

VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN IS
PREVENTABLE

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE
PROTECTS
WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS

Change the story.

A shared framework for the primary
prevention of violence against
women in Australia (second edition)

SUMMARY

EVERY SECTOR
INSTITUTION,
ORGANISATION
& COMMUNITY
HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE
REQUIRES
A COORDINATED
LONG-TERM
NATIONAL
APPROACH

**Our
WATCH**
End violence against
Women And Their Children

Violence against women is a serious and prevalent problem, with devastating and widespread impacts

Violence against women is a problem of epidemic proportions in Australia. It is both a serious violation of women’s human rights, and extremely costly to the whole of society. Violence against women in Australia takes many forms, including intimate partner

violence, sexual assault (partner and non-partner), workplace sexual harassment and street harassment. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual, financial and technology-facilitated violence or abuse, and stalking. This violence occurs in the home, in workplaces, in social settings and public spaces, in residential care, in institutions and online. It can be a one-off incident, or an ongoing pattern of deliberately coercive and controlling behaviour. **Violence against women is both a symptom and a cause of gender inequality, and a barrier to its achievement.**

<p>Violence against women is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men.</p>	<p>On average, one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner.</p>	<p>Women are far more likely to experience intimate partner violence than men.</p>
<p>In 2012, 95% of men and 94% of women who experienced violence did so at the hands of a male perpetrator.</p>	<p>53% or one in two women has experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime.</p>	<p>30.5% or one in three women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15.</p>
<p>2018 data suggests women are sexually assaulted at a rate almost seven times higher than men.</p>	<p>In most incidents of workplace sexual harassment, the harasser was male.</p>	<p>All violence has significant impacts on women’s physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>Exposure to violence against mothers or other caregivers causes profound and long-term harm to children.</p>	<p>\$21.7 billion — 2015 estimate of how much violence against women costs the Australian economy a year.</p>	<p>\$323.4 billion — estimate of how much violence against women will cost the Australian economy by 2044–2045.</p>

Violence against women is preventable: how this framework can help change the story

By taking a primary prevention approach, Australia can change the story of violence against women. We can stop this violence before it starts. Primary prevention works to change the underlying social conditions that produce violence against women, and that excuse, justify or even promote it. It works across the whole population to address the drivers of this violence, by changing attitudes, norms, practices, structures and power imbalances.

With the first edition of *Change the story*, Australia began developing the foundations for a world-leading approach to primary prevention. This second edition provides an updated, expanded, evidence-based framework for Australia to continue and strengthen this shared national approach.

Australia has made progress and is on the right track, but there is much more work to do. We must stay the course if we are to achieve the social transformation needed to prevent men's violence against women, with ongoing, systematic and coordinated investment and effort at the largest possible scale.

Action is needed from all levels of government and from non-government organisations, the private sector, civil society and communities. *Change the story* can help drive, guide and support this collective prevention effort.

Prevention protects women's human rights

Australian governments have obligations under international human rights agreements to ensure the health, safety and equality of women, and specifically to take positive steps to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

This document is a summary of the full *Change the story* framework, which:

- ✓ Makes explicit the connections between gender inequality, other forms of inequality and violence against women.
- ✓ Identifies the specific gendered drivers of this violence, as well as various other reinforcing factors.
- ✓ Provides a suite of essential and supporting actions that are needed to address these drivers and reinforcing factors.
- ✓ Provides evidence-based guidance to government and non-government stakeholders, the private sector, civil society and communities on how to lead, coordinate, resource and support effective prevention efforts across Australia.
- ✓ Identifies the multifaceted actions that are necessary, from government policy and legislative reform, to changes to systems and structures, to organisational and institutional strategies, to social norms change, to programming and advocacy.
- ✓ Articulates the infrastructure that is required to enable prevention activity and ensure its effects are both amplified and sustained.

Preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women: a dedicated framework

Addressing the disproportionate rates of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women must be treated as an urgent national priority.

