

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION** to provide comment on  
the **ACTION PLAN CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK**  
for **ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN**

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Please complete your submission in a **Word.doc format** and email to the Office of Women's Policy (OWP):

[submissions.owp@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:submissions.owp@dhs.vic.gov.au)

by **no later than Friday 23 March 2012.**

Should you have any questions relating to your submission, please contact the Office of Women's Policy - Selina Getley on 9918 7328 or Angela Bourke on 9918 7346.

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**Please complete:**

Name of stakeholder/ organisation / individual making this submission:

White Ribbon Foundation

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The comments provided in this submission are from the perspective of (please bold or underline those that apply):

Advocacy/ representative organisation

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### **Submissions**

The information provided in this submission will be used to inform a feedback report to the Minister for Women's Affairs and other responsible ministers. The feedback report will consist of aggregated, de-identified information and will be used to inform the final Action Plan for addressing violence against women and their children. It is not intended that this report will be published.

Submissions will be treated in confidence and will not be published. Any request made under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* for access to a submission will be determined in accordance with that Act.

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## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Please provide your feedback by responding to the consultation questions below.

**1. Does the Consultation Framework provide balance in terms of addressing all forms of violence against women and their children?**

The White Ribbon Foundation's submission follows the order of the consultation questions listed here. Please note that we provide an overview of the White Ribbon Campaign's activities in Australia under consultation Question 4.

In responding to consultation Question 1, we focus on the ways in which the Consultation Framework identifies or names the problem it seeks to address, arguing that the Framework's language could be clearer and more careful throughout.

The Consultation Framework uses three phrases: "violence against women", "violence against women and their children", and "family violence and sexual assault". The names chosen to describe and act against forms of interpersonal violence will never perfectly contain the phenomenon (Macdonald 1998, p. 36). Nevertheless, any act of naming involves conceptual and political choices, and policy frameworks should involve careful reflection on these.

*"Violence against women"*: This phrase is the most ideal of the three used in the Framework. The term "violence against women" is valuable above all for its inclusiveness, by encompassing a wide variety of forms of violence directed at women as women, and for its clear identification of its concern with violence experienced by women. What would be even more preferable is the phrase "men's violence against women", as this also names the perpetrators of the vast majority of violence against women.

*"Violence against women and their children"*: This phrase is vulnerable to three criticisms. First, the phrase dilutes a focus on violence against women, by including violence also against children. Yes, violence against children is an area of urgent social concern, but including this in a policy framework centered on violence against women does not do it justice. Second, the phrase could be understood to refer only to 'violence against women *who have children* and their children', and not also to violence against women who do not have children. In other words, it could be understood to refer only to women who are mothers. Third, to the extent that we address violence against children, the phrase could be understood only to children who reside with their mothers rather than all children, including those who reside with their fathers or with other carers or in other contexts.

One rationale informing the use of the phrase "violence against women and their children" may be the recognition that when a man is using violence against his female partner or ex-partner and they have had children, often he is also using violence against these children, and whether or not they are directly subjected to violence they experience harm in the presence of violence against women. However, there are many ways in which the Consultation Framework could acknowledge this without the use of the phrase "violence against women and their children".

*"Family violence and sexual assault"*: These terms refer to particular types of interpersonal violence, defined either by the relationships of the individuals involved and the context in which violence takes place ('family' violence) or by the sexual character of the violence itself ('sexual' assault). Both terms are valuable precisely because of their identification of particular forms of or contexts for violence. However, both are also vulnerable to the criticism that they deflect attention from the sex

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of the likely perpetrator (male), likely victim (female), and the gendered character of the violence.

We have argued so far that the Consultation Framework should identify the problem it addresses as *men's violence against women*. The Framework then could discuss family violence and sexual assault as forms of violence which are the object of particular concern. At times in the Framework, it would then be appropriate to refer to 'men's family violence against women' and 'men's sexual assault of women' or 'men's sexual violence against women'.

*'Gender-based violence'*: Finally, the Framework's glossary refers to the phrase 'gender-based violence'. This term is increasingly common in international efforts to address men's violence against women. However, the term has several weaknesses. First, it is not entirely clear what forms or field of violence the term defines, given that most forms of violence can be seen as 'gender-based' in various ways. Most, if not all, forms of interpersonal violence, whether involving male or female perpetrators and male or female victims, are at least shaped by gender (by the meanings given to being male or female and the patterning of men's and women's relations) and thus plausibly described as 'gender-based'. Second, the term seems to be used in contradictory ways. In some usages, 'gender-based violence' (GBV) is another term for violence against women. This is not surprising, given that the term 'gender' itself often is used as a synonym for women. If GBV does refer exclusively to violence against women, then the terms 'violence against women' or 'men's violence against women' are preferable as they clearly delineate the kind of violence in question. In other usages however, 'gender-based violence' refers to violence against women *and* violence against men. But if there is little which is distinctive about this violence that makes it 'gender-based', the term 'gender-based' is redundant and we should simply be talking about violence.

