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# 2014–15 Annual Progress Report

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## Second Action Plan: 2013–16

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All Australian governments are strongly committed to working together to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children



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# Foreword

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This is the 2014–15 Annual Progress Report (the report) of the *Second Action Plan 2013–2016: Moving Ahead* (the Second Action Plan), under the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan).

Over the past 12 months, we have witnessed the extraordinary efforts of the broader Australian community and Australian governments to address violence against women and their children, including sexual assault. As recognition has grown of the emergent and horrific trends in relation to violence against women and their children, so too have government efforts.

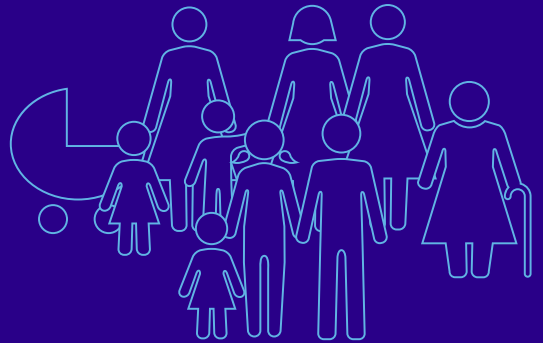
This report outlines the progress of the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the community on the 26 practical actions prioritised under the Second Action Plan. Building on from the foundational efforts of the First Action Plan, this report demonstrates how work towards reducing violence against women is advancing.

Linking short and long term initiatives, the report charts the collective work to drive and implement initiatives that make a real difference to women and their children: from primary prevention and early intervention initiatives, to specialist services for women and their children, to effective perpetrator interventions and controls.

We are proud to note the achievements of the Australian Government, state and territory governments and the non-government sector.

However, there is still a long way to go. As embedded in the historic 12 year National Plan, we remain strongly committed to a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women, including sexual assault.

This report reinforces the commitment to work together and to learn from our united experiences in implementing the First Action Plan, and to continue our progress in reducing violence against women and their children. This is a community issue — it needs effort from us all — because it is everyone's business.



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## Signatories

**The Hon. Scott Morrison MP**  
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**Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash**  
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for Women and Assistant Minister for  
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Minister for Child Safety, and Minister for  
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# Second Action Plan

## National Priorities

The Second Action Plan was launched on 27 June 2014 by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Tony Abbott MP, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash and the then Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Kevin Andrews MP, in Sydney. This section of the report provides a summary of key national actions under each National Priority of the Second Action Plan.

The next section of the report, 'Jurisdictional Highlights', outlines other significant actions undertaken by the Australian Government and state and territory governments.

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### National Priority One

#### Driving whole of community action to prevent violence

**Violence against women and their children is an issue that impacts the whole community. There is strong momentum in the community to reject inequality and violence, and to drive a change in attitudes and behaviour to ensure women and their children are safe.**

The National Plan aims to prevent violence and sexual assault by raising awareness, engaging the community and building respectful relationships in the next generation. Under the Second Action Plan, significant work has been undertaken to strengthen initiatives that will drive primary prevention over the life of the National Plan.

#### Our Watch

Our Watch was established in July 2013 as a partnership between the Australian and Victorian Governments. The Northern Territory and South Australia joined as members in mid-2014 and Tasmania in May 2015. The mission of Our Watch is to drive cultural and attitudinal change through community engagement and advocacy. The Australian Government has committed \$14.1 million over five years to support Our Watch to deliver a range of primary prevention activities.

One example of this work is the National Media Engagement project. The project aims to support and assist media across Australia to increase quality reporting on violence against women and their children, and to build awareness of the impacts of gender stereotyping and inequality.

Our Watch is delivering:

- media capacity training for future and practicing journalists — working with the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia to develop training curriculum material for both journalism students and practicing journalists. The curriculum will be available in early 2016
- resources for journalists on the Our Watch website — in collaboration with the Women's Centre for Health Matters, guides for journalists were produced to improve reporting on sexual violence, domestic violence, child sexual abuse and Indigenous family violence. These guides were launched on 5 September 2014

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- a national survivors' media advocacy programme — working with VicHealth and Women's Health East to develop a training package to help survivors become more effective media advocates who can tell their stories in the context of primary prevention. This will be rolled out in late 2015
  - national media awards for exemplary reporting to end violence against women — working with the Walkley Foundation to deliver awards that recognise and encourage accurate reporting of violence against women. The inaugural event will take place in late 2015.

These four initiatives are supported and informed by:

- an implementation guide, to be published in late 2015, for engaging the media in the prevention of violence against women
- formative research about media representations of violence against women and their children, delivered by ANROWS in early 2016
- a Media Advisory Board, comprising journalists from television, radio, print and online media, media academics and representatives from peak professional bodies. The April 2015 meeting included an address from the then Chief of Army, Lieutenant General David Morrison.

In addition, the Australian Government has committed \$1 million over three years until 30 June 2017 for Our Watch to administer a Sports Grants Bank. This will allow national sporting organisations to fund violence prevention activities. The Australian Government is providing one-off funding for four national sporting organisations to drive innovative work in preventing violence against women by increasing awareness, addressing gender inequality and developing tools and strategies to implement change. The successful national sporting organisations will be announced in mid-2015.

### ***The Line* campaign**

Supporting and educating young people about respectful relationships is paramount to preventing domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

The Australian Government is providing \$6.6 million over four years to support *The Line* social marketing campaign until 2017 to ensure young people have a safe place to discuss and debate relationship issues, and form their own conclusions about what sort of behaviour crosses the line. Our Watch is delivering this campaign and relaunched *The Line* website on 8 May 2015.

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## Respectful Relationships in schools

Respectful Relationships is a primary prevention initiative to educate young people about ethical behaviour, to develop protective behaviours and skills to conduct respectful relationships. Schools and organisations deliver a range of respectful relationships programmes in different ways. Governments are working together to strengthen and support the delivery of high quality respectful relationships education in schools, homes and communities, including education about online safety and sexual health education.

The *Review of the Australian Curriculum Final Report*, and the Australian Government's initial response to the review, were released on 12 October 2014. The COAG Education Council has tasked the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) on 5 March 2015 to address key themes highlighted by the review. Any changes to the curriculum from this work will be presented to the Education Council for endorsement by ACARA later in 2015.

## Online safety

This year, COAG is considering strategies to tackle the increased use of technology to facilitate abuse against women, and to ensure women have adequate legal protections against this form of abuse.

On 17 September 2014, a commitment to appoint an e-Safety Commissioner and introduce legislation to enhance online safety for children was announced. Mr Alastair MacGibbon was appointed as the first Children's e-Safety Commissioner and starts work on 1 July 2015 following the passing of the *Enhancing Online Safety for Children Act 2015* in March 2015. The legislation establishes the Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner in the Australian Communications and Media Authority. The legislation provides for a complaints system for cyber-bullying material targeted at children. The two-tiered complaints system will rapidly remove cyber-bullying material from large social media services and provide civil penalties, enforceable undertakings and injunctions. The system will be completed during 2015.



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## National Priority Two

### Understanding diverse experiences of violence

**Some groups of women can be more vulnerable to violence and face challenges in getting access to information, services and support. Indigenous women, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and women with disability can face an increased risk of violence. Learning more about violence against these groups of women is critical.**

The Second Action Plan aims to deepen our understanding of diverse experiences of violence, and we are working with women and communities to make sure diverse groups of women receive the information and support they need.

