



National Plan Stakeholder Consultation Final Report

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Abbreviations

ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
ADE	Australian Disability Enterprise
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AGD	Attorney General's Department (Commonwealth)
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CTG	Closing the Gap
FDSV	Family, domestic and sexual violence
DSS	Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex and/or asexual
MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program
MGFVPC	Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NPAG	National Plan Advisory Group
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
OFW	Office for Women (Commonwealth)
PINOP	Person in need of protection
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RCFV	Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria)
RRE	Respectful Relationships Education
RREP	Respectful Relationships Education Program
Tas	Tasmania
UN	United Nations

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Executive Summary

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Executive Summary

Family, domestic and sexual violence is a national crisis in Australia. The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022 was released in February 2011 following a consultative effort by the Commonwealth Government in collaboration with Australian State and Territory Governments and a shared commitment to drive improved responses to, and prevention of, all forms of violence against women. The National Plan represents the overarching strategy to address family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia. Over this 12 - year period, the implementation of the National Plan has been guided by the priorities and actions set out in four three-year Action Plans. The Commonwealth Government has committed to the development and delivery of a new National Plan to end violence against women and children (next National Plan) to frame the Government's priorities and approach to eliminate gender-based violence in Australia. In April 2021 the Department of Social Services (DSS), in partnership with the Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (OFW), released a Consultation Guide to frame the consultation process that would inform the development of the next National Plan. The Consultation Guide presented six principles underpinning the Government's commitment in this space as well as a Draft framework for Australia's National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children. In May 2021, shortly following the release of the Consultation Guide, DSS contracted the Monash Consultation Team to undertake key elements of the Australian Government's consultation.

The stakeholder consultations to inform the next National Plan included four key stages:



This Report presents the key themes, findings and recommendations from each stage of the Consultation. It aims to inform the development, implementation, governance and impact measurement of the next National Plan. The Report is forward facing. The consultation was not focused on reviewing the previous National Plan or reflecting on its strengths or weaknesses, as the methodology details. This Report, then, does not provide an evaluation of what has been achieved under the term of the current National Plan nor does it review the current response system and prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence across Australia. This Report provides an overarching account of the views of those consulted: representing the diverse perspectives on how the next National Plan must be developed, implemented, governed and measured to provide the most effective effort towards ending all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia.

During the stakeholder consultation virtual workshops and interviews, over an 11-week period from early July 2021 to mid-September 2021, the Monash Consultation Team engaged 492 individuals from 338 organisations. The key findings from those stakeholder consultations are presented throughout this Report thematically and reflect the views, experiences and recommendations of the range of Australian stakeholders engaged. The key findings focus on the desired outcomes under the next National Plan and are deliberately forward facing to achieve this.

Key Findings on Desired Outcomes

The following key findings reflect stakeholder views on the key desired outcomes under the next National Plan. Stakeholder views are grouped into key themes.

1.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities

- The next National Plan aligns governance structures and implementation plans with the commitments enshrined in Priority Reform One of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- The next National Plan embeds the right to truth telling, healing, and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- The voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are embedded throughout the development, implementation and evaluation of the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan includes dedicated funding for First Nations led and run community-controlled organisations, which includes components for community building activities and a strategic framework to support local retention of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trauma-informed workforce.
- Specific naming and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+, Sistergirls and Brotherboys occurs within the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan builds competency of ACCOs to deliver inclusive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQA+ communities including Sistergirls and Brotherboys through training and education.
- Sistergirls and Brotherboys are represented on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council, and opportunities for cross-sectorial engagement are sought.

1.2 Children and Young People

- The next National Plan acknowledges children and young people as victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence in their own right.
- The wellbeing, recovery and safety needs of children and young people are central to the next National Plan's focus.
- The next National Plan is trauma informed and adopts a life course approach to the prevention of, and responses to, family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan promotes culturally safe, community-led policy and practice responses to the experiences and support needs of First Nations children and their families that align with the Closing the Gap key targets and outcomes as they relate to children, young people and their families.
- The next National Plan ensures the voices of children and young people are visible in the implementation and activities that stem from its operation.
- The next National Plan promotes greater investment in therapeutic and trauma-informed services for children and young people experiencing or impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence. This includes support for peer support workers to be embedded into services and capacity building for the specialist workforce to ensure safe and trauma-informed engagement with children and young people.
- The next National Plan addresses the safe housing deficit for children and young people experiencing or impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence with the aim of ensuring accessing and greater availability of respite services and safe housing options.

1.3 LGBTIQA+ communities

- The next National Plan should recognise and address gendered forms of violence without excluding LGBTIQA+ populations from its objectives and target populations. Its current title therefore requires

reconsideration.

- The next National Plan commits to funding the development and delivery of a prevention framework for LGBTIQ+ communities.
- The next National Plan supports workforce capacity building in specialist and mainstream service provision to ensure safe and informed service responses that meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ populations affected by family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan incorporates an intersectional lens that recognises the underlying drivers of family, domestic and sexual violence disproportionately affecting LGBTIQ+ populations.
- The next National Plan recognises and addresses family-of-origin violence as a key underlying driver for poor mental health outcomes and increased risk of self-harming behaviours and suicide among LGBTIQ+ populations.

1.4 People with disability

- The next National Plan broadens the scope of family, domestic and sexual violence to ensure it is inclusive of the forms of violence experienced by people with disability.
- The language of vulnerability is removed from the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan adopts an intersectional approach that aims to address the policy and service system silos for people with disability who experience violence.
- The next National Plan promotes alignment with the rights contained in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The next National Plan acknowledges the service system gaps and barriers for people with disability who experience violence and support improved service accessibility and trauma informed supports.
- Training on identifying violence, assessing risk, and connecting people with disability who are experiencing violence to relevant supports and services is promoted under the next National Plan. This training is delivered by people with disability, and beyond NDIS staff to encompass health workers and the specialist family violence sector.

1.5 Migrant women and individuals on temporary visas

- The next National Plan includes a focus on improving access to services for migrant and refugee women, regardless of their visa status.
- The next National Plan commits to delivering system reforms, with a focus on the migration system, to increase migrant and refugee women's safety from family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan includes a national commitment to longer-term funding of existing specialist support for migrant and refugee women.

1.6 Rural, regional and remote communities

- The next National Plan develops and implements a strategy to address the lack of access to safe housing for women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities.
- The next National Plan increases funding to support service accessibility and to enhance service delivery across rural, regional and remote communities.
- The next National Plan increases longer-term contracts for the family, domestic and sexual violence workforce in rural, regional and remote communities to address workforce retention and development challenges.
- The next National Plan supports new research to build the evidence base on family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities. This includes building an accurate picture of the prevalence of violence in rural, regional and remote communities, and service provision in the wake of natural disasters.

1.7 Older people

- The next National Plan acknowledges the risk of certain life-stages, including older age, including by incorporating life stage as a risk factor in national risk assessment principles. This requires an intersectional lens to ensure the diverse needs of older people are taken into consideration.
- The next National Plan provides clearer recognition of the recovery needs of older people who have experienced family, domestic and sexual violence. In particular, the Plan recognises the accumulated economic disadvantage for older women and the need to improve provision of safe and affordable housing.
- The next National Plan recognises the risks specific to older persons and the need for trauma-informed responses for older women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan better recognises and responds to elder abuse and sexual violence in aged care settings. It supports increased training in aged care settings to improve early identification of elder abuse and supports increased capacity for sexual assault services to be offered in aged care settings.
- The next National Plan supports longitudinal research into the gendered experiences and impacts of sexual, domestic and family violence over the life-course.

1.8 Military and veteran families

- The next National Plan supports further research to build the evidence base on the prevalence and complexity of domestic and family violence, victimisation and perpetration within military and veteran families
- The next National Plan supports a review of the feasibility and impacts of the culture of 'zero tolerance' for domestic and family violence in the Australian Defence Force.
- The next National Plan considers the development of practice guidance on responding to veteran/military families to help inform mainstream services on how to respond to domestic and family violence disclosures and requests for assistance from military and veteran communities.

2.1 Naming of the plan

- The name, and the focus of the priorities and implementation actions included within the next National Plan is inclusive of violence experienced by all priority populations and forms of gendered violence.

2.2 Consistent definitions

- The next National Plan commits to introducing a national definition or framework on family, domestic and sexual violence that includes wide-ranging consultation with a range of populations, including First Nations populations, people with disability, cultural and linguistically diverse communities, and LGBTIQ+ populations.

2.3 A commitment to inclusivity and intersectionality

- The next National Plan embeds a commitment to inclusivity and intersectionality throughout the Plan, any implementation/action plans, and in all work stemming from the Plan.

2.4 Ensuring sexual violence does not fall off the agenda

- The scope of the next National Plan includes a commitment to ending all forms of sexual violence, including sexual violence outside of the context of family, domestic and intimate partner relationships.
- The next National Plan includes a clearly articulated commitment to addressing and ending sexual violence against young women and girls.

2.5 Alignment with other national plan, policies and practice guides

- The next National Plan is developed and implemented with clear reference to, and mapped against, all other relevant national, state and territory plans and policy agendas.

3.1 Governance arrangements

- The next National Plan embeds an independent governance arrangement responsible for monitoring the implementation and delivery of the Plan's priorities and actions.

3.2 Embedding lived experience expertise

- A victim-survivor expert advocacy group is established by the Commonwealth Government to inform the development and implementation of the next National Plan. This group is remunerated in recognition of their time and expertise.

3.3 The role of data and research

- The next National Plan embeds a clear commitment to research, monitoring and evaluation.
- The next National Plan supports First Nations led research and evaluation to address the dearth of evidence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan embeds the 2020 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) standard for the collection of all data on family, domestic and sexual violence.

3.4 Funding needs and recommendations

- The next National Plan embeds longer-term funding cycles.
- Under the next National Plan there is a clear move away from the process of competitive tendering for, family, domestic and sexual violence services and peak bodies.
- To implement the next National Plan, Government works in genuine partnership with and adequately funds ACCOs.
- The next National Plan supports the development of a First Nations Accountability Framework for governments to adhere to when considering funding (i.e. co-design, healing, embedding the voices of First Nations people).
- The next National Plan includes a strategy to build the capacity of ACCOs. This strategy aims to improve recruitment and retention of local trauma-informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforces in ACCOs. Other capacities to be built include grant writing, local program design and evaluation.

5. Prevention

- The next National Plan includes an increased focus on the prevention of sexual violence within and beyond family and intimate partner relationships.
- The next National Plan contains clear and unambiguous targets for the primary prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence. This should include strategies to meet these targets and avenues to monitor progress.
- The Australian Government considers developing a national Gender Equality Strategy and a dedicated machinery independent of the Australian Government to implement it.
- The next National Plan commits to providing longer-term investments in primary prevention.

- The next National Plan embeds funding for research and evaluation into primary prevention initiatives to build the evidence base required to inform effective whole of community interventions across a wide range of settings.
- As part of the work plan to emerge from the next National Plan, a primary prevention workforce development strategy is designed and implemented. The work plan aims to improve consistency and coordination of the workforce.
- The next National Plan commits to the delivery of a range of primary prevention initiatives at the structural, community and individual levels to comprehensively progress the prevention of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence. This includes initiatives developed by community and tailored to the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence among priority populations.
- The next National Plan commits to the delivery of a national community awareness initiative focused on improving community understandings of what constitutes coercive control, and on the prevention of technology-facilitated abuse.

5.3 Education

- The next National Plan reflects the need for age-sensitive, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive education on respectful relationships, sexualities and consent across the schooling life span.
- The next National Plan supports the expansion of the Respectful Relationships program to include:
 - Age-sensitive resources on sexual consent,
 - Increased resources to support the development of wraparound support for schools, including professional development for teachers to support upskilling, provide access to up-to-date referral options, and training on safely responding to disclosures of violence, and
 - A bank of resources for parents and carers to support conversations regarding respectful relationships in the home.
- The expansion of the Respectful Relationships program, under the next National Plan, also involves the provision of an independent review to consider the degree to which the curriculum materials are culturally sensitive and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, young people living with a disability, and children and young people with diverse gender identity and/or sexualities.

6.1 Early intervention

- The next National Plan elevates opportunities for early intervention for all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence, including with a dedicated stream of work that focuses on children and young people using harmful and sexual abusive behaviours.
- Early intervention initiatives with parents broadly, and fathers specifically, are expanded under the next National Plan. This includes specific focus on community led and culturally safe initiatives that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents.
- The next National Plan further develops earlier interventions programs with boys and young men. These programs are implemented across schools and include a focus on the prevention of technology-facilitated abuse among boys and young men.

6.2 System integration and service delivery

- The next National Plan seeks to improve system integration within and across specialist and mainstream service system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan supports embedding coordinated risk-assessment and information-sharing practices nationally.
- The next National Plan includes clear recognition that different models of system integration are required for First Nations communities and that this is essential to ensuring culturally safe and appropriate system design and delivery.

- The next National Plan supports strategies to better harness and share learnings from best practice across service systems, settings and jurisdictions.
- The next National Plan ensures the importance of trauma-informed practice is reflected in the overarching principles that govern the family, domestic and sexual violence system.
- The next National Plan clearly articulates and embeds a right to recovery for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

6.3 Risk assessment and management

- Over the term of the next National Plan there is a clear commitment from the Commonwealth, as well as state and territory governments, to enhancing risk assessment and management practices. Wherever possible there is due consideration to whether national consistency of practice can be achieved.
- The next National Plan recognises the need to improve the degree to which risk assessment and management practices inform effective practice beyond the context of male-perpetrated intimate-partner violence. The next National Plan supports work to expand understandings of how risk can be assessed and managed for all forms of domestic and family violence.

6.4 Housing responses

- Housing is at the forefront of the next National Plan.
- The Commonwealth Government undertakes a national review to determine the level of demand, supply and cohorts' needs for a fully funded safe housing system.
- The next National Plan commits to delivering a significant investment into social housing for individuals impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence. This must include investment in long-term housing (covering at least a two-to-three-year period).
- The next National Plan ensures specialised and inclusive housing options, including for First Nations populations, LGBTIQ+ communities, and for individuals from migrant backgrounds.
- The next National Plan expands the Safe at Home program, and ensures evaluations are embedded to determine effectiveness to enhance women's safety and economic recovery from COVID-19.
- The next National Plan expands housing options for perpetrators removed from the home to increase feasibility and safety of women and children remaining in the home.

6.5 Health system responses

- The next National Plan embeds a consistent definition of family, domestic and sexual violence within health systems nationally, and ensures that responses to all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence should be clearly established as a priority public health issue.
- The next National Plan supports a program of work to enhance early intervention in health settings. There is a significant need to provide training to health practitioners broadly, and general practitioners specifically, as to how to provide trauma-informed responses to disclosures of family, domestic and sexual violence.
- Identifying and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence is built into the recommended national curriculum of all medical students.
- The next National Plan ensures clearer integration and cooperation between health services, including mental health, sexual health, maternal health care, and alcohol and other drug services.

6.6 Workplace based responses

- A national stocktake of workplace responses to perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence is

conducted with the aim of sharing learnings across industries and geographical locations, and with the goal of building the evidence base to inform effective practice in responding to and preventing violence.

- The next National Plan supports the development of a suite of best practice training resources to promote training consistency across industries.
- The next National Plan recognises that workplaces have a critical role to play in addressing financial stress and economic instability for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.
- The next National Plan commits to the development of national guidelines on responding to domestic and family violence perpetrators in the workplace.
- The merits of a gender equity version of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) are further explored in consultation with primary prevention experts and industry leaders.

6.7 Child protection

- The next National Plan commits to addressing the fears that victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence hold, and which prevent them from reporting violence and/or accessing support services.
- The next National Plan provides guidance to all states and territories on the importance of trauma-informed and specialised domestic and family violence training for the child protection workforce.
- The next National Plan commits to improving service system integration and the identification of opportunities for earlier support system intervention to reduce the involvement of child protection in the lives of victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

6.8 Justice system responses

- The next National Plan commits greater funding to allow for more effective, trauma-informed and culturally safe justice system approaches to be adopted in response to family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan supports the introduction of an independent auditing mechanism for the policing of family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The level and effectiveness of family, domestic and sexual violence police training is increased to inform more appropriate and effective police responses. This includes an increase in the provision of training to:
 - inform specialist and trauma-informed responses,
 - enhance understandings of domestic and family violence as an ongoing pattern of behaviour,
 - enhance understanding and awareness of technology-facilitated abuse in all its forms, and
 - ensure appropriate, culturally safe and effective ways of interacting with diverse communities, including LGBTIQ+ communities, refugee and migrant communities, and First Nations communities.
- The next National Plan supports national research into the circumstances in which police misidentify the person in need of protection, including in the context of coercive control, to inform improved police training and prevention strategies to counter misidentification.
- The next National Plan provides increased support and embed funding for health-justice partnerships into service agreements. The opportunity for health-justice partnerships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to offer community-led, strengths-based responses to family, domestic and sexual violence is explored.
- The next National Plan increases access to interpreters at all stages of justice system process including for preliminary court dates.
- The next National Plan commits to addressing the disruptions caused by the separation of court processes across criminal, civil and family courts for individuals experiencing family, domestic and

sexual violence. Opportunities for improved systems integration are explored and reforms to prioritise safety at all points of the system and reduce systems abuse should be progressed.

- The next National Plan supports a program of reform across states and territories to promote improved court responses to sexual violence. This program of reform supports trauma-informed, culturally safe court response to sexual violence, including by addressing the re-traumatisation of victim-survivors through the court process and exploring opportunities to embed an intermediary or advocate for victim - survivors, and to enhance jury directors in sexual violence matters.
- Increased judicial training across state and territories is provided to improve understanding of coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse, and to dispel presumptions and myths about sexual violence. The next National Plan supports the development of a national definition and set of principles to guide consistent state and territory responses to coercive control.
- The next National Plan gives further consideration to the merits and need for a national definition and set of principles to guide tailored responses to technology facilitated abuse.
- The next National Plan supports research to build the evidence base on technology facilitated abuse experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including increasing knowledge on experiences of abuse and opportunities to develop First Nations community specific responses.

6.9 Alternatives to Justice System responses

- The next National Plan promotes the introduction of trauma-informed and culturally safe alternatives to justice system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. Alternative models facilitate opportunities for victim-survivors to choose the path most suitable for them while supporting victim- survivor healing and recovery are explored.
- The next National Plan allocates greater resources and funding to support investment in capacity building and allow communities to develop their own alternative justice system responses.

6.10 The family law system

- The next National Plan prioritises family, domestic, and sexual violence specialisation of all staff, practitioners and judicial officers involved in family law court proceedings to ensure domestic and family violence, trauma informed responses to victim-parents and children, and to identify and interrupt system abuse and manipulation by perpetrators of domestic and family violence.
- The next National Plan invests in trauma-informed, wraparound support within the Family Law System for mothers/parents and children experiencing domestic and family violence. This includes a commitment to ensuring before and aftercare for parents and children experiencing domestic and family violence.
- The next National Plan establishes specialist lists for high risk/high complexity matters involving family, domestic and sexual violence in the Family Law Courts.
- The next National Plan establishes specialist lists for matters involving at least one party identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the Family Law Courts.
- The next National Plan supports the delivery of cultural competency training by First Nations practitioners to all professional engaged in the Family Law System.
- The next National Plan includes a commitment to improve education, training, and employment pathways for First Nations people in the family law system.
- The next National Plan embeds culturally sensitive and safe mediation models into the family law system for First Nations people.

7.1 Perpetrator Interventions

- The next National Plan supports the development and delivery of a suite of perpetrator-focused

interventions across the span of prevention, early intervention and response. This is mapped out to inform the development of a coordinated Commonwealth, state and territory integrated plan and supports a diverse range of interventions tailored to priority populations.

- The next National Plan supports the development of a robust national evaluation framework for working with men and perpetrator interventions.
- The next National Plan supports a review of the National Outcomes Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI) to embed state and territory implementation guidelines.
- The next National Plan supports a review of opportunities to enhance compliance management and responses across perpetrator interventions with a view to improving perpetrator accountability and victim-survivor safety.
- The next National Plan supports enhanced information sharing about perpetrator risk.
- The next National Plan funds a national stocktake of all perpetrator intervention pilots and short - term programs. This stocktake focuses on documenting current practice and analysing program evaluations across each of the states and territories.

Introduction

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Introduction

Family, domestic and sexual violence is a national crisis in Australia. The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*¹ was released in February 2011 following a consultative effort by the Commonwealth Government in collaboration with Australian State and Territory Governments and a shared commitment to drive improved responses to, and prevention of, all forms of violence against women. The National Plan represents the overarching strategy to address family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia. Over this 12- year period, the implementation of the National Plan has been guided by the priorities and actions set out in four three-year Action Plans. Often-cited key achievements of the National Plan include the creation of Our Watch – a national organisation dedicated to the primary prevention of violence against women and their children – delivery of the *Stop it at the Start* national awareness campaign, and support for national support services, including 1800RESPECT.²

The Commonwealth Government has committed to the development and delivery of a new National Plan to frame the Government's priorities and approach to driving the elimination of violence against women in Australia. This Plan, to come into effect in mid-2022, is hereinafter referred to as the 'next National Plan'.

In April 2021 the Department of Social Services (DSS), in partnership with the Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (OFW), released a *Consultation Guide* to frame the consultation process that would inform the development of the next National Plan. That guide presented six principles underpinning the Government's commitment in this space as well as a *Draft framework for Australia's National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children*.³ In May 2021, shortly following the release of the *Consultation Guide*, DSS contracted the Monash Consultation Team to undertake key elements of the Australian Government's consultation.

Overall, the stakeholder consultations to inform the next National Plan included four key stages:



Figure 1: Stages of the National Plan Stakeholder Consultation

The role of the Monash Consultation Team was to analyse the findings of the two consultation phases, one already completed (the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence) and one underway (the DSS Engage Survey), and to undertake stakeholder consultations and observations at the National Women's Safety Summit. This Report presents the key findings from these different components of the stakeholder consultations undertaken between June 2020 and September 2021 as they relate to the development and delivery of the next National Plan. The purpose of the consultation, at each stage, has been to inform the development, implementation, governance and impact measurement of the next National Plan.

¹ Hereinafter, National Plan.

² House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs. (2021) *Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence*. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ix.

³ Department of Social Services. (2021) *Consultation Guide*. Available at: <https://engage.dss.gov.au/developing-the-next-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children/public-consultations-for-the-next-national-plan-consultation-guide-and-translations/>

This Report is structured chronologically, according to each of the four key stages of the Consultation. It should be noted that in many instances the key findings emerging from each Consultation Stage are iterative. Additionally, some individuals and organisations contributed numerous times at each point of the Consultation.

The Report is forward facing. The consultation was not focused on reviewing the previous National Plan or reflecting on its strengths or weaknesses, as the methodology details. This Report, then, does not provide an evaluation of what has been achieved under the term of the current National Plan nor does it review the current response system and prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence across Australia. This Report provides an overarching account of the views of those consulted: representing the diverse perspectives on how the next National Plan must be developed, implemented, governed and measured to provide the most effective effort towards ending all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia.

Approach to the Consultation

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Approach to the Consultation

The stakeholder consultations were carried out across four key stages over a 16 -month period, from June 2020 to September 2021, as shown in the Figure below.



Figure 2: Key stages of the Consultation

Prior to the Monash Consultation Team being contracted by DSS to undertake the stakeholder consultations, the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence (Inquiry) was completed, and the DSS Engage Survey was designed and launched. The Inquiry findings and recommendations as they pertain to the next National Plan have been included here as representing Stage 1 of the Consultation. Our Consultation Team also received the de-identified data provided by individuals and organisations through the DSS Engage Survey platform to conduct a higher-level analysis as part of this Consultation Project. This analysis involved a quantitative analysis of all survey data alongside a thematic analysis of open text responses received by both individuals and organisations.

Further details on each stage of the Consultation are set out in the following section.

House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence

The first stage of the consultation to inform the next National Plan began in June 2020 with the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs' commencement of an Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence. The Inquiry's Terms of Reference were to inquire into and report on family, domestic and sexual violence with an express view to informing the development of the next National Plan.⁴ The objectives of the Inquiry, as stated in the Foreword to the Final Report, were to:

⁴ See Appendix A.

... reflect on the successes and shortcomings of the National Plan, to hear from experts in the field about what has and has not worked, and to identify opportunities to ensure that the next National Plan leads to a meaningful reduction in the unacceptable rates of family, domestic and sexual violence.⁵

It is important to note here that, unlike other phases of the consultation where all forms of sexual violence have been of relevance, the Inquiry did not examine sexual violence, including sexual assault and sexual harassment, occurring beyond the context of domestic and family violence. While the Inquiry did receive evidence pertaining to sexual violence in the workplace, in higher education settings and in the wider community, this was 'not examined in detail',⁶ and hence not covered in the Inquiry's Final Report Findings and Recommendations. Sexual violence outside the context of domestic and family violence has been considered at other stages of the Consultation, most pertinently during the stakeholder workshops and interviews.

The Inquiry was conducted between June 2020 and March 2021. A timeline of key stages of the Inquiry is included below, noting that as part of the Inquiry process an open call for submissions occurred and public hearings were held in late 2020.

Figure 3: Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence – Timeline



The Inquiry culminated in the publication of a 470-page bipartisan report, which made 88 recommendations seeking to inform the development of the next National Plan.⁷ The Inquiry's Final Report grouped these recommendations into five key themes:

⁵ House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs. (2021) *Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence*. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, x.

⁶ House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs. (2021) *Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence*. Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, x.

⁷ See Appendix B for a full list of the 88 recommendations made by the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs.

1. The need for uniformity and inclusivity,
2. The need to engender a culture of accountability and greater workforce support,
3. The critical importance of education,
4. The need to prioritise the welfare of victim-survivors and children, and
5. The importance of holding perpetrators to account for their use of violence.

The role of the Monash Consultation Team was to conduct a high-level analysis of the findings and recommendations as they relate to the development and priority areas of the next National Plan.

DSS Engage survey data analysis

The public survey hosted on the DSS Engage platform was designed by DSS (see Appendix C for a copy of the survey instrument). The survey was launched on 7 April 2021 to facilitate an open call opportunity for all Australians to contribute to the Consultation either in an individual or organisational capacity. It closed on 31 July 2021. Over its four-month open period, the DSS Engage survey was promoted through Commonwealth Government ministerial communications and social media posts; it was also promoted by the Monash Consultation team in email communications and during stakeholder engagement. The survey allowed for the collection of quantitative and qualitative data across a series of scale-response and open-ended text questions. The survey contained 15 questions for individual respondents and 13 questions for organisations.

All data received through the DSS Engage platform was reviewed by the Department and a de-identified and redacted data set was shared with the Monash Consultation Team for high-level analysis. This data set contained 1,104 responses from 931 individuals and 173 organisations. The data set was cleaned to remove duplicate entries. The final data set utilised by the Monash Consultation team contained responses from 899 individuals and 173 organisations. A further breakdown of the demographics of the individuals and organisations that participated in the survey is provided in the Consultation Stage 2: DSS Engage Survey section of this Report.

A quantitative analysis was conducted of all scaled responses, and a thematic qualitative analysis was undertaken of all open-text responses. The presentation of high-level findings in this Report is focused on provided responses pertaining to the content, development, implementation, governance and measurement of the next National Plan. We note that many individuals utilised the DSS Engage survey to share their experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence, and to comment on their interactions with different points of the response system. The data-sharing agreement with DSS and the scope of our Consultation project did not permit this Report to present those experiences, but we acknowledge the victim-survivor expertise shared through this platform and the imperative of learning from lived experience.

Stakeholder consultations: virtual workshops and interviews

The key mode of data collection for the Monash Consultation Team occurred via a series of virtual thematic and jurisdiction-specific workshops, and a series of small group and individual interviews, carried out via Zoom in July through to mid-September 2021. The workshop themes were developed by the Monash Consultation Team in close partnership with the DSS. The Monash Consultation Team provided an initial list of recommended workshop themes, following which DSS sought feedback from the OFW and National Plan Advisory Group (NPAG). Additionally, direction and advice on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific workshops was sought from the Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence (Advisory Council). A final list of workshop themes was set by DSS.

and provided to the Monash Consultation team.

Workshop themes: Over the course of the stakeholder consultation, workshops were held on the following themes (listed here alphabetically):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (three workshops were held on this theme)
- Addressing complex and intergenerational trauma
- Children and young people
- Children and young people: issues and responses
- Coercive control
- Disability and gender-based violence
- Family law systems and support systems for women and children experiencing violence (two workshops were held on this theme)
- Family, domestic and sexual violence (including sexual harassment)
- Health system: interventions, support and responses
- Housing
- Justice responses to gender-based violence
- LGBTIQA+ communities
- Life circumstances
- Migrant and refugee women
- Policing and law enforcement
- Primary prevention: campaigns and community interventions
- Promotion of business and industry initiatives that work to prevent violence or support those experiencing violence
- Recovery
- Reinforcing factors
- Research, data development and measurements
- Rural, regional and remote women
- Service design, delivery and integration
- Sexualised violence: responses and support for victims
- Sistergirls and Brotherboys⁸
- Technology, safety and technology-facilitated abuse
- The role of workplaces in promoting gender equality and addressing drivers of violence
- Working with perpetrators: prevention, holding to account

The thematic workshop questions were semi-structured and developed in consultation with DSS to reflect key themes and priority areas for each workshop. Key stakeholders, including other Commonwealth agencies, advisory groups (including NPAG and the Chair of the Advisory Council) and others, were consulted on an ad hoc basis on workshop themes, participants and questions. The workshop questions were designed to explore key issues pertaining to the development of the next National Plan, including the identification of priority areas, key challenges, issues specific to the theme and priority populations, as well as questions pertaining to the measurement of success and progress under the next National Plan. The questions were intended to be a guide rather than a firm schedule, and workshop facilitators encouraged participants to provide all information they believed relevant to the Consultation, even where this did not align directly with the questions posed. At the end of every workshop, time permitting, all workshop participants were offered an opportunity to provide any other relevant information or views they had not yet shared. It was important to ensure that the Consultation captured all areas deemed relevant and important by stakeholders, within and beyond those identified through the prepared questions.

⁸ The workshop on sistergirls and brotherboys was conducted with a smaller number of participants.

Workshop participants: At the outset of the Consultation, DSS determined that there would be no open call for participation in the workshops. Given the ongoing impact of the pandemic, virtual settings were sought for all workshops and it was decided that participation in each workshop should be capped at 15-20 individuals to maximise the quality and depth of contributions. Participation was facilitated through invitations from the Monash Consultation Team. The Monash Consultation Team developed an initial list of participants for each of the workshops and provided it to DSS for consideration; DSS then provided the Monash Consultation Team with a final expanded list of approved participants. This process allowed for the inclusion, in the most relevant workshop, of individuals and organisations that had reached out to DSS directly.

Individuals unable to attend the workshop initially allocated for them were invited by the Monash Consultation Team to participate in another workshop (where a relevant option was available) or to nominate another representative from their organisation to attend the workshop on their behalf. All efforts were made by the Monash Consultation Team to accommodate additional participant requests – for example, those made directly to the Monash Consultation Team by people seeking to participate in a workshop, and recommendations by invited participants for additional participants. Individuals unable to participate in a workshop were provided the opportunity to contribute to the broader consultation via the Department's DSS Engage Survey. Survey participation was open to workshop participants as an additional avenue for further contribution to the consultation.

Every effort was undertaken to ensure that a diversity of views was achieved in each workshop. While some workshops focused on priority populations and communities, these workshops were not the only point at which the views, experiences and sector needs of those communities and populations were considered. Intersectionality of participation was sought across the workshop themes, although we concede that this was achieved more fully in some areas than others.

While we acknowledge that many individuals working within the family, domestic and sexual violence sector have lived experience of violence against women, this phase of the consultation to inform the development of the next National Plan drew largely on the experiences of those working in and researching across the sector. It was determined early on in the consultation process that a separate, focused consultation would be conducted with victim-survivor advocates to ensure safe and appropriate contribution and to allow for the voices and expertise of victim-survivors to be privileged and heard. That consultation is underway at the time of completing this Report.

Jurisdictional workshops: In addition to the thematic workshops, a jurisdiction-specific workshop was held for each state and territory. These workshops were designed by the Monash Consultation Team in discussion with relevant state and territory government representatives. Each jurisdiction was given the opportunity to identify three key themes for discussion at their jurisdiction-specific workshop, and to identify the individuals who should be invited to participate. There was significant variance across the jurisdictions in the range of issues selected for focus and the composition of the workshop attendees.

Each of the thematic and jurisdictional workshops was attended by three members of the Monash Consultation Team, two facilitators and a project engagement manager. Their presence ensured continuity and consistency in workshop facilitation and note taking across the consultation.

Workshop observers: Nominated members of the DSS, OFW, and NPAG attended each of the thematic workshops, excluding the jurisdictional workshops, as silent observers. Members of the Advisory Council observed the three thematic workshops specifically focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For a smaller number of workshops, members of the AGD also attended in the capacity of silent observer. At the outset of the workshops, the Monash Consultation Team, noting that several

participants work in government-funded organisations, advised DSS that the presence of government observers might impact the willingness of workshop participants to provide full and frank feedback. However, Government observers attended each of the workshops, in part to ensure key themes emerging from the consultation could be captured by the Department in real-time.

Individual and small-group interviews: In addition to the workshops, 62 individuals participated in an individual or small group interviews, carried out during the final fortnight of the stakeholder consultations. These interviews were utilised by the Monash Consultation Team to undertake in-depth consultation with key leaders and experts in the family, domestic and sexual violence field. The individual and small-group interviews mirrored the approach taken for the workshops, including nomination of participants, and were semi-structured.

Total number of participants engaged: Over an 11-week period from early July 2021 to mid-September 2021, across the thematic workshops, jurisdictional workshops, and interviews, the Monash Consultation Team engaged 492 individuals from 338 organisations in this stage of the consultation project. Participants during this consultation stage were requested to advise the Monash Consultation Team if they did not wish for their name and/or organisation to be published in this Consultation Report. A list of all participants who consented for their names to be published in this consultation report, is provided in Appendix D.⁹

Data analysis: Each of the workshops and interviews was audio recorded and transcribed in full to facilitate the identification of key findings within and across the workshops. All transcripts were uploaded into NVivo qualitative analysis software to allow for thematic analysis by the Consultation team. In addition to the audio recordings, a summary document was produced following each of the thematic workshops identifying the key themes discussed. These summaries were provided to the DSS throughout the Consultation and have been drawn upon in the writing of this Report.

In presenting the key findings from the workshops and interviews in this Report, the Monash Consultation Team has drawn heavily on the voices of the consultation participants, captured through the inclusion of direct quotes throughout. These quotes and the key views of participants in the consultation have been de-identified. Where possible, we have identified in our analysis whether a view was held by the majority of consultation participants, by some of them, or by a small minority of participants.

National Summit on Women's Safety

The final stage of the stakeholder consultations captured in this report was the National Summit on Women's Safety (the Summit). Originally scheduled to be held at Parliament House in Canberra at the end of July, the event was postponed due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health control measures. Instead, the Summit was held virtually on 6 and 7 September 2021, with closed roundtables held the week prior on 2 and 3 September 2021. The Summit comprised two days of virtual roundtables followed by a two-day livestreamed event encompassing a combination of keynote addresses and facilitated panel discussions. Each state and territory nominated approximately 20 delegates with diverse backgrounds to represent varied perspectives and experiences; included were individuals with lived experience of family, domestic and sexual violence. Members of the NPAG and Advisory Council comprised the Commonwealth delegation. In total there were 163 jurisdictional delegates at the Summit, including 11 lead delegates who represented their jurisdictions and led discussions with the Commonwealth to develop and deliver the final Delegate Summit Statement.

⁹ There were 20 participants who nominated not to be individually named in the Final Report and they have not been included in Appendix D.

The Summit was designed and carried out by the Commonwealth Government. The role of the Monash Consultation Team was to provide scribing support for the roundtables to ensure that views relevant to the development and implementation of the next National Plan could be captured and presented in this Report. There were 11 roundtables held over the two days on the following themes (listed here alphabetically):

- Experiences of the LGBTIQA+ community
- Health and wellbeing responses
- Improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Legal responses, including coercive control and national consistency
- Migrant and refugee women's experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence
- Perpetrator interventions and working with men
- Protecting and supporting children
- Service delivery in regional and remote areas
- Service delivery reform and innovation, and measuring success
- Support women and children with disability
- Technology and abuse – challenges and opportunities

391 individuals attended the Day 1 roundtables, and 332 individuals attended the Day 2 roundtables. We note that some participants and observers attended multiple roundtables. The key themes and findings from these discussions are presented in the final section of this Report.

Beyond the roundtables, livestreaming of the keynote and panels facilitated wider participation in the Summit over 6–7 September. Up to 1,059 viewers attended either a panel or presentation session at any one time over these two days. We note that the reach of the Summit will extend beyond these attendee numbers as session recordings have now been published online via the Summit website.

Unsolicited submissions and resources

While the Monash Consultation Team did not facilitate an open call for submissions, over the course of the consultation the Consultation Team and the DSS received unsolicited submissions and resources from a number of organisations and individuals. Where consent was provided, DSS shared a copy of the submission received with the Monash Consultation Team.

The content and focus of these submissions varied considerably. Some had been prepared specifically for the Consultation Team; in other instances, resources generated for research, evaluation or organisational purposes were shared on the basis of their subject relevance to the consultation. DSS sought consent from all submission authors to share their submission with the Monash Consultation Team. Only where consent was received did DSS share the submission. The submissions shared are listed in Appendix E and have been reviewed and taken into consideration alongside other consultation materials. During the stakeholder workshops and interviews, participants also used the zoom chat function to post links to relevant organisational reports and research. These resources have been collated and taken into consideration in the presentation of the key themes and findings emerging from the stakeholder consultations.¹⁰

¹⁰ See Appendix F for a full list of resources, research and reports cited during the consultation interviews and workshops.

The National Plan Advisory Group (NPAG) was established by the Minister for Families and Social Services and Minister for Women's Safety, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne.¹¹ The NPAG is convened and co-chaired by the DSS and the OFW and reports to the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety (the Taskforce). Advice provided by NPAG is shared with the Taskforce and senior government officials responsible for the development and delivery of the next National Plan.

Under the Terms of Reference, the NPAG:

- Supports public consultations, including by promoting consultations through their stakeholder networks to encourage participation and involvement,
- Provides advice on the key principles, priorities and outcomes for the next National Plan, including advice informed by members of the organisations they represent,
- Shares insights into practical measures to inform implementation,
- Identifies opportunities to support links with other relevant strategies and frameworks, and
- Engages across government as opportunities arise to ensure the next National Plan benefits from a broad range of expertise.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence (Advisory Council) was established to inform the development of the next National Plan.¹² The Advisory Council has the additional role of supporting the implementation of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Target 13:

By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero.

The Advisory Council has been established by the Commonwealth Government for an initial period of three years, with \$1 million in the 2021–22 Budget to support establishment and operating costs. The Advisory Council is chaired by Professor Sandra Creamer AM, who is also a member of the NPAG.

In addition to their broader roles, members of the NPAG and Advisory Council participated throughout the consultation, including providing advice on workshop themes, topics and participants and observing and taking part in workshops. Members were also part of the Commonwealth delegation at the Summit, and many participated in panels and roundtables across the four-day event.

Throughout the consultation period, members of the Monash Consultation Team observed NPAG meetings and other ad hoc meetings,¹³ and workshops convened by the DSS and OFW.¹⁴ The list of initial workshop themes proposed by the Consultation Team was provided to NPAG members for their consideration and input. NPAG and Advisory Council members participated across the Consultation, in the Inquiry, in workshops held as part of the stakeholder consultations and as panellists and invited participants at the National Summit.

¹¹ See Appendix G for NPAG membership list.

¹² See Appendix H for ATSIAC membership list.

¹³ See Appendix I for a list of related activities undertaken to inform the Stakeholder Consultation.

¹⁴ See Appendix J for a copy of the Workshop Summary Report for the Prevention of Financial Abuse Workshop held on the 7 July 2021. This Workshop was organised by the Office for Women and facilitated by members of the Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre.

Consultation

Stage 1:

Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation Stage 1: Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence

“ This inquiry was an opportunity to reflect on the successes and shortcomings of the National Plan, to hear from experts in the field about what has and has not worked, and to identify opportunities to ensure that the next National Plan leads to a meaningful reduction in the unacceptable rates of family, domestic and sexual violence.¹⁵

As is evident in the Foreword to the Final Report (quoted above) and the Terms of References for the Inquiry, informing the development of the next National Plan was a key focus of the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence.

The Inquiry was conducted and completed independently of the stakeholder consultations carried out by the Monash Consultation Team, yet its findings and recommendations, as well as the focus of the submissions made to it, are highly relevant to the development and delivery of the next National Plan. This section is not intended to represent a reanalysis of all material provided to the Inquiry through submissions, public hearings and other ad hoc engagement activities, rather, it offers a thematic analysis of the recommendations as they relate to the next National Plan and its implementation.

Recommendations specific to the broad framework of the next National Plan

The Inquiry made 24 recommendations specific to the next National Plan. They ranged from framing issues to recommendations for the inclusion of specific priority populations in the next National Plan. The majority of recommendations focused on what the next National Plan should include within its remit; nine of them related specifically to guiding the scope of the plan. These recommendations stated that the next National Plan should:

- Include quantitative measures (Recommendation 2),
- Be named the ‘National Plan to reduce family, domestic and sexual violence’ (Recommendation 5),
- Promote and enhance an integrated whole-of-service-system response to family, domestic and sexual violence across jurisdictions (Recommendation 6),
- Promote and enhance a whole-of-society response to family, domestic and sexual violence that involves businesses, community groups, non-government bodies and governments (Recommendation 7),
- Involve local government in the development and implementation of the next National Plan (Recommendation 16),
- Include a commitment to an ongoing program of independent and transparent monitoring and evaluation (Recommendation 20),
- Adopt a public health approach to preventing and managing drug and alcohol related harms experienced by families and children (Recommendation 60),
- Recognise that family, domestic and sexual violence impacts upon workplaces (Recommendation 87), and
- Include greater emphasis and specific detail on the crucial role of work and economic equality in the advancement of gender equality and the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 88).

Importantly, the Inquiry’s third recommendation stated that the next National Plan must be inclusive of the diversity of all victim-survivors. In particular, the next National Plan should recognise the rights and needs

¹⁵ Inquiry Final Report, *Foreword*, at p. x.

of women; children in their own right; men; older Australians; LGBTIQ+ people; and people living with a disability (Recommendation 3). This is critical, as it underscores the importance of ensuring that *all* forms of family, domestic and sexual violence are brought within the next National Plan's remit and, by extension, that all victim-survivors of such violence are likewise included.

In addition, whilst not specifically tied to the development of the next National Plan, Recommendation 1 of the Inquiry was that uniform definitions of domestic, family and sexual violence across Commonwealth, state and territory governments should be developed.

Three of the Inquiry's broad recommendations related specifically to how the next National Plan should reflect a focus on prevention, including that it should:

- Seek to prevent all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 4),
- Continue with the core philosophy that primary prevention is key to reducing family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 55), and
- Provide increased funding for developmentally appropriate primary prevention campaigns, including protective behaviour education, to inform respectful attitudes around sexual consent, with an emphasis on community education, particularly young people in schools (Recommendation 56).

The Inquiry recognised that the principal drivers of family, domestic and sexual violence are gender inequality and stereotypical attitudes towards gender roles, characteristics and behaviours, together with disrespect of girls and women.¹⁶ The Inquiry recommended that the Australian Government consider establishing a gender equality strategy (Recommendation 58).

These recommendations are reflective of the shared view throughout the vast majority of submissions that gender inequality is one of the main drivers of family, domestic and sexual violence. Numerous submissions criticised the high levels of gender inequality in Australia and noted the need for the next National Plan to support an increase in primary prevention and gender equality focused initiatives. In addition to these broad arching recommendations, the Inquiry also recommended that the Commonwealth Government work with states and territories to ensure that age-appropriate, respectful relationships are taught in all Australian schools and early education settings (Recommendation 59). This recommendation builds upon a shared view through submissions to the Inquiry that the respectful relationship education program is an effective and important school-based initiative.

At the governance level, the Inquiry recommended that responsibility for the implementation of the next National Plan should continue to rest with the Department of Social Services (DSS) (Recommendation 8). There were two other recommendations broadly related to governance of the National Plan itself or the implementation activities stemming from it. The first was to make a representative of the Australian Local Government Association a member of the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety (Recommendation 15). The second was to establish as an independent statutory office a National Commissioner for the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 23). The role of the National Commissioner (or another independent body) was presented as pivotal to delivering on the need for an ongoing program of independent and transparent monitoring and evaluation over the life of the next National Plan. Recommendation 20 set out that achieving this should include formal opportunities for victim-survivors and other non-government stakeholders to provide input. This point is critical, given the significant support throughout submissions to the Inquiry for the voices of those with lived experience of family, domestic and sexual violence to be elevated.

In relation to priority populations, at the broad level, the Inquiry recommended the following about the next

¹⁶ Inquiry Final Report, *List of recommendations*, at p. xxxviii.

National Plan:

- That it be inclusive of the diversity of all victim-survivors: women, children in their own right, older Australians, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability (Recommendation 3),
- That any family, domestic and sexual violence policies, programs and legislative frameworks that affect Indigenous Australians be co-designed by Indigenous peoples along with government (Recommendation 36),
- That it specifies people living with disability as a priority cohort, to ensure that legislation, policies and programs include consultation to support specific consideration of the impacts on, and needs of, these members of the community (Recommendation 44), and
- That it be more inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, their experiences and their needs (Recommendation 48).

In addition to these recommendations, there were numerous specific recommendations relating to individual community and population groups.

How funding should be allocated through the implementation of the next National Plan

In addition to the 21 recommendations guiding the overall scope and remit of the next National Plan, the Inquiry made 68 recommendations prescribing actionable items to be implemented over the life of the next National Plan. 20 of them related specifically to where funding should be committed, including specific programs, services and campaigns. The Inquiry recommended that the Australian Government should:

- Continue to provide increased funding for frontline family, domestic and sexual violence services in the COVID-19 pandemic (Recommendation 13),
- Develop a needs-based funding methodology to account for variations in the presentation of family, domestic and sexual violence in different jurisdictions (Recommendation 19),
- Fund a specific public awareness campaign about coercive and controlling behaviour as a form of family, domestic and sexual violence and a predictor of severe physical violence and homicide (Recommendation 25),
- Develop and provide funding for training for the identification of coercive and controlling behaviour for police; justice and legal sector practitioners; and health, mental, social services, and specialist family, domestic and sexual violence service workers (Recommendation 26),
- Provide funding for programs, including in schools, to improve the financial literacy and reduce the financial abuse of women (Recommendation 31),
- Provide funding for an increased number of financial counsellors (Recommendation 32),
- Provide ongoing funding for the National Education Toolkit for Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Awareness (Recommendation 34),
- Provide funding for culturally specific Indigenous awareness programs for all stakeholders in government, including police, service providers and the judiciary; to enable an improved understanding of the particular challenges faced by Indigenous Australians affected by family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 37),
- Fund Our Watch to update its Change the Story framework to be inclusive, and to develop an LGBTIQ+ specific prevention guide (Recommendation 42),
- Provide a specifically funded resource to assist larger multicultural organisations to enhance family, domestic and sexual violence service delivery for culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Recommendation 50),
- Provide increased funding for developmentally appropriate primary prevention campaigns, including

protective behaviour education, to inform respectful attitudes around sexual consent, with an emphasis on community education, particularly young people in schools. This should include funding for Our Watch for the entire life of the next National Plan (Recommendation 56),

- Support national research and awareness raising campaigns into sexist advertising and the negative effects of unequal gender representation (Recommendation 57),
- Provide additional funding to No to Violence to support the national operation of the Men's Referral Service for a further three years (Recommendation 63),
- Provide additional dedicated funding for perpetrator behaviour change programs (Recommendation 65),
- Provide dedicated funding to perpetrator behaviour change program providers and specialist family and domestic violence services to deliver support services for partners, ex-partners, children and other family members of perpetrators enrolled in perpetrator behaviour change programs (Recommendation 68),
- Commit to increasing the overall baseline funding for specialist family and domestic violence service providers (Recommendation 72),
- Consider funding for emergency accommodation for perpetrators to prevent victim-survivors being forced to flee their homes or continue residing in a violent home (Recommendation 75), and
- Fund a trial program of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre's Women's Trauma Recovery Centre, in partnership with the New South Wales Government (Recommendation 77).

In addition to these recommendations, Recommendation 18 set out that the next National Plan should include a commitment to improve the transparency of funding for family, domestic and sexual violence programs and services. This would require linking Commonwealth funding to that of states and territories with co-funding and reporting requirements. Co-funding requirements are particularly relevant for at least four of the funding recommendations made by the Inquiry require co-funding by the Commonwealth Government and a state and/or territory government. These recommendations include to:

- Co-fund on a 50-50 basis a dedicated family and domestic violence policy officer in each state and territory local government association for an initial period of five years (Recommendation 17),
- Provide additional funding on a 50-50 basis to community legal centres for a minimum of five years to assist victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 78),
- Provide funding on a 50-50 basis to legal aid commissions and community legal centres to engage more social workers experienced in family violence, child protection and family-law matters (Recommendation 79), and
- Provide funding on a 50-50 basis for the establishment of a small property mediation program – subject to positive evaluation of the Legal Aid Commission Small Claims Property Trials (Recommendation 80).

While not directly related to funding, there were three other recommendations made by the Inquiry. Responsibility for them lies at the state and territory government level, not the Commonwealth. Specifically, these recommendations were for state and territory governments to:

- Provide funding for perpetrator court support workers to enable offenders to be referred to appropriate behaviour change programs and support services (Recommendation 66),
- Work with local community-based organisations to design and implement place-based models of justice reinvestment, similar to that used in the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project, as a matter of priority across Australia (Recommendation 71), and
- Increase criminal penalties for breaches of apprehended or domestic violence orders, and ensure that the judiciary receives further training about the importance of security to victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence and their families (Recommendation 85).

The next National Plan will be a strategy developed by the Commonwealth Government and implemented with support from the state and territory governments.

Research and data collection focused recommendations

In addition to these funding-focused recommendations, the Inquiry set out a number of recommendations regarding expanded and consistent data collection and specific research activity. These recommendations reflected the vast number of submissions stressing the importance of evidence-based responses to family, domestic and sexual violence, and the need under the next National Plan for clear support for research, evaluation and consistent data collection. The recommendations would see funding directed towards building the national evidence base on family, domestic and sexual violence. Recommendation 21 was for the next National Plan to provide funding for Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) for the life of the Plan. Recommendation 22 was for family, domestic and sexual violence programs to include funding for a standardised evaluation component.

Other research and data-focused recommendations included:

- Direct and appropriately resource the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to conduct the Personal Safety Survey on an annual basis and ensure that the survey collects information about the prevalence of specific forms of family, domestic and sexual violence and complex forms of violence (Recommendation 9),
- Direct and appropriately resource the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) to develop a national data collection on service-system contacts with victim-survivors and perpetrators, including data from primary health care, ambulance, emergency department, police, justice, and legal services. Further, provide appropriate funding and support to service providers to implement consistent data collection procedures (Recommendation 10),
- Direct and appropriately resource AIHW to develop a national data collection on the use and demand for specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services (Recommendation 11),
- Continue funding for critical research around the context, motives and outcomes of technology-facilitated abuse – in particular by providing dedicated funding for eSafety and ANROWS (Recommendation 28),
- Fund research into the prevalence and impact of family, domestic and sexual violence on children and young people (Recommendation 35),
- Fund a national research project to examine the impact of family, domestic and sexual violence affecting the LGBTIQ+ community (Recommendation 40),
- Provide funding to investigate the prevalence and prevention of elder abuse, both in residential care facilities and in people's own homes, whether by facility staff, carers or family members (Recommendation 52),
- Commission research into the prevalence of family, domestic and sexual violence against men and its impact on male victim-survivors (Recommendation 54),
- Provide funding for research on the backgrounds, characteristics, and recidivism rates of perpetrators of family violence, with a view to informing future policy and practice in relation to perpetrator interventions (Recommendation 70),
- Resource additional research regarding the intersection between mental health and family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 76), and
- DSS to commission research on the potential benefits and risks to victim-survivor safety posed by the establishment of a publicly accessible register of convicted family, domestic and sexual violence offenders (Recommendation 83).

In addition to research and data collection focused recommendations, the Inquiry identified a number of measures that should be introduced to inform understanding of the impact and effectiveness of activities

stemming from the next National Plan. This included four recommendations that the next National Plan include measures:

- Informed by the experience of family, domestic and sexual violence in the COVID-19 pandemic (Recommendation 14),
- To support the social services sector (including the health, mental health, disability, family and relationships, and alcohol and other drugs sectors) to have a greater role in identifying and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 61),
- To leverage the existing network of Primary Health Networks to improve the identification and response to family, domestic and sexual violence in general practices (Recommendation 62), and
- To support increased use of technology in delivering perpetrator behaviour change programs, where it is safe to do so (Recommendation 67).

In addition to these four specifically identified measures, the Inquiry also recommend that the Commonwealth Government develop and implement measures based on the recommendations of the eSafety Commissioner (Recommendation 29). The delivery of these recommendations will require coordination and cooperation across Government departments and jurisdictions. While this represents just one example of the need for greater systems integration if the next National Plan is to achieve its goals, it is a useful one. Throughout the Inquiry, submissions consistently called for greater coordination and collaboration across the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, NGO and private sector, and the broader community to deliver integrated systems, services and responses to family, domestic and sexual violence.

Recommended legislative reform

Relative to the number of reforms targeting other areas of policy and practice, there was not a significant number of Commonwealth legislative reforms recommended in the Inquiry's Final Report. In part, this likely reflects that much of the legislation relevant to family, domestic and sexual violence sits at the state and territory level; it may have been considered outside the remit of a Commonwealth Government-level Inquiry. That said, at least three recommendations from the Inquiry require legislative reform at the Commonwealth level:

- Adopting recommendations under the *Online Safety Act* and other reforms relating to technology-facilitated abuse (Recommendation 30),
- Implementing national uniform legislation establishing mandatory reporting by registered disability-service providers to police and the proposed National Commissioner for the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence of all incidents of violence perpetrated against people living with disability, whether in residential care facilities or people's own homes (Recommendation 47), and
- Making changes to immigration legislation and procedures (Recommendation 51).

In addition to these three recommendations, there are interrelating recommendations with multiple components, one of which requires legislation reform. Among them is Recommendation 36, which prescribes that the Commonwealth Government must ensure that legislative frameworks (as well as programs) are co-designed by First Nations populations and government.

Recommended activities to stem from the implementation of the next National Plan

The Inquiry's findings included a number of recommendations focused on a specific activity or program or

the development of a resource that should be supported during the life of the next National Plan. Reflecting one of the Inquiry's key themes, the importance of holding perpetrators to account for their use of violence, some of these recommendations were focused specifically on improving responses to perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence. These included:

- Undertaking a review of relevant risk identification, risk assessment, and risk-management practices to ensure that coercive and controlling behaviour is adequately captured (Recommendation 27),
- Having DSS review the adequacy of referral services for perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 64),
- Taking action to support an increase in the number of perpetrators attending and completing behaviour change programs (Recommendation 66), and
- Considering policies to remove perpetrators from homes and emergency accommodation for perpetrators (Recommendation 75).

Beyond perpetrators, other Inquiry recommendations targeted improving specific aspects of the response to family, domestic and sexual violence:

- Have the Attorney-General take measures to enable the identification of financial information and facilitate superannuation splitting (Recommendation 33),
- Provide additional training to police, General Practitioners, child health nurses, Remote Area Clinic nurses and any other service providers that have contact with people in rural and remote areas to assist in the early identification of family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 38),
- Explore opportunities to use technology to provide more services for victim-survivors and perpetrators in regional, rural and remote areas (Recommendation 39),
- Develop programs and policies relating to family, domestic and sexual violence in partnership between government agencies and LGBTIQ+ organisations (Recommendation 43),
- That NDIA staff and NDIS providers complete mandatory training in identifying and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence affecting people with disability (Recommendation 46),
- Provide more, and more effective, culturally appropriate education on family, domestic and sexual violence to culturally and linguistically diverse communities (Recommendation 49),
- That the Department of Health release all de-identified data and information pertaining to incidents and allegations of sexual assault in residential aged care (Recommendation 53),
- Collaborate to identify programs that could be implemented across the country, and ensure that specialist and 'wrap around' support services have access to dedicated, long-term funding (Recommendation 73),
- Collaborate in the provision of affordable housing solutions in Australia to meet long-term needs for those made homeless by family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 74),
- Expand the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme to include orders issued under the *Family Law Act 1975* and orders issued under state and territory child protection legislation (Recommendation 82), and
- Adopt a variant of the United Kingdom's 'Silent Solution' for silent calls for police assistance (Recommendation 84).

Within the bank of recommendations focused on activities to emerge from the implementation of the next National Plan, there were eight recommendations pertaining to the development of a new scheme, strategy or framework:

- Develop a national FDSV death toll (Recommendation 12),
- Develop shared principles to guide any future offences of coercive and controlling behaviour

(Recommendation 24),

- Develop and implement nationally consistent, regular and targeted education and training within mainstream services, including police and paramedics (Recommendation 41),
- Develop a national strategy, in consultation with people living with disability, to improve access to comprehensive, equitable, accessible, and disability-inclusive sexual and reproductive-health education and information (Recommendation 45),
- Have DSS lead the development of a national outcomes framework for evidence-based perpetrator behaviour change programs (Recommendation 69),
- Implement a national electronic database of domestic violence orders to support the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme (Recommendation 81), and
- Have the Australian Government and states and territories jointly develop a mechanism to provide resources to victim-survivors to assist them to leave their home and resettle to escape a violent relationship (Recommendation 86).

These recommendations are significant. To varying degrees, they represent original offerings stemming from evidence given by stakeholders and advocates who contributed to the Inquiry. At the time of delivery of this Report, the Commonwealth Government is considering these recommendations as part of their work in developing the next National Plan.¹⁷

¹⁷ See further https://www.apf.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Social_Policy_and_Legal_Affairs/Familyviolence

Consultation Stage 2: DSS Engage Survey Findings

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation Stage 2: DSS Engage Survey Findings

This section presents the qualitative and quantitative high-level findings from the DSS Engage Survey hosted on the Government's survey platform from 7 April 2021 to 31 July 2021. The platform allowed contributors to identify as an individual or an organisation. In total, 1,104 responses to the survey were received by the department. De-identified responses were provided to the Monash Consultation Team for analysis, including 899 responses from individuals and 173 responses from organisations.

Profile of Individual Respondents¹⁸

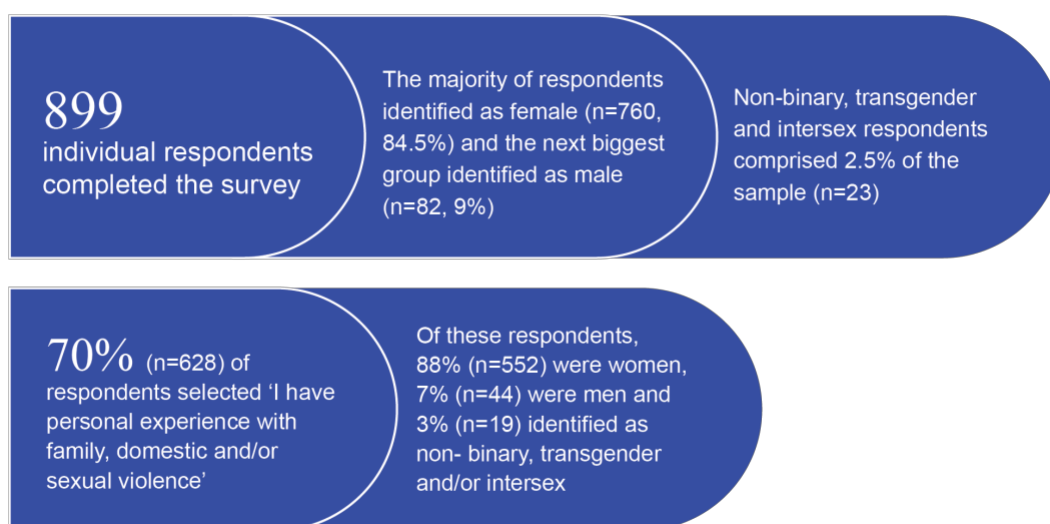


Figure 4: Profile of Individual Respondents

Many individual respondents identified across numerous 'experience' categories, for example, as having personal experience of domestic and family violence and/or sexual violence; having a loved one/friend who has experience of family, domestic and/or sexual violence; and working as a support worker with people who experience family, domestic and/or sexual violence. People also identified across multiple 'identity' categories, for example, as culturally and linguistically diverse, or with a disability and LGBTIQ+.

Respondents' Residential Location

Respondents' from across Australia submitted to the DSS Engage Survey. The largest number of submissions were received from individuals who reside in Victoria (26%), New South Wales (24%) and Queensland (24%). Responses were also received from individuals who reside in South Australia (8%), Western Australia (7%), Australian Capital Territory (5%), Tasmania (4%) and Northern Territory (2%).

Respondents' Age

The most common age groups for respondents was 40-49 years (30%), followed by 50-59 years (24%), 60-69 years (21.6%) and 30-39 years (20%). Only a small proportion of respondents were aged under 18 years (0.4%) or 70 years and over (4%).

¹⁸ Respondents were able to select more than one option for each of the profile questions. Participants were also able to skip questions and as such the totals do not equal 100 per cent for each question.

¹⁹ Four participants identified as residing in more than one jurisdiction.

Diversity of Respondents

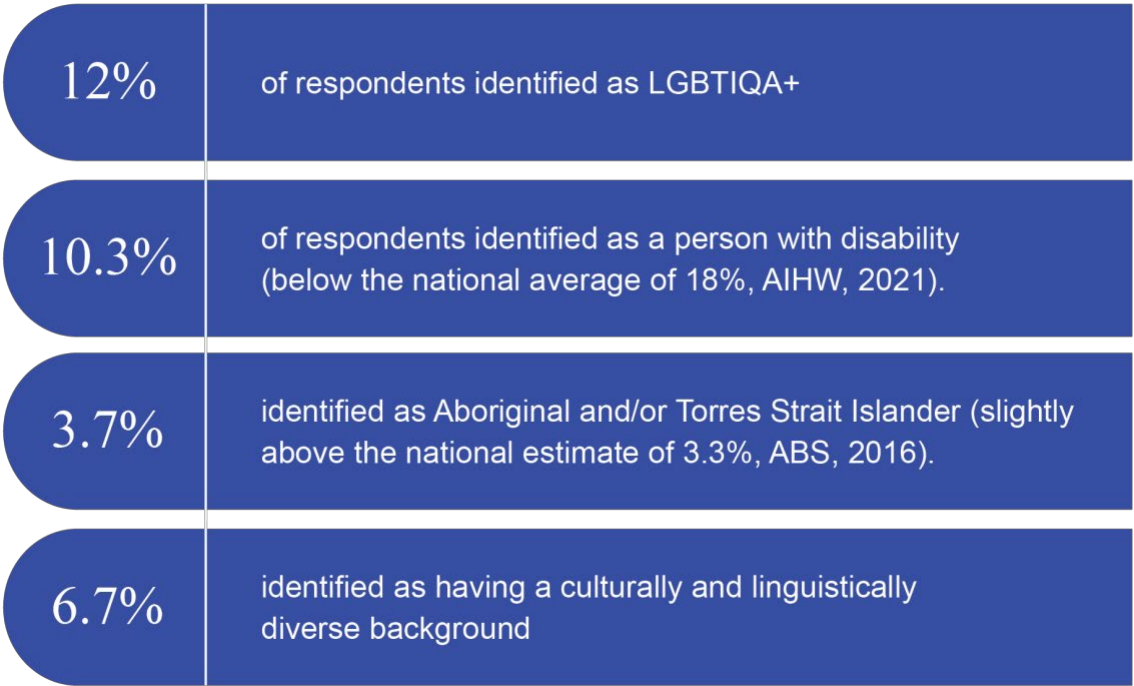
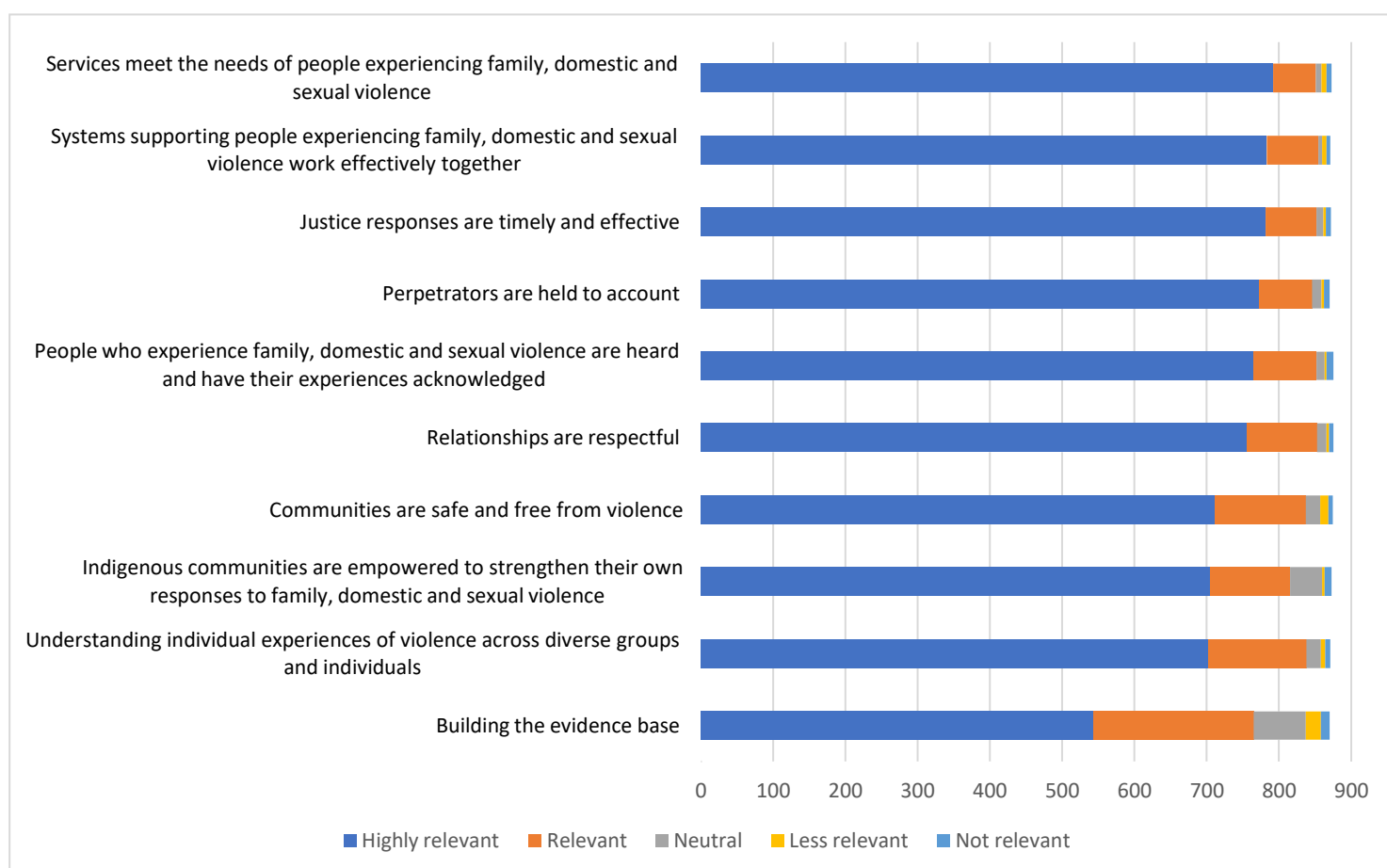


Figure 5: Diversity of Respondents

Respondents identified the most relevant outcomes and priorities for a national strategy on preventing family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV).

1. Services meet the needs of people experiencing FDSV (88%; n=792 out of 899 respondents).
2. Systems supporting people experiencing FDSV work effectively together (87%; n=783 out of 899 respondents).
3. Justice responses are timely and effective, and perpetrators are held to account (87%; n=781 out of 899 respondents).

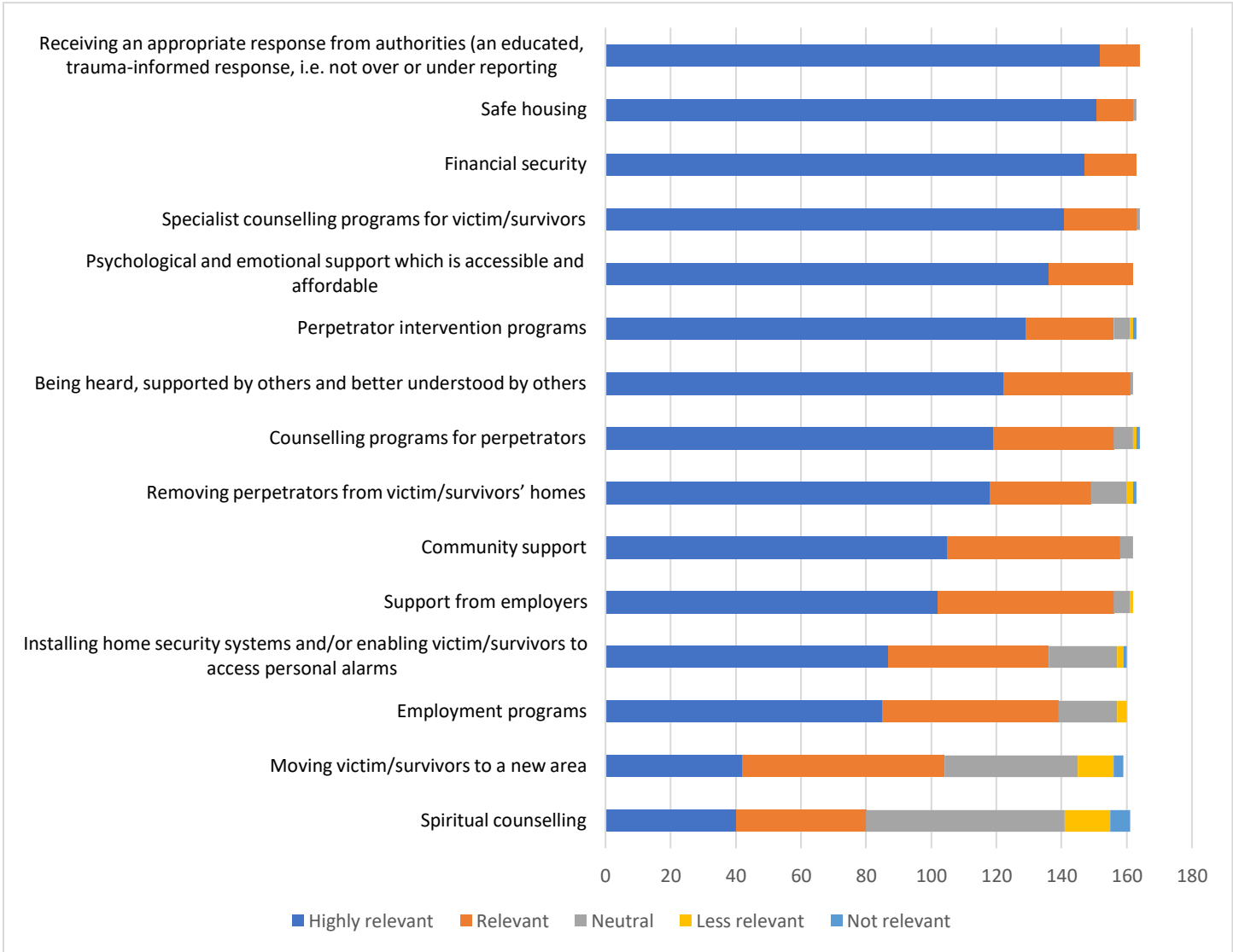
Graph 1: Relevant outcomes and priorities for a national strategy on preventing family, domestic and sexual violence



Respondents identified that the most important things we can do to support people who are experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence are:

1. Safe housing (89.5%; n=804 out of 899 respondents).
2. Receiving a response from authorities that is compassionate, and trauma-informed (89%; n=798 out of 899 respondents).
3. Financial security (84%; n=755 out of 899 respondents).

Graph 2: The most important things we can do to support people who are experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence



Individual Responses: Qualitative Findings

Many individuals used the DSS Engage Survey to share stories of their experiences of violence and/or their experiences supporting a person experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. People also contributed open-text responses to draw attention to aspects of the system they believe are working well and to areas where improvement is required.

The following are key themes that emerged from the open-text responses to several of the questions.

- **Recognition of the importance of ensuring safety** and of the lack of adequate, ongoing funding for support services to meet demand and keep women and children safe. In particular, survey respondents have noted the lack of caseworkers, refuges and safe housing, which contributes to long waiting lists and to women and children remaining in unsafe situations. Supporting women and children to leave an abusive relationship safely was identified by several respondents as a national priority.
- **Safe at home strategies** in which perpetrators are supported to leave the shared home and women and children are supported to stay in the family home featured significantly in survey responses as

a positive initiative.

- **Acknowledgement of the fear** (especially for children and young people) and the shame and stigma that are experienced by victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. Connected to this were concerns raised by numerous respondents, largely female, around preserving privacy and confidentiality for those escaping violence.
- Lack of **specialised understanding and training regarding domestic and family violence**, and all types of violence against women, among frontline responders, especially police and social services, courts and victim-survivors themselves. Within these survey responses was an acknowledgement of the ways perpetrators can use systems to continue to abuse victims (including courts and banking systems) and a recognised need to ensure service professionals and community workers understand the dynamics of coercive control.
- **Perceived failures of the family law system**, with survey respondents noting the delays, costs, and lack of understanding of coercive control within the system. The issue of systems abuse, such as purposely protracted property settlements and abuse and manipulation via child support payments, was raised by survey respondents as a particular concern. Some respondents indicated that there should be less emphasis on equal shared care post-separation.
- Lack of **coordination across services and systems integration**. Respondents spoke about the need for coordination between police, child protection and specialist domestic and family violence services, emphasising that the current lack of integration requires women to tell their stories numerous times at different points of the systems. The need for a central access point for services and responses was raised by numerous survey respondents. Related to this point, was the recognised need to mitigate siloed service responses between primary health, alcohol and other drugs and mental health services.
- A call for **affordable psychological and counselling services** to facilitate long-term recovery from experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence, including PTSD. Long-term support to facilitate recovery was also recommended by numerous survey respondents in relation to mental health, housing and employment support for victim-survivors.
- Reflections on the **perceived failure of different points of the system to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions**. Numerous survey respondents called for greater police and court action on breaches of intervention orders with some respondents pointing to the issue of misidentification of the predominant aggressor. Many responses spoke about inadequate legal frameworks to protect women and children from family violence, including a small number of individual responses calling specifically for criminalisation of different forms of domestic and family violence, including coercive control.
- **The need for greater progress towards gender equality in Australia**. Gender equality was identified by survey respondents both as a major issue requiring attention in and of itself, as well as a priority area that would make a difference to preventing family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The need to **embed victim-survivor voices and expertise in reforms**.
- The value of a **national definition of domestic and family violence**.

In addition to these key themes, individual survey respondents also commented on the lack of information regarding services and referral pathways, the need for services to develop specific responses to financial abuse, the long wait times to receive domestic and family violence related services, including counselling, the lack of family violence awareness and services in rural regional and remote communities, and the lack of tailored support services for children and young people, including programs to address adolescent violence in the home (AVITH).

Several survey responses highlighted the need for **brain injury screening for victim-survivors of family violence** and national guidance around processes and best practice for diagnoses and treatment for acquired brain injury in the context of domestic and family violence.

When asked to identify what would make a difference to preventing family, domestic and sexual violence, beyond the factors specifically listed in the survey, the most common qualitative responses from individual respondents were:

- The need to **raise community awareness** about the range of forms of family, domestic and sexual violence to heightened awareness among the community.
- The value of **specialised trained police units** to increase understanding among police officers of family, domestic and sexual violence (including coercive control) and to improve police responsiveness to reports of violence, including the degree to which police take immediate action to protect the victim-survivor.
- The need for **increased, long-term and sustainable funding** in the family violence sector, including calls to fund programs and interventions that have been shown to work.
- The value of **primary prevention and early intervention initiatives**, including Respectful Relationships education from primary school (noting the need to make this available in multiple languages), initiatives that increase gender equality and the *Stop it at the Start* campaign. A number of respondents suggested that this education should be mandatory from primary school and should be accompanied by information for parents and training for teachers to respond to disclosures, to identify warning signs and to provide appropriate support. Respondents indicated that gender equality education and awareness beyond the school context should include workplaces and community organisations such as sporting clubs. Numerous responses called for education around pornography and sexually explicit imagery in the media, while other respondents pointed to the normalisation of physical and sexual violence in popular culture.
- The need to **overhaul the family law system**, including reflections on the need to enhance specialist training for magistrates, to ensure better provision of support for victim-survivors to enhance safety and support, to embed family and domestic violence legislation within the system, and to ensure abusive parents are not granted custody of children.
- **Leadership and positive role modelling** of respectful relationships and gender-equitable attitudes from the government down through corporate, community and religious leaders was highlighted as important by several survey respondents, and
- The need to increase the focus on the **impact of domestic and family violence on children**.

In addition to these key themes, individual survey respondents also indicated the following areas as likely to have a significant impact of the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence:

- **Women's economic security**, including affordable childcare, paid domestic and family violence leave and greater access to legal aid,
- **Trauma-informed training** for all family, domestic and sexual violence response services, including police and criminal justice practitioners,
- **The use of technology for safety**, including to aid reporting, to create alerts for victim-survivors when perpetrators are released on bail, and to increase access to services,
- **Evaluations of programs and responses** that measure success by drawing on qualitative data from victim-survivors about what works,
- **Increased capacity for health systems professionals**, specifically General Practitioners, to make referrals to specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services including counselling services, and
- **Expanded national legislation** to allow for and enhance information sharing between services, agencies and jurisdictions.

