Monitoring Victoria's family violence reforms
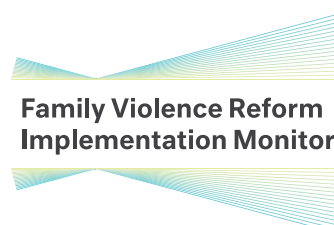
Primary prevention system architecture

August 2022

**Family Violence Reform
Implementation Monitor**

Family violence services and support

If you are concerned for your safety or that of someone else, please contact the police in your state or territory, or call Triple Zero (000) for emergency assistance.

If you have experienced family violence and need support or assistance, contact:

> National Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence hotline
> 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

> Safe Steps 24/7 family violence response line
> 1800 015 188

> Victims of Crime helpline for men experiencing family violence
> 1800 819 817 (8am-11pm)

> Rainbow Door specialist LGBTIQ+ support, advice and referral line
> 1800 729 367 (10am–5pm).

If you are concerned about your behaviour and its impact on your family, contact the Men's Referral Service on 1300 766 491 (8am–9pm).

Victim survivor acknowledgement

We acknowledge the terrible impact of family violence on individuals, families and communities, and the strength and resilience of the children and adults who have, and are still, experiencing family violence.

We pay respects to those who did not survive and to their family members and friends.

Aboriginal acknowledgement

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We acknowledge and respect that Aboriginal communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on an incredibly disciplined social and cultural order. This social and cultural order has sustained up to 60,000 years of existence.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community in addressing and preventing family violence and join with our First Peoples to eliminate family violence from all communities.

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This document is also available in HTML and PDF format on the **Monitor's website.**

Monitoring Victoria's family violence reforms

Primary prevention system architecture

August 2022

Foreword

Whenever we ask stakeholders (including victim survivors and specialist family violence services) what they would like to see change going forward, almost everyone says there needs to be a greater focus on primary prevention.

Primary prevention is vitally important in the family violence system. It is the way we can stop more people from ever having to experience the harm caused by family violence and the only way we can reduce the pressure on family violence response services. Having concerted and visible primary prevention efforts in place is also important to give a sense of hope that the future burden of family violence will be lessened.

Jan Shuard PSM
Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor

This was a very difficult topic to navigate. There is a lot of work happening, but the system architecture – including the design of the necessary components of the system, and decisions about how different parts interact with one another – is still developing. Despite this, we observed enormous commitment to this work and a strong will to work collaboratively, and I applaud the dedicated work of those actively pursuing the primary prevention of family violence and violence against women. They are doing incredible work with relatively low investment, and they often face job insecurity given the short-term funding models in place.

As one stakeholder powerfully told us, Victoria's strong history of progress in primary prevention has been built on the goodwill of women in underpaid and insecure jobs, which are the very factors that contribute to gender equality and violence against women.

We thank all our stakeholders who gave their time and shared their expertise so generously – particularly when there were other prevention reviews happening at the same time. Special thanks to Respect Victoria, who had many discussions with us, including to explain the basics of primary prevention.

This report highlights the need to build on the work that's already been done to strengthen the primary prevention system. We suggest numerous ways that this strengthening could occur, but most importantly, we suggest the need to create a framework that explains how the system operates, to clarify roles and responsibilities of all parts of the system, and to articulate a theory of change for Victoria's strategic approach to primary prevention. These actions will provide clarity about who is doing what at all levels of the system, why, and how the overall outcomes will be achieved.

This report also draws attention to the common themes being raised across our topics:

> the counterproductive impact of short-term funding, hence the need for longer term investment – this is especially true for prevention work, which requires sustained effort over a long period to produce generational change

> continued attention to intersectionality and ensuring the needs of diverse groups in the community are addressed through policies, strategies and services

> the importance of strengthening data and monitoring so the system has the capability of seeing whether things are working as expected.

We hope this report is useful in reflecting some of the key elements the primary prevention system needs to ensure it is best placed to achieve the generational change that it seeks to achieve.

Jan Shuard PSM
Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor

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Monitoring context

About the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor

The Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor (the Monitor) was formally established in 2017 as an independent statutory officer of the Victorian Parliament after the Royal Commission into Family Violence released its report in 2016. The role is responsible for monitoring and reviewing how the government and its agencies deliver the family violence reforms as outlined in its 10-year implementation plan Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change.

On 1 August 2019 former Victorian Corrections Commissioner Jan Shuard PSM was appointed as the Monitor under section 7 of the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor Act 2016. Jan took up her role on 2 October 2019, replacing Tim Cartwright APM, the inaugural Monitor.

Monitoring approach

The Monitor's 2021–2022 plan was developed through a process of consultation with government and sector stakeholders. Topics were selected that aligned areas of greatest interest and concern to sector stakeholders, with reform implementation activity outlined in the government's second Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023. In determining topics, the focus was on areas where an independent perspective could add the most value to the ongoing reform effort.

Topics selected for monitoring throughout 2021 and 2022 are:

> accurate identification of the predominant aggressor

> family violence reform governance

> early identification of family violence within universal services

> primary prevention system architecture (this report)

> Aboriginal-led primary prevention and early intervention

> crisis response to recovery model for victim survivors

> service response for perpetrators and people using family violence.

In undertaking our monitoring, the following cross-cutting themes are examined across all topics:

> intersectionality

> children and young people

> Aboriginal self-determination

> priority communities such as LGBTIQ+, people with disabilities, rural and regional, criminalised women, older people and refugee and migrant communities

> data, evaluation, outcomes and research

> service integration.

Monitoring of the selected topics is based on information gathered through:

> consultations with government agency staff

> consultations with community organisations and victim survivor groups

> site visits to service delivery organisations (where possible)

> attendance at key governance and working group meetings

> documentation from implementation agencies, including meeting papers and records of decisions by governance bodies

> submissions made to the Monitor in 2020 by individuals and organisations (many of these are available in full on the Monitor's website **fvrim.vic.gov.au**).

Engaging victim survivors in our monitoring

We are also actively seeking to include user experience and the voices of victim survivors in our monitoring. The office is working with established groups including the Victim Survivors' Advisory Council, Berry Street's Y-Change lived experience consultants and the WEAVERs victim survivor group convened by the University of Melbourne.

Stakeholder consultation

The Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor would like to thank the following stakeholders for their time in monitoring this topic:

> Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)

> Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

> Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

> Department of Education and Training

> Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (including Family Safety Victoria)

> Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS)

> Dr Michael Flood

> Gender Equity Victoria

> Gippsland Lakes Complete Health

> Gippsland Women's Health

> Goulburn Valley Centre Against Sexual Assault

> Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

> Municipal Association of Victoria

> Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault

> No to Violence

> Our Watch

> Rainbow Health

> Respect Victoria

> Safe and Equal

> Sexual Assault Services Victoria

> South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault

> Statewide Family Violence Integration Advisory Committee

> Thorne Harbour Health

> Women with Disabilities Victoria

> VicHealth

> Women's Health in the South East

> Women's Health Loddon Mallee

> Women's Health Services Council

> Women's Health Victoria.

Introduction

Because violence against women has multiple, interrelated drivers which play out across every level of society, preventing this violence requires a holistic, multilayered national approach, engaging the largest possible number of people and organisations … (T)o prevent violence against women and create a truly gender equitable society, discrete programs are not enough. That level of change requires a sustained investment in prevention, through a coordinated, long-term, national approach based on multiple, mutually reinforcing efforts.[1]

Ensuring a sustained and coordinated approach to primary prevention of family violence, with mutually reinforcing efforts across a range of settings, requires a coherent prevention system architecture.

In looking at the topic of primary prevention system architecture, we acknowledge the long and proud history of grassroots primary prevention work actively pursued by the feminist movement. This report examines the implementation progress in building on this work to establish effective system architecture for the primary prevention of family violence, and coordinated effort between the government and non-government sectors. We set out to determine whether:

> government plans and strategies are effectively driving primary prevention activity

> roles and responsibilities in the primary prevention space are clearly defined and understood, and how well effort is coordinated

> the primary prevention system is sufficiently funded to achieve the goal of eliminating family violence

> the prevention workforce is being adequately supported to strengthen the primary prevention system

> there are adequate mechanisms for research and monitoring of primary prevention initiatives, and for scaling up initiatives that are proven to be effective.

These areas broadly align with the key elements of an effective prevention infrastructure listed in the Our Watch framework Change the Story[2] and reflect the main areas of discussion in our consultation meetings.

Context and scope

This report focuses on the primary prevention of family violence, which is distinct in its scope from the prevention of violence against women. However, the two types of violence significantly overlap, so there are numerous mentions in this report of the prevention of violence against women and of the gendered drivers of violence.

This report does not specifically examine the primary prevention system for our Aboriginal communities; that is the focus of our next report. However, it does include reference to required connections between Aboriginal-led prevention and statewide architecture.

Through past consultations, victim survivors have repeatedly highlighted the importance of primary prevention to tackle family violence in a meaningful way, but we did not seek further victim survivor engagement in developing this report. Further thinking and development is required to determine how lived experience expertise could be used to inform primary prevention efforts.

We acknowledge that Respect Victoria's analysis of Victoria's progress on preventing family violence and violence against women was occurring while we examined this topic, and we suggest the two reports may be read alongside one another. Importantly, Respect Victoria's reporting to parliament on progress towards primary prevention outcomes is an important ongoing part of the prevention architecture in and of itself, as a key form of oversight, review and reporting.
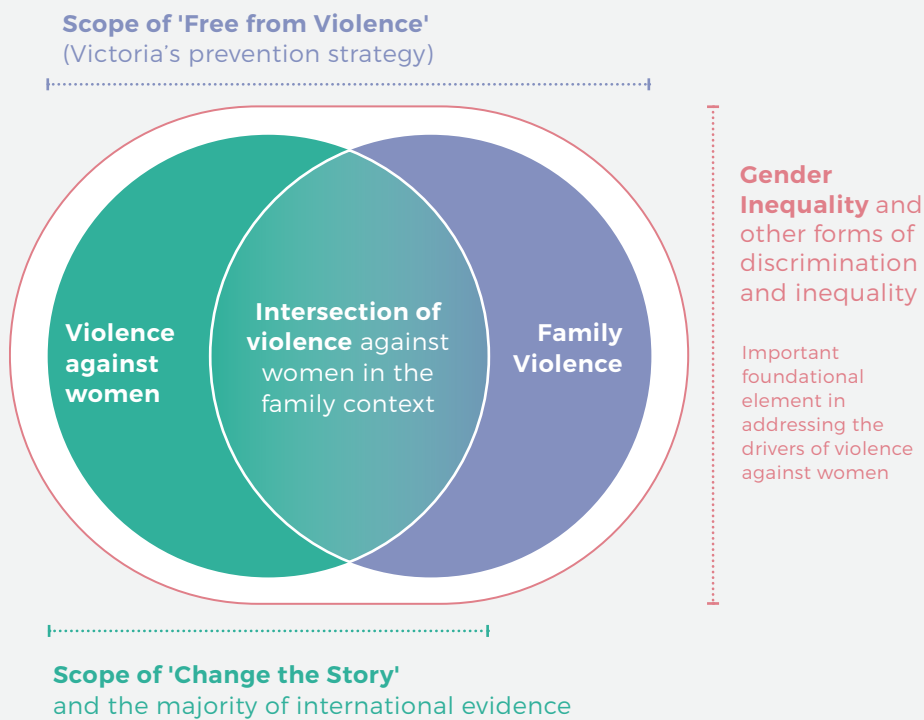
What is primary prevention of family violence?

In investigating this topic, it took us some time to understand the scope of family violence primary prevention, and how it intersects with the prevention of violence against women and gender equality work. Many stakeholders indicated that it is common for there to be confusion about what primary prevention is. As family violence prevention requires collective effort, there is room to improve in how primary prevention is explained and positioned alongside related work for a non-specialist audience.

We have learnt that primary prevention activity seeks to stop family violence before it starts by addressing the underlying drivers of violence at the population level. Preventing family violence also requires 'changing the social conditions that give rise to this violence; reforming the institutions and systems that excuse, justify or even promote such violence; and shifting the power imbalances and social norms, structures and practices that drive and normalise it'.[3] Some primary prevention activities target the entire population (for example, through widespread behaviour change campaigns), but primary prevention activity can also be tailored so it is accessible and relevant for different contexts. For example, some primary prevention work may specifically aim to prevent family violence within LGBTIQ+ communities, and some activities might focus on people at a particular life stage (such as school students, or soon-to-be parents). Activities can also target structures, norms and practices at different levels of society, reflecting the view that such violence is the outcome of 'interactions among many factors at different levels – the individual and relationship level, the organisational and community level, the system and institutional level, and the societal level'.[4]

As depicted in Figure 1, preventing violence against women and preventing family violence significantly overlap. We know that much of the violence that women experience occurs in the family / intimate partner context, and conversely, that family violence is overwhelmingly a gendered issue. We acknowledge that preventing violence against women is the focus of most of the available evidence and frameworks, and therefore this is emphasised throughout this report. However, there are forms of family violence that do not involve men's violence against women such as family violence perpetrated against children, against older males, and within LGBTIQ+ relationships. A complete family violence prevention work program will need to address the drivers of all these forms of violence.

Formal gender equality efforts are not considered violence prevention in and of themselves, but they 'are an important foundation for prevention because they help address the underlying social context of gender inequality that gives rise to violence against women and enables it to thrive'.[5] This is also true for work that seeks to address other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination.

Figure 1: Relationship between family violence prevention, the prevention of violence against women, and gender equality

Scope of 'Free from Violence'
(Victoria's prevention strategy)

Violence against women

Intersection of violence against women in the family context

Family Violence

Gender Inequality and other forms of discrimination and inequality

Important foundational element in addressing the drivers of violence against women

Scope of 'Change the Story'
and the majority of international evidence

Source: Adapted. Free from violence: Victoria's Prevention Strategy

The importance of primary prevention in stopping family violence before it starts

The trauma of family violence has profound, negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of Victorians who experience it (see Figure 2, for example). Primary prevention (working to address the underlying drivers of violence to stop that violence before it starts) exists on a continuum that also includes early intervention (or secondary prevention) and response (or tertiary prevention), as described in Figure 3. Governments have an obligation to work across this spectrum. Providing adequate attention to primary prevention is particularly important so that fewer Victorians ever have to experience family violence and to achieve reductions in the overwhelming levels of demand pressure on the family violence response system.

Figure 2: Extent and impact of family violence

One in six women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15[i]

One in four women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner since the age of 15[i]

A child or **children** were recorded as an affected family member or witness **at 33,948 family violence incidents (36.3%)**[ii]

91,144 family violence incidents were reported to police (year ending December 2021)[ii]

The **total cost** of family violence in Victoria was estimated at **$5.3 billion** in 2015-16[vi]

On average, **one woman a week** is killed by a partner or former partner in Australia[iii]

Family violence is the **number one risk factor** contributing to disease burden in Australian women aged 18-44 years, more than tobacco use, high cholesterol or use of illicit drugs[iv]

Two in three women (66.7%) and **one in three men** (36.4%) who experienced family violence had been diagnosed by a doctor with **depression or anxiety** compared with 31.3% of women and 20.7% of men who did not experience family violence[v]

Data sources

i   ABS Personal Safety Survey, 2016
ii Crime Statistics Agency, year ending June 2021
iii Our Watch (2021): Change the Story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed)
iv ANROWS (2016): A preventable burden: Measuring and addressing the prevalence and health impacts of intimate partner violence in Australian women
v   Victorian Population Health Survey 2017
vi KPMG (2017): The Cost of Family Violence in Victoria, prepared for the Department of Premier and Cabinet

As Respect Victoria has previously explained:

Historically, Victorian investment in family violence has focused on response; rather than efforts to stop violence from occurring or escalating, and to prevent long-term harm. As a result, despite recent gains, there are continued unacceptable rates of violence experienced, predominantly by women and children. Addressing the drivers of violence through primary prevention is the only way in which the overall prevalence of family violence (and therefore demand) can be reduced. This requires strengthened investment and effort in order to realise Victoria's vision of ending family violence and violence against women in all its forms.[6]

Figure 3: Primary prevention on the continuum of work to address family violence

Primary prevention	**Early intervention** (or secondary prevention)	**Response** (or tertiary prevention)
Whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary ('first' or 'underlying') drivers of violence.	Aims to change the trajectory for individuals at higher-than-average risk of perpetrating or experiencing violence.	Supports victim survivors and holds perpetrators to account, aiming to prevent the reoccurrence of violence.

