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

Framework and Implementation Considerations

State Government Victoria

Domestic Violence Victoria

Peak body for domestic violence services for women & children

Working with News and Social Media to Prevent Violence against Women and their children: A Strategic Framework for Victoria.
This document provides the framework, background and context to its development and use, and considerations for implementation.

Working with News and Social Media to Prevent Violence against Women and their children: Quick Reference Guide
The accompanying Quick Reference Guide includes the purpose of the framework, actions and action areas.

Media-related initiatives for preventing family violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
Please note that this document is not necessarily well-suited to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in working with media to prevent family violence in their communities. Consultations found that the development of an adapted version is needed to meet the specific needs of these communities in preventing family violence with the media. At the time of publishing, plans are underway for its development. Further information and contacts can be obtained through Domestic Violence Victoria.

Copies of this document, in Word and PDF format, can be accessed online at www.dvvic.org.au.

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April 2015

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Preface

Before reading this document, it is important to understand why it has been developed and what it aims to achieve.

Working with News and Social Media to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children: A Strategic Framework for Victoria (Framework) has been developed to achieve a clear plan in Victoria for working with the media in the area of primary prevention of violence against women and their children (VAW). It builds upon many years of collaborative effort across the state, from work that originated in the Grampians region of Victoria.

Working with the media is an important element of Victoria and Australia's commitment to preventing violence against women and their children. The experience of Victoria in the last decade has shown that:

- The media is a powerful setting for, and influencer of social change
- There is strong enthusiasm for doing media-related prevention of VAW work
- The intersections between media and prevention of VAW are complex, and there are risks associated with doing media-related prevention of VAW work in a poorly conceived, piecemeal or inconsistent way
- Achieving improvements in media and community understanding of men's violence against women and their children will require stakeholders in this work to have a shared understanding of the evidence base and of the key messages and approaches needed for positive social change.

The Framework sets the stage for future work with media in the prevention of VAW field, taking into account the complexity of the task and the great diversity amongst stakeholders. We believe that generating agreement about what is needed and aligning the diverse groups who are doing media-related prevention of VAW work is a critical first step in fully implementing the Framework. To this end, we have identified strategic priority actions (1, 2.1 and 2.2) which are an essential starting point for successful projects and outcomes in this field.

We ask users of this document to keep in mind that the Framework is not a step-by-step guide to implementing all future work, but rather a map of the approaches required and a supporting tool to align and encourage informed and critical engagement with news and social media on VAW.

The Framework has been funded by the Victorian Government. It builds upon the significant and respected research and approach of the VicHealth document *Preventing violence before it occurs* (2007), and is situated within the broader policy context of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children* 2010-2022. Broad action and work in this sphere has been supported by Victorian Governments since 2010.

The Framework also particularly draws from the strategies of the *Family Violence in the News: Strategic Framework* (Cafs Ballarat and Pact Community Support, 2007) which has informed media and prevention work in Victoria since its publication.

The above policy and research documents recognise that primary prevention work needs to be founded in improving community understanding of violence against women and their children and its causes, especially gender inequality.

Working in primary prevention in the media setting includes improving news and social media content around the issues of:
- The right of women and children to live free from violence
- The causes of men's violence against women and their children
- The central role of gender equality in preventing men's violence against women and their children
- The myths and misconceptions about men's violence against women and their children
- The prevalence of men's violence against women and their children
- The impact of men's violence against women and their children on our community
- Actions community members can take to prevent men's violence against women and their children.

The Framework is structured around four Action Areas to address and improve news media reporting and social media dialogue, namely:
1. Align the diverse groups working on, or planning to work on, media-related PVAW
2. Upskill and develop resources for the specialist PVAW field and related organisations to engage effectively with media on prevention
3. Provide content the way media needs to receive it
4. Strengthen dialogue with the news media on PVAW.

It is important to note that during state-wide consultations held in 2013, this Framework was found to not necessarily be well-suited to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Consultations found that the development of an adapted version is needed to meet the specific needs of these communities in preventing family violence with the media. At the time of publishing, plans are underway for its development and it is expected that this document will be pivotal in contributing to social change in this area.

The development of the Framework has been supported by the Victorian Cross-Sector Advisory Committee on working with media to prevent violence against women. It has also relied on support and input from individuals and organisations across the state.

At time of publication, the national prevention body, Our Watch, are establishing their National Media Engagement Project. It is expected that this national project will continue to both inform and be informed by Victorian work, contributing to greater national congruence in this field.

Explanation of Terms

CALD
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

CALD refers to cultural groups and speakers of languages other than English. Research indicates that CALD communities experience significant discrimination and barriers in their daily lives, and culturally responsive and equitable approaches and services are needed to address such disparities.

Gender

'Gender refers to the social roles of men and women, and boys and girls, as well as the relationships between and among them, in a given society at a specific time and place. Gender is a key determinant of who does what, who has what, who decides and who has power.' (UNICEF, 2005)

Gender Equality

'Gender equality means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they be treated exactly alike. Levelling the playing field requires working directly with girls and women to address historical and present inequalities (affirmative action), as well as efforts to ensure that girls and women, and boys and men, define and benefit from mainstream development efforts (gender mainstreaming).' (UNICEF, 2005)

Gender Inequality

Has been found to be a significant causal factor in violence against women and their children, and addressing it is therefore a fundamental part of preventing violence against women (VicHealth 2007).

VAW
Violence Against Women

Violence against women is defined as:

'Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.' (United Nations, 1993)

In use of this term, there are a number of factors that need to be recognised. Firstly that the vast majority of violence against women is committed by men (ABS, 2013). Secondly that children are often exposed to and/or impacted by violence against their mothers, particularly within a family context (DSS, 2014). Violence can also be directed towards children by men as a way to hurt and control their mother/caregiver.

Therefore, the use of the term *violence against women* within this Framework should be understood to be referring, in the most part, to men's violence against women. Further, that this violence may include direct or indirect violence to women's children. This term is not intended to encompass all violence directed towards children, or other forms of child abuse or neglect.

FV
Family Violence

Family violence is one of the most common forms of VAW. It is behaviour that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally or psychologically abusive, threatening or coercive, or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to fear for his or her safety or wellbeing or for the safety or wellbeing of another person (Family Violence Protection Act 2008).

SA
Sexual Assault and Abuse

Sexual assault is one of the most common forms of VAW. Sexual assault and abuse is any unwanted sexual behaviour that causes humiliation, pain, fear or intimidation. It includes behaviour that does not involve actual touching, such as verbal sexual harassment.

Sexual assault and abuse also occurs outside of the context of VAW. This Framework does not address sexual assault towards men, nor sexual abuse of children that occurs outside the context of VAW (see VAW explanation above with reference to violence against children).

PVAW
Prevention of Violence Against Women

Prevention of violence against women is defined as activities and interventions that seek to prevent violence against women before it occurs. Interventions can be delivered to the whole population (universal) or targeted to particular groups that are at higher risk of using or experiencing violence in the future (VicHealth, 2007).

Prevention differs from service response or early intervention, which occurs after violence has occurred or at early signs of violence. It differs also from more specific actions targeted at individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of perpetrating violent behaviour or of being subject to violence.

The term PVAW is used in this document to refer to work that contributes or is relevant to PVAW. This is whether it is carried out by prevention-specific practitioners or other experts and spokespersons.

Media

Media is used to refer to a variety of forms of media, including news reporting, social media, advertising and popular programming. This document focuses on news media and social media.

News media: Print, electronic and broadcast (television and radio) media that focus on delivering news to the general public or a target audience.

Social media: the collective of online communications technologies and applications dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Social media is a new and constantly evolving platform/medium, and therefore its scope, reach and consumption is constantly being redefined. It commonly describes a variety of applications such as forums and content communities (YouTube), blogging and micro-blogging (Twitter), social networking (Facebook), social news networking (Reddit), social curation (Pinterest), collaborative projects (Wikipedia) and visual media exchanges (Instagram).
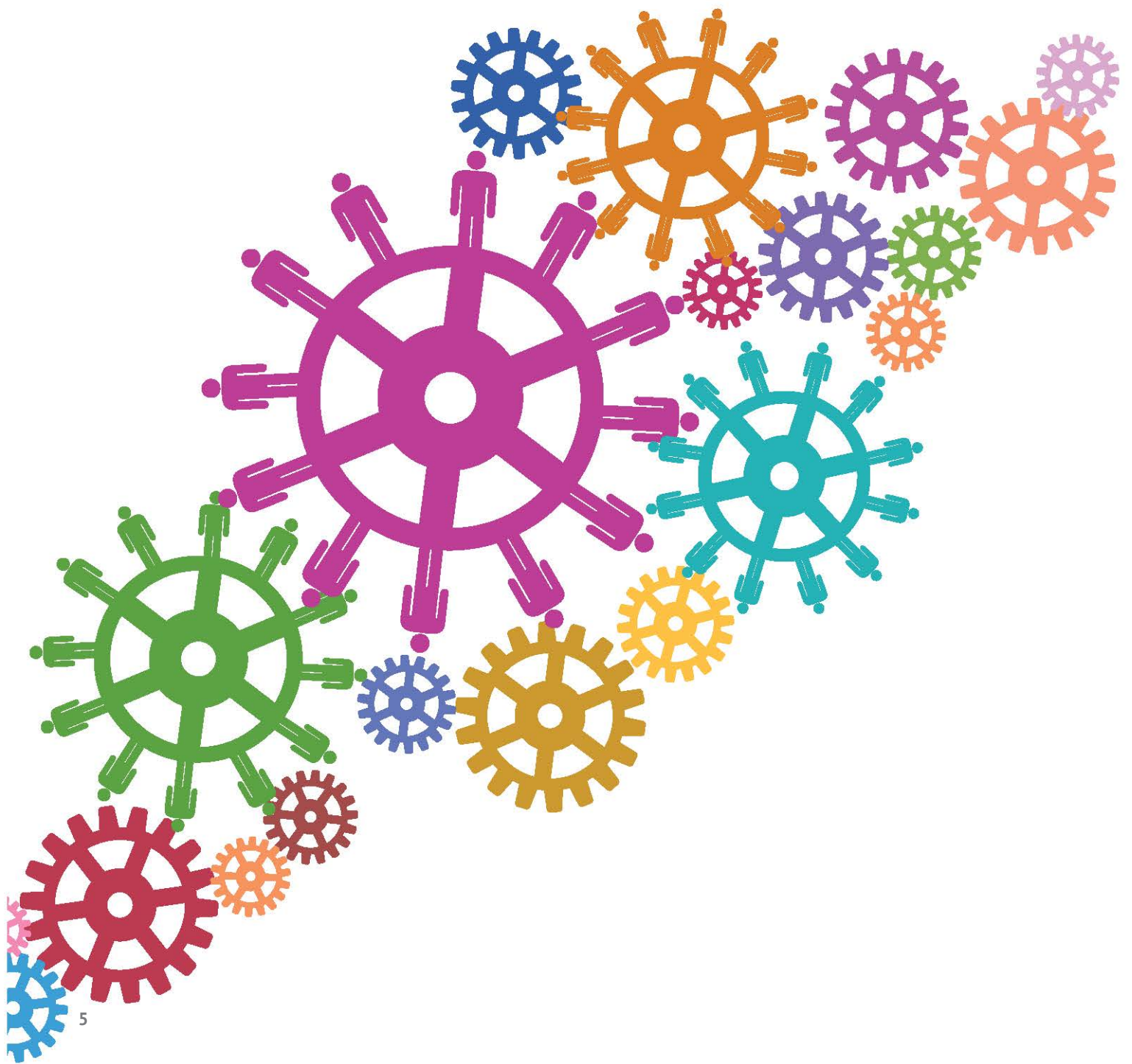
Introduction

What is Primary Prevention?

