

You the Man: a theatre-based program for bystander engagement and violence prevention

November 2014

Update no. 4



The main purpose of this update is to report on the pilot season and future plans. For any readers completely new to *You the Man*, or for those who want a recap of how we got to this point, please see pages 7-8.

NEWS:

'You the Man' - a theatre-based education program for bystander engagement and violence prevention has been selected as a finalist in the 'Building health through arts' category for the 2014 Victorian Health Promotion Foundation Awards.

See <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/>

This would not have been possible without the great input and support we have received from many of you, many thanks for this.

Pilot season 2014

The pilot season of the *You the Man* program ran from March–September 2014. As part of the pilot the program was provided in a range of settings and locations across Victoria, and we collected data to measure the program's short-term impact.

The pilot of the *You the Man* program has demonstrated that the program provides an excellent tool for engaging people in the important issue of relationship violence. It is also a tool, different to many others, in that it starts with a theatrical event rather than a lecture or presentation. *You the Man* enables engagement and discourse that is free from some of the stigma and barriers that often discourage engagement. It is also empowering, providing audience members

with a new perspective on the ways they can act in response to the issue.

Initial analysis of the data collected from the preview and pilot seasons demonstrate that the program is extremely successful in engaging participants in the issue, and in the potential positive roles they may perform as bystanders.

In this report we share some of the results from analysis of the survey data collected in the first part of the pilot season, plus feedback from local organisers, focus groups and other unsolicited feedback. We start the report with a selection of unsolicited feedback on the events in a variety of settings, before moving on to an analysis of survey responses, then to feedback from focus groups and local organisers. A section on next steps covers our future plans into 2015.

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Unsolicited feedback from events in different settings

Sports clubs

"What a powerful tool. We would very much like to discuss the opportunity to run this again – 1. to invite leadership from clubs more broadly and

2. to support a family violence hot spot in our northern suburbs."

sports club in regional Victoria, August 2014

"Several of us at the meeting were in attendance at the session and all said it was fantastic – well organised, thought provoking, well presented etc. We felt it was right on the mark with issues that needed addressing and would like to run it again in the future."

from committee meeting of sports club after delivery in regional Victoria, July 2014

Workplaces

"Feedback has been very positive with many wanting repeat performances."

August 2014

"Thank you for the opportunity to participate in such a worthwhile program."

September 2014

Secondary schools

"You the Man was wonderful last week, it had the students engaged and gave them strong take home messages. Thank you for giving the students the opportunity to learn about this very important topic in such a meaningful and engaging way. We have had a couple [of] students present to welfare seeking support with issues as a result of viewing the play. The feedback from the staff present has been overwhelmingly positive."

regional secondary school, May 2014

"The performance was an appropriate and effective way to engage young people. In fact, it remains the best thing I have seen! The characters and scenarios were disturbingly similar to real life cases and because of this, it felt real and was thought provoking. The male actor meant the male audience members remained connected to the task, which in my experience is difficult to do. The actor is also a wonderful role model for young men. The panel set-up is a great way to enable debriefing and information provision. If anything, it could have gone on for longer."

panel member at metropolitan secondary school, June 2014

Community

"I am a Social Work student currently on my final placement. Last night I had the opportunity to go to You the Man at ... Community Centre. I understand that this is a new-ish program in Australia and I just thought I'd send you a mail to let you know how great it was. The actor last night was absolutely fantastic and the play itself really highlighted some challenging issues for the group. The group was predominantly African and this inevitably added a very cultural element to the discussion at the end. I was really interested to hear some of the audience members raise questions about the role of culture in domestic violence and this was met with some great feedback and thought-provoking responses from the panel."

metropolitan community event, August 2014

Pilot season events - summary

Across the pilot season the program has been delivered to over 1700 people in 28 different local events:

- 9 in secondary schools
- 5 in sports clubs
- 6 in universities
- 4 in workplaces
- 4 in community settings

Fourteen of these events were in metropolitan Melbourne, and fourteen in regional or rural locations.

During the pilot, the short-term impact on awareness and knowledge, attitudes and intended behaviour was measured using pre and post-event surveys. Post-event survey data collection will be completed during November 2014. We have deliberately been using a very similar survey to that used in the US in order to enable comparison of our findings with the US findings. In addition, a limited number of focus groups with audience members have been conducted, and workshops held to discuss emerging findings with local organisers and panel members.

