

**PROMOTING EQUALITY AND RESPECT: AN INTERFAITH COLLABORATION
IN PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE.**

**SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE
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Good afternoon everyone and thank you for inviting me to launch this resource “Promoting Equality and Respect: an interfaith collaboration in preventing family violence”.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land – to pay respect to those that have passed before us and to acknowledge today’s Tasmanian Aboriginal community who are the custodians of this land.

I acknowledge members of the Tasmanian Parliament, religious leaders and distinguished guests.

There are three reasons why I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak at this launch.

First, it is International Women’s Day and the theme this year is BeBoldForChange: encouraging each one of us to put gender on the agenda and be a leader within our own sphere of influence by taking bold pragmatic action to accelerate gender parity. It follows that this is a most appropriate day to launch this resource.

Secondly, putting gender on the agenda has been a focus of my term as Governor, and in particular gendered violence, namely sexual and family violence.

Thirdly, this is an excellent resource. What I particularly like about it is that it goes well beyond definitions of family violence, the bald facts of family violence, the impact of it on our community and how to respond and assist victims of family violence. Instead its primary focus is on how to prevent family violence - on primary prevention.

The recurring theme of this publication is that the causes of family violence are societal: unequal power between men and women, rigid gender roles and stereotypes and social attitudes that excuse or condone violence by men. All too often tackling these primary causes of family violence is seen as too difficult. We fall back on focusing on improving our response to family violence.

This resource provides a primary prevention strategy to eliminate violence against women. It offers practical examples of how to promote attitudinal and behavioural change by having conversations in the community about the roles of men and women, what makes a respectful, equal and healthy relationship (we know from research that young people struggle with this) and the importance of promoting gender equality to address the problem of gender violence. It suggests doing this in sermons or by inviting experts in the area to speak to your community. It gives ideas about how to start these discussions, for example by using a case of violence against a woman reported in the media as a conversation starter. This is a strategy I have used, and it certainly makes people sit up and listen.

The resource gives examples of community initiatives such as White Ribbon Day that communities can participate in and many others.

And it contains useful examples of taking action to promote gender equality in the community by, for example, developing a community action plan to promote gender equality (and an illustration is given of one) and taking measures to involve both women and men in decision-making in the community.

In summary, the book deals with the causes of violence against women in a clear and accessible way, it identifies the social norms that condone, often unconsciously, violence against women. And it provides ideas about ways to address gender inequality which are crafted to assist faith leaders.

I am aware that this resource was first published and launched in Victoria in 2015 and was developed as part of the CHALLENGE Family Violence Project and funded by the Victorian Government's Community Crime Prevention Program. It is good to see that it is now also being launched here in Tasmania.

I encourage everyone here today to use this resource and the sources it refers to do your part in encouraging your community to advocate for change and promote equality in our communities.

On that note, I take much pleasure officially launching the resource Promoting Equality and Respect: An Interfaith Collaboration in Preventing Family Violence.

Thank you.