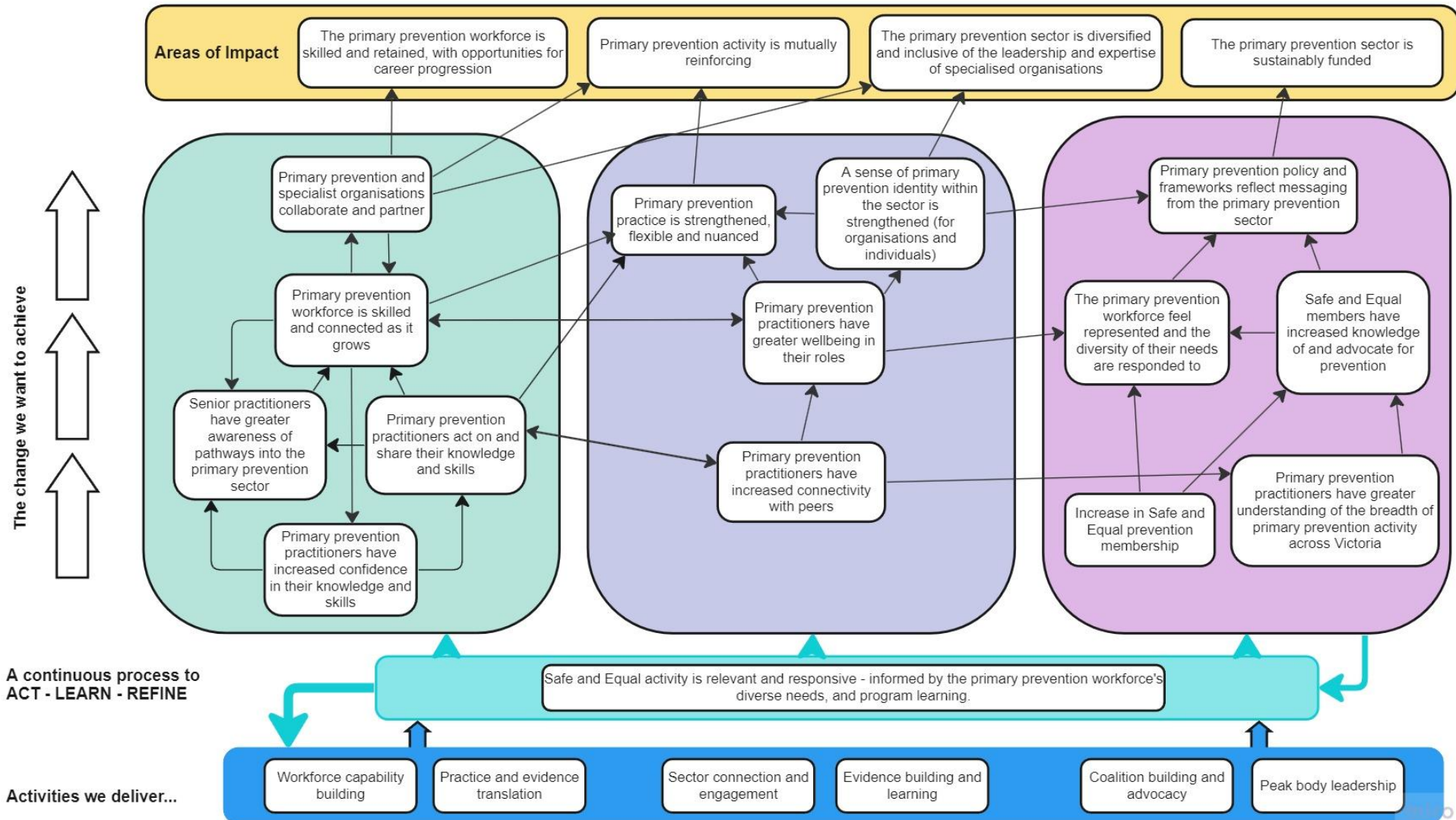


SAFE+EQUAL

THEORY OF CHANGE Statewide Prevention Workforce Development Program 22-26

Goal and purpose of this program: The Statewide Prevention Workforce Development program supports and advances the primary prevention workforce by bringing them together, further developing their capabilities, and advocating for and with them. Through 2-way engagement the program identifies and clarifies the workforce's evolving needs and delivers mutually reinforcing activities that respond to these needs. In turn, the workforce is more equipped to deliver strengthened, adapting and nuanced prevention work within their communities. Ultimately the program contributes to a retained, growing and appropriately resourced workforce, as part of a broader movement for change to end family and gender-based violence.



STATEWIDE THEORY OF CHANGE – EXPLAINED:

Problem we are trying to address: Emerging from decades of community led primary prevention activity, a system of organisations, initiatives and people working to prevent family and gender-based violence is taking shape in Victoria – together they make up the primary prevention workforce. The workforce continues to grow, adapt and innovate in response to rapidly changing need from its grassroots origins.

