



OUR WATCH

SUBMISSION TO VICTORIA'S ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE

PART TWO

The second of a two-part submission:

PART ONE (submitted 5 June): *The evidence base on what drives violence against women, what works to prevent it, and challenges for population-level change*

PART TWO (this submission): *The National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children – implications and recommendations for Victorian system, policy and practice development*

19 June 2015

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About this submission

The second of two submissions

This is the second of two submissions from Our Watch to the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria). Our initial submission outlined the current evidence base on the drivers and contributors to violence against women, what works to prevent it at the program level, and the challenges we need to meet if we are to see population-level change.

This supplementary submission brings in recent learnings from updated research and nationwide consultations on a [National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children](#) (the Framework). Development of the Framework is being led by Our Watch, in partnership with the Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth, and in consultation with State and Territory Governments. The Framework will guide a coordinated approach to prevention policy and programming across jurisdictions and sectors. The submission draws conclusions on the implications of the Framework for prevention of violence against women and their children in Victoria, and makes concrete recommendations for systems development, policy and practice.

Scope and terminology

Like Part One, this submission deals solely with the *primary prevention* of violence against women and their children – in line with Our Watch's mandate and expertise. We reiterate that good responses are a fundamental 'building block' for prevention and that investment across prevention, early intervention and response is necessary to maximise the effectiveness of strategies in all areas. Please refer to our earlier submission for our definition and understanding of primary prevention.

This submission also uses the language of ‘violence against women’ in alignment with the international evidence base, national policy and the new National Framework. As the ‘note on language’ in Part One explained, we understand this means the submission does not speak to the full gamut of the Commission’s remit over ‘family violence’, but it does provide a robust and sound conceptualisation of how to prevent the overwhelming majority of cases of such violence – those perpetrated by men against women who are their partners or ex-partners.

Finally, this submission, like Part One, makes reference to [Getting serious about change: the building blocks for effective primary prevention of men’s violence against women](#), a ‘Joint Statement’ from nine organisations¹ outlining the foundations that signatories agreed were necessary if we are to move beyond a ‘project-by-project’ approach to prevention in Victoria and achieve measurable whole-of-population change. In this submission we look at what the concrete applications of the ‘building blocks’ might be, based on the learnings from the Framework’s development, and provide options and recommendations along these lines for the Commission to consider.

New learnings from the National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children

Advances in the research since the 2007 VicHealth Framework

This section outlines draws the learnings from the most recent literature² and ‘think pieces’ commissioned by the National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children partnership project (‘the Framework’). It also reflects on the stakeholder consultations undertaken between February and June 2014 to inform the development of the Framework. It considers how these most recent sources build on the previous evidence, suggesting where the evidence is now strongest, and distilling and summarising new and emerging learnings and implications for policy.

Historically the emphasis in policy and practice with regard to violence against women has been on responding to that violence, and therefore has appropriately focused on women as the victims of violence. The key challenge of a primary prevention approach remains shifting the focus to more squarely analyse and understand the factors driving perpetration in order to identify the kinds of changes that will be required to reduce and eliminate it.

In the past, much prevention activity has been undertaken without sufficient collective analysis of the problem – that is, without first building a collective understanding of the drivers of violence

¹ Namely: CASA Forum Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault; Domestic Violence Victoria; Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health; No To Violence; Our Watch; Victorian Equal and Opportunity and Human Rights Commission; Women with Disabilities Victoria; Women’s Health Association of Victoria; and Women’s Health Victoria. VicHealth participated in the drafting of the Joint Statement, and indicated support for it in their own submission to the Royal Commission.

² Drawn in particular two unpublished literature reviews undertaken by Michael Salter (2014) and Kim Webster (2015).

against women (Michau et al 2014). As this understanding has become more developed in the literature since 2007, there is now an opportunity to better align prevention efforts with this analysis, in a way that acknowledges the scale and complexity of the issue as well as the emerging clarity about its main drivers, and that ensures the bulk of prevention effort and resources is directed towards tackling these most significant drivers.

Where the evidence is now stronger

The status of gender inequality as the key driver of violence against women

The literature reviews undertaken for the 2007 VicHealth Framework had already noted that, as a complex social problem, violence against women does not have a single ‘cause.’ However, the consensus is now much stronger that the key driver underpinning this violence is gender inequality – in structural, normative and practice-based dimensions (examined in more detail below). It is gender inequality that not only correlates with or contributes to violence against women, but is consistently recognised as the key factor that drives high levels of this violence.

International data shows an inverse relationship between gender equality and violence against women, based on the leading global indices for structural gender equality. These measure equality based on: life expectancy, sex ratio at birth, adult literacy, education enrolment rates, workforce participation, income, wage quality, and representation in political office or in management and technical positions (Remenyi 2007; True 2012; UN Women 2010). In other words, it has become clear that the main structural driver of violence against women is unequal economic, social and political power relationships between men and women, with such violence being both a cause and a consequence of such inequality. This relationship is now well established in numerous theoretical works and empirical studies and is recognised in state, national and international policies to address the problem (COAG 2010; UN Women et al, 2012; WHO 2010).

The status of other contributing factors

There are many other factors – particularly those associated with individuals’ life experiences and the environmental or material conditions in which they live – that need to be acknowledged as contributing to violence against women, or as affecting the severity or distribution of that violence in a given society. These contributing factors include, for example, individuals’ life experiences and their psychological effects, such as the (complex) relationship between childhood experience of violence and later patterns of perpetration; alcohol and other drug use and poverty or socio-economic disadvantage.

Research into ‘biographical factors’ finds ‘exposure to abuse and violence against women in childhood, and substance abuse’ to increase the risk of violence against women at the individual

level, interpreting this to suggest individual level 'risk factors', albeit that operate in the context of environmental and macro-level factors (Salter 2014: 25). Similarly, several recent studies find neighbourhood level socioeconomic status to be associated with increased prevalence of intimate partner violence in local communities (Bonomi, Trabert et al, 2014; Edwards, Mattingly et al, 2014; Khalifeh, Hargreaves et al, 2013; Pinchevsky & Wright 2012), with various indicators of disadvantage such as unemployment and low income appearing particularly relevant (Salter 2014: 19). This has been interpreted to suggest that a clustering of 'risk factors' in some communities, increases the likelihood that they will display higher rates of violence (Salter 2014).

However what is now becoming clearer is that while these factors are 'part of the picture', they should be considered as *contributors*, rather than drivers, because none of them on their own is sufficient to explain the current prevalence of gender-based violence against women. Rather, they are better understood as contributing to violence only in relationship to or interaction with the key driver of gender inequality.

Furthermore, in responding to this research there is a need for caution about the use of terms such as 'risk factors' and 'vulnerability' or 'vulnerable communities'. These terms can be problematic because they focus on the risk of victimisation; implying that the drivers of violence lie primarily in the particular characteristics of those individuals and communities who *experience* it at the highest rates, rather than in the broader social factors that determine its *perpetration*. This can not only have a stigmatising effect on victims, but effectively diverts attention from the broader social context in which the key drivers of violence (particular dimensions of gender inequality) originate. This approach also tends to imply that the priority for intervention should be to address environmental and individual level factors in those 'disadvantaged communities', or among 'vulnerable individuals' thought to be most at risk. This is an assumption that risks diverting attention from the need for universal, whole-of-population prevention strategies aimed at broad *social*, transformation rather than individual or community level change.

