



**The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP  
Minister for Housing  
Minister for the Status of Women**

**Launch of the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their  
Children's *Time for Action* report  
Narrabundah College, Canberra  
Wednesday 29 April 2009**

- CHECK ON DELIVERY -

It gives me great pleasure to stand here today with you all at the formal launch the National Council's *Time for Action* report.

Violence against women is an old problem, with us still every day.

That doesn't mean it's an insoluble problem.

With a sustained and methodical approach, that uses all of the evidence available to us, we can substantially reduce the number of women who suffer from domestic violence, family violence or sexual assault.

When we first collected data on smoking rates in the nineteen-forties, when more than half of Australian men smoked, who would have thought that with sustained quit smoking education, taxation and other means, we could have reduced smoking rates to less than 20 per cent - the third lowest in the world – saving an estimated 750,000 lives in the process?

Perhaps the better analogy is with drink driving – a crime that can cause death.

We educate drivers about the dangers; we legally prescribe the maximum concentration of alcohol in the blood of drivers, we suspend licenses and even gaoil people for breeches of the law.

The widespread use of random breath testing is designed to send a message that if you drink and drive, you will get caught.

Road deaths have fallen by two-thirds since the late seventies, even though the number of cars on the road has doubled.

The NSW police minister believes Random Breath Testing has saved about 20,000 lives in NSW since its introduction.

The Government's *National Plan* will be designed to have a radical, long-term effect on the rates of violence against women.

We need to discover what works, not just raise awareness, but to change behaviour.

And we have to take those keys to behaviour change into every lounge room and kitchen, into every school and workplace, into every pub and sporting club: wherever violence occurs and wherever it is condoned.

Fortunately we have a Prime Minister who is committed to doing this: to stamping his mark on the history of this country by being the first Prime Minister who didn't let the size of the task before us deter him from making a start.

The Prime Minister has been a driving force behind the establishment of the Council and the development of a *National Plan*.

And I know he will continue his leadership as we work on the next stage of developing a truly *National Plan*. The Prime Minister will work with state and territory leaders through COAG to deliver a plan for our whole nation.

I am proud of the work done by the Council, and I want to take this opportunity to thank its members:

- Chair – Libby Lloyd
- Deputy Chair – Heather Nancarrow
- Moira Carmody
- Dorinda Cox
- Maria Dimopoulos
- Melanie Heenan
- Rachel Kayrooz
- Andrew O'Keefe
- Vanessa Swan
- Lisa Wilkinson
- Pauline Woodbridge

I want to thank also the special advisers to the Council, and the critical readers, as well, of course as all of the 2,000 Australians who told their own stories, and the staff of FaHCSIA and KPMG for their work.

*ENDS.*