



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Indigenous Family Violence Consultation Summary - Women'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

This material was commissioned by the Commonwealth of Australia to assist in the collection of information from consultation sessions workshops around Australia. 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 Ms Barbara Shaw from Tangentyere Council 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 Womens's workshop on domestic, family and sexual violence in Indigenous communities

Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Aboriginal Corporation

Alice Springs Town Council

Tangentyere Council

Anyinginyi Health Aboriginal Corporation

Piliyintinji-Ki Stronger Families

Central Australia Women's Legal Service

Central Australian Domestic and Family Violence Network (CAFVSAN)

National Association for Prevention of Child abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)

Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara Women's Council (NPYWC)

Territory Families

Northern Territory Legal Aid

Department of Social Services



Key themes and priorities

Key themes and priorities

Issue	Themes	Priorities
Solutions need to be developed and implemented locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alice Springs is seen as a service town - people have to attend Alice Spring for services. Although services seem to have worked outside of their community, when they arrive back in remote towns they resume violence • Some services deliver “drive-ins” where they deliver services in towns for a limited number of days and then leave. This is expensive and does not provide ongoing services for locals • Operation Haven (in Alice Springs), an initiative based around targeting offenders through intelligence, has made some community members uncomfortable; family issues are openly discussed and may involve the families of those partaking in these discussions • Service providers do not see the data, evidence and numbers, rather they see the qualitative occurrences on the ground. There’s no communication of police data to service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding needs to be placed into towns, not the major centres (i.e. Alice Springs, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek). • There needs to be more people in communities to respond to violence, particularly in remote communities, with a focus on upskilling them • Need to increase the skills of people in the local communities to deliver services. Local people should be offered the opportunity to work local jobs • Engagement between police and service providers is needed to share information sensitively (intelligence information and quantitative data/evidence).
Governments and universal programs need to better support Indigenous people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NT mandatory reporting laws are barrier to women reporting violence. There is a significant fear around children being taken away after a child protection flag has been made if the victim provides a statement or reports partner. Therefore, statements are not being made, and perpetrator are not being held accountable • Police are not always able to distinguish between regular violence and family violence • The 1800RESPECT service does not work for Indigenous people and culturally and linguistically diverse groups. The service is not helpful if English is a victim survivor’s second language. First nation interpreters are needed. • There have been multiple layers of Royal Commissions, yet Indigenous people have not seen better outcomes • There has been less consultation in the Northern Territory with Aboriginal people, and the issue appears to be getting less representative each time a consultation process has occurred. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to link up all the national and NT plans to enable more effective change, including the Closing the Gap initiative. • Police need domestic family and sexual violence training, including how to distinguish family violence from regular violence • Aboriginal communities and people need to be engaged in policy and program design

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Alcohol abuse is a barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service providers find it difficult to work with clients who misuse alcohol. Alcoholism and alcohol abuse needs to be treated first, otherwise services cannot treat the client for their violent behaviour. Services are struggling to get past the alcoholism and violence in order to help the person. • Alcohol should not be recognised as the sole contributor to domestic and family violence. • Alcoholism and violence is a learned behaviour that should be treated like a disease. It needs to be recognised that this behaviour is in response to trauma experienced by Indigenous people. This needs to be at the focus of treatment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSS recognised that early prevention, especially childhood prevention can create change • Treat alcoholism and violence like a disease, with trauma-informed approaches
Greater support is needed to help families manage money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inability to manage money is a major contributor to disadvantage • Financial counselling is only provided when referred and is not integrated with Centrelink. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrelink should better integrate with financial counselling services. • There was a suggestion that social security payments should tied to recipients undertaking financial counselling.
Significant service gaps across the Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and areas where there are no services available are huge issues, however there limited acknowledgement that this issue exists. • Need to address the lack of safe housing, particularly housing that accommodates women’s child before there can be meaningful change in domestic and family violence • Services and supports also need to be able to address jealousy, cycles of violence and different forms of violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate housing options need to be made more available in communities across the Northern Territory
Services and engagement with children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyber-violence is occurring amongst young people • Aboriginal liaison officers who work with children need to be involved in consultation and program design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education from early childhood is needed around healthy relationships and violence • More should be done around cyber-violence amongst Indigenous communities