

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – FEBRUARY 14, 2019

NT investment into domestic violence prevention can lead to generational change: Jesuit Social Services

Jesuit Social Services welcomes the Northern Territory Government's \$22 million investment into implementing the first of three Action Plans to prevent domestic violence, help change behaviours and support victims.

"This is a significant investment that can lead to generational change by supporting prevention and early intervention. This funding will educate the community about domestic violence and respectful relationships and, importantly, hold perpetrators of violence to account and work with them to change behaviour. It will also give victims of domestic violence greater access to services to help them recover and thrive," says Jesuit Social Services CEO Julie Edwards.

Ms Edwards says that funding for interventions that will help change men's behaviour – including expanding the range and coverage of existing services, supporting the development of new and evidence-based interventions and increasing awareness and education in youth detention facilities – is a vital element in working towards a society free of violence.

"It's important we hold boys and men who perpetrate violence accountable. We know that many boys and men who display problematic behaviours are themselves dealing with a range of complex problems such as mental illness, substance abuse and social isolation, which are contributing factors.

"If we can work effectively with boys and men to address these concerns and behaviours, and ensure they are connected to education, employment and the broader community, we will ultimately improve outcomes not only for boys and men themselves, but importantly for women and the broader community."

In October 2018, Jesuit Social Services' The Men's Project released an Australian-first study called *The Man Box: A study on being a young man in Australia*, showing that young men who comply with society's pressures to be a 'real man' are twice as likely to consider suicide, more likely to commit acts of sexual harassment, more likely to experience and perform acts of bullying and violence and to report poorer mental health.

"The findings of *The Man Box* demonstrated the immense cost of continuing to perpetuate rigid ideas of masculinity and what a 'real man' looks like. One of our key recommendations coming from the report was to engage young men in settings such as schools, workplaces and sporting clubs to provide activities and interventions.

"We are pleased that this Action Plan recognises the importance of reaching out to people in settings they are comfortable in, and supporting engagement with community, religious, sporting and business backgrounds. Positive support to promote and strengthen respectful relationships will give every member of the community a chance to flourish."

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