



Media release

Ted Baillieu MLA
Premier
Minister for the Arts

Mary Wooldridge MLA
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Women's Affairs
Minister for Community Services

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Coalition action plan tackles family violence

An action plan to prevent family violence – and to improve the response when it does occur – was unveiled today by the Victorian Coalition Government.

Premier Ted Baillieu said the plan, *Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children - Everyone has a Responsibility*, outlined a whole-of-government approach to addressing the scourge of family violence and sexual assault.

"Violence against women and children is unacceptable in any form and under any circumstances," Mr Baillieu said

"The Coalition Government is committed to preventing violence happening, holding perpetrators to account for their actions, and making sure we support those women and children who experience violence.

"This is an integrated and co-ordinated, whole-of-government plan that addresses all forms of violence against women and children, with a strong focus on family violence and sexual assault, given their impact and prevalence," Mr Baillieu said.

The plan is supported by the Coalition Government's investment of \$90 million in 2012-2013 – a 20 per cent increase in funding in just two years.

The action plan launched today, which covers prevention, early intervention and response measures includes new and expanded initiatives worth \$7.9 million including investment in:

- raising community awareness to change attitudes and behaviours that have allowed violence against women and children to occur or continue;
- working with schools to incorporate more information on respectful relationships into the school curriculum, promoting social media literacy, training teachers and establishing links to local community organisations;
- providing resources and training for workplaces on developing environments that are inclusive, safe and supportive of women, including a Bystander Program to equip people with knowledge about what to do when someone known to them is experiencing violence or using violence against women; and
- working with the media on responsible reporting of violence against women and training survivors to be media and public spokespeople.

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The action plan also incorporates the new measures announced by the Coalition Government on 3 September 2012, including legislative changes to reduce the occurrence of family violence and provide better protection for women and children, as well as a further \$16 million over four years for services to boost the support services available for victims and expand men's behaviour change programs.

Mr Baillieu said prevention was at the core of the plan, with an emphasis on educating and engaging the community to positively change attitudes and behaviours.

"We are investing in a comprehensive and complementary range of innovative prevention initiatives in schools, media, workplaces and communities that will educate about and promote respectful and non-violent relationships and gender equity," Mr Baillieu said.

"Regional action plans will be developed to engage local communities in raising awareness and delivering support to prevent violence against women.

"We are working with the community to change the culture of antisocial behaviour and violence," Mr Baillieu said.

The action plan also includes prevention activities to support highly vulnerable women, including those with disabilities and from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

There is a stronger focus than ever before on early intervention to support women and children at risk. This includes extending training and skills development for workers in health and women's services to help them identify family violence and manage associated risks, and a project focused on families at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness due to family violence.

The plan has new initiatives for men and boys at risk of being violent, including a pilot program that intervenes to address behaviours for adolescents who use violence in the home, as well as new training for people who work in services with men who are at risk of being violent against women.

The action plan signals a tougher approach to perpetrators of family violence, and includes a proposed new graduated offences regime for breaches of intervention orders and improved family violence safety notice and intervention order processes that have been announced recently.

The three-year plan will be overseen by a small, high level advisory group comprising key sector experts in conjunction with key ministers from the Victorian Government.

Minister for Women's Affairs Mary Wooldridge said reducing violence against women and children was a shared responsibility across the Victorian community and could not be achieved by government on its own.

"Violence against women and children is a complex social and economic problem that affects all Victorians," Ms Wooldridge said.

"Through this action plan, the Coalition Government is providing strong leadership and a co-ordinated and integrated approach to tackling this issue.

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"However, if we are to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and children, we need communities, organisations and individuals to join us in taking action.

"As the action plan states, everyone has a responsibility to act," Ms Wooldridge said.

To view or download *Victoria's Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women and Children - Everyone has a Responsibility to Act*, visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au/addressingviolenceagainstwomenandchildren

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Funding for new and expanded initiatives	
<i>Educate to change attitudes and behaviours and engage organisations and communities to drive gender equity and non-violence</i>	
Enhanced community awareness	\$1.15 million
New initiatives in education, media, workplaces and local communities	\$3.11 million
Investment in a coordinated and prioritised program of research through the new National Centre for Excellence	\$1.13 million
<i>Identify women and children at greatest risk of violence and target services to those who are at risk of committing violence</i>	
Information, resources and training to prevent violence against women with disabilities and in multicultural communities	\$950,000
Improved identification of women who may be experiencing violence or men who might be perpetrating it in health and community services sectors and assisting trafficked CALD women to leave the sex industry	\$1.05 million
<i>Protect and empower women to rebuild their lives</i>	
Improved information sharing, referrals and case management for women who experience family violence	\$500,000
Total	\$7.89 million