

NATIONAL PLAN TO
**REDUCE VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN
AND
THEIR CHILDREN**



2016–17 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

*Third Action Plan 2016–2019 under the National Plan to
Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*

Safe and free from violence

An initiative of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

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Introduction

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2012–2022

The 12-year *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan) is a key framework that connects the important work being done by all Australian governments, not-for-profit organisations and the broader community to work towards the vision that ‘Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities’.

The National Plan is underpinned by four three-year Action Plans to drive practical change at all levels of government and respond to emerging priorities over the course of the National Plan.

The first two Action Plans laid the foundation for the National Plan and were important in building the national infrastructure and capability to support victims of domestic, family and sexual violence.

The Third Action Plan 2016–19 was developed during a time of heightened attention and significant work nationally around domestic and family violence. This included a number of state and territory-based inquiries and reports, as well as the final report of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children.

The Third Action Plan was informed by this work, as well as progress made under the first two Action Plans and extensive stakeholder consultation in 2016.

2016–17 Annual Progress Report

Governments committed to annual reporting on the progress of the National Plan. The 2016–17 Annual Progress Report is the first report for the Third Action Plan and demonstrates the collective effort by Australian, state and territory governments in 2016–17 to reduce violence against women and their children.

It provides a selection of activities undertaken between July 2016 and June 2017 that contribute to the six National Priority Areas and provides an indication of investment by jurisdictions during this time. It also tracks the nature and extent of violence against women between 2005 and 2016, based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Personal Safety Survey.

This report reinforces the commitment of all governments to work together, learn from combined experience and continue to work towards a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women, including sexual assault.

Investments

Australian Government

To support the Third Action Plan 2016–19, the Australian Government has invested an additional \$100 million over three years, comprising:

- \$30 million to frontline legal assistance and family law services
- \$25 million to assist Indigenous communities
- \$20 million for prevention and early intervention initiatives
- \$15 million for frontline services
- \$10 million to respond to and prevent sexual violence, and to conduct research.

This builds on:

- ongoing funding of around \$25 million per year that underpins the National Plan to support national partners and key services such as 1800RESPECT, DV-Alert, Our Watch, White Ribbon and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
- the \$100 million Women's Safety Package announced by the Prime Minister in September 2015
- a \$30 million national *Stop it at the Start* campaign, jointly funded by the Australian, state and territory governments. The campaign aims to help break the cycle of violence against women by encouraging adults to reflect on their attitudes and have conversations about respect with young people.

Australian Capital Territory

In 2016, \$21.42 million was committed to the Safer Families package, representing the single largest spending and policy commitment to address family violence in the ACT's history. This is the first time that there has been such a dedicated, interconnected, whole-of-government and cross-community commitment to address domestic and family violence. The 2017–18 Budget allocated an additional \$2.2 million to help address family violence, bringing funding for the Safer Families Package to \$23.5 million over four years.

New South Wales

From 2016–17, the New South Wales Government is investing more than \$300 million over four years in the specialist domestic and family violence response, more than doubling the investment in specialist services and initiatives. This investment, which will deliver a more effective response to domestic and family violence across the state, supports the implementation of the *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016–2021: Safer Lives for Women, Men and Children*. In the 2018–19 NSW Budget this commitment is being extended to \$390 million over four years.

Northern Territory

During 2016–17, more than \$15 million was provided to non-government organisations for domestic and family violence services. These services included critical intervention outreach services for victims of domestic violence and their children, women's shelters, a men's behaviour-change program, a men's outreach and referral assessment service, victim support and advocacy services, and a domestic violence specialist children's service. Four women's shelters — in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs — were funded to provide services in 16 communities and 29 town camps.

Queensland

The Queensland Government has supported the health and wellbeing of women who have experienced sexual violence, with investment increasing from \$6.07 million per annum across 19 sexual assault services in 2015 to \$8.93 million across 29 services in 2017–18. This represents an increase of \$2.86 million per annum, or 47 per cent, since 2015.

The Queensland Government has demonstrated its commitment to the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026 (and its associated action plans) by committing \$328.9 million over six years to implement and build on recommendations from the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland report, *Not Now, Not Ever*.

South Australia

The South Australian Government has invested significantly in measures to address and prevent violence against women, including legislative reform and strengthening integrated systems, building on a strong reform agenda. The new state Government has committed from March 2018 to addressing domestic and family violence through investment in a suite of initiatives.

Tasmania

In August 2015, the Tasmanian Government launched *Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan 2015–2020*. Under *Safe Homes, Safe Families* more than \$26 million has been allocated to fund new and direct actions to address family violence in Tasmania. This is in addition to the \$16 million in direct and \$24 million in indirect funding to address family violence that the Tasmanian Government spends each year.

Victoria

Victoria has made huge investments in responding to and preventing family violence. The Victorian Government committed \$572 million in statewide funding in the 2016–17 Budget to start delivering on 65 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence's most urgent recommendations. Of this \$572 million allocated, fixed-term funding of \$174.2 million went to specialist family violence initiatives.

In May 2017, the Victorian Government announced an investment package of \$1.91 billion in the 2017–18 Victorian Budget, to help implement every recommendation made by the Royal Commission into Family Violence. More than \$216 million over four years was allocated to continue funding for family violence case management, perpetrator interventions, therapeutic supports and statewide crisis responses.

The package included \$448.1 million to establish 17 Support and Safety Hubs across the state, to serve as a visible contact point for victim survivors and give local communities access to highly skilled workers with connections to the justice system and social services, including housing.

Support was also provided for tens of thousands of victims, including \$270.8 million for after-hours crisis support, counselling and therapy.

The funding included a massive overhaul of Victorian courts and the justice system, with \$269.4 million to implement five Specialist Family Violence Courts across the state.

Victoria is also making substantial investments through its prevention of family violence and gender equality strategies. Victoria has allocated \$50.8 million over four years to deliver ongoing family violence prevention activities, including \$12 million to establish *Respect Victoria*, a new organisation that will have a dedicated

focus on the prevention of family violence and all forms of violence against women. In addition, \$38.8 million over four years is allocated for primary prevention initiatives.