Change the story is designed to be relevant across the diverse Australian population, including to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. At the same time, it cannot do justice to all the specific issues associated with violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. For this reason, Our Watch has an additional framework, *Changing the picture*, which is dedicated to this issue. These two frameworks are designed to complement each other.

Changing the picture identifies the intersecting drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women as:

- ongoing impacts of colonisation, including intergenerational trauma, systemic oppression and racism, and the disruption of traditional cultures, family and community relationships and community norms about violence
- racialised structural inequalities of power in Australian society, social norms condoning violence, and insufficient accountability for violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- gendered factors; those that drive violence against women generally, as well as systems of ‘colonial patriarchy’ and intersections of racism and sexism.

Changing the picture emphasises the importance of prevention initiatives being guided by principles of self-determination and led and implemented by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander–controlled organisations, which are best placed both to respond to immediate harms and to undertake prevention by focusing on healing and enhancing the social and cultural determinants of safety and wellbeing. The framework also points to the responsibilities of non-Indigenous organisations and people to work as allies in culturally safe ways, and to address racism and discrimination in Australian society.

‘[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander] women and girls have emphasised that effective resolution of systemic issues will demand large-scale prevention strategies grounded in our self-determination and oriented toward healing and restoration of our social and cultural values.’

— June Oscar, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.

More information

For a more detailed exploration of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and a dedicated prevention framework, see:

- Our Watch. (2018). *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*
- Our Watch. (2018). *Changing the picture: Background paper – Understanding violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*



Masculinity and men's use of violence: what we know about perpetration

Violence against women in Australia is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men. Men are more likely to perpetrate violence that results in serious injury or death and men commit homicides at a much higher rate than women. Research shows strong links between socially dominant forms and patterns of masculinity, sexist attitudes and behaviours, and men's perpetration of violence against women. This means some men are more likely than others to use violence.

Those who rigidly adhere to norms and ideas about masculinity that encourage control, dominance, aggression and entitlement to sex are more likely than other men to:

- commit violence against women, including sexual violence, especially when their masculinity is challenged or when they find it difficult to live up to these norms
- demonstrate sexist and violence-supportive attitudes and behaviours
- use violence as a means of achieving control in their intimate relationships.

The importance of engaging men

Men who perpetrate violence against women in Australia are in the minority. Yet many men hold sexist or violence-supportive attitudes. Many more do not actively challenge other men's sexist behaviour. And many stay silent when they see other men harassing or showing disrespect towards women, or exhibiting aggressive forms of masculinity. In these ways, many men contribute to creating and maintaining gender inequality and the social context that drives men's violence against women. This means that engaging all men and boys, and addressing harmful forms of masculinity, are critical to preventing violence against women. Because norms and ideas about masculinity are upheld and promoted not only by individuals, but within social structures and systems, prevention approaches need to work at all these levels.

Given that violence against women is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men, addressing harmful patterns of masculinity and engaging men in prevention efforts is critical.

More information

For a more detailed exploration of these issues, see:

- Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women*



Understanding what drives violence against women

Violence against women has distinct **gendered drivers**. Evidence points to four factors that most consistently predict or 'drive' violence against women and explain its gendered patterns.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Gender inequality
and other forms
of **oppression**

Driver 1.

Condoning of violence
against women

Driver 2.

Men's control of
decision-making and
limits to women's
independence in
public and private life

Driver 1.

Condoning of violence against women

When societies, institutions or communities support or condone violence against women, levels of such violence are higher. Individual men who hold these beliefs are more likely to perpetrate violence against women. Condoning of violence against women occurs both through attitudes and social norms and through legal, institutional and organisational structures and practices that justify, excuse or trivialise this violence or shift blame from the perpetrator to the victim.

Violence against women who breach socially accepted roles or identities, such as sex workers or trans women, or women who are seen as 'promiscuous' or intoxicated is more likely to be condoned, and there is a particular tendency for violence against women with disability to be downplayed or trivialised, and for violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to be ignored.

Driver 2.

Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life

Violence is more common in relationships in which men control decision-making and limit women's autonomy, have a sense of ownership of or entitlement to women, and hold rigid ideas on acceptable female behaviour. Constraints on women's independence and access to decision-making are also evident in the public sphere, where men have greater control over power and resources.

All these forms of male dominance, power and control and limits to women's autonomy collectively contribute to men's violence against women by sending a message that women have lower social value and are less worthy of respect.

Gender inequality is the social context in which violence against women arises. There is a strong and consistent association between gender inequality and violence against women.

The social context for violence against women is also characterised by many other **intersecting forms of inequality and oppression** (see page 8).

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Gender inequality
and other forms
of **oppression**

Driver 3.

Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity

Driver 4.

Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

Driver 3.

Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity

Promoting and enforcing rigid and hierarchical gender stereotypes reproduces the social conditions of gender inequality that underpin violence against women. In particular, stereotypes of masculinity play a direct role in driving men's violence against women. Men who form a rigid attachment to socially dominant norms and practices of masculinity are more likely to demonstrate sexist attitudes and behaviours, hold violence-supportive attitudes and perpetrate violence against women. Globally, rates of violence are higher in societies, communities and relationships where there are more rigid distinctions between the roles of men and women, and more stereotypical notions of the 'ideal' man or woman, and where dominant forms of masculinity are rigidly adhered to.

Driver 4.

Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

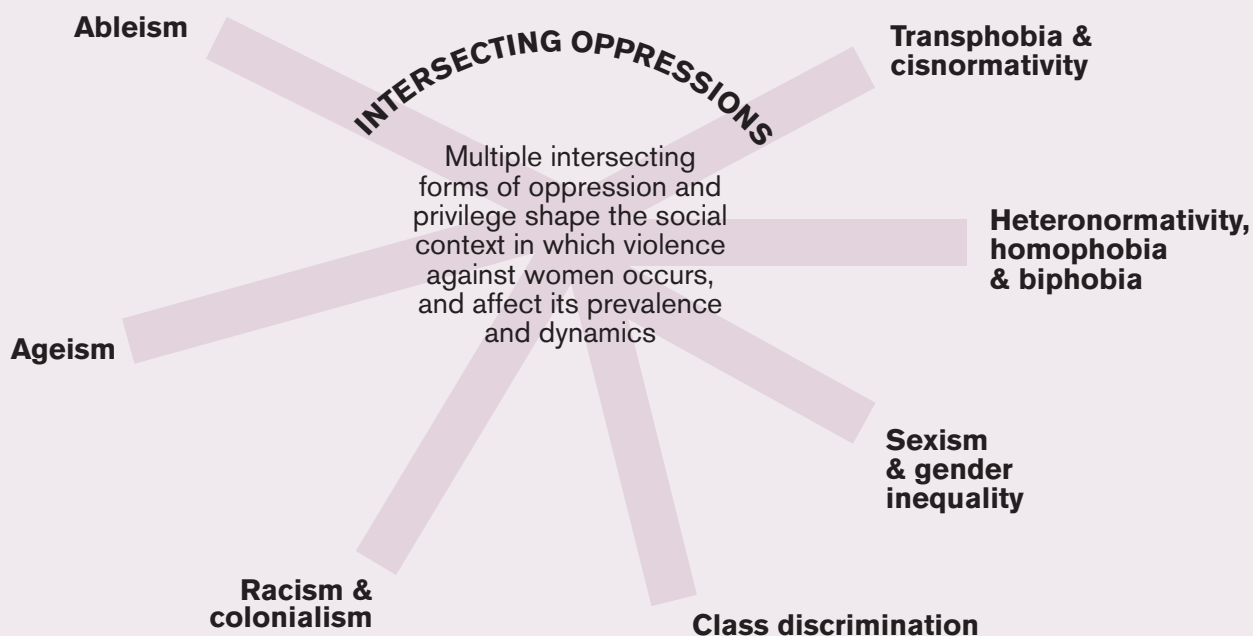
Male peer relationships (both personal and professional) that are characterised by attitudes, behaviours or norms regarding masculinity that centre on aggression, dominance, control or hypersexuality are associated with violence against women. In such peer groups, adherence to these dominant forms of masculinity increases men's reluctance to take a stand against violence-supportive attitudes, and can increase the use of violence itself. Structural factors – such as poor organisational cultures, inadequate policies and insufficient penalties – can reinforce, support or excuse violence-supportive attitudes and behaviour, particularly in male-dominated organisations and contexts.

