

Chapter 6

Primary prevention

6.1 This chapter will examine the use of primary prevention strategies to address violence against women, the development of the current strategies and key initiatives in this area by the Commonwealth, jurisdictions and non-government organisations. It will also cover the development of a prevention framework to improve the coordination and dissemination of primary prevention information.

Public health approach

6.2 The public health approach is an important influence on policy making in the area of domestic and family violence. The Australian Women's Health Network outlined the public health model:

Public Health has been defined as an organised response to the protection and promotion of human health...It is concerned with the health of entire populations, which may be a local neighbourhood or an entire country. Public health programs are delivered through education, promoting health lifestyles, and disease and injury prevention. This is in contrast to the medical approach to health which focuses on treating individuals after they become sick or injured.¹

6.3 Domestic Violence Victoria outlined the public health model approach to domestic and family violence:

The public health approach tells us that violence against women – including family violence – rather than being the result of any single or individual factor is the outcome of multiple determinants that all reflect persistent discrimination against women including:

- Gender roles and relations
- Social norms and practices relating to violence against women and exposure to violence
- Access to resources and systems of support.²

6.4 The need to address social and cultural attitudes and behaviours in the general community in relation to domestic and family violence was highlighted to the committee as the key to long term change in this area. Ms Chrystina Stanford, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre emphasised:

I think that we need to recognise that the reason this issue hasn't been solved is because it is a very complex one that is reflected in our broader societal structures.³

1 *Submission 4*, p. 16.

2 *Submission 124*, p. 10.

3 *Committee Hansard*, 15 October 2014, p. 4.

6.5 SunnyKids stressed the need for prevention strategies to embed long-term change:

By focussing on periods of crisis (as opposed to lifelong support and education) such as providing support and intervention post event we fail to 'turn off the tap'. These services are essential and critical, however they must run in parallel with lifelong prevention and education strategies that focus on 'breaking the intergenerational cycle'.⁴

6.6 Ms Mirjana Wilson, Executive Director, Domestic Violence Crisis Service, also indicated that work needs to continue at a societal level to achieve real change.⁵

Focus on primary prevention

6.7 A key aspect of the public health model is the focus on primary prevention⁶ which aims to stop or prevent the problem by addressing the underlying causes, behaviours and attitudes in the general population.

6.8 Our Watch highlighted there is a difference between primary prevention and other strategies such as early intervention to reduce the incidence and effects of domestic and family violence:

[Primary prevention] approaches are distinct from responses to domestic violence (e.g. crisis counselling, police protection and justice responses, or men's behaviour change programs) and early intervention activities (such as those working with 'at risk' young people or families) – although it is essential that activity be coordinated and mutually-informed across the spectrum from prevention to response.⁷

6.9 The Australian Women's Health Network emphasised that primary prevention is a long term approach to addressing cultural change:

Primary prevention is a public health approach that aims to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. It is advocated as an effective means of working towards the elimination of all forms of violence against women. Primary prevention must focus on changing the culture/s that

4 *Submission 2*, p. 3.

5 *Committee Hansard*, 15 October 2014, p. 9.

6 The public health model uses three levels to place strategies on a continuum. Primary prevention refers to strategies aimed at preventing violence before it occurs, including whole-of-population strategies. Secondary prevention or early intervention, refers to programs that involve early detection of risk or manifestations of the problem. For domestic violence it refers to interventions that target individuals or population sub-groups showing early signs of becoming a victim of violence, as well as individuals engaging in violent behaviour or at risk of developing violent behaviours in the future. Tertiary prevention or response or intervention, refers to responses set in motion after the violence has occurred. They aim to reduce the consequences and effects and prevent recurrence. See Inara Walden and Liz Wall, 'Reflecting on primary prevention of violence against women, the public health approach'. Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault, ACSSA Issues, No 19 (2014), pp 5-6.

7 Our Watch (Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children), *Submission 141*, p. 5.

operate to make gender based violence acceptable. This is sometimes referred to as culture, or cultural change.⁸

6.10 Primary prevention programs can include a range of activities, including: public awareness campaigns to improve gender equity; programs targeted at moderating factors that are linked to higher rates of domestic and family violence, such as alcohol and drug abuse; and education programs to change underlying social and cultural gender norms that may contribute to domestic and family violence.

