

Playing our part

Lessons Learned from
Implementing Workplace Responses
to Domestic and Family Violence

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Dear Colleague:

The Male Champions of Change (MCC) aim to achieve a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership in Australia. Established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick, then Sex Discrimination Commissioner, our group comprises Chief Executive Officers, Secretaries of government departments, and Non-Executive Directors from across business and federal government.

Having male leaders step up beside women and lead on gender equality is at the heart of the Male Champions of Change strategy. For so long, women alone have led the way advocating for hard-won improvements, when so many men hold power to support change.

In 2015, in our *Playing Our Part* report, we shared with you our realisation that we could not champion gender balanced leadership, without addressing domestic and family violence, whose victims are overwhelmingly women. Domestic and family violence is a pervasive issue in our community and it impacts our workplace. Inspired by courageous advocates such as Rosie Batty and Kristy McKellar, we committed ourselves to taking steps to reduce its impact and prevalence as a workplace issue. We shared a three phase model of action, which continues to guide us.

Over the last year, finding solutions to domestic and family violence has rightly been prioritised by government and has gained unprecedented visibility nationally. Workplace momentum has also developed. We remain committed to being persistent in our efforts and will report on our progress in our annual Progress Report.

We are learning from experience. Our implementation has benefited from advice from experts and learning from each other. This letter describes approaches we are taking to build our workplace responses to domestic and family violence. We provide examples that others can build on. We identify emerging solutions to challenges we have faced to accelerate progress.

Every single Australian, and workplace, can act to reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic and family violence.

Domestic and family violence is a workplace issue

Traditionally, leaders were often unsure of their role in reducing the prevalence and impact of domestic and family violence. Some of us wondered – is this an over-reach? Isn't this a private matter, outside our responsibility?

What are the facts? What has convinced us to take action?

1. Domestic and family violence is prevalent: domestic and family violence is a widespread although often hidden problem across Australia. While domestic and family affects both men and women, the overwhelming majority of acts of domestic violence and sexual assault are perpetrated by men against women. Approximately 1.4 million Australian women are living in an abusive relationship, or have been so in the past. Of these women, about 800,000 are in the paid workforce. Perpetrators are too. Chances are that in a workplace of any size, you are affected.

2. Domestic and family violence has a cost: those experiencing violence bear most of these costs in terms of pain, suffering, property replacement and other financial costs. Workplaces are also impacted. Violence reduces our employees' ability to contribute. Nearly half of those experiencing violence report difficulty in getting to work. Performance is impacted by employees feeling anxious, distracted and unwell. Violence can force those affected to take time off work. KPMG estimates that domestic and family violence will cost Australian businesses \$609 million annually by 2021.

3. Workplaces can make a difference: economic factors are the most significant predictor of whether someone experiencing domestic violence remains, escapes or returns to an abusive relationship. Workplaces assist in providing the economic independence that supports individual choices. Furthermore, perpetrators often make use of work resources (such as email and phone) to carry out their abuse. Workplaces can ensure that this is not tolerated.

Given the prevalence and cost of violence and our ability to make a difference, we are not prepared to dismiss domestic and family violence as a personal matter, outside our interest.

We believe organisations can play a significant role when they have a robust response – thought-through, leader-led, implemented strongly and not left to chance.

When workplaces actively support women, and build a culture of respect, they change lives. One thing I know is that it's going to take all of us – every single one of us – to build a more gender equal world.

– Elizabeth Broderick, Non-Executive Director, MCC Convenor

Playing our part

Our 2015 report proposed actions that organisations can take to reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic and family violence. We shared what we'd learned about our leadership mindset, and how the actions that we take as leaders determine how managers and those impacted feel. The three part model, we continue to employ, guided our action.

