

Strong Foundations: Submission to the Next Stage of Victoria's Work to End Family Violence

Submission prepared by Women's Health in the South East, February 2024

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The five focus areas of [Strong foundations: Building on Victoria's work to end family violence](#)

I. Drive down family and sexual violence

A community-wide approach to primary prevention, with a particular focus on engaging men and boys and Aboriginal-led prevention, will be critical to ending family violence in Victoria. The following three priorities were developed in consultation with family violence sector stakeholders and across government as the top priorities to focus on over the next three years to drive down family and sexual violence:

- Build a community-wide approach to preventing family and sexual violence
- Support Aboriginal-led prevention
- Engage men and boys to change attitudes and behaviours that can lead to violence

The following questions focus on the **three priorities listed under the Drive down family and sexual violence focus area**. Your answers will help us confirm the actions needed to deliver on these priorities to the end of 2026.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian Government take to build a community-wide approach to preventing family and sexual violence?

SUMMARY

As a health promotion agency, Women's Health in the South East sees the benefits in primary prevention of gender-based violence. We know that intimate partner violence is a major contributor to disease burden in Australia among women aged 25-44 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2019).

We support the Strong Foundations paper's commitment to community-wide approaches, supporting Aboriginal-led prevention approaches, engaging men and boys, and embedding lived experience to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence.

Despite this we feel that there should be a much stronger focus on primary prevention in this paper, and in particular we recommend a fifth pillar, called Build Healthier Masculinities. While there has been some progress in recognising the importance of engaging men and boys in violence prevention, there is an urgent need to include a strategic approach to a healthier masculinities approach to end violence-supportive attitudes, the use of violence in intimate relationships, and bullying and sexual harassment. We need to see a strengthening of both policy foundations and associated implementation in Victoria which relate to four main areas:

- Policy change
 - Workforce capacity building
 - Community awareness raising
 - Future research.
1. INVEST in primary prevention programs that promote gender equity and respect within male dominated businesses and industries.
 2. INVEST in primary prevention initiatives which support empowerment of migrant and refugee women and their families, ensuring that they are connected to their communities, supported to transition to Australia and have knowledge about their rights and responsibilities with respect to healthy and respectful relationships.
 3. INVEST in training for all workplaces to ensure they understand their obligations to provide Domestic Violence/Family Violence Leave, within their leave entitlements.
 4. FUND parenting, social and emotional regulation, and healthy relationships, healthy masculinities programs that deliver culturally appropriate content with a focus on employing bicultural workers.
 5. ADVOCATE to the National government to commit to paying superannuation during periods of Parental Leave and Carer's Leave, as well as providing high-quality, free, universal childcare.
 6. FUND and scale up initiatives (E.g. similar to the shEqual program, and the *Put Her Name On It* initiative) to combat sexist and harmful advertising.

7. INTRODUCE a legislation that regulates harmful advertising (that objectifies women) and holds perpetrators accountable when breached (similar to the legislation introduced in the UK- Communications Act 2003).
8. INVEST in programs that address the role of pornography and social media in contributing to harmful sexual behaviours and reinforcing stereotyped attitudes among adults, children and young people.
9. FUND all Local Government Authorities to implement the Free from Violence Local Government Program to support them with implementing the Gender Equality Act, Fair Access Roadmap and Gender Impact Assessments.
10. INCREASE investment in short, medium and long-term affordable housing options to support women and children (including adolescents of all genders) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to family violence.
11. STRENGTHEN and fast-track the Family Violence Housing Taskforce that oversees development of an affordable housing framework.
12. ADHERE to the principles of the Family Violence Experts by the Experience Framework to ensure victim-survivors are engaged in co-production of a social and affordable housing system.
13. BUILD the capacity of primary and tertiary prevention workforce to recognize multi-perpetrator violence by continuing to invest/fund in training programs such as Lifeline's, Domestic Violence Training (DV-alert Training)
14. INVEST in multilingual family violence, mental health and trauma services, and family counselling that is culturally competent and safe.
15. Establish a state-wide standardised intake and assessment point for mental health services to facilitate access to mental health services (e.g. similar to DirectLine for alcohol and other drugs services and the Safe Steps Family Violence Crisis Line for family violence services)
16. IMPLEMENT a mental health services universal screening tool to screen all clients for family violence.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to support Aboriginal-led prevention?

