

Our Watch supporter communications pack

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this communications pack is to share key messages, resources, social media post examples and assets with organisations who are committed to preventing violence against women in Australia. Communications can play a key role in helping to reinforce messages that get to the heart of what drives violence against women, including gender inequality.

This resource draws from Our Watch's focuses and key publications including [Change the Story](#), [Changing the Picture](#), and [Men in Focus](#) and from our prevention frameworks including [Workplace Equality and Respect](#), [Equality and Respect in Sport](#) and campaigns such as [No Excuse for Abuse](#), [Doing Nothing Does Harm](#) and [The Line](#).

This resource is intended as a guide, as Our Watch recognises that each organisation, whether it be a sporting association, local council, workplace or education provider, will each have key local information that is also critical to share.

For all social media posts, please tag Our Watch at these platforms below

[LinkedIn](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

KEY MESSAGES

Our Watch

- Our Watch is a national leader in the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia.
- The work of Our Watch is primary prevention - stopping violence before it starts.
- It's up to everyone to create a new normal, where women and men and boys and girls are respected as equals.
- Our Watch works with schools, sporting codes, young adults, all levels of government, workplaces and the media, to address the drivers of violence against women.
- Overwhelmingly, national and international research tells us that there are four key drivers of violence against women:
 - Condoning of violence against women
 - Men's control of decision making and limits to women's independence
 - Rigid stereotypes about masculinity and femininity
 - Disrespect towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression.

Facebook/LinkedIn post:

@OurWatchAus is a national leader in the primary prevention of men's violence against women and their children in Australia. They work to embed gender equality and prevent violence where Australians live, learn, work and socialise. Learn more about what they do and how to take action here. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/>

Twitter post:

@OurWatchAus is a national leader in the #primaryprevention of men's #violenceagainstwomen & their children in Australia. They work to embed gender equality & prevent violence where Australians live, learn, work & socialise. Learn more and take action <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/>

Change the Story second edition

- The second edition of *Change the story* is a fully updated, evidence-based framework to guide a coordinated, effective national approach to preventing violence against women.
- *Change the story* goes beyond a focus on individual behaviours to consider the broader social, political, and economic factors that drive violence against women, and the social context of gender inequality in which this violence arises.
- Importantly, *Change the story* outlines the essential actions needed at all levels of society – from individuals to schools, from workplaces to governments – to address these underlying drivers and stop this violence before it starts.
- The economic, social and health costs of violence against women are felt right across Australian society, so we all have a responsibility to play our part in addressing this national crisis.
- A sustained reduction in the prevalence of violence against women will not be achieved unless we address the underlying drivers of this violence. And this will not be possible without an ongoing, national, evidence-based shared approach to prevention.
- Implementing the actions outlined in *Change the story – second edition* will reduce the gendered violence that girls and young women experience in their homes, online, in workplaces and in public places.
- To prevent violence against women, we need individual, organisational, systemic and structural change. We need to transform society, by promoting the equal distribution of power, resources and opportunities between people of all genders.
- The second edition highlights the connection between harmful forms of masculinity, gender inequity and violence against women and points to the importance of effectively engaging men and boys in prevention work.
- *Change the Story - second edition* also highlights the importance of addressing intersecting forms of discrimination, such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism.

Facebook/LinkedIn post:

'Change the story' is @OurWatchAus national framework for a consistent and integrated approach to preventing violence against women and their children in Australia. The framework shows that gender inequality is the core of the problem, so gender equality must be the heart of the solution. There are roles for all of us to play in preventing violence against women. Find out more here. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/>

Twitter post:

'Change the story' is @OurWatchAus national framework for a consistent & integrated approach to preventing #violenceagainstwomen. The framework shows that #genderinequality is the core of the problem, so #genderequality must be the heart of the solution. <https://bit.ly/3lXBhME>

Respectful relationships education

- [Respectful relationships education](#) is the holistic approach to school-based, primary prevention of gender-based violence.
- Supporting young people to develop skills and knowledge for what respectful and equal relationships looks like is an important step we must take, as is transforming the environments in which young people learn to ensure that they are safe.
- Schools are not only places for learning, but are also workplaces and community hubs, which have the potential to contribute to stopping gender-based violence before it starts.
- [Respectful relationships education](#) that is embedded within schools has the potential to reach over four million students across Australian primary and secondary schools, as well as a workforce of over 290,000 teachers and wider community of over 9,500 schools.
- Primary schools provide an opportunity to reach children during their early development and shape their attitudes, beliefs, knowledge and behaviours around gender and respect.
- This education and cultural change within schools based on equality and respect must continue during high school, when adolescents are experiencing their first intimate relationships.
- International and national evidence shows that to be effective, respectful relationship education must take a whole-of-school approach to change, support staff through professional learning, and have a long-term vision and commitment.
- Importantly, best practice approaches to [respectful relationships education](#) address the drivers of gender-based violence, such as by challenging gender stereotypes in teaching materials, through role-modelling in the school, and taking a whole-of-school approach to change and promoting gender equality.
- Every part of the school community needs to get involved in this, from principals, teachers and parents in order to help children and young people to have healthy, happy and respectful relationships as they grow up.

