


October 2024

**National consultation report:  
Men and masculinities in primary prevention project**

# **Strengthening national approaches to addressing masculinities and working with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence**



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## About Our Watch

Our Watch is a national leader in the primary prevention of violence against women<sup>1</sup> and their children in Australia. We have a clear vision, an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence.

Our Watch works to embed gender equality and address the drivers of violence wherever people in Australia live, learn, work and socialise. Everything we do at Our Watch is based on robust national and international research and evidence.

We work in partnership with governments, communities, the prevention workforce, and leaders across a wide range of sectors to create change across Australia.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Our Watch acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay respects to Elders past and present and recognise the continuing connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to land, culture, knowledge and language for over 65,000 years.

As a non-Aboriginal organisation, Our Watch understands that violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is an issue for the whole community. As highlighted in Our Watch's national resource *Changing the picture*, the evidence clearly shows the intersection between racism, sexism and violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Our Watch has an ongoing commitment to the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, who continue to suffer from violence at a significantly higher rate than non-Aboriginal women. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations who continue to lead the work of sharing knowledge with non-Indigenous people and relentlessly advocate for an equitable, violence-free future in Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'women' that is used throughout the report refers to anyone that is a woman, which includes cisgender and trans women.

# Contents

<b>About Our Watch</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Acknowledgement of Country</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Priority activities	5
Ongoing activities	6
<b>Background</b>	<b>7</b>
Policy context	7
Our Watch's work to date	7
About Our Watch's Men and masculinities in primary prevention project	8
Language used in this report	9
<b>Consultation methodology</b>	<b>13</b>
Who was involved	13
Framing the consultation and the report findings	14
The consultation process	16
<b>Consultation findings</b>	<b>18</b>
Current situation across Australia	18
The policy, regulatory and legislative environment	20
Gaps, challenges and opportunities	20
Opportunities and priorities for national prevention infrastructure	32
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>42</b>
Appendix 1: The project team	42
Appendix 2: Technical Advisory Group members	42
Appendix 3: Consultation participants	43
Appendix 4: Good practice principles and parameters	44
Appendix 5: A shared language or thesaurus	45
Appendix 6: Examples of existing mapping tools	46
Appendix 7: Increasing connection and collaboration	46
Appendix 8: Workforce development activities	47

# Executive summary

The national consultation for the Our Watch Men and masculinities in primary prevention project (the consultation) brought together 50 stakeholders from across Australia for a one-day in-person event on 21 May 2024. Participants explored what is needed to build more coordinated and evidence-informed approaches to working with men and boys and addressing masculinities nationally as part of primary prevention of gender-based violence efforts, focusing on two specific elements of prevention infrastructure:

- Mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance.
- Mechanisms for workforce and sector development.

Consultation findings will support Our Watch's scoping of potential activities, opportunities and pathways for the Men and masculinities in primary prevention project. Findings will also support Commonwealth and state/territory governments, and other interested stakeholders, in their work to meet the goals of the *Second National Plan to End Violence Against Women and their Children 2022–2032*.

Based on these findings, the report concludes with a series of key opportunities and priorities to strengthen prevention infrastructure to support work engaging with men and boys and addressing masculinities as part of primary prevention of gender-based violence efforts in Australia. An overview of these opportunities and priorities is below.

**'Priority activities'** will help work through current tensions and challenges, creating a strong shared underpinning for the **'ongoing activities'** that will support more coordinated and mutually reinforcing approaches to working with men and boys and addressing masculinities. While activities may occur simultaneously, attention should be given to priority activities as their completion will inform and enhance ongoing activities.

The 'Opportunities' section of this report provides further explanation of these activities, including recommended actors to lead implementation. While some initial consideration has been given to sequencing, the numbering of activities does not reflect their priority.

## Priority activities

1. Resource all jurisdictions to put in place and sustain the infrastructure and people required to achieve and maintain a coordinated, mutually reinforcing and skilled primary prevention of gender-based violence sector and workforce.
2. Ensure adequate funding and support to accompany the growth and development of gendered violence primary prevention workforces in each jurisdiction, including support for organisational care strategies for staff.
3. Undertake mapping to better understand current work being undertaken, the workforce, and workforce development needs of those working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.
4. Collaborate to determine the core principles and parameters for ensuring safe, accountable and effective practice when working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.
5. Utilise and expand on existing primary prevention of violence against women and gendered violence frameworks to articulate a shared understanding and approaches to working with men and boys and addressing masculinities, to support increased coordination and cohesion across primary prevention workforces.
6. Further develop the evidence base and platform practice knowledge from under-researched areas, including how masculinities intersect with homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and transmisogyny, as well as ableism, colonialism and racism in ways that compound gender-based violence.
7. Further scope an appropriate national mechanism/s to support coalition-building, joint advocacy, communications and messaging development, and coordinated advice, guidance and workforce capacity-building.
8. Resource work to increase intersectional practice through evidence-building and development of practice resources and capacity-building activities.
9. Identify opportunities to make *Change the story*, *Men in focus*, and other Our Watch resources more accessible to different segments of the workforce, including via tailored practice resources and professional development for early intervention, response, recovery, and men's health and wellbeing sectors.

## Ongoing activities

10. Identify and enact policy, regulatory and legislative reforms that drive the systems-level change required to promote more positive and expansive forms of masculinity and respectful gender relations, and to engage men and boys in preventing gender-based violence (and meet the objectives of the Second National Plan).
11. Increase opportunities for connection, learning and collaboration between gendered violence primary prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and men's health and wellbeing sectors, including those working across the continuum.
12. Undertake further scoping to identify workforce development needs for those working with men and boys and addressing masculinities in each jurisdiction, including the need to upskill the existing workforce and expand the workforce.
13. Identify mechanisms to bring together evidence and promising practice in accessible, practical ways for practitioners working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.
14. Increased professional development, support and funding to better evaluate initiatives, including capacity-building for impact evaluation and collective impact evaluation.

# Background

## Policy context

In recent years there has been an explicit focus on addressing masculinities and working with men and boys in the prevention of violence against women. Given that violence against women and against people of all genders is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men, addressing harmful patterns of masculinity and engaging men and boys in prevention efforts is critical. Men can be a significant part of the problem but, importantly, they can be an active part of the solution, when they play informed, committed and accountable roles in preventing violence against women and gender-based violence more broadly.

This is reflected in the *Second National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032*, which outlines the importance of working with men and boys in promoting healthier masculinities and more positive and respectful male peer relationships to help prevent violence against women. It acknowledges that all men have a role to play, not only in challenging their own attitudes and behaviours, but also to help shift the social structures and norms that maintain gender inequality and drive violence against women.

*Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed. 2021)* highlights how addressing masculinities and working with men and boys is essential in order to address the gendered drivers of violence against women and the broader social context of gender inequality and other forms of oppression that underpins this violence. Similarly, *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children (2018)* recommends engaging both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men to address the impacts of colonisation on Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and challenge harmful and violence-supportive ideas about masculinity and relationships.

## Our Watch's work to date

The first edition of *Change the story* (2015) outlined the research highlighting the relevance of men and masculinities in relation to the gendered drivers of violence against women. In 2019, Our Watch explored this further and developed the evidence review *Men in focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women*, followed by *Men in focus practice guide: Addressing masculinities and working with men in the prevention of men's*

*violence against women*, published in 2022. Together these resources develop a deeper understanding of the links between masculinities and violence against women and examine what is needed to work with men and boys to prevent violence against women.

Both resources were developed through extensive consultation with advisory groups made up of key stakeholders, including practitioners, academics and advocates working in a range of settings and with a diverse range of communities and population groups. While these resources are foundational to Our Watch's dedicated work in this space, stakeholders in these advisory groups and more broadly have highlighted the need for further knowledge translation of the evidence base and build more coordinated and mutually reinforcing approaches to the practice-based work that is being done across Australia.

## **About Our Watch's Men and masculinities in primary prevention project**

In 2023 the Commonwealth Department of Social Services funded Our Watch to commence work on a new Men and masculinities in primary prevention project (the project) to be delivered between 2023 and 2027. The project is funded under the First Action Plan of the Second National Plan, as part of the Commonwealth government's commitment to working with men and boys in prevention.

The project seeks to achieve more coordinated and evidence-informed approaches at the national level in work that addresses masculinities and engages men and boys in the prevention of gender-based violence at all levels of society, across settings, organisations, and communities.