Many intersecting forms of oppression influence violence against women

Gender inequality cannot be disentangled from other social conditions and injustices. Many other forms of structural and systemic discrimination and inequality influence the prevalence and dynamics of violence against women.

Some women are more likely to experience violence. Both the perpetration and the experience of violence are influenced by the intersections between gendered drivers and other systemic and structural forms of social injustice, discrimination and oppression. These include racism, ableism, ageism, heteronormativity, cissexism, class discrimination, and – for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women – the contemporary impacts of colonialism.

The gendered drivers outlined in this framework are the most consistent predictors of men’s violence against women, and explain the gendered patterns of this violence, but they should not be considered in isolation from the range of other influences on this violence that are associated with these other systems of oppression, discrimination, power and privilege. While gender inequality and the gendered drivers are always relevant in explaining violence against women, they may not be the most significant factor in every context.



Reinforcing factors

In addition to the gendered drivers, *Change the story* identifies four reinforcing factors. While none of these factors predict or drive men's violence against women on their own, they intersect with the gendered drivers to influence the prevalence and dynamics of violence.

A reinforcing factor may:

- magnify or increase the influence of one or more of the gendered drivers in some contexts or circumstances
- increase the overall prevalence of violence across the population, or the likelihood or frequency of violence in particular circumstances or contexts
- influence the nature, severity and dynamics of violence in particular contexts or circumstances
- affect the relative influence of gender inequality, and other forms of systemic and structural oppression, on the prevalence and patterns of violence.

Careful analysis of how these factors manifest in gendered ways is necessary both to explain the prevalence and patterns of violence against women and to inform prevention efforts.

What's the difference between gendered drivers and reinforcing factors?

The gendered drivers of violence against women are a constant presence in society; they are manifestations of the underlying social context of gender inequality, and play out at all levels of society, from the individual to the institutional. These are the factors most strongly and consistently associated with violence against women in the evidence.

The reinforcing factors are only sometimes influential. They are more context-specific or circumstantial and have a less consistent association with violence.

REINFORCING Factor 1.

Condoning of violence in general

which can lead to the 'normalisation' of violence.

REINFORCING Factor 2.

Experience of, and exposure to, violence

particularly during childhood.

REINFORCING Factor 3.

Factors that weaken prosocial behaviour

reducing empathy, respect and concern for women, such as stress, environmental factors, disasters and crises, male-dominated settings and heavy alcohol consumption.

REINFORCING Factor 4.

Resistance and backlash to prevention and gender equality efforts

including actions that seek to block change, uphold the status quo of gender relations, or re-establish male privilege and power.

