



# National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

eNewsletter, Issue 1, October 2014

Primary Prevention

**Welcome to the first eNewsletter for the [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022](#) (the National Plan).**

The focus of this first issue is primary prevention, which is about stopping violence before it happens by changing attitudes and behaviours and supporting people, particularly young people, to develop respectful relationships.

The National Plan focuses on primary prevention because we recognise that it is critical to reducing violence against women and their children. The First Action Plan laid the foundations for long term change through setting up some key primary prevention initiatives. The Second Action Plan builds on this, driving whole of community action to prevent violence.

## A message from Ministers Andrews and Cash

We are pleased to welcome you to the first newsletter of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

All Australian governments firmly believe that to stop violence against women and their children we must first change the attitudes that allow it to occur. It is for this reason that this first edition of the newsletter is focussed on primary prevention.

At the launch of the Second Action Plan in June, we reiterated that strong community engagement is crucial if we are to drive changes in attitudes and behaviour. We must start a public conversation to transform the way communities think about, and respond to, violence.

This newsletter will be part of starting that conversation – it will provide information on the important work being done by all governments and civil society under the National Plan as well as share opportunities for you to get involved.

Commonwealth and state and territory governments are investing in important initiatives towards the primary prevention of violence against women and their children under the National Plan. Two of these are highlighted in this newsletter - Our Watch, whose mission is to transform community attitudes towards violence; and ANROWS, who will help us to discover and share 'what works' in reducing violence against women and their children.

There is a lot more to do, but we are confident that together we can achieve the National Plan's vision that Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities.

We encourage you all to share this vision, and the work being done under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children with your networks.

Sincerely,

The Hon Kevin Andrews  
Minister for Social Services

Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash  
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women

## What has happened during the past three months?

- 27 June** Launch of the [Second Action Plan](#) by the Prime Minister, the Hon Tony Abbott MP, in Sydney.
- 1 July** [Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety \(ANROWS\)](#) published a catalogue of publically accessible resources their website.
- 15 July** Parliamentary launch of Second Action Plan at Parliament House in Canberra.
- 5 September** Launch of [Our Watch](#) in Sydney.
- 17 September** Launch of the [National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women](#) in Melbourne.
- 19 September** Local launch of Second Action Plan for the Northern Territory, in Alice Springs

## Feature stories

### The National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women

The 2013 [National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women](#) (NCAS), undertaken by VicHealth, was released on 17 September 2014.

Results from the 2013 NCAS show that, on the whole, Australians' understanding and attitudes towards violence have remained stable since 2009, when the survey was last conducted. Some attitudes have improved, but some attitudes have become worse.

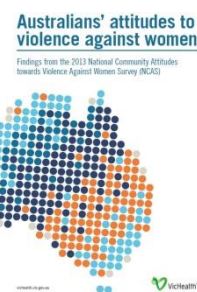
Among the positive findings are:

- most Australians do not endorse attitudes supportive of violence;
- most Australians would intervene if they witnessed a woman being assaulted
- there has been an improvement in young people's, particularly young men's, attitudes towards violence against women, with fewer in 2013 holding attitudes in the extreme end of the spectrum.

The NCAS results also showed some concerning attitudes:

- around 1 in 5 (22%) respondents think there are situations in which violence can be excused
- more than 2 in 5 Australians (43%) think that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex
- more than 3 in 5 (64%) Australians see violence against women being primarily due to some men not being able to manage their anger.

In response to these findings, Jerril Rechter, CEO of VicHealth, said "As a society, we have a long road ahead, but it begins with the simple step of educating ourselves, our peers, and ultimately changing our perspective so that women are always on equal footing to men, and the next generation of women can grow up in a world that is safe, supportive and free from violence." More information can be found at: [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au).



## Our Watch launch



[Our Watch](#) launched on 5 September 2014, and is an independent not-for-profit organisation tasked with challenging gender inequality and the deeply entrenched sexist attitudes that allow and condone violence against women and their children in Australian communities. As part of its launch, Our Watch released a powerful video titled: [It's time to act on Our Watch](#).

Our Watch's mandate is to stop violence before it occurs and this primary prevention approach is the foundation of all of the organisation's strategies going forward.

Our Watch is funded as part of the [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children](#). It exists because of the vision of the Commonwealth and Victorian governments and the commitment of the South Australian and Northern Territory governments to share in this task.

Our Watch is focusing on four key areas:

- sustaining constructive public conversations
- delivering innovative and evidence-based prevention programs
- enabling organisations, networks and communities to embed prevention practices
- influencing public policy, systems and institutions.

This important work can't be done in isolation. Our Watch partners include the Women's Alliances, White Ribbon Australia and ANROWS.

