

Key recommendations from the Joint Response to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence Report

This Joint Response was prepared by thirteen of Victoria's leading organisations and peak membership bodies involved in the primary prevention of men's violence against women and their children. The recommendations and advice provided are intended to inform the Victorian Government's next steps for implementation of the Commission's primary prevention recommendations.

Immediate steps to support implementation of the Commission's recommendations on primary prevention:

- **Establish a high-level primary prevention steering body to:**
 1. Consult on and develop the Primary Prevention Strategy outlined in recommendation 187 within the Statewide Family Violence Action Plan, informed by *Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (and contribute to the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy);
 2. Co-design a sustainable and effective governance and operational structure for prevention meeting recommendations 199 (Family Violence Agency) and 188 (Primary Prevention Initiative); and
 3. Provide guidance to current government strategies and investment in primary prevention activities.
- **Strengthen and resource existing regional governance arrangements** to ensure primary prevention forms part of a holistic approach, and support peak body and representative organisations in their respective leadership roles.

How to effectively co-design a sustainable governance and operational structure for primary prevention

- **Goals for the process:** undertake a fully collaborative process with all key prevention stakeholders – led by the aforementioned steering body – that maps what is required for a consistent approach to statewide primary prevention and designs an infrastructure to ensure such functions are delivered.
- **During the process:** ensure that Women's Health Services are supported to continue their leadership role in coordinating regional prevention through an intersectional approach, with partners from across regional government departments, local agencies, local government and community organisations.
- **After the process:** review and build on current infrastructure in a year's time after the Action Plan and statewide governance and operational structures have been established.

The Primary Prevention Strategy within the Statewide Family Violence Action Plan should:

- **Encompass prevention of all forms of violence against women** (within and outside the family context) endorsing *Change the story* as its foundation and addressing structural, normative and practice-based gendered drivers of violence against women through an intersectional approach.
- **Envisage additional actions to prevent other forms of family violence** (e.g. elder abuse, disability-based violence, violence in same sex relationships and adolescent violence against parents), using action research methodologies to build the evidence base.



- **Include tailored initiatives and intensive investment for groups experiencing multiple layers of disadvantage** (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disabilities, and culturally and linguistically diverse women).
- **Be developed with cross-party support and protected long-term funding** to enable generational social change.
- **Have dedicated primary prevention funding** that includes investment across the multiple settings outlined in *Change the story*, and creates a sustainable prevention infrastructure.
- **Be supported by action and investment** in the Victorian Gender Equality Strategy.
- **Include resourcing for evaluation of all primary prevention activities**, be aligned with a monitoring and accountability framework and make all evaluation reports commissioned by Government publically available.

Development of the Independent Statutory Family Violence Agency and Primary Prevention Initiative should:

- **Be undertaken through a co-designed process with stakeholders** ensuring that these recommendations are not developed in isolation from each another.
- **Take a holistic approach that considers primary prevention, early intervention and response** as an integrated system, while ensuring specialist expertise, funding and leadership is dedicated to each area.
- **Operate in conjunction with a whole-of-government coordination mechanism** that sits within the Family Violence Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the aforementioned steering body.
- **Recognise agencies that have a long track record and expertise in prevention**, and those working on behalf of population groups experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage.
- **Work closely with key partners** such as Our Watch as the national prevention organisation, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), and any national advisory and governance mechanisms taken forward under *The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*.

The Victorian Government should co-design a monitoring, accountability and reporting framework for primary prevention under the Action Plan that will:

- **Support organisations with primary prevention expertise** to undertake data collection at both state and regional levels and report on progress into the shared frameworks and the independent agency.
- **Be closely linked** to parallel monitoring and reporting frameworks for early intervention and response strategies.
- **Include measures relating to primary prevention** and groups that experience multiple forms of disadvantage, and ensure the proposed Victorian Family Violence Index sits within the framework.

The implementation of the Commission's recommendations for workforce development should:

- **Build cross-competencies** between those working on violence against women and their children and a diversity of organisations to effectively address intersectional forms of discrimination and disadvantage within the primary prevention strategy.
- **Develop a workforce strategy closely aligned with the 10-year industry plan** with our recommended sub-committee/state-wide steering committee, and advice from experts and registered training organisations.
- **Develop a 'policy and practice leadership' strategy** to support the professional development of current leaders in primary prevention practice, in addition to an accreditation regime, to assist with prioritising gaps in the prevention workforce.

The Victorian Government should ensure that the Gender Equality Strategy:

- Requires government to undertake an intersectional gender analysis of all government policy, legislative development and budgeting in recognition of existing unequal gendered power relationships and multiple forms of discrimination.

We would like to acknowledge VicHealth, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Women's Legal Service Victoria, the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association and Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre who endorse this Joint Response. These organisations recognise the expertise of the signatories in the area of primary prevention, and the unique prevention knowledge that is reflected in the recommendations provided.