

Brisbane Consultation Summary

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

Summary of Consultation – 17 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 Brisbane, Queensland. 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

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- Kurbingui
- Women's Legal Service Queensland
- Young Women's Advisory Group (YWAG)/AWAVA
- Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence
- Life Education QLD
- Red Rose Foundation
- DVConnect
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- YWCA Australia
- Domestic Violence Prevention Centre, Gold Coast
- Director, Office for Women, Violence Prevention and Youth, DCSYW
- Mercy Community Family and Child Connect
- Centre Against Sexual Violence
- Kummara Association
- Relationships Australia (QLD)
- DFV South East Queensland, Save the Children
- Department of Children Safety, Youth and Women
- WESNET
- Life Education QLD
- ANROWS
- Murrigunyah Family and Cultural Healing Centre
- Anglicare SQ, MBCP
- DCSYW
- Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service
- ANFPP National Program Centre
- Immigrant Women's Support Service
- Chisholm
- EVAWQ
- SPEAQ
- Uniting Care QLD
- DVAC

Key themes

Community education

- High profile people, journalists, brands and online communities should be engaged to increase awareness around domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Domestic violence awareness and prevention needs to be incorporated into university courses, especially media education courses to ensure accountability to media guidelines.
- The “drink responsibly” campaign needs to specify that alcohol drinkers are responsible for the violence they commit when they are under the influence.

Reducing sexual violence

- There is a national conversation due to a number of high profile cases.
- The lack of specialisation and responses mean women are not getting the right level of support.
- Respectful Relationships needs to be incorporated in mandatory sexual education that address pornography, healthy relationships, consent and respect in schools, universities and communities.
- Automated responses on phone line services do not give victims the support they need. We should focus on satisfaction of victims within the engagement.

Support for Indigenous communities

- There should be greater consultation with Elders and leaders in Indigenous communities.
- Every community is different. Trauma-informed programs need to link with the story of the community.
- Conversations and education around consent should begin earlier, with age-appropriate messaging (i.e. kindergarten age).
- Teachers, medical staff and all service providers in the community should be more aware of domestic violence and how to respond to it.

Support for CALD communities

- Barriers at all levels should be removed and services should be offered to women regardless of their immigration status.
- Responses to women on temporary protection visa and give access to housing, Centrelink and medical services.
- Targeted responses are required for priority groups.
- Staff need to be trained in cultural competencies.
- Police and other organisations should engage interpreters at the point of initial contact and work with interpreters to build capacity in the context of working with women experiencing violence.

Support for women with disability

- Disability is a broad term and includes physical, mental and well-being, personal care needs, and impaired ability to communicate.
- Women with disability are disadvantaged when accessing services, such as refuges, that do not allow animal companions or have specialised equipment for accessibility.

- The focus should be on meeting the needs of women with disability at the design phase, and asking women with disability about their lived experiences and needs (e.g. transport in rural and remote areas or accommodation with appropriate care).
- There needs to be appropriate risk assessment and safety planning as perpetrators may be carers or have control of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) self-managed plans.
- Workforce development is required to ensure services are accessible and not further marginalising.
- Disclosure of domestic, family and sexual violence is a major barrier for women with disability (e.g. limited understanding of sexual violence; carers or partners who are the perpetrators attending medical appointments with victims; and interpreters not interpreting word for word).
- Women with disability need greater protection in the legal system and there should be better education for police, court and judges to know the legislation.
- There is a different set of challenges for women with disability in rural areas (e.g. perpetrators taking advantage of lack of access to transport or technology).

Impact on children

- There needs to be adequate training for adults working in family or child-centred organisations to recognise and respond to domestic and family violence.
- Antenatal visits are opportunities for prevention, to talk to new parents about managing anxiety.
- There needs to be conflict resolution and resilience education for all ages.
- Services should target the whole family unit.
- Appropriate mandatory respectful relationships in schools with language and delivery that engage kids.
- Interdisciplinary training with co-trainers from different programs and sectors would enable a better understanding of the impact of domestic violence on children within the system.
- Restructure funding models and contracts to better enable interdisciplinary teams.
- “In their shoes” training with child safety for mediators and magistrates helps to bring understanding of the child’s perspective.
- Standardised training for family report writers from domestic violence sector using existing SAFER tools to identify and respond to violence.
- Create safe environments for all mothers to disclose child risks (e.g. be aware of sensitivity in Indigenous communities where women may have fears of child removal).