Primary prevention of violence against women and their children is activities and interventions that seek to prevent violence before it occurs.

Men's use of violence against women and their children is a fundamental violation of human rights. It is widely recognised as being at global epidemic proportions. The violence includes many forms of abuse that are directed by men against women because they are women. As such, violence against women can also be referred to as *men's violence against women* or *gender-based violence*. This violence can also affect or be targeted towards women's children.

Evidence tells us that one of the most significant causes of men's violence against women is the inequality of power and status between men and women. This includes structural gender inequalities in society, and embedded social attitudes and norms about women and children's value and place in society.

Evidence also shows that violence by men towards women occurs far less frequently in societies where there is more gender equality (WHO, 2013). It also tells us that community attitudes shape and influence the perpetration of, and response to, violence against women (VicHealth, 2009).

Primary prevention differs from response or early intervention, which occur after violence has occurred or at early signs of violence. It differs also from more specific actions targeted at individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of perpetrating violent behaviour or of being subject to violence.

To prevent violence from occurring in the first place, our culture needs to understand what gender equality looks like and implement evidence-based solutions to become more gender equal (VicHealth, 2007).

Primary prevention interventions can be delivered to the whole population (universal) or targeted to particular groups that are at higher risk of using or experiencing violence in the future (VicHealth, 2007).

Gender inequality is a causal factor in VAW. Addressing it is therefore a fundamental part of preventing violence against women.

Primary prevention of violence against women is an emerging area of practice, both in Australia and worldwide. Presently, few jurisdictions around the world have a comprehensive focus on primary prevention initiatives that are aimed at behavioural and cultural change beyond advocacy or awareness-raising campaigns. Efforts to build upon existing work and evidence around prevention are required (WHO, 2010; AHRC, 2012).

The evidence-based VicHealth paper *Preventing violence before it occurs* (2007) argues that in order to reach a tipping point of attitudinal change and behavioural change, prevention messages and initiatives should reach community members where they live, work and play.

It identifies multiple sites for action to prevent violence against women, including local government and community services, sport and recreation, workplaces, schools and young people, and media.

In Victoria, the emerging field of prevention work is led by a range of professionals and organisations. Some of these are prevention-specific practitioners, others also work across the continuum of responses to VAW from early intervention to crisis response.

The term PVAW is used in this document to refer to work that contributes or is relevant to PVAW, whether carried out by prevention-specific practitioners, or other experts or spokespersons.

Why is media a site for primary prevention of violence against women?

The media (news reporting, social media, advertising and popular programming) are highly influential in either reinforcing or challenging community attitudes and norms which contribute to violence against women. As such, media industries are uniquely placed to help redress the disparity between common perceptions held by the community about violence against women and the realities of that violence.

This Framework addresses media influence with a focus on news media and social media.

Media itself is rapidly changing; traditional media outlets are no longer the sole contributors or sources of news. Social media is integrated into much of the community, and is a powerful and proven mechanism for engaging and influencing the public and the news media. Social media can drive news media content and provide an unprecedented level of access to key media personnel and community leaders, as well as unprecedented access to concerned citizens and advocates.

High quality, informed and accurate news media coverage of PVAW, and engaged social media interaction on the issue, can be important contributors to prevention efforts through such actions as:
- Accurately conveying the full impact of VAW on our communities
- Conveying accurate and meaningful context for stories on men's violence
- Challenging community attitudes and behaviours that underlie or reinforce men's violence
- Identifying available specialists and support services for people seeking assistance
- Ensuring women's experiences of violence are accurately and sensitively communicated.

Through sector, agency, and individual work over the last decade, a good deal has already been achieved in understanding and building effective liaison between the PVAW field and the media. Some of the key insights from this work are presented in Section 3.

The task at hand is to continue to assist media to improve the quality and accuracy of reporting on VAW, its root causes and what is needed to prevent it.

Why do we need a Strategic Framework?

Engaging with media as an organisation or individual in the PVAW field is lively, demanding, and complex work that really can make a difference. It can also include some risks. The Framework aims to maximise the effectiveness and potential of these media-focused prevention initiatives.

There is significant work being done in Victoria, much of it informed by the Victorian project *Family Violence in the News* (Cafs & Pact Community Support 2006) and the resources it developed. For example, many agencies and workers in the PVAW field in Victoria already respond to media requests; some agencies have social media accounts and take the initiative to seek media coverage of issues they want highlighted; and some successful prevention messages and media-related initiatives are making positive change in the prevention space.

So with this work already underway - why do we need the Framework? And what benefits are there in adopting an overarching approach and coordination to ongoing action?

The Framework is a plan of agreed, consistent and evolving PVAW actions for both responsive and proactive engagement with news and social media. It also sets out key considerations for implementing this plan of actions.

Workers in the field in Victoria have identified a number of key reasons for taking a more strategic approach to working with media in men's violence prevention.

1. To maintain congruence with current policy and initiatives

There is increased community attention to PVAW, alongside a growing take-up of initiatives by state and federal governments.

All levels of government are now building strategies and plans and investing in programs on PVAW. Many of these include reference to working in the media setting. Diverse organisations and groups are also showing an interest, and/or investing resources in prevention initiatives. These prevention initiatives can include planned media engagement work or simply the utilisation of media as a complementary aspect to the core work.

The approach of this Framework is to assist in aligning the diverse groups involved in or planning PVAW initiatives with planned or incidental media-related components.

2. To help manage media demand

The increased interest is placing added pressure on those who work in the PVAW field.

Organisations who work on PVAW are being actively sought out as experts by a variety of media sources to provide insights or commentary. Many are also taking up, or are expected to take up, a social media presence to follow up fast-paced news items. Conferences, workshops and events also provide new opportunities to contribute to highlighting the role of gender equality in PVAW.

Sector consultations have revealed that many organisations and workers feel under pressure and under-resourced to meet these escalating media demands and requirements, and a supported strategic approach would benefit their work and confidence.

3. To create greater consistency of messages.

Social attitudes around gender and VAW continue to be shaped by misinformation and misconceptions that circulate through private, group and public media networks. Challenging and changing these attitudes requires consistent messages from authoritative sources that present an alternative perspective that is grounded in the realities of violence against women.

It is important that efforts and prevention messages are informed by the same evidence base so that confused or mixed messages are not presented to the public via media. The Framework identifies the development of consistent messages across the diverse field as an important element in the work required to change social attitudes. This includes building on prevention messaging that has already had success in this work and investigating how it can be adapted to different contexts whilst retaining consistency.

4. To ensure effective media engagement

Working intentionally and wisely with the media will result in more effective contribution to PVAW. The experience gained in implementing the first strategy, *Family Violence in the News* (Cafs Ballarat & Pact Community Support 2007), showed that a coherent strategy of approach and engagement with the media was much more effective and less problematic than piecemeal or reactive responses.

A further learning is that improvements in one area can have positive implications for others. It was found, for example, that creating incentives for media to focus on the issue of men's violence against women resulted not only in an increase in media reporting, but also a corresponding demand for personal stories and 'expert' opinions.

Prior to these developments, media capacity to find sources for such commentary was limited and PVAW messaging amongst those they did find was not consistent.
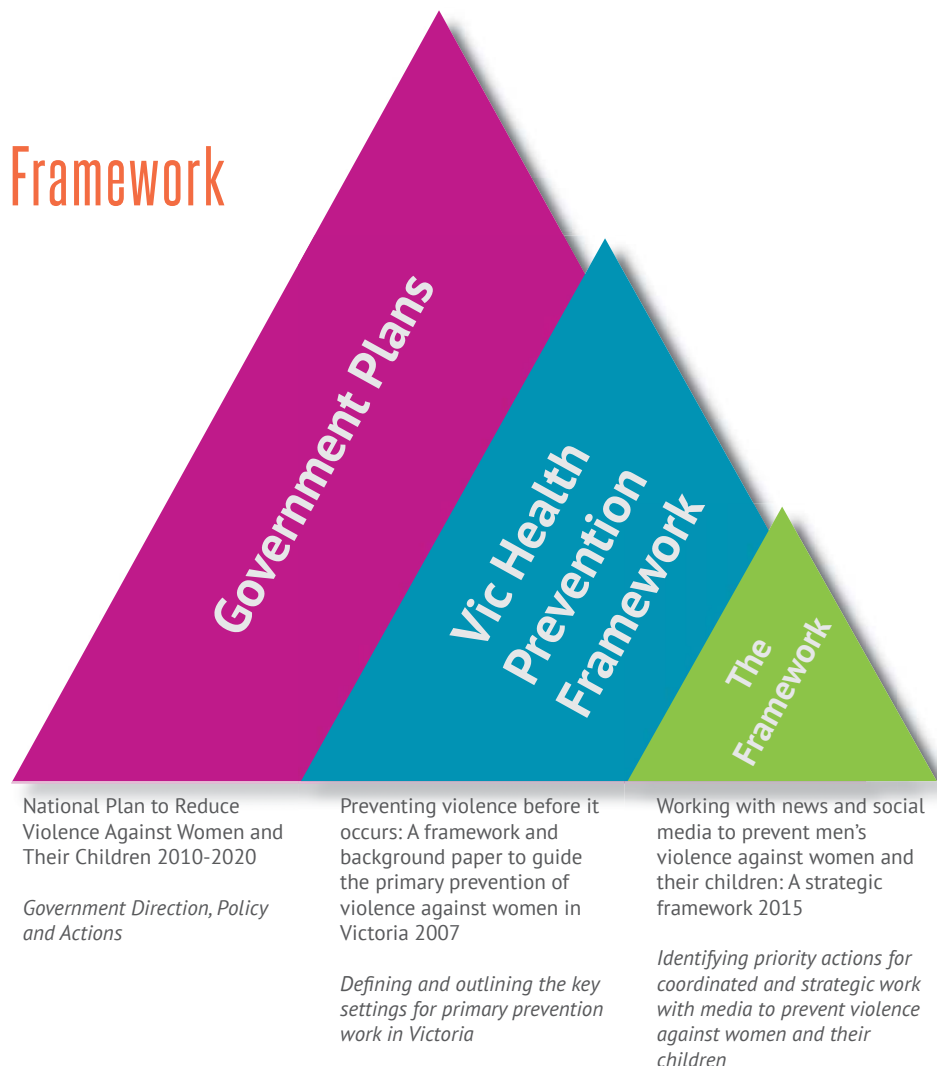
Building on successful initiatives and creating consistent and effective media engagement across the state is one of the emphases of this Framework.