In relation to **perpetrator interventions**, individual respondents most commonly referred to the need to hold perpetrators to account, with a number of respondents also expressing support for men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs) and the need to increase program funding. Numerous responses called for

more specialised support for perpetrators in general. Some responses indicated the need for combined interventions such as family violence and alcohol and other drug services (AOD), as well as family violence and mental health services. The need for family safety contact during perpetrator interventions was also highlighted by several survey respondents.

One of the most common individual responses on improvements to help prevent and address family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia relates to **funding**. Survey respondents noted the need for more specific and targeted funding for services. Responses commonly indicated the need for funding in the following areas:

- short- to medium-term case management,
- group work and crisis support for women, children, young people and men,
- frontline support (noting that services are currently at capacity) to ensure referrals are processed expediently and victim-survivors can access therapeutic support when they need it, and
- primary prevention activities in the form of community awareness about healthy relationships and what constitutes acceptable behaviour.

Survey respondents also frequently identified the courts and the law as requiring improvement. They noted the need to address court delays, to improve training for magistrates and lawyers to understand coercive control, to diversify the judiciary and to ensure women's safety is paramount in court decision making. Contributors suggested greater penalties for breaches of DVOs and the reconsideration and regulation of plea negotiations in the resolution of domestic and family violence matters. A small number of respondents indicated that criminalisation of domestic and family violence and coercive control would have a positive impact on prevention. Some responses also called for caution around the criminalisation of coercive control, citing system readiness as a key issue.

There were few differences in individual responses received from male and female respondents. **Male respondents** most commonly identified the lack of specific support services available for male victims of sexual, domestic and family violence as the key priority for a national strategy, noting the need for additional funding to ensure accessibility and availability. Several male respondents also referred to the impact of shame, which can create barriers to seeking support, and the need for increased community awareness and education about what female-perpetrated violence looks like.

Individual responses from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples raised a number of key issues, including the lack of police responsiveness to family, domestic and sexual violence victimisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the fear of not being believed when reporting victimisation, and the need to increase funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to promote safety within their communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents noted the lack of information about service availability for support and recovery and, more generally, the lack of services in regional areas. Respondents also described the need for a single point of entry for those trying to escape domestic and family violence, rapid financial support to assist women and children leaving violence, financial assistance, housing assistance, and access to legal representation and counselling services.

There was substantial overlap in the major issues and priorities raised by individual respondents who identified as LGBTIQ+, as having a culturally and linguistically diverse background, or as being a person with disability. Respondents noted a lack of awareness of the tailored supports available to people in these diverse cohorts and the need for greater training to ensure services are culturally safe, appropriate and accessible. Across all three of these respondent groups, there was an emphasis that primary prevention must be a priority in the future to address diverse issues, including gender inequality, cultural norms

(through education on respectful relationships), consent education, community awareness activities, workplace training, and legislative reform to the Migration and Family Law Acts.

Respondents who identified as having a culturally and linguistically diverse background raised a number of concerns about the accessibility of the service system. They involved insufficient services and financial support for culturally and linguistically diverse clients, and a lack of awareness of those services which do exist. The need for increased funding of interpreter services across the service system was also raised.

When speaking about prevention and community awareness activities, culturally and linguistically diverse respondents specifically called for education for boys and men about gender equality, healthy relationships and identifying violence; for school programs that address the connection between patriarchy and family violence; and for community awareness education about family violence that addresses the stigma surrounding it. Culturally and linguistically diverse survey respondents indicated the need for an expansion of opportunities for disclosure and intervention; they indicated early childhood educators and schoolteachers as possible sites. Respondents also indicated the need for regular contact with social workers for families at risk.

Responses from these populations also called for tailored and culturally aware police responses. There was variance in other criminal justice-based solutions proposed. Among them were calls to remove perpetrators from the home until sentencing, and for the use of restorative justice solutions (where appropriate) that keep perpetrators out of the criminal justice system. Anecdotal views were shared about how such criminal justice system interventions often leave women economically dependent on government benefits.

Respondents who identified as LGBTIQA+ reported that they fear being judged, not being believed, or having their experience minimised when trying to access support. Respondents identified the difficulties disclosing and discussing their experiences of violence with family and friends and the associated difficulty getting the specific support they needed. LGBTIQA+ survey respondents indicated several specific key issues including:

- A lack of specialised services, holistic, wrap-around support, and case management,
- A lack of affordable/subsidised/bulk-billed and specialised psychology services for people affected and recovering from family violence,
- Risks and experiences of poverty as a result of family, domestic and sexual violence,
- A need for service enhancements, including trauma-informed responses from services and additional services in regional areas to mitigate waitlists, and
- The importance of a national family, domestic and sexual violence LGBTIQA+ specific service.

Many respondents in this cohort emphasised the need for greater community awareness that family, domestic and sexual violence occurs in LGBTIQA+ relationships and for education about how to recognise what this abuse looks like. Responses highlighted the need for primary prevention in schools and the community about the links between misogyny and gender-based violence.

For respondents who identified as a person with disability, the lack of accessible services in regional, rural and remote areas emerged as a major issue, as did the lack of adequate and ongoing funding for accessible services. Respondents with disability highlighted the following specific issues emerging from current responses:

- A lack of accessible information on what services are available,
- A lack of accessible refuges and safe housing that can accommodate women, children and pets,

- A lack of affordable housing,
- A lack of domestic and family violence counselling services, and
- A lack of long-term support options.

Survey responses from this cohort also spoke to well-known issues for people with disability experiencing violence; these include police not believing women, not taking women seriously and failing to act on reports of family, domestic and sexual violence. The persistence of the social stigma of abuse for both men and women with disability experiencing domestic and family violence was highlighted in several responses received, as was the fear of retribution when seeking support. Respondents noted that trauma symptoms are wilfully misinterpreted by perpetrators to deflect from accountability, undermine integrity and gaslight victim-survivors. Responses also highlighted systems abuse,²⁰ and the way that systems can replicate the power and control of a perpetrator.²¹ Respondents called for improved trauma-informed practice, perpetrator accountability and gender equality.

Profile of Organisations Represented in Survey Responses

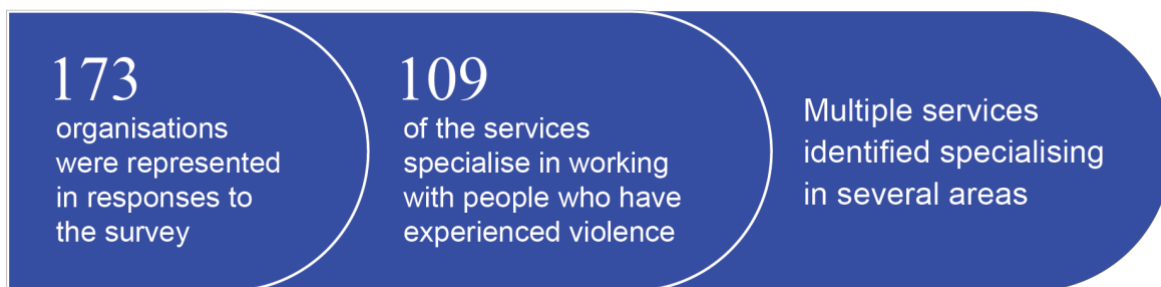


Figure 6: Profile of Organisations Represented in Survey Responses

Organisations identified as working with the following groups:²²

- 109 organisations work with people who have experienced violence (victim-survivors)
- 109 organisations work with women
- 63 organisations work with men
- 63 organisations work with children
- 64 organisations work with Aboriginal peoples
- 53 organisations work with Torres Strait Islander peoples
- 70 organisations work with culturally and linguistically diverse people
- 72 organisations work with young people
- 48 organisations work with LGBTIQ+ people
- 51 organisations work with people with disability
- 41 organisations work with perpetrators
- 23 organisations work with people in aged care

²⁰ The term 'systems abuse' refers to 'a type of family violence whereby perpetrators manipulate legal, administrative and/or welfare systems in order to exert control over, threaten or harass a current or former partner' (Reeves, 2020, 92).

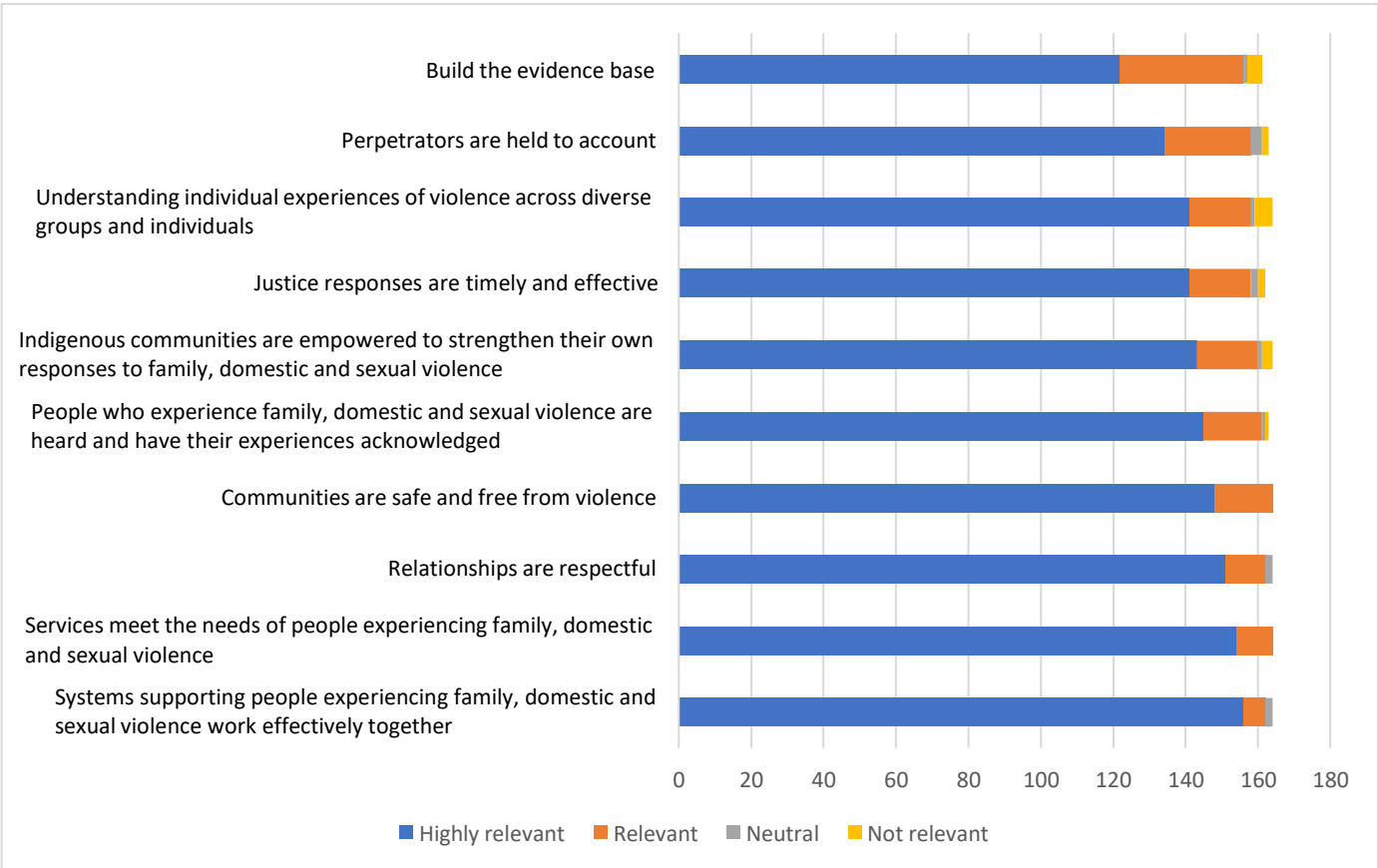
²¹ The National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book (2021) defines systems abuse as the abuses of processes that may be used by a perpetrator in the 'course of domestic and family violence related proceedings to reassert this power and control over the victim'. See further: www.dfvbenchbook.aija.org.au

²² More than one answer was possible for this question.

Organisations identified that the most relevant outcomes and priorities are:

- 1. Systems supporting people experiencing FDSV work effectively together (156 out of 164 organisations; 95%).
- 2. Services meet the needs of people experiencing FDSV (154 out of 164 organisations; 94%).
- 3. Relationships are respectful (151 out of 164 organisations; 92%).

Graph 3: Relevant outcomes and priorities for a national strategy on preventing family, domestic and sexual violence



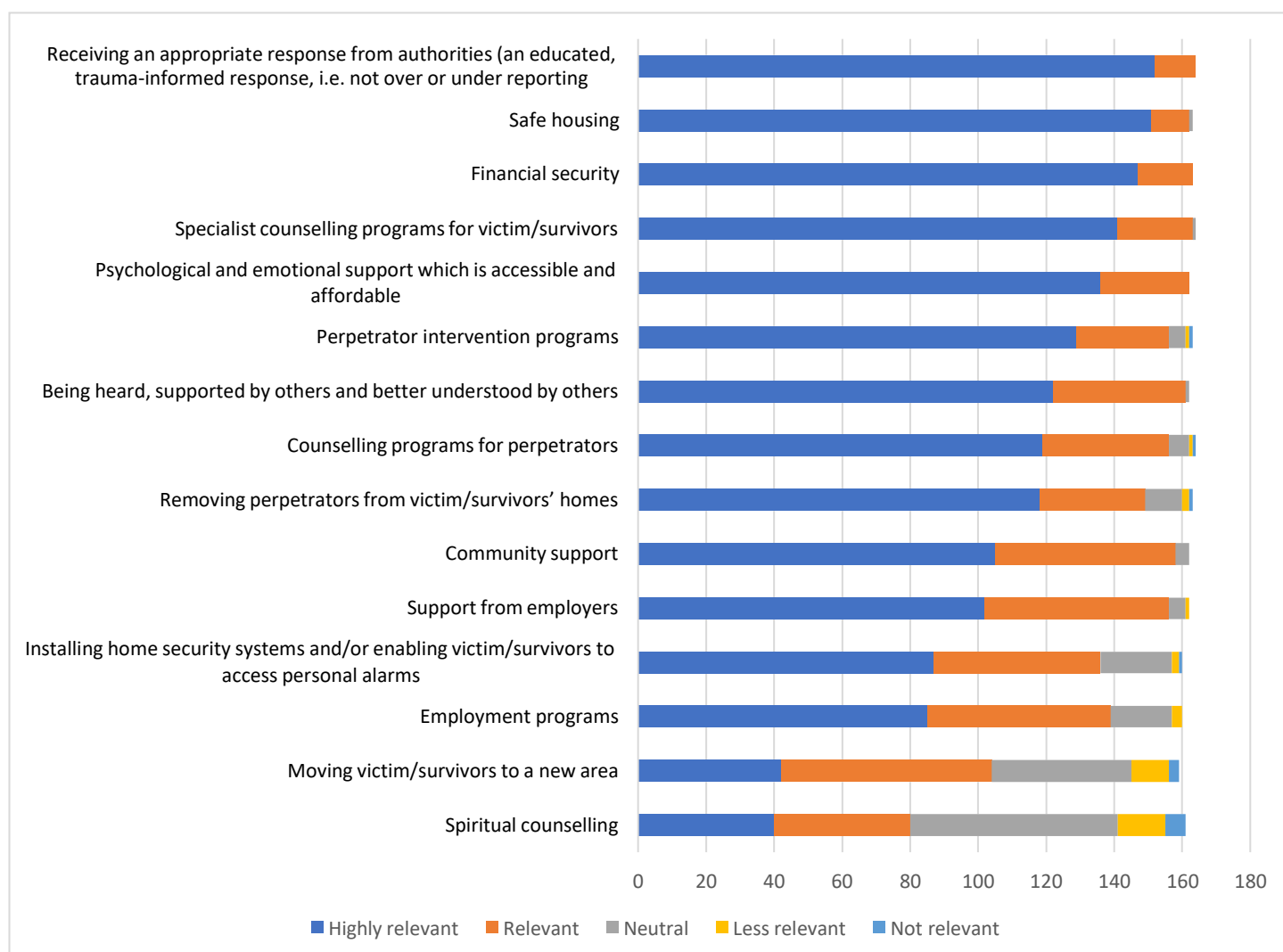
Organisations identified that the most important things we can do to support people who are experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence are:

- 1. Receiving a response from authorities that is compassionate and trauma-informed (93%).
- 2. Safe housing (93%).
- 3. Financial security (90%).

Organisations identified that the least important things to support people who are experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence are:

- 1. Spiritual counselling (26%).
- 2. Moving victim-survivors to a new area (26.5%).

Graph 4: The most important things we can do to support people who are experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV)



Organisation Responses: Qualitative Findings

There was substantial variation in the level of detail provided by organisations in their qualitative responses, as well as diversity in focus. The need for a diverse service offering that is accessible and fully funded was identified. Some organisations highlighted the need for services to be trauma-informed, culturally safe and co-designed with diverse communities (where appropriate and relevant).

Key themes that emerged from the survey responses provided by organisations included:

- A need for increased accessibility to mental health, drug and alcohol services for individuals experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence,
- The importance of specialist family, domestic and sexual violence training, including trauma-informed training for police, child protection, corrections, youth justice, court practitioners, housing, disability, aged care and youth services,
- A need for stronger responses in family, domestic and sexual violence matters at the Magistrates Court level,
- A need to increase service availability and accessibility in rural and regional areas,
- The importance of community awareness initiatives, including workplace awareness and training,
- A call for increased investment in improving health outcomes for victim-survivors, and
- Acknowledging that perpetrator interventions for First Nations men should be longer in duration than

standard MBCPs and should be focused on healing and wellbeing.

A number of the responses provided by organisations focused on current funding needs. These responses identified the following needs.

- Increased funding of services in relation to accessibility, availability, training, specialisation (including culturally appropriate responses), frontline service provision and case management,
- Increased funding for short- to medium-term support for victim-survivors, noting that current funding levels are described as inadequate,
- Specific funding to mitigate waitlists for counselling for victim-survivors and MBCPs for perpetrators,
- Sustainable long-term funding for services so that specialist staff can be more readily retained,
- Funding for housing responses, including short-term, medium and long-term solutions. Responses received from several organisations noted that victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence face an increased risk of homelessness, and
- Increased investment in primary prevention and early intervention, including education in schools on healthy relationships, respectful relationships, gender equality and diversity.

Attention to and investment in the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse communities was indicated in many organisational survey responses. Respondents pointed to:

- The limited services available for people on temporary visas,
- The need for primary prevention initiatives to be developed and delivered by government and the local community in collaboration,
- The need for early intervention via education programs in schools and with senior community members, with a focus on recognising family violence in the home, and
- The need to recognise the role that community organisations play in assisting victim-survivors and running culturally appropriate programs. Respondents identified a need to more adequately fund culturally specific community organisations to lead programs within their community.

The **family law system and the Migration Act** were identified as systems requiring reform to ensure safety and accessibility of services for individuals experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. Numerous respondents called for an overhaul of the Family Law Court system to ensure more adequate safety protections for individuals experiencing domestic and family violence.

Consultation Stage 3: Stakeholder Workshops and Interviews

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation Stage 3: Stakeholder Workshops and Interviews

PRIORITY POPULATIONS AND COMMUNITIES

This section reflects the voices of the stakeholders who participated in the consultation but does not seek to speak on behalf of these populations. We acknowledge that there will be a greater diversity of views than has been captured and represented as part of the consultation.

1.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities



Aboriginal people are getting more of a voice in this space now but still, unless you listen and look at it through an Aboriginal lens and not a white lens, then I don't see much is going to change.

If you look across Australia, there's lots of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in this space. We've got men and women that have been working in this space, they've got doctorates, they've got the knowledge, they've got the research, et cetera. It's important that we don't have to reinvent the wheel, we've got our people that are actually working in these spaces already.

Throughout a series of three dedicated workshops and individual interviews, and across all the thematic and jurisdictional workshops, the Consultation Team were extremely privileged to draw on the expertise and experience of members of the First Nations communities. This section presents a summary of the key themes emerging across the consultation specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. To do so, we draw here on insights from the dedicated workshops but note also that across key aspects of the consultation more broadly that workshops focused on systems and other key populations also repeatedly brought to the fore the need for understanding and First Nations-led responses.

First Nations stakeholders involved in the consultation viewed adopting a strengths-based approach towards ensuring family safety as critically important. A strength-based framework is one that talks to the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to practice their culture and to continue embedding those cultural systems as part of what is safe and healthy for their communities. The value of this approach was succinctly explained by one stakeholder:

We know that properly resourced Aboriginal people can live meaningful and healthy lives on their traditional lands and that our cultural way of living and our customs and bringing into all the other things that makes us who we are as Indigenous people should be valued and should be celebrated and not seen as that's what keeps us down, because if we didn't have that we wouldn't be who we are.

Stakeholders recognised that a whole-of-family approach is critical to community safety and healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities: a very different foundation to mainstream responses that tend to separate out young people, women and men to respond to or prevent family, domestic and sexual violence.

First Nations stakeholders who participated in the consultation were clear in their agreement that the next National Plan needed to dramatically change its approach to preventing and improving responses to family, domestic and sexual violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As one stakeholder explained:

If we think more fundamentally and conceptually about the word disruption, in its simplest form it basically means to do different or move from. So, if we're not prepared to do things differently such as move [from] quantitative to qualitative or from government control to community control or whatever else it may be

then we're actually not causing disruption. So, to cause disruption to the cycle we have to be prepared to do different ... I think that's been a bit of a barrier at the moment, is people like to talk about causing the disruption at a policy level but then just repeat the same, maybe slightly different language that gets used in the policy that gets drawn up or the framework that gets developed but it has the same intent, the same KPIs and the same outcomes. So there's no disruption.

Part of this 'disruption' requires acknowledging the need for all activities relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities stemming from the next National Plan to be First Nations led. Importantly, stakeholders emphasised that this leadership must be enshrined from the outset through to measurements of success. As one stakeholder commented:

We should be the master of how this story gets told, not others trying to tell us what the measure of this is, of the success of this is. The success is how we want to tell the story and the story is how our kids grow up despite immense odds, how our communities have changed the story, how they've built their communities despite a community having had a huge lack of unemployment in the community, despite the racism, despite intergenerational trauma of being moved from the mission and people being stolen, how they're rebuilding that community, how they're tackling the violence that's in that community. They're the stories that's our strength for the future, that's what we need to build, that's the stories we need to tell.

There was significant agreement in the Consultation on this point. First Nations stakeholders emphasised the need to ensure that any measures and indicators that are built into the next National Plan, or individual action plans arising from it, are First Nations led. As another stakeholder noted:

I think it's really worth, if we're looking at asking local communities to come up with the strategies and the issues, that we also ask them to come up with what success looks like for them. I think if we're localising everything else, we need to localise success as well.

Governance and implementation arrangements

“ *It's the collective that needs to be addressed at a local space. If we're continually picking up and planting responses that have worked in other areas without consulting with the local mob about what they think will work, then we fail them. We have to work with them and work out solutions based on what they think need to be the solution.*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders involved in the consultation emphasised that if the next National Plan is to bring about change in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, then First Nations leadership is non-negotiable. Priority Reform One from the National Agreement on Closing the Gap was often cited.²³ This priority reform mandates formal partnerships and shared decision-making between government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Joint decision-making roles and responsibilities for First Nations peoples are enshrined and a guaranteed 'seat at the table' for First Nations representatives is required. As one stakeholder noted:

It's important that government and policy makers, that they have to listen to us, listen to the advice from our people because for 200 years plus, they've been working – they've been having these programs for our people but it hasn't worked because it's been developed by white bureaucrats. So, we've got to change that relationship with the policy makers, the funding bodies that are providing services, funding to our people.

²³ Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations & all Australian Governments. (2020). National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Retrieved from <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/national-agreement-ctg.pdf>

A commitment to this priority reform was viewed as an essential requirement of any governance and implementation arrangements emerging from the next National Plan. As another stakeholder explained:

So this checking with community is really important because if we're going to institute changes in the way in which we respond, if we're not checking with community about how it's being received and how it's operating in our communities and how it's making a change or not then we don't know if it's effective or not and whether it's helping or hindering our mob. So I think working with our communities is absolutely fundamental at every stage, not just at the start, not just at the end but all the time, all the way through. Having a women's group or a family violence group that we can meet with every month about what we're doing and how we're doing it is essential, it's fundamental and not enough communities have that. We need to resource them to have that.

Funding of community-owned activities

“ *So we have to be very cognisant that there is no quick fix to the experiences that we have in our communities and so I think that the solutions that are available in the non-Indigenous community are not the solutions that are necessarily going to work for us. Too often I think the solutions are often thought of that they will work for us and that is often a big mistake that hurts our community.*

Many participants expressed the sentiment that the ability of the next National Plan to deliver meaningful change for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities requires a commitment to self-determination and First Nations representation. Several stakeholders explained that beyond governance arrangements and the detail of implementation plans, this shift will require activities flowing from the next National Plan to be community owned and funded. As one stakeholder described:

If we do have community ownership, I agree that I think it makes a whole world of difference and we need to start changing the narrative to be able to make it fit our purposes and fit our needs rather than us trying to fit into the government's thoughts around what we should be doing and how we should be doing.

There was an acknowledgement among stakeholders that achieving self-determination and community ownership of the next National Plan will require a significant investment in resourcing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities:

We talk about self-determination; well, our communities don't have that. If we're to see any proper changes, I keep going back to our communities, we've got to see governments that are fair dinkum about resourcing and building the capacity of our communities before we're to see any proper changes in our women and children's lives.

Stakeholders pointed out that care must be taken to ensure that there is sufficient resourcing to support these shifts. Without adequate resourcing, the transitions will not be successful, and this will have negative consequences on the community, including provoking feelings of shame and disappointment. As two stakeholders explained:

It doesn't matter what project, program, initiative we're looking at, I think if we're looking at transferring power and control back to communities ... we actually have to ensure that the opportunities and the resources are available to support that transfer. So making sure that we're not just – and we've seen it happen before where we've tried to transition stuff back to communities and agencies probably had an inkling that there hasn't been the resources available or the supports present for those transitions to occur and things fall over.

All that does is leave a further sense of shame and disappointment etc. with the community so I think if

anything that's going to be developed it needs to start from a position of looking at 'okay, what opportunities and resources, be that skills, be that human resource, be that financial resource, whatever is currently available and how do we build on that to ensure that whatever we're looking at is actually going to be sustainable, manageable and sustainable' by the community so that there are initiatives that are actually more likely to have a positive outcome and to have a legacy than setting people and organisations and communities up for another failure that they then get blamed for.

A related point emphasised by stakeholders was that communities need to be afforded the flexibility to choose where funding is invested because there is no one-size-fits-all approach to funding First Nations led responses and prevention initiatives. As one stakeholder explained:

It's the collective that needs to be addressed at a local space. If we're continually picking up and planting responses that have worked in other areas without consulting with the local mob about what they think will work then we fail them. We have to work with them and work out solutions based on what they think need to be the solution.

This was also referred to by some stakeholders as supporting a 'co-design process', with stakeholders noting that, 'Aboriginal people have got to be part of designing, developing and evaluating programs for their people.' To this end, funding models must support place-based and First Nations led interventions. There was an expressed frustration among stakeholders that First Nations led local programs and interventions have often failed to receive government funding. As one stakeholder explained:

Aboriginal women don't have an issue developing programs ... What we do have an issue with is getting the correct funding behind those programs to run them out from our Aboriginal perspective. That's the issue. There's great programs sitting around that were developed that never got funded because heaven forbid Aboriginal women come up with the right ideas and the right ways to go out and help their own. Heaven forbid we haven't got white women telling us how we should be Aboriginal women. That really is the basis for it, what's best for us and we go back to colonisation. That's what it was built on. You can say that that's not the case but it is the case, whether we like it or not but that's the bottom line.

The need to recognise the importance of the leadership and work of the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) was frequently cited by stakeholders in the context of funding. Stakeholders felt strongly that ACCOs need to be funded and empowered to deliver response and prevention focused initiatives. Stakeholders explained that in certain areas ACCOs are presently working with communities and bearing the responsibility of providing essential services, in addition to providing advice and consultation services for the government when called upon to do so. Stakeholders frequently pointed to the impossibility of this situation. First Nations communities are tasked with enormous responsibility; they are expected to be responsive to Government demands despite being in a position of ongoing financial dependence and insecurity. As one stakeholder explained:

We're an Aboriginal organisation, we depend on government to fund our organisation, but we've got to be looking at how that – the funding comes in, the reporting, all of that, we can't wait until the 11th hour to know that we're going to get another two year's funding. And the weight of this organisation is enormous when government is asking for advice, but sometimes I get sick of giving advice because I think that no one is listening and it's just a tick box exercise. But that's not to say that we don't live in hope that things will change for the better.

Interrupting the cycle of intergenerational trauma

During the consultation, stakeholders reflected on how the next National Plan can interrupt the cycle of intergenerational trauma that contributes to all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence, the normalisation of violence and the shame and stigma of help-seeking. Stakeholders emphasised the

importance of developing and delivering trauma-informed responses by First Nations people, as well as community education to break the silence about intergenerational trauma and educate people on what it is and what it looks like.

Numerous stakeholders highlighted the ongoing impacts of colonisation and the need to increase public awareness of how they contribute to the experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. Stakeholders powerfully captured how truth-telling about Australia's colonial history can operate to disrupt the passing down of trauma. As two stakeholders explained:

If we're going to be disrupters and we're going to disrupt the cycle of intergenerational trauma, then it needs to be taught in schools. The truth around colonisation needs to be taught in schools. Everyone's got this image that Aboriginal people are drunks or they're violent, but I go back to colonisation all the time. In order for Aboriginal people to be accepted and treated equal as the white people, you've got to understand, what were the colonisers doing when they came? They were raping, they were stealing children, they were pillaging land, they were just taking over and that's no excuse for violence but that's where it stems from ... we talk about intergenerational trauma, I say it's like a family heirloom that nobody wants but it gets passed down, so in order to break that cycle, we have to start telling the truth and in order to tell the truth, we have to go back to where it all started and that hasn't happened and we continually have these conversations, we continually have these forums.

Beyond the individual stories which are absolutely important it also requires institutional and national truth-telling like if we're not prepared to look at the colonised history that has led to this and there's not some collective responsibility taken at that national and at the institutional level then we're still only getting a half-truth, we still only get our stories coming out. We don't get the other side accepting and yarning about the true realities about why they actually exist, why we're even having these conversations. We're unfortunately all in the business of First Nations ill health and despair. I think we need to call that out and say, 'we're only employed because of that, we're only having this yarn, we're only having to create this framework because of that' and that has been driven by previous policy and legislation as well as individual mindset under that. So there's two sides to that truth-telling and yes, we need to be able to tell our truths, but the other side needs to step up and actually tell the truth.

Important to this point, stakeholders emphasised that governmental accountability for the social and economic inequity between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Australia is part of the significant re-framing required to meet Priority Reform One of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. Stakeholders reflected that to date First Nations people have been responsible to 'solve problems that they haven't created'. As one stakeholder explained:

The other thing that troubles me a little in this space is the way that much of our focus is on individual families and service responses, when a lot of the levers and the structural drivers that actually are causing – that make violence more likely remain out of the reach of communities, and I worry that it puts communities in a position where they're being made responsible for solving problems that they haven't created. So I think it's mindful that we also put the structural drivers into this conversation as well, broader issues of representation, of self-determination, of poverty, of economic and social violence.

Other stakeholders raised similar points throughout the Consultation:

It's absolutely necessary to recognise the underlying drivers, but in doing that also reinforcing what everyone's said ... there's been something else that caused it, and that's about accountability, and that is acknowledging in the framework that the accountability doesn't sit on us, and this is the product of significant structural bias over many, many years.

I think one of the unique contributors that we have to call out here is current and past policies that have

actually caused these inequities and continue to perpetuate them, because if we don't call out the policies themselves as being a driver then – that should be the foundation for them saying, 'We need new policies to drive solutions.'

These quotes, as well as the numerous discussions that took place throughout the consultation, provide consistent recognition that family violence is more a symptom of much larger intergenerational trauma, complex trauma, structural violence and broader holistic social determinants.

The right to healing

“ *The big funding frameworks don't support this type of cultural healing that makes you feel proud and gives you strength and creates just – women's ceremony, it is just such a wonderful, wonderful safe place where you are loved and you are strong ... I would love to see a framework that celebrated that and celebrated that incredible history and culture and cultural practice. There is a deep psychology in that healing, in that healing rhythm ..., I don't know how you'd frame that, but geez I'd love to see it.*

Throughout the consultations, embedding the right to healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities emerged as a key theme. As one stakeholder explained:

When we look at what are some of the drivers and we're talking about healing, it must never be attached – not all healing stuff should be attached to a program. It should be how do we get families together, because it deals with all those things, making young people – families feeling good about themselves, it boosts their self-esteem and it helps with their mental health, all of those things, it gets them away from the day-to-day stuff of communities when we know the under-investments of governments into communities where people are just in overcrowded homes. When we know that that does a world of good for people, but for government it's always around it's got to be program delivery.

The working of the Healing Foundation was cited by several stakeholders as representing innovative and meaningful interventions that support the healing of First Nations individuals impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence.

Criminal justice intervention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

There was strong recognition across all consultation with First Nations stakeholders that criminal justice responses to family, domestic and sexual violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are failing to offer an effective response. Stakeholders noted that First Nations people are over-represented at all levels of the criminal justice system, that there is a lack of culturally safe and trauma-informed practice and training, and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence are at high risk of misidentification of the primary aggressor and criminalisation of the victim through the civil system. These issues are explored in more depth in the relevant sections of this Consultation Report.

Child protection was also identified as a particularly concerning point of the system's responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders identified that First Nations victim-survivors face barriers to seeking support and reporting violence as a result of their fear of having their children removed. The overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system likely exacerbates this fear. There was a view that investment in prevention and health-based responses may mitigate the involvement of child protection services.

The need to better understand family, domestic and sexual violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

“ *At the moment it's just the community that gets painted as if it's abusive and all the abuse is internal rather than recognising that a lot of that abuse is coming external from the community, be it from non-Indigenous peoples or even further, through the systemic discrimination that's present that sits outside of the community.* ”

Stakeholders spoke about the need to distinguish between family, domestic and sexual violence perpetrated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and violence perpetrated by non-Indigenous individuals. The experiences of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are complex. It is commonly assumed that high rates of victimisation are perpetrated by one's own culture, but this is not easily quantified. Stakeholders commented that non-Indigenous perpetrators 'fly under the radar' and tactics of coercive control are intertwined with racism and discrimination, further complicating the experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples family, domestic and sexual violence. One stakeholder observed that it is 'always the community or the First Nations individual who gets labelled as either the perpetrator or the villain', despite knowledge that a large proportion of violence is perpetrated by non-Indigenous individuals. Stakeholders highlighted the need for this to be recognised in policy and to filter down into tailored system responses to First Nations and non-Indigenous perpetrators.

Stakeholders recognised the systemic racism of the State, which is exacerbated when violence is perpetrated by non-Indigenous individuals. The experience of institutional racism within the justice and criminal systems inflicts further pain and shame on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who experience violence.

Stakeholders also identified the taboo nature of sexual violence against children and young men in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This was identified as a priority area, as it is an under-researched and poorly understood form of victimisation. A flow-on effect of this, as noted by stakeholders, is a lack of culturally safe services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, specifically young men, experiencing sexual violence in First Nations communities. Youth sexual violence and abuse is a cause of trauma and a driver for the cycle of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Developing specialist responses for the Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities

“ *We are the marginalised within the marginalised ... we have discrimination and bigotry and all of these awful negative views coming at us from both sides; ... we've got the racism ... intergenerational trauma, intergenerational bad treatment from white fellas, and then we've also got that transphobia, bigotry from cis people, society pushing their gender binary onto us, which is also colonial and racist.* ”

Stakeholders recognised that there is a lack of services for gender diverse First Nations peoples experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. While noting that some communities are more inclusive than others, stakeholders believed this may in part reflect the relative lack of acknowledgement of trans and non-binary people within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Gender diverse individuals are often required to relocate to bigger cities and metropolitan areas in order to be able to access diverse services.

During the consultation phase a small group workshop was undertaken with representatives of the Sistergirls and Brotherboys community. It gathered insights about the impacts of domestic and family violence on this cohort and how their identified priorities should be reflected in the next National Plan. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sistergirls and Brotherboys describe the cultural lived experience for some First Nations Australians who do not sit within the binary gender or sexuality definitions of the

dominant culture. The terms Sistergirls and Brotherboys do not fit western definitions of transgender and may incorporate an umbrella definition of concepts beyond Western understanding.

Reflecting on what makes Sistergirls and Brotherboys at risk of domestic and family violence, stakeholders spoke about how this cohort experiences discrimination within multiple systems. As First Nations peoples, Sistergirls and Brotherboys experience transphobic attitudes in addition to the intergenerational trauma experienced in broader Indigenous communities. Participants spoke about the gender binary as a colonial and racist structure, and they attributed the discriminatory attitudes they face from within their own cultural communities to the colonial imposition of Christianity on Indigenous populations. One participant spoke about the difficulty for Sistergirls in community when they either encounter or have men's ceremonial practices forced upon them in an effort to 'defeminise' them. The repercussions for not conforming to cultural expectations can create significant risk for Sistergirls, as one participant noted:

A lot of us, we run away from our communities because of the violence and because of the threats that we get, and discrimination that we get, and facing people that make death threats, or even just bashings.

Sistergirls and Brotherboys living in rural, regional and remote locations and within First Nations communities spoke about having to move off Country to escape discrimination and potential violence, as well as to access appropriate and gender-affirming healthcare and services. One participant observed that this imparts a sense of being 'a refugee in our own Country'. Another stakeholder spoke about the isolation from community and Elders – in addition to alienation from LGBTIQA+ communities due to a lack of understanding about the complexity of intersecting issues for queer First Nations people:

There's a massive barrier between our access to Elders and leaders in community ... back home ... I used to speak a lot around this particular subject, and then I would have Elders who would refuse to acknowledge me after I'd spoken, because of what I was speaking about ... I think what's scary for me, and for other Brotherboys and Sistergirls, is that even culturally it's unsafe ... we then flock to cities ... [a]nd we're often isolated, disconnected from culture, and then it kind of puts us into that space of the abuse of drugs and alcohol and possibly into the prison system...for a lot of us, we don't have a really strong community to go back to, and...[e]ven white trans people can't understand our kinship and our connection to land and culture.

Sistergirl and Brotherboy contributors spoke about the difficulty in accessing gender-affirming shelter and refuge services, specifically Sistergirls being denied access to women's shelters and Brotherboys being only offered a women's refuge. Stakeholders also raised significant concerns about First Nations peoples being targeted by police and the resulting lack of trust in police.

Reflecting on priorities for the next National Plan, strengthening communities rather than reforming institutions was highlighted as a priority. Stakeholders emphasised that they want culturally safe services that are LGBTIQA+ informed and that they no longer want to feel medicalised. Participants also advocated for widespread community education about Sistergirls and Brotherboys, with one person noting, '[o]ur knowledge shouldn't exist in places where we're only the ones to access it, because we're not the ones causing harm or violence to ourselves'.

Reflecting on how Sistergirls and Brotherboys can best be represented in the next National Plan, stakeholders indicated a desire for the following: representation on the National Plan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group; opportunities to work with emerging leaders; cross-sectoral engagement, including representation on a range of advisory boards; the explicit naming of Sistergirls and Brotherboys in the Plan and Implementation Plan; and consideration of renaming the Plan using the language of reducing 'gendered violence'.

Key findings on desired outcomes:

- Governance structures and implementation plans arising from the next National Plan must align with the commitments enshrined in Priority Reform One of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.
- The next National Plan should embed the right to truth telling, healing, and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- It is essential that the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are embedded throughout the development, implementation and evaluation of the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan must include dedicated funding for First Nations led and run community-controlled organisations, which includes components for community building activities and a strategic framework to support local retention of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trauma-informed workforce.
- Specific naming and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+, Sistergirls and Brotherboys within the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan must seek to build ACCOs competency to deliver inclusive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQIA+, Sistergirls and Brotherboys through training and education.
- Sistergirls and Brotherboys should be represented on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council, and opportunities for cross-sectorial engagement should be sought.

1.2 Children and young people

“ *Children have been at best an afterthought, if not invisible, in the National Plan and in the domestic violence field up until now.*

One of the things in all of this work is that kids keep telling us every day that things aren't great for them ... there's the reality of big plans, that somehow seem to get so far away from kids who are every day saying, 'why is it that there are so many adults in the world and that no one helps me?' So there's a level of humanity in that, I think, that needs to come through in whatever it is that we design.

Throughout the consultations, stakeholders called for children and young people to be clearly established as a priority in the next National Plan. This would require the wellbeing, recovery, and safety needs of children and young people to be central to the Plan's focus, and for the voices of children and young people to be made visible in the implementation and activities that stem from the next National Plan's operation. As one stakeholder commented:

Naming the issues for children and young people very expressly in this National Plan is going to be so incredibly important.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for the next National Plan to be trauma informed. This was considered particularly important in the context the wellbeing and support of children and young people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. Throughout the consultation, stakeholders also discussed the need for the next National Plan to adopt a life-course approach – recognising that family, domestic and sexual violence can happen from the first year of life and through all stages of childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Across all areas of the discussion relating to children and young people, stakeholders emphasised the importance of addressing recovery, as well as the need for increased investment and resources for children and young people experiencing, and impacted by, family, domestic and sexual

violence.

An acknowledgement of children in their own right



Centring the voice of children and young people in this conversation is absolutely central

Across the consultation workshops and interviews, stakeholders consistently emphasised the need for the next National Plan to recognise children as victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence in their own right. As explained by one stakeholder:

What I want to see is much more visibility of children, children more centre stage, not out in the wings. And increased investment in both understanding what matters most to children, what they're experiencing, but also then ensuring that their perspectives and expertise get put into policy design and service system reform.

Critically, this acknowledgement requires children to be viewed as separate to the primary victim parent rather than as an extension of that parent. As one stakeholder commented:

The very first thing is having children and young people seen as separate to their primary victim parent, which is often the mother. So generally, children and young people are seen as an extension or an accessory to the primary victim parent.

As part of acknowledging children in their own right, stakeholders welcomed the move away from treating children as an appendage of their mothers, female carers or women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence more broadly. Numerous stakeholders noted that the previous National Plan was titled 'National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children' but that the Draft Consultation Framework had removed the word 'their' from the title. This is essential. Children and young people can be primary victims as well – for example, teenagers in abusive relationships or children who are the target of parental or sibling abuse.

To ensure that children are adequately embedded into the next National Plan in their own right, stakeholders emphasised the need for government to create pathways for young people to be heard and to facilitate change. One stakeholder emphasised the value of a human rights lens here, noting the right for children to participate in issues that affect them:

Something we advocate for quite a lot here ... is talking about participation as a human right. I don't think we talk about it as a human rights issue. So pointing to the UN Convention on the rights of the child ... It talks about the participation of children on issues that affect them. So actually, calling that out as a human right feels really important, rather than, 'this is a right that they need to exercise.' It's actually a human right that children and young people should all have.

Stakeholders recognised the need to explore ways in which the voices of children and young people can be centred and better utilised to inform policy and practice reform. The next National Plan was viewed by many as a key opportunity to embed an explicit commitment to providing a platform to listen to the voices of children and young people impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence to ensure their lived experiences inform policy and practice. Stakeholders pointed to the strength of the advocacy being led by young people across Australia and the need to amplify the voices of young advocates in this space. One stakeholder commented:

I think tapping into those already existing networks are really great, but also having young people who are particularly interested in this issue and interested in having their voices heard around violence against young women, would be a really important part of this conversation as well. And it wouldn't take too much to hear what they're trying to say, and to tap into what they're already yelling in the streets about

basically. That it's already a function that's happening within young people; young people organising themselves.

There was some competing discussion here, with stakeholders acknowledging that targeting children and young people specifically for prevention can be problematic, as it may unduly place the weight of prevention responsibility onto them, rather than adults. Conversely, children and young people were also described by stakeholders as empowered agents of change.

Stakeholders also recommended the development of the peer support workforce, noting the value of embedding peer support workers into the service system. Some examples were provided by stakeholders of peer support workers embedded into organisations in Victoria, with a clear view that this approach enhances the design and delivery of support mechanisms to children and young people.

Specialist domestic and family violence services for children

“ *Children and young people need to be seen as victim-survivors in their own right and to be responded as such – my experience is that when kids are responded to as victim-survivors and receive "justice" they are less likely to carry out abuse against others ... we have heard from young people that it is important to them that service providers understand and respond to their experience as primary victims/survivors, not only in relation to their parents.*

Throughout the consultations, stakeholders emphasised the need to ensure service accessibility and availability for children and young people outside of punitive systems, such as child protection and youth justice. Many stakeholders commented that access to therapeutic and trauma-informed supports for children and young people are lacking in the current system architecture. As one stakeholder explained:

People keep talking on behalf of children and young people saying what they need. Children and young people that I've been working with for over ten years keep saying, 'the problem is, there is no service for me to just go to on my own, that doesn't just look at me and my needs, or me and my siblings and my needs. It's constantly looking at me and my parents and my needs, and then my parents end up speaking on behalf of me.

Mirroring this view, other stakeholders commented:

Where are the specialised family violence services for children and young people to be able to access easily without having to come through child protection services? ... can we have just specialised family violence services where children and young people can access it with their own agency, rather than having to be captured through the child protection system, the out-of-home care system, or the homelessness system?

Seriously, there is very little in terms of any service responses directed to children in their own right, other than a fairly under-resourced child adolescent mental health service, which then picks up on a whole range of other issues, and child protection, which I don't think anyone would suggest is a therapeutic response.

There was clear recognition among stakeholders of the lack of specialised children's services nationally. The need for such services is particularly critical in instances where a child is removed from their family for safety reasons. Stakeholders had identified a gap in available and appropriate options when they sought to make referrals for children and young people in their own practices. As one stakeholder explained:

As an independent children's lawyer, I find that extremely, extremely upsetting, that I myself am not able to reach out and source a service that might be able to assist the children who are significant victims in

all of this.

Stakeholders emphasised the need for these services to be child-centric – designed for and with children in focus. As one stakeholder explained:

The key thing that we hear when we're working with young people is – particularly on really hard things to talk about, it's providing safe and supported environments to talk about those things. So that's meeting them where they feel comfortable. That's having supports available. That's using the organisations they trust. All those sorts of things.

It was recognised by several stakeholders that the introduction of stand-alone services for children and young people in the domestic and family violence sector would require an investment in building workforce capacity, noting the importance of specialist work that engages children safely and with a trauma-informed lens.

Some stakeholders, however, urged caution in siloing out services for children from services for women, noting that children are often with those they are cared by, or caring for. Here, stakeholders identified the importance of considering the support and service needs of the family, including kinship care, as well as the needs of children and any other adults within the family unit – noting that any services focusing on adults should be required to have any child of that adult in focus as well. As two stakeholders explained:

I think we need to watch that we don't rush to siloing out separate services for kids, separate services for women, and whatever. I think that tends to be the tendency in how our service systems operate. And to understand that children are not in isolation. They are in relationships all of the time. And one of the things that happens, as we know, is that their primary relationships can be very compromised, where they're experiencing family violence. And the ability of their primary carer to meet their needs can be compromised. So we've got to actually think about the family, the family lens, as well as the specific individual needs of kids.

Services that are focusing on adults should be required to have any children in the family or in the care of that adult in their focus. So that the children must always be visible. The moment – one of the pieces of fragmentation is that adult services only think about the adult in front of them, and they're not thinking about the wellbeing of the children in their care. We've started to talk about this, but it's still not happening widely. And I think that is something that could be in this [next National] Plan as well.

These somewhat differing views highlight the need for diverse, child-centred service responses. This includes services for children as victim-survivors in their own right as well as those offering holistic responses focused on repairing the often-undermined mother-/victim-parent-child relationship. Support options solely designed to support and empower children and young people's safety and recovery where parent-child focused interventions may not be desirable, safe or in the child or young person's best interest were also noted.

For some stakeholders, improving the service system's capacity to respond to children was further connected to the need for earlier risk identification and intervention. As one stakeholder commented:

We're not identifying risk or issues early, and we don't have the service system capacity to then provide the supports and interventions to work with a family, to work with non-violent parents in a supportive way, that is effective. We don't have that. But also, even when we miss those early intervention opportunities, and there is significant, serious, prolonged risk or violence, we don't have the service responses to those children or women.

As part of discussions around service system improvements, stakeholders emphasised the diversity of

Australian children, noting that children's experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence will be very different and that the support they require can also vary significantly. Specialist services for children need to be tailored to diverse groups. Stakeholders emphasised that there is a need within the service system to tailor responses for children living with disability and children from low socio-economic backgrounds. Stakeholders explained that children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds also have specific needs that must be addressed by service providers. As one stakeholder explained:

We have seen that children from CALD backgrounds do have very different needs. We feel that service providers do need to recognise this reality more acutely and apply a culturally nuanced lens more often. And of course, I'm speaking in general terms here, but parenting styles can often differ greatly in certain communities. There might be a slightly more conservative approach, and a more domineering approach when it comes to raising children. And, of course, several generations of a family may be living under the same roof.

There was shared recognition among stakeholders of the importance of culturally sensitive strategies and responses, including counselling, for children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. In developing tailored service responses, stakeholders emphasised that government and the sector need to become more comfortable with localised and diverse responses that recognise the presence and relevance of intersecting risk factors. As one stakeholder succinctly commented:

[We need to be] remembering that children aren't a homogenous group, there needs to be an intersectional approach as well as age focus.

For First Nations communities, stakeholders reiterated the need for specialist services for children and young people to be community led and community controlled. Here, stakeholders discussed the intergenerational trauma experienced by First Nations children, including the persistent impacts – of colonisation, intergenerational experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence, and structural disadvantage – that reinforce such trauma. Stakeholders emphasised the need to reduce the disproportionate overrepresentation of First Nations children and families in the child protection system through trauma - informed, culturally safe, community-led interventions and support strategies that are centred on the child, as well as family and kinship groups. Similar to other thematic areas of the consultation, consultations around First Nations children's experiences and support needs highlighted that the needs of First Nations children cannot be addressed via a one-size-fits-all child-centred policy. Instead, it requires a focus on intergenerational healing of trauma and a commitment to meeting the targets outlined under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap as they relate to children, young people and their families.

The importance of cross-system visibility

“ *Those children that are experiencing violence in the home are the same children that we're continuously seeing in these other systems ... a key challenge for us is to work across those systems. So, who is working on violence against women, versus who is working on homelessness, youth justice, child protection? And how do we get those sectors to work together to come up with solutions for children and young people as victim survivors?* ”

There was a shared view among stakeholders that cross-system visibility is essential to ensuring the safety and recovery needs of children and young people are met. The numerous systems that children and young people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence are engaged with were noted by stakeholders, with a particular focus on child protection, family law, youth justice, and out-of-home care settings. There was shared acknowledgement from stakeholders that children experiencing violence continue to emerge across a range of systems throughout their childhood, which offers opportunities for earlier intervention if information is shared horizontally across systems. As one stakeholder explained:

We really need to think about this in a cross-systems way so that we make visible the connections with the child protection system, the mental health system, the youth justice systems – all of the systems that we know that children who have experienced violence in the home, we know that they are the same children that are also part of these other systems. And because we deal with things in a very fragmented, siloed fashion, we fail to miss the key opportunities to act early enough.

Access to safe housing was also identified as a key area of concern. Stakeholders noted that children and young people experience homelessness as a result of family, domestic and sexual violence. There is a need for stable and safe housing options for children and young people, with stakeholders noting that the out-of-home care system is often a site of re-traumatisation. Stakeholders raised concerns that children in the foster-care system experience abuse and noted that when children (especially those from First Nations families and communities) are removed from their homes there is a consequential breakdown in the resilience of the children and families, which can result in further victimisation and trauma. Stakeholders emphasised that, in addition, children who are removed from their homes often lose access to other support systems beyond the family, including school-based support, friends and sporting clubs. Mirroring warnings that emerged at other points of the consultation, relating to the harm inflicted on victim-survivors by punitive systems (including the justice system and child protection), stakeholders emphasised the need to divert children and young people away from punitive systems wherever possible.

Addressing the impacts of intergenerational trauma

“ *I think it's going to be really crucial and vital that we talk about the impacts of intergenerational trauma in families and what that is doing to children and young people. What happens when that goes unaddressed and unsupported? Which is often what is happening.*

Throughout the consultations, stakeholders were of the shared view that the impacts of intergenerational trauma on children and young people are largely unaddressed throughout current system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. There was an acknowledgement among stakeholders that when children who have been victims of domestic and family violence become parents themselves the onus is placed on them to be the circuit breakers in this cycle of violence.

In families where intergenerational trauma is unaddressed, stakeholders noted the significant impacts this has on the lives of children and young people. During the consultation, one stakeholder described in some detail the tendencies for young people to ‘step up’ in the family unit to act as a circuit breaker and the impact of this on the trajectory of that young person.

What happens when young people become the carers and the circuit-breakers themselves in these families, because they're not getting the support that they need? So many children and young people that I'm working with are becoming the sole keepers/carers/secondary parents for younger children, when they're all just trying to cope with the aftermath of family violence ... They're not seen as formal carers for families. It's meaning that they're dropping out of school. They're failing school. They're not able to get employment because everything is around keeping that family together. And that's an extraordinarily painful thing for any child or young person to have to carry on their shoulders. And I feel like it's something we're not dealing with at all.

Stakeholders identified repairing and promoting the parent-child attachment as critical to addressing and preventing further intergenerational trauma. Trauma-informed support services for parents and children whose attachment is disrupted by family, domestic and sexual violence was described by stakeholders as critical to preventing the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Stakeholders further noted the positive work being done by some support services in working with fathers to increase paternal accountability and

improve paternal attachment.²⁴

Children and young people who use violence in the home

“ *Adolescent violence in the home and young people using violence gets very lost in the family violence space and particularly in national planning. I think it's really important to pick up and address those people at an early age. It's often we're focusing on adult offenders and by that stage it's very tertiary and very late, so we need to do more around young people.*

There was acknowledgement throughout the consultation that children and young people who use violence in the home do not fit the perpetrator model – and that to respond to children and young people as perpetrators is inappropriate and causes stigma. Stakeholders emphasised that any perceived benefits of criminalisation are well and truly outweighed by the negative impacts, with some stakeholders noting that the next National Plan should include an objective of not criminalising children and young people. This was noted by stakeholders as particularly important in the current context of debates surrounding the expansion of the law – including the criminalisation of coercive control – and given the low minimum age of criminal responsibility across Australia.

Underscoring the need for therapeutic wraparound services for children and young people who use violence in the home, stakeholders reflected that in their professional experience, these are typically children who have had violence in their lives. As one stakeholder described:

Children and young people who use violence don't often use violence outside of violence occurring in their world, in their lives. And so ways – in terms of prevention, ways to prevent violence against children and young people are the same ways that we would prevent children and young people from using violence.

Stakeholders urged a rethink of the broader context of children and young people using violence, including the support they need. Stakeholders acknowledged that young people who use violence within the home are at higher risk of homelessness; there is a need to ensure the accessibility and availability of respite services and safe housing options.

Data gaps and research needs

Throughout the consultation gaps in the current evidence base were identified, with stakeholders noting that data is 'very, very important', but to date domestic and family violence data sets have often not captured child-focused data. Stakeholders believed that greater data collection on children and young people, including their characteristics and their specific support needs, is required to ensure they do not continue to be invisible in policy and practice. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of engaging children and young people in research. The value of listening to children and young people, and of using their voice to build the evidence base to inform improved responses and prevention, was well captured by one stakeholder:

I just want to say that children and young people's opinions about what they need is an evidence base. And I think we overlook that. We think about big data. We think about quantitative data. These things are very important. But without the stories coming from inside communities that doesn't mean anything.

²⁴ Interventions with fathers are increasingly used internationally, including in Australian jurisdictions. See, for example, Meyer, S., and McDermott, L. (2020) *Key findings and implications – Queensland Caring Dads Trial Evaluation*. Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre, Victoria, Australia.

Stakeholders identified specific forms of violence they believe to be underexplored, including child sexual abuse and intimate-partner violence in the context of young dating relationships.

Stakeholders noted the need to better understand what happens to children who have experienced family, domestic and sexual violence after they leave care settings. A longitudinal study was proposed as needed to build the data in this space to better track young people's journeys and to inform tailored and effective supports. As one stakeholder explained:

Although we talk a lot about early intervention, we don't really know enough about what happens to young people, for example, after they leave out-of-home care, when they're exiting homelessness services, which is usually where young people are ending up when they're experiencing family violence. We're not tracking their journey ... How do we get that data to be able to support where they're going into the future; after-care, relapses or ends?

Stakeholders noted the lack of data on children living with a disability, their experiences of domestic and family violence and, where relevant, their experiences in out-of-home settings. Stakeholders emphasised the lack of disability services for young people experiencing violence more broadly, along with a lack of information collected around the disability status of children whose mothers/victim-parents present to support services with children in their care. Stakeholders commented that 'we cannot address this without data/numbers'.

Stakeholders also noted that there is limited evidence nationally on the prevalence of child sexual abuse and sexual violence against young women and girls, including young girls' experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace. Noting that this extends in part to sexual violence outside the context of domestic and family violence, stakeholders emphasised the need to ensure these experiences of violence are acknowledged and covered through the work of the next National Plan.

Key findings on desired outcomes:

- Children and young people should be acknowledged as victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence in their own right. The wellbeing, recovery and safety needs of children and young people must be central to the next National Plan's focus.
- The next National Plan must be trauma informed and adopt a life course approach to the prevention of, and responses to, family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan must ensure culturally safe, community-led policy and practice responses to the experiences and support needs of First Nations children and their families that align with the Closing the Gap key targets and outcomes as they relate to children, young people and their families.
- The voices of children and young people must be made visible in the implementation and activities that stem from the next National Plan's operation.
- The next National Plan should promote greater investment in therapeutic and trauma-informed services for children and young people experiencing or impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence. This should include support for peer support workers to be embedded into services and capacity building for the specialist workforce to ensure safe and trauma-informed engagement with children and young people.
- The next National Plan must address the safe housing deficit for children and young people experiencing or impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence with the aim of ensuring accessing and greater availability of respite services and safe housing options.

1.3 LGBTIQ+ communities

“ It’s really important that the Department understands that the populations that we’re talking about isn’t a person, that this [LGBTQIA+] acronym, whatever it looks like is a human rights movement and we have many things that are different and many things that are the same and that we are not one person and we’re not even three people, we are millions and millions of people coming together because we have a shared experience of stigma, discrimination, heterosexism, [and] cisgenderism, these rigid ways of being in our bodies that are then policed.

There were significant concerns raised across the consultation that a National Plan expressly focused on violence against women and children does not adequately acknowledge and hence cannot meaningfully address family, domestic and sexual violence experienced by members of LGBTIQ+ populations. As two stakeholders explained:

I would just say very clearly that the name of the plan, while it’s so critically important that it must centre reducing violence against women, it also needs to be really clearly articulated that this is about reducing gendered violence, addressing gendered violence, of which LGTBQ populations are experiencing. And we can’t really progress much without that happening for this plan.

So a plan to tackle the violence even in just changing the language so that it becomes a plan against family, domestic and sexual violence begins to tackle – that language change itself indicates that we are willing to look at and tackle huge systemic problems that are drivers of this, that these are not one bad apple in isolation incidents. It also removes that danger of the respectability politics and politeness politics people mentioned earlier where people might not come forward because to admit to domestic violence in a same-sex relationship might be seen as an indictment of all same-sex relationships, might be seen to affirm the degeneracy that many politicians and religious figures foist upon our communities.

There was a strong view that LGBTIQ+ populations must be represented in the naming of the next National Plan and that this inclusivity be filtered through the priority areas and outcomes of the Plan.

Stakeholders were explicit in noting that LGBTIQ+ populations are not singular; they are diverse populations who have a shared experience of stigma and discrimination, and the forms of violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ populations have been largely ignored at the national policy level. Specifically, numerous stakeholders identified family-of-origin violence as a form of violence that is presently not acknowledged as domestic and family violence;²⁵ but it should be recognised as such, given its close intersection with the trauma, self-harm and suicidality disproportionately affecting some LGBTIQ+ populations. As one stakeholder explained:

I think it’s really important that we acknowledge that family-of-origin violence is not acknowledged in terms of its impact or looked at as family violence within the health sector broadly. We need to acknowledge that family-of-origin violence against LGBTIQ people broadly may lead to suicide, self-harm and really poor mental health outcomes.

As captured here, during the consultations stakeholders clearly set out the gravity and impacts of domestic and family violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ populations, which are otherwise not fully recognised. In particular, stakeholders described domestic and family violence as key drivers of suicide for LGBTIQ+ populations.

²⁵ The term family-of-origin is used to describe the family an individual grows up in, usually biological or adoptive. Researchers in the field of sexuality studies and queer theory use terms and phrases such as 'kinship' and 'families of choice' to describe LGBTQIA+ experiences and negotiations of relationships and family life (State Government of Victoria, 2017, 19). In a 2017 joint report on primary prevention of family violence against LGBTI communities, researchers observed that one of the reasons LGBTI people create families of choice is because 'they have experienced discrimination and/or rejection from their family of origin' (2017, 19). The phrase 'family-of-origin violence' in this context then, refers to the violence or rejection a LGBTQIA+ identifying person may have faced in the family they grew up in.

There was substantive recognition among stakeholders that an intersectional lens is critical when responding to the experiences and support needs of LGBTIQ+ populations. The need to ensure the inclusion of Sistergirls and Brotherboys as a priority policy area for the next National Plan was raised. As one stakeholder explained:

It's always important whether we talk now about the drivers or any sort of responses further down the track to take into account the intersectional lenses, that whatever drivers are for LGBTIQ plus people, those experiences for people who are culturally and linguistically diverse or with disabilities or from Aboriginal backgrounds would be compounded as well ... I think it's also important that we're not creating some kind of an idea of LGBTIQ plus communities being very homogenous but also really recognise there's some sectional compounding effects in that as well.

Mirroring other findings from the consultation, stakeholders emphasised the need for the next National Plan to connect with other national plans and policies, including those focused on AOD consumption, mental health outcomes and suicide prevention. Stakeholders perceived that there is at present an uncoordinated investment in activities across the various programs, that more investment in community-controlled services is required moving forward.

Intersex Populations

“ *When people talk about LGBTQIA+ relationships and communities I think that not only conveys an impression of homogeneity which I think is mistaken, it also implies a degree of community connectedness. One of the key problems facing the population of people with innate variations of sex characteristics, the intersex population, is a lack of community connectedness and that is reinforced by the use of very different nomenclature [names used] by different stakeholders.*

In the thematic workshop on experiences and support needs of LGBTIQ+ populations a clear view emerged confirming the need to acknowledge and address the diverse needs of members of the intersex community who experience family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders explained that the criticism some LGBTIQ+ individuals raise in relation to cis-genderism can constitute a form of lateral violence towards intersex people, as for some cis-gender is a positive identification.

There was an acknowledgement among stakeholders that to date there has been very limited resourcing directed towards intersex populations and service needs. Likewise, there has been minimal investment in researching the prevalence, perpetration and experiences of domestic and family violence in this population. As one stakeholder reflected:

The resource limitations that we experience mean that we have barely worked on issues of domestic and family violence. Now this doesn't mean that our population does not experience domestic and family violence, we know that it is a significant issue and we know that misconceptions about who intersex people are supposed to be play a significant role in domestic and family violence.

Stakeholders noted that body ideals are a key driver for violence among intersex populations and that this represents a form of ableism that is yet to be recognised in official policy and practice. As one stakeholder explained:

In terms of drivers, I think that there are some common drivers that link LGBTIQ+ populations including normative ideas about sex and gender but also normative ideas about how bodies look or should look or should function and to me that's linked very strongly to conceptions of ableism.

Beyond concerns specific to intersex populations, stakeholders noted that there is a concerning deficit of

services for trans men who experience family, domestic and sexual violence. There was also recognition among some stakeholders of the need to ensure that services are tailored to respond to elder abuse among the LGBTIQ+ population.

Acknowledging the invisibility of some members of the LGBTIQ+ population in the National Plan to date led to a shared recognition among stakeholders as to the need for the next National Plan to be intersectional and to be articulated using inclusive language.

Prevention and Education

“ *I see a lot of tokenism around trans and gender-diverse inclusion in the prevention of violence space but I don't yet see many programs, initiatives or resources being developed.* ”

Stakeholders emphasised the need to build understandings of the drivers of violence specific to LGBTIQ+ populations, including cis-genderism and heteronormativity. As one stakeholder explained:

I really see the concept of cisgenderism or cis-normativity as being a tremendous driver of violence across and within our communities and the transphobia that it breeds and the rigid gender norms that it tries to police. I would go so far as to say that I think cisgenderism is a tremendous driver across all family, domestic and sexual violence that plays out across all people and certainly the drivers are gendered, I believe, facing our communities.

There was support among stakeholders that the next National Plan should recognise violence as gendered. Numerous stakeholders recommended that the next National Plan should include a commitment to funding the development and delivery of a prevention framework for LGBTIQ+ populations.²⁶ Stakeholders offered ‘wholehearted support’ for this action, noting the work that has been led by Our Watch through *Change the Story*,²⁷ and the need for a separately funded, specific LGBTIQ+ prevention framework.

Related to the call for a tailored prevention framework, stakeholders called for specific education about respectful and healthy relationships among LGBTIQ+ people. Stakeholders noted the range of priority settings within which this education content must be delivered, including schools, universities, workplaces, sporting groups, arts, health settings and faith-based contexts.

Access to services and barriers to reporting

“ *The real key is about choice and people being able to self-determine where they go, whether they want to access mainstream services that are LGBTQ inclusive, and specifically trans- affirming, or specialist community-controlled organisations. At the moment, there's just not enough of any of either.* ”

There was shared acknowledgment throughout the consultation that LGBTIQ+ populations have a lack of trust in safety, equity and justice when seeking help. This lack of trust has significant impacts on reporting of all forms of violence by members of the LGBTIQ+ community. It in turn becomes a driver of violence as those in need do not access services and are consequently placed at higher risk of future violence. As one stakeholder commented:

The ways that the barriers to accessing services and the barriers in our health and justice and policing

²⁶ See also Rainbow Health (2020). Pride in Prevention Evidence Guide. Retrieved from <https://www.rainbowhealthvic.org.au/news/launch-pride-in-prevention-evidence-guide>

²⁷ Our Watch. (2015) Change the Story: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women and their Children in Australia. Retrieved from <https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/21025429/Change-the-story-framework-prevent-violence-women-children-AA-new.pdf>

systems are themselves drivers of LGBTIQ+ experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence because of the ways that our communities, whether it's Indigenous communities, whether it's transgender communities, whether it's intersex people with innate sex characteristic variations and many other parts of our intersecting communities, particularly multiply marginalised groups within our communities, because of the ways in which we cannot feel trust, that we cannot feel that there's safety and accountability and equity and dignity in our dealings with health systems, policing systems, justice systems, we underreport when we experience family, domestic and sexual violence. That cycle of underreporting, because those institutions have not partnered with us to gain that trust from our communities and to guarantee our safety, that itself actually become a driver generationally because then there's a pattern of us not accessing services or being provided appropriate services.

One of the key barriers identified by stakeholders was the ongoing existence of binary ways of thinking about sex and gender across key services, including housing and visa status, as well as a tension between mainstream women's service and services specific to the LGBTIQ+ populations. On housing, stakeholders acknowledged the lack of inclusive housing supports for LGBTIQ+ populations, with several stakeholders reflecting that while refuges will take lesbian and queer women, it was unclear which refuges are open to non-binary and trans women. As one stakeholder commented:

We also see a lot of inappropriate housing so it's not enough to just have housing, it has to be affirming, it has to be safe and inclusive and appropriate.

Stakeholders also noted that the perceived lack of tailored care impacted victim-survivors' help seeking. As two stakeholders explained.

Our Brotherboys and Sistergirls, LGBTIQ+, our space, they don't turn up for treatment, they don't engage in the mainstream services because those services are less likely to provide culturally competent support or care.

They're not going and getting support because they just don't see their relationships within those support services advertising and that sort of thing. So language is really a huge one and something that definitely needs some work.

Stakeholders advocated for a stronger sector response, necessitating increased, trauma-informed and specialist resources, to ensure that family, domestic and sexual violence among LGBTIQ+ populations is better responded to. On this point, stakeholders were clear that workforce training alone was not sufficient. In addition, the next National Plan must make a commitment to service provision that offers LGBTIQ+ populations a greater choice in the availability of services.

At a base level this requires that violence against LGBTIQ+ populations can be identified and taken seriously; there was a perception among stakeholders that this is yet to occur. As one stakeholder commented:

For many people in our communities, access to information is so tricky and hard because the dominant narrative of domestic violence in particular is that of a cisgender heterosexual woman.

Stakeholders recommended that core funding be committed in the next National Plan to ensure that community organisations can be inclusive to LGBTIQ+ populations. This should extend to the specialist service sector, where there was an acknowledgement of the need for specialist practitioners to assist with workforce capacity building. Specifically, inclusive responses in the sexual violence space should be ensured. Stakeholders noted that there is a lack of specialist supports for LGBTIQ+ victim-survivors of sexual violence.

There was a recognised need for capacity building within LGBTIQ+ community-controlled organisations (CCOs). Several stakeholders reflected that there is often an inability within CCOs to respond to competitive funding calls and large tenders. Stakeholders suggested that larger organisations should seek to partner with CCOs in meaningful ways to ensure LGBTIQ+ expertise was not lost through these processes.

Beyond the service system there was recognition among stakeholders of the risks of policing and imprisonment for gender diverse individuals, including perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence. It was noted that this is exacerbated for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identifying as LGBTIQ+.

Key findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must recognise and address gendered forms of violence without excluding LGBTIQ+ populations from its objectives and target populations. Its current title therefore requires reconsideration.
- The next National Plan should include commitment to fund the development and delivery of a prevention framework for LGBTIQ+ communities.
- The next National Plan must support workforce capacity building in specialist and mainstream service provision to ensure safe and informed service responses that meet the needs of LGBTIQ+ populations affected by family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan must incorporate an intersectional lens that recognises the underlying drivers of family, domestic and sexual violence disproportionately affecting LGBTIQ+ populations.
- The next National Plan must recognise and address family-of-origin violence as a key underlying driver for poor mental health outcomes and increased risk of self-harming behaviours and suicide among LGBTIQ+ populations.

1.4 People with disability

“ So many times in my work I come across women with disabilities who don't even understand that they're experiencing violence. So I think we actually have to go back to the start. We actually have to really outline what violence is ... There are many people in the system who are shocked when I describe the forms of violence that occur. So I think we actually have to go back to basics.

The experiences and needs of people with disability emerged as a key priority for stakeholders throughout the consultation, particularly in the disability and gender-based violence specific thematic workshop and the intellectual disability and cognitive impairment small group interview. Stakeholders acknowledged that there is significant work to be done to improve the prevention of and responses to violence experienced by people living with a disability. There was a shared acknowledgement that the policy and practice priorities identified in this consultation have been required for some time (and been under discussion for some time). There was a sense of urgency among stakeholders for the next National Plan to represent a clear commitment by the Government to ensure the protection of people with disability from violence.

Language and scope of the next National Plan

“ One thing that I would mention for the National Plan that's really important is to broaden the scope of family and domestic violence and look at the specific forms of violence that women with disabilities experience.

I think what we really desperately need is to get some conceptual clarity in the next National Plan, which we didn't

have in the first National Plan. I mean the first National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children uses the language of violence against women, which is of course consistent with the UN ... But the operationalisation of that has been intimate partner violence. And what that does is that it obscures fundamentally, the entire gamut of abuse, harm and violence that disabled women experience. So I think we need a bit of conceptual clarity, and the new National Plan is absolutely the right vehicle to do that.

There was a clear view among stakeholders that the language and scope of the next National Plan needed to expand definitions of violence beyond family, domestic and sexual violence to include all forms of gender-based violence. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of capturing the diverse forms of violence that women with disability experience in the places they live and work. Specifically, stakeholders identified that people with disability in institutions and group homes experience sexual, mental and emotional abuse; often this violence is perpetrated by unpaid and paid carers as opposed to intimate partners. As stakeholders explained:

Looking at the way in which women with disabilities often live in segregated housing. So that's group homes and different institutions. And within these spaces, although they are women with disabilities in the domestic sphere, they're not captured under DV legislation at all; there's very few mechanisms for disabled women to pursue any type of DV charge ... because it's seen as a disability issue, rather than a DV issue. So yeah, I think that's one thing that we are consistently pushing for, is the recognition of the different forms of violence that recognise women with disabilities [experience].

One of the...things you'll hear from staff who work in group homes is, 'We're like a family here' ... there's a sense on the ground that people living in group homes are living in a family environment. They're not allowed to share beds. They're not allowed to have sexual relationships with each other. However, their violence that happens in their homes is not considered family violence, even where people have lived together for 50 years. It's not considered in that construct. It's like a world unto itself, where service providers make the rules ... And what happens in those houses is a function of managing people who are difficult to manage, and we do what it takes ... there is considerable violence from staff to residents. There is considerable violence between residents. It is not considered family violence. It's not even considered violence.

One stakeholder specifically pointed to the way in which this manifests in inadequate health system responses to women with disability experiencing violence:

Speaking about women with disabilities, it's interesting because the definition of family violence defines violence that happens within the home, but for women with disabilities, quite often that violence, so what you deem to be family violence and sexual violence, happens within closed institutions, so group homes, aged care homes, mental health in-patient facilities. And I don't think the current health responses address the violence in those environments so well.

The specific forms of violence experienced by women with disability must be acknowledged in the next National Plan. As one stakeholder explained:

When violence occurs for women with disabilities isn't necessarily in intimate partner violence, it's actually in the places where we live. So in the National Plan and what I've been able to read, it talks about intimate partner violence and family violence ... I don't really see anything in there that talks about the violence that occurs to women with disabilities that is different to the other forms of violence that occurs.

There was a shared view among stakeholders that too often the definitions embedded in government policy and practice revert to a focus on domestic violence and intimate partner relationships narrowly defined, and that this fails to acknowledge that women with disability experience unique forms of violence. Stakeholders recognised that this inability to include all forms of violence experienced by people with disability within the scope of the National Plan to date has meant that funding and policy attention and

implementation measures in this area have been limited. As one stakeholder explained, 'the flow on effects of having that narrow conceptualisation is that there's narrow conceptualisation in terms of the investment.'

Stakeholders stressed that the language of 'vulnerability' should be dropped from the next National Plan and that where possible, other official plans and documents should be revised to remove this language. Stakeholders explained that the vulnerability frame individualises both the harms and the responsibility and is not conducive to effective responses nor prevention. As stakeholders explained:

I think it would be nice to see the National Plan drop the language of vulnerability because that really does hide these structural issues behind something that's much more individualised. So I think we talk about certain groups with vulnerabilities, I think that would be a really good, very small but quite powerful change to the way that the plan addresses these issues.

You know vulnerable doesn't actually state why, it just states that we are. And ignores all the structures and systems around us and blames the individual versus the vulnerability of the environment we live in. So yes, definitely we need to find a better language to use around the issue of vulnerability and how we position the language of that.

As part of the discussion on the language and scope of the next National Plan, stakeholders emphasised the importance of intersectionality and ensuring that the next National Plan does not create policy and service silos for people with disability who experience and are impacted by violence. As one stakeholder succinctly explained:

There is a tendency in Australia to look at domestic violence from a DV perspective. But then if it's disability, that's not our responsibility, that's a disability thing. So, getting policy, breaking down policy silos, and to look at different frameworks talking to each other. So, if we have a new disability strategy that's coming up this year, and a new national plan, they better be talking to each other.

To ensure this, stakeholders emphasised the need to link up national and state plans to ensure connectivity of policy fields at the state and Commonwealth levels. There was a strong view among stakeholders that the Commonwealth government must lead here. As one stakeholder stated:

The problem is the policy siloing. The Commonwealth government has a leadership role here to provide the authorising environment. And a lot of this policy football and volleyball that we see between state and territories could easily be rectified by fit-for-purpose policy-making. And I think that's where the Commonwealth steps in to provide that authorising environment.

While safe, secure, and accessible housing featured prominently throughout the consultation in multiple thematic areas, the need for housing as an alternative to violent and unsafe institutional or group homes was raised specifically by stakeholders in the context of cognitive impairment and intellectual disability. One stakeholder explained:

For so many of the people that we support, they're living with people who are dangerous to them. And there is no way out. We've had cases where there has been substantiated abuse between people being forced to live together, who are continuously still forced to live together. [participant provides an example of residents who have been living in a group home together for 22 years] ... there were two women ... who were now elderly, who had altercations all the time – violent altercations ... the staff had this whole scene going on where they couldn't leave these two women ... in the same room at the same time without staff between them. And that's how they had been living and continue to live.

Consistent with the issue raised above and emphasised by numerous stakeholders discussing priority policy and practice areas related to disability, this stakeholder expressed frustration that this situation was not considered to be a problem for either of the women involved or the other people who lived in this

particular house who, they commented, have ‘witnessed violence their whole entire lives’. As another stakeholder commented, ‘violence is normalised in disability residential services ... nobody thinks of it as violence – it’s just behavioural problems with people’.

At the international level, stakeholders noted that the next National Plan should promote alignment with the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). As one stakeholder explained:

I think what also must be addressed is our compliance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, in particular the fact that Australia maintains the interpretive declarations on Articles 12, 17 and 18, which all relate back to access and justice and equality before the law. Now we do have multiple jurisdictions for sure, however I don’t see that it is an adequate response from the federal government to say we cannot address the interpretive declarations because we’ve got multiple jurisdictions. And certainly, this was the argument that was put forward by the Australian government delegation in Geneva in 2019. These are highly problematic and in fact allow for things around guardianship and around to access to justice more broadly to happen. These must be addressed.