However, the workforce needs to connect further both within and across various organisations delivering prevention activity across a range of settings. The programs delivered by practitioners and organisations are impacted by ongoing short-term funding cycles and resource constraints. This is an issue for workforce retention and organisational and program sustainability. Despite the efforts of committed and skilled individuals and organisations, more could be done to build coalition, enabling greater connection and collective action within and across the prevention workforce as a whole. This will support workforce wellbeing and retention by limiting isolation and burn out. Strengthening a sense of professional identity for prevention practitioners will also assist and is a necessary part of growing prevention as a professionalised sector, within a movement for change. Delivering a range of effective and mutually reinforcing prevention activities and initiatives at scale requires both workforce development and prevention sector coordination.

At this point in time, there is a need for leadership working across the prevention sector to advocate for and with a much larger, resourced, multidisciplinary workforce working across and within different settings, sectors and communities. We need the work being delivered by the workforce to be long-term, sustainable and mutually reinforcing. Individuals delivering prevention activity need to be connected, supported and recognised for their practice expertise, and joined with the broader prevention workforce through a sense of common professional identity and purpose as a part of a movement for change.

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We use our leadership position as a peak body to work in solidarity and amplify the voice of specialised organisations and communities, while strengthening and connecting organisations across the family violence system. Through equitable partnership and collaboration, we aim to engage leaders in settings and communities to bring greater visibility to the breadth of primary prevention activity occurring across the state.

Building both workforce capability and connection contributes to career progression and well-being. Ultimately the program contributes to a retained, growing and appropriately resourced workforce, as part of a broader movement for change to end family and gender-based violence.

The evidence we draw from that supports our understanding of the problem and inform the design of our activities:

Our work to date is grounded in formal evidence that informs how we think about family and gender-based violence and what works to prevent it. This includes but is not limited to

evidence summarised in *Change the Story, Changing the Landscape, Changing the Picture, Pride in Prevention, Transfemme* and *Intersectionality Matters*.

Our understanding of the current Victorian prevention context is evidenced by, but not limited to, a range of sector wide reports including the Respect Victoria *Progress on Preventing Family Violence and Violence Against Women in Victoria: First Three-Yearly Report to Parliament* and the Victorian Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor on *Primary Prevention System Architecture*, both released in late 2022. The Family violence workforce census administered through Family Safety Victoria is another source of important data on the state of the workforce. We continue to build and test our knowledge of that context and what is needed through engagement with the prevention workforce in our activities, as well as partnerships and collaborations with specialised organisations.

Notably, our actions build on outcomes and learning from evaluation of past Safe and Equal programs and projects including the Free for Violence – Workforce Capability building project (2018 – 2020), Partners in Prevention project (2017 – 2020) and the Statewide Prevention Workforce Development program Annual Report 2021-22. Since 2017, activities delivered through this program have been evaluated and found to be effective and relevant. Actions are also informed by learning and evaluation from other Safe and Equal programs including Fast Track 2021-22 Evaluation, and ongoing learning through the Connecting Communities program.

Sector assumptions we have made in identifying what we want to change:

- The primary prevention sector is becoming clearer on who Safe and Equal are and what we do and will welcome our leadership role as a peak body.
- The engagement of primary prevention practitioners in the 2019-2020 primary prevention workforce census administered by Family Safety Victoria suggests respondents may not identify as being a part of the primary prevention workforce, or are unclear on this issue.
- A sense of common professional identity for primary prevention is needed and would assist with sector coordination and connection.
- The prevention sector understands what enough of what policy and advocacy is, what role they have in it, why it is required for primary prevention and want to engage in it.
- Specialist organisations will have varying capacity, willingness and interest to partner with Safe and Equal.
- Prevention practitioners within and across settings and locations identify as members of the Partners in Prevention Network and want to identify as part of this Network.
- Evidence tells us that short-term and insufficient resourcing is a factor in practitioner well-being, workforce retention and prevention program sustainability. This context will affect the extent to which we can achieve change for the workforce and affects the sustainability of the Statewide program.

Organisational assumptions we have made in identifying what we want to change:

- Safe and Equal's role as a peak body helps to increase our reach across Victoria, and extend our leadership within the primary prevention sector.
- Safe and Equal is equipped to respond itself, and support the sector to respond, to resistance and backlash.
- Safe and Equal has the capacity and processes in place to continually collate and assess practitioner experiences and need.

Enablers that support us to achieve change:

- Size and past engagement in the Partners in Prevention Network
- Participants and engagement in Advisory Groups, namely Practitioner Reference Group and Prevention Strategy Advisory Group
- Expertise and engagement of Safe and Equal members
- A whole of organisation Strategy guiding and support prevention activity within the organisation
- Prevention programs that Safe and Equal are a part of/leading including Fast Track, Connecting Communities and 16 Days of Activism. These programs are mutually reinforcing of the Statewide Prevention Workforce Development program and extend and diversify reach within communities and across settings.

Constraints to achieving change:

- Annual funding that is not increasing with indexation thus reducing the staffing profile that can be sustained through this funding.
- Resource constraints within the primary prevention sector is adversely affecting efforts to collaborate and emphasise competition or scarcity.