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For immediate release

## **WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

***Don't just stand there – say something!***

Many people think that violence against women is caused by a few men who can't control their anger. "This is true only in part," says Rita Butera, Executive Director of Women's Health Victoria. "The causes of violence against women include traditional attitudes about gender roles, as well as a society that accepts violence. Violence against women is prevalent – one in three women over the age of 15 years has experienced physical assault, usually by someone close to them. The lead up to White Ribbon Day on 25 November is a good time to be thinking about these issues."

Belief in male authority and hostile attitudes towards women are a big part of the problem. Trivialising or excusing violence because women 'ask for it' or 'deserve it' is another factor.

"The good news is that we can challenge these pro-violent attitudes in everyday situations," Rita explained. "This can be done in really simple ways. If we hear someone joking about domestic violence, we can say 'what if that was your sister or daughter?' It makes the person think about what they've just said."

"Women's Health Victoria has developed a whole-of-company program to prevent violence against women in our community – *Take a Stand Against Domestic Violence*<sup>®</sup>. We have found that when organisations and individuals have the tools and the courage to stand up against violence, change is possible," she said.

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