*Sex trafficking, FGM, and sexting*: In relation to the Consultation Framework's language, we have two further concerns. It is commendable that the Consultation Framework recognises a variety of forms of violence against women, including sex trafficking and female genital mutilation. We have two reservations about its attention to these areas. First, it must be recognised that while these forms of violence are caused in part by determinants which are shared with those for other forms of violence against women, they also have distinct determinants. As a consequence, efforts that are effective in tackling the factors associated with family violence and sexual assault may not be effective in addressing these other forms of violence. Second, there is a conceptual slippage in the Framework between forms of 'violence against women and their children' and other behaviours which either are not necessarily visited upon women or are not necessarily violent. Cyber-bullying as a form of violence undoubtedly worthy of government's concern, but its inclusion in this Framework is awkward. Sexting is not necessarily violent, given that the term can refer to the consensual sharing of sexually explicit messages or images via mobile phone, rather than those either produced or shared without participants' consent.

In conclusion, the Consultation Framework would best be served by consistent adoption of the language of 'men's violence against women'.

## **2. Does the Consultation Framework provide the right balance between prevention, early intervention and response?**

In this section, our submission makes four points:

1. The Framework should offer a more comprehensive strategy for violence prevention;
2. The three areas of action – prevention, early intervention, and response – should not be in competition with each other;

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3. The Framework's prevention strategies should include both universal and targeted interventions;
  4. The Framework's prevention strategies should be directed more thoroughly towards key causes or determinants of family violence and sexual assault.

### **The principles for effective violence prevention**

The Framework should offer a more comprehensive strategy for the prevention of violence. In its draft form, the Framework does not show sufficient emphasis on key principles of effective violence prevention.

More than four decades of research and evaluation regarding efforts to prevent interpersonal violence have produced an emerging consensus regarding the generic features of effective prevention. Effective interventions have five generic features.

First, effective violence prevention is comprehensive. It uses multiple strategies to address the problem behaviour, and does so in multiple settings and at multiple levels. Multi-level or 'ecological' interventions address a variety of factors associated with family violence and sexual violence at different levels of the social order, from individuals' relationships and communities to local contexts and organisations to wider social forces (Casey and Lindhorst, 2009; Nation *et al.*, 2003). Experience from other fields suggests that comprehensive interventions have a greater impact on attitudes, behaviours, and social norms than singular or isolated approaches.

Second, effective violence prevention should be built on a sound understanding of the causes and workings of the problem and of how it can be changed. Strategies therefore need to incorporate both an appropriate theoretical framework for understanding the phenomena and a theory of change (Flood *et al.*, 2009, pp. 33-35).

Third, effective prevention involves educational, communication and other strategies known to create change. For example, educational strategies should address the factors known to be antecedents to or determinants of this behavior, use effective teaching methods, and have sufficient duration and intensity to produce change (Flood *et al.*, 2009, pp. 35-54).

Fourth, effective prevention should be crafted with an attention to context, both larger social and structural constraints and local beliefs and norms (Casey and Lindhorst, 2009, pp. 99-101; Flood *et al.*, 2009, pp. 55-56).

Finally, effective prevention involves a comprehensive process of impact evaluation that is integrated into program design and implementation (Flood *et al.*, 2009, pp. 57-58).

White Ribbon has developed a number of integrated programs, from schools to universities and workplaces that engage men and contribute to effective violence prevention across Australia.<sup>1</sup> These programs need to be supported with funding for more comprehensive implementation and impact evaluations.

### **Balancing prevention, early intervention, and response**

The three areas of action in the Framework – prevention, early intervention, and response – should not be in competition with each other.

The White Ribbon Campaign, both in Australia and around the world, is oriented towards primary

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<sup>1</sup> See the following website for more information: <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au>

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prevention. That is, its focus is on preventing men’s violence against women before it occurs. (The Framework uses the term ‘prevention’ in general, but its use refers to *primary* prevention.<sup>2</sup>) The White Ribbon Campaign emphasises, however, that such primary prevention efforts must be complemented and balanced by early intervention and response.

The White Ribbon Campaign recognises that prevention work has only become possible because of years of hard work and dedication by survivors, advocates, prevention educators, and other professionals (CDC, 2004, p. 1; Harvey *et al.*, 2007, p. 5). Primary prevention efforts complement, but do not replace or take priority over, work with victims and survivors.

‘Secondary prevention’ – what the Framework terms ‘early intervention’ – focuses on early identification and intervention, targeting those individuals at high risk for either perpetration or victimisation and working to reduce the likelihood of their further or subsequent engagement in or subjection to violence. Secondary prevention aims “to identify the problem before it becomes evident and to intervene as soon as possible to *prevent* the problem from occurring or progressing” (Chamberlain, 2008, p. 3). It is intended therefore to reverse progress towards violence and to reduce its impact.