### CALD kitchen tables

From October 2014 to March 2015, the Australian Government supported 29 small group consultations (kitchen table conversations) across the country with CALD women leaders and communities about domestic and family violence and sexual assault. The conversations focused on issues, challenges, community involvement, the role of governments, what works well, good ideas and engaging CALD men. Feedback from conversations is being consolidated to inform the ongoing implementation of the Second Action Plan and National Plan. A summary report is planned for release in mid-2015.

### Indigenous Advancement Strategy

The Australian Government launched the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) on 1 July 2014. The five flexible programme streams under the IAS provide an opportunity for practical engagement with Indigenous Australians, service providers, business and government, to ensure solutions are tailored to local needs.

Through the IAS Safety and Wellbeing Programme, the Australian Government is funding a number of activities, including the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and other legal assistance for Indigenous women. There are also activities to strengthen social norms against violence, improve the coordination of referrals for victims of family violence and build service provider capability.

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## **Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) Research Programme 2014–16**

ANROWS is an independent organisation jointly funded by the Australian Government and state and territory governments to expand research on domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia. ANROWS launched its Research Programme 2014–16 in October 2014 funding 20 projects with a total value of around \$3.5 million. A number of these projects will specifically consider the experiences and needs of Indigenous women, immigrant and refugee women and women with a disability.

### **Pre-departure information pack for overseas spouses**

The Australian Government is finalising an election commitment to develop a pre-departure pack on domestic and family violence and sexual assault for partner visa holders. The online pack will strengthen support for women coming to Australia by increasing awareness of rights and where to access support. It has been user-tested both on and offshore to confirm the content is appropriate and relevant. The pack will be translated into over 20 languages and made available on the Department of Social Services website and in Partner Visa Grant letters from mid-2015.

### **Women with a Disability**

Ongoing conversations have been held with key disability organisations, including Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA), in relation to the implementation of new initiatives and key outcomes stemming from the *Stop the Violence Project*, which was led by WWDA under the First Action Plan.

### **Translated materials and release of Easy Read Second Action Plan**

Under the Second Action Plan, the Australian Government is ensuring that diverse groups of women have better access to translated information and resources. In September 2014, the Easy Read version of the Second Action Plan was launched, and the Second Action Plan brochure and CALD fact sheet were translated into 12 diverse community languages.

Further, throughout November and December 2014, 1800RESPECT, Australia's national telephone and online counselling service for domestic and family violence and sexual assault, released new content and over 35 resources to improve the accessibility and cultural appropriateness of its website. This included eight videos, translation of content into 28 community languages and Indigenous-specific resources for frontline workers. The new resources, which were funded by the Australian Government, have been very well received and visits to the 1800RESPECT website increased by 14 per cent during October–December 2014.

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## Safety and Security in the Courtroom Project

Announced by the Prime Minister in March 2015, the Safety and Security in the Courtroom Project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Australian courts system to ensure access to justice for women from CALD backgrounds. It will specifically address child and early forced marriage, female genital mutilation, family violence and human trafficking.

The project will:

- conduct national consultations and focus groups
- disseminate a national consultation report to all courts
- establish a national framework to support judicial officers and court administrators
- create a training package to be used as part of the National Judicial College training programmes.

Consultations will take place in major capital cities with CALD women and Indigenous women. Roundtables will be held in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, and involve representatives from the judiciary peak settlement bodies, peak Indigenous bodies and settlement service providers and specialist legal services. The project is expected to be completed by mid-2016.

## National Education Toolkit Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Awareness

On 6 February 2015, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash, announced funding for the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health to deliver the National Education Toolkit FGM Awareness project. This project will develop consistent national resources to increase awareness of female genital mutilation, support victims to seek help and change attitudes to end this harmful practice.

## National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015–2019

On 2 December 2014, the Minister for Justice, the Hon. Michael Keenan MP, launched Australia's *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015–2019*. The National Action Plan provides the strategic framework for Australia's whole-of-community response to human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices such as forced marriage over the next five years.

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### Forced marriage

On 14 July 2014, the Minister for Justice awarded almost \$500,000 under the Grants to Australian Organisations Program to Anti-Slavery Australia, the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans, and the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights, to progress outreach and awareness-raising activities on forced marriage.

To support the criminal offences of forced marriage, in 2014 the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery Communications and Awareness Working Group also developed a range of awareness-raising materials for frontline officers, teachers, and vulnerable groups. These materials were launched by the Minister on 2 December 2014.

The Crimes Legislation Amendment (Powers, Offences and Other Measures) Bill 2015 was introduced to Parliament on 19 March 2015 and contains a number of amendments which will strengthen Australia's response to forced marriage.

### Reforms to the Human Trafficking Visa Framework

On 27 May 2015, the Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, and Minister Cash announced funding of \$2.3 million under the 2015–16 Federal Budget to reform the Human Trafficking Visa Framework and for enhanced support arrangements.

Under reforms to the Human Trafficking Visa Framework, a specific subclass of bridging visa will be redesigned for the exclusive use of trafficked people assisting authorities with an investigation or prosecution of these crimes. An exclusive subclass of bridging visa will allow government to provide better targeted support to trafficked people on temporary visas, such as access to the Adult Migrant English Program. In addition to redesigning an exclusive bridging visa, the reforms will change the name of the permanent visa used for trafficked people. This change will remove any possible stigma associated with the visa's current title and further protect the identity of trafficked people.

The reforms also improve social security access for trafficked people who have been granted a permanent visa by exempting them from waiting periods for a range of social security payments.

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## National Priority Three

### Supporting innovative services and integrated systems

**Services and systems need to work well together for women and their children to be protected and supported. This means fostering integration and working in new ways across a number of levels, including police, courts, child protection, domestic and family violence and sexual assault services, services for perpetrators and other community services.**

The Second Action Plan is strengthening integration at a policy, services system and individual level. Work is being progressed to enhance information sharing across jurisdictions, in order to protect women and their children and meet local priorities and needs.

### DV-alert

The Australian Government has extended the funding to Lifeline Australia to continue delivering DV-alert until 2016. DV-alert is the nationally accredited and nationally delivered training programme designed to help health and allied health workers better understand and identify domestic and family violence and improve their referral and support skills.

DV-alert is developing new programmes for health and allied health workers in CALD communities, and has also held sessions for an Indigenous men's awareness programme.

There is strong demand for DV-alert and it has been well received, with high levels of satisfaction and increased understanding, skills and confidence reported by course participants. As at 31 December 2014, over 4,300 people had received training through face-to-face and e-learning modes since the programme was extended in July 2011.

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### 1800RESPECT

1800RESPECT is the first national telephone and online counselling service for domestic and family violence and sexual assault to be staffed by professional counsellors. The Australian Government has extended funding for 1800RESPECT of \$28.5 million over three years until 2017, and announced an additional \$4 million to meet increased demand for the service.

In October 2014, the Australian Government announced funding for a project to inform the establishment of Primary Care Professional Support and Information Line and online portal through 1800RESPECT. This will help health professionals who come into contact with victims of family, domestic or sexual violence.