1. INVEST in initiatives that promote the leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly women, in public life.
2. CONTINUED Investment in resourcing Aboriginal organisations (such as ACCOs and specialist family violence, child services) to engage their peoples to seek their own solutions.
3. MANDATORY consultations with local Aboriginal Gathering Places and their Elders before decisions are finalised concerning their peoples.
4. INVEST in a roll-out of training delivered by Aboriginal-led organisations to do truth-telling and build the capacity of mainstream organisations to be culturally safe for Aboriginal communities.
5. CONTINUE to ensure the roll-out of cultural competency training for early years services, schools and other education services so that all staff, educators, teachers, children and young people have a deep connection to our First Nations history and culture.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to engage men and boys to change attitudes and behaviours that can lead to violence?

1. INVEST and fund specific services that aim to promote healthy masculinities to young men (such as the current work being done by Jesuit Social Services: 'The Men's Project').
 - i. This also includes Healthy masculinities / gender equity training programs in place-based social settings (such as sports clubs, men's sheds etc)
2. DEVELOP a state-wide men's consultation committee that brings together men from a diverse range of backgrounds and lived experience and that regularly hands down recommendations in how to address unhealthy masculinity and its effects on community.
3. INTEGRATE people of all genders, and non-gender identified, in decision making spaces to challenge constructs of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.
4. FUND feminist interventions to engage boys and men in collectively dismantling hegemonic masculinity and developing healthy masculinities. This includes outdoor adventure therapy programs which have a strong evidence base. They can be used as a healing modality for mental wellbeing, and opportunity to break away from restrictive gender norms.
5. PROMOTE feminist informed Men's Health Week by funding projects and campaigns that specifically deliver activities.
6. DEVELOP a state-wide, highly trained, feminist 'healthy masculinities' workforce made up of mentors, that could promote gender equity through meaningful relationships with young men and boys. Settings could include schools, prisons, sporting organisations, gyms, sporting clubs, and public figures online.
7. INVEST in parenting programs for both parents but that emphasise the importance of fathers and male carers. These feminist informed programs should aim to equip parents to assess their attitudes and behaviours, and to model healthy and respectful relationships and be provided universally through Maternal Child Health services e.g. *Baby Makes 3 Program*
8. INCREASE and introduce incentives for men to do 'non-traditional masculine' university degrees and diplomas (such as, nursing, and teaching, and age care) and incentivise traditionally female dominated workplaces
9. INVEST in programs that address porn addiction prevention and the effects of porn addiction amongst young men and boys (such as Marie Crabb's "It's time we talked" program.)
10. INVEST in men's healing and recovery programs that encourage emotional regulation and healthy parenting (This includes the program *Tuning into Kids and Teens: Primary prevention through parenting* from the Victorian Jewish Community.)
11. CONDUCT a statewide *Man Box Survey* to support local government and education settings (such as, schools/universities) engagement with men and boys.
12. INCLUDE men with a lived experience (as both perpetrators and victim survivors) to design solutions.
13. INTRODUCE mandatory 'respect and equality' messaging at all major sports and music events.

14. INTRODUCE government parental leave for male parents/carers
 - i. By encouraging the employer to introduce parental leave for all employees, men are then encouraged to be more involved in family and take this leave.

II. Focus on children and young people

As victim survivors in their own right, children and young people need tailored responses when they experience family violence. These responses can be pivotal in breaking the cycle of violence and contribute to healing and recovery from childhood trauma.