‘Tertiary prevention’ – what the Framework terms ‘response’ – focuses on responding to, or treating the problem: minimising the impact of violence, restoring health and safety, and preventing further victimisation and perpetration (Chamberlain, 2008, p. 3). These activities include crisis care, counselling and advocacy, and referral for victims and survivors of sexual violence, as well as efforts to prevent additional abuse (Chrisler and Ferguson, 2006, p. 245), and criminal justice and counselling responses to perpetrators of violence aimed at punishment, rehabilitation, and the prevention of further violent behaviour.

The White Ribbon Foundation urges that governments continue, and indeed extend, their support for early intervention and service responses. It does so because such activities are vital in their own right, and because they also contribute directly to the primary prevention of men’s violence against women. For example, rapid and coordinated responses to individuals perpetrating sexual violence can reduce their opportunities for and likelihood of further perpetration, while effective responses to victims and survivors can reduce the impact of victimisation and prevent re-victimisation (Chamberlain, 2008, p. 4). Tertiary responses also contribute indirectly to prevention. For example, when community members perceive that the criminal justice system intervenes in and punishes domestic violence, they are also more likely to have supportive attitudes towards victims and towards legal responses to violence (Salazar *et al.*, 2003). Tertiary activities therefore are legitimate components of the prevention spectrum. Their effective and systematic application complements and supports the currently and future primary prevention programs initiated by organisation such as White Ribbon.

## **Need for universal and targeted interventions**

The Framework does not give sufficient attention to the need for both universal and more targeted

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<sup>2</sup> In other materials, the term ‘prevention’ sometimes is used more widely, such that it also includes what the Framework describes as ‘early intervention’ and ‘response’. In these alternative uses, ‘prevention’ is equivalent to *primary* prevention, and refers to activities which take place *before* violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration or victimisation. The Framework’s ‘early intervention’ is equivalent to *secondary* prevention, and refers to immediate responses after violence has occurred to deal with the short-term consequences of violence, to respond to those at risk, and to prevent the problem from occurring or progressing. The Framework’s ‘response’ is equivalent to *tertiary* prevention, comprising long-term responses after violence has occurred to deal with the lasting consequences of violence, minimise its impact, and prevent further perpetration and victimisation.

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interventions.

*Universal* prevention measures are aimed at the general public or at all members of a specific group such as adolescents or young men. *Selective* measures are aimed at individuals or groups that have a higher risk of developing a problem. For example, a schools program may be aimed at young people who have histories of delinquency or other risk factors relevant to sexual violence. *Indicated* measures are aimed at high-risk individuals or groups that have detectable signs of the problem, in other words, who show any identifiable risk factor or condition that makes it highly likely that they are experiencing or perpetrating sexual violence (Chamberlain, 2008, pp. 4-5). Thus, a universal strategy targets an entire population without regard to their exposure to violence, a selective strategy targets those who have a heightened risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence, and an indicated strategy targets those who are victims or perpetrators (CDC, 2004, p. 6).

In its action areas related to prevention, the Framework should incorporate a commitment to “Work in contexts and communities shown to have particularly high risks for family violence and sexual assault”. For example, there is solid evidence that risks of men’s violence against women are significantly higher in particular peer and organisational contexts and cultures (Flood, 2007, pp. 5-6), and preventative work should be oriented in part to these. Culturally appropriate prevention activities have been shown to be more effective than those implemented without attention to context or culture (Flood *et al.*, 2009, pp. 55-56). The Framework mentions the need for work with culturally specific services at action item E13, but should incorporate a more systematic emphasis on the need for culturally appropriate strategies in prevention, early intervention, and response.

### **Direct interventions to key causes or determinants**

Please see below regarding this aspect of our submission.

## **3. Will the Action Areas improve primary prevention, early intervention and responsiveness?**

### **Direct interventions to key causes or determinants**

The Framework is correct in its diagnosis of the problem of men’s violence against women and in its broad articulation of the solution. The Framework is absolutely correct to affirm that “the causes of all forms of [men’s] violence against women relate to gender inequality, gender stereotypes and broader cultures of violence” (p. 3). In turn, the Framework is absolutely correct in emphasising that the prevention of men’s violence against women and their children should centre on “fostering relationships, organisations, communities and cultures that are gender equitable and non-violent” (p. 7). However, where the Framework is far weaker is in carrying its diagnosis and its solutions through into the actual strategies identified and their intended impacts.

#### **Diagnosis of the problem**

The Consultation Framework is correct to diagnose the problem of men’s violence against women as a problem of gender inequalities. The State Government is likely to receive submissions from some men’s and fathers’ groups suggesting that this is misguided. However, there is abundant scholarly evidence that men’s violence against women indeed is based in gender inequalities and rigid gender norms.

