

Australia's campaign to  
stop violence against women

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Dear Taskforce

**Response to Terms of Reference for Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence**

Please find enclosed White Ribbon Australia's submission to the aforementioned Taskforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Terms of Reference and for the time extension afforded to us.

I look forward to the opportunity to elaborate on the information contained in this submission if required.

Yours sincerely

Libby Davies

CEO

White Ribbon Australia



## White Ribbon Australia's Response to the Government of Queensland's Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence December 2014

### Introduction

White Ribbon Australia (White Ribbon) appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence.

This submission particularly addresses points 1, 3 and 6 of the Terms of Reference with particular emphasis on:

- The relationship between gender inequity and violence against women
- Additional investment in primary prevention
- Schools as sites of social change essential to the prevention of men's violence against women
- The advantages and necessity of a whole-of-government response to violence against women

### 1. Educating and engaging Queenslanders to create a community that supports respectful relationships, practices positive attitudes and behaviours and promotes a culture of non-violence

White Ribbon has been active in Queensland since 2007, working to engage Queenslanders in our primary prevention campaign and programs that work to change the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate men's violence against women to occur.

Our vision at White Ribbon is that all women live in safety, free from all forms of men's violence. The White Ribbon Campaign and Programs recognise the positive role men play in preventing violence against women. We foster and encourage male leadership in the prevention of violence against women, based on the understanding that most men are not violent.

White Ribbon is a means for men to speak out and act to stop violence against women, and to safely and effectively challenge the attitudes and behaviours of a minority of men who use or condone violence against women.

We work through primary prevention initiatives involving awareness raising, education and programs with young people, schools, workplaces and across the broader community.

The work of this national male led campaign work has been gathering significant momentum over the years as indicated by the Campaign metrics.



The success of engaging men and the broader community to drive change is being evidenced by the campaign that:

- now has between 60 - 70% brand recognition;
- has seen a doubling of White Ribbon events in the last two years;
- through our Workplace Accreditation program directly touched over 144,000 employees of which the majority are men;
- through our Youth Programs, has directly worked with 200 schools and over 100,000 students;
- now has a social media reach of over 2 million;
- reflects successful community and corporate partnering; and
- is evidencing positive social change.

Now, 11 years into a campaign owned and driven by the community and based on research and best practice, our programs are evidencing attitudinal and behavioural change. We are a campaign that is 87% funded and driven by the community. The movement has taken hold and men, together with women, are driving the change.

In contrast to the results of the National Community Attitudes Survey released in September this year, this Campaign evidences that many men in Australia are taking a stand against sexism and gender based violence. The huge growth of the White Ribbon Campaign is testimony to the commitment of men and the community to drive social change. This is a campaign that is driven by the diverse sectors of the community, which engages the community across its breadth and depth, a campaign where men are committed to being active agents of change, a campaign that gives men the strategies and tools to be the change. As a stakeholder has said, *it provides a positive framework for the community to progress prevention about this sensitive and insidious issue.*

Men engaged through the Campaign proactively acknowledge the issue and are committed to building on the feminist tradition to stop violence against women. They are the backbone of the campaign and are deeply concerned about the embedded sexism and constructs of masculinity that fuel violence. Their activism is driven by enhanced understanding of what constitutes violence against women and the tools of engagement that enable them to be a voice and an activist.

We are measuring the social impact of this work and concomitant with the length of time it takes to see attitudinal and behavioural change, evidencing positive impact in our schools and workplaces and in the commitment of communities that are becoming 'White Ribbon Communities'.

The programs of prevention, independently evaluated, give men the tools to recognise and act in places that matter, in workplaces, in schools, in universities, and in the community.



