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# CHANGE the STORY

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

Our  
WATCH

 VicHealth™

ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH  
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY  
to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children

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**Acknowledgement of country:** *Our Watch acknowledges the traditional owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past and present, and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and knowledges.*

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# Foreword

**Australia has a choice. We can change the story that currently sees a woman murdered every week by a current or former partner. We can choose a future where women and their children live free from violence.**

Violence against women and their children is not an inevitable or intractable social problem. Rather, it is the product of complex yet modifiable social and environmental factors.

## **Put simply, violence against women and their children is preventable.**

In recent years, through increased public awareness, Australians no longer consider violence against women and their children to be a private issue. No longer are we willing to accept the untold damage such violence inflicts on individuals, communities, organisations and institutions.

But this alone is not enough.

If we want an Australia free of violence against women and their children we have to challenge the historically-entrenched beliefs and behaviours that drive it, and the social, political and economic structures, practices and systems that support these.

Although there is no single cause of violence against women and their children, the latest international evidence shows there are certain factors that consistently predict - or drive - higher levels of violence against women. These include beliefs and behaviours reflecting disrespect for women, low support for gender equality and adherence to rigid or stereotypical gender roles, relations and identities.

## **What this framework makes clear is that gender inequality is the core of the problem and it is the heart of the solution.**

Violence against women has been shown to be significantly and consistently lower in countries where women's economic, social and political rights are better protected, and where power and resources are more equally distributed between men and women. Individuals (men and women) who do not believe men and women are equal, and/or see them as having specific roles or characteristics, are more likely to condone, tolerate or excuse violence against women.

Australia is currently ideally placed to create the nationwide cultural and systematic change needed to end violence against women and their children.

We have one of the world's strongest research and practice bases – established over a decade of bipartisan leadership at national and state levels – and are one of the few countries to have developed and begun implementing substantive policy frameworks to stop violence against women and their children before it starts.

While we have much to learn from the international evidence drawn on in this framework, we also have much to contribute to it and, with the right planning and commitment, we are poised to lead the world on the issue.

## **An Australia free of violence against women and their children is an Australia where women are not only safe, but respected, valued and treated as equals in private and public life.**

We can end violence against women and their children. The evidence-based approach outlined in this framework lays out a pathway to a measurable reduction in its prevalence. Similar approaches have been used to great effect in areas such as road safety, drink driving and rates of smoking.

We now know what it's going to take to prevent violence against women and their children, making Australia an exciting place to work and live as we all pull in the same direction towards a shared goal of safety, equality and respect for all.

Let's change the story. Let's end violence against women and their children in Australia.

*Our Watch, ANROWS, VicHealth.*



**Our Watch** has been established to drive nationwide change in the culture, behaviours and power imbalances that lead to violence against women and their children. In leading the development of this framework, we have drawn on the latest international research, and the expertise and practice wisdom of government and non-government stakeholders across the country, to frame a national approach to prevention. Our Watch will use this framework as a guide for our own work and our partnerships with other stakeholders. By working together we will create an Australia where all women and men, girls and boys, are treated equally, and respected and valued, in public and private life.

A white handwritten signature of Paul Linossier on a dark teal background.

**Paul Linossier, CEO, Our Watch**



**ANROWS's** purpose is to build, translate and lead the uptake of evidence in work towards a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children by 2022. As part of our inaugural Research Program, we were pleased to partner with Our Watch and VicHealth on the development of this framework that will guide work to overcome structural inequality and other enablers of violence against women and their children well into the future.

A white handwritten signature of Heather Nancarrow on a dark teal background.

**Heather Nancarrow, CEO, ANROWS**



At **VicHealth** our primary focus is promoting good health and preventing chronic disease. We pinpoint and prevent the negative influences of ill health, and champion the positive influences on good health for all. Over the last decade we have worked with our partners, with government and with communities to advance the primary prevention of violence against women. Now we have all arrived at this critical moment in history – as a nation, we are poised to reduce the health and economic impact of violence and to realise women's rights to safety and wellbeing once and for all.

A white handwritten signature of Jerril Rechter on a dark teal background.

**Jerril Rechter, CEO, VicHealth**

# Contents

<b>About this framework .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A shared approach to preventing violence .....	2
Framework foundations: supporting documents .....	2
Preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children: additional future work .....	3
<b>The framework at a glance: executive summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction: an urgent need for collective action .....</b>	<b>11</b>
A prevalent, serious and preventable human rights abuse .....	12
A new framework for action .....	13
Our vision: an Australia free of violence against women and their children .....	16
<b>Element 1 An explanatory model of violence .....</b>	<b>18</b>
What is violence against women and their children? .....	19
Understanding violence in a social context of gender inequality .....	20
The gendered drivers of violence against women .....	23
Factors that reinforce the gendered drivers .....	26
How the gendered drivers and reinforcing factors increase the prevalence of violence against women .....	31
<b>Element 2 Key actions to prevent violence against women .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Essential actions to reduce the gendered drivers of violence against women .....	33
Supporting actions to address reinforcing factors .....	34
<b>Element 3 Approach, settings and techniques .....</b>	<b>35</b>
Reaching everyone .....	36
Settings for action .....	38
Proven and promising techniques .....	41
Making change 'stick': combining techniques across multiple settings .....	45
Innovating and evaluating to build evidence .....	46

# Contents

<b>Element 4 Prevention infrastructure</b>	<b>47</b>
Mechanisms for coordination and quality assurance	48
An expert workforce	48
Political, sector-specific and civil society leadership	49
Policy and legislative reform	49
Shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks	49
<b>Element 5 Stakeholder roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>50</b>
Council of Australian Governments	51
Commonwealth, state and territory and local governments	52
Those working in key settings and sectors	53
Those working on other social issues	54
Our Watch and others working to end violence	54
<b>Element 6 Stages of action and expected outcomes</b>	<b>56</b>
Stage one: 2016–18	57
Stage two: 2019–21	58
Stage three: post-2022	59
How will we know we are making a difference?	59
<b>Glossary of terms</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Appendix 1 An overview of effective prevention practice by technique</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>69</b>

About  
this  
framework

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# A shared approach to preventing violence

*Change the story* presents the evidence and a conceptual approach for preventing violence against women and their children in Australia. It is a framework for a shared understanding and collaborative action, with six interrelated elements, all of which need to be in place to achieve this objective.

The framework is *shared* for three reasons. Firstly, it was developed in partnership, as part of a cross-party national political agenda. Led by Our Watch in partnership with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), the framework contributes to the Second Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the *National Plan*),<sup>1</sup> itself a joint, bipartisan commitment of all Australian governments.

Secondly, its development was a collaborative effort. The final framework is informed by extensive consultations undertaken around the country, with the participation of over 400 stakeholders – researchers, practitioners and policy makers, from community and non-government organisations, services and networks, and government agencies at all levels. It draws on the invaluable ideas, input and feedback provided by these stakeholders and

articulates a broadly shared understanding, approach and vision. That the development of the framework was able to benefit from so much generous input, and such a high level of active and passionate engagement, is a sign of the deep and genuine commitment of so many in the Australian community to addressing this critical issue.

Thirdly, preventing violence against women must be a shared endeavour. While governments have significant responsibilities, they cannot solve this problem alone. Deep and lasting social transformation cannot occur without a broad-based movement for change – one that involves individual women and men, whole communities, and diverse organisations and institutions. Violence against women and their children is not only a deeply entrenched and serious problem, it is a shared one. Preventing violence must therefore be a shared effort, with everyone working together. By informing, guiding and coordinating this shared effort, *Change the story* will help create an Australia where all women and their children are valued, respected, and live free from violence – an Australia where our homes, workplaces and schools, and our public places and communities are inclusive, equitable and safe for all.

## Framework foundations: supporting documents

*Change the story* is supported by two companion documents.

**Framework foundations 1** is a review of the evidence on correlates of violence against women and what works to prevent it.

This background research paper was commissioned by Our Watch to inform the development of *Change the story*. It reviews existing syntheses of relevant international literature on violence against women, and on its prevention, and summarises and conceptualises the findings. The development of the framework, particularly the identification of the drivers, reinforcing factors and approach to prevention, draws strongly on this evidence base.

**Framework foundations 2** includes think pieces, stakeholder consultations, issues, implications and approach.

This second background document details the additional research and consultations undertaken as part of the development process for *Change the story*. It comprises:

- a description of the extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement process that was used to test the findings that emerged from the research, seek further input and perspectives on this topic, and obtain feedback on drafts of the framework
- the eight independently authored think pieces that were commissioned by Our Watch to provide new perspectives on specific areas of interest
- an outline of the main issues that emerged and were considered during the development of *Change the story*, and the approach taken in response.

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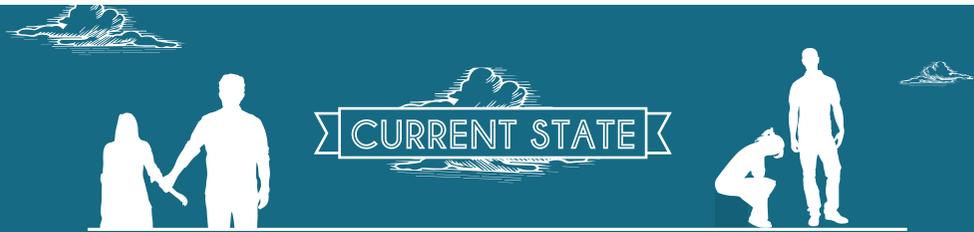
# Preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children: additional future work

In developing *Change the story*, we particularly acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders: women and men who provided diverse expertise, experience and knowledge to help inform this work, especially in areas where research specific to their communities is lacking.

While prevalence rates vary for many groups of women, the differential impact of violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in particular is striking. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience violence at around twice the rate of non-Indigenous women,<sup>2</sup> and are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence related assaults than other Australian women.<sup>3</sup> Such violence must be considered in the context of broader colonial violence and specifically the intergenerational impacts of dispossession, the forced removal of children, the interruption of cultural practices that mitigate against interpersonal violence, and the ongoing and cumulative economic exclusion and disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. These impacts include intergenerational trauma, lateral violence and internalised colonialism (see Glossary on page 62).

A national framework designed for relevance across the diverse Australian population must acknowledge and take into account this specific reality, but it cannot do it justice. Further consideration of how to most effectively prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children is imperative, and requires a separate, dedicated effort, one that is guided by a participatory process where the voices, experiences, ideas and solutions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves are central. Following the release of *Change the story*, Our Watch, together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, will develop a dedicated resource to guide the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, to be released as a companion document to this framework. For more detail on this planned additional resource, see *Framework foundations 2*, Section 4.5.

The framework  
at a glance:  
executive summary



Violence against women is serious, prevalent and driven by **GENDER INEQUALITY**

## GENDERED DRIVERS of violence against women:

- |                                     |   |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| CONDONING of violence against women | MEN'S CONTROL of decision-making and limits to women's independence | STEREOTYPED constructions of masculinity and femininity | DISRESPECT towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|

Gender inequality sets the **NECESSARY SOCIAL CONTEXT**

**657**  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MATTERS ARE DEALT WITH EVERY DAY BY AUSTRALIAN POLICE

Every week one **WOMAN IS MURDERED** by her current or former partner



Violence against women **IS PREVENTABLE** if we all work together



## ACTIONS that will prevent violence against women:

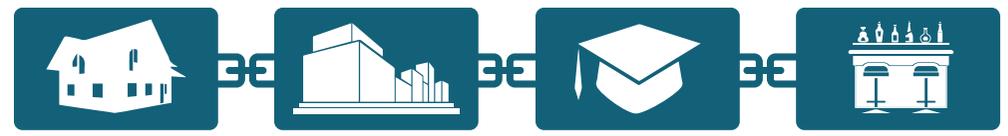
- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| CHALLENGE condoning of violence against women | PROMOTE women's independence & decision-making | CHALLENGE gender stereotypes and roles | STRENGTHEN positive, equal and respectful relationships |
|---|--|--|---|

Promote and normalise **GENDER EQUALITY** in public and private life



**MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIONS ARE NEEDED THROUGH LEGISLATION, INSTITUTIONAL, POLICY AND PROGRAM RESPONSES:**

- by governments, organisations and individuals
- in settings where people live, work, learn and socialise
- tailored to the context and needs of different groups.



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## Introduction: an urgent need for collective action

Violence against women and their children is a prevalent, serious and preventable human rights abuse. One woman a week is murdered by a current or former partner and thousands more are injured or made to live in fear. The social, health and economic costs of violence against women are enormous. Preventing such violence is a matter of national urgency, and can only be achieved if we all work together.

*Change the story* draws on robust international evidence to identify the core elements required to create a strategic, collaborative and consistent national approach to preventing violence against women and their children.

## Purpose of the framework

*Change the story* harnesses the momentum and will across Australia to end violence against women and their children.

It reinforces the direction outlined in the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*, and seeks to consolidate and strengthen the action already occurring around the country to address the issue.

It draws upon the latest evidence from around the world and is the result of consultations with hundreds of stakeholders across Australia.

*Change the story* details a national approach to preventing violence against women and their children through:

- identifying what drives and contributes to violence against women
- providing evidence-based guidance to government, the private sector, civil society and communities on how to strategically and effectively lead, coordinate, resource and support prevention effort across Australia
- informing and supporting the development of policy and legislation, prevention strategies, programming and advocacy that targets and seeks to reduce the drivers of violence against women.

# What drives violence against women?

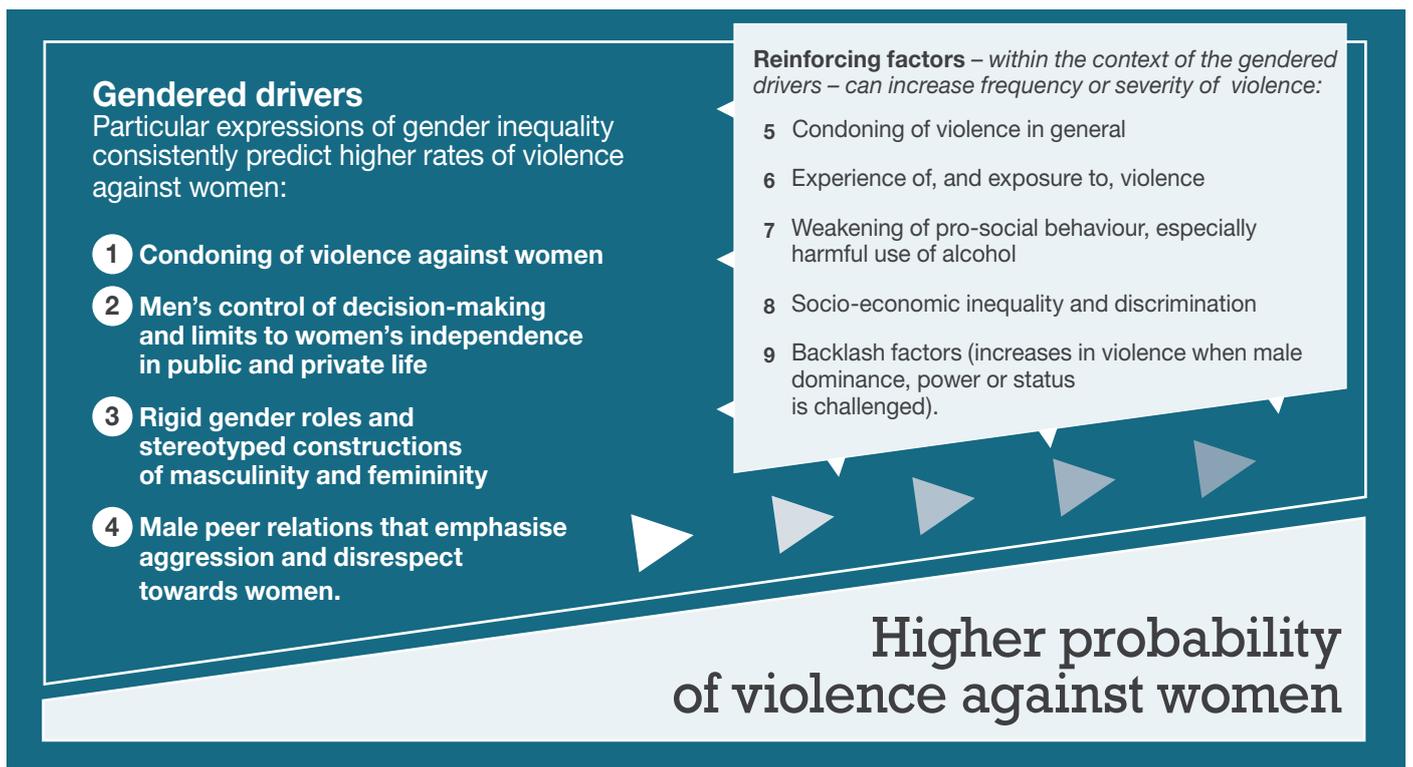
**Element 1: An explanatory model of violence** clarifies what constitutes violence against women and explores the gendered nature of this violence. It identifies the drivers of violence, together with a number of reinforcing factors, as summarised in the graphic below.

Element 1 demonstrates how gender inequality sets the necessary social context in which violence against women occurs. Despite concerted effort and gains to improve the position of women in Australia, we have not yet achieved true gender equality. In 2014, Australia was ranked 24 out of the 142 countries included in the Global Gender Gap Index.<sup>4</sup> We are currently below similar countries such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and also behind developing countries such as the Philippines, Nicaragua and Burundi.

Gender inequality is a social condition characterised by unequal value afforded to men and women and an unequal

distribution of power, resources and opportunity between them. It results from, or has historical roots in, laws or policies formally constraining the rights and opportunities of women. Gender inequality is maintained and perpetuated today through structures that continue to organise and reinforce an unequal distribution of economic, social and political power and resources between women and men; limiting social norms that prescribe the type of conduct, roles, interests and contributions expected from women and men; and the practices, behaviours and choices made on a daily basis that reinforce these gendered structures and norms.

Gender inequality is influenced by other forms of systemic social, political and economic disadvantage and discrimination. Other factors interact with or reinforce gender inequality to contribute to increased frequency and severity of violence against women, but do not drive violence in and of themselves.



# What can we do?

**Element 2: Key actions to prevent violence** outlines the range of actions needed through legislative, institutional and policy responses; implemented in settings such as workplaces, schools, community organisations, sports clubs, media and popular culture; and tailored to the context and needs of different groups.

It identifies five essential and five supporting actions to address the factors that drive and reinforce violence against women. These actions need to be undertaken across the nation by a diverse range of stakeholders.



# How should we do it?

**Element 3: Approach, settings and techniques for prevention** identifies specific, practical strategies that the research suggests should be drawn upon when engaging in prevention work. Drawing upon national and international research and evaluation findings, it identifies approaches to ensure different communities are reached and engaged, and that prevention initiatives span the life course and are tailored to the diverse contexts of people's lives. It notes the greater intensity of effort and resources required for communities or groups affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, or experiencing the cumulative impact of many negative factors.

Element 3 also looks at how the different environments in which people live, work, learn, socialise and play can be key settings for prevention activity including:

- education and care settings for children and young people

- universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions
- workplaces, corporations and employee organisations
- sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces
- art and cultural spaces
- health, family and community services
- faith-based contexts
- media
- popular culture, advertising and entertainment
- public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities
- legal, justice and corrections contexts.

Finally, it explores the techniques and strategies that have proven effective or promising in reducing violence against women and its drivers. It highlights the shared principles for effectiveness across techniques and settings, and these are covered in more detail in Appendix 1.

---

## What supports are needed?

**Element 4: Prevention infrastructure** explains how a collaborative national approach requires strong infrastructure to support quality cross-sectoral practice, enable policy and legislative reform and provide the leadership and coordination necessary to drive broad, deep and sustainable social change.

This holistic approach should integrate the promotion of gender equality and non-violence into the work of established agencies, organisations and networks; and use existing infrastructure at the national, state, regional and local levels, supported by coordination and quality assurance mechanisms and an expert workforce.