6.11 Other social and health areas where primary prevention measures have been used successfully are acknowledged in the National Plan:

Primary prevention strategies have successfully reduced other complex social or health problems such as drink-driving and smoking. But we know that they are only effective when implemented through a coordinated approach at all levels. The social practices and cultural values of broader society shape how violence can occur at an individual level.⁹

The need for a variety of prevention strategies

6.12 The importance of a variety of primary prevention strategies at different levels to reduce domestic and family violence was emphasised in evidence to the committee. Ms Irene Verins, Manager, Mental Wellbeing, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) told the committee:

[A]n effective approach to prevention requires a combination of both universal and whole-of-population approaches, such as equality at work and targeted interventions such as school programs and parental programs that focus on priority population groups.¹⁰

6.13 This need for action at multiple levels was also stressed to the committee by Ms Sally Camilleri, Health Promotion Coordinator, Women's Health West:

We know that efforts to prevent violence against women require action at multiple levels, including work with individuals, community, organisational level and institutional and structural levels. For example, respectful relationships education with school aged children and young people is important work at the individual level.¹¹

6.14 Given the multiple factors which contribute to domestic and family violence, Ms Sophie Hardefeldt, Program Manager, Australian Women Against Violence Alliance spoke about the need to ensure messages cover the complexity of the issue:

Further, primary prevention messaging must focus on gender inequality and its intersection with other social inequalities...Both traditional and social media are now reporting more on male violence against women and are beginning to represent the issue accurately as a national disaster, yet we can

8 *Submission 4*, p. 7.

9 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 1 (National Plan), p. 19.

10 *Committee Hansard*, 12 September 2014, p. 2.

11 *Committee Hansard*, 12 September 2014, p. 33.

see from VicHealth's recent national community attitude's survey that disturbing attitudes are still rife in our communities. This suggests that we still have not got the messaging right. The focus remains on physical violence or other stressors rather than the root causes of male violence against women. Moving forward we must address the issue of gender inequality resulting from patriarchal social relations if we are to effectively prevent this violence and abuse.¹²

6.15 The Australian Women's Health Network also highlighted this issue in their paper *Health and the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women, Position Paper 2014*:

To be defined as primary prevention the strategies must challenge the attitudes and behaviours that are violence supportive whilst changing the structural supports that maintain gender inequality. Education programs, awareness raising and community mobilisation are all important, but alone do not constitute primary prevention; a comprehensive, multi-level, integrated approach is needed for primary prevention. Primary prevention should actively address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and disadvantage that place women and girls at risk of violence.¹³

Need to target prevention initiatives

6.16 The Australian Women's Health Network noted how primary prevention is able to target specific groups:

Primary prevention programs can be carried out in 'settings', or the places where people in communities live, work, play and age. A settings approach makes it possible to target specific groups with appropriate programs – in (among others) sports clubs, schools, workplaces and faith settings, as well with specific population groups including children, young people, and people with physical and intellectual disabilities, Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse people.¹⁴

6.17 Submissions noted the need for prevention strategies to be targeted for particular groups at risk of violence. For example, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) stated:

Whilst violence can affect women regardless of their race, cultural background, socioeconomic status or age, research suggests that particular population groups are more at risk of violence, or more extreme forms of violence. The diverse needs of these populations, including women with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex and queer women, and women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, are often not adequately understood as there is only a limited amount of academic and program

12 *Committee Hansard*, 15 October 2014, p. 22.

13 Australian Women's Health Network, *Submission 4*, p. 17.

14 Australian Women's Health Network, *Submission 4*, p. 7.

research which addresses the particular needs of these communities, particularly in a primary prevention context.¹⁵

6.18 The AHRC noted there was value in strengthening the capacity of ANROWS to build the evidence base about domestic and family violence, particularly about 'at risk population groups and primary prevention'. Its submission also advocated:

Ensuring targeted data is collected to inform primary prevention, early intervention and response initiatives with at risk or hard to reach population groups.¹⁶

6.19 As mentioned previously, the Commonwealth Government has announced \$160,000 for the Diversity Data project (to be undertaken by ANROWS) that will review how CALD women, women with a disability and Indigenous women experience violence and examine options on how to improve information in future.¹⁷

6.20 Dr Casta Tungaraza, Member, New and Emerging Policy Advisory Committee, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia explained the need to make targeted information available to new and emerging communities:

