

Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) National Consultation Submission to the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children, September 2013

1 PLEASE INDICATE THE TYPE OF ORGANISATION YOU ARE FROM

National Women's Alliance. The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) is one of 6 national women's alliances funded by the Federal Government. The Alliance comprises of 19 National and State and Territory peak based member organisations.

2 WHAT APPROACHES WORK WELL IN THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN? PLEASE LIST UP TO 3 EXAMPLES

Primary prevention measures in The National Plan recognise that violence against women can be prevented by reducing inequalities in power between men and women and challenging gender stereotypes and violence-supportive attitudes.

-National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

To tackle this issue we need a coordinated national voice, an obvious rallying point, the collaboration of the sector, the explicit support of the community and endorsement of government.¹

-Ministers Collins and Wooldridge, 2013

2.1 AN APPROACH PREMISED ON A GENDER-BASED UNDERSTANDING OF VIOLENCE

AWAVA recognises that efforts to end violence against women and their children must be accountable to women and promote women's empowerment and social and gender equality. At the core of primary prevention programs and projects **must** be a consideration of gender when examining the causal factors that contribute to violence against women. AWAVA recognizes that gender inequality "is both a consequence of and a reinforcer of the power disparity between genders"². "Using gender-neutral content and individualist frameworks fails to address the social and structural factors that endorse and perpetuate boys' and men's violence"³. Research by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), shows that as "gender equality improves, the prevalence of violence against women is lower. Countries with greater equality between women and men tend to have lower levels of violence against

¹ <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/media-centre/media-releases/7447-new-national-foundation-to-prevent-violence-against-women.html>

² CASA House (2008) *Sexual Assault Prevention Program for Secondary Schools (SAPPSS) Report*, CASA House and The Royal Women's Hospital, Australia. (p. 7)

³ YWCA Adelaide, YWCA Canberra, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (2013)

Delivering Best Practice: Using the NASASV standards to deliver primary violence prevention education programs. Paper presented at the White Ribbon International Conference 2013. Available at http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/uploads/media/Conference_2013/Delivering_Best_Practice_YWCA.pdf

women”⁴. Using a gender analysis of, for example sexual assault and violence “would acknowledge the gendered nature of sexual violence, while recognising that there are many ways to perform masculinity. It would recognise that some (young) men could use sexual coercion and force, at the same time as recognising **not all** men support the cultural norms that support violence against women”⁵. Adopting a structural gender analysis in conjunction with an ecological approach (Heise, 1998)⁶ in order to understand violence, looks beyond the individual to examine the conditions and social norms that support and reinforce violence against women. This dual approach which combines the ecological model with an understanding of gender recognises that the interplay of different individual, relationship, community and societal factors and their relationship with gender and how this interplay leads to violence. Concomitantly, this dual approach which underpins the work of the preventing violence against women Sector in Australia needs to extend to places where people live and work, to our communities, to our media, to our schools, and in our families and friendship circles.

The National Plan to Reduce the Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22 recognises “*violence against women can be prevented by reducing inequalities in power between men and women and challenging gender stereotypes and violence-supportive attitudes*”. Furthermore, The National Implementation Plan identifies “*Advance gender equality through the development and utilisation of gender equality*” as an action under the Building Primary Prevention Capacity National Priority⁷. A prevention approach that embeds and advocates for gender equity and equality at all levels understands that violence against women is rooted in historical and structural inequality in power relations between males and females, that violence is characterised by the use and abuse of power and control in public and private spheres, and that it is intrinsically linked to norms, customs, stereotypes that perpetuate, underlie, and increase women’s vulnerability.

