

Primary Prevention and the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children

Primary prevention measures in the *National Plan* recognise that violence against women can be prevented by reducing inequalities in power between men and women and challenging gender stereotypes and violence-supportive attitudes.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN (THE NATIONAL PLAN)?

The *National Plan* is an agreement by all Australian governments to work together to reduce violence against women and their children.

The *National Plan's* vision is for Australian women and their children to live free from violence in safe communities.

HOW WILL THE NATIONAL PLAN PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

As well as working to hold perpetrators of violence accountable and to respond effectively to women and children affected by family violence and sexual assault, the *National Plan* will focus on primary prevention, to prevent violence from happening in the first place.

Primary prevention measures have been introduced under the *National Plan* to ensure that communities are safe and free from violence, and that relationships are respectful.

WHAT IS PRIMARY PREVENTION?

Primary prevention means stopping violence against women before it starts, by addressing its underlying causes. Over the last decade, research has been undertaken to identify the factors that contribute to violence against women.

Research released by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), shows that as gender equality improves, the prevalence of violence against women is lower. Countries with greater equality between women and men tend to have lower levels of violence against women.

In addition to challenging attitudes and behaviours that tolerate violence, primary prevention also works to reduce economic, social and political inequalities between women and men. Primary prevention does make a difference to rates of violence against women.

The *National Plan* aims to create positive, inclusive and safe communities, organisational cultures, and equal and respectful relationships. It is based on changing gender discriminatory or stereotyping cultures, attitudes and behaviours.

The evidence suggests that prevention work must happen across a variety of settings such as schools, communities, sporting groups and the media. It needs to target whole communities and broad social norms, as well as individuals.

Primary prevention has many benefits. It will ease the burden on support services, police and the justice system. Above all, violence against women must be prevented because it is a fundamental violation of human rights.

HOW IS THE *NATIONAL PLAN* DIFFERENT TO OTHER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES?

For the first time all Australian governments will work together to reduce violence against women and their children. Governments have agreed to do the following:

- **Deliver advertising and innovative online marketing initiatives** to help reduce the incidence of relationship violence as part of *The Line* social marketing campaign.
- **Funding Community Action Grants** to support communities in reducing violence against women by working with community organisations and sporting codes to engage community in a range of primary preventions activities.
- **Implementing Respectful Relationships Initiatives**, 21 projects have been funded. Respectful relationship education is also to be included in phase three of the Australian Curriculum.
- **Supporting White Ribbon Day** initiatives, raising awareness among men and boys about the roles they can play to prevent violence against women.
- The National Plan recognises that violence against women is a whole-of-community problem that needs a **whole-of-community approach and response**.
- The Government is committed to the development of a **Media Code of Practice** on the media's reporting of sexual assault and domestic violence. This code will encourage the media to portray sexual assault and domestic violence appropriately.

HOW WILL THE *NATIONAL PLAN* ENSURE THAT THESE CHANGES ARE SUSTAINABLE IN THE FUTURE?

The *National Plan* has a long term vision to make a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and children. These long term measures will be achieved by improving the evidence base, identifying and promoting what measures work well, improving how we work with perpetrators and by enhancing the way services respond to victims.

WOULD YOU LIKE A COPY OF THE *NATIONAL PLAN*?

The *National Plan* is available online at:

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/nationalplan/Pages/default.aspx>

Or you can order hard copies by calling 1800 050 009

IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE CALL:

- 1800 RESPECT -1800 737 732
- Local services in your state or territory
- Relationships Australia – 1300 364 277
- Mensline - 1300 789 978

If you require urgent assistance contact the police on 000.

