



Australian Government

Department of Social Services



Australian Capital Territory Consultation Summary

**Fourth Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce
Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022***

Summary of Consultation 2 of 2 – 29 August 2018



Community engagement workshops facilitated by ThinkPlace,
and report written in collaboration between ThinkPlace and DSS.

*The Department of Social Services acknowledges
the traditional owners of country throughout
Australia, and their continuing connection to
land, water and community.*

*We pay our respects to them and their cultures,
and to Elders past, present and
emerging.*

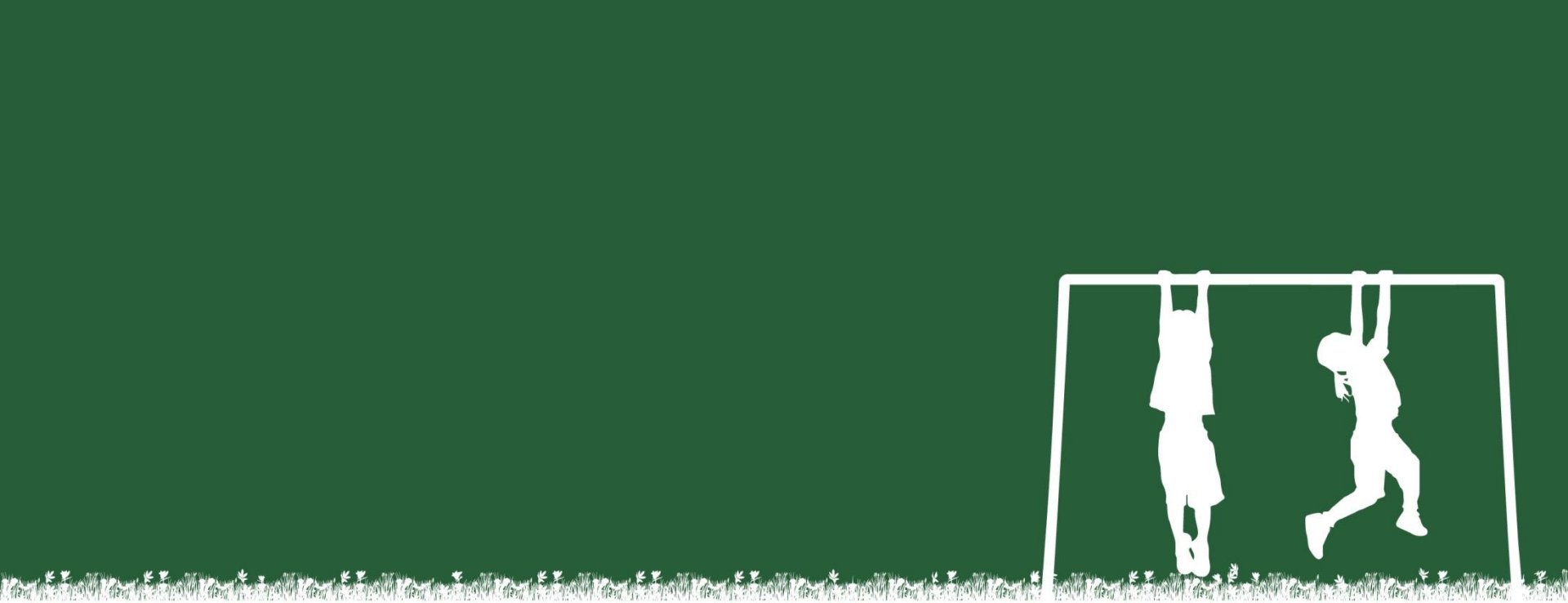
About this document

This material was commissioned by the Commonwealth of Australia to assist in the collection of information from consultation sessions workshops around Australia. The purpose of this material is to summarise consultations held by the Department of Social Services as part of the development of the Fourth Action Plan in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. This session was facilitated by ThinkPlace.

The Department of Social Services thanks all participants of this discussion for their contributions as part of the development of the Fourth Action Plan. The views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect those of the Commonwealth, or indicate a particular course of action.

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Key themes

Key themes

Workforce capability

- There needs to be a holistic approach to service delivery for families experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Cross-sector training, networking and building trust between organisations and individuals is required to enable the best outcomes for people who are experiencing violence.
- Organisations need to build and maintain a supportive but neutral role with families to enable the best outcomes.