5. To keep pace with the changing media environment and changes in reporting

The media environment has changed significantly in recent years, giving the PVAW field greater access to and involvement in news items and issues:

- Changes in the pace and participants in the news media, through the influence of online media and faster and evolving news cycles
- Rise in community members and journalists contributing to online commentary on PVAW, due to vast increases in community access to and engagement with online environments and news
- The rise of interactive social media, and its interaction and influence on community dialogue and news
- A significant and growing media profiling of PVAW, and emerging coverage of its links to gender inequality.

Situating the Framework

Government Plans

Vic Health Prevention Framework

The Framework

National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2020

Government Direction, Policy and Actions

Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria 2007

Defining and outlining the key settings for primary prevention work in Victoria

Working with news and social media to prevent men's violence against women and their children: A strategic framework 2015

Identifying priority actions for coordinated and strategic work with media to prevent violence against women and their children

Outline of the Framework

Action 1.1
Establish a coordinating body and/or worker to align Victorian media-related PVAW efforts

Action 1.2
Increase local and other networks for media-related PVAW

Action 1.3
Promote the Framework across the various sectors

Align the diverse groups working on, or planning to work on, media-related PVAW

Action Area 1

Action Area 4

Strengthen dialogue with the news media on PVAW

Action 4.1
Provide resources and information sessions for media which aid quality reporting

Action 4.2
Engage journalism students

Action 4.3
Support investigation into the impact of gender inequality within the media industry

Action Area 2

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

Action 2.1
Develop agreed Victorian key messaging about PVAW

Action 2.2
Deliver training and resources for PVAW workers on news, social media and prevention

Action 2.3
Develop guidelines and strategies for coordinated use of social media for PVAW

Action 2.4
Invest in research and evaluation on PVAW and media

Action Area 3

Provide content the way media needs to receive it

Action 3.1
Support the ethical provision of women's stories to the media

Action 3.2
Support the provision of diverse and effective community voices on PVAW

Action 3.3
Use events to promote PVAW messages and story content

Who is the Framework for?

The Framework has been developed with the following stakeholders in mind:

- Practitioners directly working on development of PVAW projects with a media component

- Project and organisational managers who are developing or revising policies around media and PVAW

- Organisations applying for funding to support PVAW through media projects or other PVAW projects that may have a media component or media profile

- Family violence and sexual assault response service workers who communicate with media

- Organisations that are using social and online media for PVAW-related activities

- Government, philanthropic, corporate and other bodies seeking to invest in media-related PVAW initiatives.

The Framework may also be of use to others, such as:

- Anyone working in the area of PVAW

- Anyone working in the area of early intervention or response to men's violence against women and their children who may be called upon by media to make comment

- Anyone responsible for communications, messaging or education in organisations whose work is related to or intersects with PVAW, including community groups and the health sector

- Local and state government including local councils, Victoria Police, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other departments

- Tertiary institutions, academics and research bodies whose work is related to PVAW.

The Framework has been designed to be accessible and useful for a diverse range of practitioners and organisations that have a stake in engaging with media to prevent violence against women in their particular areas of work.

Purpose of the Framework

This Framework is considered timely and designed for a number of specific purposes:

- To give context for the future development of media-focused PVAW activities
- To increase awareness for the PVAW field that media is a powerful, important and unique area of work that requires informed attention to ensure best prevention outcomes
- To assist organisations and groups with the knowledge and background needed to support investment into media-focused PVAW projects
- To better assist managers and workers to plan for, assess and articulate opportunities and consequences before responding to media requests or initiating media engagement
- To illuminate the media context, including their operating conditions, requirements and focus
- To highlight and share expertise and wisdom gathered from successful media-focused prevention projects to date, and articulate what works in the media setting.

While the Framework provides considerations and priorities to guide implementation, it is **not** designed to:

- Be a short cut to project planning and funding applications
- Be a training guide in how to work with media
- Be an action plan for media activities
- Be a media campaign
- Provide a quick checklist of messages/facts to give media when asked
- Replace opportunities for local flexibility, expertise or relationships
- Promote an organisation's or individual's professional agenda. It is acknowledged that there are myriad pressures on agencies to advocate for their specific organisational needs; however the Framework's focus is on engaging with media for the purpose of the primary prevention of men's violence against women and children - not on using it for organisational advocacy requirements.

Scope of the Framework

The issue of social violence is a broad one. The scope of this Framework is a particular focus on (1) men's violence against women and their children[1], and (2) actions in relation to media towards prevention of that violence. Within that focus a number of issues require clarification:

Media-related initiatives for preventing family violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

This document is not necessarily well-suited to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in working with media to prevent family violence in their communities. In December 2013, state-wide consultations on the Framework recommended that an adapted version be developed to meet the specific needs of these communities in preventing family violence with the media. At the time of publishing, plans are underway for its development. This upcoming document should be referred to for this work. Further information and contacts can be obtained through Domestic Violence Victoria.

Forms of media

As noted in the Explanation of Terms, there are various industries under the umbrella term 'media.' This Framework is focused principally on news media and social media, primarily for practical reasons. Different media industries operate with different aims, structures and processes that limit the sector's ability to respond to all. While other forms of media are important, what's required to work with them is not within the scope of this Framework.

Reference to children

The term violence against women is used throughout the paper with a recognition that men's violence against women also damages the health and wellbeing of children who witness it, are exposed to it, or who are targeted as part of violence against women. Threats and harm to children can be understood as part of the dynamic of violence against women, especially within a family setting. Although it is not within the scope of the Framework to consider media representation of all forms of violence against/towards children, including other forms of child abuse and neglect, children's experiences in the context of men's violence against women is a key concern.

Sexual assault

Sexual assault is one of the most prevalent forms of VAW. However sexual assault is also committed in significant numbers against other men and against children in contexts distinct from VAW. This Framework focuses on men's violence against women and their children. It is outside the scope of this document to examine or make recommendations on improving media reporting of sexual assault against men or the sexual abuse of children in contexts distinct from VAW.

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1 Please see section 'Explanation of terms' for more information.

A Strategic Framework for Victoria

Vision and Aims of the Framework

The Vision

That news media will:

- Report men's violence against women and their children, its causes and prevention, in a way that is accurate, sensitive and contextualised

- Challenge myths about men's violence against women and their children, its causes and prevention

- Be an active proponent for the prevention of men's violence against women and their children.

That social media will be an active medium for:

- Distributing messages on the causes and prevention of men's violence against women and their children

- Challenging myths about men's violence against women and their children, its causes and prevention

- Promoting understanding and support for the prevention of men's violence against women and their children.

The Aim

To achieve the vision by:

- Strategically aligning those who can supply information or comment to the media on prevention of men's violence against women and their children.

- Structuring, informing and guiding consistent, coordinated, collaborative and evidence-based approaches to this work

- Contributing to organisational actions which further an increase in quality media reporting, and reduce media reporting on attitudes and behaviours that support violence against women and their children

- Continuing to build and respond to the evidence on primary prevention, work with media, reporting and community attitudes.

Action Area 1

Align the diverse groups working on, or planning to work on, media-related PVAW

People working in the PVAW field include prevention organisations, NGOs providing a response to women, children and men, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, CALD services, the disability sector, legal centres, health services, local councils, police, tertiary institutions, media and more.

The decentralised nature of the prevention field has the potential to be its greatest strength. Prevention messages and initiatives being communicated and enacted in such a diversity of sectors and settings is highly beneficial to achieving message saturation, broad understanding and successful social change.

However, there is not necessarily alignment across all groups undertaking primary prevention work, and experience shows that fostering alignment between diverse groups requires concerted effort, commitment of time and resources, relationship building and good will. Where it exists, it has been actively created and continually maintained, and is generally limited to a particular work area or sector, particular regions or to limited time periods (e.g. groups may come together for the life of a project).

Currently many groups approach the work from different angles, for different purposes and from the particular evidence-base of their respective field or professional expertise. There is much to be shared and learnt from these different approaches and in aligning their strengths.

Action 1.1
Establish a coordinating body and/or worker to align Victorian media-related PVAW efforts

Coordinated effort is likely to lead to greater effectiveness and consistency of messages.

With such a diverse range of sectors in this field, implementation would benefit significantly from an identifiable coordinating Victorian body.

This body would act as an important specialist and information source for those working with the Framework; guide and coordinate implementation of the Framework and centralise and share communications on initiatives, evaluation and research that are specific to Victoria.

This coordinating body would need expertise and credibility to the range of sectors working in this area, and would work with the existing *Victorian Cross-Sector Advisory Committee for preventing violence against women with the media (PVAWM Committee)* to build from current Victorian engagement and expertise in this area.

Action 1.2
Increase local and other networks for media-related PVAW

Networks across Victoria will enhance the ability to work with media for PVAW.