Contemporary scholarship on men’s violence against women takes as a given that this violence is shaped by a variety of factors which operate at personal, situational, institutional, and social levels. At the same time, it is well documented that gender inequalities and gender norms are influential determinants of violence against women. This is true at the level of relationships and families, in

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local contexts and communities, and in societies as a whole (Heise 1998). A recent review of scholarship attests that:

- At the *individual* level, men’s adherence to sexist, patriarchal, and/or sexually hostile attitudes is an important predictor of their use of violence against women;
- At the level of intimate *relationships and families*, key determinants of men’s intimate partner violence against women include asymmetrical, male-dominated power relations;
- At the level of *contexts and institutions*, key determinants include sexist peer norms, cultures of hyper-masculinity, values of dominance and aggressiveness, and adversarial sexual beliefs;
- At the level of *cultures*, risks of men’s violence against women are higher in cultures in which manhood is defined in terms of dominance, toughness, or male honour (Flood, 2007, pp. 1-7).

The centrality of gender inequalities and rigid gender norms is endorsed by influential policy documents and prevention frameworks in Australia including:

- VicHealth’s prevention framework *Preventing Violence Before It Occurs* (2007);
- *Time For Action: The National Council’s Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009–2021* (2009);

This insight also is endorsed by key international documents such as:

- World Health Organization. (2004). *Preventing Violence: A guide to implementing the recommendations of the World report on violence and health*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization. (2009). *Violence Prevention: The evidence*. Geneva: World Health Organization (Seven briefings).

For example, in a recent review of the evidence regarding violence prevention, the WHO notes that “[p]romoting gender equality is a critical part of violence prevention... gender inequalities increase the risk of violence by men against women and inhibit the ability of those affected to seek protection.”

### **Strategies of intervention**

While the Consultation Framework correctly identifies the roots of men’s violence against women, it does not do enough to carry this forward into the actual strategies it then identifies and the intended effects of these efforts. The Action Areas related to prevention (p. 9) require further development, to move closer to a comprehensive strategy for lessening the gender inequalities and rigid gender norms which underpin men’s violence against women.

For example:

- The Victorian Government should consider the implementation of particular strategies of social marketing, for example by supporting the development of social norms and bystander intervention campaigns. These are an example of what Action Area P3 describes as “state-wide resources and tools”.
- While the Action Areas include support for schools to implement respectful relationships education (Action Area P9), this could be expanded towards the goal of universal delivery of ‘whole of school’ approaches to the prevention of boys’ and men’s violence against girls and women across the education system (End Violence Against Women Coalition, 2011, pp. 23-

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- While the Action Areas include the strategy of engaging men as ambassadors and leaders (Action Area P11), this should be part of a wider strategy of community mobilisation. We return to this under consultation Question 4 below.
- While the Action Areas include the goal of working “across government and business, sporting, community and other organisations to create gender inclusive and equitable environments for women and girls” (Action Area P6), this could include more systematic policy measures intended to move organisations and institutions towards formal and substantive gender equality;
- While the Action Areas include the goal of working “with media to promote positive representations of women”, this could be expanded to include the regulation of violence-supportive representations of women and girls in media (End Violence Against Women Coalition, 2011, p. 18).

### **Areas of focus and impact**

The Framework’s intended areas of impact also should reflect its recognition of the need to build gender equality as central to the prevention of men’s violence against women.

The Consultation Framework identifies a range of indicators of successful efforts to prevent violence against women and their children, on page 7. At the broadest level, these indicators – improved community attitudes, declining levels of violence and fear among women, and improved gender equity – are appropriate indicators of positive impact. However, we have four concerns about the indicators as they stand. First, there is little sense in the Framework of *how* progress against these indicators will be determined or measured. In particular, ‘gender equity’ should be measured in ways which are clearly related to the distribution of power and resources between men and women. For example, if a goal is to “[b]uild organisations, communities and cultures that are gender equitable and non-violent” (p. 7), then appropriate indicators in organisations (for instance) will include measures of women’s and men’s respective participation in decision-making, the existence of appropriate policies and processes regarding domestic and family violence, evidence of the promotion of a respectful workplace culture, and so on.

Second, and related to this, there is a gap between the desirable outcomes listed on page 7 of the plan and the actual timeframes with which the Action Plan works. While the Action Plan has a three-year timeframe, its indicators of success may be seen as long-term ambitions for significant social change. Yes, preventing men’s violence against women will require substantial and long-term change in gender roles and relations and in other social and cultural processes associated with this violence, and the activities represented by the Action Plan should work towards this. However, the Action Plan should close the gap between its timeframe and its goals. It could do this either by including both long-term and medium-term outcomes among its indicators, or by concretising its indicators in terms of specific measures of impact. The latter is necessary for its own sake, in any case, as we argue below.

Third, the indicators may be understood in a way which prioritises attitudes over other areas of impact. Too much violence prevention activity focuses simply on ‘attitudes’ as the key area in which to effect change, neglecting the wider inequalities which are central to the workings of men’s violence against women. As Pease and Flood (2008, pp. 556-58) have argued elsewhere, we should not assume that men’s violence against women is shaped *above all* by attitudes:

A focus on individual attitudes risks neglecting the cultural, collective, and institutional underpinnings of violence against women. Beyond individual attitudes and perceptions, violence

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against women is shaped by the social, cultural, economic, and political relations of particular contexts, communities, and cultures. While these collective social relations do have attitudinal dimensions, they are not reducible to them.

