

Media Release

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Stopping violence before it starts

Health promotion foundation VicHealth has welcomed the Victorian Government's new strategy to prevent family violence before it starts.

The [new Free from violence strategy](#), released yesterday, responds to the Royal Commission's recommendation for a state-wide Primary Prevention Strategy. It will include new evidence-based research and programs as well as Victoria's first prevention agency.

"Violence against women is an issue that continues to plague our state and our nation – too many Victorian women and children are living with fear and living with violence," VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said.

"We can prevent family violence from occurring by changing the harmful attitudes and behaviours and that lead to it in the first place.

"There is a proven link between gender inequality, objectification and violence against women in all its forms. When women are viewed as unequal to men, this leads to underlying attitudes which can feed into violence against them.

"The Victorian Government's prevention strategy recognises that all Victorians have a role to play in challenging harmful social norms. That includes all sectors of our community including workplaces, schools, sports clubs and local governments.

"Importantly, the strategy builds on the evidence and concepts in [Change the Story, Australia's national prevention framework](#), which we were proud to launch recently with ANROWS and Our Watch."

Ms Rechter said the new strategy's release has come at a moment of unprecedented support from the community for action on gender inequality and family violence.

"This is a watershed moment for gender equality – Victoria is truly leading the way," Ms Rechter said.

"VicHealth, alongside tireless family violence advocates and service providers, have been advocating for change in family violence for many years, and we owe a great deal to the women who have brought us to this important moment in Victoria.

"Ending violence and challenging gender inequality will not happen overnight. Critically, the Victorian Government will roll out this strategy over many years to deliver sustained change.

"We welcome the commitment to prevent all forms of family violence because all Victorians have a right to live free from fear and violence. While the strongest evidence base exists for preventing violence against women there is more work to be done in ensuring every Victorian understands what role they can play to achieve a safer Victoria.

"We applaud the Victorian Government's leadership and VicHealth looks forward to continuing playing our role in creating a future where Victorian women and girls are free from violence and discrimination and can reach their full potential."

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