Structures, norms and practices: the aspects of gender inequality that are particularly significant as drivers of violence against women:

Broadly, gender inequality refers to the socially constructed distinctions between men and women and the unequal power relations and hierarchies within which they are positioned in society. It is gender inequality in this broad sense that can be considered the overarching driver of violence against women. However, there is an emerging understanding of the specific dimensions of gender inequality that are most relevant, which can best be described as expressions of three key processes (Flood 2009):

- **Structural:** Unequal economic, social and political power between men and women – and the laws and practices that support or fail to address this. Violence against women is 'deeply rooted in the greater power and value that societies afford men and boys in access to material, symbolic, and relational resources, compared with women' (Michau et al 2014: 3).

- **Normative:** Social norms are rules of conduct and models of behaviour expected by a society. Social norms theory proposes that behaviour is influenced less by a person's own beliefs than by what they believe is expected of them or what they believe influential others would do in a similar circumstance (VicHealth 2014). This makes the dominant social norms in any given context extremely powerful, and in contemporary Australian society these are based on rigid gender roles, identities and stereotypes. They include for example, widely held ideas about men and women, such as the assumption that men make better leaders than women, and assumptions more specific to violence, such as the view that violence is a means of asserting male dominance and defining masculinity
- **Practices:** The way in which gender inequality is manifested in everyday practices at individual, organisational/institutional or social levels, such as child-rearing or employment practices.

These domains or processes of gender inequality are interrelated and mutually reinforcing – a structural power imbalance such as a lack of women in cabinet reinforces the normative notion that men make better leaders than women, and the normative assumption that women's role is to look after children can reinforce discriminatory workplace practices such as pregnancy discrimination. Further, the norms, structural power imbalances and practices that support gender inequality are reflected in other forms of discrimination and inequality (such as on the basis of Aboriginality, (dis)ability, age, ethnicity, or sexuality). They are also communicated both informally (e.g via community attitudes) and formally (in social structures, laws and institutions) (VicHealth 2014).

The multiple levels at which gender inequality – as the key driver of violence against women – is manifested

The socio-ecological model is now established and well-accepted as a means of explaining the complex phenomenon of gender inequality, and the way in which it is manifested (in norms, structures and practices) at multiple, interrelated levels – from the individual and relationship level, to the community, organisational, institutional and societal levels. The importance of this model in relation to the prevention of violence against women is also now emphasised by literature that points to the way it counters a strong tendency in the community to attribute violence only to individual level factors (Webster et al 2014).

Some criticisms of the ecological model suggest that it fails to incorporate a coherent theory of causation in relation to violence against women (Pease 2015) and is thus merely descriptive rather than explanatory (Salter 2014). As a result, it is argued, it can be used in ways that are antithetical to the notion that violence against women is rooted in gender inequality, by suggesting that it is rather the result of a 'grab-bag' of factors at the different levels of the social ecology (Pease 2015).

However, the socio-ecological model is not best understood as a theory of causation in itself (beyond the assumption that individual behaviours are the product of interrelated levels of influence). Rather it is best treated as a scaffold to be populated using a process guided by theory and other forms of evidence.

On this view, the model is compatible with a theory of causation that highlights gender inequality as the key driver, in that it provides a useful map across which the different dimensions (norms, structures and practices) of gender inequality can be plotted. Furthermore it can help demonstrate how these dimensions interact with each other in complex and mutually reinforcing ways by making clear the ways in which they are manifested at multiple levels of the social ecology.

As Michau et al (2014) suggest, there are mechanisms that sustain violence against women and girls at each level of the social ecology, and these ‘manifest within the overarching frame of gender inequality and imbalance of gender-power relations’. Thus, while violence may be associated with unequal power relations at the interpersonal level, these in turn stem from and are rooted in unequal power relations that characterise systemic structures at the broader community, institutional and societal levels.

This approach builds on and goes beyond the established public health framing of the socio-ecological model, incorporating Salter’s (2014: 17) argument that what is needed is

- a **sociological** approach that recognises violence as a social practice that is a product of, but also produces, gendered norms and gendered inequalities; and
- a **political economy** perspective to understand how gender norms are grounded in the maldistribution of economic and political power to men at the expense of women.

Conceptualised and enhanced in this way the ecological approach is particularly useful in helping to build a theoretically coherent model to explain violence against women, for two reasons. First, most theories locating violence against women in unequal gender relations assert that the factors contributing to both gender inequality and violence against women are reproduced across multiple levels of society, from the psyches of individuals through to cultural institutions and the state (See Pease 2015; Connell & Pearse 2015 for reviews). Second, the interconnectedness of influences at each of these levels is emphasised. In particular, most feminist-informed theoretical accounts of gender inequality note the mutually reinforcing relationship existing between the private and the public domains (see Connell & Pearse 2015; Walby 1990) – that is, the relationship between what happens in families and relationships and the public world of work, cultural institutions and the state.

The model also has the potential to counteract the tendency in some research to focus on individual risk factors and pay relatively less attention to the impact of macro-level factors, that is, those social, economic and political characteristics of nation-states that are statistically associated with increased incidence of violence against women. Research that does consider this question indicates that structural violence (that is, systemic inequality embedded in economic, political and social systems) is an important driver of gendered violence (Salter 2014: 13, True 2012).

Factors that can be understood as particularly significant drivers of violence against women at each of the levels of the model include:

- **Individual:** The ways in which gender roles and identities are embedded in individual psyches (Pease 2015) and played out in the behaviours of individuals

- **Relationships** (between intimate partners, and at the family or household level): Family and relationship practices (e.g domestic divisions of labour, patterns of decision-making, child rearing practices), and norms pertaining to family and intimate relationships and identities and to violence against women
- **Organisational/community**: Organisational structures (eg patterns of institutional power, the division of labour), formal and informal practices and norms pertaining to gender roles, relations and identities and violence against women,
- **Institutional**: State and market structures and practices pertaining to gender relations and violence
- **Societal**: cultural norms pertaining to gender and violence against women, transmitted through society wide institutions, especially the media.

Implications for a prevention agenda – aligning policy and practice with emerging analyses

This section draws on both the summary of the literature provided above, and on the consultations undertaken to inform the development of the National Framework, to suggest a number of emerging implications for a prevention agenda.

Explicitly focus direct effort and investment on addressing gender inequality as the key driver

Prevention strategies need to concentrate their focus, and the weight of effort and resourcing, on the key driver of violence against women, namely gender inequality. Efforts should aim to tackle those structural normative and practice-based dimensions of gender inequality discussed here, with the aim of narrowing ‘the gender gap’ across all these dimensions.

In consultations on the Framework, the assertion that gender inequality is the most significant driver of violence against women, and the draft Framework’s intention to emphasise this as the key finding from the literature, was widely appreciated. Stakeholders approved of the way the explanatory model makes this the central issue, and weights it more than the other factors, thereby avoiding an approach that uses a long and undifferentiated list or ‘grab bag’ of factors. Stakeholders were keen to see this emphasis on the need to address gender inequality reflected in the Framework itself.