...ethno-specific knowledge and understanding is crucial in the development of appropriate strategies and lasting solutions aimed at addressing this problem. Firstly, there are differing understandings and perceptions of what domestic violence is for women from new and emerging communities. In many communities, for instance, domestic violence is only associated with physical assault and excludes other forms of abuse, such as verbal, emotional, financial or sexual abuse. Moreover, the term domestic violence does not have an easy or accurate translation in many languages...¹⁸

6.21 Redfern Legal Centre drew out the importance of community education that reaches vulnerable groups, particularly noting that:

Community education programs and public awareness initiatives aimed at reducing domestic violence must target vulnerable groups such as CALD, refugee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is especially important for those groups who do not share the English language and legal system. For example, the Family Law Council have commented that there is a need for information about court processes and domestic violence laws in CALD communities in Australia.¹⁹

6.22 The committee notes that the need to better target prevention initiatives for particular communities is recognised by the government and in November 2013, the government announced \$1 million for White Ribbon Australia to work with CALD

15 *Submission 133*, pp 5-6.

16 *Submission 133*, p. 2.

17 See Chapter 4, 4.38.

18 *Committee Hansard*, 15 October 2014, p. 33.

19 *Submission 129*, p. 14.

and Indigenous communities, including new and emerging communities, as discussed below.²⁰

The role of the Commonwealth in primary prevention

6.23 The Commonwealth takes a lead role in developing, funding and implementing primary prevention programs aimed at reducing violence towards women.²¹ ANROWS noted:

States and territories have primary responsibility for policy, legislation and programs directed to addressing the prevalence and effects of domestic violence. Nevertheless, the Federal Government has a critical national leadership role in driving social, cultural and behavioural change....²²

6.24 Our Watch agreed that the Commonwealth should play a central role in leading and coordinating primary prevention across all jurisdictions:

The Federal Government however has a crucial leadership role to play in driving and coordinating collective, evidence-based approaches across jurisdictions. For example, it can support design and delivery of accredited training programs to build the capacity of the organisations and workforces needed to implement prevention activity in different sectors; develop best practice standards, tools and guidelines; and measure collective progress against indicators of the factors known to contribute to violence. In short, the activities of the Federal Government over the coming years should articulate and establish a 'prevention architecture' that not only supports prevention practice, but harnesses it in a coordinated effort that will achieve whole-of-population change by 2022.²³

6.25 The New South Wales Government also agreed that the Commonwealth should provide national leadership in primary prevention initiatives:

...through the development of the national prevention approach, and in addressing the underlying causes of violence against women, such as gender inequality.²⁴

6.26 Redfern Legal Centre recommended that the Commonwealth Government prioritise primary prevention initiatives to raise awareness of domestic and family violence and change attitudes and behaviour over the long term:

Primary prevention through community education, public awareness and other initiatives to change attitudes and behaviours should be central to the

20 *Second Action Plan 2013-2016*, p. 25.

21 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 1 (National Plan), p. 4.

22 ANROWS, *Submission 68*, p. 4.

23 Our Watch (Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children), *Submission 141*, p. 8.

24 *Submission 140, Attachment 1*, p. 37.

Federal Government's efforts to prevent and address domestic violence in Australia.²⁵

Primary prevention and the National Plan

6.27 A lack of investment in primary prevention was identified in the work undertaken by the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their children (the National Council) which presented its recommendations in a 2009 report *Time for Action*. This report concluded:

Past investments in communication campaigns about violence against women have not been sustained or sufficiently aligned to ensure coherency in messages to the community. Public campaigns are a critical partner in any social change process and there is evidence that they work when they focus on positive messages promoting cultural and behavioural change, rather than focusing on victims as a means of encouraging them to access support.²⁶

The National Plan

6.28 The National Plan has a strong focus on preventing violence by raising awareness and assisting young people to build respectful relationships:

The National Plan is unprecedented in the way it focuses on preventing violence by raising awareness and building respectful relationships in the next generation. The aim is to bring attitudinal and behavioural change at the cultural, institutional and individual levels, with a particular focus on young people.²⁷

6.29 The National Plan contains six national outcomes.²⁸ Primary prevention is noted as a key strategy to achieve national outcome 1 that 'Communities are free from violence'. However, prevention clearly also has a place in relation to national outcomes 2 and 3 also.