The level our organisation is at...	<div style="text-align: center;">1</div> LEVEL ONE Making a start	<div style="text-align: center;">2</div> LEVEL TWO Getting serious	<div style="text-align: center;">3</div> LEVEL THREE Integrated
...is influenced by our leadership mindset...	<i>I am uncertain about our role as an employer and where the boundaries are.</i>	<i>I accept domestic and family violence is a workplace issue that affects the safety and productivity of our workforce.</i>	<i>I expect my organisation to take an active role to address and reduce domestic and family violence.</i>
...and drives the actions we take...	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Demonstrate leader commitment to gender equality 2 Ensure employees are safe at work 3 Enable access to referral pathways 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Communicate domestic and family violence as a workplace issue 2 Communicate support available 3 Equip managers to implement policies 4 Provide additional paid leave to employees experiencing violence 5 Provide guidance on dealing with perpetrators via workplace policies 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Implement initiatives that reach out to customers, suppliers and community 2 Regularly evaluate and improve support provided
...and determines how our people feel.	<p><i>I am concerned about what might happen if I tell my manager what is going on at home.</i></p> <p><i>I don't want to get involved. What if I do the wrong thing?</i></p>	<p><i>I know I can ask my workplace for help.</i></p> <p><i>We have the policy and resources on this which will help me do the right thing.</i></p>	<p><i>I know that my organisation cares about ending domestic and family violence and will assist me.</i></p> <p><i>I am proud to work for an organisation that takes a stand.</i></p>

1

LEVEL ONE

Making a start

Making a start: we focus on employee safety and referral pathways.

Actions Summary

Action	Examples from our experience
1 Demonstrate leader commitment to gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity and inclusion strategy in place • Gender equality and gender balanced leadership is a known, measured business imperative
2 Ensure employees are safe at work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal policies and approaches have been reviewed and enhanced. Emphasis is on customised safety planning including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Contact information screening & changes (e.g., email, phone number, devices, internet profile) ◦ Adjustment to time or location of work and flexible work information ◦ Support from security personnel (e.g. escort) ◦ On-site parking ◦ Safe technology at work • Safety measures also offered to employees supporting others who are experiencing violence
3 Enable access to referral pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral pathways established • Free confidential counselling services offered • Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) with domestic violence expertise provided. See Example 1.

Lessons learned from level one implementation:

Our early experience surfaced a number of lessons:

- 1 Just do it:** the response to our commitment to domestic and family violence has been more positive than we anticipated. Speaking about violence was uncomfortable at first. Prevalence data means that employees have been impacted through experiencing or witnessing violence themselves. Many had stories to share and a willingness to help.
- 2 Expertise matters:** domestic and family violence is complex. External support builds confidence to act. Engaging experts has been necessary and invaluable for most of us to understand the real impact that violence has on our employees and how we can best support them through a difficult time.
- 3 Employee Assistance Providers (EAP) can partner with you:** these partners are well positioned to support those impacted by domestic and family violence. However we do need to ensure they have the right expertise. Building the right expectation into your working relationship is critical. Example 1 shares an approach for evaluating your EAP arrangements. For those without access to EAP services there are a number of referral pathways to services that are qualified to provide support, such as 1800 RESPECT
- 4 Inclusive conversations:** the origins of our work on domestic and family violence lies with our efforts on gender equality. The facts tell us that victims of domestic and family violence are overwhelming women; perpetrators are overwhelmingly men. However, we've learned that conversations benefit from being respectful and inclusive. This means making clear that all violence is unacceptable, in addition to delving into its gendered nature.

Example 1 Questions for Employee Assistance Providers

1. Do your staff have experience with the issue of domestic and family violence?
2. What resources are in place to support triage staff in responding to disclosures of domestic and family violence? How are cases flagged for escalation?
3. What questions on domestic and family violence are in place for initial contact?
4. How are staff prepared to deal with those experiencing domestic and family violence? What are the referral pathways?
5. Are domestic and family violence specific resources established? (e.g., emergency accommodation, child safety services, legal aid, financial assistance and training)
6. Are you prepared to deal with perpetrators of domestic and family violence? What are the referral pathways for perpetrators?