The establishment of collaborative 'PVAW in the media' networks, as new groups or as an added focus to existing networks, enables sharing of knowledge and the coordination of initiatives.

Networks have the potential to provide a cost-benefit whilst also supporting a united voice and common messages. Responsive gatherings of network members will:
* Enhance collaboration and learning
* Enable shared understandings
* Ensure diverse relevant perspectives are included
* Ensure we keep pace with associated changes in media or policy environments
* Facilitate ongoing coordination of PVAW activities and resources.

Networks can be effective in a range of sizes and scope, established around common areas, organisations or particular work areas, or targeted at particular goals and projects.

Networks work best when they are representative of the key stakeholders for the target area and goals.

Action 1.3
Promote the Framework across the various sectors

Promoting the Framework across various sectors will assist in the take up of actions.

The Framework is a map of current knowledge and what is needed for further progress. As such, it is a starting point to effective change. Actual change however, will come from its use and implementation.

The promotion of the Framework, potentially through training outlined in Action 2.2 and other general promotional activities, will ensure that the content and actions of the Framework are integrated in the initiatives of the PVAW field. It will also assist in a more strategic approach that can be adopted in planning and investment opportunities for PVAW across the state.

Action Area 2

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

Many in the broad PVAW field have felt under resourced and out of their depth when required to work with media, especially at short notice.

Working with the media, particularly on an issue fraught with myth and misunderstanding, requires a trained skill-set and resources, an understanding of the news and social media contexts and how to undertake work with media for the purposes of prevention as distinct from organisational advocacy. Many PVAW practitioners have limited or no formal expertise in media and communications, with few working specialists in the field.

Increased sector confidence and skills in working with news and in social media will greatly develop media capacity to report accurately on the issue. This includes hard copy and online resources (the currency of which is continually maintained), and delivery of short, consistent and evidence-based workshops on working with and providing prevention information to the media industry.

It will also provide a space to share the diverse knowledge held amongst participants, including their media successes and learnings broadly and within their specific contexts.

Action 2.1
Develop agreed Victorian key messaging about PVAW

Underpinning the Framework is the core content of key messaging that will be used consistently and predictably in actions and training, in engaging with the media and in dialogue about this work.

Working with media for the purpose of primary prevention is quite different from working with media for organisational advocacy purposes. It will be critical to understand the value and purpose of consistent and specifically prevention-based messaging to achieving the goals of PVAW.

The primary prevention of violence against women is an emerging field nationally and internationally and the concepts can be complex to communicate to people who haven't considered them before.

Messages will draw from the key learnings of Victorian and international prevention work, and any existing examples of successful PVAW messaging that have been used within projects and regions.

Consistent messages are those that accord with each other and are heard regularly from a range of different voices. Key PVAW messages must be credible, evidence-based, educative and in everyday language. They must be easy to adapt to emerging settings, to target small or larger audiences and to diverse community needs to make them attractive to media.

These messages will drive practice and will be the priority action for implementation of the Framework on which all other actions will rely.

The agreed key messages will be presented and promoted in a way that makes their purpose understandable and accessible to different audiences. They will also be specific to the knowledge context of the Victorian community, understanding that Victorian print media has been found to be significantly advanced within the international context (VicHealth 2012).

Action 2.2
Deliver training and resources for PVAW workers on news, social media and prevention

Training and resources will assist people working in prevention to effectively communicate with news and social media. Subject matter experts will develop and deliver consistent coordinated state workshops and resources, which share successes, and inform and support effective approaches in communicating PVAW information to news media and in social media.

Where media and communications departments or personnel are present in organisations, training and resources are likely to be required to support working with media on the specialised topic of PVAW.

Where media and communications capacity in specialist PVAW organisations is absent or limited, training will be required:
- To share information about the news media and social media landscapes
- For skill development and confidence building and for effective processes to incorporate media work into organisational policies and procedures
- Templates and processes to create time-saving ways of delivering accurate and current information, quotes and interviews to news media and within social media
- To share success stories, experience and contacts.

Training should be accessible to all PVAW related organisations, tailored and graduated to different degrees of expertise. Making such training available to small and regional organisations and those not currently using social media is recommended.

Action 2.3
Develop guidelines and strategies for coordinated use of social media for PVAW

State-wide guidelines will support the coordinated use of social media to maximise effectiveness in strengthening dialogue on PVAW.

As well as training in using social media for prevention purposes (as described in 2.2), coordinated intentional effort is most likely to bring results.

Social media strategies will be useful at a number of levels: state-wide, region specific, and within or across networks or groups of co-operating organisations.

A coherent planned social media strategy or set of guidelines allows organisations to capitalise on efforts by banding together around current issues, social debates and/or media coverage. Responsive action to current media events or proactive targeting around key social issues will increase the reach of PVAW communication.

Social media also comes with particular risks which can be more pronounced when communicating about PVAW. Issues of safety and confidentiality are paramount. For example on Twitter, we have control over what we tweet, and how we respond to those who reply to us but we have no control over what others do with the information we tweet. Images, personal abuse, wrong or misleading information can become attached to our tweets.

Similarly, 'trolling' and other negative or challenging commentary is inevitable (and can be debilitating) for those who tweet or write online about women's issues, men's violence against women, family law issues etc.

It should be recognised that some organisations may not want to engage in social media activity or may want to limit their involvement on PVAW to news media or their own websites.

Action 2.4
Invest in research and evaluation on PVAW and media

Investing and participating in research will increase understanding and expertise in this area.
This includes the evaluation of engagement initiatives under the Framework and implementation of the Framework itself.

Data collection and data analysis provide a base for most research and evaluation so quality record keeping and conscious decisions about data collection are needed.

Measuring the impact of reporting of PVAW on attitudes and behaviours will directly inform and allow effective future work.

Increased and ongoing research is needed in both PVAW and gender equality for currency. Efficient distribution of funding within targeted research planning will be achieved by mechanisms that encourage collaboration, sharing and coordination of research opportunities and distribution of findings.

Key bodies such as Our Watch and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) play a valuable role in national research and evaluation.

Action Area 3

Provide content the way media needs to receive it

It is not the news media's role, nor can it be reasonably expected of them, to be experts in prevention of VAW. Sustaining media interest and capacity to report accurately on PVAW relies on providing information in ways that meet media needs regarding public interest, reporting requirements, media timelines and other factors.

Action area 3 considers how relevant expertise on PVAW can be most effectively shared with news media and through social media for best prevention outcomes.

There are a growing number of groups and organisations across Victoria undertaking PVAW work who are ideally placed to support accurate and informed media content that is underpinned by specialist prevention expertise. Achievements under Action Area 2 will ensure there are even more groups and organisations that have this expertise.

Action 3.1
Support the ethical provision of women's stories to the media

It is vital that women's stories are shared with news and social media in an ethical and respectful manner.

The most common request and story focus for PVAW reporting is human stories that highlight the experience and impact of violence. Personal stories are seen to heavily contribute to the relevance and newsworthiness of stories and can often be the defining factor in whether a story is progressed or run. Media may also directly seek out 'victims of violence' for their stories.

Being prepared for and having some control over human stories provided to media is important to support increased and ethical reporting of PVAW.

It is powerful for the community (including other women experiencing violence and men who are perpetrating violence) when women tell their own stories of violence and these are shared through the media. Women and their immediate communities can be empowered by the impact their stories have in breaking silence, combatting stereotypes and in changing community dialogue and attitudes. Poor coverage of stories can have the opposite effect.

Victorian mechanisms to address ethical and effective supported telling of women's stories have included organisation-based media advocate programs and the guidelines for journalists reporting on VAW (see Appendix 2).

Action 3.2
Support the provision of diverse and effective community voices on PVAW

Subject matter experts and other spokespersons providing comment to news and social media should reflect expertise and the diversity of community voices.

Moving away from media over-reliance on police and judiciary sources is a goal of this Framework.

Similar to providing women's stories to the news media, there are other commentary and stories that can 'add news value' to news reports and social media and get PVAW messages heard.

Personal stories and voices of community leaders generate media demand and add weight to 'newsworthiness'. Research shows that different voices have different impacts and reach different audiences, and are heard differently by audiences.

Having a range of educated, aware community voices who can speak against VAW in appropriate contexts plays a key role in influencing community attitudes, challenging gender inequality, sharing information, increasing understanding and encouraging community dialogue and action.

Effective spokespersons will have a strong understanding of PVAW and use key messages, ideally in a fresh and unique style appropriate to their context.

Action 3.3
Use events to promote PVAW messages and story content

Events can be an effective vehicle for promoting newsworthy content and consistent messages to the news media.

Sharing event information across the PVAW field and collaborating on events is an excellent opportunity to maximise community and media interest and involvement.

This includes:
- Organising or participating in events which provide an opportunity for disseminating agreed PVAW messages and making them attractive to media coverage.
- Engagement with a broad range of events to deliver newsworthy content on PVAW to media.

Events, whether small community based events or regional and state-wide events, often attract media attention and can be an effective way to present PVAW messages. Such events may be focused in an area closely allied to PVAW field but could also be quite broad, such as a men's health conference, a rural women's gathering or a women in leadership seminar.

Media coverage of events can promote community understanding of VAW, offer opportunities for promotion of PVAW messages. The coverage can connect the community to specific organisations, spokespersons or activities that increase awareness and are educative in a variety of ways.

The social worth of an event does not necessarily equate to newsworthiness. In order for it to be reported, an event needs a point of difference or provide something new or interesting to be seen as newsworthy by journalists. For example, the larger the event, the more community leaders attending, inclusion of an announcement, the more 'newsworthy' it will be considered. However, CALD communities, people with disabilities, indigenous communities, and other marginalised groups report a long history of difficulty in attracting media coverage to their events. In some cases this is supported by the above measures, in others it is not.

Action Area 4

Strengthen dialogue with the news media on PVAW

The media industry and the community sector operate with widely different expertise, purposes, and structures. It is important to work together to reduce gaps and develop understanding on both sides to support the aim of ongoing improvement in the quality and quantity of reporting of VAW.

Significant differences in understanding and approaches exist in sector-related organisations in relation to the media industry, the role of media, use of social media, and the issue of reporting on VAW.

Encouraging mutually respectful dialogue, positive relationships and direct and cooperative provision of reliable and topical information is proposed as the basis for this work.

