RESPONSIBLE REPORTING GUIDELINES FOR JOURNALISTS

When reporting on Violence Against Women:

DO

- ► Label it "Violence Against Women", "family violence" or "sexual assault". Avoid using terms like 'relationship problems', 'domestic dispute', 'troubled marriage', 'unwanted sex' or any other term that minimises violent behaviour.
- ► Contextualise the story. Provide information about the prevalence, incidence and impact of violence against women.
- ▶ Be aware of how source selection will shape the story.
- Acknowledge that violence against women is not a private matter.
- Give priority consideration to safety and confidentiality needs of those who have been victims of violence against women.

DON'T

- Treat violence against women crimes as unusual or bizarre. They are not.
- ► Focus on or blame the behaviour of the woman/girl who has been a victim of violence.
- Perpetuate commonly held beliefs that are not true, e.g. alcohol causes men to behave violently.
- Assume that some cultures or 'classes' are violent and others are not.
- Minimise or sensationalise violence against women.
- Offer excuses for violent behaviour.
- Report in such a way as to suggest that the defence case is 'truth' (when reporting court cases).

Add to the end of any Violence Against Women story:

It is crucial for readers to be able to access help services. Please include in all reports a statement from below that best fits the content of your story:

National

- ► In emergency situations or immediate danger call Police on 000.
- ► For confidential help and referral in Australia call the National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line on 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732).
- Children/young people needing help should call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

Victoria

- In emergency situations or immediate danger call Police on 000.
- ➤ Women needing help or referral for domestic violence can call the Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service on 1800 015 188.
- ► Men concerned about their behaviour at home can call the Men's Referral Service on 1800 065 973.
- ► People who have experienced sexual assault can call the Sexual Assault Crisis Line on 1800 806 292.
- Children/young people needing help should call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

Who to call for comment:

For comment on the EVAs or domestic violence issues contact:

Fiona Mc Cormack, Domestic Violence Victoria - The peak body for domestic violence services for women and their children in Victoria: Ph. 9921 0823/0828

For comment on the EVAs or male violence prevention contact:

Danny Blay, No To Violence - The peak body for male family violence prevention: Ph. 9428 3536/0417 690 311 For interviews with survivors of family violence contact:

Jane Ashton, Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Services: Ph. 0419 328 938

For comment on violence against women crisis services, including refuges contact:

Deb Bryant, Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service: Ph 9928 9611/0437 544 594

For comment on sexual assault issues contact:

Carolyn Worth, South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault: Ph 9928 8741 / 0414 538 275

For comment on violence against women with disabilities contact:

Keran Howe, Women with Disabilities Victoria: 9664 9340/ 9317

For comment on Victoria Police strategies on violence against women contact:

Victoria Police Media Enquiries: Ph 9247 5205/ 5206

For comment on VicHealth research and health strategies for preventing violence against women contact:

Dr Melanie Heenan, Preventing Violence Against Women expert with VicHealth: Ph 9667 1319/0435 761 732

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

Prevalence/Incidence and Reporting of **Violence Against Women**

- A woman is killed in Australia almost every week by a partner or ex-partner.1
- ► More than one in three Australian women (34%) who have had an intimate partner, have experienced violence from a partner or ex-partner."
- ► Of all physical assaults against women, 74.9% occurred in the home, often repeatedly, by a man they knew.iii 31% of women who experienced physical violence in the past 12 months were assaulted by a current and/or previous partner, compared to 4.4% of men.iv
- ► Women and girls constitute the majority of reported victims of family and sexual violence to Victoria Police. 77 per cent of reported family violence victims and 89.09 per cent of reported rape victims are women and girls."
- ► In Victoria during 2009/2010, there were 35,720 incidents where Victoria Police submitted family incident reports.vi
- More than half of all intimate partner homicides have a recorded history of prior police involvement.vii
- ► Nationally, only 19% of women who experienced sexual assault by a male perpetrator and 36% of women who experienced physical assault by a male perpetrator reported to police.viii
- ► An estimated one in four children and young people have witnessed domestic violence against their mother or step-mother.ix
- ► Of the 4,378 sexual assaults reported to Victoria Police in 2008-2009, 62% were for children, and most of these were perpetrated against girls.x
- ► Women with a disability are more likely to experience partner or sexual violence, of greater severity, and over a longer period of time, than women without a disability.xi

