



**Submission to Inform the Development of the Second Action Plan
Under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22*
White Ribbon Australia
March 2014**

Introduction

White Ribbon Australia (White Ribbon) appreciates the opportunity afforded through the respective Roundtable consultations and this submission to inform the Second Action Plan.

Achieving meaningful social change, resulting in the reduction of violence against women and children, requires work and commitment over the long-term, and the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (hereafter the National Plan) recognises this. The First Action Plan increased the focus on prevention and engaging the community in awareness-raising. The Second Action Plan enables a reflection on the achievements of the First Action Plan, its omissions, and new way forward including maintaining and further enhancing primary prevention, amongst other critical priorities.

White Ribbon's activities continue to be committed to primary prevention. White Ribbon is Australia's unique, innovative and nationally recognised primary prevention organisation working to stop men's violence against women through a male-led campaign. The campaign works to change attitudes and behaviours that lead to the perpetuation of this most insidious and prolific form of violence through a number of strategic activities outlined herein.

White Ribbon's leading-edge work is recognised nationally and worldwide. It is informed by the White Ribbon Australia Research and Policy Reference Group, comprised of leading academics and policy-makers, and is supported by market research and evidence based best practice.

White Ribbon plays a crucial national role in building capacity to generate lasting positive change, and safer, more inclusive communities. White Ribbon demonstrates leadership in the sector, enabling communities and organisations to develop strategies to build communities and cultures based on respect and equality – and to end violence against women. Specific primary prevention programs are driving long term positive social change outcomes by delivering against the call to action captured in the National Plan.

In responding to the key questions for consideration, the following information is provided in relation to primary prevention action in Australia, in particular the White Ribbon Campaign.

1. What have been the achievements/gaps under the First Action Plan?

A major achievement is the progression of primary prevention activity. In particular the White Ribbon Campaign, based on evidence based best practice and the World Health Organisation Model of Health Prevention, is demonstrating positive social impact across the Australian community in the following key areas:

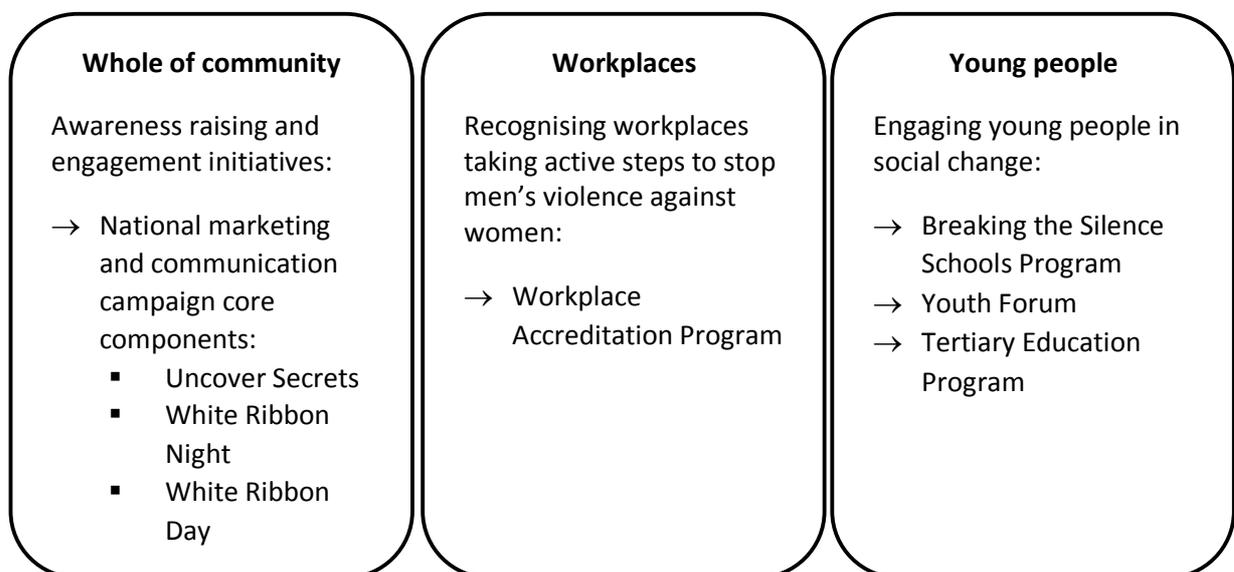


White Ribbon works with government and the community at all levels as well as the Prevention of Violence against Women (PVAW) sector. The Campaign, in all its elements, is demonstrating effective capacity for developing strategies and working in partnership with the PVAW sector and the community to effect real normative and attitudinal change. White Ribbon’s national campaign clearly supports the National Plan, through a concerted and determined focus on education and awareness-raising, with a clear call to action to change behaviours and attitudes that support violence. This call to action is demonstrated in its suite of primary prevention programs: the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program, and the Breaking the Silence in Schools program and the developing overarching Youth Strategy.