Supporting Indigenous communities

- The messages of community education and information sharing need to be consistent but applied across different mediums and approaches (e.g. yarning circles by elders).
- Elders are fundamental to the success of programs delivered in Indigenous communities and need support. It is not just the organisations that deliver messages.
- Indigenous communities hold the solutions for addressing domestic violence and need to be engaged in any responses. Services must follow the principle: “nothing about us, without us”.

Supporting culturally and linguistically diverse communities

- The underreporting of domestic, family and sexual violence within migrated culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities means we have a lack of accurate data.
- Interpreters are often male and can be someone known to the victim; this is a significant barrier to disclosure, particularly when the interpreters are not appropriately trained.
- Women on accompanying visas do not get access to services and are reliant on their husbands.
- There is a need to educate men on acceptable behaviour and social norms in multiple languages.
- Religious leaders can be excellent advocates and empower the community to respond to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Key themes

Access to justice

- The judicial system can become a barrier to achieving positive outcomes for people who have experienced violence.
- The Family Law Court, Criminal Justice system and Immigration need to be more victim focussed.
- Plain English information should be made available for victims across the system.
- The systems are complex and difficult to navigate (e.g. there are a lot of different systems that need to be understood).
- There is inconsistency in the responses to perpetrators who are not compliant to orders at all levels.

Adequate and appropriate crisis accommodation

- Women on temporary visas are usually not eligible for social housing and thereby lack exit points from violent relationships.
- Refuges are vital to support many women experiencing violence; but they are not appropriate for everyone. There needs to be different accommodations options available for people leaving violent relationships including children.

Long term safety, wellbeing and independence of women and their children

- There should be links between the National Homelessness and Housing Agreement and the Fourth Action Plan.
- Although it is unsafe for separated couples in violent relationships to live together, it is often economically necessary.
- School and welfare staff should be trained in trauma informed referrals and support for families in crisis.
- There are examples of the business community engaged in support (e.g. Ronald McDonald house).

Key themes

Reducing sexual violence

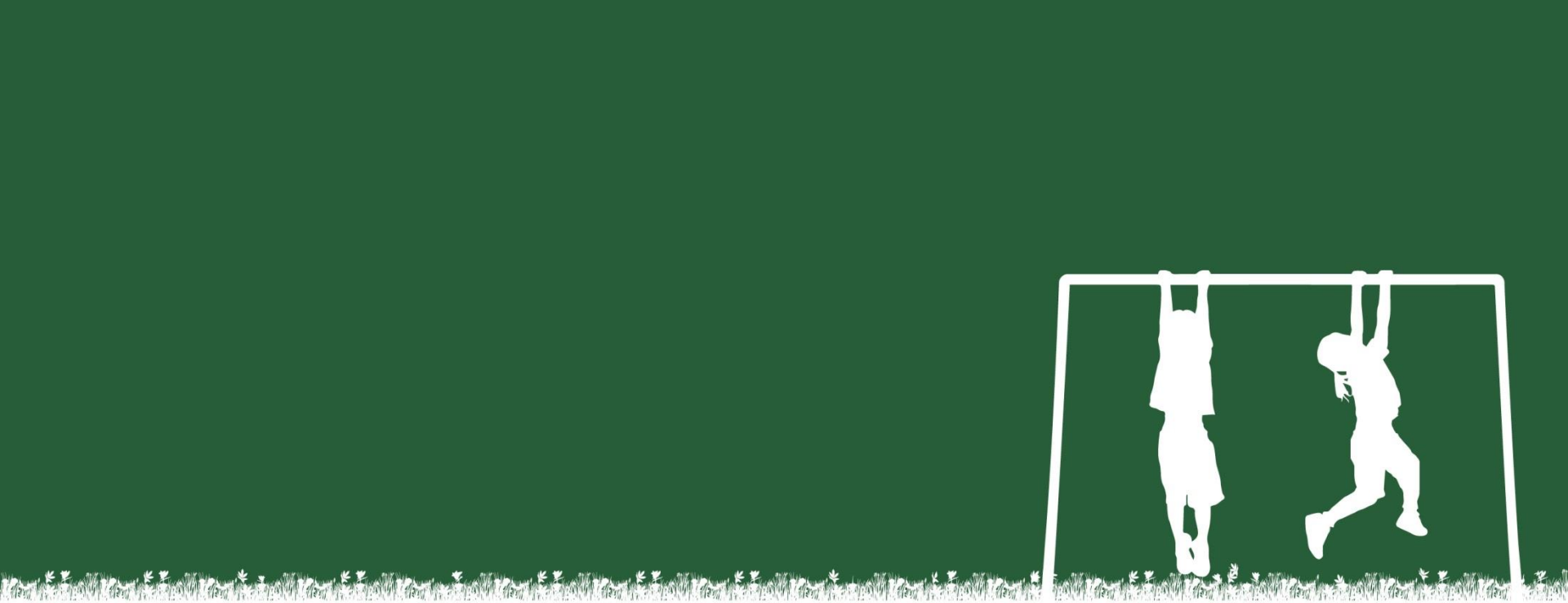
- There is a need for tools and information for young people to recognise and respond to abuse, especially on online media.
- Community education around sexual violence should be part of primary prevention. This needs to be scaled up, connected and funded.
- So many people would benefit from conversations about consent and respectful relationships, not just young people (e.g. older people, people with disability).
- As children are becoming sexually active at a very young age, there needs to be layered messages to meet the needs of different age groups and levels of emotional maturity.