6.30 The Progress Review of the First Action Plan noted that the measures of success for outcomes 1, 2 and 3 were not expected to change greatly over the course of the first plan as:

[T]hey are long term measures that, depending on success, will change over the life of the National Plan. Baseline data has been established for a number of the Measures of Success and data for comparison will become available as the national plan progresses. The goal in the First Action Plan

25 *Submission 129*, p. 6.

26 The National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, *Background Paper to Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009-2021* (2009), p. 5.

27 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 1 (National Plan), p. 12.

28 Outcome 1: Communities are free from violence; Outcome 2: Relationships are respectful; Outcome 3: Indigenous communities are strengthened; Outcome 4: Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence; Outcome 5: Justice responses are effective; Outcome 6: Perpetrators stop the violence and are held to account.

was to set a platform of initiatives that will drive primary prevention over the life of the National Plan. The focus has been on systemic and strategic investments that build knowledge and establish infrastructure to support long term change.²⁹

Examples of national primary prevention initiatives

6.31 A critical element of addressing domestic and family violence is changing cultural and social norms that appear to support violence. This was stressed by Mr Peter Bravos, Acting Assistant Commissioner, Crime and Specialist Support Command, Northern Territory Police:

Real progress, however, will be made when the attitudes of males towards women, and especially their attitude towards violence against women, changes. This is where the biggest challenges lie and where the biggest rewards can be reaped. As a community, we all need to be committed to challenging the perceptions of many men...We as a community need to say: 'If you demean or degrade women in any way, you're not a man; you're a thug. If you assault a woman, you're not a man; you're a coward. If you engage in any form of domestic or family violence, you're not a man; you're a criminal.'³⁰

6.32 Mr Bravos particularly noted the work of Mr Charlie King with the No More campaign.³¹ National initiatives are discussed below. Each state and territory has its own primary prevention initiatives and a number of these are outlined in the first and second action plans.

Our Watch (formerly the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children)

6.33 Our Watch was 'created to drive the broad-based attitudinal and behavioural change required to achieve a future free from violence against women and their children'.³² Mr Paul Linossier, Chief Executive Officer, Our Watch, indicated:

Our vision is an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence and we describe our program of work in the strategy as comprising four areas: sustaining a constructive public conversation; developing innovative whole-of-population and community-level attitudinal and behavioural change programs; supporting networks, communities and organisations to develop effective local-level primary prevention strategies; and influencing public policy and public institutions regarding the future development of this work over time.³³

29 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 3 (Progress Review of the First Action Plan), p. 5.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 10 March 2015, p. 33.

31 *Committee Hansard*, 10 March 2015, p. 33. See also <http://nomore.org/> (accessed 20 April 2015)

32 ANROWS, *Submission 68*, p. 4.

33 *Committee Hansard*, 12 September 2014, p. 2.

6.34 Mr Linossier told the committee that following its establishment in June 2013, national consultation was undertaken which revealed that 'if we are effective as an organisation in terms of sustaining a public conversation, in turn, as part of our primary prevention strategy, more women will have confidence to take action to report violence, to disclose'.³⁴

The Line social marketing campaign

6.35 'The Line' is national social marketing campaign aimed at young people and was established in 2010 as part of the primary prevention approach of the First Action Plan. It aims to encourage young people aged between 12 and 20 to discuss and debate what constitutes reasonable behaviour in relationships, and thereby create long term changes in attitudes that encourage or enable violent behaviour. A separate campaign aimed at Indigenous Youth 'the Line – Respect Each Other', incorporates a strong community approach in encouraging and promoting respectful relationships.³⁵

6.36 The May 2014 Progress Review of the First Action Plan found positive outcomes for The Line including that:

87% of people who recognised the campaign claimed it has improved their understanding of behaviour that could be 'crossing the line'

83% of people changed their behaviour as a result of the campaign

88% of people intend to change their behaviour in the next six months

84% of 12 to 24 year olds intend to change their behaviour in the next 6 months as a result of the campaign.³⁶

White Ribbon

6.37 Starting in Australia in 2003, White Ribbon Australia is a male-led primary prevention campaign to end men's violence against women. The campaign works through primary prevention initiatives involving awareness raising and education, and programs with youth, schools, workplaces and across the broader community.³⁷

6.38 Ms Libby Davies, Chief Executive Officer, White Ribbon Australia explained the origin of the campaign in Australia to the committee:

It was brought to Australia by a group of men and women who you would describe as very strong feminists. It has provided a strong and well-recognised mechanism to education, involve and give men strategies and tools that successfully involve men in that prevention of violence against women.³⁸

34 *Committee Hansard*, 12 September 2014, p. 3.