Stakeholders commented that the Federal Government’s response to CRPD to date has been inadequate and that lack of compliance with these sections should be addressed to ensure better protections from violence for people with disability.

Service availability and accessibility

“ *This is something that happens to us across multiple settings, at multiple different points in time and how does this create disempowered people who can’t actually speak up for themselves and have any choice and control over the disability care when they’ve just experienced so many constant forms of disempowerment across their lifetime and why people end up in guardianship and all those sorts of things.*

There was a strong view in the consultation that people with disability experience disempowerment across service settings, further compounding the challenges that women face in speaking out about violence they experience. Building on the need to better recognise a range of violence experienced by women with disability, stakeholders stressed that women often fall between the cracks in the service system. As one stakeholder explained:

So realistically what it means is that disability services don’t necessarily recognise violence against women in these spaces. And that a lot of the time it’s because these are disability service providers, so of course they don’t want to recognise violence, because they would be responsible and liable for that. But also the fact that then the more mainstream family violence services kind of leave it as a specialist area that needs specialist intervention. Which means women in these settings are left with nothing.

Mirroring this view, another stakeholder described the ways in which the family violence risks for women with disability may be overlooked at different points of the system:

The maternal health centres, the doctors, the nurses, the hospitals who have all got programs in place to assess family violence risk ... I’m not sure that people with disabilities are actually being assessed at the same rate. Mainly because of the ableist attitude which underpins our society. And also that we also have this attitude that, ‘They wouldn’t be doing that to them, after all they were a good bloke staying with a women with a disability.’ We hear that so many times. The family violence sector has a responsibility to respond to women with disabilities.

Several stakeholders identified a need for better service accessibility and trauma-informed supports for women with disability and experiencing violence, especially for those living in rural and remote areas. There was a clear view that the role that trauma plays in the lives of people with disability is currently

misunderstood by the institutions and structures responding to experiences of violence. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring system supports for parents to maintain custody and/or contact with their children. The prevalence of child removal in this context was identified as an area of concern. One stakeholder discussed the myriad of challenges that women face because their mothering is viewed using a deficit model where women with disability are seen as 'less worthy':

I've been doing this for over 20 years and I'm still hearing the same stories. I'm still spending my Sundays supporting women who have had their children removed as a result of family violence. I'm still having women not believed. I'm still having people say to me – and I suppose this is a good term to think about – In Australia we say a fair go. Unless it's for women with disabilities, and then we say fair enough. So, women with disabilities have their children, we say well it's fair enough, they have their children removed because there's a reason for that. We need to start changing the way the rest of society considers us as acting in a deficit model. We are all women, right? That's the first thing. The disability is the barrier that we face in accessing something that everybody else takes for granted. So, if we can just get that right and acknowledge that we have the same rights as everybody else. Then perhaps we'd go some way. But until this plan actually acknowledges our humanity, I'm not sure that we will go much further.

Stakeholders noted that services and structures are harnessed by perpetrators to control and harm women with disability. The importance of acknowledging systems abuse was clearly articulated by one stakeholder:

I think a start would be acknowledging how the structures in institutions are actually harnessed by perpetrators. To then further perpetrate abuse against women and girls with disabilities. How those structure are actively being harnessed and utilised as ways of controlling and as I said and causing harm. So it's one thing – we need to start actually acknowledging that that happens – this happens via police. This happens via putting people into institutions. It happens with the mental health sector. And how those areas are actively – what's the word – colluding with violent perpetrators. With abusive family members. Starting to acknowledge that is a first start to then – how do we address it? Not really sure, but we have to actually acknowledge it to be able to actually address it ... the national plan actually spelling that out again is something that would be highly valuable and really important.

Stakeholders noted the dangers of segregation with concern. There was a shared view among stakeholders that people with disability should not be placed in segregated settings where they are at higher risk of violence. As one stakeholder commented:

The only point I'd wish to raise is the dangers of segregation, and that what we really need to very mindful of is ensuring that people are not placed into segregated settings. Because that's where a lot of structural and institutional violence can take place. And that segregation can be subtle, in terms of it can be a workplace, it can be an educational setting, it can be a health setting. But we need to have very clear processes and procedures to ensure that segregation on the base of gender and disability does not take place in circumstances where it should not because of the dangers involved.

There was an acknowledged need across stakeholders for greater visibility of the abuse perpetrated in disability institutions. In particular, the dangers of Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) were identified in the consultation, with one stakeholder commenting:

ADEs – sheltered workshops – are institutions, they are places of specific segregation. They are also silencing places because very often the service provider may also be the service provider for your group home. So these are very insidious structures – places of violence against people with disability. Not just physical violence of course, but psychological and emotional violence as well. Eliminate ADEs. There's no reason really to have them. If we have an employment strategy that is genuine and authentic, then we have no need for ADEs.

Beyond specific institutional settings, stakeholders emphasised the importance of examining the role of

poverty in creating risks for people with disability. There was general acknowledgement among stakeholders that poverty is prevalent across the disability community, creating barriers to care and wider services. In particular stakeholders stressed that poverty impacts an individual's ability to leave a violent intimate partner and/or abusive carer relationship. As one stakeholder described:

The role that poverty plays in our lives creates real world barriers to be able to escape from violence and the fact that for disabled women it's – a lot of us – we do live in poverty. It's quite prevalent within our community ... the intersection of poverty, plus the intersection of disability and needing care then creates those very, very real-world barriers that we're not addressing as a whole within society. And then if we're not dealing with the issue of somebody living in poverty, then we're not giving somebody necessarily the tools that they need to escape violence.

There was a shared view that these challenges have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, stakeholders noted that tech-facilitated abuse of women with disability (who often rely on technology) was a big issue for many reasons, exacerbated by COVID and lockdowns.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was raised across the consultation and was discussed in detail during the thematic workshop specifically focused on disability. Stakeholders recommended that a gender strategy be developed to sit alongside the NDIS and address the low uptake of the Scheme among women. Stakeholders explained that not all women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence have access to the NDIS. Stakeholders also noted that independent advocacy is left out of funding packages and support.

There was a strong view that the current training mandated for NDIS staff is insufficient and should be expanded to include appropriate responses to violence, and enhanced understanding of the gendered drivers of violence. Stakeholders reflected that the lack of training to date meant that in some service workplaces the nature and impact of violence is downplayed, and victims are disbelieved. Reflecting on the recommendations of the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence that NDIS staff should receive mandated training about family, domestic and sexual violence, stakeholders emphasised the need for any training to be delivered by people with disability to ensure authenticity. There was a query from stakeholders as to the viability of this recommendation. As one stakeholder questioned:

NDIS staff are actually removed somewhat from the levers of government so who mandates the training? For example, even if we thought it was a good idea, which I think we wholeheartedly don't, it lacks an understanding of what the NDIS is, what the levers are to mandate training, and what that might actually do in terms of unregistered disability service providers and push them further away from the leaders of government.

Considerable prominence was placed on ensuring that training emphasised how to identify violence, assess risk, and connect with service system support. As one stakeholder explained:

I just, I think, want to flag that training just in identifying violence isn't really going to cut it. It really needs to also – I mean people need to be given the tools to respond, which has been mentioned so far as well. But it also needs to address the attitudinal barriers and the ableist and the sexist stereotypes and thinking that justify, excuse and normalise violence ... there are also attitudes and stereotypes that make it so women with disabilities are less likely to be believed or taken seriously if they are reporting violence. So if we're just looking at training to identify forms of violence but we aren't addressing those underlying issues and social norms, it's not really going to cut it or have the impact that we want it to have.

Stakeholders also stressed that any training must extend well beyond NDIS staff specifically if it is to ensure

specialist responses to *all* women with disability experiencing violence.

The importance of health sector specific training was identified by several stakeholders, as health practitioners are well positioned to provide support to people with disability experiencing violence. As one stakeholder noted:

I think we could do so much better with educating health carers that go into people's homes to provide care for women with disabilities around identifying and responding to family violence, or even how to ask the right questions when they're going into their homes. I think that could be done so much better.

Improving legal and state responses

“ *We need to address the limitations in the current legal context across state and territories in responding to and preventing violence against women and girls with a disability.*

Stakeholders emphasised the need to reimagine what access to justice looks like for people with disability. Within this, there was specific recognition that neither police responses nor the legal system offer a safe or accessible space for women with cognitive disability and that this cohort experiences intensified barriers to justice.

Stakeholders spoke about the difficulties for women with cognitive impairment and intellectual disability engaging police intervention, and about the problems of misidentification of the primary aggressor this cohort faces. As one stakeholder explained:

We have a significant amount of cases that come to us where women have tried to report violence to the police. But ... they're very often not the first party to get to the police and don't necessarily have the supports to identify the violence that they're experiencing ... it's an extremely common situation for our women to perhaps not even have their statement formally acknowledged ... the other ... common thing for our clients is that they get warned that if they make a statement it's actually going to be them that gets in trouble ... we have a client who ... was experiencing extreme domestic violence from her partner and kept messaging him to try and figure out what's going on. But instead of the police listening to her story, they just say, 'Well, you've been messaging him. We're going to take out an AVO against you.'

When discussing legal system responses, stakeholders noted that the narrow scope of the definitions for violence inhibit the degree to which the law can respond to all forms of violence experienced by women with disability. As one stakeholder noted:

Our legal definitions in Australia across state and territories are limiting in themselves. They don't provide access to justice because you can't provide access to justice if you don't conceptualise the varied forms of violence that women with a disability experience. And that's a problem.

Another stakeholder commented:

[There is a need to] understand the impact that the legal system has on women with cognitive disability, women with psychosocial disability, and how those legal systems create massive barriers for us and how they are not safe spaces for us to go to, let alone the fact that then the legal system is then used and harnessed against women with cognitive disability. They're not believed in a courtroom or people's mental health is used against them to dismiss their validity of what's happened.

There was an emphasis on ensuring people are supported to make decisions. This may be through the services of advocates and, potentially, through the provision of witness intermediaries. One stakeholder supporting people with intellectual and cognitive disability in the criminal justice system noted:

The focus we've had with our criminal justice services is to attach the support to the person – and I don't know, it would be much better if general services were more expert. But until that happens, I think maybe there is a need for a woman who's in a domestic violence situation to have an advocate or have somebody who's attached to her. In fact sometimes it's advocating for her with the domestic violence services.

Stakeholders reflected that men with cognitive disability often don't know what violence is; that there is a need to tailor perpetrator interventions for this cohort outside the justice system.

There was a clear view among stakeholders that people with disability must be involved in the current policy and legislative discussions on improving responses to coercive control. As one stakeholder explained:

If we are talking about legal responses, for disabled women, I think it's also really, really important, we're having a national debate at the moment on coercive control. And criminalisation of coercive control I think it is really, really important that disabled women have a seat at the table across state and territories because I think it's a very, very different ballgame for those of my disabled sisters who have an intellectual disability or psychosocial disability or live with cognitive impairments. So, I think we have to have a meaningful seat at the policy and legislative tables. We keep making legislative changes in this country, based on the archetype of a woman and she's more often than not, middle-class white and able bodied. So, we really need to start thinking intersectionality.

Stakeholders emphasised that consultative processes must include more than one advocate with disability. One stakeholder commented:

we take the acceptable and the palatable disabled people. We need to start broadening that when we start having these conversations

Creating accessible opportunities for meaningful input for people with disability who have experienced violence was viewed as essential to ensuring that the next National Plan is able to support meaningful progress in this space.

Key findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must broaden the scope of family, domestic and sexual violence to ensure it is inclusive of the forms of violence experienced by people with disability.
- The language of vulnerability should be removed from the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan should adopt an intersectional approach that aims to address the policy and service system silos for people with disability who experience violence.
- The next National Plan should promote alignment with the rights contained in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The next National Plan should acknowledge the service system gaps and barriers for people with disability who experience violence and support improved service accessibility and trauma informed supports.
- Training on identifying violence, assessing risk, and connecting people with disability who are experiencing violence to relevant supports and services should be delivered as part of the next National Plan. This training should be delivered by people with disability, and beyond NDIS staff to encompass health workers and the specialist family violence sector.

1.5 Migrant women and individuals on temporary visas

“ I think part of the challenge really is that sometimes the language used in the national plan does not translate to [understanding the] gender specific experience of migrant women. And migrant women are sometimes seen as a homogenous category, like if you have one South Sudanese, one Indian, one Chinese, one Filipino – you've now

There were consistent views expressed by stakeholders around the importance of considering how migrant and refugee women are included in the next National Plan. Two predominant themes were clear: a focus on migrant and refugee women must be a central part of the next National Plan, and reform of the migration system is essential to increasing the safety of women who hold temporary visas.

Stakeholders pointed to recent research that highlights the specificity of migrant and refugee women's experiences of domestic and family violence,²⁸ and the numerous reports on the impact of temporary migration on women's safety.²⁹ Stakeholder views through the consultation generally highlighted the importance of balancing specificity without 'othering'. Many stakeholders noted that Australia is a diverse multicultural nation, with a significant number of Australians born overseas. As such, migrant and refugee groups are a large part of the population; this should be reflected in a nuanced and attentive response that engages with migrant and refugee women and communities across all aspects of the next National Plan. One stakeholder stated: 'we're a very, very diverse society. Why would we look at a plan that looks at cultural and linguistic diversity as a second thought?'.

Stakeholders consistently identified the need for women's safety to be prioritised, and to recognise that key systems, including in particular the migration system, are creating significant barriers to women's safety. Stakeholders strongly advocated that reform is required within the system. It was reported across the consultation that women's safety was being routinely compromised by the flow on impacts of denial of support (including financial, medical, legal, housing, childcare), or limited access to support, because of women's migration status and the complex interaction of these issues with other areas of law, including family law.

Strengthening the specialist response

A clear message from across the consultations was the importance of moving away from associating complex forms of violence as exclusive to the experience of migrant and refugee women – where complex forms of violence include dowry abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation [FGM], and trafficking and slavery-like practices. Many stakeholders expressed the importance of ensuring that migrant and refugee women are not 'othered' and their experiences siloed as 'complex'.

One concern was that focusing on specific types of violence focuses attention away from structural issues and prevents a more comprehensive understanding of the full remit of domestic and family violence in the Australian community. One stakeholder encapsulated this view in their response to the list of forms of violence that have previously fallen under the banner of *complex* forms of violence:

I don't think these are the five utmost important issues with migrant and refugee women. They are important and they are hurting women's lives. But if I was to identify the five areas in the National Plan needed to work with migrant and refugee women, that list would not look like that ... [and it's] really important to remember is no one comes to a specialist family violence service to seek help and it's just dowry abuse that they experience. It's usually complex forms of family violence where dowry abuse is one of the presenting issues and you're generally not going to find out about it the fifth or sixth time you have that conversation because there is so much judgment in Australia about dowries and dowry abuse that they're not going to tell you until they trust.

There were some differing views on specific forms of violence experienced, reflecting ongoing differences

²⁸ Migrant and refugee women in Australia: The safety and security study', June 2021; Vaughan et al (2016) Promoting community-led responses to violence against immigrant and refugee women in metropolitan and regional Australia. The ASPIRE Project: Key findings and future directions.

²⁹ Segrave & Pfitzner (2020) Family Violence and Temporary Visa Holders During COVID-19 (2020); Segrave (2017) Temporary migration and family violence: An analysis of victimisation, support and vulnerability.

around how forms of violence, such as FGM, may be understood and where and how they are best responded to. This echoed the calls to understand that migrant and refugee groups are not homogenous, that views differ within and across communities, and that this is an important starting point. As one participant commented in relation to financial abuse, depth and nuance is most critical for understanding how different forms of domestic and family violence manifest and for developing informed responses:

Some of the cultural practices of money are not understood. The morality of those practices are not understood. But because they are different from the Anglo ones, they're seen as abusive ... [where other practices are not recognised as potentially abusive]. For instance, if a woman, when you're interviewing her in a family violence practice and she's from India and she says her mother-in-law has kept the jewellery quote unquote safe – [in] the bank locker, it's a red flag. You have to probe a little bit more ... [P]olicy makers and ... people who are [charged with] helping the woman get to a point of economic security, how do they do it if they don't have the [right] questions to ask?

This view of the need for depth of understanding about specific community and cultural experiences dovetailed with the focus on specialisation. There was strong agreement that for migrant and refugee women, specialisation is critical, particularly to understanding the family, social and structural systems women have to navigate, not to mention the nuances of their experiences of violence. This includes understanding the cultural, familial, religious or other aspects of women's circumstances in order to best understand risk and to support women's safety.

There was a shared call for greater investment in interpreters and translators to ensure they are consistently accessible and, where possible, an investment in specific skill sets of interpreters, with a focus particularly in key areas of the justice system such as courts. These roles are important for many reasons, not least of which is that women feel safe and comfortable in speaking, as one stakeholder highlighted:

It's so important for interpreters to be appropriately trained so that women reporting feel safe and feel that they're not going to be betrayed by an interpreter who might have loyalties elsewhere in the community.

The wide endorsement for significant investment over longer periods to achieve greater specialisation and support intersected with a review of how specialist services are funded. Stakeholders consistently advocated for longer-term investment in specialist providers across the domestic and family violence and legal sectors in particular. This was captured in the following comment by a specialist lawyer asserting that complex cases take a long time to progress through the migration system, which requires significant resourcing.

I think some of that also goes to the resourcing for specialist services. So one, the fact that these things take so long mean that we need lots of resources and two, we had this experience of a client going back to a relationship because we couldn't give her certainty we could represent her, and the reason for that is we just didn't have certainty in terms of resourcing. So it's really resource-intensive, and all of our services have worked in this area for a really long time, and we need to be resourced to continue to do the work within our area of expertise.

It was reported by many stakeholders engaged in the consultation that the lack of tailored support services means women and children are staying in or returning to dangerous situations, and that the next National Plan should include a map to achieve reform and agreement across the state, territory and Commonwealth jurisdictions to reduce this.

The migration system and temporary visa holders

Across the stakeholder consultations, emphasis was placed on identifying issues and challenges across key systems that are negatively impacting women's safety. There was significant agreement among stakeholders with the sentiment that these systemic issues are well known but not always visible, and that, as this stakeholder expressed, the next National Plan 'really needs to make those things visible, particularly

the inequity of access to services and to support’.

The migration system was the primary focus here. There was consensus across workshops and interviews that reform is required to ensure women are safe. A number of broad issues were raised. First, there was strong support for an effort to redress the different definitions of family violence in regulations and law across states and territories and the Commonwealth and promote consistency. This was seen as critical in the migration area in particular, where various systems interpret and apply different definitions.

Second, processing times across the migration system at every stage are impacting women’s safety: from visa application processing to family violence provision applications, to Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) processes. It was consistently noted that processing waiting times are putting women and children at increased risk, as this stakeholder highlighted:

Protracted delay ... it’s a huge problem, and it’s a problem when women are trying to make decisions for their safety, and then it’s a problem for women trying to remain safe while they’re waiting for a visa application to be processed, and it’s in both the protection area and in the partner visa area, and at the Tribunal it’s just absolutely obscene. I’ve had recently two clients, one waiting for the Tribunal and one waiting for the Department, who are protection visa applicants who have returned to violent relationships because they haven’t been able to support themselves and their children during the process, and it’s really distressing.

Related concerns included the impacts of changes in migration law and regulation, such as the expansion of s501 character test cancellations, which were introduced in some cases (in part) to ostensibly protect women. For those working directly in these areas, there are observable concerns related to women being hesitant to contact police – because an apprehended violence order or domestic violence order will result in their partners’ visa being cancelled, (and they rely on that male partner as a breadwinner/contributor). In the context of those seeking protection, similar issues arise regarding protecting the primary applicant. These are complex areas where unintended consequences can be identified and addressed, which a number of stakeholders identified as being within the remit and responsibility of the next National Plan.

Specific concerns were also raised by stakeholders in relation to the AAT processes and operations that deserve specific attention in the context of systems that negatively impact women’s ability to access safety. Stakeholders reflected that the cost of pursuing an appeal through the AAT has increased significantly in recent years, placing the burden and risk with women and advocates to find the money to cover the decision.

Another concern from stakeholders in the area was the reliance on independent experts in the AAT process, and the different approach to family violence evidentiary requirements and standards in the AAT. This is a small but important cohort of women on temporary visas whose situations are particularly complex. These cases are often pursued over many years while applicants (women who have experienced domestic and family violence) rely on very limited, if any, government support and have limited rights to work and study. Stakeholders suggested that the next National Plan could identify ways to work to redress these impacts.

The importance of reviewing the family violence provisions, currently only available to those who hold temporary partners visas, was a core focus for several stakeholders through the consultation. There was general agreement on the need to expand access to the provisions. Two further issues were consistently raised regarding the current operation of the system and the absence of understanding of family violence in this process:

1. Significant concerns were raised around the role and process of independent experts, who are necessary in the absence of judicial evidence assessing whether family violence took place.

Some stakeholders noted in detail significant concerns regarding independent experts; this was brought to the fore during COVID-19, as court delays impacted access to judicial evidence. One example, of a number given, follows:

The interviews are traumatising and damaging for women. They cover topics that are much broader than family violence. Children are being required to be interviewed, lawyers are not able to be present, ' There were also consistent concerns that assessments were wrongful and uncontestable (examples were given such as an independent expert accepting that a woman was strangled but didn't accept that that made them feel reasonably fearful for their wellbeing and safety).

2. 'Genuine relationship' was also raised by many stakeholders throughout the consultations as a fundamentally flawed touchstone.

More broadly, stakeholders noted that the impact of temporariness for those who have no claim to the Family Violence Provision is a major priority and an area that should be in focus for the next National Plan. Some stakeholders referred to calls for a visa to be created for all temporary visa holders experiencing family violence to give them ease of access.³⁰ As this stakeholder stated:

I think there's a lot we need to do with temporary visas. I think one of the most critical things is we need a temporary visa of two to three years so that when any woman can demonstrate a legitimate relationship and family violence, they can automatically go onto a temporary visa which gives them health rights, working rights, social security and education rights.

The key prompt is that temporary visa holders, as stakeholders across the consultation agreed and highlighted, are systematically denied access to support or have only limited support options available, and this needs to be redressed in the next National Plan via bipartisan support. The intersection of barriers to support was highlighted by many stakeholders, for example:

I think what also falls under barriers to access to safety reporting and information is access to services that Australian women are able to access, that women on temporary visas are unable to, such as accommodation, social security and financial support especially where there are children at risk from the perpetrator. So a lot of women on temporary visas are often having to choose whether to remain in an abusive relationship versus becoming homeless and having no income.

Many stakeholders engaged in the consultation saw the introduction of a three-year temporary visa, with access to the full suite of support and rights to work and study, as overcoming the barriers to all the support mechanisms that women need but are currently less able, or not able, to access because of their migration status. It was also argued by a number of stakeholders that the introduction of the temporary visa investment would be one contribution to larger conversations about skills shortages. As two stakeholders stated:

A temporary visa is critical and also supports the whole situation Australia is facing, which is the skills shortage. It's the fastest track because these are a [sic] – some of these women have got overseas qualifications; they've got heaps of work experience overseas.

They can really make a difference with our skills shortage and we're just not allowing them to do anything except for live off charity. So, I think that is a critical [point] – that you can't leave a cohort to live in charity.

³⁰ National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence (2019) Blueprint for Reform: Removing Barriers to Safety for Victims/Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence who are on Temporary Visas. PDF: https://awava.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Blueprint-for-Reform_web_version.pdf

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must include a focus on improving access to services for migrant and refugee women, regardless of their visa status.
- The next National Plan must commit to delivering system reforms, with a focus on the migration system, to increase migrant and refugee women's safety from family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan must include a national commitment to longer-term funding of existing specialist support for migrant and refugee women.

1.6 Rural, regional and remote communities

“ From the foundations of the Plan, there needs to be a real understanding of the functioning and characteristics of rural and remote areas of Australia. Who are our rural and remote women? What does safety look like for them? A plan that is built on the needs of metro areas will not provide equity of safety and support for rural and remote women.

Stakeholders recognised that the former National Plan was ‘very quiet’ on family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities. There was shared recognition across the workshops, and in particular, in the dedicated thematic workshop, that the next National Plan should address responses to and prevention of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities as a priority.

Limited access to services

“ The Commonwealth Government will roll out funding with no or very little consultation with the communities in which they're rolling out funding and often, or even with the states that have existing programs in that area. So what you find is there's massive gaps in services where they're needed. And there's other areas where there's double ups and duplication of services. So I think there needs to be – before the Commonwealth rolls out any funding there needs to be greater engagement with communities.

A key focus of the discussion in the workshop on rural, regional and remote communities, and of relevant comments from other workshops, was the need to recognise the limited service responses to family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities alongside the heightened accessibility barriers experienced by victim-survivors. Stakeholders recognised the logistical challenges that victims of family, domestic and sexual violence face when accessing services in rural, regional and remote areas. As one stakeholder explained:

Rurality continues to be a tag on discussion when funding and programs are being determined at a state-wide and national level. This impacts all levels [of] service delivery as said by others today and the result is an impact of ability of women to access equal service delivery or supports in general.

In particular, stakeholders noted that limited communications infrastructure in rural, remote and some regional areas has a significant impact on service accessibility, as clients are often unable to access the Internet or secure a reliable phone connection to contact a family, domestic or sexual violence service. As one stakeholder stated:

the reliance, or the over-reliance on creating services that say, ‘Why don't you call this telephone number? You can actually dial in or get on the internet and use this service’ is, with respect, inappropriate, when I know for example ... that phone reception and internet reception – the only way they can access it is, ‘Here’s

my phone, I'm gonna run down to that wharf, that jetty. I'm gonna stick my hand up, hopefully I'll get one bar of reception to get a phone call through. And I don't have on-the-ground services that will be immediate response to my need.' With respect, I find that absolutely un-Australian. I find it absolutely appalling that women and their children, when they are facing crisis and are in need of immediate response, can't get it.

Other stakeholders shared these concerns, noting that the lack of access to reliable phone reception significantly impacts on victim-survivors' ability to seek help. As two stakeholders explained:

Still a lot of the remote communities out here don't have any phone reception. You'd be required to go to the public telephone, which may or may not be working and making a call on the main street of your community to call for assistance, let alone – again if you're a cattle station woman that needs assistance, you're using a phone there. So absolutely that investment in infrastructure is huge.

I really think that technology or lack thereof is a huge issue in best supporting regional, rural and remote communities. Not only directly for victim survivors, but also for service providers and the staff. So we can't expect services to provide optimal care in communities unless they've got this basis infrastructure available to them. And it's obvious that it's not. So I think there needs to be a really big investment to better support these communities.

Beyond connectivity and access to services, stakeholders also identified a lack of access to safe housing as a critical issue for women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities. As two stakeholders explained:

There's a ... big shopping list for the additional disadvantages that women and their children face in regional, rural and remote areas across ... But perhaps underpinning ... [it] ... is housing. And the lack of affordable housing, and the lack of social housing

There are no refuges/safe houses in rural Tasmania ... Small town folk tend to 'take care of things' themselves i.e. get a house on farm for a woman and her children plus furniture etc. but there are no wrap around services and the woman does not become a statistic until isolation and lack of safety from a perpetrator causes her to flee from the community.

Given that domestic and family violence is the leading cause of women's homelessness in Australia,³¹ the inability of victim-survivors to secure timely access to safe housing is particularly concerning. Data from New South Wales showed that demand for homelessness services in regional and rural areas significantly outpaced demand in metropolitan areas in the period 2013-2017.³² During one workshop, a practitioner reflected on an incident where a woman from the Torres Strait Islands had to wait overnight to be moved off the island as there was no access to a crisis housing intervention on the island at all.

Beyond housing, several stakeholders also identified the disjunct between demand and availability for legal aid services in rural, regional and remote communities. As one stakeholder explained:

In smaller regional places and definitely remote, we're talking about a very small number of services that actually exist to begin with I think is probably something that really needs to be considered. And I guess part of that is definitely the funding model ... I could literally name everybody that works in most of the other legal services ... that's a really small number of people to be assisting quite complex clients with quite complex needs.

³¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2017) *Specialist Homelessness Services 2016-2017*. Canberra: AIHW; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2018) *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia 2018*, Cat. No. FDV 2, Canberra: AIHW.

³² Herron, R. (2019) *Homelessness in regional, rural areas outpace cities as domestic violence, drought tightens grip*. ABC News, 15 July.

When reflecting on priority areas for the next National Plan, stakeholders identified the importance of increased funding to support service accessibility and delivery in rural, regional and remote communities. As one stakeholder commented:

Also funding for travel for services to visit. We have such little funding to go out and deliver domestic violence legal services across the [place] region. If we were better funded then we would have a much bigger footprint going out, funding for women and children that need to come in as well. Unfortunately, there's always money for a paddy wagon or a care flight but there's not money to intervene before it gets to that point.

Building on the discussion about the funding of services in rural, regional and remote communities, there was strong recognition among stakeholders that there is a clear need for a diversity of services in rural, regional and remote areas. Clearly demonstrating the value of a next National Plan that prioritises a commitment to intersectionality, various stakeholders provided anecdotes throughout the workshops as to the diverse range of individuals within their own rural, regional and remote community.

Recognising the need to tailor responses, stakeholders also emphasised the value of place-based services, noting that to date there has been a problematic assumption that effective service -delivery models in metropolitan areas can be easily transferred to remote areas. As one stakeholder described it:

One of the key things that I always caution against, especially in relation to service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but I also put it into the context of service delivery in regional, remote and rural, is not falling into the trap of the one-size-fits-all model. If this works in metro, then it should work in regional, rural and remote. Each community should be treated quite distinctly and uniquely.

Workforce development and retention

“ *Workforce capacity and investing in that is really, really, really critical and that has a direct impact on the capacity for women and their families to receive good services and to be able to recover well, and that's what we want.*

Workforce development was recognised as a significant issue for services in rural, regional and remote communities. Stakeholders noted that it is difficult to recruit and retain family, domestic and sexual violence practitioners in rural, regional and remote areas. A key issue identified here was the challenge of getting people to relocate to the communities for short term roles. As one stakeholder explained:

Regional recruitment issues and shortages means that the service or the funding might be there but there aren't workers on the ground. And I absolutely agree with training, upskilling and supervision once there are. So I'm not sure how that gets addressed nationally, but some focus on trying to incentivise staff and workforce to go to regional areas and then to remain there.

Stakeholders noted that an increase in funding would allow for higher salaries and longer contract terms to be offered, which would be significant in attracting more job applicants. As one stakeholder commented:

My big ... note under this one was funding in big capital letters. Funding certainty, length of contracts, amount of money ... touching on [the] point about recruitment and retention earlier – that would hugely assist. We cannot offer competitive salaries in the first place to come – for example if you're seeking someone of a higher level with more experience – it's not a competitive salary and you're asking them to move to a Triple-R area. You can't offer longer-term contracts, which again would encourage people to upend their life and move to a more remote area.

Research and data needs

Several stakeholders noted the need to build the evidence base on family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities. As one stakeholder explained:

There's just a significant lack of research. So, I totally agree that there has been limited focus on rural regional, rural and remote family violence research, and that's really missing – when it's missing in the evidence it's missing in the policy. And so, we can see that.

Stakeholders recognised that the prevalence of family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities is difficult to accurately measure given the low reporting rates. There was an identified need to build a more accurate picture of the prevalence of violence and service demand. Another key area of research specific to rural, regional and remote areas focuses on the impacts of extreme weather events, including natural disasters, on family and domestic violence. As one stakeholder commented:

Whether there's a possibility in the [next] National Plan for there to be some recognition about the effects of extreme weather events and disasters in relation to family violence and how that's going to be addressed going forward, particularly for rural, remote and regional areas where that's particularly felt.

Stakeholders identified an important opportunity for the next National Plan to support research in this area, recognising that while not all states and territories are equally impacted by extreme weather conditions, the findings of any research in this space would support improved responses, including service provision, in the wake of natural disasters.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should develop and implement a strategy to address the lack of access to safe housing for women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities.
- There is an identified need to increase funding to support service accessibility and to enhance service delivery across rural, regional and remote communities.
- The next National Plan should commit increased and longer-term contracts for the family, domestic and sexual violence workforce in rural, regional and remote communities to address workforce retention and development challenges.
- The next National Plan should support new research to build the evidence base on family, domestic and sexual violence in rural, regional and remote communities. This would include building an accurate picture of the prevalence of violence in rural, regional and remote communities, and service provision in the wake of natural disasters.

1.7 Older people

“ *The focus really has to be on safe and affordable housing ... and ... economic security ... the pay gap, access to superannuation, the fact that women have often broken career histories due to caring, family, volunteer responsibilities, greater proportion of part-time work. Those kinds of things aggregate over a lifetime, and they hit really hard once women are 55 and over. We see the evidence of that ... every single day so just that focus on what is an accumulated lifetime of financial disadvantage and therefore that the priority needs to be on safe, affordable and gender-appropriate housing for older women.* ”

Priorities related to the safety, economic security and recovery of older people who have experience family, domestic and sexual violence were raised by stakeholders throughout the consultation. The demographic category of ‘older people’ cuts across other priority population categories, including First Nations communities, diverse gender identities and sexual orientation, living with a disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Throughout the consultation, stakeholders were clear that life stages (as with certain life events) can increase the risk of family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders suggested that a ‘matrix approach’ is needed when considering the context for aging and older age, one that reflects the way insecurity and vulnerability in older age can be an accumulation of life circumstances. Stakeholders emphasised that there needs to be improved, specialist services for older women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders indicated that increased awareness of the risk of certain life-stages, including older age, should be a priority area for the next National Plan and that a public health framework may be beneficial when considering the funding needs for this priority population.

Older women were the focus of stakeholder comments about advanced life stages, except in circumstances of elder abuse, which stakeholders acknowledged can impact men as well as women. Stakeholders noted that elder abuse may have specific manifestations for men and women from LGBTIQ+ populations and that this was an underdeveloped area of policy and research. Reflecting on the policy and practice priorities for responding to older women’s risk of family, domestic and sexual violence, stakeholders highlighted the following key areas: housing, economic security, accumulated economic disadvantage, the right to recovery and the burden of trauma, elder abuse, abuse in aged care settings, and migration status.

Economic security and older people

Calls for safe and affordable housing dominated stakeholder discussions about older people. This mirrored the consultation more broadly, whereby discussions about women’s economic security in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence inevitably led to stakeholders’ emphasis on the need to address housing. Stakeholders emphasised the accumulated economic disadvantage for women who are absent from the workforce while caring for children and consequently do not accumulate superannuation. For women who have left violent relationships, fraught settlement processes often mean they leave with very little financial security. Stakeholders made the point that financial disadvantage aggregates over time and hits older women hard. As one stakeholder explained:

You’ve got particularly low-income women with very small amounts of super but often those women were forced to leave violent relationships without getting access to the super ... we’ve got to remember super was not divided up within marriage separations ‘til quite recently so we’ve still got a historical lag of some of those issues ... we have a group of women that ... are particularly vulnerable which is the generation 55 and up now ... we have to learn the lessons about how important super is as we move forward ... women are too scared to have the fight with their violent partner and legitimately for real reasons about superannuation, the house. They are exhausted by the time this has all gone through Family Court and then there’s a financial settlement. We need to make sure that there’s safe ways that women can access those really important foundations of ... economic security which is home ownership if they’re lucky enough to have got there in the first place, and secondly, access to super, particularly their partner’s super which is often higher than theirs but also was paid while they were doing the childcare.

In the same way that financial disadvantage aggregates over time, stakeholders recognised that unaddressed trauma can accumulate and intersect with other compounding disadvantages. Stakeholders noted the need for the next National Plan to connect recovery efforts to prevention as a mechanism through which to address intergenerational violence and women's compounding risks over time. Mirroring broader calls for trauma-informed responses to family, domestic and sexual violence heard throughout the consultation, stakeholders identified specific benefits of trauma-informed responses for older women.

Elder abuse

“ *Domestic violence and elder abuse is the most underreported form of abuse that we see and need to contend with. People are not going to report their children full-stop and it's the area in the [National] Plan that I would hope that we really highlight ... where are those critical points in the community that we can really leverage a bit more to work with family violence providers to really support the woman who is caught in a cycle like that?*

Elder abuse was raised by stakeholders as a significant concern and key area for attention in the next National Plan. While we note that elder abuse has previously been considered outside the scope of the National Plan, and that there is an existing National Plan to respond to Elder Abuse, throughout the consultation many stakeholders discussed issues relating to elder abuse and the need for these to be acknowledged in the next National Plan.

Stakeholders asserted that elder abuse is the least reported form of abuse, and that addressing its complex manifestations adequately will require the identification of more effective referral pathways and integrated service responses both within the specialist domestic and family violence sector and external to it. There was also stakeholder recognition of the need for comprehensive training to facilitate earlier identification of, and tailored responses to, elder abuse. As one stakeholder explained:

Looking at elder abuse really highlights the needs to engage and upskill professionals outside of the domestic and family violence sector. So, for example, older people who are vulnerable because of a cognitive impairment can be a target of abuse by adult children or carers, and this can be perpetrated through obtaining enduring powers of attorney or guardianship to gain control of a person's assets. Professionals witnessing these instruments need to be upskilled to safeguard older people from abuse.

Stakeholders similarly called for increased training and resources to support adequate reporting of elder abuse, as well as domestic and family violence perpetrated by co-residents and carers in aged care facilities. Stakeholders involved across the consultation spoke about the need for aged care providers to guarantee transparency about the number of assaults that occur in these settings, but they also indicated that there is a need for aged care workers to be trained to understand and recognise abuse in aged care setting as domestic and family violence.

Stakeholders also noted that abuse in institutional settings, such as aged care facilities, should not be treated as a workplace issue but rather recognised as a form of domestic and family violence. Stakeholders asserted that elder abuse and institutional abuse in aged care settings is gendered, and they called for the consideration of setting specific solutions, including offering gender separate wards for dementia residents due to the increased risk of abuse in this cohort. As one stakeholder commented:

My particular concern is about that stage of life where a woman may have to go into institutional care. The previous National Plan didn't acknowledge the experience of older women in nursing homes, for example but shockingly it is estimated that 50 older women a week are sexually abused in nursing homes. So the vulnerability of older women assaulted in institutions does need to be part of that conversation.

Participants emphasised the need for trauma informed supports for women in aged care settings who have

experienced family, domestic and sexual violence. Some stakeholders raised the need for greater consideration of the vulnerability of older people identifying as LGBTIQ+ people in aged care settings.

Several stakeholders specifically noted concerns about the hidden nature of sexual assault victimisation within aged care settings. Stakeholders also indicated that there is a lack of recognition of the role of the service system in responding to sexual assault perpetrated against older women. One stakeholder explained:

[There] needs to be more recognition of the role of the service system in response to sexual assault being appropriately delivered and focused to older women, particularly women in their 70s and 80s and 90s and I don't think that the system reflects that it's an inclusive provision to women throughout their lives. Likewise I don't think that the aged care delivery system looks out at sexual assault services or sexual health services as part of its stakeholder group. So we need to elevate the issue of the importance of a service system for women that is for their lifetime and is not focused at just earlier or middle stages of women's lives.

Narrowing this focus down further, one stakeholder observed, 'I don't think that the aged care delivery system looks ... at sexual assault services or sexual health services as part of its stakeholder group'. In agreement, another stakeholder commented:

I don't think that the [service] system reflects ... an inclusive provision to women throughout their lives ... we need to elevate the issue of the importance of a service system for women that is for their lifetime and is not focused at just earlier or middle stages of women's lives.

Building on this, one stakeholder noted the importance of ensuring that elder abuse does not fall off the agenda of the next National Plan:

I think that abuse, elder abuse against women in a – institutional or a congregate care setting is not understood as ... domestic violence ... we don't use the terminology domestic violence because that setting isn't considered a domestic setting but the characteristics of the abuse in those settings is exactly the same. I think that if we're going to talk about domestic violence, we should ensure that it covers all settings where women live that are their domestic environments.

Policy and practice reform

Reflecting on priority reforms for older women, stakeholders called for the consideration of multiple policy adjustments to safeguard against the accumulation of financial hardship when leaving domestic and family violence – such as the loss of assets and superannuation, childcare arrangements, time out of the paid workforce, and needing to upskill to re-enter the paid workforce. Stakeholders advocated for a set of national risk assessment principles that incorporate life-stage as a risk factor:

Life stages or certain life events are really important for risk-identifying [especially with] government departments [such as] Centrelink. Risk identification questions have been generalised or dumbed down ... so that you've got a whole lot of Centrelink staff who have one risk identification question that they ask ... So ... we would be really interested to see life stages and life events inserted into the [National] Plan.

The migration system was also identified by stakeholders as raising specific risks for older women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. Risks specific to visa status were noted as an ongoing issue for culturally and linguistically diverse women of advancing age, with stakeholders indicating barriers to accessing services and capacity to leave violent relationships as equally relevant to this age cohort. One stakeholder also raised the issue of elder abuse in situations where women of advanced age are brought to Australia to act as carers for families and children. This stakeholder noted that this form of violence is

currently a largely ‘unacknowledged’ issue in need of further research and policy recognition.

There were other areas of elder abuse that were noted by stakeholders as requiring further research. Specifically, several stakeholders noted the need for longitudinal research that would demonstrate the gendered consequences of family, domestic and sexual violence over the life-course:

I would love a piece of work that ... shows very clearly what we all know in terms of women’s poverty after domestic and family violence, a longer life course trajectory ... we know that women can plummet into poverty, but I would like that to be a front and centre impact that the nation knows.

Stakeholders explained that such research would provide the evidence base needed to inform improved early intervention, service system and recovery supports for older women experiencing domestic and family violence.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should acknowledge the risk of certain life-stages, including older age, including by incorporating life stage as a risk factor in national risk assessment principles. This requires an intersectional lens to ensure the diverse needs of older people are taken into consideration.
- The next National Plan should provide clearer recognition of the recovery needs of older people who have experienced family, domestic and sexual violence. In particular, the Plan should recognise the accumulated economic disadvantage for older women and the need to improve provision of safe and affordable housing.
- The next National Plan should recognise the risks specific to older persons and the need for trauma-informed responses for older women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.
- There is a need to better recognise and respond to elder abuse and sexual violence in aged care settings. The next National Plan should support increased training in aged care settings to improve early identification of elder abuse and to support increased capacity for sexual assault services to be offered in aged care settings.
- The next National Plan should support longitudinal research into the gendered experiences and impacts of sexual, domestic and family violence over the life-course.

1.8 Military and veteran families

“ *That’s the ... fear ... if we open up Pandora’s box, every veteran will be considered a perpetrator, when they are not. Everyone will be afraid of them and think that they are all broken. So stop talking about the bad stuff. Please. Put the hat back on. Stop talking about it. And we can’t do that. Because we’re hurting our community.*

During the interview phase, a small group interview was undertaken with professionals working with and advocating for veteran families to gather insights about this cohort’s experiences of domestic and family violence and stakeholders’ views on how these should be reflected in the next National Plan. Further consideration could be given to consulting with professional groups and services that work with families of members currently serving in the Australian Defence Force. Stakeholders who contributed to this consultation were unanimous that a simple acknowledgement of the existence of this problem in the next National Plan would constitute a successful first step.

The picture for veteran families impacted by domestic and family violence is unique and complex. As is frequently the case when awareness of domestic and family violence within an emergent population group grows, the initial information is revealed to be merely the ‘tip of the iceberg’. Stakeholders spoke about the barriers they face when trying to bring this issue into the public domain, including being routinely disbelieved

or alternately told their experiences are not unique. These barriers are exacerbated by underreporting within veteran communities, which is due, in large part, to the respect for veterans within both military and civilian contexts. Stakeholders were clear that far from an act of disrespect, bringing this problem to public attention was a key first step in rupturing the culture of silence in the veteran community that prevents families from seeking the support they need.

Stakeholders involved in the consultation stressed the importance of avoiding assumptions about the use of domestic and family violence behaviours in veteran families; they indicated that not all veteran families experience domestic and family violence, not all veterans are perpetrators and not all victim-survivors are family members.

Stakeholders spoke about the high anxiety levels and 'constant high vigilance' of veterans due to their training and the nature of their work. As one participant described:

They're at a nine if they're lucky, every single day, they're hypervigilant, because they have to be. This can manifest paranoia for some. Their brains are trained to look for risk and for threats. And they don't shut that off ... The common message that families hear is, 'They just want a quiet, peaceful household' ... when they have a three and a five-year-old. And a 17-year-old in the house. And you're like, 'Mmm, not sure how that's gonna happen'.

Stakeholders also spoke about the uniquely specialised IT skills that veterans have from their training and how these can be used by some to obtain private information and control family members. Linking-in with concerns raised more broadly during the consultation, there was an acknowledgement that technology is utilised by perpetrators to further control and abuse victim-survivors.

In outlining the complexity of the problem, consultation participants referred to the culture of 'zero tolerance' within the veteran community for domestic and family violence. The perception of this culture creates a high-stakes and dangerous environment for disclosures of domestic and family violence, as it is perceived that they can have a direct impact on veterans' employability and career.

Drawing on veteran families' reflections of their experiences while the veteran was serving, stakeholders also spoke about the equally fraught and complex context in which victim-survivors consider leaving a violent partner. Defence employment is unpredictable and transitory, families may be posted to a different location as often as every two years, and members can be deployed for overseas service with very little notice. The combination of these factors makes it nearly impossible for a Defence member's partner to secure employment as they need to be able to take on sole parenting responsibilities at short notice and change location bi-annually. The impact of this is twofold. The first is that the partners of Defence members typically do not have financial independence and are reliant on Defence income, which is reliant on the sustained employment of the serving member. The second impact of the military-family lifestyle is that member's partners can often be very isolated from friends, family and community supports that may assist in the process of a separation. As one stakeholder explained:

Where a family might get a counsellor – start to feel safe. Start to create a plan. Start to have community where they're getting support. And then Defence moves them, sometimes as often as every two years and that is doubly isolating. They can go from Adelaide to Townsville, to Darwin to Melbourne to Wagga Wagga to Canberra to Williamstown. They lose their job. They lose their childcare connections. They lose their doctors. They lose any ability for someone to be aware that they may be at risk or see them declining or any of those characteristics that we might see in a normal long-term community member.

Re-establishing community and trusted connections following a new posting was described as 'challenging' and as a period when families can be at risk of domestic and family violence.

Stakeholders also noted that veteran families face significant challenges when seeking services for domestic and family violence. As indicated above, if they seek assistance from veteran community services, they fear jeopardising their partner's ability to participate fully in their employment and potentially their career. If they seek assistance from a mainstream service, the forms of violence they encounter, and the unique and dangerous environment of the veteran context may not be adequately understood. One stakeholder observed that veterans are one of the most studied cohorts in Australia and veteran families one of the least. Stakeholders emphasised that the Defence community is a microcosm of broader society, one that contains numerous minority populations, including First Nations and LGBTIQ+ members; this suggests the need for wide-ranging intersectional analysis of the impact of domestic and family violence in this cohort.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- Further research is needed to build the evidence base on the prevalence and complexity of domestic and family violence, victimisation and perpetration within military and veteran families.
- The next National Plan should support a review of the feasibility and impacts of the culture of 'zero tolerance' for domestic and family violence in the Australian Defence Force.
- Consideration should be given to the development of practice guidance on responding to veteran/military families to help inform mainstream services on how to respond to domestic and family violence disclosures and requests for assistance from military and veteran communities.

NATIONAL CONSISTENCY AND COORDINATION

2.1 Naming of the Plan

The previous National Plan was titled the 'National Plan to reduce Violence against Women and their Children'. The Government's Draft Consultation Framework, released shortly prior to the beginning of the stakeholder consultation project, was titled the 'National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children'. During the consultation there was a strong view that the title of the next National Plan needs to be inclusive, which many stakeholders believed would require a reconsideration of the Draft Consultation Framework title.

Stakeholders positively noted the apparent removal from the previous Plan of 'their' in front of children. As examined in the earlier section on children and young people as a priority population, there was a strongly expressed view among stakeholders that children should be recognised and responded to as victim - survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence in their own right and that the name of the next National Plan should not undermine that focus.

Numerous stakeholders noted that the name of the former National Plan was not inclusive of LGBTIQ+ people and does not reflect the diversity of experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence across the Australian community. There was a strong view that LGBTIQ+ populations need to be better represented in the naming of the next National Plan and that their needs and experiences of violence need to be filtered through the priorities, focuses and implementation activities stemming from the Plan. As one stakeholder explained:

One of the things that is really critical about us understanding the position of this National Plan, is who's being left behind by it currently. And I want to say up front that I see and we see and are very aligned to the experience of family, domestic, and sexual violence as a gendered violence issue. I want to be really clear with you that these are the same drivers that drive violence to and within LGBTQ+ populations, that at the moment the National Plan is leaving behind gay men, bisexual men, and queer men, both cis and trans. It's leaving behind lesbians, bisexual women, queer women, cis and trans, and particularly trans women. It's leaving behind non-binary people. At the moment, a National Plan called A Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children is leaving behind a population of people.

Numerous stakeholders agreed with this view, as captured in the comments of other stakeholders:

That the National Plan and the language around it focuses on women and their children is already beginning to not embed the rights and needs, let alone serve the rights and needs, or create space to service the rights and needs of many people in our communities.

What does actual meaning for inclusion of LGBTIQ+ communities means because quite often we are always [an] afterthought in the policy, people just add and LGBTIQ+ thinking they're inclusive. The actual name of this plan ... where do we belong in that equation? It's really important – and then even within the Plan ... how do we present the issue of sexual and gender-based violence and how through the language we actually keep reinforcing this silencing of the experiences that our communities go through if we only focus on what's really palatable at the moment in the current political landscape?

Several stakeholders recommended that a focus on the problem, being family, domestic and sexual violence, as opposed to the individuals (currently women and children) would be a more effective approach to the naming of the next National Plan. It was also noted that this would ensure that the focus is on the

acts of violence as opposed to the victim-survivors of violence themselves.

Following this approach of focusing on the problem, some stakeholders recommended that the next National Plan be retitled as a national plan on gendered violence or gender-based violence. This view is captured in the comments of stakeholders:

The name of the plan, while it's so critically important that it must centre reducing violence against women, it also needs to be really clearly articulated that this is about reducing gendered violence, addressing gendered violence, of which LGBTQ populations are experiencing. And we can't really progress much without that happening for this plan.

I think it's absolutely key for the plan from even that starting point of the name to include everyone in our communities (while also maintaining a strong feminist and gendered lens on the issue of DFV). I would suggest a name such as 'The National Plan to Reduce Gendered Violence'.

Stakeholders who supported a renaming of the next National Plan to include gendered violence commented that it brought into focus the drivers of violence. As one stakeholder explained:

It enables us to keep that gendered lens on domestic and family violence and I think that that's one way that we can help to bring along the broader sector and also to really drive home that importance of understanding the drivers of violence for our communities.

Other stakeholders recommended that the next National Plan should be titled the 'National Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence', noting that this would more clearly align the next National Plan with Recommendation 5 of the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Some stakeholders, however, reflected during the consultations on the importance of naming 'women' in the title of the Plan and ensuring that the focus was on women's safety. For these stakeholders removing this 'hard won' gendered focus from the National Plan's title was viewed as a loss. As one stakeholder explained:

I'd be resistant, I think, to removing the word 'women' from there. I really think that was probably something that has been campaigned for long and hard, and the trouble is also ... just with the rise of the men's movement. Now, I'm looking at the rise of the anti-gender equality movement all across the world. They are hugely well resourced ... In that environment, because that's where the world sits today, I would be very resistant to losing the word 'women'.

Key Finding on desired outcomes:

- The name, and the focus of the priorities and implementation actions included within the next National Plan must be inclusive of violence experienced by all priority populations and forms of gendered violence.

2.2 Consistent definitions

“ *I think the leadership around trying to create some really strong consistent national definitions of domestic and family violence, which includes coercive control which includes specific aspects of abuse that occurs in different community groups and settings and relationships, I think that's really important. I think also around sexual consent, having real clarity and consistency around that, because it sets the signal, it sets the tone, and we need to be able to take it seriously.*

The Final Report of the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence recommended the development of a uniform national definition of family, domestic and sexual violence (Recommendation 1). It was recommended that this definition be 'more inclusive of the various manifestations of family violence as well as the diversity of both victim-survivors and perpetrators'. The Inquiry explicitly recommended that this definition take into account non-physical forms of violence, including coercive control, financial and technology-facilitated abuse. Across the workshops and small group interviews stakeholders discussed the merits of this recommendation.

As part of this discussion, numerous stakeholders recognised the significant work and time that would need to go into the development of a nationally consistent definition of family, domestic and sexual violence. These stakeholders urged the process of developing the definition to be seen as a key activity within the next National Plan and for there to be a significant commitment and investment in consultation to inform the national definition. As two stakeholders commented:

I think it's a really large piece of work that includes expert input. Family violence response system and people with lived experience, marginalised communities, et cetera, it's pretty tricky stuff.

Supportive of a national definition of family violence inclusive of coercive control ... we definitely see the complexities and challenges of developing a national definition of family violence, and it would have to obviously entail a lot of consultation with experts and with people with lived experience ... we see it as a long term project to ensure that we get it right ... very cognisant that different jurisdictions across Australia have different definitions, and definitely wanting to look at the strengths of definitions, and what victim survivors need to have their experiences acknowledged no matter which jurisdiction they're in in Australia.

There was some concern that this stakeholder consultation process, coupled with the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence would be viewed as sufficient to inform the development of a definition. Stakeholders sought to press the significance of the work needed to inform an inclusive and intersectional shared definition.

A national definition of family, domestic and sexual violence

Across the consultation, stakeholders were broadly supportive of the introduction of a national definition or framework for family, domestic and sexual violence. Numerous benefits of uniformity and creating a shared language were identified by stakeholders. Stakeholders stressed the need for consistency of definition and language across all intersecting legislation and policies.

Stakeholders stressed the imperative of consulting with First Nations populations to inform the development of any definition or framework. As one stakeholder stated:

It's really important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women be consulted if there is a uniform definition that's developed because firstly want to make sure that kinship structures and family structures are included within whatever definition is developed, but also that it takes into account the specific ways that coercive control can be used that have cultural components.

Other stakeholders agreed, noting specific reasons why culturally appropriate consultation with First Nations populations would be essential. One of the key reasons raised related to the applicability of the term 'coercive control' to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence. As one stakeholder explained:

I've spoken to a lot of Indigenous women who don't see themselves as being coercively controlled. They see themselves involved in fighting or a whole bunch of other things ... So I think that's another issue in

terms of thinking of coercive control as part of the picture, not the whole picture. But obviously you'd want to consult with people carefully about that. But that's my understanding. I've spoken to so many Indigenous women who would insist they're not controlled, and don't see themselves in that way.

Given this, several stakeholders noted that to frame a national definition with this term at the centre would be problematic if it does not resonate with First Nations populations.

A number of stakeholders queried the value of a uniform definition, recommending instead that the next National Plan should seek to inform the development and implementation of a shared framework for family, domestic and sexual violence. Linking back to earlier work undertaken by the Australian Law Reform Commission, stakeholders believed that a shared framework would be a more effective approach. As stakeholders commented:

I think it would be useful. And obviously the Law Reform Commission in 2010 gave us a bit of an idea about what that would look like, and the Commonwealth is yet to follow that advice. For example for migration legislation. So it would be good if it modelled that itself, or work would be a good start. But certainly I think it should be recognised in the National Plan, and I think we should be aiming for that.

I think I've struggled with having a universal definition that applies for everything, and that idea and framework sits well with what I do.

In addition to discussions of whether a definition or framework would be a more suitable approach to adopt, across the workshops specific terminology preferences and debates were raised. For example, several stakeholders referred to 'reproductive coercion' and the need to ensure this is expressly included in the next National Plan under any definition of domestic and family violence. One workshop participant expressed a strong view that the term encompasses 'all aspects of reproductive coercion rather than just being limited to forced sterilisation and abortion (which is most commonly discussed, but it's far more complex)'.

Other stakeholders stressed the need for clear definitional clarity on what constitutes technology facilitated abuse. As one stakeholder explained:

There's actually not much clarity about what forms of abuse and what contexts of abuse are we talking about when we talk about tech abuse? It means that our strategies that can flow from that aren't very tailored, aren't very specific and so I think what there needs to be in the next successor plan is a clearer idea of what are the targeted areas of this that we most want to focus on? I mean we can't always do everything but we do know from the research for instance that women typically experience tech abuse in the context of domestic violence and coercive control so that has absolutely got to be a pillar of our approach.

In addition, there was significant discussion amongst stakeholders as to how the language and focus of the plan can shift to better reflect and expressly include the violence(s) experienced by people with disability and by LGBTIQ+ populations. These stakeholder views have been presented in detail in the earlier section of this report on Priority Populations.

Defining coercive control

In addition to stakeholders' discussion on the merits of a national definition of family, domestic and sexual violence, numerous stakeholders specifically noted the importance of embedding a clear definition and understanding of coercive control into the next National Plan. As stakeholders commented:

Coercive control isn't new to the domestic and family violence space. We've all been working with it for years. But actually, naming it and drawing it out is so important and we support that.

It seems to be surprising that we could even be debating whether or not coercive control should be reflected in a definition of family violence. It's the very nature and dynamics that underpins most forms of its defining feature.

There were, however, diverse views among stakeholders on the extent to which the lens of coercive control should be applied to the entirety of the next National Plan. One stakeholder cautioned against an approach that *only* considers domestic and family violence through the lens of coercive control, noting the importance of still recognising some acts as incidents of violence:

There needs to be I think a clear distinction between what is coercive control and what is incident based domestic violence where there is not coercive control present. We don't want to go all the way over the other side where we've gone from coming through this incident-based framework to then treating all domestic violence as though it's coercive control because obviously coercive control is a very particular kind of abuse.

A smaller number of stakeholders, however, suggested that the entirety of the next National Plan could be framed through the lens of coercive control. As one stakeholder explained:

One of the opportunities that I think a reframing of the National Plan through the lens of coercive control as well as through the lens of incident based domestic violence, which of course is still occurring outside of coercive control, but the main opportunities it provides us is to really show and respond to the extension of coercive control outside of the interpersonal relationship and outside of the traditional justice systems.

Beyond the specifics of a uniform definition, or shared framework, stakeholders urged the need to ensure any newly developed definition or framework avoids the use of sector-specific jargon that may not resonate with the everyday lives of victim-survivors. As one stakeholder commented:

I feel like we need to move away from jargon. I think we need to find other ways to talk about – coercive control in itself is a bit jargonistic. I think we need to turn this into plain language, and we need to make meaning of it. Because I think that – yeah, it's not particularly accessible, and I don't think it's very well understood generally.

Resolving variations in state and territory legislation

One of the key benefits of a national definition or framework that was identified by stakeholders across the consultation was that it would resolve variations in the terminology and definitions used across relevant state, territory and Commonwealth legislation. This was viewed by many stakeholders as a significant achievement that would have benefits for policy, law and practice. As stakeholders noted:

It would make a huge change to the service system because they'd be operating more similarly rather than with the differences, which really impact women who move between states.

We should be heading for a national definition. But I think we do need to appreciate that every jurisdiction has a different legal system, different approach to this. So it has to be implemented and translated on the ground in different jurisdictions. And I think if we're going to develop a national definition of these things, it's not going to be done in time for the plan to be produced. So it should be one of the actions in the plan.

Stakeholders from national organisations shared this view, with several stakeholders reflecting on the benefits of having one definition they could use across all communications and strategies, noting that it would significantly reduce current complexities. As one stakeholder explained:

We find it really tricky, because we're a national organisation, to go by state based. So, if we can have something that's consistent, that we can inform our people on, who are also the forefront of an essential service, and can pick up on indicators of vulnerability, we'd love to have a consistent definition.

While still commenting favourably on the recommendation, a number of stakeholders urged caution in how any definition or framework is implemented, noting the need to ensure it is embedded into state and territory laws and legal frameworks, as well as into the relevant service systems at the state, territory and Commonwealth level. Doing so effectively was recognised as a challenging task. As stakeholders commented:

I think it is important to recognise that at least since the '80s we have been talking about control in our policy definitions. So, I actually think there's a very important question about why that hasn't translated as much as we'd like it to. So if we are going to move towards a uniform definition, how are we really going to operationalise and action that so it actually gives the change that we haven't necessarily seen to-date.

I think the integration piece is really important and needs to touch across obviously the family law but also migration law and social security, child protection, the various child protection legislation, etc.

Several stakeholders did acknowledge that the Victorian definition of family violence, as legislated in the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*, is an exemplar model that should be drawn upon in the development of a national definition. As stakeholders commented:

At a federal level, absolutely, Family Law Act, and it absolutely should be reflected in other areas of federal responsibility; migration, social security ... We have a really robust definition in the Family Violence Protection Act in Victoria. I think that's another helpful point of reference.

Having all the different definitions by states and territories, I understand that's the way we currently operate, but that does cause a number of issues. And that's why I think it needs to be in the National Plan, so at least there's one consistent definition, and potentially states and territories will follow, or at least try and align to that. And I agree, Victoria has done a lot of work on this already. So maybe some of the thinking is already there for the National Plan. But I do think it needs to be an action as well.

The other useful resource referred to was that adopted in the National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book, where a negotiated contextual statement on coercive control is included.³³ While the National Bench Book does not provide a singular national definition per se, the context statement does set out the range of behaviours that are considered under the term *coercive control*.

Key Finding on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should commit to introducing a national definition or framework on family, domestic and sexual violence. This must include wide-ranging consultation with a range of populations, including First Nations populations, people with disability, cultural and linguistically diverse communities, and LGBTQIA+ populations.

2.3 A commitment to inclusivity and intersectionality



An intersectional lens on the issue is so important.

³³ National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book. (2021) Context statement: Coercive Control. Accessed at: www.dfvbenchbook.aija.org.au/terminology/coercive-control/

Regardless of the specificity of the name of the next National Plan, there was agreement among stakeholders that it must demonstrate a strong commitment to inclusivity and intersectionality. There was an often-expressed opinion that to date any acknowledgement of diversity had resulted in a siloing of diverse populations and that the next National Plan must better acknowledge intersectionality and commit to delivering inclusive services for all populations experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.

This need to better acknowledge a range of diversity, and to move away from a siloing of individual diverse populations, was raised by numerous stakeholders:

We often forget that these things occur together as well; that culturally and linguistically diverse children, or refugee and migrant children and young people may also identify as queer or may also be living with a disability. And so instead of thinking about these things as separate issues or separate parts of society, thinking about what is it about children and young people with a disability who may also have these experiences that make them a bit more vulnerable, for lack of a better word. And how we can develop, how we can use that expertise that's already within these sectors, to build on that intersectionality across the groups of children and young people.

Then I think embedding intersectionality, the intersections of our communities, the many different groups and how they in nuanced and complex ways interact with each other.

[We need] to have an intersectional approach, to responding to and preventing violence against disabled women and girls. And that is not a diversity lens. So it's about saying, 'All right, here's a disabled woman and this is her experience of violence.' But looking at a woman in the entirety of her identity. So being a woman of colour or being a First Nations woman and having a disability.

Building on this, one stakeholder strongly cautioned against viewing 'intersectionality' as only relevant to how we respond to and prevent violence against some members of the community. Emphasising the need for a whole-of-system intersectional approach, the stakeholder commented:

I think often intersectionality is only seen as relevant when we're talking about minority or disadvantaged groups, whereas in fact an intersection analysis applies to every single population in the country, because intersectionality involves not only disadvantaged but privileged. So the lives of white, middleclass, heterosexual boys at a private school in Melbourne are as intersectionally organised as those of Indigenous people in the Northern Territory, but they're organised much more by privilege than by disadvantage. So our attention to intersectionality should involve as much attention to questions of privilege and intersecting forms of privilege as to disadvantage.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of inclusivity across system responses to, and prevention of, all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence. It was stressed that it is not enough to have inclusive policies, mission statements and legislation, but that inclusivity needs to filter down to a truly inclusive delivery of services. Stakeholders emphasised that this requires substantive training. As stakeholders commented:

Mainstream organisations and education systems require a great deal of training and support in creating Cultural safety, across all areas of systems, governance and service delivery. Understanding how to embed Traditional Culture as a healing and protective factor.

Mainstream services need to ensure ongoing training for all staff, change of their approaches, changes to data collection so they are inclusive and trusted services.

Stakeholders also emphasised that a commitment to inclusivity should be reflected in the definition of key terms adopted throughout the next National Plan. Several of the issues arising from the language and

naming of the plan have already been explored in earlier sections of the report, but ‘gender inequality’, for example, was identified by several stakeholders as a term that is often used only in the context of discussing women. A commitment to addressing gender inequality as a driver of family, domestic and sexual violence must include clear acknowledgement of LGBTIQ+ inequalities. On the importance of inclusive language, one stakeholder commented:

So in terms of this language there is a basic inclusive language use that’s completely absent at the moment that would go a long way to beginning to change the way that we can even conceive of a plan like this let alone the plan’s ability to deliver services appropriate to our communities.

There was also recognition among stakeholders that a commitment to inclusivity and intersectionality requires critical reflection on the ways in which the system has, to date, inflicted harm and injustice upon the groups and individuals that were not meaningfully included. As stakeholders explained:

So for me intersectionality puts the responsibility on those systems and it shouldn’t be on the people who are impacted by those intersecting forms of oppression. That’s my understanding of it, we need to take that responsibility away from the minority communities and put it back on the systems that created those forms of oppression.

If we want to actualise an intersectional approach, we have to NAME the barriers that exist for particular population groups and COMMIT to addressing them.

Key Finding on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must embed a commitment to inclusivity and intersectionality throughout the Plan, any implementation/action plans, and in all work stemming from the Plan.

2.4 Ensuring sexual violence does not fall off the agenda

“ *Don’t lose sight of sexual violence and harassment.*

We would like to see an increased focus on sexual violence as a form of gender-based violence in the next National Plan.

Numerous stakeholders expressed a concern that the next National Plan, like the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, will only capture sexual violence in the context of domestic and intimate partner relationships. There was strong support among stakeholders for the next National Plan to include a clear focus on all forms of sexualised violence, including that which occurs within the context of a coercive and controlling relationship. As one stakeholder explained:

I wanted to speak about sexual violence, and I think what I’m hoping to see generally in this next National Plan is an increased focus on sexualised violence and how we can prevent it and address it better. I just wanted to note that that obviously can be and often is part of how people experience coercive control, and there should be dedicated streams to educating and responding effectively to that type of violence.

Stakeholders identified the need to ensure that sexual violence in the workplace and street-based sexual harassment, along with sexual violence against women with disability, sexual violence in prisons and aged care settings, do not fall off out of focus. As stakeholders commented:

Often sexual violence gets left off or not integrated. I know there’s this whole stream on it, but it’s by intimate partners and family members. So, I don’t know why we silo it, but we do.

I just wanted to say that throughout all of this, I think it's important that the National Plan does also consider sexual assault that's outside of family and domestic violence settings because I'm very conscious that almost all of the funding so far has been channelled towards family and domestic violence. And, of course, it's never enough. But that sexual assault is often just put in the too hard basket.

Reflecting on risk assessment and management practices specific to their jurisdiction, several stakeholders noted that sexual violence is typically an 'add on' and that often frontline domestic and family violence practitioners are uncomfortable when responding to sexual violence. It was recommended that the next National Plan should promote increased professional development and training to support improved responses to sexual violence.

Several stakeholders noted that the invisibility of some forms of sexual violence in the previous National Plan and the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence disproportionately erased sexual assault and harassment experienced by younger women and girls. As one stakeholder reflected:

I think that because this plan often is talking of domestic violence but also sexual violence and sexual assault ... I think that in the previous plans there hasn't been such a focus on the younger – young women and girls who actually are experiencing sexual violence, which clearly in the last year we've seen evidence of that. So, I think having that as well somewhere in the plan would be very, very useful and important.

Stakeholders commented that a clear commitment to addressing and ending sexual violence against young women and girls should be articulated in the next National Plan and reflected in funding allocations emerging from the Plan.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The scope of the next National Plan must include a commitment to ending all forms of sexual violence, including sexual violence outside of the context of family, domestic and intimate partner relationships.
- The next National Plan should include a clearly articulated commitment to addressing and ending sexual violence against young women and girls

2.5 Alignment with other national plans, policies and practice guides

“ One of the limitations of the current National Plan is that it hasn't focused on inter- jurisdictional coordination as it is often seen as a Commonwealth Plan. Commonwealth versus state government service delivery boundaries are not consequential to people who use or experience violence. Moving into the next National Plan, better and more formalised coordination is required.

The usual way is you develop a strategy in your silo, and that's just how it's done. But it seems to me right at the minute we have a big once in a generational opportunity, with a number of strategies being developed across portfolios at Commonwealth level, that the states and territories will sign up to. And it's absolutely critical.

The need for the next National Plan to align with other national plans and policies was a constant point made by stakeholders throughout the consultation. Stakeholders recognised the significance of the National Plan in its own right but stressed that at the outset of its development, and throughout its implementation, there was a strong need for it to intersect with a range of other plans, strategies and policies that sit at the Commonwealth level. This viewpoint is captured in the remarks made by several stakeholders:

All of these things need to fit together so that we don't have dividing priorities and actions that conflict with

one another, but we can look at synergies and how we can actually leverage the different strategies to get some real support for young people in this plan.

Talking about an integrated holistic approach, you can't have one plan, second plan, this plan, that plan doing different things. These are real people experiencing a multitude of issues and this person over here is not going to be, 'Oh I fit under this national plan'. You have to have that integrated whole of service, whole of sector consistency, otherwise you just have a whole load of people operating in silos, which is completely what we don't want.

In particular, across numerous workshops stakeholders pointed to the need to prioritise alignment the priorities contained in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. As a stakeholder stated:

National Plan needs to be weaved into all other wonderful plans and so again focusing on the national remit on Closing The Gap. That structural reform piece is so key and I hope that this plan has levels of structural reform within that, moving government to no longer work in silos but understand that in addressing family violence in all of its different forms we must be considering the social determinants of health as well.

Several stakeholders also stressed the importance of the next National Plan aligning with relevant policies and strategies at the state and territory level. For some stakeholders, the need to align the next National Plan with state-level policy was perceived to offer a clearer integration of the plan with state priorities. As two stakeholders explained:

My biggest issue with the existing National Plan which is it's largely a Commonwealth document which states and territories kind of attend the launch of. I think what we need to see going forward is an actual Commonwealth, state, territory integrated document and plan because otherwise it's going to be ineffective poorly coordinated. This is a very policy nerd answer, but my biggest criticism of the National Plan is that it's separate from state approaches and we do need a better integrated system.

Yes, I agree there is a disconnect between the plan and at a national level down to a state-wide level.

It was argued that greater awareness of the Plan's alignment would facilitate improved coordination of government's response. As one stakeholder explained:

I think that having some type of common messaging within different national plans will mean that at least the framework is more of a whole of government approach, then that's a start in terms of trying to achieve – maybe not a whole of government approach, but something towards that.

Within the context of First Nations communities, the priority reforms and targets contained within the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (CTG) were by far the most often cited example of another agreement or plan that the next National Plan must align with, and support progress towards. As stakeholders explained:

As we move towards developing a new National Plan, that it must be aligned with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap not only in regards to the outcomes and targets but in a way that things are done, the way that the priorities are identified, the programs that are designed and the research that is obviously formulated.

The National Plan must align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. We have to ensure that we don't undermine the national agreement on closing the gap. Closing the gap, those targets are very, very clear. The national agreement underscores four priority areas, those areas being strengthening community control, which of course allows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to design and implement what they see as justice responses.

Stakeholders emphasised that major structural changes were needed within and outside of Government to ensure that Australia can deliver upon the CTG Agreement.

For children and young people, stakeholders emphasised a number of Commonwealth and state-level plans and strategies that the next National Plan should align with. Specifically, stakeholders noted that the next National Plan must align with the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse, particularly in relation to information sharing and system integration. Stakeholders also identified the need for the next National Plan to align with the National Youth Policy Framework. With regards to the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse, being led by the National Office of Child Safety, one stakeholder suggested:

I guess when you're talking about system integration and system barriers, one of the really tricky things again that comes up, and that's been grappled with in Victoria, is information sharing between systems, and flagging things in systems. So maybe linking into that work as well and saying what the National Plan can – how those two strategies can talk to each other around information sharing as well. And really look at that on a national level.

There were numerous other plans mentioned by stakeholders throughout the consultation as relevant. These included the National Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2017–2026, the Mental Health Plan and the Suicide Prevention Plan. In relation to the relevance of the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement, one stakeholder commented:

I think perhaps one of the challenges also just thinking in terms of how the plan works is also how it also works with the National Housing and Homelessness Plan and how this is a complex space but progress on this issue has been perhaps not satisfactory, we've been going backwards, I think, in this regard. So I think that that just has to be really a very key point.

Speaking specifically about the relevance of the Suicide Prevention Plan, another stakeholder remarked:

The plans need to talk to each other and they need to reference each other like when you're talking about suicide and there's strategies around that and funding for that they must also reference family violence and not be dealt with in a compartmentalised way. I think otherwise what you get is around suicide prevention, this idea that sort of no answers for why it happens but actually the family violence data quite clearly points to what people do when they experience family violence in our communities.

Beyond Australian plans and strategies, several stakeholders also identified the relevance of several United Nations Human Rights Law instruments, noting that by adopting the language of rights throughout, the next National Plan would also allow the government to look to the international frameworks for alignment and support.

Key Finding on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must be developed and implemented with clear reference to, and mapped against, all other relevant national, state and territory plans and policy agendas.

A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND GREATER WORKFORCE SUPPORT



It's one thing to hold domestic violence offenders accountable but how do we hold institutions accountable when they don't take domestic violence seriously? There needs to be accountability in all structures.

3.1 Governance arrangements

Stakeholders across the consultation recognised the importance of embedding independent governance arrangements into the next National Plan. Several different governance models were proposed by stakeholders throughout the consultation. These models had overlapping features – that it be an independent body that includes members with substantive expertise in family, domestic and sexual violence, who are also representative of a diverse range of priority populations. On the point of diversity of membership, one stakeholder commented:

We know that services do better when they are governed by community ... we know that when women are in those positions of governance that things work better, and that we need to make sure that there is that diversity of governance that's there.

Several stakeholders referred to the Victorian Independent Family Violence Reform Monitor, which was established in the wake of the Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victoria. This independent role is responsible for monitoring and reviewing how the Victorian Government and related agencies are tracking in their delivery of the 227 recommendations for reform presented in the Royal Commission's Final Report. This model was considered favourably by stakeholders, who noted that it provided the necessary independent accountability. Stakeholders did acknowledge that the office of the Monitor, as in Victoria, would need to be well resourced to ensure effective monitoring and review of the national policy and practice agenda stemming from the next National Plan.

The other governance model that gained support during the consultation involves an Independent Commissioner for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, as proposed in Recommendation 23 of the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence. Numerous stakeholders responded favourably to this Inquiry recommendation, with the caveat that the Commissioner would only be as effective as the resources and funding allocated to the role and office. In stepping out what this may involve, one stakeholder explained:

If you had a Commissioner, then presumably to ensure the plan was being implemented as agreed, and funded, and properly resourced, would require some kind of staff secretariat ... That would be the only other thing, you'd want to make sure it had a dedicated funding base, it had a certain level of capability around monitoring evaluation, because that's really what it would need to do.

Stakeholders across the consultation recommended that if introduced this Commissioner position should sit within the Australian Human Rights Commission. It was noted favourably that this would allow the position to be embedded within a Rights Framework. As one stakeholder described:

That's the one message that I would have for you around violence against women, is it's a human rights issue, and we don't see it as that in Australia. We see it as morally wrong, as tragic, as bad, all those things, but at the heart of it is discrimination, and of course power and control and all those things; but we don't

frame it as a human rights issue. It could have the advantage, if it sat within the Commission, of framing it as a human rights issue.

One of the key questions emerging from governance discussions about the next National Plan centred on the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experts and to what extent they should be included within a national governance arrangement or lead a First Nations specific governance role/group.

There was a clear directive from stakeholders that any governance structure set up as part of the development, implementation and delivery of the next National Plan should be remunerated in acknowledgement of the expertise and time required of members. It was noted that this hadn't always been practice. As one stakeholder commented:

So it needs to be funded, and when we're talking about funding not just funds to deliver services, it's that acknowledgement that the governance structure that sits behind that, so whether it's Eldership, whether it's boards, whether it's community expertise, that also requires payment.

In addition to any governance arrangements stemming from the next National Plan some stakeholders also identified the need to formalise opportunities for different states and territories to share their policy and practice learnings over the lifespan of the next National Plan. Two stakeholders suggested this could take the format of a series of nationally established 'Communities of Practice' (COP). For this approach to be an effective knowledge-sharing method, it was recommended that all states and territories would need to commit their resources to the COP and contribute to its membership, focus and remit.

Beyond governance arrangements, stakeholders also recognised the importance of developing an Implementation Plan to deliver upon the commitments made and priorities identified in the next National Plan. The consultation spent some time discussing potential activities, impacts and measures that would be built into the work stemming from the next National Plan.

Key Finding on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must embed an independent governance arrangement responsible for monitoring the implementation and delivery of the Plan's priorities and actions.

3.2 Embedding lived experience expertise



I really think we need to listen deeply to survivors and to practitioners.

As noted in the *Approach to the Consultation* section, it was determined that a separate, focused consultation would be conducted with victim-survivor advocates to ensure safe and appropriate contribution and to allow for the voices and expertise of victim-survivor advocates to be privileged and heard. A key focus of this separate stage of the consultation (underway at the time of completing this Report) is to gain insight into how lived-experience expertise can be embedded into the development, implementation and governance of the next National Plan.

Throughout the consultation, stakeholders recognised the importance of embedding lived-experience expertise into the development and the activities stemming from the next National Plan. This included consistent acknowledgement of the value of the voices of victim-survivors. As one stakeholder explained:

I just want to speak to the importance also of having more consultation with victims and victim survivors ... about what actually works for them, so we can really consider what it is that works for victim survivors as a really diverse group of women. Sometimes the existing models or the practices obviously don't work

well for women with disabilities or CALD women, First Nations women. We all know that; it's not rocket science, I'm not telling you something you don't know. But I think there's just so much more room there for embedding the experiences of people who've been through violence to inform the development of the models and the practices.