The project builds on the existing Our Watch *Men in focus* evidence base and focuses on three key objectives:

1. Increase the uptake and implementation of the approaches outlined in the *Men in focus evidence review* and the *Men in focus practice guide* with priority audiences.
2. Establish a more coordinated and consistent approach to working with men and addressing masculinities nationally, including the building of further relationships and networks with the prevention workforce and other related sectors.



3. Establish and build further relationships, networks and potential partnerships with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations working with men, to support and elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and boys to stop violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

This report presents the findings of a national consultation event held in May 2024 to support the project team in scoping potential activities, opportunities and pathways for project objectives 2 and 3.

Report findings also support Commonwealth and state/territory governments, and other interested stakeholders, in their work to meet the goals of the *Second National Plan to End Violence Against Women and their Children 2022–2032*.

## Language used in this report

A key tension in this field of work – and one strongly reflected in the consultation findings – is the lack of consistent or shared language. There are differing definitions for key concepts, as well as a range of preferences and critiques for the language used to describe key terms. The broad scope of this consultation – bringing together organisations from across the country working across multiple sectors – presented a distinct challenge from the outset in the language used to frame the consultation and present the report findings.

The report findings identify several key opportunities to further progress how we conceptualise and talk about this work. While language choices have been made in order to frame the consultation and report writing, we recognise the tensions and limitations of some of this language. We support the ongoing process of identifying a common and shared language that can meet the needs of all those working to prevent gender-based violence, and that is respectful and inclusive of the diversity of people’s lived experience and identities.

The definitions below reflect the language choices and framing used in the consultation and report.

## Masculinities

The socially learnt roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that any given society considers appropriate for men. These expectations vary between cultures and faiths, and in different contexts, and can change over time.

## **Socially dominant forms and patterns of masculinity**

Refers to the particular attitudes, norms, roles, practices and structures that men and boys are expected to conform to, display and participate in, and that give privilege and benefits to men as a whole. In Australia, the socially dominant form of masculinity comes from white western cultural/colonial masculinity that is shaped by dominant norms and assumptions about race, disability, heteronormativity and cisnormativity. We avoid the term 'traditional masculinity' because other culturally specific forms of masculinity, particularly for First Nations communities, differ significantly from the Western form.

## **Addressing masculinities**

Challenging socially dominant norms and practices of masculinity that can help drive men's violence, as well as transforming the broader systems and structures that foster and reinforce these. This work supports individuals, communities, organisations and institutions to consider how socially dominant norms and practices of masculinity both uphold inequality and maintain some men's use of violence.

While 'addressing masculinities' is used throughout this report – reflecting its use in *Change the story, Men in focus* and the funding agreement for the Men and masculinities in primary prevention project – we recognise the tensions and differences surrounding what is understood by 'masculinities' and how we describe masculinities-focused work. This includes contestations and limitations of 'healthy/ier masculinities', 'addressing masculinities' and 'transforming masculinities.' This is further explored in the 'gaps, challenges and opportunities' section of the consultation findings.

## **Working with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence**

Engaging men and boys in efforts to challenge gender inequality (and other forms of inequality) by increasing their awareness, encouraging critical reflection, and building their knowledge, motivation and capacity to actively challenge socially dominant forms of masculinity and rigid ways of being a man. This also includes working in allyship with those most impacted by men's use of violence.

While the focus of this project is on work with men and boys to prevent gender-based violence, we also include the intersections of some men's health and wellbeing work that does intentionally address the gendered drivers (e.g. masculinities), reinforcing factors and broader social context that drives gender-based violence.

## Prevention continuum

The prevention continuum refers to the spectrum of interconnected activities required to address, reduce and ultimately eradicate gender-based violence: primary prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery.

In some jurisdictions, 'prevention' is used as shorthand for 'primary prevention of violence against women/gender-based violence', while in other jurisdictions 'prevention' refers to work across the spectrum. This report specifies 'primary prevention' to ensure the distinction is clear.

## Primary prevention of violence against women and gender-based violence

Primary prevention is a whole-of-population approach that addresses the primary (first or underlying) drivers of violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence. Primary prevention means stopping violence before it starts and focusses on addressing the systems, practices and attitudes that enable violence and inequality to occur in our society. Primary prevention requires many mutually reinforcing initiatives and activities working across all levels of society to create change.

While the scope of Our Watch's work and this project is violence against women, the overlap and intersection with broader primary prevention of gender-based violence work is recognised through inclusion in the consultation of individuals and organisations working to prevent and respond to other forms of gender-based violence. This includes those working to prevent violence against LGBTIQ+ people; this violence is also gender-based and is driven by rigid ideas about sex, gender and sexuality. The report primarily uses 'primary prevention of gender-based violence' to reflect this broader scope.

## Primary prevention infrastructure

Drawing on the description provided in *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed. 2021)*, prevention infrastructure refers to the 'systems, resources and human capacities required to support long-term primary prevention efforts across the country'.

The key elements of an effective primary prevention infrastructure outlined in *Change the story* are:

- sustained political leadership
- private sector, civil society and community leadership
- a well-resourced, independent women's movement
- policy, regulatory and legislative reform

- mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance
- mechanisms for workforce and sector development
- a strong evidence-base informed by ongoing research, practice and evaluation
- national monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

In keeping with the project's aims for more coordinated approaches and on workforce and sector development, the consultation focused on exploring the following elements of effective primary prevention infrastructure:

## **1. Mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance**

- Shared frameworks, approaches, practice principles and delivery tools/resources to ensure work is evidence-based and effective.
- Coordination mechanisms to support working in a consistent, mutually reinforcing way at a national, state/territory and regional level (for instance, strategies and plans, coordinating bodies or working groups etc).
- Mechanisms to support collaboration, partnerships, mutual learning and other networking opportunities (for instance, conferences, practice hubs and forums).
- Mechanisms for quality assurance that ensure high-quality approaches to prevention practice and programming (for instance, standards, shared principles etc).

## **2. Mechanisms for workforce and sector development**

- A well-resourced workforce to undertake primary prevention of gender-based violence activities.
- Workforce capacity and capability-building activities, such as accreditation, professional development and training.
- Translation of the evidence base into tools/resources to support effective delivery for practitioners.

These descriptions were provided to participants prior to, and during, the consultation.

Further explanation of this terminology and the framework informing it is found in:

- Our Watch. (2021). *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.
- Our Watch. (2019). *Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

# Consultation methodology

The national consultation on Men and masculinities in primary prevention (the consultation) brought together stakeholders from across Australia for a one-day in-person event on 21 May 2024 in Melbourne.

## Who was involved

### Personnel

The consultation was led by a multidisciplinary Our Watch project team. An external consultant – Claire Varley – was engaged to support consultation planning and lead facilitation, and to write this report.

Our Watch established an external Technical Advisory Group in February 2024 consisting of key stakeholders working across the domains of gendered violence primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery and men's health and wellbeing. Advisory group members provided expertise and advice on the design and delivery of the national consultation, and helped ensure an intersectional approach was applied.

Across three meetings, the Technical Advisory Group supported the project team and consultant to plan the consultation event, including developing consultation questions and format, identifying key stakeholders for participation, and identifying potential tensions, risks and mitigation strategies. Technical Advisory Group members were invited to participate in the consultation, with seven able to attend on the day. Following the consultation, the Technical Advisory Group provided feedback on the draft report via a fourth and final meeting.

A full list of project team and Technical Advisory Group members is found in [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#).

### Consultation participants

Consultation participants comprised 50 stakeholders from across Australia with experience and knowledge of working with men and boys and addressing masculinities in the prevention of men's violence against women, gendered violence prevention, early intervention or response (such as men's behaviour change programs), and the men's health and wellbeing sector. The men's health and wellbeing sector was invited due to the existing (and potential) crossover between this sector and gendered violence prevention work; while men's health

and wellbeing work is not always explicitly focused on gender-based violence prevention, much of this work contributes – or has the potential to contribute – to the essential and supporting actions to address the drivers of gendered violence.

The Technical Advisory Group and Our Watch identified a pool of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and from relevant sectors across the country who were well positioned to provide their knowledge and insight into current challenges and opportunities for developing and further building Australia’s primary prevention of gender-based violence infrastructure.

In addition to seeking their expertise, the consultation also provided the opportunity for practitioners across the country to extend and build relationships and networks. Professional isolation is already known to be a significant issue in this work. Therefore, the consultation event itself created an opportunity for practitioners in this field to connect and contribute to building the knowledge base for this work together.

