinities and men.

CORE CONCEPTS AND UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

This ToC understands prevention as a continuum that spans primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery. The focus of this ToC, however, is on primary prevention and early intervention.

Primary prevention

Describes whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary (i.e. 'first' or 'underlying') drivers of violence so that violence can't even happen in the first place. Primary prevention works to change the social conditions that produce and perpetuate violence: that excuse, justify or even promote it. Primary prevention addresses attitudes, norms, practices, structures and power imbalances that drive violence.

Early intervention

Describes initiatives designed to stop early signs of abuse from escalating as well as targeted interventions to shift attitudes and behaviours in ways that minimise immediate and long-term risk. This can involve working with groups or individuals who might be at higher risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence, focusing efforts where there are signs that violence is more likely to occur, and working more broadly across communities and society to improve approaches for recognising and responding to signs of violence.

This ToC is aligned with existing practice principles for prevention. These are the five principles from the *Men in Focus Practice Guide: Addressing masculinities and working with men in the prevention of violence against women* (Our Watch, 2022), and one particular principle from *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (Our Watch, 2021). In aligning the ToC with these principles, the partners have focused on the following.

Intersectional feminist approach

This ToC recognises and understands that gender is a system of power and oppression that creates the social conditions for family and gender-based violence to occur, and that gender as a system does not operate alone. Multiple systems of power and oppression *intersect* and influence the experience of violence in differential ways, in terms of perpetration and victimisation. Effective prevention requires addressing the intersections of sexism, colonialism, racism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity, ableism, ageism and classism (among other systems) and displacing these in favour of equitable social arrangements, interpersonal relationships and ways of being in the world. This must be done through coalition building and standing in solidarity with progressive social movements that have fought long and hard against these systems.

Gender transformative approach

This ToC supports the view that the social construction of gender is rigid, binary, hierarchical, harmful and historically specific (e.g. a colonial construct) but that men (indeed people of all genders) have opportunities to transform attachments and adherences to dominant gender roles and expectations. This active challenging and transforming of the gender system is known as the gender transformative approach, and it is central to dismantling the intersecting systems of power and oppression that drive violence.

Maintaining accountability to women

This ToC recognises and understands that many different thinkers, activists, community organisers, scholars, practitioners and other professionals from around the world – most of whom are women – have been active in the movement to end family and gender-based violence for a long time. From this history, we are the beneficiaries of a wealth of experience, insights, knowledge, solutions and leadership to guide our prevention endeavours. A focus on masculinities and men must be done in ways that respect this history and elevate women's leadership – including cis and trans women – and decision making as we move forward together. Maintaining accountability to women in these ways is vital to taking a gender transformative approach (and avoiding a gender exploitative one).

Strengths-based approach

This ToC supports the view that transforming attachments and adherences to dominant gender roles and expectations works best through curiosity and invitation – that is, by raising awareness of prevailing gender norms, inviting men to loosen their attachments (and not blaming them) and promoting positive alternative ways of being. As noted in the *Men in Focus Practice Guide*:

- + Men are invited to build their empathy for the experiences of women and to use this empathy to reflect on the changes that are required to move towards gender equality across all levels of society. The motivations that men have for becoming supporters of and advocates for gender equality are identified and fostered. Prevention efforts encourage men to connect their emotions with their values in ways that inspire them to act (Our Watch, 2022: 51).
- + Men's own experiences of marginalisation and trauma need to be held in a way that does not excuse their use of violence but meaningfully connects with their identity and the power that they do have access to. These approaches are important when working in a strengths-based way and aiming to build connection and empathy (Our Watch, 2022: 32).

Solutions across every level of society (socio-ecological approach)

This ToC recognises and understands that multiple intersecting systems of power and oppression exert their influence at all levels of society: in our institutions, organisations and communities, and also interpersonally. The social conditions for violence are *systemic*. Effective prevention therefore requires solutions to topple these systems as expressed across the *entire* social ecology. In other words, our solutions must target the institutional, organisational, community and individual levels to bring about the transformations required to end violence once and for all. A focus only at the individual level will not be sufficient to end violence.

