

Media Release

29 March 2016

MINISTER'S PERSONAL STORY WILL INSPIRE FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS ACROSS THE NATION

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter has commended Victoria's Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, Fiona Richardson, on sharing her own personal family violence story.

Ms Richardson, who is also the Minister for Women, last night told the ABC's *Australian Story* of her first hand experiences growing up in a violent home with an abusive father.

Ms Rechter said she was deeply moved watching Ms Richardson share her story.

"The decision to share her personal experience publicly must have been a challenging one for Ms Richardson and her family to come to," Ms Rechter said.

"I applaud her for sharing her story which will encourage other women experiencing violence to seek help while also inspiring survivors who are struggling with their own horrific experiences."

"Ms Richardson's story helps to break down the stigma around family violence and demonstrates that it can happen to anyone, regardless of who they are, where they work or what their background is," Ms Rechter said. "It also helped to show that everyone in the community has a role to play in promoting respect and equality, to stop violence happening in the first place."

One in three Australian women has experienced violence, most often by a previous partner. Violence against women is also the biggest contributor to ill health and premature death in women aged 15-44.

Worryingly, VicHealth's National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey showed that while most Australians take the issue of violence against women seriously, too many are still prepared to make excuses for violence and to blame the victim.

Ms Rechter said the Victorian Government had showed considerable leadership on addressing the alarming rates of family violence.

"The Victorian Government's commitment to keeping women safe in Victoria has been clearly evidenced through the appointment of Australia's first state government Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the establishment of Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence, the development of a Family Violence index and through the current formation of Victoria's first gender equity strategy," Ms Rechter said.

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“VicHealth looks forward to working with Minister Richardson and the Premier as the Victorian Government looks to implement the Royal Commission into Family Violence’s recommendations.”

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If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au

In an emergency, call 000.

Media Contacts

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