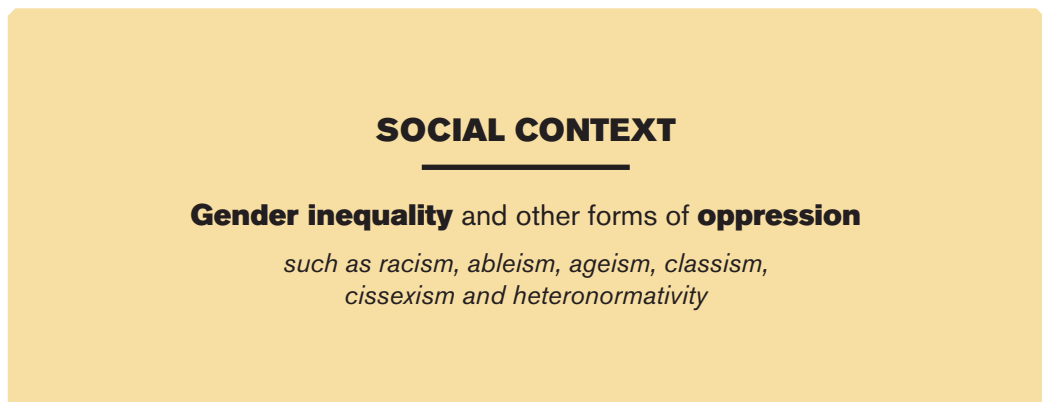
THE PROBLEM

Violence against women is serious, prevalent and driven by gender inequality

Gendered drivers of violence against women

Driver 1.	Driver 2.	Driver 3.	Driver 4.
Condoning of violence against women	Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life	Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity	Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

Underlying **social context** for violence against women



Factors that reinforce violence against women

REINFORCING Factor 1.	REINFORCING Factor 2.	REINFORCING Factor 3.	REINFORCING Factor 4.
Condoning of violence in general	Experience of, and exposure to, violence	Factors that weaken prosocial behaviour	Resistance and backlash to prevention and gender equality efforts

These drivers and reinforcing factors play out at every level of society: from individual attitudes and behaviours, to social norms, organisational cultures and practices, policies, laws, and institutions.

THE SOLUTION

Violence against women is preventable if we all work together

Essential actions to address the gendered drivers

ACTION 1. **ESSENTIAL**

Challenge the condoning of violence against women

ACTION 2. **ESSENTIAL**

Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships

ACTION 3. **ESSENTIAL**

Build new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes

ACTION 4. **ESSENTIAL**

Support men and boys in developing healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships

Essential actions to address the underlying social context

ACTION 5. **ESSENTIAL**

Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life

ACTION 6. **ESSENTIAL**

Address the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination, and promote broader social justice

ACTION 7. **ESSENTIAL**

Build safe, fair and equitable organisations and institutions by focusing on policy and systems change

ACTION 8. **ESSENTIAL**

Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys, in public and private spheres

Supporting actions to address the reinforcing factors

ACTION 9. **SUPPORTING**

Challenge the normalisation of violence and aggression as an expression of masculinity

ACTION 10. **SUPPORTING**

Reduce the long-term impacts of exposure to violence, and prevent further exposure

ACTION 11. **SUPPORTING**

Strengthen prosocial behaviour

ACTION 12. **SUPPORTING**

Plan for and actively address backlash and resistance

These 12 actions need to be implemented at every level of society: using legislative, institutional, policy and program responses; by governments, organisations and individuals; in settings where people live, work, learn and socialise; in ways that are tailored to the context and needs of different groups.

Twelve actions to prevent violence against women

To prevent violence against women, the following twelve actions are needed, which address:

- the underlying **gendered drivers** of this violence (essential actions 1–4)
- the **social context** in which it arises (essential actions 5–8)
- the **factors that reinforce** this violence (supporting actions 9–12).

FOUR ESSENTIAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE GENDERED DRIVERS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Action 1.

Challenge the condoning of violence against women

- ✓ Reform legal, policy and institutional systems and practices that implicitly or explicitly condone violence against women or reduce men's accountability for violence.
- ✓ Shift community attitudes and social norms that justify, excuse, trivialise or downplay violence against women, or shift blame from the perpetrator to the victim.
- ✓ Challenge the condoning of violence through sexist, ableist, racist and other discriminatory attitudes, behaviours, systems and practices.
- ✓ Challenge sensationalised or stereotyped media coverage and sexist, racist, and other types of discriminatory depictions that contribute to a culture that condones violence against women (or particular groups of women).

Action 2.

Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships

- ✓ Strengthen women's economic security, independence and social, political and economic participation in public life, to equalise access to power and resources between women and men.
- ✓ Challenge attitudes and social norms that privilege 'masculine' behaviours or character traits and that normalise male control and dominance in public life and relationships.
- ✓ Support the rights of all women to make decisions about their own lives.
- ✓ Use policy, regulation and organisational strategies to increase the representation and diversity of women in political systems and institutions, and in decision-making at every level of society.
- ✓ Use policy levers to reduce women's economic dependence on men and increase economic support to women who face financial barriers to equality and independence.