Evidence based and evidence building

This ToC supports the view that policy, programs and practices must draw on available evidence from research on violence, evaluations of initiatives to prevent violence (where these exist) and the know-how of the many people working in prevention in organisations and communities. It is vital that evidence continues to grow by building knowledge on the social conditions and specific drivers that underpin violence, resourcing meaningful evaluations of prevention initiatives, and sharing what we know through appropriate and accessible forums and media.

OUR TOC DIAGRAM

Our ToC diagram depicts the results that must be achieved through successive levels of change if we are to realise our long-term vision for Victoria.

- ➔ Level 5 shows our long-term vision or the **ultimate result** that we seek.
- ➔ Level 4 shows what must be in place as the **ultimate preconditions** for our vision. There are three ultimate preconditions.
- ➔ Level 3 and Level 2 show what must be in place as the **necessary preconditions** for the levels above them. There are three necessary preconditions for Level 3 and five necessary preconditions for Level 2.
- ➔ Level 1 shows the **immediate conditions** that must be met before anything else can be realised all the way through our ToC, including our long-term vision. There are four immediate conditions in our ToC.

Our ToC diagram was developed for engaging masculinities and men in the primary prevention and early intervention of family and gender-based violence, and is specific to Victoria. The diagram must therefore be understood with these contexts in mind.



Masculinities and Men in Prevention of Family and Gender-based Violence: A Theory of Change for Victoria



Developed by Safe and Equal, Women's Health Services Network and Jesuit Social Services

OUR TOC NARRATIVE

How the narrative is structured

Our narrative accompanies the diagram and is presented from Level 5 to Level 1, or from top to bottom. The long-term vision is explained more fully, as is every precondition at each level that follows, until we get to the immediate conditions on Level 1 without which nothing else can be achieved. Selected examples are included where appropriate to give further detail to the states being described.

The narrative paints a picture of the linkages between the preconditions from level to level, with each result setting the stage for the results in the levels above, all the way up to our long-term vision. In other words, while the narrative (and diagram) unfolds from top to bottom, the progression of change in real time and real-world contexts works from the bottom up.

As with the diagram, our ToC narrative was developed for engaging masculinities and men in the primary prevention and early intervention of family and gender-based violence, and is specific to Victoria. The narrative must therefore be read with these contexts in mind.

Finally, as with any ToC, our narrative and diagram are intentionally ‘big picture’ in articulating and depicting only the necessary and sufficient results across five levels of change, including the final state, our long-term vision (Level 5). Multiple mutually reinforcing actions will be required to move through the change progressions; and these actions do not belong on our ToC but rather in tactical plans that operationalise various parts of the ToC. Once in place, such plans will help to make the ‘gap’ between each level feel less like vast distances to be reached (see further, ‘What happens next?’).

Our narrative in detail

Level 5: Ultimate Result

5.1 Everyone in Victoria lives and loves with dignity, connection and respect

Our vision is for Victoria as a place, while recognising that this land was never ceded by First Nations people. Our vision applies to everyone living in Victoria or anyone who might be visiting or passing through, or temporarily working or studying here. We note that for Aboriginal peoples, the concept of place is one of deep connection with land, water and culture that transcends geographical boundaries of Australian federation. While achieving our vision only within Victoria is unlikely, as a place this has meaning as the location for combined prevention effort.

Our vision is values based. In order to inspire ourselves and others to change, our vision appeals to values associated with a positive future and a sense of shared humanity. Values like love, dignity, connection and respect. Our vision thereby goes beyond the absence of violence as the problem we are trying to solve. Instead, our vision is intentional in offering anyone who encounters it something unifying to aspire towards and be inspired by.

Our vision is strengths based. It indicates that everyone lives a life of value; is self-determined in how they live and love; enjoys freedoms to be who they are without being constrained by systems of power and oppression; and is flourishing and thriving with choice and opportunity in themselves, their relationships with others, and their ways of being in the world. Further, that no one's individual freedoms are made at the expense of others, and that our freedoms (and shared humanity) are inherently interconnected.

