

## Chapter 3

### Gender stereotypes, government initiatives, and other related matters

3.1 The second part of the terms of reference asked this committee to inquire into and report on:

(b) the role of gender stereotypes in contributing to cultural conditions which support domestic violence, including, but not limited to, messages conveyed to children and young people in:

- (i) the marketing of toys and other products,
- (ii) education, and
- (iii) entertainment;

(c) the role of government initiatives at every level in addressing the underlying causes of domestic violence, including the commitments under, or related to, the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children; and

(d) any other related matters.

3.2 This chapter describes the evidence received by the committee that was responsive to this part of the terms of reference.

#### Education

3.3 The Primary Prevention Framework notes that there are particular stages of life which present significant opportunities to address the drivers of violence against women:

Experiences in childhood and adolescence have a particularly strong influence and can impact development and future life paths.<sup>1</sup>

3.4 As with the committee's previous inquiry into domestic violence, submissions expressed support for programs targeted to young people.<sup>2</sup> The progress of some of these programs is outlined below.

#### *Respectful relationships*

3.5 The Second Action Plan of the National Plan states '[s]upporting and educating young people to build respectful relationships is paramount to preventing

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1 Our Watch, ANROWS and VicHealth, *Change the story*, 2015, p. 37.

2 Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee, *Domestic Violence in Australia*, August 2015, pp 71, 73-75, 80.

domestic and family violence and sexual assault in the future'.<sup>3</sup> The Second Action Plan details work being undertaken in this area:

Schools and organisations deliver a range of respectful relationships programmes in a number of different ways. Under the First Action Plan, we explored and evaluated the effectiveness of different approaches to respectful relationship education in school and non-school settings.

Under the Second Action Plan, governments will work together to develop and test a suite of good practice tools and resources to strengthen and support the delivery of high quality respectful relationships education in schools, homes and communities. This will build on findings from the evaluation of the First Action Plan's national Respectful Relationships programmes.<sup>4</sup>

3.6 Specifically, the Second Action plan details the following project:

Our [Watch] is funded by the Victorian Government to undertake a Respectful Relationships in Schools project across selected areas in regional and metropolitan Victoria. The project will be evaluated to document best practice examples to be used across jurisdictions.<sup>5</sup>

3.7 In addition:

Following endorsement of the Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education by Education Ministers at the Standing Council for School Education and Early Childhood, states and territories can commence incorporating respectful relationships education into their local curricula and syllabi, building on work already undertaken by states and territories in this area.<sup>6</sup>

3.8 For the Third Action Plan, Our Watch recommended that there be further support for schools:

...to embed whole-school approaches to Respectful Relationships Education and ensure the full benefits of the new Australian Curriculum reach every child.<sup>7</sup>

### ***White Ribbon***

3.9 White Ribbon Australia, established in 2003, is a male-led primary prevention campaign to end men's violence against women.<sup>8</sup>

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3 Second Action Plan 2013-2016 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, p. 22.

4 Second Action Plan 2013-2016 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, p. 23.

5 Second Action Plan 2013-2016 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, p. 23.

6 Second Action Plan 2013-2016 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, p. 23.

7 *Submission 66*, p. 37.

3.10 White Ribbon Australia runs the 'Breaking the Silence' schools development program for principals and teachers. Their submission states that the program supports staff to:

...embed models of respectful relationships in school culture and classroom activities. These models give students the opportunity to learn and experience respectful relationships, preventing the perpetration of violence against women and girls.<sup>9</sup>

3.11 White Ribbon reported that since its 'Breaking the Silence Schools' program commenced in 2009, 203 schools have completed the program, reaching over 220,000 students.<sup>10</sup>

### ***The Line***

3.12 *The Line* (established in 2010 as part of the primary prevention approach of the First Action Plan), is a national social marketing campaign aimed at young people aged 12-20 years. *The Line* encourages young people to discuss what constitutes reasonable behaviour in relationships in order to create long term changes to attitudes that can enable violent behaviour.<sup>11</sup>