35 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 3 (Progress Review of the First Action Plan), p. 6.

36 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 3 (Progress Review of the First Action Plan), p. 6.

37 See www.whiteribbon.org.au/what-is-white-ribbon (accessed 23 January 2015).

38 *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2014, p. 9.

6.39 Ms Davies described how the campaign is funded:

The campaign is an expression of corporate and community partnering that continues to gather momentum and traction. This last financial year only 10 per cent of funding made available to support this work came from government. The rest was raised by the community and by corporate Australia.³⁹

6.40 White Ribbon runs the *Breaking the Silence* professional development program for principals and teachers. The program 'supports them to embed models of respectful relationships in school culture and classroom activities'.⁴⁰

Respectful relationships programs

6.41 The importance of working with young people to change attitudes was highlighted to the committee. As noted by Ms Virginia Geddes, Executive Officer, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria:

One of the things is generally the evidence seems to be that working in primary prevention work with young people is a key area. There has been quite a lot of evidence to suggest that some of the work done on respectful relationships programs around the world is effective. That would be something, getting people's attitudes really early to build those respectful relationships and to change ideas about gender.⁴¹

6.42 The National Plan recognises the need to assist young people to develop equal and respectful relationships. The May 2014 Progress Review of the First Action Plan noted:

A number of jurisdictions funded and delivered respectful relationships projects in school and non-school based settings during the First Action Plan. To supplement the work already underway in states and territories and build the evidence base around good practice respectful education, the Commonwealth funded three rounds of respectful relationships projects around the country.⁴²

Second Action Plan

6.43 Under the Second Action Plan, National Priority One is 'Driving whole of community action to prevent violence'. The plan notes the work undertaken since the First Action Plan in this area:

The National Plan has a strong focus on preventing violence by raising awareness, engaging the community and building respectful relationships in

39 *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2014, p. 9.

40 White Ribbon, *Submission 94*, p. 7. White Ribbon outlined their other work programs in this submission and appearance before the committee, see Ms Libby Davies and Dr Christina Jarron, *Committee Hansard*, 4 November 2014 pp 9-16.

41 *Committee Hansard*, 5 November 2014, p. 4.

42 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 3 (Progress Review of the First Action Plan), p. 6.

the next generation. To date, significant work has been undertaken to establish strong foundations that will drive primary prevention over the life of the National Plan. This includes establishing the Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children [Our Watch], delivering and evaluating respectful relationships education and delivering The Line, an innovative social marketing campaign aimed at changing young people's attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence. The Second Action Plan will harness this work and take it to the next level.⁴³

6.44 The actions listed under this National Priority in the Second Action Plan are:

- Support communities to prevent, respond to and speak out against violence, through local government, business, community and sporting groups, schools and key institutions.
- Improve media engagement on violence against women and their children, and the representation of women experiencing violence, at a national and local level.
- Take the next step to reduce violence against women and their children by promoting gender equality across a range of spheres, including women's economic independence and leadership.
- Support young people through the Line campaign and by addressing issues relating to the sexualisation of children.
- Build on the findings of the respectful relationships evaluation, to strengthen the design and delivery of respectful relationship programmes, and implement them more broadly.
- Incorporate respectful relationships education into the national curriculum.
- Enhance online safety for children and young people.⁴⁴

Progress with initiatives

The Line

6.45 In relation to The Line, the Second Action Plan notes:

Successful social marketing campaigns, including The Line, have been able to support young people to change their attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence. The Commonwealth Government will extend funding of The Line social marketing campaign until 2017 to ensure young people continue to have a safe place to discuss and debate relationship issues and form their own conclusions about what sort of behaviour crosses the line. To maximise the effectiveness and engagement with young people at this stage in the campaign, [Our Watch] will take responsibility for delivery and management of The Line from July 2014. This will allow The Line to expand its reach to a broader audience, foster innovation, and forge

43 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 5 (Second Action Plan), p. 16.