Source: Based on Our Watch (2021): Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia, p.58.

Key findings and suggested actions

Victoria has a rich history of work to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women that predates the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Stakeholders praised the progress made since the Royal Commission in building a more strategic approach and improved understanding of and commitment to primary prevention. National stakeholders were clear that Victoria is well positioned to carry out meaningful work to prevent family violence compared with the rest of the country. Yet there is broad agreement that there is a long way to go to create a primary prevention system that can come anywhere near realising the vision of a Victoria free from family violence.

Primary prevention work aims to achieve generational change to prevent family violence from occurring in the first place, which we know can only happen with sustained and widespread effort based on evidence. This requires a strong and well-coordinated primary prevention system (that is, the range of organisations and structures that collectively and actively work towards preventing family violence before it starts, and how they interact) that:

> has the appropriate infrastructure

> is clear about the roles and responsibilities of all parties

> retains a skilled prevention workforce

> is backed by sufficient and sustained funding

> is committed to ongoing evidence-based improvement and refinement.

Progress has undoubtedly been made in these areas, particularly with the creation of Respect Victoria (Victoria's dedicated prevention agency), the release of a dedicated 10-year primary prevention strategy[7] and increased investment in prevention. However, stakeholders expressed frustration about a disconnection between different elements of the system, inadequate overall investment, and the short-term nature of the funding that does exist, which were seen to be stymieing progress.

Multiple themes emerged from our consultations, which form the section headings in this report:

1. There are dedicated prevention strategies and plans but there remains a need for a clear theory of change and a system operating framework

2. Clarifying roles and responsibilities should be prioritised

3. There are opportunities to create a more inclusive and joined-up system

4. A highly skilled workforce exists and will need to be built upon to support the architecture and realise the intent of Free From Violence

5. The current approach to funding works against sustained efforts in primary prevention

6. Ongoing research, evaluation and monitoring will help to build the evidence base and assess progress.

In exploring these matters, we acknowledge that there is a great deal of expertise and infrastructure that does exist but that more work needs to be done to bring these together to drive systemic change. Respect Victoria is only four years old, and many stakeholders commented that the primary prevention system is in a state of development. As this development continues, we are suggesting targeted actions to address the matters raised above and strengthen the primary prevention system architecture (see Figure 4).

These actions reflect the critical need for:

> greater clarity about how the system works

> a clearer articulation of what needs to be done and how we know it will lead to change

> greater funding certainty.

The Respectful Relationships initiative is also highlighted in the actions because it is an important foundational element in Victoria's approach to primary prevention, with the potential to successfully promote respectful and gender-inclusive behaviours and attitudes among all Victorian students.

We make several other suggestions throughout the report, and these provide further specificity to accompany the suggested actions highlighted in Figure 4. There are also several stakeholder-suggested ideas that are worthy of consideration.

Figure 4: Proposed actions to strengthen Victoria's primary prevention system architecture

OUTCOMES FOCUS

1. Prioritise developing a theory of change based on Change the Story and other relevant evidence that highlights:
   a. the suite of activity that is occurring across key settings and Change the Story essential actions, and how these contribute to the expected outcomes
   b. areas where further research is required to build a comprehensive picture across all forms of family violence.
2. Prioritise the delivery of short-, medium- and long-term indicators for Free From Violence to provide a sense of what changes can be expected over time.

STRENGTHENING THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

3. Develop a strategic operating framework for the primary prevention system that outlines the system architecture, including the roles and responsibilities of all parties and key points of connection.

4. Clearly communicate the distinct roles and responsibilities of Respect Victoria, the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing) and the Centre for Workforce Excellence (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing).

5. Elicit high-level commitment to a whole-of-Victorian-Government approach to primary prevention, making clear the contribution of each department and agency.

6. Actively work to grow and strengthen the primary prevention workforce by improving pathways into the workforce, improving retention and responding to varied workforce development needs.

FUNDING

7. Urgently prioritise longer term funding across the primary prevention system, including multi-year funding for organisations leading prevention activities and stable, ongoing funding for Respect Victoria.

8. Devise a contemporary estimate of the funding required to realise Free From Violence (closely linked with the theory of change and operating framework).

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

9. Ensure the nature and duration of support provided to schools meets their individual needs and enables them to implement an evidence-based school-wide approach to the Respectful Relationships initiative.
10. Strengthen regional offices' ongoing visibility of implementation effectiveness in schools.

What did the Royal Commission say and what has changed since?

The Royal Commission found that 'too little effort is devoted to preventing the occurrence of family violence in the first place'[8] and that primary prevention only attracted a small amount of funding. It called for long-term investment to support the 'complex and lengthy process' of changing behaviours and attitudes.[9]

Most specifically related to the importance of a coordinated approach to primary prevention, the Royal Commission stated that:

> *Prevention programs are most effective when they form part of a coordinated approach. The Commission therefore recommends that the Victorian Government adopt a prevention strategy as a priority component of a Statewide Family Violence Action Plan. That strategy should be implemented in the 12 months following the delivery of this report. It should be aligned to the government's proposed Gender Equality Strategy. In addition, a mechanism for overseeing family violence prevention work in Victoria should be established, providing specialist advice and support to government and the community.[10]*

The Royal Commission made a series of recommendations that relate to primary prevention.[11] These recommendations emphasised the need for:

> creating a function to oversee prevention activities in Victoria and providing expert advice, research and monitoring

> awareness-raising campaigns and prevention programs to reflect Victoria's diversity

> a primary prevention strategy, to be implemented through a series of three-year action cycles

> prevention to be emphasised in the recommended statewide family violence action plan, with required funding identified

> effective governance arrangements

> councils to include measures to prevent family violence in their public health and wellbeing plans, and to further consider how to encourage family violence prevention at the local government level

> industry planning to support the prevention workforce

> measures of prevention in government contracts

> respectful relationships education in all Victorian government schools.

Since then, the government's approach to implementing these recommendations has been laid out through several plans, commitments and legislation, most of which are captured in Figure 6 (later in this report).

Primary prevention features in Victoria's family violence plans and structures, for example:

> **Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change (2016)** commits to delivering a primary prevention strategy to outline a 'renewed focus on preventing family violence from occurring in the first place through education, community awareness and targeted programs',[12] a prevention agency with dedicated funding, a gender equality strategy and the statewide rollout of Respectful Relationships. Two of the plan's four domains have outcomes and indicators related to primary prevention: Domain 1: Prevention, which includes four long-term outcomes, and Domain 4: System (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Domains of the Family Violence Outcomes Framework

Source: Family Violence Outcomes Framework: Measurement and monitoring implementation strategy

To date, two rolling actions plans have been released to achieve the commitments outlined in this 10-year plan:

- **Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017–2020** included prevention as a headline reform area and recommitted to the Respectful Relationships initiative, establishing a prevention agency and furthering gender equality.

- **Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023** includes primary prevention as a priority area, with actions spanning prevention projects and campaigns, workforce development, research and evaluation, and coordination and oversight. Of particular relevance are actions to establish a new prevention governance group, develop a prevention workforce plan and develop a prevention system coordination model to 'build and better coordinate statewide, regional and local grassroots activities and underpin work across a wider range of settings and sectors through sustained investment'.[13]

> **Building From Strength: 10-year industry plan for family violence prevention and response (2017)** describes a vision of a highly skilled prevention workforce that strengthens the ability of the system to address the drivers of all forms of family violence and work at the population level.

> The **Centre for Workforce Excellence** was established as part of Family Safety Victoria in 2017 to drive implementation of the industry plan and, more broadly, drive development of workforces that intersect with family violence. The Centre for Workforce Excellence has recently been elevated to sit outside Family Safety Victoria, allowing its scope to be expanded to other social services sector workforces.

We note some functions, such as Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) implementation, remain within Family Safety Victoria. Key pieces of work led by the centre include:

- Rollout of the **MARAM Framework** and associated practice guidance, which have in part aimed to increase understanding (across a broad range of professions) of the drivers of family violence.

- **Preventing Family Violence & Violence Against Women Capability Framework (2017)**, which outlines the foundational skills required for workforces to deliver prevention of violence against women initiatives, 'with recognition that future development to encompass all forms of family violence will be required'.[14] There is also a Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework. Both prevention and response capability frameworks are in the process of being updated.

> The **Family Violence Research Agenda 2021–2024** sets out the Victorian Government's priorities for research on family violence and sexual violence and harm. It includes primary prevention as a research priority, with an emphasis on intersectionality.

> **Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families Agreement 2018–2028** is the principal agreement between the Victorian Government and the Aboriginal community to address family violence.[15] The agreement sets out five strategic priorities to be progressed through three successive action plans and assessed through a monitoring, evaluation and accountability plan. Strategic priority 2 is Aboriginal-led prevention and outlines a vision that 'All prevention and early intervention initiatives will be led by Aboriginal communities and based on their choices and their solutions'.[16]

As committed to in Ending Family Violence, the following have been key levers in driving primary prevention in Victoria:

> **Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women (2017)** aims to drive a whole-of-community approach to preventing family violence. It outlines activity across three phases, the first of which 'focuses on building the infrastructure for a much larger primary prevention platform in Victoria [including] the strengthening of a skilled prevention workforce and increasing investment and expanding research, evaluation and monitoring'.[17] Two associated action plans have now been released:

- **Free From Violence – First Action Plan 2018–2021** outlines the government's plan for delivering on Phase 1 of the Free From Violence strategy. It includes key actions such as establishing the family violence prevention agency and a Victorian Family Violence Prevention Research Alliance.

- **Free From Violence – Second Action Plan 2022–2025** outlines 10 key priorities to guide the next phase of work under the strategy. Four of these priorities relate to creating an enabling environment for prevention activity: governance, coordination and system development; workforce and sector development; build knowledge' and monitor and share outcomes.

> The *Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018* established a family violence prevention agency (now known as Respect Victoria), as recommended by the Royal Commission.

The complementary gender equality agenda is driven by the following:

> **Safe and Strong: Victorian Gender Equality Strategy (2016)** recognises gender equality as 'a precondition for the prevention of family violence and other forms of violence against women and girls'.[18] It acknowledges that 'for too long, state-wide coordination of gender equality and initiatives to end family violence have been sporadic and underfunded'[19] and sets out a framework for sustained activity that aims to achieve attitude and behavioural change.

> The *Gender Equality Act 2020* came into force in March 2021. The first legislation of its kind in Australia, it requires public sector agencies, universities and local councils to measure, report on and progress gender equality in their organisations. The Act also establishes the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner to oversee implementation.

Additionally, family violence prevention is included as part of health and wellbeing planning:

> The **Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023** is the third statewide plan and contains 'preventing all forms of violence' as a priority.

> The **Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework (2016)** includes outcome 2.1: Victorians live free from abuse and violence, which includes the following indicators:

    - Reduce prevalence and impact of abuse and neglect of children.

    - Reduce prevalence and impact of family violence.

> Section 26 of the *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* was amended in 2017 to require councils to include in their municipal public health and wellbeing plans the measures the council proposes to take to reduce family violence.

Figure 6: Timeline of key strategies, plans and events in primary prevention since the Royal Commission

● Overarching strategy or framework ● Legislation ● Rolling Action Plan (RAP) ● New agency ····· Linked plans

| 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |

Gender Equality - addressing the underlying **Social Context**

Safe and Strong Victorian Gender Equality Strategy

Gender Equality Act 2020

Commissioner for Gender Equality started

Primary Prevention of Family Violence and Violence Against Women - addressing the **Drivers**

Prevention of Family Violence Act 2018

Respect Victoria started

Free from Violence Strategy

Preventing Family Violence... Capability Framework*

Free from Violence RAP 2018–2021

Free from Violence 2nd RAP 2022–2025

Ending Family Violence Victoria's Plan for Change

Building from strength 10 year Industry Plan

Family Violence RAP 2017–2020

Dhelk Dja agreement 2018–2028

Dhelk Dja 3 Year Action Plan 2019–2021

Strengthening the foundations 1st RAP 2020–2023

Family Violence Reform RAP 2020–2023

Family Violence Research Agenda 2021–2024

Response to Family Violence

*Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework

1. There are dedicated prevention strategies and plans but there remains a need for a clear theory of change and a system operating framework

As described in the previous section, there are several plans and strategies related to preventing family violence. However, we found that there remains a need for a clearer representation of how Victoria's efforts will give effect to the Free From Violence strategy. We suggest this should include a clearly articulated theory of change that describes the range of activities required and links with expected short-, medium- and long-term outcomes, as is required for public health approaches. It should also include a strategic operating framework for Victoria's primary prevention system that sets out the various components of system architecture required and how the system should operate. The theory of change will also have an important role informing the actions in the third Free From Violence action plan and should be incorporated into the Free From Violence and Family Violence outcomes frameworks.
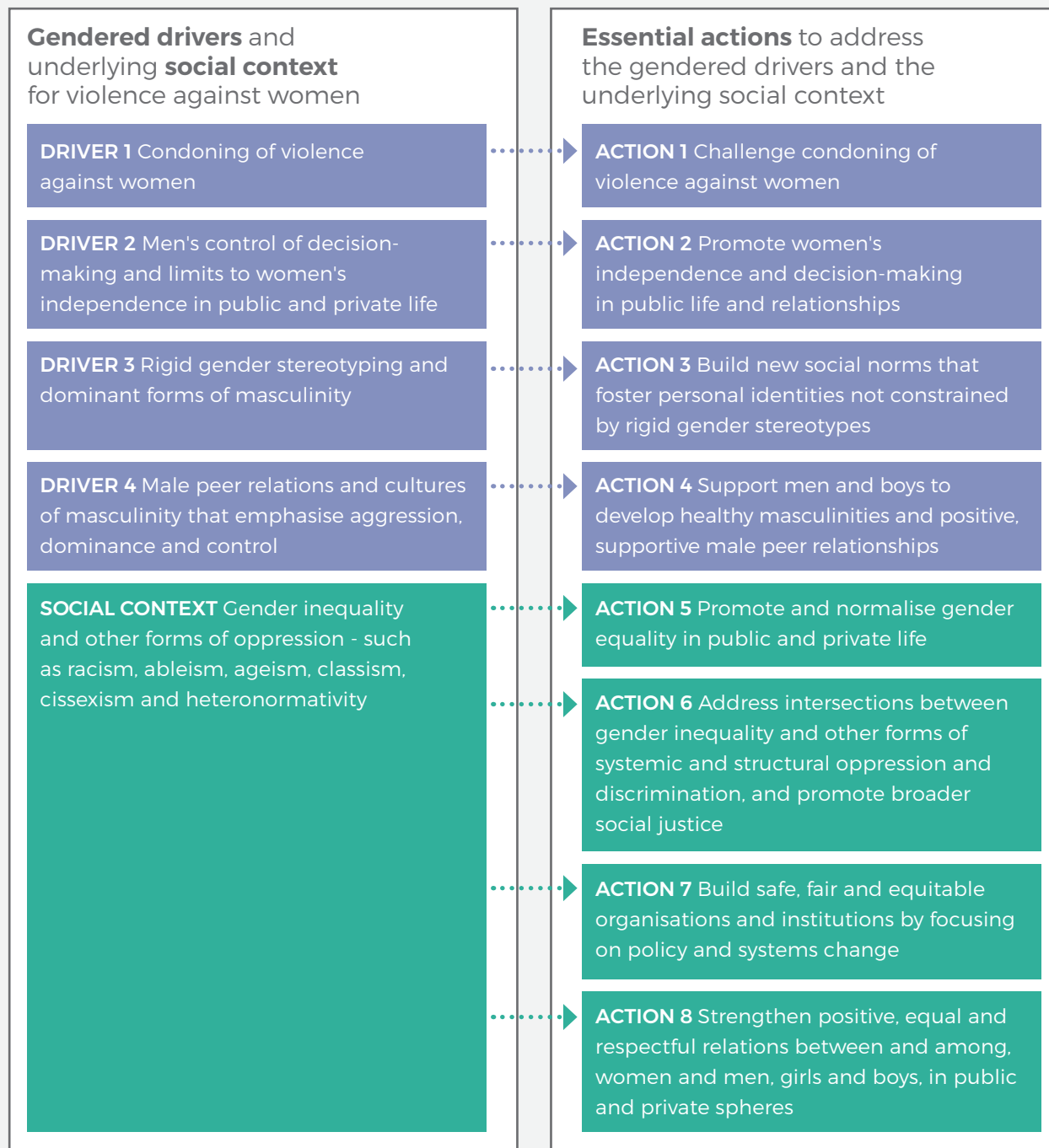
Plans and strategies driving prevention activity

The most cited framework that guides prevention activity at all levels is Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia,[20] developed by Our Watch. The first (2015) edition of this important national framework built on the world-leading work of VicHealth and was produced in partnership by VicHealth, ANROWS and Our Watch in recognition of the need for a shared, national framework that could be adopted by every industry, sector and government. In 2021 Our Watch published an updated edition. Change the Story provides a common theoretical understanding of violence against women. Importantly, it provides a clear, high-level snapshot of the drivers of violence against women, factors that reinforce violence against women, and the suite of essential actions required to prevent it (see Figure 7).