3.13 Our Watch outlined that from July 2014, they have been responsible for the delivery and management of *The Line*. In its submission, Our Watch recommended increased funding for *The Line*, through to 2018-19:

...in order to support activities that target the different attitudinal segments of young people identified by current campaign research, as well as raise broader awareness of *The Line* and support the COAG campaign.<sup>12</sup>

### **Higher education**

3.14 The National Union of Students (NUS) explained that conventional gender roles are present in the higher education sector.<sup>13</sup>

3.15 The NUS suggested that:

8 *Submission 65*, White Ribbon Australia Annual Report 2014-15, p. 7.

9 *Breaking the Silence Schools Program, Strengthening the culture of respectful relationships through Australian Schools*, <http://www.whiteribbon.org.au/schools> (accessed 23 August 2016).

10 *Submission 65*, p. 25.

11 The Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee, *Domestic Violence in Australia*, August 2015, p. 83.

12 *Submission 66*, p. 7. Note: In April 2015, COAG agreed to take collective action to reduce the level of violence against women and their children. The COAG Campaign is a national campaign to encourage the community to change the attitudes of young people to violence. The campaign builds on the latest research and efforts already underway by states and territories. For more information, see *Council of Australian Governments* at <http://www.coag.gov.au/node/535> (accessed 26 August 2016).

13 *Submission 13*, p. 5.

This divide between the areas in which women and men study does itself not reflect the epidemic of violence against women. However, it does show that the Higher Education sector is compliant in the societal perpetuation of gender roles, which underpin gendered violence.<sup>14</sup>

3.16 Universities Australia (UA), the peak body representing Australia's 39 universities, indicated that 'the higher education sector is committed to improving gender equality more broadly'. UA also welcomes further discussion on how the higher education sector can contribute to the National Plan.<sup>15</sup>

3.17 In relation to its workforce, UA is in the process of developing a Strategy for Women 'as part of the sector's commitment to equity and diversity.' The strategy will focus on:

...a broad range of gender equity issues within universities, including addressing the career pipeline for the advancement of academic and professional women staff, flexible and equitable work, gender pay equity, and supporting staff with families. The strategy will also encourage action plans in universities to tackle gender inequity. UA also supports UA Executive Women, a group that aims to increase participation of senior academic and professional women in Australian universities through mentoring programs, cross-sectoral professional development for women, and increasing awareness of the underrepresentation of women and unconscious bias in the human resources departments of universities.<sup>16</sup>

## **Employment**

3.18 The gender pay gap is the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time equivalent earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency has released information showing that the gender pay gap in Australia is currently 16.2 per cent and has been between 15 and 19 per cent for the past two decades.<sup>17</sup> The agency highlighted that the gender pay gap is influenced by:

...a number of interrelated work, family and societal factors, including stereotypes about the work women and men 'should' do, and the way women and men 'should' engage in the workforce.<sup>18</sup>

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14 *Submission 13*, p. 5.

15 *Submission 51*, pp 2-3.

16 *Submission 51*, p. 2.

17 See <https://www.wgea.gov.au/addressing-pay-equity/what-gender-pay-gap> (accessed 19 September 2016).

18 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Gender Pay Gap Statistics Fact Sheet*, [https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Gender\\_Pay\\_Gap\\_Factsheet.pdf](https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Gender_Pay_Gap_Factsheet.pdf), p. 3 (accessed 25 August 2016).

