

Media Release

7 December 2016

Long-term vision on gender equality a welcome move

VicHealth has welcomed the release of the Victorian Government's first gender equality strategy.

Minister for Women and Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Fiona Richardson this week unveiled *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy* to address inequality, sexism and violence against women.

The reforms and initiatives detailed in the strategy include reviewing laws against sexist advertising, gender equality programs in grassroots sporting clubs and prioritising women's leadership and participation in a range of settings including in work, sport, education, government and policy and arts and culture.

The strategy also outlines plans to develop a dedicated prevention-focused family violence agency, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Family Violence and also featured in the Victorian Government's recently released 10-year family violence plan.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter congratulated the Victorian Government for its long-term vision and commitment to building gender equality.

"Change will take time but unified long-term planning and achievable strategic targets that focus on outcomes for women and girls will position Victoria closer to achieving true gender equality," Ms Rechter said.

"It's pleasing to see this strategy recognising the critical role of the places where people live, work, learn and play in helping to promote gender equality. Challenging organisational structures and changing community attitudes and behaviours is critical.

"We know gender inequality is a key driver of violence against women and the more equal our society becomes, the less violence will occur.

"VicHealth looks forward to working with the Victorian Government and community to help build a society in which women and men share equal opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life."

For the past 15 years, VicHealth has been a national leader in the prevention of violence against women, helping to build world first policy research and programs to address one of the key drivers of violence - gender inequality.

VicHealth's recently refreshed Action Agenda, clearly outlines a strong organisational focus on gender equality, building on the important body of evidence gathered, and a focus on gender equality runs throughout all VicHealth's work.

Results from the recently published VicHealth Indicators Survey 2015 revealed half of all men aged 18-34 surveyed expressed low support for gender equality in relationships.

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Ms Rechter said the shocking figures showed how much work remains to change community attitudes.

“Promoting equal and respectful relationships between women and men at every level is integral to reducing the devastating rate of violence against women,” Ms Rechter said.

“That’s why VicHealth is driving approaches to building gender equality in sporting organisations, schools, workplaces and communities and collaborating with our Leading Thinkers from Harvard University, Professor Iris Bohnet and Dr Jeni Klugman, to conduct behavioural insights trials that focus on building gender equality in Victoria. Every Victorian can make a difference to gender equality, and we look forward to creating new ways for everyday people to take action.”

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