On 2 December 2014, 1800RESPECT announced it was exploring the best ways to appropriately support victims of complex violence, including forced and servile marriage, with a particular focus on young people.

### 1800RESPECT — DAISY app

The DAISY app was launched by Minister Cash in March 2015. It is a free and innovative national app that easily connects women around Australia to a range of services in their state and local area, providing support for the impacts of family violence, domestic violence and sexual assault. This includes specialist gendered violence services and legal and housing services. The DAISY app also features a quick exit button, private web browsing and a technology tips page.

The DAISY app was developed by 1800RESPECT, in consultation with all state and territory governments, and will be updated in the second half of 2015.

Preliminary data around usage patterns indicate that DAISY is meeting its purpose and suggests navigation is simple and intuitive. There is strong repeat usage and it averages around 100 downloads per week.

### National Domestic Violence Order Scheme

A cross-jurisdictional working group is developing a model legal framework that would allow domestic violence orders issued in one jurisdiction to be automatically recognised and enforceable across Australia. The working group was established under the auspices of the Law Crime and Community Safety Council and is chaired by the Tasmania Department of Justice. COAG has noted that model laws underpinning a National Domestic Violence Order Scheme would be agreed by the end of 2015.

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## National Domestic Violence Order Information Sharing System

CrimTrac is developing a prototype technical solution to address the lack of coordination and information-sharing of domestic violence orders across systems and between jurisdictions, to help keep women safe, and bring perpetrators to account.

Building a system that crosses borders, overcomes different laws, and works with the different ways that police and courts use information is a significant challenge.

In 2015, CrimTrac is consulting with all jurisdictions to understand the challenges and complexities of information sharing and to inform the requirements for a technical solution. A report on the progress of the National Domestic Violence Order Information Sharing System is being prepared for COAG in late 2015. The prototype will be trialled in three sites in 2016: Tasmania, Queensland and New South Wales.

## Child safety and wellbeing

The Second Action Plan recognises the strong links between the National Plan and the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2009–2020)*. The work being done through the National Framework meets the needs of children who are exposed to or experience violence and to break intergenerational cycles of violence.

On 18–19 May 2015, Families Australia and the Department of Social Services hosted the 3rd Annual Child Aware Approaches conference in Melbourne. The focus of the conference was innovations in early intervention, community collaboration and partnership beyond the child and family welfare sector.

The conference explored different methods of early response to the needs of children and families, and identified ways for diverse organisations, professions and communities to work more closely together to promote child safety and wellbeing and contribute to advancing the goals of the National Framework.

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## National Priority Four

### Improving perpetrator interventions

**Domestic and family violence and sexual assault are the most pervasive forms of violence experienced by women in Australia, and require an immediate and focused response. To keep women and their children safe we must hold perpetrators to account through interventions that help stop their violence. How we hold perpetrators accountable can change the future for the perpetrator, their victims and their families.**

The Second Action Plan looks at improving the quality of, and access to, perpetrator interventions across Australia. Systems including police, courts, justice, corrections and community services need to work together to make perpetrator interventions more effective and stop perpetrators reoffending.

### National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions

Governments are developing the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (the National Standards) because we understand how important it is for women and their children to be safe and live free from violence. This cannot be achieved without effectively intervening to stop the violence of perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual assault.

Perpetrator interventions are the services, systems and programmes that intervene with perpetrators because of their violence, or risk of perpetrating domestic, family or sexual violence. Together they make up the perpetrator accountability system. All parts of the system must be part of the solution and it is only when all these systems work together that we will get the best results.

The National Standards will be a set of outcomes-focused standards and associated measures to ensure perpetrator interventions across Australia have consistent goals and improve over time. The National Standards are a COAG priority in 2015. Governments will work together to develop the National Standards and will be accountable to the Australian community by reporting against these standards, once agreed.

In doing so, the National Standards will contribute to the National Plan's target of a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children, and improve the lives of Australian women and children who experience domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

To support jurisdictions to make the changes required to fully implement national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions, the Australian Government will offer a \$4 million implementation payment to be shared among state and territory governments.



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### **ANROWS perpetrator interventions research stream**

ANROWS is developing a dedicated research stream on perpetrator interventions, with funding of \$3 million provided by the Australian Government. This research will support the implementation of National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions. ANROWS has been meeting with individuals and organisations around Australia in establishing this research stream. An ANROWS Landscapes (State of Knowledge paper) on perpetrator interventions research, as well as research priorities for future projects, will be released later in 2015.

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## National Priority Five

### Continuing to build the evidence base

**A solid, national evidence base is required for the National Plan to be successful. This will add to our knowledge of what policy and service interventions are effective in preventing and responding to violence against women.**

Data and research on violence against women and their children is being expanded and enhanced over the lifespan of the Second Action Plan. This is helping us better understand what works in preventing and responding to violence and sexual assault against women and their children, and whether or not community attitudes around violence against women are changing.

### ANROWS Research Programme

ANROWS is responsible for bringing together, for the first time, research on domestic and family violence and sexual assault across Australia. ANROWS released its Research Programme (2014–16) in October 2014. It consists of 20 projects across five strategic research themes:

- experience and impacts
- gender inequality and primary prevention
- service responses and interventions
- systems
- research translation and evaluation.

These projects have a combined value of around \$3.5 million. They have an ambitious reach, with research sites in every state and territory. There is a spread of projects focusing on different types of violence against women as well as priority population groups as identified in the National Research Agenda, which was developed on behalf of all governments.

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## **Personal Safety Survey and the National Survey on Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women**

The Australian Government has invested \$22 million for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to conduct the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) every four years over the life of the National Plan. The PSS surveys people 18 years and older to provide information about the nature and extent of violence experienced by women and men since the age of 15 by different types of male and female perpetrators. The most recent PSS was undertaken in 2012. Results showed that violence was prevalent across Australia, with around 1 in 3 women experiencing physical violence and around 1 in 5 experiencing sexual violence since the age of 15. Women were more likely than men to experience violence by a partner with around 17 per cent of women experiencing partner violence since the age of 15 compared with 5 per cent of men.

The PSS will be conducted again in 2016, for release in 2017. In mid-2014, the ABS released additional information from the 2012 PSS on emotional abuse, sexual harassment and violence against people with disability.

The Australian Government has also committed more than \$2.8 million over four years for the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) to conduct the National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence against Women (NCAS) regularly over the life of the National Plan. The NCAS is a telephone survey of a cross-section of Australians aged 16 years and over on their attitudes towards, and awareness of, violence against women. The NCAS establishes a benchmark against which changes in attitudes can be measured over time.

The 2009 NCAS was repeated in 2013 by VicHealth and results were released in September 2014. Results showed that, on the whole, Australians' understanding and attitudes have remained stable since 2009. The majority of Australians did not endorse most attitudes supportive of violence against women. However, the results did provide areas for future focus, including people's attitudes towards the causes, prevalence and types of violence. Concerningly, sizeable proportions of the community believed there were circumstances in which violence can be excused.

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## Data Collection and Reporting Framework

All jurisdictions are working collaboratively to develop a comprehensive National Data Collection and Reporting Framework, to be in place by 2022, for consistent and comparable data.