Focus Area 4 contributes to advocating the need for a **two-way information exchange** between the media and the field providing PVAW information to media. This approach builds understanding, enhances communication and creates functional, growing and effective working relationships between media professionals and PVAW practitioners and organisations. It also recognises the significant influence on news reporting of the contexts, capacity, values and needs of both sectors while benefiting from combined expertise, maximising positive relationships and developing possibilities for improved and increased reporting of PVAW issues.

The Framework advocates high level consistent dialogue with a range of media rather than a scatter-gun of variable relationships between sympathetic media and their story sources in the PVAW field.

Action 4.1
Provide resources and information sessions for media which aid quality reporting

Quality reporting can be supported through resources, dialogue and flexible and consistent information sessions with news media on PVAW reporting issues.

Accurate and informed reporting relies on relationships, discussion and feedback sessions with media professionals. These serve to strengthen two-way dialogue on PVAW about the limitations and parameters of reporting, identifying where change is required and the most effective pathways for change.

The development, content, presentation and distribution of information on reporting of PVAW, whether as sessions or resources, requires a considered and contextual approach which includes media input and research, and is relevant and flexible to varied industry contexts, issues and standards.

Media representatives' experiences offer essential insights into factors that shape reporting of PVAW. This includes the possibilities for influencing reportage including constraints, influencers and opportunities within editorial, news cycle, business and online contexts.

Action 4.2
Engage journalism students

Working with tertiary institutions to include content on reporting of PVAW into tertiary courses on media and journalism will equip those training to work in the media.

Development of content for pre-service training for journalists and media professionals, not only equips journalists with knowledge and reporting skills on PVAW from the outset of their careers but also embeds accurate and informed reporting of PVAW into existing good practice principles of journalism education.

There is significant and competing demand from different interest groups to include a variety of social issues into media and journalism course curricula. Provision of PVAW knowledge and the development of positive relationships with institutions will support working relationships and increase the number of institutions willing to participate in content inclusion.

Action 4.3
Support investigation into the impact of gender inequality within the media industry

Research or initiatives addressing the impact of gender inequality on the media industry is likely to impact on reporting of prevention of VAW.

In investigating and supporting improved reporting on PVAW, it must be acknowledged that the media industry exists within Australian and international social contexts of structural gender inequality. Therefore it is not immune to manifestations of gender inequality in its structures, leadership, employment, editorial decision-making and processes. Further, some emerging research also suggests that there may be higher rates of sexual harassment within the media industry compared to other industries (North, 2012).

Significant research has yet to be done on the impact that gender inequality in media settings may have on the reporting of VAW. However, evidence indicates that women's global inequality impacts on gender inequitable structures, processes and outcomes, including within workplaces.

There is a need for research that investigates what impact gender ratios of reporters, editorial staff and sources may have on reporting of PVAW, and recommendations that may arise from any findings.

In saying this, it is critical to note that this strategy does not see the role of the community sector, whilst working with media, to set itself in opposition to the media industry nor to attempt to drive or control the media industry.

Media representatives have clearly identified that addressing gender inequality in their profession should be led by media representatives, not those in the prevention field. The PVAW field can usefully assist through being available to support initiatives in this area.

Key Considerations for Implementation

Key learnings to underpin implementation

It is acknowledged that this is a specialised area of work requiring skilled implementation.

It is not within the scope of this document to replace the breadth and depth of evidence, experiential knowledge, and successes across the state. Below however, are some of the key learnings from the last nine years that are common to many or all of the actions. These have repeated as themes of this work throughout its history including within consultations held across the state in 2013.

1. An effective strategic approach to media-related PVAW requires specific planning, expertise, capacity and coordination

On an issue like PVAW, eagerness to affect change can sometimes create an impetus to rush. However, mistakes made in this field can be risky and have dire consequences if not done well. Transfer of information through the media is very powerful, and misinformation can spread rapidly with implications for human welfare. Effectiveness in achieving positive change does not happen accidentally and requires time, expertise and a planned approach.

Successful media-related PVAW generates its own demand. This has capacity implications for PVAW organisations and the field as a whole, making a considered approach, adequate support and coordination even more important.

The expertise in media-related PVAW is specific, and requires knowledge of both fields of media and PVAW, the contexts of their interaction, and the approaches and methods appropriate to both for affecting positive change. Effective implementation will require and in turn will create an increase in this expertise in Victoria.

Supporting practical alignment of the different sectors and regions in the PVAW field is a significant task. Organisations and workers will require training and resources (as indicated in Action 2.2) and the coordination supports of Action 1.1 (a coordinating body) and 1.2 (increased networks) for a strategic approach to take effect on the ground.

2. There are priority actions in this area of work, on which all other actions depend.

Media-related PVAW work can have broad impacts, including generating demand from media, increasing contact with support services, and prompting new government or community initiatives. The actions of the Framework therefore are interrelated and co-dependent. Thoughtful and staged implementation is required to create effectiveness and sustainability for the work.

Fundamentally, all of the Framework's interlocking actions assume a coordinated effort, the use of consistent, agreed and evidence-based messages about the prevention of men's violence against women, and increasing the skill base for specialists on the ground to develop their engagement with media-related PVAW. Prioritising these actions forms the foundation for the full implementation of the Framework.

Priority actions are outlined in the following section - *Priority actions for implementation*.

3. Media Contexts

An awareness and consideration of media contexts and the key learnings on how they relate to the PVAW field, should underpin all implementation. These learnings are referenced throughout the Framework but are highlighted below.

a. Disparities between the media industry and the PVAW field.

The context and starting point for the Framework is addressing the different contexts and approaches that currently exist between the media industry and the PVAW field.

There are unique elements in how the media industry operates. These have not necessarily been understood by or been conducive to the PVAW field. This has affected good communication relationships and achieving the best outcomes.

The development of the Framework has been based on this premise, so too should implementation.

The media industry context
The traditional news media industry has structures, time requirements, and business directives that are unique to their industry. Newsworthiness cannot necessarily be dictated by social good. Reporting can be influenced heavily by timelines, capacity and structural necessities, and availability of sources and other content material.

It can often be assumed that media professionals are powerful individually because of the power that media reporting can have on community awareness and social action on certain issues. Yet increasingly faster news

cycles, demands of online news and staffing cuts are applying further stress to what was already a high pressure working environment.

Journalists and editors may not have the time to be well-versed on myriad social issues, nor the myths and reporting tendencies that underpin or reinforce them. They are unlikely to have time to learn as much about an issue or find the most appropriate spokespersons, as organisations may wish them to.

They also require content and comment, often at short notice, in particular styles and angles to suit reporting requirements.

Understanding the PVAW field and reporting context
In many professions and fields, expert media and communications units have the capacity to build relationships with journalists and to provide media with content that is considered, timely and in digestible language and formats.

PVAW-related organisations, while highly skilled in how to prevent and respond to VAW, seldom have formal media and communications roles, and many do not have capacity or staff with expertise or confidence to fill those roles informally. Where these roles or units do exist (such as in local councils with a PVAW initiative), practitioners may not necessarily have direct access to media and communications units for their PVAW project work.

Those who work outside of the media field may not necessarily understand media environments or their impacts on reporting, and may not be able to naturally engage and offer contributions to media for best PVAW outcomes.

Media may have urgent demands and an agency may not know how to respond ethically, within their capacity, in a timely manner, or may feel resistant to the angle of the story or questions.

For example, journalists may unknowingly pose 'inappropriate' questions to an agency. These questions, rather than being viewed within the media context, may be seen as inflammatory or vilifying, and agencies may respond as such.

Organisations and groups are also directly approaching media with story ideas, to comment on current stories and to promote events. They may not know how to make the most effective and targeted approach to the right person, which can make all the difference in whether a story is taken up and whether it is fairly represented.

Advice abounds for individuals and businesses (though it can be contradictory) about how best to engage with media. Without detracting from the usefulness of standardised media training, advice is not always suited to addressing the needs, methods and complexities of an ingrained and myth-laden issue such as PVAW.

b. Social media as a key space for prevention of VAW engagement
The social media space includes powerful news and engagement components. Experience in the field has identified the following benefits and modes of engagement:
- Social media platforms can be seen as circular news sources in themselves - as distributors of news information, as creators of news dialogue and as an information source for news media outlets, thereby influencing traditional news reporting.
- Social media platforms are a significant and unique media space for entering community dialogue on such things as violence, promoting prevention messages, promoting support services and challenging myths.
- As social media is inherently social, based in exchange and new forms of relationships, gaining best outcomes from engagement in social media requires active discussion with followers. Regular social media engagement can provide a powerful response to mainstream media information, can shape and shift dialogue and reporting, as well as sending messages further and more frequently than previously possible.

Experience has also shown a number of challenges for the field:
- Many agencies report not having any or enough trained staff to allow optimal use of this medium.
- Many workers in the PVAW field have noted that they feel largely ill-equipped at maximising opportunities and potential of social media.
- Known and unknown risks of social media engagement can inhibit community agencies from full participation.

For example: Worker concerns include the tracing of refuge locations, women in refuge, negative impact on court cases etc.

- Any engagement on men's violence against women and gender equality on social media platforms tends to attract a lot of online violence. Managing trolling is a workplace safety issue.

c. Strengths and weaknesses in PVAW reporting

Currently, the most comprehensive available research puts Victorian print media reporting of VAW as an international leader (see Appendix 1).

The research identifies that there are also significant gaps in reporting, including specialist content on prevalence, causes, what is required to prevent it and support services available.

Some of the most common forms of VAW are under-reported. For example, sexual assault is vastly under-reported in the news, particularly in its most common form as assault perpetrated by someone intimate or known to the woman and/or child.

VAW can be skewed by the dismissal or misrepresentation of particular groups. Although there is not space to detail all, some of those groups are:

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) communities report particularly low reporting of all VAW affecting their communities.

CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities, and women with disabilities note specific reporting problems in representation of VAW within or involving their communities and identities. This includes broader reporting approaches and misrepresentation of their communities and groups at large, for example, racialised references and/or stereotyping, or infantilising of people with disabilities. It also includes the specific ways that this can translate or manifest in reporting of VAW, for example, stereotypes that Aboriginal men are more violent, or ideas that preventing violence against women with disabilities requires giving more power to their carers.

Stereotypes exist and can impact on reporting along lines of class, profession, criminal status and age.