.....
Source material for Level 5: [The Common Cause Handbook](#); [Framing Gender Equality Message Guide](#); [Framing Masculinity Message Guide](#); [Pride in Prevention Messaging Guide](#)

Level 4: Ultimate Preconditions

Level 4 is realised immediately before our vision is realised. It is likely that not much time passes between realising all three preconditions on this level and arriving at our vision. That's because Level 4 reflects the fact that deep societal transformations have occurred and systems of equity are now the norm.

4.1

Systems of equity permeate all spheres of life and have effectively displaced intersecting systems of power and oppression

The gender system intersects with multiple systems of power and oppression to create and perpetuate the social conditions for violence. These systems are colonialism, racism, heteronormativity, cisnormativity, ableism, ageism and classism, among others.

Result 4.1 conveys that social, material and lived realities of equity are now fully in place, overwriting what we used to have (i.e. systems of inequity). Societal transformation is total and complete. For example:

- + Social and material conditions are based on the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.
- + Everyone has access to resources and opportunities needed to live and thrive (i.e. education, employment, services, supports and housing).

'All spheres of life' encompasses public life, working life, community life, family life, kinship and other forms of collective living arrangements, and all aspects of our interpersonal relationships.

4.2

Our institutions, organisations, communities and interpersonal relationships are safe for everyone – without exception

This result is closely tied to 4.1. It reflects the fact that systems of equity are positively influencing all levels of the social ecology creating safety for everyone. The social ecology includes institutions, organisations and communities, and interpersonal relationships. 'Safe for everyone' means freedom from harmful constructions of gender and sexuality at all socio-ecological levels, and not only the individual level. For example:

- + Institutions, organisations and communities celebrate all people and affirm their humanity.
- + Communities maintain positive connections to their culture and/or Country in ways that are affirmed by everyone.
- + Equity exists in families of all kinds, kinship arrangements and other forms of collective living and is supported institutionally via policies such as equitable primary caregiving to children.
- + Rigid harmful gender binaries no longer dictate our relationships or who and how we love.

4.3

Everyone is free to express their bodies, genders and sexualities in their own unique ways, unharmed by rigid binary constructions

This result is interconnected to 4.1 and 4.2. With deep societal transformation comes individual freedoms to choose relationships, friendships, connections and who and how to love – without prejudice or fear. For example:

- + Individuals have the opportunity to live a life that is not constrained by rigid harmful constructions of gender.
- + Individuals are their authentic selves, and have opportunities to live in ways that align with their values and not according to harmful gender and other (intersecting) norms and stereotypes.

Individuals enjoy a bodily existence that is not denied, devalued, stigmatised or invalidated through harmful gender and other (intersecting) norms and stereotypes.

.....
Source material for Level 4: *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia; Changing the Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children; Changing the Landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities; Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities; Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women*

Level 3: Intermediate Preconditions

Level 3 contains results that indicate that the movement to end violence is well underway with all levels of government and all parts of civil society involved in the work. It's at this level that we see men no longer using violence, because violence is starting to become inconceivable as a choice. A tipping point has been reached where ending violence is everyone's business; everyone can see a part to play in the movement.

3.1

Governments at all levels use all available levers to promote systems that are equitable and prevent harm

Our ToC is for Victoria, but we recognise that coordination and leadership at the national level will help to realise the results we seek. 'Governments at all levels' means national, state and local governments using available levers to bring to fruition systems of equity and thereby prevent harm. Levers include:

- + dedicated long-term plans to prevent family and gender-based violence;
- + policy, legislative or regulatory reforms that promote equity and do not further perpetuate inequities;
- + long-term funding of prevention programs, infrastructure (e.g. workforce development) and coordination;
- + policies, processes and practices across government agencies that 'walk the talk' i.e. promote equity and prevent harm within government as a setting and demonstrate government accountability to such measures.

Policy is one of the most critical levers because it enables systemic and lasting change. Result 3.1 implies that equity is at the heart of all policy – from social and physical infrastructure policy to immigration and economic policy – and that centring the experiences of communities faced with structural discrimination and marginalisation is the norm.