This is a significant contribution to building the evidence base under the Second Action Plan.

The ABS released the Foundation for a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework (DCRF) in September 2014. The DCRF forms a basis for a shared understanding of family, domestic and sexual violence and focuses on ways to improve administrative reporting in organisations and across family, domestic and sexual violence services.

The DCRF was produced by the ABS, in partnership with the Department of Social Services, following consultation with researchers, frontline contacts including state and territory justice agencies, and supporting organisations such as hospitals and accommodation providers.

The introduction of the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework will ensure that researchers can better identify common characteristics of family and domestic violence incidents. Researchers will be able to create demographic and economic profiles, see family relationships, the types of violence and frequency of events, as well as look at resulting outcomes such as court proceedings, the need for medical treatment or the use of services such as housing assistance or counselling at the local, jurisdictional and national levels.

## Victims and Offenders Data Project

Expanding existing administrative data collections is a key activity for implementing the DCRF.

The Department of Social Services has funded the ABS to add family and domestic violence data items into its existing recorded crime datasets. The ABS currently collects information from states and territories about offenders and victims that are recorded in police administrative systems.

The ABS has consulted and collaborated with state and territory police agencies to understand differences in state and territory legislation and police business practices relating to the use of family and domestic violence 'flags'.

The ABS has used this information to develop a national standard family and domestic violence indicator data item for use in recorded crime collections. Police Commissioners have formally supported this project by agreeing to their jurisdictions providing, where possible, new family and domestic violence indicator data items to the ABS for the 2014 Recorded Crime Victims collection and 2014–15 Recorded Crime Offenders collection.

Data has been received from the seven jurisdictions that are able to provide this data item for the Recorded Crime Victims collection and the quality of this data is being examined. Subject to the outcomes of this quality assessment, experimental tables containing the new family and domestic violence indicator data are expected to be released and made available on the ABS website by the end of September 2015.

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## Senate Inquiry into Domestic Violence in Australia

On 26 June 2014, the issue of domestic violence in Australia was referred to the Finance and Public Administration References Committee for inquiry and report by 27 October 2014. The Inquiry is to consider issues including:

- the prevalence and impact of domestic violence in Australia
- factors contributing to the present levels of domestic violence
- policy and community responses to domestic violence
- policy decisions regarding housing and legal services
- the influence of women's economic independence on the ability of women to escape domestic violence
- the social, cultural and behavioural shifts required to eliminate violence against women and their children.

The Inquiry is underway with the support of government. An interim report summarising the directions and initial findings of the Committee was released on 19 March 2015. The Australian Government has engaged with the Inquiry and the final report is expected to be released by late 2015, after which time the Australian Government will respond formally.

# Jurisdictional Highlights

Considerable work has been done by all Australian governments since the launch of the Second Action Plan.

The previous section of the report outlined key national actions under each National Priority of the Second Action Plan.

The following section provides an overarching summary of activities and achievements from the Australian Government and each state and territory government, as well as key examples of work.

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## Australian Government

2014–2015 has been a year of unprecedented momentum and action by the Australian Government in relation to reducing violence against women. On 27 June 2014, the Prime Minister, Minister Cash and the then Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Kevin Andrews MP, launched the Second Action Plan in Sydney and announced more than \$100 million over four years to fund related activities.

### 2015 Australian of the Year

On Australia Day 2015, family violence campaigner, Rosie Batty, was named Australian of the Year. Since 2014, we have witnessed Rosie Batty's commitment to championing efforts to fight domestic violence after the loss of her 11-year old son, Luke.

### Council of Australian Governments

In January 2015, the Prime Minister announced that preventing violence against women and their children would be a Council of Australian Governments (COAG) priority in 2015. COAG agreed to take urgent collective action in 2015 to address the unacceptable level of violence against women.

This has included the establishment of a new Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women to advise COAG. The Advisory Panel is chaired by former Victorian Chief Commissioner, Mr Ken Lay APM. Ms Rosie Batty and CEO of ANROWS, Ms Heather Nancarrow, are Deputy Chairs. Other members of the Panel include Ms Julie Oberin, Ms Tracy Howe, Mr Ed Mosby, Dr Vicki Hovane, Ms Maria Hagias, Commissioner Darren Hine APM, Ms Sue Salthouse and the Hon. Bess Price MLA.

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In 2015, COAG will focus on:

- the National Domestic Violence Order Information Sharing System, a prototype system that will enable police and courts to better share information on domestic violence orders, being developed by CrimTrac
- the new National Domestic Violence Order Scheme, which will develop model laws allowing domestic violence orders (DVOs) to be automatically recognised and enforceable in all jurisdictions
- the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions, to ensure that perpetrators of violence against women are held to account, at the same standard across Australia
- strategies to tackle the increased use of technology to facilitate abuse against women and to ensure women have adequate legal protections against this form of abuse.

On 4 March, the Prime Minister and Minister Cash announced a national campaign focused on reducing violence against women and their children, to build on efforts already underway by states and territories. On 17 April, COAG agreed to jointly contribute \$30 million for the national campaign, and potentially for associated increased services to support women seeking assistance.

### **National Priority actions under the Second Action Plan**

As previously outlined, the Australian Government has provided ongoing or additional funding to a range of services and organisations that operate under the Second Action Plan. Highlights include providing a boost in funding for 1800RESPECT and expanding the service to include resources for diverse groups of women; expanding the reach of DV-alert; and commissioning Our Watch to administer a Sports Grants Bank for national sporting codes to fund violence prevention activities.

The Australian Government has committed \$1 million over four years for White Ribbon Australia, Australia's only national, male-led campaign to end men's violence against women, to enhance engagement with our many CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Training with communities is underway.

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## **Police Commissioners take a united stand on violence against women and children**

On 24 November 2014, all Australian and New Zealand Police Commissioners convened in Canberra for the first time to stand together against domestic violence. Police Commissioners were joined by the Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove and Lady Cosgrove, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Minister Cash, and Australia's Ambassador for Women and Girls and Chair of Our Watch, Ms Natasha Stott Despoja.

## **National Plan Communications**

The National Plan toolkit and website is being developed in consultation with all governments and National Plan partners, and is aimed for a public release in mid-2015. Additionally, a quarterly e-Newsletter has been created to provide information on the important work being done under the National Plan.

## **NT Domestic and Family Violence Strategy**

The Australian Government contributed \$6 million towards the Northern Territory's \$18 million Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy. This funding will go towards:

- outreach support services to enhance responses to victims
- specialist children's services
- specialist family sexual assault services
- an integrated referral system.

## **Investments in other National initiatives to support women and children experiencing violence**

2014–2015 has seen a strong focus on better supporting women through the service system. On 23 March 2015, the Minister for Social Services announced the Australian Government's \$230 million extension of funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPAH) for two years until 2017. Negotiations are focused on giving funding priority to frontline services that support women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, and homeless youth.

Approximately \$25.5 million of funding has been restored for Legal Aid Commissions, community legal centres and Indigenous legal service providers, with the Commonwealth Government providing \$1.6 billion in legal assistance funding over five years. Domestic violence is an acknowledged priority in this assistance.

There has also been additional investment of more than \$15 million over two years to deliver family services that support children and parents experiencing family violence or the impacts of substance abuse.