2. What are the opportunities for consolidating and building upon the actions undertaken under the National Priorities of the First Action Plan?

2.1 Engaging the community around the issue of men’s violence against women

White Ribbon executes a tested, national communications strategy that aligns with the general population and is based on market research to ensure a behavior-focused primary prevention model that provides for tangible and measurable impact on actual behaviour over time. This strategy underpins the White Ribbon community awareness and engagement campaigns and supports the best practice evidence base of the primary prevention activities White Ribbon delivers in workplaces and schools.



2.2 White Ribbon has proven strategies for awareness-raising, engagement and primary prevention

Through a strong communications strategy, we have achieved significant outcomes across our community awareness campaigns and workplace and school programs. To extend the depth and breadth of the prevention work further development of more culturally appropriate strategies and resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people must be actioned. These strategies and resources will facilitate culturally appropriate and contextualised engagement with these communities.

Key engagement outcomes thus far in the Campaign include:

- 200% increase in the number of White Ribbon community events since 2010
- 2,170 male White Ribbon Ambassadors across Australia
- 28 organisations participating in the Workplace Accreditation Pilot Program, reaching 85,000 employees (140 on the waiting list for program roll out in June 2014, 97 of which have a particular connection/relationship with CALD and/or ATSI communities)
- 18 organisations accredited as White Ribbon Workplaces
- Workplace Accreditation Program awarded *2013 ACT Partners in Prevention Award*
- 120 schools across NSW, Victoria and the ACT participating in the White Ribbon Breaking the Silence Program, reaching 62,000 students
- Breaking the Silence was a finalist in the *2013 HESTA Community Sector Awards*
- Two million reach across social media platforms

2.3 White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program

The White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program assists organisations to build awareness and responsiveness to the issue of violence against women. The Program is an important component of the National Plan and has been developed by White Ribbon to bring about attitudinal and behavioural change within workplaces at the cultural, institutional and individual levels.

Building on and recognising current and emerging initiatives, the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Pilot Project recognises and accredits workplaces that are taking active and effective steps to stop violence against women. The Pilot engages workplaces to build on existing initiatives that address respectful relationships by incorporating primary prevention and early intervention approaches to drive culture change. Across the 28 organisations taking part in the Pilot, there are approximately 83,500 employees, around 55,000 of which are male.

The Pilot ended in December 2013, and the ongoing Program will roll out from June 2014. There are currently 140 organisations from across Australia on the waiting list. The Program is applied to organisations of all sizes and types, and challenges employers to develop safe and effective ways to play a crucial role in stopping violence by working in partnership with White Ribbon.

The Program works to:

1. Target the causes of violence at three levels: individual, organisational and societal through effective leadership, organisational planning, training, staff participation, and integrated policies and procedures; and
2. Promote knowledge sharing, raise awareness and protect workers.

The preliminary results of the Program evaluation have been very positive, with 68% of management survey respondents feeling that employees would be more likely to take action if witnessing unacceptable behaviour or language as a result of the Program, and 95% believing this would be achieved in the future.

The Program also led to increased levels of knowledge and awareness of support for women experiencing violence, and how to access it. Following the Program, if a female colleague were to experience violence at home or in the workplace, 88% of employees knew there would be support available to the victim, and 75% knew where to access this.

Whilst these figures show there is some way for these organisations to go on their journey to true culture change, the Program has had a significant and real impact over a relatively short period of time. The final evaluation of the Program will be available in April 2014. The Program was also the winner for the workplace category of the *2013 ACT Partners in Prevention Awards*.

2.4 Breaking the Silence in Schools

White Ribbon's Breaking the Silence in Schools Program is a unique leadership program which works to embed models of respectful relationships within primary and secondary schools, working with youth from 8 – 18 years to prevent the perpetration of violence against women and girls. The program takes the unique White Ribbon approach of facilitating and enhancing respectful relationships within the school culture, filtering down to classroom activities and engaging students in learning and experiencing respectful relationships. It combines professional development and preventative practice within existing school curricula to integrate strategies and tools for school leadership to engage students—and subsequently, whole of school communities—in the prevention of violence against women, to bring about positive social change.

The program is delivered to principals and senior teachers, providing participants with resources and strategies to implement the program into their respective schools. Built upon academic research and an evidence base, the program is cognisant of other programs that may be in place at a school and is designed to be adaptable to a school's specific needs, cultural sensitivities, community, resources and place in the culture change journey. Since the Program's inception in 2009, it has been piloted and independently evaluated within the Sydney Region of the NSW Department of Education & Communities (DEC), and expanded across NSW, VIC and the ACT. To date, the Program has engaged more than 120 schools, with over 62,000 students experiencing its benefits.

Since implementing the White Ribbon Schools Program, the principal of Sans Souci Primary School noted that, *"suspensions relating to bullying, and aggressive and violent behaviour have decreased by over 80%"*.