Prior to attending, participants were provided with briefing information to ensure the purpose, scope and objectives of the consultation were understood, and to allow them to prepare for participation. This included project information, key questions to be asked on the day, and a glossary of key terms used throughout the consultation.

Participants were invited to attend either in-person or virtually, with all attendees opting to attend in-person. Our Watch covered the costs for 24 participants attending from outside of Victoria (including flights, accommodation, and airport parking).

Those unable to attend had the opportunity to provide written input prior to the event to be fed into the consultation discussion. One stakeholder took up this opportunity. Five attendees provided further insights via email after the event to contribute additional information not covered on the day.

A list of organisations who participated in the consultation is included in [Appendix 3](#).

## **Framing the consultation and the report findings**

There are a number of considerations that frame the consultation and the findings in this report. Many of these considerations and tensions were identified at the outset by members of the Technical Advisory Group and helped inform the design and delivery of the consultation, as well as report writing. This meant finding ways to ‘hold’ these tensions while still facilitating meaningful, respectful

and collaborative discussion during the consultation. Tellingly, many of these considerations and tensions also feature in the report findings as gaps, tensions and opportunities for the next stage of work. Some of these included:

1. There is no shared understanding of how we conceptualise working with men and boys, and addressing masculinities, as part of primary prevention efforts in Australia (nor a common language used to describe it). This includes if we are talking about a specific segment of the primary prevention workforce or if we are talking about issues relevant to all practitioners and organisations working to prevent gender-based violence (or, if we are talking about both, what activities are relevant to each group). Better mapping and articulating these approaches are priority activities identified in this report. This will help better determine which workforce audience each of the subsequent opportunities included in the report are intended for.
2. The broad range of stakeholders participating in the consultation meant differing:
  - understandings, objectives and approaches to working with men and boys, and addressing masculinities.
  - understandings of primary prevention of gender-based violence and its frameworks, including varying familiarity with *Change the story* and *Men in focus*.
  - knowledge and grounding in the intersectional, gender and feminist critiques that frame much of the evidence and research base that informs ‘masculinities work’.

The report findings identify opportunities to better connect stakeholders to others working in this space – and into the key national frameworks, evidence and practice resources that support this work – to support increased coordination, collaboration and learning.

3. As a foundational piece of work, the focus of the consultation was on identifying tensions and raising questions, not answering them. The opportunities included at the end of this report set out a range of activities that will help work through these tensions and find shared answers to these questions.
4. The consultation findings reflect the discussions and observations of consultation participants. At times, the report authors have endeavoured to clarify or contextualise findings, however the intention of the report is to reflect the voices of the many stakeholders who contributed to the consultation.

## The consultation process

### Consultation objectives and scope

The objective of the four-year Men and masculinities in primary prevention project is to help build more coordinated and evidence-informed approaches to working with men, boys and addressing masculinities nationally. The consultation focused specifically on what is needed to build and improve the primary prevention infrastructure required to support these approaches. The consultation sought to capture key stakeholder insight into what these national primary prevention infrastructure needs and priorities might be, including gaps, challenges, tensions and opportunities.

As noted in the '[Language used in this report](#)' section above, the consultation focused on two particular elements of prevention infrastructure. Participants were encouraged to focus discussion on the current gaps, challenges and tensions, and potential opportunities to improve on:

1. Mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance.
2. Mechanisms for workforce and sector development.

### Consultation questions and activities

An overarching key question directed the focus of activities for the consultation:

*How do we achieve a more coordinated and consistent approach when working with men and boys, and addressing masculinities, as part of primary prevention efforts in Australia?*

As a starting point for discussion to unpack this, participants were asked prompt questions:

1. What do we want to achieve?
  - What could it look like to have a coordinated and consistent approach to this work?
2. Where are we now?
  - What is the state of our current approach and prevention infrastructure?
  - What are the gaps, challenges and opportunities?
3. What do we need to move from where we are to where we want to be?
  - What do we need when it comes to prevention infrastructure?
  - What are the infrastructure priorities?



For the first part of the consultation, participants were grouped by six 'streams' of work that share similar foci, approaches and challenges. The purpose of these groups was to facilitate deeper, more effective discussion as participants already shared commonalities. Additional sub-questions tailored for each group were used to prompt conversation.

The six streams included:

1. Primary prevention: Violence prevention programs working with men and/or boys, and addressing masculinities (National and Victoria).
2. Primary prevention: Violence prevention programs working with men and/or boys, and addressing masculinities (outside of Victoria).
3. Primary prevention: Community-led/co-designed prevention work with priority population groups.
4. Settings-based primary prevention: Programs/initiatives that drive organisational and cultural change work (e.g., workplaces, universities and TAFEs, sport).
5. Organisations or programs supporting at-risk men and boys (e.g. men's behaviour change programs).
6. Men and boys' health and wellbeing programs that have a focus on addressing masculinities.

The decision to split the violence prevention programs streams into 'National/Victoria' and 'outside Victoria' reflects the larger workforce and more established infrastructure in Victoria, due to a range of social, political and historical factors.

For the second part of the consultation, a mixed group of participants were assigned to each of the previous rooms to review the findings from the streamed groups. This provided the opportunity for participants to build on the previous discussions, exchange further ideas and think outside their current spheres of work. This activity was repeated twice, with participants having the opportunity to review the findings of two different streamed groups. A majority of the consultation findings arose from the streamed groups. The mixed group activity largely validated or added detail to the findings from the initial discussions.

As a final reflection activity, participants were asked to share their responses on post-it notes:

- What is one reflection you are taking away?
- What do you think is the most pressing infrastructure priority that will help us move towards a more coordinated and consistent approach when working with men and boys, and addressing masculinities, as part of primary prevention efforts in Australia?

# Consultation findings

This section presents the key findings from the consultation. It provides a brief description of what is currently occurring across Australia and explores key gaps and challenges identified during the consultation. It concludes with a set of opportunities and priorities that can inform the work of Our Watch, Commonwealth and state/territory governments, and other interested stakeholders working in primary prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and other related sectors such as the men's health and wellbeing sector.

While intersectional practice is included as a specific finding to allow space for detailed discussion, it is also embedded across all other themes.

It should be noted that while the consultation used the term 'consistent' to describe the desired approach – i.e. 'a coordinated and consistent approach' – many participants were hesitant to use this word as it may suggest a uniform or one-size-fits-all approach. The term 'mutually reinforcing' was preferred and henceforth is used in the consultation findings in this report instead of 'consistent'. Similarly, 'approach' has been changed to 'approaches' to reflect the range of tailored approaches needed to engage across all settings, population groups and communities in Australia.

## Current situation across Australia

Participants were asked to briefly describe the current situation for work focusing on men and boys and addressing masculinities. A state-by-state description was not able to be captured as in many jurisdictions the work is still emerging and remains relatively unconnected. More detail was able to be captured for Victoria through the Victoria-focused 'streamed' group which included stakeholders working in statewide coordination and workforce development roles who were well-placed to describe the Victorian context. A priority activity recommended in this report is undertaking more detailed jurisdiction mapping to better understand and describe the diversity across each jurisdiction and support future activities (see [Opportunities](#)).

A summary of combined responses from participants culminates the following:

## Victoria

Victoria's primary prevention of gender-based violence sector and workforce is significantly more developed and resourced than the rest of the country. This is due to a confluence of social, political and historical factors. Participants identified an increasing focus within the state's primary prevention of gender-based violence sector on working with men and boys, and on addressing masculinities as part of addressing the gendered drivers of violence. Victorian participants felt this work has 'matured', with a growing number of projects seeking to transform not only rigid individual and community attitudes and behaviours regarding masculinity, but the practices, systems and structures that uphold these rigid norms. *Change the story* and other Our Watch resources were largely cited as guiding documents.

Despite increasing activity – both for work specifically focusing on engaging men and boys and for broader primary prevention of gender-based violence activities – work remains underfunded, often with insecure one-off funding that does not allow opportunity to extend or scale up promising practice, nor to invest in the impact evaluation necessary to assess change. More mechanisms are needed to coordinate work and share learnings within the state, and with the rest of the country.

