

August 17, 2020

CNV welcomes funding that helps keep perpetrators in sight

Centre for Non-Violence welcomes today's \$20 million Victorian Government funding announcement, which will assist organisations to continue working with perpetrators of violence – and keep women and children safe – during the global coronavirus pandemic.

While we are yet to learn how the funds will be distributed, they have been committed to programs that will enable perpetrators of family violence, or people who believe they are at risk of using violence, to leave their homes and move into short or long-term accommodation.

The funds will also provide intervention and behaviour change programs for those who are using violence in the home, and allow family violence response agencies to continue to adapt their services under Covid-19 restrictions.

Men's Behaviour Change programs support men to address family violence and help them understand the impacts of their use of violence and abuse on their partners, children and relationships.

The programs help men understand and unpack beliefs, attitudes and expectations that underpin their use of violence and control within their relationships. They are encouraged to learn new ways of thinking and to behave differently in situations where they had previously used violence and abuse. The focus in the groups is on developing a more positive set of behaviours. Men are challenged to take responsibility for their behaviour, but the program also models an attitude of respect rather than punishment or shame.

Prior to restrictions, Centre for Non-Violence had two groups ready to commence Men's Behaviour Change programs in March, and one group with only four weeks left of the program.

A third group was ready to participate in the Making aMENds program for fathers.

Up to 12 men participate in each group.

In July, CNV had a wait list of 53 men, and that number has since increased to 65 - because face-to-face group work is not possible because of current restrictions.

We are maintaining telephone support for men on our waiting list, with women's and children's safety at the centre of our work.

Centre for Non-Violence client services general manager Yvette Jaczina said the organisation's capacity to continue working with men on an individual basis was under pressure, and the additional funding would help address that.

The organisation has been working with peak bodies across the domestic and family violence sector, including No To Violence, to [highlight the impact on Covid-19 on perpetrator intervention programs](#).

"We've been actively working to engage with men and understand their support needs, while continuing to assess the risk to women and children," Ms Jaczina said.

"But it's also important to recognise that Men's Behaviour Change groups are not the panacea – they are part of an integrated system response.

"While these groups are important, ensuring we are in contact with men and keeping them visible, with all parts of the system working together, is critical.

"We are actively working with other parts of the system to ensure risk to women and children is being assessed."

Ms Jaczina said it was preferable for men using violence to be removed from the home, rather than women and children experiencing abuse.

"This ensures the lives of women and children are not disrupted – children in particular can maintain connection to their communities, schools," she said.

"When men are accommodated, that accommodation comes with a range of supports and the opportunity for the perpetrator to make changes that result in better outcomes for everyone.

"It also allows us to work with women and children in a safe way, if they choose to."

Centre for Non-Violence covers the Loddon region – which includes the City of Greater Bendigo and the Central Goldfields, Mt Alexander, Macedon Ranges, Loddon and Campaspe shires. Centre for Non-Violence can be contacted on 1800 884 292 | The 24-hour statewide safe steps family violence crisis response line is 1800 015 188 | Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491 | In an emergency, call 000 |

For information, visit: www.cnv.org.au/we-are-here-to-help

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