

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT STRATEGY

Preventing Violence Against Women
in Melbourne's East 2017-2021



TOGETHER FOR
EQUALITY & RESPECT



An electronic version of this publication can be found on the Women's Health East website.

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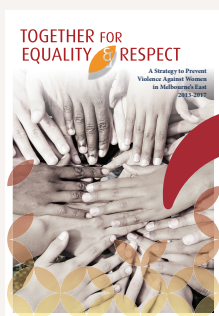


Together For Equality & Respect Partnership

The Together For Equality & Respect (TFER) Partnership is a collaborative, cross sector partnership of organisations working together to prevent violence against women in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The TFER Partnership has taken a Collective Impact approach to the primary prevention of violence against women since its inception in 2013.

Together For Equality & Respect Strategy 2017 - 2021

Together For Equality & Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2017-2021 is the second four-year strategy developed by the TFER Partnership. It outlines the case for action, the current evidence on how to prevent violence against women and provides a framework for action in the EMR.



BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

Since 2012 the TFER Partnership and Strategy have strengthened the Region's ability to prevent violence against women, by supporting a shared vision and aligned mutually reinforcing initiatives over time. TFER provides a mechanism to coordinate and integrate primary prevention activities in order to maximise efforts, and minimise duplication.

Although TFER partners have worked together over the last four years to drive and evaluate prevention of violence against women activities, there is a clear need for sustained action. Violence against women remains unacceptably prevalent in our community and has alarming health and wellbeing impacts on women, children and communities. For these reasons, the prevention of violence against women remains a shared regional priority.

The TFER Strategy and accompanying action plan 2013 – 2017 was rigorously evaluated. The evaluation has informed the development of this next Strategy. The full TFER Evaluation 2013 – 2017 will be available on the TFER website from January 2018. See whe.org.au/tfer. The evaluation has ethics approval from Deakin University in anticipation of sharing the findings through peer reviewed journals, conferences and other means in order to contribute to the evidence base for prevention of violence against women.

Implementation of the TFER Strategy 2017-2021 will build on the achievements of the previous Strategy, driving the prevention of violence against women across the EMR into the future.

Violence against women is serious and prevalent

Men's violence against women is widely recognised as a global problem and one of the most widespread violations of human rights.¹ In Australia, three in ten women over 15 years have experienced physical assault, one in five has experienced sexual assault at least once in their lives, and one in four women has experienced violence from an intimate partner.² At least one woman a week is killed in Australia by a partner or former partner.³ Violence between intimate partners is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health for Victorian women aged 18–44⁴ and is the single largest driver of homelessness for women.⁵

Research indicates the profound and long-term toll that violence takes on the health and wellbeing of women, families, communities and on society,⁶ as well as the \$21.7 billion cost to the Australian economy each year.⁷

In the EMR the reported incidence of family violence increased from 5,818 in 2011/12 to 8,628 in 2015/16,⁸ equating to almost 24 incidents each day. These increases in reported family violence incidents may be as a result of a range of factors including increased community awareness and education campaigns that encourage reporting, as well as changes in police practice and reporting, all of which have been occurring in Victoria over the last four years.

Violence against women is preventable

While violence against women is prevalent and serious, the evidence tells us that it *is* preventable.⁹ To end violence against women we need long term, coordinated efforts to address the drivers of violence across all levels of our society. We need to reach everyone in our community in the places in which they work, learn, live and play. Entering into our second four-year plan, the TFER partnership is truly moving toward sustained, coordinated action in Melbourne's East.

Preventing violence against women together

The TFER Partnership (the Partnership) provides a mechanism to coordinate and integrate activities across the EMR, to maximise prevention efforts and to promote mutually reinforcing actions aimed at preventing violence against women before it occurs (also known as primary prevention). The TFER Strategy 2017-2021 (the Strategy) delivers an evidence-informed framework for action. While violence occurs in other contexts (e.g. within same-sex relationships or where men are victims), the purpose of the Strategy is to address the significant and widespread issue of men's violence against women.

The Strategy builds on collective efforts to prevent violence against women across the EMR over previous years. It aligns with the significant focus on prevention of violence against women from government at national and state levels, guiding prevention activities at the local and regional level.

As evidenced by the ongoing regional commitment to the TFER Partnership³ and the investment and policy development by state and national governments, the momentum to prevent violence against women is ever increasing.

Drawing on international and local evidence, the Strategy recognises that effective responses to end violence against women need to address the underlying determinants of why violence occurs in the first place. Change the Story: A shared framework for prevention of violence against women and their children highlights gender inequality as the underlying cause and necessary condition for violence against women

to occur. This framework identifies gender inequality as the key driver of violence against women, describing it as “the core of the problem” and addressing gender inequality as “the heart of the solution”.¹⁰ Together For Equality & Respect prevents violence against women by redressing gender inequality and promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women across the cultures, structures and norms in society.

Based on local consultation and informed by a strong and growing evidence base, the Together For Equality & Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne’s East 2017-2021 presents a framework for action for the Eastern Metropolitan Region. Led by Women’s Health East, this Strategy facilitates sustained, ongoing action to prevent violence against women, through a mature and collaborative partnership.

Intersectionality

Together For Equality & Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence in Melbourne’s East 2017 – 2021 has a strengthened focus on intersectionality. An intersectional approach to the primary prevention of violence recognises that women’s experiences of inequality are shaped by the intersection of gender with other social conditions such as class, Indigeneity, race or ethnicity, ability, sexuality, gender identity, religion and age. Discrimination based on these factors compound and interact with gender inequality to create overlapping power imbalances, which may also increase women’s risk of experiencing violence.¹¹ Addressing gender inequality is central to any action to prevent violence against women. Intersectional practice to prevent violence against women includes working more closely with communities to understand women’s lived experiences of gender inequality, tailoring action to ensure relevance and reach to all in our community and building a focus on addressing other forms of discrimination into our gender equality action¹².

Terminology

In this Strategy we have predominantly used the term ‘violence against women’ as it encapsulates all commonly used terms for forms of violence perpetrated against women including ‘family violence’, ‘domestic violence’, ‘sexual assault’ or ‘intimate partner violence’.

What next? Together we will...

The TFER Action Plan 2017-2021 will be co-designed with TFER partners. It will include a range of existing and new initiatives that align with the four Strategic directions.

Reflecting a stronger intersectional approach, the Action Plan will aim to expand relevance and reach across all levels of the community and into new settings and population groups. It will promote partnerships across sectors and ensure the coordination of regional action to prevent violence against women. More specifically, it will outline areas for action, objectives, population groups and settings, Partners’ responsibilities, and evaluation indicators and measures.

With combined effort through mutually reinforcing activities, genuine progress towards ending violence against women in the EMR will be achieved.



For further discussion regarding the terminology used in this Strategy see **Appendix 1**

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT FRAMEWORK

Vision

A society where women live free from men’s violence – where every girl and boy grows up to be equally valued, heard and respected, and with equal access to opportunities.