Victoria has also provided funding of \$5.8 million for a number of initiatives promoting gender equality and supporting the implementation of the gender equality strategy *Safe and Strong*.

Western Australia

In March 2017, the Western Australian Government appointed the state's first Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence. During the reporting year the Western Australian Government implemented the following commitments from its *Stopping Family and Domestic Violence* policy platform: 10 days paid domestic and family violence leave for public sector employees; membership of national primary prevention organisation, Our Watch; planning towards additional refuges; a residential perpetrator program; regional counselling services; a pet referral scheme; initial planning for culturally appropriate services and supports for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse communities; and respectful relationships education in schools.

Prevalence of violence 2005–2016 — findings from the Personal Safety Survey¹

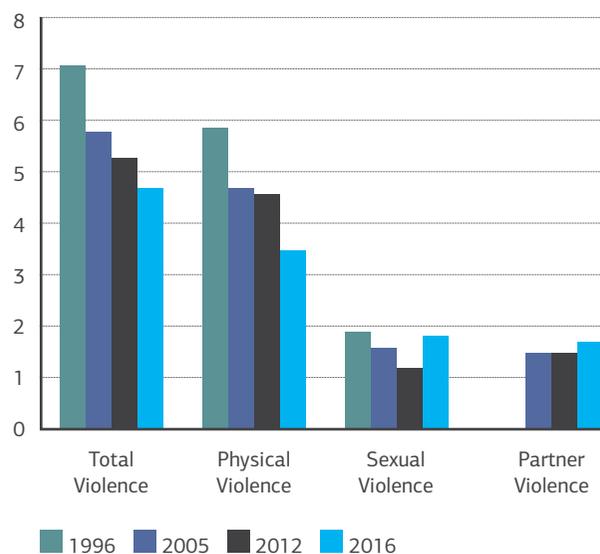
The prevalence of violence against women in Australia has been falling since at least 1996. This has been driven mostly by a long-term decline in the number of female victims of physical violence (across all perpetrator types).

However, declining trends in the two forms of violence targeted by the National Plan — sexual violence and domestic violence² — have recently reversed. In particular, the prevalence of sexual violence against women saw a statistically significant increase between 2012 (1.2 per cent) and 2016 (1.8 per cent).

These trends can be observed at both national and state/territory levels.

National trends

Figure 1: Proportion (%) of women who experienced physical, sexual, and partner violence, during the last 12 months, 1996, 2005, 2012, 2016, Australia

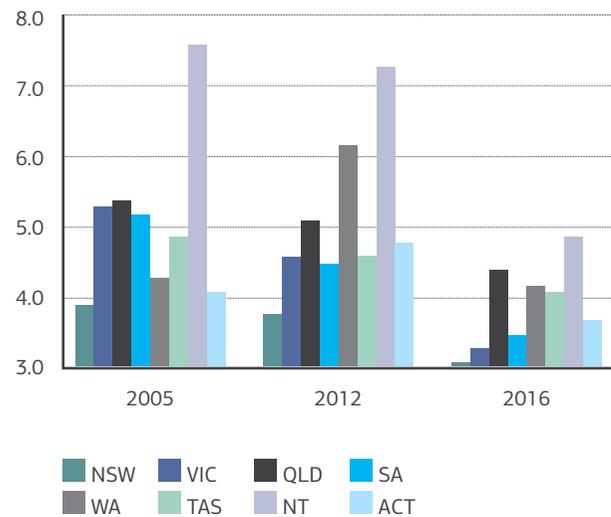


Source: ABS Women's Safety Survey (1996) and Personal Safety Survey (2005, 2012, 2016)

1. The Personal Safety Survey is conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) approximately every four years. The survey collects information nationally from men and women aged 18 years and over about the nature and extent of violence experienced since the age of 15 and other related information regarding people's safety at home and in the community.
2. Measured as violence at the hands of a cohabiting current or former partner.

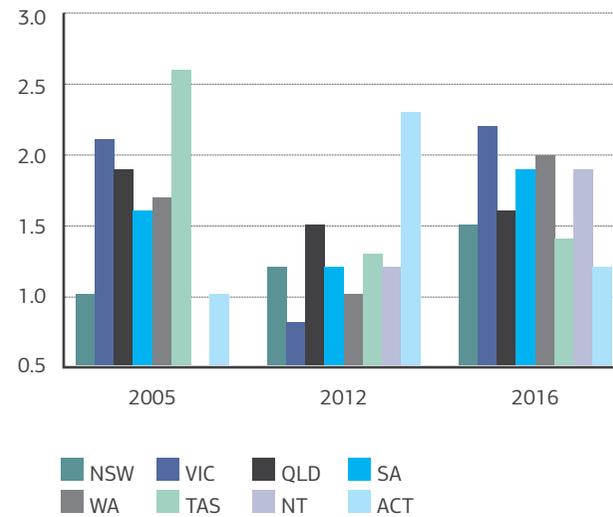
State and territory trends

Figure 2: Proportion (%) of women who experienced physical violence, during the last 12 months, changes over time, by state/territory



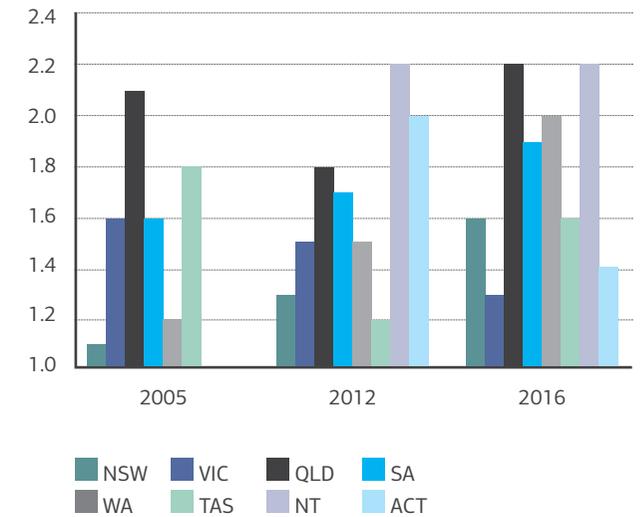
Source: ABS Personal Safety Survey (2005, 2012, 2016)