Survey analysis so far – selected results

Initial analysis of the data collected from surveys¹ of program participants demonstrates that the program is extremely successful in engaging participants on the issue, and on their potential positive roles as bystanders. Feedback from local organisers (see Box 1) also spoke to this.

Box 1: Stimulating constructive discussions

“The play is a great engagement tool, powerful and hard-hitting, it creates an immediate impact and gets people asking questions.”

Local organiser tertiary education

“I was very happy with ... the participation of the young people during the panel discussion, and also with the way that the panel handled the questions ... I think it is a great tool for engaging young people with very difficult and sensitive subject matter.”

Local organiser community

“I think the play is great, and a great way to

¹ Surveys were carried out 1-2 weeks before the delivery of the *You the Man* program and then 4-6 weeks following the attended performance.

start conversations and get people thinking about their role as bystanders.”

Local organiser sports club

Analysis of survey results from the first part of the pilot season demonstrates the program’s capacity to affect participants’ appreciation of the seriousness of different types of behaviour in a relationship (see Table 1), and their views about their readiness to take appropriate action as bystanders (see Table 2).

Table 1: Attitudes towards specific behaviours

Behaviour	Percentage of participants who think item of behaviour in a relationship is 'not at all serious' or 'not very serious'	
	Before program	After program
Someone puts down, insults or calls the person they are dating or in a relationship with names	8.5	3.8
Someone tells the person they are dating or in a relationship with that they cannot do certain things	23.3	8.4
Someone tells the person they are dating or in a relationship with that they cannot go certain places	23.3	8.5
Someone tells the person they are dating or in a relationship with that they cannot talk to certain people	16.3	5.0
Someone engages in sex or sexual activities when they did not want to	3.3	2.9
Someone threatens the person they are dating or in a relationship with This includes things like punching the wall nearby or breaking or kicking something to show force.	1.2	1.2
Someone hits, punches, shoves, or otherwise physically hurts the person they are dating or in a relationship with	2.0	1.3
Someone feels unsafe with or doesn't trust the person they are dating or in a relationship with	2.8	2.6
Someone is absent from work/ education because they didn't feel safe in a relationship	2.5	1.9

Table 1 shows increased appreciation of the non-physical components of abusive behaviour, and a

growing appreciation of the importance of consent.

In Table 2 we see increases in both measures of perceived capacity to offer bystander support although importantly, the first item (which speaks particularly to confidence to take action), shows a much smaller increase than the second (which refers to having adequate tools and resources to take action). This pattern also demonstrates participants' recognition of the complexity of the issue.

The results shown in Table 1 and 2 are very similar to those found in the US study.

Table 2: Perceived ability to offer bystander support

N: 258 pre survey, 255 post survey	Percentage of participants who responded 'definitely' or 'most likely' to be able to take action	
	Before program	After program
I feel able to take action on behalf of someone else	56	58
I have the tools and resources to take action	57	76

Participants' views about *You the Man*

The post-event survey contained a number of questions that directly addressed the views of participants about *You the Man*.

An open question in the post-event survey asked: "What were a couple of things you learned from the play that seemed really important to remember?" Analysis of the first 140 responses to this question demonstrated:

- 85% of respondents advanced one or more items that demonstrated knowledge of dating abuse/domestic abuse/sexual assault, possible sources of support for those involved and/or knowledge of ways to offer support to someone experiencing violence and abuse.
- 2-3% made a statement that demonstrated resistance to the program.

Selected quotes illustrating frequently occurring themes are given in Box 2.

Box 2: Examples of learning

"some things can seem minor but taken in context are quite serious"

"The immediacy and urgency of issues relating to domestic violence together with the responsibility of all of us to do something about it, however minor... to make a difference."

"By being a passive bystander you are complicit and essentially condoning the behaviour / actions / attitudes of others. You can be an active bystander by speaking out and not ignoring others inappropriate behaviour etc. ...there are options and ways to assist those who are experiencing partner violence."

"if I ever need help there are lots of ways for me to get it and people to go to. - different perspectives from specialists and their way of handling issues - I am never alone"

"if you feel someone is in need of help, you need to remember to be respectful and listen, and do not assume anything."

