

**The Secretary
Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety
ACT Legislative Assembly
GBO BOX 1020
Canberra ACT 2601**

**White Ribbon Australia
Submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety
Inquiry into Domestic Violence and Family Violence – Policy approaches and responses
17 October 2017**

White Ribbon Australia (White Ribbon) appreciates the opportunity to contribute a submission to the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety's Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence – Policy approaches and responses.

We also acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the White Ribbon Capital Region Committee who live and work predominantly in the Australian Capital Territory. Their contribution significantly aided the development of the submission.

White Ribbon

White Ribbon is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end men's violence against women and girls, promote gender equality and create a new vision of masculinity.

White Ribbon Australia, as part of this global movement, wants all women in Australia to live in safety, free from violence and abuse. We focus on primary prevention: stopping violence before it starts.

White Ribbon Australia is dedicated to ensuring men are active advocates for changing the social norms, attitudes and behaviours that are at the root of men's violence against women. We engage men to stand up, speak out and act to influence the actions of men, demand change and drive gender equality.

Through education, awareness-raising and creative campaigns, prevention programs, community engagement and partnerships, we highlight the positive role men play in preventing men's violence against women and support them to be part of this social change.

Our vision is 'A nation that respects women, in which every woman lives in safety, free from all forms of men's abuse'. We do this by engaging men to make women's safety a man's issue too. This involves men and women working alongside each other, using the White Ribbon Campaign and Prevention Programs as a platform for raising awareness and creating attitudinal and behavioural change.

Summary

The ACT Government has taken significant steps to respond to men's violence against women and has continued to reaffirm the importance of prevention efforts, which work to stop this violence before it starts.

The ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011 2017 has also acknowledged the

importance of engaging men, alongside women, in efforts to prevent this violence.¹ In particular, it affirms the significant role men play in prevention efforts, particularly their role in supporting community awareness about violence, speaking out against other men's sexism or use of violence, and striving for a culture and community that is safe, respectful and just for all. White Ribbon commends the ACT Government's ongoing commitment to a whole of society response to and prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence.

As mentioned, White Ribbon's mandate is the primary prevention of men's violence against women, with White Ribbon's programs working as platforms for raising awareness and creating attitudinal and behavioural change to prevent and stop violence before it starts.

As such, this submission will specifically address terms of reference d) *best practice policy approaches and responses being undertaken in other jurisdictions to prevent and/or respond to domestic and family violence*. It will do this by providing a brief outline of the best-practice programs White Ribbon is currently implementing in the Australian Capital Territory and other States and Territories across Australia.

It is also important to note that, while this submission does not speak specifically to the other terms of reference, White Ribbon believes that effective primary prevention efforts to reduce men's violence against women must work to modify or eliminate the underlying causes and drivers of this violence by challenging and transforming attitudes, practices and behaviours that support discrimination and men's violence against women; policy approaches and responses should also reflect this.

In White Ribbon's submission to the *Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence and Gender Inequality* by the Finance and Public Administration References Committee Inquiry, White Ribbon identifies that to address the underlying causes of domestic [family and sexual] violence a long-term whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach is required.² This approach requires a strong focus on prevention as part of the continuum of responses through to tertiary service provision. The White Ribbon social change movement to stop men's violence against women is based on a whole of community approach and the prevention programs in place evidence this approach.

The submission also reaffirms that while significant steps have been taken to respond to and prevent men's violence against women, much more investment is required at the government and service levels to enhance coordination and facilitate systemic change. We believe the comments made in this submission are relevant to the broader context of this inquiry and we ask that the Committee consider them in their deliberations.

White Ribbon Programs: best-practice responses to prevent violence before it starts.

The following section provides a brief overview of the White Ribbon social change movement and White Ribbon programs. As mentioned, these programs work as platforms for raising awareness and creating attitudinal and behavioral change to prevent and stop violence before it starts.

Underpinning White Ribbon's programs is our Social Impact Measurement framework, which works to measure the outcomes of its activities and programs. The framework builds on groundbreaking attitudinal research and primary prevention frameworks, such as the National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS)³ and OurWatch's Primary Prevention Framework *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*⁴, to measure changes in peoples' knowledge about, and

¹ The ACT Government (2011) The ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011 2017: Our responsibility: Ending violence against women and children. Retrieved from: http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/231337/ACT-Prevention-of-Violence-Against-Women-and-Children-Strategy-2011-2017.pdf

² White Ribbon Australia's submission to the Senate inquiry into the Finance and Public Administration References Committee Inquiry into Domestic Violence and Gender Inequality 2016 can be found here: <https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/about/what-white-ribbon-does/advocacy/>

³ VicHealth. (2014). *Australian' Attitudes to Violence against Women. 2013 National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey.*

⁴ Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

attitudes towards, men's violence against women and gender equality overtime to track performance of our programs and activities. It also measures peoples' likelihood to intervene when they witness violence. Where possible, we compare our results to what is happening nationally.