## Outside Victoria

Beyond Victoria, the lack of funded state-based primary prevention of gender-based violence workforces and infrastructure means there is less distinction between primary prevention and secondary and tertiary prevention work and less ability to focus on whole-of-population approaches. Much of the work shared during the consultation focused on awareness-raising and education for young men on areas such as respectful relationships and men's health and wellbeing, or on working with men and boys at-risk of, or who have used violence. Activity was less likely to be guided by *Change the story* and other Our Watch resources in jurisdictions outside of Victoria.

Limited and insecure funding was cited as a significant challenge, particularly as this means the primary prevention of gender-based violence workforce remains underdeveloped across most states/territories. This means limited opportunities for connection and collaboration at both a state and national level and limited opportunities to pursue whole-of-population approaches to preventing gender-based violence before it occurs.

## The policy, regulatory and legislative environment

While the consultation did not focus on policy, regulatory and legislative reforms, participants stressed that these reforms are important to enabling and bolstering all other areas of infrastructure development. For instance, the point was made that while grassroots co-design processes are vital for effective primary prevention work, unless reforms occur to government systems such as child protection, policing and the justice system, there is little chance for meaningful change.

*“If the government systems aren’t willing to change, then we can do all the co-design in the world, but the reality is this child protection system is still set up the same way to blame others and place the responsibility for violence on them. The police system still doesn’t know how to talk about violence, how to actually police violence. Or you get to the point where men are willing to take accountability and they go to the police and the police say ‘oh there’s nothing we can do to help you.’”*

– Consultation participant

Similarly, participants emphasised the importance of ensuring a policy and funding environment that recognises and adequately resources both the workforce and other infrastructure requirements to undertake primary prevention of gender-based violence work generally, and with a specific focus on working with men and boys. This would account for and reduce the current unevenness in funding across jurisdictions.

Victorian participants noted that while the need for further reform continues, the state’s policy and legislative environment has played a significant role in advancing Victoria’s approaches to primary prevention in the last decade, including driving prevention infrastructure development.

## Gaps, challenges and opportunities

The consultation findings identified a number of key gaps, challenges and opportunities experienced by those working with men and boys, and addressing masculinities, as part of primary prevention of violence efforts in Australia. Coming together to explore and address these areas will help strengthen coordination, collaboration and effectiveness of work within and across jurisdictions.

## 1. We need to be clearer about what we are describing when we say ‘working with men and boys and addressing masculinities’

The participants raised the **tendency to conflate all work that includes men and boys** as a specific target group or as part of a broader program as one and the same, whereas there are distinct differences in both approaches and aims, including:

- Working with individual men and boys around attitude and behaviour change, such as healing programs, educational programs, men’s behaviour change programs, or men and boy’s health and wellbeing programs.
- Working with men and boys to more broadly support and engage in primary prevention efforts, such as men as allies in primary prevention of gender-based violence or working with male leaders for organisational change. In this instance, we need to focus on men because they are often less involved and have more power to change things at the broader systems, institutional and organisational levels.

Participants also **cautioned against siloing work that engages men and boys or addresses masculinities away from other primary prevention of gender-based violence efforts**, or seeing it as separate or distinct. This means recognising how work with men and boys and addressing masculinities sits within Australia’s shared frameworks<sup>2</sup> so that activities are more likely to be mutually reinforcing and effective. This means recognising that:

1. Transforming masculinities is an important part of addressing all the drivers of violence against women and violence against LGBTIQ+ people. This means addressing masculinities across the population and at all levels of society, and especially with men who display and conform to harmful ideas of masculinity.
2. Engaging men and boys requires tailored approaches just like with any cohort, and is a part of all primary prevention of gender-based violence work.<sup>3</sup>

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2 *Change the story, Changing the picture, Changing the landscape, and Pride in Prevention* (as well as the forthcoming Our Watch/Rainbow Health Australia-led national framework to prevent gender-based violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual people and communities).

3 This includes recognising that ‘men and boys’ are not a homogenous group, but have a multitude of their own experiences of, and proximity to, intersecting forms of oppression, discrimination and privilege. Therefore, tailored and nuanced approaches are needed across the population.

Rather than conceptualise the workforce engaging men and boys as an 'offshoot' of the primary prevention of gendered violence workforce, all primary prevention work benefits from improving understandings of how to engage men and boys and transform masculinities.

Participants raised **risks of assuming that this is 'men's work'**. It is vital that people of all genders are part of the primary prevention of gender-based violence workforce and the cohorts it reaches. It is also important that it reflects the best practice principles that apply to all primary prevention initiatives, including ensuring accountability to – and centring the voices of – those most impacted by gender-based violence, including women and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Participants noted that **work across the gendered violence prevention continuum currently remains siloed**, with limited collaboration between primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, or with the men's health and wellbeing sector. There was consistent recognition of the shared or aligned aims and outcomes that each sector is working towards – i.e. increasing safety, wellbeing and equality for people of all genders – though there is currently less alignment in terms of the principles and practice approaches each uses in order to achieve this. Participants from all sectors were enthusiastic about the potential to connect with and learn from one another. This includes identifying opportunities to learn from other practice approaches, as well as exploring opportunities for these approaches to be more aligned and mutually reinforcing.

There was particular interest in **learning more from organisations who work in an integrated way across the domains of primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery**. This way of working better reflects the approach to prevention utilised by many stakeholder organisations in attendance, for instance prevention work engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or multicultural communities, or in areas where there are not dedicated primary prevention organisations (including in regional or remote areas). It was also noted that these organisations were well placed to support increased understanding of how to undertake primary prevention of gender-based violence work that better engages with men and boys while managing collusion and engaging with the harmful aspects of masculinities that can contribute to violence.

Finally, it was identified that better collaboration across primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, and men's health and wellbeing could help **expand understandings of men's violence from being seen either as 'women's health' or 'men's health' issue to a societal issue** that people of all genders must work together to address.

## 2. Better articulating our shared understanding and approaches to working with men and boys and addressing masculinities

Participants identified the **ongoing challenge of articulating a shared understanding and approaches to working with men and boys and addressing masculinities, including shared goals, principles, evidence base and measures of success**. There was general consensus regarding the benefits of better articulating what is shared or aligned across sectors and their spheres of work, and what differences exist at a theoretical level, as well as a policy and programmatic level. For instance, the alignments and genuine or perceived differences between approaches:

- working across primary prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, as well as in men's health and wellbeing.
- working to prevent violence against women and to prevent other forms of gendered violence.

Some participants felt that **a shared theory of change is missing**, noting that while the workforce is generally good at articulating the problem, it is yet to fully articulate what exactly the solution looks like. For instance, a tension remains as to whether the goal is seeking to provide an alternative 'healthy masculinity', expand masculinities or disband gender boxes altogether (i.e. is the aim to change, challenge or detach from socially dominant and/or harmful forms of masculinity).

Multiple participants noted that the attraction of the online 'manosphere' lies in the prescriptive model of masculinity it offers to men, and felt an alternative was required to combat this. Opportunities suggested by participants to improve strength-based approaches included celebrating 'positive masculinities' and exploring trauma-informed, family-centred models focusing on strong families and 'rites of passage' models. Participants felt a clearer theory of change would support better articulation of shared or aligned outcomes and measures of success, strengthening collective evaluation efforts.

Other participants felt that **Change the story already provides an overarching theory of change, but more work is still required to articulate the specific practice approach/es needed for each types of work** (i.e. what is different when working with individual men or boys, as opposed to as part of a broader prevention initiative). As noted earlier in this report, many stakeholders were not necessarily familiar with – or working from – *Change the story* and other Our Watch frameworks, suggesting the need for Our Watch to have an ongoing lead role in doing further knowledge translation to build capacity to use the frameworks, and to apply the practice principles and approaches outlined in

*Men in focus*. This may help build consensus around a shared approach, as well as identify where more nuanced or tailored principles or practices are required.

Participants noted the **importance of any approach allowing the ability to translate or tailor work into different contexts, settings and communities**.

This includes that approaches cannot be too prescriptive or western-centric and must allow local knowledge to drive local solutions. The importance of place-based approaches in increasing engagement, effectiveness and sustainability was noted across the six streamed groups.

Alongside this was the recognition that **there are principles and parameters that are required to ensure effective, safe practice** (for instance, that work must be intersectional, gender transformative, feminist, safe, and accountable to women and LGBTIQ+ communities. See [Appendix 4](#) for principles suggested during the consultation). The need to strike the balance between the non-negotiables of safe, effective practice with the ability to contextualise and tailor was a recurring discussion point. Participants noted that better articulating this balance – with guidance on how to implement it in practice – would help increase the effectiveness and safety of primary prevention of gender-based violence work in Australia.

