



JULIE COLLINS MP

Minister for Community Services
Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development
Minister for the Status of Women

MEDIA RELEASE

New toolkit to stop violence against women in rural communities before it happens

The Minister for the Status of Women, Julie Collins, has today launched a new toolkit aimed at stopping violence against women in rural communities before it happens.

Opening the Country Women's Association of Australia's 34th Triennial Conference in Hobart, Ms Collins said the Australian Government had invested \$50,000 in the Stopping Violence Before it Happens toolkit.

"The toolkit is the result of consultations with women and community services workers in remote communities," Ms Collins said.

"It's designed to meet the specific needs of rural and regional communities by providing straightforward advice, practical resources and ideas for community-led action.

"It consists of 15 practical, easy to understand fact sheets, covering key concepts, issues and methods in the primary prevention of violence against women.

"Anyone can use the toolkit, but it will be of particular benefit for people working in the community services sector, including social workers, case managers, policy officers, teachers, youth workers, and police and community leaders.

"The main difference between primary prevention measures like this toolkit and other types of violence interventions is they are about preventing violence before it happens."

The toolkit was developed through a partnership between the National Rural Women's Coalition, the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance and Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research.

It was developed following community consultations in Broken Hill in NSW and Emerald in Queensland.

"These consultations involved talking to ordinary women to find out what kind of support and information they need to undertake violence prevention initiatives in their communities," Ms Collins said.

"Some of them said there is sometimes little empathy for women who experience violence, especially in communities where everyone was 'doing it tough'. Clearly, this is unacceptable.

“The Stopping Violence Before it Happens toolkit fact sheets address topics that deal with issues about raising awareness and changing attitudes.

“They also address other topics such as encouraging respectful relationships and improving women’s financial independence and leadership.”

At the conference, Ms Collins also congratulated the Country Women’s Association on its social and economic contributions to rural Australia and the wider community.

“The CWA and its members are the backbone of local communities.

“They run businesses and farms, take on leadership roles, drive sustainability and innovation across primary industry sectors, ensure the wellbeing of families and communities, build strong networks and take part in everything from disaster response to volunteer work,” Ms Collins said.

The Stopping Violence Before it Happens toolkit is available free on line through the National Rural Women’s Network at <http://www.nrwn.org.au/toolkits/> or hard copies can be ordered through the National Rural Women’s Coalition webpage at <http://www.nrwc.com.au/>

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