Lessons learned from practical experience and evidence from programming in the prevention of violence against women, also confirm the need for this approach. Reviewing a range of practice evidence, Michau et al conclude that prevention to be effective, violence against women ‘needs its underlying drivers to be tackled; fundamentally, we need to transform gender-power imbalances’

(Michau et al 2014: 1).

Take a sociological, not individualised, approach

Prevention efforts need to be based on a sociological analysis of violence against women. This is necessary to explain – and crucially therefore to tackle – the phenomenon of violence against women as a social problem, rather than as a psychological one, or a question of individual behaviour.

On this question, in the Framework consultations, there was much discussion about the question of ‘men’s choice to use violence’, with many important conversations about the meaning of individual choice and its conceptual status in the explanatory model being developed for the Framework. The outcome of these discussions was general agreement that this model is sociological, rather than psychological in nature. In other words, it is a probability-based explanation of a problem at the social level, rather than a behavioural model that explains individual ‘pathways to perpetration’.

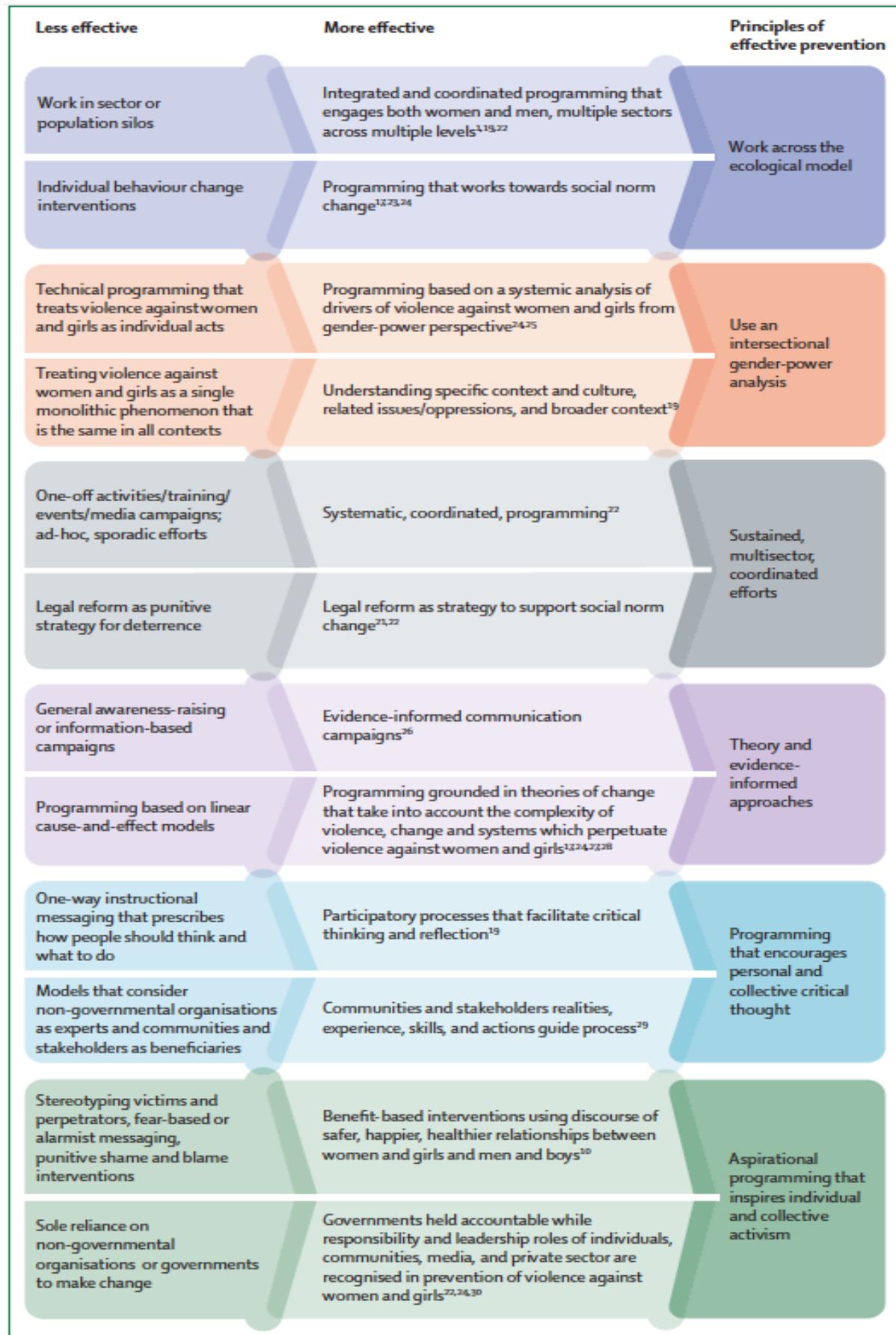
This is not to imply that prevention strategies should not *include* programs aimed at changing the attitudes and behaviour of individual men, but rather to assert that these are in no way sufficient on their own, and in fact will be largely ineffective without larger efforts towards *social* transformation to tackle gender inequality at all the levels of the socio ecological model, and across its structural, normative and practice-based dimensions.

Link with, strengthen and support others’ efforts to address contributing factors

There was broad support from consultation participants for the Framework *to support* efforts to address contributing factors (such as alcohol abuse and socio-economic disadvantage), by linking with, informing and strengthening them – *but general agreement that this should not be the Framework’s focus*. Stakeholders felt the Framework should make clear that the bulk of investment and resources for prevention of violence against women must be dedicated to addressing the structural and normative gendered drivers of such violence if we are to achieve sustainable change (and because this is an otherwise neglected area of social policy and practice).

We suggest this is also an appropriate approach for any state-based strategy for addressing violence against women, to ensure that resources are directed where they will be most effective in relation to this goal.

Figure 1: the key learnings from international evidence on good practice prevention programming (Michau et al 2014)



Distinguish between the prevention of violence against women and their children, and the broader child protection agenda

Preventing violence against women has the effect not only of preventing women themselves from experiencing violence, but of protecting children in their care from exposure to such violence, particularly intimate partner violence against their mothers or other female caregivers.

In conceptualising an agenda to prevent violence against women *and their children*, Our Watch acknowledges the serious impact of violence against women on children in their care. However, in making this connection, we do not intend to include the prevention of *all* violence against children within the scope of our work to prevent violence against women.

We suggest it is similarly important for state-based approaches to both acknowledge the overlap between this agenda and existing child protection agendas, and yet draw a clear distinction between the two, as they involve overlapping yet significantly different sets of drivers.

However, there are a number of areas of complexity that need to be carefully considered given that:

- The impact of direct childhood experience of violence is a potential contributor to future perpetration or victimisation,
- Childhood is recognised as an important stage in prevention programming, and
- Some girls whose age makes them legally ‘children’ experience forms of violence that are best understood as gender-based rather than as forms of child abuse.

