

ELEVEN WAYS TO BOOST YOUR WORK WITH NEWS MEDIA

*How you can help the media report
prevention of violence against women*

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SECTOR WORKERS



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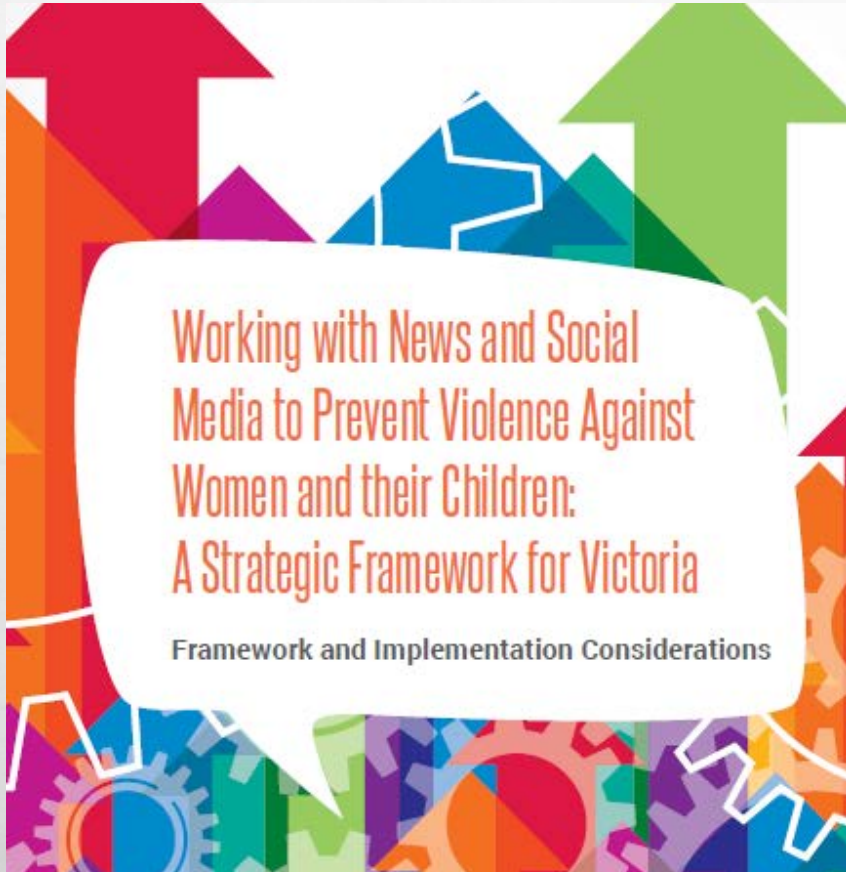
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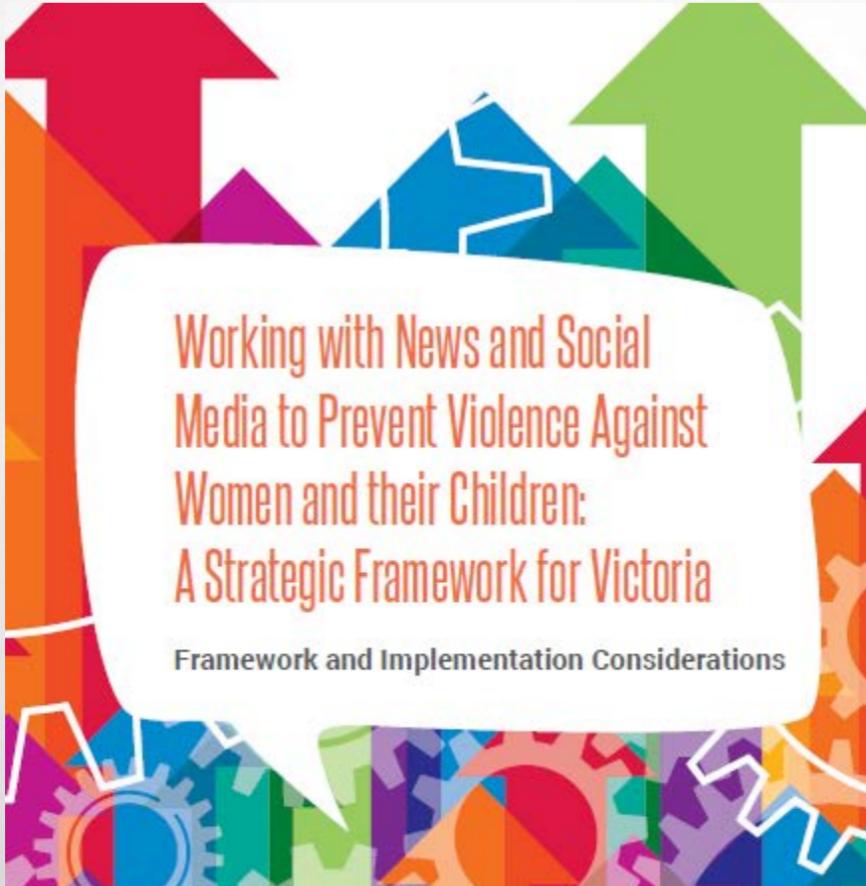