## Who needs to be involved?

**Element 5: Stakeholder roles and responsibilities** acknowledges that every sector, institution, organisation, community and individual has a role to play in preventing violence against women. But different stakeholders have different responsibilities, expertise and capacities, as well as varying spheres of influence and opportunities to take action.

Prevention efforts will be most effective if stakeholders both take advantage of their own specific opportunities, and also work in collaboration or partnership with each other to ensure different prevention efforts are consistent and mutually reinforcing. Element 5 outlines these roles and emphasises that an effective national approach to the prevention of violence against women must coordinate and systematise the efforts of multiple stakeholders.

## What changes can we expect to see and when?

**Element 6: Stages of action and expected outcomes** notes that the goal of an Australia free of violence against women and their children is a long-term, intergenerational one. We need to sequence our actions in order to sustain progress over time.

Element 6 identifies short, medium and long-term phasing of collaborative activity, and the expected outcomes or signposts of success that signal what Australia will see with an increase in support for, investment and action in preventing violence against women.

It also indicates directions for measuring the changes expected across the population as a systematic, evidence-based, well-resourced approach to prevention is progressed. This will require evaluating not only what is done at a program or initiative level, but also at the broader community, state and territory and national level, against the drivers of violence against women.

## Conclusion

An Australia where women and their children live free from violence is an achievable long-term goal. It can only be realised by addressing the drivers of this violence, which are deeply entrenched in our culture, society, communities and daily lives.

This means that no one individual, community, organisation or government can prevent violence against women alone. However, through a shared, consistent and mutually reinforcing approach, we can all contribute to creating a safer Australia built upon respect and equality.

The framework offers a path towards this ultimate goal of social transformation. It provides the necessary evidence, rationale and guidance required to lead and support a significant and sustained nationwide effort to prevent violence against women and their children.

INTRODUCTION

An urgent need  
for  
collective action

# A prevalent, serious and preventable human rights abuse

In Australia, at least one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner. Intimate partner violence contributes to more death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 than any other preventable risk factor.<sup>5</sup> Domestic or family violence against women is the single largest driver of homelessness for women,<sup>6</sup> a common factor in child protection notifications,<sup>7</sup> and results in a police call-out on average once every two minutes across the country.<sup>8</sup> Violence against women is not limited to the home or intimate relationships. Every year in Australia, over 300,000 women experience violence – often sexual violence – from someone other than a partner.<sup>9</sup> Eight out of ten women aged 18 to 24 were harassed on the street in the past year.<sup>10</sup>

Violence is experienced differently by different women. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience both far higher rates and more severe forms of violence compared to other women.<sup>11</sup> Young women (18 to 24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.<sup>12</sup> There is growing evidence that women with disabilities are also more likely to experience violence.<sup>13</sup>

While all violence is unacceptable, regardless of the sex of the victim or perpetrator, there are distinct differences in the ways in which men and women perpetrate and experience violence. The vast majority of violent acts – whether against men or women – are perpetrated by men.<sup>14</sup> Men are more likely to experience violence by other men in public places, while women are more likely to experience violence from men they know, often in the home.<sup>15</sup> The overwhelming majority of acts of rape and sexual assault are perpetrated by men against women,<sup>16</sup> and women are at least three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.<sup>17</sup> Prevalence statistics alone do not tell the full story (see Figure 1). Women are five times more likely than men to require medical attention or hospitalisation as a result of intimate partner violence, and five times more likely to report fearing for their lives.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to those women who experience violence directly, the high prevalence of violence against women in Australia affects all women – the threat of violence limits many women’s activities in one way or another, which reduces their participation in social, civil and economic life.<sup>19</sup>

There are many reasons to prevent violence against women and their children. It takes a profound and long-term toll on women and children’s health and wellbeing, on families and communities, and on society as a whole. The combined social, health and economic costs of violence against

women and their children drain the Australian economy of at least \$13.6 billion a year, and this cost is rising.<sup>21</sup> Above all, violence against women is a fundamental violation of human rights, and one that we have an obligation<sup>22</sup> to prevent under international law.<sup>i</sup>

Violence against women and their children is not inevitable, and it can be prevented. A strong body of research now exists on the drivers of violence against women and a growing body of practice and evaluation tells us how to target these drivers and prevent future violence.<sup>23</sup>



Figure 1 Prevalence statistics for women’s experience of different types of violence<sup>20</sup>

Small steps can make a significant difference. For example, if we reduced the prevalence of intimate partner violence in Australia (27% of women across their lifetime) to that of Denmark (22%) this 5% reduction would prevent 6,000 new cases of violence-related injury, illness and disability, and also save \$38 million in health sector costs, and \$333 million in productivity costs over time.<sup>24</sup>

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## A new framework for action

Through the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the *National Plan*) all Australian governments have made a long-term commitment to ensure that women and their children live free from violence in safe communities. The development of this framework is a priority action under the *Second Action Plan 2013–2016: Moving Ahead*, and aims to support all prevention work under the *National Plan* throughout its third and fourth action plans.

The bipartisan nature and 12 year span of the *National Plan* acknowledges that such change will not be easy, will not be quick, and will not be possible unless we all work together. This framework provides evidence-based guidance to governments, the private sector, and communities for the collaborative implementation of the *National Plan*'s vision. It is designed to assist those who:

- develop policy and legislation on prevention and gender equality
- design, coordinate, implement and evaluate prevention strategies, programs and activities
- undertake advocacy on the prevention of violence against women.

Informed by the two *Framework foundations* companion documents, *Change the story* distils the latest evidence on the drivers and contributors to violence against women, the characteristics of effective prevention practice, and the systems and mechanisms required to plan, implement and sustain prevention activity. It identifies a range of ways that stakeholders can prevent violence by engaging in collaborative and mutually reinforcing efforts that focus on reducing the drivers of violence against women and their children, across the whole community, and among different groups within it.

*Change the story* outlines a primary prevention approach. Primary prevention requires changing the social conditions, such as gender inequality, that excuse, justify or even promote violence against women and their children. Individual behavioural change may be the intended result of prevention activity, but such change cannot be achieved prior to, or in isolation from, a broader change in the underlying drivers of such violence across communities, organisations and society as a whole. A primary prevention approach works across the whole population to address the attitudes, practices and power differentials that drive violence against women and their children.<sup>25</sup>

Examples of primary prevention activities include schools-based programs to create gender-equitable environments and build students' relationships skills, efforts to reduce the disrespectful portrayal of women in the media, comprehensive public education and social marketing campaigns, and workplace initiatives promoting positive bystander responses.<sup>26</sup> Such approaches are distinct from responses to existing violence such as crisis counselling, police protection or men's behaviour change programs, as well as from early intervention activities such as working with 'at risk' young people or families. As Figure 2 shows, a primary prevention agenda must be effectively linked to early intervention and response efforts, also known as secondary or tertiary prevention.

This is an interdisciplinary framework, informed by a wide range of literature, practice and evidence, and theoretical and conceptual contributions from diverse fields. It draws on the contributions of feminist and other social and political theory and analysis to understand the gendered dynamics of Australian society and other systemic forms of social, political and economic discrimination and inequality. The human rights-based imperative to end violence, and the human rights principles of collaboration, participation and ensuring equality of outcomes for all, inform every aspect of this framework.

<sup>1</sup> The elimination of violence against women is also a specific target of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, to which Australia is committed: United Nations (2015) Sustainable Development Goals <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics>

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In particular, *Change the story* draws on the evidence base and techniques of public health, which offers a population-level model for change that goes beyond addressing individual behaviours alone and considers the broader social, political and economic factors at play. Public health provides a robust and proven methodology for complex social change that:

- structures and stages complementary activities over time, and across the environments where people live, work, learn and play
- includes activity from the societal level to the community, organisational and individual or relationship levels
- draws on the available evidence on the causes

of a problem and what works to prevent it

- is supported by integrated policy and long-term investment
- defines indicators to measure progress in the short, mid and long-term
- addresses the underlying drivers of a problem, not just its immediate precursors or its impacts.

This model also allows for an iterative learning process: identifying new and innovative ways of working, testing them and sharing the results, and integrating promising findings into future work.

### **Building on a history of Australian leadership in primary prevention**

While the first framework with a national scope, this is the second framework launched in Australia for the primary prevention of violence against women. The first was developed by the Victorian Government and VicHealth in 2007. Drawing on international evidence, this innovative framework provided a basis for a state-wide plan. Beyond government policy, the framework enabled unprecedented prevention activity in Victoria with women and men from across the community and multiple sectors and industries, and was recognised as world-leading in international research.

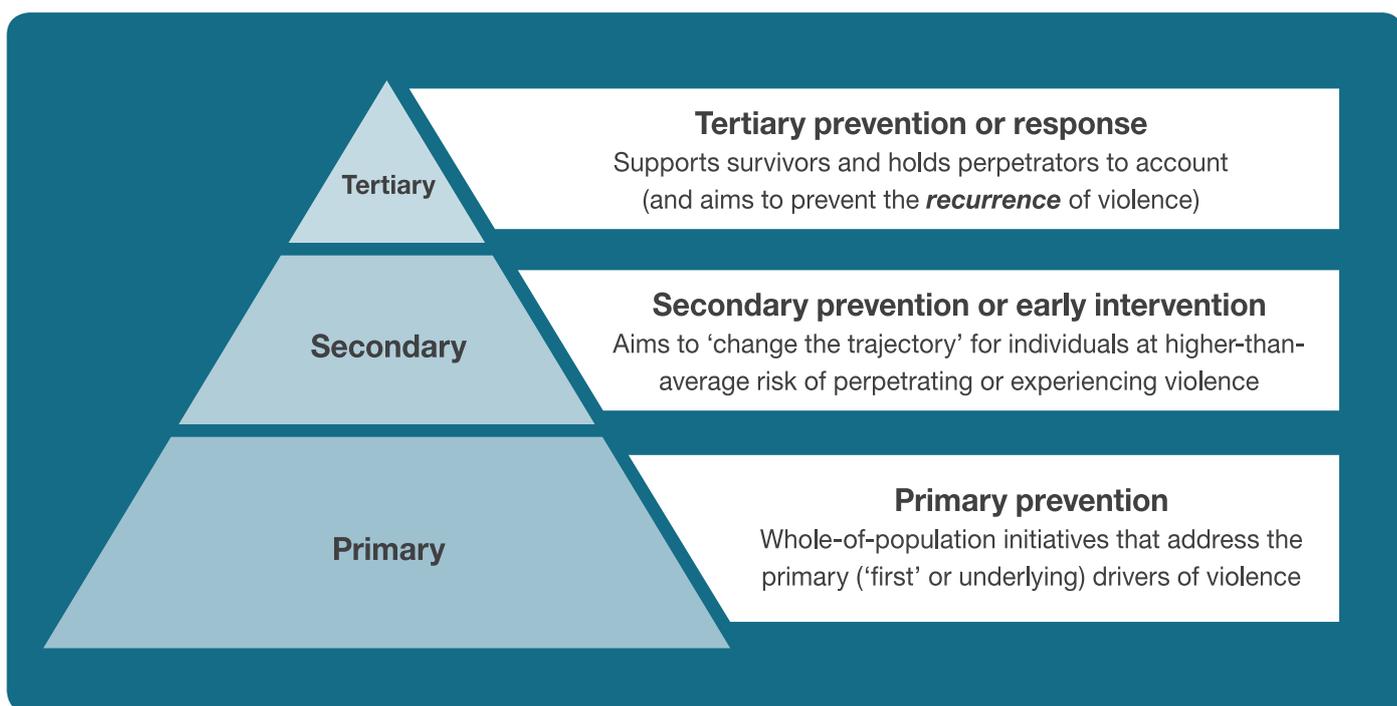


Figure 2 The relationship between primary prevention and other work to address violence against women

### Linking primary prevention to early intervention and responses to violence

A comprehensive and holistic approach to violence against women must involve a continuum of interdependent and interlinked strategies, where prevention efforts are integrated with early intervention and response initiatives.

Primary prevention complements work undertaken in the response system. It is designed to stop violence before it starts by addressing its deep-seated drivers. Because primary prevention targets the whole population, it inevitably reaches those who are already experiencing or perpetrating violence (or who are at increased risk of doing so). As such, primary prevention also enhances early intervention and response activity by helping reduce recurrent perpetration of violence (which is driven in part by similar factors to initial perpetration), and shifting attitudes and practices in service and justice systems that may inadvertently tolerate, justify or excuse violence against women and their children.

**The explicit focus on primary prevention means this framework is distinguished from early intervention or response efforts.** But these other approaches can and do have important preventive effects: stopping early signs of violence from escalating, preventing a recurrence of violence, or reducing longer-term harm. They also provide the foundation stone of primary prevention, sending a society-wide message that violence is not acceptable, establishing perpetrator accountability, and protecting women and their children from further violence.

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## Our vision: an Australia free of violence against women and their children

The primary prevention of violence against women and their children has positive impacts that go well beyond ending the violence itself, from better health outcomes for individuals to more inclusive and equal organisations, communities and families that support personal development and social wellbeing.

An Australia free of violence against women and their children is one where all women and men, girls and boys, are treated equally, respected and valued in both private and public life. In this future Australia, relationships are healthier, happier, more equal and respectful, with decisions between partners made jointly. Women and men, girls and boys, develop personal identities based on their individual character, not constrained or dictated by limiting and stereotypical models of what it means to be a man or woman.

In this future Australia, we recognise and understand violence against women and their children, and the gender stereotypes, inequality and disrespect that drive it. As neighbours, colleagues or friends, we are open to conversations about violence, we believe and support those who disclose violence, we have the courage to speak out against sexism, victim-blaming or justifications for violence,

and we receive the support of others – our communities, the media, our public institutions – when we do.

Our daughters and sons know how to identify and reject sexist and violence-supportive messages they encounter among peers, in popular culture or on social media. Schools across the country model and promote respectful relationships, non-violence and gender equality, not just in the classroom but in the playground and staff room. In our workplaces, all women and men are valued, and inequalities in decision-making, recruitment and promotion are recognised and addressed. Our public and social spaces are inclusive, safe and accessible to everybody.

This Australia is one that many of us – in government, civil society, schools, workplaces and communities – have been working towards for many years. Good practice initiatives exist across the country, and the signs of progress are there. But to achieve our ultimate goal, these efforts need to be scaled up, supported and coordinated so that everyone, everywhere, benefits and activity is sustained over the long-term to create intergenerational change. *Change the story* provides a roadmap for that effort, for all stakeholders who share a common vision of an Australia free of violence against women and their children.

# 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.

## 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, medium and long-term signposts of success: outcomes Australia can expect to see from the collaborative approach outlined in *Change the story*.

ELEMENT 1

An  
explanatory model  
of  
violence

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**Before considering how best to prevent violence against women it is necessary to develop a shared understanding of the problem, based on the latest evidence. Element 1 defines and describes violence against women and presents an explanatory model for this violence, with an emphasis on exploring the problem at a social level and explaining its gendered dynamics and drivers.**

## What is violence against women and their children?

The framework's definition of violence against women, shared with the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* and the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), is:

*any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life.*<sup>27</sup>

This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience, including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual violence and financial abuse, that are gender based. Gender based violence is violence specifically 'directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately'.<sup>28</sup> It can occur in homes, in social and recreational contexts, on the street, in workplaces, schools or online, and at the hands of perpetrators either known or unknown to the victim.

The framework aims to guide prevention of violence against *all* women, understanding that women's and men's identities, social positions and experiences are shaped not just by gender, but by a range of other social categories of difference, including Aboriginality, culture, race, ethnicity, faith or spirituality, socio-economic status, ability, sexuality, gender identity, education, age and immigration status. The framework's definition includes anyone who identifies and lives as a woman.<sup>ii</sup>

Many women who experience violence have children in their care.<sup>29</sup> Exposure to violence against their mothers or other caregivers causes profound harm to children, with potential impacts on attitudes to relationships and violence, as well as behavioural, cognitive and emotional functioning, social development, and – through a process of 'negative chain effects' – education and later employment prospects.<sup>30</sup> Because violence against women has such direct and significant impacts on children, preventing it will also prevent associated harm to and consequences for children, which is why the framework title refers to violence against women and their children.<sup>31</sup>

The framework's emphasis is on the prevention of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual assault of women, the two most common forms of violence against women in Australia.<sup>32</sup> These types of violence are also the focus of the bulk of the international literature, knowledge and practice on which the framework draws. There is less research and practice on other forms of violence against women,<sup>iii</sup> but all forms of violence against women are interrelated and exist on a continuum, and the research shows they share many of the same drivers.<sup>iv</sup> For this reason, the framework is also likely to contribute to the prevention of these other forms of violence.

<sup>ii</sup> The framework also acknowledges that violence is experienced by people whose experience and/or identity does not conform to binary definitions of sex and gender. While it does not include strategies *specifically* aimed at preventing violence against transgender, gender diverse and intersex people, to the extent that such violence shares some similar drivers to violence against women (particularly rigid, binary and hierarchical constructions of gender, sex and sexuality) its prevention is likely to be aided by the strategies outlined here.

<sup>iii</sup> Such as street harassment, violence perpetrated against women by their (male and female) adult children, forced sterilisation, violence in lesbian relationships, sex trafficking and other slavery-like practices, female genital mutilation/cutting, so-called 'honour' crimes and forced or early marriage. There are also limitations to the literature on forms of violence which also may affect men in large numbers, such as elder abuse, or violence perpetrated by (male or female) staff against women in institutional, residential and other formal care settings particularly against women with disabilities, or in prisons or detention centres. While these types of violence have gendered dynamics, they also have significant distinct drivers and contributors. For this reason, the framework does not include strategies specifically aimed at preventing these particular forms of violence, and supports the need for specialised approaches based on an understanding of the complex drivers of and contributors to these practices, and an analysis of the specialised literature on each.

<sup>iv</sup> While some drivers are distinct to particular types of violence (holding attitudes that sexually objectify women is a more significant driver of men's non-partner sexual assault, for instance, than it is of physical or psychological partner violence), the majority of drivers are shared across all studied types of violence against women: see for example European Commission (2010) *Factors at play in the perpetration of violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence: A multi-level interactive model*; World Health Organization (2010) *Preventing intimate partner and sexual violence against women: Taking action and generating evidence*.

# Understanding violence in a social context of gender inequality

## Gendered patterns in violence perpetration and victimisation

Most men are not violent: they are loving, caring and respectful partners, brothers, fathers, friends and colleagues. But around 95% of all victims of violence – whether women or men – experience violence from a male perpetrator.<sup>33</sup>

Experiences of violence are also gendered, with men subjected to violence mostly from other men in public spaces, and women mostly from men they know in private contexts. Women are far more likely than men to experience sexual violence and violence from an intimate partner, and with more severe impacts.<sup>34</sup> Women are more likely than men to be afraid of, hospitalised by, or killed by an intimate partner.<sup>35</sup>

Regardless of gender, violence against anyone is unacceptable. But to prevent violence against women, our explanations and understandings must account for these gendered patterns, particularly that violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men.



OF ALL VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE - WHETHER WOMEN OR MEN - EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE FROM A MALE PERPETRATOR.



AUSTRALIANS THINK MEN SHOULD TAKE CONTROL IN RELATIONSHIPS AND BE THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD



AUSTRALIANS THINK MEN MAKE BETTER POLITICAL LEADERS

There is a strong and consistent association between gender inequality and levels of violence against women. A 2015 study in medical journal *The Lancet* found factors relating to gender inequality predict the prevalence of intimate partner violence across 44 countries,<sup>40</sup> and a United Nations review found significantly and consistently higher rates of violence against women in countries where women's economic, social and political rights are poorly protected, and where power and resources are unequally distributed between men and women.<sup>41</sup>

## A socio-ecological model for individual behaviour

Historically, many attempts to understand violence against women have sought simplistic or single-factor causes for individual men's violence. Such explanations point to the psychology or mental health of the perpetrator, his life experiences (such as childhood exposure to violence), behaviour (such as alcohol use) or personal circumstances (such as unemployment). While such individual level factors may well be relevant, we need to explain why most men to whom they apply are *not* violent, and why other men not exposed to any of these factors *are* violent. We also need to explain why such factors seem relevant in some cases, contexts or countries, but not others.