The implications of these considerations for a prevention agenda are as follows:

1. Strategies to prevent violence against women should clearly define the primary prevention of direct child abuse and neglect as out of scope, but should nevertheless demonstrate support for, or solidarity with child protection agendas (as per the analysis above). Linking with, informing and strengthening the work of those aiming to prevent child abuse (especially through capacity building on the gendered drivers of such violence) should be considered within scope.
2. The prevention of violence against women should focus on whole-population initiatives that include a life-course approach to ensure all children and young people:
 - Grow up in positive, equitable and non-violent family environments (e.g. parenting programs),
 - Participate in education and care environments that promote equality, build respectful relationships skills, and respond effectively to those at risk or experiencing violence (e.g. whole-school programs building relationship skills and promoting respect and equality).
 - Are involved in creating a non-violent and equitable futures for themselves and their society (i.e. they participate actively in the development of prevention programs).

To this end, settings that are influential in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of children towards both violence and gender inequality could usefully be prioritised in a prevention strategy, with possibilities including:

- Family support services (with home visiting programs reported as particularly effective (Bair-Meritt et al 2010))
- Parenting and parenting services
- Early childhood education and care services
- Sports and recreation settings
- Education (school –based respectful relationship programs show particular effectiveness (Fulu, Wilson and Lang 2014; Whitaker et al 2013))
- Media and popular culture (e.g. advertising, gaming) and regulatory frameworks (e.g. particularly pertaining to sex stereotyping, pornography).

Furthermore, the ‘transition to parenting’ should be considered as a key time for prevention activities to occur. This recognises both that this life stage is a time when the probability of violence against women is high, and that exposure to violence in childhood can be a contributing factor to future perpetration of violence (with the caveat discussed above that this is not a direct predictor of violence, and that this factor is only relevant in combination with, or as an interaction with the key driver of gender inequality). A focus on this life-stage is also important given the evidence that shows programs targeting new parents to be effective (Flynn 2011; Fulu, Wilson and Lang 2014).

3. Specific forms of gender-based violence against girls and young women (in particular dating violence) should be considered in scope for any prevention strategy, as they derive from the same drivers as violence against adult women. That is, they are forms of gender-based violence against women that affect young women (and some children) because they are female, rather than because they are children.
4. No setting in which prevention activity is undertaken should be presumed to be free of existing violence. Nor should the likelihood be overlooked that some children and young people who are participants in prevention programs and activities are already experiencing violence. For this reason, while a clear distinction needs to be drawn between the *prevention* of violence and early intervention or response efforts, any prevention activities that involve working with children and young people should seek to link with and support early intervention initiatives aimed at children experiencing (or who have experienced) violence (and create referral pathways to link individual children to those programs and services where appropriate).

Aim to create change across the three dimensions of gender inequality, and particularly at the structural level

Preventing violence requires change across all three of the dimensions of gender inequality discussed above – structures, norms and practices. It requires a transformation of the long standing institutional structures, dominant social norms and deeply entrenched and socially accepted practices, and that together maintain gender inequality and normalise or support violence against women and girls (Michau 2014: 3).

Recent approaches to preventing violence against women have emphasised the importance of changing social norms (via changing attitudes), or using positive norms as a means of persuading people to respond in certain ways (VicHealth 2014). A concern about this approach is that it has tended to focus on attitudinal and behavioural change while neglecting structures and practices (Pease 2015). This is a problem since social norms are themselves shaped by social structures and social practices (Pease & Flood 2009). This means that to change social norms it is also important to change the practices and structures responsible for their development and maintenance. There is a need to move beyond the tendency in some previous and existing approaches to prevention to focus only on, or direct effort only at the individual level, in an attempt to change attitudes and behaviours. This approach, while necessary is not sufficient, and will not be effective without simultaneous focus on effort that the other level – in particular the more macro levels at which structures of gender inequality are embedded.

The role of structural factors in driving violence against women is reflected in the National Plan's emphasis on the importance of women's economic status as a factor influencing levels of violence against women. However a greater focus on the role played by these macro-level factors is critical to the development of effective prevention strategies at this level (DeGue, Holt et al, 2012; True 2012).

Strengthen cross-sector and multi-level collaboration

As is now well-established, the interconnectedness of the various dimensions of gender inequality as causal drivers means that the prevention of violence against women cannot be achieved by one institution, sector, or group working in isolation, but requires cross-sectoral coordination and mutually reinforcing strategies that address structures, norms and practices across all social settings (Michaud et al 2014: 3). This requires systematic, sustained programming across the multiple interconnected levels of the social ecology (Michau et al 2014).

Build gender equality indicators to inform the monitoring of prevention strategies

The new hypothesis that emerges from this understanding of gender inequality as the key driver of violence is that narrowing the gap in gender inequality in terms of structures, norms and practices, and doing this at multiple levels across the whole of society is what will drive a reduction in violence against women. In turn this suggests the importance of developing relevant indicators that go beyond the level of prevention program evaluation data and focus on measures of gender inequality (with regard to structures, norms and practices, and at all levels of the socio-ecological model).

Options and recommendations

In our first submission we outlined how the evidence base for primary prevention of violence against women has evolved over the last decade to the point where:

- 1) We can have confidence that we understand the key drivers of, and contributors to, this violence;
- 2) We know that good practice prevention initiatives can be effective at changing the structures, norms and practices that drive violence against women; and
- 3) We know that some of these strategies have even proven, in longitudinal studies, that they can reduce future perpetration or victimisation among participants.

It was posited that if we consider this work in the context of other major primary prevention 'movements', such as those addressing smoking or drink driving, then we are at the third of four broad stages, the remaining one of which is to:

- 4) Begin implementing and monitoring a coordinated, multi-setting and long-term program of work that demonstrates progress in *reducing drivers or levels of violence against women across the whole Victorian population*.

Our first submission noted that this will require the Victorian Government to take a leadership role, working with private and community sector partners, and that the broad 'prevention project' must be monitored and evaluated as a whole, not only to build evidence and improve practice, but also to enable measurement that goes beyond the individual impact on participants to an assessment of population level progress towards social change. The submission then looked at some of the major 'shifts in thinking' required if Victoria is to meet these challenges and lead the world as the first jurisdiction to aim for and demonstrate population-level change.

This supplementary submission now takes that analysis a step further, and makes recommendations for the concrete actions and infrastructure needed to put this vision into action.

Joint Statement 'building block'

Options and recommendations for implementation

1. Develop a long term, bipartisan, whole of government and whole of community plan

Our Watch commends the Victorian Government's identification, in its own submission to the Commission, of a whole of government family violence prevention framework, with a focus on gender equity, as an opportunity for reform.

Elements of the prevention plan/framework

The Royal Commission should recommend that this plan/framework:

- 1.1. Seeks to prevent all 'violence against women' – especially intimate partner and sexual violence – in line with national policy and the international evidence that there are common drivers across the spectrum of such violence. There is no comparable evidence base for shared drivers of different forms of 'family violence' as defined in Victorian legislation, and different prevention strategies will be required to address, for example, elder abuse or adolescent violence against parents;
- 1.2. Aims to address – in its universal and systemic elements – the *structural, normative and practice-based* gender inequalities (see explanation on p.7) that drive violence against women, and monitors a 'narrowing of the gap' across all three areas (more detail in recommendations 2 and 3);
- 1.3. Does not, within a limited 'budget envelope', place disproportionate emphasis on, or investment into, addressing the 'contributing' factors such as alcohol and drug abuse, socio-economic

disadvantage or mental illness. Such areas already receive distinct policy attention and funding, and only become relevant as contributing factors to violence against women when interacting with gendered and violence-supportive norms, practices and power imbalances. Rather the framework should seek to link with, strengthen and support existing policy and programming in these areas through bringing a gendered and violence-informed analysis, while retaining its focus and investment on addressing the recognised drivers of violence against women.