[...] We must move beyond a strictly *cultural* emphasis in both explanation and intervention, recognising that ‘violence has much deeper roots in the structural foundations of interpersonal relationships (and societal arrangements in general)’ (Michalski, 2004: 653). Thus, to stop violence against women, we must do more than change community attitudes. We must also address ‘the structural conditions that perpetuate violence at the interpersonal and even societal level’ (Michalski 2004: 670).

Fourth and finally, it would be ideal for the Action Plan to include actual targets for success. That is, the Framework should specify the degree of change in various domains it is intended to achieve. Its targets should be tailored to the relevant timeframe. These targets might include, for example:

- A decline over the next three years of a specified percentage in the proportion of Victorians who agree with particular violence-supportive attitudes;
- An improvement in Victorians’ attitudes towards family violence and sexual assault such that they are better than national averages for such attitudes;
- Statistically significant improvements in attitudes towards, and skills and behaviour for, respectful relationships among young people who participate in respectful relationships education programs in schools, and ideally, declines in their rates of victimisation and perpetration;
- Take-up of whole-of-school approaches to violence prevention by a specified number of schools over the next three years;
- A specified number of local councils or other entities which have adopted X, Y and Z measures for violence prevention and response over the next three years;
- A minimum representation of women on the boards or among the decision-makers of particular kinds of organisations of a specified percentage by a certain date;
- And so on.

We hesitate to suggest that targets should address the domain of victimisation in particular at the State level, e.g. by including specified reductions in the proportions of women in Victoria who report having experienced violence in the past year. Given the relatively short timeframes for action, the Victorian Government’s positive impact on rates of men’s violence against women may not be visible. In addition, if the Victorian Government’s efforts are successful, this may in fact lead to *increased* reporting of violence against women. One impact of prevention programs which reduce community tolerance for men’s violence against women is that increased numbers of women recognise and name their experience as violence or a crime and report it. Also, measures which increase the legal and other policing of violence can embolden victims to report the violence they have suffered.

Nevertheless, the Framework could include discussion of its aspirational targets for prevention. In particular, the Framework could include the aspiration that rates of violence against women in Victoria be reduced from their current levels (as assessed by the ABS’s *Personal Safety Survey*) to levels similar to those for example in Norway or Japan (as assessed by studies including the *International Violence against Women Survey (IVAWS)*, World Health Organization’s *World Report on Violence and Health* (2002), and the World Health Organization’s *WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence Against Women* (2005)). Such aspirations would be couched as long-term objectives, rather than ones achievable within the lifetime of the Action Plan.

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In short, the Framework should include indicators of positive impact which:

- Address a range of dimensions of gender inequality, including but not limited to attitudes;
- Identify how measures of impact in these dimensions will be measured;
- Are tailored to the relevant timeframe; and
- Specify aspirational targets for success.

## Evaluation

This leads us to our final point in this section of the submission, and this is that the Consultation Framework should involve a more robust and integrated attention to evaluation.

Evaluation refers to the systematic review and assessment of the features of an initiative and its effects, in order to produce information that can be used to test and improve the project's workings and effectiveness. Evaluation is one of the weakest points of contemporary violence prevention efforts. Few violence prevention interventions have been evaluated, and existing evaluations often are weak methodologically or conceptually (Flood 2007, pp. 17-18). A failure to properly integrate evaluation is evident in the Federal Government's Respectful Relationships Program. While this program includes funding for a range of valuable education programs, the Federal Government has not integrated evaluation across the funded projects nor has it funded or resourced evaluation as a requirement within each project. This neglect of evaluation means that a significant national opportunity to assess and improve our efforts among young people to prevent and reduce intimate and dating violence has been lost. It would be disappointing indeed if the same were to occur in the Baillieu Government's Action Plan to address violence against women and their children. Without evaluation, interventions represent little more than the idea that we should 'deliver and hope'.

There is a widespread consensus in the violence prevention field that evaluation is vital. In violence prevention, health promotion, and other fields of public health, there is a pervasive expectation that prevention or health promotion efforts will be complemented by examination of their effectiveness. There is thus a growing emphasis on what many have termed 'evidence-based practice' – on the conscientious and judicious use of current best evidence in guiding program design and implementation. A 'science' of prevention is emerging, drawing on knowledge gained in the behavioural and health sciences. This scholarship examines what works and what does not, the factors which mediate the effectiveness of prevention efforts, and so on (Noonan and Gibbs, 2009, p. 5s).

Not only should violence prevention include evaluation, but it should be systematically integrated into prevention frameworks. There is also a consensus in the violence prevention field that good practice programs involve a comprehensive process of evaluation which is integrated into program design and implementation (Flood *et al.* 2007, p. 57).