Facebook/LinkedIn post

Schools are mini communities that play a central role in teaching young people what gender-based violence looks like and how it can be prevented. @OurWatchAus respectful relationships education approach is about taking a whole of school approach to primary prevention for the benefit of everyone in your school community. Learn more here. <https://education.ourwatch.org.au/>

Twitter post:

Schools are mini communities that are central in teaching young people how to prevent gendered violence. @OurWatchAus respectful relationships education takes a whole of school approach to #primaryprevention for the benefit of everyone in school communities <https://bit.ly/3zKE8NZ>

Changing the picture

- Violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is not an 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander problem.' It is a national problem – one that is prevalent and persistent in all communities, right across Australia.
- Gender inequality cannot be separated from other forms of oppression such as racism, as well as the ongoing impacts of colonisation and dispossession. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience disproportionate rates of violence, and violence that is often more severe.
- [Changing the picture](#) helps us understand why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience higher rates and more severe violence, what is needed to change this, and how as a society we can all work together to stop this violence from happening in the first place.
- [Changing the picture](#) contains a set of clear actions that are needed to address the drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. It shows many different stakeholders –

Indigenous and non-Indigenous, government and non-government, across diverse settings and geographical contexts – what they can do, and how they can contribute. It shows how we can all work together as part of a shared national effort to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.

- Our Watch has worked closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop [Changing the picture](#). Our Watch has tried to ensure it respects, and is informed by, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and by the many decades of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's activism on this issue, and that it makes central the voices, experiences, ideas and solutions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves.
- [Changing the picture](#) is a national resource - intended to encourage, guide and support a national effort – by many organisations and stakeholders, at many levels and in many settings.
- As a non-Indigenous organisation, Our Watch does not claim to have all the solutions. But are committed to taking responsibility for the change they can lead, and to playing their part in tackling the drivers of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Facebook/LinkedIn post:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience disproportionate rates of violence, and violence that is often more severe and more complex in its impacts. Preventing this violence must be a national priority. Read @OurWatchAus national resource 'Changing the picture' to support preventing violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women here. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/resource/changing-the-picture/>

Twitter post:

#Aboriginal & #TorresStraitIslander women experience disproportionate rates of violence that is often more severe. Read @OurWatchAus national resource 'Changing the picture' to support #preventingviolence against Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women <https://bit.ly/2WiY2Cb>

Men in Focus

- [Men in focus: Unpacking masculinities and engaging men in the prevention of violence against women](#) is an extensive evidence review and analysis of the International and Australian research on masculinities and its links to violence against women.
- The landmark report, [Men in Focus](#), shows that men who conform to rigid stereotypes of how to be a man are more likely to have sexist attitudes and behaviours, which in turns makes them more likely to perpetuate violence against women.
- [Men In Focus](#) provides practical guidance and support for those working with men and boys to prevent violence against women.
- There are many ways to be a man and men should not feel the need to conform to one fixed way of 'being a man'
- Many common social norms and attitudes about men and masculinity are harmful, both to men and to women
- Stereotypes about men underpin an unhealthy ideal of masculinity, and help drive gender inequality and violence
- We need to reject harmful ideas and stereotypes about men, to promote and encourage a diversity of masculinities or other ways of being a man that are more positive and respectful
- Attachment to a rigid set of ideals about masculinity – dominance, control, risk-taking, hypersexuality, heterosexuality, stoicism, aggression – is associated with a range of harmful
- behaviours, including violence against women.

Facebook/LinkedIn post:

@OurWatchAus 'Men in Focus' evidence review analyses existing research on masculinities and violence against women to develop a deeper understanding of the links between dominant forms and patterns of masculinity and violence against women.