Purpose

Together for Equality & Respect provides a platform for organisations in the Eastern Metropolitan Region to prioritise and work together on the primary prevention of men’s violence against women. It provides sustained opportunities to build intersectional practice, collaborate, share skills, knowledge and resources, avoid duplication and strengthen the capacity of the EMR to enable gender equality and equal and respectful relationships between men and women.

Strategic Directions

Support and enable integration and coordination in order to:

LEAD & ACHIEVE CHANGE	ADOPT AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVIDENCE BASE	BUILD ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE	STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS
Organisations will lead initiatives that work with the community to enable gender equality & equal and respectful relationships.	Organisations will adopt evidence-informed primary prevention action and evaluation to prevent men’s violence against women, and contribute to the evidence base.	Organisations will invest in building their capacity and that of their workforce to address men’s violence against women.	Organisations will work in partnership to prevent men’s violence against women and to reinforce prevention initiatives.

TFER Action Plan and Evaluation Framework

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT PARTNERSHIP

The Together For Equality & Respect (TFER) Partnership is a collaborative, cross sector partnership of organisations working together to prevent violence against women in Melbourne’s Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The TFER Partnership has taken a Collective Impact approach to the primary prevention of violence against women since its inception in 2013.

The TFER Partnership has expanded over the last four years and new partners are welcome and encouraged. A list of partners 2013-17 is included at the back of the Strategy.

A Collective Impact approach

Collective Impact is an approach to bringing about long-lasting change, usually in relation to the most serious and complex social problems. Organisations from a range of sectors come together to focus on a common agenda for change. Key enabling conditions identified for Collective

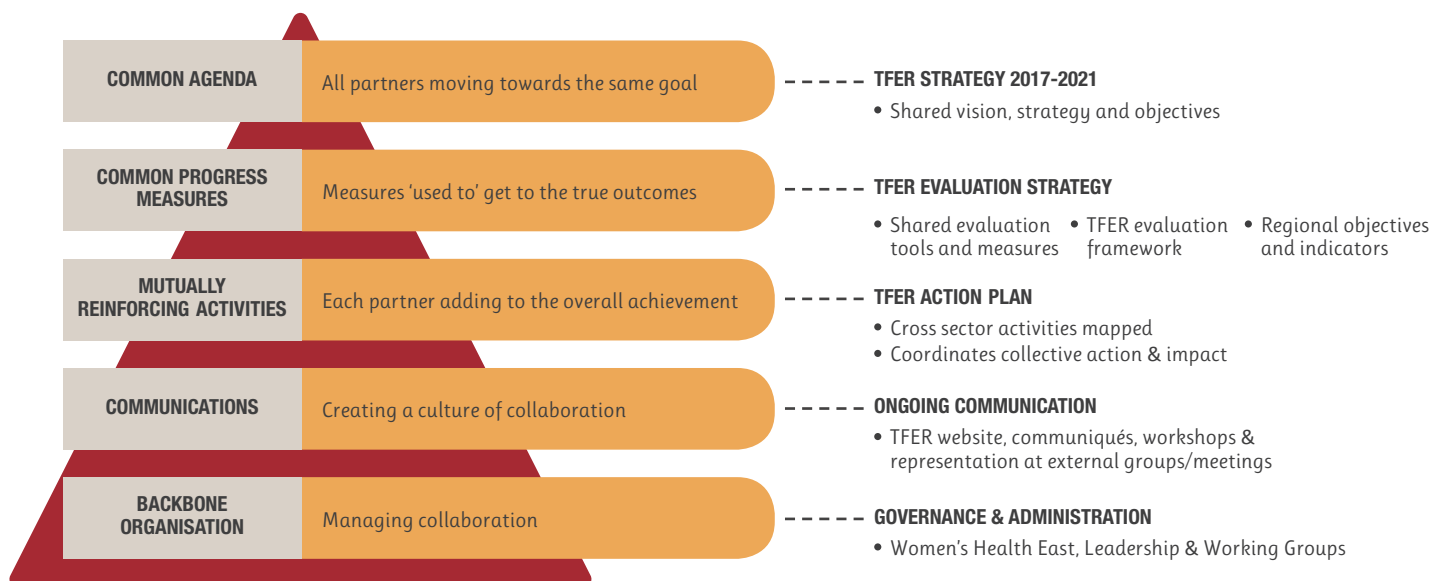
Impact are: a common agenda, a shared measurement system, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and backbone support.¹³

The TFER Partnership reflects these five key elements of Collective Impact. Led by Women’s Health East as the backbone organisation, with the support of the TFER Leadership Group and Working Groups, Partner organisations implement mutually reinforcing activities which are articulated in the TFER Action Plan. These activities work towards shared objectives and are evaluated using shared measures as described in the TFER Evaluation Framework. Communication mechanisms include the TFER website, a quarterly communique and regular meetings between partners through forums and workshops.

(see figure 1).

In addition to being the backbone organisation for the TFER Partnership, Women’s Health East has worked in the prevention of violence against women for well over a decade, and brings this expertise and experience to the Partnership.