It should be noted that discussions about shared principles included little mention of the guiding principles described in *Men in focus* – which cover the principles noted above – suggesting a lack of familiarity among participants. This was not unexpected, given the broad range of stakeholders invited to participate in the consultation, and highlights the opportunity for Our Watch to support increased engagement with the *Men in focus* resources particularly for those working in early intervention, response, recovery and men's health and wellbeing.

Alongside identifying good practice principles and parameters, **resourcing is also required to support organisations and practitioners to build capacity and capability in translating and embedding these principles and practices into their work, including funding for professional development resources and training**.

A number of participants identified the need to **improve how the primary prevention of gender-based violence workforce communicates their ways of working with men and boys and addressing masculinities to those outside the prevention workforce**. This includes how effectively and strategically the workforce communicates the theory, approaches and practice to government and other funders, as well as to potential stakeholders, participants and the community in general. This would not only better encourage uptake and engagement, but help plan for, minimise and manage resistance and backlash. It would also support the workforce to collectively and cohesively advocate for this work, including identifying opportunities for cross-sectoral action with the



men's health and wellbeing sector. This includes how to communicate complex social change models into simple explanations and how to better bring people along in this work, including more accessible language and mutually reinforcing effective messaging (as well as reducing the chances of mixed, confusing or conflicting messaging). The importance of a strategic and coordinated voice was particularly noted given the increasing global backlash against LGBTIQ+ rights, reproductive rights, and other gender equality initiatives.

A strong theme across the consultation was the **challenge of finding a shared language** that was accessible and fit for the many purposes, audiences and settings in which the workforce employs it. The need for language to be robust, flexible and meaningful suggests that instead of seeking a shared language, a 'shared thesaurus' would be better suited, providing guidance on principles and considerations to assist the workforce to select language that is both fit-for-context and meets good practice framing principles. This includes ensuring language is tailored, gender transformative and does not reinforce assumptions, binaries, stereotypes or exclusions about gender, sexuality, race, culture, faith, disability or other characteristics. See [Appendix 5](#) for consultation suggestions.

### 3. Strengthening and better communicating evidence, evaluation and examples of promising practice

The consultation identified tensions, gaps and challenges in evidence, evaluation and examples of promising practice.

Like many complex social change issues, it is **an ongoing process to test and understand what is and isn't effective when it comes to gendered violence prevention, in what circumstances and with whom**. This is further challenged by the complexities of evaluating the impact of discrete programs or initiatives in contributing to the reduction of societal issues, as well as a long-standing lack of investment in impact evaluation. While funders understandably want to fund evidence-based interventions, this evidence is still emerging. Participants noted an expectation from funders that impact should be measured in methods and timeframes that do not align with good practice evaluation or the long-term nature of social change work. A number of participants described feeling the pressure to share only achievements, instead of also sharing learnings about what is less effective as this might be interpreted as 'failure'.

There is also **uncertainty regarding what exactly should be measured** (linking to [point 2](#) above regarding uncertainty on what success looks like and how to measure it). The need for shared or collective impact evaluation frameworks and measures was noted by many participants, as well as significant appetite for more support to undertake effective impact evaluation. For instance, in programs working directly with men and boys, some participants noted the challenges in

measuring if attitudinal changes had occurred, and whether this had led to changes in behaviour in their spheres of influence. Other participants described the desire to better situate their work within the broader social context – for example, how do we know that this work has made a difference to the safety of women and LGBTIQ+ communities?

Participants identified the need to **better capture and value practice knowledge and community knowledge alongside formal research and evaluation**, particularly from under-served population groups such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people, and people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Participants noted the tendency to privilege certain forms of knowledge, practice and evidence-building over others, with the need to better recognise community-based and grassroots research and knowledge. Participants spoke about the need to better value the Indigenous evidence base in Australian and internationally, including learnings from the Pacific Islands which can hold more relevance and value for First Nations prevention practice than ‘mainstream’ practice in Australia. It was widely felt that often questions are asked for which community already has answers, but this information is not being valued or heard. This includes better working with communities to identify what measures of success might look like and to develop evaluation frameworks and practices that reflect this.

Many participants reported **difficulty in knowing where to go to access relevant, reliable evidence and evaluation to support their work, or, if they could locate this, struggled with translating formal research into practical application.**

Participants wanted more information on what may be more or less effective, including innovative ideas about how to work at a systems and broader social level rather than just individual attitudinal-level change. A **key priority was easier access and improved knowledge translation of existing and future research, evaluation and practice knowledge.**

Additionally, the lack of gender segregated data in the National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS) and need for a national perpetrator study were mentioned. There is also a need to **strengthen the intersectional approach in research and methodologies**, for instance ensuring major data sets and research meaningfully include priority population groups in surveys and demographics.

#### **4. Embedding intersectional and inclusive practice across all work**

The consultation strongly identified the **significant opportunity for improvement in both intersectional and inclusive practice** across work with men and boys, and in addressing masculinities (this includes noting the varying levels of

familiarity and understanding of intersectionality across the workforce and funders, which is often incorrectly understood as interchangeable with inclusivity). It was identified that work in this space operates from assumptions about ability, neurotypicality, cisnormativity, heteronormativity, culture, race and faith, which creates the real potential for people and communities to be excluded and further stigmatised, as well as increased risk for already marginalised population groups. By supporting the workforce to better understand the intersections of interrelated forms of oppression and privilege, primary prevention work is better able to address the structural and systemic inequities that drive disproportionate levels of violence against priority population groups.

There remain **significant research gaps** on masculinities and how they intersect with homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, and transmisogyny, as well as racism, ableism and colonialism (and the intersections of multiple forms of oppression, such as the disproportionate levels of violence experienced by trans women of colour). Future consultations, for instance, would benefit from including Sistagirls and other groups disproportionately marginalised and impacted by gendered violence. The extensive practice knowledge and expertise held by specialist and community-led organisations is often overlooked or discounted by 'formal' research processes and should be better captured to help address these research gaps.

The focus and assumptions underlying a lot of prevention work is still largely on intimate partner violence between people who are cisgender and heterosexual. The experiences of trans women and trans feminine people, and trans and gender diverse people more broadly, are not adequately reflected in family violence and masculinities frameworks and strategies, and in the practice-based work with men and boys. Participants identified the **need to better recognise how crucial the gender transformative work of LGBTIQ+ organisations is, and the opportunities for the sector to elevate and learn from this work**. This includes better funding to strengthen collaborative action to address shared drivers of gendered violence, building on the growing momentum and appetite across the primary prevention space for collaboration (for instance, joint advocacy towards structural and systemic change).

It was recognised that **intersectionality must be core to all work, rather than relegated to work that was tailored or community specific**. For instance, all 'mainstream' work with men and boys must engage with the impacts of colonisation, racism, cisnormativity, heteronormativity, ableism and class structures – to recognise how these intersecting forms of privilege and oppression shape constructions of masculinities, and the inequitable power relations that contribute to gender-based violence. While there is increasing recognition of intersectionality within key Commonwealth and state/territory strategies, this has not been accompanied by the investment required to deliver

on this. This is **both a key funding and workforce capability-building need**, given that organisations with expertise in intersectional practice and/or priority population groups are not adequately funded to provide the kind of capacity-building or support needed by 'mainstream' services and the broader sector. The Commonwealth and state/territories commitments must be accompanied by funding to meet the strong appetite for collaboration and capability-building that exists across the sector.

It was also noted that often the focus of who must change is centred on those with the least power in society. A strong theme across all discussions was that **focus cannot rest solely on expecting individual attitudinal and behavioural change without transforming the inequitable institutions, laws and systems that shape the lives of individuals and communities.**

## 5. Workforce and sector development

Consultation findings reflected the **broader workforce challenges experienced across the gendered violence primary prevention workforces**, including underfunding, job instability and high staff turnover due to insecure funding (exacerbated by cost-of-living pressures), as well as burnout and lack of workforce supports. This was particularly felt in jurisdictions where there is limited investment in a dedicated primary prevention of gender-based violence workforce or where this work is being delivered by the secondary or tertiary prevention workforce, including by community-controlled organisations, either as part of or in addition to their core work.

