

Sydney Consultation Summary

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

Summary of Consultation 1 of 2 – 9 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 Sydney, New South Wales. 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 Affairs
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of Social Services
- Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV)
- NSW Department of Family and Community Services
- Women NSW
- NSW Department of Health
- NSW Department of Justice
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
- NSW Police

- White Ribbon Australia
- Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre

Key themes

Support for Indigenous communities

- Services need to be driven by Indigenous communities. One of the big problems is that much if the funding is not being spent on the right services.
- Aboriginal communities need to be listened to about violence and how to respond in the context of their communities and in their terms.
- A positive narrative needs to be established to break the cycle of violence. A strengths-based approach is required to leverage existing capability and knowledge.
- Aboriginal languages need to be brought into the dialogue.
- Local interventions should be encouraged and facilitated (e.g. local sporting clubs and peer to peer support).

Support for women with disability

- A more coordinated approach is required between services that are tailored to people with a disability.
- The service systems need to better support women and children who are at risk or facing violence (e.g. leveraging the workers under the National Disability Insurance Scheme).
- Better training and support around domestic, family and sexual violence is required for service providers and carers.

Building workforce capability

- Legal professionals need to increase their understanding in domestic violence against children as they may be overlooked.
- Across the service system, there is a need for increasing the understanding of working with children. This understand needs to be across where different services intersect (e.g. Child Protection, Justice and Out of Home Care).

Prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence

- Primary prevention is about breaking the cycle and addressing long term, systemic attitudes.
- There is a need for a campaign that empowers people connected to women experiencing violence and the broader community to stop the violence from happening.
- Prevention should be seen as an ecological model and be pushed beyond the usual touch points (e.g. beyond schools).
- The broader community should be engaged in co-design and to empower new partnerships and ideas that look at addressing local issues.
- There is a need to look at alternative levers to address violence, such as liquor sales and gambling. Violence is often linked to usage of alcohol and other drugs.
- We need to build a more robust mental model of violence that recognises all forms of power (e.g. financial, social, emotional/psychological and physical).

- Messages should be targeted to women with certain risk factors to offer support early (e.g. relationship vulnerabilities, bad relationship choices, or previous lived experiences with others who have been violent).

Access to justice

- More work is needed to understand the complex needs of offenders to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.
- There needs to be better integration across different services, processes, information and systems.
- Young people's experience of violence and their pathways through the justice system is not focused on enough.

Support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities

- The gaps in expertise around working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women needs to be addressed. Responses need to be able to respond to the specific issues unique to CALD women and children.
- There is a shared responsibility across the Commonwealth and states for addressing the violence experienced by CALD women, especially for immigration and visa issues.
- The gap in accessing interpreting services presents a barrier for frontline workers understanding the needs of women.
- Culturally appropriate safety planning and support is critical to support CALD women experiencing violence.

Reducing sexual violence

- There needs to be less stigma associated with women speaking about sexual violence.
- Service systems needs to build their competence and confidence to raise sexual violence, and make it safer for frontline workers to talk about it.
- Primary prevention is required to shift societal norms and attitudes on this topic (e.g. leveraging the #metoo movement generating discussion in the media).
- Consideration should be given to a specialist court which is able to deal with sexual assault and violence.
- The necessary wrap-around services need to be in place to support victims of sexual violence (i.e. intensive case management for victims).

Technology-facilitated abuse

- Justice responses should not be addressing online behaviour in different ways to offline behaviour.
- There is a need for increased awareness and education about online abuse and likely perpetrator behaviour.
- The government needs to partner with industry such as banks, insurance, superannuation, retail, fashion, music and social network brands to assist in reaching women and children at risk of online abuse with messaging and what to do if they experience it.
- There should be greater collaboration with technology companies to develop risk management approaches to reduce perpetrators' use of apps or devices to perpetrate abuse.

Impact on children

- All services need to be competent in offering trauma informed advice and support, and taking a therapeutic response to children.
- Education campaigns and programs targeted at male perpetrators are required to help them understand the impact of violence on their children.
- There needs to be more campaigns that challenge gendered norms.
- Domestic violence and child protection workers should be brought together more regularly to develop relationships and a common understanding of the violence experienced by their respective clients.
- Seek out partners across the community (i.e. banks and sporting clubs) to come together to combat violence against children.

Adequate and appropriate crisis accommodation

- Financial support needs to be offered to women who stay at home.
- Young people who are escaping family violence at home need to be able to access crisis accommodation.
- There is a significant gap in accommodation options for women with older teenage boys.
- There needs for wrap-around services for women once they are in crisis accommodation.

Big shifts

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

- From imposing responses on Aboriginal communities to building the capacity of Aboriginal communities and organisations to respond to violence
- From focus on short term crisis responses to expand the focus and priority of primary prevention (invest in both prevention and response)
- From making assumptions when assessing women's experience of violence and compartmentalising forms of abuse to a more holistic way of assessing violence experienced by women without compartmentalising
- From multigenerational trauma to systemic response to stopping violence through generational lens
- From disconnection between services and systems responding to violence to systems work together and proactively reduce crisis
- From intervening at crisis points to intervening and responding to risk at transition points
- From limited evaluations that are not shared to regular evaluation and sharing of lessons across the whole service system
- From domestic, family and sexual violence being seen as a private matter to make it everyone's business in an empowered way
- From not feeling safe to come forward to services think of safety first and encourage women to access their services
- From punitive justice and individual responses to therapeutic and integrated responses that aim to stop future violence

- From negative discourse around CALD, ATSI, disability, LGBTIQ+ to strength-based discourse genuinely looking to overturn systemic discrimination
- From system focused to client outcome focused
- From limited and patchwork funding for services and supports to funding adequate to meet demand and make a difference
- From stigma around the issue to normalising the issue to allow discussion
- From lack of information and technology skills for various demographics (e.g. elders) to greater access to education and information around how to use technology safely
- From women's issue to societal issue, actively engaging men