



## Evaluating the impact of the Victorian Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) Schools Pilot

Jesuit Social Services

January 2024

Deloitte  
Access Economics

# Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land where we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We also acknowledge women, allies and pro-feminist organisations who have worked for decades to improve gender equality – this report nor the work of The Men’s Project would be possible without the progress made by these committed trailblazers.

This report is an independent evaluation by Deloitte Access Economics, who were engaged by The Men’s Project. The evaluation was designed by Deloitte Access Economics in collaboration with The Men’s Project. The Men’s Project undertook quantitative data collection. Qualitative data collection, data analysis, and reporting was completed by Deloitte Access Economics.

Deloitte Access Economics would like to thank the following people and organisations for their input into this evaluation:

- All the program participants who responded to the surveys and participated in focus groups and interviews
- The Respectful Relationships workforce from the Victorian Department of Education
- Anika Moore and Sharnee Curran from the Victorian Department of Education
- Dr Naomi Pfitzner from Monash University, who provided feedback on the design of the evaluation, early findings, and the draft report
- The Men’s Project’s team, in particular Drew Hanger, Olivia Stephenson, Rachel Thomson, and Michael Hail
- Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, for providing in-kind investment into this evaluation.

# Acronyms and definitions

Acronym	Full name
Healthy/Healthier Masculinities	Expressions of masculinity which are gender equitable, diverse, not unique to men and boys, and healthy for men and boys themselves. Often referred to in this document as “healthier identities”.
HMLC	Healthier Masculinities Learning Community
MoRE	Modelling Respect and Equality
UMB	Unpacking the Man Box

## A note on gender in this report

We acknowledge the binary nature of discussing gendered norms and their impacts through the use of “men and women” and phrases like the ‘Man Box’ or The Men’s Project. Gender is much more diverse than this and does not exist in simple binary categories. However, the social construct of a gender binary shapes Australian society and the experiences of all genders. This report therefore refers to this construct throughout.

## Suggested citation:

Deloitte Access Economics, *Evaluating the impact of the Victorian Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) Schools Pilot* (report commissioned by The Men’s Project, Jesuit Social Services, January 2024), Melbourne.

# The Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) Victorian Schools Pilot

Delivered by The Men's Project | Evaluated by Deloitte Access Economics

## The problem

**1 in 4**  
women in Australia

experience **physical or sexual violence** by an intimate partner or family member at some point in their life from the age of 15\*

Unhealthy views of masculinity can manifest as violence in situations where men are traditionally encouraged to reassert dominance and control. To **prevent family violence** we need to challenge and change these attitudes



**How do we design and deliver programs that encourage healthy conceptions of gender and relationships, particularly as these attitudes are being developed in the minds of our young people?**

## The pilot

The Men's Project developed the Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) Victorian Schools Pilot to:

- 1** **deepen understanding of the link between supporting healthier masculinities and the prevention of violence against women, and**
- 2** **further embed a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships.**

The pilot uses 4 phases (below) to raise awareness of unhealthy masculinities and their links to gendered violence and support schools to promote healthier masculinities.

58 schools across Victoria have participated in the pilot.

## Pilot roll out



**Phase 1: Partnership building and onboarding**

Scheduling workshops and building relationships with schools



**Phase 2: Unpacking the Man Box workshops**

3 x 1 hour workshops raising awareness for all school staff



**Phase 3: MoRE two-day training**

2 day intensive workshop for selected 'MoRE Champions', focused on personal reflection and growth, and actions



**Phase 4: Healthier Masculinities Learning Community (HMLC)**

6 months of ongoing support for MoRE Champions

## The findings

The program builds knowledge about the **links between unhealthy masculinities and violence against women** and equips schools to challenge unhealthy masculinities



**72%** Unpacking the Man Box participants agreed that the phase 2 workshops **deepened their understanding** of the link between supporting healthier masculinities and preventing of violence against women.

2 out of 3 MoRE Champions **intended to make change in their school culture** and environment



The program creates a **shared language and framework** for school staff to be able to conceptualise the 'Man Box' as part of the whole school approach

This shared language supported **increased confidence to challenge unhealthy masculinities** at school, and Phase 3 supported MoRE champions to challenge not only students, but also their colleagues.

