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Media Release

Men encourage each other to break down stereotypes in new campaign from Respect Victoria

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A new campaign from Respect Victoria showcases the stories of Victorians who are taking steps towards equality in their communities, relationships, families and workplaces.

Their stories touch on what it means to be a man, the role that respect plays in relationships, and how both men and women benefit from breaking down stereotypes about gender that can hold people back.

Launching in the lead-up to the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, the campaign aims to reach everyday Victorians and encourage small steps towards change.

“Violence against women is preventable, and it’s a challenge that belongs to all of us,” said Respect Victoria CEO Emily Maguire. “It’s a big task, but we can take it one small step at a time in our homes, relationships, friendships, workplaces and communities.”

“An important piece of the puzzle is men supporting each other to break down outdated stereotypes about gender, masculinity, and what it means to be a man,” said Ms Maguire.

Campaign participants James and Thomas both live and work in Mildura and have spent many years working and participating in community sport.

“When I was growing up, sport gave me a sense of belonging, a sense of place, and a sense of community. My passion in life is to make sure that everyone else gets the same thing,” said James.

“There’s no way I could say I’m perfect, and I’ve certainly said things or been involved in conversations that I shouldn’t have, mostly in male-dominated environments,” said Thomas.

“It’s about saying: okay, I know more now. I need to set a better example for my sons, for the kids at the footy club, and for my mates and colleagues.”

Ed and Meaghan, who live in Gippsland, spoke about the simple conversations they have to make sure their relationship and home is equal, and to role model equality for their kids.

“Ed does more of the kitchen chores than me, which he likes and I don’t like. Small things like that are important, because it’s not my job, it’s *our* job,” said Meaghan.

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Ed often gets comments from people about 'babysitting' when out with his kids alone. "That really grinds my gears. I shouldn't have extra recognition for having them on my own – I've chosen to enter into a relationship where there is a child, and to have kids."

Mufaro and Kobe, who work with young men in schools, spoke about the importance of breaking down the stigma about what a man 'should' be, and the role that men can play in each other's lives to make communities safer for women.

"The power of speaking up has way more impact than not saying anything," said Kobe.

The 'Respect Is' campaign will run across social media, radio, press and digital channels in both regional and metro Victoria in November and December.

Respect Victoria is proud to collaborate with organisations across sectors to spark conversations, encourage change, and work towards a future where everyone is safe, equal and respected.