

Media Release

LEADING EMPLOYERS TACKLE CONFRONTING ISSUE AS PART OF EFFORTS TO END DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN AUSTRALIA

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Leading Australian employers are set to tackle the confronting issue of employees who use domestic and family violence as part of nationwide efforts to end this endemic societal scourge.

The approach, which is supported by organisations such as Telstra, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Ashurst and Medibank is captured in a new resource from the Male Champions of Change coalition titled: *“Employees who use Domestic and Family Violence – A workplace response.”*

“The statistics are clear, domestic and family violence is prevalent in our society and there will be both victims and perpetrators among the employees of large organisations in Australia today. Workplaces can and therefore should take action, and in doing so we can contribute to both saving and changing lives for the better,” according to Andy Penn, CEO of Telstra.

Developed in collaboration with Our Watch, No to Violence, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia, Australia’s CEO Challenge, and UNSW Gendered Violence Research Network, the work recognises that any comprehensive workplace response to domestic and family violence must also include approaches to employees who use domestic and family violence.

It’s a challenging and sensitive area for employers - balancing accountability and support for employees who use domestic and family violence, while ensuring that the safety of the person experiencing domestic and family violence is always paramount.

“Our workplace response to this issue has now been extended to ensure our support encourages those who are using or have used violence, to seek help and rehabilitation pathways, and to choose different behaviours. By assisting those willing to change, we hope to support the prevention of domestic and family violence and be part of a community-wide response to the issue,” said Matt Comyn, CEO, Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

The resource includes principles to underpin organisational approaches to the issue; guidance on managing situations where an employee has (or is alleged to have) used domestic and family violence; legal obligations for employers and a sample policy and communications which leaders can adopt or adapt for their own organisations

Organisations working in the frontline of the issue have welcomed the support and direct engagement of the business sector:

“Workplaces have a vital role to play in creating an Australia where women are safe, equal and valued. Appropriate workplace responses to perpetrators of violence against women not only support individuals, but also help to address the drivers of violence against women and contribute to broader community efforts to prevent this violence from happening in the first place,” said Patty Kinnersly, CEO of Our Watch.

“Workplaces can play a critical role in helping these people to change their behaviour, while also protecting those who are impacted by it. This resource offers a comprehensive guide on how to appropriately do this and is an essential element of our whole of community response to this devastating issue,” according to Karen Willis, Executive Director of Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia.



“We know that people who use family and domestic violence rarely seek support, we also know that most of these people are employed. This toolkit provides workplaces with a practical guide and resources to safely engage with people using violence to assist them to stop their use, seek help and change their behaviour,” Jacqui Watt, CEO of No to Violence said.

“As someone with a lived experience of domestic and family violence, I know just how critical it is for workplaces to support those impacted to be empowered to take steps to safety. However, I also know it is just as critical for workplaces to hold to account those using abusive behaviour and support them to change their behaviour, including by removing the shame and stigma that prevent men from seeking support,” Jacque Lachmund, CEO of Australia’s CEO Challenge said.

“Many employers are uncertain about how to respond appropriately to employees who use domestic and family violence (DFV). It is now clear that both a balance of procedural fairness for the employee using domestic and family violence and a focus on safety for the person who is experiencing the violence, are key ingredients to competent management of this complex organisational issue. This MCC Toolkit provides evidence informed practical guidance together with a wealth of resources to assist organisations to manage these important and challenging matters,” Professor Jan Breckenridge, Head of the School of Social Sciences and Co-Convener of the Gendered Violence Research Network at UNSW, said.

The work enhances Male Champions of Change long-term focus on supporting employees experiencing domestic and family violence and, more broadly, advancing gender equality within their organisations and society - one of the most effective strategies in addressing the attitudes, behaviours and cultures that contribute to domestic and family violence.

Download [Employees who use domestic and family violence: a workplace response](#).

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