## The next steps

The pilot has shown that working with **large** groups to raise awareness, alongside **intensive work** with selected champions, can lead to greater understanding of the links between unhealthy masculinities and family violence, and confidence to challenge unhealthy masculinities at an organisation level. This implies that other organisations and communities may benefit from using these findings to deliver **similar programs in other contexts**.

The next steps for the MoRE pilot are **considering methods to refine, grow and embed** the program in Victorian schools, to have a greater impact.

"The training was not only interactive but informative giving participants the opportunity to learn, express and voice their ideas and opinions in a safe and non judgmental environment. Would highly recommend this training for other schools no matter what their entry level."

\*Australian Bureau of Statistics, Personal Safety Survey, 2021-22

# Executive summary

People's conceptions of what it means to be, or behave as, a woman or a man become established in their early years. Home, school, and community settings, as well as external stimuli such as social media, shape individuals' views around gender as they grow up, often in unconscious ways. As such, these settings are critical to encouraging, or discouraging, healthy views of gender and masculinity, for example views on gender roles in a household or on the way 'real' men should express themselves.

Healthy views of gender matter because they manifest in people's behaviour and actions, and significantly impact the lives of both women and men. Societal views of gender often dictate that people 'should' be or act a certain way to align with expectations and not be penalised or punished, for example socially. These visible and 'invisible' restrictions on people's actions can be harmful to themselves and others.

For example, Unpacking the Man Box research by Jesuit Social Services shows that men in the 'Man Box' – those with rigid views of masculinity – are 1.4 times more likely to drink heavily, 3.5 times more likely to be in a traffic accident, 2.0 times more likely

to have had thoughts of suicide in the last two weeks and 6.6 times more likely to make sexual comments to women or girls they do not know in a public place.<sup>1</sup> They are also more likely to perpetrate verbal, online or physical bullying, and experience verbal and physical bullying.

The relationship between unhealthy attitudes of gender and family violence is particularly potent and alarming. The assigned power that comes with stereotypical masculine norms can manifest as violence in situations where men are traditionally encouraged to reassert dominance and control. In Australia, this has led to a concerning level of family violence, with one woman murdered each week as a result of family violence.<sup>2</sup>

In this context, Australia is tackling a significant problem when it comes to gender equity: how do we design and deliver programs that encourage healthy conceptions of gender and relationships, particularly as these attitudes are being developed in the minds of our young people?



<sup>1</sup> The Men's Project, Flood, M 2018, The Man Box: A study on being a young man in Australia, Jesuit Social Services: Melbourne.

<sup>2</sup> 'Quick facts', Our Watch (2023) <<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts/>>.

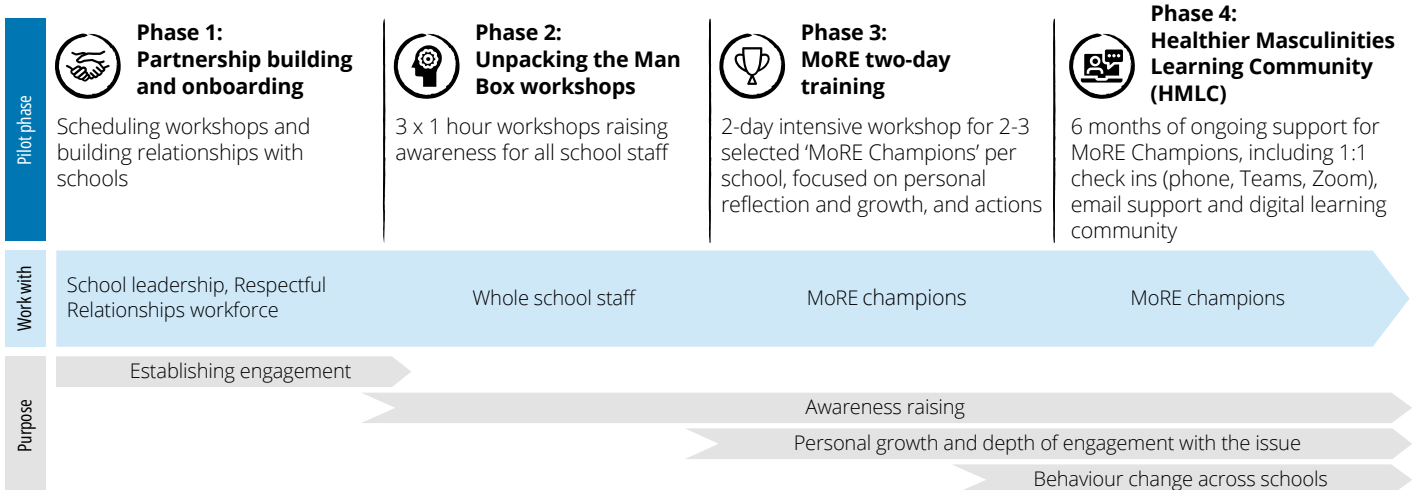
# The Victorian Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) Schools Pilot and this evaluation