Figure 3: Proportion (%) of women who experienced sexual violence, during the last 12 months, changes over time, by state/territory



Source: ABS Personal Safety Survey (2005, 2012, 2016)

Figure 4: Proportion (%) of women who experienced partner violence, during the last 12 months, changes over time, by state/territory



Source: ABS Personal Safety Survey (2005, 2012, 2016)

Third Action Plan highlights in 2016–17

<p>The ACT Legislative Assembly passed the <i>ACT Family Violence Act 2016</i>.</p>	<p>The then Prime Minister, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, launched the Third Action Plan of the <i>National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022</i>.</p>	<p>NSW launched the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2017–2021 to inform the way NSW government agencies, non-government organisations and communities design and deliver prevention and early intervention activities.</p>	<p>The Australian Government introduced the Enhancing Online Safety for Children Amendment Bill 2017 to broaden the functions of the Children’s eSafety Commissioner to include online safety for all Australians.</p>	<p>Victoria launched <i>Free from Violence: Victoria’s strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women</i> — targeting the social conditions, structures and practices influencing individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that lead to family violence and violence against women.</p>
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July 2016	August 2016	September 2016	October 2016	November 2016	December 2016	January 2017	February 2017	March 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017
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	<p>Women’s Safety Services SA (WSSSA) implemented a pilot Multi Agency Hub, a collaboration that co-locates WSSSA with SA Police Family Violence Intervention Officers and representatives from SA Department for Correctional Services, increasing collaboration between government and non-government agencies in the delivery of services to victims of family and domestic violence.</p>		<p>The WA Parliament passed the <i>Sentencing Legislation Amendment Act 2016</i>, which included measures for stricter supervision of seriously violent criminals, including GPS tracking.</p>	<p>The Tasmanian Government released <i>Responding and Reporting</i>, highlighting progress against <i>Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania’s Family Violence Action Plan 2015–2020</i> announcing four new actions.</p>	<p>The Northern Territory Government, in partnership with the Rirratjingu Aboriginal Corporation, hosted the inaugural Indigenous Family Violence Policing Conference in Alice Springs.</p>
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Examples of progress against the Third Action Plan’s national priority areas in 2016–17

National Priority Area 1: Prevention and early intervention

Victoria:

Workplace Equality and Respect Program

Workplaces are an important site for family violence prevention and response strategies. Workplace settings provide significant opportunity to reach large sections of the population, and unique potential to reach and support vulnerable or isolated groups. There is opportunity for workplaces to play a key role in building capacity to challenge sexist, discriminatory and bullying behaviours and cultures.

The Victorian Government funded Our Watch to develop and pilot workplace resources to support activities for the primary prevention of violence against women. The suite of resources focuses on policies, training and activities within workplaces to address the four core drivers of violence against women, which are: condoning violence against women; men’s control of decision-making and limiting women’s independence;

rigid gender roles and stereotypes about masculinity and femininity; and men disrespecting women to bond with other men.

The resources are intended to facilitate primary prevention activities within workplaces through continuous dialogue, reflection and action. They were piloted in four Victorian workplaces in 2016–17, and were then refined on the basis of the pilot findings and additional stakeholder consultations.

The next phase of this project, being rolled out in 2017–18, will see the evidence-based tools trialled across the Victorian public sector workplaces to: enable them to build respectful and gender equitable cultures;

ensure that they have suitable policies for family violence victims; provide adequate responses to and not allow for collusion with family violence perpetrators; and build skills and support staff in taking bystander action.

Program models, tool kits, training resources and packages will be made available for use in all workplaces. The government will also review and report on options for using existing regulatory frameworks and government procurement policies to support all Victorian employers in implementing best-practice family violence policies.

Northern Territory case study: Funding and support to the Tangentyere Women’s Family Safety Group

The Northern Territory Government is providing funding and support to Tangentyere Council as part of the Alice Springs Integrated Response to Domestic and Family Violence.

This collaboration has created the Tangentyere Women’s Committee, which has fostered the formation of a Family Safety Group. The Family Safety Group is a group of 25 women and a number of men who volunteer their time to develop and conduct training, produce and distribute resources, hold events, and conduct activities in public spaces. The group also liaises with government and others, lobbying them to pay heed to and support their voices, and to recognise the expertise and knowledge they bring to the aim of ending family and domestic violence.

This initiative works with women of the town camps to develop resources and processes to identify and prevent family and domestic violence, make referrals to appropriate support services, and empower participants.

The practical resources being developed include:

- information, resources and messages to increase understanding and develop awareness of and appropriate responses to family violence
- improved processes for identifying, supporting and referring women and families who are at risk of family and domestic violence
- information sessions or workshops for community women, including specially developed sessions for young women and girls
- brokering specialised program responses to children’s experiences of family and domestic violence
- improved data collection.



Tangentyere Women’s Committee

National Priority Area 2: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children

Commonwealth:

Co-designing Indigenous-specific initiatives

Under this national priority area, the Commonwealth, through the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) committed \$25 million for Indigenous-specific activities to address family violence in Indigenous communities. These activities include:

- trauma-informed therapeutic services for Indigenous children affected by family violence to break the cycle of intergenerational violence
- services for perpetrators to encourage behaviour change and prevent future offending
- intensive family-focused case management to address behaviours that lead to family violence
- increasing the capacity of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services to deliver holistic, case-managed crisis support to Indigenous women and children experiencing family violence.

An important first step in the development of any program initiative is to gather the evidence and where possible undertake a co-design and consultation process. It is critical that policy and program responses aimed at addressing Indigenous family violence are developed and implemented with and by communities — that is, ‘working with’, not ‘doing to’.