The following four priorities were developed in consultation with family violence sector stakeholders and across government as the top priorities to focus on over the next three years to focus on children and young people:

- Engage children and young people to create generational change
- Provide support for children and young people where, when and how they need it
- Enable Aboriginal-led services for Aboriginal children and young people
- Support children and young people who use violence to heal and change their behaviour

The following questions focus on the **four priorities listed under the Focus on children and young people** focus area. Your answers will help us confirm the actions needed to deliver on these priorities to the end of 2026.

SUMMARY

If we are serious about driving down family and sexual violence, then we need to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma. This will not only prevent future perpetration and victimisation but also will have a significant impact on young people mental wellbeing and their ability to build respectful personal relationships and live happy, healthy lives.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian Government take to engage children and young people to create generational change?

1. INVEST in a community-based roll out of Respectful Relationships with schools as partners. This reduces the burden on schools who are suffering from staff shortages and whose core business is numeracy and literacy. Communicate to schools the importance of the Community Partnerships component of the Whole of School approach to RR and adequately fund those community partners to implement gender equity and respectful relationships initiatives to young people and their families.
2. CONTINUE on-going funding for the Respectful Relationships (RR) Education program, ensuring that teachers are able to apply a transformative gender lens to curriculum but also are modelling respectful relationships in their own behaviour.

3. FUND a Victorian-wide Critical Friends Network so community health, council and other community-based organisations can roll out community-based RR and connect with their local schools.
4. FUND Respectful Relationships education and anti-bias programs for early years, coordinated with peak bodies such as, Early Learning Association Australia and Early Childhood Australia.
5. FURTHER INVEST in prevention activities that use generational trauma-informed principles and practices (For example, SECL Youth Links projects delivered by WHISE.)
6. INTEGRATE place-based approaches in all programs and services that can respond to community needs to ensure all children are supported.
7. EMPOWER schools and early learning services to engage with the community (and vice versa) by integrating 'community meetups' in school curriculums.
8. INVEST in a paid employment program for young people (15yrs and up) to be part of a lived experience workforce. This is to ensure that their voices are integrated in the industry, but also promote and aid independent living for at risk young people.
9. REGULATE internet and online platforms to ensure the protection of children and young people from the harms of sexual exploitation, violent pornography and other harmful content, with serious penalties for failures to comply (this includes revisiting the age verification for pornography sites bill).

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to provide support for children and young people where, when and how they need it?

1. BUILD a resource library of evidence-based youth interventions that councils and non-profits can access.
2. STREAMLINE referral pathways from specialist sexual assault to family violence services, to ensure all children are receiving holistic care.
3. INVEST in and subsidise trauma services that help all children, young people and families heal and recover from trauma.
4. INTRODUCE a targeted primary prevention initiative to support children impacted by family or sexual violence to access additional support through their schooling years.
 - i. Ensure provision of additional human resources to provide support to children and young people for when they need support around family violence and trauma.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to enable Aboriginal-led services for Aboriginal children and young people?

1. CONTINUE to fund Aboriginal-led organisations to provide services for Aboriginal children and young people as well as funding to provide training to mainstream organisations to build their capacity to provide culturally appropriate services.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to support children and young people who use violence to heal and change their behaviour?

1. FUND DoH, DFFH and DET) to fund community services (e.g. Community Health and multi-cultural community organisations such as South East Community Links (SECL)) to deliver primary prevention of gender-based violence programs.
 - i. This includes developing opportunities to consult with children and young people directly about how they think general change could happen.
2. INTEGRATE trauma-informed models in all behaviour changing programs (e.g. emotional regulation frameworks) to ensure blame and shame is removed and the root problem is addressed.
3. PROVIDE capacity building on trauma-informed practices for all child protection, out-of-home-care workers, health professionals, NDIS support workers and more.
4. STRENGTHEN data collection and evaluation of existing programs which measure the prevalence of children who use violence.
5. EXPAND FUNDING to resource the workforce to provide parenting programs with a flexible and 'after hours' services – to engage parents, especially fathers/male carers, when it suits them.
6. FUND early interventions for young boys who have experienced family violence to build healthy relationships. This includes focusing on how men can step into role models for positive healthy respectful relationships.
7. ESTABLISH specialised therapeutic services for children/young people who use violence through the public healthcare system providing a coordinated and holistic response. This will keep the children and young people connected with multidisciplinary support over their lifetime and prevent further violence.
8. ENSURE all new and existing programs that aim to support children who use violence are informed by expertise and learnings from specialist sexual assault and family violence services.