ACTION 1.
ESSENTIAL

Challenge the condoning of violence against women

ACTION 2.
ESSENTIAL

Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships

ACTION 3.
ESSENTIAL

Build new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes

ACTION 4.
ESSENTIAL

Support men and boys in developing healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships

Action 3.

Build new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes

- ✓ Raise awareness of the negative impacts of gender stereotyping and increase community support for children, young people and adults to act in ways or take on roles that are not constrained by gender stereotypes.
- ✓ Build the capacity of children, young people and adults to reject rigid gender roles and challenge aggressive, entitled, controlling constructions of masculinity and subordinate constructions of femininity.
- ✓ Increase social support for masculine norms, practices and behaviours that are healthy, respectful and ethical, for individuals, and within organisations.
- ✓ Promote and support gender-equitable domestic and parenting practices, including through policy and legislation, early parenting programs and workplace initiatives.
- ✓ Develop positive ways to engage men and boys in prevention and gender equality.

Action 4.

Support men and boys in developing healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships

- ✓ Teach boys and men how to recognise and challenge harmful expressions of masculinity and male privilege in their peer groups.
- ✓ Counter constructions of masculinity as dominant, aggressive, controlling or hypersexual in public and private life, media and popular culture.
- ✓ Challenge homophobia as an expression of masculinity, in male peer groups and in organisations.
- ✓ Promote representations of men and boys that model and normalise respectful, ethical, safe and equitable behaviours and relationships.
- ✓ Ensure prevention activities include an explicit focus on addressing dominant forms of masculinity and engaging men and boys.
- ✓ Work with boys and men to challenge norms of sexual entitlement, dominance and hypersexuality, counter the influence of pornography, and build understanding of consent, agency, mutual pleasure and power.

FOUR ESSENTIAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING SOCIAL CONTEXT THAT GIVES RISE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Action 5.

Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life

- ✓ Use policy, regulatory and legislative mechanisms to advance gender equality in all spheres.
- ✓ Increase social and structural support for gender equality.
- ✓ Establish, maintain and report publicly on processes to assess all public policy for its impact on women and gender equality.
- ✓ Build greater connection between initiatives to ensure women's safety and broader efforts to advance women's social and political rights and economic security.
- ✓ Support and resource women's collective advocacy and social movement activism to prevent violence and promote gender equality.
- ✓ Strengthen support for gender equality in both public and private contexts, among adults, young people and children.

Action 6.

Address the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination, and promote broader social justice

- ✓ Within all prevention activity, take action to address the intersections between gender inequality and racism; heteronormativity; cisnormativity; homo-, bi- and transphobia; ageism; ableism and class discrimination and oppression.
- ✓ Form partnerships and coalitions to address the collective challenges.
- ✓ Work to ensure a gendered analysis and a gender lens are embedded within work to address other forms of systemic and structural discrimination and oppression.

ACTION 5.
ESSENTIAL

Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life

ACTION 6.
ESSENTIAL

Address the intersections between gender inequality and other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination, and promote broader social justice

ACTION 7.
ESSENTIAL

Build safe, fair and equitable organisations and institutions by focusing on policy and systems change

ACTION 8.
ESSENTIAL

Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys, in public and private spheres

Action 7.

Build safe, fair and equitable organisations and institutions by focusing on policy and systems change

- ✓ Use policy, regulatory and legislative mechanisms to equalise access to power and decision-making between women and men within organisations and institutions.
- ✓ Develop and promote national standards for organisations, sectors and institutions on a range of issues related to preventing and responding to violence against women.
- ✓ Enable whole-of-organisation approaches to the prevention of violence against women, in line with the Workplace Equality and Respect standards.
- ✓ Address masculine organisational cultures through prevention work targeted at male-dominated organisations, institutions and social settings.

