

ENDING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE – 2024

PREAMBLE

Australian women have never known what “Equality” looks and feels like.

Since the first fleet arrived from England to Australia women have been subjected to the ranks of the “lesser members of society.”

Women have served men to women’s disadvantage.

The Women’s Suffrage Movement during the 19th century fought for women to have a “Voice” in Parliament, the right to vote and the rights to make decisions regarding property and children

The Women’s Rights Movement (commonly known as The Feminist Movement) and the Women’s Liberation Movement of the 1960’s/70’s focused on equality and the barriers women faced in this struggle. Paid work, abortion, childcare, forced adoption, rape/sexual assault and domestic violence, lack of adequate education and social disadvantage and more.

In 1974, 50 years ago the first Women’s Health Service, Women’s Shelters/Refuges and Women’s Education were established.

In 2022, the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022 - 2032 was launched.

Prior to the National Plan there have been major reports, Royal Commissions. Evidence based studies, State and Federal Legislation, focus groups etc, etc all with a view to gain equality and safety for Australian women.

Women have negotiated, demanded, pleaded, drawing on hope, not myth, that Australia is a fair go country and it’s now 2024 - how can women still be the lesser members of society. ?

Women are gathering again. Women are angry. Women have always marched as a way of being seen and their needs being heard.

The March for Justice, 2021 was another turning point in Australia’s women’s history.

Australian women marched in every state and territory, screaming out for a stop to male misogyny.

Anger and unrest has continued - it is now 2024.

CURRENT SITUATION

Australian Women have fought for generations to gain equality and safety.

The 60's and 70's delivered some social change. Services to assist women with basic rights were established. There was hope. There was enthusiasm. There was energy.

Now in the 2000's, 50 - 60 years later, Australia view's women's services and social change as the next decade - the next generation - in the future - many believe this will never happen

The call to Governments is loud and clear. Women have a right to be equal in all areas of life, safe at all times and not be murdered by men. All women have a right to use their voice, be believed and supported through structures and systems. This is not women's current experience.

All governments need to act and if they do not act appropriately, they are supporting ongoing male misogyny.

This is the current tone of women's sentiment.

While many understand that the issue of Australian male misogyny delivers our country into an ongoing crisis, male misogyny continues to be threaded through all our systems - many more individuals are demanding Governments take leadership to stop inequality, to invest in new legislation, new structures and new systems, otherwise, Australia will continue to "chew" around the edges of male misogyny and never stop the core of inequality and abuse including the murder of women and children.

The issue of sexual, domestic and family violence in Australia has drawn down on Federal, State and Territory's budgets to the estimated value of \$26 billion a year

Commonly, there has been a funding/service provision approach, with a lack of evidence based research for those affected by abuse, majority women and children - and those who perpetrate abuse, majority men. It has often been seen as a dart throwing exercise to see where it lands. This occurs especially around election periods.

Equally, funding is withdrawn, held back with no guarantee of ongoing funding or a new government has new ideas and the cycle continues.

Australian women are not going to be quiet - they are erupting - this eruption is escalating. Now is not a time for a "knee jerk reaction" but instead following a clear decisive vision.

THE NATIONAL PLAN to END VIOLENCE Against WOMEN and CHILDREN 2022 - 2032

The National Plan, launched 2 years ago, was developed in partnership with women of lived family/domestic and sexual violence experience and evidence based research.

“The National Plan builds upon history of leadership and action by victims-survivors, advocates and women and community organisations including legal services, health care professionals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled organisations, the family, domestic and sexual violence sector, academics, law enforcement, agencies, the justice sector and all Governments and community members.”

The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032 is the lead Federal Government document, partnered and signed by all State and Territory Governments.

It is the template “needed” for a focus for change to achieve equality and safety for all Australian women in the 2000’s and onwards

The National Plan speaks to areas for Action - The National Plan must be driven by the Federal Government and the State and Territory Governments must be accountable in all aspects to the Federal Government.

Responsibilities cannot be splintered through States and Territories.

Prevention is the key to stopping violence against women.