All states and territories endorsed Change the Story as the national framework for prevention under the Third Action Plan of the first National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women. However, as some key sector leaders explained to us, Change the Story is not a practice framework. It provides the common theoretical understanding, and high-level actions and principles, but these need to be translated into strategies and practice frameworks in each jurisdiction. Our Watch has already developed various practice tools and resources to assist with implementation in various settings,[21] and may be able to play a greater role in translating Change the Story into practice guidance following its recent record investment of $100.5 million over five years from the Australian Government.[22]

Similarly, organisations drawing on Changing the Picture (Our Watch's resource that describes what is required to address the drivers of violence against Aboriginal women) in their work are supported by a number of Our Watch tools and projects, however investment is required to continue its translation into practice.

Figure 7: Gendered drivers and underlying social context for violence against women, and essential actions to address these

Gendered drivers and underlying **social context** for violence against women

Essential actions to address the gendered drivers and the underlying social context

DRIVER 1 Condoning of violence against women

→ **ACTION 1** Challenge condoning of violence against women

DRIVER 2 Men's control of decision-making and limits to women's independence in public and private life

→ **ACTION 2** Promote women's independence and decision-making in public life and relationships

DRIVER 3 Rigid gender stereotyping and dominant forms of masculinity

→ **ACTION 3** Build new social norms that foster personal identities not constrained by rigid gender stereotypes

DRIVER 4 Male peer relations and cultures of masculinity that emphasise aggression, dominance and control

→ **ACTION 4** Support men and boys to develop healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships

SOCIAL CONTEXT Gender inequality and other forms of oppression - such as racism, ableism, ageism, classism, cissexism and heteronormativity

→ **ACTION 5** Promote and normalise gender equality in public and private life

→ **ACTION 6** Address intersections between gender inequality and other forms of systemic and structural oppression and discrimination, and promote broader social justice

→ **ACTION 7** Build safe, fair and equitable organisations and institutions by focusing on policy and systems change

→ **ACTION 8** Strengthen positive, equal and respectful relations between and among, women and men, girls and boys, in public and private spheres

Source: information from Our Watch (2021): Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition). P.70-71.

Victoria's overarching approach to preventing family violence is articulated in the Free From Violence strategy and its associated action plans. The second action plan clearly frames its main content in terms of:

> Free From Violence pillars (see Figure 8)

> specified action areas under each pillar

> numerous deliverables under each action area.
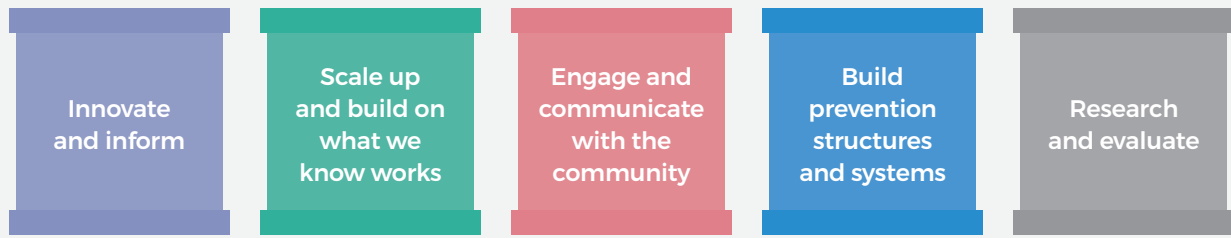
It is positive that several actions from the second action plan are drawn from other relevant plans such as Building From Strength ('the industry plan') and the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023. By bringing these actions together in one place, people won't need to consult multiples strategies and plans to piece together the primary prevention agenda. However, it is not clear how comprehensive the suite of actions is in terms of the Change the Story essential actions, or any other actions required to respond to other forms of family violence, and the key settings where activity must occur. We suggest it would be useful to map the suite of actions against, for example, the drivers of violence and against key settings where prevention activity must occur.

A public health approach to primary prevention of family violence

The Royal Commission noted that while prevention strategies targeted to population-level risk factors for family violence were relatively new, 'the success of other population-level prevention strategies relevant to public health, such as reducing smoking and increasing road safety, may be useful in informing prevention strategies relevant to all forms of family violence'.[23] Free From Violence is explicit about taking a public health approach to family violence prevention, similar to those taken for anti-smoking and skin cancer prevention: 'Both of these initiatives targeted all levels of society and were implemented across a range of settings where people live, work, learn, socialise and play, ensuring messages to end smoking or reduce skin cancer were reinforced at every possible opportunity.'[24] This approach reflects work across the socio-ecological model (see Figure 9) that is designed to be mutually reinforcing to collectively achieve outcomes.
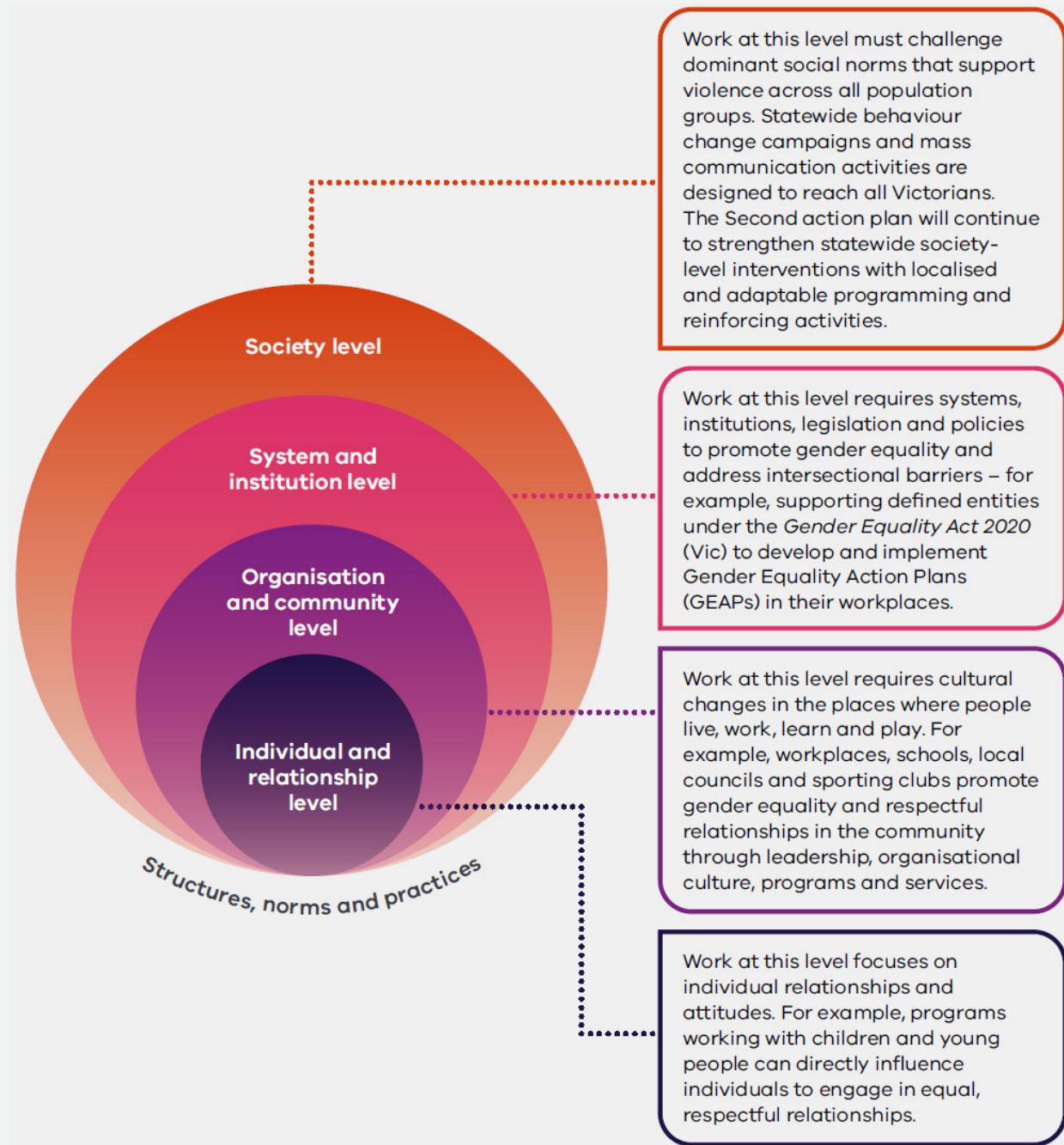
Similarly, Change the Story, which guides much of Victoria's prevention work, 'draws on the evidence base and principles of public health, particularly the need to investigate the underlying causes, determinants, or drivers of a problem, not just its immediate precursors or its impacts, in order to determine how best to prevent it'.[25]

Free From Violence provides the high level vision for primary prevention in Victoria, explains the need for action across the socio-ecological model, and outlines its priority actions, but it doesn't take the next step and explain how the strategy will be operationalised through the available system architecture. We suggest that in an emerging system such as the family violence primary prevention system, there would be substantial benefit in developing a primary prevention system operating framework to help put Free From Violence into practice. This could be done as part of the next Free From Violence action plan or as a separate framework to complement Free From Violence and should describe:

> the various components of system architecture that are in place (and those still required)

> the relationships between these components

> the roles, responsibilities and key connections for the various groups participating in the primary prevention system.

Relates to action 3

Figure 9: The socio-ecological model for primary prevention

Society level

Work at this level must challenge dominant social norms that support violence across all population groups. Statewide behaviour change campaigns and mass communication activities are designed to reach all Victorians. The Second action plan will continue to strengthen statewide society-level interventions with localised and adaptable programming and reinforcing activities.

System and institution level

Work at this level requires systems, institutions, legislation and policies to promote gender equality and address intersectional barriers – for example, supporting defined entities under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic) to develop and implement Gender Equality Action Plans (GEAPs) in their workplaces.

Organisation and community level

Work at this level requires cultural changes in the places where people live, work, learn and play. For example, workplaces, schools, local councils and sporting clubs promote gender equality and respectful relationships in the community through leadership, organisational culture, programs and services.

Individual and relationship level

Work at this level focuses on individual relationships and attitudes. For example, programs working with children and young people can directly influence individuals to engage in equal, respectful relationships.

Structures, norms and practices

Source: Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2021): Free from Violence second action plan. p.16 in Our Watch (2021): Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd edition), p.34.

The framework, which would need to be co-developed by government and the sector, needs to be broad enough to accommodate and guide the full spectrum of primary prevention efforts, including the range of grassroots activity that is being progressed with diverse sources of funding. This includes response organisations that have decided to lead primary prevention activities in their communities and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations that have an integrated approach to family violence prevention and response, and health and wellbeing more broadly.

The system operating framework could also help build a shared understanding of how the work of various parts of the system comes together to achieve the vision in Free From Violence. For example, the Free From Violence second action plan was developed based on heavy engagement with the sector and outlines agreed strategic priorities for government-funded primary prevention efforts in Victoria. However, many stakeholders delivering prevention projects on the ground did not or could not describe their role in contributing to delivering Free From Violence outcomes. While such an action plan cannot capture all primary prevention activity occurring across the state, strengthened communication, at the very least, may be required to ensure a shared understanding of how local work connects to the Free From Violence pillars.

There is also an opportunity to better link Free From Violence activities with expected outcomes. Free From Violence includes an outcomes framework that reflects Domain 1 from the Family Violence Outcomes Framework and focuses on using and building the evidence base. This is essential given the known gaps in data availability and evidence about priority groups (discussed in a later chapter). However, it does not describe an evidence-based theory of change that connects its suite of actions with the outcomes it ultimately expects to see. In particular, it does not articulate the range of interventions to be pursued within various settings that are aligned with the essential actions to address the drivers of violence against women outlined in Change the Story or the other essential actions that are needed to address the drivers of family violence for other groups.

> Relates to action 1

Furthermore, a detailed theory of change had still not been developed in time to inform the development of the second action plan, although we note it was informed by the broad program logic articulated in the Free From Violence Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework.[26] We suggest that to inform the third action plan, and to give the government a better sense of how completely or incompletely it is funding the prevention of family violence, a theory of change is needed to provide a more comprehensive picture of what is required to generate outcomes.

The development of a theory of change by Respect Victoria was a commitment in the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023, due in 2020–21, but has been delayed to allow for further engagement with the sector, and to ensure alignment with Respect Victoria's next strategic plan. Developing this theory of change is critical because it has the potential to very explicitly state the activities required to ultimately generate population-wide outcomes, and describe how far the current work program can go to deliver these. We expect that the theory of change will be strongly aligned to Change the Story, to other evidence about the prevention of family violence among diverse groups (being clear about where evidence needs to be developed) and to the key settings and life stages described in the second action plan. The theory of change will also have an important role informing the actions in the third Free From Violence action plan.

2. Clarifying roles and responsibilities should be prioritised

Free From Violence acknowledged the importance of coordinating primary prevention activities, stating that:

Everyone has a role to play in preventing family violence and all forms of violence against women. This includes state and local governments as well as businesses, community organisations and the different places where people live, work, learn, socialise and play. However, to ensure these many different approaches are consistent and mutually reinforcing, and to achieve the maximum impact across Victoria, we will coordinate prevention activities at both the statewide and local levels. Advocacy, implementation and reform will happen across the state rather than in disparate ways relating to individual programs.[27]

However, one of the key issues we identified is that while there are multiple organisations doing important prevention work – from government agencies, to peak bodies and local services – there is no clear picture for how all of these organisations and their work come together as part of a coherent prevention system (although we have attempted to depict the key players at various levels in Figure 10). While people were generally positive about the high-level governance arrangements that have been put in place, we did not observe shared accountability for primary prevention across all government agencies, and there was confusion about the specific roles and responsibilities of those leading prevention at the system level in Victoria. And although much of the local activity occurring was backed up by strong local planning, it sometimes appears disconnected from higher level strategies and structures.

Relates to action 3

We note that the review and update of the prevention and response capability frameworks currently underway includes an aim to elevate the role of prevention across the system. This offers an opportunity to provide greater clarity about roles and responsibilities for primary prevention.

Strategic leadership in primary prevention

In Victoria, various aspects of strategic leadership are shared between Respect Victoria and the Office for Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (hereon referred to as the Office for Prevention). The Centre for Workforce Excellence within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing also has a system leadership role in the prevention workforce space.

Stakeholders overwhelmingly expressed praise for the creation and work of Respect Victoria – a dedicated and highly visible primary prevention agency. Those who interact with the Office for Prevention also had great respect for its work. In relation to the Centre for Workforce Excellence having responsibility for the prevention workforce, stakeholders welcomed the concentrated focus on workforce, yet there was consensus that work done for the prevention workforce often seems like an afterthought compared with work done for the response workforce.

These parties indicated that they work closely together to lead primary prevention work; however, stakeholders expressed some confusion about their respective roles and responsibilities. As Gender Equity Victoria (the independent peak body for organisations, practitioners and individuals promoting gender equity in Victoria) stated in its 2020 submission to us, 'it appears that there is a confusing matrix of responsibilities for oversight, technical advice, research and accredited workforce training'[28] extending across Respect Victoria, the Centre for Workforce Excellence and the Office for Prevention. We suggest it would be timely to revisit and clearly define the respective roles of the three groups.

