



# Media release

**The Hon Mary Wooldridge MP**

Minister for Mental Health  
Minister for Community Services  
Minister for Disability Services and Reform

Thursday 2 October 2014

## Helping communities to unite against violence

- **\$600,000 to change community attitudes towards violence against women and children**
- **Everyone has a responsibility to take a stand**
- **Napthine Government building a safer Victoria for women and children**

The Victorian Coalition Government and community services organisations are uniting to change attitudes towards violence against women and children.

Speaking at the VicHealth forum *From Attitudes to Action: Stepping in to Prevent Violence Against Women* today, the Minister for Community Services Mary Wooldridge said everybody had a responsibility to challenge social norms and attitudes that condone and permit violence against women.

“The problem of violence against women and children can’t be tackled by government alone – all of us must take a stand,” Ms Wooldridge said.

“Our schools, workplaces, sporting clubs and media all have a part to play in challenging attitudes that minimise, justify or excuse violence against women.”

Ms Wooldridge said VicHealth’s recently released *2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey*, reinforced the need for sustained efforts to shape attitudes, with results indicating that more than one in five people believe that family violence can be excused if the perpetrator later regrets their actions.

The Coalition Government has provided funding of nearly \$600,000 to VicHealth to develop two workplace and bystander programs that will help in building gender-equitable, safe and inclusive communities and organisations.

The *Bystander Resources Project* will include the development of fact sheets and a DVD ‘Moving to Action’ to enable workplaces and organisations to develop their own anti-violence bystander programs.

This project complements a range of other prevention initiatives set out in the *Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and their Children 2012-2015* which target a range of different community settings such as schools, the media, and CALD groups.

“This targeted approach ensures that no matter who you are, or where you are, you hear the same message – violence against women is not okay anywhere, at any time, or under any circumstances,” Ms Wooldridge said.

“Workplaces are also a vital component in this approach as evidence indicates that women are more likely to seek help in these settings, because of workplace policies and procedures, making workplaces a key setting for prevention activities.”

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Ms Wooldridge also announced that the organisation En Masse would lead the government-funded *Respect and Equality in the Workplace Program*, developing resources and training to help workplaces promote respectful relationships between women and men, and to focus on gender equality at an organisational level.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said violence thrives in environments where the roles and identities of men and women are rigidly defined and where there are imbalances of power.

“Our survey revealed that 12 per cent of people believe that when jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women,” Ms Rechter said.

“This funding will help create safer and more inclusive workplaces for Victorian women.”

The Napthine Government continues to address family violence through its *Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children 2012-2015*. This is supported by an investment of more than \$100 million in 2014-15.

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