44 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 5 (Second Action Plan), p. 16.

closer connections with other primary prevention initiatives across the country.⁴⁵

6.46 The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health suggested that the inclusivity and accessibility of The Line could be improved:

While there is written and audio information on this website in 12 languages other than English, the main interactive and educational features of the site are all in English. The 'MyLine' telephone counselling line is in English only as is the recorded message which provides important safety and confidentiality information to callers while they wait to connect. Waiting time is significant (up to 30 minutes) and the call-back feature is explained in English only, and is therefore not available to callers who have not yet connected to an interpreter. It is not clear from the information available on the website whether the interpreter is free of charge to the caller, which may act as a disincentive to the caller.⁴⁶

6.47 The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health also suggested The Line could include more information for young people from immigrant and refugee communities:

There is no information on this website which approaches the issue of violence against young women from a multicultural perspective, taking into account issues like migration, diverse cultural backgrounds and racism, which would be more appropriate for young people from immigrant and refugee communities.⁴⁷

6.48 The committee notes that the Second Action Plan indicates that The Line will be expanded to include targeted resources for CALD young people and communities.⁴⁸

Respectful relationships programs

6.49 Action 5 of the Second Action Plan is 'Strengthening respectful relationships programmes'. It notes:

Schools and organisations deliver a range of respectful relationships programmes in a number of different ways. Under the First Action Plan, we explored and evaluated the effectiveness of different approaches to respectful relationship education in school and non-school settings.

Under the Second Action Plan, governments will work together to develop and test a suite of good practice tools and resources to strengthen and support the delivery of high quality respectful relationships education in schools, homes and communities. This will build on findings from the evaluation of the First Action Plan's national Respectful Relationships programmes.

45 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 5 (Second Action Plan), p. 20.

46 *Submission 97*, p. 3.

47 *Submission 97*, p. 3.

48 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 5 (Second Action Plan), p. 25.

[Our Watch] is funded by the Victorian Government to undertake a respectful Relationships in Schools project across selected areas in regional and metropolitan Victoria. The project will be evaluated to document best practice examples to be used across jurisdictions.⁴⁹

6.50 Action 6 of the Second Action Plan is 'Incorporating respectful relationships education into the national curriculum':

Following endorsement of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education by Education Ministers at the Standing Council for School Education and Early Childhood, states and territories can commence incorporating respectful relationships education into their local curricula and syllabi, building on work already undertaken by states and territories in this area.⁵⁰

Suggested improvements in the area of primary prevention

6.51 Our Watch suggested that the Second Action Plan provides the opportunity to scale up more of the work, including prevention work:

While the National Plan has indeed 'built a strong foundation' for the above [prevention of domestic violence], governments across Australia are yet to meet the best practice in policy approaches recognised by international evidence and agreements. This means that while relatively small-scale prevention activity has been funded and shown results for individual projects (and their participants), we are yet to bring such work to scale and so begin to see results at the population level. The [Second Action Plan] provides the opportunity for all governments to increase whole of government policy commitment and investment in coordinated activity, workforce and practice development, embedding and scaling up of good practice, data collection and evaluation to achieve this aim.⁵¹

6.52 Our Watch submitted that there were positive examples of primary campaigns working well in targeted settings, including educational institutions, workplaces and sports. Despite these positive signs, they argued:

...limited shared understandings of what constitutes effective prevention continues to constrain the development of good practice nationwide. More activity exists than is evaluated or fully documented, which presents challenges for improvement and upscaling, with a particular dearth of evidence-based practice on working with different population groups.

Most importantly, the social, cultural and behavioural change required to prevent violence against women and their children cannot be achieved 'project by project'.⁵²

49 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 5 (Second Action Plan), p. 21.

50 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 5 (Second Action Plan), p. 21.

51 *Submission 141*, p. 6.

52 *Submission 140*, p. 7.

