



# Preventing violence against women

## VicHealth's integration approach

### The story so far

Violence against women is prevalent, serious and preventable. Over the last decade, VicHealth has invested significantly in primary prevention initiatives and has worked in partnership across sectors to build policy, research and programs to address the root causes of violence. Working within a public health approach and with multiple strategies, VicHealth has been proud to assist Victoria in becoming a world leader in primary prevention.

VicHealth is now moving forward with its Action Agenda 2013-2023, a ten-year plan for health promotion in Victoria, by focusing on five strategic imperatives and driving activity across our organisational model of Innovate, Inform, Integrate. We recently released our Action Agenda Scorecard, which will allow us to report progress toward our goal of one million more Victorians with better health and wellbeing.

### INNOVATE, INFORM, INTEGRATE

Our activity to achieve the Action Agenda goals is underpinned by the VicHealth model – Innovate, Inform, Integrate. Our 'Innovate' approach reflects VicHealth's pivotal role in pioneering work to address emerging challenges through forming new partnerships, and developing and testing innovative methods to achieve behavioural and environmental outcomes. Our 'Inform' approach indicates VicHealth's position as an outward-looking organisation which strives to deliver programs, campaigns and generate public discussions about health. Our 'Integrate' approach shows our intention to embed proven and emerging innovations into policy, practice and systems change.

One of our ten-year imperatives is to 'Improve Mental Wellbeing' with a focus on young people and resilience. In this area of work, we will contribute to the evidence base, foster innovations and build environments that promote resilience and social connection for young people.

Our work will also concentrate on the integration of our preventing violence against women activity, building on the achievements of the last decade and looking to the future in a rapidly changing sector.

### Action Agenda achievements

VicHealth has continued its key investments and partnerships since 2013 under the new Action Agenda.

**Research:** We have delivered the National Survey of Community Attitudes to Violence against Women 2014 (NCAS). The program is funded by the Commonwealth Government and provides an important mechanism to assess changes in community attitudes over time, as well as a basis to plan future prevention activity. We have also delivered a new NCAS Youth Report and population group reports, as well as the tools and resources to enable the sector and community to communicate attitudes data more broadly.

**Programs:** We have worked in partnership with the Victorian Government and others to deliver new resources for workplaces, sporting associations and bystander programs, such as the 'Equal Footing' and 'Stepping In' toolkits. We have continued to test new approaches in Creating Healthy Workplaces and in a place-based approach through the Generating Equality and Respect Program. We have also supported workforce development through Communities of Practice, statewide practice forums, short courses and new evaluation guides.

**Policy:** We have continued to work with the Victorian Government to align VicHealth initiatives with the emerging policy agenda. We have worked with the Royal Commission into Family Violence throughout 2015 and hosted the first-ever policy-makers' conference on primary prevention in Victoria.

**Partnerships:** In April 2014, we launched a formal partnership with Our Watch, the national foundation to prevent violence against women and their children. Our joint activity includes the development of the new national framework and the transfer of program resources and workforce development activity to Our Watch in coming months.

**New reports and resources are available online**  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/our-work/preventing-violence-against-women](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/our-work/preventing-violence-against-women)

*Preventing Violence Against Women – An Australian Timeline: 1970–2015* is available at  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/1970-2015-timeline](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/1970-2015-timeline)

## Coming soon

In the short term, VicHealth is working jointly with others to release seminal new resources that will significantly advance policy and programming in primary prevention.

- **Change the Story – A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.** This world-first resource builds on the Victorian framework 'Preventing Violence Before it Occurs' and is led by Our Watch in partnership with VicHealth and ANROWS (the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety). The new framework updates the evidence on the key drivers of violence against women and outlines key areas for action in policy and programming.
- **A high price to pay: The economic case for preventing violence against women.** This report is led by PricewaterhouseCoopers working in partnership with Our Watch and VicHealth. It describes the cost of violence against women to our society and estimates the value of investment in prevention, including benefits arising from a reduction in violence as well as an increase in gender equality.

VicHealth will also soon release our new Mental Wellbeing Strategy. Building on our strong history in mental health promotion, we will prioritise action to build stronger approaches to resilience and social connection with a focus on young people.

## Looking to the future

In the coming years, VicHealth will be changing its approach to the prevention of violence against women. We will transfer our knowledge and expertise to other leading organisations and will refresh our focus in the areas of research and programs.

In the area of **research**, we will explore innovative approaches that will contribute new knowledge to the sector, for example in relation to media and pornography and young people's relationships. We will commence the first year of activity in the next National Survey of Community Attitudes to Violence against Women. We will also work with the Commonwealth Government to involve new organisations in the leadership and delivery of the survey program.

In the area of **programs**, we will concentrate our integration activity. We will finalise our investments in Creating Healthy Workplaces and Generating Equality and Respect, and work with our partners to disseminate the knowledge and resources resulting from this work.

As part of our new activity in Mental Wellbeing, we will explore a focus on young people and social relationships in the digital age. Also, as part of our activity in other VicHealth strategic imperatives, we will integrate a focus on the promotion of respectful relationships and gender equality, for example with the initiative 'Changing the Game'.

In the area of **policy**, we will support Our Watch to lead the roll-out of the new National Framework particularly through workforce development and implementation guides. Through our Policy Development Office, we will continue to assist the Victorian Government with the development of prevention initiatives including actions arising from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN MENTAL WELLBEING

VicHealth's Mental Wellbeing Strategy 2015–2019 will build on our existing work in promoting mental wellbeing and introduce a new focus: building resilience and social connection, with a focus on young people aged 12–25 years. This is a first step towards our ten-year goal to enable more Victorians to be resilient and connected.

Our new direction is informed by an extensive review of evidence, analysis of trends and consultation with experts. We have surveyed young Victorians to identify the most significant influences on their current resilience and mental wellbeing. We also commissioned CSIRO to produce a strategic foresight report identifying the major trends which will influence young people's lives in the next 20 years.

In the area of **partnerships**, we will continue to work with Our Watch to transfer knowledge and resources for program and practice development. In the new area of Mental Wellbeing, we will seek new partnerships that enable us to maximise our impact with young people, particularly through education, arts, online, sports and workplaces.

## Our goal

We aim to support the elimination of violence against women in Victoria by exploring new research, by continuing to inform policy, and by supporting new leaders and organisations to advance primary prevention into the future.



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