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### ***Workforce participation***

3.19 The 2015 Intergenerational Report indicates that for all age groups (other than those aged 15-19 years) the total workforce participation rate for men is higher than for women. In 2013-14, 71 per cent of men and 58.6 per cent of women participated in the labour force.<sup>19</sup> It noted that Australia's female participation rate is about four percentage points lower than in New Zealand and Canada.<sup>20</sup> The Intergenerational Report includes an estimate from the Grattan Institute that if Australia's female participation rate reached that of Canada, Australia's GDP would be a permanent \$25 billion higher.<sup>21</sup>

3.20 Treasury projected that in 2054-2055, the participation rate will be 68.1 per cent for men and 56.8 per cent for women.<sup>22</sup> The Intergenerational Report states:

Labour force participation rates for females in most age groups have increased significantly over the past 20 years, and are expected to continue increasing over the projection period. This is attributed to the increased levels of educational attainment among women and continued better access to childcare services and more flexible work arrangements.<sup>23</sup>

3.21 The Intergenerational Report also notes the reasons for the increase:

The increase in female participation rates resulted from increased levels of education, changing social attitudes towards gender roles, declining fertility rates, better access to childcare services and more flexible working arrangements.<sup>24</sup>

3.22 The Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE) also pointed out higher education levels for women:

More women than men now go to university. Women make up 55.5% of the student population but this has not reduced the gender pay gap nor removed prejudices that still act as barriers for women obtaining and maintaining decent and secure employment. For women's financial security to be addressed, Australia needs to lead behavioural change in the workplace and in the home.<sup>25</sup>

3.23 However, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics on labour force participation shows that:

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19 Commonwealth of Australia, *2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055*, p. 138.

20 Commonwealth of Australia, *2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055*, pp 20-21.

21 Commonwealth of Australia, *2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055*, p. 21.

22 Commonwealth of Australia, *2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055*, p. 99.

23 Commonwealth of Australia, *2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055*, p. 138.

24 Commonwealth of Australia, *2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055*, p. 19.

25 *Submission 15*, p. 21.

Part-time work was the most common form of employment for mothers with children of all ages in Australia.<sup>26</sup>

### 3.24 Women's Health Victoria outlined:

Though workforce participation by women has increased over time, women do an average of 33.75 hours of household work (including caring for children as well as domestic activities) compared to 18.3 hours for men. Australia also has one of the lowest employment rates for mothers in developed countries at 62%.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.25 WIRE advised that taking time out of the workforce to undertake caring responsibilities can have a detrimental effect on employment:

Long career breaks impacts a woman's ability to re-enter the workforce. Often women are forced to return to roles that are part-time, lower paid, casualised, lack security and offer less opportunities for progression.<sup>28</sup>

### 3.26 The Tasmanian Government also commented that women are more likely than their male counterparts to have interrupted work patterns which can affect career progression:

Particularly following the birth of a child or caring for family members. The majority of unpaid caring work is undertaken by women...

...and they spend almost three times as many hours each week looking after children compared to men.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.27 Some submitters, including Women's Health West argued that a lack of affordable childcare hampers women's ability to re-enter the workforce:

A lack of childcare and the unequal distribution and availability of affordable childcare further entrenches gender inequalities by reducing the economic participation of women and subsequently increasing their dependence on government support and/or their partners.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.28 Childcare and its effects on workforce participation has been the subject of a number of inquiries, including the Productivity Commission's 2014 inquiry into childcare and early childhood learning.<sup>31</sup> There have also been a number of Senate

26 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force Participation- an International Comparison*, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/0CBA37179F1B71BACA25732C00207901?opendocument> (accessed 25 August 2016).

27 *Submission 38*, p. 40.

28 *Submission 15*, p. 23.

29 *Submission 1*, p. 2. See also Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006, *How Australians Use Their Time*, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4153.0> (accessed 25 August 2016).

30 *Submission 10*, p. 1. See also WIRE, *Submission 15*, p. 11.

31 Productivity Commission, *Childcare and Early Childhood Learning*, 31 October 2014 available at <http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/childcare#report> (accessed 25 August 2016).

inquiries into childcare.<sup>32</sup> The committee will not replicate the work of these inquiries here but urges those interested to review the reports.