Action at local and regional levels is also vital and all Australians must take responsibility for challenging the attitudes and beliefs that minimise, justify and excuse violence against women.

To assist in this endeavour, Our Watch has a number of high profile supporters, including inaugural Patron-in-Chief, His Excellency General the Hon Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC, Governor-General of Australia, and Patron, the Hon Dame Quentin Bryce AD, CVO.

In addition, Our Watch ambassadors, whose expertise and influence stretch across public and political spheres, include comedian and television presenter, Charlie Pickering, Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, human rights advocate, Khadija Gbla, Chief of the Australian Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO, comedian and journalist, Stella Young, actor and director, Damian Walshe-Howling and actor, Miranda Tapsell.

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## Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety

Launched in May this year, [Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety](#) (ANROWS) is a not-for-profit independent national research organisation, jointly funded by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments.

ANROWS

A key initiative under the National Plan, ANROWS' role is to build, distribute and promote evidence to drive policy and practice aimed at reducing levels of violence against women and their children and alleviating its impacts.

Based on national consultation and analyses of gaps in the current state of knowledge on violence against women, ANROWS produced the National Research Agenda to guide researchers and research funders, in general, as well as its own decisions on research priorities.

ANROWS' *Research Program 2014-2016* will address the four strategic research themes of the National Research Agenda and feature:

- large-scale multi-jurisdictional projects scoped by ANROWS in collaboration with national advisory groups
- smaller scale state of knowledge projects directly commissioned or produced by ANROWS
- projects selected from an open grants application process.

ANROWS received 50 excellent quality open grant applications. These have been peer reviewed and contracts for research projects under the program are currently being negotiated.

ANROWS provides access to evidence through a range of information services to support decision-making for policy and practice, as well as further research. These services include ANROWS' online [Resources Database](#).

Read more about the [National Research Agenda](#), ANROWS' [research priorities](#) and its [publications](#) on [ANROWS' website](#). The ANROWS office is buzzing and there are exciting times to come.

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## Foundation for a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework for family, domestic and sexual violence



The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released the [Foundation for a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework for family, domestic and sexual violence, 2014](#) on 30 September 2014.

Developed in consultation with researchers, state and territory justice agencies, and supporting organisations like hospitals and accommodation providers, it will act as a guide for organisations about the collection of administrative data in respect to family, domestic and sexual violence.

The National Data Collection and Reporting Framework is designed to improve the evidence base for family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia. Once the framework is in place, researchers and policy makers will be able to better identify common characteristics of family and domestic violence incidents, including demographic profiles; types of violence; and use of services.

The next steps of the project will involve working across agencies and jurisdictions to ensure information is collected in a consistent and comparable manner for robust reporting and to continue to build a more flexible evidence base.

The Foundation for a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework for family, domestic and sexual violence, 2014 was produced by the ABS in partnership with the Department of Social Services under the National Plan.

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### Updates from around the country

#### Northern Territory launch of the Second Action Plan

On Friday 19 September in Alice Springs, the Northern Territory Minister for Women's Policy Hon Bess Price MLA hosted Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash (Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women) to launch the Second Action Plan of the National Plan.

The event was held at the Alice Springs Convention Centre and provided insight about how the Second Action Plan has a focus on Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. Over 100 guests attended including NT Attorney-General, the Hon John Elferink MLA and NT Health Minister Hon Robyn Lambley as well as Natasha Stott Despoja AM, Chair of Our Watch.



L to R: Bess Price, Michaelia Cash, John Elferink, Natasha Stott Despoja

As part of the launch, Minister Price and Natasha Stott Despoja also signed a certificate of commitment between the Northern Territory Government and Our Watch ensuring that Indigenous women and children from remote regions are a part of Our Watch's strategic direction. This event was also an opportunity to launch Our Watch in the Northern Territory.

Earlier in the day Minister Price, in partnership with the NT Attorney General, launched the [Northern Territory Domestic and Family Violence Strategy 2014-2017: Safety is Everyone's Right](#). This comprehensive strategy aims to create an improved and coordinated approach to reduce and prevent domestic and family violence in the Northern Territory.

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## Establishment of Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Taskforce



L to R: Ms Kerry Millard MP; The Hon Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO (Chair); Ms Liz Cunningham MP; Ms Heather Nancarrow; Mr Ian Kaye MP; Ms Ada Panawya Woolla; Ms Anne Cross; Mrs Desley Scott MP

In response to growing concern about the level of domestic and family violence in the state, the Queensland Premier, the Hon Campbell Newman MP, has established a Special Taskforce to investigate domestic and family violence in Queensland.

The Taskforce members (pictured, left) and its Terms of Reference were announced by the Premier on 10 September 2014. The Taskforce Chair is the Hon Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, former Governor-General of Australia and former Governor of Queensland.