III. Strengthen support for victim survivors.

A continued focus will ensure services are more responsive to victim survivors' needs, there are more access points for victim survivors to seek assistance, and more streamlined information sharing between services continues to hold perpetrators to account and keep victim survivors safe.

The following four priorities were developed in consultation with family violence sector stakeholders and across government as the top priorities to focus on over the next three years to strengthen support for victim survivors:

- Provide all Victorians who experience family or sexual violence with the support they need when they need it.
- Continue to shift the focus onto people who use violence.

- Support Aboriginal-led responses for Aboriginal victim survivors and people who use violence.
- Increase the number of skilled and diverse workers to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence.

The following questions focus on the **four priorities listed under the Strengthen support for victim survivors** focus area. Your answers will help us confirm the actions needed to deliver on these priorities to the end of 2026.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian Government take to provide all Victorians who experience family or sexual violence with the support they need when they need it?

SUMMARY

We support the Victorian Government's "Building from strength: 10-year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response". The industry plan and subsequent action plans need to ensure that they are informed by the voices of people with lived experience across the various socio-economic, ethnic, gender and cultural backgrounds.

1. MAP the victim survivor journey to ensure that the changes that have been made have improved the safety and the experience of victim/survivors in their dealings with The Orange Door and other services.
2. SUSTAIN boosted funding for Women's Health Services (WHS) who specialise in the primary prevention of violence, which includes work to help victims recognise that they are or have been experiencing family or sexual violence and builds confidence in community to report and seek help.
3. ENSURE that primary prevention is funded to implement at all stages of the early intervention, response and recovery spectrum to give context to both victim/survivors and perpetrators of violence.
4. INVEST in building a trauma-informed service system that meets the protective and recovery needs of children and young people by Domestic and Family Violence and other forms of child abuse and acknowledges the high degree of adverse childhood experience on children and young people's short- and long-term mental wellbeing.
5. INTRODUCE guidelines that focus on terminology and language to ensure consistency throughout Victoria. Current inconsistencies in terminology include sexual violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, consent, domestic violence, family violence.
6. INTEGRATE community voices in the decision-making processes that involve children who experience violence. This includes place-based care approaches for children in out-of-home care. This ensures children are still connected to their community (if it is safe).
7. CONTINUED investment into the promotion and expansion of the Orange Door locations including in rural and remote areas, and extend hours of operation to include weekends and mid-week after hours (FV doesn't just happen between 9 to 5/Monday to Friday).
8. ISSUE and promote plain language resources on family violence legislation. This is to minimise misinformation, increase clarity and understanding of the forms of family violence that are illegal, e.g. when an intervention order has been breached.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to continue to shift the focus onto people who use violence?

