**Fathering Across Cultures Website – Video Transcript**

**Andrew O’Keefe AM, White Ribbon Australia Ambassador**

Hello and welcome! Wherever we come from on this big diverse planet, there are certain things that we all share. In the words of the Dalai Lama of Tibet, there are only three things that make a human: a human body, a human mind, and a human heart. It doesn’t matter if we’re black, yellow, brown or pink; whether we’re poor or rich, indigenous or immigrant, male or female… we all share those same three basic qualities that make us human beings.

Because of that, I believe that we all have a right to the same basic human dignity. We all have a right to the same opportunities for happiness and success. We all have a right to bring up our children free from fear or persecution. And we all have a right to be who we are, in safety.

For the past 15 years, I have been a member of White Ribbon Australia, which is part of a global movement of men and boys working to end men’s violence against women. Because violence against anyone limits that person’s potential to lead a productive and happy life. With your help, White Ribbon aims to create an Australian society where all women and girls can live in safety, free from violence and abuse, so that they can share equally in the great gift and opportunity that is human life. A society in which everyone is truly equal.

Now, most violence against women in Australia comes at the hands of a man whom they know, and are probably in a relationship with, whether that’s a marriage or a family relationship or a friendship of some kind. And because it’s men – not all men, but men nonetheless – who cause this violence, it’s only men who can choose to make it stop. And how do we do that? Well, we each have a choice whether we want to use violence to get what we want or not. And we need to educate ourselves to make the right choice by constantly practicing respect toward the women in our lives, in what we say, in what we believe, and in how we behave. Because the way the view people determines the way we treat them. If we believe that women are somehow inferior to men, and we talk about women with disrespect for their place in this world, we give ourselves permission to treat them badly, or use violence against them.

The National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) in 2013 provides a picture of how we promote this respect and equality in culturally diverse communities. The research behind the survey found that respondents born in non-English-speaking countries have a good knowledge of violence against women, although this is not *as well* developed as for Australian-born respondents. This is especially the case with regard to the law concerning forced sex within a relationship.

So we need men from all backgrounds to stand up, to pledge to respect and honour women, to show leadership through their own behaviour and the behaviour they expect from others in the community around them. That’s how we create a society in which every one of us is safe and has the opportunity to succeed and pass on a better world to our children. And isn’t that why we all came to this country in the first place? This is our chance to make the world a better place…a place where men and women truly support and respect each other, and where the dream of true understanding and love can become a reality. And every single one of us has a role to play, by setting the right standard for our children, our fri. As the great Persian poet and philosopher Rumi said, “You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the entire ocean in a drop.”