

Media Release

Embargoed 00.01am 14 July 2015

RESPONDING TO FAMILY VIOLENCE: AUSTRALIA'S LEADING EXPERTS GATHER IN MELBOURNE

Leading experts from across Australia are gathering in Melbourne today to share their insights and expertise ahead of the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016.

VicHealth is hosting a two-day conference, *Policy, People and Prevention: Ending Violence against women in Victoria* in partnership with the Victorian Government, which will see the country's foremost experts describe how they're addressing the root causes of violence in the Australian Defence Force, in the Australian Football League, in workplaces and in schools.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said Victoria had led Australia on primary prevention – stopping violence before it starts – and was well positioned to lead the prevention of family violence by becoming the first place in the world to reduce violence against women.

“There is an incredible array of prevention work going on, and there have been some amazing achievements to date, but there is still a lot of work to do. Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to ill-health, death and disease for women aged 15-44 in Victoria. While there is always more research that can be done, we have enough at our fingertips to understand what we need to change in order to end violence against women.

“The international consensus is clear: if we want to reduce violence against women, we have to increase equality between women and men at every level in workplaces, in sport, in education and in community life. This conference is designed to give policymakers the tools to shape a Victoria that is safer, more respectful and more equal, one where women and their families can live healthier and happier lives,” Ms Rechter added.

The two-day conference will be opened by Fiona Richardson MP, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence. Those due to speak include:

- Rosie Batty, Australian of the Year 2015
- Elizabeth Broderick, Sex Discrimination Commissioner
- Professor John Catford, Chair of the Board, VicHealth
- Vice Admiral Ray Griggs AO CSC RAN, Vice Chief of the Australian Defence Force
- Commissioner Kate Jenkins, Victorian Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.
- Assistant Commissioner Dean McWhirter, Family Violence Command, Victoria Police
- Peggy O'Neal, President of Richmond Football Club
- Jerril Rechter, CEO VicHealth
- Natasha Stott-Despoja, Chair of Our Watch and Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls

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Rosie Batty, Family violence campaigner and 2015 Australian of the Year, said she hears every day from members of the community who want to be part of the solution to ending family violence.

“They don’t want to just wait until the next crisis; they want to stop violence before it starts and they want to be part of the movement towards equality. We need to get better at supporting victims and better at bringing perpetrators to justice, but this won’t be enough to eliminate violence. We need to show each and every person in Victoria that they have a role to play in stopping violence before it starts by challenging sexism and inequality.”

The conference will also see the launch of two practical guides for prevention. Minister Fiona Richardson will launch a toolkit for workplaces to improve equality and respectful relationships in their organisations and Ms Jerril Rechter will launch VicHealth’s Prevention of Violence against Women Evaluation Guide, a booklet for programmers across sectors to carry out better evaluation of prevention projects.

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For more information and the full conference schedule, see www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/pvawconference.

Further information on VicHealth courses and material on preventing violence against women can be found at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/our-work/preventing-violence-against-women.

Media please include the following information in reports about violence against women and children: “If you or someone you know is impacted by domestic or family violence or sexual assault, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au. In an emergency, call 000.”

CONFERENCE DETAILS

Policy, People and Prevention: Ending Violence against Women in Victoria will get underway at 9am on Tuesday 14 July 2015 at the **Village Roadshow Theatre in the State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street** (enter from La Trobe St), Melbourne

The two-day conference will be opened by Fiona Richardson MP, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence

The following will be available for interview at **10.30am (upstairs in Seminar Room 1)**:

Jerril Rechter, VicHealth CEO; **Fiona Richardson MP**, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence; **Natasha Stott-Despoja**, Chair of Our Watch and Australia’s Ambassador for Women and Girls; **Vice Admiral Ray Griggs AO CSC RAN**, Vice Chief of the Australian Defence Force and **Peggy O’Neal**, President, Richmond Football Club

The following will be launched during the opening session:

Minister Richardson will launch the [Equal Footing workplace toolkit](#) to improve equality in workplaces.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter will launch [VicHealth’s Prevention of Violence against Women Evaluation Guide](#) which is designed to help programmers carry out better evaluation of prevention projects.

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