1. FUND data collection on domestic, family, and sexual violence should include deliberate attention to perpetration – to the prevalence and character of violence perpetration, including its gendered and intersectional dynamics (Flood, M., Brown, C., Dembele, L., and Mills, K. (2022)
2. INTRODUCE media code guidelines who report on family violence and sexual violence. For example, media outlets who use victim blaming language which take away accountability from the perpetrator. Penalise media outlets who breach this code.
3. INVEST in parenting programs and projects that are specifically tailored to men that focus on emotional regulation and connection.
4. INTRODUCE a gender lens over all psychology, psychotherapy, counselling, mental health, psychiatry certificates, diplomas, and degrees.
5. MANDATE psychologists and psychiatrist to undergo a gender lens model as part of their yearly registration modules.
6. INCREASE INVESTMENT for university training for teachers and educators in RR.
 - i. This is to ensure that there is content related to gender equality within teaching university units to empower future teachers.
7. INTRODUCE MANDATED TAFE, VET and University courses related to unpacking the drivers of violence in ways that are engaging and positive and plans for resistance and backlash. Ensure that these mandatory units are designed with the input of lived experience of people of all genders.
8. INTRODUCE requirements for private institutes certificate courses in the community services sector to do Gender Equality and Family Violence units.
9. DEVELOP a formal process that gives legislative authority for agencies across the family violence sector to be included in the assessment of risk and parenting capacity of fathers (or mothers) who are perpetrators of family violence to inform ongoing contact and parenting arrangements.
10. CONTINUE INVESTMENT in programs that work with women who have experienced family violence. This is to help reduce internal gaslighting and self-blame and aim to move the individual's focus on to the person who has used the violence.
11. DEVELOP a formal process that gives legislative authority for agencies across the family violence sector to be included in the assessment of risk and parenting capacity of fathers (or mothers) who are perpetrators of family violence to inform ongoing contact and parenting arrangements.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to support Aboriginal-led responses for Aboriginal victim survivors and people who use violence?

1. CONTINUE to fund healing and recovery centres focused on culturally appropriate and safe provision of services to people who have used violence. Ensure that they have a transformative gender lens applied to their programs where participants can unpack their

underlying assumptions, attitudes and behaviours that may have contributed to the use of violence.

2. INVEST in research that shows how colonisation impacts men and masculinity in Aboriginal victim/survivors and people who use violence to contextualise some of the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that have contributed to both.

IV. Respond to change.

To change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence and address new ways that family violence is being perpetrated we must effectively respond to change. This includes responding to the rapid cultural, social and technological shifts and build resilience into the way Victoria prevents and responds to family violence.

The following four priorities were developed in consultation with family violence sector stakeholders and across government as the top priorities to focus on over the next three years to respond to change:

- Respond to cultural, social and technological shifts that impact family and sexual violence
- Respond to new forms of family and sexual violence
- Embrace technology in how we prevent and respond to family violence
- Reduce and respond to the risk of family violence during times of crisis

The following questions focus on the **four priorities listed under the Respond to change** focus area. Your answers will help us confirm the actions needed to deliver on these priorities to the end of 2026.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian Government take to respond to cultural, social, and technological shifts that impact family and sexual violence? Optional

SUMMARY

New forms of family and sexual violence are driven by the same factors as any other family and sexual violence. The government needs to be very aware that the drivers of family violence and sexual violence are gender inequality, rigid gender roles and stereotypes, and sexual objectification of women; the contributors are mental illness, unstable housing, financial insecurity, addictions, past trauma, sexual objectification of women and young girls. It is not the direct form of violence that needs to be addressed as much as the underlying cause. For instance, technology-facilitated abuse is not perpetrated by technology, it is perpetrated by the abuser. Technology can become a tool for people using violence to continue their abuse. The belief systems, attitudes, cultural behaviours in society are what needs to be addressed to combat family and sexual violence.

1. INVEST in specialised services for multicultural communities (and in-language), especially migrant and refugee communities that have been displaced by war. History of trauma is a well-known risk factor for using violence.
2. ADVOCATE to the Federal Government to amend legislation that prevents overseas qualifications from being recognised in Australia. Psychotherapists and psychiatrists who have their degrees from overseas should work here in Australia so they can service our multicultural communities.
3. DEVELOP an e-Safety taskforce whose sole purpose is to attend to deepfake/AI pornography.
4. ISSUE research into the health consequences of online-pornography, particularly on children and young people.
5. FUND primary prevention initiatives that focus on achieving system change and cultural shifts.
6. ENSURE that Respect Victoria and The Office for Women have a seat at the table when designing legislation, policies and programs that impact families. (e.g. Liquor Laws, Cyber Security, Road Safety, Gaming and Gambling.)
7. CONTINUE to invest in initiatives to pro-actively prevent tech facilitated abuse in partnership with the private sector.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to respond to new forms of family and sexual violence?