The notion of a 'social ecology' is a useful way of both understanding individual behaviour in a social context, and illustrating the dynamic interrelations between relevant factors located at the individual, organisational, community, systemic and social levels represented by the concentric circles in Figure 3.

The research reviewed in *Framework foundations 1* shows that factors associated with higher levels of violence against women include the ideas, values or beliefs that are common or dominant in a society or community – called social or cultural **norms**. Norms are reflected in our institutional or community **practices** or behaviours, and are supported by social **structures**, both formal (such as legislation) and informal (such as hierarchies within a family or community), as shown in Figure 3.

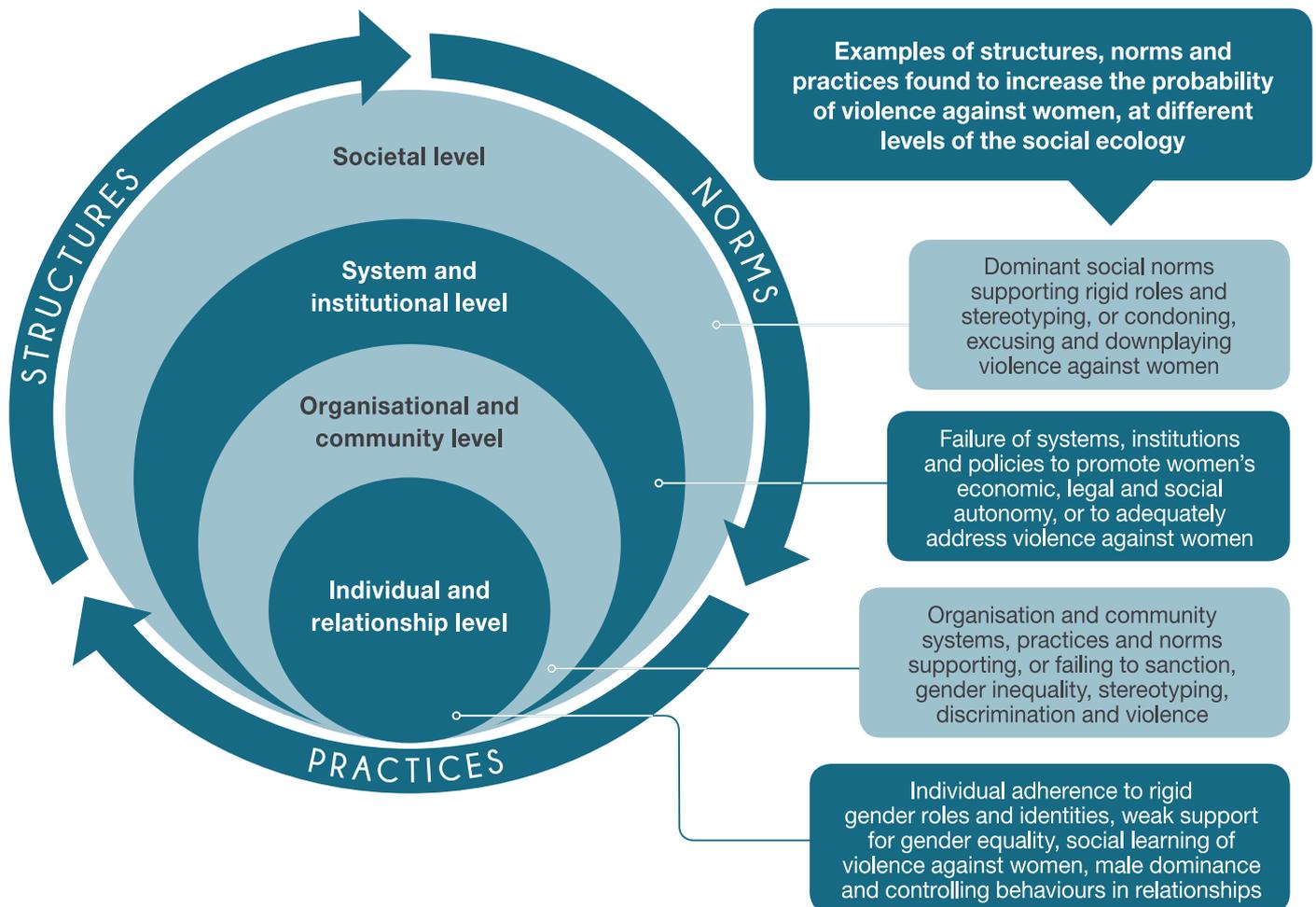


Figure 3 Socio-ecological model of violence against women

## Gender inequality as the social context for violence against women

There is now consensus in the international research that examining the way in which gender relations are structured is key to understanding violence against women. Studies by the United Nations, European Commission, World Bank and World Health Organization all locate the underlying cause or necessary conditions for violence against women in the social context of gender inequality.<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this research, see *Framework foundations 1*.

Gender inequality is a social condition characterised by unequal value afforded to men and women and an unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunity between them. It often results from, or has historical roots in, laws or policies formally constraining the rights and opportunities of women, and is reinforced and maintained through more informal mechanisms. These include, for example, **social norms** such as the belief that women are best suited to care for children, **practices** such as differences in childrearing practices for boys and girls, and **structures** such as pay differences between men and women.<sup>37</sup> Such norms, practices and structures encourage women and men, girls and boys to adopt distinct gender identities and stereotyped gender roles, within a gender hierarchy that historically positions men as superior to women, and masculine roles and identities as superior to feminine ones.

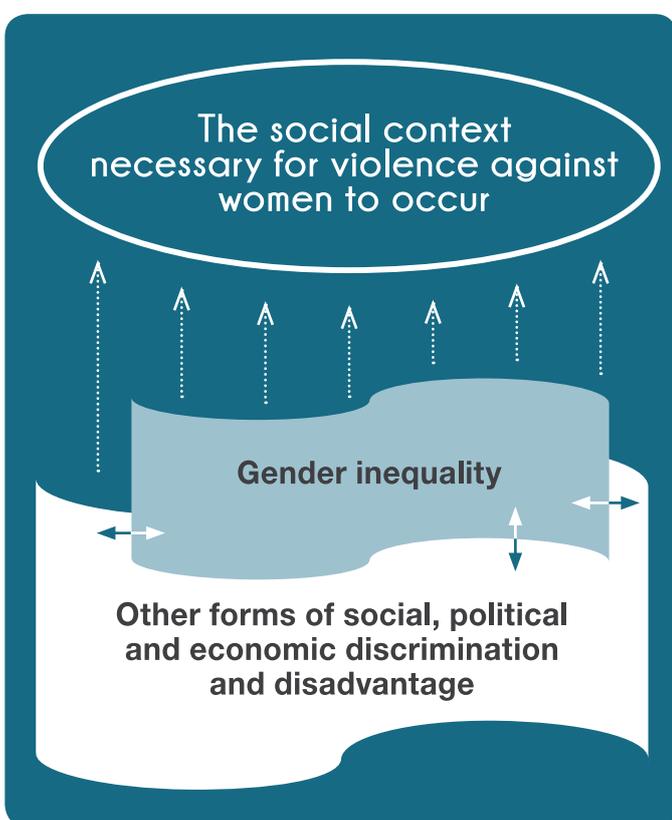


Figure 4 Gender inequality as the necessary condition or root cause of violence against women.

Social, economic and political conditions, as well as historical and cultural factors, all influence the way gender inequality is expressed in different communities, organisations or neighbourhoods. For example, internationally, certain countries and regions may be approaching income parity or equal participation of women and men in various occupations or in public decision-making roles, but their media and popular culture may still be dominated by gender stereotypes, and domestic labour may still not be equally shared between women and men.

Further, while forms of gender inequality vary between countries and contexts, the kind of gender hierarchy described above, and particularly the association of men with greater power and authority, is common across most societies.<sup>38</sup> In Australia the pervasiveness of these ideas is illustrated by a recent survey showing more than a quarter of Australians think men make better political leaders, and one in five think men should take control in relationships and be the head of the household.<sup>39</sup>

While gender inequality is always influential as a driver of violence against women, it cannot be considered in isolation, nor is it experienced in the same way by every woman. Other forms of systemic social, political and economic discrimination and disadvantage influence and intersect with gender inequality, and in some cases, increase the frequency, severity and prevalence of violence against women (see Figure 4). This means that while gender inequality may be a necessary condition for violence against women, it is not the only, or necessarily the most prominent, factor in every context. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who, with the men and children of their communities, are suffering the legacy and contemporary manifestations of colonialism, intergenerational trauma and entrenched social and economic disadvantage, may not always place gender inequality as central to their understanding of violence against women. Gender inequality therefore needs to be considered and addressed alongside a range of other significant factors. These factors are discussed further below, and strategies to address them outlined in Elements 2 and 3.

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# The gendered drivers of violence against women

Research has found that factors associated with gender inequality are the most consistent predictors of violence against women, and explain its gendered patterns.<sup>42</sup>

These factors are termed the **gendered drivers** of violence against women. They should always be considered together with other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

Another group of factors become significant in the context of the gendered drivers. These factors operate in different ways, some reinforcing the gendered drivers, while others, such as entrenched social inequality, affect the relative influence of gender inequality in different contexts. None predict or drive violence against women on their own. They are termed **reinforcing factors**, and are discussed in the following section.

The gendered drivers arise from gender discriminatory institutional, social and economic structures, social and cultural norms, and organisational, community, family and

relationship practices that together create environments in which women and men are not considered equal, and violence against women is tolerated and even condoned. Within this context, the following particular expressions of gender inequality have been shown in the international evidence to be most consistently associated with higher levels of violence against women:

- 1 Condoning of violence against women
- 2 Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence
- 3 Rigid gender roles and identities
- 4 Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

These gendered drivers are described below, and illustrated in Figure 5 on page 32.

## 1. Condoning of violence against women

When societies, institutions, communities or individuals support or condone violence against women, levels of such violence are higher.<sup>43</sup> Men who hold such beliefs are more likely to perpetrate violence against women, and both women and men who hold such beliefs are less likely to take action to support victims and hold perpetrators to account.<sup>44</sup>

Violence against women is condoned both through widely-held beliefs and attitudes (social norms), and through legal, institutional and organisational structures and practices that reflect and reinforce them. This driver includes social norms, structures and practices that:

- **Justify** violence against women, based on the view that it is acceptable for men to use violence. Justifications are often found for a man using violence against a woman with whom he is in an intimate relationship in certain circumstances, such as if she has sex with another man.<sup>45</sup>
- **Excuse** violence by attributing it to external factors or proposing that men cannot be held fully responsible for violent behaviour. A recent Australian survey found that 43% of Australians believed that 'rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex'.<sup>46</sup> Violence against women is often attributed to men's mental health status, use of alcohol or stress. A 2012 Australian study found that the majority of media

reports of violence against women portrayed violence as random acts perpetrated and experienced by individuals 'with problems', instead of as part of a broader pattern in society.<sup>47</sup>

- **Trivialise** the impact of violence, based on the view that the impacts of violence are not sufficiently serious to warrant action. For example, 17% of Australians believe that domestic violence is a private matter to be handled by the family, while 12% of Australians believe that 'women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves rather than report it'.<sup>48</sup> Fewer than half those witnessing violence, sexism or discrimination in social or workplace contexts report they would say or do something in response.<sup>49</sup>
- **Downplay** violence by denying its seriousness, denying that it occurs or denying that certain behaviours are violence at all. Over half of Australians believe that women in child custody cases often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence, and one in ten believe that 'it's only rape if the woman physically resisted'.<sup>50</sup> Violence against women who are seen as 'other', such as women from some minority ethnic groups, or who breach accepted roles or identities, such as sex workers, is more likely to be downplayed in both community attitudes and institutional responses.<sup>51</sup>

- **Shift blame** for the violence from the perpetrator to the victim. For example, one in five Australians believe that if a woman is raped while drunk or affected by drugs she is at least partly responsible, and one in ten believe that domestic violence can be excused if a woman is affected by alcohol.<sup>52</sup> Institutional support for such blame-shifting includes legislation or judicial practice that allows for a woman's sexual history to be presented in rape trials, sending a message that a woman's behaviour is relevant to the act of violence perpetrated against her. Child protection or family law practices that put the onus on women to

protect children from family violence, instead of on the perpetrator, can similarly contribute to the notion that women carry the responsibility for violence, or for managing its impacts.

Condoning of violence against women is the most obvious driver of violence against women. But prevention efforts focusing *only* on addressing such beliefs and attitudes have had limited success. Instead, condoning of violence against women should be seen as the 'tip of the iceberg' – the direct consequence of other expressions of gender inequality (described below), which are equally powerful in driving such violence.

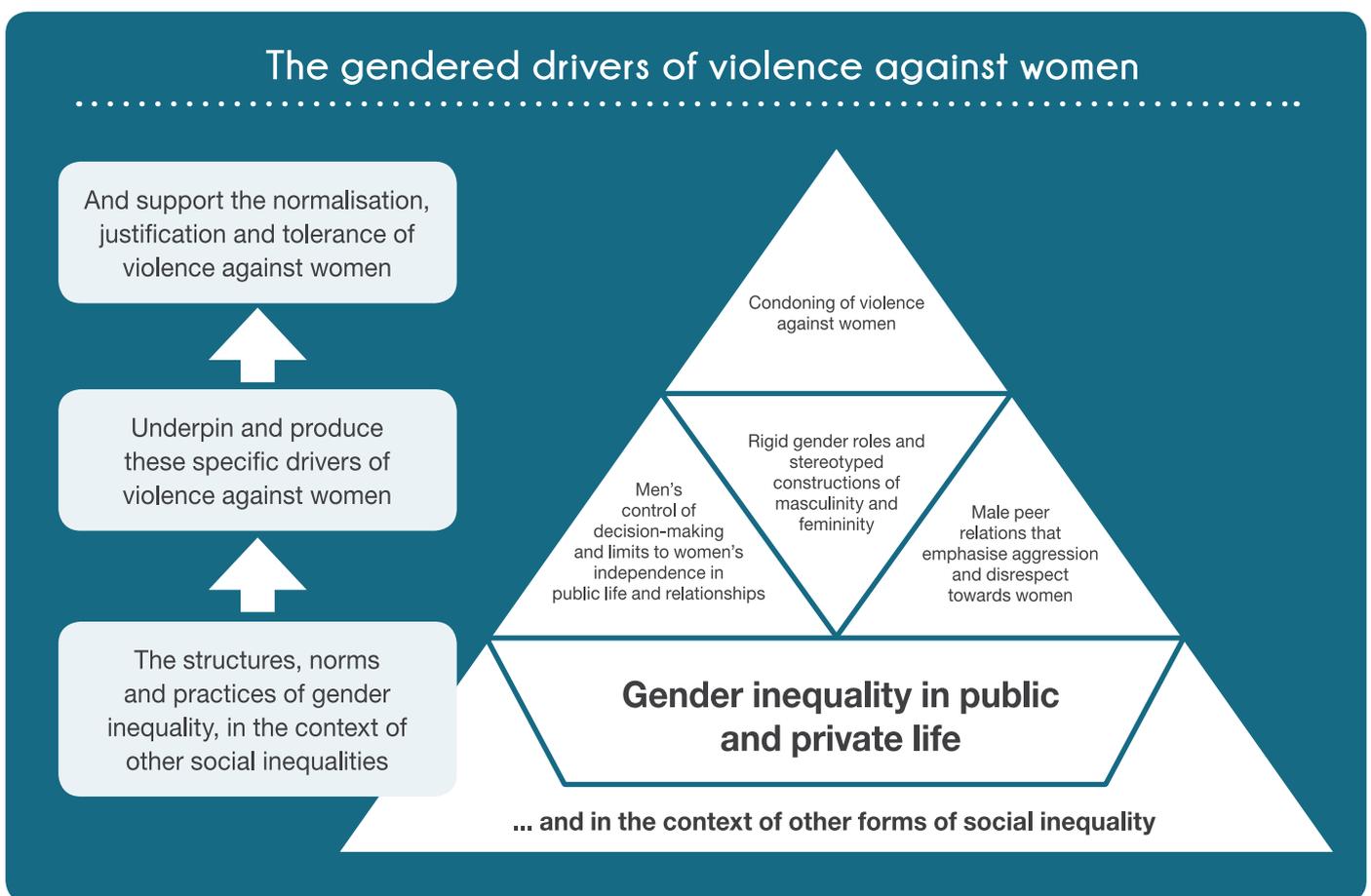


Figure 5 The gendered drivers of violence against women

## 2. Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships

Violence is more common in families and relationships in which men control decision-making and less so in relationships in which women have a greater level of independence – this has been shown both internationally and in Australia.<sup>53</sup> Men who adhere to notions of masculinity that involve male control and dominance are also more likely to sexually assault women outside the family and relationship context.<sup>54</sup> Male control and dominance is frequently represented as a normal or inevitable part of heterosexual

sexual and romantic relationships, and widely normalised in popular culture as well as learned in peer groups and the family.<sup>55</sup>

Limits to women's independence or autonomy, whether through social factors such as unequal access to education and economic resources, or through men's limiting or control of women's financial or social independence in relationships, increase the probability of violence against women.<sup>56</sup> Isolating women from support networks of family

and friends is a well-known form of controlling behaviour and psychological abuse. Social structures and environments limiting opportunities for women to form strong relationships with other women can isolate them from the emotional and practical support that would strengthen their autonomy and help them recognise the early signs of violence.

There are several potential ways in which male dominance and control of decision-making, along with limits to women's autonomy or independence, contribute to violence against women:

- by sending a message to both men and women that women have a lower social value, are less worthy of respect, and are therefore more legitimate targets of violence,<sup>57</sup> particularly for women experiencing other

forms of discrimination that impact on their perceived worth or the social and economic power they hold such as women with disabilities.<sup>58</sup>

- by making women economically dependent on men, such that men may believe they can perpetrate violence with social or legal impunity,<sup>59</sup> and women, especially those with responsibility for children, may find it difficult to leave violent relationships.<sup>60</sup>
- by undermining women's participation in the public sphere, particularly in formal decision-making and civic action, which has a compounding impact because women in positions of power are more likely than men to act to secure women's freedom from violence.<sup>61</sup>

### 3. Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity

Levels of violence against women are significantly and consistently higher in societies, communities and relationships where there are more rigid distinctions between the roles of men and women<sup>v</sup> – for example, where men are assumed to be the primary breadwinner and women to be primarily responsible for childrearing – and between masculine and feminine identities, or what an 'ideal' man or woman is.<sup>62</sup>

Research has consistently found that men who hold traditional, hierarchical views about gender roles and relationships are more likely to perpetrate violence against women.<sup>63</sup> For example, men who use violence report a greater sense of ownership of or entitlement to female partners, and more rigid ideas on acceptable female behaviour in relationships.<sup>64</sup> Rigid gender roles may influence the perpetration of violence against women in a number of ways:

- The sense of entitlement associated with the traditional masculine gender role may result in the use of force (including forced sex) by some men, particularly in intimate relationships.<sup>65</sup>
- Violence may be used to reinforce role divisions or 'punish' women when they do not conform to expected gender roles.<sup>66</sup>
- The gendered division between the public world of work and the private world of the home can isolate women and make them dependent on men.<sup>67</sup>

Rigid constructions of, and a strong belief in, gendered personal identities or what it means to be 'masculine' or 'feminine' are also key drivers of violence against women. People who see men and women as having specific and distinct characteristics are more likely to condone, tolerate or excuse such violence.<sup>68</sup> This applies to notions of masculinity and femininity. Notions of masculinity

associated with dominance and control are significant, but ideal feminine identities related to sexual attractiveness also play a role, casting women as targets for objectification, sexual exploitation and – if not perceived as meeting such standards – hostility and denigration, increasing the acceptability of violence against women.<sup>69</sup> Gender identities do not have to be negative to predict violence. For example, where ideal femininity is associated with 'moral' standards of behaviour, rape of women seen to transgress such standards is more likely to be condoned.<sup>70</sup>

Sexist and stereotypical ideas about masculinity and femininity may increase the probability of violence against women because they:<sup>71</sup>

- define masculinity as callous and insensitive, or suggest that men are 'naturally' more violent than women and are driven by uncontrollable sexual urges<sup>72</sup>
- contribute to gender hierarchies based on men having power over women, supporting male entitlement to sex and control in relationships
- may valorise male violence in general, and sexual aggression towards women in particular
- can cast women as targets for exploitation,<sup>73</sup> based on the idea that women are 'naturally' passive and submissive, combined with objectified and sexualised identities
- can support disrespect and violence towards women through negative identities of women as inherently deceitful and unfaithful, and needing to be controlled.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>v</sup> Recognising this relationship, international law requires states to modify the social and cultural patterns of men and women to eliminate prejudices and practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either sex and/or stereotyped roles for men and women. United Nations (1979) *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, Article 5A.