Impact on children

- Teachers need training and resources to support children and young people who experience domestic violence in the home.
- Organisations need to build and maintain a supportive but neutral role with families.
- There is a need to build awareness around diverse sex, sexuality and gender; particularly when kids start thinking about forming identity. Responses should not be making assumptions (e.g. about family formation, what is driving violence).

Visas

- Temporary visas create an additional vulnerability as visa status is used by perpetrators to intimidate and control victims
- Women who end up with uncertain immigration status can't leave emergency accommodation because they have no income, i.e. are not eligible for any income support payments
- DV provisions under the Migration Act need to be extended to all temporary visas not just spousal and distinguished talent due to the vulnerability created.
- For women on temporary visas the system intersections create complexity, vulnerability and leave women trapped, so we need to address the way the Immigration, Income Support, Social Housing and Family Law systems interact to improve pathways to safety for this group of women



Big shifts

What are the big shifts we want to see in this space?

Big shifts

FROM	TO
Lack of visibility and coordination between government and community sector services	Coordinated services across the community sector
A system focused on crisis	A system based on prevention rather than treatment
Seeing children as add-ons of their parents	Seeing children in their own right with their own unique goals
Focus on children and young people younger than 16 years old	Focus on all children and young people
Ad hoc and uncoordinated responses to family and domestic violence	Coordinated, whole of community response to addressing domestic and family violence
Respectful and healthy relationship education isn't consistent	Consistent approach to respectful and healthy relationships in education
Lack of data about what works and what is being done across the country especially regarding culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, diverse sex, sexuality and gender	Comprehensive data and evaluation of progress of services
No nation-wide legislation to assist children affected within schools (e.g. counsellors)	Introduce legally binding domestic and family violence experts to teach children about healthy relationships and give sufficient assistance to those who are victims
Fragmented and political approach	Bi-partisan and national support including through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG)

Big shifts

FROM	TO
One-size fits all approach that is slowly adapting intersectional language and training	User-centred approaches, options and choice for both tailored and mainstream
The system is disjointed and hard to navigate	Holistic, person-centred approach. Ease of access and transition
Diversity is an add-on and treated as separate	The plan takes an intersectional approach throughout all work
Four action plans	A permanent focus until the issue is fixed
Inflexible, disjointed, under-resourced responses with no evidence base	Well-trained and supported, responsive and coordinated workforce with a strong evaluation culture leading to outcomes
Siloed sectors across jurisdictions, prevention, intervention and response with competing in priorities	An integrated system across prevention, intervention and response that cares for children, holds perpetrators to account and women are supported in the long term
Community based services are not adequately respected and supported as experts	Community based services have the respect, funding and support to do their work and inform policy
Enduring community beliefs and values that underpin domestic, family and sexual violence	Culture change so that violence is unacceptable through primary prevention, education, changing attitudes and beliefs

Big shifts

FROM	TO
Reactive and inadequately funded with time-limited political attention	Commitment to long-term funding and attention to achieve long-term intergenerational change and no tolerance for violence
Lack of awareness of services available	A website or central point for information on service availability
Inconsistent or non-existent consequences for people breaching orders	Consistent accountability for people who use violent and controlling behaviours within the justice system and post-sentencing when orders are in place regarding breaches and non-compliance
National funding decisions (e.g. homelessness, community and legal) not supporting the objectives of the National Plan	National funding decisions in health, housing, legal services etc. prioritise domestic, family and sexual violence and support the National Plan
Training offered on domestic and family violence in each sector separately	Joint training across disciplines (e.g. police, education, social work, health, NGOs for family violence)
Parents supporting their children	Support parents in understanding the effects of domestic and family violence on their children behaviourally, emotionally, neurologically