3.29 The inability to participate in networking or training activities was considered a further barrier exacerbating the inability to gain promotional opportunities for employees with caring responsibilities and/or flexible work arrangements.<sup>33</sup>

3.30 The Australian Government has developed the *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2019* (the Gender Equality Strategy). The Gender Equality Strategy identified that:

[F]emale employees are less likely to have informal networking opportunities extended to them than their male co-workers—missing out on the connections and confidence these offer.

Flexible work arrangements are available in most APS agencies, but are accessed overwhelmingly by women and hardly at all by senior leaders. Flexible work is seen largely as an accommodation for women, and as incompatible with working in a leadership role. Workplaces that take a flexible approach to how, where, and when work is done attract the highest-calibre employees—and keep them in the long term.

The case for change is clear. Without recognising gender equality as a business imperative, agencies risk being left behind.<sup>34</sup>

3.31 It has been pointed out that structural and cultural obstacles can also hamper men's ability to take on feminised careers or family responsibilities:

These include entrenched beliefs about the types of roles that are suitable for flexible work, a belief that flexible work is only for women with small children, inconsistent implementation by supervisors, workforce planning issues and the negative stigma attached to flexible work.<sup>35</sup>

3.32 WIRE commented on the impact of this perception:

Men are twice as likely as women to be denied flexible hours at work, making it harder for men to take on unpaid caring role. Men fear that if they become primary carers or take on flexible work arrangements in order to care for dependents, they will be seen as not being career focussed.<sup>36</sup>

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32 For example see: Senate Education and Employment References Committee, *The immediate future of the childcare sector in Australia*, 16 July 2014; Senate Education and Employment References Committee, *The delivery of quality and affordable early childhood education and care services*, 16 July 2014.

33 Australian Government Office for women, *The Leadership Challenge, Women in Management*, 2008, p. 10.

34 *The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2019* (the Gender Equality Strategy) p. 4.

35 *Cultural Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police*, Elizabeth Broderick & Co, 2016, p. 67.

36 *Submission 15*, p. 24.

3.33 The Gender Equality Strategy focusses on changing the Australian Public Service (APS) attitudes towards gender roles:

The APS workforce must reflect contemporary reality— one in which men, as well as women, have both caring and work responsibilities, and where everyone is given the same opportunities to develop and to lead.

The APS must set the pace for a contemporary Australian workforce. APS leaders at all levels must be accountable for driving progress in their agencies, their divisions, their branches and their teams.

The APS will not achieve gender equality until both women and men are seen as capable and credible leaders; until both women and men can work flexibly without risking their career progression; and until outdated assumptions of 'women's work' and 'men's work' are identified and eradicated.<sup>37</sup>

### ***Industrial segregation***

3.34 WIRE pointed out that although caring for dependents is an important role, it is not one which is usually valued by status or remuneration and it is a 'role that has typically been thought of as unskilled women's work'.<sup>38</sup> WIRE explained the implications for employment in this area:

Feminised work is undervalued by society and thus professions such as childcare are poorly paid. This leaves those in the industry working hard but struggling to get ahead financially.<sup>39</sup>

3.35 However, there is gradual change in this area. In 2012 Fair Work Australia ruled that 270,000 commonwealth workers in the non-government community services sector should receive significant pay increases of between 19 and 41 per cent:

The wages umpire had earlier ruled that these workers had been underpaid partly because the majority of them are women.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Boards***

3.36 Women are underrepresented on boards and in leadership positions across both the public and private sectors.<sup>41</sup> On 31 December 2015, women made up 58.7%

37 Australian Public Service Commission, *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service gender equality strategy 2016-2019*, p. 3.

38 *Submission 15*, p. 24.

39 *Submission 15*, p. 21.

40 Fair Work Ombudsman, *Equal Remuneration Order*, <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/pay/minimum-wages/social-and-community-services-industry-pay-rates>, (accessed 26 August 2016), ABC, *The World Today*, 1 February 2012, <http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2012/s3420387.htm>, (accessed 26 August 2016).