The following table provides a snapshot of our activity in Queensland:

White Ribbon Activity in Queensland 2007-current
<p><b>White Ribbon Events</b></p> <p>83 White Ribbon events to date in 2014, including 54 for White Ribbon Day</p>
<p><b>White Ribbon Ambassadors</b></p> <p>260 White Ribbon Ambassadors in Queensland, representing 11% of all Ambassadors</p>
<p><b>White Ribbon Volunteers</b></p> <p>115 White Ribbon volunteers in Queensland, representing 10% of all volunteers</p>
<p><b>White Ribbon Workplaces</b></p> <p>7 Queensland organisations are participating in the current intake seeking accreditation as a White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program and a further 27 have registered interest</p>
<p><b>White Ribbon Committee</b></p> <p>There are a number of White Ribbon Committees in metropolitan and regional Queensland including Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Townsville and Brisbane. The Queensland White Ribbon Committee based in Brisbane is one of our most active nationally, holding 7 events since its establishment in 2013</p>

Our high-profile national social media and advertising presence, that is based on market research and stakeholder consultation, underpins these activities, raising awareness of men's violence against women.

White Ribbon currently self-funds the majority of our activities in Queensland, which are forecasted to cost \$127,000 in 2014/15. We appreciate and acknowledge a recent contribution from the Department of Communities to our campaign activity in Queensland.

White Ribbon offers to deliver all of the White Ribbon prevention programs in Queensland, including our *Breaking the Silence Schools Program*, which is an award winning program endorsed by all State and Territory Departments of Education. The capacity to deliver the Program into Queensland is dependent on funding and to date there has been no funding made available by the State. Integrating the Program into Queensland schools will ensure primary prevention messages reach all segments of the Queensland community, maximising the impact of our work and making Queensland communities safer for women and girls. A description of *Breaking the Silence* and its role in supporting respectful relationships and a culture of non-violence in communities is explored at length in the response to Term of Reference 6.

### 3. Holistic, coordinated and timely responses to domestic violence

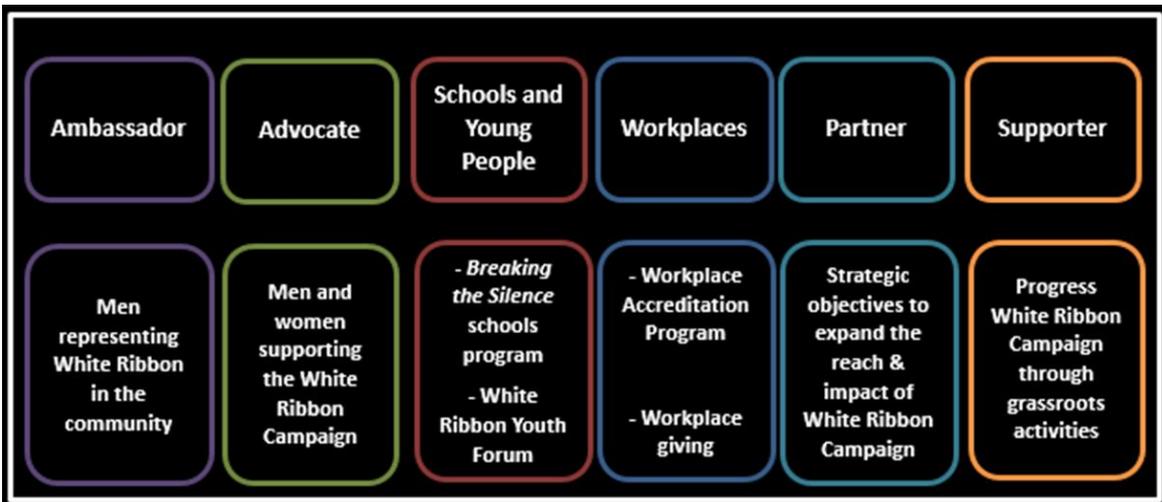
Violence against women costs the Queensland economy more than \$2.7 billion annually. Additional investment in proven prevention programs will demonstrate the Queensland Government’s commitment to eliminating men’s violence against women and creating positive, lasting social change.

The Terms of Reference for this taskforce refer to holistic, coordinated and timely responses to domestic violence. Such a response must include a focus on prevention. Primary prevention efforts must involve a variety of activities in a number of environments. The White Ribbon Campaign and Programs operate across a spectrum of activities and locations through funding that largely comes from the broader community, only 10-12% of funding to support this work comes from Federal and state governments:

**White Ribbon Campaign:** a year-long social marketing and awareness raising campaign engaging the community in the issue of men’s violence against women and starting the process of attitudinal change, including through promotion of active bystander interventions (e.g. the White Ribbon *Hey Mate* and *Uncover Secrets* Campaign).