3.2 All parts of society take responsibility for challenging and ending violence

Civil society encompasses non-government institutions like education and the media; industries and sectors including the business sector; and organisations, communities and individuals. When all parts of society are involved in ending violence, many things are achieved. For example:

- + Institutions across the board promote and support lives that are free from harmful gender constructions and stereotypes.
- + Entire industries and sectors, along with organisations of every kind, prioritise freedom from family and gender-based violence.
- + Organisations use all available levers to promote internal structures, practices and processes that are equitable and prevent harm.
- + Communities everywhere are empowered to challenge harmful gender constructions and stereotypes, and community-led ways of working for prevention are prioritised.
- + Individuals in positions of influence and leaders and collaborators of all stripes work to dismantle inequitable systems and build better systems.
- + Everyone stands in solidarity to challenge violence.

What we also see happening at this point is more pro-social bystander action (because it's safer to do this) and less backlash and resistance to the work of prevention (because it's harder to do these).

3.3 Men no longer use violence in their relationships and on themselves

This result flows on from 3.1 and 3.2. When all levels of government and all parts of society are involved in the movement to end violence, violence itself starts to become inconceivable. This result communicates that family and gender-based violence is untenable because we live in an environment that no longer justifies, excuses, trivialises and dismisses violence, or shifts the blame onto victims. Further, this environment is all encompassing and systemic.

This result keeps men in the frame as actors who no longer use violence both against others and on themselves. It indicates a better world for men in terms of their health, relationships, identities and ways of being men.

.....
Source material for Level 3: *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032; Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia*

Level 2: Intermediate Preconditions

Level 2 contains results specifically related to masculinities and men and positions these as the preconditions for the next level up. This is the level where the necessary work of countering and fundamentally transforming dominant forms of masculinities occurs – through engaging with men and boys (individually and collectively) in loosening rigid gender norms and attachments that harm themselves and others.

2.1

Men and boys have positive peer relationships and role models for exploring emotional range and diverse expressions of masculinities

Result 2.1 indicates that men and boys have been supported and challenged to loosen their attachments to dominant gender roles and expectations, including the role of homophobia and transphobia in these constructions. For example:

- + Men and boys are supported in their relationships with each other to break down rigid adherence to masculine gender norms.
- + Men are supported to take leadership as role models in demonstrating and encouraging a range of expressions and identities, and in challenging harmful, aggressive and violent masculinities.

This result is accountable to women. The work required to achieve it cannot be done through men taking action on their own. It has to be done in relationship with women and in ways that elevate women's leadership. See also Result 2.3.

This result is strengths based. It recognises that many men and boys will want to embark on these explorations but are less sure about how to go about it. It indicates that with the right kind of support, men and boys can build on their own strengths to overcome shame (and other barriers) associated with beginning the work.

2.2

Men and boys are supported to engage critically with harmful representations of gender and sexuality and to counter or challenge them

Representations encompass all media, traditional and social. Online pornography is particularly noted here. 'Engage critically' means:

- + being equipped with the right tools for constructive navigation and regulation around harmful representations of gender and sexuality;
- + having access to effective strategies for navigating one's own resistance and backlash, and the resistance and backlash among peers.

This result is necessary because it relates to the media as a key institutional influence on how identities, genders and relationships are perceived and expressed. Through critical engagement, alternative possibilities for how men and boys can live and love are explored, and negative impacts of problematic stereotypes and narratives are mitigated.

2.3 Men and boys help to lead change on gender-based violence in ways that are accountable to women

Our ToC recognises and supports men and boys as active participants in the movement to end violence, and indeed in helping to lead change on violence. This result shows that men have been engaged as individuals and bystanders, and that men are also contributing to change as actors (with power) in their roles within relationships, families, communities, organisations, institutions.

While men and boys must be part of the solution to end violence, it is critical that their participation is always accountable to those with lived experience of family and gender-based violence, and the women who have contributed their thinking and activism to the movement for decades. This level of accountability can only be achieved through sustained attention to promoting women's leadership and consciously sharing and ceding power.

