



Rotary SAFE Families
www.rotarysafefamilies.org.au

Here we are in November, mostly vaccinated and ready to continue our lives with COVID safely. Unfortunately, the latest statistics show the increased lack of safety for many families, as family abuse has increased during lockdown.

After visiting 86 Rotary Clubs and Inner Wheel Clubs, I am however left reflecting on why we find abuse such a "taboo" topic. Mostly people avoid the reality of abuse occurring whilst making sounds of agreement to becoming informed, but instead quietly return to their believed homeostatic state of the "inactive bystander".

What does it take for more Australians to be alarmed and be part of the solution in the prevention of abuse?

The Duchess of Cornwall last year addressed the Women of the World Conference and said: *"...domestic abuse can affect anybody, regardless of social standing or wealth and implored those suffering to seek help ... Nothing makes you immune to domestic abuse happening ... It affects everybody. It doesn't matter who you are ... My message to people: whoever you are, wherever you are from, there are organisations that can help you. Go and get help. Talk to them, just get up and talk about your experiences. They will help."*

In 1985, the Traffic Accident Commission in their mass media interventions to prevent drink/driving used the slogan: "If you drink'n drive ... you're a bloody idiot!" It has taken 36 years of promotion, for us to respect that drink/driving is a crime and is unacceptable. Well, family abuse is also a crime and totally unacceptable. Rotarians can make a difference by promoting Rotary SAFE Families campaign!



The World Health Organisation cites: *"Although the effect of mass media interventions, aimed at whole societies, on levels of violent behaviour have seldom been evaluated, their success in addressing other public health issues (smoking and drink-driving, for instance) suggests they have a critical role to play in the prevention of violence."*

This is what Rotary SAFE Families is about. It is aimed at getting society on board to challenge, support and become active in identifying, calling out abuse safely, and getting help for the victim.

Why aren't more Rotarians stepping up to show their acceptance of our campaign in **S**topping **A**buse in **F**amilies **E**verywhere?

There is "NO Excuse for Abuse" so what is your excuse?

Dorothy Gilmour
Co-Creator/Chair Rotary SAFE Families
www.rotarysafefamilies.org.au

Special Notes:

1. Dorothy is seeking translators to translate our Rotary SAFE Families Guide for Friends, Families & Neighbours into at least 10 languages. If you can assist with these translations or know someone who can help, please email me: info@rotarysafefamilies.org.au
2. If you would like to join us online on Monday, 15 November at 5.00 pm (AEST note daylight saving time), please attend. A brain storming hour of our Rotary Champions/Ambassador Clubs. Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/96428869895?pwd=a2loN0R2V0pqMXg4cDVkaFJ6Zk5lUT09> Meeting ID: 964 2886 9895 Passcode: 083658

OUR LATEST NEWS

New Laws Protecting Children

Rosie Batty backs domestic violence laws to protect children

By [Shannon Deery](#) State Political Editor, October 26, 2021

Rosie Batty has backed tough new penalties for domestic violence perpetrators who offend in front of children as incidents.

1 in 6 women experience physical and/or sexual violence from a live-in partner from the age of 15. These startling new figures from Australian Institute.

Domestic violence perpetrators would face tougher penalties for offending in front of children under a bold new proposal backed by Rosie Batty.

Under the plan perpetrators would be jailed for up to two years if convicted of committing family violence in the presence of a child.

Derryn Hinch's Justice Party will this week ask the state government to commit to the new offence, which has been developed with support from [Ms Batty](#) and others.



Rosie Batty is supporting new domestic violence laws. Picture: Josie Hayden

“Family violence that occurs in the presence of children is traumatic and has a profound

effect on their lives,” Ms Batty said.

“That is why men who use violence in the presence of their children should be held accountable. This law reform will make it possible for the police to have a stronger tool to charge and convict perpetrators of violence and will ultimately better protect children,” she said.

It comes amid soaring reported incidents of family violence, including a 35 per cent increase in offences committed in the presence of a child.

Almost 175,000 family violence reports were made in the year to June, up 18 per cent on the previous year.

Breaches of family violence orders increased by 15.1 per cent to 55,252 offences.

Data published by the Crime Statistics Agency reveals that more than 75 per cent of children who witnessed a police-recorded family violence incident had a future interaction with the justice system. It also found one in 50 children in Victoria witnessed a police-recorded family violence incident in 2018-19, most aged under nine.

And most incidents witnessed by children occurred between intimate partners and involved male aggressors and female victims.



