

Media Release

30 March 2016

Royal Commission findings show critical importance of primary prevention of violence against women

VicHealth has welcomed the findings of the [Royal Commission into Family Violence](#), which cited VicHealth's role over the past 15 years in building evidence and developing programs, partnerships and policies to prevent violence against women in Victoria and beyond. The recommendations will help guide VicHealth's continued and refreshed focus on preventing violence against women before it starts.

"This is an historic moment for Victoria, and indeed Australia. Never before has the case for action to curb the scourge of violence against women and their children in this country been so clear. Government, public and media interest in this issue is at an all-time high," said VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter.

"The Royal Commission, which looked at all aspects of the issue in detail and produced 227 recommendations, has created a roadmap and mandate to tackle the drivers of family violence *before* it occurs.

"We're so pleased to see that the Commission's recommendations include a specific section on primary prevention of violence against women, including action in communities, workplaces, schools, sports, media and popular culture and local councils. We're particularly thrilled to see the proposed establishment of a new independent statutory agency to tackle family violence.

"We also commend the recognition that Victoria needs a long-term primary prevention strategy to create real cultural change.

"Our world-first [Burden of Disease report](#) showed violence against women is common, serious and preventable. It's horrific to think that one in three Australian women has experienced violence, most often by a previous partner. Intimate partner violence is also the biggest contributor to ill health and premature death in Victorian women aged 15-44; that's higher than high blood pressure, smoking and obesity.

"VicHealth is proud of our leadership role in building the evidence to understand the health impacts of violence against women in Victoria and Australia. Our community is now poised to achieve a world-first reduction in violence by not only improving crisis responses but also by stopping it from happening in the first place.

Media Contacts

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“We need to encourage respectful and equal relationships between men and women, and create safe and healthy environments for women. We also need to take a stand when we see disrespect for women and girls or we see others excusing violence – we all have a responsibility to prevent violence against women,” said Ms Rechter.

Following the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, and as part our refreshed focus, VicHealth will:

- provide forums for Victorian policy-makers to take action on the Royal Commission findings, following up the 2015 VicHealth statewide prevention of violence against women conference
- test new ways of equipping young people online to combat pornography
- continue to support sports and media organisations to promote women’s participation and leadership in sport through our Changing the Game program
- build collaboration to address alcohol and violence against women, including facilitating a roundtable forum for experts as a first step
- work with Our Watch and ANROWS to put the new prevention framework for policy makers, ‘Change the Story’, into action, including developing practical guides for action and evaluation
- drive new approaches to building gender equality in sporting organisations, schools, workplaces and communities.

“We look forward to working with Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence Fiona Richardson and Premier Daniel Andrews as the Victorian Government looks to implement the recommendations of the nation’s first Royal Commission into Family Violence,” said Ms Rechter.

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If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault or family violence, call 1800RESPECT or 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au. In an emergency, call 000.

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