

Port Augusta Consultation Summary

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

Summary of Consultation – 18 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 Port Augusta, 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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- Communities for Children
- Port Augusta Children's Centre
- South Australia Police
- Uniting Country South Australia
- South Australian Police
- Devonport Community Council
- Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council of South Australia
- Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
- Office for Women (South Australian Government)

Key themes

Impacts of violence on children

- A children's safety hub should be established to help children who experienced violence.
- The Multi-Agency Protection Service (MAPS) initiative should be expanded to include children services.

Primary prevention

- More programs are required around respectful relationships to increase understandings of healthy relationships, and to empower both men and women.
- Consideration should be given to establishing a shopfront for women to attain information around gaining support for domestic, family and sexual violence.
- Messaging needs to be universal (i.e. transcending socio-economic boundaries and beyond non-physical forms of violence) as many families will not even realise they are in a violent situation or messages does not apply to them.

Men's services

- All domestic violence programs should have a male worker to both address violence experienced by men, and to work with male perpetrators of violence.
- Whilst acknowledging that male victims are much rarer, there is a lack responses for male victims of domestic violence.
- If we say women have the right to be safe in their own home, this needs to be met with system responses in place to wrap around perpetrators.

Drugs, alcohol and mental health are strongly correlated with domestic violence

- Drugs and alcohol are strongly related to domestic violence incidents. There is a lack of outreach support for alcohol and other drugs issues. There also needs to be more counselling for alcohol and other drugs rehabilitation.
- Addiction is a big issue and catalyst for violence in Port Augusta that impacts a whole array of services, including health and domestic violence.
- More responses are needed to support people with mental health issues are frequently being abused both physically and sexually.

Responses for regional areas

- Appropriate funding for regions should not based on statistics, but also take into account the geographic reach and safety of workers (e.g. two workers to visit one client to ensure safety of workers).
- There needs to be better understanding the South Australian Family Safety Framework process. Meetings under this framework should be fortnightly in regards to high risk clients.

Workforce capability

- There is a lack of trauma-based training or psychologists available in Port Augusta and other regional areas.
- Consideration should be given to a central database for services, to find information about other services for referral purposes and resources to assist responses.

- Mainstream services should have skillsets expanded around trauma informed practices and how to work with victims of domestic violence.

Access to justice

- Judicial systems must expedite intervention orders. Many women are withdrawing before they are processed.
- Situations need to be dealt with quicker; as by the time they go through court, families may have reunited and the chance for intervention may have been missed.

Adequate and appropriate crisis accommodation

- There are not enough options for crisis accommodation in regional areas. Many hotels and caravan parks in regional areas are not accepting referrals for victims of domestic violence and for homelessness reasons.
- There are examples of women getting deliberately inebriated to go into a sobering unit, because there is no other safe accommodation available.
- It is important that responses are based on a right for all people to feel safe in their own homes and communities.

Priority actions

Workforce capability

- There needs to be the workforce to appropriately support additional crisis accommodation that is needed.
- Education is required for first responders (i.e. Police) to better identify violence and understand that physical abuse is not the only form of violence that requires a response.
- More information around sexual violence (including language used by women around sexual violence) is needed to make it more comfortable for disclosures.

Responses for regional areas

- More services are needed to address the significant alcohol and other drugs abuse, as it is a key factor associated with the use of violence.
- Funding and resources need to reflect the time and resources that are required to travel for outreach and service provision in regional and remote areas.

Primary prevention and community education

- Universal messaging is required around all types of domestic, family and sexual violence (including around power imbalances).
- The promotion of bystander interventions and training to change the 'shut eye' society worrying about repercussions to one that better responds to violence.

Whole of community approach to addressing violence

- Everyone should be involved including corporates (e.g. Commonwealth Bank offering financial assistance to victims).
- Mandatory reporting for domestic violence should be for everyone who may see violence (e.g. contractors and electricians going into the house for service).