Justice Party MP Stuart Grimley says the framework for family violence in Victoria isn't working. Picture: Mike

Dugdale

The proposed offence would not replace existing ones, but could be applied in conjunction with more serious offences. Justice Party MP Stuart Grimley said it could also capture lower-level crime that was still damaging to children.

“The current sentencing framework for family violence in Victoria clearly isn't working and certainly does not place enough emphasis on the profound effects it has on children,” Mr Grimley said.

“The fact that over three-quarters of kids who witness family violence commit a crime within five years tells us this needs to be taken more seriously,” he said.

Mr Grimley said despite \$3.6bn outlaid to combat family violence since the 2016 royal commission, such incidents were increasing.

He said he hoped behavioural change programs such as *Caring Dads* would be compulsory as part of the new charge, forcing those convicted to take part in the program. The new offence should also be backed up by adequate family violence training for police, he said.

Mr Grimley plans to work with Ms Batty and other survivors to table a Private Members Bill next year to establish this offence and other strategies to curb domestic violence.

Applying 3RRR's

Prevention of Abuse

How to Support Someone Who is Experiencing Family Abuse

A guide for family and friends

**RECOGNISE THE SIGNS
RAISE YOUR CONCERNS
REFER SUPPORT**

1. *RECOGNISE* the signs:

What might be the signs that someone is in an abusive relationship?

- Family Abuse is not just physical violence. It involves any behaviour designed to control another person or make them live in fear. This can be verbal, mental, emotional, financial and social abuse.
- The abuse may be hidden within the relationship. It is not always obvious to outsiders that someone is experiencing family abuse.
- A person who is experiencing family abuse is often very isolated. They may have stopped connecting with family and friends. They may also have stopped doing their hobbies or other interests.
- Often their partner is the decision maker in the relationship. This includes controlling finances and making decisions about what they do or who they see.
- There may be signs of physical injury such as bruising or broken bones.
- They may talk about their partner getting angry, or appear worried about pleasing them.
- Their partner constantly calls or appears to monitor what they are doing.

You can find more information about recognising signs of family violence and abuse here:

[Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria \(DVRCV\)](#)

[Safe Steps Family Violence Resource Centre](#)

2. *RAISE* your concerns "*safely*"

How can I help?

Safety is always the priority.

Often the person experiencing family abuse will feel that they are to blame for their family member's behaviour. Often this will be a male partner, but this is not always the case.

If it is safe to do so you can have a conversation.

- You can start by asking them if they are OK.
- Don't pressure them to talk to you.
- Let them know you can talk later if they are not ready to talk now.

There are a range of ways you can offer support during a conversation.

- Believe what they are telling you.
- Help them to recognise that they are in an abusive situation and the behaviour is not OK.
- Help them to understand that the abusive behaviour is not their fault.
- Help them to think about a safety plan and what they can do to keep themselves and others safe.
- Let them know there are places they can go to get help.

Disclosing their experiences of family abuse is an important first step in seeking support and lessening their isolation.

It is important not to tell someone experiencing family abuse what to do or to judge them if they choose to stay in their relationship.

Next steps

Respect their choices if they are not ready to leave. There may be many complex reasons a person may choose to stay with a partner who uses family abuse.

It can take great courage, and be highly risky to leave family abuse. Women are most at risk when they decide to leave or immediately after they have left a partner who chooses to use family abuse.

Someone who wants to leave family abuse may need to consider:

- personal safety
- keeping children and pets safe
- having a safe and secure place to go to
- being financially independent and accessing money
- accessing appropriate support (medical, counselling, financial, family and friends etc)
- maintaining stability for children (medical needs, schooling, friends and community)
- knowing their rights and options.

3. REFER victim to support or Make the call yourself!

What help is available?

**** If you are concerned for yourself or someone else's immediate safety call 000.****

Safe Steps (Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service)

24 hour telephone crisis counselling, information, referral and support for women experiencing domestic violence. Phone 1800 015 188 www.safesteps.org.au

Lifeline Australia

24-hour counselling to anyone within Australia. You can talk to them about any problem, big or small. Phone: 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au

1800 RESPECT

24 hour counselling and support service for people impacted by sexual assault, family violence. Phone: 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au

Women's Support Line

Run by Women's Information and Referral Exchange Inc. you can call this free, confidential and state-wide phone service on 1800 811 811 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). You can also email inforequests@wire.org.au

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline provides private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling for children, teens, young adults and also for parents and carers on 1800 55 1800 (toll-free).

Email: counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au Counselling and WebChat is also available.