VICTORIAN FRAMEWORK



Action Area 2

Upskill and develop resources for the specialist PVAW field and related organisations to engage effectively with media on prevention



Working with News and Social
Media to Prevent Violence Against
Women and their Children:
A Strategic Framework for Victoria

Framework and Implementation Considerations



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OVERVIEW

- Considerations for PVAW and working within our capacity
- News rooms, news production, deadlines, newsworthiness, building relationships
- Handling requests, interviews, working with Media-Comms staff
- The centrality of key messaging, PVAW themes for messages, message tailoring

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Priority themes for PVAW

Prioritise the following three themes in your communications with media, to support a move away from individual or incident-based news coverage and to increase a prevention focus in media reporting and community understanding.

Theme 1. Talk about the causes of VAW

E.g. International research is clear that gender inequality is a key underlying factor for violence against women.

Theme 2. Explain the influential role of other factors

E.g. Other factors such as harmful use of alcohol, poverty, discrimination, and the way violence in general is used and accepted in our community all play a part in VAW; they interact with gender inequality and need to be addressed alongside it.

Theme 3. Talk about what everyday people, governments and communities can do to prevent VAW

E.g. Violence against women is preventable; prevention requires everyone to play a part in changing the culture, attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence against women, in particular inequalities between men and women.

Key Concepts for Theme 1. Talking about the causes of VAW¹⁹

International research is clear that gender inequality is a key underlying factor for violence against women.

Disrespecting women does not always result in violence against women; but all violence against women begins with disrespecting women²⁰.

Gender inequality exists within social structures, norms and practices that work together to create an environment where women and men are valued differently.

Gender inequality can be seen in a history of laws and policies that have formally restricted the rights and opportunities of women.

Gender inequality continues to exist today, often in ways that are invisible to many people, through the unequal social value, power, resources and opportunities available to women and men.

Gender inequality is present in our society in many ways. *Change the Story* tells us that the key aspects of gender inequality that are linked to violence against women are when:

- There is an imbalance of power between men and women in families and relationships as well as in workplaces, schools and other arenas of public life
- Roles for men and women and ideas about masculinity and femininity are rigidly defined
- Peer relationships between boys and men that support or promote aggression and disrespectful attitudes and behaviour towards girls and women
- Communities condone or excuse violence against women.

'Everyday' sexism is part of, and reinforces gender inequality.

Violence against women is the extreme end of gender inequality, but less extreme forms of 'everyday' sexism create and reinforce gender inequality and violence:

- The threat of violence impacts on all women, limiting different aspects of their lives.
- Sexist jokes, comments and behaviours reflect and reinforce sexist attitudes. They excuse and support the gender stereotyping and discrimination that often leads to violence against women.
- If no-one speaks up when a sexist comment or joke is made, it sends the message that these attitudes and behaviours are okay.

Evidence for Theme 1

Prevalence of VAW

1 in 5 Australian women have experienced sexual violence and 1 in 3 Australian women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15²⁴.

More than one woman a week is murdered in Australia by a current or former partner. In 2015, 79 women were murdered in Australia in the context of gender-based violence. Thousands more are injured or made to live in fear²⁵.

Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to preventable ill-health, death and disease for Victorian women aged 15-44. Violence contributes more to the health burden for this group than many other well-known risk factors such as smoking and obesity²⁶.

The fear of violence including harassment, is a permanent constraint on the mobility of women and limits their access to resources and basic activities. High social, health and economic costs to the individual and society are associated with violence against women. Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into subordinate positions²⁷.

A woman is hospitalized every three hours in Australia due to family violence²⁸.

Around 800,000 women in Australian workplaces are experiencing domestic or family violence, and one in five women experience sexual harassment in the workplace at some time²⁹.

Nine out of ten Australian women have experienced either verbal or physical street harassment³⁰.

Of women who have experienced violence from an ex-partner, 73% have experienced more than one incident of violence³¹.

The gendered nature of violence

Around 95% of all victims of violence – whether women or men – experience violence from a male perpetrator³².

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, which is the unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women, and discrimination associated with that inequality. Gender inequality can play out within families and households, institutions and social structures³³.

'Gendered drivers' are particular expressions of gender inequality which consistently predict higher rates of violence against women:

- Condoning of violence against women
- Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life
- Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women³⁴.

At an individual level, one of the most consistent predictors of the perpetration of violence against women are traditional views about gender roles and relationships, attitudes that support male dominance, and attitudes that reflect sexual hostility towards women³⁵. Violence is more common in families and relationships in which men control decision-making and is less so in relationships in which women have a greater level of independence³⁶.

Women are significantly more likely than men to have experienced:

- an episode of stalking as an adult: 19% compared to 7.8%
- sexual assault since the age of 15: 17% compared to 4%
- physical assault by a male in their home during the last 20 years: 62% compared to 8.4%
- emotional abuse by a partner since the age of 15: 25% compared to 14%³⁷.

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