

# Users of violence Consultation Summary

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

Summary of Consultation – 14 September 2018

*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.

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

- Centacare Perth
- No to Violence
- Northern Territory Government
- Stopping Family Violence (WA)
- Relationships Australia (Victoria)
- Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Medibank
- Baptist Care
- White Ribbon
- Jesuit Social Services
- UnitingCare Community
- Domestic Violence Prevention Centre (Gold Coast)
- SPEAQ
- Communicare (WA)

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Lifeline
- ACRATH
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
- Department of Social Services

## Key themes

### Coordinated, joined up service delivery system

#### What's working well?

- Following the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, there are a number of good examples of services beginning to integrate at the systemic level (Victoria)
- Curtin University (Western Australia) is conducting research on having a continuum and integrated system of responses
- The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) (Victoria) is developing responses with youth justice and young users of violence on programs into adolescent violence in homes
- The Invisible Practices Research Project (University of Melbourne) will be valuable in addressing the need for resources and tools

#### What are the challenges?

- Many service providers have a lack of knowledge about men's behaviour change programs, safe referrals and perpetrator accountability
- There is very limited funding for men's behaviour change programs in most jurisdictions. A lot of funding is for time limited pilots which are not being scaled. This compounds difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff
- There are still many areas in Australia without any services for users of violence and we need national vision on where are the geographic gaps, especially in remote areas with high vulnerability
- It is very difficult to be innovative with no or limited funding
- There needs to be better integration with women's services with more nuanced conversations around men seeking help as women may not want to leave
- There needs to be pathways for perpetrators of sexual violence currently in the justice system as it is out of scope of family violence

#### What improvements can be made?

- A coordinated approach from Commonwealth and jurisdictions to improve processes and the sustainability of programs. Many pilots are effective, but disappear due to lack of long term planning and operational commitment
- Connect with the different parts of the system (e.g. women's services and sexual violence services). There is a particular gap around aiding women who choose to stay in relationships; and greater case management is required to address behaviours of the perpetrators and keep the victim safe
- There were calls for a national accountability mechanism for service delivery (e.g. clear and consistent outcomes measurement) led by the Commonwealth. This would enable comparisons of jurisdictional investment

- Consideration should be given to the continuum of responses for men including primary, prevention early intervention, to tertiary responses. This is especially the case for perpetrators transitioning from prison
- The promotion of knowledge sharing and communities of practice (e.g. learn what is different and common about place-based responses in other communities)
- Openness and transparency around what is or is not working is needed, including sharing knowledge across the broader system
- Consideration should be given to creating a toolkit to inform families about men's behaviour change, with consistent messages across services

## Workforce capability

### What's working well?

- Alcohol and Other Drugs peak bodies have started work to equip their workforce on responding to domestic, family and sexual violence
- Child protection services is looking at their proficiency to engage and respond to perpetrators whilst supporting the long-term safety of victims
- Financial Counselling Australia is training financial counsellors in working with victims of domestic, family and sexual violence

### What are the challenges?

- There needs to be a clear understanding on what collective responsibility means for generalist services
- There are no responses to perpetrators of sexual violence

### What improvements can be made?

- Responses should be tailored for men. As programs come from different theories of change, there is a need to tailor responses without forgoing gender-based theory
- Workforce development that takes into consideration the differences in different workforces and how they respond to domestic, family and sexual violence
- There needs to be a specific response for perpetrators of sexual violence

## Perpetrator accountability

### What's working well?

- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) is researching perpetrator interventions
- Victoria is trialling case management for perpetrators in coordination with services for victims, joining up family safety, alcohol and trauma services. However this is resource intensive and requires funding for long-term solutions. It is currently being evaluated

### What are the challenges?

- There is a lack of clarity around what 'perpetrator accountability' means in terms of actions to be taken. This across service system results in assumptions being made and differences in outcomes sought

- Government does not hold perpetrators to account; only perpetrators can hold themselves to account. Organisations that work with users of violence need to assist men to recognise their behaviour
- Magistrates and services may need to be more aware of the danger and risks of not understanding perpetrator accountability, especially in the case of repeated use of violence

#### What improvements can be made?

- There needs to be leadership and legislation to keep perpetrators in view; especially if they are repeat offenders
- A more nuanced understanding of what perpetrator accountability is, and what the outcomes being sought would be useful to drive a more integrated response to domestic, family and sexual violence

#### Primary prevention

##### What's working well?

- Respectful Relationships is good to engage young people on discussions about consent, empowerment, and provide basic relationship skills
- Some workforces are managing domestic and family violence in workplaces (e.g. Australia's CEO Challenge, Commonwealth Bank, Medibank Health Solutions)
- Australian Post is assisting victims of domestic and family violence with a mail redirection service
- Social inclusion corporate partnerships are shifting the concept of masculinity in workplaces
- There are organisations helping to promote conversations around family violence in different communities (e.g. ACON for LGBTIQ+ people)
- The North Coast Positive Adolescent Sexual Health Consortium (PASH) was provided as a good example of a program that discusses positive attitudes to relationships with children
- Undercurrent Victoria runs discussion-based sessions led by young educators in schools on attitudes (prevention) and early intervention in the same space

##### What are the challenges?

- There is a need for greater support for men going through behaviour change programs; not just at crisis point
- Some communities have a lot of normalised violence and need a holistic, joined up approach to address it
- Staff are often referred to the Employee Assistance Program; but there is a lack of consistency in responses
- Young people may not understand the difference between discipline and family violence
- Service providers need to work with schools to identify early warning signs of young people using violence and build workforce capability to appropriately make referrals

##### What improvements can be made?

- National support and guidance on conversations and concepts about domestic, family and sexual violence to anchor thinking in the broader community (i.e. how might men start the conversation?)

- Within corporates, there needs to be a non-collusive, non-silencing way to help victims struggling to speak up. Traditional HR models sometimes work against this
- Genuine engagement is required with young people and grassroots organisations in program design, including how we can meaningfully engage them and elevate their voices on social media on healthy relationships (i.e. young people are the experts on how to engage young people)
- Provide information to parents, communities and education programs to help identify negative behaviours early and show the projection of a perpetrator's journey from such behaviours

## Community-based approaches

### What's working well?

- Men's Behaviour change programs in Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities are developed with communities.
- Rural responses require greater community input and engagement with Aboriginal men and their families. There is a different journey for perpetrators when the community supports the family

### What are the challenges?

- There is a gap in addressing identity-based violence towards people of diverse sex, sexuality and gender (e.g. heterosexual parents or families being violent to LGBTIQ children. In Victoria, a curriculum is currently being developed)
- More services are needed for CALD men, especially in Western Sydney where there is only one men's behaviour change program in a community of 49 language groups. Support is needed for community development to build programs that work for men and their families

### What improvements can be made?

- Community-based programs need to be built into funding models. If a community does not understand the program, it cannot be implemented effectively
- Programs that are implemented in communities (such as Indigenous communities) should be endorsed by leaders to ensure there is community ownership
- There needs to be a long-term strategy over 7-10 years for workforce development, training and equipping workers in CALD communities
- More interpreters are needed that are culturally appropriate and training in domestic, family and sexual violence
- Programs should draw upon the lessons of the co-design approaches of program development in some Indigenous and CALD communities in metropolitan and mainstream settings