

Adelaide Consultation Summary

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

Summary of Consultation – 17 September 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 Adelaide, South Australia. 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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Participants

- Aboriginal Services
- Anglican Community Care
- Australia Refugee Association
- BPW Adelaide
- Centacare
- Community Connections, City of Charles Sturt
- Eastern Adelaide Domestic Violence Service
- South Australian Housing Authority
- Yarrow Place
- Indian Australian Association of South Australia
- Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation
- Fleurieu Families
- Iranian Women's Organisation of South Australia
- Japan Australia Friendship Association
- Junction Australia
- Women's Safety Services (SA)
- Women and Children's Health Network
- YWCA Australia (SA)
- Zonta Club of Gawler
- Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
- Legal Services Commission
- Lifeline Australia
- Local Government Association
- Multi Agency Protection Service (MAPS)
- Multicultural Communities Council (SA)
- National Council of Single Mothers and their Children
- No FGM Australia
- Nunga Mi: Minar Incorporated - Northern Regional Aboriginal Family Violence Service
- Relationships Australia
- Equal Opportunity Commission (SA)
- Soroptomist International
- St Vincent De Paul Society
- Staying Home Safe
- Uniting Communities
- Working Women's Centre SA Inc
- Health (South Australian Government)
- Office for Women (South Australian Government)
- National Council of Women (SA)
- Yarredi Services / Port Lincoln Regional Domestic Violence Service

Key themes

Access to supports

- Specialist roles with greater cultural competency are required to respond to violence in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
- Police need to have be able to better refer to culturally appropriate surrounds when people experience crisis.
- Police Stations and rural areas should be open after 5pm and on weekends, to ensure there are safe places for victims of family violence to go.

Links between justice and responses to violence

- Magistrates should be mandating perpetrators to men's programs, rather than suggesting attendance.
- There needs to be men's programs available, for both justice-referred and voluntary approaches for support to address violent behaviour.

Women who do not want to leave

- Specialist roles with greater cultural competency are required to respond to violence in culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.
- Police need to have be able to better refer to culturally appropriate surrounds when people experience crisis.
- Police Stations and rural areas should be open after 5pm and on weekends, to ensure there are safe places for victims of family violence to go.

Primary prevention

- Form a national response to promote conversations to ask people appropriately about domestic and family violence (i.e. similar to 'RU OK').
- Funding for prevention programs should be provided to organisations that work with local groups, such as sporting clubs.
- The prevention of violence for children should start at a young age (e.g. a three year old boy should know not to push a three year old girl).

Accessibility to finances

- There is very limited access to crisis money, which is short-term.
- More funding is needed to support women trying to leave a violent relationship (e.g. a woman cannot access Centrelink payment until she has left the relationship but cannot leave without financial support).

Supporting culturally and linguistically diverse women

- In culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities, women feel the shame and guilt when violence happens. This significantly impacts reporting levels.
- As part of the migration process, the husband and wife should receive individual packs to make women aware of services available to them and educate men on the rules.
- There are considerable issues with translators, with many either being connection with victims communities or not appropriate trained in domestic and sexual violence. Some service workers (with the client's permission) will record the conversation in attempt to hold the interpreter accountable.

- Different cultures have different levels of tolerance. The Police need to emphasise that there is zero tolerance in Australia for violence.

Reducing sexual violence

- The shame and stigma that women from all communities needs to be addressed, particularly in smaller communities and in rural and remote areas.

Community-based approach

- Everyone in the community should take responsibility for addressing domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Greater education of community, Elders and the religious leaders is required. This is how information is spread across many communities.
- Work needs to occur with CALD communities to empower different communities to share the information and provide practical support to people experiencing violence.
- Genuine co-design is required across communities to find solutions to suit the individual needs of the community (e.g. communities are the experts in engaging with their own community).

Priority actions

Collaboration across sectors

- Collaboration is required between governments and non-government organisations at both policy and operational levels (e.g. frontline).

Legislation audit and reform

- Establish consistent national legislation throughout the country to address domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Conduct a domestic violence audit on all legislation relating to domestic, family and sexual violence, and the safety of women and their children.
- Complete an audit of all laws through a domestic violence lens (e.g. add domestic violence as a ground for discrimination).

Evidence base and information sharing

- Enable national information sharing across different states and the Commonwealth around domestic and family violence, and child protection.

Community strength-based approach

- Develop specific action plans for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, recognising the differences in cultures and how this impacts responses.
- Develop frameworks for 'family approaches' for Indigenous people, developed by Indigenous communities.

Community awareness

- Create a national campaign to challenge rape culture and sexual assault within an intersectional framework.

- Deliver a public awareness campaign that broadens the impact of the messaging (e.g. domestic violence is a health issue and not just about safety; and it is okay to talk about your violence).
- Messages should be targeted to address the specific issues that different communities and areas face (i.e. remote and regional areas).

Broader education in schools and workplaces

- Respectful Relationships education should be rolled out in all state schools across Australia from reception to year 12. It is preferable that this is delivered by specialist workers due to teachers frequently not being comfortable or competent in speaking about these issues.
- Training and education should be provided within an intersectional framework on gender-based respectful relationships across all schools.
- National bystander intervention training should be rolled out across workplaces.
- Schools need to be funded to run 'respectful, positive interactions' groups.

Funding

- There needs to be clarity about Commonwealth contributions to domestic, family and sexual violence investment over the medium to long term.
- There is a need for increased funding over all domains (i.e. primary prevention, response and recovery).
- As domestic and family violence is a public health issue, funding and resourcing should be allocated accordingly.

Providing choice

- Systems that enable women to stay at home and men to get support they need should be improved and expanded.
- A mandatory domestic violence policy that increases paid domestic violence leave to 10 days should be implemented.

Long term independence, wellbeing and safety

- Provide affordable, appropriate and safe housing for women who have experienced violence.
- Women affected by domestic violence should have an exemption to retain parenting payment, rather than Newstart.
- There should be an extension of financial support payments for women in crisis (i.e. even if they are not accessing welfare payments).

Workforce capability

- Domestic violence awareness and training in child development and trauma for professionals is needed.
- The workforce needs to be seen to include lawyers, family law court judges and report writers - not just specialist family violence workers.

Perpetrators

- There should be stronger laws to hold perpetrators to account, but these should be supported with service structures to address their behaviours.

- Men's programs need to be looked at in the context of what works for individual communities. One size fits all approaches are not appropriate for many communities.
- There needs to be increased funding for perpetrator programs.

Children as victims in their own right

- The gap in services for children affected by domestic violence needs to be addressed.
- Children should have access to accredited and domestic violence trained lawyers and reporters.