41 Tasmanian Government, *Submission 1*, p. 3. See also Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Australian Census of Women in Leadership*, <https://www.wgea.gov.au/fact-sheets-and-research-reports/australian-census-women-leadership> (accessed 25 August 2016).



of the APS population, but only 41.8% of the Senior Executive Service.<sup>42</sup> In comparison, in the private sector, Catalyst research found:

...26.7% of board positions at ASX50 companies are taken by women. While this is more than the overall proportion of female directors of companies included in the ASX200 (21.9%), ASX300 (20.0%) and All Ordinaries (16.6%), it nevertheless means that only about one in four ASX50 board positions are occupied by women.<sup>43</sup>

3.37 In 2015 Senators Xenophon, Lambie, Lazarus and Waters sponsored the Australian Government Boards (Gender Balanced Representation) Bill 2015 (the bill). The bill sought to implement existing policy regarding the equal representation of gender on government boards into legislation by requiring government boards to consist of at least 40 per cent men and at least 40 per cent women, with the remaining 20 per cent unallocated.<sup>44</sup> The bill was referred to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee for inquiry and report but the committee recommend that the Senate not pass the bill.<sup>45</sup>

3.38 However, with effect from 1 July 2016, the government has committed to:

...a new gender diversity target of women holding 50 per cent of Government board positions overall, and women and men each holding at least 40 per cent of positions at the individual board level.<sup>46</sup>

3.39 States such as South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria are following the Commonwealth's lead with a commitment to gender equity in public sector boards and court appointments.<sup>47</sup>

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42 Australian Public Service Commission, *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service gender equality strategy 2016-2019*, <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/gender-equality-strategy>, (accessed 25 August 2016).

43 Catalyst CSR Dashboard, *Gender Equality at work, March 2016*, [http://catalyst.org.au/documents/Gender-dashboard/Gender\\_Equality\\_at\\_Work\\_-\\_Report.pdf](http://catalyst.org.au/documents/Gender-dashboard/Gender_Equality_at_Work_-_Report.pdf) (accessed 25 August 2016).

44 Explanatory Memorandum (EM), p. 1.

45 Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, *Australian Government Boards (Gender Balanced Representation) Bill 2015*, 10 November 2015.

46 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards*, <https://www.dpmc.gov.au/office-women/leadership/gender-balance-australian-government-boards>, (accessed 25 August 2016). Note: The Australian Government Office for Women prepares the annual *Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards Report*.

3.40 In addition, the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* requires non-public sector employers with 100 or more staff to submit a report on gender equality indicators to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.<sup>48</sup>

### *Male champions of change*

3.41 The Victorian Women's Trust Limited outlined that achieving gender equality cannot be left to women alone. Proactive action by men's groups is needed to support women:

...that goes beyond being an 'ally' or a 'feminist' or saying that 'violence against women is wrong.'<sup>49</sup>

3.42 In April 2010, the then Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick AO met with a group of senior Australian men to form the Male Champions of change. The organisation was established as:

In most nations, men largely occupy the seats of power. Relying exclusively on women to lead change on gender equality is therefore illogical. We need decent, powerful men to step up beside women to create a more gender equal world.

The Male Champions of Change strategy is about male leaders advocating for and acting to advance gender equality.<sup>50</sup>

47 Women's Health Victoria, *Submission 38*, p. 32, Government of South Australia Office for Women, *Boards and Committees*, <https://www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/womens-policy/womens-leadership/women-on-boards-and-committees> (accessed 25 August 2016), Tasmanian Government, *Tasmanian Government Committed to 50% representation of women on boards*, [http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/tasmanian\\_government\\_committed\\_to\\_50\\_representation\\_of\\_women\\_on\\_boards](http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/tasmanian_government_committed_to_50_representation_of_women_on_boards) (accessed 25 August 2016), ABC News, *Women to make up half of judiciary, government board appointments, under new Victorian rules*, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-03-28/women-to-make-up-50-pc-of-vic-boards-under-new-rules/6355282>, (accessed 25 August 2016).