#### *Making Women’s Safety a Man’s Issue Too*

Our continuing market research identifies how to enhance ‘pitch’ to resonate with men. In 2014 we launched the *Uncover Secrets* Campaign; and the enhancement of the community engagement program that runs all year and not just focused on White Ribbon Day. Following lengthy Board and stakeholder discussion White Ribbon Australia revised the Mission statement to better capture the core essence of the campaign and reflect the views of our White Ribbon Ambassadors whose activist roles are about *making women’s safety a man’s issue too*. We also reviewed and reframed how White Ribbon works across the community and this is captured through *the six ways of being White Ribbon* as identified in the following diagram:



**Breaking the Silence Schools’ Program:** professional development program for school principals and teachers that supports them to further embed models of respectful relationships in school culture and classroom activities. These models give students the opportunity to learn about and experience respectful relationships, preventing the perpetration of violence against women and girls. Schools are important sites for social change. Importantly, *Breaking the Silence* takes a whole-of-school approach, engaging schools,



local services, Police, students and parents in violence prevention. Over 200 schools have participated to date, reaching over 110,000 students.

**White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program:** this program recognises and accredits workplaces taking active steps to prevent men's violence against women in and outside of the workplace. To date, 27 organisations have achieved accreditation and 43 are currently undergoing accreditation.

**Ambassadors:** Over 2,600 men across Australia are White Ribbon Ambassadors. Ambassadors represent White Ribbon at community events, through media and in everyday life. They are leaders in driving attitudinal and behavioural change in their spheres of influence. The role of Ambassador, namely men engaging men in violence prevention, underpins the White Ribbon Campaign and Programs and is fundamental to our theory of change.

**Research:** White Ribbon contributes to research in a variety of fields relevant to men's violence against women including gender equity, masculinities, legal responses to men's violence against women and youth attitudes to violence. This research is conducted with research partners, other not-for-profits and through the White Ribbon Australia Research and Policy Group. In early 2014, we undertook a youth attitudes to violence survey. This has yielded thousands of responses from young people around the country. Results are currently being analysed and will be released later in the year.

In 2013, the Research and Policy Group oversaw the publication of two papers that can be found on the White Ribbon website as part of the White Ribbon research Series:

- *Understanding the Statistics about Male Violence against Women* by Professor Donna Chung
- *Genders at Work: Exploring the role of workplace equality in preventing men's violence against women* by Scott Holmes and Dr Michael Flood.

By the end of 2014/15 we will have added to the research series the following publications:

- *Working with Men from Immigrant and Refugee Communities to prevent Violence against Women* by Dr A. Murdolo and Dr R. Quiazon
- *Women's Safety is a Men's Issue: Men's Attitudes to Violence against Women and what that means for men* by Dr Kristin Diemer

**Grassroots action:** The White Ribbon Campaign is driven by the community for the community. In 2013 we saw over 850 events held across Australia, a 200% increase on the previous year and at least 34% of those were run by men. Local, regional and state/territory committees are a key component in White Ribbon's effective mobilisation of grass-roots activity. There are many White Ribbon Committees operating across the country.

White Ribbon Committees are made up of people from a range of sectors and organisations - service providers, government, police, schools and local business leaders, amongst others. There are at least 30 of these across Australia working together with, alongside or as part of the locally focused DV Committees.