The Taskforce will undertake extensive consultation across Queensland and seek input from relevant experts across a broad range of issues. Formal [submissions](#) have been invited and close on 1 December 2014. In addition, Queenslanders can contribute to a 'Perspectives' document which will be a compilation of essays on the stories, ideas, experiences and thoughts of interested individuals and organisations. The closing date for these submissions is 20 October 2014. The Taskforce will make recommendations to the Queensland Government to inform the development of a domestic and family violence strategy. It will deliver its report to the Premier by 28 February 2015.

Further information can be found at [www.qld.gov.au/dfvtaskforce](http://www.qld.gov.au/dfvtaskforce).

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## Domestic violence deaths under the spotlight in the ACT

A [review into domestic violence deaths](#) in the ACT is to be undertaken by the independent [ACT Domestic Violence Prevention Council](#).

The review will consider actual cases of domestic and family violence that led to the death of a victim to determine what can be done to prevent the violence and what warning signs we need to look for. The review will assist in achieving the objectives of both the National Plan and the [ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-2017](#).

The ACT Government has committed to driving continuous improvement through sharing outcomes of reviews into deaths and homicides related to domestic violence with other states and territories. Domestic and family violence has a very human cost, claiming the lives of more than 100 people in Australia every year, and the government and community needs to build a strong foundation to ensure that the loss of life ends.

This review will help the Domestic Violence Prevention Council provide a robust and independent picture of domestic and family violence in the ACT and help to inform government decisions about domestic and family violence mechanisms in to the future. The findings of the review may also help to identify issues that point to the need for legislative, policy, practice and service changes across government and the community sector.

The terms of reference, reporting deadline and involvement of victims' families are yet to be finalised, but the council's executive director, Marcia Williams, said a timeframe of about 12 months could be expected.



## New guides for ACT media reporting on domestic violence

On 4 September 2014, ACT's Minister for Women Joy Burch launched new guides to help local media when reporting on domestic and sexual violence in the ACT. The [Guides for ACT Media - Reporting on Violence against Women and Children in the ACT](#) were developed by the Women's Centre for Health Matters (WHCM) in consultation with local journalists and media students from the National Press Club, University of Canberra Press Club and the Media and Journalism Faculty at UC.

The guides are practical resources for media in the ACT, which will provide them with information and advice to help them gain understanding about domestic violence, sexual violence, child sexual assault and Indigenous family violence.

"Journalists and the media in general play a major role in telling the story of violence against women and children. They shape and reinforce local attitudes about, and perceptions of, domestic and sexual violence in the ACT, and help us see the stories behind the headlines.

But reporting on these issues can be complex for journalists who may be faced with a lack of knowledge of how to report, and trying to balance their legal and editorial barriers. These resources will support them in that important role."

-Joy Burch, ACT's Minister for Women

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## Breaking the Silence in Tasmanian schools



White Ribbon Australia was recently awarded \$83,580 from the Tasmanian Community Fund for a statewide project to offer its [Breaking the Silence in Schools](#) program (BTS) to selected schools in Tasmania.

This program aligns with the Tasmanian Department of Education's *Respectful Schools* *Respectful Behaviour* initiative, which is a key component of the Department's *Respectful Schools and Workplace Framework (2013)* aligned to its *Learners First Values*.

As part of this framework, a priority is to ensure that schools and workplaces are inclusive of all; that there are shared visions, values and clearly defined expectations that contribute to being accessible, diverse and accepting and that respectful behaviour is the responsibility of everyone. The Department supports a whole of school approach to behaviour through the provision of a resource for schools – *Respectful Schools, Respectful Behaviour*, professional learning for teachers and principals through the Professional Learning Institute and a web portal.

BTS is White Ribbon's primary prevention program designed to drive attitudinal and behavioural change in young people aged 8-18 years, aiming to prevent perpetration of men's violence against women and girls.

The primary prevention approach targets lasting cultural change to reduce and prevent violence before it occurs by addressing the root causes and conditions which support gender-based violence.

The Tasmania BTS project will begin in 2015 with a series of workshops across the state. Participating schools in each region will receive three facilitated BTS workshops which will equip school principals and senior leaders with an understanding of the issues around this violence and teaching strategies to engage students.

The [Tasmanian Community Fund](#), established in 1999, provides grants to not-for-profit organisations and is administered by an independent board.

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## WA website “Youth Say No”

Work is underway on the redesign of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support’s [Youth Say No website](#), which targets young people experiencing violence in the home, in a dating relationship, or those looking to support a friend who is being abused.



The website was first developed in 2000 as part of a larger campaign promoted and delivered through high schools. A design company was contracted earlier this year to undertake a redevelopment of the website based on current usage patterns and interests of the target group. Preliminary research has provided sound findings in what young people want to see and how they want it delivered.