While some aspects of Respect Victoria's role are very clear – namely, monitoring, research and the provision of expert advice – there are other elements, particularly related to coordinating prevention activity, that remain unclear. For example, while the Royal Commission saw Respect Victoria as overseeing prevention activity in Victoria, and Free From Violence explicitly stated that Respect Victoria would oversee and coordinate prevention activity across the state, the legislation that created Respect Victoria does not explicitly talk about Respect Victoria having an oversight or coordination role. Respect Victoria advised us that while this coordination role is not explicit in the legislation, they believe it is implicit and have received feedback that other sector organisations want Respect Victoria to play this role. Respect Victoria's strategic plan explains that it exists 'to drive primary prevention over the long term and ensure prevention efforts are considered and coordinated'.[29]
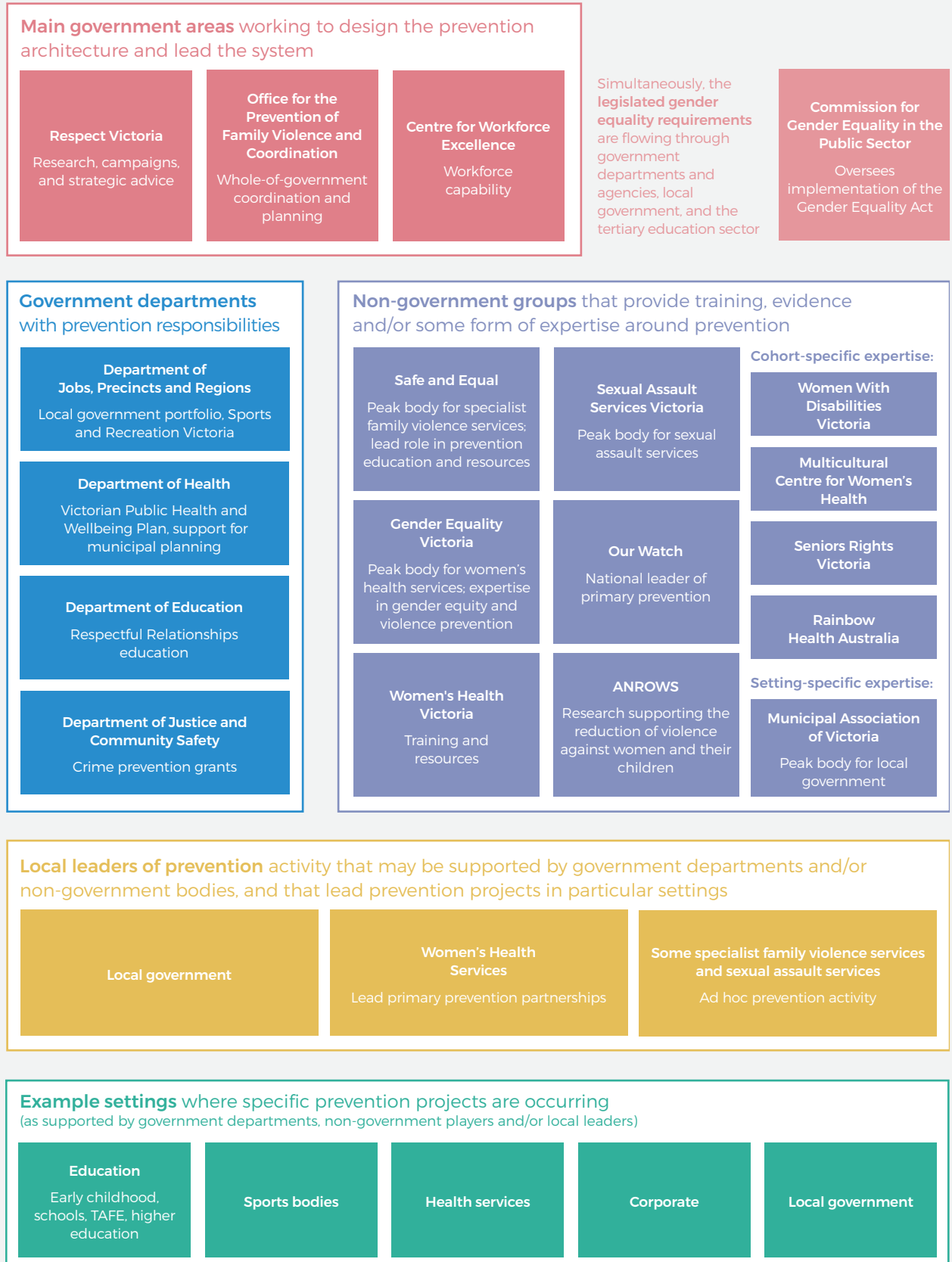
On the other hand, the Office for Prevention explained that its role includes overseeing the Victorian Government's work to prevent violence by fostering a culture of equality and respect in Victorian communities and implementing Free From Violence, in partnership with Respect Victoria and the family violence prevention sector.[30]

The development of a prevention system coordination model by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing was included as an action in the Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023, due for implementation by mid-2021. But this action has been marked as 'in progress' in 2020, 2021 and 2022.[31] In fact, we understand that Respect Victoria is leading this work, as reflected in the Free From Violence second action plan. We are advised that this work is underway but we have not yet seen specific evidence of a coordination model.

We suggest that clarifying the roles of these leading agencies is an essential component of developing an effective system architecture. Respect Victoria's recent leadership change and adjustment of strategic approach (including withdrawal from internal government governance groups and a focus on work to engage external sectors) may help create a greater distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the two lead prevention agencies.

Relates to action 4

Figure 10: A snapshot of key roles and responsibilities in Victoria's prevention system

Main government areas working to design the prevention architecture and lead the system

Respect Victoria	Office for the Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination	Centre for Workforce Excellence
Research, campaigns, and strategic advice	Whole-of-government coordination and planning	Workforce capability

Simultaneously, the **legislated gender equality requirements** are flowing through government departments and agencies, local government, and the tertiary education sector

Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector

Oversees implementation of the Gender Equality Act

Government departments with prevention responsibilities

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Local government portfolio, Sports and Recreation Victoria

Department of Health
Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, support for municipal planning

Department of Education
Respectful Relationships education

Department of Justice and Community Safety
Crime prevention grants

Non-government groups that provide training, evidence and/or some form of expertise around prevention

Safe and Equal
Peak body for specialist family violence services; lead role in prevention education and resources

Sexual Assault Services Victoria
Peak body for sexual assault services

Cohort-specific expertise:

Women With Disabilities Victoria

Multicultural Centre for Women's Health

Gender Equality Victoria
Peak body for women's health services; expertise in gender equity and violence prevention

Our Watch
National leader of primary prevention

Seniors Rights Victoria

Rainbow Health Australia

Women's Health Victoria
Training and resources

ANROWS
Research supporting the reduction of violence against women and their children

Setting-specific expertise:

Municipal Association of Victoria
Peak body for local government

Local leaders of prevention activity that may be supported by government departments and/or non-government bodies, and that lead prevention projects in particular settings

Local government	Women's Health Services	Some specialist family violence services and sexual assault services
	Lead primary prevention partnerships	Ad hoc prevention activity

Example settings where specific prevention projects are occurring
(as supported by government departments, non-government players and/or local leaders)

Education	Sports bodies	Health services	Corporate	Local government
Early childhood, schools, TAFE, higher education				

Note: This diagram seeks to represent the main organisations brought to our attention through our monitoring and does not capture all organisations with a role in primary prevention, nor does it capture governance arrangements and partnerships.

Departments that support work on the ground

Beyond the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Department of Education and Training appears to have the most developed and accepted role in family violence prevention, largely because of its established role in delivering the Respectful Relationships initiative in Victorian Government schools and participating Catholic and independent schools. It also delivers Respectful Relationships professional learning to early childhood educators in Victorian Government–funded kindergartens. The Department of Education's recent work in the TAFE sector provides an effective example of how departments can support the development of primary prevention approaches within particular settings (see Box 1 and Figure 11).

We also understand that the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions has some visibility of prevention work because of its responsibility for local government and for Sport and Recreation Victoria, both of which are spaces where there are dedicated gender equality and primary prevention efforts occurring. The Department of Health leads the development and implementation of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (which includes preventing all forms of violence as a priority), funds women's health services and has a role in ensuring local governments meet legislated responsibilities in the Public Health and Wellbeing Act that relate to preventing family violence.

Box 1: Primary prevention in the TAFE setting

The Respect and Equality in TAFE project was funded by the Department of Education and Training with the aim of increasing the implementation of best practice primary prevention of violence against women by Victorian TAFEs. Our Watch worked with the Department of Education and Training and five pilot TAFEs to develop a whole-of-institution approach to primary prevention in TAFEs. Our Watch's evaluation of the pilot found the framework to be useful and practical for TAFEs, and suggested the need for further consideration and focus on supporting TAFEs with ongoing funding, tools, resources and oversight to help them embed the approach and support all staff to understand the value of the work.

Source: Based on information provided by the Department of Education and Training.

However, we found there is not a comprehensive, whole-of-government view of what each department's and agency's role and responsibilities are in preventing family violence and contributing to achieving Free From Violence outcomes. For example, we consider the role of the Department of Health and the health sector in the primary prevention of family violence requires clarification, given the profound impact family violence has on health outcomes. Some stakeholders perceived that violence prevention has been deprioritised in the 2019–2023 Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and other related plans and guidelines. The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan includes violence prevention as a priority but not as one of the four priorities elevated to 'focus areas'. This represents a change from the previous plan, which did not designate focus areas. The Department of Health disagrees with this characterisation and notes its recent doubling of investment in women's health services, which are the local primary prevention leads, and the ability of community health services, Local Public Health Units and others to contribute to preventing family violence. Given these different perspectives, clarification with services is likely required.

Additionally, it was brought to our attention that the Department of Justice and Community Safety runs a crime prevention grants program. The focus of the funded projects is public safety and preventing offending, but some of the projects have links to family violence prevention. For example, $240,000 was provided to Big Hart Inc in 2021 for the Something to Talk About program, which is using digital art workshops, mentoring and peer-to-peer messaging to prevent the use of coercive control among students in Years 5–8 at schools in Frankston North.

Figure 11: Primary prevention model developed for the TAFE sector in Victoria

VISION

FOR RESPECT AND EQUALITY IN TAFE

TAFEs are future-focused in the delivery of value to students, industry and government and actively support gender equality in Australia by ensuring equality of opportunity in vocational education and employment.

1. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

Appoint an individual or department with seniority and adequate support to lead and coordinate a whole-of-TAFE approach across the five domains.

2. TAKE ACTION AND TRACK PROGRESS

DOMAIN	WORKPLACE	STUDENTS	TEACHING AND LEARNING	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY
LEAD	Leaders/ Business and Operations/HR	Student Services/ HR (OHS)	Educators	Communications/ Marketing	Student Services/ HR/Skills and Jobs Centres
ACTION	TAFE workplace structures, strategies and policies that promote gender equality are established and reviewed.	With active involvement from students TAFEs are gender equitable environments where students are safe and respected.	Course delivery modes incorporate and promote gender equality and respect into teaching practice.	Gender equality and respect are integrated into TAFE communications.	TAFE actively engages with industry and community partners for a gender equal future.

3. TRANSFORM BUSINESS AS USUAL

1. TAFEs enable **gender equality** in education over the life course.
2. TAFEs are vocational-educators and **employers of choice** for women.
3. TAFEs **say no** to discrimination, sexism, harassment and violence against women.
4. TAFE campuses are **safe places** where students and staff are treated with respect.

While we understand that relatively new entities like Respect Victoria and the Office for Prevention now lead on primary prevention work, we suggest decisions about the roles and responsibilities of departments and the sectors they lead need to occur at a more strategic, whole-of-government level.

Such joined-up approaches have been taken through the Victorian State Disability Plan and the Victorian Road Safety Strategy, for example. There is also a precedent for whole-of-government effort in the family violence space. For example:

> As we discussed in our Early Identification of Family Violence within Universal Services report, the MARAM and information sharing reforms introduced clear roles and responsibilities across government in identifying family violence and preventing future harm.

> The Gender Equality Act has created legislated obligations for all government departments and agencies in working towards gender equality, which we know is an important contributor to preventing gender-based violence.

We suggest more needs to be done to work towards a whole-of-government commitment and effort to prevent family violence, with clarity provided about what each department and agency's contribution to primary prevention will be. We also note that the obligations created through the reforms listed above are providing a foundation for primary prevention across government. For example, the MARAM Framework clearly outlines the drivers of family violence with an intersectional lens, and the work to comply with the Gender Equality Act provides an opportunity for public sector organisations to build their awareness of gender equality and its role in violence prevention. It may be worth considering whether a legislative mechanism is required to drive primary prevention work across government departments and agencies. But with or without a legislative obligation, the Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector reminded us that it is essential to work towards achieving a genuine, strategic commitment by departments, otherwise there is a danger that this type of work is seen as a compliance exercise.

<div style="float:right">Relates to action 3</div>

As discussed in our Family Violence Reform Governance report,[32] internal government governance arrangements have been strengthened over the past couple of years, with the creation of the Primary Prevention Working Group and the elevation of accountability for prevention outcomes by adding family violence prevention to the remit of the Family Violence Reform Board. That report makes some suggestions for improvement, including expanded membership for the Primary Prevention Working Group (which has now been addressed). Noting the reform governance structures in place to drive the work, we suggest the Victorian Secretaries Board will need to endorse the final position around a whole-of-government commitment to primary prevention, and drive activity within departments.

Organisations leading local prevention work

We identified three key groups that are leading prevention work in their local communities:

> women's health services, which drive local capacity building, health promotion, gender equality and violence prevention activities

> local government, which has a developing role in family violence prevention and pursuing gender equality in local government areas

> individual specialist family violence and sexual assault services and other community organisations, including many Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, that have decided to pursue primary prevention in their local community.

The three broad groups listed above are leading a range of local primary prevention initiatives of various sizes, and these often align to one or more of the drivers of violence towards women articulated in Change the Story. While we heard about many inspiring local prevention activities, it was not always clear whether these were part of a coherent approach to achieving agreed outcomes.

Free From Violence committed to building on existing partnerships to ensure there are:

> *… local-level prevention alliances and community partnerships that bring together the right people and resources to coordinate and deliver primary prevention initiatives at the local level. These alliances will help ensure that prevention activities are consistent and coherent and support consistent outcomes across the state.*[33]

Most stakeholders we met with see women's health services as the primary prevention experts. They are leading primary prevention partnerships locally and have led grassroots activities to prevent violence against women for many years. There are good examples of projects that have been developed through these partnerships, which include, for example, local government, women's health services, specialist family violence services and others (see also Box 2). Recent funding commitments suggest a strengthened, ongoing role for women's health services in preventing family violence and all forms of violence against women. For example, the 2022–23 State Budget provided $19.4 million over two years to Victoria's 12 women's health services, representing a doubling of their previous recurrent funding of $9.1 million. Approximately 20 per cent of the funding is for prevention of gender-based violence activity. Women's health services also received $4.8 million over four years for violence prevention to coincide with the launch of the Free From Violence second action plan in December 2021. For each women's health service, this equates to approximately $250,000 per year for violence prevention activity.

Box 2: Ambassadors for Gender Equality and Respect – an example of local partnership work

The Ambassadors for Gender Equality and Respect project was piloted in three local secondary schools in 2018, with funding from Yarra Ranges Council. The project was developed by a group of partners: Inspiro, GenderWorks, Yarra Ranges Council, Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS), Cire Services and Community School, Little Yarra Steiner School, Upper Yarra Secondary College, Eastern Health and Women's Health East.

Designed to complement Respectful Relationships education in schools, the project teaches participating students about the importance of gender equality over a series of workshops and supports them to design and lead their own activities to raise awareness among their peers about gender equality.

The pilot project's evaluation found that, after the training, all participants:

> acknowledged an increase in knowledge and understanding of gender equality

> identified an increase in skills and knowledge in how to be an activist for change

> felt more comfortable and motivated to advocate for change.

The evaluation noted that ongoing support for the students to deliver their projects would be essential to ensure success.

The Youth Ambassador for Gender Equality Respect still runs in multiple local government areas in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, with participants chosen through an expression of interest process. Participants have the benefit of being able to use the Take Action for Gender Equality and Respect student voice resource co-designed by EDVOS, Inspiro and the young people who took part in the pilot.

Source: Information gathered from Women's Health East's webpage: https://whe.org.au/tfer/tfer-projects-2/ (accessed 24 May 2022) and Inspiro (2018): Ambassadors for Gender Equality and Respect 2018 Pilot Evaluation Report.

As acknowledged in Free From Violence, and by the Municipal Association of Victoria, local government is ideally placed to take a lead role in primary prevention work because they have numerous points of connection with their local communities. But funding has not previously been provided to employ dedicated staff to lead prevention work within councils (we note that some councils may fund these positions themselves), and there are only two funded positions at the Municipal Association of Victoria to provide support to all local government areas. We understand there has, therefore, been considerable variability between councils' efforts to prevent family violence. More recently, the Free From Violence Local Government Family Violence Program is providing three years of funding to 15 councils to help them embed a whole-of-council approach to primary prevention and gender equality by implementing the yet-to-be-released Local Government Guide for Preventing Family Violence and All Forms of Violence Against Women. All other councils are also encouraged to use this resource.