1. FUND state-wide research to examine how technology is currently being used to perpetrate family violence.
 - i. This would need to incorporate experts from the field of technology, law and individuals with lived experience.
 - ii. Ensure the right departments (Law enforcement) have adequate resources and powers to follow up and stop technology being used to perpetrate family violence
2. FUND regular training for the community service sector and law enforcement so we are all aware of the new forms of family violence.
3. INTRODUCE laws to increase the accountability of social media platforms promoting harmful messaging, sexually explicit material, and who fail to address technology-facilitated abuse.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to embrace technology in how we prevent and respond to family violence?

1. FUND an independent grass-roots campaign involving training in healthy masculinities for young male influencers to then produce healthy masculinities content which genuinely engages other young men and boys in building positive visions of what it means to be a man.

2. INVEST in forming online hubs managed by expert youth workers, trained in gender equity and prevention of gender-based violence, to bring together stakeholders for collaborative action. This could be particularly useful in engaging men and boys.
3. ENGAGE with young people through a consultation to design positive key messaging of respect and equality. The purpose would be to create targeted campaigns for young people. This can be done by linking schools and their media units.
4. ESTABLISH a taskforce to explore the use of technology in preventing and responding to family violence.
 - i. This task force could be made up of experts in technology, law enforcement, and victim services.
 - ii. This taskforce would also hand down recommendations for how technology can be used to prevent and respond to family violence.
5. PROMOTE digital literacy among victims and survivors of family violence via online training.
6. DEVELOP an online forum platform for survivors/victims of family and sexual violence to connect through a shared community. Councillors can also offer support, referrals, and guidance on this platform.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to reduce and respond to the risk of family violence during times of crisis?

1. DEVELOP, in partnership with researchers and family violence agencies, an evidence-based, intersectional approach to address the increased risk of violence against women by their male partners during and after disaster. This includes including how these risks vary and may be further magnified for women who are part of other marginalised groups (such as women on temporary ADVOCATE to the Federal government for ongoing funding for Gender and Disaster Australia to conduct free training and ongoing research.
 - i. This will build the capacity of emergency management professionals particularly in council and community settings to be prepared and have gender responsive approaches to disaster planning and recovery.
2. DEVELOP disaster planning and recovery taskforce which includes programs and services.
 - i. This is alongside messages to the community regarding the preparation of property for climate emergencies.
 - ii. Cardinia Shire Council is developing a resource and messaging that calls for the community to also prepare their relationships for climate emergencies. The Victorian Government could promote 'Prepare your Relationship' alongside current promotions.
3. FUND primary prevention organisations that issue resources, campaigns, and programs that focus on family and sexual violence during disasters.

4. IMPROVE collaborations between human welfare and animal welfare agencies.
5. ENSURE information about family and sexual violence is publicly available, easily accessible, and seen as priority advertisement. This includes family violence, sexual violence, child abuse agencies, and animal welfare services.
6. INCREASE funding for specialised family violence staff recruitment in preparation for crises to ensure services are not over stretched and can keep up with the demand.
7. EXPAND community partnerships to ensure referrals are streamlined.
8. DEVELOP self-care kits and resources for practitioners to minimise burnout and vicarious trauma. This will help to prevent staff turn-over.

V. Understand and demonstrate our impact.

We must be able to better measure the impact of our work in the lives of Victorians to help focus efforts where there is the greatest need or impact, better inform investment decisions and strengthen funding models.