"That you can call the helplines, even if you personally are not the one being abused."

The post-event survey also included direct questions posed to participants about their views of the effects of *You the Man* on their preparedness to take action, see Table 3. As the Table shows a considerable majority agreed that *You the Man* had been effective in this respect.

Table 3: Views about effects of *You the Man*

N: 255 post survey	Percentage of participants who responded to categories indicating at least some agreement
Seeing <i>You the Man</i> increased my sense of being to take action on behalf of someone else	80
Seeing <i>You the Man</i> increased my confidence in having the tools and resources to take action	78

Focus group feedback

During the pilot season, we have held a small number of focus group discussions with participants in the program from university and

workplace settings. These discussions have reinforced the findings from the survey analysis and confirmed the value of the program for adult audiences.

Participants talked about the value of the program in broadening their understanding of what constituted abuse within a relationship, talking particularly about the importance of considering all sorts of controlling behaviour. They also emphasised the appreciation they gained of the complexity of trying to leave an abusive relationship, and of being an active bystander:

“It also showed how hard it was to be a bystander, and try to help with the best intentions, but you still could just make it worse. And the message in that to me was, people need to see this and understand this before it happens, because once it’s already happening it is very difficult. But it definitely increased my awareness of all of the different options available for help, not just for the people involved but for bystanders. And I think knowing as a bystander, what resources you could reach out, not just to help the people, but to help you help the people and all of the rest of it.”

Within the workplace setting, focus group participants emphasised the importance of the links to other activities in the same setting, and what they saw as the value of *You the Man* in this context. Box 3 presents an extract from a focus group discussion where two participants discussed the issue of how *You the Man* was presented and linked to other initiatives in their workplace.

Box 3: Extract from focus group discussion

Facilitator: *How was it [You the Man] introduced and how do you feel it connects to other initiatives in the workplace?*

A2 *It was presented - I personally see what the place was, as soon as saw the word play, I thought excellent, because I think it’s a medium for getting messages across. It was sent out by an email and generally inviting. So what immediately caught me was, I thought this is really important, this is really interesting, I can see the power of it, I’ll go to that. And so the - in terms of where it sits, I thought it was great at the end talking about the resources that are available, making it aware that it’s part of a bigger program that does exist which I wasn’t aware of before. I mean I did some training and knew it was there but hadn’t sort of put it together as part of a - we need - this is a thing in the workplace. So we care about her, we care about your safety. And I think*

that was done well.

A1 *And the same for me, I guess when an announcement has come out, and I think probably the recent one was last year when there was an official statement that came from [senior male champion] in regards to domestic violence in the workplace. And I felt - when I saw that I actually felt, well it’s good that we’re having this conversation because it’s important. It’s about that education, not saying that it’s not normal to have this conversation, and it’s stigmatised, and put a label on everything, but it is something that is part of life. So coming out and actually saying that there is a system in place, and we are here for you, even though you might not be a victim but knowing that it is there for our staff. It’s not just a tick the box thing for me, but although there are compliance requirements, it affects your professional health and safety. It’s part of your mental health and physical wellbeing, so there’s a lot of other impacts it has. So I understand that context, and I related to that pretty much straightaway. And what I felt was that, yes good, you are doing it. It was like when OH&S started and it was really, you know, the big thing was we’ve got to be more careful. And this is the same with that, it’s just saying be more careful, and just be on the lookout for yourself and others. ... to me it’s a good start, it’s a positive start. You have to start somewhere, and that was something that added to what was started as a conversation. And what my hope would be, would be that there would be ongoing conversation.*

Local organiser feedback

Local organisers play a particularly key role in bringing the *You the Man* program into a local community. The script of the play remains unchanged from performance to performance, but the format of the post-performance discussion was tailored to the local setting, circumstances, and other violence prevention activities happening locally. Panel members for the discussion are drawn from local support agencies, and the discussion serves to introduce people to the locally-available resources. A comprehensive resource pack is provided to assist the local organiser(s) set up the program for their particular setting, and this is backed up with telephone support where necessary.