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## 4. Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women

Male peer relations – whether in social or organisational contexts – can be important sources of support and friendship between men. But where they are characterised by cultures that reinforce stereotypical and aggressive forms of masculinity, and/or the idea that relations between men and women are fundamentally based on conflict, this can create disrespect for, objectification of, or hostility towards women.<sup>75</sup> These types of negative male peer and organisational cultures are associated with higher probability of violence against women because:

- an emphasis on aggression and sexual conquest in socialisation of men through peer relationships may lead to a greater tendency for some men to use or support violence<sup>76</sup>
- when men are encouraged to privilege their relationships with other men over those with women, they may be more likely to excuse other men's violent and disrespectful behaviour towards women<sup>77</sup>
- men may be reluctant to take a stand against their peers' disrespect of women, or even use of violence itself, because they fear rejection from their peers.<sup>78</sup>

## Factors that reinforce the gendered drivers

This section outlines a range of reinforcing factors, so-called because, while not sufficient in themselves to predict violence against women, they can interact with the gendered drivers to increase the probability, frequency or severity of such violence.<sup>79</sup>

These reinforcing factors (illustrated in Figure 6 on page 29) are:

- 5 Condoning of violence in general
- 6 Experience of, and exposure to, violence
- 7 Weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol
- 8 Socio-economic inequality and discrimination
- 9 Backlash factors (when male dominance, power or status is challenged).

## 5. Condoning of violence in general

Condoning of violence in general is generated through similar social norms, practices and structures as the condoning of violence against women. The difference is that condoning of violence in general is not as influential on levels of violence against women as condoning of violence against women: it becomes a reinforcing factor in conjunction with gendered social norms – particularly those concerning masculinity.

Violence can be condoned either informally, as in the reactions of family and communities, or formally, such as through weak laws. This can lead to a 'normalisation' of violence, with violence taken for granted as a part of everyday life.

Some have argued that violence against women simply reflects that violence more generally is a learned social practice, but this does not explain the specifically gendered patterns of violence against women. Studies show that people learn about violence not in isolation, but in the context of learning about and experiencing social norms about

gender and gender (in)equality, particularly masculine gender identities. The violence that our society normalises, valorises or condones is in itself 'masculinised'. The vast majority of acts of violence – whether against women or men, in public or private, in reality or in media and cultural representations – are perpetrated, or depicted as perpetrated, by men.<sup>80</sup>

Men's violence is also more likely to be downplayed or excused for men under certain circumstances, such as if a man is drunk. Women's perpetration of violence is rarely normalised, valorised or condoned to the same degree.<sup>81</sup>

The valorisation of masculine violence in media and popular culture, or in male-dominated peer groups such as gangs or some sporting clubs, predicts a higher likelihood of all types of violence – including, but not only, violence against women. However, not all violence against women can be attributed to the valorisation of male violence, as men's violence against other men is different from that against women, and not all men who are violent against other men are violent against women.<sup>82</sup>

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## 6. Experience of, and exposure to, violence

Exposure to violence against women (especially as a child), the direct experience of violence (such as child physical or sexual abuse), or long-term exposure to other forms of violence, whether as a child or adult (such as racist violence, lateral or community violence, or situations of armed conflict and war), can in some cases contribute to the normalisation of violence, particularly in the absence of positive alternatives and support to recover from its impacts. Importantly, such experiences can be mitigated by other social, educational and psychological factors, such as positive relationship models, and gender-equitable and non-violent norms, so those who have been exposed to or experienced violence should not be considered at inevitably higher risk of perpetration or victimisation.

Children's direct experience of physical or sexual violence, and/or exposure to violence against their mothers or other female caregivers, can have profound and negative impacts on their development and later lives. Early exposure to violence can potentially lead to developmental issues<sup>87</sup> that predispose a child to later behavioural problems, such as poor school performance, bullying or anti-social behaviour in adolescence.<sup>83</sup> Without intervention, this developmental pathway can lead to a higher risk of perpetration of partner violence for boys, and potentially victimisation for girls. Again,

this pathway is by no means inevitable: while exposure of children to violence against women can shape later attitudes to violence and gender relationships, making some more accepting of violence against women, it conversely makes others 'highly intolerant of such violence, having experienced its damaging effects'.<sup>84</sup>

Long-term exposure to, or experience of, any type of violence – particularly in early life, but also for adults – can establish and reinforce a belief that violence is an appropriate form of discipline, punishment or way of solving disputes.<sup>85</sup> But such social learning does not occur in isolation from learning about gendered power and roles. For example, childhood exposure to violence against mothers or stepmothers by fathers or stepfathers also normalises such violence as an expression of masculinity in relationships: children witnessing violence against their mothers also learn that it is acceptable for men to control and denigrate women.<sup>86</sup> The impact of exposure to or experience of violence reflects existing gendered socialisation and patterns of violence, that is, boys and men are more likely to go on to perpetrate violence, and girls and women to experience and/or accept it. This demonstrates the need to address gender norms and power relations, and not just the practice of violence itself.

## 7. Weakening of pro-social behaviour, especially harmful use of alcohol

A further group of factors has been shown, in some cases, to increase the likelihood of violence against women because they compromise the ways in which people might otherwise or normally act to uphold gender equality and non-violence. This group includes any factor that might erode or weaken pro-social behaviour, heighten individualistic tendencies or reduce concern for others and the consequences of actions in the context of gendered socialisation and power imbalances.

Alcohol is a feature in a disproportionate number of police call-outs to family violence, and is correlated with a higher number of, and more severe, incidents of violence against women.<sup>87</sup> Alcohol does not itself drive violence against women; not all people who drink are violent, and many people who do not drink are violent. However, the contribution of alcohol to increased perpetration is significant in the context of social norms and practices that condone or support violence against women, in particular those relating to masculinity and masculine peer group behaviour.<sup>88</sup>

Gender socialisation and identities are also reflected in the ways in which alcohol is consumed, and in the social norms

relating to alcohol, for example, in drinking cultures that emphasise male conquest and aggression, as well as in the ways individual men and women tend to behave under the influence of alcohol. This suggests it is the interaction between social norms relating to alcohol, and social norms relating to gender, that can increase the likelihood, frequency or severity of violence against women, not just the consumption of alcohol itself. Strategies that address the intersection between alcohol use and social norms relating to both violence and gender can help create a more supportive environment for other prevention activity. Research is limited on the impact of other drugs on violence against women, but similarities might be expected where a drug has similar effects to alcohol, and is also used in the context of gendered socialisation and power differentials.

Some analyses also place extreme socio-economic disadvantage in this category, because of its perceived impacts on pro-social behaviour, but the complexity of such disadvantage arguably has broader impacts and is considered separately below.

<sup>84</sup> There is even evidence that early trauma can affect the developing brain, interfering with a child's ability to learn to trust and develop empathy, and heightening the tendency to perceive benign overtures as threats. Overcoming such impacts entails complex and long-term efforts for those who have suffered such early trauma and those supporting them, making primary prevention of such violence imperative. See for example Kinniburgh, K., Blaustein, M., Spinazzola, J., & van der Kolk, B. (2005) Attachment, self-regulation and competency: A comprehensive intervention framework for children with complex trauma, *Psychiatric Annals*, 35, 424-430; Neigh, G.N., Gillespie, C.F., and Nemeroff, C.B. (2009) The neurobiological toll of child abuse and neglect, *Trauma Violence Abuse*, 10(4), 389-410; Perry, B.D (2005) *Maltreatment and the Developing Child: How early childhood experience shapes child and culture*, the Margaret McCain Lecture Series.

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## 8. Socio-economic inequality and discrimination

The probability of violence against women is higher when the consequences of gender inequality intersect with the impact of other forms of inequality and discrimination, such as racism, discrimination against people with disabilities or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Any factor that, in addition to the gendered drivers outlined above, reduces or limits women's access to resources, the social and economic power they hold, or the perceived worth of some groups – such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, lesbians or transgender people, or women with disabilities<sup>89</sup> – increases the probability of violence against them. Women in communities affected by multiple forms of adversity and discrimination may also be reluctant to report violence to the police because they lack trust in authorities, or because the

perpetrator is part of their own community and they do not wish to breach the solidarity of already fragile communities. In such communities there may also be a lack of investment (or a disinvestment) in systems, organisations and institutions, such as law enforcement, designed to maintain accountability.

Women's attachments to, or solidarity with, men may be in tension with their desire to support other women, or claim their own right to safety. Women in groups or communities experiencing discrimination and marginalisation, especially where the unity of the family is particularly valued,<sup>90</sup> may be particularly reluctant to report violence perpetrated by men in their communities because they fear it will exacerbate community stigma and unfair treatment of those men.<sup>91</sup>

## 9. Backlash factors (when male dominance, power or status is challenged)

Research is inconsistent on whether factors such as socio-economic inequality and discrimination, along with low educational levels, rapid social and economic change, and other social stressors,<sup>92</sup> increase the probability or frequency of violence against women. While some studies find a correlation, others find none. Many also rightly warn against the risks of drawing conclusions that disadvantaged communities are inherently violent, or alternatively undermine accountability for violence in particular circumstances. Any analysis must account for why most men in such circumstances are not violent against women, and women are not more likely to be violent under such circumstances.

Increases in violence against women under such conditions are best understood in conjunction with backlash theories that point to the (often aggressive) resistance to change that occurs in societies where existing or expected power differentials and hierarchies are challenged. For example, when gender relations are based on a hierarchical model where women play a subordinate role, violence may be used and accepted as a mechanism for maintaining this dynamic, especially when it is under threat.<sup>93</sup> Men who have fewer economic and social resources relative to their partners (whether in the form of employment, education or income) have been shown to be

more likely to perpetrate violence against women, but this is primarily among men holding stereotypical beliefs about their roles as 'providers'.<sup>94</sup> Men with fewer resources than their partners who hold more egalitarian beliefs about gender roles do not have a greater risk of perpetrating violence.<sup>95</sup>

Violence against women is also more likely to be supported where women are perceived to have breached socially defined feminine roles, such as when women's education increases relative to men.<sup>96</sup> Studies also show violence against women increases in societies undergoing rapid economic change, and where women begin to play a more prominent role in paid work and civic society.<sup>97</sup> Together, this suggests that violence, or the threat of violence, may be used in such circumstances to re-establish the previous 'gender order', one that is often perceived to be 'natural' or 'traditional'.

Such research demonstrates that backlash is to be expected as part of the change process, and should be planned for in prevention practice. While women's and girls' empowerment must remain central to prevention activity, strategies to address backlash, particularly by directly engaging men and boys in the change process, are crucial.

# What drives and reinforces violence against women?

The triangle represents the gendered drivers of violence against women

Factors outside the triangle can reinforce the gendered drivers to increase the probability, frequency or severity of violence against women

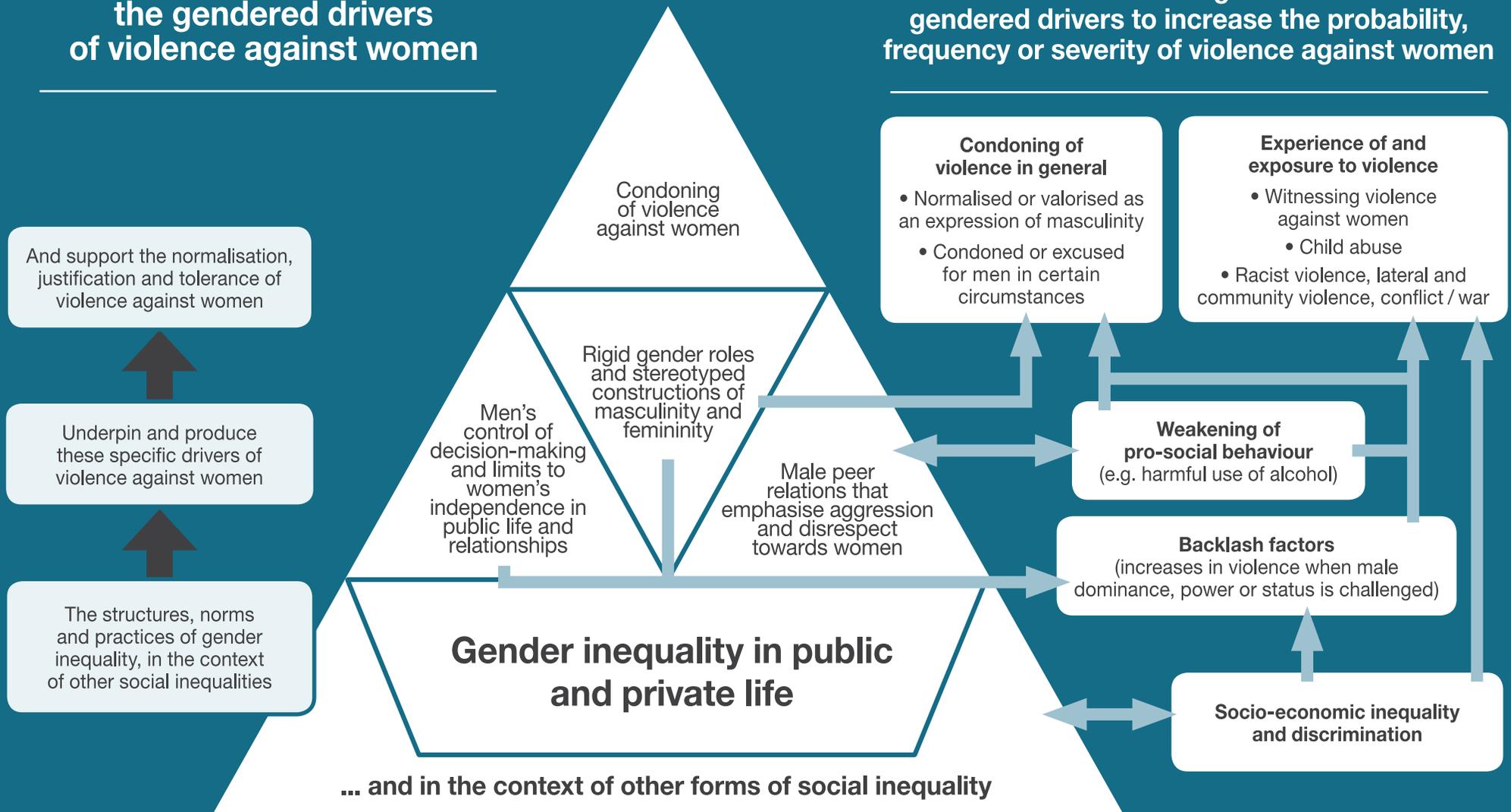


Figure 6 The interactions between gendered drivers of violence against women and the reinforcing factors

# How the gendered drivers and reinforcing factors increase the prevalence of violence against women

This section has demonstrated that violence against women is not caused or determined by any single factor. But as the number of relevant factors and their degree of influence increases, so does the probability of violence against women, as shown in Figure 7. A model to predict or explain the prevalence of violence against women must consider the whole range of social factors that increase the probability of men using violence against women.

The drivers of violence against women outlined in this section are both simple and complex. They are simple, because there is consensus that violence against women is inextricably bound to gender inequalities in public and private life.

They are complex because:

- gender inequalities operate in a multitude of ways, and some are more influential than others

- there are a number of other factors that interact with gender inequalities to exacerbate or reinforce violence against women
- other forms of social, political and historical discrimination and disadvantage intersect with, and affect the relative influence of, these drivers and reinforcing factors in any one context.

A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia must respond to this complexity. It needs to address these drivers in a holistic way that recognises how they interact and reinforce one another. It needs to do this at all levels, from the individual to the social. The following sections present actions to address the identified drivers of violence against women and the reinforcing factors, and point to the kinds of prevention initiatives that have been effective.

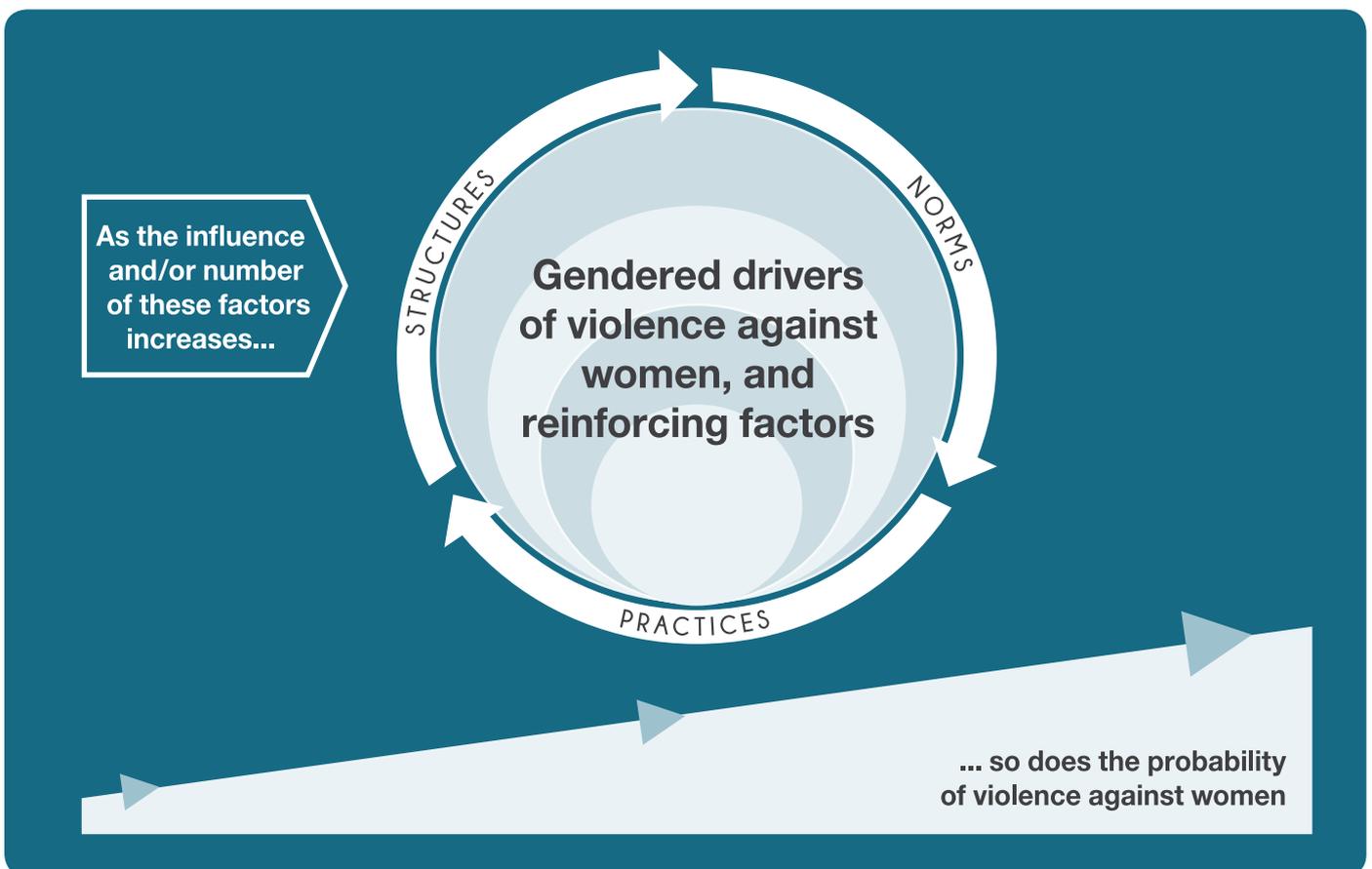


Figure 7 Model for understanding the probability of violence against women

ELEMENT 2

Key actions  
to  
prevent violence  
against women

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The following five essential and five supporting actions together address the factors that drive or reinforce violence against women. No one organisation can undertake all these actions, but all stakeholders can contribute – in appropriate and context-specific ways, separately and in partnership – as part of a shared national approach.