Action 8.

Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among women and men, girls and boys, in public and private spheres

- ✓ Provide systemic support for initiatives (including respectful relationships education in all education and care settings) that promote positive, equal and respectful relationships between people of all genders, in all contexts.
- ✓ Build organisational and institutional cultures that promote and demonstrate the importance of equality, respect, safety and fairness in professional contexts.
- ✓ Challenge peer relations between men and between boys that involve hostility or disrespect towards women, or that objectify or sexualise women and girls.
- ✓ Increase critical media literacy among children, young people and adults, including building skills to engage respectfully in an online environment.
- ✓ Build people's confidence to act as prosocial bystanders to challenge sexism, harassment, inequality, disrespect and hostility towards women, and violence-supportive attitudes.
- ✓ Challenge and critique the influence of pornography on sex, consent and gender stereotypes, as part of wider violence prevention strategies.

FOUR SUPPORTING ACTIONS TO ADDRESS THE REINFORCING FACTORS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The four supporting actions address the four reinforcing factors described on page 9. On their own, these supporting actions are not sufficient — a national approach to prevention must prioritise the essential actions described on pages 12–15 in order to directly address the drivers of violence against women.

However, these supporting actions can make an important contribution to overall national prevention goals. Examples of how these supporting actions can be implemented are provided — please see the full *Change the story* framework for a more detailed list.

Action 9.

Challenge the normalisation of violence and aggression as an expression of masculinity

- ✓ Counter the construction of masculinity as ‘naturally’ violent and the learning of violence in gendered ways.
- ✓ Challenge the normalisation, valorisation and glorification of male violence through strategies that focus on the socialisation of boys and young men, and that challenge the construction and expression of masculinity as aggressive or violent, both in public and private life, and through media and popular culture.

Action 10.

Reduce the long-term impacts of exposure to violence and prevent further exposure

- ✓ Strengthen early intervention mechanisms for children and young people that aim to address the gendered impacts of exposure to violence.
- ✓ Support and advocate for healing strategies and other efforts to mediate the impacts of past occurrences of violence such as child abuse, racially motivated and colonial violence, violence against women with disabilities, war-related trauma and torture experienced by refugees, or violence occurring in prisons or detention centres, and strengthen efforts in policy and strategy to prevent these forms of violence.
- ✓ Work with local and state-wide organisations to strengthen the promotion of non-violent parenting.

ACTION 9.
SUPPORTING

Challenge the normalisation of violence and aggression as an expression of masculinity

ACTION 10.
SUPPORTING

Reduce the long-term impacts of exposure to violence, and prevent further exposure

ACTION 11.
SUPPORTING

Strengthen prosocial behaviour

ACTION 12.
SUPPORTING

Plan for and actively address backlash and resistance

Action 11.
Strengthen prosocial behaviour

- ✓ Dismantle norms and practices within organisations, institutions and systems that protect men's power and privilege at the expense of women's health, safety or wellbeing.
- ✓ Increase social cohesion, community connectedness and access to required services within communities across Australia. Address the relationship between harmful alcohol use and social norms relating to both violence and gender.
- ✓ Apply a gender lens to disaster planning and emergency management in the context of disasters and crises, to proactively address the increased risk of violence against women and increase community resilience over the long term.

Action 12.
Plan for, and actively address, backlash and resistance

- ✓ Integrate strategies to address various forms of resistance (individual, community, collective, organisational, institutional, structural and systemic) into all prevention activity.
- ✓ Promote forms of masculinity that are not dependent on harmful social norms.
- ✓ Develop, implement and evaluate specific strategies to address backlash and resistance from individual men or groups of men.
- ✓ Use legislative, policy and other levers to ensure effective consequences and penalties (both legal and institutional) for backlash and resistance.

Principles of a national approach to primary prevention

Use all available policy, legislative and regulatory levers.

Use an intersectional gender transformative approach.

Prioritise the essential actions to address the gendered drivers.