PM&C, through its regional network, identified Indigenous service providers that were well regarded and respected as service organisations within their local communities. PM&C engaged the Indigenous business Inside Policy to lead and manage the co-design process. Inside Policy convened two co-design workshops in the reporting period with all 14 Third Action Plan providers.

The first co-design workshop enabled the providers to focus on developing an evidence-based service delivery model. The second allowed the providers to focus on their program logic (inputs, outputs, short, medium and long-term outcomes and impacts) as well as data collection and future evaluation of their models. This process will allow for a successful rollout of the new services in 2017–18.

Queensland:

‘Safe at Home’ solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children in remote areas

The Queensland Government recognises that Indigenous communities are made up of many voices and experiences that form community stories. In response, it commissioned Winangali Ipsos to lead engagement and research alongside three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander remote communities — Doomadgee, Coen and Pormpuraaw — exploring culturally suitable ‘Safe at Home’ solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence (DFV). The research harnessed community strengths, perceptions of size of the issue, how DFV was being managed and what strategies or solutions could be implemented to reduce DFV in these communities.

Aligning with findings in the ANROWS report *Innovative models in addressing violence against Indigenous women*³, the research showed that Indigenous Australians seek from government an understanding of what it is like to live in their communities and, in response, services that are culturally and locally appropriate, community-led and owned, strength-based, flexible and respectful of cultural gender beliefs and practices. Indigenous Australians seek an understanding that they are best placed to identify their challenges and potential solutions.

The research further validated the complexity of DFV in remote Indigenous communities, how it is interconnected with a range of catalysts (e.g. alcohol, drugs, social media, stress) with its underlying causes being deeply rooted in Indigenous people’s disconnection from culture, trauma and the historical legacies of colonisation.

In all locations, community participants in the survey identified a ‘safe community’ as one that draws on strengths of the community, actively promotes a children-centric focus for growing stronger leaders, grows strong families through fun, relaxation and cultural activities and everyone working together, and emphasises the importance of children having a loving environment, in which parents are providing well for the children, who are safe and happy.

In the communities studied, witnessing fighting and the impact of drugs and alcohol was a regular occurrence for many children, resulting in a ‘normalisation’ of violence. Children are being severely impacted, growing to model negative behaviour learnt from their parents and other community members. Study participants were worried for their children’s futures and called for more positive parenting practices aimed at children/youth at

times of crisis and holistic interventions that address community needs, including education in communities on the impacts of DFV on children.

Communities were clear in their message that the indicators of success should be established well before interventions are actioned and that program effectiveness depends on culturally-led, collaborative decision making processes **before** implementation.

Following the research, the Queensland Government is building on the trust and engagement developed with the Doomadgee, Coen and Pormpuraaw communities, working with them to develop culturally respectful, holistic approaches to reducing DFV which deliver outcomes that are valued and relevant in their respective communities.

3. Blagg, Harry, Williams, Emma, Cummings, Eileen, Hovane, Vickie, Torres, Michael and Woodley, Karen Nangala 2018

South Australia case study: Ceduna Building Resilience project

Ceduna Building Resilience is a joint project funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and the South Australian Government. The national Building Resilience initiatives aim to achieve positive outcomes for families, women and their children by working across sectors to improve the safety and wellbeing of children, advancing gender equality and reducing violence against women and their children.



Yalata Aboriginal Women's Gathering, November 2016

The Ceduna project is intended to deliver on several elements:

- culturally appropriate integrated responses to male perpetrators of violence against women and their children. This response will utilise community referral pathways linked to the Ceduna Family Safety Meeting
- facilitating intensive Aboriginal men's groups that cover men's use of violence, social and emotional wellbeing, community development and referral to ongoing, existing services (e.g. health, drug and alcohol, housing)
- providing a Women's Safety Contact Program for women in the Ceduna and Yalata areas, building on and partnering with the Ceduna Regional Domestic Violence & Aboriginal Family Violence Services. The service has initiated a mobile service using a camper trailer with a large annexe as a portable meeting space to deliver outreach into remote Aboriginal communities. This includes providing and facilitating community education, with local Aboriginal communities utilising employment agencies and employee, police, justice, legal, health and other specialist services



Ceduna Aboriginal Women's Gathering, November 2016

- specific measures to provide support and services to young Aboriginal women in their final stages of pregnancy, or having just given birth to a child, who are living in family violence situations, or who do not have appropriate family support in Ceduna and/or surrounding areas
- facilitating Aboriginal Women's Gatherings in Ceduna and Yalata to provide a safe and culturally sensitive space for Aboriginal women from the region to come together and discuss local issues and identify priorities from their communities. A gathering was held November 2016 in Ceduna and Yalata, and a second is scheduled for mid-2018.

Western Australia case study: ‘Safe at Home’ solutions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children

In November 2016, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation in partnership with Starick Services commenced a pilot Safe at Home (SaH) program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. The pilot focuses on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, with or without children, to remain in their existing housing when it is safe to do so. The aim is to develop a model that is culturally safe and secure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. The pilot is underpinned by an action research approach, with findings from consultations and literature reviews informing the preliminary service model. An outcome of the pilot will be a recommended SaH service model that is more accessible to Aboriginal women and children in the Perth metropolitan area.

Findings to date have identified the need for Aboriginal support workers; involvement of an Aboriginal-led agency; wrap-around support and follow-up for 12–18 months; community awareness raising in partnership with Aboriginal organisations and Elders; no compulsion to disclose/report the violent incident to the WA Police; no compulsion to take out a Family Violence Restraining Order against the perpetrator; support for women experiencing both intimate partner and family violence; referrals to SaH that can bypass police involvement; and brokerage funding to improve physical security.



Wungening Aboriginal Corporation official opening of the Wooree Miya Women's Refuge in Western Australia

Case Study

Kellie (not her real name) was referred to the SaH program by a local women's refuge. Kellie is a 28-year-old single Aboriginal woman with four children. Kellie has experienced severe family and domestic violence by her ex-partner. For safety, Kellie has had to flee her public housing property on several occasions to access a number of separate women's refuges and shelters. On referral, Kellie advised the SaH worker that she did not want to involve the police or obtain a Family Violence Restraining Order due to fear of retribution.