AWAVA recognises that the experience and impact of violence against women is not evenly distributed and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, immigrant and refugee women, women from non-English speaking backgrounds, women with disabilities, women who identify as bi-sexual, lesbian, same sex attracted, queer, transgender or intersex are subjected to interpersonal and public violence at greater than average rates, and that such violence is compounded by experiences of marginalisation. Additional factors such as women’s location, age and access to income and resources also affect their experience of violence and its impact. AWAVA recognises that violence against women needs to be understood in the intersectional context of sex, racism, colonialism, classism, homophobia and able body-ism. To reduce

⁴ UNIFEM quoted in Australian Government (2011) Primary Prevention and the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Available at <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/publications-articles/reducing-violence/national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children/primary-prevention-and-the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children>

⁵ Carmody, Moira; Evans, Susan; Krogh, Chris; Flood, Michael; Heenan, Melanie & Ovensen, Georgia (2009), *Framing best practice: National Standards for the primary prevention of sexual assault through education*, National Sexual Assault Prevention Education Project for NASASV, University of Western Sydney, Australia (p.34)

⁶ Heise, Lori. L (1998) Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework, *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 262-290

⁷ Australian Government (2013) *Progress Report to the Council of Australian Governments 2010 – 2012*. Available at http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2013/final_edited_report_edit.pdf

inequalities in power, challenge gender stereotypes, and promote behavioural and attitudinal change, primary prevention must be underpinned by approaches that privilege⁸:

- ✦ **Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Community, and Whole-of-School approach:** Working in partnerships and fostering collaborations
- ✦ **Coherent conceptual approaches** – Prevention programs and projects need to use a theoretical approach that provides an understanding of the gendered nature of violence, why it occurs, how it intersects with other social inequalities, and how it can be prevented
- ✦ **A theory of change** – Prevention programs and projects should clearly account for how activities will achieve successful outcomes
- ✦ **Relevant, inclusive and culturally sensitive practice** – Prevention programs and projects must be tailored to target groups and not based on a ‘one size fits all’ philosophy. Programs need to be inclusive and culturally sensitive and where appropriate, involve consultation with representatives from diverse populations and marginalized groups
- ✦ **Effective development and delivery** – Prevention programs and projects must have a design that considers how educators will deliver effective content
- ✦ **Effective strategies for impact evaluation** – Prevention programs and projects must involve a comprehensive process of evaluation that indicates its effectiveness in achieving its objectives
- ✦ **Supporting thorough training and professional development** of educators – Prevention programs and projects must provide resources and support to educators

In 2011-2012, using an action research framework, AWAVA partnered with the National Rural Women’s Alliance and the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research at Central Queensland University to develop the *Stopping Violence Before it Occurs* Toolkit specifically to assist the implementation of the National Plan. Originally planned to be for rural women it is actually a community resource which can be used in urban, rural and remote areas of Australia and be adapted globally for communities. The Toolkit comprises 15 fact sheets to be used individually or as a series. The Toolkit consists of practical resources for community-led action and contains recommended reading lists and signposting to further already available resources, thereby not reinventing the wheel and acknowledging the innovative programs and projects already being progressed and implemented in Australia.



(Fig 1. Stopping Violence Before it Occurs- A Practical Toolkit for Communities)

⁸ These approaches have been adapted from the NASASV national standards developed by Carmody, Moira et al. (2009) *Op.cit.* and the *Stopping Violence Before it Occurs- A Practical Toolkit for Communities* Available at <http://www.nrwn.org.au/Projects/StoppingViolenceAgainstWomenBeforeItHappens.aspx>

The Toolkit has developed a 5 point checklist to help assess if a particular program or service is using a primary prevention approach:

- ✚ Does it aim to challenge and change attitudes and behaviours that enable violence against women and not just maintain the status quo?
- ✚ Is it implemented before behaviours and attitudes are entrenched?
- ✚ Does it aim to reduce or eliminate the factors that place people at risk of using or experiencing violence?
- ✚ Does it target the broader population and not only 'at risk' groups?
- ✚ Does it promote gender equality and respectful relationships between men and women?⁹

2.2 AN APPROACH WHICH EMBEDS AND ADVOCATES FOR GENDER EQUALITY AT ALL LEVELS

2.2.1 EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

AWAVA Member Organisation, the Association of Women's Educators (AWE) wish to highlight that education approaches, including the National Curriculum, in order to be commensurate with the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children*, need to be informed by current research and promote gender and social equality understandings, for addressing the limiting gendered beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of young people. This is a key strategy for success in schooling, and for wider social change.