Include supporting actions to address the reinforcing factors.

Implement actions across all levels of the socio-ecological model: individual, community, organisational, institutional, and social.

Draw on a range of appropriate evidence and expertise.

Be explicit about audience and tailor the approach.

Ensure specific and intensive effort with communities affected by multiple forms of oppression.

Build partnerships across sectors and between violence prevention and gender equality specialists and other organisations.

Connect to response systems during design and implementation.

Work across the life course.

Combine techniques across multiple settings and sectors to make changes 'stick'.

Scale up what works and ensure the long-term sustainability of effective initiatives.

Strengthen the evidence base through evaluation and innovation.

Prevention infrastructure

Violence against women has multiple, interrelated drivers which play out across every level of society, so preventing this violence requires a holistic, multilayered national approach.

For primary prevention to be successful, it requires a large-scale effort, engaging the largest possible number of people and organisations.

This level of change requires a sustained investment in prevention, through a coordinated, long-term, national approach. It also requires effective local, state and national 'infrastructure' to ensure long-term success.

Key elements of an effective prevention infrastructure are:

1. sustained political leadership
2. private sector, civil society and community leadership
3. a well-resourced, independent women's movement
4. policy, regulatory and legislative reform
5. mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance
6. mechanisms for workforce and sector development
7. a strong evidence base informed by ongoing research, practice and evaluation
8. national monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

An effective national approach to prevention requires the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders. Every sector, institution, organisation and community has a role to play. Partnerships that include women’s organisations and violence specialists and community-controlled organisations will ensure prevention efforts are informed by a deep understanding of the complex dynamics of violence, gender and other social inequalities. To ensure community ownership of prevention work, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives, trusting and transparent relationships between government and civil society are critical.

Commonwealth and state/territory governments — have primary responsibility for women’s health, safety and equality as a human rights obligation; they can provide governance and coordination through complementary, long-term national and jurisdictional plans; use policy levers to drive social, cultural, structural and systemic change; provide funding; build prevention infrastructure; ensure effective monitoring and reporting; set standards and model best practice.

Local governments — can influence change at the local level and across the life course; tailor prevention to the local context; provide political leadership and model best practice.

Women’s rights organisations, NGOs and civil society — advocate for reform; build the evidence base; share knowledge; promote women’s participation in decision-making; help identify systemic problems faced by women; advise on the gendered impacts of policy; and work with institutions and organisations to build capability and implement effective solutions.

Specialist organisations including violence prevention, women’s health, domestic/family violence/sexual assault organisations contribute expertise on gendered violence and what works to prevent it; provide leadership and capacity-building for implementation.

Organisations with expertise in specific communities or contexts can contribute knowledge of how to work appropriately and effectively with particular cultural or age groups or in particular communities, locations or settings; translate prevention approaches to these contexts; ensure prevention is community led and informed by lived experiences; provide leadership to address forms of violence requiring more specialised approaches.

Those working in key settings and sectors (schools, workplaces, unions, business, leisure venues, early childhood services, sports, civil society organisations, social services, advertising, public transport and the arts) — can lead tailored prevention activities; set behavioural and cultural standards; address systemic issues; provide public advocacy.

Those working on other social issues — can incorporate a gender analysis into all social change work, and create partnerships with prevention specialists to address the drivers of reinforcing factors.

Our Watch — will provide national leadership on prevention and advocate for, drive and support the holistic, shared national approach outlined in *Change the story*, through the actions outlined in our Strategic Plan.

This is a summary of the second edition of *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia*. The full document includes extensive references to support the points made in this summary document and can be found at ourwatch.org.au

Suggested citation: Our Watch. (2021). *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia – Summary* (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.

Acknowledgement of Country

Our Watch acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of the land on which *Change the story* was largely developed, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

As a national organisation, we also acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of country across Australia and pay our respects to them, their cultures and their respective Elders, past and present.

© Our Watch 2021

GPO Box 24229

Melbourne VIC 3001

www.ourwatch.org.au