The SaH worker discussed with Kellie all options, completed a risk assessment and developed a safety plan for Kellie and her children to empower her and to provide options to address issues as they arose. Kellie was encouraged to make contact with the community Elders for support and guidance. Kellie was very frightened of the perpetrator, but she felt she needed to maintain communication with him until she could arrange support from Elders within his family, which she knew would enhance her safety. Meanwhile, the SaH worker arranged to visit Kellie at her home to assess the property and determine whether any safety measures were required. To enable Kellie to feel safe at home, the service arranged for security upgrades to the property.

Kellie consulted with male Elders including the perpetrator's father, brothers, uncles and a cousin. The Elders were able to make contact with the perpetrator and discuss with him his need to make positive life choices and to seek support for his addiction. The perpetrator was required to relocate back to country, undertake rehabilitation, and maintain contact with the Elders. The Elders contacted Kellie and assured her that she and her children would be safe due to the perpetrator relocating out of the metropolitan area. The Elders encouraged Kellie to contact them if she had any further concerns.

Culturally appropriate wrap-around support was provided for Kellie. SaH workers respected that Kellie was the expert in her situation. Kellie has been linked in to culturally specialist and mainstream services to address her individual needs. SaH workers continue to support Kellie in ensuring her safety and support needs are met.



Wungening Aboriginal Corporation official opening of the Wooree Miya Women's Refuge in Western Australia

National Priority Area 3: Greater support and choice

Commonwealth: Family Advocacy and Support Services

The Australian Government has committed \$18.5 million to deliver integrated duty lawyer and family violence support services under Action 3.10 of the Third Action Plan. These Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS) were established in each state and territory in 2016–17.

Many families involved in family law matters have complex needs, and may be involved in matters across the family law, child protection and family violence systems. The FASS is designed to assist families moving between the state and federal court systems, complementing specialist services available in state and territory courts.

Legal aid commissions in each state and territory are delivering the services in family law court registries, and local courts in the Northern Territory. The FASS is also providing support in regional circuit court locations across Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania. The commissions are working together with family violence support services to ensure that clients' multiple needs can be identified and appropriate support provided.

The FASS duty lawyers are providing clients with discrete legal advice and assistance, including drafting court documents, understanding orders, and helping victims to access protective measures such

as alternative ways to give evidence. Family violence social support workers are delivering trauma-informed services to families, improving the safety of victims and children when engaging with the courts. The FASS is prioritising clients who face additional barriers to accessing assistance, such as Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse clients, clients with a disability, and clients from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer community.

ACT: Family Safety Hub co-design

In 2016, in response to a number of major reviews, the ACT Government committed to co-design a Family Safety Hub to improve domestic and family violence service responses. The Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety undertook a 12-month co-design with services and service users, commencing in December 2016. The process was highly consultative and engaged more than 50 staff working in frontline service delivery, as well as people with lived experience of domestic and family violence.

A key principle of the co-design was that it would be informed by the experiences of people affected by domestic and family violence and the frontline staff working to support them. Priority was also given to

groups of people who are most vulnerable to domestic and family violence and those who find it hardest to get support through services. These groups include women from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community members.

The co-design process found that the whole service system, including the health and legal sectors, needed to be able to respond to women and children who are affected by domestic and family violence. Flexible and varied solutions need to be available in order to meet the needs of the community.

The outcome of the co-design was a proposal for a Family Safety Hub which will focus on creating a shared understanding across the service system so that people get the right response wherever they seek help; building capability to integrate services for clients; and creating alternative pathways to safety that meet diverse needs.

The hub will be a network for developing and testing innovative solutions that address identified needs and bring about the necessary change across the existing service system. New solutions that are shown to be effective can then be scaled up, catalysing change across the existing service system.

Tasmania: Safe Families Coordination Unit

The Safe Families Coordination Unit (SFCU) was created as a flagship action of *Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania's Family Action Plan 2015-2020*. The Unit has been informed by the South Australian family violence initiative, the Multi-Agency Protection Service, and adapted to meet Tasmania's existing whole-of-government integrated response to family violence, Safe at Home. The unit is led by Tasmania Police and adopts a highly collaborative and collegial approach. It comprises 11 co-located senior representatives from the Departments of Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services.

The work is supported by access to more than 60 individual state government data sets from across the participating agencies. The unit analyses information to support effective and coordinated operational responses to family violence. The unit's key functions are to:

- review all reported family violence incidents
- undertake detailed analysis of all high-risk family violence incidents. Operational responses continue to be managed by frontline services
- perform detailed analysis of all high-risk cases and provide targeted, coordinated 'recommended actions' to all partner agencies. This information is provided in a consolidated assessment report which details the current situation and all validated government information for those involved (victim, perpetrator and affected children), so that everyone knows what action is to be undertaken

- maintain and share Priority Family Violence Perpetrator (PFVP) intelligence, which assists in supporting operational responses for this cohort of high-risk perpetrators, particularly within the Departments of Justice and Police. As part of this work, the unit maintains electronic PFVP profiles that can be accessed by operational police through their tablets, and which contribute to informed and coordinated operational responses.

The unit also provides timely family violence notifications to all Tasmanian schools, including Catholic and independent schools. These notifications contribute to ensuring that all school age children affected by family violence receive appropriate services and support within the school setting.

New South Wales case study: Safer Pathway

Christina (not her real name) was referred to the Local Coordination Point (LCP) by NSW Police after she was seriously assaulted by her partner, Peter (not his real name). Christina had been subject to escalating physical and psychological violence from Peter over years.

Due to their shared involvement in Safety Action Meetings (SAMs), police and the LCP have an excellent working relationship. The detectives investigating Christina's assault encouraged her to engage with the LCP when she had previously been reluctant to speak with any services. Because of Peter's history of offending behaviour, the police believed he would attempt to return to Christina's home as soon as he was released from custody.

The LCP supported Christina and her child to move in with her parents immediately, and began the process of finding alternative accommodation for her. The LCP also connected Christina with a specialist psychologist for the trauma she had experienced.