Absent, racialised, inaccurate and/or stereotyped reporting of particular groups reflects and supports damaging discrimination against communities that can put women in those communities at greater risk of violence. The impact of these stereotypes is also damaging on the understanding of PVAW more broadly, as it confuses and conflates vulnerability factors, contributing factors and causes, and deflects from addressing the cross-cultural and gendered nature of VAW.

4. Building on success: Successful Victorian initiatives can and should inform implementation methods

Previous and current Victorian initiatives have identified a number of successful methods and approaches to addressing gaps between the media industry and the PVAW field. This work continually serves to identify solutions and approaches needed.

Implementation of the Framework should consider the methods and approaches that have achieved previous success in Victoria, and build on these.

The common themes of success have been:
- A strategic approach. Many successful initiatives have come directly or are heavily influenced by the recommendations of the *Family Violence in the News: Strategic Framework*. That is, they were not developed in isolation but as part of a bigger plan of what was needed to initiate and achieve change state-wide.
- Recognition and response to media industry contexts and needs. Successful initiatives find a way to jointly meet the needs and interests of the media and the PVAW field, rather than asking the media for help.
- A collaborative effort. The success of many of these initiatives has been in their cross-organisational or cross-sector nature.

Further details on these projects, as well as the policy and research background for the Framework can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

5. Consistency and flexibility are needed in PVAW and media work to address the wide scope of audiences and stakeholders.

As VAW exists across all classes, races, abilities, sexualities, and ages, the audiences and contexts for this work are varied.

Those enacting prevention initiatives require content, formats and delivery methods that can be adapted to the audience, presenter, context and purpose. If we do not adapt in this way, prevention risks reaching only specific groups, or only certain messages being heard.

Specific considerations include:
- Specific needs of regional groups
- Specific needs of cultural groups
- Needs of particular groups facing common misrepresentation by the media and/or social discrimination and disadvantage, including Indigenous communities, CALD communities, women with disabilities, LGBTIQ communities.
- General tailoring and flexibility of all initiatives to the specific contexts and groups they are working with. "One size fits all" is generally not a great approach for sensitive social issues.

6. Considerations for key message development

Implementation of *Action 2.1 Develop agreed Victorian key messaging about PVAW* will need to consider and will be impacted by:
- The approach and perspective in many newsrooms that this issue is old or stale ('We've covered it already' is a statement that journalists commonly report hearing from their editors)
- The decentralised nature of the PVAW field and the differing evidence bases and approaches
- The ingrained, structural and personally challenging nature of examining social gender.

Because of the above factors, effective messaging needs:
- Messages that do not inhibit media coverage, namely that they are adaptive enough to be used in fresh and unique ways to maintain their newsworthiness (e.g.. not in a robotic way)
- Messages that are representative of and used within the range of sectors in this field
- Messages that can be adapted to different purposes and audiences, particularly to levels of understanding or resistance to a gender or prevention focus
- The need for community campaign strategies such as using plain language, reaching audiences where they are etc. may be more pronounced.

Implementation approach
- State-wide consultations will be highly effective in discerning and ensuring relevance to the needs of the various stakeholders in the PVAW field to increase the likelihood of the use of developed messages
- Use of language and messaging experts with the skill set to communicate complex social issues beyond an awareness-raising approach
- Accompanying material on the benefits of key messaging and considerations for how to best adapt and use them, may be of benefit to stakeholders.

7. There are particular risks to this area of work

Experience has found that there are some key risks worth consideration in the Framework Action Areas. This section does not attempt to replace a full risk assessment for actions.

There can be risks to speaking out on gender-based violence
There are particular implications, some existing as risks, to speaking out on gender inequality and violence issues. The controversial nature of the topic and the very public nature of news and social media can pose risks to staff, women and other spokespersons speaking out about violence.

This subject matter regularly elicits degrading, abusive and threatening responses in news and social media, in the form of online comments to articles, social media posts, and occasionally by particular news media presenters and commentators.

This can impact on the emotional welfare of those who are aligned with the issue and for those who may be particularly singled out in the degradation or abuse.

These risks can also escalate to or include physical safety risks where locations of organisations are public or where women and communities are speaking out against a violent man, such as women telling their stories of violence to the media. VAW is based in power and control, and being seen to publicly break that control may be judged by violent men as a reason for retribution.

There are also general welfare issues, such as being snubbed, blamed or stigmatised within your community. This may be particularly pronounced in smaller, rural or regional areas or amongst specific cultural groups.

Legal risks
The public context of the media increases risks to current or upcoming court cases or to charges of defamation.

Caution should always be applied when commenting on specific cases involving men's violence against women

in the event that cases are *sub-judice* (underway in the courts). Risks can include inadvertently prejudicing cases or risking charges of defamation with media commentary. Legal advice should be sought if in doubt about the appropriateness of commenting in particular instances.

Credibility risks
Social change in this area requires changes in community attitudes and behaviours to gender and gendered violence. Credibility of messages and spokespersons is essential for supporting media and community confidence and involvement.

Given the existing myths, the contentious nature of gendered violence, and the challenges of creating new dialogue on an 'old' issue, a tendency has been identified for communities to not know what to believe and to take particular notice of any perceived inconsistencies in evidence or language. This extends to the nature and behaviour of the spokespersons themselves, whose character may be judged as part of the 'evidence' of this issue.

Implementation of the Framework and its actions, requires specialist planning, organisational capacity and coordination support to address and plan for these risks.

In particular, Action 2.2 (media-related PVAW training and resources) requires content on risk, including safety with social and news media, safety considerations for supporting women or others to tell their personal stories to the media, safety considerations for social media, and considerations for selection and use of spokespersons on PVAW.

These considerations should also be particularly noted for implementation of Actions 3.1 (women's voices) and 3.2 (community voices). Selection of spokespersons who are appropriate to the audience and credible in character requires planning.

> For example, spokespersons who may not be seen to espouse the anti-violence or gender equality messages they are publicly representing, can pose a risk to the credibility of the issue. Choosing spokespersons unsuited to a cultural or geographical group also affects credibility.

As expressed earlier in this chapter, the diversity of sectors, spokespersons, and evidence bases in the PVAW field can support credibility or be detrimental to it, dependant on alignment and consistency.

8. This is fast changing and evolving work
Continuing to support ongoing development and learning in this space is essential.

Media-related PVAW is a relatively new and developing field of work and as such there are many new learnings expected. It is expected that this and other policy documents, initiatives and learnings will continually inform this area of work.

> For example, at time of publication, the national prevention body, Our Watch, are establishing their National Media Engagement Project. It is expected that this national project will continue to both inform and be informed by Victorian work, contributing to greater national congruence in this field.

It will be essential to implementation that the Framework is responsive to changes in the media industry and space. It will also be essential that implementation focuses heavily on the incorporation of evaluation and research that support the development of the evidence base for this work, and allow the Framework to be updated.

Priority actions for implementation

This Framework's actions provide powerful investment opportunities for government and others to support social change through media-related PVAW.

Below are the priority areas for implementation, which should be commenced immediately to buttress the full implementation of the Framework.

Enact Action Area 1

Action Area 1 Align the diverse groups working on, or planning to work on, media-related PVAW

This will establish a Victorian coordinating body and supporting networks to align the state and support distribution and implementation of the Framework.

Enact Actions 2.1 and 2.2 of the Framework

Action 2.1 Develop agreed Victorian key messaging about PVAW

Action 2.2 Develop and deliver training for PVAW workers on news, social media and prevention

Actions 2.1 and 2.2 will provide a solid foundation, particularly for the effective implementation of Action Areas 3 and 4 which work directly with media. Engagement of media and use of social media on PVAW has been found to generate interest and demand for comment and spokespersons. Without clear messaging and trained and confident specialists, media interest and requests run the risk of having minimal effectiveness or backfiring.

Agreed messages and a sound understanding of working with media are the fundamental building blocks for work in this field.

Enact Action 2.4 throughout all implementation of the Framework

Action 2.4 Invest in ongoing research and evaluation on PVAW

It is a priority that Action 2.4 continually underpins Framework implementation. This will ensure that media-related PVAW is implemented accordingly to the most current evidence and learnings, produces most effective investment and outcomes, and contributes to the broader evidence base for PVAW.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The policy and research context for the Framework

Policy context for the Framework

- *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2020 - Second Action Plan 2013-2016* – Moving Ahead: Strategy 1.1, Prevention Action 2: 'Improving Media Engagement' (DSS, 2014)

- ANROWS' *National Research Agenda to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children,* Priority Strategic Research theme 2: Gender inequality and primary prevention (ANROWS, 2014)

- Our Watch, 2013 established, independent and cross-government funded: 'National Media Engagement Project' (Our Watch, 2014)

The research context for the framework

A significant strength of this Framework is the evidence base behind its development. Whilst relevant research is referenced throughout the document, the following is a list of the key materials that underpin the Framework:

1. Prevalence of and community attitudes towards PVAW
   - *Personal Safety Survey 2012* (ABS, 2013)
   - *Crime Statistics 2012/13* (Victoria Police, 2013)
   - *2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey* (VicHealth, 2014)

2. Primary prevention, and media as a site of influence
   - *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background document to the prevention of violence against women and their children* (VicHealth, 2007)
   - *The factors influencing community attitudes in relation to Violence Against Women: A critical review of the literature,* (VicHealth, 2006)
   - *What factors shape community attitudes to domestic violence?* (Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2011)

3. Media reporting of family violence and violence against women
   - *Victorian print media coverage of violence against women* (VicHealth, 2012)
   - *Family violence reporting: supporting the vulnerable or re-enforcing their vulnerability?* (Thomas & Green, 2009)
   - *Desperate lovers and wanton women: press representations of domestic violence* (Evans, 1999)

NOTE: Research and evidence is fast accumulating in this and associated fields - this list is current as at time of publication. It is recommended users of the Framework search for updates and new material if utilising these sources for academic, planning or funding purposes.

Appendix 2:   Victorian initiatives that have informed the Framework

The Framework draws heavily on content and components of the *Family Violence in the News: Project*, *Media Toolkit*, and *Strategic Framework* (Child and Family Services Ballarat & Pact Community Support 2006, 2005, 2007), and over a decade of focused Victorian effort that has stemmed from this original work.

There may be further work nationally and internationally that has been achieved over this time period. The scope and objective of this section is to detail Victorian initiatives that have directly influenced this Framework.