Other stakeholders shared this view, commenting:

I think the opinions and perspectives of people who have experienced domestic and family violence and sexual violence are integral and that we should look at ways that we can continue to increase their voices and understanding from them.

For the National Plan to be successful ... it needs to be something that upholds and preserves the dignity of women. And we do that by centring her as the expert in her life and stepping away, stepping out of the way and allowing her to have choice and agency, that is essential. This won't work if we allow decision makers, policy makers to continue to make assumptions about what women need, who they need to be supported by and by how much they need to be supported.

Stakeholders acknowledged the importance of ensuring that victim-survivors are empowered through their contributions to the development of national policy agendas. As one stakeholder remarked:

Victim survivor choice is a part of this, and that we need to properly always consult and give agency as much as is possible for victim survivors in this situation.

Stakeholders emphasised that there is a need to ensure funding is allocated to victim-survivor advocacy groups in recognition of their expertise, noting that they should be supported at the national level. As two stakeholders commented:

Having the funding to pay survivor advocates is really important.

Funding to pay survivor advocates as advisors/consultants across the sector as per the Experts by Experience framework instead of them volunteering time.

The *Family Violence Experts by Experience Framework* was developed in Victoria by the University of Melbourne with support from Domestic Violence Victoria as part of the Family Violence Sector Capacity Building Program.³⁴ The Framework proposes 10 best-practice principles to support effective and safe engagement with victim-survivors. Included among the 10 is the principle of 'value', which sets out that victim-survivor advocates should be 'financially remunerated for their time, contributions and expenses when they provide significant input into policy and practice'.

Key Finding on desired outcomes:

- A victim-survivor expert advocacy group must be established by the Commonwealth Government to inform the development and implementation of the next National Plan. This group must be remunerated in recognition of their expertise.

³⁴ The project was funded through the Domestic Violence Victoria Family Violence Philanthropy Collaboration Project (FVPCP).

3.3 The role of data and research

“ So you know you can't be the creator of policy, but also the evaluator of policy, and hold that policy to account and monitor that. So we need to have some really meaningful, independent and impartial mechanism to hold government to account if this is going to be a next decade, and a new ten-year plan, then we absolutely have to have an independent body, and we have to have disabled women represented on that body. It's 2021, it's no longer good enough.

Across the consultations stakeholders discerned a need for a shared understanding on how to define violence, relationships and other variables. Stakeholders noted that each state and territory has its own set of definitions and that the lack of commonality across terminology hinders consistency in data collection on family, domestic and sexual violence. There was also recognition that as new forms of violence emerge (for example, new forms of technology-facilitated abuse) there may be a lag time before official definitions update, however, stakeholders cautioned about constantly changing definitions and data collection tools. As two stakeholders commented:

Research and data, I think are really important. There needs to be more investment in that from the Commonwealth looking at how to improve data collection from services and standardise that, investing in decent high-quality research that tells us about prevalence and dynamics as well as what works.

Well thought out data collection is a critical aspect of any national plan so that we can measure what we're doing to see if we get improvement.

Critical to improving consistency in data collection is the need to build capacity across the sector. Stakeholders acknowledged that this creates a 'data burden' for the sector, especially the NGO sector, establishing a further need for significantly more resources to be able to collect data effectively. In lieu of the creation of a model national minimum data set, which was recommended by one stakeholder, stakeholders recognised the need for improved engagement between data collectors and data users to ensure consistency and to facilitate collaboration. Stakeholders also noted that closer coordination would minimise the risk of duplication of research efforts.

Several stakeholders acknowledged the leadership and work of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). Recognising that ANROWS was established to play a coordinating role, stakeholders reflected that the organisation is now reaching the point of maturity, where it is able to effectively fulfil this role. Stakeholders also acknowledged the role that ANROWS plays in facilitating the sharing of research and recommendations across jurisdictions and relevant government agencies. Ensuring a feedback loop between policy, practice and research was viewed as critical. However, several stakeholders did note that some researchers may require more information about what policy makers are seeking from research, while others may find it difficult to establish strong research relationships with government.

Some stakeholders recommended that under the next National Plan the Commonwealth Government should establish a mechanism to continually monitor for research developments. It was felt that this may reduce the siloing of knowledge within and across state and territory jurisdictions, which was recognised by many stakeholders as problematic. As stakeholders commented:

The collection of data is siloed and needs to be captured centrally without duplication.

I think what needs to be addressed is how do we gather data, how do we communicate with all of these different groups more effectively. Nobody, I'm sure, wants to see another layer of bureaucracy, but having better networking between the disparate groups and across the country, I think, would facilitate – well, from our perspective, it would facilitate better research, but hopefully in the other direction, it would

facilitate better implementation of policy if there's clearer channels of communication.

While some stakeholder identified the Commonwealth Government as holding responsibility to deliver on this, other stakeholders felt there is a strong role for ANROWS to play in developing a one-stop-shop for evidence. Regardless of the holder of responsibility, stakeholders expressed strong support for a clear commitment to monitoring and evaluation being embedded into the next National Plan.

Critical areas to build the evidence base

“ *We need the national data set where we can actually compare apples with apples and oranges with oranges, and we need to make sure that we have the demographics down pat ... obviously we need reporting rates, we need prosecution rates, we need conviction rates and those sorts of things, but we need the qualitative data. So we need to make sure that we're measuring access ... – people who've experienced violence and abuse, were they able to access this service, this service, this service et cetera. And then what was their experience? And not just their experience in terms of the trauma-informed response, but also was it culturally safe and et cetera. So I think that they're the things that we need to measure and track, get a baseline data and track over time to see if we're hitting that to make sure that we do have universal access to services. But also what worked and what didn't. What actually increased people's safety and wellbeing and what didn't, that's qualitative stuff that could be done.*

Throughout the consultations, numerous stakeholders listed what areas of research they thought most needed to be progressed under the next National Plan. There were five key themes across the critical areas identified:

1. **Perpetrator interventions and behaviour change research**, as explored in the later section of this report.
2. **Research with priority populations**, including people with disability, children with disability, LGBTIQ+ communities, First Nations communities, and migrant women.
3. **Longitudinal studies** examining the impact of service provision and support programs over time.
4. **Data on barriers to reporting and alternative help-seeking exercises**, and
5. **Research examining system failures and structural inequality.**

There was a shared view that investment in research should be made by the Government as part of the work emerging from the next National Plan.

Stakeholders acknowledged the importance of embedding the voices of lived experience in research, particularly as part of any system, policy or practice evaluations. As stakeholders explained:

I think it's really, really important that we have targets and measurement that is meaningful, that actually speaks to and picks up on the actual lived experience of people who are trying to access justice and then who do access justice ... I'd like to see more of that kind of data capture, not just how many people have access to service.

It is the qualitative data and it's about centring people with lived experience, which will actually indicate our success as we go forward.

Stakeholders noted the importance of ensuring trauma-informed and culturally safe research engagement with victim-survivors.

The need to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' data sovereignty

“ *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the most over-researched group. They're a model about research and from that model what we know is we don't have data sovereignty, we don't have any control, we don't have any levers to that data.* ”

Stakeholders highlighted the recognised need for the next National Plan to value and share First Nations community practice and knowledge. Stakeholders noted there is currently poor data collected nationally to inform responses to, and the prevention of, family, domestic and sexual violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. To date there has been a heavy reliance on official datasets from criminal justice agencies, including police, courts and corrections. These data sets were acknowledged as limited in terms of their ability to shed light on First Nations experiences of violence. Reflecting on the value of quantitative analysis, one stakeholder commented:

I agree ... I think that too often it's the story about numbers, the focus is often on reducing the numbers of kids going into out of home care or kids being shifted to permanent care and those kinds of things rather than a story about how a community is defining violence and talking about violence. It's the story that's rich in our communities in how they're engaging with violence today as opposed to how they engaged with violence 20 years ago and how they will talk about violence in 10 years from now. That's the story that we want to capture and that's the story that we want to engage with ... it may be a qualitative story about how a community is engaging with how they're changing the story around normalisation, how they're engaging with that intergenerational story of traumatisation. It's not going to be a numbers story. So we have to define how we want to tell that story

There were calls among stakeholders for the next National Plan to support First Nations led research and evaluations to address the lack of evidence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence. As one stakeholder explained:

When I talked about programs being either codesigned by First Nations organisations and the government, it's the design, delivery and evaluation of the program. So they need to have the Aboriginal people right from the beginning to design the evaluation plan to look at the questions, to look at the purpose, to go through the whole lot with them until they are happy with it and then implement it. But they've got to be right through it, have ownership of it.

This was viewed as critical to understanding 'what works' in community and to building the evidence base to inform future interventions. Stakeholders recognised that this necessitates upskilling across First Nations communities to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' organisations and researchers to undertake data analysis and dissemination. As one stakeholder explained:

Rather than having to send data off to government agencies then to apply their own methodologies to research which then doesn't really suit us and so we just get the same old government agenda with our data and our information, and that can be used against us. So I'd like to see Aboriginal organisations to be supported around their own data capture and creating their own methodologies.

Upskilling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in this way was viewed by stakeholders as critical to supporting dissemination of First Nations led knowledge. The value of this was well captured by one stakeholder:

We're sick and tired of hearing negative stories, that's all we hear about Aboriginal people, but no-one shows you the positive stories and there's many positive stories out there but no-one's doing any recording at all, saying it and I agree, Aboriginal people need to be the architects of their own story. We need an avenue where we can present that in a lot of ways.

Data collection and research for LGBTIQ+ populations

“ When I’m thinking specifically about the communities I work with, LGBTQ communities, the group really need to reflect that there’s a lot that we don’t know yet about some of those life stage and factors so for example I would think about coming out and affirming one’s gender or inviting in as a life stage that I imagine would absolutely impact on someone’s experience of sexual, domestic and family violence but we know so little about that.

The stakeholder consultations were undertaken during the period data collection for the 2021 Census was being conducted by the Commonwealth Government. Numerous stakeholders noted, with disappointment, that the 2021 Census reporting will not capture LGBTIQ+ populations. Stakeholders expressed concern that this would further invisibilise gender diversity.

There was recognition among stakeholders that limits in the terminology and scope of the next National Plan, if not reconsidered, would inhibit data collection. There was strong agreement among stakeholders that the 2020 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) *Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables*³⁵ should be embedded into any data-collection activities stemming from the next National Plan and in other related Commonwealth and state data-collection activities.³⁶ As one stakeholder explained:

Everyone should be using the ABS gender, the 2020 standard for the variables around sex, gender, intersex and sexual orientation because if we can’t get some consistent commitment that we can see, I think it’s going to be very, very hard for us to see benefits from a plan that will sit there with good intention because if it’s not defined well enough, if it’s not embedded well enough, if we don’t see then the levers through the system we will in 10 years’ time still be having this conversation and all of the outcomes in the data that we do have just aren’t going to change.

Other stakeholders recognised that the ABS standards were the result of significant consultation, with one stakeholder describing the standards as ‘great’. Stakeholders noted that while it is unlikely that the ABS standard will become mandated or compulsory across all data collection, government agreement to utilise it in national surveys would be a key start. One stakeholder explained the benefit of having the standard embedded across services and programs as well as surveys such as the Personal Safety Survey and National Community Attitudes Survey.

Stakeholders also noted the need to ensure adequate training to support the use of the ABS standards. As one stakeholder commented:

When you change a dataset and you want it to be national, like there’s got to be some kind of training around it and how you would ask those questions as well.

Beyond these specifics, stakeholders called more broadly for increased investment in data collection, research and evidence base to inform the prevention of and improved responses to family, domestic and

³⁵ Full details can be accessed via the [ABS website here](#).

³⁶ The Australian Bureau of Statistics has developed a new standard for capturing Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables, referred to as the ‘2020 standard’. The 2020 standard replaces the previous 2016 version and aims to ‘to standardise the collection and dissemination of data relating to sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation’. The new standard captures information across four variables – Sex, Gender, Variations of sex characteristics and Sexual orientation. The new standard contains descriptions of each variable and additional information relating to the ‘conceptual issues and definitions’ for each.

sexual violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ populations.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- A clear commitment to research, monitoring and evaluation should be embedded into the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan must support First Nations led research and evaluation to address the lack of evidence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan should embed the 2020 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) standard for the collection of all data on family, domestic and sexual violence.

3.4 Funding needs and recommendations

“ I think it would be remiss of me not to say it is up to them [Commonwealth government] to actually demonstrate some leadership and have the hard conversations with the state to say, 'If Victoria are funding it at this level why isn't New South Wales or South Australia or WA? Why aren't you doing a similar level of investment into this problem?' We know the problem is there, it's consistent across the country, it's just hidden more in some places than other places.

Government have to have a level of huge responsibility in acknowledging that it's the decades and decades of underfunding and lack of investment that is a result to where we are today.

Throughout the consultations there was significant criticisms of the lack of funding or the short-term nature of funding across the family, domestic and sexual violence system to date. Frustrations expressed by stakeholders in relation to prior funding priorities and practices are captured in the following stakeholder comments:

The other issue for me within these national plans is then how they get enacted and how they're implemented. What we see through the implementation policy is uncoordinated investment in programs, we see generalist dollars being invested in services rather than those dollars being invested into community-controlled services

There's definitely not enough funding and it's not long-term and it's often competitive.

I don't think at the moment that it's being adequately funded or funded in a really thoughtful, coordinated way that's got good governance around it in terms of violence prevention, what we need to do to actually shift the violence occurring in the first place.

Stakeholders specifically noted the negative impacts of competitive funding cycles on the sector. It was noted that calls for competitive funding place a significant burden on sector organisations to be constantly reapplying for funding and impede collaboration across the sector. Stakeholders strongly believed that the funding model should be reconsidered to one that favours and promotes collaboration and cross-sector integration. The need for this was well captured by one stakeholder:

It's about funding being used in a really smart way. I know government don't want to hear funding, but the reasoning is so strong in terms of that upfront – what we were just talking about then around it's just the upfront investment. But what I'd say is we need funding, and I've mentioned some of this, but to actually enable us to have that security to be able to innovate, to be able to reach out and have an integrated response with other – and actually integrate with the disability care sector, with child protection, with family law and family relationships service sectors, with aged care, all of that. We want to do that work, we want to integrate better but we don't have the funding to do that.

Stakeholders also reflected that there is a lack of accountability as to who is funded through competitive funding rounds, and what the benefit and impact of that funding is in practice.

Stakeholders noted with frustration the impact that short-term funding has had on staff retention and workforce capacity building. As one stakeholder explained:

[We need] core funding to keep lights on but also so that staff can be resourced beyond project cycles so that organisations can retain knowledge and experience.

Beyond its impact on the workforce, stakeholders also noted that limited funding has necessitated a focus for many services on critical frontline delivery at the cost of innovation and early intervention. As one stakeholder commented:

A big elephant in the room regarding the access issue is that there also needs to be adequate funding of services in the ecosystem because limited funding means that services are focused on crisis response rather than innovation and early intervention.

Bringing together these two frustrations, another stakeholder commented:

Services need longer-term secure funding contracts for certainty, planning and momentum. Also, so that they can implement innovative interventions.

Numerous stakeholders recognised that if the next National Plan is going to produce meaningful change and improved responses there is a significant need for increased funding to be commensurate with the scale of the problem of family, domestic and sexual violence. As one stakeholder explained:

The targets for the National Plan need to be met with the level of resourcing, commitment and momentum that matches them. So if the aim is a significant reduction in violence against women, that requires a massive, massive investment and also broadly coordinated approach not only in work to drastically transform our society to address the drivers of violence against women, but also to meet both existing service demand from women who are experiencing violence and need support, and also men who are perpetrating violence and need support and accountability, but also the increased demand that we see when we increase primary prevention activity.

Stakeholders recommended generational funding that stretches the life of the next National Plan, noting that this is the scale and term of funding needed to effect generational change. Stakeholders emphasised that such longer-term funding was required to develop stronger, more effective responses to family, domestic and sexual violence and to foster partnerships with local communities. Importantly, stakeholders acknowledged that it was not simply about more funding (although that was certainly advocated for) but rather better targeted and needs-based funding allocation.

Stakeholders recommended that a service mapping exercise be undertaken as part of the early work arising from the next National Plan to inform an understanding of funding needs and future allocations. There was strong recognition among stakeholders that funding needs to be responsive to and supported by community.

Funding for First Nations communities

“ Government doesn't take this seriously enough by not funding it the way it should be. I think that that's the message that needs to go back, that if you're not going to fund it seriously with the appropriate funding in all of these spaces rather than funding it for crisis then you take away the legitimacy of the work that we do and you set not only the services up to fail but you set up victims for lifelong trauma. You set up those that are offending to not be able to take full accountability. They need to be taking this seriously and funding it accordingly.

Throughout the consultation, numerous participants cited funding as the biggest challenge in responding to key issues specific to First Nations communities. Appropriate resourcing to meet complexity and demand was the most pressing concern related to funding, however, stakeholders also spoke about the need for sustainable and long-term funding, issues with competitive tendering processes, funding for primary prevention, and the structural incompatibility between self-determination and government funding structures.

Adequate resourcing was cited as the biggest challenge in the First Nations funding space. Stakeholders referred to services needing to work beyond their remit and capacity, community desire for established services and the difficulties holding onto good staff under precarious funding conditions:

I think the biggest challenge is actually around resourcing appropriately. We have services that are doing work outside of their scope because they just are trying to meet the community need. We have services that just fly in, fly out. The communities actually want established services so I think funding is the big issue and I think we've been speaking about that.

We have no long-term permanency around employment because of those same issues and I just think we know what's working on the ground and our whatever, that should be taken into consideration with funding. If it's working well it should be rolled out for a longer-term ... we shouldn't have to be reporting every couple of years on funding ... because it takes us away from doing the work that we're actually here for which is valuable work which is working with our communities.

Stakeholders also pointed to the need for dedicated funding beyond crisis responses, into early intervention and prevention; they commented that the investment should not be an either-or scenario and recommended a reframing to a public health model of funding:

So it's not about I think taking money away from post and putting in pre, that we need to recognise you need two buckets of money, two buckets of resource and equal at each side because there's going to be people that are going to continue to need post-intervention and emergency support but we are absolutely not going to change anything if we're not working at the causalities, back at the end of the causalities. We just don't have those conversations, we're not looking at what are those drivers of people's despair leading them to feel that the only choice that they have is to negatively cope through whatever mechanism that is.

I don't understand why domestic and family violence and sexual assault isn't treated in a public health way in the sense of it being treated as a disease where if it was treated like cancer we would have funding that has early intervention, that has prevention and is funded accordingly. We wouldn't have to be fighting for pilots and the reality is as we all know ... we treat this space as something that we can cure, that we can get over in a couple of years that's not the reality.

Significant concerns were raised about the inefficient, resource-intensive and at times futile process of applying for competitive funding. As one stakeholder described:

Competition for funding would be our number one because we're up against the big mainstream organisations. We don't have the luxury of having submission writers. We've got to drop everything and

write submissions oursel[ves] and it's very difficult ... we've missed out quite a few times. We're luckier now and then but mostly we miss out to the mainstream organisations.

This participant and others involved in the consultation reflected on how frustrating competitive and precarious funding models are when First Nations organisations are then approached by mainstream ones to provide advice and services anyway. As two stakeholders described:

The irony about it is that I've had a lot of non-Indigenous counsellors come to me and ask me 'how do I engage with Aboriginal men?'. Then I've had these organisations refer the Aboriginal men to me because the Aboriginal men say to them, 'I want to talk with an Aboriginal counsellor, Aboriginal man'. So what do you do?

We're an Aboriginal organisation, we depend on government to fund our organisation, but ... we can't wait until the 11th hour to know that we're going to get another two year's funding. And the weight of this organisation is enormous when government is asking for advice, but sometimes I get sick of giving advice because I think that no one is listening and it's just a tick box exercise. But that's not to say that we don't live in hope that things will change for the better.

Another stakeholder explained this pattern of funding and described the predicament it places ACCOs in as one underlined by a lack of trust:

The other thing that I've found in the research space with the competitive funding that often ... there isn't enough in terms of trust. So they'll trust the non-Indigenous services to fund them but they won't trust the Indigenous services to fund them. So they'll fund the Indigenous services for the pilots but they won't trust them for the long-term funding, they'll trust to fund other mainstream services. I think that sometimes we have to give Indigenous services a go, we have to trust that they know their communities well enough to be able to get in and do the work that's needed to respond to these issues.

Several stakeholders spoke to more difficult structural concerns, which might be best described in terms of an incompatibility between First Nations knowledge and self-determination and government funding structures. The difficulties of situating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural approaches to behaviour moderation and healing within government frameworks and funding streams is captured in the following quotes from stakeholders.

Where I'm from the rule was you lived with your wife's family so that if you hurt your wife, that all her brothers and fathers were there, you just didn't do it right ... but if you needed healing then your family came in and they healed you and they took you away and they sang for you and they protected you ... The strength it gives them to be able to leave their husbands if they need to, and if there is space to or if that's what they want to, or even the other way, sometimes that singing is designed to interrupt the behaviours of husbands as well. A lot of this stuff, we've lived with it for years and years, it has impact that people don't necessarily understand but it works. Again, there is no income stream that supports this type of work. You've got variations of it, say for example in Alice Springs there's Healing Centre, but it's only a little tiny organisation. The big funding frameworks don't support this type of cultural healing that makes you feel proud and gives you strength ... I would love to see a framework that celebrated that.

... Not all healing stuff should be attached to a program. It should be how do we get families together, because it deals with all those things ... families feeling good about themselves, it boosts their self-esteem and it helps with their mental health ... it gets them away from the day-to-day stuff of communities when we know the under-investments of governments into communities where people are just in overcrowded homes. When we know that that does a world of good for people, but for government it's always around it's got to be program delivery.

Numerous First Nations stakeholders involved in the consultation noted the value of local responses in

community- run interventions and programs. This was cited as an approach typically discordant with highly structured funding models:

Our communities are a lot more responsive and we react differently and ... if given the opportunities we think outside the square ... and that's where that localised response is so much better because you know what's on the ground, what you can utilise and what you can actually capture an audience with, whether or not they're young people or older people or whatever ... being able to have adaptability ... if there are resources provided, that we can utilise them and that we can actually use them in a way that we think will be the best practice or meet the needs or the demands of the community that we're working in. I think that's one thing that government tends to be a bit scared of, is actually having something that's not really so structured that it's not moveable, it's got to be a pilot program for 12 months and that's it.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should embed longer-term funding cycles.
- Under the next National Plan there should be a clear move away from the process of competitive tendering for family, domestic and sexual violence services and peak bodies.
- To implement the next National Plan, government must genuinely hand over control and adequate funding to ACCOs.
- The next National Plan should support the development of a First Nations Accountability Framework for governments to adhere to when considering funding (i.e. co-design, healing, embedding the voices of First Nations people).
- The next National Plan should include a strategy to build the capacity of ACCOs. This strategy must aim to improve recruitment and retention of local trauma-informed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforces in ACCOs. Other capacities to be built include grant writing, local program design and evaluation.

MEASURING SUCCESS



We have to recapture the enthusiasm, the grand vision and the determination to make this happen. That's what the National Plan was always meant to be. So, for me it's meaningless to talk about these individual levels of success when we still don't have a Commonwealth government that takes a stand and leads the country around an issue that affects every single person in this country. It kind of blows my mind that we go into these fancy plans when at the end of the day no one's really showing leadership around it on a national level ... I just think the Commonwealth Government has to get legitimately fair dinkum.

Numerous stakeholders called for a bipartisan, national approach to measuring progress throughout the lifespan of the next National Plan. Some stakeholders suggested that improved and additional data collection is critical for transparency and accountability, while others suggested that a clear articulation of goals and achievements should be mandated, published and reported against yearly. To this end, stakeholders emphasised the importance of public reporting and independence in the measurement of success. The importance of including targets is well captured in the comments of two stakeholders:

Targets aren't everything, we can't necessarily rate the success of reducing domestic and family violence just by the reduction of homicides for example. But I think that we have to have, as we do in every other public health strategy document, some target, something that we're reaching for and that will delineate whether or not we're achieving success in certain areas.

We have to have some really ambitious and clear targets or measures ... we can't just keep relying on two major surveys done every four years to see how we're going. Because if we do that, we're going to have another policy failure.

Discussions on measuring the success of the National Plan throughout interviews and workshops identified:

- The challenge of defining success,
- The need for reflection on different conceptions of what is required,
- That achieving success is a process and should be measured along a continuum, and
- That leadership requires identifying success in different ways.

Stakeholders were in agreement that all reforms, initiatives and programs implemented as part of the work plan stemming from the next National Plan require careful and close monitoring and a move away from high level process measures that were perceived not to have made an impact in the lives of individuals experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. There was also a strongly held view that any measures of success should align with and support commitments made as part of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

There was shared recognition of the value of several of the ongoing national data sets in this area, including the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) and the National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS). Stakeholders recommended that the tracking of success as part of the plan required a linking up of these datasets. As part of a wider focus on recovery and wellbeing, some stakeholders emphasised the value of embedding relevant questions into existing longitudinal studies of women's health in Australia. Specifically, stakeholders noted there is a need to include questions on women's health outcomes following experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence.

In addition, stakeholders emphasised the importance of sharing learnings from individual program evaluations and pilot projects conducted at the state and Commonwealth level. Numerous stakeholders stressed the importance of embedding victim-survivor expertise into program evaluations, noting the need to build the evidence base on what improves women's safety during and after programmatic intervention.

4.1 Indicators of Success

Across the consultation stakeholders recommended a range of different measures and targets that should be included as part of the implementation and ongoing monitoring of the next National Plan. Targets were viewed by stakeholders as important to ensuring the next National Plan is focused and ambitious. Measures were framed as essential to gauging progress, ensuring accountability, and demonstrating impact over the life of the next National Plan. While there was a strongly held view that elimination of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence was the ultimate goal sought, stakeholders readily acknowledged that progress measurements and stepped out indicators would be vital to achieving elimination.

Across the workshops and interviews stakeholders suggested a range of specific indicators that could be used to measure progress and success as part of the work stemming from the next National Plan. Linking closely with the key themes and desired outcomes highlighted throughout this report, broadly these suggested indicators can be grouped into eight key measurement focuses. Within each of these indicators, stakeholders stressed the need to achieve a combination of quantitative measures alongside qualitative data, which would provide the depth of knowledge needed to effectively measure progress and success over time.

Prevention

“ *For me what would look like success would be a really good investment in proper primary prevention. So that work is done with communities, including with young people ... that would be a sign of success in a national plan because there's been proper investment right across the whole sector and right across all of government departments that would ultimately lead to lower rates of sexual, domestic and family violence.*

Measuring attitudinal change was viewed by stakeholders as a critical measure of primary prevention. Specific measures suggested included:

- Decrease in violence supportive attitudes across all cohorts of the Australian population,
- Improvement in attitudes to gender equality across all cohorts of the Australian population,
- Reduction in the derogatory attitudes held by boys and young men towards women and children, and
- Increased confidence in individuals' preparedness to intervene when witnessing violence or its precursors.

In addition to recognising the importance of measuring attitudinal change over time, stakeholders also identified the need to include an indicator on structural inequalities, noting that a decrease here would have positive impacts on rates of family, domestic and sexual violence. Other relevant indicators suggested included access to child-care, paid domestic violence leave, and measurements of the gender pay gap.

At the education level, recommended indicators included:

- The number of schools nationally delivering whole of social RRE,
- The number of schools nationally delivering education on consent,
- Funding allocated per capita to evidence-based education initiatives in this space, and
- Impact of primary prevention initiatives and programs across education settings.

In addition to these indicators, numerous stakeholders noted the value of 'Counting on Change',³⁷ which was developed by Our Watch and described as providing 'for how you can try and measure some primary prevention initiatives'. Stakeholders stressed the importance of not reinventing the wheel where good measurement frameworks had already been developed and were specific to the Australian context.

Rates of homelessness and access to housing

Stakeholders readily recognised that measuring homelessness experienced by women and children impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence was a critical indicator to be embedded into the monitoring of efforts stemming from the next National Plan. In addition, stakeholders recommended that as part of the next National Plan indicators be developed to measure:

- Number of victim-survivors who can access crisis housing,
- Number of victim-survivors who are supported with suitable medium- and long-term safe housing options, and
- Accessibility of LGBTIQ+ inclusive housing options, and
- Availability of pet friendly refuges and safe housing options.

Relatedly, it was suggested that an indicator should be developed to measure the number of women who report family, domestic and sexual violence and are supported to stay safely in their own home. Here the need to measure availability of alternative housing for perpetrators of family and domestic violence was noted as an important emerging indicator.

Service accessibility and engagement

There was a strong emphasis across the consultation on the need to develop clear indicators which measure service accessibility and engagement for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders noted that increased levels of engagement at different points of the system can provide useful indicators on help seeking and service accessibility. In particular there was a strong emphasis placed on the need to capture this data for victim-survivors from priority cohorts, including LGBTIQ+ communities, First Nations peoples, victim-survivors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Within this, stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring that service accessibility data captured extends to children and young people and builds evidence-based understandings of the ways in which children access support services, outside of punitive systems.

Importantly, there was a strong emphasis placed on the need for service system data captured to extend beyond tracking engagement with specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services, to include engagement with a range of intersecting services such as mental health, alcohol and other drug services, and housing. Stakeholders also recommended that indicators be developed to measure effective information sharing and risk visibility across states and territories, and different system intervention points.

While the specific indicators that could be included were not articulated, several stakeholders who participated in the consultation also noted the need to develop measures of effective service delivery.

Rates of injury and deaths due to domestic, family and sexual violence

 *Keep it simple. Track a decline in the prevalence of violence.*

There was a clear acknowledgement across the consultation that a key measure of success would need to be a decrease in the annual number of deaths occurring in the context of family, domestic and sexual

³⁷ Our Watch. (2017). Counting on change: A guide to prevention monitoring. Retrieved from https://media-cdn.ourwatch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/27043538/OurWatch_Counting-on-Change_AA.pdf

violence, and prevalence of injuries attributed to domestic, family and sexual violence. In particular, stakeholders noted the importance of working towards a clear reduction in the number of women and children killed annually by men's violence – this was often the first measure of success listed in each of the consultation activities. Highlighting the importance of collecting detailed national data on the extent of violence throughout the community, stakeholders stressed the need to ensure such data captures all forms of violence against women and gender-based violence recognising that some forms of family, domestic and sexual violence are presently under-recorded.

In addition to quantifying the prevalence of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence, stakeholders discussed the ongoing need to report annually on the prevalence of family, domestic and sexual violence related hospitalisations, presentations to emergency departments, acquired brain injuries and related disability to be reported on annually. Changes in annual prevalence rate should be measured and reported on over the timeframe of the next National Plan.

Justice system-based indicators

While numerous stakeholders recommended that rates of police reporting be included as a measure, there was equally an acknowledgement among stakeholders that rates may initially increase alongside efforts to collect more substantive data and to more accurately measure reporting trends. While a decrease in the long term should be sought alongside a decrease in overall prevalence of violence, stakeholders stressed the need to understand that initial increases in reporting may be a positive indicator of more accurate data collection, and increased willingness among victim-survivors to access and engage with the system. Beyond reporting rates specifically, at the policing level, several other indicators were suggested:

- Increase in victim-survivor willingness to report to the police and trust that the police will believe them,
- Increase in victim-survivor satisfaction of their engagement with police,
- Increase in the percentage of police officers that have received specialist domestic, family and sexual violence training, and
- Decrease in attrition rates in sexual assault matters.

There was support among stakeholders for regular police audits at the state and territory level to be undertaken specific to the policing of family, domestic and sexual violence. As two stakeholders explained:

how do we ensure, for example, the policing of sexual, domestic violence is constantly being improved so that there are more people engaging with police ... we would recommend having independent annual auditing of policing of domestic and family violence ... which would build confidence for community that police are reflecting on their [own] practice and keen to improve their practice.

What we also need in and amongst all of that so that we can measure the effect of the primary prevention, the lower rates of sexual and domestic violence, the better policing and better justice responses, is a mechanism by which we can do regular auditing of police and justice responses, with the collection of not only quantitative data, but really importantly that qualitative data so that we can hear people's stories.

At the prosecution and court level, suggested indicators to be embedded in the next National Plan included:

- Charge and arrest rates for family, domestic and sexual violence related offences,
- Conviction rates for family, domestic and sexual violence related offences,
- Rates of intervention orders breached as well as court responses to breaches of intervention orders,
- Access to fully funded legal services,
- Prevalence of systems abuse in family and domestic violence matters, and
- Prevalence of misidentification of the person in need of protection, including a specific measure of the prevalence of misidentification of First Nations women victim-survivors.

Related to capturing rates of charges and convictions, stakeholders identified the importance of measuring reductions in recidivism rates among known family, domestic and sexual violence perpetrators as an indication of success. It is important to note here that for many stakeholders the design of indicators of success within the justice system was considered fraught with difficulty given the need to reflect the negative impacts of over criminalisation among First Nations peoples. For these communities it was emphasised at numerous points of the consultation that high rates of police intervention and high conviction rates should not be associated with success.

Child protection indicators

Numerous stakeholders identified data within the child protection system as critical to measuring success. It was suggested by stakeholders that the number of children being removed in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence should be measured over the life of the plan, and that there should be a specific commitment to measuring and publicly reporting on the number of children removed from First Nations communities.

Perpetrator focused indicators

A number of stakeholders highlighted the need to ensure that in any measurement model adopted as part of the next National Plan there are indicators included which focus specifically on perpetrators and the need to keep perpetrators visible. Stakeholders called for an increase in collection of data that is perpetrator focused and the need to develop indicators that measure men's responsibility and perpetrator accountability at different points of the system.

Workplace measures

Recognising the importance of the workplace as both a site of violence and as a site of intervention, stakeholders identified several workplace focused measures that could be included, including:

- Rates of work absenteeism attributed to family, domestic and sexual violence victimisation,
- Employee support policies,
- Access to paid domestic and family violence leave,
- Percentage of employees trained in basic family, domestic and sexual violence literacy and awareness, and
- Co-worker confidence to respond to a disclosure of family, domestic and sexual violence victimisation in the workforce.

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

“ Any work that’s done to create a more gender-equal Australia will necessarily have a positive impact on ending violence against women and their children.

Throughout the consultation, including in the thematic workshop dedicated to primary prevention, stakeholders emphasised the need for the next National Plan to include an increased focus on primary prevention and a commitment to structural change. Stakeholders acknowledged that to date primary prevention work has largely focused on domestic and family violence, and that there is a need to ensure that the next National Plan includes an increased focus on the prevention of sexual violence within and beyond family and intimate partner relationships.

Stakeholders emphasised that primary prevention is far broader than ‘campaigns and community interventions’. At its core, primary prevention was described by stakeholders as encompassing work focused on changing the social conditions that support gender-based violence. Stakeholders described the breadth of work that falls under the umbrella of primary prevention as including mutually reinforcing actions through legislation; institutional, policy and program responses by governments; organisations; and individuals. While community programs were viewed as important, there was a strong view among stakeholders that they must be seen as one element of primary prevention, and that there is a need to increase the visibility of other primary prevention activities, such as work in workplaces and with corporate partners. As one stakeholder commented:

Community engagement work is really important, but it can’t stand alone, we also need to be transforming our organisations, institutions, and legal frameworks to be gender equitable and addressing the drivers of violence against women.

There was a strong desire from some stakeholders for the work on primary prevention across Australia to become more strongly coordinated and developed. As two stakeholders commented:

Ultimately, to really make a difference to domestic and family and sexual violence, given that they are problems largely of men’s perpetration of those forms of violence we’re going to have to shift behaviours and relations among men, so it seems to me that that’s almost an inevitable, a vital part of prevention work. But in terms of looking around the country and seeing what kinds [of] men and masculinities work of goes on its ad hoc, it’s scattered, it’s often miles away from what we know to be best practice, and it’s typically not integrated into comprehensive prevention approaches.

We need the appropriate infrastructure for prevention, for gender equality and disability policy, to have that cross-jurisdictional work for it to be able to work together. The ongoing policy reform. So really, rather than just focusing on that individual level to make sure that we are considering the systems and the structures as well.

As part of this coordination piece, stakeholders emphasised the need for the next National Plan to contain clear and unambiguous targets for the primary prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence. Emphasis was placed on the need to incorporate strategies to meet these targets and avenues to monitor progress. There was strong support among stakeholders for the development and implementation of a national Gender Equality Strategy and a dedicated machinery independent of the Australian Government to implement it. As one stakeholder remarked:

We need a more systematic adoption of gender equality policy as primary prevention. So, the state and Federal Government should look at gender equality machinery and national gender equality strategy as key to primary prevention.

A national Gender Equality Strategy was viewed as a critical step in demonstrating the concerted leadership required to address the gender pay gap, universal domestic and family violence leave, universal access to affordable high-quality childcare, superannuation reform and a commitment to comprehensive women's economic impact statements.

There was a clear view among stakeholders that investment in primary prevention requires longer-term timelines and funding packages than have been made available to date. Stakeholders expressed their support for the existing national organisations working in this space, namely Our Watch and ANROWS, and highlighted the need for these organisations to receive secure and longer-term funding.

Building the evidence base

“ *We know that multiple strategies and multiple settings are much more likely to make change. So I suppose I'd say whatever we do it – whatever the National Plan endorses and whatever government support it should be based on evidence and guided by expertise.*

I would have to say this is absolutely about gender inequality. What this means is not that it exists because we know it does, but what behaviour does it lead to? So that needs to be a major focus; what is it that allows this to keep happening despite all of this incredible work that everybody's doing? Why does it not change?

There was strong support among stakeholders for increased funding to ensure the operationalisation of the *Change the Story* and *Changing the Picture* frameworks developed by Our Watch. Stakeholders also noted the forthcoming revised *Change the Story* framework and that there would be a need to ensure a funded communication strategy to disseminate the framework widely, including among priority populations. The importance of building on these critical frameworks and embedding them into the focus of the next National Plan is well captured in the comments of one stakeholder:

I think the second plan should very much continue the attention to gender drivers and to the gendered norms, practices and structures which drive family, domestic and sexual violence, so it should be guided by Change the Story I think or by Change the Story 2. It should continue to embody that gender analysis, a feminist intersectional analysis of those various forms of violence, but it should also have a stronger focus on addressing structures, structural gender inequalities and achieving structural change.

Stakeholders noted that there is a need for greater coordination of work on men and masculinities, and the engagement of men and young boys in primary prevention. As two stakeholders commented:

We need a stronger focus on addressing the aspects of masculinity that feed into men's perpetration of various forms of violence, so a stronger attention to engaging men in prevention.

Integrating more comprehensive approaches to engaging men and boys in prevention should be an important part of the National Plan.

Stakeholders commented that at present the bulk of primary prevention work is ad hoc and often not well evaluated. Our Watch's *Men in Focus* work was specifically identified by stakeholders as requiring additional funding to take it to the next step. Beyond the work of Our Watch, stakeholders emphasised that a strong evidence base for all primary prevention work is critical and that there must be Commonwealth Government investment in this. Stakeholders identified some specific areas of primary prevention in need of greater research, including on pornography and the impact it is having on young men and women, and their relationships, as well as the harms inflicted via social media and online dating apps.

Workforce Development

“ *There’s a real opportunity under the second National Plan to build on the prevention infrastructure across the country, so that’s moving beyond individual grants programs and one-off initiatives and moving to actually developing a prevention workforce across the country.* ”

Stakeholders called for an investment in the primary prevention workforce, noting that it requires distinct skills. Broadly, there was general agreement among stakeholders that significant workforce development and infrastructure is needed across the country to carry out consistent and coordinated primary prevention work. As two stakeholders explained:

We know that we need to really invest in the prevention workforce because it’s a different skillset from what you may need during crisis work or justice work.

I think there’s not enough people who have the understanding and skills to do what is quite nuanced work at a high quality, unfortunately, and we’ve certainly found it difficult to hire for people with that skillset. It would be good to keep building on that within the sector and beyond the sector so that we can ensure that we’ve got good quality people putting out the work.

Stakeholders also recognised the importance of ensuring support structures are in place for those working in primary prevention. This includes specialised workforce development regarding issues such as pornography and sexuality education, and workforce development in sectors such as the corporate and university sectors. As one stakeholder explained:

[We need] recognition of other industries and sectors as places of primary prevention. As universities, we have 1.5 million students, we have 100,000 staff, we have enormous research partners, so I think recognition that primary prevention does not end at the age of 18 when people might finish school and enter the workforce, and that it’s everyone’s responsibility. So I think recognition that there are a multitude of settings in which all of us can undertake prevention activities that would be helpful.

5.1 Primary prevention initiatives

“ *I think prevention is better understood more broadly as changing the social conditions that support and promote domestic, family and sexual violence. In other words, it’s got a social and structural orientation. I think it’s important too to name the agents of violence, to talk about preventing the perpetration of violence, to talk about preventing harm before it is perpetrated, rather than the language of preventing violence before it occurs, as if it’s caused by a cloud or a gust of wind rather than by people.* ”

There was a strong view expressed throughout the consultation that primary prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence must occur at the structural and individual level. Stakeholders recognised the importance of changing individual attitudes but also noted the need for structural changes and strategies. There was shared acknowledgement that individual prevention approaches must be complemented by community, organisational, structural and cross-jurisdictional strategies and initiatives. As stakeholders commented:

One of the biggest challenges I think we have in this space is the conceptualisation of violence as an individual problem which can be prevented by changing individual attitudes. We know that changing individual attitudes are only a very small part of the broader approach to primary prevention, and so we need to see for the second National Plan a more purposeful effort to ensure that work is resourced, and

change is created across all levels of the socioecological model, and that we not only focus on individuals, but we actually look at the broader change that can be created through systems and structural change. And that requires not only funding from governments for community-based activity, but also thinking through the actions that governments themselves can take which can progress gender equality and address these drivers at a more structural level.

Framing primary prevention as community responsibility as well as government responsibility, systems responsibility, structural responsibility. So, framing it in a much wider way than we currently do would be really helpful, and then when we talk about it in that broader way we talk about how different governmental structures, how different departments for example, they can be involved in primary prevention as well rather than outsourcing it to the communities and community sector alone.

We do need to shift the focus of much of our prevention work to give a greater attention to community level factors. Much of the prevention activity that takes place around the country is aimed at individual and relationship level factors, and not at the community level factors that are significant.

To achieve change at the structure level, stakeholders emphasised the need for a suite of primary prevention initiatives and activities. As one stakeholder stepped out:

We know that in order to be effective we need a multifaceted approach to primary prevention ... we need to be really careful that the next National Plan doesn't focus in on particular prevention techniques and not also look at other prevention techniques. So yes, community programs as we've all said are really critical, particularly when they're community led and resourced over a longer-term so that communities can really effect ongoing change, and campaigns and communications are also a really important prevention technique. But if we only focus on those two we're not also focusing on other techniques like organisational development, like community mobilisation, kind of broader change at the structural level.

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of and need for localised approaches. This view was well captured in the comments of one stakeholder:

I think we need a focus on evidence-based messaging to all different kinds of diverse communities. So not just culturally diverse but all different kinds of diversities so that it's not just a one-size-fits-all national message around preventing men's violence against women, but that way really working out what are the messages that will reach diverse communities across Australia, geographically diverse, demographically diverse, culturally diverse, diverse faith groups et cetera. Also, the community via community approach which a few people have raised already, supporting community led responses. So that real localised form of community, but then also evidence-based messaging to broader diverse communities.

As part of this, the need for multicultural communities to be meaningfully involved in the development and delivery of primary prevention initiatives at the systemic and grassroots levels was emphasised. As one stakeholder commented:

I think supporting localised options in terms of primary prevention, so upskilling communities to create solutions that work for their communities and ensuring that we are supporting all the different marginalised groups to create resources and develop projects that work in their specific communities.

Some stakeholders did urge caution on this point, emphasising that it is essential to ensure that engagement with multicultural communities is undertaken in a meaningful way that supports community leadership and engagement. As one stakeholder cautioned:

The key concern for us is making sure that multicultural and migrant and refugee communities are involved and not just as an add-on but meaningfully in the prevention work both at systemic and community level. At the community level the engagement and involvement needs to go beyond what has been the norm so

far to engage with traditional communities or what is considered to be traditional community leaders and go to more grassroots level women leaders, and also efforts that are happening on the ground within the communities to engage with that level.

Stakeholders explained that there is a need to build greater understanding that diverse populations have specific primary prevention needs without stigmatising these groups. As one stakeholder explained:

When we talk about consistency of messaging nationally that we somehow need to work out how we balance what a tailored response looks like for different communities and acknowledge the diversity and the need for diverse approaches while having some sort of core content that is foundational and universal at some level.

Stakeholders also commented that there is minimal prevention-focused work specific to LGBTIQ+ populations. As stakeholders commented:

I see a lot of tokenism around trans and gender-diverse inclusion in the prevention of violence space, but I don't yet see many programs, initiatives or resources being developed.

We need the broader family violence sectors and prevention sectors to engage with our issues and our experiences and our needs because it's not something that we can do on our own although we would need to continue to centre absolutely the lives and experiences and voices of LGBTIQ people, so their leadership is maintained within any response.

5.2 Community Awareness Initiatives

There was strong recognition across the consultations of the need to raise community awareness of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence. However, there was also clear acknowledgement among stakeholders that community awareness strategies should not be implemented in isolation from other primary prevention activities and programs of work. This view is well captured by one stakeholder:

We need increased understanding. We need to be doing awareness-raising. Obviously, it has value, particularly for victim survivors. We just want them to recognise what they're experiencing as family violence, and absolutely, that goes without saying. But I'm a little bit nervous about that being the go-to. I think it needs to be part of a suite. And it worries me that when we talk about prevention that it's, 'we just raise awareness. Everything will change. Cultures, attitudes will change. Victim survivors will seek help. Et cetera, et cetera.' And I think you need to consistently draw attention to what else sits behind that behaviour. It's not just attitudes. It's not just a culture that normalises this. We need to also focus on the structural and systemic drivers that underpin violence against women as well, and those attitudes. So what sits behind those attitudes, and those patterns of behaviour and those cultural norms? And so I just wanted to put it out there that I think awareness-raising has its role, obviously, long-term work, got to be done. But it has limited impact. It's not going to solve this problem.

The stakeholder consultations were held during a time when there has been significant public debate surrounding responses to, and the prevention of coercive control. This was front of mind for many stakeholders during the workshops who emphasised the need to build community awareness of what coercive control is and the range of behaviours in which it can manifest. As several stakeholders commented:

I don't think we can underestimate how much the public don't understand what coercive control is. And I think also internally, because for a lot of what I do, you really rely on women to seek help and to self-report. And they don't realise they're being controlled; coercively controlled. So there's so much to be done in that space.

I still think there's a lot of women, and men probably, in relationships, who don't realise that coercive control isn't normal ... Like, 'why is that normal for you?' So I think that that's something we need to keep in mind, is educating at earliest possible primary prevention ... So that's where that coercive control definition would be really important as well, and some examples and things like that. But they come along afterwards. So I just think that's so important as well, to remember that women are just living with this every day and they think it's normal.

There was recognition here that an increase in community awareness also facilitates improved responses. Speaking in relation to coercive control, one stakeholder commented:

To improve responses to coercive control you need to take a whole of community and a whole of system approach so that no matter where a victim survivor enters the system or reaches out for help they're going to receive a consistent and a safe response and one that understands the experience that they're currently going through as well. I think that whole of community, community awareness raising is really important because the people responding to victim survivors are drawn from the community.

For many stakeholders, a key aspect of preventing technology-facilitated abuse is increasing awareness by educating women and children about how technology can be abused and thus how best to secure their technology to make it safe. Avoiding technology altogether was not considered a viable option – and indeed, could be a dangerous one – rather, stakeholders emphasised that the focus for prevention of this form of abuse should be on ensuring that people understand what it involves, so they can ensure their devices are protected. As one stakeholder explained:

I think a broader digital literacy and resilience pillar of our prevention work that can cut across those range of settings and forms of tech abuse but are also about promoting a more positive approach. This is not about saying to people 'don't do this because it's wrong'. I mean that's part of it but it's also about how do we actually promote digital participation that's based on equity and respect as a key pillar of our education platforms?

There was a shared recognition among several stakeholders that the next National Plan should support the development and delivery of a primary prevention initiative in this space.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should include an increased focus on the prevention of sexual violence within and beyond family and intimate partner relationships.
- The next National Plan should contain clear and unambiguous targets for the primary prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence. This should include strategies to meet these targets and avenues to monitor progress.
- The Australian Government should consider developing a national Gender Equality Strategy and a dedicated machinery independent of the Australian Government to implement it.
- The next National Plan should commit to providing longer-term investments in primary prevention.
- The next National Plan should embed funding for research and evaluation into primary prevention initiatives to build the evidence base required to inform effective whole of community interventions across a wide range of settings.
- As part of the workplan to emerge from the next National Plan, a primary prevention workforce development strategy should be designed and implemented. The workplan should aim to improve consistency and coordination of the workforce.
- The next National Plan should commit to the delivery of a range of primary prevention initiatives at the structural, community and individual levels to comprehensively progress

the prevention of all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence. This should include initiatives developed by community and tailored to the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence among priority populations.

- The next National Plan should commit to the delivery of a national community awareness initiative focused on improving community understandings of what constitutes coercive control, and on the prevention of technology-facilitated abuse.

5.3 Education

“ *The piece of work that’s really critical in this space is actually the education of our children and young people. So I think there’s opportunity for us to have some influence over the national curriculum and really looking at how is domestic and family violence spoken about within the schooling setting, how are children and young people educated about that, given that many of those are living in homes where that would be normal for them to see this interaction between their parents, their carers. So how do we actually de-normalise that for them? How do we give them pathways to reach out for support and assistance that makes it okay to do that reaching out?* ”

There was strong recognition throughout the consultation from stakeholders that prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence needs to begin early in the life course and that there is a broad range of education settings in which this can occur. As one stakeholder described:

We’re afraid to talk about violence and sexual violence and consent in schools in the ways that I think we really need to do to start to decrease the rates of sexual and domestic violence. So I think there needs to be proper resourcing and funding and for us to go more bravely into this fear in primary prevention.

Stakeholders called for ‘courage’ from government to support and resource healthy relationships and sexualities education within school environments nationally – and to ensure that such education is provided across the schooling life span, from early childhood education, foundation to years 6, years 7–10 and final years. Education was viewed as an important early intervention for young people, particularly women, who are at significant risk of dating, intimate-partner and sexual violence, and may also be experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence at home.

There was recognition among some stakeholders that the education piece cannot be left to schools alone. As one stakeholder explained:

I hear it all of the time in these conversations that schools are the answer, but there’s enough pressure on teachers who are having to do all of this work anyway, so how do we again at a local level look at the ways that we can start to give people safe spaces to talk about these kinds of topics but also safe spaces to learn about these kinds of topics?

Throughout the consultation, stakeholders identified schools as well as universities, workplaces, community sporting clubs, the arts, and faith-based contexts as key sites for the delivery of education on healthy relationships and sexualities.

Across all education sites, levels and issues raised, there was recognition among stakeholders of the need for greater workforce development. In particular, stakeholders identified opportunities to upskill the university and corporate sectors in addition to the early-childhood, primary and secondary school workforces. Beyond the location of education, there was also a strong view among stakeholders that engaging with boys and young men was essential to preventing family, domestic and sexual violence, and that education on consent and healthy relationships must be developed with these target cohorts specifically in mind.

Respectful Relationships Education

“ Schools are really big untapped resource as an early intervention site and there could be a lot more intervention there and a lot more early intervention. We know that that’s often the very beginning of this sort of behaviour.

During the consultation the role and potential of Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) was raised by numerous stakeholders. RRE is a primary prevention initiative developed to promote equal and respectful relationships. Given that education in Australia is state and territory-based there is significant variance across jurisdictions; there is no one RRE program per se. Several Australian states and territories deliver RRE in government schools, the Commonwealth has launched the Respect Matters Program earlier this year, and independent and Catholic schools have their own RRE resources and programs.

While stakeholders broadly described Respectful Relationships Education as ‘excellent’, during the consultations some stakeholders criticised aspects of some of the program’s content. Again, there is variance in the content and delivery of RRE across geographic locations and education settings, but among these criticisms were the following: that the content reflects limited contexts, that it does not explicitly discuss consent, and it does not address the impact of pornography. These criticisms are succinctly captured in the comments of one Queensland stakeholder:

It’s being only taught in the context of bullying, and then not looking at it with a gendered lens and the gendered impacts, we’re not getting explicit discussions around consent and sexual consent, and we’re not having discussions around I guess sex-positive discussions, and discussions around pornography with young adults and the impacts of that, and how to navigate that in terms of sexual violence and consent and sexual relations. That really needs to be taught explicitly to young people, and we’ve seen young people calling for that in a big way.

Despite these criticisms, which were held by a minority of stakeholders, a number of stakeholders across the consultation emphasised the need to increase the resourcing of Respectful Relationships to include wraparound support for schools, including for teaching staff. Stakeholders noted that specialist trained staff are required to teach the curriculum, however, that practice currently varies significantly across geographic locations and school settings. Some stakeholders reflected that, in practice, too many staff are struggling under the workload. Several stakeholders noted that it is often the physical education or science teacher who is automatically assigned to deliver healthy relationships and sexualities education regardless of any demonstrated expertise to do so. This likely reflects the Australian curriculum set by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), which covers all students from Foundation to Year 10. Under the current Australian Curriculum,³⁸ aspects of RRE are covered in Health and Physical Education. It is important to note that while the current Australian Curriculum does cover knowledge, understanding and skills related to some aspects of RRE, it does not constitute a full RRE program curriculum.

Stakeholders highlighted the need to embed specialist providers and teachers into school settings to ensure effective delivery of the Respectful Relationships curriculum. One stakeholder recommended that a specialist Respectful Relationships educator position should be required in all schools that deliver the curriculum to ensure the integrity of the program delivered. Stakeholders also emphasised that teachers and the school community must be equipped to effectively respond to disclosures of violence, and to identify childhood trauma and early onset behaviours. One stakeholder explained:

Teachers report being without guidance on how to work effectively with those who have been using troubling sexual behaviour in relation to school peers. Prevention education tends to focus on victims and bystanders, but not to frame the person who exhibits the behaviour as someone who may be wanting help

³⁸ This curriculum was under review at the time of the Stakeholder Consultation, with new curriculum expected to be announced in November 2021.

to stop this behaviour.

There was a consensus among stakeholders that to date this has been achieved on an ad hoc basis and that there is no consistent skill level. Stakeholders emphasised the need for additional funding to ensure teachers have access to enhanced professional development to build their skills and ensure their confidence to deliver this education initiative. Access to up-to-date referral options and service information was also considered critical to ensuring teachers are adequately supported to respond to disclosures of violence made in the course of delivering this curriculum.

The need to ensure availability and accessibility of age-sensitive interventions was also suggested by some stakeholders, one of whom noted that:

There's not a lot of funding or very, very little in the early intervention space, particularly with boys and young men as these behaviours are occurring and maybe being picked up for the first time. Particularly anything that's pre-court or pre-police or justice intervention and certainly if they're not hitting a certain risk level there's just really not an intervention at the moment for them. So I feel like we really need in that perpetrator space a lot more interventions that aren't a MBCP but maybe sit more out in the family sector space and schools and education.

Resources for parents and carers to support conversations regarding healthy respectful relationships were also identified by stakeholders as an essential component of the Respectful Relationships education. Stakeholders felt that this aspect is likewise presently underdone across different geographic locations and school settings. The need to educate parents and carers as to how to discuss key issues and how to address problematic behaviours was emphasised by stakeholders as a critical component of the primary prevention and early intervention opportunity afforded as part of the initiative. One stakeholder commented:

There is a need for greater education towards parents within the healthy respectful relationships space to better equip families to identify potential areas of concern as well as understand how to seek supports.

Another stakeholder identified the need to consider what risks arise when children disclose domestic and family violence during the delivery of RRE, and further, when they return home to an abusive environment with new information and a new outlook that may not be supported by other members within the home. This stakeholder explained:

I worked in educating schools for many years around Respectful Relationships and something that was a really big deal was when we were talking about unhealthy and healthy relationships with very young children and young people, they'd actually be disclosing about family violence in the moment. And obviously there's processes in place to tell the teachers. My key concern here is what happens when children and young people go home, after being taught about respectful relationships, and they're talking about what a respectful relationship may look like, and then they get further abuse in the home ... I just don't think we're looking at this. I think we're thinking of respectful relationships as a blanket policy response. And I'm extremely supportive of it. I think it's really exciting, and I just want to think about what are the complexities for children and young people that are holding the understanding about respectful relationships as a circuit-breaker in the family. Going home and not being supported by the family, and then actually being punished for that there.

This view was shared by several other stakeholders, two of whom commented:

None of us want to diss the Respectful Relationships programs in the schools, but it really does upset me a lot to think that that's seen as a primary early intervention piece. And then we're sending these kids back to unsafe homes every day. And I think we have to stop that. We have to stop seeing the school-based programs as the solution, and we actually have to have a much more holistic view about what children need, children and young people.

It's children and young people who are going back home, having all this really great information and toolkits and resources, but actually it's very dangerous for them.

These views capture the importance of the wraparound, whole of system supports that many stakeholders involved in the consultation advocated for. There was a shared view that while RRE itself was commendable, it was not being rolled out alongside the necessary supports to ensure the safety of children and young people following the delivery of the content. Addressing this requires a whole of school approach to the delivery of this education initiative. As one stakeholder explained:

The provision of resources is not sufficient to integrate a whole of school approach to Respectful Relationships education ... There needs to be support in terms of responding to disclosures and referrals to community organisations, but also more broadly support embedded within education systems to help schools identify how they're going to take a whole of school approach ... it's really important that if the [next] National Plan does highlight this as a key area and we know it is such an important intervention point ... that it goes beyond a statement of support which is obviously important, and actually identifies how education systems across the country will enable this work, which inevitably involves quite a significant investment, but also these changes to the way education systems operate to help this become business as usual.

This stakeholder recommended that a shift from a school-by-school approach to a whole of education system delivery of Respectful Relationships would represent a significant change to current practice across Australian states and territories, where the delivery of this curriculum presently varies significantly within and across state jurisdictions.

Stakeholders also recommended that the delivery of Respectful Relationships education be extended to broader settings that reach young people outside of the school environment. As one stakeholder emphasised:

I think we should name that there are cohorts of young people who are not likely to get access to this education if they're not in schools, and specifically name some of who those groups are. So young people in out of home care contexts, young people in juvenile justice contexts, young people who are in communities where there's very low school attendance, and they arguably are some of the cohorts that need this more than anyone else and that we should have strategies and approaches that are tailored to their needs.

In agreement, several stakeholders identified the need to ensure the delivery of Respectful Relationships education to young people in care settings and to children and young people at high risk of truancy. First Nations stakeholders emphasised that it is important that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth who have trouble at school or do not attend regularly, are still provided this education. Stakeholders with expertise working with young people living with a disability emphasised that the delivery of Respectful Relationships education must be accessible and inclusive, and that it is critical that the curriculum content considers disability. Some stakeholders highlighted the inability of the curriculum to date to acknowledge the diversity of children's experiences, including diversity in sexuality and gender identity.

Sexual-consent education

“ *I think we need courageous leadership, that we need leadership at a government level in primary prevention that is prepared to talk about the difficult things and not wait until we have thousands of young women sharing their stories in an online petition to say that we need to do some things better. And to be able to resource it.*

Throughout the consultation, there was significant agreement among stakeholders about the need to

embed sexual-consent education into Australian schools, and that at present, there is a lack of consistent education on consent at all education levels, including in RRE curriculum, where it is utilised. There was shared agreement among stakeholders that greater education is needed in this space. As one stakeholder described:

That [education] needs to start at the very, very beginning in terms of educating young people, young women, young men about what is okay, where that line is in relationships including the online component.

The delivery of sexual consent education was inherently linked by stakeholders to discussions about the delivery of RRE and other sexuality curriculum. As one stakeholder explained:

I do think that comprehensive sexuality education is a key strategy there including content explicitly on questions of consent, and if you like, you've got two overlapping circles ideally of comprehensive sexuality education on the one hand and healthy or respectful relationships education on the other.

Several stakeholders reflected on discussions they had been involved in with children and young people calling for better and more education around sex and consent. Reflecting on these conversations, one stakeholder commented:

From the conversations I've had with young people, that they talk about rape culture in schools. They talk about things that are really quite distressing. And if we don't, as adults, have these conversations alongside them, I worry about the effectiveness of any plans.

There was recognition among stakeholders that to embed sexual consent education would necessitate a significant financial commitment on the part of the government and that this commitment should be explicitly made as part of the work program arising from the next National Plan.

Several stakeholders referred with disappointment to two things: the government's failure to support The Line campaign; and the apparent censoring of the very issues for which stakeholders perceived young people require support to navigate and understand. Stakeholders commended The Line campaign, developed by Our Watch, as a program that resonates with young people.

Early childhood education

“ *The early childhood space is a really important one and that it would be great for there to be additional emphasis on that. We know that gender stereotypes is an important place to be working on and that most people work out what gender identity is by the age of four. So, I think if we can support early childhood centres to do this work that would be great.*

There was recognition among stakeholders across the consultations that age-sensitive education to promote healthy relationships, and to prevent family, domestic and sexual violence, needs to be embedded into the early childhood education curriculum. This was described as 'really important' by stakeholders. Early childhood settings were recognised as being particularly useful to provide early education on understanding gender identity and gender stereotypes. While there is RRE in early childhood education settings in some areas of Australia, the views of stakeholders engaged through the consultation point to the need for expansion and consolidation.

This call for education to be embedded into early childhood settings also reflected stakeholders' recognition of the early onset of problematic behaviours. Stakeholders commented that 'we need to start young' because:

I think it [problematic coercive and controlling behaviours] starts very young. And I know we're doing

some good work in that space, but I think this is a relatively new thing that our country is grappling with. So, it needs to be re-looked at, I think.

The development and delivery of age-sensitive early childhood education was identified by stakeholders across the consultation as a key component of the primary prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence strategy in Australia.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The need for age-sensitive, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive education on respectful relationships, sexualities and consent across the schooling life span should be reflected in the next National Plan.
- The next National Plan should support the expansion of the Respectful Relationships program to include:
- Age-sensitive resources on sexual consent,
- Increased resources to support the development of wraparound support for schools, including professional development for teachers to support upskilling, provide access to up-to-date referral options, and training on safely responding to disclosures of violence, and
- A bank of resources for parents and carers to support conversations regarding respectful relationships in the home.
- The expansion of the Respectful Relationships program, under the next National Plan, should also involve the provision of an independent review to consider the degree to which the curriculum materials are culturally sensitive and accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, young people living with a disability, and children and young people with diverse gender identity and/or sexualities.

WHOLE OF SYSTEM RESPONSES

6.1 Early Intervention

“ *Nothing much has changed. Community members cannot identify a clear pathway for seeking support, and often victim-survivors are unaware of what is available until they are in crisis – Victim-survivors not identifying or recognising all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence – Specific intersectional related barriers to seeking and accessing help for some.* ”

There was strong support across the consultation activities, workshops and interviews included, for the next National Plan to elevate opportunities for early intervention for all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence. Children and young people were often the focus of stakeholders’ reflections on early intervention and the need to enhance current practices. These views are captured in the comment of one stakeholder:

We actually need to see embedded within our National Plan and addressed at each state and territory level underneath it, how we support our young people, how we actually recognise their needs and the impact of trauma, what they witness and how to support them in terms of positive peer modelling, positive behaviours.

In particular, stakeholders identified a key opportunity to enhance early intervention opportunities with school age children using harmful and sexually abusive behaviours. It was recognised that some of these children and young people would likely also be victim-survivors of domestic and family violence in their own right. The diversity of views heard here is captured in the following stakeholder comments:

Schools need to be observing and understanding what they’re seeing and consulting and working with people who actually know how to work with that sort of stuff with kids and take reports and help schools build and teachers build coordinated responses and know what they’re seeing, know what to do, know who to contact and see it as part of that continuum of work that they need to be doing around prevention of sexual harm.

The one thing I do want to flag is the role of trauma and childhood trauma, including child sexual abuse in subsequent perpetration in terms of the increased risk for boys in terms of intimate partner violence, onset of sexually harmful behaviours and so forth and also, the increased risk that childhood trauma poses to girls in terms of their vulnerability to future revictimisation. It also really shapes young people’s engagement with other kinds of mainstream prevention activities such as respectful relationships ... I’m just interested in how the National Plan can also become a trauma-informed National Plan and I think that means keeping our eye on early onset trauma because that’s so common in the lives of both victims of gender- based violence and also perpetrators.

The importance of adopting a trauma informed approach was empathised by numerous stakeholders. As one stakeholder stated:

I can understand that you have a primary victim – normally Mum who is fleeing from the violence, from a home with her kids in-tow. You can’t then ignore the children, because they have witnessed that violence. Whether it’s manifested physically, sexually, non-physically. And they will have a trauma journey. That trauma journey and trauma cycle will then unfortunately set them up for an interaction with the child protection system, the youth justice system and then the adult criminal justice system.

Early intervention with parents generally, and fathers in particular, was flagged as a promising avenue

through which domestic and family violence can be prevented. As one stakeholder reflected:

I'm curious about the role of the National Plan for first-time dads and the possibilities of extending that focus on the perinatal period beyond its traditional focus on women in screening settings but what's the kind of work that we potentially could be doing or promoting with first-time dads? Whether that's social marketing work around encouraging men to start reflecting and self-identifying problematic behaviour or more active forms of service provision. I do think that's been a bit of a gap for us in terms of early intervention and I think there is broader evidence to suggest that getting in around that period of first child for dads is potentially effective in preventing onset or at least reducing escalation.

Throughout the consultations with First Nations communities, some stakeholders flagged the importance of empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents. This was noted as a strategy that would serve to prevent child-protection intervention in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and would mitigate child-welfare concerns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. Stakeholders also noted that there may be a hesitance among First Nations individuals to engage with early intervention due to a fear of punitive system intervention in their lives. As one stakeholder cautioned:

Early prevention services is really high on everybody's radar, there is a massive system and cultural shift that needs to happen in the unconscious bias of how we assess families, how we work with families and understanding that we need a culturally responsive workforce that underpins all of this because our mob are terrified of coming into contact with early intervention services because they know what comes next. So, there's those sorts of things and reinforcing again the need to be looking at things like our trauma-informed approaches and be really clear on where those intersects with those big national plans are.

This viewpoint really underscores the importance of ensuring that early intervention strategies for First Nations populations are culturally safe and community-owned and delivered.

Stakeholders commented that there is a need to engage boys and young men in primary prevention and education initiatives, and to ensure the next National Plan supports the development and delivery of a suite of perpetrator-focused interventions across the span of prevention, early intervention and response. In the early-intervention space, stakeholders emphasised the need to develop earlier interventions with boys and young men. As one stakeholder commented:

Something often missed is the opportunity to see childhood as a uniquely powerful time that we can reach multiple generations at the same time. Missed opportunity.

Stakeholders suggested that this could be undertaken through schools and should adopt a gendered approach with a focus on healthy relationships and consent (see also the section on Education). Stakeholders emphasised the need to examine violence between boys and young men, and to address violence-supportive behaviours, social norms and attitudes from an early age. There was a shared acknowledgement among stakeholders working in this space that increased insights are needed on how to effectively engage boys and young men in early intervention programs and initiatives.

Several stakeholders raised concerns that there has been a lack of investment in collecting data and evaluating the impacts of early interventions with individuals experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. The need for the next National Plan to invest in an increased focus on early intervention was strongly supported throughout the consultation. As one stakeholder commented:

I think there needs to be an acceptance that we've got short-term issues but then we're really looking long-term and realistically it's those early intervention programs, it's the community response programs that need to be invested in properly and be accepted that they're going to have short-term outcomes that you're able to promote and point to in terms of goals and resources, providing funding. You're really looking at

the goals being 10 years down the road because I feel like that's really tied to that short-term response in funding. You can't produce the data because you're really investing in early intervention programs and then that means that it's pulled away and we're just going through this cycle of short-term intervention rather than focusing on the long game.

Specifically, stakeholders noted the lack of funding for early intervention to prevent ongoing technology-facilitated abuse, especially with boys and young men. The role of schools and the education system in both prevention and early intervention was noted. As one stakeholder explained:

There's not a lot of funding or very, very little in the early intervention space, particularly with boys and young men as these behaviours are occurring and maybe being picked up for the first time. Particularly anything that's pre-court or pre-police or justice intervention and certainly if they're not hitting a certain risk level there's just really not an intervention at the moment for them. So I feel like we really need in that perpetrator space a lot more interventions that aren't an MBCP but maybe sit more out in the family sector space and schools and education.

In order to respond more effectively to technology-facilitated abuse, stakeholders identified the need for specialist training of frontline service providers on the intersection between such forms of abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. Technology-facilitated abuse needs to be understood as a form of abuse, to be taken seriously as part of a pattern of abuse. There is a fundamental need to build capacity and understanding so that frontline workers can respond more effectively.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should elevate opportunities for early intervention for all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence, including with a dedicated stream of work that focuses on children and young people using harmful and sexually abusive behaviours.
- Early intervention initiatives with parents broadly, and fathers specifically, should be expanded. This should include a specific focus on community led and culturally safe initiatives that empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents.
- Earlier interventions programs with boys and young men should be further developed and implemented across schools and include a focus on the prevention of technology-facilitated abuse among boys and young men.

6.2 System integration and service delivery

“ I guess the plug for the [next] National Plan is that this is a better use of existing capacity, it's a better use of existing services because it is helping services work better together. But it also improves the capability, and it does that through training, it sees work across professional and practitioner groups is critical, it does that through training, it does that through referral process, it does that through bringing a broader range of practice and discipline approaches into holistic service responses. So, really, really keen to see that we're thinking about approaches that pick up this thinking around integration, this thinking around person-centred and holistic, but we're also allowing that to be beyond what we currently think of as the healthcare system, so that we're actually tapping the expertise that we're seeing in justice, legal assistance, social and community service settings.

As part of the consultation, there was a thematic workshop dedicated to examining service design and delivery, however, stakeholders' views on service delivery were offered throughout the entirety of the consultation activities. One of the key priorities identified by stakeholders was the need for improved system integration within and across specialist and mainstream service system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. The need for improved systems integration is captured in the comment of a stakeholder:

I think the integration piece is really important and needs to touch across obviously the family law but

also migration law and social security, child protection, the various child protection legislation, etc.

Reflecting on the need for improved service integrations, several stakeholders referred to recent Victorian reforms stemming from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) and specifically the launch of the Orange Door model. As one stakeholder commented:

It's a good model of best practice going forward. It's had its hiccups and its dark days but it is still a [maturation] system but I think that's what everyone's talking about here so that we can talk to each other. That Orange Door's like a one-stop shop to have all those things done ... where people can come in and have it all done in one spot without having to retell their story. So there is a way to do it and the National Plan really needs to address that, having it at a national level so that we can talk to each other.

Embedding coordinated risk-assessment and information-sharing practices was viewed as a critical step towards supporting effective system integration.

First Nations stakeholders throughout the consultation emphasised the impossibility of siloing off responses to domestic and family violence from other social issues impacting individuals' lives, including health, housing and economic security, among other factors. Strongly advocating for a whole-of-system response, one stakeholder explained:

When I think about policy and prioritising policy ... They [government] want to continue to engage with us from a siloed mentality. So when we're responding around whether it's a social determinants of health, that social piece as others have spoken to is really, really key. To respond to domestic and family violence, for many of our families when they're trying to put food on the table how do we prioritise the urgency of the support that they require?

This viewpoint captures the need to ensure that any system integration strategies for First Nations communities are community controlled and led. Clear recognition that different models of system integration are required for First Nations communities is essential to ensuring culturally safe and appropriate system design and delivery.

Stakeholders acknowledged that there is significant innovation underway across the service system nationally and that there is a need to better harness and share learnings from best practice. There was a shared view that it would be ideal if the Commonwealth Government could collate and centralise evidence and information emerging from the trials, pilots and service innovation models underway.

Stakeholders recognised that trauma is a key factor in both victim -survivors' and perpetrators' lives and a trauma-informed service response needs to be integrated at all points of the system. There was strong agreement among stakeholders that the importance of trauma-informed practice needs to be reflected in the overarching principles that govern the family, domestic and sexual violence system. As one stakeholder commented:

I definitely agree about the holistic integrated response but would also add ... the vital importance of it being a trauma-informed response and a sexual domestic and family violence informed response and a culturally-safe response. I think that goes into safety in family law, safety for sexual assault complainants as they're engaging in processes that we need to look really clearly – carefully for example, when it comes to sexual assault, about why it is that there are so few people reporting to police and then fewer numbers being prosecuted, fewer numbers being convicted. There is a problem with the system. So it's looking critically on how to ensure that all the systems are as trauma-informed, sexual, domestic and family violence informed and culturally safe as possible so that they are accessible.

Stakeholders explained that trauma-informed approaches should embed a gendered lens and also be disability and culturally informed and adopt an intersectional approach. This necessitated focus on trauma

also linked to a key view shared by stakeholders that the next National Plan should embed a right to recovery for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. As one stakeholder commented:

It's really integral that we link recovery to prevention, that where there is a high trauma burden in a person's life or in their family or in their community, they are at increased risk of revictimisation. So, they've been victimised in the past, they're not supported to recover, they're at increased vulnerability to being victimised in the future.

Stakeholders articulated the importance for the next National Plan to clearly articulate this right to recovery. A key step in articulating this is acknowledging that victimised individuals are at a higher risk of being re-victimised when they are not supported financially (and otherwise) to recover. There was significant acknowledgement that recovery from sexual, domestic and family violence takes time, but it delivers on the investment. Stakeholders commented that the tendency to prioritise 'short-termism and announceables' operates as a political roadblock to this.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- There is a need for improved system integration within and across specialist and mainstream service system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan should support embedding coordinated risk-assessment and information-sharing practices nationally.
- The next National Plan should include clear recognition that different models of system integration are required for First Nations communities and that this is essential to ensuring culturally safe and appropriate system design and delivery.
- The next National Plan should support strategies to better harness and share learnings from best practice across service systems, settings and jurisdictions.
- The importance of trauma-informed practice must be reflected in the overarching principles that govern the family, domestic and sexual violence system.
- The next National Plan must clearly articulate and embed a right to recovery for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

6.3 Risk assessment and management

There was shared acknowledgement among stakeholders who participated in the consultation, particularly those from the specialist family, domestic and sexual violence sectors, that effective risk assessment and management practice is a critical component of building an effective and integrated whole-of-system response to women's safety. Current risk assessment and management practices are largely coordinated at the state and territory level. There is significant disparity nationally as to how comprehensive state-specific risk frameworks are. In some jurisdictions, Victoria and Queensland being the most commonly provided examples here, there has been a significant reform focus on updating and embedding a common risk assessment and management framework. In other jurisdictions, stakeholders reflected that there are numerous risk-assessment frameworks in use within and across different points of the system.

There was significant appetite from service practitioners for nationally consistent risk assessment and management practices for family and domestic violence, and for this to better account for the diverse forms of violence that occur. As one stakeholder commented:

So again, a national risk assessment and management framework has been on the agenda for the last ten years. But it is a really important thing to revisit, to see about how we lift the literacy.

There was a common viewpoint among numerous stakeholders that current risk assessment and

management practices largely account for male violence within intimate partner relationships but fail to hold as much relevance for domestic and family violence that occurs among other family members. The need for improved consistency and coordinated practice was well captured by one stakeholder, who commented:

I think because we don't have an agreed definition and shared understanding of risk assessments, we're just grouping everything into one basket and there's many different types of responses required for different needs and DVs on a continuum from elder abuse to domestic violence to APV, adolescent to parent violence, to same-sex relationships and violence and I think in grouping everything together as a homogeneous group and trying to put a blanket, one-fit response, we're seeing women and children being bounced through the service system and not being responded to quickly...I think we need a definition but then shared assessment and a way of being able to triage appropriately into services in a responsive timeframe to meet needs and manage safety appropriately.

Building on this, individual stakeholders offered numerous suggestions as to where risk assessment frameworks could be improved, including to better account for the risks that children and young people face in their own right, the barriers to services accessible to individuals living in rural and remote areas, and the risk factors that may be unique to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The long-term nature of the next National Plan was viewed as a key opportunity for the Commonwealth and state and territory governments to provide long term commitment to the iterative enhancement of risk assessment and management practices in each state and territory jurisdiction.

Making sure that risk management does not fall out of focus was also viewed as critical to ensuring the safety of victim- survivors. It also connected with key findings emerging at other points of the consultation relating to effective referral pathways and supporting victim-survivors' right to recovery.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- Over the term of the next National Plan there should be a clear commitment from the Commonwealth, as well as state and territory governments, to enhancing risk assessment and management practices. Wherever possible this should give due consideration to whether national consistency of practice can be achieved.
- There is a need to improve the degree to which risk assessment and management practices inform effective practice beyond the context of male-perpetrated intimate-partner violence. The next National Plan should support work to expand understandings of how risk can be assessed and managed for all forms of domestic and family violence.

6.4 Housing responses

“ *I think housing absolutely has to be front and centre in the National Plan. And if we're not acknowledging that the primary reason for women's homelessness is domestic and family violence then we've failed to draw the very strong link there.*

There was a strongly held view among stakeholders that housing needs to be at the forefront of the next National Plan. During the consultations, numerous stakeholders expressed significant disappointment that there was no section on housing in the previous National Plan, and they emphasised a strong desire for housing to be a key focus area in the next National Plan. As two stakeholders commented:

I think social and affordable housing is the no-brainer in this space. If women have social and affordable housing it acts as that safe place to build the future from, it is mental healthcare, it is freedom from abuse, it is a place that you can get away and stay away safely and successfully. It is absolutely integral and I don't think we can deliver the plan that has the appropriate gendered lens on the causes and drivers of domestic and family violence unless we look at the impact of domestic and family violence on women's homelessness.

It's absolutely critical as a first step to securing that future free from violence.