48 Women's Health Victoria, *Submission 38*, p. 15. Companies subject to mandatory reporting requirements are non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees in Australia for any six months or more of a reporting period. All employees (headcount, not full-time equivalent) should be counted. This includes full-time, part-time, casual and temporary employees of the employer (including all of its subsidiaries employing employees in Australia). From 2016, independent contractors will not be included in the headcount. For corporations which are part of a corporate group, the 100 or more employees' threshold is applied to the combined total of employees in Australia of the parent corporation plus the employees in Australia of any subsidiaries.

49 *Submission 26*, p. 9.

50 Male Champions of Change, *A message from Elizabeth Broderick*, <http://malechampionsofchange.com/message-from-elizabeth-broderick/> (accessed 26 August 2016).

### ***Superannuation***

3.43 This inquiry did not receive detailed information on this area, however, the committee notes that on 17 August 2015, the Senate referred an inquiry into the economic security for women in retirement to the Senate Economics References Committee. The committee's report was tabled on 29 April 2016 and covers relevant issues such as narrowing the gender pay gap, women's working experience and superannuation. The committee encourages those interested in this area review this detailed report.<sup>51</sup>

### **Entertainment**

3.44 A number of submissions contemplated the significance of the entertainment industry.

### ***Toys***

3.45 Play Unlimited, in its submission noted the important influence of toys on early development, including the formulation of ideas of gender norms and stereotypes:

Toys are among the earliest and most influential technologies with which children come into contact. As such, they transmit to children, in concert with other cultural apparatus, particular views of gender relations, examples of appropriate behaviour, and character models. They can also be a windows [sic] to broader phenomena extending beyond the toy-box.<sup>52</sup>

3.46 Dr Kaye Quek, RMIT University, reported on the academic evidence demonstrating a significant link between the promotion of traditional gender roles and stereotypes and attitudes conducive to male violence against women.<sup>53</sup>

3.47 Dr Quek further explained:

To the extent that some toys convey to children that dominance and aggression are 'natural' to boys, and submissiveness and domesticity are the appropriate behaviour of girls, they uphold cultural conditions that facilitate the lesser treatment of women, enacted through behaviour such as domestic violence.<sup>54</sup>

3.48 Dr Quek, acknowledged that addressing the problem of gender stereotyping in the toy industry will not, in itself solve the issue of male violence against women.<sup>55</sup>

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51 Senate Economics References Committee, *Economic security for women in retirement*, 'A husband is not a retirement plan', 29 April 2016.

52 *Submission 35*, quoting Dr Wendy Varney, pp 1-2.

53 *Submission 49*, p. 1. The evidence referred to is Flood, Michael and Pease, Bob (2009), 'Factors influencing attitudes to violence against women', *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 10(2): 125-142.

54 *Submission 49*, p. 2.

55 *Submission 49*, p. 2.

3.49 The Illawarra Forum argued that current marketing strategies promote boys and girls adopting roles where females are subservient and males dominant.<sup>56</sup>

3.50 The Australian Toy Association (ATA) outlined how toy manufacturers and retailers are becoming more gender inclusive in their advertising in an effort to respond to community concerns regarding toys and gender:

Toys "R" Us has opted to remove labels denoting gender in its catalogue and website, and Myer, Target and Big W have removed online options to shop by gender, instead listing toys by their function and brand.<sup>57</sup>

3.51 The toy industry's steps have been recognised by organisations such as the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA):

The industry should be praised for taking steps to respond to changing sentiment that supports gender equality.<sup>58</sup>