Adequate and appropriate crisis accommodation

- There is a one-size-fits all in terms of domestic violence crisis accommodation in Queensland; but not everyone needs the level of security that refuges provide and the safety restrictions can make it more difficult for women to access accommodation.
- A range of crisis accommodation options for women who have experienced sexual violence, not just domestic violence, is crucial. (e.g. the perpetrator leaves the home or bypass crisis with rental subsidies)
- More long-term housing are needed and support beyond crisis accommodation such as learning life skills.

- Safety should be for all women. Women without income or immigration status cannot access housing, have no exit options and are at risk of exploitation.

Access to justice

- There needs to be consideration of implementing an accountability clause to request reimbursement for costs for court if application is fraudulent or misleading to deter systems abuse.
- There are incidents of victims being penalised and re-victimised when reporting offences (e.g. victim is arrested due to outstanding fine).
- We need consistency across jurisdictions (e.g. special witness considerations in NSW criminal courts not applied in Queensland and women are not afforded the opportunity to submit evidence remotely).
- Courts and Family Court Orders need to prioritise safety of women and children (e.g. women and perpetrators going through different doors, remote video access).
- Rural and remote legal service delivery needs greater funding to enable them to cover vast areas.

Supporting long-term wellbeing and independence

- It is important to have shared language between services for an integrated approach to service provision.
- Opportunities should be created for women to visit the support services and see that it is a safe environment to make an appointment.
- Offer women education or free bridging course to universities for victims of domestic violence.
- Build workforce capability for trauma-informed services (e.g. housing, finance, medical).
- Allow women bring pets to shelters.
- Safety plans should be developed that identify relatives or people who are safe.

Technology-facilitated abuse

- Focus on the behaviour and not the technology itself. People's online behaviour is not divorced from their behaviour offline.
- Consult young people on how to teach people critical skills, such as how to use technology safely and how to deconstruct what they see in media.
- Promote work from WESNET and e-Safety commissioner that raises awareness about technology-facilitated abuse.
- We need to reconsider the legal definitions and their flexibility as it leads to inconsistency in courts and in some cases digital evidence not taken seriously.
- Examples of technology helping women who have experienced domestic and family violence include Penda app and Smart Safe.

Big shifts

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

- From expectation of women to make life changes to perpetrators are held accountable
- From incident-based domestic violence policing to patterned-based domestic violence policing
- From patriarchal society to gender equality
- From inconsistent responses responding to Domestic Violence Orders to confidence in a consistent response by police and magistrates regarding Domestic Violence Orders
- From disjointed, repeated stories to collaboration through trauma-informed, co-ordinated case management
- From barriers to housing to long-term appropriate, affordable housing choices
- From no federal law to federal domestic and family violence/violence against women law
- From no mandatory domestic and family violence training for key professionals to mandatory, benchmarking national training standards for key professionals (e.g. family report writers, judiciary, lawyers)
- From no national judicial training college for domestic violence to national, funded judicial training college for domestic violence co-taught by magistrates, domestic violence experts and trainers
- From no national domestic violence research agenda to domestic violence informed evidence-based practice with research and data
- From no police training on primary aggressor to repeated national primary aggression training for police
- From victim servicing to victim thriving
- From consulting *about* young people to working *with* young people
- From marginalisation of migrant and refugee women to support and response to women regardless of visa status
- From sexual violence not addressed separately from domestic and family violence to understanding, resourcing & prioritisation of sexual violence requiring different responses
- From misalignment of justice systems to co-ordination across stakeholders
- From one size fits all approach to an approach that is fit for purpose with choice
- From discrimination against women with no income to access for all