While there are good examples of women's health services and local government collaborating on primary prevention projects, their respective roles and responsibilities, and how they should interact, appears to remain unresolved.

We are also aware that some specialist family violence services, like EDVOS, and some specialist sexual assault services have chosen to work in the primary prevention space despite not being funded for this other than through ad hoc grants and not being considered a prevention agency (see Box 3 for an example of the work EDVOS is leading). Similarly, Gippsland Lakes Complete Health is a provider of a range of health and support services, including family violence services, but has also undertaken family violence prevention work in the local community for many years, yet has only received family violence prevention funding through a Victorian Bushfire Appeal recovery grant in 2020. Consideration of how these organisations and their prevention work fits into the system will help generate a more complete picture of primary prevention activity in Victoria.

There seems to be a disconnect between these local activities and statewide structures and frameworks. Indeed, women's health services raised a lack of vertical integration from the local primary prevention partnerships they lead into statewide governance structures. In 2020, Gender Equity Victoria noted:

> *... a lack of opportunity for vertical communication from government down and for grassroots work to feed back up. Respect Victoria and the Office of Women haven't established any clear communication processes with the sector yet.[34]*

There has been progress in this area, with many non-government stakeholders saying they were pleased to have a seat at the table through involvement in the Prevention Sector Reference Group, which brings together government and sector stakeholders to discuss primary prevention work and priorities across the state. However, anecdotally, it remains difficult to feed good local practice up through statewide structures to allow for the opportunity to have work considered for scaling up, despite positive relationships with departments and governance involvement. Finding ways to improve this vertical integration will need to be considered as part of any efforts to create better links between the sector and government.

Stakeholders raised a number of ways to address these matters, including:

> **Relates to action 3**

> funding for local coordinating positions equivalent to regional Principal Strategic Advisors (PSAs, who convene family violence regional integration committees) – such primary prevention coordinators could further improve local relationships and come together (like the PSAs do with the Statewide Family Violence Integration Advisory Committee) to discuss progress and issues, and link in with government

> funding a dedicated primary prevention officer in each local government area to drive activity within councils

> greater strategic guidance about local roles, responsibilities and areas of focus to ensure the right mix of activity is occurring locally while also retaining scope for local innovation.

Box 3: EDVOS's Ways to Play project

Ways to Play is a primary prevention project led by EDVOS in partnership with organisations in the Outer Eastern Metropolitan Region. Ways to Play Workshops aim to educate parents or carers on how to play with their child/ren (aged 0-5 years) in a way that is free from gender stereotypes, and promotes gender equality and respectful relationships. At the end of the sessions, families are given a Level Playground Family Play Kit with activities, games and ideas to keep building on the healthy play from the workshops. (Level Playground is a broader suite of resources and programs targeted at primary prevention in the earlier years that EDVOS has curated.)

The Ways to Play project has received an overwhelmingly positive response, including the need for a waitlist of families who wished to attend the workshops. When evaluated, 86 per cent of parents/caregivers strongly agreed that their awareness of promoting healthy messages around gender equality and respectful relationships had increased due to the workshops. The workshops take place in local libraries, community centres and parks, so they also provide parents with opportunities to make connections in the local community.

The project was originally funded through the Outer East Primary Care Partnership grant program, before receiving further funding to deliver sessions across Victoria. Due to the success and importance of the project, EDVOS endeavours to source sustainable funding to continue this work.

Source: Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor, based on information provided by EDVOS.

3. There are opportunities to create a more inclusive and joined-up system

In addition to clarifying roles and responsibilities for all parts of the primary prevention system, our consultations revealed areas where key system links need to be strengthened. In particular, the following were raised as areas for improvement:

> better engagement of experts representing diverse communities and specialisations (such as women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ communities, migrant and refugee communities, and the sexual assault sector)

> links between mainstream prevention effort and culturally relevant prevention activity in the Aboriginal community

> links between work occurring in the healthy masculinities space with the broader family violence and prevention of violence against women sector

> links between the family violence prevention and response sectors

> links between Respect Victoria and mainstream systems (such as the business community) at the strategic level.

Improving connections with diverse expertise

Women With Disabilities Victoria, the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health, Rainbow Health Australia and Sexual Assault Services Victoria all raised the need for their expertise around particular groups and/or forms of violence against women to be sought early, to allow for true co-design, and to ensure primary prevention efforts are inclusive. Examples brought to our attention include:

> Women With Disabilities Victoria was asked to be involved in a prevention project by a major sector stakeholder, but the platform being used was not accessible so involvement was limited; they note that government and the agencies it funds need to adhere to their own accessibility guidelines.

> The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health explained that a lack of cultural diversity within Victorian prevention campaign materials means that migrant and refugee communities will not see themselves in the messaging and will not engage.

> Sexual Assault Services Victoria explained that the specialist sexual assault sector has typically been underutilised in family violence prevention work, particularly given their strong links to schools and long history delivering primary prevention education focused on consent. The specialist sexual assault sector is also often called to schools to provide a trauma-informed response to disclosures of sexual violence arising in the context of the Respectful Relationships initiative.

As the head of policy and programs at Rainbow Health Australia powerfully told us:

The commitment to engaging with community has to be embedded at the policy level or this work will continue to fail.

We suggest that each area of diversity needs to be carefully considered, with input from communities sought to maximise engagement and effectiveness, and that, more broadly, a holistic, intersectional approach to primary prevention is required.

A key challenge is that these organisations, while having important expertise, are small and don't always have the capacity to engage as fully as they would like. Careful planning and consideration are required to ensure these organisations are appropriately engaged but not overwhelmed by government requests.

Better connecting mainstream prevention effort for the Aboriginal community

Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations we spoke to say they have had no involvement in Respectful Relationships in schools. They suggested that a tailored approach was required to ensure effectiveness for Aboriginal students. More broadly, there is an acknowledged need to 'work across government to ensure programs and initiatives to prevent family violence address racism and discrimination as forms and drivers of family violence against Aboriginal people',[35] but it is unclear how much of this is occurring outside of Aboriginal-led work. These areas are explored in more detail in our forthcoming companion report on Aboriginal-led prevention and early intervention.

Engaging men and boys

Prevention strategies and frameworks acknowledge that effectively preventing family violence and all forms of violence against women requires the engagement of men and boys. The fourth essential action to address the drivers of violence against women in Change the Story is to 'support men and boys to develop healthy masculinities and positive, supportive male peer relationships'. Our Watch's evidence review, Men in Focus, goes into further detail by suggesting several considerations for policy makers to strengthen work addressing masculinities as part of broader primary prevention efforts.[36]

The Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023 included a commitment to 'community organisations targeting men and boys delivering grassroots programs that are designed to promote healthier masculinities, gender equality, building relationship skills, and social connections'. Consistent with this, in May 2022, the Victorian Government announced two healthy masculinities programs that are being piloted in selected Respectful Relationships schools:

> The Man Cave is delivering one-day workshops to 12- to 16-year-old male students in 100 schools.

> Jesuit Social Services is piloting its Modelling Respect and Equality program for school staff in up to 100 schools.

Dr Michael Flood from the Queensland University of Technology – an expert in this space – told us of promising work happening to support healthy masculinities. However, it is on a small scale, variable in quality, and sometimes disconnected from primary prevention more broadly. He emphasised the need for government to help:

> lift this work up to become more systemic – ensuring the right strategic direction, workforce capacity and funding are in place to enable the work to be effective

> ensure work to promote healthy masculinities is an integrated part of the primary prevention strategy, rather than being siloed

> engage a range of leaders in healthy masculinities and hold leaders to account for actions that go against gender equality and violence prevention (we note this is part of activating 'private sector, civil society and community leadership', which Change the Story describes as a required element of an effective prevention infrastructure)

> generate quality standards to ensure programs have a gender transformative approach (oriented towards transforming gendered behaviours, norms and structures), are not doing further harm, and are done in partnership with those working to promote gender equality and prevent violence against women.

Connection between prevention and response sectors

There is no doubt that primary prevention requires a distinct and dedicated focus, but government strategies and plans have consistently communicated the need for the prevention and response sectors to be better linked. For example, the industry plan stated that:

We need to consider stronger links between specialist primary prevention and response sectors, to support mutually reinforcing action to stop family violence and violence against women.[37]

The Free From Violence second action plan explained that:

The prevention system is part of the broader family violence system. This system exists on a continuum from primary prevention to early intervention (secondary prevention or intervening early to prevent recurring violence) and response (tertiary prevention or preventing long-term violence).

Each of these approaches is important, interdependent and needs to reinforce each other. Linking the prevention system with the broader family violence system ensures that those experiencing or using violence can safely access services. Primary prevention supports and complements early intervention and crisis response efforts by reducing pressure on these other parts of the system.[38]

A number of stakeholders reiterated the need for all family violence workforces to have some understanding of the full spectrum. They explained that whenever prevention activity is occurring, disclosures will happen, and prevention specialists need to have a basic understanding of how to initially respond and refer. Some of the Office for Prevention's existing practices already support this, such as including questions about how organisations will manage disclosures in grant application forms and encouraging organisations to participate in MARAM training, and there is an opportunity to strengthen these efforts in line with the revised prevention capability framework. This is also important for surge capacity in the disaster context; for example, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many prevention practitioners rapidly transitioned into response work due to pressure on response services. Their capacity to assist in this way to support victim survivors is essential, as is protecting the specialist nature of both prevention and response roles.

We also heard (for example, from EDVOS and sexual assault services) that there can be benefits in an organisation doing both prevention and response work (because the prevention work provides a sense of hope for response workers) and that prevention and response practitioners can learn from one another.

Understanding the gendered drivers and reinforcing factors associated with family violence is part of the foundational knowledge required for all professionals who respond to family violence, as reflected in the Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework[39] and the MARAM framework and associated practice guides. Safe and Equal confirmed that having such an understanding is critical to response work while also being able to acknowledge and respond to the individual experiences of violence. Rainbow Health explained that when response workers understand the personal and societal factors contributing to a perpetrator's use of control and violence, they can use this knowledge to help the victim survivor understand how they have been groomed or controlled. Yet, a Gippsland response organisation we met with noted that some graduates come to them without a foundational understanding of the gendered drivers of violence.

While this issue was primarily raised with us in relation to individual worker capabilities, some stakeholders did raise the need for more strategic links between the prevention and response sectors. For example, they noted that emerging trends in the response space can also help to inform and target prevention efforts. We suggest there is a need to consider both necessary crossover capabilities at the worker level (perhaps through the revision of the prevention and response capability frameworks that is currently underway) and the most useful points of linkage between prevention and response structures at the strategic level.

Connections with mainstream architecture

One of the required elements of prevention infrastructure outlined in Change the Story is 'private sector, civil society and community leadership'. We did not look closely at this element, and it is arguably the component of system architecture that is least developed; however, we do note that the Supporting Multicultural and Faith Communities to Prevent Family Violence: 2021 Grant Program funded 33 organisations to provide community leadership in preventing family violence.

Change the Story explained that:

> *Civil society and private organisations – including those that represent specific settings and sectors such as workplaces or sporting codes, and those that represent specific communities – can provide leadership on this issue (including) by supporting and encouraging primary prevention efforts among their sectors, members and networks ...* [40]

Our discussions with Respect Victoria have highlighted how critical it is to gain primary prevention buy-in at scale in these spheres. For example, while individual businesses might want to take action to prevent family violence, Respect Victoria and other lead prevention organisations have minimal capacity to engage in one-on-one support for such businesses. It makes far more sense for Respect Victoria to link into existing representative and influential bodies in other systems so they can provide prevention leadership within their respective sectors. The framework we suggest in section 1 should help to articulate the sorts of actions needed in these spheres, and an approach to bringing these to fruition.

4. A highly skilled workforce exists and will need to be built upon to support the architecture and realise the intent of Free From Violence

Workforce is a critical part of prevention system architecture, with the ability to achieve outcomes in large part depending on having a skilled, stable workforce in place to deliver the work.

<div style="float:right">Relates to action 6</div>

Who makes up the prevention workforce?

Noting that the prevention capability framework is in the process of being updated, the inaugural version defines the prevention workforce in two parts:[41]

1. **Prevention practitioners** – those who 'specialise in designing, implementing and monitoring actions to prevent violence against women. [Prevention of violence against women] practitioners must understand the drivers of violence against women and are engaged in activity that focuses on actions to prevent violence before it starts' (though we understand the workforce prefers the term 'prevention specialists').

2. **Prevention contributors** – 'those who are located within specific sectors or disciplines where participation in [prevention of violence against women] practice may be a part of their role, but is not their primary focus. These practitioners include teachers, health sector staff, sports administrators, local government staff, human resources staff, child and family services staff, evaluators, workforce trainers or communications personnel.'

Many stakeholders found it difficult to define precisely who the primary prevention workforce is, with one commenting that this could change from year to year, depending on where grants are allocated and shifting organisational priorities. Most stakeholders were clear, however, that prevention specialists in women's health services are the main experts in this space. We understand that the review of the prevention capability framework will look at supporting a clearer definition of the roles within prevention, including that of prevention contributors.

In preparation for the 2019–20 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence, the size of the primary prevention specialist workforce in Victoria had been estimated to be 352 people; however, there were 517 responses to the primary prevention census survey. The survey findings report outlined possible explanations for this: the population size may have been underestimated or respondents may have mistakenly classified themselves as prevention specialists.

Gender Equity Victoria told us that compared with the response sector, the specialist prevention workforce relies on networks and partnerships to progress its work, and that, for this reason, it is often seen as 'messy'. Similarly, Women's Health Victoria explained that there is not a 'primary prevention service system' like there is in the family violence response space; rather, there are people in all types of organisations that together constitute the prevention workforce. Indeed, the workforce census results confirm that prevention specialists work across a range of different organisation types and settings (see Figure 12).

While the dispersed nature of the workforce is not necessarily a problem, having an accurate picture of the specialist prevention workforce will be essential for future workforce planning.

Figure 12: Proportion of prevention specialist by organisation type

They work across **a range of different organisation types**, the top 10 being:
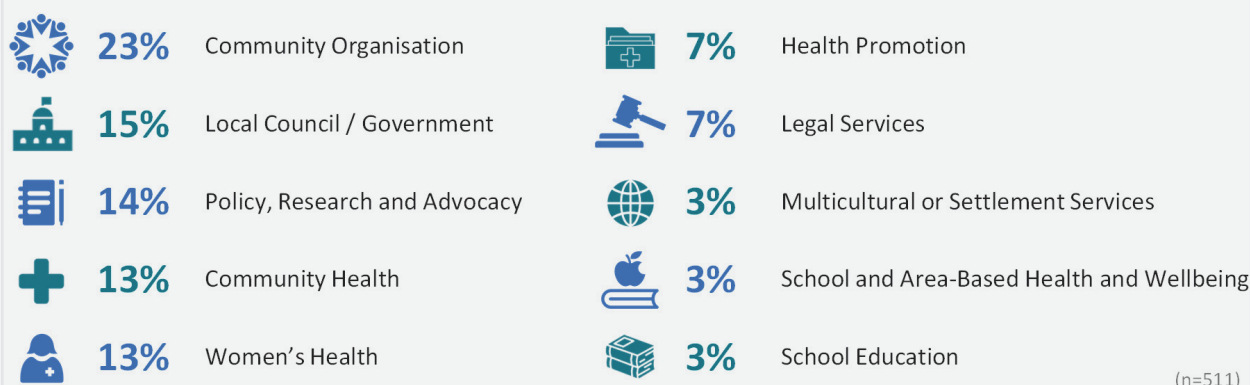
23%	Community Organisation		**7%**	Health Promotion
15%	Local Council / Government		**7%**	Legal Services
14%	Policy, Research and Advocacy		**3%**	Multicultural or Settlement Services
13%	Community Health		**3%**	School and Area-Based Health and Wellbeing
13%	Women's Health		**3%**	School Education

(n=511)

Source: Orima Research (2020): Family Safety Victoria 2019-20 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence: Survey Findings Report – Primary Prevention Workforce

Workforce strategy

The industry plan recognised the need for a 'strong pipeline of dedicated, skilled and diverse workers for the specialist family violence and primary prevention sectors' to ensure the full value of the Victorian Government's substantial investment into family violence reform can be realised. More recent consultation with the sector around Victoria's approach to primary prevention reiterated the need for the government to pursue strategies that aim to widen the prevention workforce pipeline.[42]

Initiatives led by the Centre for Workforce Excellence have had the primary prevention workforce in scope. For example:

> The family violence attraction and recruitment campaign includes resources aiming to attract people to the prevention workforce and links to prevention roles included on the jobs portal.