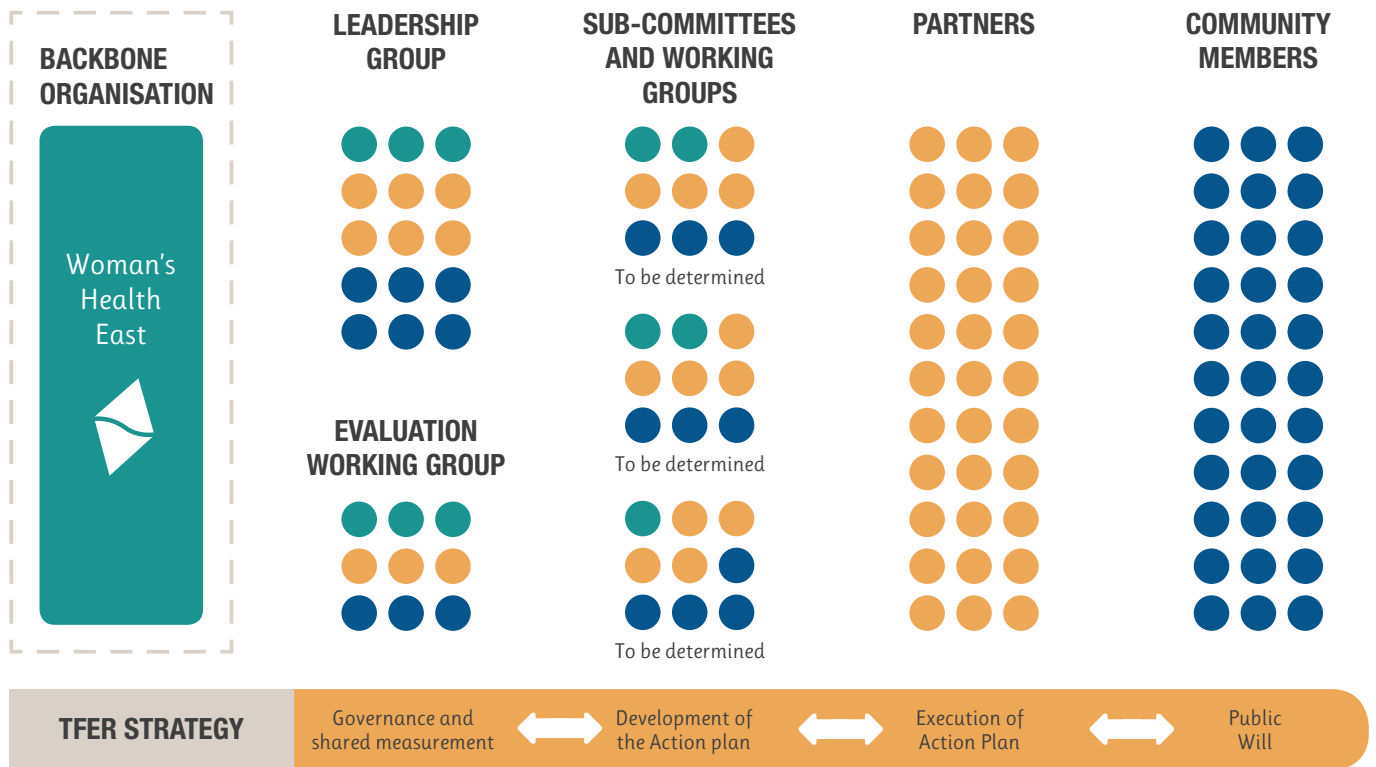
Figure 1: TFER’s Collective Impact



Together for Equality & Respect Partnership and its governance structure

The following diagram demonstrates the TFER Partnership and its governance, including the role of the TFER Leadership Group and Women's Health East. It also demonstrates the role of its working groups in supporting organisations to implement TFER actions with the broader community.

Figure 2: Together for Equality & Respect partnership



Benefits of the TFER Partnership

The evaluation findings from TFER 2013-2017 demonstrate that the TFER Partnership is instrumental in building the capacity of Partners to implement, evaluate and lead prevention of violence against women actions across organisations.

BEING PART OF THE TFER PARTNERSHIP ENABLES:

Innovation – fostering partnerships across sectors to support innovative and effective action



Collective action and learning – working together to implement prevention of violence against women actions and share collective knowledge and learnings



Mutually reinforcing activities – enabling the work of Partners to combine effort for the prevention of violence against women, reaching communities across the EMR, across a range of settings



Evaluation support – providing partners through a shared regional evaluation framework, and access to shared evidence-based evaluation tools and guidance



TFER resources and branding – providing up to date TFER evidence-based documents and resources and the ability to use the TFER branding in promotion of activities



Contributing to the evidence base for the prevention of violence against women – participating in a rigorous, academic evaluation



The role of TFER Partners

The commitment from TFER Partners throughout 2013-2017 has been unwavering and has continued to grow and develop despite the uncertainties of the changing external environment. In addition to the growing policy focus and investment in prevention of violence against women, there have also been numerous sector reforms, competing priorities, and limited resources. Through a variety of roles TFER Partners have been instrumental in keeping the prevention of violence against women as a key priority in the EMR.

<p>WOMEN'S HEALTH EAST AS THE BACKBONE ORGANISATION IS TO:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support TFER Partnership governance structures and processes • Provide resources and expertise to facilitate evidence-based practice and evaluation • Build capacity of organisations to implement actions to improve gender equity in the workplace • Build capacity of the prevention of violence against women workforce to implement intersectional action • Participate in codesign and evaluation of TFER Partner prevention of violence against women initiatives • Coordinate advocacy activities • Act as a communication conduit - providing Partners with up-to-date information on relevant activities, funding, innovative practice, training opportunities and progress on regional action plans • Orient new members to primary prevention and to the TFER Partnership • Coordinate the development and review of the four-year TFER Action Plan
<p>THE LEADERSHIP GROUP IS TO:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee efforts promoting an integrated approach to the prevention of violence against women across EMR • Adopt a structure for implementation of the Strategy, including the identification of appropriate working groups and associated Terms of Reference • Monitor the TFER Action Plan • Identify ongoing opportunities and mechanisms for extending the TFER Partnership • Develop a communication plan for the Strategy • Provide a regional voice on the prevention of violence against women within the EMR • Act as a problem-solving forum to address barriers to implementation of the Strategy <p style="text-align: center;">It is envisaged that in 2017-2021 other working groups will be established to support the Partnership, for example a Communications Working Group.</p>
<p>THE EVALUATION WORKING GROUP IS TO:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an evaluation framework and evaluation plan for the TFER Action Plan 2017 - 2021 • Communicate the evaluation plan to partner organisations • Collect evaluation data from partner organisations • Analyse and report on the evaluation findings • Contribute to the evidence base by disseminating findings from the TFER Evaluation
<p>THE ROLE OF TFER PARTNERS IS TO:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake primary prevention action • Work in partnership with others • Contribute to the achievement of one or more objectives within the TFER Action Plan • Participate in the shared regional evaluation and/or have a commitment to sharing learnings

TFER Partner roles may also include to:

- Participate in relevant regional workshops, forums and community of practice sessions
- Contribute to TFER governance through membership of the TFER Leadership Group
- Contribute to TFER working groups
- Advocate for the prevention of violence against women as a sustained regional priority for action and the TFER Partnership as a mechanism for taking action
- Resource the Partnership to undertake TFER related activities
- Develop and implement new tools and guidelines to progress and evaluate TFER objectives

The TFER Partnership has matured and grown since its inception in 2012. The TFER Strategy 2017-2021 provides the opportunity to strengthen the depth of commitment to Partnership initiatives, broaden the Partnership across sectors, and support wider organisational capacity to end violence against women in Melbourne's East.

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT STRATEGY

This Strategy has been developed to respond to men's violence against women, which has been widely recognised as a global problem and one of the most widespread violations of human rights.¹⁴

The impact of violence has profound consequences for women, children, families and whole communities. While violence against women is serious and prevalent, the evidence tells us that it is preventable.¹⁵

Together for Equality & Respect Strategy: Preventing Violence Against Women in Melbourne's East 2017-2021 progresses the longstanding, mature partnership and commitment to the prevention of violence against women. The TFER Partnership works across the EMR and was initially established in 2012. This Strategy builds on the 2013-17 TFER Strategy and the leadership, momentum and achievements that have been demonstrated by organisations across the Region.

To end violence against women the evidence tells us that we need long term, coordinated efforts to address the drivers of violence across all levels of our society. We need to reach everyone in our community in the places in which they work, learn, live and play.¹⁶ Entering into our second four year plan, the TFER Partnership continues to support sustained, coordinated action in Melbourne's East.

Dedication to the prevention of violence against women in the EMR is unmistakable. A range of evidence-informed initiatives have been undertaken in recent years demonstrating ongoing commitment to prevention of violence against women from our Partners as evidenced in the TFER timeline which highlights the breadth of partnership activity from 2007 - 2016.

The 2017-21 Strategy builds on the collective efforts to prevent violence against women across the EMR over previous years. It aligns with the significant focus on preventing violence against women from government at national and state levels, guiding prevention activities at the local and regional level.

At a Victorian level this includes:

- The Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015¹⁷
- *Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change*¹⁸
- *Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy – Preventing Violence Against Women through Gender Equality*¹⁹
- *Free from Violence, Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women*²⁰



See **Appendix 2** for a summary of relevant international, national, state and local frameworks that inform TFER.



BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

The evidence has consistently highlighted that it is not possible to end violence against women with disparate initiatives, short-term funding and one-off projects.^{21 22}

Since 2012 the TFER Partnership and Strategy have strengthened the region's ability to prevent violence against women, by supporting a shared vision and aligned and mutually reinforcing initiatives over time. TFER provides a mechanism to coordinate and integrate primary prevention activities in order to maximise efforts, and minimise duplication.

Although TFER partners have worked together over the last four years to drive and evaluate prevention of violence against women activities, there is a clear need for sustained action. Violence against women remains unacceptably prevalent in our community and has alarming health and wellbeing impacts on women, children and communities. For these reasons, the prevention of violence against women remains a shared regional priority.

The TFER Strategy and accompanying action plan 2013 – 2017 was rigorously evaluated. The evaluation has informed the development of this next Strategy. The full TFER Evaluation 2013 – 2017 will be available on the TFER website from January 2018. See whe.org.au/tfer. The evaluation has ethics approval from Deakin University in anticipation of sharing the findings through peer reviewed journals, conferences and other means, in order to contribute to the evidence base for prevention of violence against women.

The TFER Partnership has grown with many new organisations joining over the last four years. It is recognised that organisations are at varied levels of readiness, have differing resources to contribute and will have different roles to play in the prevention of violence against women. The TFER Strategy 2017 – 2021 encourages organisations to tailor actions to their own context and for the communities with whom they work. It builds on evidence-informed

practice already taking place in the Region, as well as supporting organisations that have not had a lot of experience.

Implementation of the TFER Strategy 2017-2021 will build on the achievements of the previous Strategy, driving the prevention of violence against women across the EMR into the future.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is widely recognised as one of the most widespread violations of human rights.²³

Violence against women is defined as *“any act of gender based violence that causes or could cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of harm or coercion, in public or in private life”*.²⁴ It can include physical, sexual, emotional, cultural, spiritual or financial abuse.

Family violence and sexual assault are the most common forms of violence experienced by women in Australia.²⁵ While violence frequently occurs in the home, sexual assault can also occur in settings such as workplaces, schools, pubs and clubs - outside of the 'family violence' context.²⁶ Young women (18-24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.²⁷

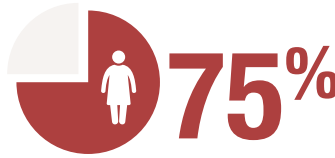
The term 'violence against women' recognises the gendered and disproportionate nature of violence that predominately is perpetrated by men against women. For instance, in Australia:

Women are

FIVE TIMES MORE LIKELY
to be killed by an intimate partner than men^{28 29}



Of intimate partner homicides in Australia women were victims in **75% OF INCIDENTS**³⁰



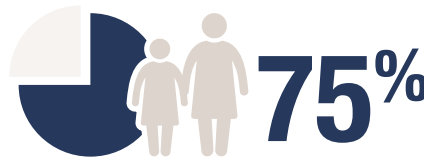
Of all reported sexual assault incidents,

93% ARE PERPETRATED BY MEN
against women and girls.^{31 32}



Women constitute the overwhelming majority of victims of family and sexual violence in Victoria -

75% OF REPORTED FAMILY VIOLENCE IS EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN AND GIRLS,
WHILE THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF PERPETRATORS (77%) ARE MEN.³³



GENDER INTERSECTS WITH OTHER FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

Women are not one homogenous group. Women come from a diversity of backgrounds and have widely varied lived experiences and identities. Although violence occurs in all communities regardless of cultural, educational or socio-economic background, certain groups of women experience much higher rates of male violence than others. Discrimination based on factors such as age, Aboriginality, sexuality, ability, culture and socio-economic status intersect with gendered discrimination to shape the experience and risk of men's violence, as well as access to appropriate responses. The evidence demonstrates that the prevalence, severity and frequency of violence is often more profound among women who face multiple layers of disadvantage and discrimination including women with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women in rural and remote areas, and some immigrant and refugee women.^{34 35}

Examples of this include:

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WOMEN EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE AT AROUND TWICE THE RATE OF NON-INDIGENOUS WOMEN,

and are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence related assaults than other Australian women³⁶

Violence perpetrated against women with disabilities is significantly more common, more diverse in nature and more severe than for women in general. For example,

90% OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO SEXUAL ABUSE.³⁷

A STRONG CASE FOR ACTION

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS PREVALENT

Violence against women remains one of the most serious and pervasive issues affecting women, families, communities and society.³⁸ In Australia, approximately three in ten women over the age of 15 years have experienced physical assault, one in five women have experienced sexual assault, and over half of all women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.^{39 40} At least one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner.⁴¹

Figure 3 - Prevalence of violence experienced by Australian women
From the Personal Safety Survey 2016⁴²



Violence between intimate partners remains the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health in Australian women aged 18-44 (Webster, 2016) and is the single largest driver for homelessness for women.⁴³ Analysis of data from the Australian Personal Safety Survey 2012 highlights that in Australia, one in four women have experienced at least one incidence of violence by a partner who they may or may not be living with.⁴⁴

Sexual violence is a pervasive part of the everyday lives of women. A survey undertaken by the Australia Institute in 2015 found that 87 per cent of women reported having experienced street harassment, with 83 per cent of those aged 18-24 having experienced it in the past year.⁴⁵

A landmark study encompassing 39 universities across Australia, conducted by the Human Rights Commission, found that more than half of all university students were sexually harassed on at least one occasion in the previous year. Overwhelmingly, men were the perpetrators of both sexual assault and sexual harassment reported in the