### Promising results

White Ribbon metrics for 2013 (we are still collating the metrics for 2014) indicate that community responses to preventing violence against women, including domestic violence, are gathering momentum:

- Over 150,000 people have taken the White Ribbon Oath since 2010, swearing never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women



- 58% increase in the number of Ambassadors from 2010 to 2014
- 310% increase in the number of White Ribbon community events from 2010-2013
- Over 90,000 people engaged with White Ribbon on Facebook and Twitter
- A two million reach on social media

White Ribbon Programs are seeing evidence of attitudinal and behavioural change across programs. The White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program formally recognises and accredits workplaces that are taking active steps to respond to, and prevent, violence against women in and outside of the workplace. To date, 27 organisations have achieved accreditation and the program has reached 144,000 employees, the majority of whom were men. Independent evaluations of the project shows that we are increasing people's awareness of violence against women and starting to change their behaviours. For example, there has been a 16% increase in the number of employees who think that sexually explicit jokes are 'never acceptable' in the workplace.

We have achieved these results through a campaign and programs based on evidence-based best practice and the World Health Organisation Model of Health Prevention. Ongoing funding for the continuous development of these campaigns and programs is essential to building on and strengthening these results.

To reach as many people as possible, violence prevention initiatives must be targeted and culturally appropriate. Over the next four years, White Ribbon will focus on expanding our reach into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse communities across Australia.

Policy responses to domestic violence need to be cognisant of, and build on, successes such as those outlined above. This will avoid duplication and facilitate joined up service delivery. The Queensland Government can support this by adopting a whole-of-government approach to reducing men's violence against women that sees portfolios and governments communicating with each other and working together on proven and effective responses.

## 6. Defining the scope of violence, assault and abuse to be addressed in a domestic and family violence strategy and whether it would be appropriate for such a strategy to focus on particular or defined sections of the community in order to have the most impact.

The Terms of Reference for this Taskforce ask if a domestic and family violence strategy should focus on particular or defined sections of the community in order to have the most impact. White Ribbon programs are targeted to ensure maximum impact, with our programs running in workplaces around Australia, including Queensland, and schools in New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and Tasmania. To respond to this, we will focus on schools as sites of social change and essential to the prevention of men's violence against women.

The National Plan recognises the importance of respectful relationships and gender equity to eliminating violence against women and their children. Beginning this work with children in schools is key to achieving this for a number of reasons, including research indicating that children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to perpetrate this violence (Marcus and Braaf 2007).

There are a number of examples of respectful relationships education programs run in classrooms with children and young people, including the *Love Bites* initiative by NAPCAN and *Be the Hero!* from NIRODAH. White Ribbon works with these organisations through our *Breaking the Silence* Program. *Breaking the*



*Silence* is an award-winning professional development program for principals and teachers that supports them to embed models of respectful relationships in school culture and classroom activities. These models give students the opportunity to learn and experience respectful relationships, preventing the perpetration of violence against women and girls.

To support successful implementation of program content, *Breaking the Silence* has been designed to be flexible and adaptable to meet the individual cultural and curriculum needs of schools and communities. We achieve this by combining professional development and preventative practice within existing school curricula. White Ribbon works with schools to adapt the program to the school's community, resources and place in the culture change journey. The school's involvement in this program progresses their work in this space and articulates them as 'White Ribbon' Schools.

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*'The Breaking the Silence initiative has all the features of a successful primary prevention program for schools. It is directly linked to curriculum content; it can be delivered flexibly to suit the varying circumstances of schools; it is engaging for the whole school community; and it links well with a key school value – developing respectful relationships between boys and girls (and men and women). It has been an absolute delight observing principals, teachers, students and parents breaking the silence and making it such a key component of what it means to be contemporary, caring and responsible schools'*

- Dr Phil Lambert, General Manager, Curriculum, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

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White Ribbon launched *Breaking the Silence* in 2009. Since then, over 200 schools have participated, reaching over 110,000 students in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory. In 2015, we will roll out the program to Tasmania. *Breaking the Silence* was awarded State and Territory winner of the *Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards 2013* and was a finalist in the 2013 *HESTA Community Sector Awards*. During Child Protection Week in 2014, *Breaking the Silence* was awarded national winner of the *NAPCAN Play Your Part* award.