Local organisers were asked about the ease of various aspects of the work involved in setting up their local event(s) (see Table 4.) The most difficult aspect was attracting and ensuring the attendance of the audience, and 24% of local organisers reported this as difficult or very difficult.

The resource pack was found to be helpful or very helpful by 76% of the local organisers. Based on the survey outcomes and discussions, changes agreed for the future include:

- A different version of the resource pack is to be prepared for each setting, with more specific information about that setting and incorporating feedback from the pilot season.
- An index and in-text hyperlinks will be added to the resource pack to simplify locating specific information.
- The briefing information for panel members will be separated from that for the event moderator: this will make the briefing for panel members shorter.

Table 4: Ease of organisation

N=17	Difficult or very difficult	Neither easy or difficult	Easy or very easy
Locating a suitable venue	18%	18%	64%
Recruiting a suitable moderator	6%	29%	65%
Recruiting a suitable panel	0%	41%	59%
Recruiting the audience/participants	24%	41%	35%
Setting up support resources for the event	0%	18%	83%
Briefing the key people involved	12%	29%	59%

The availability of telephone support was important or very important to 65% of local organisers. One organiser rated the availability of telephone support as not important, commenting: "However, I was glad it was available to inform discussions I had with my management to agree to run *You the Man* and in the end facilitate the event." This aspect of the program will therefore continue to be offered for future *You the Man* events.

One aspect highlighted as important (by the local organisers) was embedding the *You the Man* program in other relevant activities in the particular setting. Events in different settings approached this in different ways, as detailed in Box 4. Generally local organisers found it more difficult to secure participants in settings the

program was not well embedded into other activities.

Box 4: Embedding in other activities - examples
<p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "the school had done some gender equity/dating and relationships work prior to the performance" • "year 11 co-ordinators are planning curriculum follow up" • "We hope to recognise white ribbon as a whole school"
<p>Workplaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "we launched the <i>You the Man</i> program as a key initiative under our Gender Equality Strategy launch and deliverables" • "Our workplace has a strong commitment to White Ribbon, also through its community consultation networks it has a strong link to FV networks. the timing of <i>You the Man</i> was chosen deliberately to lead into November 2014 White Ribbon events"
<p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "we organised a warm-up event two weeks prior to <i>You the Man</i>, involving community theatre and a film, both related to the subject matter"
<p>University</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "[It was part of a] Respectful Community Initiative, [with] delivery of forums regarding violence against women, interpersonal and sexual violence and the impact of alcohol"

Next steps

We are now working to complete the data cleaning and analysis of the data set from the entire pilot season, and plan to complete this in early 2015. We will then circulate a fuller report of the research study conducted during the preview season of *You the Man*. That report will include analyses of any different responses by setting, age and gender.

Results from the analysis of the complete data set will be presented at:

- A seminar on Thursday 5 February 2015 at Warrnambool City Centre (Timor Street, Warrnambool). (email ann.taket@deakin.edu.au if you wish to attend)
- A Centre for Health through Action on social Exclusion (CHASE) symposium on 10 February 2015 at Melbourne City Centre, 550 Bourke Street, Melbourne CBD (email Melissa.graham@deakin.edu.au if you wish to attend).

We will also circulate a full report when it is available

The *You the Man* program will be available in three seasons in 2015: February-March, June-July and September.

During the first of these seasons the program will be available at cost price of \$985 per performance (excluding GST) for any location in Victoria. We are currently seeking funding support so that we can make discounted prices available in particular localities and/or settings.

We will also be seeking larger-scale funding to take the work further forward as appropriate.

Enquiries regarding booking the *You the Man* program during 2015 should be directed to Julie Melican (Phone 03 5227 8108, email: julie.melican@deakin.edu.au)

Any questions?

Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

If you require any further information or clarification, do not hesitate to [contact me](#).

I would also be very happy to receive any further ideas or thoughts you might have about the use of *You the Man* in Victoria at any time.

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Starting off – a recap

You the Man originated in the US, as a theatre-based program for bystander engagement and

violence prevention. It is a brief intervention, consisting of a 35-minute play about dating violence plus a post-performance panel discussion. The script of the play remains unchanged from performance to performance, but the composition of the post-performance panel is locally tailored to the setting, the local circumstances, and other violence prevention activities happening locally. Data from an ongoing longitudinal study in secondary schools in the US has demonstrated that the intervention affects knowledge, attitudes and behaviour in the short, medium and longer term. Follow-up research in the US was carried out for four years.