To address this challenge head-on, The Men’s Project team at Jesuit Social Services developed the Unpacking the Man Box initiative, a series of awareness raising workshops that are delivered (and tailored) to a wide range of audiences including workplaces across government, private industry, public and community sectors, as well as to schools, community groups and other settings. The Men’s Project team also developed the Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) program, a two-day intensive training that supports participants to build their skills and confidence to take actions and implement changes in their community or setting. In 2022, The Men’s Project combined their core initiatives to create the Victorian MoRE Schools Pilot to

complement and support the existing Respectful Relationships curriculum that has been taught in primary and secondary settings in Victoria since 2015.

The structure of the program is depicted in Figure i, reflecting four key phases of implementation: engagement with the Respectful Relationships workforce and schools, whole school Unpacking the Man Box (UMB) workshop series, two-day intensive MoRE training for 2 to 3 staff members selected as MoRE champions, and a Healthier Masculinities Learning Community (HMLC) to connect MoRE champions across schools in their area.

**Figure i: Victorian MoRE Schools Pilot structure**



The objective of the pilot was two-fold:  
 to deepen understanding of the link between supporting  
 ▶ healthier masculinities and the prevention of family violence  
 to further embed a whole-school approach to Respectful  
 ▶ Relationships.

Specifically, the first 12 months of implementation targeted the attitudes, behaviours, and practice of school staff as they relate

to promoting healthier masculinities throughout their school. As an early phase pilot, it was designed as a staged roll-out such that it could continuously evolve.<sup>3</sup> Importantly, and in line with other gender transformative programs, the pilot was intended to act as a prevention program for family violence and other social harms in the longer term, through the influence teachers and school staff have on students’ conceptions of masculinities.

## Deloitte Access Economics was engaged by Jesuit Social Services to evaluate the MoRE Schools Pilot

The pilot was evaluated across three domains:

- implementation
- participation and
- early outcomes.

The evaluation also considered how the next iteration of the pilot might be improved.

It was guided by a number of research questions under each domain, and informed by stakeholder interviews, five surveys, and program data and documentation. This evaluation received ethics approval by both Jesuit Social Services’ (JSS20220701) and the Department of Education (2022\_004650).

<sup>3</sup> The provision of resources such as teaching plans and other tangible materials was out of scope for the Victorian MoRE School pilot.

## Key Findings

Overall, the pilot was well received by schools, implemented responsively and effectively within the Respectful Relationships initiative, and built teachers' knowledge about the links between healthier masculinities and family violence, equipping schools to challenge unhealthy masculinities more broadly.

### **Finding 1: The pilot was useful and acceptable to schools.**

Most school leaders surveyed (82%) believed the pilot was 'suitable and fitting', and 64% agreed there was clear value in participating in the pilot. Schools viewed the pilot as complementary to the Respectful Relationships initiative, strengthening their approach to challenging attitudes and biases related to gender norms. While motivations to participate in the pilot varied, the majority of participants (67% of UMB participants, 99% of MoRE champions and 77% of HMLC participants), would recommend the program to colleagues and schools considering how to further their skills in promoting healthier masculinities.