Assure Programs, EAP Provider

Violence against women is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality with economic factors the largest predictor of whether a woman stays, leaves or goes back to an abusive relationship. It is the responsibility of every CEO to challenge their workplace response to violence against women to ensure their policies and support are practical, and implemented with compassion.

– Gary Wingrove, CEO KPMG

Everyone has the right to feel safe and free from violence and this is not the case for many women across the globe and for far too many in Australia. We all have a role to play to change this and workplaces that take steps will help change lives.

– Andrew Penn, CEO Telstra

2

LEVEL TWO

Lessons Learned

Getting Serious: we step up because we recognise domestic and family violence as a priority workplace issue.

Actions Summary

Action	Examples from our experience
1 Communicate domestic and family violence as a workplace issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication delivered on domestic and family violence including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prevalence data and the likely implication for the number of employees experiencing violence in our workforces ◦ Stories that bring to life real experiences ◦ Existing communication forums (e.g., safety shares at Rio Tinto, Executive and Townhall meetings, Electronic Forums) ◦ Making explicit the link between domestic and family violence and progress on culture, gender equality and diversity ◦ Partnerships with expert organisations • Example 2 describes Citi Australia’s approach to Communicating domestic and family violence as a workplace issue
2 Communicate support available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic and family violence incorporated into employee touchpoints (e.g., induction, regular training updates, intranet portals, policy manuals.) High impact approaches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Were tailored to audience context (e.g., existing level of knowledge, male- dominated industries) ◦ Utilised a variety of channels (e.g., workplace posters, training sessions, townhalls, morning teas, intranet, email, social) • Different geographies require customised approaches (e.g. remote and rural locations, international operations)
3 Equip managers to implement policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies reviewed. Domestic and family violence inserted or elevated to ensure organisational support is clear across relevant organisational policies (e.g., code of conduct, harassment and bullying, Technology Usage, Flexible Work) • Staff training delivered - particularly for people and line managers. On and off-line methods utilised. Focus has been on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ “How to support” those impacted in the case of a disclosure. ◦ Relevant policies (e.g., D&I, harassment and bullying, risk, safety, IT) ◦ Paid leave provisions and approval process ◦ Performance manager tips • Example 3 describes the focus of our efforts to equip managers to implement policies • Example 4 describes how the Department of Prime Minister developed its workplace response to domestic and family violence • Partnerships established with external experts to augment internal efforts

<p>4 Provide additional paid leave to employees experiencing violence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid leave policies reviewed. In almost all cases, new paid leave policies were required to meet aspiration for support • Example 5 describes leave approaches taken • Example 6 provides emerging ideas on how to deal with perpetrators via workplace policies • Example 7 describes Telstra’s Policy related to Perpetrators and Leave
<p>5 Provide guidance on dealing with perpetrators via workplace policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of violence and aggression covered in codes of conducts and other guidelines; however, more work is required to shape our general perpetrator response

Lessons learned from level two implementation:

Our early experience surfaced a number of lessons:

- 1 Reviewing policies and practices:** will identify opportunities. Many of us found gaps or confusion around our approaches. Streamlining and enhancement was required. At times, our support for those experiencing violence needed to be made much more explicit.
- 2 Investing in manager capability building:** is critical to an effective workplace response. Managers often lacked confidence in how to act, and are keen to learn how to best support their colleagues. Knowing that they are not expected to be experts helps to relieve some of the burden managers feel. Providing practical conversation starters helps with the initial first response.
- 3 Paid domestic and family violence leave:** acts as a powerful symbol of our commitment to supporting those experiencing violence through a difficult time. As a practical support, financial security can make the difference to whether a woman remains, escapes, or returns to an abuse relationship.
- 4 Simplifying the approval process for leave** helps to make it more accessible for employees. Some organisations found that empowering line managers to approve leave (in addition to HR or more senior leaders) was a positive step. It improved the perceived accessibility of paid leave given line managers are often the most practical disclosure point. It also sends the message to individuals that they will be heard, believed, and supported.