Christina's matter was referred to the SAM. The LCP advised the meeting about ongoing efforts to secure Christina in a new property. The day after the SAM, the LCP was advised that the real estate agency managing the property Christina was due to move into required a large lump sum as bond and two weeks rent in advance.

The Rent Start Bond Loan product available from the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) Housing section can usually be used in such circumstances. However, in this case an IT system issue within FACS had caused a backlog and increased processing times for applications. The real estate agency advised that it needed the money by close of business that day or the property would be offered to another family. Christina had given notice that she would vacate her old property that day. She was at work and unable to leave for fear of losing her job. Christina was therefore at risk of becoming homeless.

The LCP liaised with FACS Housing staff, who were aware of Christina's case as a result of the SAM. FACS Housing was able to use Christina's status as a SAM referral to advocate that the Rent Start Bond Loan application be processed immediately. FACS Housing then rang the real estate agency while the LCP was on the phone to confirm that the application had been approved. This verbal approval allowed the real estate agency to give Christina the keys that afternoon.

Lastly, FACS (Community Services section) had received a child protection notification regarding Christina's child following the serious assault. However, because of the information shared by other agencies at the SAM, FACS could confirm that Christina was acting protectively for her child, and could therefore close her case knowing that Christina was engaged with multiple services and receiving support to ensure the safety of herself and her child.

National Priority Area 4: Sexual violence

Commonwealth:

Office of the eSafety Commissioner — development of the national online portal on image-based abuse

Through its eSafetyWomen program, the office identified a need for a dedicated resource to provide practical support for Australians who have their intimate images or video shared without consent, and to help victims manage the wide-ranging impacts of image-based abuse.

The office was subsequently given a lead role in providing support and assistance to all victims of this form of abuse under the Third Action Plan. This was announced at the COAG National Summit on 28 October 2016.

The office was aware that victims of image-based abuse did not know where to go for help when their intimate images had been shared. There was a lack of awareness of what the options were to report

image-based abuse, and how essential help and support could be accessed. A purpose-built national portal — providing clear guidance and advice for victims, their family and friends, information about support services and how to obtain legal help, and a reporting tool to make it easy for victims to report image-based abuse to the office — would bridge that gap.

The foundation work for the portal was undertaken in 2016–17:

- a program of research into image-based abuse with three key elements:
- research into the main websites, platforms, apps and social media services used in the distribution of this material

- quantitative research — a national survey examining the prevalence of image-based abuse, its related impacts, actions taken by victims, their information and support needs, and community attitudes
- qualitative research — interviews with front-line workers and victims.
- extensive consultation with stakeholders, such as counselling support services, content hosts, law enforcement agencies and similar initiatives overseas
- feedback on proposed web content, design and branding from relevant experts and through focus groups.

The portal is currently being piloted and will be launched by June 2018.

Northern Territory: NPY Women's Council Sexual Violence Research Project

The Northern Territory Government provided Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) Women's Council \$30,000 to undertake sexual violence research in the cross-border region. This research is funded as a component of the South Australian–Northern Territory partnership agreement and will inform the development of a Northern Territory Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework.

This funding will support a locally led research project that will aim to determine the prevalence and severity of sexual violence in the cross-border region of the Northern Territory and South Australia. The research findings are highly likely to provide key messages to inform policy and specialist services' responses.

The rate of sexual assault in the Northern Territory is reportedly the highest in Australia at 154 per 100,000⁴, and sexual violence continues to be widely under-reported. The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework will seek to ensure that response and prevention services and programs are better targeted and integrated.

4. Northern Territory Crime Statistics downloaded 28 February 2016.

Tasmania: Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS) Primary Prevention in Schools Program

The Tasmanian Government has provided SASS with four years of funding to deliver a sexual violence primary prevention program in four Tasmanian high schools and colleges each year. The program works with school staff, parents and carers and young people to address the underlying causes of family violence and sexual assault, promote respectful behaviour among young people and enhance the capacity of school communities to respond to sexual assault.

Click the **play button below** to access a short video about the program.



Commonwealth: 1800RESPECT

1800RESPECT has been funded by the Australian Government since 2010 as part of the National Plan. It provides a free, confidential and interactive online and telephone counselling, information and referral service for anyone affected by domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

In August 2016, a first responder triage model was implemented to improve the accessibility and responsiveness of the service. Under this model, all calls are answered by first-response counsellors who have a minimum three-year tertiary degree in a relevant field, such as social work, social services, welfare studies, psychology or counselling. They must also have a minimum of two years full-time counselling experience. First-response counsellors undergo additional in-depth training before they can respond to 1800RESPECT calls.

Anyone who is assessed as needing additional in-depth trauma specialist counselling, or who requests this support, is warm transferred to a highly qualified and experienced trauma specialist counsellor. This means the initial counsellor provides the trauma-specialist counsellor with the information, with the caller still on the line, to avoid the caller needing to re-tell their story.

Trauma specialist counsellors hold a minimum three-year tertiary qualification in a relevant field and have a minimum of three years trauma specialist counselling experience, specialising in sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling and working with people from diverse backgrounds and locations.

The implementation of the first-response model resulted in a 172 per cent increase in the number of telephone and online contacts answered, with an additional 40,500 people able to receive support in 2016–17 compared with the previous year under the original operating model.

Further, a dramatic decrease in the average wait time from more than 10 minutes to under a minute has meant that people can now receive support in the moment it is needed.

National Priority Area 5: Responding to children living with violence

Queensland case study: Information sharing

In Queensland, legislative changes for sharing information (including in some circumstances without consent) came into effect in May 2017. These changes enabled prescribed entities, such as police, housing, health, child protection and specialist domestic and family violence services, to share relevant information for the purpose of assessing and managing risk. These amendments are used by all relevant parties and have been particularly supportive in the functioning of Queensland's new High Risk Teams (HRTs).