It explores how primary prevention efforts can best address and challenge these patterns and effectively engage men in the prevention of violence against women. Read the full review here. <https://bit.ly/3ocgscs>

Twitter post

@OurWatchAus 'Men in Focus' analyses existing research on the links between dominant forms and patterns of #masculinity & #violenceagainstwomen; how we can address and challenge it; and how to engage men in preventing #violenceagainstwomen. Learn more here. <https://bit.ly/3ocgscs>

[Workplace Equality and Respect](#)

- Overwhelming evidence shows that women are more likely to be victims of violence across all aspects of society, including in workplaces. The reason for this can be found in the social context of gender inequality, which creates the conditions for violence against women across society, and which creates specific gendered drivers of violence.
- Other forms of inequality, such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, and ableism, can further exacerbate violence against women, putting them at greater risk.
- Workplaces have a critical role to play in improving gender equality and stopping other forms of discrimination, making flexible work arrangements genuinely available for women and men, encouraging women's career progression and ensuring that their policies and processes address discrimination and inequality.
- Our Watch's [Workplace, Respect and Equality program](#) has resources that workplaces can use to get started in this area.

Facebook/LinkedIn post:

All violence is unacceptable, whether it occurs in the home or the workplace. All workplaces have the power to make changes that will support progress towards gender equality in our society. @OurWatchAus Workplace Equality and Respect process can support workplaces to assess their organisation and identify key actions to ensure that gender equality and respect are at the centre of their workplace. Learn more here. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/>

Twitter post:

All workplaces have the power to make changes that support #genderequality. @OurWatchAus Workplace Equality & Respect supports workplaces to assess their organisation & take key actions to ensure gender equality & respect are at the centre of their org <https://bit.ly/3CSqmLb>

[Equality and Respect in Sport](#)

- Sport is an integral part of Australian society and has the capacity to reach a large number of Australians and influence their attitudes and behaviours
- Sport settings have great potential to influence social change and prevent violence against women by creating inclusive, equitable, healthy and safe environments for men and women, boys and girls. They can challenge problematic norms, practices and structures to drive cultural change

- On and off the field, sport provides the environment and opportunity to set and reinforce positive community standards about respect and equality
- As with other social institutions such as schools and workplaces, people learn and reproduce particular attitudes, behaviours and social norms through their participation in sport
- Leadership initiatives in sport are a good starting point (a first step) but it is important to explore other ways to be more proactive
- Sports can show leadership by setting the standard of zero tolerance towards sexist attitudes, language and discriminatory behaviour in your sport, providing opportunities and pathways for women and girls to participate at all levels, and promoting women's voices and perspectives equally
- Sport has the capacity to influence, inform and shape attitudes and behaviours in both negative and positive ways.
- The Australian Football League (AFL), National Rugby League (NRL), Football Federation Australia (FFA), Rugby Australia (RA) and Netball Australia (NA) have pledged to work with Our Watch and use their influence to stamp out gender inequality and set an example for their employees, sponsors and fans to follow.
- To help National Sporting Organisations (NSO) embed gender equality and respectful relationships into their business, networks and communities, Our Watch has created Equality and Respect in Sport to give NSOs guidance and a set of standards and tools to embed gender equality in their work to ensure sustainability.
- Our Watch's Equality and Respect in Sport website provides a range of free, evidence-based information, tools and resources designed for the needs of national sporting organisations.

Facebook/LinkedIn post:

Sport is an integral part of Australian culture and has been identified as a priority area for the primary prevention of violence against women. @OurWatchAus Equality and Respect in Sport is an initiative which aims to assist national sporting organisations to build their capacity to promote gender equality. Your sporting organisation can help create an Australia where women are safe, equal and valued. Find out more. <https://sport.ourwatch.org.au/>

Twitter post:

Sport is an integral part of Aus culture & has been identified as a priority area for the #primaryprevention of #violenceagainstwomen. @OurWatchAus Equality & Respect in Sport assists sporting organisations to build their capacity to promote gender equality <https://bit.ly/3m6ilGo>

CAMPAIGNS

Doing Nothing Does Harm

- The Doing Nothing Does Harm campaign aims to motivate and support bystanders to *do something* when they witness disrespect towards women
- When you see or hear disrespect towards women, *do something*.
- Doing nothing when you witness disrespect towards women is harmful and creates a culture in which violence against women becomes more likely
- Disrespect towards women includes behaviours that make a woman feel demeaned, unsafe or uncomfortable such as sexist jokes or comments, interrupting or talking over women or saying they belong in certain roles.
- Even if you don't call out disrespect the first time you see it, it is important that next time you don't sit with the discomfort of inaction and you 'do something' There are lots of ways to do something, depending on how comfortable you feel:
 - You can **show** disapproval with body language, you don't always need to say something