While data collection to inform the framework is still in its adolescence, preliminary data from the Social Impact Measurement framework has shown promising results. For example, survey data indicates that White Ribbon supporters have significantly higher support for gender equality than the general population. The development of this framework is ongoing with plans to report against the framework by mid-2018. We aim to share this information, and work in collaboration with the ACT Government, and work towards a shared set of data that can inform on social and attitudinal change to stop men's violence against women.

Further details regarding White Ribbon's Programs and the Social Impact Measurement Framework are provided in the *Briefing Pack: October 2017 Update* appended at the end of this document. We ask that the Committee consider this information in their deliberations for this inquiry.

White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program

The White Ribbon Australia Workplace Accreditation Program is a world leading violence-prevention initiative focused on providing organisations with the tools and strategies to actively prevent and effectively respond to violence against women.

To be accredited as a White Ribbon Workplace, organisations must demonstrate a commitment to tackling violence against women and meet 15 criteria across three standards, which are then independently assessed to support compliance and best-practice.

As part of the accreditation assessment, organisations must be able to respond to and prevent violence against women, whether it occurs inside or outside the workplace. To do this, organisations are provided with support to adapt their policies and procedures so that these take a zero-tolerance stance against violence, support women experiencing violence and hold perpetrators to account.

Workplaces are also required to take practical steps to promote gender equality and respectful relationships. This is done, for example, through facilitating effective leadership, resource allocation, communication, HR policy development and staff training. Such steps support the creation of a workplace culture where all employees are able to challenge inappropriate behaviour and strengthen gender equality within the organisation and broader community.

To date, the number of accredited White Ribbon Workplaces across Australia is 122, reaching over 600,000 employees in government, non-government and private sectors across all states and territories in Australia. A further 100 workplaces are currently working towards accreditation.

Over 150,000 survey responses have been collected from employees of participating organisations across Australia. Initial analysis of survey data demonstrates increased knowledge of men's violence against women, an improvement in employee's attitudes and behaviours towards violence against women and gender equality, as well as increased confidence to challenge disrespectful behaviour and to support disclosures of violence. Currently, White Ribbon is collaborating with KPMG to compile these survey responses into an online Dashboard and an independent evaluation of the White Ribbon Workplaces program is being commissioned with results expected at the end of 2018.

The reach and scope for change of this program is unprecedented. The Program acknowledges the importance of workplaces in promoting gender equality; not only does it raises awareness of how workplaces and individuals within workplaces might unintentionally contribute to the problem, but it also practically helps them transform their workplaces to become part of the solution.

White Ribbon commends the 2nd Implementation Plan 2015-2017 of the ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2011 – 2017, which encourages Directorates to consider becoming White Ribbon Accredited. We believe that this sends a clear message that the ACT Government is serious about preventing domestic, family and sexual violence. To continue to drive long-term, whole-of-society social-change, we welcome continued support for the program and recommend widespread implementation of White Ribbon's Workplace Accreditation across all

government, non-government and private sectors.

Breaking the Silence Schools Program

White Ribbon Australia's Breaking the Silence Schools Program (Breaking the Silence) is an award-winning, professional learning initiative for principals and teachers that provides foundational knowledge, tools and strategies to implement respectful relationships education and violence prevention programs in schools.

Breaking the Silence supports schools to bring about a commitment to stop violence against women. It builds on existing initiatives to strengthen a culture of respect and equality at all levels of the school community - through curriculum, role modelling from staff, policies and procedures, education programs and strengthened family and community partnerships.

Breaking the Silence is suitable for both primary and secondary schools. Through the program, students learn and experience respectful relationships, gender equality and how to challenge attitudes that support violence.

White Ribbon Australia continues to engage and collaborate with local and federal government stakeholders, including key personnel in various Departments of Education to help align Breaking the Silence with developments in state/territory curriculum and policy frameworks, and to support strategic engagement of school networks.

Breaking the Silence also garners indirect support and buy-in of efforts to prevent violence by the broader community through the continuous engagement with community stakeholders including White Ribbon committees, community organisations, and local agencies targets the expansion of the 2017-18 Program. This also helps facilitate local, contextualised support that links with tertiary services.

Since 2009, Breaking the Silence has reached approximately 314,000 students, 23,800 teachers in over 570 schools. In the ACT, ten schools have completed the program and are recognised as White Ribbon Schools with seven more schools undertaking the program this year.

For example, an independent evaluation of the program conducted by UNSW Gendered Violence Research Network in 2013/2014⁵ found that:

- Schools described improved behaviour amongst their students following program implementation, including positive changes in the interactions between boys and girls
- Schools agreed that students were more likely to stop others who were being unfair or disruptive.
- Schools were more likely to have procedures in place to promote a culture of non-violence.

Preliminary findings from the 2016/2017 internal evaluation of Breaking the Silence reaffirmed the positive social impact of the program and found:

- **100%** of respondents agreed that the Breaking the Silence Schools Program was a valuable professional learning tool.
- **100%** of respondents agreed that the Program has given them foundational knowledge of the issue of men's violence against women.
- **91.95%** of respondents agreed that the Program has enabled them to integrate respectful relationships/violence prevention education through a whole of school approach.