Aminah (not her real name), who was in her mid-twenties, was referred to an HRT by a non-government organisation (NGO). Aminah had three children with Amir (not his real name), all of whom were under the age of six. Aminah advised the NGO that Amir's pattern of behaviour included punching her head, kicking her legs and back, slamming her head into the walls and sexually assaulting her on a frequent basis. These had recently started escalating. Aminah also reported that Amir controlled the finances, the use of the car and when she could see her extended family members. The children were always in the home when these episodes occurred and witnessed or heard the violence and abuse. The children were fearful of Amir, clung to the mother and appeared very withdrawn. Aminah was from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

The HRT worked collaboratively on a complex risk assessment to establish the level of serious or lethal risk faced by Aminah and her three children and developed a multiagency safety plan. Under this plan, relevant agencies were tasked with particular actions:

- A Legal Aid referral was expedited and Aminah was represented by a solicitor for DFV and Family Court matters.
- Aminah was supported to vary the conditions of an existing Domestic Violence Order (DVO) by having her children added and a no-contact condition included.
- Aminah was supported to report Amir's breaches of the DVO to the Queensland Police Service (QPS).
- Court dates and outcomes were passed on to the NGO providing primary case management support to Aminah and the children.
- Aminah was contacted and supported regularly by the NGO case worker and by Child Safety to ensure that she and the children remained safe.
- Queensland's victim advocate agency, Victim Assist QLD, with support from Queensland Health and the QPS, provided \$18,000 for counselling expenses, which included counselling for Aminah and play therapy for the children, and safety upgrades on Aminah's house, including installation of sensor lights, security cameras, a high fence and curtains.
- QPS followed up on past breaches of the DVO with a view to upgrading the charges against Amir.

The NGO regularly reviews and monitors Aminah and the children's safety.

Western Australia case study: Invisible Practices

Western Australia's Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support Division partnered with Curtin University and the University of Melbourne in the Invisible Practices action research project. The project is funded by the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and the Western Australian component is being led by Curtin University to inform the processes required to shift system focus onto the perpetrators of family and domestic violence, and alleviate the burden placed on women and children.

The Invisible Practices project seeks to answer the following questions:

- What do child protection practitioners require for their organisations and/or other organisations to support them in working with fathers who use violence?
- What evidence is there that capacity-building workshops, supported by coaching and supervision from the US-based Safe & Together Institute, provide increased experiences of safety and support for practitioners?

Practitioners from the department undertook Safe and Together training and attended six facilitated workshops as a community of practice. The training offered a paradigm shift towards focusing on the perpetrator and their pattern of behaviour. It also highlighted the strengths of adult victims and the connection between the harm to the child and the actions of the perpetrator. The workshops provided an opportunity to share both case challenges and positive outcomes, and build relationships across district offices.

Participants reported that the project was positively influencing their practice, and that the model aligns well with the Signs of Safety Child Protection Practice Framework. They found that the workshops prompted them to apply what they had learned to their own practice and that of their colleagues.

As a result, participants have described using a family domestic violence (FDV) informed approach to working with families who come to the attention of the department and are:

- having conversations with perpetrators who are fathers about the harm they are causing to their children through their use of violence against the mother
- using strengths-based conversations to build more meaningful relationships with mothers, and discover their strengths
- focusing on culture and working with respected community members
- seeing a clear shift towards perpetrator engagement and accountability in order to create and increase safety for child and adult victims of FDV and enable them to stay together where it is safe to do so.

National Priority Area 6: Keeping perpetrators accountable across all systems

South Australia:

Development of safe practice standards for domestic, family and sexual violence interventions

In June 2017 South Australia began developing a set of safe practice standards for interventions responding to domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) as part of the state-based project implementing the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions. The standards focus on providing consistently delivered programs across the state and aim to support systems to keep perpetrators accountable.

A working group, made up of DFSV services, supported a tailored approach to developing the standards. Guidance was sought from a working group made up of workers who identified as Aboriginal⁵ from organisations specifically involved in delivering interventions and services in Aboriginal communities in response to domestic, family or sexual violence.

The standards were developed through consultation with this group to ensure that an understanding of service delivery within Aboriginal communities was a considered and influential aspect of the development process. This approach:

- recognises that the intergenerational trauma, dispossession of land and forced removal of children interrupted and impacted cultural practices across Aboriginal communities and played a significant part in the conditions that created such high incidences of violence for Aboriginal women⁶
- understands and applies the learnings that these organisations have accomplished in their specific areas of service delivery

- addresses the fact that Aboriginal people are over-represented in the social services space — for example in child-protection, as victims of DFSV, and within our correctional systems — and that a cultural focus and response is needed to enhance the possibility of successful outcomes to address this over-representation.

The standards include Aboriginal Service Delivery Principles and a set of culturally proficient practices to guide and support organisations to increase their capacity to effectively deliver services across the Aboriginal community. The standards are now in draft form awaiting guidance from the new SA Government on the governance approach for interventions across the state.

5. In South Australia the term 'Aboriginal people' includes Torres Strait Islanders.

6. Atkinson, J. 2002. *Trauma Trails: The Transgenerational Effects of Trauma in Indigenous Australia*, Spinifex Press, North Melbourne.

New South Wales:

Perpetrator initiatives under the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform

The NSW Government is committed to holding perpetrators to account as well as supporting them to change and address their problems with violence. The NSW Premier has made it a priority to reduce the proportion of domestic violence perpetrators reoffending by 25 per cent by 2021 (based on the 2019 cohort of perpetrators).

In 2016–17 the NSW Government commenced implementing the *NSW Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform 2016–2021: Safer Lives for Women, Men and Children* (the Blueprint), which sets out the directions and actions to reform the domestic violence system in NSW over the next five years. The Blueprint is a comprehensive strategy to prevent violence, intervene early with vulnerable communities, hold perpetrators accountable, and deliver evidence-based quality services across the system to support the safety of victims and their recovery.

The Blueprint was developed in consultation with people affected by domestic and family violence, as well as service providers and stakeholders from the domestic and family violence sector, and the broader NSW community. Under the Blueprint, significant progress has been made to hold perpetrators to account for their actions.