It should go without saying that violence prevention, early intervention and response activities should be based on the best available data and evidence. It is commendable that the Action Plan "will build on the current platform of [...] Research, evidence and evaluation" (p. 6). What this means in practice, however, is not clear. We have two recommendations.

First, a comprehensive evaluation framework should be integrated into the Action Plan. At the bare minimum, impact evaluation within the action plan should include:

- Assessment of interventions' impact on violence-related variables, such as attitudes, behaviours, and gender inequalities;
  - The use of standardised measures of these variables;
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- A pre-test/post-test design;
  - A dissemination process.

These represent the minimum standards for evaluation (Flood and Kendrick, 2012, in press). To briefly describe them in more detail, first, evaluations should examine the intervention's impact on the factors known to be associated with violence. These include violence-related attitudes and ideally, violence-related behaviours and violent perpetration and victimisation themselves. Second, where possible, evaluations should use standardised measures of the relevant domains of impact, drawn from existing scales or instruments. This is valuable for both the rigour of the evaluation and the comparability of its findings. Third, and this is compulsory if the evaluation is to make any claims about program impact, the evaluation must involve both pre- and post-intervention measures. At minimum therefore, evaluations should involve a one-group pre-test/post-test design (Tutty *et al.*, 2002, p. 185). Ideally, evaluations include long-term follow-up at least three months after the intervention, and preferably six or months after. Finally, a process for the dissemination of evaluation findings is valuable in order to circulate them and to open them to critical scrutiny. If these four elements represent an 'economy' model of evaluation, then a 'deluxe' model of evaluation would include: programs having a logic model or theory of change, the use of both quantitative and qualitative measures, longitudinal assessment over longer periods, measures of contexts and settings, measures of program implementation and fidelity, examination of processes and mediators of change, and experimental or quasi-experimental design incorporating control or comparison groups or settings (Flood and Kendrick, 2012, in press).

Our second recommendation related to evidence-based prevention is that the Action Plan should include violence prevention strategies known to be effective *and* other strategies which are promising. The Action Plan should include *both* the implementation of strategies already supported by a scholarly evidence base *and* the opportunity to develop and trial strategies which are promising but which have less evidence to support them so far.

There is a wide range of strategies now in place around the world to prevent, reduce or respond to men's violence against women. Various frameworks have been developed to organise and categorise these, such as the 'ecological model' (VicHealth, 2007) and the 'spectrum of prevention' (Davis *et al.*, 2006; Lee *et al.*, 2007). In addition, different strategies have differing levels of evidence regarding their effectiveness. We can organise strategies into these against three criteria: (a) *theoretical rationale*: there are good reasons for their use, in that they address key determinants of men's violence against women or they involve measures which have been shown in other areas to generate positive social change, (b) *evidence of implementation*: they have been tried; and (c) *evidence of effectiveness*: they have been shown to work. These generate three levels of support for particular strategies:

- *Effective* strategies and interventions have a theoretical rationale, have been implemented, and have evidence of effectiveness;
- *Promising* strategies and interventions have a theoretical rationale, and they have been implemented, although they do not yet have evidence of effectiveness;
- *Potentially promising* strategies and interventions have a theoretical rationale, but they have not been tried or evaluated (VicHealth, 2007, p. 43).

Our recommendation is that the Action Plan should include the use of strategies across these three levels. It would be misguided to assume that the best and most important interventions can be found only among those strategies identified as 'effective', while those identified as 'promising' or 'potentially promising' necessarily are less valuable. Some of the strategies with the strongest theoretical rationale, such as community development and community mobilisation, have been implemented only rarely and evaluated even less often. At the same time, their strong rationale

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makes them critical elements in future violence prevention efforts (Flood, 2007, p. 18).

While we have focused on the necessity for evaluation in relation to the Action Plan's strategies for prevention, it also follows from our discussion that evaluation is necessary in relation to early intervention and response as well. There is a growing body of scholarship focused on the impact evaluation of perpetrator programs, legal sanctions, services for victims and survivors, and other secondary and tertiary prevention efforts (Shepard, 2005; Tolan *et al.*, 2006). Evidence regarding effective practice in these areas should guide the Action Plan's interventions.

#### **4. Should particular Action Areas be prioritised?**

The White Ribbon Foundation commends the Action Plan on its commitment that “[m]en will also be engaged to act as champions to prevent violence and reject it when it occurs” (p. 2), and its inclusion in its Action Areas of the strategy of engaging “men as ambassadors and leaders to spread positive messages that support respectful and gender equitable relationships between women and men, girls and boys” (Action Area P11). However, efforts by individual men to speak out in support of ending violence against women by themselves will do little to help prevent or reduce this violence. Instead, a more comprehensive strategy of engagement and involvement among boys and men is necessary to make progress.

The White Ribbon Campaign recommends that the engagement of men in prevention should be adopted in more comprehensive and systematic ways than exists presently. Before discussing this, we offer a brief overview of the White Ribbon Campaign and its foundations.