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## Australian Capital Territory

A series of deaths from domestic violence in the ACT in early 2015 brought significant and unprecedented community attention to the issue of domestic violence.

This attention galvanised the community and the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a motion calling on the ACT Government to work with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council to convene an extraordinary meeting.

The extraordinary meeting was held in April 2015 with representation from all government departments, the police, courts and the community sector. Subsequently, a report was prepared from that meeting which contained a number of recommendations.

The ACT has incorporated specific recommendations from that special meeting into the ACT second implementation plan for the *ACT Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Strategy 2011–2017*. The broader concerns raised at the special meeting will also be reflected in the general priorities and directions of the implementation plan.

### **Appointment of first Co-ordinator-General for domestic and family violence**

On 30 May 2015, the ACT Government announced the appointment of Justice and Community Safety Directorate deputy director-general Vicki Parker as the territory's first coordinator-general for domestic and family violence. The new role is designed to ensure that the government meets its responsibilities and actions under the implementation plan.

The role will support all domestic and family violence prevention and response-related work within the ACT Government. It will also oversee implementation of the government's response to the Domestic Violence Prevention Council's report into domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

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## Annual Progress Report

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### Financial resources for women escaping violence

In October 2014, as part of Poverty Week, the former ACT Minister for Women, Ms Joy Burch MLA, launched Women's Money Matters. This set of financial literacy resources are designed to assist vulnerable women in the ACT, particularly those escaping domestic and family violence, women who have come into contact with the criminal justice system, older women, and CALD women.

### Funding commitment to tackle domestic violence

On 17 March 2015, the ACT Legislative Assembly passed a motion by the Attorney-General Simon Corbell MLA that recognised the abhorrence of family and domestic violence, and called on all governments, political parties and the community to work together to put an end to the harm it causes in our society.

Earlier in the month — and following the death of Tara Costigan — Mr Corbell announced an extra \$300,000 in funding from the Confiscated Asset Trust Fund for domestic violence prevention. These funds will be used for a number of purposes aimed at addressing domestic and family violence and will go toward women's safety grants, the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and strengthening data collection on domestic violence crime.

Mr Corbell reaffirmed the commitment of the ACT to curb domestic violence: "I am proud that our government is changing support services to be more responsive to those most in need in our community."

### New guides for ACT media reporting on domestic violence

In September 2014, the former ACT Minister for Women, Ms Joy Burch MLA, launched new guides to help local media when reporting on domestic and sexual violence in the ACT. The Guides for ACT Media — Reporting on Violence against Women and Children in the ACT were developed by the Women's Centre for Health Matters in consultation with local journalists and media students from the National Press Club, University of Canberra Press Club and the Media and Journalism Faculty at the University of Canberra.

The guides are practical resources for media in the ACT, providing information and advice to help them gain understanding about domestic violence, sexual violence, child sexual assault and Indigenous family violence.

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## New South Wales

The NSW Government is taking a whole of government, whole of community approach to addressing and preventing domestic and family violence, and is working closely with the non-government sector to deliver services and supports to women and their families in a way that meet their needs.

*It Stops Here* — the NSW Government's Domestic and Family Violence Framework for Reform was launched in February 2014. *It Stops Here* focuses on preventing domestic and family violence, making victims and their children safer, boosting the capacity of frontline workers to respond to victims' needs, strengthening the criminal justice response, and building the evidence base to improve policy and services.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring:

- the safety of victims and their families across all NSW communities
- violent men can recognise and change the attitudes and behaviours that sustain their violence
- domestic and family violence is prevented.

In February 2015, the NSW Government announced a new Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault. The first of its kind in Australia, the objective of this portfolio is to shift the focus of Government to the prevention of domestic and family violence, and sexual assault, while recognising the importance of supporting victims.

The NSW Government has also committed to increasing the number of specialist domestic violence liaison officers across the state by 24.

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## **Launch of It Stops Here: Safer Pathway**

*It Stops Here: Safer Pathway* was launched in Orange and Waverly in September 2014, and will be progressively rolled out across NSW from July 2015. Under *Safer Pathway*, services work together to create a coordinated, holistic response to victims of domestic and family violence and their children. Victims are offered tailored support to meet their immediate and long-term safety, health and wellbeing needs. The new pathways mean that:

- When police attend a domestic violence incident or a service provider comes into contact with a person who they are concerned is a victim of domestic violence, they will use a common threat assessment tool to identify the level of threat. Where a person is found to be at threat or at serious threat, they will be immediately referred to a Central Referral Point to electronically manage and monitor referrals, and then on to a Local Coordination Point.
- The Local Coordination Point will contact the victim within 24 business hours of receiving the referral and offer case coordination to victims and referrals to local domestic violence specialist and other services. These Local Coordination Points are operated by the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services for female victims, and by Victims Services for male victims.
- Victims who are identified to be at serious threat will additionally be referred to Safety Action Meetings to ensure immediate action to improve their safety. Meetings are held fortnightly and attended by a range of government and non-government health, welfare, justice and other service providers, who develop and implement individually tailored Safety Action Plans to prevent or reduce the serious threat to victims.

## **Criminal Procedure Amendment (Domestic Violence Complainants) Bill 2014**

The Criminal Procedure Amendment (Domestic Violence Complainants) Bill 2014 was passed by Parliament in NSW in November 2014. This legislation provides greater support for domestic violence victims in court by enabling complainants to give their evidence by a prior recorded video or audio statement in proceedings for a domestic violence offence involving a charge. This support mechanism is now available in courts.

## **Review of minimum standards for men's domestic violence behaviour change programs**

The NSW Government introduced minimum standards for men's domestic violence behaviour change programs in December 2012. The minimum standards are currently being reviewed to ensure they continue to reflect good practice for the sector.

NSW is also developing strategies to improve management of domestic violence offenders, increase accountability and reduce re-offending.

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## **Plain English Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs)**

The Government has been working on a trial to apply behavioural insights techniques to the ADVO process. The objective of the interventions is to reduce ADVO breach rates and domestic violence reoffending, while ensuring that victims' safety is not compromised.

The proposed interventions will be trialled in two phases. The first phase includes plain English customised ADVOs. Consideration will also be given to the use of text message reminders during this phase. The second phase will involve meetings with defendants to explain the orders.

## **Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme**

On 6 March 2015, the NSW Government announced it would pilot a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS). The Government is consulting on the development of a model DVDS through public consultation and roundtables hosted by the Attorney General and Minister for Women with legal experts and victims' support groups. A pilot DVDS will be implemented in late 2015 in four locations in NSW.

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## Annual Progress Report

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### Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Government is committed to keeping victims safe, holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring an integrated response to addressing domestic and family violence.

*Safety is Everyone's Right*, the Northern Territory Domestic and Family Violence Reduction Strategy 2014–17 directly aligns with the National Plan and envisions a Territory that is free from domestic and family violence; where women and children are safe. There are five key areas of action under the strategy:

- prevention
- early intervention
- protection — safety for victims
- rebuilding the lives of victims
- accountability and positive change for perpetrators.

### Release of *Safety is Everyone's Right*

In September 2014, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Senator the Hon. Michaelia Cash, joined the Northern Territory Minister for Women's Policy, the Hon. Bess Price in launching *Safety is Everyone's Right*.