In May 2013, a team from the Faculties of Health and Arts and Education at Deakin University, led by Prof Ann Taket, started work on the production of an Australian version of *You the Man* in collaboration with A/Prof Cathy Plourde and her team at the University of New England, Maine, US. The work started with a series of presentations on the *You the Man* program held across Victoria. During these consultations the potential use of *You the Man* in Australia was explored. The consultations also identified a diverse range of enthusiastic individuals who wanted to be involved in the various stages of the work of producing the Australian version and piloting it across the state. The consultations confirmed that a translation of the play for the Australian cultural context was required rather than any extensive reworking of the play's storylines.

The Australian script for the play was produced and a series of informal readings held with a range of experts in the field of violence prevention to confirm the applicability and appropriateness of the content. This allowed us to fine-tune the script. We engaged a highly-experienced Australian director, Suzanne Chaundy, to work with us and by the end of September, she had cast two actors to join the team: Glenn Maynard and John Shearman.

The play is very carefully constructed to provide accurate and important information, highlight community services, and have high artistic merit, whilst retaining simple production requirements. The single actor plays six contrasting male characters. None of the characters are perpetrators (or victims). The play shows the impact of violence on the characters and models different forms of supportive bystander response, especially by the family and friends who are closest to people involved in dating violence/domestic

abuse. The play uses humour and headlines to honour the complexity and seriousness of the issues involved. It is designed for delivery to mixed or single gender audiences.

Previews November 2013

Suzanne rehearsed the actors in October and early November, with involvement from our Australian writers Virginia Murray and Patrick van der Werf as well as individuals from the violence prevention field. As a final stage of the rehearsal process, four preview performances were held in November 2013, with each actor performing once with a school audience and once with an adult audience. The secondary schools were in regional Victoria and the adult audiences were at a regional conference of family services providers and early years' staff in Warrnambool, and at an event held as part of the G21 month of action "Stop Violence Against Women" in Geelong.

Feedback from the previews was extremely positive (see Box 5), and provided some helpful suggestions for fine-tuning.

Box 5: Feedback from previews

School student comments collected by a teacher at one of the schools:

"the performance was powerful. I enjoyed it a lot and it was a real eye opener. I liked the transformation of character by using props. Although we never met Jana, we still got a sense of what kind of person she was."

'I liked it, it gave me things to look for before I go into a relationship! It was very powerful in all ways, the way Mitch tried to help Jana to get away from John because he was a very rude person.'

"A moving play which was easy to follow and well aimed at our age".

"It made me feel sorry for girls that have had to go through that experience. And it makes you aware of what you have seen in the past."

"the play was very powerful. It really showed how people can push away help if they are afraid. It is very powerful how one person can keep trying to help."

"it was great. Don't be a bystander."

Comments from adult audience members:

"exactly the type of program required to really help to stimulate open discussion of the issue"

"Support is not just agencies but people around"

"Community is bombarded by media stories – but this format helps people take on the issues"

"[The play] raises many issues and many questions which lead to great conversations"

"As a parent, I wouldn't feel uncomfortable with my 12 year old being exposed to this"

"[The play and discussion] seemed to impact people on a personal level – I got the impression most could relate to either one of the characters or some of the moral dilemmas explored"

"It was fast-moving, messages were very clear, and your work on ensuring that script development supported messages in the Australian context was very apparent. The actor and director both did great jobs"

"the refreshing thing about the play – no judgement and no victim blaming, the focus was on the response of family and friends to support Jana"

Media coverage

The previews attracted attention from national radio, and a feature was broadcast on ABC's *Bush Telegraph* on Tuesday 19 November 2013. This article featured our director Suzanne Chaundy, one of the actors John Shearman, and Renee Fiolet who moderated the Geelong preview session.

The recorded feature is available for listening and with a transcript at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bushtelegraph/you-the-man/5101514>

A *You the Man* event held during Deakin Law Week in May 2014 (and part of the pilot season) also attracted the ABC's attention. A recording of the resulting news piece is available on *The World Today* available at:

<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2014/s4005989.htm>