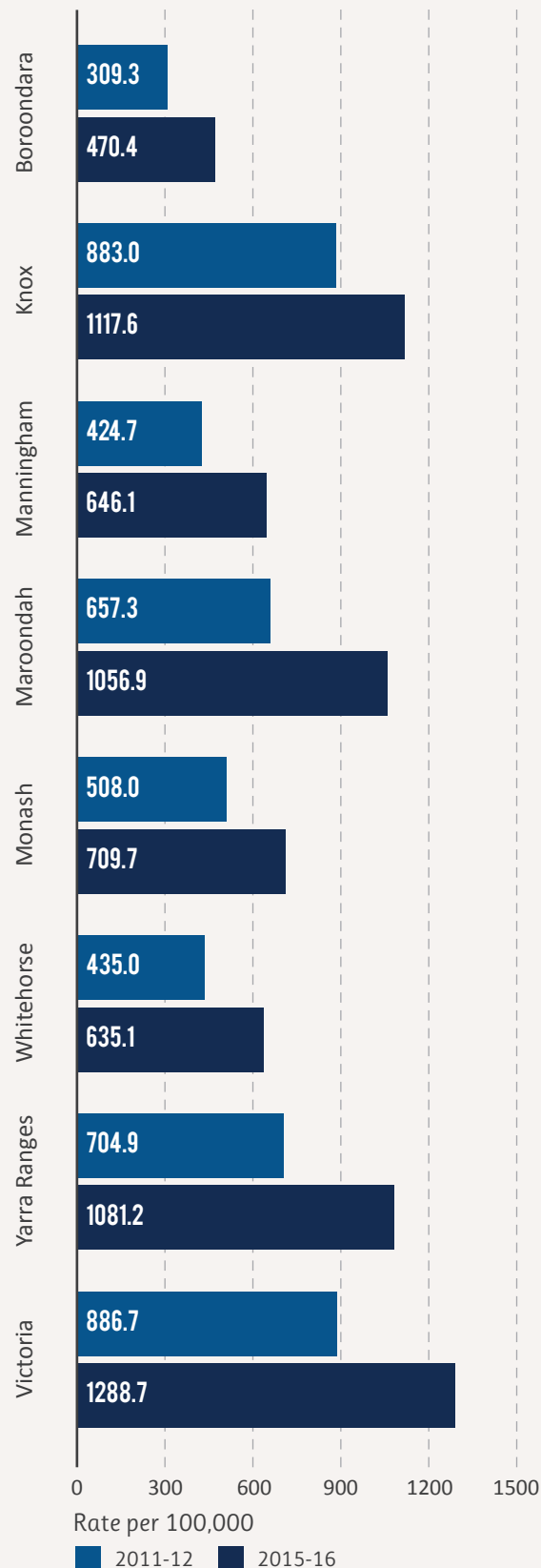
survey and women experienced harassment and assaults at disproportionately higher rates than men.⁴⁶

Online and technologically assisted sexual violence are growing concerns for women. Research conducted by Our Watch and Plan International Australia revealed that online harassment and bullying is commonplace, with 70 per cent of girls aged 15-19 believing it to be endemic.

In Victoria, 78,007 family violence incidents were reported to police between 2015-2016⁴⁸, a figure which represents an increase of 45% since 2012. Increases in reported family violence incidents may occur as a result of a range of factors including increased community awareness and education campaigns that encourage reporting, as well as changes in police practice and reporting. Family violence remains a highly underreported crime.

In 2015-16, Victoria Police attended 8,628 family violence incidents in the Eastern Metropolitan Region.⁴⁹ Data for the EMR (see graph below) shows a steady increase in the rate of reported family violence incidents over the past five years.

Figure 4 - Rates of Reported Family Violence in the Eastern Metropolitan Region 6 Year Trend Analysis



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS SERIOUS

Violence against women is a violation of women’s rights and freedoms as human beings. Research indicates the profound and long-term toll that violence takes on the health and wellbeing of women, families, communities and on society.⁵⁰ Violence against women and their children costs Australia \$21.7 billion each year.⁵¹

Violence against women is the leading contributor to death, disability and ill-health among Australian women aged 18-44. The main health outcomes contributing to this burden of disease include depression and anxiety (62%). This is followed by suicide, tobacco and alcohol use, and other negative impacts.⁵² As highlighted in Change the Story (p 16),⁵³ family violence against women is the single largest driver of homelessness for women,⁵⁴ a common factor in child protection notifications,⁵⁵ and results in a police call-out on average once every two minutes across the country.⁵⁶ The trauma of experiencing violence has devastating and widespread impacts on women’s physical and mental wellbeing.⁵⁷

The physical impacts of violence includes bruises, welts, fractures, eye damage, chronic pain syndromes, permanent disabilities, gastrointestinal disorders, gynaecological disorders, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and unwanted pregnancies.⁵⁸ Additional social implications include women suffering social isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.⁵⁹ Family violence also has significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of children who witness it or live in a home where violence occurs.⁶⁰ Further research suggests one in four children have seen violence against their mother or step-mother, and in 65% of family violence incidents in Victoria, children were present.⁶¹

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS PREVENTABLE

While violence against women is prevalent and serious, the evidence tells us that it is preventable.⁶² To end violence against women we need long term, coordinated efforts to address the drivers of violence across all levels of our society. We need to reach everyone in our community in the places in which they work, learn, live and play. Entering into our second four-year plan, the TFER partnership is truly moving toward sustained, coordinated action in Melbourne’s East.

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TOGETHER

TOGETHER FOR EQUALITY & RESPECT FRAMEWORK

Vision

A society where women live free from men’s violence – where every girl and boy grows up to be equally valued, heard and respected, and with equal access to opportunities.

Purpose

Together for Equality & Respect provides a platform for organisations in the Eastern Metropolitan Region to prioritise and work together on the primary prevention of men’s violence against women. It provides sustained opportunities to build intersectional practice, collaborate, share skills, knowledge and resources, avoid duplication and strengthen the capacity of the EMR to enable gender equality and equal and respectful relationships between men and women.

Strategic Directions

Support and enable integration and coordination in order to:

LEAD & ACHIEVE CHANGE	ADOPT AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVIDENCE BASE	BUILD ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE	STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS
Organisations will lead initiatives that work with the community to enable gender equality & equal and respectful relationships.	Organisations will adopt evidence-informed primary prevention action and evaluation to prevent men’s violence against women, and contribute to the evidence base.	Organisations will invest in building their capacity and that of their workforce to address men’s violence against women.	Organisations will work in partnership to prevent men’s violence against women and to reinforce prevention initiatives.

TFER Action Plan and Evaluation Framework

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater diversity of population groups engaged in gender equity and prevention of violence against women Increase in the proportion of people in the EMR who have high support for and take action on gender equality and gender equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evidence base for the prevention of violence against women includes findings from TFER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in organisations in the EMR that have established systems that promote and enable gender equality The TFER Partner workforce has the capacity to support, lead and participate in gender equity initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the TFER Action Plan enhances the partnerships created and outcomes achieved towards prevention of violence against women in the EMR
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APPROACHES INFORMING THE TFER STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The following section highlights core approaches for TFER Partners working on the prevention of violence against women:

- Addressing the drivers of violence against women
- A population health approach
- A primary prevention approach
- A socio-ecological model for behaviour change
- Gender equity
- Intersectionality

Addressing the drivers of violence against women

The national framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children, *Change the Story*,⁶³ **identifies gender inequality as the precondition to violence** by setting the necessary social context in which violence against women occurs (pg 12). Gender inequality refers to the unequal value afforded to men and women in society, and the unequal distribution of power, resources and opportunity between them. The framework outlines particular expressions of gender inequality that consistently predict higher rates of violence against women, described in the framework as drivers. These are:

- Condoning of violence against women
- Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life
- Rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- Male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women

Gender inequality is the core of the problem. Gender equality is the heart of the solution.

While there are other identified factors that interact with and reinforce gender inequality, what the evidence makes clear is that “gender inequality is the core of the problem” and addressing it is the “heart of the solution”.⁶⁴ Efforts to address the issue need to challenge the drivers of violence against women to influence sustained structural and cultural change.

Action to prevent violence against women should promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life including actions that

- Challenge condoning of violence against women
- Promote women's independence and decision-making
- Challenge gender stereotypes and roles
- Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships

It is important to realise that in order to achieve significant ongoing change and act on the drivers of violence against women, it is necessary to target interventions across the range of essential actions.