- 1.4. Aims for equality of outcomes across population groups, tailoring strategies to ensure universal reach of primary prevention activities. Achieving such outcomes will require that prevention strategies promote not only respectful relationships and gender equity, but also challenge negative stereotypes based on Aboriginality, disability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- 1.5. Note that the targeting of activity to 'vulnerable cohorts' or those at 'increased risk' is not a primary prevention, but an early intervention approach. Early intervention approaches aim to change individual pathways/trajectories where violence is already occurring or at risk of occurring, and should be used sparingly and with care because of the risk of vilifying or pathologising certain groups. They are not an appropriate strategy to use with groups on the basis of characteristics such as Aboriginality, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic status alone. Early intervention activity should receive attention and investment that is distinct from primary prevention, which instead aims to set the right conditions for equal and safe relationships between *all* women and men, girls and boys, through universal and tailored activities, no matter what their circumstances or identity characteristics.
- 1.6. Covers a period long enough to enable complex social change to begin (at least 10-12 years), and envisage shorter-term action plans with clearly articulated activities and timelines, as well as responsibilities and reporting requirements for different areas of government.
- 1.7. Includes activities at all levels – from policy, legislative and institutional reforms, to multi-phase communications campaigns and programs, and coordinated prevention programming with

	<p>communities and organisations.</p> <p>1.8. Comprises mutually reinforcing activities across multiple settings, such as education, early childhood, local government, sports, workplaces and the media.</p> <p>1.9. Engages people at different stages of the life course (such as children and young people or new parents) and in different groups (such as Indigenous communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and women with disabilities).</p> <p>1.10. Is developed with cross-party support (see, for example, Tasmania's <i>Taking Action</i> plan, and the National Plan itself) and cross-party budgetary commitment.</p>
<p>2. Address structural, normative and practice-based gender inequality as the key driver of men's violence against women, through an intersectional approach</p>	<p>What the plan/framework should aim to change</p> <p>The most recent research informing the development of the new National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women (to be released in September 2015) has distilled the particular elements or dimensions of gender inequality that most consistently and significantly drive violence against women globally.</p> <p>The Royal Commission should recommend that all prevention efforts work across three areas, aiming to:</p> <p>2.1. Achieve structural equality: 'Equalise' women and men's economic, social and political power, on measures such as pay equity, superannuation, and representation in decision-making positions in private and public sectors;</p> <p>2.2. Create equal and non-discriminatory social norms around gender: Shift attitudes, assumptions and portrayals of women and men that reinforce gender roles, identities and stereotypes, such as popular culture portrayals of men as violent or alternatively 'protective' of women, advertising portrayals of women as sexually available, or else as carers and home-makers; and</p> <p>2.3. Change practices to support equality: Alter institutional, organisational and individual practices and behaviours to support the above, such as by increasing the availability and affordability of</p>

	<p>childcare, or changing workplace systems to promote men’s equal participation in child-rearing.</p> <p>The new National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children will provide more detailed guidance on how these areas can be addressed in state policy.</p>
<p>3. Develop a monitoring, accountability and reporting framework</p>	<p>Planning and resourcing to measure change</p> <p>The plan/framework in recommendation 1 should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Set ambitious but achievable short and longer-term targets that directly reflect the necessary changes to the known drivers of men’s violence against women across the three areas in recommendation 2, and at all levels (e.g. gender equality targets for institutions and organisations as well as improvements in community and individual norms, attitudes and practices); 3.2. Improve data collection across agencies, and at the regional and local levels, to enable better understandings of where existing inequalities exist and progress towards eliminating them: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2.1. Mandate and resource a central government agency (such as the Crime Statistics Agency, working in partnership with the Women and Equality Office) to oversee the above; 3.2.2. Seek expert advice on ensuring accurate and sensitive indicators of structural, normative and practice-based gender inequality are identified, strengthened and/or developed for all levels of policy and programming; 3.2.3. Ensure data is collected in a consistent and robust way across geographical locations and settings by including adequate funding for evaluation (20% of project budgets) and guidance/standards for data collection; 3.2.4. Work with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Commonwealth Government to strengthen local and regional-level data collection on prevalence and attitudes through existing survey mechanisms, such as the Personal Safety Survey and the National

	<p>Community Attitudes Survey (given the 'data picture' at regional and local levels is currently limited to police and service reporting data); and</p> <p>3.2.5. Establish processes for councils and local services to collect uniform data on incidence of, reporting of, and attitudes towards violence, including for the collection of benchmark or baseline data against which to measure progress in local areas</p> <p>3.3. Include monitoring and reporting requirements for all participating agencies and organisations (government and non-government); and</p> <p>3.4. Be managed, overseen and monitored by an independent statutory entity, such as the Safety and Equality Commission (or comparable option) in recommendation 4 below.</p>
<p>4. Establish strong governance and quality assurance mechanisms</p>	<p>Internal governance structures</p> <p>To ensure a robust and coordinated prevention effort is maintained across government departments, the Royal Commission should recommend that the prevention framework/plan in recommendation 1:</p> <p>4.1. Is governed by a sub-committee of cabinet or a similar cross-ministerial group that includes ministerial portfolios relevant to prevention as well as response (especially education, equality, employment, health and youth affairs).</p> <p>4.2. Is implemented by a high-level steering committee comprising senior cross-government representatives (secretary and deputy secretary level) and a diverse range of other prevention stakeholders. This may require building capacity and systems for the meaningful participation of diverse groups in the committee and other implementation structures.</p> <p>4.3. Decisions of the committee should be implemented by an adequately-resourced and technically-expert central government unit with a mandate for strategic coordination and monitoring of activity across departments (ideally the Women and Equality Office within the Department of Premier and Cabinet).</p>

Our Watch's role

The proposed 'Safety and Equality Commission' should be required to collaborate with Our Watch on prevention activities that transcend state boundaries and are part of a national approach. Our Watch could assist the Safety and Equality Commission with the provision of, for example:

- *Nationally-agreed conceptual frameworks, and monitoring and evaluation guidance (with partners VicHealth and ANROWS through the National Framework to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children project);*
- *Nationally-agreed quality standards and implementation tools for work in different settings and tailored for different geographical contexts or population groups;*
- *A suite of modular prevention training programs and materials that are adaptable to different sectors, and to pre and in-service*

A statutory Safety and Equality Commission to ensure quality and monitor progress

To ensure quality and statewide reach of prevention activity, a comprehensive programmatic function is required – operating on an 'action research' model with an eye to innovation and evaluation. A monitoring mechanism that is independent from government is also necessary to support accountability, evidence-based practice and continuous improvement.

One option is to hold such functions – programmatic and monitoring – separately. The programmatic function could, with the right investment and specialist expertise, sit within a central unit of government, but this would make it vulnerable to changes of government and political investment priorities. Alternatively this function could sit with an existing statutory body or nongovernment organisation – such as VicHealth, a state 'arm' of Our Watch, or a women's organisation – with expanded mandate and operations. The monitoring function, on the other hand, needs to be separate from government if it is to make claims to independence, and needs to be mandated with the power to access data from government agencies and programs – suggesting a statutory body.

