



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services



# Indigenous Family Violence Consultation Summary - Men's Break Away Group

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

**Summary of Consultation - 5 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

These notes relate to a break-away session focused on family violence experienced in Indigenous communities, attended by men. This was held by the Department of Social Services as part of the development of the Fourth Action Plan in Alice Springs Northern Territory. This session was facilitated by Mr Desmond Campbell from the Anti-Discrimination Commission in the Northern Territory.

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 of Men's workshop on domestic, family and sexual violence in Indigenous communities

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation

Tangentyere's Men's Four Corners

Tangentyere Council

Ingkintja Male Health Service

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Social & Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB)

Anti-Discrimination Commission (NT Government)

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Targeted Family Support Service (TFSS)



# Key themes

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## **Addressing the role that alcohol plays in domestic, family and sexual violence**

- Addressing alcohol abuse is more effectively and safely dealt with when led by trusted local people with existing relationships or community standing
- There is not enough community education and discussion around alcohol abuse and healthier consumption of alcohol
- Too many non-Indigenous people are speaking about alcohol abuse on 'behalf' of Indigenous people. Indigenous experiences need to be told by Indigenous peoples
- Mutual violence whilst under the influences of alcohol is an issue that is not being addressed
- There are so many restrictions in place around alcohol sales which is promoting unhealthy consumption. People are turning to black market purchases, and drinking to excess when they have the opportunity

## **The importance on local community controlled approaches to address violence**

- Many of the responses are 'Darwin' or 'Canberra' focused, delivered by mainstream organisations for programs that are designed elsewhere.
- It is important that local Indigenous people are trusted to drive the change in their communities

## **Services are needed to support men**

- The language around 'women and their children' cuts men out of the issues - both as users of violence and as victims
- All cases of violence are painted with the same brush with no understanding of the different experiences of men
- Society does not acknowledge that women can also be users of violence
- Safe spaces need to be available for men
- Domestic Violence Orders (DVOs) do not consider where men will stay - there is a greater need for places for men to stay if they are under a DVO
- Some women are using DVOs against men when they do not like something that he is doing (i.e. non-domestic violence reasons)



# Priority actions

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## **The men's family violence space should look different**

- There should be culturally appropriate supports that wrap around men after experiences of family violence and are easily accessible
- A number of services need to be available, including men's sheds, safe spaces with showers and beds, accommodation, counsellors and availability of education
- Services and supports needs break away from 'shame' and begin to address the issues affecting men
- Legal advice and education is required for men that is more easily accessible

## **Men's behaviour change programs**

- There needs to be programs based on family; not just gender. Mens and womens programs need to be separate, but also need opportunities to come together
- Alice Springs has a lot of good men who should be given a chance to lead
- More programs are needed. These need to employ local people who have been through the program and draw on local men's networks
- The 4 Corners Program (program led by local men that promote community safety and strong leadership) should be expanded. Greater funding is needed for the Inkgja Mens Program

## **Engagement with young people**

- Drop in centres need to be open 24 hours a day.
- There needs to be a safe space for young people, like men's safe spaces. These need meals, showers and a bed
- There is a need for programs to specifically support and wrap around young people
- Life lessons from leaders need to be transferred to young people

## **Indigenous culture and empowerment**

- There needs be protocol in drawing on Indigenous culture, which is currently not being shared. Culture programs are needed
- There are many Aboriginal visitors from outside Alice Springs that do not follow the local culture. Outside Shires should be responsible for taking their people back to their shires
- Indigenous communities need to be given the power to enforce justice
- A community justice model needs to be developed by the community, and implemented by the community



# Priority actions

## More mental health support

- There is limited to no support for addressing mental health issues in men
- Mental health issues are seen as taboo and there is a lot of shame surrounding them
- Local healing and yarning programs are needed to assist address the significant mental health issues in Indigenous communities

## Addressing the trauma in Indigenous communities

- Programs that are culturally appropriate are needed to address trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples
- The effects of the Northern Territory Intervention are still being felt, and impacting Indigenous peoples
- Strengths based approaches are needed

## Alcohol and drugs

- The issues of ICE are massive in communities, and have significant impacts in family violence
- Alcohol is a major contributor to family violence
- Programs need to be led by local community members
- More alcohol and other drug (AOD) services are needed, both within community and inside prisons
- There needs to be greater education of the effects of drugs and alcohol
- Police need to focus on targeting the dealers and drug runners; not the people using the drugs

## Prison and other justice programs

- There should be other justice alternatives to prison
- Some men use prison as quiet time: time to get away from family; food; safety; and a bed. This is reflective of the lack of other support to assist local communities
- There needs to be more opportunities to engage in culture and ceremony in prisons