

# How sport can help Change the story

Preventing violence against  
women through sport



Our  
**WATCH**  
End violence against  
Women And Their Children

# Sport can help change the story to prevent violence against women



*“I believe we currently have an extraordinary opportunity to harness the potential of sport for gender equality. I have faith in our ‘sports-mad’ nation of sportspeople – that together we can build a fairer world – a world where women stand equal and safe both on the sporting field and off.”*

*Elizabeth Broderick AO, Former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner*

Violence against women is serious and widespread across Australia. The statistics are alarming. On average, at least one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner, and one in three Australian women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

However, the good news is that there is clear evidence that violence against women can be prevented before it occurs. To do this, we need to challenge the underlying drivers of this violence, and work to increase gender equality. We need to do this right across society and in all aspects of everyday life, including in sports organisations and clubs.

There is a clear opportunity for sporting organisations and clubs to play an active and positive part in this shared movement for change.

*Change the story: a shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* identifies sport as a priority setting for preventing violence against women in Australia.

- Sport can challenge the attitudes and behaviours that excuse or support disrespect, gender inequality and/or violence against women. Evidence shows that to prevent violence before it starts requires us to consistently challenge the things that drive violence against women.

- Sporting organisations need to work hard to ensure the notion of a ‘level playing field’ is a reality for players, staff members, volunteers, fans and anyone connected to the club. They can also use their influence to extend these principles of equality and fairness beyond the field – into the boardroom, the coach’s box, the stands, the change rooms, and the media.

## **Communities expect sport to be safe and for sporting organisations to work towards gender equality and to prevent violence against women**

VicHealth research found that:

- 98% of Victorians expect their local community sporting clubs to provide an environment that is welcoming and inclusive to girls and women
- 89% expect such clubs to educate males about appropriate behaviour towards women

RAPE  
MURDER  
PHYSICAL &  
EMOTIONAL ABUSE

HARMFUL GENDER STEREOTYPES,  
DISRESPECT OF WOMEN,  
CONTROL & THREATS,  
BULLYING



## What can sports clubs do to prevent violence against women?

Everyone involved in sport – whether you're a Board member, CEO, manager, coach, player, umpire, staff, volunteer or fan – can play an important role in preventing violence against women by:

- showing leadership by setting the standard of zero tolerance towards sexist attitudes, language and discriminatory behaviour in your sport
- providing opportunities and pathways for girls and women to participate at all levels of your sport
- promoting women's voices and perspectives equally with men's in your club
- using communications, marketing and events to demonstrate your club's commitment to gender equality – both inside and outside the club
- reviewing how safe, welcoming, equal and inclusive your club is for women (for example surveying members about their experiences, reviewing your policies and club facilities) and developing an action plan to identify opportunities for improvement
- being a positive role model to children and young people by showing that both women and men play an active role at all levels of your club
- providing training and information to your club so everyone understands their role in preventing violence against women

Let's Change the story through sport by promoting women's participation and opportunities, challenging gender stereotypes and roles, challenging attitudes and behaviours that support or condone violence and disrespect, and encouraging respectful, healthy and equal relationships on and off the field.

We need to take a whole-of-sport approach, the evidence shows violence against women can be prevented if we address the underlying drivers.

**It'll be a team effort, but if we all work together - sport can help Change the story.**



## Who is Our Watch?

Our Watch leads Australia's work to stop violence against women and their children before it starts. We aim to drive nation-wide change in the culture, behaviours, attitudes and social structures that lead to violence against women and children. Our vision is an Australia where women and their children live free from all forms of violence.

## What work does Our Watch do with sport?

Our Watch's Sport Engagement Program acknowledges the important role that sport can play in preventing violence against women. The program supports various sporting organisations and partners to embed gender equality and respectful relationships into their networks and communities, and build cultures that prevent violence against women.



*"Sport can bring out the best and the worst. It's our choice – be a haven where ugliness can fester, or make it a leader in showing the rest of society how we can limit harm and help our best selves flourish."*

*Moya Dodd, Board Member, Football Federation Australia*

## Want to know more about how your sport can prevent violence against women?

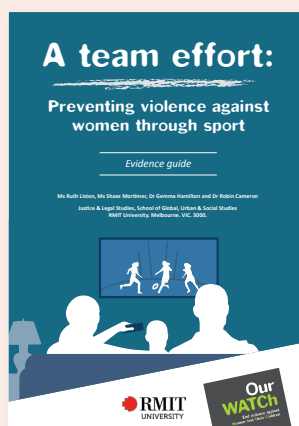
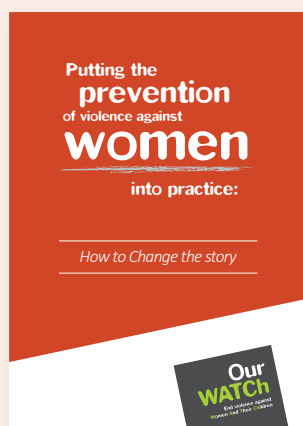
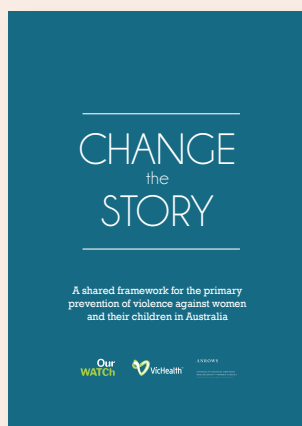
Although sports organisations across Australia have undertaken various activities aiming to prevent violence against women for some time, it is only recently that we have developed clear evidence about what good practice looks like, and about the kinds of actions that sports need to take to be most effective in helping to prevent violence against women.

Our Watch and RMIT University have developed an evidence guide to help sporting organisations play an effective role in preventing violence against women.

*A team effort: Preventing violence against women through sport* outlines ten key elements of an effective approach. These elements provide practical and measurable components that support sports organisations in delivering promising practice to prevent violence against women.

Sport has an important and powerful role to play as part of this shared movement.

To learn more head to our website [www.ourwatch.org.au](http://www.ourwatch.org.au)



*Change the story*, *A team effort: Preventing violence against women through sport* (Evidence Guide), *It will be a team effort* video, and other helpful resources are available on the Our Watch website. Our resources to prevent violence against women are continually evolving, so keep an eye out for new resources on our website or sign up to our e-newsletter.

They can be downloaded from [www.ourwatch.org.au/Media-Resources](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/Media-Resources)