We're not strong enough on saying, 'if you want to make a real difference in domestic violence, you're going to have to shout about housing, and put it front and centre in your plan.'

Stakeholders commented that prioritising housing in the next National Plan requires government to address a range of pathways and options that cover social housing and innovative partnerships to support access to private rental. In order to do so, stakeholders stressed the need for the Commonwealth government to undertake a national review to determine the level of demand, supply and cohorts' needs for a fully funded safe housing system. As one stakeholder explained:

I think the plan should set out what housing issues there are first, so that we then know what we need to tackle. Because I think it seems obvious, but how much social housing do we have? How many women escaping domestic and family violence need social and affordable housing? How many need other options?

There was clear acknowledgement among stakeholders that women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence struggle with the decision to face homelessness or return to their abusers. This impossible choice was viewed by stakeholders as a direct result of the shortage in affordable housing options. As one stakeholder explained:

We're talking about a homelessness issue as a consequence of family violence, but we're also talking about a safety issue. Because if women can't secure housing and return to a perpetrator, then of course their health and life is at risk in that situation. So yeah, I just want to make sure that we sight housing not just as an addressing homelessness issue. Although, of course, addressing homelessness is so important. But also recognise how central it is to safety as well.

Stakeholders recounted that women who escape domestic and family violence by staying with friends struggle to access social housing after their initial escape from violence. Stakeholders identified that this scenario reflects the lack of housing availability – but it also demonstrates the narrow definitions of homelessness that are operationalised in this space.

Housing as a foundation to recovery

“ *I don't think we can talk about homelessness in isolation when it comes to domestic and family violence. I think it has to be spoken about in terms of understanding women's homelessness as a consequence and an impact of domestic and family violence, that really needs to be made clear. Therefore, how that then impacts on women's life course and their life trajectory and how then the other domains of women's lives become enmeshed in that.*

Access to both emergency and longer-term social housing was described by stakeholders as ideally being the fundamental first step in a woman and child's recovery from family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders recognised that when housing is provided, victim-survivors are better able to settle, develop and/or maintain pivotal connections to the community – all of which is essential to aiding recovery. As one stakeholder commented:

It really is foundational to the success of women, to be able to leave domestic and family violence and to build a new life. And so because it is so foundational, it is absolutely critical that we remove those systemic barriers to it.

Stakeholders recognised that having immediate access to safe and secure accommodation can allow a victim of family, domestic and sexual violence to establish a base from which to access other relevant support services. There was also recognition among stakeholders that to assist recovery, we need to go beyond merely providing the housing shell. As two stakeholders described:

Increase crisis funding for furniture and necessities to put into the house. Funding that gives the victim more choice and control on how they apply the crisis money.

When it comes to housing, trying to flee to safety when you're already in a situation where it's not your tenancy, you're couch surfing with your bubs, the issue around housing. So building on that, making sure that our housing is healthy. So environmental housing is a real key component. We want our families to have every option to have running water, toilets that work, and for that to be a part of the government responsibility.

A small number of stakeholders discussed an initiative adopted by real estate agents in Queensland, which supports tenancies for individuals experiencing domestic and family violence. There was support among stakeholders for this program to be adopted in other Australian states and territories.

Lack of funding for social housing

“ *This is a complex space, but progress on this issue has been perhaps not satisfactory, we've been going backwards, I think, in this regard. So, I think that that just has to be really a very key point.*

Stakeholders unanimously agreed that funding allocated to social housing was inadequate, and that significant investment is necessary. The lack of funding of social housing has led to what one stakeholder described as the 'pervasive inaccessibility of crisis accommodation'. Other stakeholders commented:

[We need] more affordable housing targeted at women experiencing violence especially those that are through no fault of their own 'bottle necked' in women's refuges which effectively caused other women and children to be put into hotels and motels.

So there's a couple of solutions just to achieve that kind of rapid, rehousing outcome. One of them is access to long-term social housing, which does require quite a significant increase in social housing. Because as we were flagging, the numbers of women coming to homeless services is actually the biggest client group of homeless services; is women and children fleeing family violence. So we're talking about quite significant numbers.

Stakeholders commented that the failure to date to create a national housing strategy has led to competition between priority population groups and significant gaps between schemes and funding pools. The negative impacts of inadequacies in the current housing system were well-recognised by stakeholders. As two stakeholders explained:

Safe accommodation and housing, we've got very limited options and we're often in the situation where a woman may only reach out once and if the service system fails to respond, then it just consolidates that feeling of entrapment for her and for her children.

I think part of the challenge is that it's not actually terribly complicated. It's just that government hasn't been doing it. So the main cause of women and children becoming homeless when they come to homelessness services and can't resolve through the private rental sector, is because there isn't enough social housing ... that really needs to be centred within the National Plan. Not just like a mini-recommendation. Because it is just so critical to the safety question.

Stakeholders agreed that while short-term crisis accommodation and long-term housing were both important, investment in long-term housing (covering at least a two-to-three-year period) was seen as particularly critical. Stakeholders explained that long term housing can offer a strong foundation for women, children and the family structure. This foundation supports healing and recovery from domestic and family

violence. As one stakeholder explained:

Being able to stay in a house in the short-term is great, in terms of security. But being able to afford to keep it in the long-term, either via mortgage or rent, on one income, or potentially like pension income, is another thing altogether. And so I think we have to also understand the nuances of income as well as the safe roof. And that plays into all kinds of things, such as what you might get from working, what you might get from Centrelink, but also what you're eligible for in terms of child support, and how child support can also be used as a post-separation form of financial abuse, where men refuse to pay to deliberately try to keep women in poverty. So all of those factors are incredibly interlinked. And I don't think we can think about the housing trajectory without also thinking about what income sources are available to women to stay safe and stay away.

Due to increased prices and demand, there was clear recognition among stakeholders that utilising private rentals as social housing had become increasingly untenable.

To determine the level of investment required, stakeholders noted the need for good metrics to determine the success of investment into social housing. The benefits of determining demand were well captured by one stakeholder:

When you get the supply right, you then start to build the capacity for people to work together, so that both victims, importantly, but also those perpetrators, actually get access to the supports and services that they need; housing being the critical foundation.

Stakeholders also noted that migrant and refugee women are ineligible for public housing in many instances due to their visa status, with significant consequences for their safety as there are so few service response options available.

The need for specialised and inclusive housing

“ *We have to maintain the focus on the women and children, and keeping them safe, and really getting to grips with how housing so importantly plays into all of those things, and indeed how intersections play into those things as well. First Nations women, disabled women, LGBTIQ and non-binary people are all caught in the crossfire of those intersections as well.* ”

Across the workshops, numerous stakeholders discussed the need for specialised and inclusive housing options. Individuals from First Nations populations, LGBTIQ+ communities, and migrant backgrounds were noted to have specific needs that necessitate specialised housing support. As one stakeholder commented:

Really agree with purpose-built refuges. Most refuges in the NT are not fit for purpose or culturally appropriate, especially for women and children from remote communities.

Stakeholders recognised the additional challenges that First Nations women face when seeking to leave an abuser and seek safe housing. The range of barriers encountered was well captured by one stakeholder, who commented:

It's always expected that Aboriginal women are expected to get up and leave, and we have a long history of displacement from our communities and from our country, and so appropriate housing and addressing the underlying needs around poverty would be really useful to address that as well. I think for white women and the white way of doing things or the mainstream way, it's that people get up, move away and take everything and leave their school, their community and everything that's kept them safe, but a lot of

Aboriginal women in our communities don't feel – that's like another form of – a safety issue when you just get displaced from where you know people

A number of stakeholders discussed the challenges that people with disability encountered when trying to access social housing properties. This included acknowledgement of the limited options available and the difficulty of getting information about the accessibility of different social housing properties. It was also noted by stakeholders that the lack of long-term accessible and appropriate social housing for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence with disability was leading to the NDIS paying excessive costs for temporary accommodation.

Stakeholders also highlighted the need for refuges to become LGBTIQ+ inclusive. Stakeholders noted that, in practice, refuges will often take lesbian and queer women, but there is a lack of clarity as to whether non-binary and trans women can access refuges. As one stakeholder explained:

In terms of access of transwomen to refuges and shelters, that's still far from being a good access or easy access. We also see a lot of inappropriate housing so it's not enough to just have housing, it has to be affirming, it has to be safe and inclusive and appropriate.

This was identified as a key driver of homelessness among the LGBTIQ+ community. Additionally, during the consultation, a small number of stakeholders also identified the need for refuges to be pet friendly.

Access to housing for male perpetrators

There was shared recognition among stakeholders that victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, predominantly women and children, experience significant trauma when trying to access and navigate safe housing options. As one stakeholder explained:

I'm often challenged by the fact that our service models here dealing with women and children, the system requires the women and children to have to leave their home in order to be safe, actually exacerbating their existing trauma and then we place them in a service system of refuges and all of that in relation to housing and other things that further exacerbates trauma.

There was also recognition that in some instances removing the perpetrator from the home can cause financial stress for the victim-survivor. As one stakeholder commented:

Taking the perpetrator out of the home won't necessarily help either if the victim is not an income earner or able to earn income.

Stakeholders emphasised the value of providing housing options for male perpetrators to facilitate their departure from the home, and to allow the victim-survivor mother and any children to remain safely in the family home. Stakeholders often referred to the Safe at Home program, noting that initiatives that provide housing for the male perpetrator have considerable potential. One stakeholder encouraged the Commonwealth Government to support an expansion of the Safe at Home program:

The other thing the Commonwealth could do because it's trying to be forward focused is the Safe at Home program ... it is a fantastic enabler and there could be a lot more of that built into the plan. Family violence, number one cause of homelessness in Australia, and for a lot of women in deciding whether to leave ... if they make that choice to leave the relationship, they're often choosing homelessness, so having Safe at Home programs that are addressing housing is a critical enabler and the Commonwealth have a huge role in relation to that.

Another stakeholder stepped out some of the challenges that have arisen in delivering the Safe at Home

program, noting that these could be addressed through the development of a national framework for Safe at Home:

They [perpetrators] tend to prefer to go to family or mate's couch. Even when perpetrator is removed many women won't go home as they don't feel safe or have been violated there and it no longer a 'home' for them. We need a national framework to coordinate a Safe at Home approach so that front line refugees, child protection, police and courts are all on the same page.

There was support among stakeholders for this model to be expanded if supports and evaluations were built in, and it was found to be a successful intervention that increases women's safety.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- Housing must be at the forefront of the next National Plan.
- The Commonwealth Government should undertake a national review to determine the level of demand, supply and cohorts' needs for a fully funded safe housing system.
- The next National Plan should commit to delivering a significant investment into social housing for individuals impacted by family, domestic and sexual violence. This must include investment in long-term housing (covering at least a two-to-three-year period).
- There is a need to deliver specialised and inclusive housing options, including for First Nations populations, LGBTQIA+ communities, and for individuals from migrant backgrounds.
- The Safe at Home program should be expanded, and evaluations embedded to determine effectiveness to enhance women's safety and economic recovery from COVID-19.
- Housing options for perpetrators removed from the home should be expanded to increase feasibility and safety of women and children remaining in the home.

6.5 Health system responses

There was a strong view among stakeholders who participated in the thematic workshop on the health system that in many contexts family, domestic and sexual violence is not readily recognised as a health issue. There was strong support for this view to be tackled and for family, domestic and sexual violence to be seen as a key health and wellbeing priority. Stakeholders defined the barriers to effective current practice in this space as existing at three levels:

1. A lack of training among health professionals combined with a lack of acknowledgement that health workers themselves will often have experiences of violence.
2. Institutional barriers due to conflicting demands and a lack of knowledge.
3. Barriers experienced by service users themselves who may feel shame, have a lack of awareness of the potential for health system support and intervention combined with a mistrust of health professionals. This mistrust was viewed as especially relevant for some priority populations.

There was shared acknowledgement that victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence are often treated for the symptoms of violence within the health system rather than at the source. This was seen to reflect a common experience that victim-survivors who present to health services do not use the language of family, domestic and sexual violence, rather, they are symptoms-focused, for example, presenting with headaches and eating disorders. There was a strong acknowledgement among stakeholders that there is a need to treat the trauma and not just presenting systems. Stakeholders noted that the failure to address trauma will lead to ineffective responses and hinder an individual's recovery from violence.

There is an identified need to embed a consistent definition of domestic and family violence within health

systems and to ensure that violence is viewed as a priority public health issue. Likewise, this view was shared specifically in relation to sexual violence, as one stakeholder explained:

I think that there is something important to recognise here around sexual violence. I think that sexual violence has some unique impacts, and I don't think we've been as good at recognising the diversity of sexual violence in women's lives. It's tended to be subsumed either as intimate partner sexual violence or one-off sexual assaults, and sexual violence is broader than that in women's lives and there's often a continuity from childhood, early exposure in child sexual abuse and sexual assault in teen years and so on. I suppose it's a broader point here, but there is a particular kind of sexual trauma and I think we haven't been as good at acknowledging it and addressing it as a public health issue.

Stakeholders explained that problems arising from the lack of a consistent definition has contributed to disparate practices across health systems and institutions and to multiple gaps in identification and response.

Numerous stakeholders acknowledged that general practitioners (GPs) are the biggest group for disclosures of current violence. This acknowledgement provides a clear motivator and directive for changes in policy and practice to ensure these disclosures are met with effective trauma-informed responses and referral pathways. Stakeholders reflected that victim-survivors often seek help from trusted GPs, whom they have long term relationships with. As one stakeholder explained:

I just wanted to reiterate that missed opportunity, I think that's still a priority going forward, is around really investing in the people that are seeing the individuals and families every day. And general practitioners and other health professionals such as nurses and psychologists and therapists, they are the highest professional group told about domestic and family violence. And GPs in particular are the highest professional group where women disclose currently experiences, not necessarily past; they may not be the biggest group for past, but for current survivors they are, even more than the police. So, I think if that's not compelling enough, I don't know what is.

The perceived current lack of coordinated and informed responses to these disclosures was viewed as a critical gap in the health system's responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. As one stakeholder explained:

Let's really make the point in this report that general practice in particular, I'm not saying just because I'm a GP, and counsellors and other health professionals, all sorts, nurses, are the highest group told about current and past domestic violence ... yet we just do not have a focus or a visibility. So, we are failing women who are already telling this system, I'm not saying they're responding well or doing any of those things, but we're failing women because this is an already accessible platform for them to go to.

There is a need to improve early intervention in this space and to provide frontline training to health practitioners on how to respond to such disclosures.

Stakeholders explained that specialist services, social workers and criminal justice practitioners are understood as the key responders for family, domestic and sexual violence, and that there is a need to better acknowledge the critical role that health practitioners can and should play in this area. Several stakeholders suggested that one way to tackle this is to ensure that identifying and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence is built into the curriculum of all medical students. The invisibility of this topic presently was viewed as a key reason why medical graduates do not see it as part of their role.

Stakeholders advocated for a clearer integration and cooperation between health services, including mental health, sexual health, maternal health care, and alcohol and other drug services. Across all of these settings there was a strongly held view that trauma-informed care should be the norm, not the best-practice exception.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- A consistent definition of family, domestic and sexual violence should be embedded within health systems nationally, and responding to all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence should be clearly established as a priority public health issue.
- The next National Plan should support a program of work to enhance early intervention in health settings. There is a significant need to provide training to health practitioners broadly, and general practitioners specifically, as to how to provide trauma-informed responses to disclosures of family, domestic and sexual violence.
- Identifying and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence must be built into the recommended national curriculum of all medical students.
- There is a need to support clearer integration and cooperation between health services, including mental health, sexual health, maternal health care, and alcohol and other drug services.

6.6 Workplace based responses

“ I think government needs to hear loud and clear, this is an area where we’re preeminent, so how are we going to continue to build momentum in workplaces? For them to see, particularly in a COVID era where we’re living with COVID, where people’s homes are their workplaces, how are we going to continue to build momentum in there? Is it about incentivising workplaces?

There was an acknowledgement in the consultation about the value of including a range of organisations and community groups in the scope of the National Plan. While in many instances workplace-based responses to family, domestic and sexual violence are in their infancy, there is significant activity underway across a range of industries and workplaces that should be harnessed, coordinated and evaluated. Stakeholders recommended that the next National Plan acknowledge the important role that workplaces of all sizes can play as sites of intervention and sites of violence. As one stakeholder commented:

I don’t think we spoke enough about workplaces as a piece of the overall picture, but I think there needs to be a strong focus on workplaces in the second National Plan. Particularly I think smaller businesses, smaller workplaces which make up a huge percentage of the Australian workforce often don’t feel like or don’t have the resources to implement some of the tools, whether it’s human resources or financial resources ... And governments need to think about not just how the big corporates or the government departments engage with those tools, but also how they can support smaller business and smaller workplaces to both be safe workplaces from sexual harassment and abuse, but also to advance gender equality and the primary prevention aspect as well.

There was considerable support for a national stocktake of workplace responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders recommended that as part of the work stemming from the next National Plan a national stocktake would be extremely valuable. Stakeholders recommended that this review could:

- Set out existing corporate and collective partnerships in the space,
- Identify shared priorities within and across industries,
- Include a benchmarking exercise of key industries,
- Identify policy levers, and
- Map depth and breadth of workplace-based initiatives underway across key areas.

This should be conducted with the aim of sharing learnings across industries and geographical locations, and with the goal of building the evidence base to inform effective practice in responding to and preventing

violence.

Workplace responses to domestic and family violence

As part of the consultation, a thematic workshop in promoting business and industry initiatives was held, as well as several individual interviews with key stakeholders. Through these discussions key stakeholders, including business leaders from across a range of industries, shared examples of workplace practices in responding to domestic and family violence. This included risk identification and referral practices, information sharing, and organisation approaches to staff training and education on domestic and family violence. On training, stakeholders recommended that the next National Plan support the development of a suite of best practice training resources to promote training consistency across industries. It was suggested that this could include:

- Shared training frameworks and resources, and
- Online domestic and family violence training modules.

Several stakeholders queried whether industry charters and guidelines could be revised to embed compulsory competencies in domestic and family violence.

Within essential services, including utility companies, there was shared acknowledgement of the opportunity to identify where a client was experiencing domestic and family violence and to provide financial relief as well as referrals to a range of support services.

Several members of the financial sector participated in the consultation. These stakeholders emphasised the importance of focusing on customer vulnerability, as well as the early identification of and responses to economic abuse. This was viewed as a critical focus given increasing recognition of the ways in which remote banking applications can be used to facilitate violence. Stakeholders noted that there is increasing awareness of the proliferation of abusive bank transfers, for example, and the emergence of proactive strategies to identify and respond to these behaviours.

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of addressing financial stress and economic instability for women. Here the role and value of financial counsellors was emphasised by several stakeholders, who also noted that there is a current lack of financial counsellors with expertise in domestic and family violence. Also, for the financial sector, stakeholders identified ethical investing initiatives and sustainable financing opportunities as two areas where additional activity was needed.

Beyond domestic and family violence leave, stakeholders were unable to share examples of many policy and practices that are utilised to support an employee who may be experiencing family, domestic or sexual violence. There was considerable appetite among stakeholders for the development of best practice victim - survivor centric and trauma-informed responses in this space, with several individuals acknowledging that it would be valuable to understand how to best support an employee victim-survivor to remain safely in the workplace. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and perhaps reflecting that many of these consultations were undertaken during periods of lockdown, stakeholders identified a need to better understand how to gauge employee safety to work from home when they are known within the company to be experiencing domestic and family violence. While stakeholders felt a responsibility to take employee safety while working at home into account, there was considerable uncertainty as to how that should be managed.

Responding to perpetrators in the workplace

“ We believe that whatever becomes unacceptable in the workplace becomes unacceptable in society, so a real focus on workplaces.”

The need to better respond to and address perpetration and perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence was a strong point of consensus among stakeholders, albeit with a shared recognition of the need for better coordination and sharing of practice.

There were some approaches to responding to perpetrators shared by stakeholders who participated in the consultation. Stakeholders with experience implementing responses to perpetrators within their workforce emphasised the importance of upskilling staff with the knowledge needed to refer perpetrators of violence to specialist services and other relevant supports. Critically, stakeholders also highlighted the importance of educating staff on what not to do when responding to perpetrators of violence in the workplace and emphasised the importance of ensuring that any interventions do not increase risk for the staff member nor the victim-survivor (who may or may not also be in the workplace).

Stakeholders emphasised the need for national guidelines on responding to domestic and family violence perpetrators in the workplace, noting that this would be a valuable output to emerge from the next National Plan. As one stakeholder commented:

There is this question about what do you do when you find out something about somebody else's – something that they're doing that's not in the workplace. It doesn't involve using our premises or our systems or our processes. It's not impacting directly on their work. How should we respond? If there was a consistent and a nationally consistent approach for employers, it would then mean that there's fewer places to hide, frankly.

Mirroring this view, another two stakeholders commented:

Addressing perpetration would probably be something where guidance would be particularly useful. It's hard to know the appropriate response and what the community expectation would be around addressing this issue for business.

When we discover that a staff member is a perpetrator of domestic and financial abuse, there is no nationally consistent approach. And it would be quite helpful.

The role of corporate partnerships



Corporate sector engagement is an exciting innovation.

Partnerships were viewed as key in delivering business and industry initiatives in this space. Throughout the consultations numerous partnerships were cited as examples of good practice; in these cases, industry bodies or individual companies had partnered with specialist domestic and family violence services. An often-cited example of a partnership was the 'Next Chapter' program of work to prevent economic abuse led by Good Shepherd in partnership with the Commonwealth Bank and National Australia Bank.

There is scope for significantly more information and resource sharing in relation to business and industry initiatives to respond to, and prevent family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders recognised the need for enhanced leadership from industry associations to facilitate knowledge translation within and across industries, and within and across state jurisdictions. It was also believed that there is a key role for government to play in this space to facilitate collaboration, particularly in relation to corporate sponsorship and supports.

The role of workplaces in promoting gender equality

During the consultation activities with workplace and industry leaders, there was clear acknowledgement

that much of the work being led by industries is response focused and that there is still significant work to be done in relation to primary prevention initiatives. While the 'Change the Story' framework developed by Our Work clearly establishes that employers have a role to play in the prevention of violence, for the majority of stakeholders we spoke with, there was appetite to lead work in this space but not yet significant programs of work underway.

A number of stakeholders suggested that a gender equity version of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) requiring sign-off from prevention experts, such as Our Watch, could be an effective response to propel activity forward in this area. Within this, stakeholders suggested that businesses be required to publicly report on the provision of domestic and family violence leave within their organisation, and other relevant measures.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- A national stocktake of workplace responses to perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence should be conducted with the aim of sharing learnings across industries and geographical locations, and with the goal of building the evidence base to inform effective practice in responding to and preventing violence.
- The next National Plan should support the development of a suite of best practice training resources to promote training consistency across industries.
- Workplaces have a critical role to play in addressing financial stress and economic instability for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence.
- There is a need for national guidelines on responding to domestic and family violence perpetrators in the workplace.
- The merits of a gender equity version of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) should be further explored in consultation with primary prevention experts and industry leaders.

6.7 Child protection

“ *What I'm saying is that there has to be a different route of doing it so that we encourage our women to call and get help if they're being assaulted instead of fearing to get help for the fear of having the children removed and when the children are removed, it's the woman who's got to jump through hoops.* ”

Throughout the consultation, the child protection system was identified by numerous stakeholders as a source of trauma for women who have experienced, and who are experiencing, family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders identified numerous opportunities for reform to ensure greater specialisation and a trauma-informed lens, to encourage cross-system collaboration and integration, and to minimise the degree to which women's fear of child protection involvement acts as a barrier to seeking help for family, domestic and sexual violence. Each of these key themes is explored here.

Fear of intervention from child protection services was consistently identified by stakeholders as a key reason why women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence may be reluctant to access support services and to report violence. This was emphasised by numerous stakeholders throughout the consultation, as succinctly captured by one stakeholder:

The impact with child protection as well with the lack of reporting, that's just the fear of victims in wanting to report because they're concerned that their children are going to be taken off them as well.

Stakeholders emphasised that this fear is heightened for specific population groups, including women with disability. As one stakeholder explained:

For women with disability, there is a massive fear around disclosing family and sexual violence to healthcare providers because they're mandatory reporters. Women with disabilities already have a lot of fears around children being removed, because they have disability. Add in an experience of family and sexual violence, and that's a huge roadblock there to women with disability disclosing because there's so much fear around that. So, I think we need to review and really look into responding better as healthcare providers around those disclosures and mandatory reporting.

This view was also strongly held by First Nations stakeholders who participated in the consultation. Stakeholders specifically criticised the architecture of the response system in the Northern Territory, where domestic and family violence crisis support services are run by the same Government department that oversees child protection. This was identified as particularly harmful for First Nations women experiencing violence. As one stakeholder explained:

So the safe houses in the Katherine region ... they're currently being run by Territory Families. So you have a lot of women who are not presenting there because they know that then there'll be a notification. They view the crisis centres as being an arm of Territory Families ... We've heard that therefore less women are presenting at crisis centres ... So yeah, people are hugely concerned that if they seek help that ... there will be a notification to Territory Families and... Victim mothers then being told in child protection space that you didn't protect your children from domestic violence.

Extending on this view, several First Nations stakeholders noted that child protection intervention in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have experienced family, domestic and sexual violence acts as a further extension of the violence into their lives. Describing child protection intervention as a form of state violence, two stakeholders commented:

In a child protection perspective, I'm really mindful that often the way we respond to family violence is by replacing it with state violence either through policing or through child protection responses. I'm very mindful that we should label that and call it out and actually change the way that these broader systems work so that they're in the hands of our communities first and foremost ... the Closing the Gap framework is the direction that's trying to go, about actually allowing local communities to have their hands on those levers and direct meaningful investment to the sorts of things that are going to address the concerns of communities rather than just trying to put out fires that keep popping up

For many of our women speaking out about violence actually begets more violence. It just steps from being interpersonal violence to being state sanctioned violence, and that's important.

This connects to a shared view among several stakeholders that the child protection system is a point of significant retraumatisation for women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. As one stakeholder explained:

So those issues around child protection and the way that that's implemented when a woman is not safe, and she's punished for it. But just going back to two things; I think we need to look at recovery from an individual perspective but also looking at the retraumatisation perpetuated by the systems. So we need to look at it from an individual perspective and a systemic perspective and how we can eliminate or remove those barriers and challenges within systems as much as possible. Part of that of course is that they're fragmented and siloed.

Other stakeholders were in strong agreement, with one commenting:

In no other service model where we deal with children, in child protection and trauma are you allowed and enabled to continually in a systemic way further exacerbate trauma in the way that we do for family violence. I think it's really important that there is a trauma-informed lens and nonnegotiable in a plan

moving forward.

During the workshops, stakeholders also recounted the ways in which related systems, including the child support system, can be used by perpetrators to continue to control and abuse their partners. As one stakeholder explained:

I think something that's incredibly important is perhaps tinkering with some of the settings in the child support system to ensure that it can't be used as a tool for post separation abuse. We know that there's significant areas in the system which are open to manipulation and insignificant resourcing in the system to be able to follow up paying parents who perhaps minimise their taxable income or have it paid into other people's bank accounts or otherwise make it difficult to claim entitlements which can support a woman and children's financial independence and security.

Other stakeholders identified the same systems abuse, as one stakeholder explained:

I also think it's incredibly important that we sort out the issue of violent men getting a pass on paying child support in the first place. It shouldn't be a system where somebody can be violent and be rewarded for that by not having to pay child support.

In addition to their recognition of ways the child protection system can inflict further harm on victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence, stakeholders identified a number of barriers within the system that hinder child reunifications in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence. Housing was identified as a key point of the system where greater coordination between housing services and child protection is needed to ensure better outcomes for women and children. Problems with the current system were clearly identified by two stakeholders:

We also need to look at how do we make sure that there's enough housing in those circumstances where the families can't live together? So the people can be reunified ... women can't get their kids back because the waiting list for housing is in excess of two years long and child protection have a new rule around that you can't get your kids back after two years. So that housing issue is one of our greatest challenges in terms of child reunifications in the post-violence situation.

Ensuring that systems like the child protection system, the justice system intersect well with housing is a really big one here ... we have a lot of cases of women which I'm sure happens in other places as well where women will lose their children and lose their housing and to get their children back, they need to get housing but they can't qualify for the housing system and obviously, a lot of these are managed on state and territory levels, so figuring out how we can bring that legislation along to intersect more effectively with the National Plan, particularly when it comes to accommodation.

This was identified as a key issue requiring attention as part of the work stemming from the next National Plan. As one stakeholder explained:

Just looking at the barriers for women and children experiencing family violence where child protection is involved in terms of trying to improve the response so women don't feel scared to report where there's family violence and seek assistance because they're worried about the child protection involvement. So if it is possible for the National Plan to in some way address that intersection as that can be a real challenge for women.

To counter the harms of the system, numerous stakeholders spoke about the importance of trauma-informed practice and specialisation. While it is noted that there are varying levels of and approaches to training in each state and territory, there was a shared view among several stakeholders that significant benefits would be gained from additional trauma-informed and specialised domestic and family violence training for the child protection workforce. As one stakeholder explained:

I think there's a lot of misinformation about when to report and that child protection is quite punitive and women are removed from their children and we want to avoid that, and children removed from their protective mothers most often. So, education and training.

Advancing opportunities to enhance system integration and facilitate earlier intervention to support women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence was supported by stakeholders. Mirroring stakeholder views on numerous other points of the system, the value of an integrated system was stressed, as is captured in the comments of one stakeholder:

in terms of what we would see the priority is really an integrated system, a family law system, family violence systems and child protection systems so that there's more sort of integrated service system for women, and there's less opportunity to drop through the cracks as we know that they do.

In particular, the importance of favouring the provision of early service system and legal supports to mothers experiencing violence, ahead of child protection involvement, was repeatedly emphasised. As two stakeholders commented:

We desperately need early intervention in the child protection system ... providing wrap around support for mothers to keep their children in their care. Early advice and assistance to provide support instead of removal.

– I work a lot in the child protection space at the moment and early legal advice is not something that happens in that area at all. It's sort of crisis response at obviously a critical time of removal of children and we want to see much earlier advice so our health justice partner, should be providing early legal advice to women who are pregnant with the aim of actually keeping the baby in their care when they're discharged.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should commit to addressing the fears that victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence hold, and which prevent them from reporting violence and/or accessing support services.
- The next National Plan should provide guidance to all states and territories on the importance of trauma-informed and specialised domestic and family violence training for the child protection workforce.
- The next National Plan should commit to improving service system integration and the identification of opportunities for earlier support system intervention to reduce the involvement of child protection in the lives of victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

6.8 Justice system responses



We need to dramatically improve our justice response. This is important for sending a clear message about acceptable/unacceptable conduct, and the relative seriousness of SDFV.

The primary messages throughout consultations about justice system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence emphasised women's lack of trust in the system, their belief that the justice system will cause them harm rather than deliver justice, and the need for significant reform to ensure a trauma-informed, culturally safe, and person-centred response. The need for improved justice system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence was succinctly summarised by one stakeholder as follows:

So many women choose not to use that justice system because of the massive potential for them to be damaged by it.

The potential for the justice system to be used more therapeutically – to acknowledge and address trauma for both women and children victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence – was apparent throughout these consultations. The approach adopted by drug and alcohol courts was offered as an example of a non-punitive approach that ‘can be a very therapeutic and constructive body’. As one stakeholder noted:

If we have a system that is trauma informed and that doesn't do more harm to an already harmed survivor, then I think that that's a sign of success.

Across all the discussions of justice system responses during the consultations, there was an acknowledgement from stakeholders of the need for far greater funding to allow for more effective, trauma - informed and culturally safe approaches to be adopted. Without significant increases to funding, stakeholders expressed concern that:

There's a lot of smoke and mirrors when the formal framework is set up but the funding really isn't there for programs.

Highlighting the need for greater financial investment, stakeholders identified a range of opportunities for reform to police, courts and correctional responses to family, domestic and sexual violence.

Police responses

Stakeholders expressed significant concern about the role of police in further traumatising victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. The specific and important experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, whose experience of policing is connected to a history of criminalisation and over policing, were acknowledged throughout the consultation. More broadly, some stakeholders acknowledged that police responses have improved over time – that there are ‘really powerful and respectful policing responses that happen’ – the clear message around police response was that there is still far more to be done. Stakeholders felt that police practice needs to improve across a range of areas, from initial response to policing of breaches to stronger police prosecution efforts.

Generally, stakeholders suggested that police do not give domestic and family violence in particular the credibility that it deserves; despite codes of practice and years of reform, there remains a lack of serious attention given to family and domestic violence incidents. To facilitate a more appropriate response, it was suggested by stakeholders that more senior police be assigned to attend family and domestic violence incidents. This would help improve responses in several ways:

- police taking a domestic and family violence incident more seriously,
- police bringing a better understanding of patterns and dynamics of domestic and family violence to the situation, and
- police being less likely to misidentify the primary aggressor.

In the context of the policing of existing orders, stakeholders suggested that the assignment of more senior officers would assist with better identification of breaches and more serious responses to breaches. This was identified as a major deficiency in current police practice. As one stakeholder explained:

A big role in advocating to police when there has been a DVO and the woman does want something to be progressed because there's been a breach, but still nothing will happen, so there's actually quite a

challenge to get some of the breaches enforced, even where we have a client who is asking us to advocate for the enforcement and prosecution of a breach.

To improve accountability of policing of family, domestic and sexual violence, stakeholders suggested that regular, independent auditing would build community confidence that the police are reflecting on their practices and are being held accountable for their actions. This would also assist with the sort of cultural reform required within police organisations, including addressing the ‘discrimination’ and ‘systemic racism’ in the system. It was noted by stakeholders that an independent auditing mechanism would also lead to greater community confidence and therefore increased willingness to contact police for assistance.

One stakeholder provided an example of the sort of inadequate response that police provide to domestic and family violence among First Nations communities, recounting the story of a woman who had called the police to report a violent incident that was taking place in her street in a rural area:

The police said – the first thing they said, ‘Are they black or white?’ Now what does that supposed to mean? They’re people, there’s violence down there, there’s families down there where it was going on and that was the police response. What is that supposed to mean? What, that we’re less because there’s violence going on in our homes? You know. So that type of stuff is just – it’s not good enough.

Some stakeholders suggested the need for guidelines or expectations to guide police practice, particularly around the need to investigate in circumstances where a woman is seriously injured and perhaps unable or unwilling to divulge information to police. Stakeholders felt that police discretion can leave complex incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence under-investigated. While other stakeholders expressed concern about the unintended consequences of mandatory/pro-arrest policies – particularly with reference to misidentifying the person in need of protection (PINOP) – there was general agreement that incidents of domestic and family violence should be taken more seriously by police than they currently are.

There was a level of disagreement among stakeholders as to whether police responses should involve specialist personnel or mainstream police. Some stakeholders saw the value in having family, domestic and sexual violence policing expertise when attending incidents; others felt that, given that a large proportion of police activity involves incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence, all police should have a degree of expertise. Nonetheless, outside of the question of specialisation, there was agreement that all police needed more training to facilitate a better police response across the board.

Policing training

One of the key issues raised by stakeholders was the need for more police training to improve understanding of the nature, patterns and consequences of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Ongoing training of police, by domestic and family violence experts, was identified as a major priority by stakeholders across the consultation. Stakeholders noted the challenges experienced by victim-survivors in reporting to police, having to tell and retell one’s story and often feeling judged, especially in the context of sexual violence. The need for training to improve police understandings of the nature, patterns and consequences of family, domestic and sexual violence was raised consistently throughout the workshops. More broadly than just improving police understanding, stakeholders also identified that effective police training needs to facilitate a change in police culture, so that family, domestic and sexual violence is taken as the serious offending that it is. The increase in the number of domestic and family violence callouts was linked to the pressing need for more appropriate and effective police responses.

In particular, stakeholders identified the need for police to apply a genuinely trauma-informed response:

If it’s such a big issue and you’re getting so many calls, then all police need to be able to effectively respond

... why aren't all police trained in how to respond effectively and in a trauma informed way?

Police responses were seen as focusing on the single, immediate incident, rather than reflecting an understanding that domestic and family violence is characterised by an ongoing pattern of behaviour. A lack of understanding of non-physical forms of violence, including coercive and controlling behaviours, was also raised by stakeholders as a significant issue where additional police training is required.

Stakeholders also noted the value of training that includes appropriate, safe and effective ways of interacting with diverse communities, including LGBTIQ+ communities, refugee and migrant communities, and First Nations communities. This was considered as vital to increase the trust between the police and diverse communities, and to facilitate increased willingness to report family, domestic and sexual violence.

Specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, stakeholders emphasised the need for the next National Plan to prioritise culturally safe and trauma-informed training of Australian state and territory police. Stakeholders spoke to the ongoing need for police training to inform their interactions with First Nations communities. As one stakeholder explained:

I've been looking at coronial reports of domestic violence deaths, Indigenous women's domestic violence deaths for over 20 years...and it's a consistent theme the Coroners write about is the need for police training ... repeatedly we don't seem to be making enough headway in that respect. Domestic violence is nuanced, and it is experienced in unique ways in each relationship and it's a tough one. Police get called out to a callout and they've only got a limited amount of time to assess a situation and to work out how they're going to manage it. So they need training around how to deal with that...we need to be urging in this National Plan that the police take that training very seriously...we need to be having a specific amount of training specific to us so that they understand turning up to our Indigenous domestic violence callouts, how to manage those circumstances.

The need for this training to be First Nations led was underlined by stakeholders as critical to ensure effective design and delivery. As one stakeholder explained:

I really think it's about this cultural understanding on how to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, picking up on nuances at a callout and things like that which the police aren't equipped for at the moment, I believe.

Stakeholders also emphasised that the training delivered must be 'localised', noting the importance of 'localised solutions for local issues'. Teasing out different ways of ensuring that training is community led, one stakeholder recommended that expert First Nations community groups be allowed to advise police in every state and territory on training, explaining:

I think that's really important that each state, if it's not in place already, that we try to look at whether or not there's an opportunity to be able to be part of looking at that training, adapting it to what we think.

Stakeholders also identified the need for training of police and police prosecutors to improve the quality of evidence that is collected and presented at court in family, domestic and sexual violence matters. As one stakeholder explained:

But certainly, from a policing and prosecuting perspective, I think that's where the really big gap is. So, it comes in, often an inability to gather the evidence in a police statement or in a police brief that is going to create the reality of the violence. And I'm talking often about emotional violence and coercive control, stalking, use of images as blackmail sort of behaviour that might then lead to either assaults or sexually coercive behaviour of the sort that's going to finally find its way into our courts. But because there's a lack of comprehensive understanding and training about that for people who prosecute, there's just a lack

of understanding, and so you'll find the frustration expressed amongst the judges who have had access to the appropriate education, that the evidence isn't there or isn't appreciated or isn't being led or isn't being explained in a way that is going to create the reality of dynamics of family violence. So, that to me is an area of a really significant gap.

Stakeholders also identified a need for better training for police prosecutors working on family and domestic violence court matters and the more widespread use of specialist police prosecutors. In the face of respondent legal representation, police prosecutors may reduce charges or withdraw them completely. Stakeholders noted that police who are trained in domestic and family violence, or who are specialists in this area, can contribute to improved access to justice for victim-survivors.

Misidentification of the person in need of protection

“ *We still find that when we front up at court, understanding who the true victim is. Yes, she may have beat him or stabbed him but she's been the one that's been suffering years and years of violence and so really understanding the true victim. I think the other thing is understanding the justice system is set up for the defender so it's not about the victim and how do you change a whole justice system to support the victim a lot more? But I think there needs to be change in that area as well where the victim feels comfortable enough to come forward.*

The misidentification of the person in need of protection (PINOP) was identified by stakeholders as a priority issue in improving police responses to domestic and family violence. Stakeholders acknowledged the potential difficulty in identifying the primary aggressor, particularly in instances of coercive control, when police are ‘in and out within 10 minutes’. In addition to police training specifically on the question of misidentification, it was suggested that having a social worker attend police callouts for domestic and family violence matters may assist.

There was concern among stakeholders about the heightened risk of misidentification of women as primary perpetrators in particular cohorts, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women living outside of metropolitan areas, refugee and migrant women, and for people in LGBTIQ+ communities.

The cascade of negative consequences of misidentification was offered by one stakeholder to illustrate the importance of reducing its occurrence:

And when it happens, and the police turn up all they're seeing is highly likely a female that's pretty distraught, very upset, maybe a couple of broken vases where she's tried to peg it at the perpetrator and then she becomes the aggressor. She's arrested, children are reported to DCJ – a whole row of – how can I say it? There's a whole play out then of kids being reported, mother getting locked up, and it's just not good for any family. And you've got kids who are going to go automatically into care, you've got family jumping up trying to go and get the kids off DCJ, and then after Mum's arrested and released, she's got to go through a whole process again with DCJ ... And all the while she may have just been protecting herself.

The consequences of misidentification for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were seen as especially acute in the context of the risk of having children removed: child removal continues at a far higher rate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities than in non-Indigenous communities.³⁹

Stakeholders suggested that training to reduce misidentification was needed not only for police, but for members of the judiciary as well. A focus on coercive control incidents as particularly prone to misidentification led some stakeholders to suggest that the next National Plan take a systems approach to the issue:

³⁹ See, for example, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2020). *Child protection Australia 2018–19*. Canberra: AIHW.

I think what would be really valuable for the [next] National Plan would be to define which systems are being gamed by perpetrators and to look at what kind of education we can provide these systems so that they can protect both themselves and their clients, the victim-survivors, from being coercively controlled using those systems as a proxy.

This recognition from stakeholders builds on an increasing body of Australian research which has noted the prevalence and impact of systems abuse generally, and misidentification specifically across Australian criminal and civil justice systems.

Criminalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

The issue of misidentification of the PINOP was highlighted as particularly salient for people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, especially in the context of the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Australia's prisons. Stakeholders identified that police are more prone to misidentify and therefore criminalise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The ramifications of this are potentially dire, especially for women who already have a criminal record, no matter how minor. As one stakeholder explained:

If you're an Aboriginal woman and you're experiencing domestic violence and you've been misidentified, and you have a criminal record, you're going to go back to prison, no questions asked.

More broadly, while stakeholders noted that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 'have a right to be given the same service and to be believed and also supported and also protected', they also expressed a level of cynicism about the idea of police and the criminal justice system acting to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. As one stakeholder commented:

We have a history that really speaks to the genocide that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have faced and so this idea of reaching to police or looking to the law to protect them in some way is ridiculous.

For many stakeholders, the criminalisation of First Nations communities can only be addressed through genuine partnership. Stakeholders emphasised that improving the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the criminal justice system requires more than just cultural competency training for police and the judiciary. A focus on partnership and First Nations led solutions would acknowledge that the answers and expertise lie within the communities themselves – that communities have the cultural strength and expertise to address family, domestic and sexual violence in real partnership with the justice system.

Stakeholders emphasised that reducing the criminalisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the criminal justice system requires that the next National Plan align with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, both in outcomes and targets and in the approach taken to achieve them. As one stakeholder explained:

We must make sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander [people]s are the leaders and representatives, are at the table in the design of improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families' connection, in contact with the police system, the judicial system. We must ensure that community control is front and centre in delivery of programs and providing that level of support for our families.

This view was shared by many throughout the consultation, and it highlights the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives to be included on any governance structures set up to implement the next National Plan.

Legal aid and access to justice

A key theme to emerge in discussions about access to justice was the need for greater funding to enable victim-survivors to be properly represented in family, domestic and sexual violence matters and to feel safe in doing so. Stakeholders acknowledged that 'justice' will mean different things to different people, however, there was a shared concern that at present victim-survivors may have inadequate access to legal advice and assistance, particularly advice that is ongoing after a crisis has passed.

One of the mechanisms that stakeholders suggested for increasing access to justice was to invest more heavily in health-justice partnerships. The value of health-justice partnerships was acknowledged widely during the consultations, particularly in terms of providing early legal advice before the justice system becomes involved.

Notwithstanding the need for improved access to justice through traditional justice pathways, stakeholders pointed to evidence that clearly shows that victim-survivors are more likely to disclose violence in non-justice settings, particularly in the health system. One stakeholder described:

Essentially we know that women are more likely to talk to their health professionals and seek quasi-legal advice than they will talk to lawyers, because they don't have access to lawyers in the way that they have access to health professionals ... If they can then be linked in with lawyers, legal advice, legal assistance, it can be a really safe way of obtaining that advice and assistance.

Stakeholders were clear that this model does not necessitate that health providers become legal experts; rather, it shows the value of collaboration and integration across service systems, for example, by embedding legal professionals within health services and by building the 'legal awareness and capability of health workers'. As one stakeholder noted:

And so, again, a really strong hook there for thinking about collaboration, for thinking about how you build capability by connecting services better together, rather than assuming that we're now asking all of our health service practitioners to become experts in legal need, that we can build that capability through systems like the health system by building partnership with legal assistance and other justice-based responses.

Health-justice partnerships were held up by stakeholders as a demonstration of 'what it looks like to really transform service system responses'. The range of professional expertise that becomes available through such partnerships allows for a wraparound response to the diverse needs of different communities in response to complex need. The importance of including such partnerships in the next National Plan was summarised by one stakeholder as follows:

There's two ways to think about the role that health-justice partnership can play in the National Plan going forward. One is this opportunity to use a system as vast as the healthcare system, so many points of entry, so many trusted points of entry in lots of different contexts, whether it's community-controlled health services, whether it's child and maternal health nurse centres. Whatever the setting, using that trusted point of access to get help to a whole range of other problems that are appearing in peoples' lives, so there's a really clear way that this call for person-centred, holistic responses can be tackled by approaches like health-justice partnership.

A similar approach was suggested for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a way to overcome fear of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. As one stakeholder proposed:

That is again about shifting it to a model that is where do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

feel safe? Where do you they have trusted relationships? Where will they seek information? And they're likely to seek information from our peak body. And health services being one of those bodies, I think we have to really get a bit more sophisticated in the design and working in partnership again, with the police. I would love to see each of our ACCOs have a police champion in there. That has such a presence in the community, they have such a visual presence. There is an ability for mob to be able to yarn to them a bit. We've just got to change the way the relationship historically has been based, and the way that it has built to this really detrimental narrative that's in the community. There is such trauma attached to it. We have to really be thinking about how to direct that into a positive meaningful way. Black fellas aren't going anywhere. Police aren't going anywhere.

Other stakeholders also noted the importance of health-justice partnerships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in providing opportunities for community-led, strengths-based approaches:

Health-justice partnerships are so key because our ACCHOs are a trusted source, and so when I think about our health services, it's a place where we identify, it's where we self-determine, it's where we are our strength based. ACCHOs will continue to lead in this space and demonstrate our strength, because that network is so ingrained in the way that our communities operate. Community-controlled model is the model that we protect fiercely, and that model has come out of not being visible in this country and being powerless in this country. And so, health-justice partnerships, particularly when you are partnering with an [ACHO] to deliver comprehensive primary healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is a key, key partner, because that network is ingrained and woven through community.

But to enable such health-justice partnerships and a more integrated approach generally, stakeholders pointed out, requires partnerships to be embedded into funding agreements and the budget process. Greater funding over a longer timeframe for a more integrated approach is also needed to ensure that a solid understanding of the nature and signs of family, domestic and sexual violence is more widespread throughout the various service systems. As one stakeholder explained:

We need to make sure – and it goes back to the whole requirement that everybody has to have competency in identifying and responding and referring, and so that we're actually picking things up earlier, whether it be at Centrelink or whether it be at your health service or whatever, but you're picking stuff up at an earlier point. But we have to resource the services, because they're not going to be able to prioritise that early intervention if we don't fund them.

The next National Plan was viewed by stakeholders as a timely opportunity to recognise the role that other systems play in responding to family, domestic and sexual violence, embedding legal assistance into non-legal settings and encouraging partnerships by integrating other national plans and strategies, such as Closing the Gap, health and mental health strategies, and those related to other areas such as education, disability and social services.

Access to justice was seen as particularly complex for some communities. For example, stakeholders noted that practices in the justice system need to be culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 'to increase access to a system that is very complicated and can be quite hostile to certain groups'. A key barrier to access to justice for refugee and migrant victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence identified by stakeholders was the limited specialist support to address complex legal issue, and the limited availability in court of interpreters – particularly female interpreters – to ensure women's safety, comfort and understanding. While it was acknowledged that interpreters are generally available for substantive hearings, stakeholders suggested that they are not necessarily available for preliminary court dates. This can result in the victim-survivor not fully comprehending what has transpired and what is required going forward, potentially resulting in complaints being withdrawn, court dates being missed, or timely instructions not being given.

Court responses to family and domestic violence

“ *The legal system is often one of the last tools that perpetrators of violence can use and wield effectively for many years.*

An integrated, trauma-informed court system was seen as pivotal to improving the justice system experience of victim-survivors of domestic and family violence. Throughout the consultation stakeholders emphasised that the disruption caused by the separation of court processes across criminal, civil and family courts means that victim-survivors are required to be involved in the justice system over an extended period of time and to retell their stories multiple times, potentially causing them to be retraumatised by the very system that aims to provide justice. One stakeholder suggested that the courts need to ‘radically transform’:

In terms of when matters do get to court, that system needs to radically transform and I think the next 10 to 12 years of this plan, we should be talking about transformational change. Why do we still have separate courts for every single issue? We can't seem to bridge the gap between the federal and state matters. We should actually be committing to courts being able to address all of those issues for individuals and families rather than this still very highly separated, siloed and traditional system that really hasn't changed for many years.

A fractured justice system also facilitates its misuse by the perpetrator as another form of abuse. Given the apparent ease with which perpetrators are able to misuse the justice system to inflict further abuse over a protracted period, stakeholders recommended that judicial decision-makers should be taking such behaviour into account when formulating their responses in individual matters. This was expressed by one stakeholder as follows:

They just got the matter in front of them, has there been violence or do they need to make an order about financial support, but what they really need to also be given is a report on how the perpetrator has interacted with and used the justice system in a way that damages the survivor.

This sentiment was echoed by another stakeholder, who noted:

All of us would be familiar with the years and years and years of torment that victim survivors are put through after the relationship is finished through systems abuse and control.

A more integrated approach, however, cannot be implemented at the expense of specialisation. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of a specialised approach across all aspects of the justice system. Underlying such an approach is the use of training, education and a common language to provide the foundation for a shared understanding of family, domestic and sexual violence. In particular, a shared definition of ‘trauma-informed’ was seen as essential for improving the treatment of victim-survivors at all points of the justice system, especially for court users from First Nations communities.

Stakeholders considered the specialist court model to be valuable in a number of ways. The nuanced and in-depth understanding of the nature and dynamics of domestic and family violence, the therapeutic approach that works to ensure that both perpetrators and victim-survivors understand any orders imposed to reduce the likelihood of breach, and the availability of specialist legal practitioners and prosecutors were seen as offering a more effective court response to domestic and family violence. But stakeholders noted that more needs to be done in the specialist court space, including in relation to the built environment of courts, to ensure that safe spaces are available for victim-survivors.

While reforms have already been undertaken in some jurisdictions to allow online intervention order applications, not all stakeholders felt that this was the most effective way for courts to respond to domestic and family violence. One stakeholder suggested that police-led applications at court carry more weight –

noting a person with greater power and authority than the perpetrator is speaking in support of the victim-survivor.

Court responses to sexual violence

The unique aspects of justice system responses to sexual assault were identified as in need of significant reform. Stakeholders queried why reporting rates of sexual offences are so low, why so few sexual offences are prosecuted and why even fewer result in a conviction. Stakeholders identified that the answer lies with the system itself: 'we know that the criminal justice system is failing people, sexual assault complainants.'

In addition to the need for a trauma-informed, culturally safe court response to sexual violence, stakeholders also noted the need for greater safety at court for sexual assault complainants. The conduct of hearings was described as retraumatising for victim-survivors of sexual violence:

The cross-examination process is just one matter when it's got to be better managed. There's no wonder why so many people don't want to engage in this process.

To the extent that victim-survivors are not represented by prosecutors and are being 'swept up in someone else's process', one stakeholder suggested that an intermediary or advocate for victim-survivors would help to improve the court experience and reduce the potential for retraumatising victim-survivors:

In Victoria we've been piloting a system of intermediaries to assist and facilitate in communication for child and intellectually-impaired complainants in sexual offence cases. That, again, has I think been extraordinarily successful in allowing people to tell their story better, but also allowing a sense of a fair fight in terms of the ability of the accused to properly cross-examine, but fairly. So, whilst an intermediary has a different role as a communication facilitator, to the sort of thing I'm thinking about where you might need somebody who can speak about or assist a victim-survivor, because the sort of role I'm looking at is someone whose almost independent expert role is to advise the court about the realities of the way victim-survivors are going to approach the court, the way they're going to approach being questioned, the way they're going to respond to different types of questioning. The traditional form of asking questions can in itself replicate the control mechanisms that they've been subjected to, and therefore render them even less powerful or more powerless in a court system.

Another stakeholder suggested that increased use of jury directions in sexual violence matters, as happens in some jurisdictions already, would improve court responses to sexual violence. Victoria was proffered as an example where judges are required to direct juries as a way of dispelling myths and tropes about sexual violence. Not only does this allow judges to dispel misperceptions among jury members, stakeholders suggested that it also influences behaviour in the courtroom:

Counsel can no longer dog whistle or actually overtly perpetuate the rape myths that used to often manifest themselves in cases.

While this approach adopts 'jury directions' as its terminology, one stakeholder suggested that this process of challenging myths and tropes ought to be adopted by judicial decision-makers every time when undertaking fact-finding.

Judicial training

As part of a trauma-informed court response to family, domestic and sexual violence, stakeholders raised the need for more judicial training in some state and territory jurisdictions. This was particularly noted with regard to a lack of understanding of coercive control and non-physical forms of violence generally. Increased training was also raised as important to counter various myths and incorrect assumptions that

still underpin some judicial decision-making, such as a belief that most women exaggerate their claims in civil protection matters, and to examine the impact of ‘unconscious gender bias and judicial stereotyping’. Such presumptions among members of the judiciary, according to stakeholders, are often invisible and unstated but can influence both the way people’s stories are interpreted and the application of the law. Victoria was held up as an example in which a dedicated judicial college provides specialist training on the nature and dynamics of family and domestic violence, enabling a shared understanding of the issues among judicial decision-makers. The value placed on this shared understanding was said to be amplified by a court culture that prioritises a trauma-informed response.

The criminalisation of coercive control

The criminalisation of coercive control as a stand-alone criminal offence was a live debate in several state and territory jurisdictions over the time of the consultations. While the workshops did not seek to evaluate or review approaches taken at the state and territory level, the degree to which the next National Plan can improve criminal justice system responses to coercive control emerged as a key focus among stakeholders involved in the workshops and interviews.

For many stakeholders the most important way to address coercive control was seen to be improving justice system responses to domestic and family violence in general. Stakeholders emphasised that police and the judiciary need to understand that coercive control is a fundamental aspect of domestic and family violence; legislation that specifically criminalises coercive control was seen as only one small piece of a larger issue. Some stakeholders noted the difficulty presently of securing an intervention order based ‘only’ on coercive and controlling behaviours, even if they are ‘lucky’ enough to have a magistrate who recognises the behaviour as fundamental to understanding the experience of domestic and family violence.

The need for a broader response to coercive control beyond the criminal justice system was supported by many stakeholders involved in the consultation; they agreed that ‘the law shouldn’t be seen as a panacea’. Coercive control, it was said, is not just about the criminal law but is about the legal system as a whole. As one stakeholder explained:

I’ve got concerns that coercive control is remaining as a criminal law debate, and in fact coercive control is about the whole legal system, and all the other service sectors, understanding what family violence is. And that if we have this reductive idea that it’s just criminal law then we miss the intersections with family violence and child protection and so on.

For many stakeholders, the key to improving justice system responses lay in ensuring training in the nature of domestic and family violence so that coercive control is recognised for what it is. For some stakeholders, the need for a better understanding of coercive control goes beyond the justice system entirely. As one stakeholder explained:

So it needs to be multilevel training in terms of right from GPs, support services and that might come from community wide education where they start to become more aware what is coercive control and knowing where to send clients if they do present with that, and then right through to police who are usually there on the first callouts, right through then to magistrates and family court judges. I think training there is really, really key.

This sentiment was closely echoed by another stakeholder:

There’s a lack of population understanding around non-physical forms of violence, and in terms of services that might be thought of as periphery, like child protection, health and family services, all of these front-facing human services agencies need a better understanding of what coercive control is, and indeed what family violence is itself.

Stakeholders expressed concern about a lack of consistency in responses to coercive control across the country, given the work towards criminalisation already underway in some state jurisdictions. The next National Plan was seen as an opportunity to provide some consistency on the issue of coercive control, at least in terms of a consistent definition or set of principles to guide responses to coercive control. Stakeholders noted, however, the potential difficulty in achieving consistency in approaches to criminalisation due to different legislative frameworks around the country (apart from the federal jurisdiction, where coercive control can be incorporated into areas such as migration law and social security law). Instead of detailed uniformity, some stakeholders suggested that high-level shared principles – principles grounded in international human rights law, such as the rights to safety, rights of children, respect for natural justice and procedural fairness – would be useful to guide individual state and territory jurisdictions as they identify the most appropriate way to address coercive control under their own legislative frameworks.

Stakeholders also identified an implementation principle that could be included in the National Plan, whereby there is an emphasis on the need for legislative codesign – with sector partners participating in developing and implementing laws.

For those jurisdictions that have already committed to criminalising coercive control there was considerable concern among stakeholders about possible unintended consequences. Bearing in mind the over-policing of First Nations communities and low confidence in police among those from LGBTIQ+ communities, stakeholders expressed a level of caution about the impact of criminalising coercive control for communities that perhaps have little trust in the police response to family, domestic and sexual violence already. Stakeholders also suggested that some victim-survivors, including migrant women and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, might be more reluctant to pursue justice system responses to coercive control if it were to increase the likelihood that the perpetrator will be incarcerated.

Stakeholders emphasised that the purpose of criminalisation needs to be carefully considered. Stakeholders were generally sceptical of the value of the criminal justice system in effecting behaviour change when perpetrators spend a large amount of time on remand – without access to services or behaviour change programs – only to be released with a time-served sentence, damaged prospects of employment and poor self-esteem. This was raised by several stakeholders in the context of the criminalisation of coercive control. As one stakeholder commented:

So I think if we're thinking about criminalisation, we have to understand the purpose of it. Not just from recognition of survivors' experience, which is obviously really important, but also what we're trying to do with criminalisation, per se, in terms of changing behaviour, or what we do at the other end of this. Because at the moment, our criminal justice process is absolutely under siege at the sentencing end. And that's really problematic. Introducing new offences won't help that at all.

Other stakeholders felt that the legal profession and the judiciary would actually respond more favourably to accepting different behaviours within existing laws than creating entirely new laws. In this respect, the need for a new offence of coercive control was questioned:

I do think you're more likely to get judges to accept different behaviours for within existing law than create new laws. I mean, strangulation is in a sense a good example of that. But there's an understandable resistance to a whole raft of new laws, because any new law brings uncertainty, and it will take years before it settles down. And if the existing laws are actually sufficient to cover behaviours that previously hadn't been thought of in that way, then I think jury directions and judicial and practitioner education are a better way to go.

This view was not unique in the consultation, demonstrating the diverse opinions held by stakeholders on the best way forward to improve criminal justice system responses to coercive control.

Responses to technology-facilitated abuse

The need for better justice responses to technology-facilitated abuse was identified by stakeholders across a number of different workshops, illustrating the issue's relevance in multiple contexts. The primary message from stakeholders was that there needs to be a better understanding of the ways in which technology can be manipulated and used by perpetrators to facilitate further abuse of women and children in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Stakeholders pointed out the way that perpetrators manipulate children's access to technology as part of their abuse; they are often given a device as a way for the perpetrator to contact or monitor the child's mother. Stakeholders also noted that perpetrators use children's social media accounts as a way to communicate with women; even court-ordered contact with children via phone or email is used to continue to abuse, threaten or intimidate. Technology can also be used to harass and threaten children and young people directly.

Technology-facilitated financial abuse was also raised by stakeholders as an issue that has become more prevalent over time, as perpetrators of domestic and family violence monitor and restrict a victim-survivor's access to finances. Similarly, abuse via dating apps was identified as becoming more common, as online media are being used to facilitate online harassment and sexual assault.

Some stakeholders noted that the use of online child sexual abuse material often takes place in the context of coercive and violent intimate partner relationships. Stakeholders reflected that in their professional experience women who leave relationships when they discover that their partner is accessing child sexual abuse material often end up in the family and domestic violence service sector, where the offending is not recognised as a form of violence against the woman herself. Even if the perpetrator is prosecuted and found guilty of accessing child abuse material, the Family Court and child protection services may require some form of co-parenting. Stakeholders identified a need to increase awareness that accessing child abuse material can be a form of violence against a female partner.

Police responses to technology-facilitated abuse were described by stakeholders as 'underwhelming', especially regarding technology-facilitated stalking. Stakeholders felt that police do not take this form of abuse seriously – that it is difficult to get them to take action. Police may see ongoing technology-facilitated abuse while an order is in place as a 'technical breach' or as minor, as it is 'just a communication' and not an in-person incident. Stakeholders viewed this as a barrier for ensuring safety, as breaches are not seen as part of a pattern of behaviour and are often not actioned by police. Stakeholders reflected that police see sophisticated technology-facilitated abuse as 'unbelievable' – they simply do not believe that extensive monitoring and surveillance is happening in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence. Training to enhance understanding and awareness of technology-facilitated abuse in all its forms was seen as pivotal for police to enable a more effective response – whether via professional development training or through the development of practice manuals and standards. More visible lines of accountability for taking action to protect people from technology-facilitated abuse was also suggested by stakeholders as a way of ensuring that police offer an appropriate response to reports of technology-facilitated abuse.

Stakeholders also identified magistrates as needing training to enhance awareness and understanding of technology-facilitated abuse and the ways in which technology may be misused. Stakeholders felt that additional training in this area was essential to avoid judicial decisions that have the unintended consequence of potentially compromising someone's safety.

Greater cooperation and coordination across Australian jurisdictions was suggested by some stakeholders as a way to address the potential for cross-border technology-facilitated abuse. While this could be facilitated by embedding standards, guidelines and common definitions in the next National Plan, caution was suggested by some stakeholders in the context of the federation – with some stakeholders noting that

negotiating standards that can be applied across all jurisdictions can lead to a 'race to the lowest common denominator'. Instead, some stakeholders suggested that those states or territories which are responding to technology-facilitated abuse most effectively should be used as a model for other jurisdictions to emulate. Other stakeholders, however, felt that clarity of definition is vital, identifying the forms and contexts of abuse that constitute the focus of the next National Plan regarding technology-facilitated abuse so that tailored response strategies can be developed. For example, stakeholders noted that technology-facilitated abuse in the context of domestic and family violence and abuse in the context of dating each require their own tailored response.

Stakeholders identified the need to review relevant Australian legislation to align it with contemporary digital life. The investigation and successful prosecution of technology-facilitated abuse was identified by stakeholders as particularly difficult – with stakeholders noting that police are not necessarily equipped with knowledge or resources to understand technology-facilitated abuse and investigate it effectively or safely. It was suggested that greater funding for specialist services would allow those with expertise in technology and gender-based violence to support general duties police in their investigations.

As 'police are just never going to get enough training, enough resources to become cybercrime experts', one stakeholder suggested a complementary approach, such as intelligence-led policing, that focuses on rendering visible people who perpetrate technology-facilitated abuse:

What we need to do is potentially start looking at alternative models of working and looking at things like intelligence-gathering as a model for actually making these guys visible so that's doing scrapes of their text messages, of their online profiles, of their social media presence, their GPS activity because these are invisible perpetrators who are perpetrating the worst forms of violence against women in our community then 'til the point at which women are murdered we don't know who they are.

Non-metropolitan areas were identified as particularly in need of greater resources, awareness and training to support a better understanding of the nature of, and responses to, technology-facilitated abuse. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may be at particular risk, but stakeholders noted that there is limited research on technology-facilitated abuse in First Nations communities. Stakeholders pointed out the need to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to address experiences of technology-facilitated abuse.

Acknowledging that many of Australia's social media platforms are owned by overseas companies, stakeholders pointed out that it is 'extremely difficult' to prove the source of abuse to the criminal standard of proof. As one stakeholder explained:

We are living in a digital age where we have a lot of technology-facilitated abuse. However, our Evidence Act, and our Criminal Procedure Act have both formulated and remained in the analogue age ... Trying to get admissible evidence in a timely fashion that number one, identifies where – actually who owns the account to beyond the reasonable doubt phase is difficult enough. But second fundamentally, I suppose the perennial question for investigations and prosecutions is proving who actually pressed the button – the send button.

Despite this challenge, stakeholders felt that police must 'stop making excuses and actually take action' – that regardless of where an image is held, for example, if it is visible in an Australian state then it is the responsibility of the state's police to take action. The recent *Online Safety Act 2021* (Cth) may assist with holding social media companies accountable and requiring them to remove content that constitutes technology-facilitated abuse.

Access to programs and supports on remand

Generally, people who are refused bail do not have access to offence-specific programs and interventions while they are on remand awaiting hearings. For those on remand for family, domestic and sexual violence offences, this means that they are not involved in programs that address their violent behaviour. With bail increasingly being refused for family and domestic violence offences in some jurisdictions,⁴⁰ and the increased use of time-served sentences,⁴¹ this means that more people are being released from custody without any specific intervention. During the consultation, some stakeholders identified this as representing a wasted opportunity – an aspect of the system where the chance to intervene in violent behaviour is not properly utilised.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should commit greater funding to allow for more effective, trauma-informed and culturally safe justice system approaches to be adopted in response to family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The next National Plan should support the introduction of an independent auditing mechanism for the policing of family, domestic and sexual violence.
- The level and effectiveness of family, domestic and sexual violence police training should be increased to inform more appropriate and effective police responses. This should include an increase in the provision of training to:
 - inform specialist and trauma-informed responses,
 - enhance understandings of domestic and family violence as an ongoing pattern of behaviour,
 - enhance understanding and awareness of technology-facilitated abuse in all its forms, and
 - ensure appropriate, culturally safe and effective ways of interacting with diverse communities, including LGBTIQ+ communities, refugee and migrant communities, and First Nations communities.
- The next National Plan should support national research into the circumstances in which police misidentify the person in need of protection, including in the context of coercive control, to inform improved police training and prevention strategies to counter misidentification.
- The next National Plan should provide increased support and embed funding for health-justice partnerships into service agreements. The opportunity for health-justice partnerships in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to offer community-led, strengths-based responses to family, domestic and sexual violence should be explored.
- Increased access to interpreters at all stages of justice system process should be ensured, including for preliminary court dates.
- The next National Plan should commit to addressing the disruptions caused by the separation of court processes across criminal, civil and family courts for individuals experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. Opportunities for improved systems integration should be explored and reforms to prioritise safety at all points of the system and reduce systems abuse should be progressed.
- The next National Plan should support a program of reform across states and territories to promote improved court responses to sexual violence. This program of reform should support trauma-informed, culturally safe court response to sexual violence, including by addressing the re-traumatisation of victim-survivors through the court process and exploring opportunities to embed an intermediary or advocate for victim-survivors, and to enhance jury directions in sexual violence matters.
- Increased judicial training across state and territories is required to improve understanding of coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse, and to dispel presumptions and myths

⁴⁰ Under the *Bail Act 1977* (Vic), for example, there is a presumption against bail for people charged with a Schedule 2 family violence offence.

⁴¹ See, for example, Sentencing Advisory Council (2020). *Time served prison sentences in Victoria*. Melbourne: Sentencing Advisory Council.

about sexual violence.

- A national definition and set of principles should be developed to guide consistent state and territory responses to coercive control.
- Further consideration should be given to the merits and need for a national definition and set of principles to guide tailored responses to technology facilitated abuse.
- The next National Plan should support research to build the evidence base on technology facilitated abuse experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including increasing knowledge on experiences of abuse and opportunities to develop First Nations community specific responses.

6.9 Alternatives to Justice System responses

There was support throughout the consultation for the next National Plan to promote alternatives to justice system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. Stakeholders noted that, while the criminal justice system itself must be improved as it continues to fail victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence, there also needs to be alternative responses to violence for those who do not wish to take their journeys through the justice system. As one stakeholder noted:

Everybody who works in the sector knows, 80%, 90% of women do not want to go to the police ... because they want their families to be whole, they just want the violence to stop.

Stakeholders emphasised that victim-survivors must be empowered to make their own choices about how best to address the violence they experience in a way that facilitates healing and recovery – to allow each person to identify what ‘justice’ looks like for them. At the same time, however, caution was expressed by some stakeholders engaged in the consultation that alternative responses must still be trauma-informed and culturally safe:

I understand in terms of the choice and the survivor-centric approach that it is important that we’re exploring options, provided those options have at their centre safety trauma-informed culturally safe survivor centric understanding of the gendered nature of violence approach, and there is accountability for the person who’s using violence too. And it really needs a lot more conversations and careful consideration about how that could happen.

The next National Plan can be used to elevate the importance of alternatives to traditional justice system pathways – to acknowledge that ‘justice’ does not necessarily have to involve a formal court process but should include multiple pathways to facilitate victim-survivors choosing the path that is best for them.

The need for alternative justice system responses

While the first criminal justice system response to family, domestic and sexual violence is policing, stakeholders noted the need to look beyond this to adopt more community responses as alternatives. Aboriginal communities were held up as examples in adopting this approach, allowing a more appropriate and nuanced response because ‘the normal legal justice remedies, they’re not safe for us and we don’t use them’. Stakeholders emphasised that this is particularly relevant in regional and remote areas where people may be more inclined to ‘try and talk it out and have a chat’ than resort to the courts. Exploring alternative justice system responses may also be most relevant for particular communities where there is a level of distrust in the police due to historical issues such as misidentification of the perpetrator, including in migrant, First Nations and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Offering alternative justice system responses also means having alternative reporting options. Many victim-survivors are reluctant to report their experiences to the police for a variety of reasons and are more likely to report to other service providers. As an example, during the consultation, stakeholders mentioned the

Victorian model of multi-disciplinary centres (MDCs) that include specialist sexual assault or family and domestic violence services but also have police on site for those who choose to follow the criminal justice system path.

To achieve better use of community responses, greater resources and funding are required through the next National Plan to support investment in capacity building and allow communities to develop their own alternative responses:

So I do think it really comes down to commitment to funding, and I guess really seeing these alternative options as alternatives ... the justice system isn't the be all and end all. People don't want to wait two, three years for their matters to progress through the court system, particularly with family law stuff.

Stakeholders were concerned that, without proper funding, alternative responses simply cannot be viable:

It's a pretty sad state of affairs when you hope for there to be an alternative to the criminal justice system, but there's not, or it's funded to the extent that it's just not a viable pathway. And so what's left is a criminal justice system and policing processes which can be so poor and so restrictive and time and time again preventing women from going down that pathway as a valid option, which leaves no valid options.

Restorative justice

There was support during the consultations for offering restorative justice processes to victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence as a mechanism that allows them to be heard while avoiding the retraumatising effects of the formal justice system. Restorative justice was seen as offering a way to 'take the heat out' of the response so that it is removed from the polarised, adversarial context of a courtroom. As one stakeholder explained:

I think, again, a serious brokered meeting where the perpetrator doesn't have all the power, and that to me is part of what a restorative justice system would look like, can be a really powerful tool. Because if you've got someone authoritative saying, 'You can't do this,' or a perpetrator having to explain, not to someone who is totally emotionally dependent on them, but to someone they trust as an objective and partial but powerful authoritative outsider, but someone who's listening to them, you can't justify yourself that way in the same way you can in the home to someone who's oppressed. And I think it's got to be explored as part of the armoury.

The importance of the victim-survivor voice in determining appropriate system responses to violence was highlighted – for those who do not wish to be involved in the criminal justice system, this means the opportunity to be heard and to be valued for their views. The primary concern raised by stakeholders during the consultation was that victim-survivors need to be empowered to make their own choices. As one stakeholder explained:

I think restorative justice, we need to look into different models for that, but we have to really focus on choice because we know that restorative justice mechanisms are going to be something that's a positive pathway for some people, and they're going to be incredibly dangerous and damaging for others.

At the same time, however, stakeholders noted that simply having restorative justice as an alternative option for victim-survivors does not offer them 'a true choice if the justice system itself isn't safe'. That is, the justice system must become more trauma-informed and culturally safe at the same time as alternatives such as restorative justice are offered. To achieve this dual aim, both approaches require proper resourcing and attention.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan should promote the introduction of trauma-informed and culturally safe alternatives to justice system responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. Alternative models should facilitate opportunities for victim-survivors to choose the path most suitable for them while supporting victim-survivor healing and recovery.
- The next National Plan should allocate greater resources and funding to support investment in capacity building and allow communities to develop their own alternative justice system responses.

6.10 The family law system

“ *The Achilles heel in the whole domestic and family violence system.*

Throughout the consultation, stakeholders expressed strong views that the family law system is a key site of risk for women and children experiencing family and domestic violence that must be addressed in the next National Plan. As one stakeholder explained:

We need to really energise the response around family law in a National Plan, particularly because it is a federal issue, not a state-by-state issue, so the National Plan is exactly the right place to be addressing it ... I think the failures of the civil system, especially family law in terms of protecting children after the relationship is over, is egregious and is just being left in space.

Stakeholders noted that findings and recommendations of numerous prior inquiries and reviews into the family law system remain largely unaddressed and that there is a need to revisit these Reports.⁴² All consultation discussions on the family law system emphasised the need to ensure that safety is the priority, particularly in relation to children, and that the system is reformed to ensure it is agile and receptive.

Reflections on current practice

The challenges of accessing and navigating the family law system were well recognised by stakeholders, with shared acknowledgement that the current system is challenging for many. Challenges are intensified for individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and self-represented litigants. Stakeholders noted that approaches taken in the family law system must be culturally and religiously responsive, and that at present the court system and the legal profession are highly Westernised. There was a view that this can be alienating for multicultural women and that it serves as a barrier to help-seeking. As one stakeholder explained:

In terms of our culturally and linguistically diverse communities, they're finding it extremely difficult to navigate the family law system, the limitations in terms of their language barriers, but also the cultural sensitivities and the religious sensitivities

Other stakeholders reflected that the use of interpreters in the family law system has been problematic, including cases where the interpreters are coercive and trigger fear among victim-survivors.

There was also recognition among stakeholders that the family law system needs to be mindful of

⁴² It is important to note that in some cases a resolution by consent includes matters where a victim-survivor parent is coerced into agreeing to an early resolution. This can occur where the victim-survivor parent is unable to financially sustain a lengthy dispute, or it can occur out of fear.

accommodating people living with a disability, including people who are neurologically diverse.

Stakeholders described that for First Nations peoples the family law system represents yet another system that is challenging to navigate and largely inaccessible. Time delays in beginning and finalising proceedings in the family law courts were cited as a key barrier for First Nations peoples. Stakeholders also acknowledged that for First Nations peoples there is significant distrust of the family law system. There is fear that engagement with the system will result in child removal. As one stakeholder explained:

Often you'll have child protection departments sitting in the family court room as well. Hence the reason our mob won't pursue family law or domestic violence or anything like that, because of fear of children [being removed] or retribution from community.

There was some acknowledgement that the Indigenous list in Sydney has worked 'quite well' and that there should be consideration given to extending this. It was recommended that the next National Plan should embed culturally sensitive and safe mediation models into the family law system for First Nations peoples. Stakeholders emphasised that the current Western mediation model does not acknowledge the nature and role of extended family in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and fails to recognise culturally sensitive mediation and support needs in diverse community settings, including regional and remote communities. Stakeholders raised the need to embed social and cultural support workers into the system to engage in culturally safe risk assessment and referral pathways, where relevant and appropriate.

Stakeholders noted that some work is underway to improve access to the family law system more broadly via a single-entry point and that this is likely to occur through the case management pathways embedded in the federal family court. Other stakeholders emphasised the need for a holistic view taken to improving how the family court system functions. Stakeholders across the consultation noted the need for the family law system to play a more integral role in ensuring access to broader services for women and children experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. The critical need for this was well captured in the reflections of one stakeholder:

The level of engagement for people traversing those different [legal] jurisdictions can wane and drop off quite significantly. Let alone for those families that are in communities that may need family law advice and assistance, but they are obviously also needing domestic violence and child protection advice and assistance as well. It can be really quite overwhelming and very, very confusing. With that, there will be associated non-legal needs. So some significant social support needs and need to get to safety of shelter, financial support. The needs are extremely high, and I suppose what this demonstrates is how much as a family law system, we require these integrated and collaborative services.

It was noted that at present the system does little to address the entry and aftercare needs of individuals who are engaged in family law matters. There was recognition among stakeholders that there is a need to embed targeted and tailored supports and services throughout the family law system, and that referrals to appropriate social services is crucial. As one stakeholder explained:

I think that's where the next plan probably needs to look at is a lot more collaboration, more broadly across all sectors, because we don't know what that point of entry is going to be for a client or a victim or indeed a perpetrator. Once they are at an entry point, the best time to engage with them is when they are receptive to that engagement.

The need to ensure that this encompasses both legal and non-legal system supports was noted by several stakeholders:

We find the collaboration with not just our legal systems, but also our non-legal system and support services is absolutely essential.

Prioritising access to safe and affordable housing is absolutely an essential part of this discussion. Looking at the family law system and how it can help achieve that.

Some stakeholders positively noted the Lighthouse Project,⁴³ highlighting the benefits of integrating domestic and family violence specialist services into the system generally and providing timely and tailored service referrals at its entry point. Stakeholders recommended that this project be extended nationally, with one noting that a national rollout would ‘really give us the opportunity to build a specialist response’ into the family law system. The Evatt list was also favourably mentioned in the consultation. The goal in the Evatt list is to move people through the system within a year. Stakeholders recommended that a specialised perpetrator program designed for men placed on the high-risk Evatt list would be ‘a good idea’.

