A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.

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Today’s presentation

• The international context, progress since 2007, and what the evidence now tells us on what drives violence against women (Lara)

• Preventing violence against women: the new national framework (Emma)

• The role of local government (Emma)
The international context

• Obligation on governments (at all levels) to prevent VAW enshrined in international law
  – Ensuring robust response as foundation for prevention
  – Promoting economic, political and social gender equality
  – Eliminating gender stereotypes / changing social norms

• But while responses have improved, few governments have met the obligation of prevention (Special Rapporteur)

• Pockets of small-scale work driven by women’s organisations
A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.

Comprehensive, evidence-based approaches – Victoria led the way

VicHealth 2007 – *Preventing Violence before it Occurs*

- First to undertake meta-analysis of global studies
  - Distilled underlying drivers and contributors
  - Proposed framework for action
  - Highly influential on Victorian policy, funding and practice at state and local levels
Also influential nationally and internationally – findings later reinforced by WHO, European Commission, and upheld in policy docs (Nat Plan, CSW 2013)

Progress since 2007
Progress since 2007 – nationally

• Enormous strides in policy and practice
• Creation of ANROWS and Our Watch 2013
• Call for updated evidence and coordinated national approach – new framework
• 2015 – unprecedented public and political attention:
  • Parliamentary and senate inquiries (and a RC)
  • Commitments to a national communications campaign and Respectful Relationships Education
• Need to ensure comprehensive approach in Third Action Plan to meet target of ‘significant and sustained reduction in VAW’ by 2022’
Progress since 2007 – internationally

- Expert Group Meeting (Bangkok 2012) – limited understandings, deep conceptual ‘divisions’, but recs
- CSW March 2013 – Agreed Conclusions:
  - Reiterated that ‘custom, tradition or religious consideration may not be invoked to avoid obligations’
  - Looked at emerging forms of VAWG such as cyber stalking, and the need for safety in public places
  - Recognized multiple forms of discrimination
  - Need to address structural causes as well as social norms
- Follow-up expert meeting (Bangkok 2015)
  - Much greater shared understanding
  - Progress in practice (less so in policy)
  - Opportunities for international/Australian cooperation
Understanding what drives violence

Explanatory model:
Gender inequality as the necessary condition for violence against women, in the context of other social inequalities

‘Intersectional’ understanding of gender inequality
Gender inequality as expressed through structures, norms and practices at different levels of society
Identifying drivers and reinforcing factors
Gendered drivers  reinforcing factors
Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children
What is the new framework?

• Supported by *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, but not policy itself

• A guide or national ‘roadmap’ for prevention policy and practice

• Isolated prevention initiatives have small-scale impacts, but will not prevent violence across the whole population.

• An integrated, evidence-informed national approach, for coordinated action across jurisdictions and sectors

• Innovative: no other country has a national prevention framework
Framework development process

- Joint project: Our Watch, ANROWS, VicHealth
- National Technical Advisory Group
- NGO driven and owned project, but with intentional engagement of governments (jurisdictional reps invited to consultation, and sit on NTAG)
- Extensive research (reviews of existing literature and evidence, plus commissioned new ‘think pieces’)
- Substantial stakeholder engagement, involvement and consultation process
  - Jurisdictional consultations
  - National forum/peak groups
  - Stakeholder review and feedback on drafts
- Peer review (research and practitioner)
- Political engagement
- Communications strategy
Change the story: resources

http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework

- The Framework
- Supporting documents:
  - *Foundations 1*: Detailed background research
  - *Foundations 2*: Think pieces, consultation report, issues/implications
- Video
- Infographic poster
- Drivers and actions: four page summary

To be developed in 2016:
- Guide to planning, implementation and evaluation
- Guide to prevention monitoring
- Training strategy
- Guide to preventing violence against Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women
- Other communications and advocacy tools
Framework structure

Change the story has six elements, all of which are necessary to achieve our shared objective of preventing violence against women and their children:

Element 1

An explanatory model that establishes our shared understanding of violence against women and identifies its drivers and reinforcing factors.

Element 2

Ten essential and supporting actions that need to be taken to address these drivers and reinforcing factors.