"The training was not only interactive but informative giving participants the opportunity to learn, express and voice their ideas and opinions in a safe and non-judgmental environment. Would highly recommend this training for other schools no matter what their entry level." – MoRE champion

### **Key findings | Rollout and implementation**

#### **Finding 2: The pilot originally aimed to engage up to 100 schools across 10 cohorts of Respectful Relationships schools as identified by the Respectful Relationships workforce.**

At the time of the evaluation, a total of 58 schools from across 10 cohorts, as identified by the Respectful Relationships workforce, were engaged in the pilot. Of these, 39 schools had completed the pilot, and 19 schools were in the process of completing Phase 4. In total, there were 3,383 school staff attendances at the UMB workshops (Phase 2), 163 MoRE champions had completed the two-day MoRE training (Phase 3), and 46 MoRE champions had completed the HMLCs (Phase 4). Participation was impacted largely by contextual factors, including: 1) periods of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic and flooding in regional Victoria, 2) education workforce capacity, and 3) pilot design, including timing and process issues related to the Expression of Interest period.

#### **Finding 3: The alignment of the pilot with the existing Respectful Relationships initiative was a key enabler to implementation of the pilot, and strengthened the embedding of a whole-school approach.**

Many of the Respectful Relationships workforce strengthened their relationships with schools in their area, playing a key role in recruiting and following-up schools throughout the pilot. Ultimately, the pilot helped school staff to engage with the Respectful Relationships curriculum, workforce, and embed the whole-school approach through shared language and frameworks, and motivation for teachers.

#### **Finding 4: Like most school professional development programs, enthusiastic and committed staff and leadership were critical for buy-in, participation, engagement, and reinforcement of the pilot.**

Schools self nominated into the pilot due to existing motivations and strong interest in the topic, and had already begun their Respectful Relationships journey. More senior participants also had higher overall confidence and intention to challenge behaviours before the training. This pre-existing motivation, and level of confidence and intention, is important when considering any scaling of the pilot outside of Respectful Relationships schools. Scaling this program to the state level would require more investment in setup time to ensure school readiness, especially for schools at the start of their Respectful Relationships journey.

#### **Finding 5: Flexibility in delivery was an enabler for school participation in the pilot.**

The pilot was iteratively developed, such that insights gleaned during roll-out led to changes in the design and delivery of the pilot. For example, the Healthier Masculinities Learning Community shifted from a digital community of practice on a Webex platform, to direct phone check-ins with The Men's Project delivery team as well as a digital community of practice on a Zoom platform. The iterative design was a strength of the pilot as clear difficulties with implementation could be resolved and tested throughout roll-out.

#### **Finding 6: School capacity and resourcing has been a consistent issue across all phases of the pilot.**



Beyond ongoing teaching supply issues in Victoria, the pilot was influenced by additional factors such as a lack of casual relief teaching staff. This influenced recruitment into and withdrawal out of the program, but also participation and engagement with each of the phases. However, despite capacity constraints, schools still showed an appetite to engage with the pilot, and many prioritised the program.

**Key findings | Engagement for each phase of the pilot**

**Finding 7:**

There were clear differences in the implementation, participation, and early outcomes of the different phases of the pilot. While more intensive and requiring in-person attendance, the Phase 3 MoRE training was most well received according to participants, due to its engaging nature. It also had the greatest impact, including in translating knowledge into actions. 64% of participants agreed that the Phase 2 UMB workshops were worthwhile, compared to 90% of participants who agreed the Phase 3 MoRE training was worthwhile, and 77% of participants who agreed Phase 4 HMLC was worthwhile. A summary of findings related to the implementation, participation and early outcomes of each phase is provided in the figure below.