> The Family Violence and Sexual Assault Graduate Program is trialling the inclusion of primary prevention placements, with two graduates taking on primary prevention roles in 2022.

> The Fast Track program (delivered by Safe and Equal) aims in part to fast track the supply of knowledgeable and skilled practitioners able to take up mid-level roles in the primary prevention of violence against women.

We do not have enough information to comment on the effectiveness of these initiatives, but it is well accepted that a dedicated plan for the family violence prevention workforce is required, building on existing work such as the prevention capability framework and the industry plan. The Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023 included the following action to be completed by early 2021:

A plan for supporting the current and growing primary prevention workforce is developed in consultation with stakeholders, including ways to engage with broader workforces to help in prevention efforts. This plan will complement the Industry Plan for workforce development.
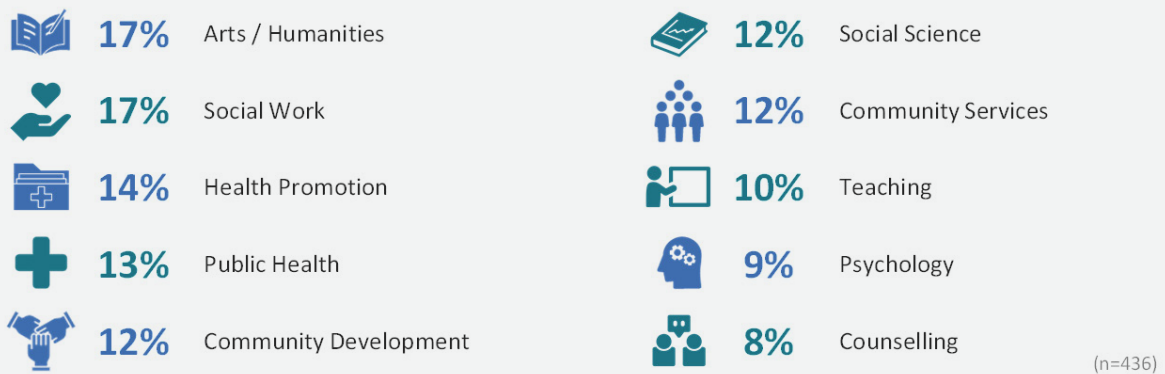
Behind the scenes during 2020 and 2021, there have been some significant pieces of work completed to map the workforce and prevention infrastructure more broadly, but this has not yet been translated into an agreed plan. The sector is eagerly awaiting the release of this work, with one stakeholder wanting to know what the approach will be before planning for its recent four-year funding allocation for workforce capability building. One opportunity to progress this work is embedding it within the forthcoming second rolling action plan to the industry plan.

Undoubtedly, widening the pipeline and attracting more people to primary prevention roles will be vital as prevention necessarily becomes a growing focus within the reform program to reduce the rate of family violence. This will likely need to be done in tandem with work to clarify the system architecture and theory of change. It must involve Respect Victoria, the Office for Prevention and the Centre for Workforce Excellence, in consultation with the sector.
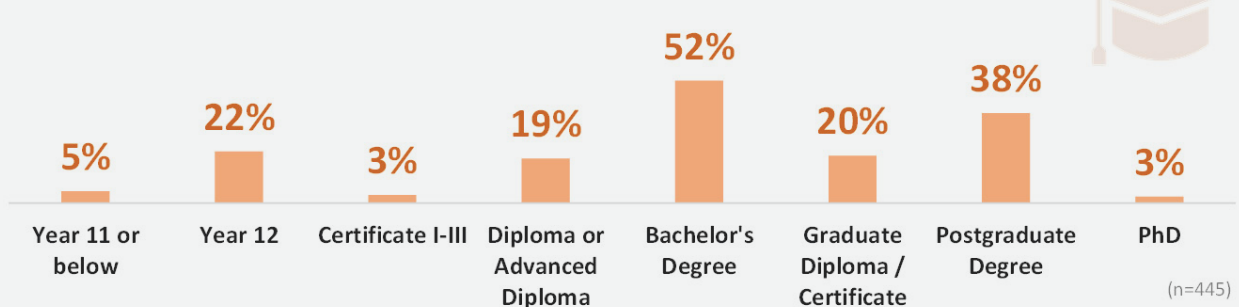
The plan will need to carefully account for the workforce's professional development needs. Prevention specialists tend to have a high level of education (see Figure 13), but they also vary in their level of confidence to undertake family violence prevention work and are committed to their professional development. For example, the workforce census found that around half (49 per cent) of respondents were extremely or very confident that they had enough training and experience to perform their role effectively (there was a higher level of confidence for specialists in women's health services: 68 per cent). Thirty-three per cent of respondents said that increased availability/accessibility of training or professional development would help them carry out their role more effectively. And approximately 73 per cent of survey respondents identified one or more areas in which they wanted more training. Consideration of how to build capability in an integrated workforce, such as the workforce within Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, which do not include prevention specialists specifically, is also needed.

Figure 13: Education level and areas of study of prevention specialists

This workforce has completed study in **various different fields** , the top 10 being:

17%	Arts / Humanities		12%	Social Science
17%	Social Work		12%	Community Services
14%	Health Promotion		10%	Teaching
13%	Public Health		9%	Psychology
12%	Community Development		8%	Counselling

(n=436)

They most commonly hold a **Bachelor's Degree** or a **Postgraduate Degree**

Year 11 or below	Year 12	Certificate I-III	Diploma or Advanced Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate Diploma / Certificate	Postgraduate Degree	PhD
5%	22%	3%	19%	52%	20%	38%	3%

(n=445)

Source: Orima Research (2020): Family Safety Victoria 2019-20 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence: Survey Findings Report – Primary Prevention Workforce

More broadly, Safe and Equal suggested there would be value in better articulating primary prevention roles beyond the currently used broad terms of prevention 'specialists' and 'contributors', which are terms that the diverse range of professionals working in prevention may not identify with, so that the workforce strategy, including capacity building, can be more targeted.

As highlighted in our 2020 report, there is a need for a concurrent focus on workforce retention to maximise the long-term impact of attraction and recruitment initiatives. Many stakeholders commented that pay and conditions for primary prevention roles need to be addressed, highlighting issues such as:

> the prevalence of short-term contracts (for example, 1–2 years)

> the low level of remuneration, meaning that some prevention specialists have had to take second jobs in retail to be able to continue this work

> under-funding of prevention work to meet demand, meaning that prevention specialists (such as those in women's health services and sexual assault services) are sometimes called upon to provide their expertise for free

> funding uncertainty, making the effective delivery of prevention activities and retention of skilled staff more challenging.

Relates to action 7

These issues significantly affect retention. Strikingly, the workforce census found that nearly half of all respondents had plans to leave their current role, mostly due to their contract ending (see Figure 14).

Further, despite high levels of satisfaction with their roles and strong intrinsic motivation for the work, of those intending to leave, 41 per cent were planning to go to another role outside primary prevention and 32 per cent were planning to go to another primary prevention role.

According to the workforce census, 85 per cent of the primary prevention specialist workforce is female. One stakeholder made the point that prevention progress in Victoria has been built on the goodwill of women with low-paid and insecure jobs (despite many having university-level health promotion type degrees) – the very factors that contribute to gender inequality and violence against women.

Figure 14: Prevention specialists' plans to leave their current role

48% **of respondents**
had plans to leave their current role

75% **of those**
who planned to leave their current role intended to do so within the next 12 months

Top 4 reasons
for leaving in the next 12 months were:
> end of contract 45%
> career prospects 26%
> lack of advancement opportunities 25%
> lack of job security 22%
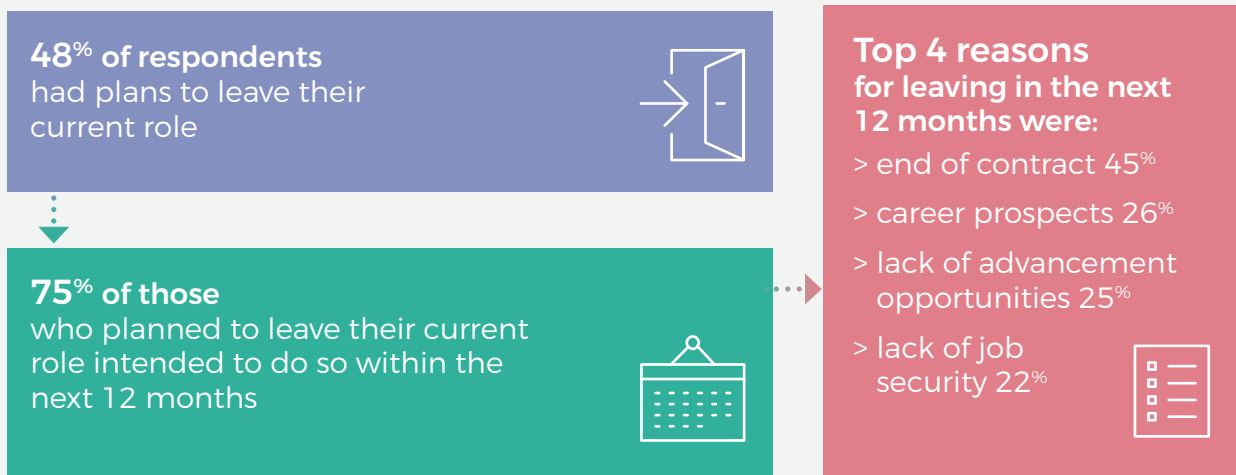
Source: Adapted from Orima Research (2020): Family Safety Victoria 2019-20 Census of Workforces that Intersect with Family Violence: Survey Findings Report – Primary Prevention Workforce

To address the retention issues, and to show that this work is truly valued, work to enhance pay and conditions in the prevention sector will be essential. This is particularly important in the context of the obligations created through the Gender Equality Act, which we understand is in some cases seen to be exacerbating existing retention issues in the prevention sector because staff are drawn to more highly paid gender equality jobs in government agencies, universities and local government. Both gender equality and primary prevention workforces are critical and both are leading mutually reinforcing work. The government must work to ensure that pipelines into both workforces are broadened concurrently.

The plan will also need to cover prevention contributors. Safe and Equal explained that universal services are essential in the family violence prevention space – the relatively small prevention specialist workforce can't drive this population-wide work on their own; however, many people do not know that they are a prevention contributor. As discussed in previous sections, work needs to occur to ensure a shared whole-of-government commitment to preventing family violence, and to generate leadership within non-government sectors. This work will need to build individuals' understanding that they are prevention contributors. A primary prevention–accredited qualification is being developed for prevention contributors to access through the TAFE sector. This is expected to be a useful addition to the suite of professional learning options for prevention contributors, noting that people will choose a professional learning pathway that best suits their particular context, and the TAFE pathway will not be practical for everyone. It is therefore important to continue to support a range of options for building the primary prevention capability of prevention contributors, including non-accredited training and resources provided by organisations such as Safe and Equal and Women's Health Victoria.

At the same time, structural levers for increasing uptake of training by prevention contributors need to be considered, such as workplace and industry endorsement of this training as recognised professional development.

5. The current approach to funding works against sustained efforts in primary prevention

Free From Violence listed 'dedicated and enduring funding' as one of four foundational elements required to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy. It also stated:

> *For prevention activities to be successful in the long term they need sustained and enduring funding. Historically, prevention has been underfunded, and funding has been short term and often only provided for individual projects rather than ongoing strategies. The work of coordinating and building the capacity of mainstream partners is critical to a truly whole-of-community approach, and must be adequately resourced to ensure it can reach the entire Victorian population.[43]*

Despite an increased focus and funding for prevention since the Royal Commission, these issues remain. Stakeholders universally called for sustained and increased funding to allow primary prevention in Victoria to gain real traction. We heard clearly and consistently during our consultations that the current approach to primary prevention funding in Victoria is a major barrier to success because the total investment is too low and the funding that is provided at the local level has typically been in the form of short-term grants and funding extensions. The absence of a detailed theory of change and system operating framework (as suggested in section 1) has likely made it difficult to clearly demonstrate why greater investment in this area is critical.

Total investment in primary prevention

The total investment in the primary prevention of family violence since the Royal Commission is $345 million (see Figure 15 for a breakdown of the high-level areas of primary prevention funding). Total investment in family violence more broadly (including prevention) over this period is $3.7 billion.

Most stakeholders agreed that a larger investment is needed to properly address the drivers of violence population-wide and, ultimately, to drive a sustained reduction in the incidence of family violence. Unfortunately, there is currently no estimate of the required primary prevention investment. As the theory of change, system operating framework and approach to workforce expansion are progressed, we suggest Respect Victoria and the Office for Prevention should work to develop an estimate of the required government investment in primary prevention. A return-on-investment framework will be essential when estimating this figure. This will help strengthen the case to Treasury about the relationship between the quantum and duration of funding provided and the substantial benefits that can be achieved. This should be framed as part of a narrative that describes the need for ongoing investment across the continuum from primary prevention to response.

Relates to action 8

Figure 15: Victorian Government investment in primary prevention and gender equality

$345m total investment in primary prevention since 2016

$84m Free From Violence Strategy

$82m Respectful Relationships

$70m Respect Victoria

$40m Gender equality initiatives

$37m Other targeted initiatives

$18m Multicultural communities

$14m Industry Plan

Examples of where budget allocations have been directed

Women's Health Services
> 2017-18: $100,000 per year for 2 years for local Free from Violence implementation
> 2020-21: extension of above funding for 2 years
> 2022-23: $100,000 per year for 4 years to deliver on-the-ground collective primary prevention work

The Department of Health and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing are also providing $19.4m to 12 services per year for 2 years in 2022-23 (double previous amount), approximately 20% of which is for violence prevention and approximately 2% of which is for evaluation.

Local government
> 2017-18: 2-year grants, total $2.7m shared between 35 councils
> 2022-23: 3-year grants, total $3.5m shared between 15 councils

Source: Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor, based on information provided by the Office for Prevention and the Department of Treasury and Finance.

Note: Figures have been rounded to whole numbers. The total investment may not be strictly primary prevention as some grants may include early intervention in scope

Duration of funding allocations

Stakeholders universally commented that the short-term nature of the funding was highly problematic, particularly for primary prevention work, which by nature requires sustained effort over longer timeframes to deliver change

As one Gender Equity Victoria member noted, the 'scatter gun approach to funding projects makes it difficult to have a complete picture of what was funded, by which department and how it was evaluated'.[44] Indeed, we found the detailed funding picture very difficult to understand, and we are not clear what proportion of funding has been short term in nature, but government and non-government stakeholders agreed that most prevention funding has been administered as one- to two-year grants or short-term agreements with extensions.

We heard that local agencies are doing a lot with relatively little state investment, with examples given by women's health services and EDVOS of leveraging other funding sources to drive primary prevention activities. However, we were consistently told about the challenge of retaining skilled staff when they were unable to offer job security due to short-term funding cycles. For those prevention specialists who completed the workforce census, the equal top theme when asked about suggestions for improvement that would help them carry out their role more effectively was more funding, including long-term funding.

This issue is also relevant to Respect Victoria. Respect Victoria is expected to drive primary prevention across the state, but unlike the Transport Accident Commission or WorkCover, a large proportion of Respect Victoria's budget (approximately two-thirds) is subject to budget bids every four years.

We understand that when pieced together, the year-on-year investment in prevention could be argued to amount to sustained support, but the destabilising effect of the short-term funding cycles cannot be underestimated. We suggest that government must:

> provide more certain investment to support the role in driving generational change that it wants Respect Victoria to play, which by nature requires long-term planning and sustained investment and activity

> direct more sustained funding to core prevention activities based on the strong evidence base that does exist while also using short-term funding options in areas where knowledge and evidence needs to be built.

Relates to action 7

The sector warmly welcomed the December 2021 announcement of four years of funding under the Free From Violence second action plan for women's health services across the state and Safe and Equal 'to deliver on-the-ground collective primary prevention work'[45] and a doubling of the women's health budget from the Department of Health for the next two years under the 2022-23 State Budget. There is a strong desire for such increases in the amount and duration of funding to continue.

