

**Media release**

Thursday 10 April, 2014

**New partnership to deliver national approach to preventing violence against women and their children**

The Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) today announced a ground-breaking partnership that will deliver a national approach to preventing violence against women and their children.

The first priority for the three year partnership will be the development of a national framework to provide a shared understanding of what it will take to prevent this violence.

The Chair of the Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children, Natasha Stott Despoja AM, said the national framework on the primary prevention of violence against women is a first in Australia. It builds on an approach developed by VicHealth which has been a catalyst for action in Victoria.

“The VicHealth framework has galvanised efforts in Victoria, inspiring those working on the frontline, and in local government, media, sporting clubs and associations, faith-based organisations, schools and education organisations, first time parenting programs and others to see that by focusing on attitudinal and cultural change, violence against women is preventable,” Ms Stott Despoja said.

“This is a blight on our community. One in three women experience physical violence and almost one in five women, have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.

“VicHealth and the Foundation share a common vision of an Australian community: where all women live safe and free from the fear of violence. This partnership is an important step towards achieving this vision.

“We are also pleased that the development of the framework will involve, as an equal partner, the National Centre of Excellence (NCE) - the national research centre in the areas of domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault.

“We see great opportunity in combining their research interests in the area of primary prevention with the policy action of developing a national framework,” Ms Stott Despoja added.

VicHealth CEO, Jerril Rechter, said there is a strong public appetite to prevent violence against women and new momentum from community leaders to realise gender equality.

“This partnership provides an incredible opportunity to have reach and impact in ways we never imagined when VicHealth undertook our pioneering work to prevent violence against women more than 10 years ago,” she said.

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“The answer to ending violence is simple, but the task is complex. If we can build equality between men and women in families, communities, organisations and society as a whole, we will see an end to violence against women. The Foundation and this partnership will bring us one step closer to realising that dream.”

The Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children is an independent, not for profit organisation, which is working to engage the whole community in action to prevent violence against women and their children.

VicHealth is a statutory agency with a mandate to promote the health of the Victorian community through funding, research, communications and program activities.

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\*If you cover this story, or any story regarding violence against women and children, please include the following tagline:

“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](http://www.1800RESPECT.org.au). In an emergency, call 000”