The TFER Action Plan addresses the drivers of violence against women using the six objective outlined in the framework.

TFER demonstrates that everyone has an important role in the prevention of violence against women and that working in partnership with other organisations is critical. This Strategy guides the implementation of initiatives to prevent violence against women in the EMR that are coordinated, collaborative and evidence-informed and tackle the drivers of violence against women. By taking a region-wide approach, with sustained commitment from a significant number of diverse partner organisations, TFER will make a real difference to the lives of women in the EMR.

A population health approach

A population health approach also guides the direction of the Strategy, The Victorian Healthcare Association⁶⁵ states that population health planning *aims to improve the health and wellbeing of whole populations, and reduce inequities between specific population groups*. The approach considers the environmental, economic, political, social, cultural and behavioural factors that contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities and populations. It is grounded in effective and meaningful community, inter-sectoral and whole-of-government partnerships.⁶⁶

TFER adopts this approach to preventing violence against women. Universal actions are implemented for the whole community. Additional, complementary initiatives are implemented and tailored to groups whose needs are not addressed by a universal approach. Initiatives are also implemented across the life course, engaging those that are at transition points or particular stages in their life, or when particular opportunities to address the drivers of violence against women present.

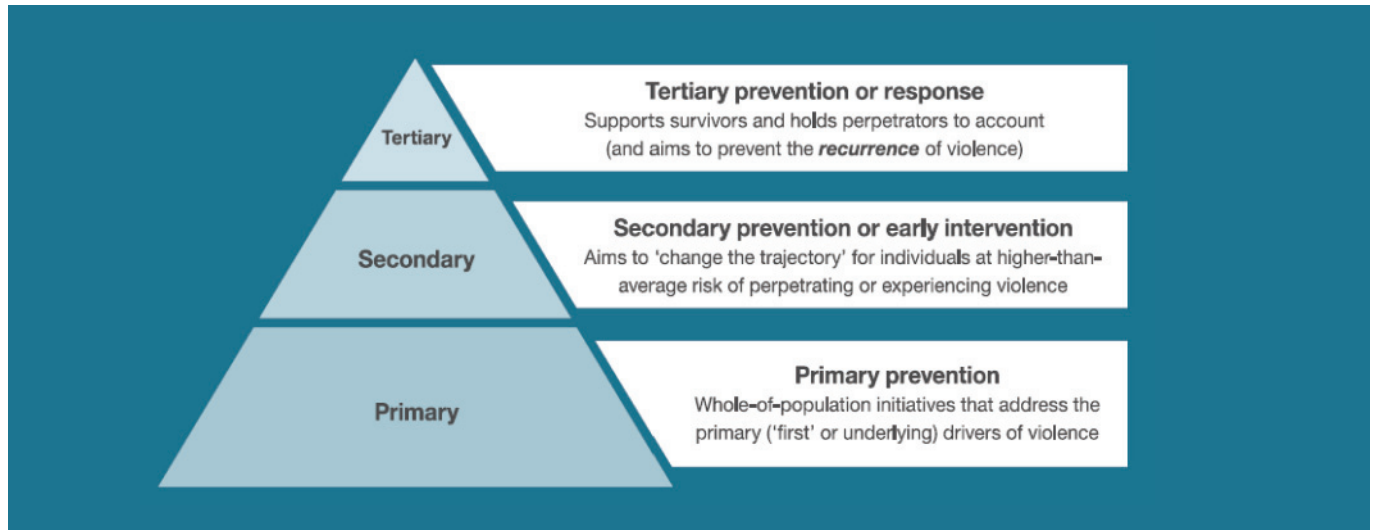
A primary prevention approach

Primary prevention initiatives in the prevention of violence against women are those that seek to prevent violence before it occurs. The focus of a primary prevention approach is on addressing the underlying causes of violence against women; gender and power inequality between men and women.⁶⁷

The prevention spectrum

Figure 5 below demonstrates the spectrum of prevention from primary prevention through to tertiary prevention. The focus of TFER is on primary prevention – that is, preventing violence before it occurs.

Figure 5. Prevention spectrum



What is the difference between primary and secondary prevention?

Although there can be areas of overlap between primary and secondary prevention, in primary prevention, the focus is on addressing the underlying causes of violence against women – namely, gender inequality between men and women. Therefore the focus is not on the violence or the 'problem', rather on shifting the social and structural norms that facilitate and perpetuate inequalities between men and women that allow violence to occur.

Examples of evidence-informed primary prevention include: gender equitable workplace policy and practices, media campaigns that challenge gender stereotypes, school or work based programs that promote respectful, gender-equitable relationships between men and women, boys and girls.

In secondary prevention, initiatives address the *contributing* factors to violence against women. VicHealth identifies the key themes for action under the secondary prevention level as:

- Promoting non-violent norms and reducing the effects of prior exposure to violence
- Improving access to resources and systems of support

(VicHealth, 2017)

Examples of secondary prevention include: campaigns to raise awareness of violence against women, activities targeting 'at risk' groups such as anger management programs for young men who exhibit signs of aggressive behaviour, or programs that promote social inclusion among women's groups.

Strategies like these are important and can be a great catalyst for primary prevention work; however they should not be confused with primary prevention.