**Figure ii: Implementation, participation, and early outcomes across three key phases**

	 <p><b>Phase 2: Unpacking the Man Box workshops</b></p> <p>3 x 1 hour workshops raising awareness for all school staff</p>	 <p><b>Phase 3: MoRE two-day training</b></p> <p>2-day intensive workshop for 2-3 selected 'MoRE Champions' per school, focused on personal reflection and growth, and actions</p>	 <p><b>Phase 4: Healthier Masculinities Learning Community (HMLC)</b></p> <p>6 months of ongoing support for MoRE Champions, including 1:1 check ins (phone, Teams, Zoom), email support and digital learning community</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinating three all-staff workshops was resource intensive and it was difficult for all staff to attend all three, due to capacity constraints</li> <li>Online delivery suited regional schools but was much less engaging for participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding capacity for in-person delivery for two full days was difficult for some staff, but ultimately led to high engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This phase was iterated multiple times in response to implementation (and participation) issues around online platforms</li> </ul>
<b>Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most participants agreed the workshops were useful</li> <li>Some schools felt more advanced in their Respectful Relationships Initiative journey than the level the workshops were aimed at</li> <li>Many stakeholders desired better tailoring to their school context with more resources and tangible plans</li> </ul>	<p>MoRE champions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tend to be women who are classroom teachers and aged 31 - 50 years old</li> <li>have strong interest and previous professional development in the topic</li> <li>immersed themselves in the training, supported by engaging facilitators, collaborative activities and structured training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 29% of those who participated in the online learning community aspects of the HMLCs found them very helpful. Moreover, MoRE champions did not engage with them or did not find them useful</li> <li>Reasons for this included capacity constraints, logistics and low priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Early outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most staff (72%) who attend the UMB workshops report that the workshops support increased knowledge and understanding of healthier and unhealthy masculinities, and the links with family violence</li> <li>Staff reported increased confidence, skill and intention to challenge unhealthy masculinities in their school despite the fact that the workshops are intended to be awareness raising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MoRE champions feel more confident to speak up and challenge unhealthy masculinities in a variety of scenarios</li> <li>Some MoRE champions report deeply engaging with the content personally (challenging internalised norms), as well as professionally</li> <li>The program supports MoRE champions to take actions to challenge unhealthy masculinities in their schools and communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given low engagement with the digital communities, low impact was reported</li> <li>The one-to-one check-ins with Jesuit Social Services staff were more impactful than the digital communities</li> </ul>

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2023).

### Key findings | Early outcomes and implications for gender transformative programs

#### **Finding 8: There is good evidence that some participants took gender transformative action, to deepen their school's commitment to gender equality and family violence prevention.**

There are many great examples of MoRE champions taking tangible actions in their schools due to the pilot, such as implementing small group sessions for students, or a MoRE football group. Importantly however, the pilot's impact was often articulated through smaller-scale actions, rather than specific action plans. A key example of this is that the program creates a shared language for school staff to be able to conceptualise 'the Man Box', and to frame student behaviours. This is in line with best practice gender transformative programs, where impacts are not just defined as actions, but changes in the way practitioners challenge their own biases and engage with others on topics related to gender. Further, the pilot provided some schools with a framework to shift their focus from intervention to preventative work with younger students.

#### **Finding 9: The focus on masculinities and its impact on wellbeing and use of family violence was considered to be a key strength of the program, encouraging engagement from school staff and students, as well as families and communities.**

Resistance to the content was perceived to be lower than other family violence prevention programs, due to the clear focus on the Man Box not only resulting in family violence, but also harming men and boys by restricting their capacity to be their authentic selves. This finding is supported by the high proportion of men MoRE participants (33% of MoRE champions identified as a man, compared to only 24% of the Victorian teacher workforce). While it may seem counter to the ultimate objective of preventing family violence and gender inequity more broadly, specifically engaging men and boys has been proven to be an enabler to the engagement with and impact of gender transformative programs, as long as attention to women's voices and the impact of such violence and inequity on women is fostered within the program.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Finding 10: While the pilot's focus on masculinities was successful in recruiting a relatively high proportion of men, two-thirds (67%) of MoRE champions in leadership positions are women, compared to 56% for Victorian school principals.**

Women MoRE champions reported greater increases in their knowledge of healthier masculinities than men MoRE champions. This aligns with women typically driving change to achieve gender equity, and their efforts to engage their schools in this kind of training should not be understated.