As part of the launch, Minister Price and Natasha Stott Despoja also signed a certificate of commitment between the Northern Territory Government and Our Watch to ensure that Indigenous women and children from remote regions are a part of Our Watch's strategic direction. This event was also an opportunity to launch Our Watch in the Northern Territory.

### Establishment of the Domestic Violence Directorate

The implementation of *Safety is Everyone's Right* is led by the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice in collaboration with the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services and the Department of Local Government and Community Services. The Domestic Violence Directorate has been established in the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice to provide leadership, coordinate policy and ensure a whole-of-government approach to implementation.

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## Local Implementation Reference Groups

Local Implementation Reference Groups have been established in Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek to ensure local expertise informs the implementation of *Safety is Everyone's Right*. The Groups include representatives from Northern Territory government departments, local government and non-government organisations. They meet on a monthly basis.

## Family Safety Framework

The implementation of the Family Safety Framework across the Northern Territory is a key component of *Safety is Everyone's Right*.

The Family Safety Framework was introduced in Alice Springs in 2012 under the Alice Springs Integrated Response project. It focuses on protecting high risk victims from further harm and death by sharing information across core government and non-government agencies. Key aspects of the Framework include consistent risk assessment tools, information sharing and fortnightly Family Safety Meetings where agencies plan immediate actions and jointly monitor safety improvements for each referral.

The Family Safety Framework has now been implemented in Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Family Safety Meetings are held in these locations, as well as Alice Springs.

Over 340 police officers have been trained in the Framework process and the Northern Territory Police is now embedding the Framework as a standard operating procedure.

Family Safety Framework training in Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek is ongoing. Over 100 staff from across government and non-government agencies have been trained so far. Training in Alice Springs began in 2012 and continues to be run to ensure sustainability of the approach.

## Legislative review

Amendments to the Bail Act (NT) were passed in February 2015 to include a presumption against bail for breach of a domestic violence order where the defendant has a prior breach.

A review of the *Domestic and Family Violence Act* (NT) is currently being undertaken as part of *Safety is Everyone's Right*. A *Domestic and Family Violence Act* Issues Paper was distributed in April 2015 to key stakeholders for consideration and comment. The recommendations of the Australian Law Reform Commission and the NSW Law Reform Commission Inquiry into Family Violence, *Family Violence — A National Legal Response*, are also being considered.

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## **Policy framework for NT women**

The Northern Territory Government has released a policy framework for Northern Territory women. The framework identifies opportunities for improvements in government policy to ensure economic, social and cultural equality between Territory men and women. The four key focus areas for action are women's safety, women's health and wellbeing, economic security and leadership and participation.

## **'No More' campaign and Indigenous First-Language Family Violence Prevention Project**

In June 2014, the Northern Territory Government and CatholicCare Domestic and Family Violence joint initiative, 'No More,' purchased promotional space on Darwin buses to promote the message that men and their families can challenge the use of domestic violence and be agents of change.

*Safety is Everyone's Right* also includes Indigenous men's leadership grants to support men to prevent, respond to and speak out against violence towards women and children.

The Northern Territory Men's Policy Unit is developing an Indigenous First-Language Family Violence Prevention Project that engages closely with stakeholders to identify how to best target violence prevention, capacity building, employment, education and training in first languages to ensure that activities are community motivated and controlled.



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## Queensland

Preventing violence against women and their children is a priority for the Queensland Government. A number of initiatives over the last 12 months deliver on this priority and support the continued commitment of the Queensland Government to eliminate domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

### Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence

A bipartisan Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, led by the Hon. Quentin Bryce AD CVO, was established in August 2014 to undertake a comprehensive and co-ordinated review of domestic and family violence in Queensland. Its remit was to make recommendations on how domestic and family violence can be prevented, and to ensure appropriate support is available for victims.

The Terms of Reference asked the Taskforce to make recommendations on:

- educating and engaging Queenslanders
- early intervention
- holistic, coordinated and timely responses to domestic and family violence
- Queensland's law and order responses
- strategies for ensuring protection from domestic and family violence in Queensland to best complement relevant systems and processes, provide just outcomes and maximise the safety of families
- defining the scope of violence, assault and abuse to be addressed in a domestic and family violence strategy.

The Taskforce presented its report *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland* to the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts on 28 February 2015. The report contained 140 recommendations for reform to provide positive and practical solutions to the concerns raised by many victims and service providers. All recommendations are being considered.

In response to the recommendations made by the Taskforce, a long-term domestic and family violence prevention strategy is being developed through consultation. A series of roundtables are being held to encourage community and business leaders to take up the challenge of championing cultural change.

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## Child Protection Commission of Inquiry

The Queensland Government is implementing its response to the Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, committing \$406 million over five years for family support and child protection services. The funding commitment includes \$49 million over five years for new and enhanced specialist domestic and family violence responses, in recognition that many families accessing the child protection and family support service systems are also affected by domestic and family violence.

The first stage of the new domestic and family violence investment was approved in March 2015 to establish new or enhanced specialist services across Queensland. This equates to \$15 million over three years to provide greater support to people affected by domestic and family violence.

Specialist domestic and family violence workers have been incorporated into the service model for the new Family and Child Connect community based intake and referral services and the new Intensive Family Support services, also funded under the child and family reform initiative.

In response to the recommendations made by the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, from 1 July 2014 the Office of the State Coroner established a specialist position within the Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit. This position provides support and assistance to coroners investigating reportable deaths of children known to the child protection system.

## Online safety for children

In 2014, the Queensland Government, in partnership with Telstra, developed the *Meet the Creeps: Are you safe online?* quiz. 2014 also saw the successful completion of a partnership between the Queensland Government and The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, which gave schools access to the eSmart Schools framework, providing them with resources to create safe and supportive learning environments.

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## **Trust Your Instinct campaign**

In April 2015, the Queensland Government launched a social marketing campaign called 'Trust your Instinct', in support of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month held in the state each May. The campaign aims to motivate people to intervene when they know, or suspect, that a friend, family member, neighbour or colleague is experiencing domestic and family violence with a specific emphasis on non-physical abuse. The campaign urges people to 'trust their instinct' and call the DVConnect helpline for advice about effective interventions to prevent the violence escalating to physical abuse or homicide.

The Queensland Government provides one-off grants to community organisations to run awareness-raising activities throughout Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.

In 2014–15 \$108,028 was allocated for 38 community-based activities and events across the state.

## **Justice responses**

Initiatives that have begun in the last 12 months include a domestic and family violence duty-lawyer service pilot, providing advice to aggrieved persons and respondents; and new stand-alone court rules for domestic and family violence proceedings to ensure greater consistency and to facilitate the just and expeditious resolution of issues.

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### South Australia

The South Australian Government has demonstrated strong leadership in addressing violence against women since 2005. This leadership is outlined in the *South Australia's Women's Safety Strategy 2005–2010*, which was followed by *A Right to Safety 2011–2022*. This leadership has harnessed efforts to build:

- consistent responses across services and systems
- community understanding of, and involvement in responding to violence against women
- local community actions to prevent violence against women before it occurs.