The following two priorities were developed in consultation with family violence sector stakeholders and across government as the top priorities to focus on over the next three years to understand and demonstrate our impact:

- Strengthen how we measure impact
- Increase opportunities for Victorians to help us improve the system

The following questions focus on the **two priorities listed under the Understand and demonstrate our impact** focus area. Your answers will help us confirm the actions needed to deliver on these priorities to the end of 2026.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian Government take to strengthen how we measure impact?

SUMMARY

One of the most important elements of any implementation of long-term systems change is collecting evidence of what has happened and what impact the initiatives have had. To do this it's important to ensure that stakeholders know in advance what's expected of them and what data they need to collect, and most importantly, that they're held accountable for collecting that data. This is the only way we're going to collectively show what's working and what isn't working to prevent family and sexual violence.

1. ENSURE this strategy and future rolling action plans include both quantitative and qualitative measures that move beyond pre/post time points.
 - i. Measure collective impact as well because it may be that a collection of strategies or programs may have been implemented.

- ii. Ensure that all interventions, implemented by state government departments are accompanied by an evaluation framework and fidelity measures (especially for programs such as DET's Respectful Relationships in schools).
2. ASSESS the collective impact of primary prevention strategies over time.
 - i. This is to ensure primary prevention is seen and treated as an investment for future change.
3. INCLUDE qualitative measurements of impact from practitioners, partners, and stakeholders from different target groups.

What steps would you recommend the Victorian government take to increase opportunities for Victorians to help us improve the system?

1. IMPLEMENT a strengths-based approach to primary prevention.
 - i. Provide people with good news stories and the positive changes/improvements (e.g. the Gender Equality ACT, Fair Access Policy, Women in Sport etc.)
 - ii. Provide Victorians with simple and practical solutions on how they can play their part and join the movement.
2. USE plain language within campaigns and its resources so that more Victorians understand what the problem is, and how to create solutions.\

VI. OUR OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES.

As we continue to work toward achieving a future where all Victorians are safe, thriving and living free from family and sexual violence and abuse, we remain committed to being inclusive, equitable and accessible in the way we prevent and respond to family violence.

Aboriginal Self-Determination: What other steps can the Victorian Government take to support Aboriginal self-determination in the next stage of Victoria's work to end family violence?

1. CONTINUE towards a treaty with First Nations people in Victoria and show leadership in reconciliation.

Lived Experience: How do you think people who have experienced family violence can be involved in developing policy, services and activities in the next stage of Victoria's work to end family violence?

1. INTEGRATE voices from those with lived experience in the development of policies and programs by forming an advisory council. This council must be a paid position and offer additional up-skilling professional development.
2. CO-FUND employment pathways in community services for people with lived experience to enter the workforce through specific long-term 'lived experience positions' that work with priority populations.

3. SUBSIDISE support by building capabilities of those with lived experience through fully paid university and TAFE certificates/qualifications.
 - i. This includes subsidised external supervision and counselling support.

Intersectionality: What steps can the Victorian Government take to ensure the next stage of Victoria's work to end family violence addresses the diverse needs of different communities and peoples in our community?

1. CONTINUE TO EMBED a collaborative approach in standard practices with
 - i. Aboriginal-led organisations and community,
 - ii. multicultural organisations and community
 - iii. seniors and older Victorians,
 - iv. people with disabilities and disability services and
 - v. LGBTQI+ services.
1. FUND specialist organisations to ensure self-determination (this includes, CALD, LGBTQI+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and disability services)
2. ESTABLISH a think tank group that examines intersectionality theory and its application. For example, how is intersectionality applied in practice without being labelled and tokenised as 'intersectional'?
3. ADAPT policies and programs through the learnings and reviews of project evaluations and reporting under the Gender Equality Act (2020). This will provide practical examples of what intersectionality looks like in practice.
4. EMBED a consistent approach to intersectional practice in workforce reform across the continuum from prevention to response.
5. PROMOTE and raise awareness of intersectional practice by empathising that this framework is not a new concept. Consider what this has looked like historically, prior to this practice being labelled as intersectional.
6. ADMINISTER a whole of government, cross department approach by using points of leverage to create sustainable change. (i.e. gender budget audit within Treasury, or ensure that the Department of Sport and Recreation has a focus on women in sports. This is to demonstrate an intersectional practice, by integrating a whole of government with a public health approach.