Given this, **planning for workforce and sector development needs to include the enabling factors of the resources, time and tools for organisations and practitioners to actively and meaningfully engage.** This means providing ongoing stakeholder engagement and feedback loops to ensure planning and implementation are effective, meaningful and have buy-in. It also means ensuring stakeholders have the time and resources to invest in practitioner and organisational development in a way that supports practitioner social and emotional wellbeing (as opposed to adding to staff stress, overload and burnout). This includes recognising that practitioner development requires time and support to undertake the deep reflective practice required to identify the internal assumptions and biases we all bring to our work.

Participants identified the importance of understanding – and mapping – **the diverse and varied nature of who comprises 'the workforce' working with men and boys and addressing masculinities across the country**, recognising that while there are shared knowledge, skills and values required for workforce competency and capability, there are also differences. While acknowledging the need to ensure work is safe, effective and reflects good practice, participants

cautioned against 'over-professionalising' the primary prevention space and pushing out people with lived experience, community experience, connection and expertise (for instance, through uniform requirements for qualifications or accreditation).

Rather than restricting who can do this work, many participants identified that the focus should be on **broadening the skilled workforce by enabling and supporting more people to do this work in a safe, effective, supported and connected way**. Workforce development must include consideration of pathways for skills development, particularly as a mechanism for **increasing the number of workers from priority population groups who bring with them invaluable lived experience and community expertise**. For instance, participants talked about the value of investing in building community prevention skillsets as a means of sustainably embedding primary prevention of gender-based violence in communities for the long-term.

There was strong support for **increasing opportunities for connection and collaboration within states/territories and nationally**. Participants greatly valued attending the consultation and wanted more opportunities to connect, hear about other projects, share learnings, undertake professional development, and identify opportunities for joint advocacy. This included targeted opportunities for settings-based workers who are often working in isolation in a workplace or for practitioners in areas where the primary prevention of gender-based violence workforce is not yet established and there are limited opportunities to connect with others.

Participants noted the resourcing required to enable increased collaboration, particularly for smaller organisations who often could not afford to engage in collaborative or networking opportunities (for instance, through prohibitive attendance costs or not being able to take time away from their day-to-day work). **A more enabling environment would be created if funding guidelines included collaboration, information sharing and knowledge dissemination as part of funding expectations, as well as the resource allocation to support this.**

Participants also identified the need to **ensure effective knowledge translation of the evidence base, including accessible tailored resources fit for different segments of the workforce**. A range of specific workforce development activities and resources were identified across the consultation. These have been included in the opportunities section as well as the appendices of this report to help inform future workforce and professional development scoping.

## 6. Effective infrastructure requires effective funding

**Adequate funding to support the prevention infrastructure and workforce underlies all other consultation findings set out in this report.** Participants noted that resourcing remains a considerable barrier to collaboration and connection, as well as to being able to test and evaluate their innovative approaches to better understand what works. The ability to experiment and pilot is also limited by tied funding, including the ability to test creative community-based solutions.

Participants identified that the **current short-term funding environment forces stakeholders to compete with one another**, rather than collaborate. The uneven nature of funding was noted, particularly for smaller organisations such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations, and LGBTIQ+, migrant and refugee, and disability specialist organisations who have limited capacity to collaborate and support intersectional and inclusive approaches without increased funding. This is particularly the case in community-led prevention work which is often reliant on a largely volunteer workforce. In order to work in a coordinated and collaborative way, an uplift in funding is required so that specialist organisations have the resources to engage at the same capacity as 'mainstream' organisations.

Consultation findings also identified that as the appetite for and investment in primary prevention of gender-based violence efforts increase across the country, **processes should be in place to ensure all funded work aligns with good practice principles** – that work is not being funded that may increase harm or be counter-effective to primary prevention of gender-based violence efforts. This was particularly noted for settings-based work where consultants are often engaged to lead prevention work with little or no primary prevention of gender-based violence expertise, and who are often working in isolation with little opportunity to connect with other primary prevention practitioners or networks. It also reinforces the earlier point that funders themselves need to have the information/guidance to be able to determine which potential tenders or funding proposals demonstrate good practice principles.

## 7. There is strong appetite and momentum across Australia to increase coordination and collaboration

The consultation found overwhelming support and excitement to continue fostering collaboration and coordination amongst those working with men and boys and addressing masculinities. This was shared by participants across all jurisdictions and across gendered violence primary prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and men's health and wellbeing.

When participants were asked to share one reflection at the end of the day, more than half (53%) were positive reflections about the sense of connection and camaraderie participants felt after coming together for the consultation, for instance: the shared priorities, breadth of expertise and opportunities to connect and share. The remaining reflections focused on how to approach the work, and its place in the broader primary prevention of gender-based violence landscape. Following the consultation, 64% of participants chose to share their contact details with other participants for the purposes of continuing their connections.

The following participant reflections demonstrate the widespread appetite for continuing collaboration and connection following on from the consultation.

*"I feel honoured and filled with hope to work alongside such incredible practitioners."*

*"Surprising/not surprising how much shared priorities/ ideas/challenges/hopes there are."*

*"Feeling very motivated and empowered by all the like-minded humans."*

*"There are wide spread of skills, knowledge and expertise within this complex system."*

*"Validating experiences, tensions, struggles. Energising + motivating. So many opportunities for collective work."*

*"The immense knowledge and expertise in the room to help guide and develop this work."*

*"There is a lot of common ground already between orgs (even if it doesn't feel like it)."*

*"Really positive to see so many from the sector with knowledge on the same page."*

*"One reflection: collaboration is key! So many amazing orgs out there doing good work, uniting as a single force will make our efforts stronger."*

## Opportunities and priorities for national prevention infrastructure

This section outlines the key opportunities and priorities identified during the consultation to support a strengthened national prevention infrastructure for workforces working with men and boys and addressing masculinities to prevent gender-based violence.

**‘Priority activities’** will help work through current tensions and challenges, creating a strong shared underpinning for ‘ongoing activities’.

**‘Ongoing activities’** will support more coordinated and mutually reinforcing approaches to working with men and boys, and addressing masculinities.

While activities may occur simultaneously, attention should be given to priority activities as their completion will inform and enhance ongoing activities. It should be noted that at the time of writing, work is already underway that will contribute to some ongoing activities (or aspects of them). While some initial consideration has been given to sequencing, the numbering of activities does not reflect their priority.

Potential actors are indicated for each activity: Our Watch, Commonwealth and state/territory governments and the ‘prevention sector’. In some cases, a lead actor is identified, in other cases where all actors can contribute, no lead actor is identified. For the purposes of this section, ‘prevention sector’ refers to the gendered violence primary, secondary or tertiary prevention sectors, with some activities also relevant to men’s health and wellbeing sector organisations.

While the consultation provides an initial starting point, further scoping is required to better understand and frame each potential activity. This includes stakeholder mapping already underway by Karina Hogan for Our Watch towards future consultations and engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. Initial participant suggestions are collated in the Appendices. Additionally, consultation participants expressed a strong appetite for future consultation and engagement with Our Watch’s project.



## Priority activities

### Resourcing infrastructure and people

**Activity 1**    **Resource all jurisdictions to put in place and sustain the infrastructure and people required to achieve and maintain a coordinated, mutually reinforcing and skilled primary prevention of gender-based violence sector and workforce.**

This includes:

1. Shifting away from short-term funding arrangements that have negative impacts on workforce retention; limit capacity and opportunity to connect, collaborate and learn from one another; and prevent scaling up of effective initiatives.
2. Increased funding for specialist organisations with expertise in intersectionality and/or priority population groups, both for undertaking primary prevention of gender-based violence as well as intersectional practice capacity-building for the workforce.

#### Lead actors

Commonwealth and state/territory governments

### Workforce funding and support

**Activity 2**    **Ensure adequate funding and support to accompany the growth and development of gendered violence prevention workforces in each jurisdiction.**

This includes support for organisations and workplaces to provide organisational care strategies for staff who are working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.

See the *Men in focus practice guide* as a starting point.

#### Lead actors

Commonwealth and state/territory governments

#### Support actor

Our Watch

## Work and workforce mapping

### **Activity 3 Undertake mapping to better understand current work being undertaken, the workforce, and workforce development needs of those working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.**

This includes:

1. Clearly articulating the breadth and scope of work with men and boys and addressing masculinities, including:
  - What types of initiatives are included, with whom, and for what purposes.
  - The intersections with broader gendered violence primary prevention efforts, and early intervention, response, recovery and men’s health and wellbeing work.
  - Alignment with national and state/territory plans and strategies
2. Detailed mapping work for each jurisdiction, including:
  - What work is being undertaken, with whom, by whom, and for what purposes (including how they would describe their aims and activities which may use different language to *Change the story*).
  - What level/s of the social ecology it is working at and which essential and supporting actions to prevent gender-based violence<sup>4</sup> it aligns with (or could align with given support).
  - Risks or potential risks regarding how work might reinforce the drivers of gendered violence or increase risk to women and LGBTIQ+ communities.
  - What existing or potential mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and quality assurance exist, including government and non-government activities.