## Essential actions to reduce the gendered drivers of violence against women

The five essential actions address the gendered drivers of violence against women described in Element 1. They are essential because, without all these actions, violence against women cannot be sustainably reduced or prevented.

To be effective, these actions require both specialised policy support and mainstream implementation in the diverse settings where people live, work, learn and play.

For each action, prevention activities that address norms, structures and practices at all levels need to be considered. For example, work addressing attitudes towards violence and gender at the community or organisational level needs to be accompanied by legislative, institutional and policy support that promotes gender equality and accountability for violence and discrimination. Activity under each action should also be designed, implemented and monitored to take into account the diversity of women's experiences and identities and ensure equality in outcomes for all women, as discussed in Element 3.

### 1 Challenge condoning of violence against women

- Shift social support for attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, systems and practices that justify, excuse, trivialise or downplay violence against women and their children, or shift blame from the perpetrator to the victim.

### 2 Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships

- Equalise access to power and resources between women and men, including by strengthening women's economic security, independence and social, political and economic participation and decision-making in public life.
- Challenge men's use of controlling behaviours in relationships and the subtle normalisation of male dominance in relationships.
- Promote social and cultural networks and connections between women to provide sources of peer support.
- Support women's collective advocacy and social movement activism to prevent violence and promote gender equality.

### 3 Foster positive personal identities and challenge gender stereotypes and roles

- Encourage and support children, young people and adults to reject rigid gender roles and develop positive personal identities that are not constrained by gender stereotypes.
- Challenge aggressive, entitled and dominant constructions of masculinity and subordinate or sexualised constructions of femininity.
- Promote and support gender-equitable domestic and parenting practices, including through workplace initiatives.

### 4 Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys

- Challenge peer relations between men that involve hostility or disrespect towards women, and attitudes that relationships between men and women are oppositional, or inevitably based on conflict.
- Promote positive, equal and respectful relationships between women and men, girls and boys, in all contexts.
- Work with children and young people to counter the early development of negative peer relationships and to promote respect and gender equality.

### 5 Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life

- Increase social and structural support for gender equality, in principle and in practice, in both public life (supporting women's social, economic, cultural and political participation, particularly in decision-making) and in private life (supporting equality in relationships).
- Establish and maintain processes to assess all public policy for its impact on women. Include an analysis of any differential impact on different groups of women to achieve a truly inclusive gender equality.

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## Supporting actions to address reinforcing factors

The five supporting actions address the reinforcing factors described in Element 1 – those that can contribute to or exacerbate violence against women in the context of the gendered drivers. Specialist violence prevention and gender equality expertise will be essential to inform these supporting actions. However, the supporting actions should also engage those working across other areas of social policy, advocacy and practice, such as child protection, alcohol and drug harm minimisation, and those addressing socio-economic disadvantage. The prevention of violence against women has common cause with these other areas of work, and establishing or strengthening partnerships for cross-learning and capacity building will lead to shared or complementary outcomes (see Element 5).

Actions to address these reinforcing factors will not prevent violence against women in a sustainable way if undertaken in isolation from the broader prevention agenda outlined here. However, if implemented in gender-sensitive ways, and in conjunction with the essential actions that address the gendered drivers of violence described above, these supporting actions can make a significant contribution to overall prevention efforts.

### 6 Challenge the normalisation of violence as an expression of masculinity or male dominance

- Counter the construction of masculinity as violent and the learning of violence in gendered ways.
- Challenge the normalisation, valorisation and glorification of male violence through strategies that focus on the socialisation of boys and young men, and that challenge the construction and expression of masculinity as violent, both in public and private life, and through media and popular culture.

### 7 Prevent exposure to violence and support those affected to reduce its consequences

- Strengthen efforts to promote non-violent parenting and prevent child abuse, and all other forms of violence (such as race-based, community, public or lateral violence), especially through the provision of expertise on the gendered dynamics of these broader forms of violence.
- Support and advocate for healing strategies and other efforts to mediate the impacts of past occurrences of violence, such as child abuse, racially motivated and colonial violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, war-related trauma and torture experienced by refugees, or violence occurring in prisons or detention centres.

### 8 Address the intersections between social norms relating to alcohol and gender

- Challenge drinking cultures that emphasise male conquest and aggression, and social norms and attitudes that position men's drinking as an excuse for violence, or women's drinking as a form of victim-blaming.
- Improve the regulation of alcohol by considering violence against women in policy debates about the promotion and physical and economic availability of alcohol.

### 9 Reduce backlash by engaging men and boys in gender equality, building relationship skills and social connections

- Consider backlash, or resistance to personal and social change, as a normal and expected part of the change process.
- Challenge excuses for violence, including those driven by a backlash to change, and maintain the need for individual accountability for violence.
- Develop positive ways to engage men and boys in the change process, encouraging them to challenge restrictive and rigid gender roles and identities for both men and women.
- Work to build relationship skills and social connections in communities experiencing rapid social and economic change, especially when this change challenges existing gender norms and hierarchies. This includes when women's increasing social and economic independence and participation and/or men's unemployment places them in roles that differ from gendered expectations.

### 10 Promote broader social equality and address structural discrimination and disadvantage

- Address intersecting forms of inequality, recognising that gender inequality cannot be separated from other forms of inequality.
- Ensure all prevention work has an inclusive and intersectional focus in order to prevent violence against *all* women.
- Form partnerships and coalitions that build collective challenges to gender inequality, racism, ableism, ageism, classism, homophobia and transphobia; address the legacies of colonisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; challenge other forms of social and structural discrimination and disadvantage; and promote social and economic justice.

ELEMENT 3

# Approach, settings and techniques

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**Element 1 explained the drivers of violence against women, and outlined several reinforcing factors, with Element 2 listing the essential and supporting actions required to address them in the Australian context. Element 3 now presents guidance on the approach, settings for action, and specific, practical techniques and strategies that can be used in prevention work.**

## Reaching everyone

A national approach to prevention aims to reach all Australians to have the greatest impact on violence against women and their children. This requires an inclusive universal approach, engaging people in all demographic

groups, from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, of all ages, abilities, genders and sexualities, and in urban, rural and remote locations.

## Tailoring initiatives to the audience

This does not mean every initiative must reach everyone. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach is likely to have limited effectiveness. Instead, tailored strategies for different communities, contexts and audiences are needed to ensure relevance across a diverse population. Each strategy should be carefully tailored to ensure it is appropriate and meaningful for the group of people it aims to engage; whether this is men in a male-dominated outer suburban football club, young people in an Aboriginal community, or journalists working in a specific media environment.

Achieving universal reach and relevance also means understanding that within the Australian population various groups have different experiences of gender, inequality, discrimination and violence. Consultation and participatory approaches to the development, implementation and evaluation of prevention initiatives ensures the ideas of different groups are taken into account, and their needs met.

## Specific and intensive effort with communities affected by multiple forms of disadvantage and discrimination

Equality and safety for all women and their children can only be achieved with specific and intensive effort for those currently experiencing the greatest inequities and violence. The differential impact of the problem also calls for a greater intensity of effort and resources for communities or groups affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, or experiencing the cumulative impact of many negative factors. Partnerships between those working on the prevention of violence against women and those working in other areas of social policy can help concentrate shared effort and resources in these high priority areas and contexts.

Prioritisation of effort and resources is an appropriate means to address the cumulative impact of multiple factors – not only the gendered drivers of violence against women, but the many other reinforcing factors that increase the likelihood of violence against, for example, women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, women with disabilities, and women from rural and remote areas. The *National Plan* particularly highlights the high prevalence, severity and complex nature of violence against

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children, and calls for additional effort, extra resources, and the prioritisation of strategies to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women within a national approach.

While all prevention initiatives should be tailored to fit the context in which they are applied, more specialised approaches to prevention may also be necessary for communities affected by multiple forms of discrimination and social inequalities. In particular, the constructs of violence against women outlined here on the basis of the international evidence may not be considered appropriate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, for whom traditional cultural values – including gender roles – may interact in complex ways with the legacy of colonisation, racism and intergenerational trauma. Intensive resourcing for specific initiatives designed, governed and implemented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities themselves should be a priority of a national effort to prevent violence against all women and their children.

## Robust response systems: the foundation for prevention work

Systems and services for responding to violence are the foundation for primary prevention activity, establishing perpetrator accountability, protecting women and their children from further violence, and sending a message that violence is unacceptable.

Primary prevention activity can and should lead to increased numbers of women being able to identify, name and seek support for violence in their own lives, and so can increase levels of reporting to services and police.

Ensuring robust and adequately funded response systems (including support services, police and justice systems) is therefore critical, to ensure that all disclosures receive an appropriate response. When prevention activity is planned in a new setting or context, linkages with appropriate response services should be established as a first step.

## Ensuring initiatives are inclusive

A holistic and truly universal approach to prevention involves challenging not only gender inequality, but other kinds of structural inequalities, negative stereotypes and discrimination, including those based on Aboriginality, disability, class and socio-economic status, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity and refugee status. To promote gender equality and respectful relationships between all women and men, the participation, representation and decision-making

power of groups that are marginalised, or who experience multiple and compounded forms of discrimination, is crucial.

Such an approach extends to the design, governance and monitoring of prevention policies and programs, which, to be inclusive, should promote self-advocacy and capacity-building based on understandings of diversity and cultural respect and sensitivity.

## Working across the life course

There are particular stages in the life course that are important transition points or which present particular opportunities to address the drivers of violence against women.

Experiences in childhood and adolescence have a particularly strong influence and can impact development and future life paths. Childhood and adolescence are also times of vulnerability to violence in the family, including child physical and sexual abuse and witnessing intra-parental violence. As gender roles and identities are being formed, there are opportunities to help younger children to establish positive personal identities and equitable notions of gender that avoid stereotypes.

The contemporary context in which young people live includes the rise of new media in which objectifying and sexualised imagery of women is commonplace.<sup>98</sup> Many young people access pornography (including violent pornography) before their first sexual experience and this may be their only or primary source of information on sexuality and sexual relationships. This may influence behaviours as well as attitudes and norms about violence against women.<sup>99</sup> Prevention work through schools, social media and other settings can help develop young people's ability to critique such influences, and build their capacity to create healthy sexual identities and respectful, egalitarian intimate relationships.

Another key stage for prevention work is with expectant and new parents. Traditional notions of parenthood – and particularly the gendered roles and identities associated with care for children – can exert a powerful influence on how new parents approach and negotiate their parenting roles. The decisions that couples make during this key stage of life can have important consequences on the level of equality within their relationship,<sup>100</sup> together with impacts on women's participation in the workforce and future economic independence.

Separation and divorce are times when the risk of intimate partner violence is especially high,<sup>101</sup> with those men used to exercising power and control over their partners more likely to perpetrate violence as that power and control is lost, in line with the recognised backlash effect. While early intervention and response efforts are particularly important during this period, primary prevention initiatives can be tailored to ensure they reach, and are relevant to, those recently separated or divorced.

Although older women are less likely to experience violence, they are more likely to be in relationships and social environments in which traditional norms about violence and gender relations prevail, and may have a relatively high degree of economic dependence on male partners.<sup>102</sup> Again, primary prevention efforts should be tailored and relevant to older people, and reach the settings where they live, work and socialise.

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## Settings for action

**Addressing a complex social problem of the scale of violence against women requires a large-scale effort, engaging the largest possible number of people and organisations with sustained and meaningful interventions that encourage shifts in the way people think and behave in relation to gender inequality and violence.**

### Priority settings

Effective prevention efforts engage people across the many different environments where people live, work, learn, socialise and play – often called ‘settings’. These are the places where social and cultural values are produced and reproduced, and prevention efforts involve the people, professionals and communities existing there.

The settings described in Table 1 are highlighted because there is significant practice expertise and/or evidence that demonstrates their potential for impact, and also because they present opportunities for significant influence over the social norms, organisational practices and institutional structures that can drive change. They include:

- education and care settings for children and young people
- universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions
- workplaces, corporations and employee organisations
- sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces

- the arts
- health, family and community services
- faith-based contexts
- media
- popular culture, advertising and entertainment
- public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities
- legal, justice and corrections contexts.

There is increasing attention on the potential of digital technologies and online environments as settings and channels that can advance prevention goals. While there is strong potential value in focusing on these new settings separately, there is also potential merit in recognising that digital environments are a feature of every setting now and in the future. Table 1 takes the latter approach, recognising that digital technologies play a role in every aspect of daily life and that the virtual environment is considered in every setting.

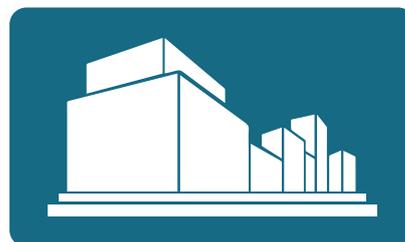


Table 1 Key settings and sectors involved in the primary prevention of violence against women

Setting/Sector	Rationale
<b>Education and care settings for children and young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes childcare and early learning centres, and primary and secondary schools.</li> <li>• Schools and education centres play an important role in the socialisation and cognitive and emotional development of children and young people.</li> <li>• This setting offers the opportunity to build students' critical literacy of media and popular culture, including gender stereotyped and sexualised content and imagery.</li> <li>• This setting offers scope to influence not only education programs and curricula but the whole education environment, as education institutions are not only places of learning, but also workplaces and community hubs.</li> </ul>
<b>Universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes academic, vocational and training environments.</li> <li>• Activity in this setting can directly influence people during the critical transition from school to work, or career change.</li> <li>• These centres are also organisations through which social norms can be shaped and changed. Effective gender equality programs in education institutions can also help reduce the gender segregation of the future workforce.</li> </ul>
<b>Workplaces, corporations and employee organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes industry, employer networks, unions, employment agencies and the public and private sectors.</li> <li>• These environments provide significant opportunity to reach large populations, including men. This includes vulnerable or isolated groups who may not be reached through other settings.</li> <li>• Through activity to influence aspects of organisational culture, work environment and practices, there is strong potential to shape social norms and relationships. Organisations can derive direct benefits from this activity.</li> </ul>
<b>Sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes local and regional clubs, professional institutions, state and national associations and the organisations providing services and facilities to them. It also includes social and leisure spaces, licensed venues and facilities.</li> <li>• These settings provide an opportunity to reach large groups and communities, including young men.</li> <li>• These contexts exert a powerful influence on gender relations as they impact on attitudes, behaviours and social norms.</li> <li>• Sports leaders can also be influential as community champions and ambassadors.</li> </ul>
<b>Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes community networks and professional organisations across the creative industries including visual and performing arts, film and literature.</li> <li>• The arts are a valuable medium for exploring and challenging social norms and also encouraging community participation.</li> </ul>
<b>Health, family and community services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes hospitals, community health, family support and relationships centres, settlement and migrant resource centres, maternal and child health, pre and antenatal care, primary health, mental health and other social services.</li> <li>• Many agencies in this setting have a longstanding history in leading community development and cross-sector initiatives. As they provide direct services across the population, they have strong potential to influence individuals and communities.</li> <li>• Health and social service programs can provide an important means of reaching groups that are outside other settings, for example, young people outside the education system, first-time parents and newly arrived migrants and refugees.</li> </ul>

Setting/Sector	Rationale
<b>Faith-based contexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes places, networks and associations that are brought together on the basis of faith, religion or belief.</li> <li>• These environments are a powerful influence on social norms and beliefs and their leaders can play a key role in building respectful relationships.</li> <li>• Organisations in this sphere can also affect individuals and communities through the delivery of programs and services.</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting refers to the industries and organisations that deliver media in all its forms – print, television, radio and social media.</li> <li>• The media has an important role to play as it has wide reach and has a significant influence in shaping and maintaining social norms. Media organisations themselves may also have potential to develop into workplaces that actively support equal and respectful relationships.</li> </ul>
<b>Popular culture, advertising and entertainment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting refers to the variety of industries, mediums and corporations that contribute to popular culture and shape consumer choices and behaviours.</li> <li>• The organisations and leaders in this setting have strong potential to contribute to the development of more positive social norms while also meeting their own goals. Some activity may be led by industry whereas others will involve partnerships with government and community.</li> <li>• In this setting there is also potential to address the influence of pornography on social norms relating to gender and relationships across society.</li> </ul>
<b>Public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting involves the wide range of industries and sectors that influence the development and use of public environments and resources in our society.</li> <li>• Local, state and federal governments have a particular role to play, as well as the communities and organisations that contribute to planning and development.</li> <li>• Consideration of equality and diversity during planning and development can have a significant bearing on the extent of women's economic, social and civic participation and also on access to facilities, transport and public spaces.</li> </ul>
<b>Legal, justice and corrections contexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting includes the many sectors that are involved in intervening in violence after it has occurred, such as police, courts, law and justice agencies and rehabilitation services.</li> <li>• The work of these sectors provides an important foundation for prevention by ensuring safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators. However, they have a further role to play in prevention as organisations that actively promote equality and respect in their environments and daily practice.</li> </ul>

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## Proven and promising techniques

There is a growing body of international evidence on the types of techniques that are effective in preventing violence against women and their children.<sup>103</sup> Some of these have now proven effectiveness, that is, they have demonstrated reductions in future perpetration and/or experience of violence on longitudinal evaluations that compare participants to a control group of non-participants. Other techniques are considered promising, in that their implementation has resulted in significant improvements against the known drivers of violence against women – the kinds of structures, norms, attitudes, practices and behaviours described in Element 1. Many Australian programs<sup>104</sup> have employed proven or promising techniques across various settings.

Techniques that have demonstrated effectiveness or promise across other areas of social policy or public health include:

- direct participation programs
- community mobilisation and strengthening
- organisational development
- communications and social marketing
- civil society advocacy.

### Direct participation programs

These programs engage and involve men, women, children or young people at the individual, relationship or group level to build the knowledge and skills for equal, respectful, non-violent relationships; improve access to the resources required that support such relationships; improve connections to social networks and institutions; and support people to prevent or address the impacts of other factors linked to violence against women such as child abuse.

Other types of direct participation programs have not yet been evaluated over time for impact on future perpetration or experience of violence, but do show promise in addressing the known drivers of violence against women. These include:

- peer education programs supporting individuals to engage and educate peers to critique gender norms and attitudes that support violence against women

Importantly, while the techniques discussed here are proven or promising in their specific settings or contexts, a population-wide approach to prevention cannot rely on any single program or technique to reach everyone. It needs to include a range of different techniques, each of which needs to be flexible and adaptable according to context if it is to reach and resonate with all groups in our diverse society. This underlines the importance of an approach that maximises both the impact and reach of prevention efforts, as discussed above.

Further, single programs or techniques have an impact that is primarily limited to participants, and that may lessen over time if the message is not reinforced in other areas of those participants' lives. This underscores the need for a multi-faceted and sustained approach involving multiple techniques across settings, discussed further in the next sub-section.