The third independent evaluation of Breaking the Silence has been commissioned and results are expected for 2018.

Breaking the Silence engages the wider school community to gender equality and create a safe, inclusive school culture. It can also help raise awareness and create attitudinal and behavioral change to modify or eliminate the underlying causes and drivers of violence and create generational change to stop violence against women before it

⁵ Breckenridge, J; Browning, L; Wearing, M (2014) *Executive Summary: Breaking the Silence: School-based Primary Prevention of Men's Violence Against Women 2014 Independent Evaluation Report*, Gendered Violence Research Network School of Social Sciences, Arts & Social Sciences UNSW Australia

starts. White Ribbon recommends continued promotion of and support for the implementation of Breaking the Silence within ACT Government and non-government schools. We believe this will support awareness raising and attitudinal and behavioural change that is required to transform and prevent the underlying causes and drivers that lead to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Ambassador Program

The Ambassador Program was developed in the recognition that men are central to achieving the social change necessary to prevent men's violence against women.

The Program equips men, as volunteers and ambassadors, with the necessary knowledge and resources to proactively engage their community in the prevention of men's violence against women.

For example, a case study of White Ribbon's Ambassador Program undertaken by Bell and Seaman at the University of Wollongong found that Ambassadors' knowledge of men's violence against women and violence against women increased as a result of their ambassadorship.⁶

In addition, the program encourages Ambassadors' self-reflection and professional development through community forums, workshops and educational materials. For example, the aforementioned case study showed that nine tenths (89.2%) of Ambassadors felt they were 'more likely to challenge sexist behaviour toward women' as a result of their involvement in White Ribbon Australia Ambassadors' program. Furthermore, almost half of the Ambassadors surveyed in this study reported they were better able to 'question the notion of "boys will be boys"' (47.6%) and have increased their 'ability to self-reflect' as men (45.9%).

As official representatives of the White Ribbon social movement, Ambassadors possess the knowledge, skills and commitment to undertake the role to the standard expected and use their influence to drive attitudinal and behavioural change among men and the broader community.

Our Ambassadors derive from a wide range of backgrounds including different sectors, varying age groups, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Diversity Program

White Ribbon works closely with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and multicultural communities to ensure cultural awareness is at the forefront of everything we do. We also work to highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion throughout all aspects of the White Ribbon social movement. With the support of the Federal Government, White Ribbon reaches out to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and those from multicultural backgrounds to prevent violence against women.

The movement works to empower diverse communities by:

- developing community capacity to prevent domestic violence by organising forums and participating in events
- organising workshops for men and supporting them to be role models and confront domestic violence
- providing resources which are relevant and appropriate, including translated factsheets and videos
- encouraging and supporting the communities to organise forums and White Ribbon events to spread the message
- ensuring that diversity and inclusion are at the forefront when drafting key policies, frameworks and Programs

⁶ Bell, Kenton and Claire E. Seaman. 2016. 'Public Report: Case Study of White Ribbon Australia's Ambassador Program: Men as Allies to Prevent Men's Violence against Women'. Wollongong: University of Wollongong. doi: 10.6084/m9.figshare.3826764

Other transformative initiatives in development

White Ribbon is also developing a number of other primary prevention initiatives designed at raising awareness and creating attitudinal and behavioural change to prevent and stop violence before it starts. These are briefly detailed below.

Fatherhood Project

Our Fatherhood Project aims to ensure Fathers and father figures experience respectful relationships with their families recognising their roles in encouraging gender equality and taking active steps to respond to and prevent men's violence against women. Our project includes educational webinars and training, interactive Fatherhood resources including practical tips and tools, event activations, social media and marketing campaign activity, an expert reference group and focus group workshops, key collaborations and social impact measurement opportunities throughout.

Youth Leaders Program

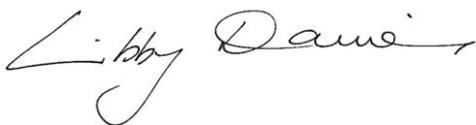
The Youth Leaders Program will collaborate with, engage, recruit and retain young men between the ages of 16 to 35 years old to drive change in their communities. Among the key activities, White Ribbon will provide educational training on understanding men's violence against women, provide workshop sessions on what it means to be a safe bystander, support the development of youth-centred resources and information, ensure volunteering opportunities, provide effective case management and employ pre and post program surveys to evaluate attitudinal change over the course of the pilot.

Community Liaison Program

White Ribbon plans to engage several Community Liaison Officers to deliver and support key trainings, community forums, event activations and help translate White Ribbon resources to ensure the movement is as far reaching as possible. The officers will be linked to collaborative partners and be engaged in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities and speak one or more of the following languages: Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Vietnamese and Swahili. This project lends itself to a strengths based model which is community owned and driven ensuring engagement is tailored, effective and culturally relevant.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide input into this inquiry. We welcome the opportunity to elaborate on the information contained in this submission as required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Libby Davies
CEO