- You can **support** the women/woman in the situation by asking if she is OK or acknowledging that the situation was not OK
- You can **speak up** and talk to the disrespectful person about their behaviour – in a light-hearted or serious way, at the time or in private afterwards
- Based on research into attitudes towards sexist behaviour, it's extremely likely you'll have the support of the people around you when you *do something*
- [Doing something](#) doesn't mean intervening in violence or confronting strangers who might put you at risk, it's about calling out our own friends, family, colleagues and teammates when they're out of line.
- **Call to action:** Next time you see disrespect towards women, do something. Doing nothing does harm.
- You can support Our Watch's [Doing Nothing Does Harm](#) campaign by sharing our campaign assets and social media collateral, available for download via the '[Support page](#)' on our campaign website, and this [Dropbox link](#). Assets include;
 - Doing Nothing Does Harm campaign videos
 - 'The 3 S's' - Show it's not ok, Support Women, Speak up social media tiles
 - 16 Ways to #DoSomething about sexism and disrespect social media tiles
 - Our Watch ambassador "Do Something" video series
 - Our Watch ambassador quote series of social media tiles

No Excuse for Abuse

- The [No Excuse for Abuse](#) campaign raises awareness of non-physical forms of violence among younger adults, 20-30 years-old.
- Non-physical abuse includes financial, social, emotional/psychological, spiritual and technological abuse, as well as stalking.
- There is [no excuse for abuse](#). This controlling behaviour is common, and we too often excuse it.
- Non-physical forms of abuse are harmful and serious.
- Regardless of the challenging circumstances some Australians are experiencing, such as social isolation, financial pressures or changing family dynamics, [there is no excuse for abuse](#).
- You can support Our Watch's [No Excuse for Abuse](#) campaign by sharing our campaign assets and social media collateral, available for download via the '[Support page](#)' on our campaign website. Assets include:
 - Campaign videos
 - Campaign images
 - Suggested posts for social media
 - Link to practitioner resource, Unpacking Violence: a storytelling resource for understanding non-physical forms of abuse and the gendered drivers of violence against women

The Line

- [The Line](#) is a social marketing campaign for young people that talks about what's ok and what's not when it comes to sex, dating and relationships.
- Violence against women is preventable and supporting young people to develop skills and knowledge for healthy relationships is an important strategy.
- Research shows that in order to stop violence against women before it starts, we need to talk to young people when they are first developing their understanding of relationships, sex and gender roles.
- [The Line](#) is delivered by Our Watch, a national leader in the prevention of violence against women and their children and is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services.

DEALING WITH BACKLASH

Resistance and backlash are expected as part of the change process.

Looking at the gendered drivers of violence is a direct challenge to the idea that our society is currently fair to all. As a result, there can be negative responses, or 'backlash', often from men, but also from women.

**REMEMBER, backlash means that attitudes and behaviours are being challenged – and that's a good thing!
But ensure you look after yourself.**

What can backlash look like?

- Saying gender inequality doesn't exist, doesn't matter, or isn't as important as other issues
- Attacking your comments for being 'too politically correct' or 'not being able to take a joke'
- Labelling your comments sexist because they 'attack' men or don't also focus on violence against men
- Saying there is no evidence to support your comments about gender inequality and violence against women.

Plan and prepare for negative reactions

People may ask questions or pose statements that are difficult to answer. Being prepared is important.

Planning and preparing for negative reactions can include:

- Listening carefully to the question to fully understand it
- Based on the question asked, thinking about the assumptions the questioner has made and the beliefs they hold
- Asking yourself — what belief or assumptions do you want to shift?
- Always acknowledging their concern. Repeating or clarifying the question to make sure that you understand it
- Separating the person from the belief. This depersonalises the issue and demonstrates you care about the questioner's feelings
- Highlighting the benefits of addressing violence against women and gender equality to both men and women, by talking about gender equality as a human rights issue and anti-violence as a value that makes society better
- Talking about the misinformation or myths by referencing the evidence.

It's important to know when to intervene and moderate destructive comments and when to let it go. Having clear moderation guidelines will help you manage this. Please reach out if you would like support with this.

Using evidence

You can respond to backlash by using Our Watch resources and other methods:

- Animated Change the Story video exploring the drivers of violence against women
- [Statistics](#) and information on violence against women, including:
 - [at work](#)
 - [in the media](#)

- [in education settings](#)
- [in sport](#)
- [in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities](#)
- [in the LGBTQIA+ community](#)
- [on social media](#)
- [and many more.](#)
- Harassing or abusive comments should be reported to social media platforms or the [eSafety Commission](#).

Responding to common questions

Questions that often come up in discussions about gender equality and violence against women are provided [here](#), with some suggested evidence-based responses.

You don't need to respond word for word, but it is good to understand the evidence and prepare yourself to respond by knowing the facts.