AWE points to current research recommending whole-school community and participative action research approaches in the curriculum, critically investigating local issues and involving system and school leaders and administrators, students, teachers, parents and carers, community sector organisations and others. A social justice lens can be applied to all interactions and in all curriculum areas, at all levels of schooling. It is especially important that a critical gender and social justice lens be brought to well-being, personal development and relationship, and anti-bullying type programs.

The *Australian Education Union Policy on Gender Equity 2008*¹⁰ states: "gendered violence and sex-based harassment must be eliminated from all educational settings by teaching about the construction of gender, effective communication and relationship skills, conflict management and resolution skills with staff and students at preschools, schools and TAFE institutions". The Policy further notes that the "implementation of gender policy is most effective when teachers are able to act on their own awareness of the problem. Effective curriculum development can only occur if teachers are involved in the properly resourced planning, implementation and evaluation of programs"¹¹. Support is needed for professional development which deepens educators' understanding of the operations of gender and power, for the practice of critical and transformative pedagogy (using models of pedagogy for social justice, such as the *Productive Pedagogies* (QSRLS 2001), and for the provision of ongoing guidance and resourcing.

⁹ Adapted from Fact Sheet 3 Stopping Violence Before it Happens Toolkit

<http://www.nrwn.org.au/Portals/43/Documents/WAV%20Tool%20Kit/NRWN-Family-Violence-Toolkit-Factsheet3.pdf>

¹⁰ Australian Education Union (2008) *Policy on Gender Equity*. Available at <http://www.aeufederal.org.au/Policy/GendEq2008.pdf> (p.7)

¹¹ Ibid. p.14

2.2.2 GENDER EQUALITY AND LAW

AWAVA recognises that violence against women is one of the most serious and widespread violations of fundamental human rights, in particular, it can violate the rights to: life; equality and non-discrimination; not to be subjected to torture and treated in an inhuman and degrading way; liberty and security; the highest standard attainable of physical and mental health; to respect, to physical, sexual and psychological integrity; and to just and favourable conditions of work.

Given discrimination and inequality are at the heart of violence against women, it is vital that federal, state and territory discrimination laws are strong, effective and accessible. AWAVA Member Organisation Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) believes that such laws are effective as an education tool to prevent discrimination from happening in the first place as well as a remedy in the event that discrimination does take place. Such laws should promote substantive equality and must provide effective remedies against systemic and intersectional discrimination. Anti-discrimination laws should also include domestic and family violence as a protected attribute. Including domestic and family violence as a protected attribute in anti-discrimination laws plays an important educative role. It moves domestic and family violence out of the private sphere into the public space. It acknowledges domestic and family violence is a community issue that requires a solution that involves everyone in the community. It is also consistent with Australia's human rights obligations (Convention on the Elimination of Violence against Women (CEDAW) and CEDAW Committee Recommendations No 12 & 19)

2.2.3 GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND LEADERSHIP

While most primary prevention programs and projects focus on young people and education, it is important to draw attention to the fact that research and practice-based evidence show that financial dependency increases women's vulnerability to violence and abuse. Lack of control over finances has also been documented by research and practice-based evidence from the Sector as a controlling tactic by perpetrators. Initiatives that support women to live economically independent lives are an effective way to prevent violence against women. Prevention projects and programs need to assist women to plan for their financial future, including savings, insurance and superannuation. Women need to be assisted with returning to further education and training and there must be on-going support for women to gain employment, or re-enter the workforce after time off and work flexibly and have recourse to affordable child care and parental leave provisions.