6.53 The Australian Women's Health Network questioned the coordination of Commonwealth and state and territory plans and whether there are effective mechanisms to communicate learnings from prevention programs:

All states and territories are signatory to the Commonwealth plan to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children, yet not all of the individual plans align with the Commonwealth in terms of primary prevention. There is a lack of transparency and clarity about how the different plans are being implemented and progressing. The Commonwealth has funded a number of community based programs since 2009 yet no effective knowledge transfer about the learnings that have come out of these programs has taken place to inform practice.⁵³

The National Primary Prevention Framework

6.54 The committee notes the development of a National Primary Prevention Framework which is a priority action under the National Plan's Second Action Plan.⁵⁴ The framework is under development by Our Watch and will be launched mid to late 2015.⁵⁵

6.55 The importance of this work was stressed by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria:

A national framework for the prevention of violence against women is required to ensure a shared understanding of what is meant by primary prevention and a common set of in the principles to guide the work.⁵⁶

6.56 Ms Irene Verins, Manager, Mental Wellbeing, VicHealth, also highlighted the importance of the National Primary Prevention Framework:

This will be a valuable resource to coordinate activity across jurisdictions and improve knowledge, skills and approaches to policy and programming. We recommend that the Commonwealth government continue to support the development of the framework and commit to being proactive in promoting it to all jurisdictions.⁵⁷

6.57 Our Watch notes that the primary prevention framework will:

...bring together the international research, and nationwide experience, on what works to prevent violence.

It will establish a shared understanding of the evidence and principles of effective prevention, and present a way forward for a coordinated national approach.

...

53 Australian Women's Health Network, *Submission 4*, p. 7.

54 Department of Social Services, *Submission 57*, Attachment 5 (Second Action Plan), p. 17.

55 See Our Watch website: [www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-\(1\)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework) (accessed 27 January 2015)

56 *Submission 123*, p. 10.

57 *Committee Hansard*, 12 September 2014, p. 2.

The Framework will not prescribe specific actions. It will be a guide to assist governments and other stakeholders to develop their own appropriate policies, strategies and programs to prevent violence against women and their children.⁵⁸

The need to ensure adequate funding for prevention measures

6.58 White Ribbon Australia highlighted the benefits of greater investment in prevention, but cautioned:

...investment in prevention should not be at the expense of other services, including crisis accommodation and legal services. The social and economic benefits of greater investment in both primary and tertiary responses to men's violence against women will outweigh the initial costs.⁵⁹

6.59 Women's Health In the North commented in their submission that the lack of funding for response services also affects primary health strategies:

The lack of funding for response services also impacts on prevention work, as it is difficult to build the case for organisations to implement primary prevention strategies when women and children's safety is at risk. However, if we do not increase our efforts to prevent violence against women before it occurs, the demand for response services will continue to escalate.⁶⁰

6.60 The funding challenge was also highlighted by the Australian Women's Health Network:

One of these challenges is to maintain a focus on primary prevention rather than be drawn into tertiary, secondary prevention. Because tertiary work is more visible and tangible, funding bodies may try to combine response and prevention in one program. The response sector has historically struggled to provide safety and support for women who are victims of violence and it is vital that resources should not be taken from these services, and that they should not have to compete with for limited funding with the primary prevention sector.⁶¹

Prevention initiatives may increase demand for services

6.61 Women's Health West, an organisation in Melbourne that delivers a range of prevention and response services, indicated they had noticed a correlation between primary prevention programs and an increase in reporting cases of domestic and family violence:

[P]rimary prevention initiatives within communities result in a spike in reported family violence and a corresponding demand for services as women become more aware of their rights and of the support available.

58 See Our Watch website: [www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-\(1\)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do-(1)/National-Primary-Prevention-Framework) (accessed 27 January 2015)

59 *Submission 94*, pp 6-7.

60 *Submission 33*, p. 5.

61 *Submission 4*, p. 23.

Current data on increasing service demand clearly demonstrates that governments must be prepared for the increase in demand for services that will initially accompany successfully implemented primary prevention and early intervention initiatives.⁶²

6.62 This issue was also highlighted by Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West:

...investment in prevention needs to be supported by a commensurate increase in crisis and case management to women and children escaping family violence, noting that primary prevention efforts commonly lead to a spike in reported family violence and service demand, at least in the short to medium term.⁶³

6.63 Mr Paul Linossier, Our Watch, reported that as part of the national consultation undertaken following their establishment, there was a recognition from service providers that the work to raise public awareness would lift demand on their services 'but nonetheless they encouraged us to continue, because it was the only way that ending the issue, as opposed to responding to incidents of violence, might be possible'.⁶⁴

Committee view

6.64 The committee agrees that investment in primary prevention initiatives is a key strategy over the long term to build awareness and bring about attitudinal and behavioural change to reduce the incidence of domestic and family violence. The committee notes this is a particular focus of the Second Action Plan.