Element 3

Specific, practical techniques, approaches and strategies for working in different settings and for ensuring reach and impact across different communities, contexts and audiences.
Framework structure

Element 4

*The supporting infrastructure needed* for a holistic approach that integrates the promotion of gender equality and non-violence into the work of established agencies, organisations and networks at the national, state, regional and local levels.

Element 5

*Stakeholder roles and responsibilities*, acknowledging the different expertise and capacities across stakeholder groups, and their different spheres of influence and opportunities to take action.

Element 6

*Stages of action* and expected short, mid and long-term signposts of success – outcomes Australia can expect to see from the collaborative approach outlined in *Change the story*. 
Recap: primary prevention means:

Understanding violence:
Identifying and directly addressing underlying conditions, drivers and reinforcing factors
(Element 1 of framework – described by Lara)

Taking action based on this understanding:
Aligning effort with the significance or ‘weight’ of each driver or reinforcing factor
Taking action

**Element 2** — Essential and supporting actions, aligned with the drivers and reinforcing factors

### Essential actions to address the gendered drivers of violence against women
1. Challenge condoning of violence against women
2. Promote women’s independence and decision-making in public life and relationships
3. Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles
4. Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys
5. Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.

### Supporting actions to address the reinforcing factors
6. Challenge the normalisation of violence as an expression of masculinity or male dominance
7. Prevent exposure to violence and support those affected to reduce its consequences
8. Address the intersections between social norms relating to alcohol and gender
9. Reduce ‘backlash’ by engaging men and boys in gender equality, building relationship skills and social connections
10. Promote broader social equality and address structural discrimination and disadvantage.

**Lower probability of violence against women**
Element 3 – approach, settings, techniques

**Principles:**
- Reaching everyone
- Tailoring to context
- Intensive effort with some groups
- Working across the life course
- ‘Gender transformative’ approach

Multiple **settings** for action (schools, early childhood, workplaces, sporting orgs, media etc)
What does primary prevention look like? Example techniques:

Initiatives aimed at whole population, not just individuals. Across multiple settings and across the life course. e.g.

- **Policy and institutional** change (to support/resource specific prevention work but also to embed gender equality in Australia)
- **Participatory programs** to challenge gender stereotypes and discrimination, promote respectful, equal relationships and gender equality (e.g. in schools, for new parents)
- **Initiatives to change organisational cultures and practices** (e.g. in workplaces, sports clubs)
- **Community-led initiatives** to empower women, or engage men in the promotion of non-violence and gender equality
- **Australia-wide public communications/social marketing/behaviour change campaigns. See Our Watch campaign ‘The Line’ (www.theline.org.au)**
- **Engagement of media/journalists** (for better reporting of violence and promotion of gender equitable norms)
Element 4 – A prevention infrastructure

1. Mechanisms for coordination and quality assurance
2. An expert workforce
3. Political, sector and civil society leadership
4. Policy and legislative reform
5. Shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks
Element 5 – Stakeholder roles

Primary responsibility is with government, but everyone must play a part; prevention needs mutually reinforcing strategies at all levels of the social ecology, in multiple settings where people live, work and play, through partnerships and collaboration.

- COAG
- Commonwealth, state, territory and local governments
- Those working in key settings and sectors
- Those working on other social issues
- Our Watch
Element 6 – Stages of action and expected outcomes

• We don’t have to do it all at once!
• First three years is about embedding good existing work and establishing the infrastructure for sustainable forward action
• Short, medium and long-term actions and envisaged outcomes
• The Framework is just a document: endorsement, advocacy and use by multiple stakeholders is what will bring it alive
The role of local government

• Local government not a ‘setting’ in this framework. Rather, can contribute across many sectors and settings, including as workplaces themselves

• Uniquely placed to influence and lead by example in local communities

• Mandate to work across the life course

• Can contribute through many existing mechanisms and partnerships
Potential opportunities for local govt.

• Not necessarily additional or new work
• Gender equality and prevention initiatives aligned with the essential or supporting actions can be embedded into many aspects of Councils’ core business. e.g:
  – Health and wellbeing plans
  – Alcohol management/regulation
  – Sports and recreation, leisure facilities
  – Early childhood
  – Community safety strategies
Thank you

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