**MEDIA RELEASE**

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***“All women with disabilities have the right to feel safe and be respected.”***

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) has developed a new information resource for women with disabilities about violence prevention and response, “***Our Right to Safety and Respect. A video resource and video guide, developed by, and for, women with disabilities about violence, abuse, safety and respect****”*.

The resource aims to provide women with disabilities information about how to identify violence and abuse and how to get help to feel safe. **The resource was made for and with women with disabilities.**

Research shows that women with disabilities are at much higher risk than other women of experiencing violence and abuse including multiple types of violence and abuse experienced over longer, periods of time from multiple people (perpetrators) throughout their lives. Women with disabilities are also more likely to experience violence and abuse than men with disabilities and have limited access to safe, useful and accessible good practice information on violence, safety and their right to respect.

In the 20-minute video women with disabilities speak about their personal experiences of violence and abuse. The women talk about how they found ways to speak up, and be heard and get support to live free from violence and abuse. Other women, who work in different services, are leaders and advocates in their community talk about women’s rights to respect, violence, and abuse and how to get help.

“The Our Right to Safety and Respect video is a celebration of the strength of women with disabilities. It shows three women’s stories of getting safe from violence and abuse. It shows the different ways we, can be connected in our communities and find people we can trust. It is empowering to find ways to speak up and be heard. It is important to find people to believe you. **As women with disabilities we, challenge abuse of power and violence in our lives. We are strong and we are not alone.”** said Keran Howe, WDV’s Executive Director.

The video is accompanied by a video guide. Reading the video guide before watching the video assists women with disabilities to safely, use the video alone and with other women. Additional information is, provided and specific questions are, asked, in the video guide to support women with disabilities to think and talk about violence and abuse and know more about their right to safety and respect. The guide also gives phone numbers and links to services and organisations that can support women to feel safe.

The video resource can also be used by friends, family and organisations to support women with disabilities.

The video includes captions, Auslan interpreting and an audio description option for people with vision impairment. The video guide is available in Plain English. The video guide will be available in Easy English format on, 18 July.

This video resource and WDV’s 2017 “Guidelines for developing resources with women with disabilities about safety from violence and abuse” are part of the WDV Safeguards Project. This project aims to increase women with disabilities’ access to safe, useful and good practice information about their right to safety and respect that builds their confidence, knowledge and actions to identify and seek support if they experience violence and abuse.

“It’s important to listen to women with disabilities. We have good ideas about our right to be safe – not just rights in relation to their disability but also women’s rights.” As quoted from Maree who is featured in the video.

The project was supported by the Victorian Government. The Victorian Government’s funding is, gratefully acknowledged.

To view the video resource online or download a copy of the video guide, go to the WDV website <http://www.wdv.org.au/our-work/our-work-with-organisations/safeguards/> or you can contact WDV on 03 9286 7800 for a hard copy of the guidelines and video resource.

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