6.65 Working with young people is important to embed long term societal change and establish healthy relationships. The committee supports the respectful relationships programs and supports the goal in the Second Action Plan to incorporate respectful relationships into the national curriculum.

6.66 General public awareness campaigns are important for primary prevention as are more targeted campaigns to address the needs of particular groups such as new migrants, CALD, and Indigenous communities. The committee notes that the Second Action Plan has a focus on working with Indigenous and CALD communities to improve access to information and resources. The government has also announced funding for White Ribbon Australia to work with Indigenous and CALD communities, including new and emerging communities.

Recommendation 8

6.67 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government consider focusing on work that reinforces the value of school based education

62 *Submission 21*, p. 6.

63 *Submission 20*, p. 10.

64 *Committee Hansard*, 12 September 2014, p. 3. See also Women's Health in the North, *Submission 33*, p. 5.

across all age groups on respectful relationships and responses to domestic and family violence.

Recommendation 9

6.68 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government, in light of the strong evidence pointing to the crucial need to prioritise primary prevention, take responsibility to lead and coordinate the delivery of these essential programs.

6.69 The development of the National Primary Prevention Framework by Our Watch will be a welcome step to improve national coordination and dissemination of information in this important area and the committee looks forward to the launch later in 2015.

6.70 While stakeholders acknowledge the possible increased pressure on services that may result from an emphasis on prevention, there is also acknowledgment that this needs to occur to effect long term change. The committee was cautioned that while a focus on primary prevention is welcome, it may result in more demand for services and governments need to ensure that there is an equal commitment to provide sufficient resources to assist women who are being encouraged to reach out early for information or help.

6.71 To this end the committee welcomes the recent announcement by COAG:

COAG agreed to jointly contribute \$30 million for a national campaign to reduce violence against women and their children and potentially for associated increased services to support women seeking assistance. It noted the importance of ensuring frontline services in all jurisdictions continue to meet the needs of vulnerable women and children.

This campaign will build on efforts already underway by states and territories. It will be based on extensive research, with a focus on high-risk groups, including Indigenous women.

COAG will be assisted with this work by the COAG Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women, chaired by the former Victorian Police Chief Commissioner, Mr Ken Lay APM, and with 2015 Australian of the Year, Ms Rosie Batty as a founding member.⁶⁵

6.72 The committee notes that since this announcement, COAG has:

...welcomed and accepted the preliminary high-level advice of its Advisory Panel on...areas for national leadership, including that the national campaign, agreed by COAG in April, focus on galvanising the community to change the attitudes of young people to violence.⁶⁶

65 COAG Communique, 17 April 2015, pp 1-2. See also Ms Liza Carroll, Associate Secretary, Domestic Policy, Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Ms Cate McKenzie, Principal Adviser, Department of Social Services, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2015, pp 20-22.

66 COAG, Special Meeting Communique, 23 July 2015.

6.73 The committee also notes that at its next meeting, COAG agreed to hear advice on campaign messaging, possible programs in schools to reinforce the campaign's messages to young Australians and also to consider the Panel's advice that 'government should explore innovative ways to use technology to keep women safe and prevent perpetrators from reoffending'.⁶⁷

6.74 In the 2015-16 Commonwealth Budget, the government announced it would contribute \$16.7 million over three years to fund this campaign, including \$1.7 million for its administration and development.⁶⁸ While the campaign and funding is welcome, the committee notes the basis for and adequacy of the \$30 million is unclear.⁶⁹

6.75 Another key message to the committee was that increased resources directed towards primary prevention should not be at the expense of resources for crisis or other services. However, an increased investment in the area of primary prevention should eventually lessen the demand for crisis services although the committee recognises that these results would be some years into the future.

Recommendation 10

6.76 The committee recommends that governments ensure additional investment in primary prevention initiatives does not result in a reduction of funding for crisis services and that sufficient resources are available for any increased demand for services following specific campaigns.

67 COAG, Special Meeting Communique, 23 July 2015.

68 Commonwealth Budget 2015-16, *Budget Paper 2: Expense Measures*, p. 163. See also Ms Rosie Batty, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2015, p. 4.

69 See committee discussion with PM&C, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 11 June 2015, pp 21-22.