There was shared recognition among stakeholders that the family law system is utilised by perpetrators to commit systems abuse; while it may occur ‘unwittingly or unwillingly’, the system itself is colluding with perpetrators in this abuse. There was acknowledgement by stakeholders that once a perpetrator can no longer abuse the primary victim, they may move onto abusing the children of the relationship or using the children as a tool for ongoing abuse against an ex-partner. Stakeholders recommended that the next National Plan has a focus on addressing and interrupting systems abuse committed through the family law system, including litigation abuse.

Beyond systems abuse, the need to address issues arising from the use of single expert witnesses was also raised by a number of legal stakeholders, who recommended that there be a move to favour multi-disciplinary expertise in family report writing. Stakeholders also noted the need to promote reliance on less intrusive forms of evidence of domestic and family violence, including a recommendation to minimise the use of counselling records and, specifically, to move away from providing an individual’s entire counselling records’ file to the court, as these are frequently misused by the perpetrator-parent to undermine a victim’s parental capacity and question her ‘fitness’ as a parent.

Acknowledging and understanding children’s risk in their own right

“ *The intersection between family law and child protection delivers some of the most unsafe conditions for women and children in our communities.*

There was strong agreement throughout the consultation that there is a need to better recognise risk to children in the context of family, domestic and sexual violence. One stakeholder described the current culture of the court as upholding the view that ‘father-child relationships trump the safety of women and children’. This view was shared by many stakeholders across the consultation who called for the removal of the presumption of shared parental responsibility. Stakeholders shared numerous anecdotes as to the negative impacts and grave safety implications for children in situations where family law orders have overridden domestic violence orders. As two stakeholders commented:

How can we protect them? There has to be some sort of consistency with that overlapping of the family violence and the child – the Family Law Courts and Domestic Violence Order. There has to be something seriously done. And we all know this is where kids are then getting killed or serious injuries are happening to our kids because of those orders.

I know what I’m about to say is extremely nitty gritty, but we’re just – for example, removing the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility, incentivise violent men to take matters through the court system, and there is a great deal of lack of understanding about this. There’s been a lot of research

⁴³ For further information on The Lighthouse Project and the Evatt List, see: <https://www.fccoa.gov.au/fl/fv/lighthouse#:~:text=The%20Lighthouse%20Project%20is%20an,Brisbane%20and%20Parramatta%20FCFCA%20registries>

and inquiries about this issue, and we still don't have that, so there are systemic issues that need to be addressed.

Associated with the recommendation to remove the presumption of shared parental responsibility, stakeholders noted the need for child-centric multi-disciplinary risk assessment practices to be embedded into the practice of the family law system.

Stakeholders raised concern over the lack of services for children embedded in the family law system. As one stakeholder explained, there is a need for:

Actually, making sure that the children have that access to the therapeutic supports that they need, whether they're reportable to the court or not, is a real issue. We need to have a short, sharp response when we've got parents intervening with appropriate therapies.

Beyond the provision of services, stakeholders noted the need for an investment in longitudinal research with children who have been engaged in the family law system to better understand the impact of the court intervention and interaction through their lives. Stakeholders noted that while most family law matters are resolved by consent, there is little to no follow-up to see how families and individuals fare beyond the courts. There is limited evidence on the trajectory of Australia children who have been engaged in family court proceedings.

Other research needs noted in relation to the family law system included the need for qualitative research examining the outcomes for parents and children, and the effectiveness of family law orders. As one stakeholder noted:

We don't have any data to see how effective family law orders are on making people safe on whether or not they're the appropriate framework for people to continue with their lives, whether they promote safety.

Specialist training needs

“ *I think what also underpins all of this ... is the need for training, for all of the family law players so that there's a much better understanding of cultural awareness and competency of sexual domestic and family violence and trauma informed training, so that everybody who's in this family law system has got a better understanding of violence, of its impacts ...*

There was strong recognition of the need for greater specialist workforce training for all professional roles involved in the family law system. Stakeholders emphasised that there is a lack of knowledge regarding family, domestic and sexual violence and its dynamics among professionals working across the family law system. One stakeholder stepped out the suite of training needs required:

Training must include taking a family, domestic and sexual violence history in a safe and trauma informed manner, doing a risk assessment of those who disclose a history, safety planning and managing a case safely as a professional and ensuring safety is built into both processes and outcomes/proposed orders, etc. as well as training about perpetrator tactics, systems abuse and how to be aware of, avoid and push back against colluding as a professional with perpetrators.

Specialist training should ensure that consistent terminology is embedded across the system, and it must be delivered by specialised workers. Stakeholders recognised the value in ensuring that practitioners share a common understanding and language, as one explained:

Sometimes the terminology is different and that can really impact on our understanding when talking to other groups. I think that consistency in the education sphere is really important to ensure the various

streams in the family law system are on the same page.

It is essential that family law system professionals have an understanding of complex trauma in order to avoid re-traumatisation. As explained by two stakeholders:

In order to ensure that the [National] plan assists survivors of domestic violence, there needs to be a deep understanding of complex trauma and how that impacts survivors' brains and that understanding needs to feed through most aspects of the system. For example, asking survivors to turn up to mentions or direction hearings or procedural parts of the litigation process that actually don't require their presence if they're represented and understanding of how they're triggered when they have to engage with the system.

A deeper understanding of complex trauma needs to be worked into the National Plan so that we can see what tweaks we need to make so that the system is less overwhelming and less triggering for survivors of abuse.

Stakeholders identified numerous benefits of specialist training, including that it is part of the cultural change piece, and it will assist in reducing risk of collusion with perpetrators. It was emphasised that training needs to be embedded, properly resourced and tailored to specific roles to be effective. Emphasis was placed on the need for ongoing access to specialist training rather than the adoption of a single point in time training model. If this was achieved, one stakeholder commented:

It would mean that everyone working within the courts, directly and indirectly has consistent evidence-based training in adequate depth required for their role.

Stakeholders highlighted the need for training to be delivered by First Nations peoples where it relates to cultural competency. There was recognition among stakeholders that merely undertaking this cultural competency training would not be enough to automatically demonstrate culturally competent practice, but it was an important first step. Stakeholders emphasised the need to embed measures to evaluate whether training has been successful.

The current Safe and Together judicial training initiative was noted as a positive intervention, although some stakeholders involved in the consultation were critical of the delivery of training by international experts. Emphasised too were the need for on-the-ground knowledge and the inclusion of First Nations communities and domestic and family violence services in the delivery of training. Stakeholders recognised the value of accreditation, with several calling for an accreditation model to be implemented. There was some acknowledgement that this is not a new request and that it has been discussed for some time.

Beyond this approach to training, stakeholders identified a need to embed specialist First Nations roles at all levels within the family law system (including in mediators, legal practitioners and judicial officers). Here, stakeholders noted the importance of creating clear education and employment pathways for First Nations peoples to enter the system.

Opportunities for reform

Stakeholders engaged across the consultation identified numerous opportunities to reform and improve the family law system in Australia. It was emphasised that First Nations peoples must be involved in designing this program of reform and finding solutions to the well documented failings and risks arising from the system's current operation.

Legal stakeholders and academics engaged in the Consultation stated the need for legislative reform, noting that the 2012 amendments to the *Family Law Act* have not led to a significant change in practice

and that further legislative reform is required.

There was an expressed view that the powers of the Magistrates Court needed to be consistently reformed to allow magistrates at all state and territory levels to make Family Court Orders. This viewpoint was linked to the need to revisit earlier proposals made for a unified family court model to be introduced in Australia, which would be inclusive of family law and child protection matters. The Western Australian court model was identified as an important example here, although it was noted that this court does not include all child protection cases. A smaller number of stakeholders also identified the opportunity to ensure that a unified court model encompassed migration law; they noted the number of complex legal systems that migrant women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence are required to navigate. As one stakeholder explained:

I think that is something that needs to be considered in that response as ensuring the service delivery or design that you've got a holistic response to the intersection between migration and family violence, and law and child protection.

Beyond legislative reform, stakeholders identified the need for increased access to services through the family law system, noting that in its current operation there is a shortage of services for marginalised women in particular. Aftercare, including the provision of services to promote recovery, was also identified in the context of the family law system as important, with one stakeholder explaining:

I think actually that aftercare from people in the system is really as important as the time that they're at that pointy crisis end and receiving that assistance.

A small number of stakeholders also noted the need to develop perpetrator programs specifically tailored to the family law system. Noting that many men engaged in family court proceedings will still have some form of contact with their child/ren, there was a view that this should be factored into the program design and content.

Other opportunities for reform specific to the family law system identified through the consultation included:

- the need to develop safe and strong dispute resolution processes,
- the need for culturally appropriate mediation, particularly for matters involving at least one party identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander,
- the need to increase access to legal aid and legal representation in family law matters, and
- the importance of embedding supports for families who are in the process of separating.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must prioritise domestic and family violence specialisation of all staff, practitioners and judicial officers involved in family law court proceedings to ensure domestic and family violence, trauma informed responses to victim-parents and children, and to identify and interrupt system abuse and manipulation by perpetrators of domestic and family violence.
- The next National Plan should invest in trauma-informed, wraparound support within the Family Law System for mothers/parents and children experiencing domestic and family violence. This should include a commitment to ensuring before and aftercare for parents and children experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Specialist lists for high risk/high complexity matters involving family, domestic and sexual violence in the Family Law Courts should be established under the next National Plan.
- Specialist lists for matters involving at least one party identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the Family Law Courts should be established under the next National Plan.

- The next National Plan should support the delivery of cultural competency training by First Nations practitioners to all professional engaged in the Family Law System.
- The next National Plan should include a commitment to improve education, training, and employment pathways for First Nations peoples in the family law system.
- The next National Plan should embed culturally sensitive and safe mediation models into the family law system for First Nations peoples.

PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKING WITH MEN

“ *Working with perpetrators in the next National Plan should be a priority in itself that we need to – if we’re serious about women’s safety in this country then we’ve got to focus on containing men’s violence against women and children. So, it has to be a priority. We have to know who we’re dealing with.*

I’d love to see a shift from discussion on women’s safety all the time to a discussion on containing men and focusing on perpetrator interventions ... when we talk about women’s safety there’s no mention of men there, the men are still invisible. I would like to see the spotlight, and I think for this National Plan, if the spotlight was strongly laser like focused on men’s responsibility to change here and interventions to support that I would think that could be a success for me.

7.1 Perpetrator interventions

Throughout the consultation stakeholders emphasised the opportunity for the next National Plan to ensure a ‘laser focus on men’, their use of violence and their need to change. To deliver on the often-quoted aim of holding perpetrators to account, and to develop effective interventions, stakeholders noted that the system requires a complete overhaul, not a tweaking. As one stakeholder commented:

So for me the constant challenge is how do we bring those systems together again, I’m going to sound like a broken record today, courts, Police, Corrections, child protection, how we actually bring those services together, any other service system that might be involved with these men and actually say, ‘Thinking about that community coordinated response model, if he’s waiting seven months to get into an MBCP then what needs to be in place so that there’s ongoing routine, regular monitoring of this man’s behaviour?’ Now this is having to make some really radical and big-time shifts.

As part of this system’s overhaul, stakeholders identified the need for the next National Plan to support the development of a robust national evaluation framework for working with men and perpetrator interventions, as well as a review of National Outcomes Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI) to embed state and territory implementation guidelines. As one stakeholder recommended:

We need to have a really robust national evaluation framework, and programs that are developed and delivered that meet the practice standards of each jurisdiction, but I’d like to see the NOSPI greatly enhanced to give more guidance where there are no practice standards in different jurisdictions. Programs that are developed and delivered in line with that framework so that we can really do some proper evaluation of programs and look at what is working and what’s not working. Programs that meet those standards, that also have the ability to do the tailored responses.

It was recognised by numerous stakeholders that cross-system coordination will require Commonwealth Government leadership in agreement with the states and territories. Stakeholders called on the Commonwealth Government to take a key leadership role here, as captured in the remarks of one stakeholder:

If the Commonwealth government is legitimately fair dinkum about actually addressing perpetrator behaviour, then they start to make overtures or they make very specific agreements with states that each state must focus attention on perpetrators and the development of perpetrator interventions, related

evaluations, [and] safety frameworks.

Additionally, it was strongly felt that a national mechanism through which learnings could be shared would greatly support improved practice and consistency within and across jurisdictions. As described by one stakeholder:

I see some really tremendous practice and initiatives happening in various areas involving various different types of agencies or service sectors that aren't really learnt from, or where the knowledge isn't shared across for others ... it's not so much about consistency, it's not about coordination, but it's about it's so easy to do a few pilot projects here, throw out some training there, hit those particular training service targets, yet we're just not learning enough from each other about how we can improve a collective whole of service system response to perpetrators.

There was strong recognition that, to date, there were limited avenues through which learnings could be collated and shared across sectors and jurisdictions.

Stakeholders acknowledged that intervening with men should occur beyond men's services. Stakeholders perceived that work beyond the men's services has been limited, often short-term and siloed. There is a recognised need to develop and deliver a range of interventions across mainstream sectors, including homelessness and housing, corrections, child protection, alcohol and other drugs, health and mental health services. Stakeholders recognised that both the specialist and mainstream sectors have a key role to play in providing a consistent cross-system response to perpetrators. As one stakeholder explained:

How do we bring courts, corrections, police, services together to have a community coordinated response? If you want non-gov organisations in charge the Government needs to fund a coordinated system.

This approach was supported by numerous stakeholders. Another commented:

We need to be working with perpetrators across the board ... perpetrators are a big gap, we need to do that, we need to give them services, but need to hold them responsible for what they've done.

The failure of health professionals to routinely engage with perpetrators was described by one stakeholder as 'a hindrance to best practice'. Within this coordinated system model, several stakeholders emphasised the importance of multi-agency risk identification, assessment, monitoring and management.

7.2 Beyond punitive interventions

Stakeholders across several workshops emphasised that perpetrator accountability, and working with men who use violence, should not always necessitate a punitive system response. While the justice system was identified as one of the key points at which perpetrators can be held to account and an intervention can take place, stakeholders emphasised that justice system interventions are merely *one* point of the system and that it is essential to build a suite of perpetrator interventions across numerous points of the system. As one stakeholder commented:

This is about accountability, but the current system in its shape is quite punitive and the accountability that our clients, our women and our children want is that behaviour to change. The system response that is needed is really, unfortunately the justice system, the criminal justice system has been that last bastion that has resisted the change that we've all implemented in our own respective practices, in dealing with early intervention and prevention and how we do that. And realising and accepting that you can't separate and demonise men. You actually need to involve the men as part of the solution ... We want accountability for actions, but we also need to see that adequately reflected when they're flowing through the justice

system, because it is not a trauma informed system. It never was designed for it and it has withheld system change.

Related to this desire to ensure interventions are available beyond those attached to punitive systems, stakeholders emphasised the importance of therapeutic engagement with men who use violence. There was a view shared by some stakeholders that at present there are numerous 'lost opportunities' to engage therapeutically with perpetrators.

7.3 Men's behaviour change programs

“ *Within the National Action Plan that there is a strong need to have availability of appropriate services and programs to address men's behaviour and that those programs are actually outcome based in terms of their funding platform. And that they're evaluated so that we can build an evidence base about what works or doesn't work in relation to behaviour change programs so that we can grow those and actually target ... the behaviours of those offenders.*

Across the consultation, stakeholders emphasised that men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs) should not be seen as the totality of work undertaken with men who choose to use violence. One stakeholder described that MBCPs are 'only part of the answer' and that the next National Plan represents an opportunity to look across the system at the different points at which perpetrators can be placed in the spotlight.

One of the significant challenges impeding the effectiveness of MBCPs, as presented by stakeholders, is the lack of authority afforded to program providers and facilitators. Stakeholders noted that the general lack of an authoritative framework means there are minimal consequences for non-compliance at the program level and minimal responses to men's breaches within the court system. As two stakeholders commented:

There's no or very, very minimal consequences for noncompliance for a man who's been ordered to a program ... Men dropping out of programs, very, very weak responses to that. And I think that sends a message to men that they can play the system, they can work the system. There's no one who's going to take this seriously.

We're a nongovernment organisation, we have no statutory powers. We can't do anything really if a man doesn't turn up for group. If they're a Corrections requirement we can report it, or we can raise concern, we can do partner contact, we can do all of those things, but we actually have no level of authority. I think there's this misguided notion that nongovernment organisations like us that deliver MBCP are somehow the keepers or accountability for these men, and it's a really, really bad practice.

This lack of authority and consequences for non-compliance was described by stakeholders as undermining the extent to which the intervention can ensure accountability. As another stakeholder described, 'if men don't attend, they cannot do anything'. This was identified as a key area requiring reform. As one stakeholder commented:

I think that we have to look at our system accountability before we start looking at individual men's accountability. So that'd be the macro challenges I think we're facing.

Another key priority area identified in the consultation related to the current disjunct between service demand, service delivery and funding levels. Stakeholders reflected that timely access to a MBCP is often hampered by high demand and long waiting lists. As one stakeholder reflected:

Without a doubt our biggest challenge is demand. At the moment we're sitting just for our men's behaviour

change around about a six to seven month waiting list ... So for us that is without a doubt our biggest challenge in how we manage it.

Stakeholders also reflected that limited access to housing is a key issue for some men actively engaging in MBCPs. Some stakeholders referred favourably to programs introduced at the state and territory level to offer housing alternatives for the perpetrator to allow the victim-survivor (and any children/co-dependants and other family members) to remain safely in the family home. As one stakeholder remarked:

There is an absolute need to have some housing allocated for men who are engaged in actively trying to make a difference and a change to program. And there needs to be support dollars and housing.

Several stakeholders noted the potential to expand programs and embed an evaluation of their impacts in supporting men to change their behaviour, and in improving safety and economic security outcomes for victim-survivors.

Programs for diverse communities

“ *We need to be a little bit more nuanced in terms of what program's going to work for which man under which conditions, and tailor our programs to meet those needs of that man that he might have at the time.*

Across the consultation, stakeholders recommended a range of different programs that could be piloted, implemented and funded under the next National Plan. One of the clear points to emerge from these suggestions was the need to develop and implement a suite of programs that can cater to diverse communities, contexts and risk levels. Stakeholders encouraged the Government 'to be brave and innovative' in this space, with one stakeholder commenting 'we have the research and the expertise in this country to deliver new models with multi-year evaluation studies built in'. There was strong recognition that these programs should be developed and delivered by the relevant community groups and organisations. As one stakeholder explained:

Working well with diversity means engaging with services that specialise in meeting the needs of individuals from particular groups (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, LGBTQ people and young people).

Stakeholders also emphasised the need to ensure evaluations and reviews are built into these programs to afford opportunities to learn from the work undertaken with men from different cultural, religious and first-language backgrounds. On this, stakeholders called strongly for clear investment in evidence-based best practice. The value of this investment was captured by one stakeholder:

We need to be conducting different types of research and evaluation for programs for different kinds of men because everyone is really different. They have different experience, they have different trauma.

Stakeholders acknowledged the need for trauma-informed men's programs. As one stakeholder explained:

My thinking about this is absolutely about trauma. I don't know all research, but so much of what I've read and seen says that the perpetrators, as much as the victims, have terrible histories of trauma ... it sounds counterintuitive that I would be sympathetic to perpetrators, but I'm trying to actually find a solution and I do think we need trauma-informed therapies for perpetrators.

This was particularly the case for First Nations communities, whereby stakeholders emphasised that working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men should uphold the right to healing, be trauma-informed and ensure that community led supports are wrapped around the men, partners and families. As one stakeholder commented:

I think what is needed is more emphasis, more focus and attention paid to the perpetrator, but we put a healing rather than a punitive process on that. Alongside a punitive process, a healing process. Language is important in any person's position, but a healing emphasis on the whole outcome would be ideal.

It was acknowledged by stakeholders that this approach necessitates a deviation from what is considered the traditional standard for the design and delivery of MBCPs. As one stakeholder explained:

So, Indigenous people, a five-day perpetrator program doesn't work. We've got to do a lot of healing and counselling to both the men and the women. And sometimes [that] takes six months or nine months, a couple of years. But they need a lot of wrap-around services involved.

Other stakeholders similarly expressed the need to move beyond traditional standards in delivering men's programs, particularly in relation to the duration of the program. Several stakeholders called for support for longer engagement with men to tackle the underlying drivers of men's violence.

I think we have to hold the truth that the journey for the perpetrator, or any man, away from patriarchy to equity and respect, is a lifelong endeavour ... this cannot be done within 20 weeks.

I think one of the big things for me is that we need to really change our view and particularly I would say the political and funding space that change is a long journey and that sending someone to one program or even two programs is not enough, particularly for some of the people we work with.

Workforce development and coordination

“ *From a policy perspective I can't go past the workforce. We are still so inconsistent with our workforce, and this will play out in this consultation, everyone will come from a different philosophical perspective, which is in the main fine to do that, but when it comes to developing that really good practice and to really building that strong system of response, there does need to be a level of understanding and consistency around how we hold particularly male perpetrators to account.*

There was significant acknowledgement across the consultations on the need to support workforce development across men's services to enhance the delivery of effective and consistent perpetrator interventions. Stakeholders reflected that there are major inconsistencies across the workforce. For some stakeholders this raised significant risks to the work delivered. As one stakeholder commented:

I'm increasing worrying about poor practice around some standards not being met, around newer practitioners coming into the role because there is such a shortage of the workforce, and agencies recruiting new practitioners starting the work before they're really ready. So I am concerned.

Other stakeholders agreed, commenting:

One of our biggest concerns is that we don't have a big enough workforce ... This is work that requires quite a lot of practice time and supervision, and having a degree doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to be really skilled and adept at working with men in these tricky spaces. So it's great that we're seeing professionalisation of the sector, but we are at the beginning of a really big journey. So I think there needs to be a large investment in building workforce capacity and providing that ongoing support.

I can't emphasise enough that organisations in a lot of jurisdictions are not funded to deliver to best practice or to the standards in some cases of the jurisdiction ... So we need to be looking at actually funding people for the work that they're doing. At the moment they're being cross-subsidised through other programs and the professionalisation can't come without sufficient funding.

Challenges in workforce development and the retention of staff were linked by many stakeholders to inadequate and short-term funding cycles. As one stakeholder explained:

Contracts are constantly extended, they're not for long enough, and it's incredibly hard to retain staff if you don't have an answer a couple of months before. We need longer-term contracts.

Stakeholders identified the need for national practice standards to guide workforce development and ensure safe program practices across diverse delivery modes:

I would agree as well around the practice standards, certainly feel really concerned about what's happening in some programs, and that there are programs that can pop up and advertise themselves, particularly as we move into a lot more variety in how those programs are being delivered, and organisations can call themselves men's relationship programs and start an online program without that program being grounded in all the principles that we believe need to be in place for best practice and victim survivor safety.

There is a drop in practice standards overall across Australia or a drop in the quality of the practice, and probably more dangerous practice happening. So I think that can be a Commonwealth issue, to support the states in workforce development, in accreditation.

On the merits of introducing an accreditation process, another stakeholder commented:

Back to accreditation. How can the Commonwealth support states and territories to embark on processes which actually support program providers about where they're putting standards into practice, because right now it's just voluntary. You sign up to standards, say you're meeting them, you may provide a whole lot of policy or paperwork ... but no one's watching your practice, and there's no opportunities to actually, through a proper accreditation process working with program providers to support and improve their practice.

Beyond a potential accreditation model, other stakeholders identified alternate opportunities for the next National Plan to support increased consistency across program design, development and delivery. Several stakeholders cautioned that there is a risk that any national standards will represent the least-developed practice and conditions for program delivery as opposed to best practice. As two stakeholders explained:

I do worry about the lowest common denominator. So, if we do have standards it's important that they're best practice because there have been a number of examples in different areas where it's reduced – the national definition is lower than some jurisdictions.

I too would worry about a lowest common denominator approach. I have to admit I think the NOSPI fell into that trap quite substantially that it can result in a very low level of ambition which really reduces the usefulness and drags things down. So there's a difference between supporting those states and territories that haven't yet embarked and that are a very early journey on standards of practice versus those who already have standards

Any review of minimum or best-practice standards for men's behaviour change programs must be evidence informed and as a starting point examine the evidence base on program length, delivery mode and intensity.

Program evaluation and data

“ I believe we don't know what a perpetrator looks like, and we don't have enough data on the perpetrator.

Stakeholders recognised that the evidence base on what works in the perpetrator intervention space is limited. In particular, numerous stakeholders identified that in relation to MBCPs there is still a need for significantly more evidence on how to effectively engage men in behaviour change. Of the program evaluations that do exist, stakeholders noted that few engage with victim-survivors as part of the perpetrator-assessment process. Victim-survivor engagement was viewed as critical to understanding the efficacy and merits of any intervention. Stakeholders recognised that partnerships may be essential to facilitate this component of program work:

Good practice in behaviour change work requires that victims and survivors be engaged – this may involve partnerships with specialist women’s services.

Stakeholders noted the number of pilots and short-term perpetrator interventions, including men’s behaviour change programs, that have been run over the periods of the former National Plan. It was recommended that, as a first step under the next National Plan, a national stocktake of all perpetrator intervention pilots and short-term programs should be undertaken. As one stakeholder commented:

Doing a stocktake across the country because I imagine there’s oodles and oodles of excellent examples of tailoring responses to diverse populations that are just documented and sitting on shelves or not being shared.

Other stakeholders expanded on this idea, commenting that a stocktake should be used to determine current practice and support an evidence-informed review of all program evaluations that have been implemented across each of the states and territories.

7.4 Information sharing about perpetrators

There was a shared view among several stakeholders that the next National Plan should support enhanced information sharing about perpetrator risk. Stakeholders reflected that at present the system has ‘loops and gaps’ that were not conducive to effectively holding perpetrators in view across a number of different agencies and system touch points. As one stakeholder described:

[We need to be] making sure that the systems talk to each other, and I know work’s being done at a national level, but that’s critical that you have good information, good decision-making, poor or missing information, poor decision-making.

As an extension of the recognition of the importance of information sharing, several stakeholders also emphasised the imperative of cross-sector collaboration in building an effective perpetrator intervention system. As one stakeholder commented:

Collaborative interagency work is necessary for work with perpetrators for a number of reasons: Perpetrators of violence usually have a range of needs that are best addressed by a range of services.

There was a shared view among stakeholders that the next National Plan should support improved practices in both of these spaces to ensure improved information sharing and collaboration across the system.

Key Findings on desired outcomes:

- The next National Plan must support the development and delivery of a suite of perpetrator-focused interventions across the span of prevention, early intervention and response. This should be mapped out to inform the development of a coordinated Commonwealth, state and territory integrated plan and must support a diverse range of interventions tailored to priority populations.
- The next National Plan must support the development of a robust national evaluation framework for working with men and perpetrator interventions.
- The next National Plan should support a review of the National Outcomes Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI) to embed state and territory implementation guidelines.
- The next National Plan should support a review of opportunities to enhance compliance management and responses across perpetrator interventions with a view to improving perpetrator accountability and victim- survivor safety.
- The next National Plan should support enhanced information sharing about perpetrator risk.
- The next National Plan should fund a national stocktake of all perpetrator intervention pilots and short- term programs. This stocktake should focus on documenting current practice and analysing program evaluations across each of the states and territories.

Consultation Stage 4: The National Summit on Women's Safety

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation Stage 4: The National Summit on Women's Safety

The National Summit on Women's Safety (Summit) was held virtually on 6 and 7 September 2021, with roundtable sessions held the week prior on 2 and 3 September 2021. Roundtable sessions were held on a series of priority topics and attended by nominated Summit delegates and observers from each Australian state and territory jurisdictions and from the Commonwealth government. Panel sessions, keynote speeches, and presentations, held on 6 and 7 September 2021, were live-streamed to the public.⁴⁴

The Summit was initially scheduled as an in-person event for 29 and 30 July 2021, however due to COVID-19 lockdowns, the Minister for Families and Social Services and Minister for Women's Safety, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston, and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women, Senator the Hon Marise Payne, announced the Summit would be postponed to September 2021, in the anticipation that an in-person event could be possible. On 17 August 2021, when COVID-19 restrictions continued in several Australian states, Senator Ruston and Senator Payne announced that the Summit would be delivered at the beginning of September 2021 as a virtual event.

Throughout the Summit, a diverse range of speakers, panellists and roundtable participants provided insights and ideas to inform the development, and implementation, of the next National Plan. Approximately 400 participants from diverse sectors across Australia were invited to attend the Summit. Delegates included people with lived experience of family, domestic and sexual violence, advocates, academics, front-line workers, and representatives from peak organisations, healthcare workers, individuals from policing and justice sectors and different levels of government. Individual representation was encouraged from a diversity of voices from priority communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, culturally diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, women with disability, young and older women, and people living in regional, rural and remote areas.

The Commonwealth, state and territory governments each nominated a delegation of participants to take part in the Summit. The Commonwealth delegation comprised the National Plan Advisory Group and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on family, domestic and sexual violence. Each jurisdiction nominated a lead delegate to coordinate the drafting of the Summit Delegate Statement – the primary outcome produced to reflect key outcomes of the Summit.⁴⁵ The Summit Delegate Statement was delivered to Women's Safety Ministers at the conclusion of the Summit and includes a number of recommendations to government in relation to the development of the next National Plan. The Summit Delegate Statement can be accessed here: <http://www.womenssafetysummit.com.au/>

The closed roundtable sessions have been summarised in detail in this report to provide visibility of discussions at the Summit that informed priorities outlined in the Summit Delegate Statement and will inform development of the next National Plan. The Monash Consultation Team did not facilitate these roundtables but observed and scribed the discussions for capture in this report.

Roundtable summary: Improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

This Roundtable opened with a focus on the use of a strengths-based approach and the ways it reflects the long history of strong and resilient Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and culture. The facilitator noted that the roundtable will identify key priorities and solutions to ending all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Participants were encouraged to consider the implementation of the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* Target 13 throughout the Roundtable.

⁴⁴ These sessions are available to view via <http://www.womenssafetysummit.com.au/>.

⁴⁵ The Summit Delegate Statement can be accessed via <http://www.womenssafetysummit.com.au/>.

The Roundtable covered four key themes:

1. Holistic responses to family, domestic and sexual violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
2. Consideration for men's support programs
3. The role of data
4. How will we measure success?

Participants were asked about their vision for **holistic family, domestic and sexual violence responses** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Responses highlighted the importance of self-determination, including ensuring First Nations individuals can create their own pathway for how they are going to respond to violence in their communities and leading this response. There was a strong view that First Nations peoples want to be supported in this process of self-determination. This approach is:

- informed by culture,
- safe for all people in the family, and
- supported, respected, and resourced by other support services and the Government.

Participants noted that First Nations peoples feel most comfortable with their own mob. There was a view that partnership models need to be re-thought and restructured, potentially on an 80/20 split. There was also a clear emphasis on language. Participants noted that language must no longer be deficit-based but should be changed to strengths-based.

Participants commented that holistic family, domestic and sexual violence responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities necessitates a redesign of services by First Nations leaders with community and cultural authorities front and centre. This redesign should ensure:

- Access to community education enables people to move forward and feel confident about responses,
- Agencies are held to account, including child protection, police and Magistrate's Court. There was recognition that within these agencies there is systemic racism,
- An acknowledgement of, commitment to, and investment into services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families – gender-focused in addition to family-centric.

Utilising the next National Plan as an opportunity to elevate First Nations voices was also identified as important.

Participants stressed the need for consistency between the next National Plan and the states' obligations and commitments. It was believed that this is essential to ensuring the Government is held to account, particularly to the targets contained in the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*.

Participants were asked to comment on the immediate needs and responses for women, men, children and families experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. They stressed the need to acknowledge that violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women is a national emergency and crisis, and the responses needs to cover urban, regional and remote areas.

There was significant support to revisiting the funding for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs). There was an acknowledgement that ACCOs currently work in silos and that mainstream responses have interfered with the holistic nature of community responses. Investing in ACCOs was viewed by participants as key to self-determination and to recognising that there is strong competency in First Nations communities. This was viewed as essential to Government giving control back to First Nations communities. Participants felt that lack of funding and the nature of short-term funding contracts presently preclude the ability of community to be proactive. There was a view shared that First Nations communities

are held back by government systems that promise community control but then undermine this by putting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses 'in a box'. Participants noted that communities are diverse, and so strategies cannot be one size fits all. For regional and remote communities, participants emphasised the need for needs-based funding rather than population-based funding, noting the complexity of services and access issues that need to be considered on a community-by-community basis.

A critical element absent from the conversation about holistic responses is First Nations leaders and Elders; they are missing. First Nations leaders and Elders have a significant place in mediating behaviours in First Nation communities, as they are an intrinsic part of the holistic response. They feel disempowered to be cultural leaders due to their devaluation within the system. Senior First Nations peoples need a place at the table to help reinforce and rebuild First Nations systems and help to achieve safe families. There was a strong view that First Nations leaders are currently missing from all the conversations and official processes.

Participants noted that there should not be an automatic reliance on Western academia to set the terms of approaches adopted in First Nations communities. The value of practice-based approaches, rather than evidence-based practice, was noted by participants. Within this, there was a general acknowledgement that national policies and programs must be flexible to local needs and priorities.

Participants were asked about **effective prevention and early intervention programs** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who experience or use violence. In response to this question, participants shared numerous examples of programs or initiatives that are perceived as working well within their state or community. Examples include:

- In Cairns, local ACCHOs run a 'cradle to grave', holistic care model. Aboriginal leadership structures the system,
- Mums Can Dads Can and/or Girls Can Boys Can by Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program, which is based on Our Watch Change the Picture,
- Kornar Winmil Yunti (KWY) has a great Men's Perpetrator Program in SA,
- Early Intervention Prevention for those who experience violence is essential. Djirra in VIC has many successful programs including Sisters Day Out, Dilly Bag, Young Luv and our Koori Women's Place, and
- Talking Respect – developed within the NT using young people's voices and images.

Both prevention and intervention raise workforce capacity issues. Questions were raised about how mainstream services best meet the needs of their diverse client groups, what partnerships can be entered into to increase capacity, and how these are encouraged and facilitated.

Participants called for additional resources to ensure First Nations workers and ACCOs are responding to family, domestic and sexual violence in culturally safe ways. Participants stressed the need to make sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander legal services are elevated. There was recognition that many families do not go to a lawyer, although health-justice partnerships were mentioned here as a good model. The co-location of health and justice services in trusted community-controlled services was viewed as positive to increasing access to culturally competent care.

There was a shared view that we must ensure that children are a focus of the next National Plan in their own right. Participants noted that preventing violence in childhood will also prevent violence in later adult life. This requires supporting families to raise children safely and well. Some participants noted the value of men's fathering programs. Participants also noted that identifying and analysing how structural determinants – the social, cultural, economic, legal, organisational and policy responses – interact to affect everyday violence in children's homes and communities will identify causal pathways.

Child protection was identified as a particularly concerning point of the system's responses to family,

domestic and sexual violence. There was a view that investment in prevention and health-based responses may mitigate the involvement of child protection services.

Numerous participants identified the importance of education, including respectful relationships. Participants emphasised the importance of community education and campaigns designed by First Nations peoples with support from allies. There was also recognition that cultural education programs have a huge role in prevention and early intervention.

Participants were asked what considerations need to be given for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's services and programs**. As with discussion of previous services, participants emphasised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must lead the way in the design and delivery of the programs and services for men. Co-design must be employed, and needs must be set by the community. There was a strong emphasis on ensuring that men's programs are co-designed and coordinated with First Nations women's services. Participants recognised the importance of keeping women and children's safety at the centre of all work being undertaken, including recognition that while legal processes are not always the best, or only, response needed, they do need to form a part of a response; otherwise violent perpetrators will represent a risk to women and children.

Colonisation, control and disempowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contributes to family violence and affects the way community can respond and recover. In designing solutions, First Nations voices and processes need to be embedded. Past trauma within the community needs to be considered and taken in to account when joining larger groups to participate in country or healing-type programs. Recognising the importance of safe spaces for men, to alleviate the necessity for women to be displaced, one participant noted that the development of men's sheds provides a culturally safe space for open discussions. Men's sheds may include Elders from the community to teach younger men how to make traditional tools, instruments, etc., with yarns around preventing family violence.

Other points raised by participants about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men's services and programs included:

- The need to promote gender equality,
- The need to recognise men's behaviour change as separate from healing and counselling,
- The need to offer conflict resolution and victim-offender reconciliation programs, followed by victim-offender mediation and, later, family group conferences, and
- A focus on men as fathers, nurturing their children, contributing to their direct care, building strong relationships, with both girls and boys. Participants noted that this will help both generations at the same time.

Participants recognised the importance of ensuring **accountability for men who use violence**. However, this sat alongside recognition of the imperative for cultural safety to be at the heart of all programs. Men's programs must acknowledge and respond to the barriers and obstacles men face, to support them to make different choices in high-risk situations. Part of this requires programs to support men to understand their behaviour, its origins and its impacts, and how they can live a different life and have different relationships.

Participants were asked in what ways **access and control of data** could be improved and maintained. There was a strong emphasis on the importance of data in ensuring a clear understanding of prevalence, responses and the impact of prevention programs and initiatives. Data sovereignty is top of the list for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and ACCOs, amid recognition that 'often data is a controlling tool'. Participants emphasised that it is essential that ACCOs are resourced to collect and analyse their own data. This is important for self-determination. Participants noted that presently ACCOs do not have the capacity to feed their data into national reviews and policy discussions. Moving forward, funding must incorporate allocations for data collection, analysis and evaluation. There was also recognition that presently data analysis is undertaken using a deficit lens that does not reflect the strengths-

based framework preferred by ACCOs. Participants viewed this as inhibiting their ability to meaningfully restructure system responses.

Participants emphasised the importance of ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led research is supported and taken seriously. Participants suggested several ways in which access and control of data could be improved, these included:

- By developing a First Nations outcome and evaluation frameworks. This could be done with Indigenous scholars who have done research on data sovereignty and published in this area, and
- Setting up a data sovereignty expert panel to co-develop safe and impactful processes. This panel would also oversee narratives (and testimonies) that sit alongside the data, ensuring there was always the correct context.

Participants highlighted the importance of collecting qualitative and anecdotal information. There was some recognition that quantitative data can over/underestimate what is going on in First Nations communities and not be a true portrayal of what is happening. Participants discussed how current data paints a picture of First Nation men as predominant perpetrators against First Nation women. The failure to examine the prevalence of non-Indigenous men who perpetrate violence against First Nation was described as a 'racist assumption'.

Participants stated that there is a need to revise definitions and data criteria, which are currently Western based and do not reflect the needs of First Nations communities. In many communities the victim - perpetrator binary does not resonate, and those who use violence are not only men. Data collection frameworks need to reflect the everyday lives and culture of First Nations communities. Participants also recommended the collection of longitudinal data to measure progress in First Nations families over times.

Participants were asked **what success for First Nations populations** would look like under the next National Plan. This raised a discussion on whether there should be a First Nations specific National Plan to ensure that the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are not squeezed into mainstream-determined boxes. Participants emphasised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need to be able to see themselves in the Plan and that First Nations populations need to see recognition that violence has been committed against their people. There was a shared view that too often First Nations populations become invisible in the mainstream plan. There is a need for inclusivity in the development and governing of the next National Plan.

Participants stated that all states and territories have signed up to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, and this includes shared decision-making, data reform and targets. The next National Plan must demonstrate how it aligns with and honours this agreement, which requires good policy buy-in, a programmatic practice framework and an Aboriginal outcomes framework. Participants emphasised that the next National Plan must articulate a strategy that cuts across sectors and institutions. There was shared recognition of the need for whole of system responses and consistent funding across the national context.

Elders' voices should be centred when thinking about what constitutes success. At present, the way questions are posed, including terminology, lays blame on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, whereas the lasting effects of colonisation, control and disempowerment also play a role that needs to be recognised. Strategies of healing, community, strength and culture must be at the centre of data collection in the next National Plan.

Other indicators of success listed by participants included:

- Increased investment into specialist FV Community controlled organisations, including ACCOs for women, men, children, and LGTBQIA+ families,

- Lack of housing is addressed. Participants suggested that a measure of success would be that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples no longer live in inadequate housing and conditions, that they have access to education and employment and do not live in poverty,
- Reduced timeframes for matters moving through courts,
- Support for localised programs addressing localised needs,
- Young people have hope for the future,
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not overrepresented in the criminal justice system and their children are not overrepresented in child removal and families are supported, and
- Settler colonialism is dismantled.

Participants were asked what should be done over the next ten years to achieve this success. The responses to this question reflected several of the key points already made throughout the roundtable, with participants emphasising the importance of needs-based and long-term funding for ACCOS, a commitment to community control and self-determination, embedding a trauma-informed lens across all supports and workforces, ensuring a focus on prevention and early intervention, and the necessity for holistic responses. Participants stated that the measures of success should be confirmed at the outset of the next National Plan and that there is a need to monitor implementation of recommendations from the next National Plan and ensure coordination with 'Closing the Gap' commitments. Some participants suggested there would be value in holding a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's gathering/summit.

Roundtable summary: Experiences of the LGBTIQ+ communities

The Roundtable on Experiences of LGBTIQ+ communities was structured into three key themes:

1. Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ community
2. Data collection and research
3. Measuring success

Across the discussion there was a strong focus on reconsidering what actions are needed through the next National Plan to ensure it is responsive to the needs of specific populations within LGBTIQ+ communities. Roundtable participants were encouraged to consider how the next National Plan can ensure that LGBTIQ+ people of all genders and gender identities have access to safe and inclusive family, domestic and sexual violence supports, how the Plan can embed a focus on the gendered drivers of violence for all people, particularly LGBTIQ+ people and cisgender heterosexual women, within its actions, and how community ownership of initiatives can best be embedded in the next National Plan.

Participants stressed the need for the next National Plan to address the issue of visibility in consultation with key sector partners. There was a shared view that the National Plan should be more inclusive: 'we cannot afford to leave communities behind.' There was recognition that a gendered framework is a suitable framework to respond to family, domestic and sexual violence in LGBTIQ+ communities, but it needs to look beyond just the experiences of women.

Participants noted the need to better understand the drivers of violence in LGBTIQ+ communities – this is something that has not been done particularly well. Understanding these drivers should be informed by a Theory of Change. Primary prevention campaigns need to be more inclusive of LGBTIQ+ communities, including pockets within the community, such as gay Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men. When mainstream awareness of FDSV focuses on men's violence against women, LGBTIQ+ persons are unable to see themselves within this framework and may be less likely to seek help or access services.

Participants noted the need for a strengthened model of FDSV supports. Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ services should not be an 'add-on' to existing service contracts of mainstream/generalist services. Currently,

mainstream services are told to be inclusive but are not appropriately funded to do so. This lack of funding limits opportunities to engage with peer-led specialist LGBTIQ+ organisations to provide advice on best practice in relating to providing safe and inclusive services to LGBTIQ+ communities. Related to this, participants identified the need for greater funding for all services, especially community-controlled services which play a critical role in providing services and support to LGBTIQ+ persons. This funding needs to be appropriately distributed across Australian states and territories.

There was a shared view among many participants that the 2020 ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables⁴⁶ needs to be more widely incorporated in service-level data collection and relevant research. There was a strong criticism of the failure of the 2021 Census to include these variables. In order for Sistergirls and Brotherboys to be better supported there needs to be greater understanding of relationships, families, communities and culture in Aboriginal communities, and this needs to be reflected and carried through to the National Plan. Participants also emphasised the need to move beyond discussions about pronouns and gender/sex variables and look at more meaningful ways to make change.

Strong emphasis was placed on not reinventing the wheel. There is research on LGBTIQ+ peoples' experiences of FDSV and the key barriers to accessing support. Whilst there is still a need for more data, it is now time for action. Stakeholders strongly supported incentives in the National Plan for mainstream services to work with community-controlled organisations: 'if this doesn't happen, tokenistic partnerships will happen'.

Participants emphasised that all consultations with the LGBTIQ+ communities need to recognise the diversity within that group (e.g., consulting with more than one person or organisation), otherwise there is a danger that some groups will not get attention – unpack the acronym and recognise that LGBTIQ+ is not a homogenous group.

Participants were invited to consider how **data collection tools and research agendas on community experiences of gendered violence could be improved to better include LGBTIQ+ communities**. Observations and recommendations were made on this point.

- Private Lives study – the largest, national-level study on LGBTIQ+ experiences, includes chapters on intimate partner violence and family-of-origin violence – critical data and the best resource that we currently have. However, there is no national funding for analysing this data to date.
- There is need at the national level for a strategic approach to research required for primary prevention, to build on and support high-quality research and fill knowledge gaps. Co-design is needed and is critical in regard to research agendas.
- The ABS will include the gender/sex variable standard in the mental health survey, but stakeholders also raised the importance of delivery tools: 'the more those questions get asked the more the community will get used to answering them'. Currently there is hesitation amongst Australian workers to ask these questions. It would be beneficial for service providers to collect this data, and this should be accompanied by training and support for workers.
- Stakeholders reflected that the Coroner's Court currently does not collect data which examines the correlation between suicide and family-of-origin violence, and the links generally to suicide and LGBTIQ+ experiences. More could also be done to support data collection and analysis of these experiences and impacts.
- Data about LGBTIQ+ communities is often gathered on a macro level. There is a need for more micro-level data (e.g., on community-based initiatives and community-based experiences) to be captured.

⁴⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/latest-release>

Data was a central consideration in participants' responses to the question on measuring success. There was a shared view that success requires the drivers of violence affecting LGBTIQ+ communities to be understood and addressed. Other measurements of success proposed by participants included:

- Communities are empowered and resourced to provide supports within their own communities,
- Safety in identifying and being supported,
- Being able to live, survive and thrive across all areas of life, relationships, systems and community,
- Visibility and clear and targeted actions (embedded and separate) within the next National Plan, with priority given to co-design and co-investment across jurisdictions,
- Services and data sets that are genuinely inclusive and therefore responsive to the needs of LGBTIQ+ communities,
- Service responses, including housing, are needed where trans-women, trans-men and non-binary peoples can expect safe, quality, client-centred care, wherever they live,
- Responses need to go beyond asking pronouns and talking about forms of violence; we need go into deeper cultural understanding of who LGBTIQ+ people are and their individual needs,
- More targeted campaigns are needed that address family violence prevention for LGBTIQ+ communities based on building respect,
- Not feeling like an 'intersectionality',
- A national primary prevention framework specific to LGBTIQ+ experiences of family violence, and
- A national research strategy to support policy and practice to address LGBTIQ+ experiences of family violence.

There were numerous suggestions from participants as to what could be done over the next 10 years to make progress towards achieving these measures of success. These included:

- Renaming the Plan to be more inclusive of gender diverse peoples,
- A clear theory of change at national level (work beginning in Vic) on all forms of family violence, that describes pathways for change to prevent family violence in all its forms,
- Key performance indicators around inclusive service provision should be built into funding arrangements as a mandatory requirement for FDSV services,
- Effective data collection,
- Establishing guidelines that new programs and policies must respond to,
- Generating specific community-engagement plans (not just consultation plans!) attached to each action plan,
- Holding up LGBTIQ+ organisations to be strong and successful,
- Considering minimum service responses for LGBTIQ+ people of all genders. Women's services are crucial, but consideration should be given to a model where GBQ men and NB people receive a minimum service, e.g., risk assessment to ensure safety,
- Providing the opportunity through resourcing to try new approaches and partnerships, and the ability to appropriately engage in co-design across sectors and with people with lived experience,
- Investing in peer-based work and models that support community organisations to partner meaningfully with service providers,
- Explicit inclusion and reference to Sistersgirls and Brotherboys,
- Centralising community-controlled organisations in the Plan for LGBTIQ+ communities,
- Decentring carceral responses, and
- A Statement in Plan as to the mutually overlapping drivers of men's violence against women and FV experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities.

There was recognition that measuring progress requires a commitment to developing a national monitoring and evaluation framework that would enable progress to be tracked and best practice to be identified. Measurements of progress should include examining where community-controlled services are funded and if they have capacity to meet demand. There was shared recognition that the Summit should be part of the

conversation but not the end point. Participants described their appetite for a commitment to come together like this (in the Summit) regularly to hold all parties to account for improved data and responses and seek continual system improvement.

Roundtable summary: Perpetrator interventions and working with men

The Roundtable on perpetrator interventions and working with men was focused on five key themes:

1. Building the evidence base, including the merits of a longitudinal study
2. Effective responses
3. Governance and coordination
4. The merits of a national perpetrator database for judicial services
5. Measuring success.

The Roundtable began with a discussion of whether participants recommended a **longitudinal study on the effectiveness of different perpetrator interventions**. Participants were largely supportive of this, noting that longitudinal research is vital to mapping the change journey for victim-survivors and perpetrators. There was recognition among participants of the importance of ensuring that any study includes appropriate indicators for cultural diversity and intersectionality, and that the study accesses 'hard to reach' populations, such as those with low English language proficiency. There was a consensus that all perpetrator interventions must be undertaken with a cultural and intersectional lens.

Participants highlighted the need to include children and partners (i.e. victims) and family members in the evaluation of men's behaviour change programs. We need to consult with the voices of lived experience in the development of any projects. Some participants reflected that many evaluations of perpetrator programs try to engage with victims-survivors but there are significant barriers to this, including, victim-survivor unwillingness or barriers to participate. There is a need to develop easy and efficient mechanisms to facilitate victim-survivor voices in a safe way in evaluation processes.

Participants also emphasised the importance of considering **the need for primary prevention work and early intervention, through to crisis and high-risk work**. This requires a complex analysis of the change process that includes its foundations and ideas of success being centred around the adult and child victim survivors. This would make a longitudinal study extremely complex.

In addition to a longitudinal study on perpetrator interventions, other participants emphasised the need for a study examining the impact of workplace gender-equality initiatives that aim to change attitudes per the Our Watch Change the Story framework and workplace standards. Participants also noted the value of action research and the need for, and strong governance of, research through an outcomes framework and program logic.

Participants also recognised the **importance of measuring broader attitudinal and cultural change** which challenges gender stereotypes and male violence. Participants cautioned on overly relying on behaviour change programs for individual men. Men's behaviour change intervention programs are just one part of a wider system, and we need to be very careful not to compare apples and oranges (e.g. long - and short-term programs). Men's Behaviour Change is one part of the service response for men who use violence, and we need to consider what a whole suite of interventions should look like.

Participants also noted that there is already good evidence about what doesn't work and there is a need to be braver about acknowledging what isn't working. Conversely, there is evidence that supports men's behaviour change programs, but under certain conditions. One of those conditions is that programs need to be linked to a broader intervention system. Programs can't be in isolation.

Beyond research and evaluation, participants were invited to discuss **effective responses to perpetrators** of family, domestic and sexual violence. There was a consistent view among participants that community-led approaches were the answer across the board and should be foregrounded in the next National Plan. There was also a shared view that community-led approaches for migrant and refugee communities are important to ensure accessible, tailored cultural responses. Participants noted that the best way to support and tailor early interventions with marginalised communities is to take the lead from these communities. There was a strong view that the next National Plan must prioritise building the evidence base through community-led research and enabling community-led organisations to turn the findings of this research into community-based solutions and programs.

Participants noted that there is a need for a **strengths-based approach** that centres the lived expertise of marginalised communities. The next National Plan needs to fund community-led organisations to design, implement, monitor, and scale-up programs. If the next National Plan wants to support and tailor early interventions for marginalised communities, participants emphasised the need to resource those communities to develop and run their own interventions.

There were other participant suggestions to improve responses to perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence.

- The need for a whole-of-system/socio-ecological approach, and the need to engage with men and boys much earlier.
- The need to identify what men and boys need at critical milestones in their lives.
- The importance of appropriate funding and training.
- Facilitators must receive ongoing training and support. This should include training on the ability to develop a professional relationship with the offenders and develop the group climate and process.
- Quality standards and compliance are also important. Women and Children need to have confidence that the interventions are safe and effective and meet the needs of multiple stakeholders. This requires opportunities for professional development as well as support for service/system development.
- Families are not passive to the complex needs of men; we need to mobilise families and networks. There is a lot of work we can do to help families step into that space.
- Participants stressed that men, families and communities in rural and remote areas have restricted access to services. A number of intersecting issues, e.g. mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, etc. are exacerbated for remote and regional communities.
- Early intervention is critical. Participants emphasised that men need a safety net they are willing to access.
- The need to consider how we can use technology and behavioural insights to intervene early, particularly with boys and young men; research using experiments to nudge gender equality behaviour in boys and measure long-term impacts – that is, preventative measures, i.e., before the need to refer men to behaviour change programs. and
- Embedding effective risk assessment into an intervention to ensure women's safety is prioritised.

Participants recognised that training is vital for a range of workforces, not just MBCP facilitators. Overseas, work is underway with police and justice workforces required to remove barriers for victim-survivors and understanding how to effectively work with perpetrators. Staff in Australia are sometimes funded to undertake training but usually not for the number of hours required to finish. There is little incentive for those on a series of short-term contracts.

Participants also shared that research undertaken in the Northern Territory has shown that many services being delivered to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not being delivered by competent service providers. People want services delivered in their own local communities, not in regional centres where there are many triggers for Aboriginal people. Participants stressed that using existing networks (such as Aboriginal men's groups) and embedding the voices of victim-survivors is important.

On **governance and coordination**, participants stressed the need to look across Australian states and territories to understand what models are already working or beginning to work well. The MARAM model in Victoria was cited as worthy of assessment. There is also recognised value in looking internationally to learn from mainstream-, small- and large-scale projects.

Participants viewed the issue of information exchange as an ongoing challenge. Good information sharing is important to understanding a perpetrator's history and pattern. There was an identified need to consider how the system works better with men; instead of thinking just about these small programs across the country we need to think much more broadly about the system. There was appetite among participants to grapple with the barriers that have prevented information sharing.

Participants agreed that a focus on a national data set is important, but it also needs to be done at localised levels in order to identify risks.

There was shared recognition that **community responses are best practice** and may have broader relevance beyond First Nations' communities. For example, the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment project in Bourke was cited as one best practice example. The men's work is just one piece of a much broader community approach. For example, participants explained that in Bourke, the domestic violence sector, men's sector, and child protection all come together. There was a recognised need for community-led solutions and the breaking down of silos.

There was some support among participants for the introduction of a **national perpetrator database for judicial services**. Participants stressed the need for clarity on why data was being sought, how it would be used and whether this was to inform funding and/or a safety response. There was an identified need to be clear about whether a database would be for safety, risk, or engagement. Setting clear parameters will help identify who needs access and what information needs to be captured.

Participants were questioned at what point of the system the database should start collecting information. Participants differentiated on this question, with some participants favouring that data is collected from the first point of contact with any system, while others preferred an approach where data is collected from the first point of contact with the judicial system or upon conviction.

From a victim-survivor point of view, participants explained that there is a real gap between just trying to survive and keep safe and the point of reporting to police or entering the legal system. Many victim-survivors never come forward; others take a long time (sometimes decades) to come forward. The lag time in reporting and the variability of the nature of family, domestic and sexual violence were both identified as factors that would place limits on the effectiveness of any perpetrator database.

Participants were invited to share their views on what success would look like under the next National Plan for perpetrator interventions and working with men. There were a range of responses, including:

- We need to look at early intervention *and* prevention, the full spectrum, not just the pointy end,
- We need to understand trauma in childhood, the role of schools and the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and misogyny from a young age.
- The strategy needs to articulate the entire way we are looking at changing relationships.
- We need to keep the safety of victim-survivors top-of-mind.
- Vision is really important. The Commonwealth could help provide vision and give people, including Aboriginal men, a voice. It would be great to see a national body which First Nations peoples could lead and be heard and share some of the good work being done in this space.

Building on this discussion, participants were invited to provide suggestions on **what actions are needed**

to achieve success. The responses here, again, were varied.

- We need to be very focused on what we want to achieve and the ability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make decisions is critical to addressing unintentional systemic racism and achieving the outcomes required.
- Funding needs to be secure and long-term if we are going to innovate and build the workforce to work with so many perpetrators and victim-survivors. We have major issues attracting qualified staff with short-term contracts. We cannot recruit effectively, retain workforce and build capacity. This is particularly the case in regional and remote communities.
- Funding is crucial, but so too is being able to understand that we need a commitment that is going to work for Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people need to be involved in setting the key performance indicators.
- We need better governance and coordination across government. For example, when support for women comes from funding for homelessness and the woman doesn't want to leave home, that is a failure of the system.
- We need to eventually shift the burden away from support services to men's services. That will require better integration between services. We need to be starting the conversation upstream with men and boys.
- We need timely responses. Recent research has shown that after separation, some women are murdered within months. We don't have much time to intervene, and we need to be doing it quickly to avoid the worst harms.
- We need targeted interventions that support communities to have those conversations. There is a need to recognise that not all men are the same and some have a story of pain sitting behind their choice to use violence. This needs to be unpacked.

In considering **how progress towards achieving measures of success could be measured**, participants emphasised that the safety of women and girls is the ultimate measure. Participants noted here that feedback from women and children is critical. There was also a recognised need to get much better at measuring the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of young people so that we get a clear sense of whether things are changing.

Roundtable summary: Health and Wellbeing Responses

In the introduction to the Roundtable the complexity of mental health issues among victim-survivors was emphasised, as was the need for trauma-informed care across all responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. The Roundtable covered five key themes:

1. Life-course health care
2. Scaling innovative models and addressing systemic barriers
3. Mental Health and alcohol and other drugs support
4. Enabling health workforce: training and resources
5. Measures of success

In the discussion on **life-course health care**, participants were asked to focus on how we can ensure that people who have experienced family, domestic and sexual violence receive life-course healthcare to support recovery. Participants emphasised the value of listening to lived experience, to ensuring that victim-survivors are given choices for their health care, and that services and care are trauma informed. Building on this, other participants emphasised the importance of person-centred care, strengths-based follow up, and ensuring that wraparound services are available and, where needed, that services are coordinated and long term.

When considering health care from the life-course perspective, participants emphasised the need to begin

with a consideration of prenatal health care and early education. There was a strong emphasis on the importance of general practitioners (GPs) in identifying and supporting victim -survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. Participants noted that there is a need to ensure information can be made available safely, that there are gender-diverse programs available and that practices move beyond merely screening for family, domestic and sexual violence to providing supports and referrals.

Throughout this initial discussion the need for sustainable and consistent funding to support life -course health care was emphasised, alongside the importance of community-controlled organisations.

Roundtable participants were invited to consider **the barriers to accessing care, support and services**. There was a strong view that victim-survivors' experiences of violence do not necessarily reflect the way that services are presently set up to respond to family, domestic and sexual violence. Participants discussed the importance of ensuring accessibility of services and the value of holistic and localised responses. A holistic response incorporates more than simply providing a referral. Various participants commented:

- Women will come to a health service in the first instance, but they may have major financial issues that are going to impact them throughout their lives,
- Health is just one plank; integration of services is key, and
- Health practitioners have a specific set of skills, but the addition of services can work to complement and tailor care.

Participants noted the importance of catering to diverse cohorts and community-controlled services, especially in relation to LGBTIQA+ communities, and of applying an intersectional lens. Responses for men known to mental health services and specific responses to environmental and pandemic crises were also noted as important.

While participants highlighted the need for more innovation in how the health system reaches people (including via online technologies), there was also a recognition among other participants that this does not require reinventing the wheel. Participants urged the Commonwealth government to look to models and innovations that are working in health care delivery in other areas, for example, in relation to coordinated care over time for patients with chronic disease.

Participants were asked which **best practice approaches and innovation models** could be expanded nationally to improve health service responses to family, domestic and sexual violence. Responses were rich in examples and focus areas.

- Strengthening hospital responses to family violence in Victoria is one such example. Participants stressed that the key to the success of these models is leadership and communities of practice. There is a lot of materials for General Practitioners (GPs) and health practitioners, but it is also about working closely together with domestic and family violence service providers to build workforce capacity.
- There was a discussion about the Victorian Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS). Participants recognised the need for shared risk-assessment practice.
- There was a discussion about the *Recognise, Respond, Refer* program for PHNS and the structural issues between the two 'different worlds' of general practice and specialist domestic and family violence services. Participants recognised the need for investment in an 'integration piece'. There was recognised value in ensuring that GPs have one coordinated referral point.
- The value of primary prevention partnerships was discussed. One participant cited an innovative model in the Victorian regions in which health services are provided as part of a multi-agency response working to prevent violence before it occurs. This model requires collaboration between sectors of health,

community, sport, etc. to prevent domestic and family violence. It was noted that this is an innovative model that doesn't exist outside of Victoria.

Throughout this discussion there was recognition that migrant women face structural and systemic barriers to accessing health care services. Migrant women can be on temporary visa arrangements for up to 10 years, which locks them out of health care responses, including access to Medicare.

Participants were asked how **health and mental health services can support recovery and care pathways** for people who experience family, domestic and sexual violence, and how the requisite skill set or experience needs changes when healthcare providers are working with perpetrators. Responses highlighted many key points.

- There was a group discussion about access to services for children who have been impacted by domestic and family violence. Participants placed a strong emphasis on the need to ensure these services embed a trauma-informed approach. This is particularly important, as young people may be experiencing trauma symptoms that themselves operate as a barrier when trying to access counselling and other services. There was also recognition among participants that children need pre-emptive counselling ahead of the deeper work. Participants stressed that in some cases children who need to access these services may be living with or spending time with an abusive parent.
- There is a need for national coordination of phone lines along with more consistent and coordinated collection of quantitative data to build the evidence base on who is calling, at what points in time and from where. Importantly, participants stressed the importance of better understanding the cohort of victim-survivors who do not call help lines.
- There is a need to acknowledge how little readily available information there is about the culturally safe services that exist, whether they are trauma informed and if they have waitlist times.
- Participants recognised that there is a significant lack of healing services available for victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

A general comment was raised at several points of this discussion about the need for informed training throughout the health system and to ensure that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying, responding to and supporting the recovery of victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Following this lead, participants were asked for their opinion on **the best ways to deliver support, training, and resources to health service providers** to enable trauma-informed care for patients experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. There was strong agreement that individuals with lived experience are often the best peer supports and that the system must embed roles in recognition of this. Beyond peer supports, participants emphasised the number of community members, other than health professionals, who are well placed to support responses in this space – but who also require significant upskilling.

For health practitioners, participants questioned what can be done to enable and build stronger capacity in the workforce. Noting that health practitioners are often time poor, a key question emerged as to how to make this work integral to their roles? The Royal Australasian College of Physicians' position is that they won't mandate specific training as that would attract significant lobbying. Participants suggested that, instead, a system like the mental health care plan specific to DV and referrals could be built into the current system,

Participants noted the need to build infrastructure supporting health care responses to FDSV to ensure services are available to respond. This relates to the need for increased secure housing, with participants recognising the lack of safe housing as a major community-wide structural factor that impedes healing and recovery.

Participants also recognised the importance of considering the capacity of health workers to respond to family, domestic and sexual violence, noting that workers may be experiencing violence themselves.

The final focus of the Roundtable was on **measures of success**, specifically in relation to health and wellbeing. Participants emphasised that health services must be accessible, affordable, and trauma informed. There was strong support for multidisciplinary and wraparound mental health services underpinning all services across the lifespan.

When asked to consider what success would look like, participants commented that success should be measured in terms of improved outcomes in women's health and wellbeing. In addition to the comments already discussed, other participants commented that success requires that:

- Health practitioners are equipped to recognise, ask about, respond to, and refer victim-survivors of FDSV,
- Streamlined referral pathways are available to support holistic recovery for FDSV victim-survivors,
- Health is part of a systems response to domestic and family violence. People affected by domestic and family violence can be connected with supports for their safety alongside their other health needs being met, and domestic and family violence services can refer confidentially into health services,
- Physical and mental health needs of FDSV victim-survivors are met, including the needs of children who have experienced violence and abuse,
- There is an increased investment in primary prevention of violence,
- Housing is no longer a critical issue,
- Information is provided to the whole population not just those who can and do access the health system,
- Better data capture in health systems to show change; health system documentation meets the needs of the criminal legal system,
- There is nationally consistent training within mainstream health services regarding the nature of intimate partner violence and its impacts on LGBTIQ+ communities. LGBTIQ+ people can access health services within a 'No Wrong Door' approach,
- Integration exists between primary care and specialist services,
- There be at least a 50 per cent increase in domestic and family violence response and referral training for health care practitioners, and
- Better access to forensic examinations is available, with documentation of injuries for victims so better evidence is gathered and collated to support victim-survivors following a FDSV crime.

In relation to First Nations populations, participants noted that success would be ensuring the next National Plan aligns with and supports the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. More broadly, participants discussed the need to ensure any targets are met across different cohorts, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ populations, people with disability, and populations living in rural and remote areas. There was some discussion of the need to build more supports in the health system, including preventive measures, for men who use violence.

In relation to funding, there was shared recognition for the need for less pilot funding and more sustained investment in service delivery, workforce capability and outcomes measurement. Participants specifically called for additional funding to:

- Support medical research and fund translation of research findings into practice,
- Support brain injury services, so victim-survivors, including children, with traumatic brain injury everywhere in Australia can access them,
- Sustain scaling up of investment in primary prevention, and for long-term investment to develop whole-of-life strategies, and

- Fund specific child-focused support, including in recovery and advocacy workers.

Beyond the health system specifically, there was shared agreement that the success of the next National Plan could be measured in the decreased prevalence of domestic and family violence, including a decrease in domestic and family violence related homicide. There were also participant suggestions that there is a need to track conviction rates in domestic and family violence matters. For several participants, success would be a shift in the percentage of people who disclose their victimisation, and an increase in the number of family and friends who feel more confident to respond, refer and to be supportive in relation to FDSV.

Roundtable summary: Service delivery reform and innovation, and measuring success

The Roundtable on service delivery reform and innovation was structured by five key focus areas:

1. Role of governments
2. Service gaps
3. Integration and innovation
4. Information sharing, data collection and reporting
5. Measuring success

Roundtable participants were first asked **how roles and responsibilities under the new National Plan should be defined for federal and state governments**. There was agreement among participants that there is an important role and responsibility for both federal and state/territory governments to ensure plans and strategies are well integrated. Participants stated that all national plans – whether for elder abuse or health or alcohol/drug use – must align to ensure violence against women is addressed. The significance of linking the next National Plan with The Closing the Gap reform was noted as crucial.

Participants also cited the importance of recognising the differences between the role of states and territories, as well as that of the Commonwealth. Stakeholders noted there is a role for the Commonwealth to play in identifying, sharing and upscaling best practice nationally. Contributors pointed to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence and the significant and systemic approach to reform and funding in that state, including the role of specialist services and government. It was observed that this model should be considered when looking at best practice nationally, and that we should learn from where this is working well. It was suggested that the Commonwealth could use the MARAM⁴⁷ (risk assessment and management) framework to increase perpetrator accountability and ensure more uniformity across jurisdictions.

In considering the role of the government, participants also emphasised the following points:

- The federal government has strong policy levers in areas like tax, social services, migration, childcare, industry awards, super, family law, and child support,
- Cross-jurisdictional issues must be addressed and ‘finger pointing’ between jurisdictions must cease. There is a need for a gap analysis to identify areas of deficit and overlap requiring clarification,
- There is a need to capture the broad impacts of gendered violence against women and children, and then to identify gaps relative to impacts,
- There is a need for consistent definitions of family, domestic and sexual violence across jurisdictions, and
- Governments must take leadership to address structural issues that act as a barrier to reform.

⁴⁷ State Government of Victoria. (2021). MARAM practice guides and resources. Retrieved from <https://www.vic.gov.au/maram-practice-guides-and-resources>.

Participants called for a National Partnership Agreement with clear and measurable targets and investment in data and monitoring. They noted that without real targets built into the next National Plan, governments will not be held accountable and there will be no mechanisms to measure performance, which may result in an under investment in key activities.

Roundtable participants raised housing as a key issue, noting that there is a need to reconceptualise service delivery around the entire journey of the person leaving violence, including their access to housing. It was stated that a National Plan which does not include housing is missing a very big piece of the initiative to protect women, and that the Commonwealth could play a role in ensuring housing needs are addressed.

Participants observed that there is a strong role for the Federal Government to deliver research (as it does with ANROWS) and develop resources (as it does with Our Watch), but local and culturally specific communities need to be funded to implement primary prevention strategies, as they have both existing relationships and influence to shift social norms.

The group was asked to consider **what governments can to do support greater service integration across federal, state and local FDSV sectors and initiatives**. Participants reiterated the need for national consistency in definitions, noting this was especially relevant for definitions of sexual violence and consent. Contributors indicated again that there is a desire in the FDSV sector for integration with other plans, such as those developed for the aged care and disability sectors. The importance of recognising differences between jurisdictions was raised, and it was reiterated that there are valuable lessons to be learnt from progress in other states.

Roundtable participants were asked to **reflect on service gaps** and advise on **how service delivery reform can be achieved in regional and remote areas where there are service gaps and accessibility issues**.

Contributors opened by emphasising the need for investment into regional, remote and rural areas, as well as a broader need to ensure consistent resourcing across the country. It was observed that funding should be awarded in 5-year terms at minimum, as it can take 12 months to set up a project ahead of commencing it.

Discussion then turned to the role of federal, state and local governments. Participants called for state and federal Governments to work together with communities to draw on their expertise, prioritise local decision-making and partnerships with community-controlled organisations (CCOs), and to invest in opportunities to create unique whole-of-community prevention approaches that engage the majority of the community.

The importance of housing for the FDSV workforce was noted, as the lack of housing can make recruitment into rural and regional areas more difficult. On the topic of workforce retention and high staff turnover in regional and remote areas, it was observed that NGOs cannot compete with Government wages.

Participants reiterated concerns about access issues for transport and telecommunications in rural, regional and remote areas, the challenges with service access privacy in small communities, the need for trauma-informed and culturally appropriate continuity of care models of support available to all – face-to-face, via phone or telehealth – and the need for a review of legal aid services.

Participants also called for:

- Recognition that housing, homelessness and income security are the biggest issues to be addressed, particularly in regional and remote areas, in order to keep women and children safe, and,
- A separate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander National Action Plan to acknowledge and respect the impact of colonisation and the cultural strengths and local solutions to prevent family, domestic and sexual violence.

Participants were then asked **how service delivery reform can meet the needs of diverse groups and address different forms of violence**. Participants opened by reiterating the need to identify gaps in current service delivery as a first step. Following this, contributors spoke about housing, specifically, the need for improved pathways to housing for marginalised communities and housing suitable for families and children. It was suggested that funding to specialist homelessness services be increased by 20% and that Government-backed home buying schemes be introduced.

Participants then spoke about specific improvements to services, including the need to shift service responses from being crisis-oriented to a system that recognises that victim-survivors need long-term support including counselling, medical, housing and financial. Contributors called for greater education for medical profession and frontline workers on recognising and responding appropriately to all diverse communities and more investment in identifying and responding to sexual violence. The importance of holistic models – primary prevention; working with perpetrators of violence; working with victim-survivors and the children who suffer from the exposure to FDSV – was emphasised. Participants suggested the implementation of minimum national standards for FDSV services which build on available guidelines such as the DVNSW Good Practice Guidelines. The need for trauma-informed training to be imbedded in all services working with vulnerable clients and children – including health, education and legal services – was also reiterated here.

Contributors then spoke about the lack of data on culturally and linguistically diverse and marginalised communities and noted that cultural variables and ethnicity indicators are essential to understanding the scope of FDSV in migrant and refugee communities. Improvements to police collection of data related to culturally and linguistically diverse communities were called for.

Participants pointed to the need for older women to be explicitly named and included in all DFV and SV policy and strategies and additionally suggested that the National Plan should acknowledge that gender - based violence takes place in group homes and institutions such as aged care facilities.

A call to listen to and fund the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOS) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOS) that are best placed to develop community -led solutions and are already engaged and embedded in community.

On the topic of **integration and innovation**, participants were asked **what actions and deliverables would help the next National Plan promote a culture of improved and integrated service delivery and reform**. Contributors emphasised the importance of sharing learnings across jurisdictions and for resolving issues around information exchange, due to the limitations this creates for risk-assessment safety planning, especially in terms of perpetrator behaviour. It was noted that national frameworks and standards to ensure consistent and safe responses across borders could be a way forward here. Contributors called for a holistic response to FDSV from all tiers of government, state, territory and federal courts, police, health, community and government services, as well as non-government and charity services.

Stakeholders were asked **how we can innovate to meet increased demand for services**. Participants offered a range of suggestions.

- Seed funding for innovative practice. Participants stated that Government needs to be invested in building local capacity or capacity for innovation will be undermined.
- Recognise that innovation also means making mistakes.
- Failure to renew funding for innovative pilots ultimately discourages innovation.
- Resource and empower local communities.
- Involve victim-survivors in the strategic development, design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives to respond to and prevent family, domestic and sexual violence. Participants stated that the integration of lived expertise is key to innovation. This should include federal funding to support the national rollout

of Voices for Change, creating platforms for lived expertise voice and advocacy. This commitment could also include a quarterly Survivor Advocate Forum or Advisory Group based on the Victorian Victim Survivor Advisory Council model.

- Recognise the importance of specialist organisations, which are key to driving innovation and meeting the needs of diverse groups in a high-quality way.

Roundtable participants were asked to share their views on **information sharing, data collection and reporting**. Participants had many suggestions for government.

- Expand ANROWS' funding for longitudinal studies, research into international best practice and knowledge translation. Increased knowledge translation will maximise ANROWS' research. There are opportunities for more knowledge translation partnerships to ensure all workforce training incorporates current evidence on best practice responses.
- Establish a national data registry for domestic and family violence, child abuse and sexual abuse, incorporating inputs from all stakeholders, services, police, mental health, Centrelink and Medicare.
- Build evaluation into funding contracts.
- Ensure commitment to data sovereignty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research.
- Funding models should consider and incorporate qualitative data in targets.
- Measures regarding gender equality and young people's attitudes need to be included in the National Plan.
- Ensure consistent definitions of family, domestic and sexual violence.
- Support national collation of data from services, including identifying the barriers to having a national database and addressing them.
- Ensure shared risk assessment frameworks are utilised to facilitate better information sharing.
- Integrate family law, domestic and family violence courts and child protection/information sharing.
- Support improved data around prevalence, particularly for children and young people.
- Ensure more attention on recovery and promising therapeutic approaches. Increase research on the integration of these approaches into practice, and increase funding for training.
- Support prevalence data to capture information about perpetrators.

Participants also suggested that the Australian Bureau of Statistics should address the methodological restrictions and limitations of the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) in order to ensure a more accurate and comprehensive picture of family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia.

Roundtable participants were asked to consider **how success should be measured**. Looking ahead to the end of the next National Plan participants were **asked what success will look like**. Respondents indicated several measures and observations:

- There is a need for clear targets, such as halving the rates of gender-based violence over the next 10 years,
- There should be rapid progress on closing the gap in relation to priority populations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with disability and people in regional, rural and remote areas,
- People using violence and abuse must genuinely be held to account,
- There should be service-access equity and reliable services,
- There needs to be an educated community able to address FDSV,
- There should be an increase in the work on recovery and restitution and fewer people in jail,
- There must be better recognition that trauma behaviour is a natural response to violence and abuse, and that it should be treated as an injury,
- There should be appropriate and effective consent and respectful relationships education, and
- There needs to be an increased capacity for data to measure complexity and need.

Roundtable summary: Protecting and supporting children

The Roundtable on protecting and supporting children was focused on three key areas:

1. Family law and children protection systems
2. Services responses to children and young people
3. Measuring success

During the Roundtable there was a clear view among participants that children should not be treated as a cross-sectional issue but be recognised in their own right. There is a need to look beyond whether children have seen or heard the violence and to better understand the impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence on children.

In the opening focus, participants were asked to reflect on how we can **develop shared understandings between the family, domestic and sexual violence sectors, child protection authorities and the family law system** to ensure that family and children affected by family, domestic and sexual violence are better supported. There was strong recognition of the need for the next National Plan to specifically include a 'safe, accessible and inclusive family law system' as a priority. To achieve this, there was consensus across participants that we need to consult with, and listen to, children. It was emphasised that there needs to be a commitment from those working in the sector to have a deeper understanding of methodologies for listening to children, which should be incorporated into training. Participants also noted the need for education resources and a greater emphasis on the insights provided by lived-experience advocates.

Participants emphasised that there is a need for all professionals in child protection and family law to have training in regard to working with and listening to children who have experienced FDSV. This reflected a shared view that cross-service capacity building and trauma-informed training is needed, including children who have experienced sexual abuse. Participants also recommended enhanced training and possibly accreditation for Single Expert Witnesses to be able to identify domestic and family violence, and to more appropriately reflect this understanding in their assessment and reports. To ensure its effectiveness, some participants noted that training should avoid being too steeped in theory, as it may result in the wrong intervention.

Participants recognised the need for improved information sharing and a common approach to assessing risk. Earlier identification of risk was noted as important. The importance of education was raised here also, with participants supporting the commencement of respectful relationships education at a young age. Some participants expressed the view that the focus on prevention and responses to child sexual abuse should be enhanced.

There was an acknowledgement among participants of the need for deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture, ways of knowing, wellbeing and kinship through Aboriginal-led design. First Nations individuals need their own voice in these conversations and there needs to be an explicit acknowledgement in the next National Plan of the power imbalances that exist at a systems level.

Recognising the need to improve the family law system, participants were invited to consider **what changes would have the greatest impact on the family law system**. The importance of adopting a child-centric and trauma-informed approach was strongly emphasised, and this should be reflected in legislation and in practice. This requires specialist training for child representatives and increased funding for children's services. As part of this, participants noted there is a need to better acknowledge child poverty and homelessness as an impact of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Participants noted that there is a need for greater focus on prevention and early interventions that connect families with support services to avoid escalation to child protection systems. Participants described that

families are sliding into child protection systems due to a lack of support. Early determination of risk and intervention was viewed as key.

Participants recounted that there have been decades of research in this area, and various inquiries into the family law system, yet they have not seen change. Participants suggested that this may be a good opportunity for redefining how we approach family law and reconsidering the merging of the family law courts. Several participants supported a shift away from the adversarial family law system, within which, participants recognised, children often 'get caught in the middle'.