Our Watch recommends that both functions sit within the one body, to allow for pooling of expertise and efficiencies. In addition to primary prevention programming and monitoring, such a body could also hold functions to coordinate and monitor family violence response system integration across regions, and design an early intervention system and suite of programs with vulnerable groups.

The Royal Commission should recommend:

- 4.4 An act of parliament to create a statutory Safety and Equality Commission with powers to guide, support and monitor progress across responses, early intervention and prevention of violence against women, particularly family violence and sexual assault. The Safety and Equality Commission's duties would include:
 - 4.4.1 Coordination of system reform and program delivery across crisis response, early

<p><i>modalities;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Technical advice on primary prevention practice, communications and policy; and</i> • <i>The design and delivery broad-based social-marketing and communications-based initiatives to change norms, behaviours and practices. Such campaigns transcend state boundaries and sit more logically with a national than state organisation. Five state/territory governments (including Victoria) and the Commonwealth Government already fund Our Watch to undertake such activity, and Our Watch recommends that this function is fully utilized in any future social marketing or communications investment in prevention.</i> 	<p>intervention and primary prevention, supporting whole-of-government policy and activity;</p> <p>4.4.2 The creation, chairing and support of taskforces to create workplans and timelines for progressive realisation of shared goals across settings and geographic areas;</p> <p>4.4.3 Ensuring quality mechanisms are adhered to, including criteria for program funding and evaluation, and the implementation of appropriate standards across settings and sectors;</p> <p>4.4.4 Statewide capacity-building, delivering nationally-accredited pre and in-service training and workforce development;</p> <p>4.4.5 Collection of data and measurement of progress at the local and programmatic levels to ‘feed up’ into statewide monitoring; and</p> <p>4.4.6 Providing an annual report on progress across all areas as a statutory obligation.</p>
<p>5. Significantly increase and sustain funding to support the above, and to ensure good programs are systematised and upscaled</p>	<p>To move beyond small-scale and time-limited prevention projects, and to begin reducing levels of violence against women at the population level, requires a significant increase in sustainable funding that is commensurate to the scale and seriousness of the problem.</p>

The Royal Commission should recommend:

- 5.1 Dedicated and ongoing funding for core service delivery and program support is embedded into departmental budgets. For example, in education this would include funding for curriculum guidance development, teacher professional development and regional office support for whole-school approaches to respectful relationships education;
- 5.2 Funding to the Safety and Equality Commission to upscale, systematise and coordinate delivery of proven and good practice prevention approaches/programs and associated training statewide, adhering to national agreed and accredited standards (see recommendations 5.4 to 5.x below);
- 5.3 An annual grant-making scheme (to be administered by the Safety and Equality Commission) for designing, testing and evaluating innovative prevention practice that increases our knowledge base and builds evidence in in gap areas. Funding criteria should be based on the quality standards outlined in recommendation 4.4.3 above, be of sufficient duration to gather meaningful data, and require that at least 20% of funding is earmarked for evaluation.

Systematising proven approaches and innovating new practice

Recommendation 5.2 above refers to the upscaling and systematisation of good practice, well-evaluated prevention programs. Many of these currently exist in Victoria, but are constrained by time-limited funding or the limited geographical reach of their host organisations. Our Watch recommends that the Royal Commission undertake a mapping exercise of such programs, based on received submissions and triangulated against good practice criteria, in order to identify gaps and assess scale-up potential of different projects or programs. Our Watch has begun such a mapping exercise to inform our national policy and practice advice, and can provide assistance to this exercise. The Victorian government has also funded Our Watch to deliver a small number of projects (see our website for detail), and the Commission is invited to contact us for early learnings from these.

A life-course lens over existing programming allows us to identify where the gaps are and make the following recommendations for upscaling or systematisation of good practice approaches, or for testing and innovating approaches in settings where there are currently gaps. All such work should be overseen by the Safety and Equality Commission and adhere to agreed standards.

As elements of 5.2 and 5.3 above, the Royal Commission should recommend funding allocations to:

- 5.4 Expand and strengthen programming in the **maternal and child health sector** that promotes equal and respectful parenting (specifically within antenatal and post-natal programs/health care services). Such programming might include strengthening maternal and child health care policies and systems to engage both mothers and fathers, professional development to ensure practices and services promote equal parenting and respectful relationships.
- 5.5 Build on and roll out existing evidenced based **parenting programs** such as Baby Makes Three, engaging couples as first time parents (as opposed to men and women separately). Participation in Baby Makes Three has been shown to result in positive shifts in attitudes and behaviours around gender equality and parenting responsibilities. The program would be strengthened by extension to the antenatal care stage and implementation – like all good practice programming – should draw on new and emerging evidence in an ongoing way. International programs such as Program P and Men Care have also shown positive results, with young fathers reporting on improved relationships with their children and partners as well as sharing household and child-care responsibilities more equally, and could be drawn on or trialled in Victorian settings.
- 5.6 Test and evaluate emerging programming in **early childhood education and care**, aiming to build children’s knowledge and skills to negotiate gender equitable identities and relationships later in life. A whole of setting approach in early childhood education and care would include professional development for early childhood staff, ensuring centre policies actively promote gender equitable staff practices, parenting and gender equitable messages to children in their care. There is limited but emerging existing programming in this area and further research is recommended to inform

the development of a program model, curriculum and professional development for early childhood educators.

- 5.7 Develop and pilot a whole-school, system-embedded respectful relationships program for **primary schools and out-of-school-hours care settings**. Some good practice respectful relationships education programs have been initiated at upper primary year levels by community organisations, but specific curriculum guidance and system-integrated work is lacking. A pilot should involve undertaking initial research to inform the design of the program model in a primary school setting, development of an evidence based curriculum (in partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET) to increase school take-up) and associated teacher professional development, and trialling through a whole of school model that involves schools, parents, community organisations and is supported by DET.
- 5.8 Deliver a whole school, system embedded approach to respectful relationships education across **secondary schools** statewide, building on the current evidence base and initial learnings from the Respectful Relationships Education in Schools (RREiS) project currently being undertaken by Our Watch (funded by DHHS and in partnership with DET). Such an approach would need to:
- Utilise the DET curriculum guidance materials (Building Respectful Relationships: Stepping Out Against Gender Based Violence);
 - Include comprehensive teacher professional development (tested and evaluated as part of RREiS);
 - Provide tools and resources to schools to support this activity, including resources for school leaders, students, parents/carers and school staff (provided through the RREiS project and The Line);
 - Ensure adequate resourcing of the local service delivery agencies (family violence, sexual assault and youth work) who can support staff/students who are experiencing violence and support schools to develop evidence based policies around disclosures and perpetration of

violence.

