

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Expansion of healthier masculinities schools work will support violence prevention: Jesuit Social Services**

Jesuit Social Services welcomes the Victorian Government's funding announcement to expand the organisation's Modelling Respect and Equality (MoRE) program into more Victorian schools.

The MoRE program was piloted in 60 Victorian schools and the new funding will allow Jesuit Social Services to roll out the program into a further 240 schools over the next four years.

"This announcement is excellent news, it allows us to support teachers across more schools to challenge stereotypes about what it means to be 'a real man' and encourage healthier masculinities," said Matt Tyler, Executive Director of Community and Systems Impact at Jesuit Social Services.

"These early intervention efforts to positively impact men's behaviour will ultimately help reduce gender-based violence in our community."

The pilot program aimed to deepen the understanding of the link between supporting healthier masculinities and the prevention of violence against women. The program includes a whole staff workshop series, and two-day intensive training for selected 'MoRE champions' who connect with other MoRE champions from across schools in their area. The continuation of the program will see the two-day intensive training adopt a more tailored approach to suit the needs of specific schools with a focus on sustaining this work.

"The MoRE program is based on the findings of our Man Box research, which is the largest Australian study into men's perceptions of and personal adherence to rigid masculine norms.

"Our most recent report, released this year, found that 28 per cent of Australian men have used physical or sexual violence against their intimate partner. Men who most strongly endorse rigid attitudes related to masculinities are more likely to have used violence, sexually abused their partner, sexually harassed women, experienced poor mental health and displayed problematic gambling behaviours. This leads to poor outcomes for not only men but the women and children in their lives."

The MoRE program was developed in 2022 to complement and support the existing Respectful Relationships whole-school approach that has been taught in schools since 2015. A recent evaluation of the MoRE Victorian Schools Pilot found that staff and MoRE champions reported increased confidence, skill and intention to challenge unhealthy masculinities in their school.

"Two thirds of our MoRE Champions said that they intended to make change in their school culture and environment after participating in the program. Participants, who spanned whole of school staff, have told us the pilot program has been 'useful and lifechanging', providing a chance to reflect on how promoting positive cultures of masculinity can help prevent violence against women."

The funding announcement is part of a suite of announcements to stop violence before it starts, including new resources to help school-aged children to safely navigate when online and a new advertising campaign to be launched by Respect Victoria later in the year.

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