A guiding principle of the Army is that our members must live by our values both at work and at home. Our work on domestic and family violence is intentional. We know that our values will help create a climate where domestic and family violence is completely socially unacceptable.

– Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, Chief of Army

2

LEVEL TWO

Lessons Learned

Example 2 Communication domestic and family violence as a workplace issue at Citi Australia

Challenge:

Initial discussions at Citi Australia surfaced questions about why domestic and family violence should be treated as a workplace issue, rather than a private matter. Citi Australia realised that it was a significant question that needed to be formally addressed before proceeding.

Approach:

Citi collated quantitative and qualitative evidence around the number of people impacted by domestic violence, and its impact. This general data was then personalised using Citi Australia's employee profile. This powerful framing helped leaders understand the impact violence was having on a day-to-day basis.

A rapid shift occurred. The conversation changed from "why are we doing this?" to "how can we do this better, quicker?"

Learning:

A personal framing, leveraging prevalence data, can be an important first step, particularly for leadership teams with limited exposure to domestic and family violence.

Example 3 Equipping managers

Our organisations are focused on equipping managers to respond to disclosures of domestic and family violence.

What managers need to know - topics to cover:

1. Why domestic and family violence is a workplace issue that managers can make a difference on
2. Manager roles: to refer and facilitate access to support, not to attempt to provide therapeutic support themselves
3. Referral pathways: internal and experts resources available
4. Relevant policies: support for victims including paid leave, policies on dealing with perpetrators
5. Warning signs: that might indicate that someone is experience domestic and family violence
6. Difficult conversations and how to have them
7. Common concerns (e.g., is it really my business? What if I do the wrong thing?)
8. Emotional resilience: information about support available for managers who might confront these situations

We have found that our managers, when given the necessary information and empowered to act, are capable of making an enormous difference.

The scourge of domestic violence which faces us today is one of our great social issues. It won't be solved in a year, but we will surely be judged, as a generation, as to how we have created a safer world, for our sons and daughters.

– Lieutenant General David Morrison, AO (Ret'd)

Example 4 Developing a Policy – Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

Context:

An incident of domestic violence involving an employee helped highlight an opportunity for PM&C to improve its workplace response. In the course of managing the issue it became apparent that a clear support structure was not in place for employees that provided guidance on managing domestic and family violence in the workplace in a sensitive and effective manner. A team was charged with pulling together a comprehensive policy to guide future action.

A draft was developed and policy was circulated widely. All staff, diversity groups and employee networks within the Department, The Office for Women and The Community and Public Service Union were consulted. Experts also provided valuable feedback.

The final policy document includes the following:

1. **Message from the Secretary:** Domestic and family violence is a priority. Gender inequality highlighted as its cause.
2. **What is domestic and family violence?** Terminology explained.
3. **Why do we need a domestic and family violence policy?** Communicating domestic and family violence as a workplace issue.
4. **Support for individuals at risk or experiencing violence:** an overview referral pathways and designated contact officers.
5. **Detailed information about support options:** including leave, mobile phone loans, safety planning, advance payment of salary, flexible working arrangements, family rooms for employees attending work with children, and relocation options.
6. **How to access support (internal and external)**
7. **Assistance for managers and colleagues:** information on how to identify an employee potentially affected by or experiencing violence, and options for showing support.
8. **Advocacy and prevention:** ways staff can raise awareness and work towards prevention.

Lessons Learned:

1. **Consulting widely, and with experts, improves the outcome:** The subject matter is complex and therefore the policy developed was more comprehensive, practical and well supported due to the consultation approach taken.
2. **An integrated approach is powerful:** The policy now in place provides a robust response with clear messaging and relevant information in one place.