Building on this discussion, participants were asked **what changes would have the greatest possible impact to the child protection system**. The need to adopt a gendered lens and not blame women for the abuse committed against them was emphasised by participants. This requires a shift towards supporting women experiencing family violence rather than removing children. A more supportive system would address the issue of women being reluctant to report abuse due to fear of having their children removed.

The value of developing a less-siloed approach and improved collaboration between organisations, including improving information sharing, was recognised – as was the need to build real connections in the sector, for example, by having embedded child protection workers in family law courts. Participants argued that introducing a national definition of domestic and family violence would inform effective and appropriate legal and policy responses across systems and improve integration.

There were a range of other recommended outcomes sought by participants to include in the child protection system; these included that the next National Plan:

- rethinks funding to address the 'bottleneck' that presently occurs in the child protection system,
- focuses on early intervention and facilitates genuine intervention with families, not just at the crisis point.
- Recognises the value of upskilling practitioners on how to work with men as parents and includes a general focus on engagement with perpetrators.

Participants recognised that the statutory focus in child protection has significant impact on First Nation families. A common concern for Aboriginal families and communities is the disregard of and non-compliance with the Aboriginal Child Placement Principle by government departments and agencies. There is a need to look at the family context and support First Nations parents in creating safe and happy family environments, rather than removing children. Participants emphasised that achieving this requires looking at racist and colonial structures.

In the second half of the Roundtable, participants were asked to consider how we can ensure that children and young people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence are able to **access relevant services**, either independently or with their family. The importance of adopting a strengths-based approach was emphasised, as well as the need for a clear articulation of prevention, early intervention and crisis intervention as a continuum. To enhance service accessibility, participants recommended **improved early screening for domestic and family violence (including pre-natal), the importance of employing early interventions to support adolescents who have used violence**, and investment in basic services such as housing and public transport.

Participants emphasised the need to shift towards a preventative model and for this to be reflected in the next National Plan. There was concern raised by a number of participants that the Roundtable questions were heavily focused on responses to children, rather than primary prevention. Some participants noted that the merits of a sub-plan for children should be considered. Implementing primary prevention centred around supportive messages for boys and young men was viewed by some participants as particularly important.

In response to a question on what **therapeutic responses for children and young people** experiencing

family, domestic and sexual violence have been shown to be effective, participants noted:

- Respectful relationships education,
- Responses that partner with mothers,
- Family therapy as a way to restore children's relationships with mothers after family violence, emphasising that the focus here should be on child wellbeing,
- Engaging allied health services to address developmental impacts of FDSV,
- Resourcing of Indigenous-led on-Country programmes that support families to take their children out bush, connecting with Country and having conversations with children in a safe and supported environment,
- Cultural strengthening with parents, reminding them of their obligations, roles and responsibilities,
- Non-therapeutic responses such as peer-led processes, and
- A focus on stability, and safe and affordable housing as a key starting point.

Across all responses, participants emphasised the need for children to be viewed as more than their trauma – healing and participatory engagement is needed. The importance of giving children real agency in this space and being committed to hearing their voices was also noted.

Participants noted the importance of First Nations-led and delivered responses that work holistically with families and are properly resourced to undertake the work that they know works for families and the children. They also acknowledged the importance of identifying, valuing and using cultural resources that exist in Aboriginal cultures and that are an integral part of children's safety, care and wellbeing. Therapeutic services for children are a component of a holistic responses, for example, Yawardani Jan-ga.⁴⁸

Participants were asked to reflect on how success for children should be conceptualised in the next National Plan. Participants noted several indicators of success, including:

- Reduction in number of children in the child protection system,
- First Nations families are strong in culture and identity,
- A change in the curve on violence supportive attitudes among Australian children and young people, as measured through the ANROWS National Community Attitudes Survey,
- An overhaul of systems leading to governments and communities ensuring children are a true priority and their abuse and neglect is eliminated,
- Violence against women and children is recognised as a human rights issue,
- Stronger universal services that are fit for purpose,
- Families feel comfortable and safe seeking help,
- Children who have been harmed are supported to move forward and have happy, healthy lives,
- Mainstream services respond effectively to domestic and family violence,
- Primary prevention is prioritised, and primary prevention programs are driven by communities,
- A reduction in number of children and young people becoming homeless due to family violence, and
- Fewer children in juvenile detention.

There were several recommendations made by participants as to how progress towards these indicators of success could be achieved, including by:

- Implementing what we already know about the need for change in the family law system,
- Resourcing and implementing healing-centred responses, practices and services,
- Dismantling risk-aversion inherent in child protection systems,

⁴⁸ Yawardani Jan-ga is an equine-assisted learning initiative established in Broome, Western Australia. See Bamford, M. (2021, May 21). *Horse healing program Yawardani Jan-ga expands to remote Indigenous communities*. ABC News. Retrieved from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-21/horse-therapy-indigenous-health/100146232>

- Embedding best practice education programs across Australia,
- Raising the age of criminal responsibility, and
- Introducing alternatives to putting children into detention.

To make clear progress over the next 10 years, participants emphasised the need to ensure that some children do not fall off the agenda of the next National Plan. This must be a plan for *all* Australian children. There was a shared view among participants that children should be engaged in measuring the progress of the next National Plan and that the next National Plan should build-in expectations that children and young people's views and experiences inform service delivery.

Roundtable summary: Technology and abuse – challenges and opportunities

The roundtable on Technology and abuse – challenges and opportunities was focused broadly on four key themes:

1. Prevention of technology-facilitated abuse
2. Service responses for technology-facilitated abuse
3. Legislation
4. Measuring success

Participants were asked to reflect on what **early intervention and prevention measures** could be implemented to prevent technology-facilitated abuse. Participants acknowledged that the next National Plan presents an opportunity to address all forms of gendered abuse. Technology-facilitated abuse needs to be incorporated in that way, as a form of gendered abuse. Participants stressed the need for a shared understanding of what technology-facilitated abuse is.

Participants also emphasised the need to understand that technology abuse can be nuanced in different communities, and that one size doesn't fit all. The experiences of remote and regional Aboriginal women can be quite different. In this context, the sharing of phones is a big issue, lateral violence and cyberstalking were also provided by participants as examples.

Participants reflected that police often minimise technology-facilitated abuse and that more training is required. While there was an acknowledgement that many jurisdictions now have specialist domestic and family violence commands, there was an identified need to resource those commands properly and ensure training on all forms of violence, including technology-facilitated abuse. Some participants shared that when it comes to recognising and using current legislation to act on technology-facilitated abuse, clients they have supported have had the best response from specialist DFV police. Increasing the numbers of these specialist police was viewed as positive.

There was a shared view among participants that women need **accessible, user-friendly information**, provided by technology platforms about how to use their phone and other devices safely. This is particularly important given the trauma many women will be experiencing, which makes it difficult to take in information. The **Safe Connection program** was provided as an example of best practice in ensuring safety. Participants stressed that it must be funded to meet demand. The Safe Connection program provides phones and data packs to NSW legal service clients to ensure a safe and secure way to make contact and be contacted. Participants also noted the imperative for services like WESNET to be properly funded, noting that they are frontline specialists who do a risk assessment and work with a gendered lens.

Participants acknowledged that perpetrators are often far more tech -savvy than the victim-survivor. This is symptomatic of gender-inequality and something that could be addressed through a broader primary prevention approach, including through progressive education of girls in Science Technology Engineering

and Mathematics (STEM) subjects from a young age. This would assist with empowering women. Participants stressed that it is not about putting the responsibility on women; it is about reducing the scope for technology-facilitated abuse to occur through increased education and awareness.

Other points were made by participants on the **nature of, and responses to technology-facilitated abuse**.

- Technology is expensive and poverty intersects here. Financial factors including coercive control can restrict access.
- Banks may be the first place where someone may disclose abuse. Perpetrators also use banking platforms to carry out abuse. The eSafety Commissioner initiative's 'Safety by Design',⁴⁹ approach has been very successful. ASIC guidance regarding safety by design principles, and how they could be implemented more broadly across corporate business and industry, was a suggested initiative.
- Industry-based responses are important (e.g. journalism and the arts). Online attacks and 'trolling' of high-profile women have been an area of focus from Gender Equality Victoria. It is important to shape workplaces to be safer spaces for women, and to create respect at work. The way public figures are treated, including women in politics (including online) sets the tone regarding acceptable behaviour and the treatment of women across our whole community/society.
- Participants highlighted the need for basic response standards from social media and technology companies. Survivors deserve a direct and proactive response from the specific platform/company where abuse is taking place, including consistent standards for content that social media and other platforms are hosting.
- ISP and Telcos are currently adapting to how they may assist victim-survivors, for example, breaking contracts that may be in the perpetrator partner's name. It is important we bring experts from the ICT industry into discussions about how to use technology for good.

Additionally, there was an acknowledgement among participants that this is an area of growing concern in culturally diverse communities. Women are experiencing onshore and offshore abuse. Culturally responsive services are required. There was also acknowledgement that in some parts of regional and remote Australia access to technology is still an issue.

Participants were invited to consider what a **specialised prevention and response service** addressing technology-facilitated abuse would look like. Participants highlighted the need for investment into community-led and practice-informed research into technology-facilitated abuse. Participants also acknowledged that technology-facilitated abuse cases are incredibly complicated and the burden is on survivors to figure out and intersect with all relevant agencies – police, social media companies, IT support, health/welfare/housing and so on. There was shared agreement that a specialised response service would include case management.

Training was viewed as critical to ensuring a specialised response service. Frontline workers need to be trained in responding to technology-facilitated abuse. Currently there is nowhere for people to go to receive in-person support. Telco providers and others will only assist online. This was recognised as challenging for victim-survivors experiencing trauma. Beyond frontline workers, participants noted that it is valuable for all industries to understand the tactics, patterns and indicators of abuse on our platforms so that we can take action – noting that people with lived experience and the services who support them are critical for enhancing understanding.

Participants noted that some training for services is already being rolled out, such as that provided by the eSafety Commissioner and WESNET.

⁴⁹ Safety by Design is an initiative of the eSafety Commissioner that aims to put 'user safety and rights at the centre of the design and development of online products and services'. eSafety Commissioner. (no date). Safety by Design. Retrieved from <https://www.esafety.gov.au/about-us/safety-by-design>.

Some participants advocated that we need to **improve police responses** to provide clear and unequivocal examples of digital crimes. There are state and federal laws which enable the investigation and prosecution of digital gender-hate perpetrators. But the implementation and application of those laws were viewed by participants as patchy, and gender biased. There needs to be a scaling up of digital investigatory power and education of federal and state/territory police forces. Participants also noted that the courts also need to support police when they seek notices to produce evidence, for example, abusive bank transactions in breach of apprehended domestic violence orders.

Participants were also invited to consider **how domestic and family violence services can adapt quickly to technology advances and promote positive digital behaviour**. Participants identified the work of WESNET, which has technology safety specialists that watch for new and emerging technologies 24/7. Participants also emphasised the importance of looking at this from multiple levels – prevention, listening to diverse women, and legislative protections. Safety by design was viewed as critical. There was a recognised need to shift responsibility to platforms to make sure technology is designed with safety in mind, rather than retrofitting.

Participants stressed the need to examine the capacity and resourcing of services, reflecting a view that services do not presently have the resources to send staff to be trained. The capacity of organisations to adapt to all of these emerging technologies was viewed as limited. Participants stated that there is a limit to the amount of upskilling services can do.

There was an identified need to consider children's voices and support for children. Perpetrators use children's technology and devices for the purpose of continuing/maintaining abuse. Participants stressed that children are increasingly being used to perpetuate abuse in this way, and this can be incredibly damaging to them psychologically.

There was a strong **focus on legislation** in the second half of the roundtable. Participants were asked what specific amendments are required to current legislation to facilitate an improved response to technology-facilitated abuse. There was a shared view that existing legislation is not used very well. Participants noted that they are seeing an increase in use of existing legislation but more needs to be done to increase awareness of the legislation. Some participants suggested that uniform legislation may be required. From a client's perspective, people are constantly rebuffed by police and it seems a number of offences fall through the gaps between federal and state legislation.

Participants did not believe that the introduction of legislation had impacted policing. Participants noted that there is still a cultural issue with police seeing family, domestic and sexual violence as a private problem – within which they very often see psychological abuse as not within their remit or control. Participants stressed that we need to recognise that training for police may not improve their ability to detect and investigate some forms of tech-facilitated abuse, particularly covert forms (e.g. hacking emails, etc.) and may be difficult to prosecute within the current burden of proof. It is a specialised skillset and requires a specialist policing and justice response. There is also the need to educate and resource police and courts to understand the complexity of technology-facilitated abuse and how to respond appropriately to it.

There was recognition among participants that the focus on legislation needs to be lifted up. We are not going to 'justice our way out of gendered violence'. What we need to change first are the behaviours and attitudes towards women and girls. The Commonwealth has a lot of levers it can pull here; there was support for enacting a National Gender Equality Strategy. **Primary prevention was viewed as key.**

Participants stressed the need to focus on the types of abusive behaviours rather than the types of technology. If we take this focus, the system will be ready for new forms of technology used. Online violence was viewed as part of a continuum of abuse and violence. It is not the technology but the behaviours that need to change, and that requires dedicated national approaches. These attitudes, behaviours and

uninformed policing and justice responses were viewed by numerous participants as inhibiting better outcomes for women and children.

Participants were asked what success would look like in relation to technology-facilitated abuse. There was a range of responses provided, including:

- The burden of technology-facilitated abuse is placed upstream to tech companies and away from victims and frontline services,
- Technology makers and providers should consider safety when designing and developing new products,
- Primary prevention is a priority,
- Require accreditation and regulation of any technology-based domestic and family violence solutions.
- Increase support for victims of technology-facilitated abuse,
- There is a need to develop accessible and low-impact mechanisms for including the voices of victims and survivors and their children in evaluations and consultation processes,
- Increase mechanisms to hold perpetrators of technology-facilitated abuse to account,
- Expand the provision of expert technical support for women, including in-person support and the development of technical tools,
- Expand social media self-defence training for women in their working lives ... which has a flow on benefit to women in their personal lives,
- Expand frontline worker training, particularly for at-risk groups and support systems (law enforcement, the courts), and
- Increase the number and availability of 'technology safety specialists'.

Participants expressed the view that there is an over reliance on the **Personal Safety Survey**, which was viewed as limited because of its status as a monitoring mechanism. There was an identified need to invest in new data collections. Participants noted that the Personal Safety Survey does not measure coercive control or reproductive coercion or different forms of tech-facilitated abuse.

Participants also considered how success can be measured. Participants noted Australia's current ranking on the **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index**, stating that success would be seeing an increase in Australia's ranking. Beyond the Index, participants highlighted:

- The need to develop accessible and low-impact mechanisms for including the voices of victims and survivors and their children in evaluations and consultation processes,
- The need to focus on new data collection rather than trying to retrofit existing data collection mechanisms such as the Personal Safety Survey and National Community Attitudes Survey, which weren't purpose built to address some of these contemporary issues,
- The need to expand the ways in which technology can be used to support primary prevention, and
- The need to enhance recognition of the pivotal role the technology industry plays in ensuring platforms and products are safe spaces.

Roundtable summary: Service delivery in regional and remote areas

The Roundtable covered four key areas:

1. Regional, rural and remote service delivery
2. Housing and shelter in regional, rural and remote areas
3. Pets, livestock and other assets
4. Measures of success

In the Roundtable discussion on **Regional, rural and remote service delivery**, participants were asked which best-practice approaches and innovative models they have seen work well in providing support to victim-survivors in regional, remote and rural areas. They were also asked to consider best practice models for working with children. Participants spoke about the need for and importance of consulting and engaging with the voices of lived experience. They discussed the importance of finding ways to hear from victim - survivors who have never reached out to a service, and of seeking information about what stopped them and what would have helped. Prioritising the voices of lived experience was a consistent theme raised throughout the roundtable.

The Orange Door was identified as the first example of a best practice approach. The ability for victim- survivors to access a range of services in one location was highlighted as a key benefit. It was noted that the Orange Door offers a safe space for victim-survivors, facilitates the input of lived experience and fosters service relationships. It was suggested that the Orange Door model would be a good candidate for national replication.

Participants spoke about the need to consider the funding and involvement of local people, programs and community organisations that are not always obviously about violence against women and children – for example, midwives, early childhood educators, teachers, teacher aides and playgroups, among others. Participants noted that healthcare workers are an untapped resource, describing them as an example of a ‘soft entrance’ into support. It was observed that having multiple ‘soft’ entry points is essential in small towns, due to the lack of privacy in these areas and the risks this poses to women’s safety. This was highlighted as essential in communities with culturally and linguistically diverse women who are socially and/or geographically isolated. It was suggested that routine and mandated screening could be conducted by services, such as midwife services, followed by referrals to social workers if necessary. The ability to complete mental health care plans online was noted as an excellent initiative facilitating open engagement from women.

The second example of best practice given was the midwife check-in service in Queensland. The continuity of care service for women during and after pregnancy has been expanded to offer women information and services in relation to sexual and domestic violence in the home and respectful and healthy relationship education. Midwives received training to obtain referrals from perinatal teams in hospital, which supports the development of multidirectional referral pathways. It was also recognised that it is often safer for women to call a midwife than to contact a family violence service.

Participants noted that there is a need for a better understanding of the role that can be played by sexual and reproductive health services in rural, regional and remote locations. The lack of access to termination services was identified as a major issue in Northern Territory, as it enables reproductive coercion and puts women and children at higher risk.

Djirra’s ‘Dilly Bag’ and youth resilience camps were identified as further examples of best practice. The dedicated women’s refuge was highlighted as effective despite the issue of women not being able to retain anonymity in a rural location.

Issues with phone and data coverage were described as ‘reversible barriers’ to service access in regional, rural and remote areas. It was noted that many communities do not have coverage to access 1800RESPECT or crisis phone lines for example.

For LGBTIQ+ community members, virtual/telehealth services and peer groups provided by community controlled LGBTIQ+ organisations were indicated as vital to providing specialised inclusive support.

Distance, and the danger in having to travel to access services, were discussed as a major issue. Participants spoke about the importance of connection and collaboration between regional networks to ensure integration across multiple services. Other programs, not examined in the main discussion, were

also indicated as examples of best practice:

- Dhelk Dja Regional Action Groups (VIC),
- Sexual Assault Service (NSW) – offered in various districts and including 24-hour crisis access to integrated psychosocial support, medical care and evidence collection, and
- Country Women’s Association of Australia partnership with Rape and Domestic Violence Services NSW to deliver workshops to members across North West and Central West NSW.

Participants spoke about the need for a stronger focus on primary prevention work in regional, rural and remote areas and suggested that funding to smaller community organisations to upskill the workforce to deliver programs would be an effective way to engage whole communities. Participants indicated a need for increased communication with remote youth and increased education around gender diversity for community members.

Crisis and long-term accommodation were identified as a key issue. Housing in rural, regional and remote areas needs a specific and tailored focus. There was general consensus among participants that the recommendations of the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence regarding housing (including Recommendations 73, 74 and 75) need further tailoring for regional, rural and remote areas. There is a need for investment in public housing and more affordable housing options in smaller towns. Participants noted significant overcrowding issues in remote areas and recognised that family violence in these households can traumatise so many people. The lack of safe houses for gender-diverse youths who live independently and have no family support was also noted.

Roundtable participants indicated the following essential needs and potential approaches:

- Programs for perpetrators outside of metropolitan areas,
- Awareness raising and education for community members to recognise and respond to family violence issues amongst friends and peers,
- State-based primary prevention agencies – built on the foundations established by Our Watch,
- Localised/place-based community-led and co-designed responses are needed with a safety-first approach, and with recognition to victim-survivors already trust.
- Local ownership of services and responses rather than organisational ownership. There should be collaboration with mainstream services and support by specialists with regional, rural and remote experience and knowledge,
- Programs not being fly-in, fly-out, but should be community-led and place-based,
- Long-term, sustainable and secure funding for programs on a needs-basis rather than population size,
- Funding to allow for data collection and evaluation. Measures of success to incorporate well-being and safety.
- Tailored approaches/programs rather than transplanting one remote or regional model to another area.

Participants were asked **how these approaches could be expanded to other regional, rural and remote areas and what the key enablers for this expansion would be**. Initially, contributors spoke about the need to recognise the complexities and differences of each regional, rural and remote area, and they noted that funding will be required to support community-led design and implementation. It was observed that there would need to be sufficient political will and funding to prioritise information sharing led by specialist DFV workforces and that there is a need for workforce capacity building. The necessity of reliable telecommunication services was also stressed.

Participants also pointed to the following key enablers:

- The mainstreaming and general acceptance of the gendered lens to address the drivers of violence,
- The importance of lived experience leading consultations and informing policy and practice,

- LGBTIQ+ specialist involvement,
- Attention to the needs of culturally diverse populations in rural, regional and remote locations, and the need to not be 'othering' in the way we respond to and address experiences of gender-based violence in diverse communities,
- Funding for children's and adolescents' specialist responses that are adapted for rural delivery,
- Consistent and integrated risk assessments, such as MARAM, and
- Clearer strategies for building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Roundtable participants were then invited to consider the issue of Housing and shelter in regional, rural and remote areas and were asked whether the recommendations from the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, specifically those related to the removal of the perpetrator and accessibility of affordable housing, are suitable for regional, rural and remote areas. Where the recommendations are not considered suitable, participants were asked to reflect on how the approach to addressing housing needs should be tailored for regional, rural and remote areas. They were asked what they have seen work well in terms of ensuring that victim-survivors can stay at home safely and further, what are the practical solutions to supporting women and children to find safe housing (including crisis and long-term affordable accommodation) in regional, rural and remote areas. Participants made a number of observations and suggestions:

- Account for the complexity in rural versus remote areas. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work, and there is a need to consider the specific characteristics of individuals and their specific needs, including women with animals.
- There are limited housing options in the Northern Territory, in particular with vulnerable clients on basic cards/income management.
- The need for official documentation, including identification documents, can be a barrier to accessing income support and subsidies.
- Limited and costly transport options prevent victim-survivors from getting back to Country to heal alongside family.
- There is a need for wrap-around services that support safety.
- A lack of safe accommodation options means young people exit into homelessness.
- Finding rental accommodation is extremely difficult, competitive and expensive. There is a need for person-centred housing responses and less reliance on motels and hotels as short-term solutions.
- There is a need for more safe-at-home options so victim-survivors are not forced to leave the home without financial support. This includes emergency accommodation for perpetrators to leave the home.
- Accessible services and housing for people with a disability is a priority.
- Service eligibility is an issue for LGBTIQ+ individuals who cannot find safe housing, and there is a lack of support for trans-women, even by women's services.
- Current funding models need to be improved so that outreach models can be adopted without risk to staff.

Roundtable participants were asked about pets, livestock and other assets and how the belongings of people who experience violence can be protected in regional, rural and remote areas – specifically livestock, pets and joint investments in shared assets. Participants were also asked about innovative solutions to the challenge of helping people who experience violence to relocate within regional, rural and remote areas.

Responses emphasised the centrality of this issue to women's safety and livelihoods in regional, rural and remote areas. Participants spoke about the need to train court personnel on the significance of the issue so perpetrators cannot continue to weaponise the courts to continue their abuse. Additional responses raised the need for succession planning and consideration of the complexities around how assets are set up and transitioned from one generation to the next. It was explained that victim-survivors might be in a context where leaving could mean walking away with debts, or nothing to their names due to complex

business arrangements. There could also be issues with their inheritance and/or they might stay because their children are thinking of being involved in their business in the future. It was further noted that livestock and pets also need to be considered in safety planning and risk assessments.

Participants spoke about the need for flexible brokerage funds that understand the importance of pets and livestock, and broker transport funds and support for pet and livestock wellbeing. Funding to support storage solutions was suggested to ensure that victim-survivors do not lose their belongings while seeking refuge and safety.

It was noted that pet inclusion is an important issue when transitioning from refuge to long-term housing. Participants also suggested that consideration should be given to leveraging other non-DFV services, such as Centrelink, doctors and vets; additionally, vets and others working with animals could be trained to recognise and respond to FDV.

Participants were also asked to consider **what success would look like in this space**. Responses were varied. They included a call for all levels of government, including local governments, to be open in their obligation and held accountable for providing support centring health and well-being. There were calls for significant funding of community solutions, that all women in regional, rural, and remote areas understand how to access services and that barriers to access are minimised. There were calls that LGBTIQ+ individuals living in regional, rural and remote areas be supported to recognise violence when it occurs and have a choice in accessing inclusive local and LGBTIQ+ services (including through telehealth). Success also means that those seeking assistance can get the help they need.

It was noted that success will be indicated by men recognising this is a problem of men's violence and working to actively solve it in primary, secondary and tertiary prevention programs. Other indicators of success included:

- The recognition of young people in the next National Plan, youth awareness of safety options and a reduction in youth suicides,
- Improved measurement of men's violence and domestic violence-related homicides,
- the development of evidence-based programs with wraparound support to help perpetrators break the cycle of abuse,
- Fewer homeless women,
- Greater financial security after separation, and
- No more domestic and family violence related deaths.

When asked what **we should we do over the next 10 years to get there**, participants made the following recommendations relating to women and victim-survivors:

- Support recovery and (where women want them) interventions to support relationship reunification – noting that in some communities, women don't want to see their partners locked up, but helped to recover,
- Women's homelessness service responses should be informed by a FDV lens as FDV is a driver of women's homelessness,
- Establish a national panel of lived-experience experts, and
- Planning needs to be more inclusive of sexual assault victims. There is a rising suicide rate, which is not currently recognised as being due to sexual assault and ongoing trauma.
- A well-funded, well-resourced and integrated service system that is responsive to victims, perpetrators, families and communities.

Participants also emphasised the importance of awareness, early intervention and education, commenting that there is a need to:

- Increase awareness raising, including delivery of early intervention and respectful relationship education programs at pre-school sessions that parents and families can attend, and
- Have a fully funded position in every school to deliver evidence-based primary prevention of violence education and initiatives that cover gender equity, diversity and inclusion, consent, sex education and respectful relationships.

The importance of funding was discussed. Participants stated that there is a need to:

- Ensure there are well-funded, dedicated family violence policy officers for each state, territory and LGA,
- Commit to fully funding community-led and delivered programs,
- Invest in intersectional approaches and work directly with communities,
- Invest in peer-based programs,
- Increase the continuum of affordable housing with a target,
- Fund a workforce strategy that includes qualification benchmarks, and
- Improve regional telecommunications and expand access to telehealth under Medicare.

In relation to perpetrators and work with men, participants highlighted the value of dedicated violence programs for men and boys so that perpetrator accountability is not just an add-on. They also highlighted the need for easier access to men's behaviour change programs in regional Australia, not only when there is domestic violence, but as an early intervention measure.

Finally, participants stressed the importance of ensuring data sovereignty for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, investment in community-controlled specialist organisations and enhanced supports for community-driven initiatives, for example, for Sistersgirls and Brotherboys to gather together.

Roundtable summary: Legal responses including coercive control and national consistency

The Roundtable was structured into three key focuses:

1. Defining and understanding coercive control
2. Responding to coercive control
3. Measuring success

All participants recognised the importance of improving responses to and prevention of coercive control. There was some disagreement about **how coercive control should be defined and understood**, with some participants believing that family violence not characterised by coercive control can exist, while others viewed coercive control as an essential component of all domestic and family violence.

There was agreement among participants that coercive control is a significant issue and that there is a need to educate the community and first responders. Many women will not come into contact with the legal system, so there is a need for a whole-of-system response. Promoting healthy relationships at the earliest point of education and maintaining and enhancing it through school was viewed as critical by participants, some of whom noted that this should be done before criminalisation of coercive control at the state and territory level is considered. Participants believed there is a strong need for shared language and understanding of coercive control: 'criminalising before we do this work runs the risk of keeping attention only on the criminal justice system than a whole of system response'.

Preventing coercive control requires clearly identifying the behaviours that we want to 'stop at the start' and disseminating these messages consistently throughout the community. The relevance of Change the Story (Our Watch) was noted, with participants stressing the need to use existing tools and follow the

evidence base. Participants discussed the merits of two-way conversations with community, noting that if people can talk about their own experiences, we can start to build community conversations. These conversations can be used to inform a national definition of coercive control. To prevent coercive control, participants noted the importance of empowering children from a very young age in relation to gender equality, relationships and respect.

While education and community awareness were viewed as important prevention strategies, participants also stressed the need to address broader systems and structures, for example, access to universal childcare and paid parental leave for both parents. There was shared recognition that increasing cultural awareness alone will not prevent coercive control.

On the question of **criminalisation of coercive control** there were diverse views. Some participants acknowledged the important role the criminal justice system can play. One acknowledged that there are benefits to criminalisation but that it would need to be a specialist police response, and one participant described a generalist approach as disastrous. In contrast, some participants highlighted that legislation, which is focused on single incidents, creates confusion regarding one-off violence and coercive control. Regardless of whether criminalisation is pursued, there was agreement among participants that education for the judiciary is important. Participants shared observations of a reluctance by magistrates to grant civil protection orders based on claims of coercive control, despite legislative changes. This was provided by a participant as an example of problems with legislating without education. To this point, there was recognition of the need for investment in up front training and education for police, lawyers, judiciary, child protection and health and noting that if it isn't done the desired outcomes from changing the law will not be achieved.

Education, awareness raising, and culture change were presented as key. Whether or not state and territory governments criminalise coercive control, participants believed there is a need for education, awareness raising and respectful relationships education, from preschool. Participants noted that education from a young age is essential. There is a huge community cultural shift that needs to occur and meaningful and culturally-safe conversations need to be had...

Beyond criminalisation, participants stressed the need to look at the role that non-legal institutions can play in addressing coercive control. A key example given was the financial/banking sector: 'money is at the heart of it and banks are best placed to detect something not right going on'. Participants also noted that corporate industry has an appetite to get involved. Noting that a lot of women experiencing coercive control would be in the workplace (many women report that they are not allowed out of the house unless go to work), corporate businesses want to understand the types of signs they should look for to be able to better support women in the work[place who might be experiencing coercive control.

There was recognition that the system needs to find meaningful ways to address coercive control in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and ensure that these initiatives are First Nations led. The influence of coercive control in family law matters was also identified as requiring attention through the next National Plan.

On **responses to coercive control**, participants were invited to consider what reform options would better address coercive control, including for priority populations. A range of different suggestions was put forward by participants, including:

- Ensuring that specialist Aboriginal community-controlled organisations are included in the conversation,
- Justice reinvestment – this approach has proven to be successful (e.g., in Bourke, NSW),
- Establishing a best-practice national risk assessment framework,
- Resources and agency to communities, rather than focusing on policing,
- Better resourcing of specialist services,

- Ensuring that the cultural nuances and language issues for culturally diverse communities are considered in communication,
- Cultural change is led by our national representatives, in terms of taking opportunities to speak about coercive control across their work and community engagement
- More early and culturally appropriate perpetrator programs,
- Integrated and coordinated place-based investments,
- Increased housing options for both victim-survivors and perpetrators,
- Develop an effective list of indicators that coercive control might be occurring to assist family, friends and communities to recognise and protect,
- A review of what laws are currently in place and how they are being used, and more importantly, *not* used, and why.
- A move away from an adversarial system towards a therapeutic one,
- Greater recognition of and support for children and young people experiencing coercive control,
- Co-operation between the finance sector, community organisations, police and courts to protect women from financial abuse.

Several participants noted the need to address the prevalence of systems abuse. Participants recognised that there are opportunities for legislative reform in terms of better supporting the court in determining who needs protection, such as funding for respondent lawyers who can help women when they have been misidentified as predominant aggressors or are otherwise vulnerable. There were calls among participants to end the criminalisation and imprisonment of women who defend themselves from violence.

Beyond specific reform options, there was widespread recognition of the importance of training. In particular, participants noted that police training needs to be focused on coercive control; it needs to provide officers with context in relation to women's actions when they are experiencing abuse – and to the things they will do to protect themselves and their children. There was a desire to see police training nationally led. The need to educate practitioners from the migration tribunals was also identified as important by participants.

In their consideration of **what success would look like**, participants emphasised several of the points that had already been raised throughout the roundtable. Some characteristics of success were described:

- All Australians understanding what coercive control is, its expressions and impacts,
- Well-resourced specialist services,
- Looking beyond statistics – looking at DFV reporting and if victim-survivors are getting a better response,
- Lowered rates of FDSV and better outcomes in other areas of life,
- Workplaces being free of all forms of sexual violence,
- Community attitude changing,
- Creating safe communities for First Nations people through improved access to employment, education and housing – rather than investing in prisons, and
- Trauma-informed policing and justice responses.

Participants recognised the difficulty of describing success without a clear national definition of family, domestic and sexual violence, as well as consistent and coordinated data collection.

To achieve this depiction of success over the next 10 years, participants emphasised the importance of systems aligning with each other and the need for greater coordination between the Commonwealth, states and territories. Specific to coercive control, several participants noted the need for a paradigm shift away from a system's focus on incidents to a focus on systemic abuse. Other suggestions for what should be done over the next ten years to make progress included:

- Investing in specialist services with multidisciplinary practice and skills – wraparound services. There is an important opportunity to learn from Aboriginal services, particularly Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services,
- Improving police and frontline responses, training and specialisation,
- Building the evidence base on the effectiveness of criminalisation,
- Further funding in place-based and community-led responses,
- Focusing on safety and trauma in the Family Law Act,
- Funding for transformative justice solutions that are driven by survivors, and
- Working with young women to support them to understand the impacts of gender stereotypes on their lives.

Roundtable summary: Migrant and refugee experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence

The Roundtable was structured by four key focus areas:

1. Changes required to help women
2. Resources, support and building capacity
3. Challenges to be addressed
4. Measure of success

Roundtable participants were asked to begin by commenting on the changes required to help women, with a particular focus on what structural system changes related to legal, migration, social security and policing, would better enable migrant and refugee women to report family, domestic and sexual violence, or seek help. Participants opened by pointing to the need for an intersectional approach that recognises the overlapping systems of disadvantage.

In relation to **needs around migration** participants spoke about Australia's migration program as a major barrier, especially for people on temporary visas. Access to Centrelink, Medicare, working and education rights is problematic, which creates barriers when trying to leave family violence situations. The children of women on temporary visas also face restrictions due to their mother's visa status. This is an issue that contributors indicated needs urgent attention. It was suggested that temporary visa holders have access to support when leaving violence, including income support and welfare safety nets. The introduction of a temporary visa for women, where a legitimate relationship and experience of family violence is demonstrated, will provide access to Centrelink, Medicare and work rights. It was observed that the current migration system creates and sustains violence. It is not just access to supports that needs attention, but how the migration system creates the situations that sustain violence and how it has tentacles into all areas of support.

In relation to **legal needs** Roundtable participants called for improved understanding of family dynamics that do not conform to the nuclear model. The situation for migrant and refugee women may involve multiple participants and extended family. At present, the legal system is unable to respond. Participants also spoke about the onus of proof, the difficulties victim-survivors face when trying to access support services even where they are eligible. Contributors called for simpler processes and special provisions to keep women and children safe. They noted the need for a humanitarian framework with universal access to domestic and family violence support irrespective of visa status.

Participants also spoke about the need for inclusivity in public health, community and service contexts. They observed that culture and religion should not be used to stereotype situations of family violence and justify non-intervention, and that the provision of interpreter services should be a basic feature in sites where first disclosures occur. Participants called for greater investment in building cultural capability and competency of all relevant responder agencies. They noted that services should not have an expectation

that women will articulate their experience using the language of 'violence', as this may not resonate with them. Neither should it be expected that women will necessarily seek support from police and traditional services. Rather, there is a need to meet women on their terms and provide services accordingly.

Participants noted the benefit of having specialised domestic and family violence services for multicultural communities, such as InTouch, on a national scale. They also observed that tailored funding and specialist support for migrant and refugee women that recognises and leverages points of disclosure and existing support systems would be beneficial. Participants called for a shift in emphasis away from mainstream services to the prioritisation of partnerships between multicultural/ethno-cultural community groups and specialist family violence organisations. It is important to think about what response-based practices look like for different migrant and refugee women across different stages of migration, how it intersects with racialised experiences. Responses need to be trauma-informed and give women agency to make their own choices.

Roundtable participants were then asked to consider **what measures would support migrant and refugee women to enhance understanding of family, domestic and sexual violence, and support help-seeking behaviour**. Participants made a number of suggestions.

The first comment reiterated the need to fundamentally change the migration system so that it can no longer be used as a tool of abuse. For example, sponsored visa holders need to wait two years, and if exited, they are placed at risk of financial and housing insecurity. Victim-survivors are penalised by the system, and organisations have limited capacity to help or make services more competent when the migration system is not allowing them to do so. There were calls to provide legal aid and other essential support irrespective of visa status.

Participants suggested that there is a need to build a knowledge base on the experiences of women on temporary visa status who have experienced DFV.

The importance of the health system response as a frequent point of first disclosure was emphasised with a particular focus on the role of primary health providers. Practitioners should embed a culturally responsive lens, and increased funding for female interpreters embedded in the health sector is required.

Participants also suggested the following to support understanding and prompt help seeking:

- Stronger partnerships and collaborations across different sectors to enhance referral pathways into support and services,
- Creative innovations in reaching out and engaging women safely, as it is well-evidenced that many women do not report,
- Clear and simple messaging to raise awareness and educate migrant and refugee women about the definition of FDV without assuming an understanding of existing descriptors,
- Increase availability of DFV-informed responders in the respective communities. Navigators are important to help migrant and refugee women negotiate a very complex system,
- Having specialised, multicultural DFV services with a coordinated approach in each state and territory. There should be equitable resource allocation, commensurate with the population profiles, and
- The establishment of a national network of migrant women-led, community-based, in-language, peer education programs that can reach women in safe settings with information and referrals to services that can: (1) enable support where needed, and (2) without need for disclosure first. Meet women where they are.

Participants were asked to **think beyond specialist women's safety services to consider how migrant and refugee women can be further supported to recover from experiences of family, domestic and sexual violence**. Participants opened by reiterating concerns that temporary visas result in women feeling

unsafe and being unable to plan and recover. The need to ensure all women and children can access family violence provisions in immigration law regardless of visa type and/or where their visa application was lodged was noted.

Participants also noted the importance of improving women's access to income and independence and improving women's economic security overall. Specifically, contributors discussed the need to address financial and employment barriers; there is a lack of access to federal financial support, provision of free/subsidised childcare, affordable housing, and specialist programs that help translate women's qualifications and skills into the Australian market.

It was suggested that an audit of police responses to multicultural communities would be useful, particularly with regards to the misidentification of migrant and refugee women as the primary aggressor. The need to address racism more broadly was noted, as it limits women's access to support and services and can shape how authorities respond.

Participants then spoke about finding ways to support migrant and refugee women who become socially isolated from their community due to domestic and family violence. This led to a discussion of the need for longer-term, trauma-informed, strengths-based holistic healing that is needs-based rather than time-limited, as women can experience further isolation from community when leaving traditional family structures. Targeted support was suggested for women who may never have lived independently and/or been allowed to manage their own lives or finances, as was ongoing support from resettlement services beyond the current five years after arrival.

Participants also offered some thoughts and ideas for supporting migrant and refugee women.

- There is a critical need post-COVID for more awareness and understanding of the way natural disaster/disruptions can impact access to services.
- More thought needs to be given to what cultural responsiveness looks like and the role of faith-based and ethno-cultural organisations in supporting women experiencing FDSV.
- Awareness needs to be improved across all systems: to the fact that some women may have been trafficked and to recognise the specific issues and barriers that these women may face.

Support services need to operate within a FDV and safety framework with more investment in response and recovery while building capacity for community to lead processes that centers lived experiences and knowledge.

Discussion then turned to **resources, support and building capacity**. Participants were asked what **resources and support are needed by family, domestic and sexual violence services in order to understand and respond to the barriers faced by migrant and refugee women in accessing support for FDSV**. Participants were additionally asked **how family, domestic and sexual services can build capacity to provide culturally responsive services that assist in overcoming barriers to engagement?**

Participants offered numerous suggestions organised below by theme.

- Integration, collaboration and coordination: Co-ordination on a higher-level where services drive the change within government and policy, and state governments also need to work together with services.

Specialisation and community-controlled organisations

- There is a need for specialised domestic violence services that are inherently multicultural and can understand complex needs, rather than mainstream.

- There is a need to fund and train experts who can respond to the different intersections of gender, migration and violence. A good system is not one where women are continually referred to different services for different needs. A more collaborative system is needed.
- Independent, autonomous women's services that are culturally responsive and led by a variety of groups should be recognised as best practice.
- Proper funding for services as they do not have huge capacities. Resources are stretched and there are long waiting lists.

Using what works and sharing expertise

- Cross-organisation collaboration and sharing of expertise should be encouraged so that services can work alongside each other to support women in different areas.
- There is a need to elevate good, evidenced-based work that is already happening. It is important to build the capacity of existing services.

Participants stated that prevention is different to response and recovery. It is important for organisations to work with young men in conjunction with community leaders.

Participants were asked to consider the **challenges to be addressed**. They were asked **how family and domestic violence services and migration/settlement support services can collaborate to prevent family, domestic and sexual violence and work with perpetrators and support victim-survivors**. They were also asked **how migrant and refugee men can be effectively engaged in prevention and men's behaviour change programs**. Participant responded with some key points and suggestions.

- Programs and responses need to be co-designed, culturally-owned and from an intersectional feminist framework (which involves both case management and group work).
- Programs and responses should be evidence-based and best practice.
- Programs should be bilingual and embedded in culture.
- There is a need to think about a more efficient and effective transfer of information to mainstream services, rather than going back continually to prominent members of the community, which places them in stressful and exhausting positions.
- Financial investment to increase capacity of the entire system and meet growing demands needs to occur.
- Funding and investment into collaborative work between different providers, such as between settlement services and DFV services needs to occur.
- There should be secure and long-term funding for already-existing programs that acknowledge the impact of migration, histories of violence, culture and faith.
- We need to build on documented evidence of effective responses/tailored men's perpetrator programs in communities, with appropriate funding/opportunity to take it to the national level and replicate it in other communities.
- We need to think about how to maintain knowledge and specialisation, especially as sectors change in the face of government reforms, which can lead to a loss of expertise and knowledge.
- It is necessary to have a suite of interventions that keep women in view and support women's agency.
- Safe and culturally appropriate prevention and early intervention services for young boys to break the cycle of violence need to be offered.
- Think about workplaces as a space to engage men – workplaces can play a role to support diversity and gender equality.
- We need a whole of family/whole of community approach to program design. Working with migrant and refugee men to understand the issues they face can offer opportunity for understanding issues on a broader, societal level and universal experiences vs individual differences.
- We need to talk about gender and family violence in a language/manner that is translatable for migrant and refugee communities.

Participants were asked to reflect on **what we should do over the next 10 years to achieve this success**. Participant's responses included the following:

- It is important to have cultural-competency standards for all specialist family violence services,
- Invest in interpreters and interpreter-funding for SFV policy, courts and the whole system,
- Make the necessary changes to the migration system to ensure that women on temporary visas are eligible for support and that women are not disadvantaged because the main visa holder is a perpetrator,
- Create a new visa option for any woman in a legitimate relationship who has experienced family violence – one that gives her access to Centrelink, working rights and Medicare,
- Have a migration system that builds in gender equity,
- Reduce the time needed for divorce so that victim-survivors do not need to have a continuous connection and contact with a perpetrator regarding parental and financial issues etc.,
- Ensure accountability in courts for breaching domestic violence protection orders,
- Effective auditing of policing work and data by ethnicity indicators is needed,
- Make sure that all women, including those under visa restrictions, are included in the National Plan,
- Have appropriate funding for community organisations,
- Build a pipeline of capability and make sure that community is a primary part of the service, so that it will reflect a multicultural workforce that can respond to multicultural communities,
- Translate good design and models into good policies. There are good and successful models, so it is important to take those into policy considerations and build on those experiences,
- It is important to have nuanced research and understanding of the diversity of migrant and refugee women, and
- There is a need for a diverse workforce, and the equity of access to income opportunities, employment and health is key. Equalising women's pay and capacity to engage in a workforce that enables their independence will go a long way, otherwise they have limited resources to make choices.

Roundtable summary: Supporting women and children with disability

The Roundtable was structured into three key focuses:

1. Inclusion of women and children with disability
2. Specific experience of violence for women and children with disability
3. Measuring success

Roundtable participants were asked to reflect on what strategies and actions are needed in the next National Plan to **ensure the inclusion** of women and children with disability. To begin, participants were asked **what prevention strategies would be effective for women and children with disability, including whether there is a need for specific responses for different disabilities**. The first response to this question was one that was consistently repeated and agreed upon by the majority of participants throughout the Roundtable, namely, that inclusive definitions and legislation are important. Participants noted that some legislation is not currently inclusive of women and girls with disability. There is a need for definitions to include women and girls with disability and people in supported care. Participants noted that women in aged care settings are experiencing sexual violence and that processes of identifying, responding and prevention are very poor in this space. They indicated this as an area requiring a particular focus in the National Plan.

A strong case was made that the next National Plan should be using the definition of gender-based violence as per CEDAW General Comment 35, published in 2017. For women with disability who do not live in a family home, the terms domestic and family violence are not relevant, nor do they capture diverse relationships.

Discussion focused on traumatic brain injuries from domestic and family violence and the need for better awareness of the prevalence of these injuries, for referral pathways, assessments and early management. Participants noted the growing body of research and knowledge of chronic traumatic encephalopathy due to traumatic brain injury and concussion, but they observed that this has so far been focused predominantly on athletes and sportspeople. This research was noted to be very relevant to the FDSV setting not only for those who experience brain injury from recurrent head trauma but also from recurrent strangulations and brain hypoxia (lack of oxygen). There is a gap in research and acknowledgment of women with a disability who received a brain injury or other disability as a result or consequence of family violence. Evidence that three women per week are hospitalised with head injury as a direct result of violence was cited.

There was also discussion about the importance of looking at acquired brain injuries among male perpetrators. It was noted that rates of ABI are high amongst perpetrators; there is a need to consider brain injury as a contributing factor to family violence. It was observed that perpetrators of intimate partner violence are twice as likely to have sustained a brain injury as matched community samples.

Numerous participants spoke about the role of the NDIS. Comments made included:

- Appropriate and accessible housing, is a significant issue. The NDIA needs to look at policies and procedures to better enable women to access funding and move into housing sooner.
- Support workers in the NDIS need access to training (co-designed with women with disabilities). It is very important that women and girls with disability are involved in the development and delivery of training.
- One of the other problems with training NDIS workers is that it's a highly casualised workforce. While training of NDIS support workers is critical, it is vital that NDIS participants are supported to build their knowledge of their human rights – including the right to live free from all forms of violence.
- There is currently no risk assessment regarding people's safety under the NDIS. People doing assessments need to be trained to ask the right questions to ensure that women and children aren't living with violence and abuse.
- Further, there should be an emphasis towards action when women and children with disability disclose experiences of violence and/or sexual abuse. There is a need to move quickly, rather than go through a very complex process to get moved or have packages changed.
- The Quality and Safeguards Commission doesn't adopt a gendered lens meaning forced contraception is not considered as a form of chemical restraint. It should also adopt the Child Safe Principles.

The general point was made that services need to be inclusive of the needs of all women and children and that the disability sector currently does not see responding to FDSV as within its remit. Participants also noted that the next National Plan needs to link to the National Disability Strategy.

Participants emphasised some issues as critical to addressing inclusion and prevention for women and children with disabilities:

- It is vital to consult with victim-survivor advocates in developing primary prevention and service responses to ensure that lived experience informs policy and practice.
- There is a critical need for capacity building of women and girls with disability about their human rights – including what constitutes violence.
- There is a lack of pre-crisis services for women with disability, that is, services that can assist women to understand what they are experiencing is violence.
- Issues of poverty are important to address here. Of key importance are strategies designed to increase access and engagement with employment for women with disability. The prevalence of poverty among this cohort and the lack of housing choices makes leaving violence far more complex.
- Services don't always understand that violence against women includes violence in shared home or care environments. Women are often directed to the Human Rights Commission.

- Mandatory training in responding to women and children with disabilities is needed in smaller territories and states where there are only one or two FDSV services. It was noted that staff are often overworked and the turnover of workers is high. Women with disability are currently falling through the cracks and their needs are not being addressed in these areas.
- Workers across broad settings need to know how to do risk assessments. Knowledge about how to safely refer people experiencing violence and abuse to services is important.
- Risk assessments must be undertaken periodically, and in a timely manner, within a human rights and trauma-informed framework where all forms and types of violence are acknowledged.
- We need to look at system abuse. The cashless welfare card doesn't seem to be a good policy response for women with disability. 'Cashless cards take away our autonomy and put us in added danger.'

The need to recognise the experiences and specific needs of children with disability was a key consideration for Roundtable participants. Contributors spoke about current approaches that only see children via their attachment to women experiencing violence. Children should be understood as victims in their own right. Participants observed that children are invisible and peripheral, yet we know violence in childhood predicts violence in later adult life. Participants noted that children with a disability are five times more likely to experience abuse. There is an obligation to shape services around their needs and, further, we need to have the courage to listen to children's views.

Also on children, participants noted that it is still common for children with disability not to be included in sex and relationship education sessions in school like other children, which is an issue for both girls and boys. Primary prevention programs like Respectful Relationships and Love Bites are currently not accessible or relevant to children and young people with disabilities.

Another participant observed that the issue of children's access to, and the changing nature of, pornography has been missing in the general discussions about prevention of violence towards women. It was noted that the average age of first viewing pornography for boys is 13 years and 16 years for girls. Pornography has become increasingly violent, and we are seeing cases in sexual assault services which reflect this, such as increasing rates of strangulation in non-consensual sexual assaults in young people, but also in consensual sexual activity. The early access to and increasingly violent nature of pornography is an emerging public health issue for Australian children and runs counter to any respectful relationship education.

Participants were asked to consider **what actions could improve accessibility and services responses for all women and children with disability**. Contributors made the following points:

- Looking at these issues from a life-course experience is important – from witnessing violence as a child, to then experiencing violence and experiencing disability,
- We need to understand the role trauma may be playing in relation to increases in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) diagnoses,
- We need more targeted prevention responses to intersectionality,
- We also need better data collection to be able to truly understand this issue. So many women just aren't being counted or seen. Many First Nations women and children with a disability experience violence and we need to be better able to quantify these intersections (LGBTIQA+, culturally and linguistically diverse, for example),
- The Personal Safety Survey (PSS) is not inclusive of many women with disability and the settings in which they experience violence, and
- Residential services have a great ability to perpetrate financial abuse when the resident has no access to external advice or assistance. This is also the same within a family. There is a role for banking and financial institutions to do much more in assisting women with disability to access their services in easy ways.

Roundtable contributors were asked to turn their attention to **the specific experiences of violence for women and children with disability** and to think about **how we should address forms of violence** such as **forced sterilisation**, for example.

Participants emphasised the critical significance of forced sterilisation and indicated that it must be stopped. Contributors observed that it is unforgivable that it is still lawful to sterilise women and girls with disability in Australia. It was observed that international human rights bodies have been urging the Australian Government to stop this for more than 16 years. There was consensus on this point by participants. It was noted that forcible serialisation and enforced contraception still occur and that the former can be used to hide sexual abuse. It was stated that reproductive coercion is a form of gender-based violence that must be addressed in the next National Plan. Women with disability often fear seeking support due to child removal concerns. There is a need for better safeguards and training that disability is not a reason for child removal. There is also a need for training of police and other first responders to recognise the unique forms of violence perpetrated against women with disability and the need to move away from seeing violence as a service issue or leaving women with the perpetrator because they are that woman's carer.

Participants made additional points about experiences of violence for women and children with disability.

- We need to address the cultural norms, for example victim-blaming, ableism and racism that prevent women and children accessing the care and support they need. Too often child protection is brought in right away when Aboriginal and Torres Strait mothers with a child with a disability seek help. The same thing doesn't happen to white women.
- We must address state-legislated violence and the systems which put women and children at risk. This issue should be incorporated more broadly in the next National Plan as well.
- The segregation of children with disabilities in care is essentially a form of apartheid and must end.
- We need a proper national strategy over the next 10 years to transition people with disability out of segregated settings.
- A commitment to a child focus in the next National Plan could be demonstrated through the building of supports around the child to assist them to remain within their family and cultural setting, rather than spending much more on punitive and restrictive systems.
- There is a need for implementing trauma-informed care in group settings. Women can be re-traumatised in group settings and carers are not aware and do not understand the implications.

Following this, participants were asked **what would enable us to better understand the experiences of women and children in residential care and groups settings**. Numerous contributors highlighted the need for research in this space and called for listening to and working with the voices of victim-survivors. Participants observed that we currently do not know how many First Nation's children with a disability have been removed from homes and are in out-of-home 'care'.

When asked **what actions should be taken to respond to these broad issues for women and children with disability**, participants pointed to the following areas:

- The provision of adequate and independent resources for residents in groups settings to go to when experiencing violence,
- The need to review access to the disability support pension (DSP), and make it easier to leave violent and abusive relationships. You can't leave if you have no access to income and if you are financially reliant on your abuser,
- More work to be done around the Quality and Safeguards Commission – for example, the use of long-acting contraceptives such as Depo-Provera,
- Child protection staff to receive training in DFV and trauma-informed care,
- Trauma-informed care in group homes, and
- Prevention strategies and 'spot checks' in group homes.

Following this, participants were asked to reflect on **how we might measure success. Looking ahead to the end of the next National Plan, contributors were asked what success would look like.** Key responses included:

- Abolition of guardianship and substitute decision-making,
- National legislation to prohibit forced sterilisation,
- Addressing the issues of indefinite detention, particularly of First Nations peoples with disabilities,
- End segregation in all its forms,
- Implement the recommendations of the Disability Royal Commission,
- All FDSV services identify disability in their data. (We can't measure success properly unless we have proper data regarding women with disability and family, domestic and sexual violence.),
- A national roll out of the Victorian NDIS emergency funding scheme. This would be a massive step forward,
- Mainstream FDSV services no longer reject women with disabilities because their cases are too complex,
- Improved employment outcomes for women with disabilities – they haven't improved for over two decades,
- Reforms and work are led by women with disability,
- That all women with disability going through the legal and justice system get automatic support to understand the system and what's happening,
- Disability appropriate programs in prisons that support women with disability, and
- Including children with disability in all respectful and healthy relationships education.

Discussion then turned to **what should be done over the next 10 years to ensure we achieve these goals.** The following contain actions and ideas suggested by participants.

- 'Mainstream' programs and initiatives, such as the Stop it at the Start campaign, include women with disabilities.
- Focus on using lived experience to inform policy and practice. Victim-survivor advocates need to be embedded across the development of policy and practice, and in the workforce to support other women with disabilities.
- Targeted sustained funding for established initiatives. We do not need more pilot programs.
- Stakeholders [noted] the current National Plan and the Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence make no mention of women who sustain disability from violence (for example acquired or traumatic brain injuries as a result of family violence). This is a significant gap given there is national and international research on prevalence of brain injury as both a contributing factor and result of family violence.
- We also need to consider the rates of acquired brain injuries among perpetrators of violence and ensure early intervention and perpetrator programs are also tailored to men and boys with disability.
- Incarcerated women (including those with disability) are often forgotten despite 98% of them having a past history of family or sexual violence. Responses for integration back into the community to ensure they are safe and supported. Many women have sustained their disability from family violence.
- Recent research found that First Nations women incarcerated for violent crimes have a possible diagnosis of complex trauma, and that almost all of the women studied had endured violence by an intimate partner prior to entering prison. A number of First Nations women have told the Royal Commission they were imprisoned for defending themselves and their children from their partner's abuse and violence.
- Better supports for children and young people in youth detention who have experienced violence (including children and young people who use violence).
- We need long term trauma recovery centres/services for women with disability, not just crisis supports and interventions.
- There needs to be an emergency carer/support worker service similar to emergency foster carers that FDSV services can access to find a support worker if needed.

There was recognition that **to measure progress** we need a national baseline regarding the status of women with a disability in Australia as a starting point. It was also observed that the next National Plan needs a strong Outcomes Framework, similar to the one used for the new National Disability Strategy. It was noted that the National disability Data Asset provides a great opportunity to improve data collection and that all state and territory governments should support it. Contributors stated that the data collection strategy must reflect the specific types and nature of violence experienced by women and children with disability to ensure we are capturing experiences accurately.

There was shared recognition on the need for evidence of how many women with a disability across the country are accessing services. Participants noted that we currently don't know this and therefore can't measure the effect of things like the current COVID-19 pandemic on service access. Participant stated that technology is a very important tool for women with disability to engage, communicate and access services – particularly during COVID. However, a one-size-fits-all approach won't work; it needs to capture the range of needs for women with disability. (No wrong door - women with disabilities can go anywhere for support and receive help).

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Appendices

National Plan
Stakeholder Consultation

Appendices

Appendix A: Terms of Reference: House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into family domestic and sexual violence

Terms of Reference

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquire into and report on family, domestic and sexual violence, including with a view to informing the next National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, the following:

- a) Immediate and long-term measures to prevent violence against women and their children, and improve gender equality.
- b) Best practice and lessons learnt from international experience, ranging from prevention to early intervention and response, that could be considered in an Australian context.
- c) The level and impact of coordination, accountability for, and access to services and policy responses across the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, local governments, non government and community organisations, and business.
- d) The way that health, housing, access to services, including legal services, and women's economic independence impact on the ability of women to escape domestic violence.
- e) All forms of violence against women, including, but not limited to, coercive control and technology - facilitated abuse.
- f) The adequacy of the qualitative and quantitative evidence base around the prevalence of domestic and family violence and how to overcome limitations in the collection of nationally consistent and timely qualitative and quantitative data including, but not limited to, court, police, hospitalisation and housing.
- g) The efficacy of perpetrator intervention programs and support services for men to help them change their behaviour.
- h) The experiences of all women, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, rural women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, LGBTQI women, women with a disability, and women on temporary visas.
- i) The impact of natural disasters and other significant events such as COVID-19, including health requirements such as staying at home, on the prevalence of domestic violence and provision of support services.
- j) The views and experiences of frontline services, advocacy groups and others throughout this unprecedented time.
- k) An audit of previous parliamentary reviews focussed on domestic and family violence.
- l) Any other related matters.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with state and territory governments to adopt a uniform definition of family, domestic and sexual violence, which:

- reflects a common understanding of the features and dynamics of such violence and the breadth of relationships in which violence can occur;
- encompasses a broad range of violence, including but not limited to coercive control, reproductive coercion, economic abuse, and complex forms of violence, such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and dowry abuse; and
- recognises the diversity of victim-survivors and perpetrators and the particular vulnerability of certain groups.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include quantitative measures, which should be agreed following consultation with non-government organisations, experts, and victim-survivors.

The Committee proposes the following measures for consideration:

- reduction in the number of deaths attributed to family, domestic and sexual violence;
- reduction in the rate of incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence;
- reduction in the rate of re-offending by perpetrators;
- reduction in the rate of family, domestic and sexual violence in diverse communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; LGBTQI people; culturally and linguistically diverse people; and people with disability;
- increase in the availability and quality of support services for victim-survivors;
- significant and long-term increase in the number of perpetrators attending and completing perpetrator behaviour change programs;
- reduction in the number of incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence involving alcohol and/or other drugs;
- reduction in the number of incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence involving children as either victim-survivors or perpetrators;
- reduction in the number of incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence involving elder abuse, whether within the aged care system or in the home;
- increase in the reporting rate of incidents of family, domestic and sexual violence; and
- significant improvement in community awareness and understanding of, and attitudes about, all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan be inclusive of the diversity of victim-survivors. In particular, the next National Plan should recognise the rights and needs of:

- women;
- children in their own right;
- men;

older Australians;
LGBTQI people; and
people living with a disability.

Further, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government, and state and territory governments, ensure that the next National Plan and the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 - 2020* are clearly aligned.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan seek to prevent all forms of family, domestic and sexual violence, including physical violence, sexual violence, exposure to violence in childhood, repeated violence, non-physical forms of violence including coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse, and complex forms of violence such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting and dowry abuse.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan be named the 'National plan to reduce family, domestic and sexual violence'.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan promote and enhance an integrated whole-of- service-system response to family, domestic and sexual violence across jurisdictions.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan promote and enhance a whole-of-society response to family, domestic and sexual violence that involves businesses, community groups and other non-government bodies, as well as governments.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that responsibility for the implementation of the next National Plan continue to rest with the Department of Social Services.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government direct and appropriately resource the Australian Bureau of Statistics to conduct the Personal Safety Survey on an annual basis and ensure that the survey collects information about the prevalence of specific forms of family, domestic and sexual violence and complex forms of violence.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government direct and appropriately resource the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to develop a national data collection on service-system contacts with victim-survivors and perpetrators, including data from primary health care, ambulance, emergency department, police, justice, and legal services.

Further, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government, and state and territory governments, provide appropriate funding and support to service providers to implement consistent data collection procedures.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government direct and appropriately resource the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to develop a national data collection on the use of, and unmet demand for, specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government lead the development of a national family, domestic and sexual violence death toll.

Further, the Committee recommends the Australian Government consider the need for additional measures to ensure better integration of data from family, domestic and sexual violence death reviews across all Australian jurisdictions.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, and state and territory governments, continue to provide increased funding for frontline family, domestic and sexual violence services in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include measures informed by the experience of family, domestic and sexual violence in the COVID-19 pandemic, including but not limited to:

- integration of family, domestic and sexual violence in emergency planning and disaster response frameworks;

- increased support for the health and welfare of frontline workers, at all times but particularly during emergencies and disasters; and

- increased use of technology and new service delivery models to improve access to services.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government seek the agreement of state and territory governments to make a representative of the Australian Local Government Association a member of the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments directly involve local government in the development and implementation of the next National Plan. If not achieved through the Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) membership on the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety, another appropriate mechanism should be utilised to facilitate ALGA's engagement.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and each state and territory government co-fund on a 50-50 basis a dedicated family and domestic violence policy officer in each state and territory local government association for an initial period of five years.

In addition, the Australian Government and state and territory governments should work with the Australian Local Government Association to consider whether additional resources are required to assist individual local governments to have a more active role in preventing and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence, and to implement the *Prevention toolkit for local government*.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include a commitment to improve the transparency of funding for family, domestic and sexual violence programs and services.

The Committee further recommends that Australian Government funding provided to state and territory governments for family, domestic and sexual violence programs and services be linked to requirements that those governments:

- fund related programs and services within their own jurisdictions on an agreed minimum ratio basis

of the funding provided by the Australian Government; and
report regularly on their own funding for related programs and services.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in consultation with state and territory governments, develop a needs-based funding methodology to account for variations in the presentation of family, domestic and sexual violence in different jurisdictions.

This methodology should be applied to future Australian Government and state and territory governments' funding for family, domestic and sexual violence programs.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include a commitment to an ongoing program of independent and transparent monitoring and evaluation, which:

- includes formal opportunities for victim-survivors and other non-government stakeholders to provide input; and

- is overseen by the proposed National Commissioner for the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence, or another independent body.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include a commitment to provide funding for Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety for the life of the plan.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that specific family, domestic and sexual violence programs funded either directly or indirectly by the Australian Government include funding for a standardised evaluation component. Evaluations should be published where possible.

Further, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in consultation with state and territory governments, consider the need for:

- the development of accredited standards or agreed outcomes measures to guide evaluations of family, domestic and sexual violence programs and services;

- additional support and training to assist organisations in undertaking evaluations; and

- a national platform for the publication of evaluations.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government establish as an independent statutory office a National Commissioner for the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence.

The functions of the Commissioner should include promoting and enhancing a whole-of-government, cross-jurisdictional approach to policy development, research, data collection, and monitoring and evaluation with respect to family, domestic and sexual violence initiatives.

The Commissioner should:

- report to the Minister for Social Services;

- be an *ex officio* observer on the National Federation Reform Council Taskforce on Women's Safety;

- be responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the next National Plan;

- provide a formal mechanism for consultation with victim-survivors and non-government organisations; and

- provide an annual report to the Parliament.

The Commissioner should be provided with appropriate resources to perform its functions for the duration of the next National Plan.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments develop shared principles to guide any future offences of coercive and controlling behaviour, with a view to ensuring consistency across jurisdictions to the extent possible.

These principles should address:

- the behaviours and patterns of behaviour captured by any new offences; the
- breadth of relationships captured by any new offences;
- the standard of proof required by any new offences;
- mitigating the impact of any new offences on groups with particular vulnerabilities; and
- associated implementation issues, including but not limited to minimum standards for training in any new offences; and, very importantly, public awareness raising about any new offences.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government fund a specific public awareness campaign about coercive and controlling behaviour as a form of family, domestic and sexual violence and a predictor of severe physical violence and homicide.

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, and state and territory governments, develop and provide funding for training for the identification of coercive and controlling behaviour for police; justice and legal sector practitioners; and health, mental health, social services, and specialist family, domestic and sexual violence service workers.

The Committee further recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments consider developing minimum standards for training on coercive control and including training on coercive control in relevant professional qualifications.

Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments undertake a review of relevant risk identification, risk assessment, and risk management practices to ensure that coercive and controlling behaviour is adequately captured.

Recommendation 28

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue funding for critical research around the context, motives and outcomes of technology-facilitated abuse—in particular, by providing dedicated funding to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety.

Recommendation 29

Based on recommendations from the eSafety Commissioner, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in cooperation with state and territory governments where applicable:

- Develop and implement education initiatives that drive cultural change and increase awareness about the abusive nature and legal implications of technology-facilitated abuse, focused on women and girls at risk of experiencing technology-facilitated abuse and men and boys at risk of perpetrating it.

Through a process of co-design, work with at-risk communities to develop resources to raise their

awareness of technology-facilitated abuse and their capacity to identify and manage it.

Develop resources for children and young people to help them understand and manage the ways that technology is used in family, domestic and sexual violence.

Develop and implement capacity building initiatives to increase all women's and girls' skills in online safety and digital literacy.

Embed comprehensive and nationally coordinated respectful relationships and online safety education into the Australian curriculum across all learning stages.

Facilitate more gender-balanced science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) industries by developing initiatives to upskill and reskill women for entry opportunities and leadership pathways in STEM.

Ensure Australia is represented on, and contributes to, global initiatives and coalitions to advance the rights of women and girls and uphold and deliver on international agreements, including in relation to technology-facilitated abuse, the potential for technology to drive gender equality, and Safety by Design.

Ensure that capacity building initiatives to increase women's skills in online safety and digital literacy occur both in Australia and in our region.

Ensure government support and funding for Safety by Design and encourage industry players to implement and champion its principles, to promote a safer online environment for women and girls.

Fund the eSafety Women program on an ongoing basis.

Expand the eSafety Women program to deliver education and training to the judiciary, legal profession, and law enforcement.

Establish a new program to provide training for frontline workers and others about how children are involved in technology-facilitated abuse cases involving their parents.

Fund eSafety to evaluate and advise on technical solutions to protect victim-survivors experiencing technology-facilitated abuse.

Provide dedicated funding for Safety by Design to assist in increasing its adoption and impact.

Develop an education and awareness campaign on dating applications.

Recommendation 30

The Committee makes the additional following recommendations relating to technology-facilitated abuse:

There should be greater acknowledgement that appropriate technology use is a shared community responsibility. It is not simply a responsibility of platforms to host and police content.

There should be greater clarity around a platform's obligation to remove content, including through the Online Safety Act.

In order to open or maintain an existing social media account, customers should be required by law to identify themselves to a platform using 100 points of identification, in the same way as a person must provide identification for a mobile phone account, or to buy a mobile SIM card.

Social media platforms must provide those identifying details when requested by the eSafety Commissioner, law enforcement or as directed by a court.

The Government should consider regulating to enable law enforcement agencies to access a platform's end-to-end encrypted data, by warrant, in matters involving a threat to the physical or mental wellbeing of an individual or in cases of national security.

There should be a substantial increase in criminal and civil penalties for technology-facilitated abuse to act as a greater deterrent for errant behaviour.

All government hosted websites and applications should have readily available (and searchable) avenues where a victim-survivor of technology-facilitated abuse can seek assistance to have abusive material removed expeditiously.

Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan provide funding for programs, including in schools, to improve the financial literacy and reduce the financial abuse of women.

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories (other than Victoria) to provide funding for an increased number of financial counsellors.

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the Attorney-General take the following measures to enable the identification of financial information and facilitate superannuation splitting:

- develop an administrative mechanism to enable swift identification of financial information, including superannuation, by parties to family law proceedings or victim-survivors of family, domestic or sexual violence; and

- amend the *Family Law Act 1975* and relevant regulations to reduce the procedural and substantive complexity associated with superannuation splitting orders, including by simplifying forms required to be submitted to superannuation funds.

Recommendation 34

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, and state and territory governments, provide support for research and community awareness raising on the harmful practice of female genital mutilation/cutting, including by providing ongoing funding for the National Education Toolkit for Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting Awareness.

Recommendation 35

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government fund research into the prevalence and impact of family, domestic and sexual violence on children and young people, including:

- during the first one thousand days after birth; and

- from infancy to adolescence.

Recommendation 36

The Committee recommends that, in accordance with National Priority Two of the Fourth Action Plan, any family, domestic and sexual violence policies, programs and legislative frameworks which affect Indigenous Australians must be co-designed by Indigenous peoples along with government. Similarly, the evaluation of such policies, programs and legislative frameworks must be appropriately funded and be designed with and led by Indigenous Australians working with government.

Recommendation 37

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments work to ensure the provision of appropriate funding for culturally specific Indigenous awareness programs for all stakeholders in government, including police, service providers and the judiciary; to enable an improved understanding of the particular challenges faced by Indigenous Australians affected by family, domestic and sexual violence. This should include the options available to them for referral to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, whether they be victim-survivors or perpetrators.

Recommendation 38

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments provide additional training to police, General Practitioners, child health nurses, Remote Area Clinic nurses and any other service providers that have contact with people in rural and remote areas to assist in the early identification of family, domestic and sexual violence. Service personnel working in Indigenous communities should receive appropriate Indigenous culturally aware training.

Recommendation 39

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments explore opportunities to use technology to provide more services for victim -survivors and perpetrators in regional, rural and remote areas.

Recommendation 40

The Committee recommends that, to improve data relevant to LGBTQI communities, the Australian Government:

- develop guidelines for data collection about sexuality and gender as it relates to experiences of violence, as part of government-funded research and service provision;

- include a question about LGBTQI identification in future Commonwealth censuses; and

- fund a national research project to examine the impact of family, domestic and sexual violence affecting the LGBTQI community, and review best practice models to inform appropriate responses.

Recommendation 41

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in cooperation with the states and territories, develop and implement nationally consistent, regular and targeted education and training within mainstream services, including police and paramedics, in relation to the nature, features and dynamics of intimate partner violence and its particular impact on those from LGBTQI communities.

Recommendation 42

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provide funding for Our Watch to update its *Change the Story* framework to be inclusive, and to develop an LGBTQI specific prevention guide, highlighting how gendered violence impacts LGBTQI communities in different ways compared to the broader community.

Recommendation 43

The Committee recommends that policies and programs relating to family, domestic and sexual violence as it affects LGBTQI communities be developed in partnership between government agencies and LGBTQI organisations.

Recommendation 44

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government ensure that the next National Plan specifies people living with disability as a priority cohort, to ensure that legislation, policies and programs (across all jurisdictions) include consultation to support specific consideration of the impacts on, and needs of, these members of the community.

Recommendation 45

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, together with the states and territories, develop a national strategy, in consultation with people living with disability and their representative organisations, to improve access to comprehensive, equitable, accessible, and disability-inclusive sexual and reproductive health education and information.

Recommendation 46

The Committee recommends that National Disability Insurance Agency staff (including planners and those with decision making delegation) and disability service workers funded by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) complete mandatory training in identifying and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence affecting people with disability.

Recommendation 47

The Committee recommends that, to support the implementation of the above recommendations, the Australian Government, in cooperation with the states and territories, implement national uniform legislation establishing mandatory reporting by registered disability service providers to police and the proposed National Commissioner for the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence of all incidents of violence perpetrated against people living with disability, whether in residential care facilities or people's own homes.

Recommendation 48

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan be more inclusive of people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, their experiences and their needs.

Recommendation 49

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government focus on providing more, and more effective, culturally appropriate education on family, domestic and sexual violence to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Recommendation 50

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, and state and territory governments, provide a specifically funded resource to assist larger multicultural organisations to enhance family, domestic and sexual violence service delivery for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Recommendation 51

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and, where applicable, state and territory governments, make the following changes to immigration legislation and procedures:

- amend the *Migration Act 1958* to prevent 'consequential visa cancellation' where a victim-survivor of family violence has their visa cancelled due to domestic violence perpetrated against them by the primary visa holder;

- where a visa applicant is in crisis or temporary accommodation, create an exception to the requirement that a residential address is required to lodge a valid protection visa application;

- address official correspondence related to visa applications to each individual applicant, so that if one of them leaves the family home, the correspondence can then be re-directed to a new address;

- provide access to legal services, specialist police services and income support for a broader range of temporary visa holders who are victim-survivors of family violence, and consider revisions to migration regulations to offer legal protection to victim-survivors on temporary visas;

- broaden the definition of family violence in the *Migration Regulations 1994* to be consistent with the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* (Vic) and to ensure that people seeking to escape violence are entitled to crisis payments, regardless of their visa status;

- exempt women on temporary visas and women seeking asylum who have experienced domestic and family violence from meeting residency requirements for the purposes of access to Centrelink and Medicare while their visa is being processed; and

- review and amend the eligibility requirements for victim-survivors of violence to access financial and other crisis supports, particularly for those on temporary visas.

Recommendation 52

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan provide funding to investigate the prevalence and prevention of elder abuse, both in residential care facilities and in people's own homes, whether by facility staff, carers or family members.

Recommendation 53

The Committee recommends that the Department of Health release all de-identified data and information pertaining to incidents and allegations of sexual assault in residential aged care, including incidents where the perpetrator was alleged to have had a cognitive or mental impairment.

Recommendation 54

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government commission research into the prevalence of family, domestic and sexual violence against men and its impact on male victim-survivors. The research should include a focus on any connections between male victim-survivors and their exposure to family, domestic and sexual violence as children.

The Committee further recommends that the Department of Social Services review the adequacy of advice and referral services for men as victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence.

Recommendation 55

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan continue with the core philosophy of primary prevention being key to reducing family, domestic and sexual violence.

Recommendation 56

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, with state and territory governments, provide increased funding for developmentally appropriate primary prevention campaigns, including protective behaviour education, to inform respectful attitudes around sexual consent, with an emphasis on community education, particularly young people in schools. This should include funding for Our Watch for the entire life of the next National Plan, so as to provide the organisation with greater certainty and program continuity.

Recommendation 57

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government support national research and awarenessraising campaigns into sexist advertising and the negative effects of unequal gender representation.

Recommendation 58

Recognising that the principal drivers of family, domestic and sexual violence are gender inequality and stereotypical attitudes towards gender roles, characteristics and behaviour, together with disrespect of girls and women, the Committee recommends that the Australian Government consider establishing a gender equality strategy.

Recommendation 59

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories to ensure that age-appropriate respectful relationships are taught in all Australian schools and early education settings.

Recommendation 60

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan adopt a public health approach to preventing and managing drug and alcohol related harms experienced by families and children, involving all jurisdictions, including local governments.

Recommendation 61

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include measures to support the social services sector (including the health, mental health, disability, family and relationships, and alcohol and other drugs

sectors) to have a greater role in identifying and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence.

These measures should include but not be limited to:

- training for all staff in identifying family, domestic and sexual violence and working with perpetrators;
- measures to support increased information sharing about perpetrators; and
- measures to support a more consistent national approach to risk assessment and risk management.

Recommendation 62

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include measures to leverage the existing network of Primary Health Networks to improve the identification and response to family, domestic and sexual violence in general practices. These should include consideration of a national rollout of the *Recognise, Respond, Refer* program, subject to a positive evaluation of the current trial.

Recommendation 63

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provide additional funding to No to Violence to support the national operation of the Men's Referral Service for a further three years.

Recommendation 64

The Committee recommends that the Department of Social Services review the adequacy of referral services for perpetrators of family, domestic and sexual violence. The review should give consideration to the need for greater consistency across jurisdictions and the establishment of a single nationally coordinated intake point for perpetrators seeking behavioural change.

Recommendation 65

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments provide additional dedicated funding for perpetrator behaviour change programs.

This should include funding to trial new perpetrator intervention models, and specialised perpetrator behaviour change programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with mental illness, people with disability, adolescents, people of diverse sexuality and gender, and women.

Funded programs should be integrated with specialist family and domestic violence and other services, and should include an evaluation component consistent with the proposed national outcomes framework, which will contribute to building the evidence base on perpetrator interventions.

This funding should not be delivered through reductions in funding to services for victim-survivors.

Recommendation 66

To support an increase in the number of perpetrators attending and completing behaviour change programs, the Committee recommends that:

- the Australian Government and state and territory governments establish a centralised online register of perpetrator intervention programs; and
- state and territory governments provide funding for perpetrator court support workers to enable offenders to be referred to appropriate behaviour change programs and other support services.

Recommendation 67

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include measures to support increased use of technology in delivering perpetrator behaviour change programs, where it is safe to do so. These measures should aim to support programs including but not limited to:

- programs for specific cohorts in sparsely populated regional, rural and remote areas who would not otherwise have access to specialised programs; and

alternatives to group-based programs for perpetrators for whom such programs are not appropriate.

Recommendation 68

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments provide dedicated funding to perpetrator behaviour change program providers and specialist family and domestic violence services to deliver support services for partners, ex-partners, children, and other family members of perpetrators enrolled in perpetrator behaviour change programs.

Recommendation 69

The Committee recommends that the Department of Social Services lead the development of a national outcomes framework for evidence-based perpetrator behaviour change programs.

Recommendation 70

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, working with states and territories where appropriate, provide funding for research on the backgrounds, characteristics, and recidivism rates of perpetrators of family violence with a view to informing future policy and practice in relation to perpetrator interventions. This should include research on adolescents, women, and children who perpetrate violence against their parents, as well as men.

The Committee further recommends that the Australian Government consider the development of an annual national, population level survey on the perpetration of family violence.