### **Media**

3.52 A number of submitters were concerned about how gender roles and stereotypes can be reinforced and sustained through popular culture and media,<sup>59</sup> such as through:

- (a) the sexualisation of women and girls;<sup>60</sup>
- (b) the depiction of gender stereotypes that reinforce the power disparities between men and women<sup>61</sup> (such as that of the male breadwinner<sup>62</sup>); and
- (c) the prevalence of glorified and gendered violence.<sup>63</sup>

3.53 Junction Australia and the Southern Domestic Violence Service Inc, in a joint submission to the committee, put forward the view that despite the existence of the Australian Communication and Media Advisory Council and the Advertising Standards Bureau:

...very little is being done to counteract the continued stereotyping and objectification of women in Australian media and entertainment.<sup>64</sup>

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56 *Submission 42*, pp 4-5.

57 *Submission 25*, p. 2.

58 *Submission 60*, p. 4.

59 See research cited by The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance, *Submission 60*, p. 4; The Victorian Women's Trust Limited, *Submission 26*, p. 5.

60 Women Everywhere Advocating Violence Elimination, *Submission 14*, p. 13.

61 The Victorian Women's Trust Limited, *Submission 26*, p. 5.

62 ANROWS, *Submission 24*, p. 4. Citing research from Webster. K. & Flood. M (2015), *Framework Foundations 1: A review of the evidence on correlates of violence against women and what works to prevent it*, p. 25.

63 Australian Council on Children and the Media, *Submission 33*, p. 5.

64 *Submission 22*, p. 12.

3.54 The Australian Council on Children and the Media also highlighted that Australia's National Classification Scheme for media 'does not include any classifiable elements relating to gender stereotypes and objectification'.<sup>65</sup>

3.55 Under Our Watch, as an initiative under the National Plan, a National Media Engagement Project (NME Project) has commenced which:

...is engaging media to increase quality reporting of violence against women and their children and building awareness of the impacts of gender stereotyping and inequality.<sup>66</sup>

3.56 The NME Project is being funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and it has four components:

- Media capacity training for both future and practicing journalists: Our Watch is working with the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia to develop training curriculum material for both university journalism students, and practicing journalists. The aim is to support a shift in newsroom cultures and practices around reporting on violence against women.
- Website portal with resources: A website portal, developed with the Women's Centre for Health Matters provides media with a range of tools for reporting. The site includes guides on how to approach the issue of violence against women, key facts, terminology, ethical reporting considerations and additional resources.
- A National Survivor's Media Advocacy Program: Our Watch is working with VicHealth and Women's Health East to develop a training package to help survivors of domestic violence to be more effective media advocates.
- A National Awards Scheme to recognise and encourage accurate reporting of violence against women: Our Watch launched a national awards scheme in 2015 to recognise and reward good reporting.<sup>67</sup>

3.57 The four initiatives will be supported and informed by a national framework for engaging the media in the prevention of violence against women.<sup>68</sup>

3.58 AWAVA acknowledged the challenges journalists face when reporting on violence against women as well as improvements already made and supported initiatives in this area including those detailed above:

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65 *Submission 33*, p. 6.

66 National Media Engagement Project (National), <http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Media-Engagement-Project> (accessed 23 August 2016).

67 National Media Engagement Project (National), <http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Media-Engagement-Project> (accessed 23 August 2016).

68 See <http://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/National-Media-Engagement-Project> (accessed 19 September 2016).

Initiatives such as the *Working with News and Social Media to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children: A strategic framework for Victoria (2015)* and those under the National Media Engagement (NME) Project, particularly the Our Watch Awards (built on the EVAs Media Awards and funded by VicHealth through Domestic Violence Victoria) have made positive steps to engage media to increase quality reporting of VAW and their children, raise awareness of the impacts of gender stereotyping and inequality and build an understanding of the links between sexism, gender inequality, community attitudes and this violence.<sup>69</sup>

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69 *Submission 60*, p. 5.