- 5.9 Develop and pilot a place-based approach to gender equity and respectful relationships for **universities and TAFEs**. This approach would need to reflect the workplace and education functions of a higher education institution, being mindful that in addition to the educational workplace, university/TAFE campuses also house places of business (eg. bookshops, cafes, post offices etc). There is some limited work being undertaken in Victorian universities (for example Monash University is participating in the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Pilot Project and has a focus on promoting gender equity through their structures and within staffing groups, and La Trobe University includes a focus on respectful relationships through their Living Well student counselling and education program). A pilot should involve undertaking research to inform the design of the program model in a tertiary education setting, developing information and tools for students to support them to engage in equal and respectful relationships and take bystander action (including the development of a peer educator program which has proven successful through secondary school programs), associated professional development for relevant university educators, business owners, student counsellors and peer educators, and trialling of a whole of campus model that involves all organisations/individuals who are physically located within the campus or are affiliated with the university through other means.
- 5.10 Mainstream gender equity **throughout education services** from early childhood through to secondary. That is, in addition to the development of specific respectful relationship education programs for various settings (primary, secondary, out of school), invest in the channels of support and influence to ensure that the policies, practices, skills and resources to reinforce and promote gender equality are in place across educational settings, including in classrooms and in the settings as workplaces in themselves. For example:
- 5.10.1 In early years settings (kindergartens, childcare etc.) national standards should include promotion of gender equality and staff should be trained accordingly;

5.10.2 The policies and practices of existing support systems for parents (i.e. ParentLine, Parent Resource Centre, MCH Line) should promote gender equality and respectful relationships, and staff trained accordingly;

5.10.3 Pre-service teacher training (across ages and stages) should include content on gender, violence prevention and respectful relationships (which in the long-term will eliminate the need for intensive in-service professional development).

5.11 Have the Victorian Government operate as a 'model of excellence', implementing best practice **workplace programs across all public sector and government funded organisations and bodies**. Such a program should learn from and build on existing good practice programs and approaches (such as that currently being trialled by the South Australian Government), and seek to build the capacity of organisational leadership to create an environment which actively promotes gender equality, and where staff are supported to take bystander action. This work would leverage the extensive reach and influence of public sector workplaces into and across communities.

5.12 Support **private sector workplaces, and other nongovernment organisational settings** to implement good practice programs. Work in this area requires a comprehensive and coordinated model and strong evaluation to ensure consistent standards and adherence to legislative acts and requirements (such as the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*).

5.13 Develop a cross-code organisational development model and toolkit to prevent violence against women and create safe, supportive and inclusive **sporting environments**. The model would include:

- strategies and tools for clubs to audit their current structures, policies and culture, and to help them create culture of gender equity, non-violence and respect at multiple levels of the organisation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integration of the promotion of gender equality and prevention of violence into existing sporting club and code development programs • resources for a good practice education program using a bystander model of prevention • opportunities for women to take leadership positions in sport and recreation organisations • strategies to integrate prevention initiatives into existing accreditation and awards programs • a ‘built-in’ accreditation system of rewards and accountability (eg – linking use of the model to liquor licensing and regulation) • a template ‘Code of Conduct’ that addresses respectful behaviour towards women and girls and which can be adapted for multiple codes and clubs. • policy/procedures to follow if the Code of Conduct is transgressed. <p>Embed the prevention of violence against women in government policies, programs and resources related to the administration of sports and recreation, and ensure that funding criteria requires recipients to promote gender equity and non-discriminatory environments.</p> <p>5.14 Support all Victorian councils to integrate prevention of violence against women into their own workplace systems and process, and into their policy and programming with local communities. For example, Victorian councils are mandated to produce plans to improve the health and wellbeing of all Victorians by engaging communities in prevention, and by strengthening systems for health protection, health promotion and preventive healthcare across all sectors and all levels of government. Our Watch defers to the submission from the Municipal Association of Victoria for more detailed options and recommendations to the Commission in this area.</p>
<p>6 Ensure universal reach through inclusive and tailored approaches</p>	<p>The Royal Commission should recommend:</p> <p>6.4 That all prevention policy and programming across sectors and settings require representation of</p>

people from different population groups in governance/advisory mechanisms, development, delivery and evaluation, and that all work is tailored to reach people from different cultural backgrounds, abilities, genders, sexualities and ages, and in different locations.

- 6.5 That all prevention policy and programming across sectors and settings – including those detailed under recommendation 5 above – includes dedicated resourcing and effort to tailor the work to different groups. For example, for the secondary school education setting, participatory design processes should be undertaken to understand the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in order to create respectful relationships education and teacher professional development materials that are culturally appropriate. Similarly, tailored initiatives should ensure young people with disabilities receive prevention education in all schools, including in Special Developmental Schools.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

- 6.6 All policy and programming aiming to prevent violence against women and their children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is guided by the principles of *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a Safer Future for Indigenous Families and Communities* 10-year Plan, in particular recognising the impact of colonisation, dispossession and intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and the part this plays in understanding violence against women and their children in these communities.
- 6.7 A dedicated ongoing funding stream for integrated and culturally competent prevention strategies that incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, values and experience. The funding stream should build on existing prevention initiatives driven by the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups and overseen by the Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum, and strengthen local leadership and capacity.

	<p>Culturally and linguistically diverse communities</p> <p>6.8 A dedicated ongoing grants stream to build leadership skills of culturally and linguistically diverse women to lead activity to prevent violence against women within their specific communities, and for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to work with the Safety and Equality Commission to use the tools and resources developed from good practice projects.</p> <p>6.9 Specific social marketing campaigns in a range of community languages and across culturally and linguistically diverse media.</p> <p>Women with disabilities</p> <p>6.10 Our Watch supports the recommendations in the submission from Women with Disabilities Victoria, and in particular the expansion the Gender and Disability Workforce Development Program (addressing gender inequity in disability services) as a unique and innovative example of prevention programming of national relevance.</p>
<p>5 Engage communities through established organisations and networks</p>	<p>A coordinated statewide approach to primary prevention should make use of established organisations, networks and infrastructure at the regional and local level. It is essential that those operating at the local level are well-supported, resourced and have access to local-area expertise to ensure that local and regional prevention activity is implemented efficiently, effectively and in line with the objectives of the whole of government prevention plan/framework in recommendation 1. A clear, strategic approach to coordinating and supporting prevention work across the state is therefore required to enable consistency and quality across regions.</p> <p>The Royal Commission should recommend:</p> <p>Regional planning and Prevention Integration Coordinators</p> <p>7.1 Dedicated and ongoing funding for the continued development, implementation and review of</p>

regional prevention plans. Regional prevention plans should be developed and implemented in partnership with a diverse range of regional and local organisations and government to ensure maximum reach and impact within local communities. The plans should focus on identifying and coordinating action across the region, and determining appropriate evaluation measures at both the local and regional level.

7.2 Establishing and funding Prevention Integration Coordinator (PIC) positions within each region to assist with the coordination and implementation of regional and local prevention action. The regional PICs could:

- Encourage and seek commitment from a wide range of regional and local organisations to undertake prevention activities;
- Facilitate the development, implementation and review of regional prevention plans;
- Provide the support and expertise necessary to assist regional and local partners with the implementation of quality, mutually reinforcing, evidence-informed initiatives;
- Lead the monitoring of regional and local prevention evaluation plans;
- Act as a conduit between the region and the Safety and Equality Commission; and
- Assist with the implementation and review of the whole of government prevention plan/framework.