Australian Childhood Foundation

Counselling for children and young people affected by abuse. Phone: 1300 381 581 Email: info@childhood.org. Website: www.childhood.org

What's OK at Home?

This website for young people has been developed by the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria. It has been designed to help people understand what family violence is, why it happens, how to recognise it and how to help others who are experiencing it. Website: www.woah.org.au Phone: Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800

The Line – Website for young people

So, 'the line': What is it, Where is it, and What happens when you cross it? Sometimes, there's no argument about where to draw the line in our friendships and relationships. But the line can get blurry. So, we're here to talk about it. This website talks about relationships, gender, sex, bystander action, technology and communication ; how to keep it healthy and respectful, and avoid crossing the line into behaviour that makes someone feel frightened, intimidated or diminished.

So, check out our articles, #knowseetheline, follow us on Facebook and join the conversations about where you draw the line. www.theline.org.au

Men's Referral Service

Men's Referral Service provides an anonymous and confidential phone counselling, information and referrals service on 1300 766 491 for:

- men who might be using violent and controlling behaviour towards a partner or family member
- men who have been victimised by a partner or family member
- women wishing to find information about male family violence
- friends, family or colleagues of people who are using or experiencing family violence
- professionals wishing to support a male or female client using or experiencing family violence.

MensLine

MensLine is a national phone and online support service for men with family and relationship concerns, which includes video counselling on 1300 78 99 78

Victims Support Agency – Men

The Victims Support Agency provides support and information to help adult male victims of family violence and victims of violent crime. The service guides victims through the legal process and helps manage the effects of crime through practical assistance and counselling. Call the Victims of Crime helpline on 1800 819 817 or use the text service via 0427 767 891 (8.00 am to 11.00 pm, 7 days a week).

Centres Against Sexual Assault

These are confidential, non-profit, government-funded organisations providing support and intervention for women, children and men who are victim survivors of sexual assault. The Sexual Assault Crisis Line is 1800 806 292 (24/7). You can also email: ahcasa@thewomens.org.au

Relationships Australia

Support groups and counselling on relationships, and for abusive and abused partners. Phone: 1300 364 277

Website: www.relationships.com.au

Aboriginal Family Domestic Violence Hotline

1800 019 123 (24 hours) Victims Services has a dedicated contact line for Aboriginal victims of crime who would like information on victims' rights, how to access counselling and financial assistance.

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (FVPLS)

This is an Aboriginal community-run organisation providing assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim survivors of family violence and sexual assault. You can call FVPLS on 1800 105 303

InTouch: Multicultural Centre against Family Violence

This is a state-wide organisation specialising in services, programs and responses to family violence in migrant and refugee communities. You can call InTouch on 1800 755 988

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline

Visit website: hotline@workfocus.com An Australia-wide telephone hotline for reporting abuse and neglect of people with disability. Call the free hotline on: 1800 880 052

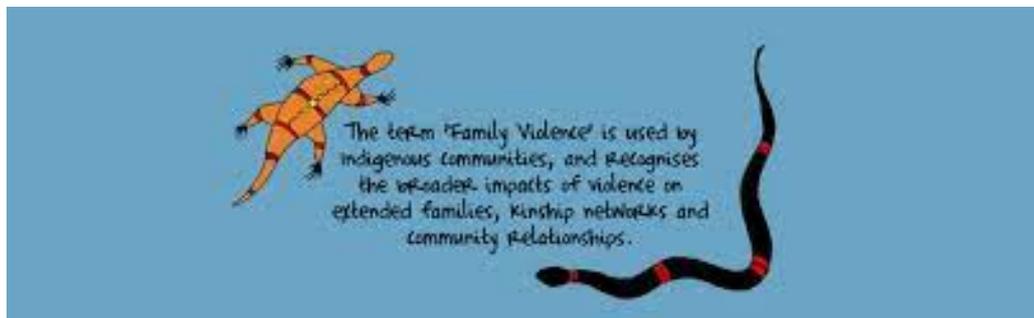
Our Place Online

An online forum for men and women who have suffered abuse in all its forms: psychological, verbal, physical, sexual, and spiritual abuse. The forum is run by a community of volunteers all over the world. Our Place aims to help educate and support those wishing to heal from the damage done. Website: www.our-place-online.net

Translating & Interpreting Service

Call the hotline for help 131 450 Gain free access to a telephone or on-site interpreter in your own language. Immediate phone interpreting is available 24 hours every day of the year on: 131 450

National Plan to Prevent Violence to Indigenous Women



Call for national safety plan to end violence against Indigenous women

The AGE October 18, 2021 By [Jewel Topsfield](#)

Karina Hogan has seen the justice system fail Indigenous women who experience family violence too many times: police will get called to a scene, she says, and the woman can end up being the one who is arrested.