The underrepresentation of women in Australia in decision-making roles across many areas, including all levels of government and virtually all sectors of the paid workforce¹² demonstrates that increasing women's leadership is a precursor to achieving gender equality and helps to prevent violence. AWAVA member organisation Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services, South Australia (CWDVS SA) believes *"Leadership programs that assist women in confidence and also give them different messages about their strengths and abilities work best as prevention programs. Women need to be provided with opportunities to be mentored through using these new found skills so that they are able to resist violence"*.

¹² Australian Human Rights Commission (2010) *Gender Equality Blueprint*

2.3 AN APPROACH WHICH IS PREMISED ON GOOD/BEST PRACTICES AND NATIONAL STANDARDS

In May 2008, AWAVA lead agency, the Women's Services Network (WESNET) managed a Capacity Building grants program on behalf of the Federal Government¹³. The project sought applications from Service Providers to build their capacity to support victims of domestic and family violence within an early intervention and prevention framework to build the capacity of projects and programs that maximised the safety of women and children and the accountability of perpetrators. Based on the project, WESNET suggested the following indicators for measuring good practice based early intervention and prevention programs for domestic and family violence:

- ✦ Programs and Projects that lead to long-term changes in knowledge, for example of legal/human rights, an increased understanding of the nature of domestic and family violence and that it is never the fault of the victim, and an understanding that perpetrators should be held accountable for their violence and abuse;
- ✦ Programs and Projects that show clear evidence of women from marginalised groups participating in activities – particularly women who may associate domestic and family violence with shame;
- ✦ Programs and Projects that measure success based on timeliness of access rather than length of access;
- ✦ Programs and Projects that show evidence of meaningful engagement instead of simple participation;
- ✦ Programs and Projects that lead to better access to justice information, such as courts and police;
- ✦ Programs and Projects that show evidence of pathways rather than referrals. Including timeliness along pathways as well as new pathways¹⁴

AWAVA member organisation, the National Association of Sexual Assault Services (NASASV) have developed the National Standards for Sexual Assault Prevention Education which comprise six standards which need to be addressed in sexual assault program design and delivery. Together these six standards comprise a national framework for sexual violence prevention through education:

- ✦ Using coherent conceptual approaches to program design;
- ✦ Demonstrating the use of a theory of change;
- ✦ Undertaking inclusive, relevant and culturally sensitive practice;
- ✦ Undertaking comprehensive program development and delivery;
- ✦ Using effective evaluation strategies;
- ✦ Supporting thorough training and professional development of educators.¹⁵

AWAVA wishes to highlight the vital importance of drawing upon National Standards and existing good/best practice when developing and funding prevention programs and projects.

¹³ WESNET (2009) Evaluation of a grant program for early intervention and prevention projects for domestic and family violence, 2008-2009. Available at <http://wesnet.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/CBG-Evaluation-Main-report.pdf>

¹⁴ Adapted from WESNET (2009) *Op.Cit.*

¹⁵ Carmody, Moira et al (2009) *Op. cit.* p.23

3 PLEASE OUTLINE THE REASONS WHY YOU CONSIDER THESE APPROACHES TO BE EFFECTIVE?

All of the aforementioned approaches have a robust focus on gender and social inequalities. Using a gender analysis based focus, as the aforementioned approaches do, aids the scrutiny of content in all program/project areas to ensure that a substantive equality lens is being incorporated. This focus challenges myths, break stereotypes, and empowers women to resist violence. Gender analysis is “... a dynamic process that assesses the impact a policy, program or project has on diverse women and men and informs actions to address inequalities that arise from the different roles of women and men or the unequal power relations between them”¹⁶. Using a gender analysis in prevention projects and programs:

- ✚ achieves better outcomes for women **and** men;
- ✚ identifies and redresses inequity and disadvantage;
- ✚ helps to develop targeted programs and policies that assess and reduce barriers and negative impacts and increase participation and engagement of all community members including women;
- ✚ ensures that programs are relevant to the needs of the community through the provision of measurable, evidence-based data for women and men¹⁷

4 WHAT DOES NOT WORK WELL IN THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN?

4.1 SIMPLISTIC/INACCURATE MESSAGING

As communications is a strategic priority for the Foundation, AWAVA submits that messaging on violence against women their children as well as program and project based messaging needs to be well-informed and reflect the complexity of the causes and consequences of violence. For example, 25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (IIDEVAW). In Australia, however, 25 November has become known as ‘White Ribbon Day’, becoming synonymous with the official UN symbol of the day. The White Ribbon campaign on the day is important but it needs to clearly support and identify itself with IIDEVAW.