A participating Sydney school recorded an 80% decrease in suspensions relating to bullying and aggressive and violent behaviour following implementation of *Breaking the Silence*. Results from independent evaluations of the program found that:

- The inbuilt flexibility of *Breaking the Silence* allows participants to tailor the program to meet the specific needs of their schools
- *Breaking the Silence* is consistent with the 'personal and social competence' dimensions of the Australian National Curriculum, enhancing the longevity of those components able to be embedded in the curriculum.
- Participating schools were more likely to have procedures in place to promote a culture of non-violence
- The emphasis *Breaking the Silence* puts on respectful relationships provided an easy link to their other programs, policies, curricula and student welfare issues
- Increase in awareness regarding the prevalence of violence.



- Students were more likely to stop others who were being unfair or disruptive.
- Schools reported positive changes in the interactions between boys and girls.

Participating teachers and students have also shared their experiences with us:

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*“...I’ve noticed a big difference in the way our students speak to us and their parents and each other...”*

*– Primary school principal*

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*“There was a difference in the language, like kids would talk about respect. I think within Stage 3, the boys that were involved in the project...there was a noticeable change in the way they actually interacted and were involved with girls. I think they became more willing to engage in conversation and relationships with the girls...”*

*– Primary school principal*

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*‘It was good to see the point of view of the bully and the victim. I have learnt how and why a female should be treated with respect.’*

*- Student*

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*Breaking the Silence* achieves this by taking a whole-of-school approach, acknowledging that learning occurs across the school curriculum, the school environment and in the community. *Breaking the Silence* is not an addition to the curriculum, it takes the unique White Ribbon approach to driving attitudinal and behavioural change by building on initiatives that may already be in place such as Love Bites. The program has been designed to sit within the general capabilities covered in the National Curriculum, focusing on school leaders modelling respectful relationships and the integration of preventative practice within the school curricula.

Research indicates the importance of schools in primary prevention (Flood, Fergus and Heenan 2009) and the effectiveness of the whole-of-school approach (Dyson 2008) that *Breaking the Silence* takes. The whole-of-school approach acknowledges the reciprocal relationship between behaviour and the environments in which they take place. This emphasises and promotes broad and diverse engagement from the school and its wider community. It includes schools, parents, local businesses, Police, domestic violence services and community services

*Breaking the Silence* is fully funded by corporate partnerships and philanthropic donations. However, additional support is needed to rollout the program nationally and bring it to young Queenslanders. Successful roll out of the program across states demonstrates its flexibility and capability to be delivered nationally.



Every government, including the Queensland Government, has a clear interest in supporting established and proven initiatives like *Breaking the Silence*. Such an investment in young people will feed directly into achievement of cross-portfolio Queensland Government and Federal Government policy by addressing the issues of respectful relationships and gender inequity that are at the heart of violence against women and their children:

**Queensland Government**

- Child protection policies, legislation and research: ***Taking Responsibility: a roadmap for Queensland's child protection; Make the Call Campaign; Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012; Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research***
- Department of Education, Training and Employment: ***Student Protection Policy***
- Policies to enhance the economic participation of women: ***Women in Resources Sector Strategy; Supporting Women Scholarships***
- Queensland volunteering policy: ***The Queensland Plan***

**Australian Government**

- Policy: ***National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022; The Second Action Plan 2013-2016***

## Conclusion

The comprehensive, primary prevention work of White Ribbon Australia is evidenced through the record of development of the Campaign over time and will be also referenced by the ongoing social impact measurement of the prevention programs. The organisation has established award winning primary prevention initiatives that build on and support men speaking out about the issue. White Ribbon's intensive work raises awareness, educates and provides the tools to address the causes of violence against women. This occurs through the primary prevention programs with youth, in schools, in workplaces and across the community. It has gained a level of traction that indicates real and enduring change. The White Ribbon Campaign is demonstrating that given time, sound strategies and tools, we as a community are able to drive positive social change to prevent men's violence against women. This work is vital and proving its worth. We urge the Government of Queensland to enhance their support of this work across the Queensland community so to build on the depth and breadth of this campaign.

## References

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Flood, M., Fergus, L., Heenan, M. (2009) *Respectful Relationships Education: Violence prevention and respectful relationships education in Victorian secondary schools*. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development: Victoria. Available:

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