2.4 Men and boys seek and receive help to build protective factors against violence – for themselves and others in their lives

Result 2.4 depicts a state where the trajectory towards violence has been substantially shifted by building protective factors; a state in which men and boys are enabled to seek supports for harmful gendered attitudes and behaviours in themselves and for others, before these can escalate into violence. For this result to be realised, supports must be available (and at scale), appropriate (in terms of culture, life stages), accessible (i.e. all reasonable barriers to participation removed) and effective.

2.5 Men and boys who have experienced violence take responsibility for their own healing and are supported to recover and thrive

Result 2.5 depicts a state where past experiences of violence, and current experiences of ongoing trauma, are effectively ameliorated as risk factors in the likelihood of future violence; a state in which men and boys with these experiences are responsible for their own healing and a different life for themselves and the people around them. This result recognises that for men, it's also about being accountable for their healing and recovery too. As with Result 2.4, for this result to be realised, supports must be available (and at scale), appropriate (in terms of culture and life stages, and in being trauma informed), accessible (i.e. all reasonable barriers to participation removed) and effective.

.....
Source material for Level 2: *The Man Box 2024; Willing Capable and Confident: Men, masculinities and the prevention of violence against women; Engaging Men from Multicultural and Faith-based Communities in Primary Prevention; Men in Focus Practice Guide: Addressing masculinities and working with men in the prevention of violence against women*

Level 1: Immediate Conditions

This level covers infrastructure and other immediate conditions that must be in place before anything else on the ToC can be realised. Infrastructure includes community literacy on the 'drivers and actions' framing of violence, a strong and sustained workforce, sustained political leadership, and coordination.

1.1 What is known about masculinities and men is integrated into prevention frameworks and practices

Research, policy and know-how arising from programs and their evaluations continue to build. This result conveys the ongoing integration of evidence on masculinities and men into prevention frameworks and best practices, and brings to life our underpinning principle of 'Evidence based and evidence building.' Integration mechanisms include:

- + collaborations that help find common ground in diverse perspectives;
- + partnerships that build expertise across the prevention system;
- + leadership from the prevention system, especially practitioners;
- + long-term funding for collaborations and leadership;
- + transparency or sharing lessons learned and how to do better.

1.2 A skilled, supported, diverse and multidisciplinary workforce is in place in Victoria

Result 1.2 conveys that adequate, sustainable funding is in place to resource the necessary workforce (i.e. skilled, diverse and multidisciplinary) for high-quality prevention. This includes (but is not limited to) a workforce where:

- + fundamentals of primary prevention and early intervention are appropriately understood and embedded into practitioner core capabilities;
- + consistent understandings of risk and protective factors are applied;
- + Aboriginal-led ways of working, skills and expertise are truly valued;
- + mutual respect exists across disciplines via mechanisms for sharing diverse knowledges and capabilities;
- + support for wellbeing and professional development is available;
- + practitioners from a range of priority communities are employed in primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery roles – both in community-led and mainstream organisations.

1.3 Political leadership and community momentum exist to reject and prevent violence

This result conveys that political leadership in preventing family and gender-based violence is in place, elevating this as a mainstream issue that attracts sustained commitment and adequate resourcing that is unequivocally maintained by successive governments. Community literacy has reached a sufficient level of consistent understanding about what constitutes violence (i.e. it's socially produced) and that violence is preventable, not inevitable.

1.4

A coordinated, fully resourced approach to good practices and programming is in place

Result 1.4 communicates that we won't realise Level 2 results, let alone any of the results on levels further up, without the consistent application of existing frameworks and evidence in practice and programming for prevention. This result can only be achieved through the support and leadership of a range of organisations and actors – among them the WHSN, JSS and Safe and Equal – and meaningful partnerships or coalitions. This result also relies on dedicated mechanisms for the coordination of prevention practices and programs that focus on masculinities and men. These mechanisms are functioning at the statewide and regional levels.

.....