#### **The White Ribbon Campaign**

The White Ribbon Campaign is the largest male-led campaign in the world for the prevention of violence against women. In Australia, the campaign is coordinated by the White Ribbon Foundation, which enacts its mission to prevent men's violence against women through a range of strategies, as we outline below. The White Ribbon Campaign is the most widespread and most well-known of a range of efforts to involve men and boys in positive ways in preventing and reducing men's violence against women.

The work of White Ribbon has firm foundations. There is a compelling rationale for involving men in ending violence against women (Flood, 2010, p. 8). There has been a groundswell of violence prevention activity engaging men and boys around the world. There is significant political support for such work, evident in state and national government plans and in international commitments (Flood, 2010, pp. 29-31). What is more, there is a growing body of scholarly evidence that violence prevention efforts among men and boys do work. Done well, they can shift the attitudes among boys and men that lead to physical and sexual violence and they can reduce males' actual perpetration of violence (Flood, 2010, pp. 31-33).

In Australia, the White Ribbon Foundation enacts its mission – to prevent men's violence against women through a male-led campaign – in four broad ways:

- (1) Running a wide-scale awareness raising campaign focusing on the positive role that men can play in bringing an end to violence against women.

In 2011, White Ribbon's social media and marketing resulted in more than 26,000 people taking the White Ribbon Oath to “never commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women”. Three-quarters of those swearing the oath were male, demonstrating that the campaign is successful in overcoming the challenge many violence prevention campaigns face of attracting men

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to their cause. There were over 1,595 media mentions, more than 67,000 visits to the White Ribbon website in November alone, more than 400 people participating in the “all \_\_\_\_\_ should swear” photo campaign on Facebook, and close to 360,000 White Ribbon tweets by users.

White Ribbon also raised awareness in 2011 by engaging communities through events sponsored or supported by the organisation. Across Australia more than 300 community events were held, and the White Ribbon events kit was accessed more than 2,409 times between October and December.

(2) Enabling leadership, particularly by men and boys, to bring about social change.

Key to the success of the movement in Australia is the development of the White Ribbon Ambassador Program. The program calls on men and boys to live the Oath and be the leaders and faces of the Campaign. Ambassador – as fathers, educators, coaches, managers and executives – are in a powerful and unique position to affect change within their sphere of influence.

In 2011, the Program grew to 1,800 Ambassadors from all states and across all sectors with participants ranging from students to grassroots and industry leaders. With a refreshed Ambassadors Only website with new resources and materials, Ambassadors were better equipped to help raise awareness on the issue than ever. Ambassadors speak at or host White Ribbon events, wear the ribbon, encourage involvement in their communities and share the White Ribbon message.

(3) Creating culture change in key settings and contexts

The White Ribbon Campaign in Australia includes violence prevention efforts concentrated in particular settings and contexts known to be critical to the prevention of men’s violence against women, including schools and workplaces. The White Ribbon *Breaking the Silence* schools program began in 2009, has been applied in over 60 schools in NSW, and is now being rolled out to other states (conditional upon increased state and federal funding).<sup>3</sup> The White Ribbon National Workplace Program was launched on 24 November 2011, with a model in place and an accreditation framework under development. This program is breaking new ground in the engagement of prevention and normative change in small, medium and large workplaces.<sup>4</sup>

(4) Building collective knowledge and understanding of the effective prevention of men’s violence against women.

Finally, the White Ribbon Foundation adds to the knowledge base regarding the prevention and reduction of men’s violence against women. It commissions and publishes policy and research reports, with four reports published thus far, in a series overseen by an expert reference group. The White Ribbon Foundation also provides media commentary and expert advice.

## Engaging men

The White Ribbon Foundation commends the Action Plan on its recognition of the need to engage men in preventing and reducing men’s violence against women. If such engagement really is to lead to change in the social and cultural conditions which underpin men’s violence against women, then a more comprehensive set of strategies is required.

Our submission makes three recommendations:

- (1) The Action Plan should include a variety of interlocking strategies for involving men in violence prevention, including community mobilisation;
- (2) Male involvement should be guided by feminist frameworks and done in partnership with

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<sup>3</sup> See the following website for more information: <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/programs/schools>.

<sup>4</sup> See the following website for more information: <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/programs/workplaces>.

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women and women's organisations;

- (3) The White Ribbon Campaign is a primary vehicle for male involvement in the issue of violence against women. While it is not and should not be the only vehicle, it is important to include and support White Ribbon in continuing to develop primary prevention programs such as the 'Breaking the Silence' Schools Program and the Workplace Program. It is also important to recognise, support and broaden the media and marketing campaigns which have been so successful in raising awareness on the issue of violence against women.

### **A variety of interlocking strategies**

Taken at face value, the strategies in the Action Plan relevant to men's involvement in violence prevention may amount to little more than individual men speaking out in support of ending men's violence against women. This is not enough. It does not reflect the spectrum of efforts, at every level from families to organisations to communities to governments, now under way in other contexts to engage men in preventing men's violence against women (Flood, 2011). More importantly, efforts by individual, isolated men will be ineffective at best, and tokenistic at worst.