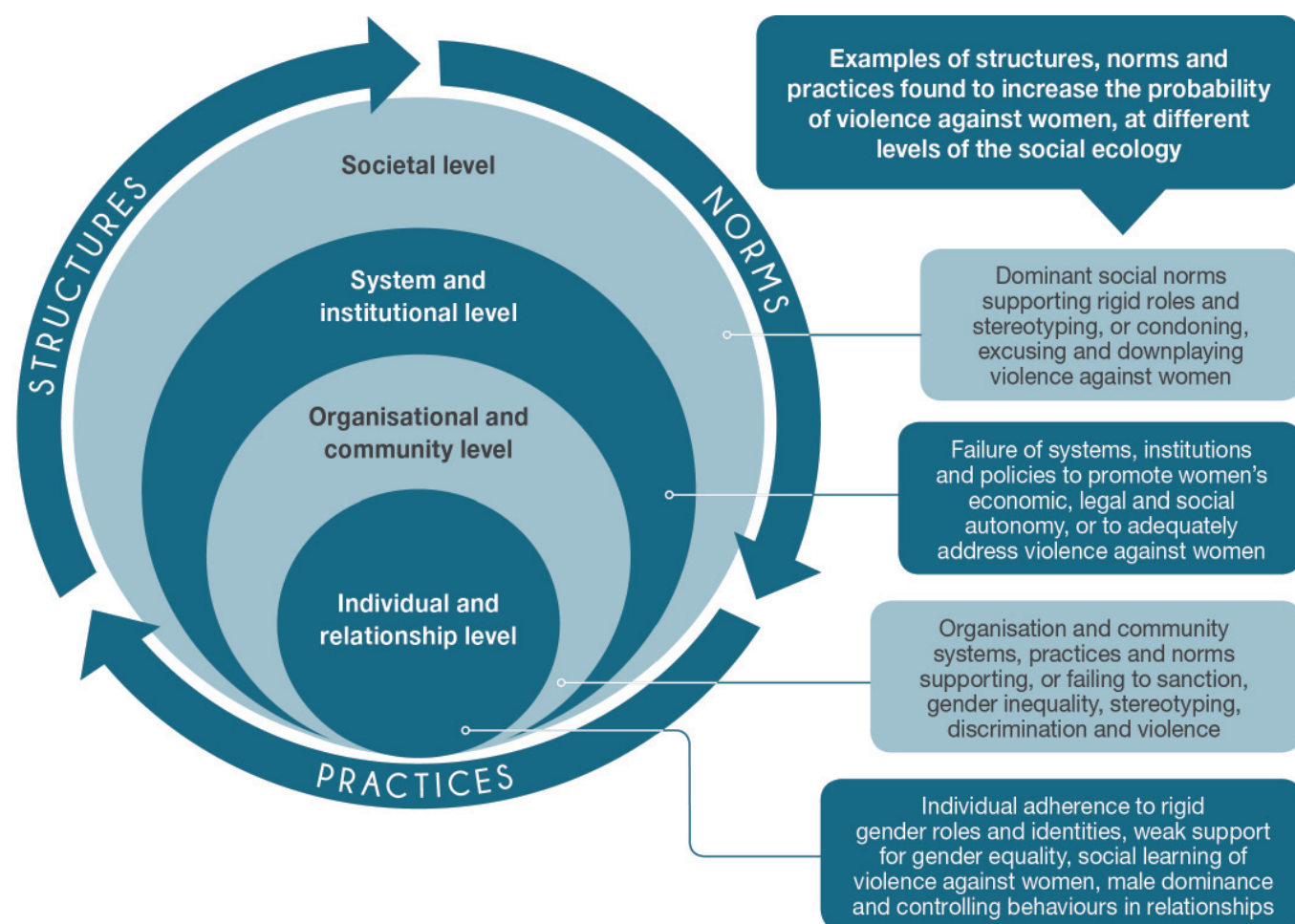
It should be noted however that the spectrum of prevention is not always clear cut and activities tend to sit on a continuum. The TFER Strategy and Action Plan refocus programs that may fall under 'secondary prevention' to build their primary prevention focus.

A socio-ecological model for behaviour change

Our Watch et al⁶⁹ recommend using an ‘ecological’ approach to understand and respond to the causes of violence against women. This approach shows how violence occurs because of the complex interrelationships between the factors that influence people at an individual, community and societal level. In order to address men’s violence against women we therefore need to take action across different levels of society, spanning the individual, interpersonal (relationship), organisational, community and societal levels.

Change the Story⁷⁰, describes the ‘factors associated with higher levels of violence against women, which includes the ideas, values or beliefs that are common or dominant in a society or community – called social or cultural **norms**. Norms are reflected in our institutional or community **practices** or behaviours, and are supported by social **structures**, both formal (such as legislation) and informal (such as hierarchies within a family or community)’ pg 23, demonstrated in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6: A socio-ecological model for behaviour change



Reproduced from Change the Story⁷¹ pg 24

Gender Equity

Gender equity is an approach that enables fairness for women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Adopting an equity approach leads to equality.⁷²

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an approach that considers and analyses dynamics of power and social inequality. It recognises how different and interacting inequalities influence peoples' experiences and their access to resources, services and opportunities.⁷³ In the context of violence prevention work, intersectionality recognizes how gender inequality interacts with other forms of discrimination such as those based on class, Indigeneity, race or ethnicity, ability, sexuality, gender identity, religion and age. These inequalities compound with the net effect that some women have less access to power, resources and opportunities than others and gender inequality is not experienced in the same way by everyone.⁷⁴

Although violence against women occurs in all cultures and socio-economic groups, the evidence demonstrates that the prevalence, severity and frequency of violence is often more profound among women who face multiple layers of disadvantage and discrimination.

Reflecting on the evaluation findings from 2013-2017, the TFER Strategy 2017-2021 recommends greater focus on intersectionality or the *'intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage in the TFER Action Plan 2017 – 2021.'* Taking this approach to prevention means that while gender inequality remains the central focus of prevention action, we need to also focus on the social conditions, structures, norms and practices which allow other intersecting forms of discrimination to be perpetrated, and address these.⁷⁵ Hence in 2017-2021 there will be greater emphasis on building capacity in the EMR to take an intersectional approach to preventing violence against women. Intersectional practice to prevent violence against women includes working more closely with communities to understand women's lived experiences of gender inequality, tailoring action to ensure relevance and reach to all in our community and building a focus on addressing other forms of discrimination into our gender equality action.

SETTINGS FOR TFER ACTION

Expressions of gender inequality driving violence against women are manifested and reinforced in all settings of everyday life. To prevent violence against women extensive and sustained action is required across multiple settings, i.e. places where people interact in everyday life. Evidence suggests^{76,77} the following settings have the greatest potential for impact because they provide opportunities for significant influence over organisational practices, institutional structures and social norms that can drive change.

They include:

	education and care settings for children and young people
	universities, TAFEs and other tertiary education institutions
	workplaces, corporations and employee organisations
	sports, recreation, social and leisure spaces
	the arts
	health, family and community services
	media
	popular culture, advertising and entertainment
	faith-based contexts
	public spaces, transport, infrastructure and facilities
	legal, justice and corrections contexts

CURRENT EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In their 2017 review of research findings and primary prevention in Australia, VicHealth summarise the evidence relating to the effectiveness of the following public health methodologies for effective practice in prevention of violence against women.⁷⁸

PUBLIC HEALTH METHODOLOGY	PURPOSE	EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS
Direct participation programs	Facilitate participation and skill development	Effective But some conflicting evidence across program types
Organisational and workforce development	Create organisational environments that foster good health	Promising Programs successfully implemented but not yet evaluated
Community strengthening	Strengthen communities and create community environments that foster good health	Effective
Communications and social marketing	Communicate about priority health issues Change behaviour of target audience	Promising – social marketing campaigns plus group education Ineffective – singular communications campaigns
Advocacy	Gain political commitment	Successfully implemented, not yet evaluated for impact on violence
Legislative and policy reform	Gain policy/legislative support	Successfully implemented, not yet evaluated for impact on violence
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Generate knowledge to guide policy, programs and practice	

PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TOGETHER

What next? Together we will...



The TFER Strategy is implemented through the TFER Action Plan.

The TFER Action Plan 2017 – 2021 will be guided by the evaluation findings from the TFER Action Plan 2013-2017, as well as evidence from Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth, and other rigorously evaluated primary prevention initiatives. It will also be informed by: Free From Violence: Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women⁷⁹, Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy⁸⁰, the recommendations arising from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence⁸¹ and the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing plan.⁸²

The TFER Action Plan 2017-2021 will be co-designed with TFER partners. It will include a range of existing and new initiatives that align with the four Strategic directions. Reflecting a stronger intersectional approach, the Action Plan will aim to expand relevance and reach across all levels of the community and into new settings and population groups. It will promote partnerships across sectors and ensure the coordination of regional action to prevent violence against women. More specifically, it will outline areas for action, objectives, population groups and settings, Partners’ responsibilities, and evaluation indicators and measures. The TFER Action Plan 2017 – 2021 will be a living

and dynamic document. The Leadership Group takes overall responsibility for monitoring the Action Plan. This group will review the Action Plan at least annually to identify areas requiring greater focus or capacity building, and opportunities to build and extend the TFER partnership. The Action Plan will be regularly updated.