Dr Phil Lambert, General Manager of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) says of the Program, *"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)."*

In 2013, the program was recognised as one of five finalists for the Organisation Award of the *HESTA Community Sector Awards* and was commended for 'building awareness about violence against women among young people in a sensitive and proactive way.' It has also been celebrated as a State and Territory Winner of the *2013 Australia Crime and Violence Prevention Awards*.

3. What types of other initiatives could benefit from a national focus?

It is critical that a national focus is maintained and further supported in the following three areas:

3.1. Marketing and Communications Research

Consistent and ongoing market research should be used to understand the impact of the White Ribbon Campaign over time against the objectives of the Campaign. This is also a fundamental building block in the rationale that underpins why Government and other institutional and corporate funders can have faith that those objectives are being met.

Market research to drive community awareness and engagement aids in understanding:

- Public perceptions of violence against women and its relevance, prevalence, importance and acceptability
- Men's understanding of, and attitude towards, the issue specifically

- Men’s perceptions of the importance of, and motivational enablers and barriers to, taking personal action to help stop violence against women by men
- The key factors influencing behaviour and therefore communications messages that should be used to move men along the change continuum:



- How these factors differ within key target audiences
- The impact (and outcomes) achieved as a result of specific and targeted campaigns.

The aim of the market research is to build on the knowledge base that enables White Ribbon to monitor and evaluate impact over time and to track the performance of the campaign. At the moment this work is completely funded by White Ribbon through our own fundraising initiatives – only 20% of White Ribbon funding is received from Government.

At this point in time, White Ribbon’s work in this area has been limited to qualitative research into the Campaign executions over the last two years. This research will again be undertaken in 2014. The purpose of this work is to understand male perceptions and motivations around the issue and their intention to act. This research has greatly informed our work and our total knowledge in these areas, but must be built upon in terms of population-wide analysis of the key drivers of awareness and attitudinal change.

3.2. National Communications Strategy

It is critical that there is better support for the development of the national communications strategy around the prevention of men’s violence against women. Each year White Ribbon undertakes a national marketing and communications approach based on creative elements developed as a result of the ongoing research and analysis outlined above. The financial support for this work comes from the funds raised by White Ribbon and is independent of any government support. Given the very limited resources available, it is testimony to the integrity and commitment of White Ribbon that the Campaign generates significant engagement as indicated in Section 2.2. The National Plan must focus more attention on this to broaden and deepen the strategy to better engage people across Australia and to include culturally appropriate strategies and resources for CALD and ATSI communities.

3.3. Social impact measurement of primary prevention initiatives

Whilst White Ribbon has built ongoing evaluation into all aspects of the primary prevention work, this continuing work needs to be funded and supported as an ongoing key area of focus under the Second Plan.

As evidenced by the programs outlined above, White Ribbon is committed to driving a primary prevention campaign dedicated to ending violence against women, launching education and normative change programs across schools, workplaces and facilitating men’s role modelling. White Ribbon also facilitates national awareness through community and organisation events, and a widespread communications strategy encompassing television commercials (TVCs), other public engagement leadership and education programs and partnerships. Now in its eleventh year, the Campaign is accumulating critical data on normative change and there must be ongoing support for these social impact measures.

We do more than assess and enable community readiness regarding ending violence against women: we facilitate male leadership on this issue to engage men to establish peer cultures that work to positively change violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours. White Ribbon is committed to working in ongoing partnership with the Australian public and the VAW sector in developing the campaign, and in reflecting on and assessing the impact of primary prevention action as we continue to consolidate our contribution to productive debates and behavioural change to reduce violence against women and their children. It is critical that there be ongoing funding to support the gathering of evidence on the social impact of this work.

4. In order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in addressing violence against women, where is there scope to reduce duplication of programmes and services provided by the Commonwealth and the states and territories, as part of the Second Action Plan

The Second Action Plan further reinforces a focus on prevention strategy and action. In light of this and the development of the Primary Prevention Foundation and The National Centre for Excellence, and given the work of White Ribbon, there will need to be ongoing collaboration and strategic development between the three social change entities to ensure the most effective use of very finite resources. White Ribbon looks forward to the continuing development of an open, transparent and collaborative dialogue and action plan across the work of primary prevention in Australia and in light of the progress made by White Ribbon to date.

5. Which vulnerable groups and communities would benefit from an increased focus under the Second Action Plan?

As identified through the consultations, there are a number of groups that require increased focus, namely people with disabilities, youth, CALD and ATSI groups. Whilst White Ribbon's focus has been at the population level, there is considerable work underway to develop strategies and resources that will better target these vulnerable groups and communities.

6. How can we better engage our leaders and broader civil society to address the attitudinal and cultural change required to reduce violence against women and their children?

The White Ribbon Ambassador and Champions' Program, operating within White Ribbon and across the Campaign, is a successful platform through which leaders are engaged to drive attitudinal and behavioural change. Support for this work needs to be an ongoing part of the Second Action Plan.
