

The Time to End Men's Violence Against Women is Now

A Joint Statement by the Centre for Non-Violence and ARC Justice

30 April 2024

2024 is proving to be another deadly year for women in Australia. With the recent murders of Samantha Clarke, Rebecca Young and Hannah McGuire in the Ballarat region, as well as Emma Bates in Cobram last week, we as a community are reminded that men's violence against women happens anywhere, to anyone, at any time. Our own region is no exception.

The Centre for Non-Violence and ARC Justice are calling for an end to men's violence against women, children and diverse communities. We stand united in asking community to reach out and seek support where they may be experiencing or using family violence. We're here to help.

Our thoughts are with the many families, friends and communities as they navigate the grief and loss of their loved ones. We know that they are not alone in this grief.

More than one woman a week and one child a fortnight dies as a result of family violence in our country. As we write this statement, and during the month of April, one woman has been killed every 4 days. It has driven thousands of Australians to rally across the country to say "no more".

This is not a tragedy – this is a national crisis. This is especially difficult when we know that family and gendered violence is 100 per cent preventable.

So far this year 33 women have lost their lives to family and gendered violence in Australia (@sherelemoodyfemicidewatch). We also know that at the time of publication, this number will mostly likely have risen again.

It is important as a community navigating our own grief and disbelief surrounding these deaths, that we recognise that to use violence is a choice. We must as a community, challenge myths surrounding behaviours and attitudes that lead to men's violence against women and children and diverse communities.

This includes understanding that the person using violence did not 'snap' or 'lose control' or faced too many pressures at home or work or financially.

To use violence is always a choice.

As two of the leading support services for those experiencing family violence in Central Victoria, ARC Justice and the Centre for Non-Violence know that in every instance where family violence has been experienced, a choice was made by the person using violence to gain power and control over the other person.

Family violence exists in every suburb of every town or city and across all socio-economic and cultural communities. It does not discriminate.

In more than 95 per cent of all cases of family violence, the person using violence is known to the victim. It is someone they knew. It is someone their families knew, their football club knew, they do not hide in the shadows, because they do not need to.

The statistics paint a sobering picture:

- 1 in 2 women and girls since the age of 15 have experienced sexual harassment
- 1 in 5 women and girls since the age of 15 have experienced sexual violence
- 1 in 3 women and girls since the age of 15 have experienced violence
- 1 in 4 women have experienced intimate partner violence since the age of 15

And for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, and women and girls living with disability, the impacts are far more devastating.

To support our community in seeking a life free from family violence, the Centre for Non-Violence and ARC Justice are working together to offer a range of support services for victim survivors and men who use violence. Now, more than ever, we encourage anyone who may be experiencing or who may be concerned about their behaviours towards their loved ones to reach out and seek help.

The Centre for Non-Violence is a fully integrated family violence support service. Working with both victim survivors and men who use violence, we offer a range of support for victim survivors including:

- crisis accommodation
- safety planning
- case management
- therapeutic recovery programs

Through a range of specialist programs, CNV supports men to make different choices and recognise how their behaviours and attitudes may be impacting the safety of their loved ones.

CNV offers a suite of programs for men who use family violence including:

- Men's Behaviour Change
- Supported accommodation programs
- One to one case management

There is a service available for anyone seeking support to make a better change for themselves, their children and their families.

ARC Justice – a rights-based, for-purpose organisation incorporating the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Housing Justice based in Bendigo and the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre based in Shepparton – provides free legal advice and representation and housing support and advocacy for those experiencing family violence.

ARC Justice has expertly trained staff to help people understand their legal rights and specialise in:

- Family violence
- Family law
- Child protection
- Renting
- General civil and criminal law matters.

Family violence raises many complex issues. ARC Justice can help with both the legal issues, especially relating to the care of children and security of housing both rented and owned and support to access related services which can help with the other issues.

We want people who are experiencing family violence to know that they are not alone, and that advice, support and help is available.

If you, or someone you know is experiencing or has experienced family violence to reach out. We're here to help.

And equally, if you, or someone you know is using family violence, we're here to help.

Give us a call today:

The Centre for Non-Violence (Monday- Friday / 9-5pm): 1800 884 292

ARC Justice (Monday-Friday / 9-5pm): 1800 450 909

For Media Enquiries please contact:

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