In order for TFER to contribute to the evidence base in the prevention of violence against women, it is important that the Strategy and its subsequent Action Plan continue to be rigorously evaluated over the next four years.

The results of the evaluation will be disseminated on to Partner organisations, relevant networks and government departments. It will also be used both to promote the work of the EMR and to inform others who may be working in the prevention of violence against women.

With combined effort through mutually reinforcing activities, genuine progress towards ending violence against women in the Eastern Metropolitan Region will be achieved.

**EVIDENCE AND
COMMITMENT
TO ACTION**



Specific Objectives
Areas for Action



Population Groups & Settings
Responsibilities/Partnerships



Evaluation Framework & Plan
Indicators of Success

APPENDICES



The term 'violence against women' is used in this Strategy because it emphasises the gendered nature of violence. That is, that violence is predominantly perpetrated by men against women. At times in this document, the term 'men's violence against women' has been used to highlight this point.

Other terminology may be used when reference is made to a specific form of violence. For example 'sexual assault' would be used if we are specifically referring to this form of violence, or where a direct quote is used from a referenced document.

While the focus of this Strategy is on preventing men's violence against women, we recognise that this is not the only form of violence in our society and that all forms of violence are abhorrent. Violence can occur, for example, within same-sex relationships, and men can also experience violence. Nonetheless, the purpose of this Strategy is to address the significant and widespread issue of men's violence against women with a focus on family violence and sexual assault.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The United Nations (1993) defines violence against women as:

'Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.'⁸³

VicHealth identifies a number of specific forms of violence against women including:

- Physical abuse and aggression such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating
- Rape and other forms of sexual coercion, unwanted sexual advances or harassment, forced prostitution and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation
- Intimidation, belittling, humiliation and other forms of psychological abuse
- A range of controlling behaviours such as isolating

women from their family and friends, monitoring their movements, or restricting their access to information, assistance and other resources

- Dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation, and other practices harmful to women⁸⁴

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault includes any sexual behaviour which makes someone feel frightened, intimidated, or threatened. It includes rape, as well as other forms of unwanted sexual behaviour, sexual coercion, harassment, unwanted sexual advances and forced prostitution.^{85 86}

Intimate partner violence is used to describe violence against women perpetrated by current or previous male partners.⁸⁷

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Includes behaviour that is physically or sexually abusive, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening or coercive, or in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to fear for their safety or wellbeing or for the safety and wellbeing of another person.⁸⁸ Family violence also includes behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness or be exposed to the effects of this behaviour mentioned above.

Indigenous definitions of family violence are broader than those used in the mainstream. The Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Task Force defines family violence as: 'An issue focused around a wide range of physical, emotional, sexual, social, spiritual, cultural, psychological and economic abuses that occur within families, intimate relationships, extended families, kinship networks and communities. It extends to one-on-one fighting, abuse of Indigenous community workers as well as self-harm, injury and suicide.'⁸⁹



While violence against women is a term that is often used interchangeably with 'domestic violence', 'intimate partner violence' and 'family violence', the term 'violence against women' is a definition that encapsulates various forms of violence along the continuum of violence perpetrated against women. Further to this, it recognises the gendered and disproportionate nature of violence that predominately is perpetrated by men against women.⁹⁰

PRIMARY PREVENTION

Primary prevention interventions are those that seek to prevent violence before it occurs. The focus of a primary prevention approach is on addressing the underlying causes of violence against women including gender and power inequality between men and women.

Sex identifies the biological differences between women and men⁹¹

Gender is the 'socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women'.⁹²

Sex and Gender are key social determinants of health; they can influence a person's access to key resources such as income and workforce participation, education and social inclusion, and social support which in turn impact on health outcomes.

Gender Equity is the process of being fair to men and women. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be put in place to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.⁹³

Gender Equality is the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and trans and gender-diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.⁹⁴

ORGANISATIONAL PLAN

For the purposes of this Strategy, the term 'organisational plans' is used to encapsulate the broad range of relevant plans or structures that drive your organisation's work. This will vary for different organisations however could include: Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans, Community Safety Plans, Council Plans, Integrated Health Promotion Plans, Strategic Plans, and organisational Business Plans.

Key policies, plans and structures that currently drive work to prevent violence against women

The Eastern Metropolitan Region's focus on the prevention of violence against women aligns with policies and plans at an international, national, state and regional level.

Under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, Australian governments have an international legal requirement to make appropriate efforts to end all forms of discrimination against women.⁹⁵ Preventing violence against women is a crucial step to protecting and promoting women's fundamental rights and freedoms. Two national agencies have also been funded to support the prevention of violence against women: ANROWS, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety and Our Watch, a foundation to provide leadership on preventing violence against women.

Both the Australian and Victorian Governments have articulated violence against women as a serious public health issue. At both national and state levels, significant focus has been placed on the prevention of violence against women with the development of relevant policy documents that support and guide action. Recent investment into prevention of violence against women policy include the Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2015,⁹⁶ Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change (2016);⁹⁷ Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy – Preventing violence against women through gender equality⁹⁸ and Free from Violence, Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women (2017).⁹⁹





At a regional level there are a number of region-wide structures and plans that will reinforce and complement this Strategy. They include the Regional Family Violence Partnership which includes a focus on the prevention of violence against women, the Eastern Metropolitan Social Issues Council (EMSIC) which identifies family violence as a shared priority for the Eastern Metropolitan Region. Furthermore as an outcome of the Royal Commission into Family Violence all Local Governments are required to report on measures they will take to reduce family violence.¹⁰⁰

As a result of these various levels of alignment, regional prevention work coordinated through TFER will add value to, and be supported by the efforts of others, thereby strengthening its ability to effectively prevent violence against women.

The diagram outlined in Figure 7 identifies a number of these key policies, plans and structures that currently drive work to prevent violence against women.



Figure 7 - International and Australian Policy context 2017

<p>INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1983) • Declaration on the Elimination of prevention of violence against women (1993) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984
<p>NATIONAL CONTEXT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 • National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 • National Women's Health Policy 2010
<p>VICTORIAN CONTEXT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 • 2011 Victorian Families Statement • Family Violence Protection Act 2008 • Victorian Local Government Women's Charter • Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities 2008 • Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework 2012 • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 • Ending Family Violence, Victoria's Plan for Change 2016 • Royal Commission into Family Violence Report and Recommendations 2016 • Safe and Strong, A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy 2016 • Free from Violence, Victoria's Strategy to Prevent Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women 2017 • Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-2019 • Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework 2016
<p>REGIONAL CONTEXT</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Together for Equality and Respect 2017-2021 • Eastern Metropolitan Region Community Crime Prevention Plan • Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership • Eastern Metropolitan Region Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group • Eastern Metropolitan Social Issues Council (EMSIC)

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We look forward to strengthening and building this partnership in 2017-2021

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