If you would like to read more about engaging different audiences and responding to backlash, here is a list of resources that Our Watch has found invaluable and informs our approach.

- [Backlash and buy in: Responding to the challenges in achieving gender equality](#), Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change, 2018.
- [Engaging Men: Reducing Resistance and Building Support](#), Flood et al., 2021.
- [Feminist Pocketbook Tip Sheet 9, 'Backlash: What is it and how do we address it safely?'](#) Coalition of Feminists for Social Change (COFEM), 2018.
- [Framing gender equality: Message guide](#), Vic Health, 2021.
- [Framing masculinity: Message guide](#), Vic Health, 2020.
- [Responding to Resistance](#), Partners in Prevention, Domestic Violence Resource Centre.
- [Speaking publicly about preventing men's violence against women: curly questions and language considerations](#), Women's Health West, 2015.
- [Resource 7: Answering 'backlash' and 'resistance' questions about the National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey \(NCAS\)](#), Respect Victoria and ANROWS, 2020.

KEY RESOURCES

Our Watch has collated a list of different resources including social media assets, videos and podcasts. We know that to reinforce key messages about addressing the drivers of violence against women, we need to engage in different forums. These are some of the resources that can be used to prompt reflection, start a discussion, or to take action.

Our Watch encourages you to share these resources within your networks but to also follow up with people and get feedback on their engagement with it.

Social Media Assets Videos

Let's Change the Story: Violence Against Women in Australia

Australia has a choice: we can change the story that currently sees a woman murdered every week by a current or former partner. This video shares how Australia can change the story by addressing the drivers of violence against women.

[Be More than a Spectator](#)

Our Watch has teamed up with AFL, NRL, Rugby Australia and Netball Australia to prevent violence against women.

[Violence against women: sport can help change the story](#)

Violence against women is preventable. To do this, we need to challenge the underlying drivers of this violence and work to increase gender equality. We need to do this right across society and in all aspects of everyday life, including in sports organisations and clubs.

[Because Why: why let gender limit our children's potential](#)

[#BecauseWhy](#) is for families who want children to learn, explore and develop all the skills they're interested in without the limitations that come with gender stereotypes. Find out more at www.becausewhy.com.au

[Five ways you can promote respect and equality](#)

Wondering how you can promote respect for women in your everyday life? Here's 5 simple ways. Share this with your friends, family, work colleagues and everyone in between and help us [#changethestory](#).

[#DoSomething with Ben and Hester](#)

Just don't laugh at the joke. Our Watch ambassadors Hester and Ben Brown know that's all it takes to show that disrespect towards women is not ok. How will you [#DoSomething](#)? Because [#DoingNothingDoesHarm](#).

[Next time, speak up: doing nothing does harm \(Zoom call\)](#)

[How to report on violence against women and their children in Victoria](#)

Reporting on violence against women and their children can be tough. Here are a few tips to help you more clearly draw the line.

TED Talks and Podcasts

[Why gender equality is good for everyone, men included – Michael Kimmel](#)

Michael Kimmel makes the surprising, funny, practical case for treating men and women equally in the workplace and at home. It's not a zero-sum game, but a win-win that will result in more opportunity and more happiness for everybody.

[Violence against women – it's a men's issue – Jackson Katz](#)

Domestic violence and sexual abuse are often called "women's issues." But in this bold, blunt talk, Jackson Katz points out that these are intrinsically men's issues and shows how these violent behaviours are tied to definitions of manhood.

[The danger of the single story – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie](#)

Author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie discusses how she found her authentic culture voice and warns that if we hear on a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

[How to deconstruct racism one headline at a time – Baratunde Thurston](#)

Baratunde Thurston explores 'living while black' narratives through news headlines. In this through-provoking and often hilarious talk, he reveals the power of language to change stories of trauma into store of healing.

[How to overcome our biases, walk boldly towards them – Verna Myers](#)

Our biases can be dangerous, even deadly - as we've seen in the cases of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner, in Staten Island, New York. Diversity advocate, Vernā Myers, looks closely at some of the subconscious attitudes we hold toward out-groups. She makes a plea to all people: 'acknowledge your biases'. Then move toward, not away from, the groups that make you uncomfortable. In a funny, impassioned, important talk, she shows us how.

Films and Documentaries

[See What You Made Me Do](#)

A 3-part documentary series on SBS that explores one of the most complex and urgent issues of our time – domestic abuse. Presented by investigative journalist Jess Hill, this series examines the fine lines between love, abuse and power.

ABOUT OUR WATCH

Our Watch is a national leader in Australia's work to stop violence against women and their children before it starts. The organisation was created to drive nation-wide change in the practices, norms and structures that lead to violence against women and children.