2

LEVEL TWO

Lessons Learned

Example 5 Providing paid leave to employees experiencing violence

Economic factors are the most significant predictors of whether an individual remains, escapes or returns to an abusive relationship. Paid leave is an effective intervention that provides a temporary safety net.

Suggested Feature	Implementation
<p>1. Paid: people experiencing violence maintain employment, connection to the workplace and financial security</p> <p>2. Accessible: employees know paid leave is available and feel supported accessing it</p> <p>3. Confidential: confidentiality is assured</p> <p>4. Proof not too onerous: sensitive application</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All organisations have developed a paid leave solution to fit their context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Small organisations opted for a case-by-case approach ◦ Larger organisations developed leave provisions ranging from 10 to unlimited days • Organisations are testing different approaches to leave categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 38% utilise a separate category to emphasise support ◦ 50% have added additional days of leave to existing categories of leave (e.g. personal or miscellaneous leave) ◦ 56% allow immediate manager approval • Take-up levels – Telstra has had 102 instances of leave being accessed since launching the policy in 2014

Example 6 Providing guidance on dealing with perpetrators via workplace policies

Dealing with perpetrators is a challenging topic. While abuse can often be hidden, behaviours do cross into the workplace. Perpetrators and those impacted can also be co-workers, which can further complicate workplace responsibilities.

A clear goal is critical: "Perpetuating domestic and family violence in the workplace, or using organisational resources (e.g. telephone, email) for such purposes, is unacceptable and contrary to organisational policies."

Although most of us are still developing our response, common themes are emerging:

- 1. Existing policies:** all employees are subject to codes of conduct relating to bullying, harassment, and use of work premises and technology. Utilising work time and resources to engage in violent, threatening or abusive behaviour is generally contrary to guidelines
- 2. Referral pathways for perpetrators:** can be provided as part of efforts to reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic family violence
- 3. Other support:** Additional paid domestic and family violence leave is intended to support victims. Perpetrators may use their paid or unpaid leave entitlements in accordance with their employment terms to attend court cases and attend behavioural change programs

Example 7 Telstra's Policy - Perpetrators and Leave

On International Women's Day 2016, Telstra launched an updated policy, now global, and included guidance for managers about perpetrators.

To understand how to best approach provisions for perpetrators into the policy, Telstra engaged subject matter experts, who work in the Family and Domestic Violence sector.

Their advice was for employers to support perpetrators in being held accountable for their actions (e.g. to attend court or behaviour change programs). Employers could help end or prevent violence by approving leave to attend these obligations. Through cross business consultation (HR, Legal, Business representatives on Diversity and Inclusion Councils), the decision was made to allow perpetrators to access their existing leave provisions (e.g. personal leave) and flexible working, to attend their commitments related to family and domestic violence.

This is different to the leave offered to victims of family and domestic violence, who have access to additional paid leave (10 days+).

The policy provides detail of support organisations in each of Telstra's locations for employees who are either experiencing or using violence, and the following FAQ regarding perpetrators:

Q: If an employee approaches me and discloses that it has been alleged that they have perpetrated family and domestic violence and they ask to take leave to attend court, police interviews or counseling what should I do?

A: All employees have the ability to request to take to take leave such as annual leave, unpaid leave, long service leave or a flexible work arrangement to enable them to meet commitments outside work. A manager should consider any request in line with the relevant Telstra policy.

One of our key lessons learned was to engage experts who work in the family and domestic violence sector, to understand the best way to support victims of family and domestic violence.

Hearing from Rosie and Kristy left me determined to make a difference. At PM&C, there was strong will to help – what we lacked was a coherent strategy and system of support. Our new policy empowers our leaders and makes explicit our commitment to reducing the impact of domestic and family violence. It means small changes – for example, moving from four people (including me) to all branch heads being able to approve special leave. Through these efforts, I know our workplace will help women reclaim their lives.