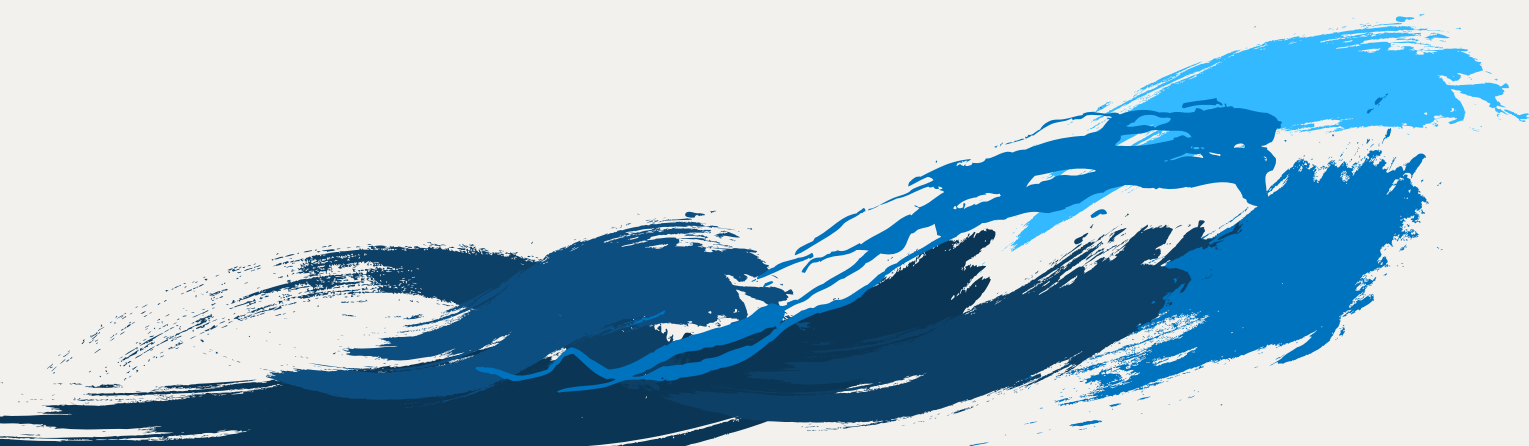
Source material for Level 1: *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia; Foundations for Action: Understanding the primary prevention workforce in Victoria*

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This ToC has revealed a substantial body of work is needed to realise **four immediate conditions** without which no other results can be realised. One next step for the WHSN, JSS and Safe and Equal is to explore opportunities for coalescing available contributions, capabilities and infrastructures, with the view to contributing to a coordination mechanism for good practices and programs that address masculinities and engage men (1.4). Another next step for the partners is to determine who else needs to be involved to realise the three remaining immediate conditions (1.1 to 1.3).

Both of these next steps would build on the partnership's endeavours to date. While this ToC reflects the first piece of shared work as a partnership of three, it was never intended as a purely theoretical exercise. The principal benefit of going through the ToC process is to support decision making – lighting the way to practice and program opportunities in the real world context. Our ToC has highlighted that the work of engaging masculinities and men needs to be integrated with prevention as a whole, and that primary prevention and early intervention can and must be integrated as a means to achieving a common vision for the future.

The WHSN, JSS and Safe and Equal are well-placed to build on these understandings – and to do so in *strategic* and *practical* ways – beginning with the Level 1 results and establishing the groundwork to realise all remaining results contained in this ToC.



REFERENCE LIST WITH URLS

Anderson A (n.d.) *The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: A practical guide to theory development*, The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, New York <https://www.theoryofchange.org/pdf/TOC_fac_guide.pdf> accessed 18/06/25

Carman M, Fairchild J, Cooper M and Ditcham A (2024) *Foundations for Action: Understanding the primary prevention workforce in Victoria*, Safe and Equal, Melbourne <<https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/foundations-for-action-understanding-the-primary-prevention-workforce-in-victoria/>> accessed 09/07/25