Ms Hogan, who comes from a big Aboriginal and South Sea Islander family, is a journalist and former board member of Sisters Inside, which advocates for the rights of women in prison. She is researching homelessness and the impact of the incarceration system on Indigenous women.



Karina Hogan believes it is critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have a separate First Nations national plan to reduce family violence. CREDIT:PAUL HARRIS

Ms Hogan says police sometimes take intervention orders out against Indigenous women who are victims of family violence because they snap or behave erratically while the male perpetrator remains calm.

“This happens all the time, this happened to me,” she said. Ms Hogan believes it is critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have a separate First Nations national plan to reduce family violence.

In 2018, [a report by Our Watch](#), Australia’s peak body in the prevention of violence against women, found Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were 32 times more likely to be hospitalised and 11 times more likely to die due to assault.

It says the violence is perpetrated by men from many cultural backgrounds, with data suggesting violence against women in remote areas is more likely to be perpetrated by Indigenous men and violence in urban areas more likely to be perpetrated by non-Indigenous men.

“The fact that there is such an over-reliance on the carceral system is so detrimental to mob,” Ms Hogan said. “If these people actually knew and understood the experiences of Aboriginal women living with violence, then there would be investment in housing, social opportunities and building capacity of mob, especially black women.”

The federal government is working on a fifth national plan to reduce violence against women. However, at last month’s women’s safety summit, Indigenous leaders including June Oscar and Marcia Langton [called for a separate national plan](#) to reduce violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, saying the national plan that had existed for 12 years had not worked for them.

On Monday, an open letter to the federal government, signed by Indigenous family violence prevention and legal services, academics, community leaders and victim-survivors, calls for a truly self-determined plan – developed for and by First Nations women – that is not an “add on” to the mainstream plan.

The letter also calls for a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women’s summit to ensure community-led solutions are invested in.



Djirra CEO Antoinette Braybrook CREDIT:JASON SOUTH

“We have seen a great investment from previous plans go into putting more police into communities,” said one of the signatories to the letter, Antoinette Braybrook, who is chief executive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island family violence prevention and legal service Djirra and co-chair of the National Family Violence and Legal Services Forum and Change the Record.

“And that’s not the solution that’s needed, because of the fear and the lack of trust of white authorities, the police. Also, we’ve seen an investment into mainstream services over Aboriginal specialist family violence services.”

‘Nobody listens to us’: Indigenous women call for separate domestic violence plan

Women’s Safety Minister Anne Ruston (pictured below) said she had heard the message “loud and clear” at the summit on the need for a standalone action plan to end violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

“There are unique circumstances in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience violence and there is a clear need for culturally specific, community-led and healing-informed responses, which is why I agreed to a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan,” Senator Ruston said.

“This doesn’t mean that the next national plan will be silent on these issues, nor should it. But equally, we understand that to create real change and end violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, there needs to be a dedicated, self-determined plan to do it.”



Senator Ruston said the 13-member Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council would lead the development of the action plan.

But Ms Braybrook said there was concern the action plan would be a subset of the mainstream national plan, and that the National Plan Advisory Group and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council had been hand-picked by the government.

“I am not saying they are the wrong people, but the process is flawed.”

She called for greater involvement from family violence prevention and legal services, which had expertise in working with victim-survivors.

Among the 13 members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council, Emily Carter, chief executive of the

Marninwarntikura Women’s Resource Centre, is a member of the National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum.

Another signatory to the open letter is lawyer and academic Dr Hannah McGlade, a member of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues, who has been advocating for five years for the need for a separate national plan.

“It’s quite clear that there’s a lot of outrage at the sexual assault and violence and murders of white women, but this endemic violence against Aboriginal women goes relatively unnoticed as if black women’s lives don’t matter.”

**Remember: Rotarians are here to help others!
Rotary SAFE Families is here to help Rotarians, help others!**

BECOME AN ADVOCATE FOR STOPPING ABUSE IN FAMILIES EVERYWHERE!

Click here to view the 1 minute promo to use at Rotary events and to the public audience.

Contact Dorothy Gilmour: info@rotarysafefamilies.org.au
Email me with your events and projects news for next month’s Newsletter

Check out the website for all things SAFE Families: www.rotarysafefamilies.org.au

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