

Media release

Wednesday 10th October 2012

New funding to help prevent violence against women with disabilities

Women with Disabilities Victoria today welcomed the Victorian Government's funding boost to train and support people who work with women with disabilities to better understand and address the dynamics of violence that affects women with disabilities.

The Executive Director of Women with Disabilities Victoria Ms Keran Howe, congratulated the Victorian Government on yesterday's launch of *Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children: Everyone has a responsibility to act 2012-2015*.

"This is welcome news," said Ms Howe.

"We know the anguish and pain that women with disabilities have suffered for too long at the hands of intimate partners and carers. We have heard terrible stories of sexual, financial, physical and psychological abuse from our members. This is about a violation of fundamental human rights, rights protected under Victorian law."

For Victorian women;

- The rate of disability is 20.1 per cent of the population
- The rate of profound or severe disability is 7.1 per cent of the population.
- Many women with disabilities are victims of family violence and sexual assault.
- Women with disabilities often have less access to support services such as family violence and justice services.

This new funding will provide a much needed opportunity to work with disability organizations to prevent this violence from happening in the first place and enable women to come forward and be supported if they report abuse.

Fiona, a Women with Disabilities Victoria member and volunteer said today, "*...make sure that no violence happens and if it does, people aren't scared to talk about it. People who speak out don't get fed, don't get medication; don't get to go into town. It's horrible. You have to deal with it every day. It makes it too difficult. Then the abuse keeps happening. There are so many people who can't speak about it.*"

Women with Disabilities Victoria recognizes the importance of transformative change in disability services to stop violence occurring. Ms Howe said "It is vital to link this plan to the NDIS to ensure that opportunities to prevent violence against women with disabilities are maximised."

“Women with Disabilities Victoria – a not for profit organisation of women with disabilities who support women with disabilities to achieve their rights – calls on the Government to resource this Plan over the next 3 years to address the most pressing human rights issue, violence against women with disabilities,” said Ms Howe.

If you feel unsafe, would like confidential advice you can call

- Centre Against Sexual Assault Ph:1800 806 292,
- Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service of Victoria, Ph: 9322 3555 or Ph: 1800 015 188 or the National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline on Ph: 1800 880 052
- Victoria Police for immediate help on Ph:000

-ENDS-

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Fiona is also available for comment. Please contact her via Keran Howe.

WDV website www.wdv.org.au

Where to get help: <http://www.dvrcv.org.au/support-services/victorian-services/>