Carman M, Fairchild J, Parsons M, Farrugia C, Power J and Bourne A (2020) *Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities*, Rainbow Health Victoria, La Trobe University, Bundoora <<https://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au/news/pride-in-prevention-messaging-guide>> accessed 09/07/25

Chen, J (2017) *Intersectionality Matters: A guide to engaging immigrant and refugee communities to prevent violence against women*, Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, Collingwood <<https://www.mcwh.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Intersectionality-Matters-Guide-2017.pdf>> accessed 09/07/25

Common Cause (2011) *The Common Cause Handbook: A guide to values and frames for campaigners, community organisers, civil servants, fundraisers, educators, social entrepreneurs, activists, funders, politicians, and everyone in between*, Public Interest Research Centre, Machynlleth <<https://www.commoncause.com.au/common-cause-handbook>> accessed 09/07/25

Department of Social Services (2022) *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra <<https://www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-end-gender-based-violence/resource/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children-2022-2032>> accessed 09/07/25

Fairchild J, Carman M, Bersten R and O'Connor B (2021) *Pride in Prevention Messaging Guide: A guide for communications and engagements to support primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities*, Rainbow Health Victoria, La Trobe University, Bundoora <<https://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au/news/pride-in-prevention-messaging-guide>> accessed 09/07/25

The Men's Project and Flood, M (2024) *The Man Box 2024: Re-examining what it means to be a man in Australia*, Jesuit Social Services, Melbourne <<https://jss.org.au/programs/research/the-man-box/>> accessed 09/07/25

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and Safe and Equal (2024) *Engaging Men from Multicultural and Faith-based Communities in Primary Prevention: Lessons from the Connecting Communities program*, Melbourne <<https://safeandequal.org.au/resources/engaging-men-from-multicultural-and-faith-based-communities-in-primary-prevention/>> accessed 09/07/25

Our Watch (2019) *Men in Focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women*, Melbourne <<https://assets.ourwatch.org.au/assets/Key-frameworks/Men-in-focus-Evidence-review.pdf>> accessed 09/07/25

Our Watch (2018) *Changing the Picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*, Our Watch, Melbourne <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/changing-the-picture>> accessed 09/07/25

Our Watch (2021) *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia*, (2nd ed.) Our Watch, Melbourne <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/change-the-story-framework>> accessed 09/07/25

Our Watch and Women with Disabilities Victoria (2022) *Changing the Landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities*, Our Watch, Melbourne <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/changing-the-landscape>> accessed 09/07/25

Our Watch (2022) *Men in Focus Practice Guide: Addressing masculinities and working with men in the prevention of men's violence against women*, Our Watch, Melbourne <<https://assets.ourwatch.org.au/assets/Key-frameworks/Men-in-focus-practice-guide-AA.pdf>> accessed 09/07/25

Respect Victoria (2024) *Willing, Capable and Confident: Men, masculinities and the prevention of violence against women*, Respect Victoria, Melbourne <<https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/willing-capable-and-confident-men-masculinities-and-prevention-violence-against-women>> accessed 09/07/25

Taplin DH and Rasic M (2012) *Facilitator's Source Book: Source book for facilitators leading theory of change development sessions*, ACTKnowledge, New York <https://www.theoryofchange.org/wp-content/uploads/toco_library/pdf/ToCFacilitatorSourcebook.pdf> accessed 18/06/25

VicHealth (2020) *Framing Masculinity Message Guide*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Carlton <<https://www.commoncause.com.au/framing-masculinity>> accessed 09/07/25

VicHealth, Outer East Primary Care Partnership, Together for Equality and Respect (2021) *Framing Gender Equality Message Guide*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Carlton <<https://www.commoncause.com.au/framing-gender-equality>> accessed 09/07/25

Women's Health Services' Sexual and Reproductive Health Community of Practice (2019) *A Theory of Change in Sexual and Reproductive Health for Victorian Women*, GEN VIC, Melbourne <https://www.genvic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/GV_TOCinSRH_20pp_V5_WEB-final.pdf> accessed 18/06/25

WHSN, JSS and Safe and Equal acknowledge the support of Respect Victoria.