VII. OTHER REFLECTIONS.

What has been the most impactful change the Victorian Government has made to date in the way it prevents and responds to family violence?

1. THE VICTORIAN ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE and committing to significant reform and action on the 227 recommendations.
2. THE GENDER EQUALITY ACT (2020) has influenced the increase in gender equity practice across workplaces, with regulations on reporting progress and actions.

3. Establishment of RESPECT VICTORIA who are taking a leadership role in coordinating evidence-based primary prevention activities across Victoria.
4. Development and commitment to gender equality strategies and frameworks, such as SAFE AND STRONG: A Victorian Gender equality Strategy which uses various levers including purchasing power, ability to put a gender lens over budgets and much more. We applaud the State Government for putting targets on this piece of work and hope that this will have a significant positive impact on women's equality over time.
5. Design, Development and Implementation of the RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS in Education across all Victorian Schools.

Thinking about the way the Victorian Government is currently working to prevent and respond to family violence, is there anything it should be doing less of?

1. LESS short-term funding for primary prevention programs.
 - i. This includes short term funding of staff, as this results in large staff turn-overs for successful programs (such as Respectful Relationships Education)
 - ii. Not only this creates a loss of knowledge and expertise, but also a constant re-establishment of relationships between schools, the department and community partners.
 - iii. Short term funding of programs means that it's impossible to plan for the long-term and particularly in prevention this is very damaging.
2. FLIP the way grant funding is allocated.
 - i. Fund organisations, communities, municipalities and regions who are doing excellent work and fund them for long-term projects (3-5 years).
 - ii. Do not pit organisations, communities, local governments and regions against each other by making them compete over the same bucket of money.
3. LESS siloing of State Government Departments.
 - i. Any primary prevention is rooted in the socio-ecological model and informed by the social determinants of health which are complexly interdependent and often can't be separated from each other when addressing inequality in individuals or whole communities, let alone on a population level. Therefore, it's important that all departments collaborate and coordinate to amplify their impact.

Is there anything else you think the Victorian government needs to do for all Victorians to access the support they need and be safe, thriving and live free from family violence?

1. SUSTAIN and deliver long term primary prevention funding – that reflects and aligns with the life cycle of National and State Frameworks.
2. As mentioned at the beginning of the submission we think a much stronger focus on primary prevention is needed,
3. We recommend a fifth pillar, called BUILD HEALTHY MASCULINITIES to implement a strategic approach to end violence-supportive attitudes, the use of violence in intimate relationships, and bullying and sexual harassment.

4. ESTABLISH an effective government structure that works across portfolios and jurisdictions (especially between Education, Health and Families, Fairness and Housing.)
5. INTEGRATE learnings from evaluation of previous primary prevention strategies, frameworks and actions in policy and program development. For example, what are the consistent themes or approaches that support sustainable shifts?
 - i. Leverage on the expertise in the community health and women's health sectors to evaluate primary prevention programs, including Respectful Relationships.
6. INTEGRATE learnings from the specialist workforce from prevention to response in government policy and program development.
 - i. The NCAS survey is not enough – Councils, as part of their Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plans, could measure attitudes and behaviours on mental health, family violence, gender equality. These findings can help inform policies and services provided by councils.
7. DEVELOP a review process with a timeline to update State Government policies which have demonstrated contributions to family and sexual violence (i.e. Alcohol, Gambling etc...)
8. INTRODUCE mandatory survey questions into the assessments of MPHWP that align with the NCAS survey.
 - i. This will allow LGA level data on attitudes and behaviours and support place-based initiatives.