Family Violence in the News: Strategic Framework

Produced by: Child and Family Services Ballarat, Pact Ballarat

The Family Violence in the News: Strategic Framework has guided work in Victoria since its development. Developed by Child and Family Services Ballarat & Pact Community Support in 2007, and updated in 2011, the Strategic Framework was based on research from Evans (1999) and Thomas and Green (2001) on Victorian media reporting of FV.

Along with the related project and Media Toolkit, it established the critical content, impetus and direction for building a consistent state-wide approach on media and prevention of violence against women. It was evidence-based, collaboratively developed and was the first strategic framework of its kind in Australia.

Its collaborative development, drawing on the expertise particularly of the then *State-wide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence,* created an end product that was relevant to and supported by groups across the state. Resourceful investigation through the group's networks, resulted in implementation of two highly successful ongoing projects, The EVAs Media Awards and the Women as Media Advocates projects.

Further information about the framework can be obtained by contacting Cafs Ballarat or Domestic Violence Victoria.

The EVAs Media Awards

Managing organisations: Domestic Violence Victoria, No To Violence, Centres Against Sexual Assault Forum

The Eliminating Violence Against Women Media Awards (The EVAs) are an awards event that acknowledge excellence in Victorian reporting of violence against women, which ran in Victoria between 2008 to 2013.

The EVAs were established to meet Strategy 3.1 of the above Strategic Framework to: *Provide media awards to formally recognise excellence in reporting family violence.*

The awards were highly successful, gaining size and momentum each year and culminated in the development of a national awards scheme, planned for launch in early 2015 by Our Watch.

The EVAs attracted the interest and support of local and national media professionals and community leaders, and created a live example of successful ingenuity in prevention engagement with media.

The EVAs successes have been:
- Providing a lively, positive and incentive-based approach to the issue of PVAW
- Engagement of cross-sector community leaders
- Involvement and investment from government and the private sector
- Support and promotion throughout the women and men's community services sector

- The provision of key content and contacts on PVAW to media and other professionals through: event speeches, models of best practice, judges' comments, and the website and accompanying EVAs Reporting Guidelines
- Much of the EVAs success was due to their conception within a clear and strategic plan, their media-needs focus and the collaborative involvement of multiple managing organisations as well as an advisory committee of cross-organisational experts and supporters.

Further information can be found at: www.dvic.org.au

The Women as Media Advocates projects

Managing organisations: *Safe Steps (formerly Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service), Women's Health East, South-East Centre Against Sexual Assault, Centre for Non-Violence*

The Survivors as Media Advocates project commenced in 2008 as *Strategy 2.3* of the above Strategic Framework: *Work with stakeholders and networks to find people wanting/willing to tell their story* [to the media]. The project supported and trained women to tell their experiences of family violence to the news media in an ethical and safe manner.

Initially a single project based on family violence experiences and sited in one state-wide agency, it has since expanded due to its success. Three projects involving several agencies are currently underway in Victoria, now including sexual violence advocates and specific rural and regional areas.

At time of publication, development is underway for national implementation guidelines and advice to support the expansion of the projects across Australia.

The projects' successes have been:
- Providing a safe space for women to tell their stories. Advocates projects support women's voice and empowerment on an issue shrouded in silence and disempowerment. Women are selected to protect their wellbeing, they receive training and education prior to speaking to media or events, and following support.
- Targeting media reporting needs and requests. The concept for this strategy and project came as a response to frequent media requests for women to speak about their experiences. It provides authentic newsworthy content through which to attach further reporting data and context.
- Providing an example to other women and to communities at large to speak out. Media advocates not only break their own silence but send a broader message about the right of women to be heard and counted.
- Providing a personal and relatable context for community recognition and engagement with the issue of PVAW.
- Providing increased media opportunities for PVAW-related events. Media Advocates are frequently included in key events, providing the above opportunities to an event space.

Further information can be found at: www.safesteps.org.au; www.secasa.com.au; www.whe.org.au; www.cnv.org.au

Quick reference guides and online content on reporting of PVAW

Produced by: Child and Family Services Ballarat & Pact Community Support (2005), Domestic Violence Victoria (2014), VicHealth (2012b), Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (2014)

Starting in 2005 as part of the *Family Violence in the News: Media Toolkit*, quick reference guides in Victoria have continued to be developed offering guidelines and suggestions to news media on reporting PVAW and related issues.

Quick guides outline general 'do's and don'ts' in reporting of men's violence against women, family violence and/or sexual assault, key statistics, myths and facts, and key Victorian contacts in the PMVAWC field.

The online Media Centre on *The Lookout* (DVRCV/DV Vic, 2014) website provides more detailed information on family violence including fact sheets, FAQs, links to reporting guidelines, and contacts.

Its successes have been:
- Concise content to meet media time constraints and key information needs
- Updated regularly to meet changing statistics and contacts
- Available online for easy access.

Domestic Violence Victoria Media Program 2013-2014

Managing organisation: *Domestic Violence Victoria*

Developed out of an extension of the EVAs Awards project, this program aimed to commence a coordinating role across the state in media-related PVAW. This program was important in establishing the principle and practice of cross-sector collaboration and perspective for this work in Victoria.

Its successes have been:
- Management of the EVAs Media Awards (detailed above)
- Acting as secretariat to the PVAWM Committee (detailed below)
- Research and development of the Framework.

The Victorian Cross-Sector Advisory Committee for preventing violence against women with the media (PVAWM Committee)

Secretariat: *Domestic Violence Victoria, membership from over 30 agencies (at December 2014)*

This committee was convened in 2012 as part of the previous media projects of Domestic Violence Victoria. The committee's purpose is to generate a collaborative thinking space among key stakeholders to examine and support the state-wide strategic coordination of PVAW activities, projects and resources directed at the media setting and industry.

A critical context for coordination and consultation, the PVAWM Committee is a key information sharing/ relationship building hub, offering expert input and advisory response to leading work across the state.

Its successes have been:
- The creation of a strategic network with broad participation and a dedicated space to support

and develop state-wide collaboration and coordination on the issue of PVAW and the media. Membership and participation has been maintained from over 30 organisations across sectors in Victoria, including media, Victoria Police, VicHealth, government and local council, academia, and women, men's, health and disability support organisations.
- The consideration and endorsement of principles and approaches for violence against women prevention work with media
- The review, development and endorsement of key documents in media and PVAW space

State-wide Consultations - September to December 2013

Managing organisation: *Domestic Violence Victoria, with advice and support from the Victorian Cross-Sector Advisory Committee for preventing violence against women with the media*

The process of developing this Framework has included the review of the 2007 *Family Violence in the News: Strategic Framework*, development of a Consultation Draft for a revised framework, and state-wide consultations at the end of 2013 with workers and organisations across Victoria.

The review of the previous framework and development of the Consultation Draft centred on reflecting key changes that had occurred in working with media in Victoria. Namely, (1) a shift in the framework focus from family violence to PVAW, (2) a broadening of the framework to address the diverse range of sectors that had become involved in PVAW since the original framework's development, and (3) updating content to reflect the most current learnings that had taken place as a result of the previous framework's strategies and other initiatives in the state and internationally.

Importantly, consultations found that the Framework is not necessarily well-suited to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The development of an adapted version was recommended by those consulted, in order to meet the specific needs of these communities in preventing family violence with the media. At the time of publishing, plans are underway for its development. Further information and contacts can be obtained through Domestic Violence Victoria.

Key successes of the consultations included:
- Consultations were extensive and well-attended, with around 150 participants, including news media, and practitioners and subject matter experts from services and prevention programs in family violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, disability, CALD, Indigenous and public health, as well as local council and police representatives, and women who had experienced violence.
- Consultations drew on the experience and expertise across the state, developing and deepening the relevance and nuance of the final Framework.
- In all, the consultations found strong interest from the PVAW field to increase active, coordinated and strategic prevention measures and to working with this Framework to that end.

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The *Victorian Cross-Sector Advisory Committee on Preventing Violence against Women with the Media* has been pivotal in getting the Framework off the ground and guiding its development. A particular thank you to committee member Peter Horsfield for review of this document throughout its development, and prior committee member Sally Ruth for editing.

Consultation participants from across Victoria have contributed extensive expertise and experience to developing this Framework into a comprehensive and relevant document.

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The *Victorian Cross-Sector Advisory Committee on Preventing Violence against Women with the Media* **includes representatives from the following organisations and groups:**

Working with News and Social Media to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children

Quick Reference Guide

Violence against women (VAW) is a fundamental violation of human rights. It is widely recognised as being at epidemic proportions globally, and includes many forms of abuse that are directed by men against women because they are women. As such, violence against women can also be referred to as *men's violence against women or gender-based violence*.

Men's violence against women also includes violence against their children. Children are often exposed to and impacted by violence against their mothers/female caregiver, particularly within a family context. Violence can also be directed towards children by men as a way to hurt and control their mother/ female caregiver. This does not encompass all violence directed towards children, or other forms of child abuse or neglect.

Evidence tells us that the most significant cause of violence against women is the unequal distribution of power and status between women and men. This includes gender inequalities and embedded social attitudes and norms about women and children's value and place in society.

Primary prevention of violence against women refers to activities and interventions that seek to prevent violence before it occurs.

The VicHealth paper *Preventing violence before it occurs* (2007)) argues that in order to prevent violence against women from occurring in the first place, our culture needs to understand what gender equality looks like and implement evidence-based solutions to become more gender equal.

The paper further argues that to reach a 'tipping point' of attitudinal and behavioural change, prevention messages and initiatives should reach community members where they live, work and play. It identifies multiple sites for action to prevent violence against women, including local government and community services, sport and recreation, workplaces, schools and young people, and media.

Why engage with the media?

Working with the media is an important element of Victoria and Australia's commitment to preventing violence against women and their children (PVAW).

High quality, informed and accurate news media coverage, and engaged social media interaction on PVAW, can make an important contribution to prevention efforts when it:
- Conveys the full impact of VAW on our communities;

- Provides accurate and meaningful context for stories on men's violence
- Challenges community attitudes and behaviours that underlie or reinforce men's violence
- Identifies available specialists and support services for people seeking assistance
- Ensures women's experiences of violence are accurately and sensitively communicated.

Engaging with media as an organisation or individual in the PVAW field is lively, demanding and complex work that really can make a difference.