– Dr Martin Parkinson, PSM, Secretary, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

3

LEVEL THREE

Lessons Learned

Integrated: we work with employees, customers and communities to take an active role in domestic and family violence as a societal issue

Actions Summary

Action	Examples from our experience
1 Implement initiatives that reach out to customers, suppliers and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our community efforts are a natural extension of our workforce response. Initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Staff volunteering ◦ Financial Literacy Programs and Hardship Assistance ◦ Telecommunications assistance ◦ Pro-bono services ◦ Direct contributions to not-for-profits • Example 6 outlines CBA's recently developed domestic and family violence strategy
2 Regularly evaluate and improve support provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metric collection allows us to learn what's going well and what might need improvement. Collected metrics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ EAP cases involving domestic and family violence (data from provider) ◦ HR contact centre calls involving domestic and family violence ◦ % of Managers who have completed domestic and family violence training ◦ # of employees taking domestic and family violence leave ◦ # participants in key outreach activities ◦ # of hits on intranet/Hub site for information on domestic and family violence and/or manager guidelines

We achieve progress when government, business and communities work collaboratively to address domestic and family violence. As business leaders, we can play a vital role in helping address this national issue. From my experience there is tremendous will amongst our people to do something and when we empower them to take action in our workplaces, they can make a difference.

– Cindy Hook, Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte Australia

Example 8 CBA's Domestic and Family Violence Strategy

Our strategy has five pillars

1. Providing a safe place to work: strengthen our internal policies and inform, educate and support our staff to ensure they have the tools they need to overcome domestic violence as either a victim, perpetrator or bystander
2. Supporting our customers in crisis - strengthen our policies and procedures to ensure we recognise and support customers in family violence situations
3. Championing gender equality: ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women is embedded in all of our practices as an organisation and to use our existing networks and spheres of influence to champion this principle
4. Promoting financial independence of women: inform, educate and help shape public commentary and attitudes around the role of economic abuse in family violence and the importance of financial empowerment for women
5. Publicly advocating for change: foster national policy discussions around domestic violence and engage MPs around financial independence, the importance of financial literacy and our efforts to promote gender equality

It is an uncomfortable fact that large companies have victims and perpetrators of domestic and family violence as customers, employees and shareholders. We cannot simply accept that fact. Rather, we must accept our responsibility to play our part in changing it.

– Ian Narev, CEO, Commonwealth Bank of Australia

Thank you

We are grateful to all those who are contributing to our journey of understanding, and who assisted with the creation of this report, particularly:

Inspiration and Expertise

- Kristy McKellar and Rosie Batty, who so courageously shared their experience with us. The work within our organisations has started or accelerated because of you.

Experts

- Ludo McFerran, Domestic Violence at Work Research Affiliate, Women and Work Research Group, The University of Sydney Business School
- Libby Davies, CEO, White Ribbon Australia
- Karen Willis, Executive Officer, and Philippa Madden, Clinical Administrator, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia
- Jan Breckenridge, Co-Convenor, Marion Brown, Senior Associate, Paula Bennett, Manager, Gendered Violence & Research Program, University of New South Wales
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About Male Champions of Change

The Male Champions of Change (MCC) aim to achieve a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership in Australia. The Male Champions of Change believe gender equality is one of the nation's most significant societal and economic issue.

Established in 2010, by then Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, our mission is to step up beside women to help achieve a significant and sustainable increase in the representation of women in leadership.

The Male Champions of Change approach is to Listen, Learn and Lead through Action. This involves:

- Understanding the facts, relevant research, existing frameworks and what has and has not worked
- Engaging with women peers, gender experts and our own employees – women and men – to gain different perspectives on the issue, new ideas and potential solutions
- Leading through action, most importantly within our own organisations
- Tracking the impact of our actions, sharing successes, failures and learnings along the way
- Working collectively to advocate for change more broadly in the community

For more information please go to: www.malechampionsofchange.com

MALE CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE 

**We need more decent,
powerful men to step up
beside women in building
a gender **equal** world.**