Our Watch has identified two options for an appropriate auspice for the regional PICs:

7.2.1 The PIC role could sit within regional Women's Health Services. Women's Health Services across Victoria have been leading coordinated, regional action to prevent violence against women with partners from across regional government departments, local government and community organisations; or

7.2.2 If co-located response services or multi-disciplinary centres are established in each region (as recommended in other submissions), the PIC role could be located in such a site. This

	<p>would enable work occurring across the continuum of response, early intervention and prevention of violence to remain coordinated and integrated.</p> <p>Statewide Prevention Practitioners in key peak bodies</p> <p>7.3 Dedicated funding to establish Prevention Practitioner positions within a range of key statewide peaks, government bodies and/or organisations. Appropriate sites for the positions should be identified based on their connection with key prevention settings and on their reach, mandate and potential to influence normative or practice change. For example, as the governing bodies for a variety of organised sport within Victoria, selected State Sporting Associations (SSAs) represent a significant opportunity to strategically influence the promotion of respectful relationships, the greater inclusion of women and girls and promotion of gender equity within regions and local communities where the sport is played.</p> <p>7.3.1 The Prevention Practitioner positions should be modelled upon the Preventing Violence against Women Policy Advisor role that sits within the Municipal Association of Victoria. This position has proven invaluable in terms of promoting evidence-informed action tailored to the local government setting, facilitating the development of expertise within the sector, coordinating networking and peer-support opportunities for workers in the field and developing practical resources to support activity.</p> <p>7.3.2 Positioning Prevention Practitioners within selected statewide peaks, government bodies and/or organisations would be a strategic approach to promoting prevention activity within particular sectors and to facilitating organisational change in culture, policy and practice that filters through to regional and local sites.</p>
<p>8 Build a skilled prevention workforce, within existing sectors, and as specialists</p>	<p>The Royal Commission should recommend:</p> <p>8.1 Investment in development of a skilled workforce that is capable of designing, delivering and monitoring effective and safe prevention interventions. This should:</p>

- Cater for different levels of expertise and roles in prevention,
- Be adaptable/modular for different settings and sectors,
- Include pre-service (university/TAFE) training for key professionals (such as early childhood educators and teachers, health promotion workers, human resources professionals, journalists and communication specialists and urban planners), and
- Include specialist prevention practitioners, reflecting the diversity of the Victorian community, that can provide leadership, technical assistance, program development and policy support within organisations and institutions.

There are several options for the development and delivery of such training and professional development:

- 8.1.1 Accredited training programs could be developed by Our Watch, in partnership with VicHealth and training providers, as part of the implementation strategy of the National Framework and its associated settings-based Implementation Guides. An initial training program based on the Framework itself is likely to be developed and trialled by mid 2016, with settings-based training modules staggered over 2016 to end 2017. Our Watch might seek to partner with higher education institutions for inclusion of profession/setting specific modules in pre-service curricula, and would likely seek to accredit in-service/professional development programs, potentially licencing providers for its delivery. The Safety and Equality Commission might seek to deliver or coordinate delivery of such training statewide and across settings in Victoria.
- 8.1.2 Alternatively, the Safety and Equality Commission might develop and deliver (or licence delivery of) its own training program, with similar pre- and in-service modules for specialists and settings-based practitioners.
- 8.1.3 Another option is that workforce development for the prevention sector build on existing gender equality or prevention or violence against women training programs held by

	<p>women’s health organisations or, for example, the Domestic Violence Resource Centre.</p> <p>8.2 Peak agencies support their member organisations to build capacity to promote gender equality and prevent violence and discrimination, for examples – VECCI and VEOHRC to develop prevention of violence against women training modules for inclusion in their curricula, WorkSafe to examine possibilities of strengthening prevention work through existing occupational health and safety and anti-bullying strategies.</p> <p>8.3 Capacity building for Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Groups, organisations and Indigenous community groups to implement local community-driven prevention programs.</p> <p>8.4 Support strategies to increase Indigenous people’s access to prevention training and train-the-trainer programs through formal and professional courses.</p> <p>8.5 Support the ongoing capacity building of mainstream services and organisations in cultural competency.</p> <p>8.6 Work with specialist community organisations to build the capacity and skills of women from marginalised groups to take a leadership role in prevention.</p>
<p>9 Undertake an intersectional gender analysis of all government policy, legislative development and budgeting</p>	<p>The Royal Commission should recommend:</p> <p>9.1 All government policy, legislative development and budgeting require a gender impact statement, ideally as part of a broader Human Rights Impact Assessment Statement, that identifies the differential impacts the law/policy/budgetary measure might have on men’s and women’s lives and details how it aims to ‘narrow the gender gap’. The procedural requirements of the gender impact statement might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial audit, at the start of policy and law-making processes, that considers the potential impact of the policy/law on structural power differences between men and women (economic, political, social, etc), on normative assumptions about the roles of men and

	<p>women, and on institutional, organisational or social practices that might reinforce or challenge structural and normative inequalities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with women representing the diversity of the Victorian population to consider the audit in the light of the different forms of discrimination or disadvantage experienced by women from different groups; and • The identification of provisions or resources specifically designed to address existing gender inequalities and empower women. <p>9.2 The whole of government plan/framework is linked to the obligation to promote human rights contained in the <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i>, and includes actions that link with areas of policy, regulation and legislation designed to address broader discrimination, disadvantage and abuse and promote inclusive and diverse communities.</p> <p>9.3 Potential amendments to legislation that might support efforts to reduce gender inequality, such as broadening the scope of the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1995</i> to capture sex discrimination in media and advertising.</p>
<p>10 Support ongoing research and evaluation for knowledge building and innovation</p>	<p>The Royal Commission should recommend:</p> <p>10.1 All new prevention activity take an ‘action research’ approach, learning from implementation and building capacity among practitioners and organisations for ongoing evaluation. Evaluation of pilots or ‘innovation programs’ should be set at 20 percent of program budgets.</p> <p>10.2 Evaluation frameworks for all initiatives should be aligned with the monitoring and accountability framework in recommendation 3 above, and should include meaningful, context-specific measures and indicators.</p> <p>10.3 Future research is planned to address gaps on prevention of violence against women experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage, and highlight good practice in prevention for</p>

addressing this in prevention activity.

10.4 Investment in Australia's first longitudinal study of Respectful Relationships Education in schools. While international evaluations have proven the effectiveness of schools-based prevention programs in reducing future perpetration of violence, no such data exists for Australian programs, and making it difficult to convince schools and governments nationally of the value of the work. Victorian is currently implementing one of the most comprehensive good practice respectful relationships programs in the country, yet current evaluation will not extend beyond measuring immediate impacts on student attitudes and school cultures. While such measures are important, further research is necessary to categorically demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach on reducing future rates of perpetration and victimisation. Such an evaluation would provide data on:

- The elements of the RREiS program that have the most 'traction' with students;
- Short and longer term changes to attitudes over time to assessing issues of 'rebound' or 'relapse';
- Subsequent changes in behaviour, such as reduced risk of perpetration of victimisation as a result of participation in the program;
- The effects of individual participant characteristics (such as exposure to other protective or risk factors) on the effectiveness of the RREiS program; and
- Particular attitudes or beliefs that are most associated with future perpetration or victimisation amongst young people.

This would provide policy makers with a definitive study of respectful relationships education in schools in the Australian context and the longer term return on investment that this program can have for young people in their future relationships.

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