Messaging on violence against women and their children must also break the silence on sexual violence and assault. While stranger-based violence receives considerable amounts of coverage in the media, sexual violence and assault in the context of intimate partner relationships and against children are virtually invisible even though research demonstrates that one in three women in Australia are affected by sexual violence¹⁸.

¹⁶ World Health Organisation (2002) *Gender analysis in Health, A review of selected tools*, Department of Gender and Women’s Health, WHO, Switzerland.

¹⁷ Adapted from Municipal Association of Victoria (2012) ‘Gender Analysis’ available at <http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/gender-equity/prevention-plans-resources/Pages/gender-analysis.aspx>

¹⁸ Mouzous & Makkai (2004) *Women’s experiences of male violence : findings from the Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IIVAWS)*, Research and public policy series no. 56, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra

AWAVA member organisation the Association of Women’s Educators (AWE) notes that it is important to remember that young girls and boys do not experience a passive, sponge-like absorption of messages. Messaging on positive models of masculinity and femininity, which are themselves mediated through social institutions such as the family and schools, needs to appreciate that positive behaviours and attitudes are not acquired in a vacuum. Therefore messaging focused on the rejection of violence needs to identify and educate on equality, equity, and structural gender disadvantage so that young people have a firm understanding of both harmful behaviours as well as positive behaviours.

It is important that those advocating for promotion of primary prevention and awareness-raising around violence against women and girls do so responsibly and in a nuanced manner and without leading to an increase in turn-away at services unable to cater for the concomitant increase in demand for services. Specialist domestic and family Violence and sexual assault services can assist with conveying appropriate and responsible messages. It is not an either/or case of protecting women from further violence (secondary prevention) or prevent violence (primary prevention), AWAVA Chairperson Julie Oberin states *“we need to do both – we must protect women AND work to prevent violence. It is important that the work to prevent violence happening in the first place does not compete with the activities to prevent the re-occurrence of violence”*.

4.2 AWARENESS RAISING IS ONE ASPECT OF PRIMARY PREVENTION

Primary prevention of violence against women and children includes awareness raising but it is far more than that. On its own, improved awareness and increased knowledge is not a sufficient outcome as their links to reduction in the incidence of violence and perpetrator recidivism are unclear. The WHO notes that there are a range of school, community and media interventions which aim to promote equality and non-violent relationships by addressing stereotypes and raising awareness. However whilst a few are well-evaluated, “more evaluations are needed that use measures of actual violent behaviour as an outcome rather than improvements in attitude or knowledge”¹⁹. It must be also noted that attitudes are “poor predictors of behavior as intolerance towards violence is not actually linked with a decline in violence rates”²⁰. Primary prevention projects and programs must evaluate their success on their ability to change behaviours (and in the long-term) not just attitudes. To effectively change attitudes and behaviours in the long-term, primary prevention initiatives need to equip people with the skills to change and adopt new attitudes and beliefs. Effective and long-term social change requires engaging communities and fostering local activism and advocacy in conjunction with consistent and strong responses from the criminal justice system towards perpetrators.