#### **Finding 11: Reinforcement of any professional development training in schools is challenging, and this reality is amplified in a program like the pilot that is seeking to shift attitudes and challenge biases related to gender norms.**

Several key barriers were evident. While many schools created action plans and/or expressed strong desire to act on learnings from the training, barriers such as school capacity and resourcing, as well as competing priorities for leadership and staff, restricted the ability for insights to be actioned. Low engagement in the HMLCs, irrespective of implementation challenges, are clear evidence of this. The Men's Project's iterative approach to implementing the pilot allowed them to adapt to these issues and better support champions. However, despite being out of scope for this pilot, requests for more tangible resources remain an important consideration for the next iteration of the pilot, and any similar program that is aiming to shape participants' perceptions and attitudes with a longer-term view to encourage changes in behaviour. Follow-up engagement is crucial to embedding a whole-school approach, and learnings from this pilot also need to consider school capacity constraints.

<sup>4</sup> Flood, M 2015, 'Work with men to end violence against women: a critical stocktake', *Culture, health & sexuality*, 17(sup2): S159-S176; The Men's Project, Flood, M 2018, *The Man Box: A study on being a young man in Australia*, Jesuit Social Services: Melbourne; Elliott, K, Roberts, S, Ralph, B, et al. 2022, *Evaluating programs aimed at gender transformative work with men and boys: a multicohort, cross-sector investigation*, Melbourne, The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation; Waling, A 2019, 'Problematising 'Toxic' and 'Healthy' Masculinity for Addressing Gender Inequalities', *Australian Feminist Studies*, 34(101): 362-375.



## What next?

The evaluation finds that the Victorian MoRE Schools program is a valuable addition in supporting schools to deepen their understanding of the link between healthier masculinities and the prevention of family violence, and further embed a Respectful Relationships whole-school approach. The iterative nature of the pilot, supported by the formative findings in this evaluation mean that the program has already evolved. One key iteration has been the revision of the HMLC format and content towards direct check-ins with The Men's Project delivery team members to better provide professional support to MoRE champions.

**The findings from this evaluation suggest there is benefit from the continued delivery of the MoRE program in schools from The Men's Project team at Jesuit Social Services.** It is likely that demand for the program will increase as it becomes better known and as schools' capacity to participate increases, particularly given The Men's Project team and the Respectful Relationships workforce have already received new enquiries for staff and parent workshops from schools located in participating cohort areas that did not participate in the 2022-23 pilot.

Considering further iterations and potential expansions to the pilot, learnings for this evaluation are grouped into three themes:

- 1. Refine** – shorter term operational or delivery considerations, such as communicating the findings and outcomes of the pilot to schools, clearly structuring the program around the school year and terms, and updating the content of the program with the latest Man Box research
- 2. Grow** – medium term considerations for scaling the pilot and increasing its impact, including offering greater flexibility in the delivery model for UMB workshops and testing a restructuring of the content of the program
- 3. Embed** – longer term considerations for sustaining the program in Victorian schools, such as empowering teachers to embed the student voice, and complimenting the whole-school approach with mobilisation across communities (including through community partnerships). Realising long-term, systematic value from this program ultimately hinges on truly embedding it into school business-as-usual activities.

**This pilot and evaluation have implications for other programs working to prevent family violence by challenging unhealthy masculinities**, and for researchers and practitioners working on gender transformative programs. They have shown that working with large groups to raise awareness, alongside intensive work with selected champions, can lead to greater understanding of the links between unhealthy masculinities and family violence, and confidence to challenge unhealthy masculinities at an organisation level. This suggests that other organisations and communities may benefit from using these findings to deliver similar programs in other contexts. Ultimately, the successful delivery of programs like the Victorian MoRE Schools Pilot in our schools, workplaces and communities is critical to driving the cultural and social shift needed to prevent family violence in Victoria and Australia.



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