### Taking a Stand

*Taking a Stand* includes a number of policy responses — some directly relating to the issues raised by the Coroner following the Inquest into the death of Zahra Abrahamzadeh, who was murdered by her estranged husband in 2010, as well as other broader measures to help prevent domestic violence:

- a Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance service
- an Early Warning System to increase accountability and provide an escalation point when there have been flaws in responding to domestic violence
- all South Australian Government departments will strengthen penalties for people who are proven to be consistent domestic violence offenders.

### Multi Agency Protection Service

South Australia Police is the lead agency for the development of a comprehensive, integrated, early intervention gateway — the Multi-Agency Protection Service or MAPS which began an operational phase in July 2014.

MAPS streamlines the referral and notification processes of key agencies and enables them to assess, analyse and respond to child protection and domestic violence issues in a more timely and coordinated way.

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## Domestic violence serial offender database

In 2014 the South Australian Government re-committed to developing a database to identify domestic violence serial offenders to assist in avoiding serious injury and/or death. The database identifies serial offenders across women's domestic and Aboriginal family violence services, and improves risk management of key services involved in the Family Safety Framework information sharing and risk assessment processes.

The database became operational in late 2014 and currently has 154 perpetrators listed. It is not used for public queries as it holds information on alleged offences reported by victims to domestic violence services, rather than offences reported to and investigated by the police.

## Violence Against Women Collaborations

The South Australian Government became a member of Our Watch in August 2014, supporting its ongoing commitment to ending violence against women outlined in the *A Right to Safety* strategy and demonstrates continued commitment to the National Plan.

Our Watch, will enhance South Australia's prevention efforts, which include Violence Against Women Collaborations. These Collaborations have been established in most regions, and aim to build community capacity to reduce violence against women by creating cultural and attitudinal change and addressing the underlying causes of the violence.

A benefit of the Collaborations is the development of regional approaches to respond to and prevent violence against women. Ultimately, the focus of the Collaborations is primary prevention strategies which seek to prevent violence before it occurs.

## Domestic violence workplace policies

The South Australian Government has implemented domestic violence workplace policies across all government departments, with endorsement from the Premier. These policies encourage community attitudes that promote respect towards women by providing supportive working environments.

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## Annual Progress Report

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### Tasmania

As a signatory to the National Plan, Tasmania is committed to implementing actions that will achieve the National Plan vision that 'Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities.' Tasmania's First Implementation Plan saw the development and roll out of *Taking Action: Tasmania's Primary Prevention Strategy to Reduce Violence against Women and Children 2012–2022*.

The Tasmanian Government continues its strong focus on primary prevention throughout its *Second Implementation Plan*, which was officially launched on 4 May 2015 by the Minister for Women, the Hon. Jacqui Petrusma MP. A number of actions in Tasmania's Second Implementation Plan have been progressed during 2014–2015.

On 2 June 2015, the Premier on behalf of the Tasmanian Government announced the formation of a Family Violence Cabinet Committee to oversee the development and implementation of a coordinated, whole of government response to family violence in Tasmania. A comprehensive Family Violence Action Plan will be released in August 2015.

### Our Watch

In May 2015, the Premier of Tasmania announced that Tasmania will become a member of Our Watch.

### Breaking the Silence in Tasmanian schools

White Ribbon Australia was awarded a one-off grant of \$83,580 from the Tasmanian Community Fund for a state-wide project to implement the *Breaking the Silence in Schools Program* (BTS). BTS workshops will start in all Tasmanian school regions (Burnie, Launceston and Hobart) during 2015. The first workshops were run in May/June 2015.

BTS is White Ribbon's primary prevention program to drive attitudinal and behavioural change in young people aged eight to 18 years. It aligns with the Tasmanian Department of Education's *Respectful Schools Respectful Behaviour Resource*, which enables schools to develop, implement and maintain whole-of-school approaches to respectful, ethical and equitable behaviour. It also aligns with the LoveBites program, which has a primary prevention focus and teaches Year 10 students about safe and healthy relationships, as well as the impact of family violence and sexual assault.

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## Safe at Home

Safe at Home is the Tasmanian Government's integrated criminal justice response to family violence and is underpinned by the *Family Violence Act 2004* (Tas). It involves a range of services working together to protect and support victims of family violence, including young people and children, while making offenders responsible for their behaviour. Now in its 10th year, Safe at Home continues to evolve to meet the needs of adult and child victims while addressing offender behaviour. The Safe at Home Internal Performance Review was completed in September 2014. An incremental implementation of the Review recommendations has begun. The recommendations will be incorporated in the *Safe at Home Strategic Plan 2015–2018*, which will be released in the second half of 2015.

## Signs of Safety Framework

The Department of Health and Human Services is implementing the Signs of Safety Framework. This will initially be the core approach for child protection work, in relation to assessment of risk, case planning and decision making, but extending to all other areas of service delivery. The Framework guides practitioners to evaluate not simply risk factors, but also family competencies, strengths, and resources, so that the worker and family consider danger and safety simultaneously to achieve a balanced, comprehensive assessment. It is anticipated this approach will deliver positive benefits for working in situations where family violence is one of the key risk factors in the family.

## White Ribbon

The Tasmanian Government continues its ongoing collaboration with White Ribbon Australia, and has participated in a number of White Ribbon events:

- On 21 July 2014, for White Ribbon Night, the Premier and the Tasmania Police Commissioner hosted the community event 'A night in to get the word out.' It encourages people to have conversations about violence and generate change towards violence against women in the community.
- On 25 November 2014, for White Ribbon Day, the Premier joined the Commissioner and other male leaders within the Tasmanian community on a breakfast walk, coming together as a collective voice speaking out against violence against women and children.
- Also for White Ribbon Day 2014, all members of the Tasmanian House of Assembly stood together to condemn all forms of violence against women and girls in Tasmania in a powerful tri-partisan display of support.

In April 2015, the Department of Premier and Cabinet committed to undertake the White Ribbon Workplace Accreditation Program. This program requires organisations to commit to addressing violence inside and outside the workplace by increasing knowledge and skills of staff, improving capacity of workplaces to respond and changing attitudes and behaviours to violence against women.

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## Victoria

The Victorian Government has established Australia's first dedicated ministry for the Prevention of Family Violence. Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence is currently underway in Victoria. The Royal Commission will make recommendations in February 2016 to guide Government in preventing and responding to family violence.

### **Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victoria**

Australia's first Royal Commission into Family Violence formally commenced in Victoria on 22 February 2015. It has been tasked with providing practical recommendations to prevent family violence, based on an examination of the current service system and best practice approaches. The Terms of Reference ask the Royal Commission to make recommendations on:

- prevention of family violence
- early intervention to identify and protect those at risk of family violence and prevent the escalation of violence
- support for victims of family violence and measures to address the impacts on victims, particularly women and children
- perpetrator accountability.

Justice Marcia Neave AO has been appointed as Chair of the Royal Commission, and will be supported by two Deputy Commissioners: Patricia Faulkner AO and Tony Nicholson. The Royal Commission will deliver its report in February 2016.

### **Mid-term evaluation of *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities — 10 year plan***

A mid-term evaluation of Victoria's Indigenous family violence strategy is underway. Findings are expected to be delivered to the Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum in 2015.