This mapping will contribute to:

- a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of work across the socio-ecological model, including gaps and opportunities.
- identifying opportunities for coalition-building and connection, both nationally, at a state/territory level, and by setting or scope of work.
- identifying opportunities to strengthen connection/ communication between existing government mechanisms to enhance coordination.
- a foundation for further scoping of workforce and sector development needs.

See [Appendix 6](#) for examples of existing mapping tools and work.

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4 From *Change the story, Changing the landscape, Changing the picture* or *Pride in Prevention*.

## Actors

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

## Good practice principles

### **Activity 4 Collaborate to determine the core principles and parameters for ensuring safe, accountable and effective practice when working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.**

These are the non-negotiable principles that all work should align with in order to reduce the potential for harm or counter-effectiveness. This involves collaboration between Our Watch and workforces working with men and boys and addressing masculinities, and should utilise the *Men in focus* principles as a starting point for testing.

This activity includes identifying what kind of capacity and capability activities are required to embed these principles and parameters in organisations and work across the country.

This will also support the development of increased guidance and capacity to support funders to better determine criteria for funding good practice primary prevention of gendered violence initiatives to increase the appropriateness, accountability measures, responsiveness and effectiveness of program design, reporting and evaluation (for instance, funding guidelines or checklists).

See [Appendix 4](#) for suggestions raised during the consultation.

## Actors

- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

## Shared frameworks and approaches

**Activity 5** Utilise and expand on existing primary prevention of violence against women and gendered violence frameworks to articulate a shared understanding and approaches to working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.

This will support increased coordination and cohesion across primary prevention workforces through:

- Supporting those working with men and boys, and addressing masculinities, to better see themselves within the *National Plan, Change the story* and other Our Watch frameworks, and the national primary prevention of gender-based violence workforce.
- Supporting existing primary prevention of gender-based violence efforts to better integrate men and masculinities into their core work by increasing understanding of how men and masculinities are prominent across the drivers of violence and in the reinforcing factors/broader social context.
- Fostering a cohesive identity to support future collaboration, connection and mutual capacity-building.

This requires collaboration to work through tensions and challenges surrounding different approaches, theories of change and measure of success used across the workforce.

This work could also include exploration of a 'shared thesaurus' to provide guidance on using effective and appropriate terminology for different audiences. See [Appendix 5](#) for initial suggestions raised during the consultation.

### Actors

- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

## Build on the existing evidence base

**Activity 6** Further develop the evidence base and platform practice knowledge from under-researched areas, including how masculinities intersect with homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and transmisogyny, as well as ableism, colonialism and racism in ways that compound gender-based violence.

This should include a plan for knowledge translation/dissemination to support on the ground practice.

Gender segregated data for the National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS) and the need for a national perpetrator study should also be further explored, as should strengthening the intersectional approach in research and methodologies, for instance ensuring major data sets and research meaningfully include priority population groups in surveys and demographics.

### **Actors**

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

### **National coordination mechanism scoping**

**Activity 7 Further scoping for an appropriate national mechanism/s to support coalition-building, joint advocacy, communications and messaging development, and coordinated advice, guidance and workforce capacity-building.**

This includes:

- Support coalition-building by connecting different approaches and voices.
- Coordinate shared advocacy on key issues, including sector development and funding.
- Support coordinated, mutually reinforcing messaging within the sector and to government, current and potential stakeholders, participants and community.
- Provide real-time monitoring of the shifting political, social and economic context, including assessing, pre-empting and responding to backlash.
- Coordinate advice, guidance and workforce capacity-building.

Scoping would build on mapping identified in activity #3 to determine what the membership of this mechanism might entail.

This could include a hub and spoke model, with advisors across the states/territories.

### **Actors**

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

## Intersectional practice evidence, resources and activities

### **Activity 8** Resource work to increase intersectional practice through evidence-building and development of practice resources and capacity-building activities.

This includes:

1. Addressing the tendency for gendered violence work to focus only on intimate partner violence and expanding attention to include other forms of gender-based violence.
2. Reducing prevalent assumptions and privileging of norms of gender, sexuality, disability, culture, race and faith that exist across the work.
3. Increasing workforce capability in intersectional gender transformative practice.
4. Increasing opportunities to centre the voices of those disproportionately impacted by violence against women and gender-based violence.
5. Fostering collaboration and shared action between 'mainstream' organisations and those with specialist expertise in specific communities and priority population groups.

While this is an immediate priority to address current workforce development needs, maintaining and improving intersectional practice will continue as an ongoing activity.

#### **Actors**

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

## Increasing use of Our Watch tools and resources

### **Activity 9** Identifying opportunities to make *Change the story, Men in focus*, and other Our Watch resources more accessible, to different segments of the workforce, including via tailored practice resources and professional development for early intervention, response, recovery, and men's health and wellbeing sectors.

See [Appendix 8](#) for potential activities.

#### **Lead actor**

Our Watch

## Ongoing activities

### Policy, regulatory and legislative reforms

**Activity 10** Identify and enact policy, regulatory and legislative reforms that drive the systems-level change required to promote more positive and expansive forms of masculinity and gender relations, and to engage men and boys in preventing gender-based violence (and meet the objectives of the Second National Plan).

#### Lead actors

Commonwealth and state/territory governments

#### Support actors

- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

### Connection and collaboration across sectors

**Activity 11** Increase opportunities for connection, learning and collaboration between gendered violence primary prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and men's health and wellbeing sectors, including those working across the continuum.

For instance:

1. Collaborate to identify mutual learning opportunities, for instance:
  - What early intervention, response, recovery and men's health and wellbeing sectors can learn from best practice primary prevention to further embed whole-of approaches to addressing the gendered drivers of violence against women and LGBTIQ+ people across all levels of the social ecology.
  - What primary prevention can learn from response and men's health and wellbeing about engaging men to address their complicity in sexism and structures of gender inequality, tailoring messages to be invitational, and manage challenging conversations while maintaining accountability.
  - Sharing knowledge to better understand how to effectively work with men and boys as a broad population group, and strengthening approaches to working with men and boys from priority populations groups.
  - Opportunities for two-way learning between primary prevention practitioners and men's health and wellbeing practitioners, including reflective practice and skills exchange.

2. Opportunities for identification of joint advocacy issues to drive systemic reforms.
3. Development of principles for effective partnerships across the prevention continuum, and with the men's health and wellbeing sector.

These opportunities should be funded to better enable participation and engagement.

A list of activities suggested during the consultation is included in [Appendix 8](#).

### **Actors**

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

## **Workforce development needs mapping**

### **Activity 12 Undertake further scoping to identify workforce development needs for those working with men and boys and addressing masculinities in each jurisdiction, including the need to upskill the existing workforce and expand the workforce**

This will build on mapping work undertaken in activity #3. It may include:

1. Opportunities to upskill and support the existing workforce.
2. Opportunities to increase the workforce by providing development pathways to community and people with lived experience.
3. Opportunities to expand the workforce, including by drawing on those who are already re-imagining masculinities, including community, creatives in the arts, design and culture sectors, and young people.

A list of examples suggested during the consultation are included in [Appendix 8](#).

### **Actors**

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector



## **Knowledge translation and collaboration**

### **Activity 13 Identify mechanisms to bring together evidence and promising practice in accessible, practical ways for practitioners working with men and boys and addressing masculinities.**

This could include:

1. A practice hub, knowledge repository, activity database or shared learning platform.
2. Opportunities to come together to share good practice across the continuum of work, including innovative ways of working and knowledge translation of the evidence base (including practice-based knowledge).

See [Appendix 7](#) for initial consultation suggestions.