Six High Risk Offender Teams (HROT) have been established across NSW to improve behaviour change interventions for high-risk domestic and family violence offenders. These teams use specialist expertise and Suspect Target Management Plans to target high-risk offenders and offer the best possible support to victims.

Initiatives have also been trialled to reduce breaches of Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs). These include:

- the DV Notify program, which uses SMS messages to increase perpetrators' court attendance and compliance with ADVOs
- plain English ADVOs to help offenders understand their obligations
- trialling 'What's Your Plan?' with Aboriginal Client and Community Support Officers. This involves defendants who volunteer meeting with an Aboriginal Client and Community Support Officer to develop a tailored strategy to comply with their ADVO. They will be offered SMS reminders to help them stay on track and a follow-up call to check on progress.

The ENGAGE program was also piloted in 2017 to develop an effective model for voluntary early engagement with defendants, prior to court finalisation. The program involves face-to-face sessions based on cognitive behavioural therapy and solution-focused therapy.

The NSW Government has also supported the expansion of non-government community-based men's behaviour change interventions by continuing to fund the four men's behaviour change pilot programs (MBCP) and the expansion of MBC services across NSW. These programs help men take responsibility for and stop using violent, controlling and abusive behaviours. MBCP also provide contact, safety planning and support for women and their children while a woman's current or former male partner attends the men's behaviour change program.

The NSW Government also supports the Men's Telephone Counselling and Referral Service, a seven-day telephone support service staffed by trained counsellors who support male callers to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour and end the violence against their family. Counsellors also refer callers to MBCP or other service providers for longer-term support, such as a specialist counselling or legal advisory services.

Victoria case study: Risk Assessment Management Panels (RAMPS)

The collaborative, multi-agency approach that underpins RAMPs promotes a more coordinated and integrated response to support women and children at the highest risk of harm from family violence. In one case, within two weeks of being referred to the relevant RAMP, an emergency RAMP meeting was convened. The victim survivor was considered to be at serious risk due to an escalation in the perpetrator's violent and controlling behaviour. The victim survivor wished to leave the perpetrator and had begun preparing to move, but found it difficult to act due to the perpetrator's monitoring behaviour.

The victim survivor had an appointment with a community health service and it was agreed that this was the opportunity to act and help the victim survivor to leave. Police, the specialist family violence service and community health were briefed on the morning of the appointment.

Following the appointment, police and family violence workers met with the victim survivor at the community health centre to discuss next steps. She agreed to proceed with the separation and move out of the home with their support. Police commenced searching for the perpetrator, who was now aware that there were extra police in the area and had begun ringing the victim survivor continuously.

Family violence workers secured accommodation for the victim survivor, ensuring that her pets were immunised and put into suitable accommodation, and arranged for removalists to remove her belongings and put them into storage that afternoon.

Police and a family violence worker attended the victim survivor's home to assist her in packing her belongings, where they spoke with the perpetrator's father and other family members.

Police advised the perpetrator's father of the situation and asked him to encourage his son to hand himself in at the police station.

The family violence worker and police remained at the home until removalists arrived. The victim survivor was relocated to safe accommodation where she was able to keep her pets with her. The perpetrator handed himself in to police and was served with a Family Violence Safety Notice.

The Victoria Police co-chair of this RAMP commented:

'The cooperation between all the partners leading up to and on the day was something I have not seen in 28 years of policing. I was in no doubt that, if left unchecked, this woman would have been killed once the offender found out that she was planning to leave. Having been a co-chair since the inception of RAMP, I believe we are successful because of a number of key factors:

- The people at the table are the right people from the agencies (at the right level).
- We are sanctioned to share all relevant information.
- All the players are together in the one place at the same time.'

Key website links

For more information on initiatives being delivered under the National Plan and the Third Action Plan:

www.plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au

<https://www.dss.gov.au/women/programs-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children-2010-2022>

For more information on programs funded under the Third Action Plan:

1800RESPECT

www.1800respect.org.au

www.1800respect.org.au/daisy

DV-alert

www.dvalert.org.au

ANROWS

www.anrows.org.au

Our Watch

www.ourwatch.org.au

Stop it at the Start Campaign

www.respect.gov.au

The Line

www.theline.org.au

White Ribbon Australia

www.whiteribbon.org.au

eSafetyWomen

www.esafety.gov.au/women

Australian Capital Territory initiatives

www.women.act.gov.au

<http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/home/safer-families>

New South Wales initiatives

www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence

NSW Domestic and Family Violence Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy 2017-2021

www.women.nsw.gov.au/violence_prevention/dfv-prevention-intervention-strategy

Northern Territory initiatives

The Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Strategy 2018-2028 – *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence*

<https://territoryfamilies.nt.gov.au/domestic-violence/domestic-and-family-violence-reduction-strategy>

Queensland initiatives

End Domestic and Family Violence

<https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/gateway/end-domestic-family-violence>

Queensland Violence Against Women Prevention Plan 2016–2022

<https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/violence-prevention/violence-against-women-prevention-plan-2016-22>

South Australia initiatives

www.officeforwomen.sa.gov.au

Tasmania initiatives

www.dpac.tas.gov.au/safehomessafefamilies

Responding and Reporting – Progress report on Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan 2015–2020

http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/266073/Safe_Homes_Safe_Families_-_Action_plan.pdf

Victoria initiatives

<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence.html>

Free from violence: Victoria's strategy to prevent family violence and all forms of violence against women

<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/prevention-strategy.html>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/women.html>

Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy

<https://www.vic.gov.au/women/gender-equality/a-victorian-gender-equality-strategy.html>

Western Australia initiatives

WA Labor Policy, Stopping Family and

Domestic Violence, A Fresh Approach for WA, January 2017

[http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/publications/taledpapers.nsf/displaypaper/4010321c0c99d4e1b5c8ac984825814e0004a2f6/\\$file/tp-321.pdf](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/publications/taledpapers.nsf/displaypaper/4010321c0c99d4e1b5c8ac984825814e0004a2f6/$file/tp-321.pdf)