6. Ongoing research, evaluation and monitoring will help to build the evidence base and assess progress

Family violence prevention activity is, by nature, a long-term endeavour. Activity must, therefore, be supported by a long-term theory of change based on evidence. Progress must also be monitored to ensure the work is on track and continues to add to the evidence base. The Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan notes that:

A strong and effective family violence evidence base is key to delivering long-term, sustainable reform of our family violence system. It tells us what is working, what needs to be adjusted, and where to focus our efforts for the greatest effect.[46]

Research and evidence

Stakeholders told us that evidence in addressing the gendered drivers of violence to prevent that violence from occurring is relatively strong. As Free From Violence stated:

While we have a sound evidence base for the prevention of violence against women (outlined in Change the Story), we know less about what causes, and what works to reduce, other forms of family violence including elder abuse, violence against people with a disability, adolescent violence and violence within LGBTI communities.[47]

Stakeholders confirmed that these gaps remain. They also highlighted building knowledge around what works to prevent violence for multicultural communities and how to engage men and boys to prevent violence against women as areas for further development.

Relates to action 1

Table 1 presents a snapshot of more recent evidence collections we found for diverse population groups. All these documents indicate that evidence of what works to prevent violence among these groups is limited and must continue to be built on. Pursuing these and other knowledge gaps must include evaluating and monitoring progress of existing initiatives (see section below) and undertaking research to fill the gaps. The family violence research agenda includes primary prevention of family violence and violence against women as a research priority. However, we have been told that no funding has been provided to support this research priority. While Respect Victoria has an accepted role in research, its current level of funding means it has some limited capacity to undertake select research but not to be a major research funding body. Therefore, the role of others with the capacity to fund research in line with the research agenda – such as universities, the sector and industry – will continue to be vitally important.

Reviewing funding arrangements and organisational capacity for research is beyond the scope of this review, but we note that Respect Victoria is considering ways to enhance research coordination and partnerships to improve collective research capacity in line with the research agenda.

Furthermore, while building the evidence base through research is essential, there are numerous actions that can be taken now to reduce gender inequality and other forms of inequality and discrimination against people from various marginalised groups, and to ensure broader primary prevention efforts are more inclusive. For example:

> Changing the Landscape contains six high-level essential actions to tackle the underlying drivers of violence against women and girls with disabilities, including a number of more specific actions, such as ensuring that prevention or gender equality initiatives include women and girls with disabilities[48] and improving representation of women and girls with disabilities in the media and popular culture.[49]

> Pride in Prevention suggests some initial priority areas for intervention to address family violence in the LGBTIQ+ context, one of which is 'supporting families'. For example, it suggests that 'existing programs for new parents and other family support programs could be expanded to incorporate positive messaging around having a child that is LGBTIQ'.[50]

Table 1: Recent efforts to collate Australian evidence for what works to prevent violence for different cohorts

| Cohort	Guiding Documents	Funded by	What it said about level of evidence
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	*Changing the picture*, Our Watch, 2018	Commonwealth Government	Limited evidence that specifically names drivers of violence against Aboriginal women but there is a range of available evidence that provides insights into various facets of this topic (including racism, Aboriginal family violence, violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and violence against women) - these have been combined and used to articulate the intersecting drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and the essential actions need to address these it.
Faith Settings	*What works to address violence against women and family violence within faith settings: An evidence guide.* The University of Melbourne, 2020	Victorian Government	There is limited evidence base of what works in faith settings, both in prevention of violence against women and also in effective capacity building for faith leaders. Few previous initiatives have been evaluated and the current research has largely been limited to Christian, Muslim and Jewish faith communities.
LGBTIQ+	*Pride in Prevention.* Rainbow Health and Thorne Harbour Health, 2020	Victorian Government	Limited evidence due to previous prevention activities tending to be small scaled and uncoordinated and evidence around drivers is not well developed.
	Primary prevention of family violence against people from LGBTI communities. GLHV and Our Watch, 2017	Victorian Government	Limited evidence about family violence experience by intersex people. There are few if any evaluations of effectiveness of specific programs or interventions.
Men and boys	*Men in focus: unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women.* Our Watch, 2019	Victorian Government	Few initiatives have been comprehensively evaluated. There is a lack of up-to-date data that measures the effectiveness of initiatives which seek to engage men and boys in prevention efforts, particularly in an Australian context.
Migrant and refugee	*Violence against women in CALD communities: Understandings and actions to prevent violence against women in CALD communities.* AMES Australia, 2016	Commonwealth Government and VicHealth	There has been limited activity to prevent violence against women in CALD communities to date and existing efforts tend to have been one-off, stand-alone projects, rather than part of a coordinated program of mutually reinforcing strategies.
Older people	*Primary prevention of family violence among older people living in Victoria.* National Ageing Research Institute, 2021	Respect Victoria	There is very limited evidence on the effectiveness of primary prevention interventions targeting the abuse of older people primarily because of a lack of primary prevention programs available to review.
	Preventing intimate partner violence against older women. Our Watch, 2022	Victorian Government	This is an emerging area of work, with significant data gaps.
Women with disabilities	*Changing the landscape.* Our Watch and Women With Disabilities Victoria, 2022	Philanthropic, Our Watch and Commonwealth Government	Data about violence against women and girls with disabilities is only beginning to be sufficient to inform evidence-based primary prevention initiatives.
	No More Excuses. The University of Melbourne, 2021	Respect Victoria	Evidence base on 'what works' to prevent violence is small. Few studies look at the potential drivers or reinforcing factors for violence operating at the relationship, community, organisational, or societal level.

Progress and outcomes monitoring

Given the long-term nature of primary prevention work, and the expected long road to seeing a drop in levels of violence, it is essential to monitor progress in addressing the drivers of violence to ensure efforts are on the right track and to recalibrate the implementation approach as needed. We note the important role of Respect Victoria's three-yearly progress reporting to parliament in supporting strong oversight and visibility of overall progress. As discussed in section 1, we also highlight the importance of having a clear theory of change at the outset – one that underpins the work program and supports the system architecture – against which expected short-, medium- and long-term outcomes can be assessed.

While a series of primary prevention outcomes and indicators are outlined in the Free From Violence Outcomes Framework – and reflected in the broader Family Violence Outcomes Framework – these do not capture the more immediate changes that can be expected.

A revised Free From Violence outcomes framework was to be published in the Free From Violence second action plan,[51] but this didn't occur. Instead, the second action plan states that '(t)he Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, with Respect Victoria, will also refresh the outcomes in the early phase of the Second action plan to develop short- and intermediate-term outcomes, indicators and measures to accompany the existing long-term outcomes'.[52] It is positive that there is a commitment to developing phased outcomes, and we understand that this work is underway. Our Watch's Counting on Change guide to prevention monitoring sets out broad short-, medium- and long-term indicators and measures that are appropriate for measuring population-level progress in addressing the drivers of violence against women (see Figure 16). This, along with Tracking Progress in Prevention, a report that operationalises Counting on Change, may assist as Victoria's work on outcomes progresses.

Relates to action 2

Figure 16: Short, medium and long term measures of population-level progress
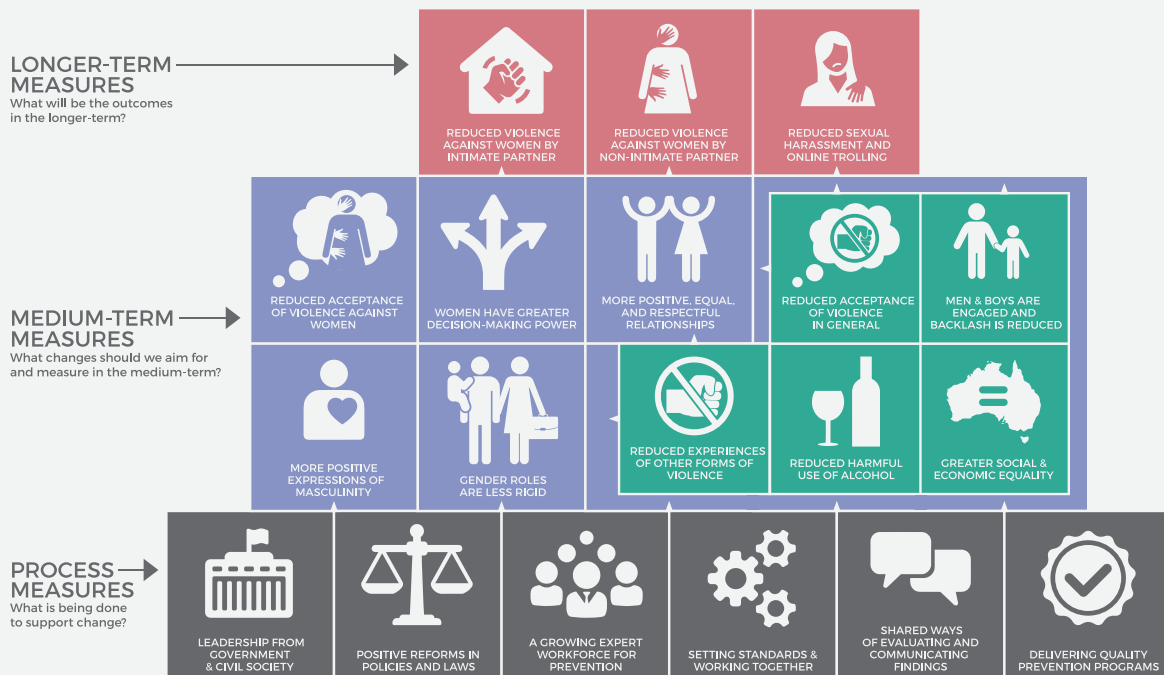
Source: Our Watch (2019): Summary of Counting on Change: A guide to prevention monitoring, p.2

Using these measures and indicators to effectively track progress requires the availability of data. Counting on Change and Tracking Progress in Prevention identify where there are gaps in existing data, and how these may be addressed to ensure more effective tracking of progress to address the drivers at the population level.

There are some major population-level data sources that support ongoing monitoring. The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), conducted every four years, highlights areas of progress and areas where there are problematic attitudes that need to be targeted through primary prevention activities. ANROWS also performs periodic deep dives into NCAS findings that are of particular concern, such as the 2017 NCAS finding that four in 10 Australians mistrust women's reports of sexual violence. These deep-dive reports provide more nuanced recommendations for primary prevention.[53] Helpfully, Respect Victoria has produced guidance to support prevention specialists to use NCAS data.[54]

Respect Victoria's creation of the Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform provides a repository of data organised according to agreed indicators in the Free From Violence outcomes framework. Over time, this platform will provide trends to help assess the collective impact of Victoria's prevention activity. The data platform heavily relies on four-yearly data sources such as the NCAS and the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey and General Social Survey, with 18 out of 27 indicators relying on measures from such sources, and there are four indicators where there are currently no measures available (see Table 2).[55] Attitudinal data by local government area is not available, although we note that Victoria funded a larger sample size in the 2021 NCAS survey to allow for more nuanced analysis of the data.

We are not aware of any processes to collate data from the broad range of program evaluations occurring across the state but suggest that putting such processes in place will play an important role in building the evidence base and monitoring progress. We note that Respect Victoria's Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework provides high-level advice to those involved in implementing the Free From Violence strategy, with the potential to be applied more broadly. It 'outlines a strategic and transparent approach to assessing the strategy's progress towards its objectives and outcomes and identifying its impacts. It also enables learning to be shared and capability for monitoring and evaluation to be enhanced across organisations.'[56] Setting up these data monitoring and reporting components of the infrastructure sets Victoria in good stead as we keep refining our approach to primary prevention. We suggest as research, evaluation and monitoring processes are further developed, increased focus should be given to the following:

> supporting those leading specific prevention programs through the iterative process of learning what changes they might expect to see as a result of their program, or what other measures they should use to assess whether programs have been implemented in such a way that maximises their effectiveness

> incorporating short-term measures into data reporting such as the process measures described in Counting on Change

> facilitating the ability to drill down into the data to conduct finer grained analyses (for example, by local government area or region and/or by other demographics, if possible), including by funding larger sample sizes for the NCAS

> as part of ongoing monitoring and reporting of the short-term measures, consider including an assessment of progress against each of the Change the Story essential actions and other essential actions for other forms of family violence

> considering how data gathered through research and ongoing monitoring will be used to adjust the course of action if needed.

Relates to action 1

Table 2: Free From Violence outcomes and indicators

Outcome	Indicators
1. Victorians hold attitudes and beliefs that reject gender inequality and family violence	Increased awareness of what constitutes violence*
	Increased recognition of the significant impact of violence on victim survivors*
	Increased awareness and understanding of the extent and impact of gender inequality*
	Increased culture of challenging gender inequalities, across all settings and across all life stages
	Decrease in attitudes that justify, excuse, minimise, hide or shift blame for violence*
	Increased visible rejection of violence by public and community leaders and in media
2. Victorians actively challenge attitudes and behaviours that enable violence	Decrease in sexist and discriminatory attitudes and behaviours*
	Increase in organisations and institutions with systems to support people who challenge sexism and discrimination
	Reduced reports of everyday stereotypes and sexism
	Increase in bystanders feeling supported to challenge sexism and discrimination*
	Increase in positive bystander behaviour in the face of sexism and discrimination
	Increased confidence among men and boys to challenge their peer group when faced with disrespectful or hostile attitudes towards women*
3. Victorian homes, organisations and communities are safe and inclusive	Increased feelings of safety for people where they live, work, learn and play*
	Increase in people feeling able, safe and willing to report violence*
	Increase in the number of people who feel safe reporting discrimination and bullying
	Reduction in people subject to family violence*
	Reduction in women subject to violence*
	Reduction in the over-representation from particular groups experiencing violence*
	Increased confidence in the systems and structures dedicated to preventing violence*
	Increased number of organisations and institutions who model and promote inclusive behaviour*
4. All Victorians live and practise confident and respectful relationships	Increased understanding of what constitutes healthy, supportive and safe relationships
	Reduced exposure of young people to violence*
	Decrease in prevalence of reported sexism, sexual harassment and gendered bullying*
	Decrease in acceptance of bullying or controlling behaviour*
	Increased competence in interpersonal conflict resolution
	Reduction in experiences of discrimination*

Key:

Orange indicators can't currently be measured.

*Rely on measures available every four years.

Source: Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform. Available at: https://files.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/Prevention-of-Family-Violence-Data-Platform.html (accessed 5 June 2022).

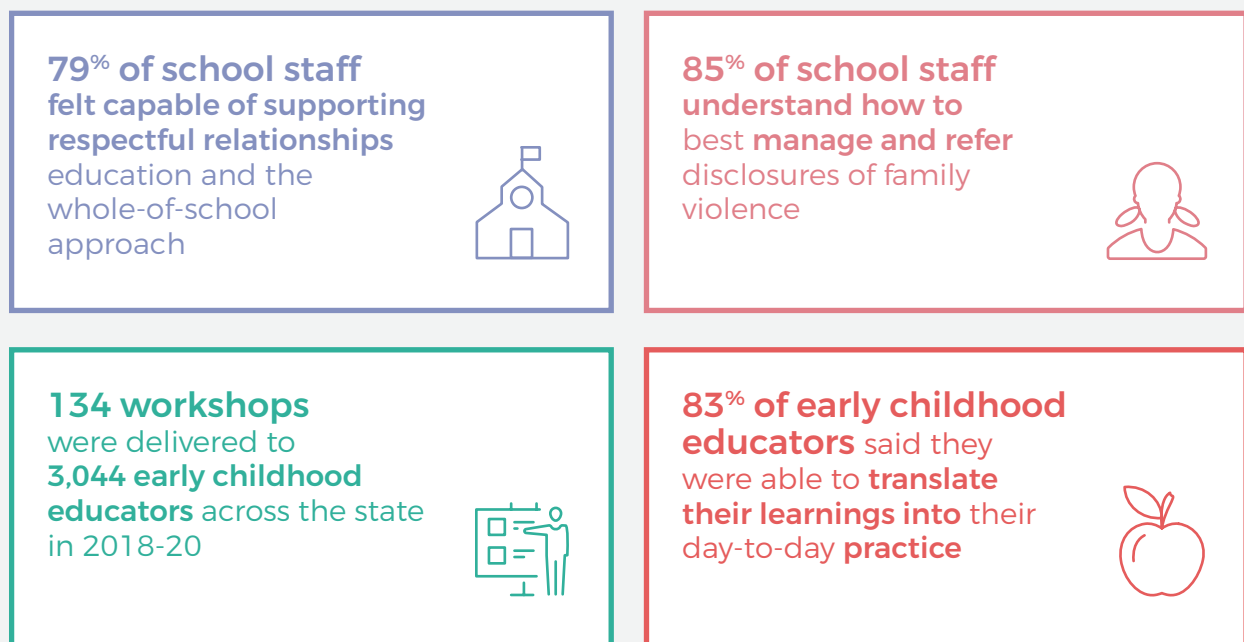# The importance of monitoring – example: Respectful Relationships

An example of the importance of measuring progress and effectiveness at the program level and refining implementation accordingly is the Respectful Relationships initiative. Respectful Relationships is a key plank in Victoria's approach to primary prevention and is backed by evidence:

Evaluations of the whole-of-school approach in primary and secondary schools in Australia have shown the potential for respectful relationships education to challenge gender stereotypes, develop a culture of equality among staff and students and support attitude change among students.[57]

However, for this to be realised, evidence shows some key elements are required, including a true whole-of-school approach, ongoing professional learning for staff, and sustained commitment including through funding.[58]

Positively, the implementation of Respectful Relationships in Victorian schools has been evaluated, indicating support for the initiative, appreciation for the available guidance and resources, and some positive signs of impact for school communities[59] (see Figure 17 for some of these positive indicators).