The *Youth Say No* campaign aims to address issues affecting young people such as dating violence and family and domestic violence, and to empower young people to take action. It is the key strategy to communicate with young people and educate them about appropriate behaviours and attitudes in the home and in relationships in WA. The website redevelopment is expected to be completed by December.

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## Victoria hosts Bystander Action to Prevent Violence Against Women forum



On 2 October 2014, [VicHealth](#) hosted the Bystander Action to Prevent Violence Against Women forum. The forum contributes to the primary prevention initiatives in [Victoria’s Action Plan to Address Violence against Women and Children 2012-2015](#) and was opened by Victorian Minister for Community Services, the Hon Mary Wooldridge.

Bystanders have the ability to challenge and influence the social determinants of violence, such as gender inequality and attitudes that minimise, justify, or excuse violence against women. Research shows that people are more likely to take bystander action when they perceive the behaviour as serious and when there is likely to be strong support for action from their peers and colleagues, communities and organisations.

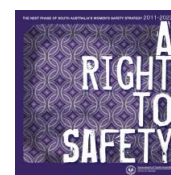
VicHealth’s 2012 report [More than ready: Bystander action to prevent violence against women](#) included a large-scale community survey that measured people’s readiness to act on discrimination and sexism in workplaces, sports clubs and social settings. The survey found strong support in the general community for bystander action and the need to strengthen formal and informal support to enable more individuals and groups – especially young people and men – to respond to the social conditions that support violence against women.

The Bystander Action forum highlighted current innovations in bystander programming, VicHealth current research and a selection of bystander programs from across Australia.

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## Violence Against Women Collaborations in South Australia

The South Australian Government became a member of Our Watch in August 2014. Becoming a member of Our Watch supports South Australia’s ongoing commitment to ending violence against women outlined in the [A Right to Safety](#) strategy and demonstrates continuing commitment to the National Plan.



Our Watch, with its aim to drive cultural and attitudinal change to prevent violence against women and their children from the ground up, will enhance South Australia’s prevention efforts, which include [Violence Against Women Collaborations](#). These Collaborations have been established in most regions, and aim to build community capacity to reduce violence against women by working to create cultural and attitudinal change within the community, addressing the underlying causes of the violence.

A key benefit of the Collaborations is the development of appropriate regional approaches to respond to and prevent violence against women. Ultimately, the focus of the Collaborations is primary prevention strategies which seek to prevent violence before it occurs.

For example, the Western Adelaide Collaboration has developed a partnership with Adelaide United Football Club to deliver White Ribbon activities. Collaboration members attended the Adelaide United final home game in April providing White Ribbon promotional materials and chatting with people attending the game. Family survivors of family violence tossed the coin at the start of the game after a brief message about violence against women.

## Coming up under the National Plan

- [White Ribbon Day](#) and White Ribbon Day events on and around 25 November 2014
- [ANROWS' Research Program](#) 2014-2016 will be announced on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October. Keep an eye out for projects under the research program, and a suite of publications that will be released in coming months, as work is completed: *ANROWS Notepad*, a fortnightly newsletter, and *ANROWS Footprints*, a quarterly update.
- Stay tuned for work that [Our Watch](#) will be doing on bystanders.
- The ACT is commencing consultation during October and November 2014 to develop the second implementation plan for the [ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011-17](#), *Our Responsibility: Ending violence against women and children*. Consultation will be occurring with various Ministerial Advisory Councils', service providers and other stakeholders, along with consultation on specific issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, with assistance from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body.
- The [4th Australasian Conference on Child Death Inquiries and Reviews](#) is being hosted for the first time in Perth, Western Australia from 6 – 7 November 2014.
- The next National Plan e-newsletter will be released in December. It will provide details about announcements and initiatives under the National Plan from October to December 2014.

## Dates for your diary

### October 2014

27 – 2: National Safe Work Week

31: Reclaim the Night

### November 2014

1 - 30: Movember, Men's health

25: White Ribbon Day / International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

25 - 10: 16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence against Women

### December 2014

1: World AIDS Day

3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities

8 - 10: 2014 World Indigenous Domestic Violence Conference

10: Human Rights Day

15 - 17: 2014 World Indigenous Health Conference

## Have your say!

We want to hear from you! If you'd like your event included in this newsletter, or have other questions, comments or ideas, please [email us](#).

If you've not done so already, subscribe to receive this e-newsletter direct to your inbox [here](#).

## Do you need help?

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic and family violence or sexual assault, get help by calling:

- 000 if you, a child, or another person is in immediate danger
- [1800 RESPECT](#) – 1800 737 732
- [Relationships Australia](#) – 1300 364 277
- [Mensline](#) – 1300 789 978