The experience in Victoria over the last decade has shown that:
- The media is a powerful setting and influencer for social change
- There is strong enthusiasm for doing media-related PVAW work
- The intersections between media and PVAW are complex, and there are risks associated with doing media-related PVAW work in a poorly conceived, piecemeal or inconsistent way
- Achieving improvements in media and community understanding of violence against women will require stakeholders in this work to have a shared understanding of the evidence base, and of the key messages and approaches needed for positive social change.

What does the Framework do?

By promoting a coordinated, strategic and consistent approach, the Framework aims to maximise the effectiveness and potential of media-focused prevention work.

The Framework builds upon VicHealth's *Preventing violence before it occurs: A Framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria* (2007), and it supports the objectives of *The National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*.

The Framework sets the stage for future work with media in the PVAW field, taking into account the complexity of the task, and the great diversity amongst stakeholders. It identifies strategic priority actions, including the critical first steps: to generate agreement about what is needed, and to align the diverse groups who are undertaking media-related PVAW work.

The Framework acknowledges that the media landscape is rapidly changing and will continue to do so. For example: social media has become a powerful mechanism for engaging and influencing the public and is integrated into much of the community; and traditional media outlets are no longer the sole contributors of news – social media can in fact drive news media content. The Framework provides guidance on what is needed to manage the challenges associated with working in such a dynamic environment.

How can I use the Framework?

While the Framework is not a step-by-step guide to implementing all future work, it does provide a road map of the approaches required. It is a tool to support informed and critical engagement with news and social media on PVAW.

The Framework provides guidance about what is needed to implement successful prevention work with media, setting out key elements that require thorough consideration. For example:

- The priority actions specified in the Framework should be implemented first, as they underpin the success of the other actions and the Framework as a whole
- An effective strategic approach requires specific expertise, capacity, planning and coordination
- An understanding of the contexts of the current media environment and of the historical relationship between media and community organisations is important
- The successes and learnings from current and previous initiatives in Victoria are important building blocks for future work
- Consistent messaging must be balanced against flexibility to address multiple audiences in different contexts and to maintain fresh commentary
- Many contextual factors are important, meaning that there isn't a 'one size fits all' approach
- There are significant risks in media-related prevention work associated with credibility, safety and legal issues
- The fields of media and PVAW, and how they interact, are constantly evolving – an understanding of these changes is crucial to ensure the work remains current and relevant.

It is important to note that state-wide consultations held in 2013 found that the Framework is not necessarily well-suited to meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Consultations found that the development of an adapted version is needed to meet the specific needs of these communities in preventing family violence with news and social media. At the time of publishing, plans are underway for its development. Further information can be obtained through Domestic Violence Victoria.

This Quick Reference Guide is intended to provide readers with a conceptual understanding of the Framework. The full document *Working with News and Social Media to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children: A Strategic Framework for Victoria* explores the potential for media-related PVAW work in detail. It can be found at www.dvvic.org.au

Vision and Aims of the Framework

The Vision
That news media will:
- Report men's violence against women and their children, its causes and prevention, in a way that is accurate, sensitive and contextualised
- Challenge myths about men's violence against women and their children, its causes and prevention
- Be an active proponent for the prevention of men's violence against women and their children.

That social media will be an active medium for:
- Distributing messages on the causes and prevention of men's violence against women and their children
- Challenging myths about men's violence against women and their children, its causes and prevention
- Promoting understanding and support for the prevention of men's violence against women and their children.

The Aims
To achieve the vision by:
- Strategically aligning those who can supply information or comment to the media on prevention of men's violence against women and their children
- Structuring, informing, and guiding consistent, coordinated, collaborative, and evidence-based approaches to this work
- Contributing to organisational actions which further an increase in quality media reporting, and reduce media reporting on attitudes and behaviours that support violence against women and their children
- Continuing to build and respond to the evidence on primary prevention, work with media, reporting and community attitudes.

Outline of the Framework

Action 1.1
Establish a coordinating body
and/or worker to align Victorian
media-related PVAW efforts

Action 1.2
Increase local and other networks
for media-related PVAW

Action 1.3
Promote the Framework across
the various sectors

Action 2.1
Develop agreed Victorian key
messaging about PVAW

Action 2.2
Deliver training and resources for
PVAW workers on news, social
media and prevention

Action 2.3
Develop guidelines and strategies
for coordinated use of social
media for PVAW

Action 2.4
Invest in research and evaluation
on PVAW and media

Align the diverse
groups working on, or
planning to work on,
media-related PVAW

Action Area 1

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

Action Area 2

Action Area 4

Strengthen dialogue with
the news media on PVAW

Action Area 3

Provide content the
way media needs to
receive it

Action 4.1
Provide resources and information
sessions for media which aid
quality reporting

Action 4.2
Engage journalism students

Action 4.3
Support investigation into the
impact of gender inequality within
the media industry

Action 3.1
Support the ethical provision of
women's stories to the media

Action 3.2
Support the provision of diverse
and effective community
voices on PVAW

Action 3.3
Use events to promote PVAW
messages and story content
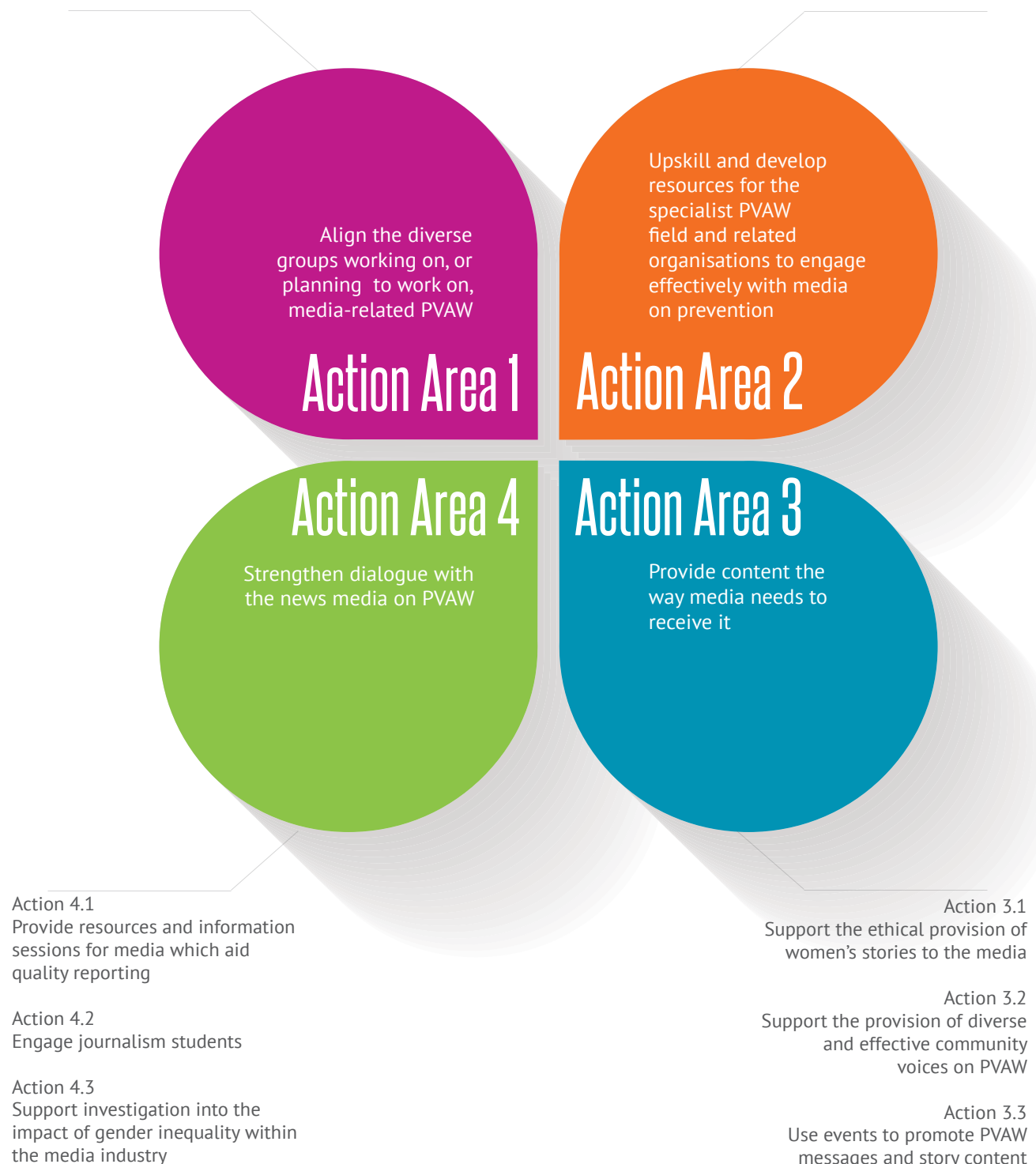
Who is the Framework for?

The Framework has been designed to be accessible and useful for a diverse range of practitioners and organisations that have a stake in engaging with media to prevent violence against women and their children in their respective areas of work.

The Framework has been developed with the following stakeholders in mind:

- Practitioners directly working on development of PVAW projects with a media component
- Project and organisational managers who are developing or revising policies around media and PVAW
- Organisations applying for funding to support PVAW through media projects, or other PVAW projects that may have a media component or media profile
- Family violence and sexual assault response service workers who communicate with or plan to communicate with media
- Organisations that are actively using or considering using social media and online media for PVAW related activities
- Government, philanthropic, corporate, and other bodies seeking to invest in media-related PVAW initiatives.

The Framework may also be of use to others, such as:

- Anyone working in the area of PVAW
- Anyone working in the area of early intervention or response to VAW who may be called upon by media to make comment
- Anyone responsible for communications, messaging or education in organisations whose work is related to or intersects with PVAW, including community groups, and the health sector
- Local and state government including local councils, Victoria Police, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other departments
- Tertiary institutions, academics and research bodies whose work is related to or intersects with PVAW.

Situating the Framework

Government Plans

National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2020

Government Direction, Policy and Actions

Vic Health Prevention Framework

Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria 2007

Defining and outlining the key settings for primary prevention work in Victoria

The Framework

Working with news and social media to prevent men's violence against women and their children: A strategic framework 2015

Identifying priority actions for coordinated and strategic work with media to prevent violence against women and their children

Need More Info?

The full framework can be found at www.dvvic.org.au

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