4.3 WORKING IN SILOS

Partnerships and collaborative engagements are most effective in primary prevention work. Prevention work needs to be done in conjunction with women’s frontline services and educators who are the experts in understanding risk assessment and risk management. It is important that broader communities are involved in primary prevention and a valuable resource to raise awareness, however prevention programs need to be led and monitored by experts in the area. There is more likelihood of prevention occurring

¹⁹ WHO (2009) *Promoting Gender Equality to Prevent Violence Against Women*. Available at http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241597883_eng.pdf (p. 13)

²⁰ Ajzen, I. & Fishbein, M. (2005) The influence of attitudes on behavior. In D. Albarracín, B. T. Johnson, & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *The handbook of attitudes* (pp. 173-221). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. (p.175).

when the systems are working together with shared messages and shared responses. To this end, AWAVA lead agency WESNET has identified via its capacity building grants project that an important objective of primary prevention and early intervention projects and programs should be investing in projects that foster collaboration and structural partnerships between governments, service providers, local agencies, communities, and individual women and men.

5 IN YOUR VIEW WHAT WILL SUCCESSFUL ENGAGEMENT OF THE FOUNDATION WITH THE COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE?

AWAVA submits that the role of the Foundation is to harness the practice and advocacy wisdom of the preventing violence against women Sector. AWAVA submits that the role of the Foundation should be collaborative, to not take over the existing space nor compete with a narrow funding base and to create additional space for prevention work and funding. Relationships should be supportive of the existing work and expertise in this area. Successful engagement with the preventing violence against women Sector must entail:

- ✦ Harnessing the practice wisdom of the domestic, family violence, and sexual assault sectors, legal services, and women's health sectors and supporting them to carry out and/or document innovative and creative ideas for early intervention and prevention activities;
- ✦ Harnessing the advocacy wisdom of the AWAVA, the Federal, issue based alliance on violence against women and their children which amplifies the work of the diverse Sector;
- ✦ Highlighting and amplifying initiatives that work well in local communities through communication with National and State and Territory Peaks;
- ✦ Supporting the Sector to document or capture innovative practice wisdom or new and innovative prevention or early intervention activities;
- ✦ Supporting the Sector's work on prevention and early intervention with at-risk communities and populations, reducing risk, building resilience and protective factors, and building capacity of communities to address and solve their problems;
- ✦ Sponsoring of Sector events related to gender-based violence, including AWAVA's proposed national conference;
- ✦ Working closely with the NCE on primary prevention research including supporting the Sector's advocacy on a national framework for prevention: primary prevention is more than raising awareness and requires long-term commitment including evidence and practice based research;
- ✦ Engaging with programs that support men's accountability around gender-based violence;
- ✦ Engaging with programs that prevent the reoccurrence of violence
- ✦ Funding Prevention work including small projects, pilots, and innovative grassroots programs

6 WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS FOR THE FOUNDATION

- ✦ A closer engagement with the Sector including advocating for the long-term funding of Sector based primary prevention projects and programs and ensuring that funding is sustainable;
- ✦ Reinforcing the importance of gender and structural inequality- This needs to be reinforced as a causal framework to understand violence against women and promoting substantive equality whilst advocating for the elimination of violence;
- ✦ Reinforcing the importance of prevention programs and projects complying with relevant National standards;
- ✦ In close collaboration with the NCE, supporting prevention program and project evaluation to add to the evidence base and to allow for program and project development and improvement

7 WHAT INDIVIDUALS, ORGANISATIONS AND COMMUNITIES WILL IT BE IMPORTANT FOR THE FOUNDATION TO ENGAGE AND COLLABORATE WITH, AND WHY, INCLUDING FOR PHILANTHROPIC PURPOSES?

- ✦ Domestic, Family, Sexual Violence, Women's Health, and Legal Services are leading the prevention agenda in many ways and while they offer tertiary services to clients they are also powerful agents of change in their local regions;
- ✦ National Advocacy and Representation organisations such as AWAVA which represent the preventing violence against women Sector;
- ✦ WESNET and NASASV as the respective Domestic/Family Violence and Sexual Assault National Peaks;
- ✦ Association of Women's Educator, Australian Women's Health Network, Australasian Council of Women and Policing, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance, Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women, Women With Disabilities Australia