Economic and Health Costs

- ► Intimate partner violence is responsible for more ill-health and premature death in Victorian women under the age of 45 than any other of the well-known risk factors, including high blood pressure, obesity and smoking; 59% of the health impact experienced by women is anxiety and depression.xii
- ► Violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion in 2009 -\$3.4 billion for the state of Victoria.xiii
- For every woman whose experience of violence can be prevented \$20,766 can be saved.xiv

Attitudes

- At an individual level, the most consistent predictor of the use of violence among men is their agreement with sexist, patriarchal, and/or sexually hostile attitudes.xv
- One in five people do not believe that 'controlling a partner by denying them money' is a form of domestic violence.xvi
- > 34 percent of the general community mistakenly believe that rape occurs because of men 'not being able to control their need for sex.xvii
- More than half of people believe that a woman could leave a violent relationship if she really wanted to.xviii
- In a recent survey, half of all respondents believe that 'women going through custody battles often make up or exaggerate claims of domestic violence in order to improve their case'. 26 per cent of people disagree that 'women rarely make false claims of being raped'. This contradicts the evidence which documents false allegations of sexual and physical assault remain low.xix

For further resources, including common myths and facts on violence against women and a downloadable copy of this factsheet, visit www.evas.org.au.

This figure has been extrapolated from a review of data contained in the National Homicide Monitoring Program Annual reports. The data indicates that in 2007/2008 there were 62 female victims of homicide killed by an intimate partner, in 2006/2007 there were 33 female victims of homicide killed by an intimate partner. http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/8/9/D/[890EDC20-3349-457C-983A-9AD9DAFA7Z56]mr13_003.pdf)

"J Mouzos & T Makkai, Women's Experiences of Male Violence: Findings from the Australian componer of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) Australian Institute of Criminology, Research and Public Policy Series, no.56, Canberra, 2004. pg 3 accessed at http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/5/8/D/[58D8592E-CEF7-4005-AB11-B7A8B4842399]RPP56.pdf

"Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005, 4906.0 Reissue, pg 29 and Background Paper to Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. 2009-2021

lence against Women and their Children, 2009-2021

^{**}Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005 , 4906.0 Reissue, pg 9.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005 , 4906.0 Reissue, pg 9.

**Victoria Police Crime Statistics (2006) Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005 , 4906.0 Reissue, pg 9.

**Victoria Police Crime Statistics (2007) (a), Family Incident Reports Submitted by sex of Parties Involved and Age Group, page 131 and Victims by Offence Category and Age Group, pg 24-27.

**Victoria Police Crime Statistics (2006) Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005, 4906.0 Reissue, page 8

**Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006) Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005, 4906.0 Reissue, page 8

**Crime Research Centre and Donovan Research, Young people and domestic violence: national research on young people's attitudes to and experiences of domestic violence, Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, Cited in D Indermaur, "Young Australians and domestic violence" Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice no. 195, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 2001, pg 2, accessed at http://www.aic.gov.au/documents/C/8/B/%78C8BC19fc-0600-4268-984F-864F9505E5EA%7Dt195.pdf

*Victoria Police (2009) Strategy to reduce violence against women and children 2009-2014, Victoria Police (2009) Strategy to reduce violence against women and children 2009-2014, Victoria Police (2009) Strategy to reduce violence against women and children 2009-2014, Victoria Police (2009) Strategy to reduce violence against women and their Children, 2009-2021 citing the following: Australian data on this is limited. It is reported in 5 Murray & A Powell, "Sexual assault and adults with a disability: enabling recognition, disclosure and a just response' ACSSA Issues 9, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Canberra, 2008; that 25 per cent of Victorian women who reported sexual assault to the police had a disability. 15 per cent had an intellectual disability, and 5.9 per cent had a physical disability. A Canadian st

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/pubs/violence/np_time_for_action/economic_costs/Documents/VAWC_Economic_Report.PDF
w VicHealth (2010) National Survey on Community Attitudes to violence against women: A summary of findings, Melbourne, pg 14

xvi Ibid, p23

xvii Ibid, p37 xvii Ibid, p.46 xix Ibid, p.37