Finally, the techniques described here need to be supported by complementary political and institutional strategies, including public policy, legislation and regulation, as well as appropriately skilled workforces. This supporting infrastructure for change at the broad societal and institutional level, and for system integration, coordination and sustainability is discussed in Element 4.

- media literacy programs, particularly supporting young people to critically engage with media and popular culture about representations of women, men and gender relations
- bystander skills-building, training individuals to take pro-social action in the face of violence-supportive or sexist attitudes, behaviours and practices (but not in reaction to violence itself as such programs have evaluated poorly)
- parenting programs building men's and women's skills in non-violent and gender equal parenting.

Direct participation programs can be implemented in many contexts and have proven successful across various settings, most notably schools, workplaces and collectives. Best practice is when such programs are implemented in conjunction with organisational development programs (see below).

The Fourth R is a Canadian grade 9 physical and health education program including a 21-lesson curriculum delivered over 28 hours by teachers with additional training in the dynamics of dating violence and healthy relationships.

***A two and a half year follow up with 1,722 students found that physical dating violence was about 2.5 times greater among students who did not participate in the program than those who did participate.***<sup>105</sup>

Safe Dates is a US school-based program involving a 10-session curriculum for years 8 and 9 that aims to give students the skills to build healthy dating relationships. It also involves parents and carers, providing resources about the topics covered to encourage discussion at home.

***Four years after implementation, those students who had participated in Safe Dates reported 56% to 92% less physical, serious physical, and sexual dating violence victimisation and perpetration than students who did not participate.***<sup>106</sup>

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## Community mobilisation and strengthening

This technique mobilises and supports communities to address violence against women and their children and the social norms that make it acceptable. It can also be used

to increase community access to the resources required for action and to address broader community-level factors that may be contributing to violence against women.

SASA! was a community mobilisation intervention in Uganda that sought to change the community attitudes, norms and behaviours that result in gender inequality, intimate partner violence and increased risk of contracting HIV.

**Four years after implementation, women's past year experiences of physical intimate partner violence was approximately 50% lower in intervention communities compared to control communities.<sup>107</sup>**

The IMAGE program was a microfinance initiative targeted towards the poorest women in South African communities and included participatory training and community mobilisation on HIV, gender norms, domestic violence and sexuality.

**Two years after implementation, the risk of past year physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner for the participating women was reduced by 55%.<sup>108</sup>**

## Organisational development

This technique recognises that organisations and organisational cultures have a powerful role in influencing the behaviours of individuals and groups and so can help prevent violence by modelling non-violent, equitable and respectful gender relations.

Longitudinal evaluations for impact are lacking, but several approaches have shown promise:

- Whole-of-school programs engage not only students, but teachers and other school staff, parents and the local community to create gender equality and challenge violence, discrimination and stereotyping across the schools as a workplace and community hub. In addition to developing the school as an organisation and workplace, such approaches usually employ a variety of strategies including peer education, advocacy and community mobilisation.

- Multi-strategy approaches with media outlets promote gender equity in newsrooms and the responsible portrayal of women and girls and violence against women in the media.
- Organisational auditing processes identify and address structures and practices contributing to gender inequality and violence against women, including a range of strategies for reform, as well as inducements and incentives such as tying funding to compliance, or awards for best practice.

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## Communications and social marketing

These techniques use a range of communication media to raise awareness of violence against women and their children and challenge contributing attitudes, behaviours and social norms across a variety of media such as television, radio and print/online media as well as social media, community forums and community arts.

There are various positive evaluations of the impact of communications and social marketing techniques on the drivers of this violence, but only when implemented in a sustained way, using a range of platforms and combined with direct participation or group education (for example by using social media, mobile apps or a thematic television series alongside a complementary peer education program).

However, single component communications campaigns, such as advertising without other supporting activities, have been shown to be ineffective at addressing the drivers of violence against women.

Communications and social marketing strategies should be based on rigorous and relevant research and testing with relevant audiences to ensure effectiveness and avoid unintended consequences such as reinforcing stereotypes. They should comprise simple and consistent key messages, with tailored messages for specific target audiences and channels.

*Somos Diferentes, Somos Iguales* was a Nicaraguan campaign that encouraged teenagers to raise and discuss 'taboo' topics such as sexual abuse, violence, HIV, homosexuality and condom use. Campaign activities included a national 'social soap' television series, nightly radio show, distribution of promotional materials and training workshops.

***In both longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis, 'greater exposure' to the program was significantly associated with changes in a series of indicators including: 62% greater probability of having talked with someone in the last six months about domestic violence, HIV, homosexuality, or the rights of young people; and 33% greater probability of knowing a centre that provides services in cases of domestic violence.***

## Civil society advocacy

Advocacy involves building collective momentum to raise awareness of the issue of violence against women and their children and to encourage governments, organisations, corporations and communities to take action to prevent it. Civil society advocacy, particularly women's organisations, has proven essential to enduring and effective policy development to prevent violence against women and their children.<sup>109</sup>

Civil society advocates are invaluable in highlighting the issue, developing a shared understanding of violence against women, and creating and implementing strategies to promote non-violence and gender equity in their own communities and local contexts.

Advocacy techniques tend to lack defined audiences or participant groups compared to community, organisational or individual programs, however some techniques have shown promise in the prevention of violence against women and their children including:

- skills training and capacity building for organisations and community members advocating for gender equality and the prevention of violence against women
- leadership programs that identify and support influential, non-violent individuals to promote gender equality and the prevention of violence against women.

## Principles for the effective implementation of prevention techniques

Appendix 1 outlines the characteristics of effective or promising practice, and of less effective or harmful practice, for each of the techniques described above. Certain principles that define effective practice across techniques and settings have been distilled from the evidence and are outlined below:

- Use an explicit gender analysis and focus on changing the gendered drivers of violence against women
- Draw on research, evaluation and consultation and seek advice from those with relevant expertise
- Follow a program logic approach
- Establish partnerships across sectors and between violence prevention/gender equality specialists and 'mainstream' organisations
- Tailor initiatives to intended audiences and contexts
- Develop an evaluation plan focused on measuring changes related to the drivers of violence
- Share information and facilitate transparent reporting and shared learning
- Establish mechanisms to respond to disclosures from victims/survivors and perpetrators who may be identified through their engagement with a prevention program
- Plan for the long-term sustainability of effective initiatives.

More detailed guidance on the principles for effective practice will be provided in a guide to design, implementation and evaluation of prevention activity, to follow this framework.



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## Making change ‘stick’: combining techniques across multiple settings

Single techniques employed in single settings may well have positive effects, but these will likely be limited to those participating, and – if a ‘one off’ project – may not be sustained. For example, a single schools-based program may change participating students’ attitudes about gender and violence by the end of the program. However, those same students live in a society in which structural gender inequality is entrenched and pervasive and rigid gender norms and stereotypes predominate at multiple levels. They are likely to experience sexist and violence-supportive messages in multiple contexts – from the media to broader peer groups, in their home environments and in recreational settings.

The impact of initiatives such as schools programs can be ‘dampened’ when they occur in isolation, and broader community or social and cultural norms and practices do not support their message.<sup>110</sup> Conversely, the effects of prevention

initiatives are strengthened when their reach is maximised, such as where a schools-based program is supported by government education departments to ensure greater reach by requiring all schools to implement it, and when their messages are reinforced by simultaneous complementary initiatives in other settings, such as when the same schools program is accompanied by a social media campaign, a local community initiative, and a sports or recreation-based program.<sup>111</sup> A multi-setting approach helps strengthen the impact of different prevention initiatives – a mutually-reinforcing effect.

In order to achieve this mutually reinforcing effect, different techniques need to be employed simultaneously across multiple settings, in a coherent and sustained way. This requires a number of higher-level mechanisms for coordination and support – and these are discussed in Element 4.



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## Innovating and evaluating to build evidence

Primary prevention of violence against women and their children is a relatively new field. High-quality, evaluated initiatives addressing known drivers of violence against women have only been undertaken within the last 10 to 15 years, but the results demonstrated above show that change is possible.

The ‘newness’ of the field and subsequent limited number of fully evaluated examples should never be a reason or excuse for inaction, or for failing to invest in innovative prevention policy and programs. Our obligations to address violence against women as a human rights abuse<sup>112</sup> have led international organisations to caution that a current lack of evaluation must not be used by governments or funders as a

justification for avoiding investment or innovation.<sup>113</sup> Further, narrowly defined standards of evidence – often derived from other fields – may be inappropriate for such a complex social problem as violence against women.<sup>114</sup>

Rather, program design and development should draw on all available evidence, prioritising formal evaluations, but also incorporating lessons from research, practice and consultation and advice from those with relevant expertise. Attention should be paid not only to replicating successful techniques, but to testing, adapting and evaluating them in different contexts and settings – an approach that is not only evidence-based, but also evidence-building.

### Evaluation methods

Investment in evaluation is crucial if we are to strengthen our knowledge of what works – and, just as importantly, what does not work – to prevent violence. Evaluation should form part of any prevention initiative, and should be resourced appropriately as a tool for learning and accountability. A range of qualitative and quantitative evaluation strategies may be appropriate depending on the program and information being sought.<sup>115</sup> Evaluations making provision for long-term follow up would provide valuable future learnings – particularly in the Australian context, where such data is limited.

Much innovative prevention work is currently trialling new methodologies, or building engagement and capacity

for more substantive future work, and so may not yet be ready for a large-scale or longitudinal study. Determining the effectiveness of prevention techniques is based on a number of variables: what is being evaluated, the quality of design and implementation, how well the initiative communicates to its target audience, the supports available, longevity, the skills of practitioners involved, and where and with whom the initiative is taking place. Short to mid-term evaluation measures that examine the strengths and weakness of the process taken, as well as measuring change against the underlying drivers of and contributors to violence against women, can provide important learnings.

### Responding to emerging issues

Prevention work needs to include innovative approaches that help build evidence in an evolving field. This includes building evidence for the effectiveness of initiatives for particular groups, and in specific contexts, whether this is teenage boys in a sports club, Aboriginal communities in a rural area, or women with disabilities in an institutional setting.

To maintain relevance and reach across a diverse and rapidly evolving Australian society, prevention strategies and approaches will need to respond to emerging issues

and a changing environment. There is a need to continue to scan the environment and undertake research to guide this ongoing innovation and adaptation and to support the development of new approaches. The impacts on young people of increased accessibility of pornography, for example, are beginning to be taken into account in schools-based and other activities. But in future, new types of violence that might emerge with technology or social changes will need to be analysed and addressed.

ELEMENT 4

# Prevention infrastructure

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**Until recently, evidence for the effectiveness of prevention efforts came largely from discrete project or program evaluations. But international reviews<sup>116</sup> have noted that to achieve the broad, deep and sustainable change needed to prevent violence against women and their children, discrete projects or programs are not enough.**

Coordinated interventions across settings and levels of the social ecology are needed to reinforce and sustain change, and these require an infrastructure that includes:

- mechanisms for coordination and quality assurance
- an expert workforce
- political, sector-specific and civil society leadership
- policy and legislative reform
- shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks.

## Mechanisms for coordination and quality assurance

Mechanisms are needed to enable coordination and collaboration across jurisdictions, sectors and settings, and to promote consistency between legislative and policy reforms, programs, communications campaigns and other prevention efforts. A holistic approach should integrate the promotion of gender equality and non-violence into the work of established agencies, organisations and networks and use existing infrastructure at the national, state, regional and local levels.

Coordination mechanisms provide the support necessary to enable mutually reinforcing programs across multiple levels and settings. This includes long-term funding to enable successful programs and initiatives to be scaled up, systematised and embedded into ongoing practice, as well as shorter-term grant programs to support evidence-building through innovation. Because of the specialised nature of

primary prevention, coordination mechanisms will likely engage different agencies and organisations than those for early intervention and response, although linkages between such mechanisms will be essential.

Quality assurance mechanisms for policy and program delivery can include establishing criteria for program funding and evaluation, or creating accredited training programs to ensure adequately skilled practitioners. The employment and monitoring of established practice standards where they exist (such as the National Association of Services against Sexual Violence *Standards for Sexual Assault Prevention Education*),<sup>117</sup> or the development of appropriate standards for other settings, can help ensure a consistent quality practice approach to prevention programming across levels and sectors.

## An expert workforce

A national approach to primary prevention requires significant investment in workforce and organisational development and capacity building, both to meet existing demand for prevention activities in various settings safely and effectively, and to expand the reach and take-up of initiatives across the country.

A workforce development strategy should build a specialist workforce of prevention policy makers and practitioners who can provide leadership, technical assistance, program development and policy support to diverse stakeholders. Such specialists should be skilled both in designing and delivering specific, evidence-informed prevention strategies and in developing policies, programs and initiatives for gender equality more broadly.

In addition to a specialist prevention workforce, building the skills and capacities of those working in diverse sectors and settings – from sports clubs, to schools, workplaces, local governments, health services and the media – can help embed prevention and gender equality efforts into their existing work and into the core business of their organisations. This might include pre-service gender equality and primary prevention training for key workers in such sectors, together with ongoing professional development, guidance and support from the specialist workforce.

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## Political, sector-specific and civil society leadership

Political will is crucial in sustaining prevention approaches over the long-term.<sup>118</sup> Demonstrated leadership by all levels of government emphasises the national importance of primary prevention of violence against women and their children and helps legitimise, support and motivate widespread efforts by a range of stakeholders. Political leadership at all levels of government can be demonstrated through:

- an active commitment to pursuing necessary legislative and policy reform
- bipartisan support for and long-term funding of prevention efforts consistent with this framework
- framing prevention of violence against women as a human rights obligation, and expressing public support for prevention efforts
- engaging and supporting organisations and stakeholders, such as schools, universities, businesses and workplaces, to participate in prevention efforts.

Community and civil society organisations and those representing specific settings such as workplaces or sporting codes can also provide leadership on this issue by supporting and encouraging primary prevention efforts among their sectors, members and networks. There is also clear evidence that collective, pro-feminist movement-based activism provides a significant form of leadership on this issue, and is effective in driving social policy change to prevent violence against women.<sup>119</sup> Women's health, domestic violence and sexual assault peak bodies and services have a particularly important leadership role given their significant expertise on violence against women.

Recognition of the value of such social movement mobilisation is an important component of a national approach to prevention. Effective political, sector-based and civic leadership will not only deliver consistent and mutually reinforcing prevention strategies, it will also build broad, nationwide support for such efforts.

## Policy and legislative reform

Policy and legal reform helps drive societal level change by shifting social norms and supporting and reinforcing other prevention strategies.<sup>120</sup> The political will to pursue legislative and policy reform is an important element of the political leadership that is necessary. It is also critical that policy and legislative development processes are characterised by an intersectional gender-power analysis,<sup>121</sup> that is, a process to

ensure that the differential impacts of policy and legislation on men's and women's lives (and on different groups of men and women) are identified and addressed. Reform should aim to address the drivers of violence against women identified in Element 1, promote the actions in Element 2, and be guided by programs of work employing the techniques and approaches across settings outlined in Element 3.

## Shared monitoring, reporting and evaluation frameworks

A national approach to prevention requires a comprehensive, coordinated system for monitoring, accountability, reporting and evaluation. All participating agencies and organisations, government and non-government, should be able to report on progress, and evaluate their efforts against shared objectives and short and long-term targets. Measures and targets should be context-specific, while directly reflecting the underlying causes and drivers of violence against women at multiple levels. These might include gender equality-based targets to measure structural change, as well as indicators of social norms, individual attitudes and relevant practices that drive violence.

should include clear responsibilities and activities that can be completed in the short to medium term. Finally, collaborations between practitioners and researchers should be supported, as an effective way of assessing impact and enabling mutual learning.<sup>122</sup> New prevention activity should take an 'action research' approach, learning from implementation and evaluation and building capacity among practitioners and organisations for ongoing improvement.

Prevention is a long-term project and outcome measures will need to reflect this timeline, although action plans

ELEMENT 5

# Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

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## **An effective national approach to prevention requires the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders.**

While Australian governments have primary responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and equality of women<sup>123</sup> as part of their international human rights obligations, they cannot do this alone. Every sector, institution, organisation, community and individual has a role in preventing violence against women.

Different stakeholders have different responsibilities, expertise and capacities and different spheres of influence. Their efforts will be most effective if they take advantage of the specific opportunities available to them within their spheres of influence, as well as work in collaboration or partnership to ensure different prevention efforts are consistent and mutually reinforcing.

Partnerships that include women's organisations, particularly those working on women's health, domestic violence and sexual assault, and social movement activists more broadly, will ensure that prevention efforts are informed by a well-developed understanding of the complex dynamics of violence against women, gender and other social

inequalities, and draw on existing prevention expertise. Similarly, partnerships with early intervention and response sector stakeholders will ensure that prevention strategies are designed to include appropriate referral pathways to information, resources and support for any women, children or young people they may engage who have previous or current experiences of violence.

Element 5 describes the most appropriate and effective roles different stakeholders can play in the interests of maximising national impact including:

- Council of Australian Governments
- Commonwealth, state and territory, and local governments
- those working in key settings and sectors
- those working on other social issues
- Our Watch and others working to end violence.

## **Council of Australian Governments**

The *National Plan* is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments and the first cross-jurisdictional Australian policy to prevent and respond to violence against women and their children. It demonstrates bipartisan political leadership across the federal system. Through the *National Plan*, and its associated three year Action Plans, the Council of Australian Governments plays an important role

in driving and coordinating action across all jurisdictions. Given the complexity of this field, where responsibilities are shared between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments, the Council of Australian Governments must continue to play a strong cross-jurisdictional leadership role to ensure a coordinated, holistic approach to prevention across the country.

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# Commonwealth, state and territory and local governments

The Commonwealth and state and territory governments demonstrated international leadership when together they produced a 12-year *National Plan* with broad-based cultural and systemic change at its core. The *Second Action Plan (2013–2016)* of the *National Plan* commits governments to whole-of-community action to prevent violence through:

1. Supporting communities to prevent, respond to and speak out against violence, through local government, businesses, community and sporting groups, schools and key institutions.
2. Improving media engagement on violence against women and their children, and the representation of women experiencing violence, at a national and local level.
3. Taking the next step to reduce violence against women and their children by promoting gender equality across a range of spheres, including women's economic independence and leadership.
4. Supporting young people through The Line campaign and by addressing issues relating to the sexualisation of children.
5. Building on the findings of the respectful relationships evaluation, to strengthen the design and delivery of respectful relationship programs, and implement them more broadly.
6. Incorporating respectful relationships education into the national curriculum.
7. Enhancing online safety for children and young people.

For these actions to have measurable and sustainable impacts across the population, a program of work at all levels of government and in each jurisdiction is required that:

- has mutually reinforcing activities at all levels from policy, legislative and institutional reform to community and organisational level programs and communications campaigns
- coordinates sustained and comprehensive programs across multiple settings such as education, sports, workplaces and the media
- engages people at different stages of the life course such as children and young people or new parents
- includes tailored activity for different social and demographic groups.

To support and sustain the commitments under the *National Plan*, governments at all levels have a critical role to play in leading and coordinating prevention activity in their jurisdictions across sectors and settings and over time. The evidence base delivered by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, itself an initiative of all governments under the *National Plan*, can help inform and guide future decisions on policy reform and coordination for prevention of, and response to, violence against women and their children.

The **Commonwealth Government** has a key role to play in coordinating and maintaining cross-jurisdictional leadership, and in establishing robust and agreed communication mechanisms that allow for a coherent and shared approach from the national to local levels.

Under the *National Plan*, the Commonwealth Government has lead responsibility in certain settings and portfolio areas crucial to prevention, such as employment, communications and the arts, tertiary education, various social services and – through engagement and regulatory mechanisms – advertising and media. It has shared responsibility with states and territories in many others – such as education and training, health, sports and the arts – where it can provide resources, guidance and in some cases legislative or regulatory support to promote consistent policy and practice across jurisdictions that is in line with evolving evidence.