#### **Actors**

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

## **Evaluation funding and support**

### **Activity 14 Increased professional development, support and funding to better evaluate initiatives, including capacity-building for impact evaluation and collective impact evaluation.**

#### **Actors**

- Commonwealth and state/territory governments
- Our Watch
- Prevention sector

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: The project team

The project is led by Jasmine Duong, Project Lead and includes:

- Shane Tas, Principal Advisor, Masculinities
- Cameron McDonald, Sector Engagement Lead, as practice advisor
- Hamish Clark, Project Advisor
- Moshi Haque, Evaluation Lead

The project is managed by Karla McGrady, Portfolio Manager and the Executive Sponsor, Christine Gregory, Director Innovation at Our Watch.

## Appendix 2: Technical Advisory Group members

Name	Organisation	Jurisdiction
Amanda Keddie	Deakin University	VIC
Amelia Ditcham	Safe and Equal	VIC
Belinda O'Connor	Rainbow Health Australia	National
Craig Rigney	KWY Aboriginal Corporation	SA
Damian Green	Stopping Family Violence	WA
Ghaith Krayem	Muslim Women's Association	NSW
James Smith	Flinders University	NT
Katie Gomes	Women with Disabilities Victoria	VIC
Lizette Twisleton	No To Violence	National
Mack Kohn	R4RESPECT	QLD
Rachel Thomson/ Michael Hail	The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services	VIC
Shelley Hewson-Munro	RMIT University	VIC

## Appendix 3: Consultation participants

Organisation	Jurisdiction
ANROWS	National
Rainbow Health Australia	National
Muslim Women's Association	National
No To Violence	National
Our Watch	National
Movember	National
Tomorrow Man	National
White Ribbon Australia	National
ACON	NSW
ARC Gender Relations, Men and Family Centre	NSW
Consent Labs	NSW
The Man Cave	NSW, VIC
Top Blokes	NSW
Waminda	NSW
Consultant, Family Violence & Healthy Masculinities	NSW
Catholic Care NT	NT
Darwin Indigenous Men's Service	NT
IvolveGen	NT
Tangentyere Family Violence Program	NT
James Cook University – It's a Man's Issue	QLD
DFV Prevention Council	QLD
Queensland University of Technology	QLD
YFS - R4RESPECT	QLD
Engender Equality	TAS
Brotherhood of St Laurence	VIC
Carlton Respects	VIC
GenWest	VIC

Organisation	Jurisdiction
Melbourne Polytechnic	VIC
RED Consulting	VIC
Relationships Australia, Victoria	VIC
Respect Victoria	VIC
RMIT University	VIC
Safe and Equal	VIC
Sport and Recreation Victoria	VIC
The Men's Project, Jesuit Social Services	VIC
Women's Health in the North	VIC
Women with Disabilities Victoria	VIC
Zoe Belle Gender Collective	VIC
Curtin University	WA
MAN UP WA	WA
Men's Outreach Service Aboriginal Corporation	WA
Preventing Violence Together	WA
Stopping Family Violence	WA

## Appendix 4: Good practice principles and parameters

Consultation discussion identified the following principles and parameters for ensuring safe, effective practice. This is not a comprehensive list but rather reflects the kinds of principles stakeholders suggested as cross cutting all work:

- Accountability to those impacted by gender-based violence including women and LGBTIQ+ communities. Accountability includes meaningful consultation and investment in organisations working with priority population groups. It also includes exploring the concept of men's accountability for their use/norming and acceptance of violence, including accountability to their families and communities.
- A gender transformative approach that actively challenges socially dominant forms and patterns of masculinity at all levels of society and promotes alternatives based on safety, respect and equity.

- Valuing and learning from community knowledge alongside formal/academic knowledge.
- Valuing and learning from First Nations-led work and expertise.
- Including a diversity of men's voices to ensure appropriate and effective tailoring of work.
- Multi-pronged approaches that allow for contextualising for settings, culture and demographics.
- Linking individual level work up to structural/systemic work.

It should be noted that there was varying familiarity with the guiding principles in *Men in focus*, so increasing awareness of will be a good starting point. These are:

- Intersectional approaches
- Gender transformative approaches
- Maintaining accountability to women
- Strengths-based approaches
- Solutions across all levels of society

## Appendix 5: A shared language or thesaurus

Consultation participants identified the need for support and guidance on how to select language and messaging that was appropriate, effective and would engage with different target audiences. Suggestions included that language be:

- Gender transformative
- Tailored to its audience
- Strengths-based
- Trauma-informed
- Simple and accessible
- Culturally appropriate

## Appendix 6: Examples of existing mapping tools

Participants noted the following existing mapping tools and work that may be drawn on to support future mapping work.

- [Working with Men and Boys for Social Justice Assessment tool](http://www.crisconsortium.org/news/masculinities-assessment-tool)  
[www.crisconsortium.org/news/masculinities-assessment-tool](http://www.crisconsortium.org/news/masculinities-assessment-tool)
- Flood, M., Hewson-Munro, S., & Keddie, A. (2024). *A Critical Stocktake of Community-Based Healthy Masculinities Programs in Victoria, Australia*. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10608265241249941>

## Appendix 7: Increasing connection and collaboration

The following **activities to support increased connection and collaboration** (at both a state/territory and national level) were suggested during the consultation:

- Topics-based learning forums or training, e.g., gender and disability; LGBTIQ+ gender transformative work.
- Communities of Practice for particular areas of work or settings.
- More opportunities for consultations that bring together diverse stakeholders around collective impact, sharing, connecting and learning.
- Networks or reflective practice groups.
- Statewide consultations/ 'state of play' events – what everyone is doing and how we can come together.

The following suggestions were made for **existing work that may support sharing promising practice**:

- [ANROW's new Evidence Portal](https://www.anrows.org.au/research-program/evidence-portal/) <https://www.anrows.org.au/research-program/evidence-portal/>
- Forthcoming work funded under the *National Men's Health Strategy*

## Appendix 8: Workforce development activities

The following suggestions for **workforce development activities** were made during the consultation:

- Mentoring or coaching for new/emerging primary prevention of gender-based violence workers from more experienced workers.
- Pathways for trans and gender diverse communities into the workforce such as traineeships and identified roles for trans and gender diverse community. There should also be specific peer roles for men to work with other men who date or are attracted to trans women.
- Pathways for skilling up community and others who have been contributing to this work without formal training, to support a more skilled workforce.
- Expanding who is considered ‘the workforce’ working to re-imagine masculinities, including community, creatives in the arts, design and culture sectors, and young people.

The following topics were suggested for **specific resources, tools or training**:

- How to use positive framing and focus on transformation. Supporting practitioners with values-based and strength-based messaging rather than deficit model.
- How to talk about the role of structural and social changes on the lives of men, and how this impacts the development and performance of different masculinities.
- Examples of what gender transformative practice looks like – making it clear for practitioners what this spectrum of work could be (language, actions etc with intersectional lens embedded across)
- How to have conversations with men and boys that can engage with shame, guilt, privilege, as well as discomfort.
- Preparing and equipping practitioners for resistance – how to facilitate healthy helpful ‘debate’ as part of this work.
- Using *The Man Box* and other resources to frame conversations about men’s health and experiences around masculinities/harmful norms etc – keeping focus on gendered drivers.
- Guidance for men’s health and wellbeing programs on what good practice looks like in primary prevention of gender-based violence, and how/why they can embed this in their work.
- More resources on how to talk about sex and consent, as well as sexual violence prevention.
- How to better engage men in different settings (including men in leadership).

- Increasing understanding of how to work with parents, partners, families – not just individual men.
- Need to understand boys and men across the lifecycle, not just as young men – and as part of families, communities etc
- Translating the drivers, reinforcing factors and essential and supporting actions into different ‘languages’ and sectors – stories and examples that people can draw on (and connects them into *Change the story*). By connecting to their motivations and objective, this would help different segments of the workforce link their work to *Change the story* and recognise the alignment in desired outcomes.
- Bringing *Men in focus* to life – regular training and update opportunities, opportunities to share, learn, webinars, keep it live. Breaking the guide into smaller resources.
- A shared language guide or thesaurus (see [Appendix 5](#)).
- Guide on how to talk about gender equality/primary prevention of violence against women/gendered violence without making assumptions around sexuality and gender identity.
- More resources and practice guides on transphobia, transmisogyny, homophobia, biphobia, including how these manifest within gendered violence primary prevention work.
- Reflective practice guides that support workers of all genders to recognise the ways we all use violence or privilege, and how to improve.
- More work on preventing violence against LGBTIQ+ young people from their family of origin or carers.
- Guidelines/checklists to support workplaces or settings to engage appropriately skilled consultants/practitioners to lead settings-based work.