PREVENTION

“Prevention” - relies on men wanting to change current patterns of behaviours, dismantling structures and systems that over decades have been developed through the values and beliefs of men - it is women’s experience that sharing the current platform of equality with men is not women’s equality

The only way forward for women’s equality is a model of Prevention in line with the National Plan - to be actioned through Federal Regulation with Federal Legal obligations.

The States and Territories to be accountable to the Federal Government.

The Federal Government to legislate reforms on the model of Prevention as outlined in the National Plan.

Such legislation to give powers to the appropriate Federal Minister and Federal Appointed Regulator

The Federal Regulator - Appointed by Federal Government.

Responsible for developing, overseeing and reporting to the Federal Government the legal obligations (legislation) required through Action In line with the National Plan signed by all States and Territories.

All Preventative Action to be reported by the Regulator through engagement with The Board, (female professional and female victims-survivors,) with a view to oversee best practice of equality, women's safety and women's experience in line with the Federal Legislation and the National Plan.

The Board reports to the Regulator. The Regulator reports to the Minister.

Prosecutions - Breaches of Federal Legislation to be overseen by the Federal Regulator with powers to prosecute with real outcomes (New penalties through new Federal legislation with power over State and Territories)

An Interim and Yearly Report - to be submitted by the Federal Regulator to The Board and released to the State and Territories as well for public scrutiny.

Education - A public Prevention Campaign to be driven alongside changes.

Such a Model of Prevention would be the catalyst/focus for change within the structures and systems that hold up the power and control entrenched by male attitudes towards women in Australia.

A non regulated society with the entrenchment of patriarchy, power and control over women, supported by male driven legislation will not deliver change.

Australian society has regulations, State and Federal, through legislation on many issues. Issues on the sale of Cigarettes/smoking in public/age/public health, Financial regulation/banks credit unions/insurance companies, Taxes Federal/State/Local Government, Environmental Protection, Education, Alcohol/Drugs are just some examples.

Without Regulation and accountability on Prevention to End Violence against Women and Children the status quo will continue and women will be left with inequality, vulnerability, abuse and murdered all while failing to break through patriarchy, power and control.

Further

A new Men's Sector to be developed and operated with a sole focus on implementing the National Plan Prevention to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

This Men's Sector to be appointed/led by respectful men - with values and beliefs reflective of an understanding of feminist based education of the barriers developed by patriarchy on women to stop women achieving equality and emotional, sexual and physical safety.

To develop programs that break down the controlling barriers, structures and systems, policies and procedures developed through patriarchy experienced by women and girls.

To advise and direct male dominated populations of their legal obligations to make change inline with Federal legislation and the National Plan

The Regulator to hold male dominated structures/systems accountable through regular reports to measured productive/change actioned in line with Federal Legislation and the National Plan

The Regulator to oversee the development, implementation and evaluation of evidence based programs that support changed values and beliefs of young Australians - male and female - as a permanent/compulsory subject throughout Public and Private education systems from kindergarten, primary and secondary schooling through to adult education systems.

The Regulator to identify and support change of structures and systems drawing on policies and procedures across all areas of society that do not reflect the empowerment of women and girls and actively disadvantage women to achieve equality and sexual, emotional and physical safety throughout Australian society.

This would include Business, Sporting Organisations, Legal Institutions, Government and non Government and Financial Institutions and more

To report such to The Board and the Minister

To work in collaboration with The Board to enable monitoring and evaluate women's safety and women's experiences including legislation, structures and systems changes.

To report such to the Minister

Retired
Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Sector-
Youth Sector
Women's Health Sector
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
Feminist -Crisis Counsellor - Trauma Therapist - Community Development - Paralegal -
Trainer - Activist

40 plus years listening to women's experiences of abuse

It is said inequality, family / domestic violence and sexual abuse of women and girls, is complex.

I challenged this hypothesis.

It is the structures, systems, procedures and policies ingrained in Australian culture that is complex

I am submitting this submission giving respect to the thousands of women I have come into contact with - listened to their voices - demanding change that will lead to equality and safety for all Australian women - today's normal must be tomorrow's abnormal

Thank you