**State and territory governments** develop their own jurisdictional plans as part of their responsibility under the *National Plan*, reflecting national directions, but tailored and responsive to their jurisdiction's needs. This level of government plays a lead role in crucial prevention settings, such as early childhood, primary and secondary education, family and community services, health, sport and industrial relations, and with different groups through portfolios such as Aboriginal affairs, multiculturalism or disability services. Primary prevention policies or plans that support the *National Plan* through a long-term, multifaceted agenda for social change within the state or territory (beyond a 'list of projects') are most likely to have sustainable impact. These will need to engage the whole of government and ideally be undertaken with bipartisan support.

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**Local governments** are the entities closest to individuals and communities and can influence social and community change. They are well placed to respond to local concerns and to lead primary prevention activities through existing mechanisms and via a range of partnerships. They have a reach and mandate to support people at different stages of life such as young people, new parents, and seniors, different faith and cultural groups and marginalised groups.

At all levels of government, international research suggests that leadership and coordination of prevention activity and plans should be supported by monitoring, accountability, and quality assurance frameworks, and is best undertaken through portfolios with a mandate to plan and manage whole-of-government prevention activity (such as appropriately resourced and mandated offices for women).<sup>124</sup> Interagency structures and processes, such as ministerial councils and steering committees, can assist with coordination across portfolios, and governments can build on existing partnerships and develop new ones to ensure effective collaboration with non-government and community stakeholders.

Effective strategies, programs and initiatives require appropriate resourcing to enable quality development, testing and evaluation, and ultimately to scale-up or systematise such initiatives for sustainability over the long-term. To ensure community ownership of prevention work, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives, building trusted and transparent

relationships between government and civil society is important through design, implementation and monitoring.<sup>125</sup>

Combined and consistent activity across levels of government promotes mutually reinforcing messaging and practice, as well as ensures reach across all systems and sectors, rather than being limited to single communities, organisations or contexts. Activity is tailored for local conditions yet benefits from economies of scale and quality assurance that comes from state and national-level coordination and support. Nationally consistent yet locally-driven prevention of violence against women strategies can be particularly effective, especially where supported or mandated by complementary state and territory level activity.

For example, in the education setting, the Commonwealth Government is best placed to ensure respectful relationships education is part of the national curriculum, to develop learning materials and to ensure consistency in teacher training to support its implementation. State and territory governments are responsible for ensuring its quality delivery, and supporting schools to implement it through a good practice whole-of-school approach. Local governments can integrate prevention of violence work in schools with other activities across the community such as in sporting clubs, and broker relationships between schools and community organisations at the local level.

## Those working in key settings and sectors

For prevention activity to reach everyone across the diverse communities they live in and the settings where they work, learn and socialise, leadership from settings and sectors beyond those traditionally engaged in responding to violence against women is needed. A comprehensive, shared national approach to prevention of violence against women and their children requires:

- the active involvement of stakeholders of many kinds, from schools to workplaces, unions, businesses, leisure venues, sports clubs and civil society organisations
- action in many settings, from early childhood to social and leisure settings and the media

- an effective reach to particular population groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, faith-based communities, and children and young people.

Sector associations and national and peak bodies in each of these settings can play an important coordination and leadership role in their fields, and high profile or influential leaders can make valuable contributions to public debate and act as champions or ambassadors for change. Opportunities for promotion and advocacy for violence prevention and gender equality exist across all such sectors, and in partnership with prevention and gender equality specialists, sectors and organisations can themselves model equitable and respectful structures, norms and practices.

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## Those working on other social issues

To address the various reinforcing factors identified in this framework that contribute to or increase violence against women, partnerships between those specifically working on preventing violence against women, and those working on other social policy issues would be beneficial. These issues might include alcohol and other drugs, childhood exposure to violence, mental health and wellbeing, economic

disadvantage, social exclusion, racism and other forms of discrimination. To maximise effectiveness in achieving shared goals, partnerships should acknowledge the relevance of other social policy issues to preventing violence against women, and ensure that work on other social policy issues incorporates appropriate gender analysis.

## Our Watch and others working to end violence

As a national and independent organisation dedicated to the prevention of violence against women and their children, Our Watch led the development of this framework, and has a key leadership role to play over the long-term in driving and supporting the implementation of the holistic national approach. Our Watch commits to working in collaboration and partnership with other organisations aiming to prevent or respond to violence against women and their children on our shared objective of ending such violence.

Together, we will continue to lead and sustain a constructive public conversation about the prevention of violence against women and their children, and support innovative prevention initiatives across diverse settings. The sectors and specialist agencies that are currently leading the response to incidences of violence against women – for example, providing policing and support services, perpetrator programs, justice interventions and specialist training – bring essential expertise and specialist knowledge to collaborative prevention efforts across sectors and settings.

Our Watch commits to engaging and liaising with governments and policy makers at all levels and across all jurisdictions to encourage and support specific government action on prevention and to provide policy advice, analysis and input into public inquiries and policy and legislative reform processes. We will also continue to undertake campaigns and social marketing to encourage attitude and behaviour change in relation to violence against women, challenge damaging social norms and attitudes and promote gender equality.

We aim to develop our practice leadership role by providing guidance and support for practitioners and producing resources, tools and training for setting-specific activity to prevent violence against women and their children. We commit to developing a series of resources to support the implementation of this framework, including a dedicated resource to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, tools and resources to support implementation and evaluation and workforce development, and a monitoring and reporting framework for Australia's national prevention efforts.

## Case study: Roles of different stakeholders in implementing the 2007 VicHealth framework in Victoria

The **Victorian Government** developed a range of policies and programs to drive prevention actions based on the 2007 VicHealth Framework, including the world's first statewide ten-year primary prevention plan – A Right to Respect. In developing the Plan, the Victorian Government's Office for Women's Policy was supported by a whole-of-government mandate provided by the leadership of five Ministers. The Office undertook extensive consultation across departments, and with experts and communities, to determine how the strategies in the framework would align with existing policy approaches, and where new policy was required. The resulting Plan reflected the key actions, strategies and settings described in the VicHealth framework and included significant budget allocation for immediate implementation.<sup>126</sup>

Departments within government then used the framework to guide their work. **The Department of Education** used it to guide research on respectful relationships education in Victorian schools. Based on the subsequent report,<sup>127</sup> the Department developed comprehensive curriculum guidance on respectful relationships for years 8 and 9, along with teacher professional development to support the new guidance and a whole school model for creating gender equitable and respectful school environments. This work is now being implemented in 19 schools across Victoria, supported by specialist positions based in regional departmental offices who facilitate access to training, guide school culture development, ensure linkages with local community organisations, and provide ongoing technical and specialist advice to the schools.<sup>128</sup>

The Community Crime Prevention Unit in the **Department of Justice** used the VicHealth framework to determine the scope of a new community grants program, with criteria requiring demonstration of how the proposed projects would address the drivers of violence across priority settings, use proven and promising strategies and engage multiple sectors in joint initiatives. Grant applicants also used the framework as a platform to build local interest and engage partners – such as corporate workplaces and media agencies – in the grant application process. The program funded eight regional initiatives over three years that were community-led and linked to existing regional justice networks, with further roll-out of tried and tested prevention programs following the first round.<sup>129</sup>

In local government, peak body the **Municipal Association of Victoria** created a full-time prevention of violence against women position to support councils to implement the VicHealth framework in their policies and programs. The position used the VicHealth framework to undertake advocacy and build capacity among councils to foster safe and inclusive environments for women and men through their existing work areas and funding streams. Prevention of violence against women is now on the agenda of almost all Victorian councils, and momentum and sophistication of the work continues to grow.<sup>130</sup>

For crisis response services and other civil society partners the VicHealth framework provided access to research and information that they could not otherwise afford to obtain themselves, along with clear definitions of prevention and prevention activity upon which to base their work with partners and stakeholders. For example, **Domestic Violence Victoria** drew on the framework to develop an influential program of work with media, the **Centres against Sexual Assault** and the **Domestic Violence Resource Centre of Victoria** used it to develop innovative resources for young people, while women's health services used it to drive collective regional approaches to prevention.

**In schools, sporting organisations, workplaces and communities across Victoria, and in health, justice, academic and corporate sectors**, activity is increasingly taking place to prevent violence against women, with many now viewing the work as core business. Training provided through an associated short course, along with specialist positions in peak bodies (such as the Municipal Association of Victoria), and communities of practice established for work in different sectors, are all helping support existing work and the increasing demand for new prevention activity across Victoria.

ELEMENT 6

# Stages of action and expected outcomes

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## **An Australia where women and their children live free from violence is an achievable goal, but reaching it will require sustained effort over the long term.**

It requires intergenerational change to deeply entrenched beliefs and behaviours in our culture, society, communities and daily lives. It will not be easy, will not be quick, and will not be possible unless we all work together. This final

Element proposes a sequence of staged action towards this ultimate goal of social transformation. Along the way, we can expect short-term, medium-term and long-term signposts of success.

### **Stage one: 2016-18**

The first stage starts with a significant increase in investment in primary prevention, and infrastructure to support it. Proven and promising practice is scaled up and embedded into system and institutional practices, while innovative initiatives are piloted, reviewed and adapted across new settings and contexts. Tools and resources are developed and workforces trained to support prevention programs and practice. Policy makers and program planners prioritise effort and resourcing to prevention strategies that will have an impact in communities affected by intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage.

The development of the *National Plan's Third Action Plan* draws on the evidence and guidance presented in this framework. Emerging evidence from evaluations, consultation, research and practice experience is incorporated into the design of new prevention initiatives, including campaigns and programs, whole-of-government policies at different levels, and organisational strategies and plans.

Importantly, all levels of government, non-government and private sector stakeholders come together to set up the various mechanisms and collaborative processes needed to build and sustain long-term and national prevention efforts. Resourcing of early intervention and response services is maintained as increased attention is given to primary prevention, recognising that demand for such services may increase from increased awareness and reporting associated with primary prevention.

### **Envisaged outcomes**

- Shared strategies, plans and reforms are developed to prevent violence and discrimination, promote gender equality, and foster the development of healthy relationships between men and women, and safe and supportive environments for children.
- Coordination, governance and quality assurance mechanisms, are established so that leaders across all sectors work together to develop and implement high quality actions, supported by guidelines and standards.
- A skilled prevention workforce begins to emerge, comprising both workers within mainstream organisations and contexts, and specific prevention specialists that can provide advice and support across sectors and settings – to meet existing demand for prevention programs safely and effectively, and to expand their reach.
- Shared monitoring, accountability and reporting frameworks are established, so that implementation and decision-making is guided by ambitious but achievable targets.
- Shared systems are developed to document lessons from pilot initiatives, scaled-up activities, and coordination mechanisms, helping to improve and refine efforts over time.
- Community engagement is broadened and deepened, through established organisations and networks, building on the reach and influence of many partners.

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## Stage two: 2019-21

Once initial strategies are implemented and embedded over successive years, signs of progress will begin to emerge. With progress in primary prevention, simultaneous efforts are made to address and reduce the possible backlash that can accompany social change. This includes ensuring that the gendered dynamics of violence, and the link between gender inequality and violence, are widely understood and accepted.

Political, academic and public debate is important, and prevention strategies should work across each of these areas to develop greater awareness of the drivers of violence. For example, strategies that encourage and work with the media to report violence against women and their children with greater sensitivity and accuracy, and with reference to its underlying drivers will continue to be central.

The development of the *Fourth Action Plan* under the *National Plan* – and associated State and Territory policies and plans – takes into account the evaluation learnings from the previous stage, reviewing and adjusting initiatives where needed and identifying opportunities for scaling up and embedding successful programs. Sustainable workforce strategies are implemented and coordination and governance mechanisms reviewed to include new and emerging settings and partners, and the next generation of leaders fostered and supported.

## Envisaged outcomes

- A diverse range of organisations and communities have tools, resources and incentives to promote gender equality and respectful relationships, and to encourage proactive bystander behaviour in incidents of sexism, harassment, discrimination and violence. Creating safe, respectful environments begins to become core business across diverse organisations and communities.
- Community, organisation and family environments model and build non-violent, healthy gender identities and peer associations and respectful and equal relationships between women and men, girls and boys.
- Women and non-violent men are supported to champion and lead prevention efforts, including in communities affected by intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage.
- Parents and caregivers have tools, resources and incentives to engage in positive and gender-equitable parenting practices.
- More individuals are empowered to challenge violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours, promote gender equality, and form respectful, equal relationships – personally, professionally and socially.
- Governments, civil society and corporate sector stakeholders take responsibility for promoting non-violent, equal, respectful, and healthy gender roles and identities.
- Promising practice is further developed and evaluated, and proven initiatives are scaled up and embedded across sectors, supported by policy, institutions and investment by governments at all levels.

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## Stage three: post-2022

Full implementation of this framework will, towards the end of the current *National Plan* in 2022, begin to show significant and measurable gains. Continued bipartisan support and investment from all levels of government – working in partnership with civil society and the private sector – will ensure prevention activity is embedded into systems, institutions, organisations and communities across sectors and across the country. A collaborative national approach is articulated and agreed to take Australia to the next stage – beyond the *National Plan* – of significant and population-level reductions in violence against women and their children.

### Envisaged outcomes

- Effective responses to sexism, harassment, discrimination and violence against women and their children are the norm in organisations.
- Social norms, attitudes and behaviours contributing to violence against women and their children are widely recognised and considered unacceptable. When expressed, such attitudes are more confidently challenged by peers, friends and families, across private and public settings.
- There is a measurable shift in the public debate towards an increased understanding and intolerance of violence against women and their children, and greater support for gender equality and models of masculinity based on respect.
- There is an increase in women’s participation and representation in decision-making positions across organisations, networks and communities.
- As violence is better identified, less tolerated and greater responsibility is taken in the media and popular culture for the representation of violence and gender, women feel more confident to disclose violence and/or report to police and services, resulting in an increase in reporting.
- Women and men enjoy measurably increased equality on economic, political, social, health and wellbeing indicators.
- Incidents of violence against women and their children decline.

## How will we know we are making a difference?

Preventing violence against women is a long-term and intergenerational endeavour. In working towards this ultimate goal it will be important to focus both on

long-term outcomes and on monitoring incremental change and progress along the way.

### A guide to monitoring will follow this framework that will:

- Identify measures of national prevention efforts, informed by this framework, that will contribute to shifts in the underlying drivers of violence against women and their children. This might include high-level indicators of structural gender equality in economic, social and political terms, or normative measures such as shifts in attitudes towards women and violence, levels of street and workplace harassment, or representations of gender and violence in popular culture.
- Provide stakeholders with detailed guidance to measure the impact of prevention efforts at different levels of the Australian population, highlighting existing measures and gaps in data at a national and state and territory level to develop a comprehensive picture of the status of the drivers of violence against women and their children.

*Change the story* will be reviewed in 2018 to align with planning for the *National Plan’s* Fourth Action Plan 2019–2022, and again in 2021 to align with the final stage of the existing *National Plan*, and developing its successor. The reviews will update the literature and evidence on prevention, examine uptake of the framework, and assess its strengths and weaknesses to enable continuous improvement.

# Glossary of terms

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**Backlash** – the resistance, hostility or aggression with which gender equality or violence prevention strategies are met by some groups. Challenges to established gender norms and identities or entrenched ideas about the roles of men and women are often resisted by those who strongly adhere to such norms, and see them as traditional or natural. From a feminist perspective, backlash can be understood as an inevitable response to challenges to male dominance, power or status, and is often interpreted as a sign that such challenges are proving effective.<sup>131</sup> Backlash can include attempts to discredit arguments about gender inequality or the gendered nature of violence, and efforts to preserve existing gender norms and hierarchies, with the result that progress towards violence prevention and gender equality can be slowed or even reversed.<sup>132</sup> In some cases backlash can lead to an increase in violence itself.<sup>133</sup>

**Drivers** – the underlying causes that are required to create the necessary conditions in which violence against women occurs. They relate to the particular structures, norms and practices arising from gender inequality in public and private life, but which must always be considered in the context of other forms of social discrimination and disadvantage.

**Domestic violence** – refers to acts of violence that occur in domestic settings between two people who are, or were, in an intimate relationship. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial abuse.<sup>134</sup> See also family violence.

**Emotional/psychological violence** – can include a range of controlling behaviours such as control of finances, isolation from family and friends, continual humiliation, threats against children or being threatened with injury or death.<sup>135</sup>

**Family violence** – is a broader term than domestic violence, as it refers not only to violence between intimate partners but also to violence between family members.<sup>136</sup> This includes, for example, elder abuse and adolescent violence against parents. Family violence includes violent or threatening behaviour, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes that family member to be fearful.<sup>137</sup> In Indigenous communities, family violence is often the preferred term as it encapsulates the broader issue of violence within extended families, kinship networks and community relationships, as well as intergenerational issues.<sup>138</sup>

**Framework** – the conceptual structure underlying and supporting an approach to a specific objective, in this case, the prevention of violence against women and their children. A framework is typically made up of interrelated component parts or elements, all of which need to be in place to achieve the objective.

**Gender** – the socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men and women; gender defines masculinity and femininity.<sup>139</sup> Gender expectations vary between cultures and can change over time.<sup>140</sup>

**Gender based violence** – violence that is specifically ‘directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately’.<sup>141</sup>

**Gender equality**<sup>142</sup> – involves equality of opportunity and equality of results. It includes the redistribution of resources and responsibilities between men and women and the transformation of the underlying causes and structures of gender inequality to achieve substantive equality.<sup>143</sup> It is about recognising diversity and disadvantage to ensure equal outcomes for all<sup>144</sup> and therefore often requires women-specific programs and policies to end existing inequalities.<sup>145</sup>

**Gender identity** – a person’s deeply held internal and individual sense of their gender<sup>146</sup> in how they define themselves in relation to masculine and feminine characteristics.

**Gender inequality** – the unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity, and value afforded to men and women in a society due to prevailing gendered norms and structures.

**Gender roles** – the functions and responsibilities<sup>147</sup> expected to be fulfilled by women and men, girls and boys in a given society.

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

**Gendered norms** – consist of a set of dominant beliefs and rules of conduct which are determined by a society or social group in relation to the types of roles, interests, behaviours and contributions expected from boys and girls, men and women.

**Gendered practices** – the everyday practices, processes and behaviours undertaken at an individual/relationship level, organisational/institutional and societal level that reinforce and perpetuate gendered norms and structures.

**Gendered structures** – the laws and systemic mechanisms that organise and reinforce an unequal distribution of economic, social and political power and resources between men and women.

**Gender transformative** – approaches that move beyond ‘gender blind’ or ‘gender specific’ approaches to encourage critical awareness of, and explicitly challenge harmful gender roles, practices, and norms, and shift the unequal distribution of power and resources between women and men.

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**Healing** – recovery from the psychological and physical impacts of trauma. Used particularly by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for whom this trauma is predominantly the result of colonisation and past government policies. Healing is not an outcome or a cure but a process; a process that is unique to each individual. It enables individuals, families and communities to gain control over the direction of their lives and reach their full potential. Healing continues throughout a person's lifetime and across generations. It can take many forms and is underpinned by a strong cultural and spiritual base.<sup>148</sup>

**Intergenerational trauma** – a form of historical trauma transmitted across generations. Survivors of the initial experience who have not healed may pass on their trauma to further generations. In Australia intergenerational trauma particularly affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, especially the children, grandchildren and future generations of the Stolen Generations.<sup>149</sup>

**Internalised colonialism** – see lateral violence.

**Intimate partner violence** – any behaviour by a man or a woman within an intimate relationship (including current or past marriages, domestic partnerships, familial relations, or people who share accommodation) that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm to those in the relationship. This is the most common form of violence against women.<sup>150</sup>

**Lateral violence** – refers to damaging behaviours that come from within a particular community or population sub-group, such as backstabbing, bullying or even physical violence. The term is used in particular by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in which such behaviour is often seen as a form of internalised colonialism because it arises from being an oppressed group of people. When people feel oppressed and live with fear or anger, they can turn on each other, even on those closest to them.<sup>151</sup>

**Non-partner sexual assault** – sexual violence perpetrated by people such as strangers, acquaintances, friends, colleagues, peers, teachers, neighbours and family members.<sup>152</sup> See also sexual violence.

