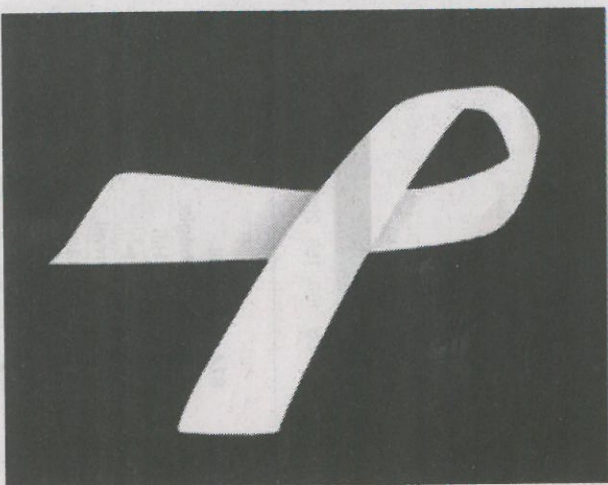


EDITORIAL

Speak out and take a stand against violence



AN AWARENESS walk in Horsham on Friday aims to pave the road to a safer life.

The walk, beginning at the Horsham Aquatic Centre before leading along Firebrace Street and ending in May Park, is real action - it takes real steps to eliminating violence against women and children in our community and, indeed, violence experienced in all communities.

The reality is, we all know a victim or a perpetrator of family violence. We might be a victim or a perpetrator ourselves. And we might not even realise.

Every week, on average across a 12-month period, one woman is killed by a current or former partner in Australia. A woman killed by her partner is most likely to be killed in her own home.

One in three women will experience

physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by someone known to them and one in four children are exposed to family violence, which is a recognised form of child abuse.

Family violence is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$21.7 billion a year.

Statistics from White Ribbon Australia indicate the rate of family violence is higher in rural and regional areas and research shows 94 per cent of employees agree that employers should take a leadership role in educating their workforce about respectful relationships between men and women.

No section of the community is immune to family violence. It affects all demographics and all cultures. It affects women and girls in many ways - not always physically, but it's always about power and control.

Yes, men can also fall victim to family violence - but certainly not at the rates

experienced by women and children.

The pages of this newspaper all too regularly detail the many cases appearing before the courts - incidents which occur not only behind closed doors but in our public places.

This is not a women's issue; it is not a men's issue. It is a whole of society issue.

People across Australia will sign an oath on Saturday - for White Ribbon Day - as they vow to take a stand against family violence. But change requires more than a signature. It is more than wearing a ribbon and it's more than words.

To say we have the power to influence change sounds simplistic, but the reality is violence is preventable. We must ensure that message stays at the forefront - not just on White Ribbon Day, but every day.

Jessica Grimbble, editor

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NEWS

Taskforce sets challenge

COMMUNITY

BY CARLY WENNER

Region

WIMMERA Drug Action

memes during December alcohol, and use of social media can contribute to this statistic," she said.

Taskforce co-ordinator Sally Pymmer said the initiative encouraged people to be so-

exposed to alcohol advertising. "The more people are on social media of you or your friends drinking a nar-

and they are reaping the benefits.

"You might post an image on social media of you or your friends drinking a nar-

"At least 102 million mi-

four. She said the taskforce was committed to promoting healthy people and safe alcohol consumption.

incidence of harm related to alcohol over the past 12 months.

"If you want to do some-