Figure 17: Statistics included in the public-facing Respectful Relationships evaluation report

79% of school staff **felt capable of supporting respectful relationships** education and the whole-of-school approach

85% of school staff **understand how to** best **manage and refer** disclosures of family violence

134 workshops were delivered to **3,044 early childhood educators** across the state in 2018-20

83% of early childhood **educators** said they were able to **translate their learnings into** their day-to-day **practice**

Source: Acil Allen (2021): Respectful Relationships Evaluation 2019-21: Evaluation Summary, report to the Victorian Department of Education and Training.

The evaluation also raises some issues around sustainability of the approach, with the level and duration of support schools require (for example, from the regional workforce and from lead schools) varying. The evaluation also flags significant variation in implementation between schools and evidence that not all schools are progressing the intended whole-school approach in full.

<div style="float:right">

Relates to action 9

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During our consultations, feedback from several stakeholders indicated they had seen a loss of momentum, that there is a lack of necessary support at the school level to support implementation, and that the Respectful Relationships regional workforce – which is responsible for supporting schools to implement the whole-school approach, as well as supporting MARAM and information sharing reforms in schools – is stretched too thinly.

We acknowledge the significant disruption of COVID-19 to normal school operations to students' learning, and that schools are necessarily focusing on supporting students' mental health and helping them catch up on learning. But concern has been expressed about how focus on effective implementation of Respectful Relationships will be regained, particularly as schools continue to face staffing challenges due to COVID-19.

This is a major implementation risk, and we understand that the only ongoing monitoring in place is through the regional workforce, which can feed any implementation issues up to the Department of Education and Training's central office. However, we suggest that given the workforce workload issues already raised, these regional staff are unlikely to have the capacity to effectively monitor implementation fidelity in all schools. It is a positive sign that all Victorian Government schools are now signed on to Respectful Relationships, but process indicators need to be monitored to determine whether implementation is occurring effectively and whether the intended outcomes can be expected to be realised.

<div style="float:right">

Relates to action 10

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The initiative is a central part of Victoria's primary prevention approach and therefore the integrity of its implementation is critical. Despite the concerns raised, there was strong praise for regional departmental staff who are driving the initiative and are clearly committed to working with Victorian students to prevent family violence. There are also some recent developments that may help to regain a focus on embedding Respectful Relationships in schools:

> the commitment in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 to strengthening Respectful Relationships in the national curriculum

> the introduction of a new Child Safe Standard, 'Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously', which requires schools to offer students access to sexual abuse prevention programs in an age-appropriate way and to document this accordingly. The department has advised that schools could comply with this standard by delivering Respectful Relationships and using the optional Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships and Building Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials.

With careful planning and ongoing implementation monitoring, there is an opportunity for Victoria to leverage these developments and harness the goodwill of key stakeholders to ensure more Victorian students will never go on to experience family violence.

Glossary of relevant terms and abbreviations

Aboriginal	While acknowledging the diversity of Aboriginal people in Australia, in this document the term 'Aboriginal' has been used to refer to all people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent.
Diverse groups	Groups that may have different experiences of family violence and different needs, and who may be experiencing additional barriers to seeking help and receiving support due to particular background or personal characteristics. These include children and young people, older people, Aboriginal peoples, people within culturally diverse communities, people within the LGBTIQ+ community, people living in rural, regional and remote communities, people with a disability, male victims, women prisoners and women who work in the sex industry.
Drivers of violence against women	The social conditions that lead to violence, which often reflect underlying inequalities in social or economic power among different groups of people.**
Family Safety Victoria	An administrative office of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (comprising some portfolio responsibilities of the former Department of Health and Human Services) with dedicated responsibility for delivering key elements of family violence reform. This includes the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, The Orange Door network and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) reforms.
Family violence	Any violent, threatening, coercive or controlling behaviour that occurs in current or past familial relationships, including by intimate partners, family members and/or non-family carers.
Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme	Established in legislation, the scheme enables sharing of information between authorised organisations to support the assessment and management of family violence risk.
Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework	A framework to help identify, assess and manage family violence risk. A range of organisations are required by law, under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008, to align their practices and policies with MARAM, which replaced the former common risk assessment framework or 'CRAF'. The MARAM Framework is supported by operational practice guidance and risk identification, screening and assessment tools.
Family violence regional integration committees	Committees established in 2006 in each of the then 14 Department of Human Services' regions. Their purpose is to improve the integration of services that respond to family violence at the local level, to drive workforce development, and to act as a conduit between specialist family violence and other providers in local areas.
Gender equality	The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, trans (and gender diverse) and intersex people. Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender.**
Gender inequality	The unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and value afforded to men and women in a society due to prevailing gendered norms and structures.**
LGBTIQ+	An inclusive initialism that refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender / gender diverse, intersex and queer people.
MARAM	See Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework.
Office for Prevention of Family Violence and Coordination	An office within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing with dedicated responsibility for coordinating key elements of family violence reform. This includes implementing the Free From Violence plan in partnership with Respect Victoria and the family violence prevention sector.

Principal Strategic Advisor	A key leadership role within the Family Violence Regional Integration Committees. This role has a strong focus on integration and collaboration of services, driving implementation of the reforms and capacity building of the workforce.
Primary prevention	Whole-of-population initiatives that address the primary ('first' or 'underlying') drivers of violence against women.^
Respect and Equality in TAFE	An initiative that supports Victorian TAFEs to implement a whole-of-TAFE approach to the pursuit of gender equality and primary prevention of violence against women.
Respectful Relationships	A primary prevention education initiative that supports government, Catholic and independent schools and early childhood settings to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. The Victorian Curriculum provides the basis for teaching and learning about respectful relationships and identifies the knowledge, skills and understanding for students to be able to engage in respectful relationships
Respect Victoria	Established in 2018, in response to recommendation 188 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence, Respect Victoria is Victoria's first independent agency dedicated to primary prevention.
Response	Also referred to as tertiary prevention. Supports victim survivors and holds perpetrators to account, aiming to prevent the re-occurrence of violence.^
Royal Commission into Family Violence	Established in 2015, the Commission was tasked with finding ways to prevent family violence, improve support for victim survivors and hold perpetrators to account. The Royal Commission provided its report, which included 227 recommendations, to the Victorian Government on 29 March 2016.
Settings	Environments in which people live, work, learn, socialise and play, such as sports clubs, schools, universities and online.**
Socio-ecological model	A prevention framework in public health approaches for a broad range of issues. The model assumes that work to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women must be coordinated across and between activities at all levels of society – from individual attitudes and behaviours, organisational and community practices and norms, to institutional structures and, more broadly, systems and society.**
System architecture	The structural design of a system, including the core components necessary for a system to fulfil its goals.
Theory of change	A comprehensive description of what activities are needed to achieve a desired outcome. It demonstrates how and why a desired change is expected to happen in the short, medium and long term.
Victim survivor	A person who has experienced domestic, family or sexual violence.
Violence against women	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. This definition encompasses all forms of violence that women experience (including physical, sexual, emotional, cultural/spiritual, financial, and others) that are gender-based.**
Women's health services	Services that exist to support the health and wellbeing of women and that have a leading role in driving gender equality and the prevention of violence against women locally. Both statewide services and a network of metropolitan and regional services ensure coverage across the state.

* Definition from Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women.

^ Definition from Our Watch (2021): Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition).

Endnotes

1   Our Watch (2021): Change the Story. A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia, p. 100. Available at: **https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/change-the-story-a-shared-framework-for-the-primary-prevention-of-violence-against-women-in-australia/**

2   Ibid.

3   Ibid. p. 55.

4   Ibid. p. 34.

5   Ibid. p. 57.

6   Respect Victoria (2020): Submission to the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor, p. 3. Available at: **https://www.fvrim.vic.gov.au/responses-call-submissions-monitoring-family-violence-reforms** submission 78.

7   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, State of Victoria, Melbourne. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence**

8   State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and recommendations, Parl Paper No 132 (2014–16), p. 6.

9   Ibid. p. 11.

10   Ibid. p. 38.

11   We identified 11 Royal Commission recommendations that relate to primary prevention: recommendations 142, 166, 187, 188, 189, 196, 202, 207, 220, 225.

12   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2016): Ending Family Violence: Victoria's plan for change, p. IX. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/ending-family-violence-victorias-10-year-plan-change**.

13   Victorian Government (2021): Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2021 > Primary Prevention webpage. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-reform-rolling-action-plan-2020-2023/priorities-for-2020-2023/primary-prevention** (accessed 9 May 2022).

14   Family Safety Victoria (2017): Preventing Family Violence & Violence Against Women Capability Framework, p. 10. Available at: **vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-05/Preventing-Family-Violence-and-Violence-Against-Women-Capability-Framework.pdf**.

15   Family Safety Victoria (2018): Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-reform-rolling-action-plan-2020-2023/priorities-for-2020-2023/dhelk-dja-safe-our-way**.

16   An Indigenous Family Violence Primary Prevention Framework (2012) pre-dates the Royal Commission. This framework identifies best practice features of primary prevention in Aboriginal communities and was designed to support prevention capacity building in Victoria. A refresh of the framework is a key commitment under the first Dhelk Dja Action Plan and Victoria's Closing the Gap implementation plan and was due for completion by December 2021. At the time of writing, the refresh of the framework was in the early stages of planning.

17   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free From violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, p. 31. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence**

18   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2016): Safe and Strong: A Victorian gender equality strategy, p. 7. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/safe-and-strong-victorian-gender-equality**

19   Ibid. p. 16.

20   Our Watch (2021): Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition). Available at: **www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/change-the-story-a-shared-framework-for-the-primary-prevention-of-violence-against-women-in-australia**

21   Examples of practice tools include the prevention handbook (https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/) and specific guides, resources and toolkits for:

         workplaces **https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/**

         sporting organisations **https://sport.ourwatch.org.au/**

         media workers **https://media.ourwatch.org.au/**

         TAFEs and universities **https://tertiaryeducation.ourwatch.org.au/**

         local government **https://handbook.ourwatch.org.au/localgovtoolkit/**.

22   While the publicly reported investment was $104 million (for example, see Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2022): Media release: Record boost to prevention and consent initiatives 6 March 2022), Our Watch has advised that it will in fact be receiving $100.5 million.

23   State of Victoria (2014–16): Royal Commission into Family Violence: Report and recommendations, Vol VI, Parl Paper No 132, p. 12.

24   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, p. 39. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence**

25   Our Watch (2021): Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition), p. 14. Available at: www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/change-the-story-a-shared-framework-for-the-primary-prevention-of-violence-against-women-in-australia

26   Respect Victoria (2021): Free From Violence Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework, p. 24. Available at: https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/guiding-frameworks

27   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, p. 47. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence

28   Gender Equity Victoria (2020): Submission to the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor, p. 18. Available at: https://www.fvrim.vic.gov.au/responses-call-submissions-monitoring-family-violence-reforms Submission 118.

29   Respect Victoria (2019): Respect Victoria Strategic Plan 2019–2022, p. 21. Available at: https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/201904/Full%20version_Strategic%20Plan.pdf

30   See https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/family-violence-reform-and-prevention

31   State of Victoria (2021): Ending Family Violence: Annual Report, p. 15. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/ending-family-violence-annual-report/rolling-action-plan-2020-2023-activities

32   Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor (2022): Family Violence Reform Governance. Available at: https://www.fvrim.vic.gov.au/monitoring-victorias-family-violence-reforms-reform-governance

33   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, p. 41. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence

34   Gender Equity Victoria (2020): Submission to the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor, p. 20. Available at: https://www.fvrim.vic.gov.au/responses-call-submissions-monitoring-family-violence-reforms Submission 118.

35   Family Safety Victoria (2020): Dhelk Dja: Safe Our Way – Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families, 3 Year Action Plan 2019–2022

36   Our Watch (2019): Men in Focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women. Available at: https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/men-in-focus-unpacking-masculinities-and-engaging-men-in-the-prevention-of-violence-against-women/

37   Family Safety Victoria (2017): Building From Strength: 10-year family violence industry plan for family violence prevention and response, p. 23. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/building-strength-10-year-industry-plan

38   Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2021): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women – Second action plan 2022–2025, p. 22. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-second-action-plan-2022-2025

39   Family Safety Victoria (2017): Responding to Family Violence Capability Framework, p. 17. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-capability-frameworks

40   Our Watch (2021): Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (second edition), p. 101. Available at: www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/change-the-story-a-shared-framework-for-the-primary-prevention-of-violence-against-women-in-australia

41   Family Safety Victoria (2017): Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women Capability Framework, p. 14. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-capability-frameworks

42   Allen and Clarke Consulting (2021): Primary Prevention Workforce Approach Final Report (unpublished)

43   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, p. 47. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence

44   Gender Equity Victoria (2020): Submission to the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor, p. 14. Available at: https://www.fvrim.vic.gov.au/responses-call-submissions-monitoring-family-violence-reforms Submission 118.

45   Premier of Victoria (2021): Media Release: Bolstering programs to prevent family violence, 6 December 2021

46   Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023 > Research and Evaluation webpage. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-reform-rolling-action-plan-2020-2023/priorities-for-2020-2023/research-and-evaluation (accessed 26 May 2022).

47   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2017): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women, p. 44. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-victorias-strategy-prevent-family-violence

48   Our Watch (2022): Changing the Landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities, p. 51. Available at: https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-landscape/

49   Ibid. p. 55.

50   Rainbow Health Victoria (2020): Pride in Prevention Evidence Guide, p. 27. Available at: https://rainbowhealthaustralia.org.au/news/launch-pride-in-prevention-evidence-guide

51   Department of Premier and Cabinet (2020): Family Violence Outcomes Framework Measurement and Monitoring Implementation Strategy, p. 21. Available at: https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-outcomes-framework#fvof-measurement-and-monitoring-implementation-strategy

52   Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (2021): Free From Violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women – Second action plan 2022–2025, p. 48. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/free-violence-second-action-plan-2022-2025**

53   ANROWS (2021): Chuck her on a lie detector: Investigating Australians' mistrust in women's reports of sexual assault. Available at: **https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/chuck-her-on-a-lie-detector-investigating-australians-mistrust-in-womens-reports-of-sexual-assault**

54   See **https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/national-community-attitudes-violence-against-women-survey-ncas**

55   To access the Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform, see **https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/prevention-of-family-violence-data-platform**

56   Respect Victoria (2021): Free From Violence Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic Framework, p. 7. Available at: **https://www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au/monitoring-evaluation-and-learning**

57   Our Watch: 'The evidence for respectful relationships education' webpage. Available at: **https://education.ourwatch.org.au/respectful-relationships-education/the-evidence-for-respectful-relationships-education/** (Accessed 26 May 2022).

58   Our Watch (2021): Respectful Relationships Education in Schools: Evidence paper. Available at: **https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/03/29130252/RRE-Evidence-paper-accessible-100321.pdf**

59   Acil Allen (2021): Respectful Relationships Evaluation 2019–21: Evaluation Summary, report to the Victorian Department of Education and Training. Available at: **https://www.vic.gov.au/respectful-relationships#evaluation-and-progress**