**Norms** – see social norms.

**Normalisation of violence** – where violence, particularly men's violence, is seen and treated as a normal part of everyday life.

**Normative support for violence against women** – is expressed through attitudes, behaviours and systems that justify, excuse, downplay or tolerate such violence, or blame or hold women at least partly responsible for violence perpetrated against them.<sup>153</sup>

**Reinforcing factors** – factors which become significant within the context of the drivers of violence. These factors do not predict or drive violence against women in and of

themselves, however when they interact with the drivers they can increase the frequency or severity of violence. See also drivers.

**Settings** – environments in which people live, work, learn, socialise and play.

**Sex** – the biological and physical characteristics used to define humans as male or female.

**Sexism** – discrimination based on gender, and the attitudes, stereotypes and cultural elements that promote this discrimination.<sup>154</sup>

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

**Socio-ecological model** – is a feature of public health and is used to demonstrate how violence is a product of multiple, interacting components and social factors.<sup>155</sup> The model conceptualises how the drivers of violence manifest across the personal, community and social level and illustrates the value of implementing multiple mutually reinforcing strategies across these levels.

**Social norms** – rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society or social group. They are grounded in the customs, traditions and value systems that develop over time in a society or social group.<sup>156</sup>

**Structural discrimination and disadvantage** – the norms, policies and systems present within politics, the legal system, education, workplaces and healthcare that are intended to be neutral but in effect present obstacles to groups or individuals in achieving the same rights and opportunities available to the majority of the population.

**Systemic social inequalities** – a pattern of discrimination that is reflected within social norms and reinforced through law, education, the economy, healthcare and politics and results in privileging certain groups and individuals over others.

**Systems and structures** – are macro-level mechanisms, both formal (reinforced through government, institutions and laws) and informal (social norms), which serve to organise society and create patterns in relation to who has social and political power.

**Violence against women** – any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life.<sup>157</sup> This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others) that are gender based. See also gender based violence.

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# Appendix 1

## An overview of effective prevention practice by technique

**Overarching principles that should be applied to all prevention techniques were outlined in Element 3.**

Table 2 provides a more specific summary, drawn from existing literature and practice, of what constitutes effective and less effective practice for particular kinds of prevention techniques. More detailed guidance will be provided in an upcoming guide to implementation and evaluation, to be produced as a companion document to this framework.

Table 2 Effective and less effective or harmful practice by technique

Technique	Effective or promising practice	Less effective or harmful practice
<b>Direct participation programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver initiatives that are 'gender transformative'.<sup>158</sup></li> <li>• Provide opportunities for program participants to practise skills learnt and/or reinforce attitude and behaviour change, particularly among their peers.</li> <li>• Offer bystander programs that build participants' understanding of and skills to address sexist and gendered norms, attitudes and behaviours, and organisational capacity to support and contribute to such bystander actions.</li> <li>• Deliver multiple sessions to a given audience and/or continue to engage the same audience through different strategies to strengthen and prolong impact, create mutually reinforcing effects and encourage extended reflection on the issues.</li> <li>• Implement complementary strategies to enable program settings to reinforce program content<sup>159</sup> such as when delivering staff workshops on sexism to strengthen workplace gender equality policies.</li> <li>• Include quality training and support for educators and program facilitators, and provide regular opportunities to build their confidence and program delivery skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering initiatives that are 'gender blind'.</li> <li>• Delivering one-off or short-term programs.</li> <li>• Including content that reinforces or perpetuates myths about violence against women or that fails to acknowledge the broader drivers of violence (such as by implying that victims/survivors are responsible for the violence perpetrated against them).</li> <li>• Delivering bystander programs that focus solely on how participants should intervene in potentially violent situations, or that fail to address the role of organisations in contributing to and supporting bystander action.</li> <li>• Delivering participatory programs in isolation from their context (that is, without developing parallel strategies to address gendered structures, norms and practices in that setting).</li> </ul>
<b>Community mobilisation and strengthening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage key organisations, recognised community leaders and diverse community members (ensuring representation from the intended audience) at all stages of the initiative.</li> <li>• Empower communities to participate in shared decision-making to promote ownership of the initiative.<sup>160</sup></li> <li>• Ensure commonly marginalised community members and organisations are given a voice and an opportunity to contribute to decision-making.</li> <li>• Invite key decision makers and those with control over resources to play an active role in the initiative.<sup>161</sup></li> <li>• Implement mutually reinforcing strategies to maximise stakeholder participation, develop local leadership and improve resource mobilisation.<sup>162</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failing to engage the community in the development of prevention initiatives.</li> <li>• Replicating an initiative that has proven successful elsewhere without tailoring to the audience and context and/or without involving the target community and key stakeholders.</li> </ul>

Technique	Effective or promising practice	Less effective or harmful practice
<b>Organisational development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ strategies across multiple levels of an organisation so that change is promoted and mutually reinforced across the organisation.</li> <li>• Concentrate initial effort where there is existing support and good potential for traction.</li> <li>• Ensure senior leadership (such as Board, CEO, Directors) creates an authorising environment by establishing and reinforcing organisational commitments to violence prevention and gender equality.<sup>163</sup></li> <li>• Develop a ‘whole of organisation’ prevention plan to set priorities, identify key strategies, direct organisational resources, facilitate action and promote accountability.</li> <li>• Implement strategies that build the capacity of staff to promote equal and respectful relationships, identify and challenge attitudes and norms that perpetuate violence, and address the drivers of violence through their own work.</li> <li>• Establish mechanisms that support those within the organisation who have personal experiences of violence, such as enterprise agreements and policies.<sup>164</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering one-off or annual events that are not part of a broader organisational approach or commitment to prevention and gender equality.</li> </ul>
<b>Communications and social marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address the drivers of violence against women (beyond ‘raising awareness’) and promote positive behaviours, practices and social norms.</li> <li>• Develop key messages that are simple, strong and consistent, with tailored messages for specific target audiences and channels.</li> <li>• Ensure that the campaign is rooted in community mobilisation and leadership at a grassroots level.<sup>165</sup></li> <li>• Devise campaigns with multiple components<sup>166</sup> to promote key messages through a range of platforms including, for example social media and peer mentors.</li> <li>• Develop multiple, multi-layered strategies based on a recognition that behaviour change is not a simple or linear process.</li> <li>• Develop an evaluation framework that outlines how the strategy’s reach, effectiveness and impact will be measured over time, including tracking research.</li> <li>• Engage skilled, independent campaign evaluators.</li> <li>• Brief relevant support services so they have an opportunity to plan responses to increased demand as a result of a communications or marketing campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering single-component communication campaigns that rely on only one ‘platform’ to reach the target audience.</li> <li>• Allocating inadequate campaign budgets.</li> <li>• Failing to evaluate the strategy.</li> <li>• Devising campaigns that reinforce gender stereotypes, rape myths and blaming attitudes (such as by targeting potential victims).</li> <li>• Failing to advise relevant support services about the potential for increased demand as a result of the campaign.</li> </ul>

Technique	Effective or promising practice	Less effective or harmful practice
<p><b>Advocacy and use of champions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote collaborative effort on the gendered drivers of violence against women and ‘common cause’ issues (includes training community members in advocacy and resourcing or establishing independent organisations to undertake advocacy).</li> <li>• Encourage effective champions and advocates to take responsibility for leading action and undertaking the background work required to be effective in such roles.</li> <li>• Provide training and ongoing support to champions and advocates to ensure they are well briefed and confident to share appropriate messages about prevention.</li> <li>• Establish mechanisms to ensure champions and public advocates do not have personal histories that undermine their position, such as a police record that indicates the perpetration of violence against a woman.</li> <li>• Engage a diverse range of champions and/or advocates who are representative of and respected within targeted communities, and who hold both formal and informal positions of leadership and influence.</li> <li>• Lead and support advocacy campaigns that seek to influence the structural drivers of violence against women and prompt systemic change, such as advocating for improvements to childcare accessibility and quality.</li> <li>• Facilitate opportunities for women to network and advocate collectively, particularly on issues or in settings where they are underrepresented, such as in male-dominated workplaces and organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relying upon women (or women’s organisations) to support and sustain male champions and leaders, reinforcing the unequal distribution of power between men and women.</li> </ul>

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## Appendix 2

# Alternative text for figures

### Page 5-6: Infographic

#### Current state

- Violence against women is serious, prevalent and driven by gender inequality.
- Gendered drivers of violence against women: condoning of violence against women; men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence; stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity; disrespect towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression.
- Gender inequality sets the necessary social context.
- 657 domestic violence matters are dealt with every day by Australian police.
- Every week one woman is murdered by her current or former partner.

#### Desired future

- Violence against women is preventable if we all work together.
- Actions that will prevent violence against women: challenge condoning of violence against women; promote women's independence and decision-making; challenge gender stereotypes and roles; strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships.
- Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life.
- Mutually reinforcing actions are needed through legislation, institutional, policy and program responses: by governments, organisations and individuals; in settings where people live, work, learn and socialise; tailored to the context and needs of different groups.

### Page 15 Figure 2: The relationship between primary prevention and other work to address violence against women

This image shows a triangle with a flat base cut into three sections. The largest section at the base of the triangle refers to primary prevention: whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary ('first' or underlying) drivers of violence. The middle section refers to secondary prevention or early intervention which aims to 'change the trajectory' for individuals at higher-than average risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence. The top part of the triangle refers to tertiary prevention or response which supports survivors and holds perpetrators to account (and aims to prevent the recurrence of violence).

### Page 21 Figure 3: Socio-ecological model of violence against women

This image shows the different factors which influence the occurrence of violence against women and their children.

The figure represents violence as the outcome of interactions among many factors at four levels.

It shows examples of structures, norms and practices found to increase the probability of violence against women, at different levels of the social ecology.

The highest level is the societal level: dominant social norms supporting rigid roles and stereotyping, or condoning, excusing and downplaying violence against women.

The second level is the system and institutional level: failure of systems, institutions and policies to promote women's economic, legal and social autonomy, or to adequately address violence against women.

The third level is the organisational and community level: organisation and community systems, practices and norms supporting, or failing to sanction, gender inequality, stereotyping, discrimination and violence.

The fourth and final level is the individual and relationship level: individual adherence to rigid gender roles and identities, weak support for gender equality, social learning of violence against women, male dominance and controlling behaviours in relationships.

### Page 22 Figure 4: Gender inequality as the necessary condition or root cause of violence against women

This image shows gender inequality in the centre with another segment representing other forms of social, political and economic discrimination and disadvantage intersecting with it at the base. These overlapping, intersecting conditions create the social context necessary for violence against women to occur.

### Page 24 Figure 5: The gendered drivers of violence against women

This image shows a triangle. At the base of the triangle, the words "Gender inequality in public and private life" appear in large text. Underneath this sentence, the words "... and in the context of other forms of social inequality" appear in smaller text. In the top part of the triangle, four segments of equal size list the following gendered drivers: "condoning of violence against women", "men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships", "rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity", "Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women."

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To the left of the triangle, there is a series of three text boxes connected with arrows. The bottom box says “the structures, norms and practices of gender inequality, in the context of other social inequalities.” An arrow points upwards to a second box that says: “Underpin and produce these specific drivers of violence against women.” An arrow points towards a third box that says: “and support the normalisation, justification and tolerance of violence against women.”

**Page 29-30 Figure 6: The interactions between gendered drivers of violence against women and the reinforcing factors**

What drives and reinforces violence against women? The diagram shows a triangle in the centre of the page with surrounding text boxes connected via arrows. The triangle represents the gendered drivers of violence against women. The text boxes to the right of the triangle represent a series of reinforcing factors.

At the base of the triangle, the words “Gender inequality in public and private life” appear in large text. Underneath this sentence, the words “... and in the context of other forms of social inequality” appear in smaller text. In the top part of the triangle, four segments of equal size list the following gendered drivers: “condoning of violence against women”, “men’s control of decision-making and limits to women’s independence in public life and relationships”, “rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity”, “Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.”

To the left of the triangle, there is a series of three text boxes connected with arrows. These describe the process by which the gendered drivers operate. The bottom box says “the structures, norms and practices of gender inequality, in the context of other social inequalities.” An arrow points upwards to a second box that says: “underpin and produce these specific drivers of violence against women.” An arrow points towards a third box that says: “and support the normalisation, justification and tolerance of violence against women.”

To the right of the triangle, there are five text boxes. These represent factors that can reinforce the gendered drivers to increase the probability, frequency or severity of violence against women. These boxes are connected to the triangle with arrows. The first says: “condoning of violence in general: normalised or valorised as an expression of masculinity; condoned or excused for men in certain circumstances.” The second says: “experience of and exposure to violence: Witnessing violence against women; child abuse; racist violence, lateral and community violence, conflict / war.” The third says “Weakening of pro-social behaviour (e.g. harmful use of alcohol).” The fourth says: “backlash factors (increases in violence when male dominance, power or status is challenged),” and the fifth says: “socio-economic inequality and discrimination.”

**Page 31 Figure 7: Model for understanding the probability of violence against women**

This image shows a circle with the words “gendered drivers of violence against women, and reinforcing factors” in the centre, surrounded by the words “structures, norms and practices”. Text around the circle says “as the influence and/or number of these factors increases... so does the probability of violence against women”.

# Endnotes

1. Council of Australian Governments (2011) National plan to reduce violence against women and their children 2010-2022, <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>.
2. Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2014) Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage: Key indicators 2014, Productivity Commission, Canberra, <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/overcoming-indigenous-disadvantage/key-indicators-2014/key-indicators-2014-report.pdf>.
3. Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2014), see note 2.
4. World Economic Forum (2014) Global Gender Gap Index: Australia's profile, <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2014/economies/#economy=AUS>.
5. Based on Victorian figures from VicHealth (2004) The health costs of violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Melbourne, <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/the-health-costs-of-violence>. A comparable national study is pending.
6. 55% of women with children presenting to specialist homelessness services nominated escaping violence as their main reason for seeking help. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2012) Specialist homeless services data collection 2011-12, Cat. No. HOU 267, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129542529>.
7. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2015) Child Protection Australia 2013-14, Child Welfare Series No. 61, Cat. No. CWS 52, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129550859>. Children exposed to family violence are classified as experiencing 'emotional abuse', which, while a broader category, is the most commonly substantiated type of harm (39%) in child protection notifications across Australia.
8. Police across Australia dealt with 239,846 domestic violence incidents in 2015, an estimated 657 domestic violence matters on average every day of the year (or one every two minutes) – calculated for police data sourced across all states and territories, collated at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-29/domestic-violence-data/6503734>.
9. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013) Personal Safety, Australia 2012, Cat. No. 4906.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsw/mf/4906.0>. Survey extrapolated to population figures on the basis of 3.8% of all women surveyed reporting having experienced physical or sexual violence from a non-partner in the past 12 months (and approximately 9 million women over the age of 18 in Australia).
10. Johnson, M. and Bennett, E. (2015) Everyday sexism: Australian women's experiences of street harassment, The Australia Institute, Canberra, <http://www.tai.org.au/content/everyday-sexism>.
11. For example, Indigenous women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence related assaults than non-Indigenous people. Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision (2014).
12. In the 2012 Personal Safety Survey, 13% of women in this age group reported having experienced violence by a man in the last 12 months. This was the highest proportion of any age group. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), see note 9.
13. See Cox, P. (2015) Violence against women: Additional analysis of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey 2012, Horizons Research Report, Issue 1, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, Sydney, <http://anrows.org.au/publications/horizons/PSS>; and Woodlock, D., Healey, L., Howe, K., McGuire, M., Geddes, V. and Granek, S. (2014) Voices against violence paper one: Summary report and recommendations, Women with Disabilities Victoria, Office of the Public Advocate and Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, <http://wdv.org.au/documents/Voices%20Against%20Violence%20Paper%20One%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>.
14. Around 95% of all victims of violence (both male and female) reported experiencing acts of violence - physical or sexual assault, or threats – from a male perpetrator. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), see note 9.
15. 16.9% of women reported experiencing intimate partner violence since age 15, and 5.3% of males. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), see note 9 and Cox (2015), see note 13.
16. One woman in five has experienced sexual violence over their lifetime compared to one in twenty men. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), see note 9. 99% of women experiencing sexual assault were assaulted by a male. Cox (2015), see note 13.
17. In 2012, 17% of all women and 5% of men had experienced violence by a partner since the age of 15. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), see note 9.
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22. The prevention of violence against women is a clear responsibility of governments and public authorities under international human rights law. The core legal obligation that establishes this responsibility is the United Nations (1979) Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (known as CEDAW), <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>, particularly the United Nations (1992) Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 19, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom19>, in turn supported by the United Nations (1993) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>; the United Nations (1995) Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>; and the United Nations (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>. Related human rights obligations are also in a number of other conventions that Australia has ratified, which address particular aspects of gender inequality and/or violence against women, including: the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation (1958) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/conv/111.htm>; the Organisation of American States (1994) Convention of Belem do Para, <http://oas.org/en/mesecvi/docs/BelemDoPara-ENGLISH.pdf>; Council of Europe (2011) Istanbul Convention, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168046031c>; United Nations (1966) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/ccpr.pdf>; United Nations (1966) International Convention on Economic, Social and

Cultural Rights, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf>; and United Nations (1984) Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cat.pdf>.

23. The research on the drivers of violence is examined in Element 1. Internationally there are a number of programs or initiatives that have proven successful at reducing future levels of violence for those participating, when compared to similar groups that did not undertake the program. Many more initiatives – here and overseas – have been effective in shifting the attitudes, behaviours and practices that are known to drive violence. These are examined under Element 3 and include: Ellsberg, M., Arango, D.J., Morton, M., Gennari, F., Kiplesund, S., Contreras, M. and Watts, C. (2014) Prevention of violence against women and girls: What does the evidence say? *The Lancet*, [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)61703-7/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)61703-7/fulltext); Fulu, E., Kerr-Wilson, A. and Lang, J. (2014) What works to prevent violence against women and girls? Evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls, [http://r4d.dfi.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/VAWG/What\\_Works\\_Inception\\_Report\\_June\\_2014\\_AnnexF\\_WG23\\_paper\\_prevention\\_interventions.pdf](http://r4d.dfi.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/VAWG/What_Works_Inception_Report_June_2014_AnnexF_WG23_paper_prevention_interventions.pdf); Arango, D.J., Morton, M., Gennari, F., Kiplesund, S. and Ellsberg, M. (2014) Interventions to prevent or reduce violence against women and girls: A systematic review of reviews. *Women's Voice and Agency Research Series*, 2014, No 10, World Bank, Washington, DC; and Heise, L. (2011) What works to prevent partner violence – An evidence overview, STRIVE, <http://strive.lshtm.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/What%20works%20to%20prevent%20partner%20violence.pdf>.
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31. The impact of exposure to childhood violence is discussed in more detail later in this section, as well as in Framework foundations 1 and in the think piece in Framework foundations 2 by Monica Campo on conceptualising children in the prevention of violence against women and children. Primary prevention of other forms of child abuse and neglect is out of scope for the framework (as they have different drivers and entail distinct prevention techniques), but programs that work with children and young people to help them recover from the effects of such violence are a relevant consideration – as a part of an overlapping agenda that will benefit from partnerships between those working to prevent violence against women and those working on child protection.
32. Cox (2015), see note 13.
33. This includes physical or sexual assault, or threats. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013), see note 9.
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103. The evidence base for the effectiveness of techniques or programs aiming to prevent violence against women and their children is growing. Major reviews undertaken in the last few years have provided the most comprehensive picture to date on such programs and techniques with the key principles and examples given below. See for example, Ellsberg et al. (2014), see note 23. Most recently, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development's What works: a global program to prevent violence against women and girls <http://www.whatworks.co.za/> is generating new evidence from action research projects in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.
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