The White Ribbon Foundation recommends that the Action Plan include further strategies, as follows:

- Support the coordination of White Ribbon activities at the State level;
- Support a White Ribbon conference or event focused on best practice in engaging men in the primary prevention of men's violence against women, in partnership with relevant community and state agencies;
- Promote fathers' non-violent and gender-equitable involvements in parenting, whether through existing family and parenting programs and services or through dedicated interventions;
- Focus particular attention on settings and contexts where violence-supportive masculine cultures are strongest;<sup>5</sup>
- Support the formation of grassroots men's groups and networks dedicated to ending men's violence against women;
- Support the evaluation of particular interventions or campaigns focused on men (such as those undertaken by White Ribbon), in line with the evaluation practice described earlier in this submission.

*Community mobilisation:* Given the evidence that social norms, gender roles, and power relations underpin men's violence against intimate female partners, strategies that address these will be critical to successful prevention efforts. There is a growing consensus that strategies of community engagement and community mobilisation are central to violence prevention (Family Violence Prevention Fund, 2004; End Violence Against Women Coalition, 2011, p. 30). Violence prevention should build local communities' capacity to respond effectively to violence, encourage their ownership of the issue, and address the social contexts in which men's violence against women occurs (Rosewater, 2003).

It is particularly important that we enable men to act *in concert* to help end men's violence against

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<sup>5</sup> Tolerance for, and perpetration of, violence against women is not distributed evenly among men, and there are contexts and settings where violent behaviours and violence-supportive norms are at their worst. Intensive interventions are needed in such contexts (Flood, 2007, pp. 5-6).

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women. As Flood (2011, pp. 368-69) notes,

Community development strategies are complemented by strategies of community mobilisation. [...] Engaging men in activism is vital in catalysing broader social change. [...] We must create opportunities for individuals to mobilise their communities through events, networks, and campaigns. Examples of key strategies here include community workshops and events, work with influential groups and community 'gatekeepers', cultural tools of art and drama such as murals, competitions, and street theatre, and fostering grassroots men's and women's groups and networks committed to advocacy for non-violence and gender equality

#### **Partnerships with women and women's organisations**

In supporting men's involvement in the prevention of men's violence against women, the Victorian Government should ensure that men's involvement is:

- Guided by frameworks and principles based on best practice in this field, and in particular, by feminist frameworks which address the links between gender, power and violence and foster gender-equitable relations (Flood *et al.*, 2009, pp. 33-35).
- Developed in consultation with, and carried out in collaboration with, relevant women's and violence-related organisations and services.

#### **Multiple vehicles of male involvement**

We encourage the Victorian Government to support other community-based or grassroots men's initiatives. In so doing, it is important to recognise that the White Ribbon Campaign provides a scaffolding and platform to support sustainable cultural change working with these groups to help eliminate the perpetration of men's violence against women. For example, in South Australia the Coalition for Men Supporting Non Violence works with White Ribbon to progress preventive strategies. The Campaign provides the Coalition with resources, other elements of support and a clear link to the national movement.

In addition, various of the other Action Areas identified, particularly those related to social marketing and communications, could include interventions which focus in particular on men's positive roles in prevention. In North America and elsewhere, there is growing evidence of the effectiveness among men of 'social norms' and 'bystander intervention' campaigns (Flood, 2010, p. 33; Flood, 2011, pp. 366-67). Trialling such approaches among men in Victoria, for example on university campuses, would be an innovative and valuable contribution to the prevention of men's violence against women. The prevention strategies and programs of the White Ribbon Campaign are well positioned to contribute to these areas with established universities and social marketing programs adaptable for expansion.

As a key vehicle for men's involvement in the prevention of violence against women, White Ribbon looks forward to seeing a framework that is robust in the areas identified above and with due recognition of the support required to further enhance the White Ribbon prevention campaign.

**5. Are there any gaps in the Consultation Framework that should be considered?**

**6. How can future governance arrangements most effectively engage partners across**

government and community?

7. What are the potential barriers and risks to be managed and mitigated in delivery of the actions?

8. What other issues need to be considered?

If you would like to provide comment on any specific action areas as set out in the Consultation Framework, please specify the number of the action area(s) on which you are commenting. For example P1, E12 or R29.

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### **Follow up**

Do you give permission for the Office of Women’s Policy OWP to obtain further information from you or your organisation? **If so, please ensure you have provided relevant contact details on page 1 of this submission.**

Yes

No

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Written submissions are required **no later than Friday 23 March 2012.**

Please submit via email (in a Word.doc format) to [submissions.owp@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:submissions.owp@dhs.vic.gov.au).

The Minister for Women’s Affairs **thanks you for taking the time to provide feedback** on the Action Plan Consultation Framework for addressing violence against women and their children.

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