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## Strengthening Risk Management Program

Following a successful pilot, the Victorian Government is implementing a state-wide roll out of the Strengthening Risk Management Program, which aims to support women and children at highest risk. Key to this is Risk Assessment and Management Panels which bring together relevant agencies including police, child protection, corrections and women's services to share information to keep women and children safe and hold perpetrators to account.

## Victorian Family Violence Index

The Victorian Government has commissioned ANROWS to develop Australia's first Family Violence Index, which will bring together indicators across crime and justice, healthcare, education and community attitudes, to create a single indicator of family violence.

It is proposed that ANROWS map what is currently known about family violence, identify gaps and make recommendations about the indicators and data collection capabilities that will be required to support the Index.

## Magistrates' Court of Victoria Response to Family Violence 2015–17

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria has released its family violence strategy, which includes six strategic priorities:

- Expansion of Family Violence Services — including that specialised family violence registrars, applicant support workers and respondent support workers will be available at all headquarter courts across Victoria
- Video conferencing pilot — to enhance the safety and security of applicants by enabling them to appear at court from remote locations
- Fast track listing model — improving perpetrator accountability and victim safety by having criminal matters dealt with as early as possible
- Professional development in family violence for all magistrates and staff
- Online engagement — to ensure information relating to the intervention order process is easily accessible and understood
- Improved use of technology and information sharing — with other government agencies and family violence stakeholders.

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## **Victoria Police Family Violence Command**

Victoria Police has appointed Assistant Commissioner Dean McWhirter as head of the first Family Violence Command in an Australian police jurisdiction. The Family Violence Command is responsible for combatting family violence, sexual assault and child abuse.

## **Family violence safety notices**

On 16 October 2014, Victorian Parliament passed laws to lift bans on the ability to report contraventions of family violence safety notices and intervention orders and to extend the operation of family violence safety notices. The reforms mean that Victoria Police can issue the notices, which provide immediate protection, at any time of the day or night instead of only outside court hours. Family violence safety notices must return to court within five business days.

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## Western Australia

The Western Australian Government remains committed to the elimination of family and domestic violence. Western Australia's *Family and Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy to 2022* (the Prevention Strategy) is a whole of government, whole of community approach to tackling this serious issue. The Prevention Strategy provides the overarching framework for action over the longer term and aligns the state priorities with the focus areas of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. The Hon. Helen Morton MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Disability Services and Child Protection is the lead Minister, and the Department for Child Protection and Family Support is the lead agency overseeing the development and implementation of strategic policy in WA.

### Freedom from Fear Action Plan 2015

The *Freedom from Fear Action Plan, Working towards the elimination of family and domestic violence in Western Australia* (the Action Plan) is due to be released in mid-2015 and is a key driver for change under the Prevention Strategy. The Action Plan aims to increase the safety of women and children who are at risk of, or experiencing family and domestic violence by supporting and strengthening integrated, accountable and effective interventions targeting perpetrators of violence and abuse.

### Minimum standards for men's behaviour change programs

The minimum standards of practice have been developed to support agencies and organisations to provide a response to men using violence that holds them accountable and provides opportunity for them to take responsibility for their behaviour. The standards establish the key components of program governance, design, delivery and review/evaluation that all programs must adhere to. The minimum standards have been modelled on the NSW minimum standards for men's domestic violence behaviour change programs with permission from the NSW Government.

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## **Media guidelines for reporting family and domestic violence**

Guidelines were developed and released in 2014 to support accurate and responsible reporting of family and domestic violence.

## **Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan**

The *Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan* (the Plan) has been developed in response to data collected over a five year period, which demonstrated that the Kimberley region had significantly higher rates of reported family and domestic violence compared to other metropolitan and regional locations in WA. In recognition of the high proportion of Aboriginal people living in the Kimberley and the over-representation of Aboriginal women and children as victims of domestic and family violence, the Plan includes strategies such as healing, strong law and culture to challenge violence, and building safer communities to help protect those who are being abused. Due to be released in mid-2015, the strategies respond to the findings of an extensive consultation and review process undertaken across the Kimberley.

## **WA Law Reform Commission final report**

In October 2014, the WA Law Reform Commission released *Enhancing Laws Concerning Family and Domestic Violence — Final Report*. The report included recommendations on improved information sharing, improved police practice and risk assessment in legal processes for strengthening the legal framework for responding to perpetrators of domestic and family violence.

## **Amendments to the Children and Community Services Act WA 2004**

Amendments to the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (WA) have been introduced into Parliament that include being exposed to family and domestic violence as a form of child abuse. The amendments also include new information sharing provisions to support collaborative responses to family and domestic across government and funded non-government services. These provisions are for families with or without children and are based on an assumed consent model. The changes will provide protection from criminal and civil liability and breach of confidentiality for people who share information in good faith.

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### **WA website: ‘Youth Say No’**

Youth Say No is an awareness campaign developed in consultation with, and for, young people. It includes information and resources about dating violence, family and domestic violence and supporting a mate. New additions to the campaign will include lesson plans for teachers, an interactive website and linkages to other social media platforms.

### **WA Police**

In October 2014, WA Police introduced new duress alarms for victims of family and domestic violence that are linked to mobile phones. Under the new system, victim’s calls to 000 are linked to an alert that initiates a priority response.

### **Second edition of the Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework**

The Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework was developed to provide a set of minimum standards for service providers to identify and respond to women as victims of family and domestic violence. The second edition of the Framework is due to be released in mid-2015 and includes:

- new practice requirements related to risk assessment, risk management, information sharing and referral
- minimum standards for responding to, and managing risks associated with perpetrator’s behaviour, information sharing and referral
- comprehensive practice guides to support implementation of the practice requirements.

# Conclusion

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It is important to acknowledge the progress against actions outlined in the Second Action Plan, and that the long-term initiatives put into place during the first two Action Plans are delivering results.

As we continue ahead with the Second Action Plan, planning for the *Third Action Plan 2016–2019: Promising Results* (the Third Action Plan) has commenced.

This will be informed by consultations with experts in the community, state and territory governments and civil society, including the COAG Advisory Panel. It will also be informed by a formal evaluation of the Second Action Plan. The Third Action Plan will deliver solid and continuing progress in best practice policies established over the first two stages of the National Plan.

Ultimately, this will enable all Australian governments to draw on greater community awareness and support in reducing the prevalence of violence and sexual assault against women and their children.

# Links

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For more information on what is being delivered under the National Plan and the Second Action Plan go to:

[www.dss.gov.au/nationalplan](http://www.dss.gov.au/nationalplan)

For more information on programmes being funded under the Second Action Plan go to:

**1800RESPECT**

[www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)  
[www.1800respect.org.au/daisy](http://www.1800respect.org.au/daisy)

**DV-alert**

[www.dvalert.org.au](http://www.dvalert.org.au)

**ANROWS**

[www.anrows.org.au](http://www.anrows.org.au)

**Our Watch**

[www.ourwatch.org.au](http://www.ourwatch.org.au)

**The Line**

[www.theline.org.au](http://www.theline.org.au)

**White Ribbon Australia**

[www.whiteribbon.org.au](http://www.whiteribbon.org.au)

**Personal Safety Survey**

[www.abs.gov.au/ausstats](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats)

**National Survey on Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women**

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

NATIONAL PLAN TO

**REDUCE VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN  
AND  
THEIR CHILDREN**