Recommendation 71

The Committee recommends that state and territory governments work with local community -based organisations to design and implement place-based models of justice reinvestment, similar to that used in the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project, as a matter of priority across Australia.

Recommendation 72

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments commit to increasing the overall baseline funding for specialist family and domestic violence service providers.

Recommendation 73

The Committee recognises the importance of the provision and availability of supportive housing models to assist victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence to find safety for themselves and their children. The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments collaborate to identify programs that could be implemented across the country, and ensure that specialist and 'wrap-around' support services have access to dedicated, long-term funding.

Recommendation 74

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments collaborate in the provision of affordable housing solutions in Australia to meet long-term needs for those made homeless by family, domestic and sexual violence, and to address the backlog of victim -survivors who cannot access affordable housing.

Recommendation 75

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments:

- consider implementing policies to remove perpetrators rather than victim-survivors in cases of family, domestic and sexual violence, where this can be achieved without threat to the safety of victim-survivors; and

- consider funding for emergency accommodation for perpetrators to prevent victim -survivors being forced to flee their homes or continue residing in a violent home.

Recommendation 76

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in conjunction with state and territory governments, resource additional research regarding the intersection between mental health and family, domestic and sexual violence. There should be a particular focus on the lived experiences of victim - survivors and the children of victim-survivors who have experienced both family violence and mental health issues.

Recommendation 77

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in partnership with the New South Wales Government, fund a trial program of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre's Women's Trauma Recovery Centre. This funding could be part of a pilot program over a five-year period with a view, subject to positive evaluation, to rolling out similar services around the country.

Recommendation 78

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments provide additional funding on a 50-50 basis to community legal centres for a minimum of five years to assist victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. Such funding should be tied to appropriate reporting mechanisms and performance indicators, including but not limited to the full disclosure of funding provided to community legal centres by the states and territories.

Recommendation 79

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments provide funding on a 50-50 basis to legal aid commissions and community legal centres to engage more social workers experienced in family violence, child protection and family law matters.

Recommendation 80

The Committee recommends that, subject to positive evaluation of the Legal Aid Commission Small Claims Property Trials, the Australian Government along with states and territory governments fund on a 50-50 basis the establishment of a small property mediation program.

Recommendation 81

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in collaboration with state and territory governments, implement a national electronic database of domestic violence orders to support the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme. The database should include provisional, interim, and final domestic violence orders and should record breaches of orders.

In addition, the Australian Government should:

- work with state and territory governments to develop standardised training material to be delivered to relevant staff alongside the introduction of the database; and

- consider whether the database should be accessible by specialist family and domestic violence service providers in addition to courts and police.

Recommendation 82

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in consultation with state and territory governments, expand the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme to include orders issued under the *Family Law Act 1975* and orders issued under state and territory child protection legislation.

Recommendation 83

The Committee recommends that the Department of Social Services commission research on the potential benefits and risks to victim-survivor safety of the establishment of a publicly accessible register of convicted family, domestic and sexual violence offenders.

Recommendation 84

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government work with the states and territories to adopt a variant of the United Kingdom's 'Silent Solution' for silent calls for police assistance.

Recommendation 85

The Committee recommends that the states and territories increase criminal penalties for breaches of apprehended or domestic violence orders, and ensure that the judiciary receives further training about the importance of security to victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence and their families.

Recommendation 86

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government and state and territory governments jointly develop a mechanism to provide resources to victim-survivors to assist them to leave their home and resettle to escape a violent relationship. This should include examining ways in which the Commonwealth may recover the costs from the perpetrator.

Recommendation 87

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, in conjunction with state and territory governments, ensure that the next National Plan recognises that family, domestic and sexual violence impacts upon workplaces.

Recommendation 88

The Committee recommends that the next National Plan include greater emphasis and specific detail on the crucial role of work and economic equality in the advancement of gender equality and the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence.



Australian Government
Department of Social Services



Sample questions to be hosted through DSS Engage

Are you responding as an individual or as a representative of an organisation?

☐ I'm responding as an individual ☐ I'm responding on behalf of an organisation

Questionnaire A will automatically populate for respondents who identify as 'an individual', while respondents who identify as 'responding on behalf of an organisation' will be directed to **Questionnaire B**

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. Your responses will help us to develop a strategy for reducing and preventing family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia into the future.

Questionnaire A – Individual Response

A.1. What do you think are the major issues for people experiencing family, domestic, and sexual violence when they try to find support?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

☐ I would like to skip this question

A.2. What do you think are the major issues regarding services for people experiencing family, domestic, and sexual violence?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

☐ I would like to skip this question

A.3. How relevant are the below outcomes and priorities for a national strategy on preventing family, domestic and sexual violence?

Scale (note: each priority to be ranked individually):

5	4	3	2	1
Highly relevant	Relevant	Neutral	Less relevant	Not relevant

☐ I would like to skip this question

☐ Communities are safe and free from violence

☐ Relationships are respectful

<input type="checkbox"/>	Indigenous communities are empowered to strengthen their own responses to family, domestic and sexual violence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Services meet the needs of people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Systems supporting people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence work effectively together
<input type="checkbox"/>	Justice responses are timely and effective
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perpetrators are held to account and perpetrator intervention systems enable accountability.
<input type="checkbox"/>	People who experience family, domestic and sexual violence are heard and have their experiences acknowledged.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Building the evidence base for family, domestic and sexual violence around what works in support.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strengthen the evidence base, monitoring and reporting through a coordinated system.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Build on primary prevention initiatives and research to promote safe relationships and build gender equitable values.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Understanding individual experiences of violence across diverse groups and individuals

A.4. Are there any other priorities that would make a big difference to preventing family, domestic and sexual violence beyond those listed in Question 2?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

☐ I would like to skip this question

A.5. What improvements or useful responses have you seen in the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence? ☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

☐ I would like to skip this question

A.6. Is there anything that could be improved to help prevent and address family, domestic, and sexual violence in Australia?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

☐ I would like to skip this question

A.7. What are the most important things we can do to support people who are experiencing family, sexual and domestic violence?

Scale (note: each priority to be ranked individually):

5	4	3	2	1
Highly relevant	Relevant	Neutral	Less relevant	Not relevant

☐ I would like to skip this question

☐ A clinical focus on mental health and emotional support which is accessible and affordable

☐ Community support

☐ Support from employers

☐ Safe housing

☐ Financial security

☐ Being heard, supported and better understood by other people in the community

☐ Receiving a response from authorities which is compassionate, informed and does not cause additional trauma (an educated, trauma-informed response, i.e. not over or under reporting)

<input type="checkbox"/> Removing perpetrators from victim/survivors' homes
<input type="checkbox"/> Perpetrator intervention programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving victim/survivors to a new area
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialist, trauma informed counselling programs for victims/survivors of Domestic Family Sexual Violence
<input type="checkbox"/> Services and programs delivered to perpetrators including counselling/behaviour change programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Programs to support people experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence returning to or in the workforce
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual counselling
<input type="checkbox"/> Installing home security systems and/or enabling victim/survivors to access personal alarms
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

A.8. If you could recommend up to three priorities for a national strategy on preventing family, domestic and sexual violence, what would they be ?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question

A.9. Is there anything else you would like the next National Plan to include or address?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question

A.10. Which of the following statements best describes you? [Multiple choice]

<input type="checkbox"/> I have personally experienced family, domestic and/or sexual violence
<input type="checkbox"/> I have a loved one / friend who has experienced family, domestic and/or sexual violence
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm a support worker / work directly with people who experience family, domestic and/or sexual violence
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm an advocate / work for a peak association or service provider
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm employed by federal, state or territory, or local government
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy or research
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify if you wish) [open text]

A.11. Which state or territory do you live in? [Multiple choice]

<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/> Australian Capital Territory
<input type="checkbox"/> New South Wales
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Territory
<input type="checkbox"/> Queensland
<input type="checkbox"/> South Australia
<input type="checkbox"/> Tasmania

<input type="checkbox"/>	Victoria
<input type="checkbox"/>	Western Australia/ regional WA

A.12. Do you identify as any of the following? <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tick all that apply</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Torres Strait Islander
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
<input type="checkbox"/>	LGBTIQA+
<input type="checkbox"/>	A person with disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify if you wish) <i>[open text]</i>

A.13. Which age bracket do you belong to? <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Tick one (1) option</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 18
<input type="checkbox"/>	19-29
<input type="checkbox"/>	30-39
<input type="checkbox"/>	40-49
<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59
<input type="checkbox"/>	60-69
<input type="checkbox"/>	70+

A.14. What gender do you identify with?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transgender
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender non-binary
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please let us know if we left anyone or anything out here) <i>[open text]</i>

A.15. Postcode: (optional)	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

That's it, you're all done. Thank you for completing our questionnaire. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and opinions. We will use this information, along with the latest research evidence and the findings of the House Standing

Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence, to provide recommendations to the Government to inform the priorities and direction of the next National Plan.

If you have any questions or feedback about this questionnaire, please contact the Department of Social Services via nationalplanfeedback@dss.gov.au.

Questionnaire B – Organisational Response

B.1. What does your organisation see as the major issues for people experiencing family, domestic, and sexual violence?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

☐ I would like to skip this question

B.2. How relevant are the below outcomes and priorities for a strategy to prevent family, domestic and sexual violence for all Australians?

Scale (note: each priority to be ranked individually):

5	4	3	2	1
Highly relevant	Relevant	Neutral	Less relevant	Not relevant

☐ I would like to skip this question

☐ Communities are safe and free from violence

☐ Relationships are respectful

☐ Indigenous communities are empowered to strengthen their own responses to family, domestic and sexual violence

☐ Services meet the needs of people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence

☐ Systems supporting people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence work effectively together

☐ Justice responses are timely and effective

☐ Perpetrators are held to account and perpetrator intervention systems enable accountability.

☐ People who experience family, domestic and sexual violence are heard and have their experiences acknowledged

☐ Building the evidence base for family, domestic and sexual violence around what works in support.

☐ Strengthen the evidence base, monitor and reporting through a coordinated system.

☐ Build on primary prevention initiatives and research to promote safe relationships and build gender equitable values.

☐ Understanding individual experiences of violence across diverse groups and individuals

B.3. Are there any other priorities that your organisation feels would make a difference to prevent family, domestic and sexual violence beyond those listed in Question 2?

☒ Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)

B.4. What are the most important things we can do to support people who are experiencing family, sexual and domestic violence?

Scale (note: each priority to be ranked individually):

5	4	3	2	1
Highly relevant	Relevant	Neutral	Less relevant	Not relevant

☐ I would like to skip this question

☐ Psychological and emotional support which is accessible and affordable

☐ Community support

☐ Support from employers

<input type="checkbox"/> Safe housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial security
<input type="checkbox"/> Being heard, supported by others and better understood by others
<input type="checkbox"/> Receiving an appropriate response from authorities (an educated, trauma-informed response, i.e. not over or under reporting)
<input type="checkbox"/> Removing perpetrators from victim/survivors' homes
<input type="checkbox"/> Perpetrator intervention programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving victim/survivors to a new area
<input type="checkbox"/> Specialist counselling programs for victim/survivors
<input type="checkbox"/> Counselling programs for perpetrators
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual counselling
<input type="checkbox"/> Installing home security systems and/or getting personal alarms
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

B.5. What is working well to prevent family, domestic, and sexual violence in Australia ? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question

B.6. What should be done to improve the prevention of family, domestic, and sexual violence in Australia? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question

B.7. If you could recommend three priorities for a strategy to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence for all Australians, what would it be? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question
B.8. Is there anything else you would like us to know? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Write your response below (Maximum 250 words)
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question

B.9. Which of the following statements best describes your organisation? [Multiple choice]
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/> Family, domestic and/or sexual violence service (local community)
<input type="checkbox"/> Family, domestic and/or sexual violence service (state-wide)
<input type="checkbox"/> Family, domestic and/or sexual violence service (national)
<input type="checkbox"/> State/territory government
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal government
<input type="checkbox"/> Service for children and/or young people
<input type="checkbox"/> First responder (e.g. police, ambulance)
<input type="checkbox"/> Research organisation

<input type="checkbox"/>	Education facility (e.g. university)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Health (e.g. hospital, GP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing/Homelessness Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Corporate Sector
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal or judicial
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify if you wish) <i>[open text]</i>

B.10. Which state or territory does your organisation operate in? <i>[Multiple choice]</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/>	Australian Capital Territory
<input type="checkbox"/>	New South Wales
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Territory
<input type="checkbox"/>	Queensland
<input type="checkbox"/>	South Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tasmania
<input type="checkbox"/>	Victoria
<input type="checkbox"/>	Western Australia
<input type="checkbox"/>	National

B.11. Does your organisation specialise in working with specific cohorts? <input type="checkbox"/> Tick all that apply	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/>	People who have experienced violence (victim/survivors)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Torres Strait Islander
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural and Linguistically Diverse
<input type="checkbox"/>	LGBTIQA+
<input type="checkbox"/>	People with disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women
<input type="checkbox"/>	Men
<input type="checkbox"/>	Children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Young People
<input type="checkbox"/>	Age care
<input type="checkbox"/>	Perpetrators
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of the above
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify if you wish) <i>[open text]</i>

B.12. Does your organisation specialise in any of the below types of support service? <i>Multiple choice (select all that are relevant)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I would like to skip this question
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual violence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family violence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Domestic violence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Crisis response (e.g. first responders)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety and wellbeing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial counselling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Legal services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify if you wish) <i>[open text]</i>

B.13. Your organisation's Postcode: <i>(optional)</i>				

That's it, you're all done. Thank you for completing our questionnaire. We appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and opinions. We will use this information, along with the latest research evidence and the findings of the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence, to provide recommendations to the government to inform the priorities and direction of the next National Plan.

If you have any questions or feedback about this questionnaire, please contact the Department of Social Services via nationalplanfeedback@dss.gov.au.

Note: All participants provided their consent to be individually named as having participated in the Consultation at the outset of each workshop. Following each workshop, an email was sent to all participants which included a reminder to advise if they did not want to be individually named in this Report. There were 21 participants who nominated not to be named and they have not been included in the list provided here.

Participants

1. **Abby Wild**, BehaviourWorks
2. **Adriene Picone**, Tasmanian Council of Social Services
3. **Alexandra Craig**, Intellectual Disability Rights Service, Solicitor
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5. **Alina Thomas**, Engender Equality
6. **Alison O'Neill**, Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania
7. **Allison Cann**, SafeChoices Tasmania
8. **Allison Cox**, Take Two, Berry Street
9. **Amanda Dashwood**, North Western Mental Health, Royal Melbourne Hospital
10. **Amanda Morris**, Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia
11. **Ana Flavia Cavalcante Borges Jelinic**, University of Queensland
12. **Assoc Professor Anastasia Powell**, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
13. **Andrew Kos**, Mission Australia
14. **Angela Ryder**, Aboriginal Services, Relationships WA
15. **Ani Lamont**, Our Watch
16. **Ann Wunsch**, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner
17. **Anna Davis**, Office of Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Reduction
18. **Anna McLeod**, Canberra Health Services
19. **Annabelle Daniel**, Women's Community Shelters
20. **Anne Crvelin**, Department of Communities
21. **Anne Freestone**, Department of Communities and Justice
22. **Anne Hollonds**, National Children's Commissioner
23. **Anne Moore**, Lucy Saw
24. **Dr Anne Summers AO**, University of Technology Sydney
25. **Arina Aoina**, Newman Women's Refuge
26. **Ash Broom**, Queensland AIDS Council
27. **Ashlee Donohue**, Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Corporation Women's Centre
28. **Associate Professor Astghik Mavisakalyan**, Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre
29. **Astrid Perry**, Settlement Services International
30. **Audrey Walker**, Our Watch
31. **Aunty Lisa Taylor**, AIDS Council of New South Wales
32. **Aunty Patricia (Pattie) Celestine Lees**, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Children and Youth Services
33. **Awhiora Nia Nia**, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation
34. **Ben Bjarnesen**, LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Foundation
35. **Ben Gauntlett**, Australian Human Rights Commission
36. **Bernadette McCartney**, Bethany Men's Intervention Centre, Victoria

37. **Beth Lovell**, National Legal Aid, NT Legal Aid Commission
38. **Bev Jowle**, Department of Communities
39. **Bianca Russell**, Australian Red Cross
40. **Bonnie Mellor**, Commissioner for Children and Young People Queensland
41. **Bonney Corbin**, Australian Women's Health Network
42. **Professor Bonwyn Carlson**, Macquarie University
43. **Brad Chilcott**, White Ribbon
44. **Breanna Wright**, BehaviourWorks
45. **Brian Sullivan**, Central Queensland University
46. **Brianna Curtis**, AIDS Council of New South Wales
47. **Assoc Prof Bridget Harris**, Queensland University of Technology
48. **Brodie Evans**, Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Qld
49. **Bronwyn McNally**, Education Directorate
50. **Brydie Clarke**, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
51. **Caitlin Boveri**, Queensland Justice
52. **Cara Ellickson**, Gender Consortium at Flinders University
53. **Carin Lavery**, Telco Together Foundation
54. **Carla Ianni**, Westpac Group
55. **Carmel O'Brien**, Psychrespect
56. **Carol Kaplanian**, Women Health and Newborn Services
57. **Carol Ronken**, Bravehearts
58. **Caroline Baum**, Older Women's Network NSW
59. **Caroline Morrissey**, Office of Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Reduction
60. **Caroline Parsons**, Solo Legal
61. **Carolyn Gillespie**, Thorne Harbour Health
62. **Caron Irwin**, Department of Communities
63. **Catherine Coletsis**, Government of WA
64. **Catherine Hawkins**, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office For Women
65. **Catherine Fitzpatrick**, Westpac Group
66. **Catherine McAlpine**, Inclusion Australia
67. **Catherine Webber**, NSW Department of Communities and Justice
68. **Professor Cathy Humphries**, University of Melbourne
69. **Catherine Liddle**, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
70. **Dr. Cathy Kezelman AM**, Blueknot Foundation
71. **Chanel Contos**
72. **Chay Brown**, Equality Institute
73. **Cheryl Munzel**, Centre for Non Violence
74. **Christine Foran**, Domestic Violence NSW
75. **Christine Robinson**, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre, NSW
76. **Cindy Torrens**, North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
77. **Clinton Schultz**, Marumali Consultations
78. **Coral Ross**, Australian Gender Equality Council
79. **Corinne Dobson**, UnitingCare Australia
80. **Daisy Burgoyne**, Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT
81. **Dale Wakefield**, Former NT Minister for Territory Families

82. **Damian Green**, Stopping Family Violence
83. **Dr Danielle Nockolds**, Commissioner for Children and Young People WA
84. **Dannielle Miller**, Enlighten Education and Goodfellas
85. **Danny Schwarz**, Playgroup Victoria
86. **David Alexander**, North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service
87. **David Wragge**, The Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Group
88. **Deborah Byrne**, Brain Injury Tasmania, National Disability Service Tasmania
89. **Professor Deborah Loxton**, Centre for Women's Health Research
90. **Deen Potter**, Magistrate
91. **Delia Donovan**, DVNSW
92. **Denele Crozier**, VAW Women's Health NSW
93. **Desmond Campbell**, Social Ventures Australia
94. **Devon Cuimara**, Aboriginal Males Healing Centre
95. **Dianah Brown**, Safe Work Australia
96. **Diane (Di) Macleod**, Queensland Sexual Assault Network Representative
97. **Dianne Gipey**, Salvation Army
98. **Dixie Link-Gordon**, Women's Legal Services NSW
99. **Professor Donna Chung**, Curtin University
100. **Donna Pearce**, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
101. **Donna Shkalla**, UnitingCare Queensland
102. **Dorinda Cox**, Greens Western Australia
103. **Dorothy Bloomfield**, Counsellor, Adelaide
104. **Ela Stewart**, InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
105. **Elena Campbell**, Centre for Innovative Justice, RMIT
106. **Elena Ferguson**, Northern Settlement Services Limited
107. **Elham Behroozi**, Migrant Women's Support Program
108. **Elise Phillips**, No To Violence
109. **Elizabeth (Betty) Anne Taylor**, Red Rose Foundation
110. **Elizabeth Brayshaw**, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office For Women
111. **Elizabeth Broderick AO**, Elizabeth Broderick and co.
112. **Elizabeth Evans**, Family Court and Federal Circuit Court
113. **Elly Raffo**, Bankstown Domestic Violence Service, Fairfield Staying Home Leaving Violence Service
114. **Eloise Layard**, AIDS Council of New South Wales
115. **Emily Carter**, Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre
116. **Emily Chauvel Byrne**, The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
117. **Emma Gierschick OAM**
118. **Emma Iwinska**, Women's Health Queensland
119. **Erica Di Muzio**, Family Court and Federal Circuit Court
120. **Erin Gillen**, Our Watch
121. **Erin Price**, Good Shepherd
122. **Estelle Clarke**
123. **Esther Nambiar**, Domestic Violence Legal Service, NT Government
124. **Dr Evita March**, Federation University Australia
125. **Faith Makwanya**, Galiwinku Women Space

126. **Fay Mound**, UnitingCare Australia
127. **Felicite Black**, Women's Health Family Services
128. **Felicity Fast**, Department of Criminal Justice Services
129. **Judge Felicity Hampel**, County Court VIC
130. **Fiona Dowsley**, Crime Statistics Agency of Victoria
131. **Fiona Looney**, Relationships Australia
132. **Fiona Mason**, Tennant Creek Women's Shelter
133. **Fiona Williamson**, Policy and Research, No to Violence (NTV)
134. **Frances Haynes**, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia
135. **Frances Quan Farrant**, People with Disability Australia
136. **Freya O'Brien**, Office for Women, Community Services Directorate
137. **Gabrielle Beard**, National Indigenous Australians Agency
138. **Gabrielle Canny**, National Legal Aid, Family Law Working Group, Legal Services Commission of South Australia
139. **Gail Thorn**, Women's Legal Service NSW
140. **Gaitee Taseer**, Legal Aid ACT
141. **Gaith Krayem**, Muslim Women Australia
142. **Gauri Kapoor**, Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health
143. **Gayatri Nair**, Economic Abuse Reference Group NSW
144. **Gayle Tourish**, Centacare
145. **Geiza Stow**, Mura Kosker Sorority Inc
146. **Dr Gemma McKibbin**, The University of Melbourne
147. **Genevieve Thornton**, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
148. **Georgia Flynn**, Community Investment team, Commonwealth Bank Australia
149. **Georgia Hagias**, Top End Womens' Legal Service
150. **Georgina Heydon**, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
151. **Georgina Sutherland**, University of Melbourne
152. **Professor Gigi Foster**, University of New South Wales
153. **Ginger Gorman**, Broad Agenda, Seriously Social
154. **Gloria Larman**, Women's Justice Network
155. **Grace Tame**
156. **Gop Gai**, Australian Red Cross
157. **Gulnara Abbsasova**, Harmony Alliance and Migration Council Australia
158. **Gwen Cherne**, Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner, Department of Veterans' Affairs
159. **Harriet Ketley**, Law Society of NSW
160. **Hayden Moon**
161. **Hayley Boxall**, Australian Institute of Criminology
162. **Hayley Foster**, Rape Domestic Violence Services NSW
163. **Heather Clarke**, Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault
164. **Heather Douglas**, University of Melbourne
165. **Heather Nancarrow**
166. **Heather Sculthorpe**, Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
167. **Heidi Ehrat**, Office for Women
168. **Helen Bolton**, The Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre
169. **Prof Helen Cahill**, University of Melbourne

170. **Helen Campbell**, Women's Legal Services NSW
171. **Helen Connolly**, Commissioner for Children and Young People, SA
172. **Helen Kleper**, Energy Australia
173. **Helen Matthews**, Women's Legal Service Victoria
174. **Helen Silvia**, Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre
175. **Henrietta Barclay**, Women's Legal Service
176. **Hilary Glaisher**, Domestic Violence Victoria
177. **Holly Brennan**, Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network, Centre Against Domestic Abuse
178. **Jacinta Starceвич**, Domestic Violence Assist
179. **Jack Picker**, Department of Premier and Cabinet
180. **Adj Associate Professor Jackie Wood**, Innovation and Health System Reform
181. **Jackson Fairchild**, Rainbow Health Victoria, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society
182. **Jacqui Watt**, No to Violence
183. **Dr Jacqui Hendriks**, Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health, Discipline of Health Promotion & Sexology, Curtin University
184. **Jaquie Palavra**, National Legal Aid, NT Legal Aid Commission
185. **Jaime Currie**, South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation
186. **Jananie Wiliam FIAA**, ANU College of Business & Economics
187. **Jane Gold**, Women's Health NSW
188. **Jane Kern**, Bank Australia
189. **Jane Lloyd**, Tennant Creek Women's Shelter
190. **Jane Rosengrave**, Reinforce
191. **Dr Jane Wangmann**, University of Technology Sydney
192. **Janene Cootes**, Intellectual Disability Rights Service
193. **Janine Young**, Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW
194. **Jacqueline King**, Council of Unions
195. **Jen Hargrave**, Women with Disabilities Victoria
196. **Jennie Child**, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria
197. **Jennifer Kingwell**, Embolden SA
198. **Jennifer Snell**, UnitingWA
199. **Jenny Bertram**, Launceston Women's Shelter
200. **Jenny Johnson**, Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
201. **Jenny Willox**, Department of Health and Human Services
202. **Jenny Wing**, Australian Childhood Foundation
203. **Jess Hill**, journalist and author
204. **Jessica Oxlade**, ESafety Women's team, ESafety Commissioner
205. **Jessica Schulman**, The Immigration Advice and Rights Centre
206. **Jessica Szwarcbord**, Djirra
207. **Jill Maxwell**, Sexual Assault Support Service
208. **Jo Flanagan**, Women's Health Tasmania
209. **Jo Pride**, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
210. **Joanna Superina**, Crime Command NSW Police
211. **Joanne Sheehan-Paterson**, Mallee Domestic Violence Services
212. **Joanne Noakes**, Women's Justice Network

213. **Jodie Sloan**, The Women's Safety Services SA
214. **Joe Ball**, Switchboard Victoria
215. **Jonathan Bedloe**, Men's Resources Tasmania
216. **Joseph McDowall**, CREATE
217. **Josephine Rechichi**, Finding Safety
218. **Emeritus Professor Judy Atkinson**, We Al-li
219. **Jules Ngahere**, Department of Health
220. **Juliana Nkrumah AM**, Settlement Services International
221. **Juliana Marshall**, Central Australian Women's Legal Service
222. **Julie Oberin**, The Women's Services Network
223. **Julie Pert**, Open Arms - Veterans and Family Counselling NSW
224. **Julie Zezovska**, DV and Child Safety Branch at Home Affairs
225. **Kai Noonan**, Women and Girls Emergency Centre
226. **Karen Bentley**, Australian Women Against Violence Alliance, WESNET
227. **Karen Field**, Drummond Street
228. **Karen Freeman**, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research Publications
229. **Karen Hogan**, Sexual Assault Services Victoria
230. **Karen Webb**, Department of Communities
231. **Karen Williams**, Family Violence Network of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Doctors against Violence Against Women
232. **Karyn Joan Walsh**, Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council
233. **Kate Colvin**, Homelessness Australia, Everybody is Home
234. **Kate Csillag**, Solace Consulting
235. **Dr Kate Ferguson**, Sexual Assault Resource Centre
236. **Kate MacLennan**, Office of Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Reduction
237. **Kate Phillips**, Women's Health West Victoria
238. **Kate Russell**, Australian Capital Territory Health
239. **Katherine Taylor**, Safe Work Australia
240. **Kathleen Maltzahn**, Sexual Assault Services Victoria
241. **Kathy Blitz-Cokis**, Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre
242. **Kathy Michaels**, Corrective Services NSW
243. **Katrina Dee**, National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence
244. **Katy Welch**, Circle Green Community Legal
245. **Kayelene Kerr**, eSafeKids
246. **Keertan Samra**, Women's Legal Services North Queensland
247. **Kelda Opperman**, Zonta House
248. **Kelly Grafton**, Department of Veterans' Affairs
249. **Kelly Wrightstone**, Allambee Counselling
250. **Kelly-Ann Tansley**, Brisbane Domestic Violence Service
251. **Kelsey Hegarty**, Safer Families Centre of Research Excellence, University of Melbourne
252. **Kendall Field**, Disability Advocacy & Complaints Service SA
253. **Kendall Galbraith**, RRR Women's Network
254. **Kerryn Pennell**, Orygen
255. **Khyaati Acharya**, Domestic Violence Victoria
256. **Kimberley Hunter**, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice

257. **Kirsty Windeyer**, Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety
258. **Kirsty Bisset**, Voices for Change
259. **Kristin Diemer**, Melbourne Research Alliance to End Violence Against Women and Their Children
260. **Kudzayi Nhatarikwa**, Australian Red Cross
261. **Kwame Selormey**, Melaleuca Refugee Centre
262. **Kyalie Moore**, No To Violence
263. **Dr Kylie Cripps**, UNSW
264. **Kylie Laughton**, Sexual Assault Resource Centre
265. **Kylie McGrath**, Refugee and Immigration Legal Service
266. **Kylie Stephen**, Queensland Justice
267. **Larissa Ellis**, Women's Safety Service of Central Australia
268. **Assoc Professor Laura Tarzia**, University of Melbourne
269. **Leanne Barron**, Starick
270. **Leanne Ho**, Economic Justice Australia
271. **Leanne McClean**, Commissioner for Children and Young People in Tasmania
272. **Leesa Hooker**, LaTrobe University
273. **Leigh Brown**, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
274. **Lena Van Hale**, Magenta
275. **Leonie Stewart**, Tasmanian Women's Council
276. **Professor Liam Smith**, BehaviourWorks, Monash University
277. **Liana Buchanan**, Commissioner for Children and Young People in Victoria
278. **Libby Eltringham**, Sexual Assault Services Victoria
279. **Dr Libby Hindmarsh**, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
280. **Magistrate Linda Bradford-Morgan**, QLD
281. **Lisa Elridge**, Department of Justice and Community Safety
282. **Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver**, University of Sydney
283. **Lisa O'Neill**, Family Court and Federal Circuit Court
284. **Lisa Pusey**, Champions of Change Coalition
285. **Livia Stanton**, Domestic Violence NSW
286. **Liza Balmer**, NPY Women's Council
287. **Liza Carroll**, Queensland Housing, Public Works and Innovation
288. **Liza Holroyd**, DSS
289. **Liz Collingnon**, Customer & Corporate Relations Chair, Westpac Group
290. **Liz Snell**, Women's Legal Services NSW
291. **Lizette Twisleton**, No To Violence
292. **Louise Milner**, Women's Legal Service Queensland
293. **Louise O'Connor**, NPY Women's Council
294. **Lulu Milne**, Women's Legal Service Queensland
295. **Lynda Andrews**, NSW Health
296. **Lynda Memery**, Womens Legal Service Victoria
297. **Lynne Clune**, Department of Social Services
298. **Maddy Liiv**, AIDS Council of New South Wales
299. **Maeve Kennedy**, Children and Young People with Disability Australia
300. **Mali Hermans**, Women With Disabilities Australia
301. **Mama Alto**, Transgender Victoria

302. **Mandy Kalyvas**, Education Directorate
303. **Marcia Neave AO**
304. **Maree Corbo**, Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group
305. **Maree Crabbe**, Australian Violence Prevention Project
306. **Marina Carmen**, Rainbow Health Victoria (ARCSHS)
307. **Marise Karunaratne**, Uniting Communities SA
308. **Marluce Silva Peters**, Doris Women's Refuge Inc
309. **Mary Karras**, Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW
310. **Clr Mary Knowles**, Local Government Association of Tasmania
311. **Matt Tilley**, Curtin University
312. **Matt Tyler**, Jesuit Social Services
313. **Matthew Defina**, The Man Cave
314. **Megan Bonetti**, Multicultural Australia
315. **Megan Boshell**, Mission Australia
316. **Megan Giles**, Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce
317. **Megan Howitt**, Department of Health
318. **Melalie Collie**, Our Watch
319. **Melanie Brown**, Gippsland Family Violence Alliance, Gippsland Women's Health
320. **Melissa O'Reilly**, Our Watch
321. **Melissa Perry**, Communicare
322. **Melissa Watson**, Canberra Health Services
323. **Mergho Rey**, Women's Safety Services SA
324. **Meriki Onus**, IndigenousX
325. **Michael Coutts Trotter**, NSW Department of Communities and Justice
326. **Associate Prof Michael Flood**, Queensland University of Technology
327. **Michael Hovane**, Legal Aid WA
328. **Associate Prof Michael Salter**, University of New South Wales
329. **Michael Torres**, Darwin Indigenous Men's Service, Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Corporation
330. **Michaela Rhode**, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
331. **Michal Morris**, InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
332. **Michelle Commandeur**, The Australia and New Zealand Banking Group
333. **Mike Rowe**, Department of Communities
334. **Moo Baulch**, Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre
335. **Morgan Carpenter**, Intersex Human Rights Australia
336. **Morgan Cataldo**, Berry Street
337. **Murray Gatt**, Youth Action
338. **Natasha Mann**, Justice NSW
339. **Natasha Mikitas**, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia
340. **Nemat Kharboutli**, Muslim Women Australia
341. **Nene Brandt**, Queensland Corrective Services
342. **Prof Ngiane Brown**, National Mental Health Commission Advisory Board
343. **Nicki Petrou**, NT Working Women's Centre
344. **Nicky Davies**, National Legal Aid
345. **Nicole Donaldson**, Family Policy Division Department of Veterans' Affairs
346. **Dr Nicole Highet**, Centre of Perinatal Excellence

- 347. **Nicole Lambert**, National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence
- 348. **Assoc Professor Nicola Henry**, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
- 349. **Nicole Lee**
- 350. **Nicolette Solomon**, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care
- 351. **Nikki Bath**, LBQTIQA+ Health
- 352. **Nina Catovic**, National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum
- 353. **Nina Levin**, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- 354. **Noelene Jorgensen**, Wadeye Women's Safe House
- 355. **Olivia Greenwell**, Victoria Legal Aid
- 356. **Pam Bubryscki**, HOPE Community Services
- 357. **Pam Geoghegan**, Reinforce Inc
- 358. **Paris Dounoukos**, Alcohol and Drug Foundation
- 359. **Paul Gray**, Children's Framework Leadership Group
- 360. **Paul McGorrery**, Deakin Law School
- 361. **Paul Watson**, Family Violence Command, Victoria Police
- 362. **Penny Drysdale**, Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
- 363. **Peta Forder**, University of Newcastle
- 364. **Petrina Slater**, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation
- 365. **Philippa Davis**, Women's Legal Service NSW
- 366. **Pip Davis**, Women's Legal Services NSW
- 367. **Priscilla Jamieson**, Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre
- 368. **Hon Pru Goward**, Western Sydney University
- 369. **Prudence Boylan**, Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- 370. **Professor Rachael Field**, Bond University
- 371. **Rachael Green**, Department of Health and Human Services
- 372. **Rachael Pliner**, Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria
- 373. **Rachel Roberts**, Aboriginal Health and Research Council
- 374. **Professor Rae Cooper**, University of Sydney
- 375. **Dr Rae Kaspiw**, Australian Institute of Family Studies
- 376. **Rebecca Cassells**, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre
- 377. **Rebecca Reynolds**, Queensland Council for LGBTI Health
- 378. **Renata Field**, Domestic Violence NSW
- 379. **Renee Bowker**, Telco Together Foundation
- 380. **Dr Renee Fiolet**, Deakin University
- 381. **Dr Renee Hamilton**, Safety and Wellbeing, Universities Australia
- 382. **Dr Rick Brown**, Australian Institute of Criminology
- 383. **Robert Skeen**, Aboriginal Health and Research Council of Australia
- 384. **Rod West**, Centrecare Inc
- 385. **Rodney Vlasis**, Safer Families
- 386. **Rory Gallagher**, Behavioural Insights, Nudge Uni
- 387. **Rosalie O'Neale**, Office of the eSafety Commissioner
- 388. **Ross Pinney**, Australian Red Cross
- 389. **Roxana Zulfacar**, Legal Aid NSW
- 390. **Russell Hooper**, No to Violence
- 391. **Russell Vickery**, Rainbow Health

392. **Sadia Choudhury**, Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change
393. **Sally Goldner**, Transgender Victoria
394. **Sally Grimsley-Ballard**, Domestic Violence Service Management
395. **Sally Mills**, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
396. **Sally Stevenson**, Illawarra Women's Health Centre
397. **Samatha Livesley**, Office of Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Reduction
398. **Sammy Cooper**, Community Legal Centre Brisbane
399. **Sana Ashraf**, Harmony Alliance
400. **Professor Sandra Creamer AM**, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
401. **Sandra Wright**, Settlement Council of Australia
402. **Professor Sandy O'Sullivan**, Macquarie University
403. **Sanjuga Vas Dev**, Office for Women, Department of Human Services
404. **Sara Muzamil**, Jesuit Refugee Services Australia
405. **Sara Raman**, NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
406. **Sarah Burr**, National Indigenous Australians Agency
407. **Sarah Cooper**, Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service
408. **Sarah Dale**, Refugee Advice and Casework Service
409. **Sarah Forbes**, Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability
410. **Sarah Gruner**, Office for Women, Department of Premier and Cabinet Victoria
411. **Professor Sarah Wendt**, Flinders University
412. **Chief Inspector Sean Mcdermott**, Domestic and Family Violence, NSW Police
413. **Serina McDuff**, Women's Legal Services
414. **Shaan Ross-Smith**, DV Connect
415. **Shane Tas**, Our Watch
416. **Shannon Longhurst**, Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People NSW
417. **Shari Latu**, National Indigenous Australians Agency
418. **Sharna Bremner**, End Rape on Campus Australia
419. **Sharon Walker-Roberts**, South Australia Police
420. **Simon Port**, EveryMan Australia
421. **Simone Gleeson**, Safer Families Centre of Research Excellence, University of Melbourne
422. **Hon Simone McGurk**, Prevention of Family Domestic Violence WA
423. **Simone Parsons**, Women's Community Shelters
424. **Siobhan Mackay**, Katherine Women's Legal Service
425. **Sophie de Rohan**, Refugee Legal
426. **Sophie Hants**, North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service
427. **Sophie McCashin**, Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre
428. **Starlady**, Zoe Belle Collective
429. **Stella Avramopoulos**, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
430. **Stella Conroy**, Relationships Australia
431. **Stephanie Foster**, Family Support Service, Department of Veterans' Affairs
432. **Stephanie Lusby**, La Trobe University
433. **Stephen Walton**, Health NSW
434. **Sue Cripps**, SC Consulting Group
435. **Sue Dyson**, La Trobe University
436. **Sue Fraser**, UnitingCare Australia

437. **Sue Kruske**, Charles Sturt University
438. **Sue Webeck**, LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council, Domestic Violence Crisis Service
439. **Supriya Singh**, RMIT University
440. **Susan Crane**, Dawn House
441. **Dr Susan Gallacher**, Government of WA
442. **Susie Smith**, Centacare
443. **Tabatha Young**, National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum
444. **Tahnya Wood**, Corrective Services, Department of Justice
445. **Tanya Hosch**, Inclusion and Social Policy, AFL
446. **Taren Buckby**, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia
447. **Taz Clay**, AIDS Council of New South Wales
448. **Teddy Cook**, AIDS Council of New South Wales
449. **Terese Edwards**, National Council for Single Mothers
450. **Tess Moodie**, Women With Disabilities Australia
451. **Tessa Boyd-Caine**, Health Justice Australia
452. **Tessa Snowdon**, Northern Territory Council of Social Service
453. **Thelma Schwartz**, Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Services, National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum
454. **Tim Moore**, Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia
455. **Tina Dixon**, Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs, Treasury and Economic Development ACT
456. **Tracey Dillon**, Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service
457. **Tricia Malowney**, Women With Disabilities Australia
458. **Trishima Mitra-Khan**, Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy
459. **Vanessa Anne Fowler**, Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council, Allison Baden- Clay Foundation
460. **Vicky Welgraven**, Our Watch Board
461. **Warren Sainsbury**, Telco Together Foundation
462. **Wendy Hayhurst**, Community Housing Industry Association
463. **Will Milne**, National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics
464. **Wynetta Dewis**, Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service Queensland
465. **Yasmin Poole**, OzHarvest, Young Women's Christian Association Australia
466. **Yvette Chtel**, Women's Legal Service Tasmania
467. **Yvette Vigando**, Southwest Sydney Legal Centre
468. **Zakia Patel**, Multicultural Hub Canberra
469. **Zanetta Hartley**, North Western Mental Health, Royal Melbourne Hospital
470. **Zita Ngor**, Women's Legal Service SA
471. **Professor Zoe Rathus**, Griffith University

Organisations

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Children and Youth Services
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice
3. Aboriginal Health and Research Council of Australia
4. Aboriginal Males Healing Centre
5. Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory

6. Aboriginal Services, Relationships Western Australia
7. AIDS Council of New South Wales (ACON)
8. Australian Bureau of Statistics
9. Australian Capital Territory Health
10. Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner
11. Alcohol and Drug Foundation
12. Allambee Counselling
13. Allison Baden-Clay Foundation
14. Australian National University (ANU)
15. The Australia and New Zealand Banking Group (ANZ)
16. The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
17. Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health
18. Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia
19. Australian Childhood Foundation
20. Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
21. Australian Gender Equality Council
22. Australian Human Rights Commission
23. Australian Institute of Criminology
24. Australian Institute of Family Studies
25. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
26. Australia's National Resesrch Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
27. Australian Red Cross
28. Australian Violence Prevention Project
29. Australian Women Against Violence Alliance, WESNET
30. Australian Women's Health Network
31. Bank Australia
32. Bankstown Domestic Violence Service
33. Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre
34. Behavioural Insights, Nudge Unit
35. BehaviourWorks
36. Berry Street
37. Bethany Men's Intervention Centre, Victoria
38. Blueknot Foundation
39. Bond University
40. Brain Injury Tasmania, National Disability Service Tasmania
41. Bravehearts
42. Brisbane Domestic Violence Service
43. Broad Agenda, Seriously Social
44. Canberra Health Services
45. Centacare
46. Central Australian Women's Legal Service
47. Central Queensland University
48. Centre for Innovative Justice, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)
49. Centre for Non Violence
50. Centre for Women's Health Research

51. Centre of Perinatal Excellence (COPE)
52. Centrecare Inc
53. Champions of Change Coalition
54. Charles Sturt University
55. Children and Young People with Disability Australia
56. Children's Framework Leadership Group
57. Circle Green Community Legal
58. Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health
59. Commissioner for Children and Young People in Tasmania
60. Commissioner for Children and Young People in Victoria
61. Commissioner for Children and Young People Queensland
62. Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia
63. Commissioner for Children and Young People, South Australia
64. Communicare
65. Community Housing Industry Association
66. Community Investment team, Commonwealth Bank Australia
67. Community Legal Centre Brisbane
68. Corrective Services New South Wales
69. Council of Unions
70. County Court Victoria CREATE
71. Crime Command New South Wales Police
72. Crime Statistics Agency of Victoria
73. Curtin University
74. Darwin Indigenous Men's Service, Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Corporation
75. Dawn House
76. Deakin University
77. Department of Communities and Justice (NSW)
78. Department of Criminal Justice Services (VIC)
79. Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (VIC)
80. Department of Health and Human Services (VIC)
81. Department of Justice and Community Safety (VIC)
82. Department of Premier and Cabinet (VIC)
83. Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
84. Department of the Attorney-General and Justice (NT)
85. Department of Veterans' Affairs
86. Disability Advocacy & Complaints Service South Australia
87. Djirra
88. Doctors against Violence Against Women
89. Domestic and Family Violence Employee Action Group
90. Domestic and Family Violence
91. Domestic Violence and Child Safety Branch at Home Affairs
92. Domestic Violence Assist (DVassist)
93. Domestic Violence Crisis Service
94. Domestic Violence Connect
95. Domestic Violence Legal Service

96. Domestic Violence New South Wales (DVNSW)
97. Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria (DVRCV)
98. Domestic Violence Service Management
99. Domestic Violence Victoria (DV VIC)
100. Doris Women's Refuge Inc
101. Drummond Street
102. Economic Abuse Reference Group NSW
103. Economic Justice Australia
104. Education Directorate
105. Elizabeth Broderick and co.
106. Embolden South Australia
107. End Rape on Campus Australia
108. Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW
109. Energy Australia
110. Engender Equality
111. Enlighten Education and Goodfellas
112. Equality Institute
113. eSafeKids
114. ESafety Women's team, ESafety Commissioner
115. Ethnic Communities' Council of New South Wales
116. EveryMan Australia
117. Fairfield Staying Home Leaving Violence Service
118. Family Court and Federal Circuit Court
119. Family Court of Australia and Federal Circuit Court of Australia
120. Family Policy Division Department of Veterans' Affairs
121. Family Support Service, Department of Veterans' Affairs
122. Family Violence Command, Victoria Police
123. Family Violence Psychiatry Network
124. Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria
125. Federation University Australia
126. Finding Safety
127. Flinders University
128. Former Northern Territory Minister for Territory Families
129. Galiwinku Women Space
130. Gender Consortium at Flinders University
131. Gippsland Family Violence Alliance, Gippsland Women's Health
132. Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
133. Government of Western Australia
134. Greens Western Australia
135. Griffith University
136. Harmony Alliance: Migrant and Refugee Women for Change
137. Health Justice Australia
138. Health New South Wales
139. Homelessness Australia, Everybody is Home
140. HOPE Community Services

141. Illawarra Women's Health Centre
142. Inclusion and Social Policy
143. Inclusion Australia
144. Indigenous Family Violence Legal Service Queensland
145. IndigenousX
146. Innovation and Health System Reform
147. Intellectual Disability Rights Service
148. Intersex Human Rights Australia
149. InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
150. Jesuit Refugee Services Australia
151. Jesuit Social Services
152. Justice New South Wales
153. Katherine Women's Legal Service
154. LaTrobe University
155. Launceston Women's Shelter
156. LBQTIQA+ Health
157. Legal Aid Australia Capital Territory
158. Legal Aid New South Wales
159. Legal Aid Western Australia
160. LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council, Domestic Violence Crisis Service
161. LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Foundation
162. Local Government Association of Tasmania
163. Lucy Saw
164. Macquarie University
165. Magenta
166. Mallee Domestic Violence Services
167. Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre
168. Marumali Consultations
169. Melaleuca Refugee Centre
170. Melbourne Research Alliance to End Violence Against Women and Their Children
171. Men's Resources Tasmania
172. Micah Projects, Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council
173. Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania
174. Migrant Women's Support Program (WSSSA)
175. Mission Australia
176. Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Corporation Women's Centre
177. Multicultural Australia
178. Multicultural Hub Canberra
179. Mura Kosker Sorority Inc
180. Muslim Women Australia
181. National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
182. National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV)
183. National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics
184. National Council for Single Mothers
185. National Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services Forum

186. National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
187. National Legal Aid
188. National Mental Health Commission
189. New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
190. New South Wales Department of Communities and Justice
191. New South Wales Health
192. New South Wales Police
193. Newman Women's Refuge
194. Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NYP) Women's Council
195. No to Violence (NTV)
196. North Australian Aboriginal Family Legal Service
197. North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency
198. North Western Mental Health, Royal Melbourne Hospital
199. Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (NCASA)
200. Northern Settlement Services Limited
201. Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre
202. Northern Territory Council of Social Service
203. Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission
204. Northern Territory Working Women's Centre
205. Office for Women (OFW), South Australia
206. Office for Women (OFW), Victoria
207. Office of Domestic, Family & Sexual Violence Reduction
208. Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs, Treasury and Economic Development ACT
209. Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People New South Wales
210. Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety
211. Office of the eSafety Commissioner
212. Older Women's Network New South Wales
213. Open Arms - Veterans and Family Counselling New South Wales
214. Orygen
215. Our Watch
216. OzHarvest
217. People with Disability Australia
218. Playgroup Victoria
219. Prevention of Family Domestic Violence Western Australia
220. Psychrespect
221. Queensland AIDS Council
222. Queensland Corrective Services
223. Queensland Council for LGBTI Health
224. Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council
225. Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network, Centre Against Domestic Abuse
226. Queensland Housing, Public Works and Innovation
227. Queensland Indigenous Family Violence Legal Services
228. Queensland Justice
229. Queensland Sexual Assault Network Representative (QSAN)
230. Queensland University of Technology

231. Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS)
232. Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS)
233. Rainbow Health Victoria (ARCSHS)
234. Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia (RDVSA)
235. Rape and Sexual Assault Research and Advocacy
236. Rape Domestic Violence Services New South Wales
237. Red Rose Foundation
238. Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre
239. Refugee Legal
240. Reinforce Inc
241. Relationships Australia
242. Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT)
243. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
244. Royal Commission into Family Violence
245. The Rural, Regional, Remote (RRR) Women's Network
246. Safe Work Australia
247. SafeChoices Tasmania
248. Safer Families Centre of Research Excellence
249. Safety and Wellbeing, Universities Australia
250. Salvation Army
251. Sue Cripps Consulting Group
252. Services and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse in Queensland (SPEAQ)
253. Settlement Council of Australia
254. Settlement Services International
255. Sexual Abuse & Family Violence (SAFE) program
256. Sexual Assault Referral Centre
257. Sexual Assault Resource Centre
258. Sexual Assault Services Victoria
259. Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)
260. Social Ventures Australia
261. Solace Consulting
262. Solo Legal
263. South Australia Police
264. South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation
265. Southwest Sydney Legal Centre
266. Starick
267. Stopping Family Violence
268. Switchboard Victoria
269. Take Two, Berry Street
270. Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group
271. Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre
272. Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service
273. Tasmanian Council of Social Services
274. Tasmanian Women's Council
275. Telco Together Foundation

276. Tennant Creek Women's Shelter
277. The Healing Foundation's Stolen Generations Reference Group
278. The Immigration Advice and Rights Centre
279. The Man Cave
280. The Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre
281. The University of Melbourne
282. The Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
283. The Women's Safety Services South Australia
284. The Women's Services Network (WESNET)
285. Thorne Harbour Health
286. Top End Womens' Legal Service
287. Transgender Victoria
288. Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
289. Uniting Communities South Australia
290. UnitingCare Australia
291. UnitingCare Queensland
292. Uniting Western Australia
293. University of Newcastle
294. University of New South Wales
295. University of Queensland
296. University of Sydney
297. University of Technology Sydney
298. Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals With Disability (VALID)
299. Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner, Department of Veterans' Affairs
300. Victoria Legal Aid
301. Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
302. Voices for Change
303. Wadeye Women's Safe House
304. We Al-li
305. WEAVERS
306. Western Sydney University
307. Westpac Group
308. White Ribbon
309. Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre, NSW
310. Women and Girls Emergency Centre
311. Women Health and Newborn Services
312. Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA)
313. Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV)
314. Women's Community Shelters
315. Women's Health Family Services
316. Women's Health New South Wales
317. Women's Health West Victoria
318. Women's Legal Service Queensland
319. Women's Legal Service South Australia
320. Women's Legal Services New South Wales

- 321. Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre
- 322. Women's Health Queensland
- 323. Women's Health Tasmania
- 324. Women's Justice Network
- 325. Women's Legal Services North Queensland
- 326. Women's Legal Services NSW
- 327. Women's Legal Service Queensland
- 328. Women's Legal Service Tasmania
- 329. Women's Legal Service Victoria
- 330. Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce
- 331. Women's Safety Service of Central Australia
- 332. Women's Safety Services South Australia
- 333. Wungening Aboriginal Corporation
- 334. Yarrow Place (SA Health)
- 335. Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Australia
- 336. Youth Action
- 337. Zoe Belle Collective
- 338. Zonta House

Appendix E: Unsolicited Submissions

1800 Respect Australia. (2021). 1800RESPECT Response to the Key Questions. Australia.

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Appendix G: National Plan Advisory Group members

1. **Alison Frame**, Co-chair, Deputy Secretary, Office for Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
2. **Liz Hefren-Webb**, Co-chair, Deputy Secretary, Department of Social Services
3. **Gulnara Abbasova**, Executive Officer, Harmony Alliance
4. **Karen Bentley**, Chief Executive Officer, WESNET
5. **Professor Sandra Creamer AM**, Chief Executive Officer, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
6. **Catherine Fitzpatrick**, Director, Customer Vulnerability and Financial Resilience, Westpac Bank
7. **Hayley Foster**, Chief Executive Officer, Rape and Domestic Violence Services Australia
8. **Carolyn Frohmader**, Executive Director, Women with Disabilities Australia
9. **The Hon Pru Goward**, Former Sex Discrimination Commissioner
10. **Anne Hollonds**, National Children's Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commissioner
11. **Patty Kinnerly**, Chief Executive Officer, Our Watch
12. **Eloise Layard**, Program Coordinator, ACON
13. **Donnella Mills**, Chair, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
14. **Padma Raman**, Chief Executive Officer, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
15. **Dr Michael Salter**, Associate Professor, UNSW
16. **Joanne Sheehan-Paterson**, Chair, National Association of Services against Sexual Violence
17. **Maria Hagias**, Chief Executive Officer, Women's Safety Services SA
18. **The Hon Dale Wakefield**, Former Minister for Territory Families, Northern Territory
19. **Jacqui Watt**, Chief Executive Officer, No to Violence
20. **Dr Renee Hamilton**, Chief Executive Officer, National Women's Safety Alliance

Appendix H: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council to inform the next National Plan to end family, domestic and sexual violence

1. **Professor Sandra Creamer AM**, CEO, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
2. **Muriel Bamblett AO**, CEO, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, and Co-chair, SNAICC, National Voice for our Children
3. **Shirleen Campbell**, Coordinator, Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group
4. **Professor Bronwyn Carlson**, Head of Department of Indigenous Studies, Macquarie University
5. **Emily Carter**, CEO, Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre
6. **Susan Cook**, Financial counsellor, Salvation Army, and Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network
7. **Fiona Cornforth**, CEO, Healing Foundation
8. **Michael Torres**, Darwin Indigenous Men's Service, Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women's Shelter, Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Corporation
9. **Professor Victoria Hovane**, Psychologist and professor, Centre for Indigenous Peoples and Community Justice, University of Western Australia, and Australian Centre for Child Protection, University of South Australia
10. **Kelly Treloar**, Disability Royal Commission Project Manager, First Peoples Disability Network
11. **Rachel Dunn**, CEO, Karadi Aboriginal Corporation
12. **Geiza Stow**, Board member, Mura Kosker (Torres Strait Islands)
13. **Robert Skeen**, CEO, Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council and Chair, South Australia Aboriginal Community Controlled Network.

Appendix I: Related activities undertaken to inform the Stakeholder Consultation

1. **2nd Technology and Abuse Workshop for the next National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children**, Office for Women, Presentation delivered by Kate Fitz-Gibbon
2. **Prevention of Financial Abuse Workshop**, Office for Women, workshop facilitated by Kate Fitz-Gibbon, held on 11th August 2021
3. **National Family Violence Policing Executive Group**, Chaired by Lauren Callaway, organised by Melinda Tynan, Department of Social Services – observed by Kate Fitz-Gibbon, held on 26th July 2021



MONASH
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GENDER AND
FAMILY VIOLENCE
PREVENTION CENTRE

Prevention of Financial Abuse Workshop

Workshop Summary Report

Provided to the Office for
Women,

5 October 2021

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Acknowledgement of Country: In the spirit of reconciliation we acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia upon which this workshop was held and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that attended this workshop.

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ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

On Wednesday 7th July 2021 the Office for Women held a virtual workshop on the 'Prevention of Financial Abuse'. The workshop was facilitated by Associate Professor Kate Fitz-Gibbon (Director, Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre) with support provided throughout the workshop by Centre members, Dr Jasmine McGowan and Jasmine Mead.



The workshop was an invite only event organised by the Office for Women and attended by a range of relevant stakeholders from across Australia. 50 individuals participated in the workshop over the course of the day. To gauge the composition of workshop participants two polls were taken during the workshop opening.

What area do you work in?

- Government (23%)
- Financial sector (26%)
- Utilities sector (3%)
- Specialist FV sector (17%)
- Legal services (11%)
- Other (20%)

In your role to what extent is the prevention of financial abuse and women's economic security a focus?

- Is the core focus of my role (36%)
- It is an occasional focus of my role (39%)
- I haven't worked in this space but keen to learn more today (14%)
- It is a future focus of my role (11%)

A Welcome to Country was provided by Janet Galpin from the Boon Wurrung Foundation. Opening remarks were provided by Catherine Hawkins, Head of Office for Women, who contextualised that the workshop is part of a suite of projects funded under the Fourth Action Plan, under the current National Plan, to address and prevent financial abuse.

The Opening Remarks were followed by two Panel Discussions, each involving a panel of four panellists followed by Question and Answer, and a final afternoon session, focused on the Safety by Design Principles draft, which included breakout room discussions.

This Report has been produced by the Monash Facilitation Team with the aim of summarising the key points of discussion that emerged throughout the day. Where relevant, the Report highlights key themes relating to the development of the successor National Plan on violence against women and children.

PANEL 1: BEST PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING FINANCIAL ABUSE IN SERVICE-CENTRED INDUSTRIES

Panel 1 featured four panellists:

1. Catherine Fitzpatrick, Westpac
2. Marcus Crudden, Essential Services Commission
3. Julie Kun, WIRE
4. Gulnara Abbasova, Harmony Alliance



The first panellist, **Catherine Fitzpatrick**, presented on the role of financial institutions in preventing, identifying and responding to financial abuse, with a specific focus on the work being undertaken under her leadership at Westpac. Catherine's presentation begun by examining the ways in which perpetrators use banking systems to inflict financial abuse.

Catherine emphasised that financial abuse is viewed as one of the top financial vulnerabilities experienced by customers and that the biggest issue they see in this space is joint debt. Other financial abusive behaviours in this space include:

- Forcing an individual to apply for credit where they will receive no benefit,
- Sending abusive messages via payment descriptions,
- Restricting access or visibility to banking information,
- Misusing third party authority agreements (such as power of attorney orders),
- Applying for credit in another person's name without their knowledge, and
- Impairing a joint borrower's credit history by not making repayments.

Catherine acknowledged that while financial products are not designed to be abusive, there is recognition within the financial service sector that they are being used to inflict harms in the context of financially abusive relationships. This has occurred in the context of intimate partner abuse, elder abuse and cultural abuse. Financial institutions that host these platforms and products have a responsibility to address systems abuse.

Catherine outlined key challenges that service centred industries encounter in identifying and responding to financial abuse:

Transition to digital economy means banks cannot spot indicators of abuse as easily as in person.

Inconsistent State and Territory approaches make it unclear where bank staff can escalate financial abuse concerns to.

Distinguishing financial hardship from financial abuse is challenging given the customer data can look the same.

Privacy laws conflict with industry regulatory obligations to provide extra care to vulnerable customers.

Determining intervention strategies amongst different socio-cultural arrangements and customs.

The transition to the digital economy and Covid-19 has inhibited our ability to notice changes in customers' behaviour and ask probing questions.

Specific to financial services, Catherine outlined additional challenges encountered when responding to financial abuse:

- **Credit reporting requirements** for banks to disclose when customers do not meet their obligations impacting the victim-survivor's financial future,
- **If one borrower doesn't pay** it can have hardship implications for both parties,
- **Victims are often bound to perpetrators** through joint debt, and
- **Family court processes do not always hold perpetrators to account**, for example if one person is ordered to pay and doesn't the victim may have to go back to court which is timely and costly. – if court orders are not enforced, they could escalate debt and make it more difficult for victims to get out of financial instability.

Catherine pointed to the opportunity for the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) to provide guidance to financial services about how to consider the risks of products and services being misused for financial abuse in line with design and distribution obligations (see [Regulation Guide 274](#)). She indicated that the safety by design framework could potentially be part of this regulation guide at some point and that this may be similar to the way Austrac provided [guidance](#) for identifying customers who don't have traditional forms of identification, including those escaping domestic and family violence.

Catherine's presentation finished with a focus on the work that Westpac has undertaken to identify and respond to technology-facilitated abuse. This included a discussion of the key data-led learnings from the policies and practices that they have put in place as well as an overview of when and how they report abusive messages to authorities.



Marcus Crudden, the second panellist, presented on the work that the Essential Services Commission (ESC) has progressed since the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV). Since 2016, the ESC has sought to improve the way that energy and water retailers respond to customers experiencing family violence (FV). This program of work has included:

- Establishing guidelines to help identify customers experiencing FV and financial hardship,
- Developing guidance for better practice responses to customers experiencing FV,
- Examining ways to extend ESC's role into reviewing financial hardship assistance in the local government sector.

Marcus provided an overview of how financial abuse manifests in the utility sector. This includes:

- Control of finances, including withholding money and not making payments,
- Weaponising of debts, including where perpetrators have services cut off to victim-survivors,
- Breach of confidentiality and privacy where perpetrators request forwarding addresses of bills sent by mail,
- Allowing the processes of debt collection for non-payment of bills and associated legal costs to commence. Having a debt collector knock on the victim's door is known by the perpetrator as highly intimidating, especially if the victim is not living with the perpetrator. This represents a form of systems abuse.

In 2019 the ESC published [Better Practice Guidelines for Safe and Effective Responses in the Utilities Sector](#). The guidelines aim to prioritise victim-survivor safety, build cultural awareness, and increase access to support services. Marcus shared key learnings from the development of those guidelines, including the importance of:

- Adopting a safety-first approach which prioritises the safety of staff and customers, including protecting information of victim-survivors,
- Ensuring a whole of organisation strategy for FV,
- Buy-in from the top to ensure FV awareness and strategies are embedded across all aspects of the company (internally) and leading industries (externally),
- Boosting awareness across staff and customers of FV and FV related policies,
- Ensuring access to information for victim-survivors via interpreters and culturally appropriate resources,
- Regular reviews of FV policies.

Marcus also identified challenges and opportunities for improvement taken from ESC's experience in this area. These included:

- Legal barriers, confidentiality and privacy obligations,
- Consistency of providers,
- Lack of genuine commitment from some companies to provide effective family violence policies to customers,
- The challenge of cross-sector referrals, emphasis on the need for sectors to work together to assist customers experiencing family violence.

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The third panellist, **Julie Kun**, emphasised the link between financial abuse and gender inequality. Julie pointed to feminised industries attracting lower than average pay, societal expectations of women holding unpaid care work, and the financial impacts on victim-survivors of family violence who often incur significant debt when leaving abusive relationships. In her presentation Julie reflected on the work of WIRE (Women's

Information and Referral Exchange), which is involved in family violence prevention, response and recovery. WIRE examines levers for change, including policies and practices in all institutions such as community organisations, the service sector, and across government.

Julie identified a need for public education and awareness raising around what healthy financial relationships look like such that community members are enabled to have respectful financial relationships. There is a concern that without this understanding individuals do not see red flags within their own relationships. Service sectors need to model respectful financial conversations with customers and to help customer service staff to recognise and respond to financial abuse.

Julie also identified a need for prevention work and for collaboration on human centred designs whereby financial counsellors, government and family violence services collaborate in policy and product development in this area. This policy change must be informed by the voices and experiences of individuals with lived experience and individuals from marginalised and diverse community groups, including people living with a disability, migrant communities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

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The fourth panellist, **Gulnara Abbasova**, focused on migrant women, including what makes migrant women vulnerable to financial abuse and how the service sector can address related cultural and gendered issues. Gulnara invited attendees to reflect on the complexity of the service system in Australia, and how challenging it is for women with migrant backgrounds to navigate.

Drawing on the findings of the recently published [Safety and Security Survey](#) by Segrave and others (2021) Gulnara reported:

- One in five migrant women in Australia experience FV.
- Of those migrant women 90 per cent experience controlling behaviour and more than half experience financial control, including controlled access to money, limited access to family business income, demanding money or assets as part of a cultural practice.

Migrant women encounter structural barriers when engaging with service systems in Australia. These occur from a range of factors, including:

- Precarious visa situations inhibiting access to systems,
- A lack of experience with the systems that differ from their home countries, and

- Language barriers.

In order to overcome these barriers, Gulnara emphasised that it is important to bridge system gaps. There is a need for:

- Investment to ensure migrant women understand their rights, obligations and options to engage with services,
- Cultural and gender critical responses to be incorporated into the design of services and products,
- Upskilling of industry to improve work with migrant women, including ensuring system understandings and responses are culturally specific and information is present in a range of languages,
- Culturally specific understandings of the migration experience, dowry abuse, gender-based violence, and financial abuse,
- Service responses to support the empowerment of migrant women to understand their financial situation and wellbeing.

As part of her presentation Gulnara presented on Harmony Alliance's work in this area, including the Office for Women funded program supporting improved financial literacy for women of migrant backgrounds. This program has been translated in 10 languages and allows women to be in control of their own finances, bank accounts, income and superannuation. The program provides a targeted intersectional approach that considers visa and language barriers.



Post-panel question and answer session: Following the four panel presentations there was a question-and-answer session, which included a discussion on the differences between **financial independence** and **financial safety**. Julie explained that:

- When women get disconnected from workforce, when they are caring for dependents, and do not have the money to contribute to bills, their financial independence is limited.
- Financial safety is the preferred aspirational term as it acknowledges that a victim-survivor is not necessarily financially independent but may have safe access to finances and services.

Julie also explained that the end of Financial Year tax time was one of heightened risk for women in financially abusive relationships and that the tax process is an example of a policy where women's safety was not considered during the design phase.



As part of the post-panel discussion, the panellists and workshop attendees discussed the importance of engaging victim-survivors in the development and design of relevant policies and practices. Workshop attendees and panellists responded to the poll question: **Do you consult with and engage victim-survivors in the development of the family violence and financial abuse related policies and practices in your organisation?**

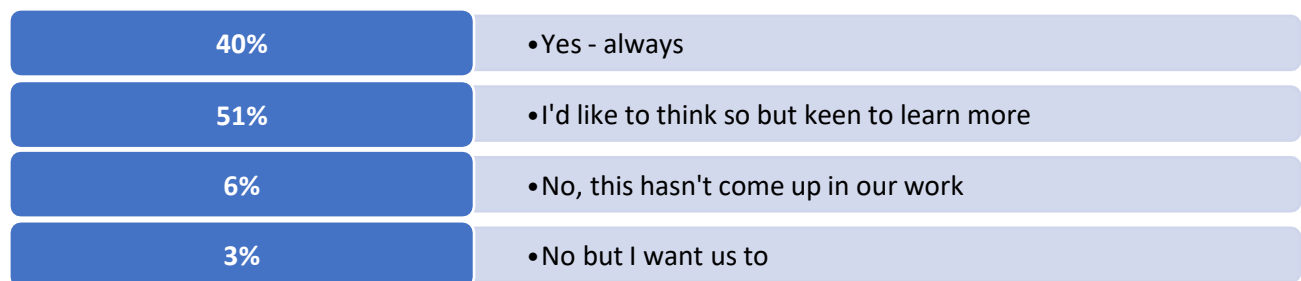
21%	• We are increasingly doing this
50%	• Yes, we have been doing this
12%	• No, but I am going to look for opportunities to do this
18%	• Not relevant for our organisation.

Panellists shared learnings from their experiences embedding experts with lived experience in the development of their workplace policies and practices. There was shared acknowledgement among panellists and attendees as to the importance of ensuring policies are informed by lived experience, that the contributions made by victim-survivors are valued and remunerated, and that diverse lived experiences of financial abuse are sought.

PANEL 2: HOW CAN FINANCIAL ABUSE PREVENTION INITIATIVES BE BETTER INFORMED WITH INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES?



At the outset of the second panel discussion all attendees responded to the poll question:
In your role do you approach responding to, and/or preventing financial abuse through an intersectional lens?



Panel 2 featured four panellists:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Larisha V Jerome, First Nations Foundation (Vic) | 3. Libby Cunnington, Women with Disabilities Australia |
| 2. Michal Morris, InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence (Vic) | 4. Eloise Layard, ACON Health (NSW) |

Panellists emphasised the importance of acknowledging different intersectionalities, noting that there is no single intersectional approach that will work across individuals and communities. An intersectional lens invites us to focus on multiplicities. System responses and interventions therefore need to be responsive and adaptative to diverse needs and experiences.



The first panellist, **Larisha V Jerome**, begun with a discussion of how economic injustice can be best addressed with a specific focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Larisha emphasised the importance of creating trauma informed practice to achieve overall economic empowerment, noting that this requires a commitment from and accountability among services that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This is particularly important in remote locations, where access to services is limited.

Larisha discussed how financial abuse prevention initiatives can be better informed with intersectional perspectives. This requires initiatives (including service specific responses and programs) to:

- Be culturally appropriate,
- Empower the community through local men's and women's groups,
- Build on community strengths,

- Connect through culture,
- Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and First Nations organisations are at the forefront, and
- Be supported by government and other organisations.

For initiatives to be effective there is a need to ensure a holistic approach which considers financial wellness alongside financial contentment and financial freedom. Creating intergenerational wealth is critical to the achievement of financial freedom.



Michal Morris, the second panellist, explored how experiences of financial abuse differ across cultural contexts. Responding to financial abuse requires an intersectional response that:

1. Examines structural barriers and how they impact our work, and
2. Addresses structural barriers to facilitate more inclusive responses.

Focusing on the experiences of migrant women, Michal set out some of the ways financial abuse manifests in migrant communities. Michal noted that her examples were within the context of a heterosexual relationship, with a male perpetrator and female victim. Michal observed that:

- It is important to acknowledge that money is a sign of stability and security,
- Women lose agency when experiencing financial abuse and become dependent on their abusive partners for financial security,
- It is important to recognise that the more knowledge a person has the more power they hold, and that financial literacy is crucial to combatting financial abuse.

Michal discussed the specific impacts experienced by temporary visa holders and individuals on partner visas, including notably, the fact that most temporary visa holders are ineligible for Centrelink benefits. This creates significant additional barriers to leaving a dependant abusive relationship.

Dowry abuse occurs where a perpetrator exerts pressure or unreasonable expectation and demands on a woman and her family relating to the dowry. This can include physical, sexual and financial abuse. While dowry abuse is recognised as a form of family violence in Australian laws, it is not as easily identified and responded to as a form of family violence. Michal emphasised that dowry abuse rarely occurs in isolation of other forms of family violence.

Reflecting on the help seeking challenges arising in contexts of temporary visas and dowry abuse, Michal emphasised the need for increasing training for frontline staff to recognise and identify different forms of financial abuse and to be equipped with the knowledge of how to respond in a variety of situations. Higher levels of community awareness and training of service providers across all industries would increase the overall support received by migrant victims of family violence, including in instances of financial abuse.



The third panellist, **Heidi La Paglia**, focused on the experiences of people with disability experiencing financial abuse. Heidi spoke about how responses to financial abuse across mainstream sectors do not presently include women living with a disability and that embedding women with disability into policy and practice is crucial. Heidi observed that this is reflective of the wider lack of inclusion of individuals living with a disability in local and state policies.

Forms of financial abuse experienced by women living with a disability include:

- An abuser controlling their access to their income,
- Service providers misusing NDIS funds or excessively charging individuals,
- Online scammers perpetrating fraudulent payment schemes,
- Imposters posing as friends or intimate partners to deceptively gain money, and
- Carers taking advantage of clients' money under the pretence of care and "doing what is best".

Heidi explained that women living with a disability are more susceptible to experiencing financial abuse in the workforce. There is need for:

- Paid domestic violence services and leave for women living with a disability,
- Information to be produced in acceptable and accessible formats including Auslan and Easy read,
- Policies that provide women living with a disability the ability to make decisions free of guardians and family members, and
- Increased recognition of financial abuse across the disability sector and financial institutions.



The fourth panellist for this session, **Eloise Layard**, focused on experiences of financial abuse among LGBTQ populations. There is limited research specifically examining financial abuse within the LGBTQ community generally, and particularly on transgender people's experiences of financial abuse. Transgender people experience transphobic discrimination which can leave them economically vulnerable (for example, unable to secure paid employment or paid less than the minimum wage in paid roles) making this population more vulnerable to financial abuse. Women with a disability in the LGBTQ community are also at heightened risk of experiencing financial abuse.

Within the LGBTQ community, there are unique forms of family violence, including identity-based abuse where someone's sexuality and gender identity is used to cause harm, this includes:

- Disclosure (without permission) of HIV status,
- Taking advantage of institutional and societal homophobic and transphobic attitudes to silence and undermine a person's agency and help-seeking.
- Threatening a person's employment by revealing their sexuality or gender identity,
- Impersonating a partner, and
- Accusing a person of homophobia or transphobia in instances where they call out financial abuse in a relationship.

Eloise spoke to the need to further the evidence base when it comes to LGBTQ people's experiences of intimate partner violence and financial abuse through undertaking more research specifically targeted to LGBTQ communities, improving data collection, and engaging with LGBTQ communities and organisations when undertaking projects in the financial abuse space.

Eloise set out what is needed to improve responses to experiences of financial abuse among members of the LGBTQ community, including:

- Ensuring that all workplaces have active and inclusive FV LGBTQ policies and practices,
- Better understanding of the drivers of abuse, including acknowledging that rigid norms and gendered expectations contributes to the perpetration of violence against LGBTQ communities and populations,
- To ensure the LGBTQ community are involved in primary prevention, and drive improved understandings of the impacts of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, and
- To deliver healthy relationship education with an intersectional approach.



Post-panel question and answer session: Following the four panel presentations there was a question-and-answer session in which many of the key issues raised by panellists in this session and the previous session were explored in further detail. The question of how services can improve responses to financial abuse was explored, with panellists and attendees emphasising that there is a need to:

- Increase resources and investment to support this work, and in particular to fund community organisations to inform improved responses.
- Embed an approach of Recognise, Respond and Refer – across services, including in particular banks that have a unique opportunity to speak directly to customers on financial matters.
- Train staff across services to recognise financial abuse and other forms of family violence and to know what responses are available, culturally safe and appropriate,
- Support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to lead in this space with an emphasis on amplifying the work of organisations that are already operating,
- Embed frequent reviews of strategies, policies and practices to ensure they prioritise the safety needs of clients accessing services, and
- Recognise the importance of co-designing processes with individuals with lived experience.

Other key points to emerge during the post-panel discussion included:

- There was a shared agreement that co-design with lived experience advocates and the specialist service sector is essential but also recognition that the sector needs to be appropriately resourced to contribute to this work. It is also important to ensure that co-design informs a localised response.
- The **Next Chapter Program** led by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia was discussed. This Program aims to increase community understanding of financial abuse by exploring the current knowledge of financial abuse in Australia and highlighting the gaps in current policies and practices across financial institutions. This program is being conducted in partnership with Good Shepherd and researchers from UNSW.
- There was shared recognition among the workshop attendees that there is limited understanding of how companies and services should respond to perpetrators in the workplace. There was an appetite for building work in this space and recognition of the need for further research and best practice case study examples.

SAFETY BY DESIGN PRINCIPLES SESSION

This session was focused on the Government funded **Safety by Design project**, which is being led by **Professor Kay Cook**, Swinburne University. This project is in its design and delivery stage, where the team are developing Safety by Design Principles and a self-assessment tool. Kay described the aims of the project, stating that it intends to integrate the insights of leading front-line service providers and industry advocates in the fields of family and domestic violence and financial abuse to ensure the principles are both fit for purpose and can be easily accessed by end users. The project approach is participatory, ensuring co-design and delivery of the principles.

Julie Fossi from the **eSafety Commission** also joined to share learnings from their work on [Safety by Design](#) in the online space. The two projects are intended to be complementary. The eSafety Commission began its

work in this space in 2018 recognising that the burden of safety should not be on the individual themselves but on industry. The Commission's project focused specifically on children, parents and carers.

The eSafety Commission's Safety by Design principles are:

1. **Service provider responsibility.** The burden of safety should never fall solely upon the user.
2. **User empowerment and autonomy.** The dignity of users is of central importance.
3. **Transparency and accountability.** Transparency and accountability are hallmarks of a robust approach to safety.

The assessment tools within the Safety by Design project are interactive and dynamic online safety tools that put safety front and centre for product design. There is a focus on online platforms and services that have user interactions, including social media, gaming platforms and the internet.



Small group discussion key points: The need for a cross sectoral approach that allows for a range of voices to contribute was emphasised. Julie reflected that for the eSafety Commission stakeholders have felt ownership of the principles because industry was involved in every step of their development. Workshop attendees reflected on the desire for consultation to occur broadly, within and beyond the financial sector.

There is a need to examining perpetrator behaviours, including how perpetrators weaponise different financial platforms and online spaces. There is an opportunity to inform how industry and relevant services should mitigate systems abuse and respond to perpetration in these settings.

RELEVANT RESOURCES

During the workshop several panellists and participants recommended relevant resources and research in the area of financial abuse, prevention and workplace interventions.

These resources included:

Arashiro, Z. (2021) Too visible, yet not fully seen: Insights from the COVID-19, Financial Capability, and Intersectionality Project. Final Report. Melbourne: WIRE. Accessible at: <https://www.wire.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Too-visible-yet-not-fully-seen-final-report.pdf>

Electrical Services Commission. (2019) *Better practice in responding to family violence*. Best Practice Guidance. Accessible at: <https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/better-practice-responding-family-violence>

Fernando, N, (2018) When's the right time to talk about money? Financial Teach- able Moments for women affected by Family Violence, Melbourne: WIRE. Accessible at: <https://www.wire.org.au/teachable-moments/>

McGowan, J., Maher, J.M., Malowney, T., & Thomas, K. (2019). Identifying economic abuse amongst women with disability in Victoria: A toolkit for service providers and people affected by family violence: Final Report. Melbourne: Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre. Accessible at: https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/report/Identifying_economic_abuse_amongst_women_with_disability_in_Victoria_A_toolkit_for_service_providers_and_people_affected_by_family_violence_Final_Report_Pdf_/7992815

Segrave, M., Wickes, R., and Keel, C. (2021) Migrant and Refugee Women in Australia: The Safety and Security Survey. Monash University. Accessible at: https://mcusercontent.com/cf3d702640e25493b600dfcd2/files/8adb9d5d-0882-9bb2-177a-596c7761c57f/HA_MRW_in_Aus_The_Safety_and_Security_Study_Digital_Report.pdf

Webster, K., Diemer, K., Honey, N., Mannix, S., Mickle, J., Morgan, J., Parkes, A., Politoff, V., Powell, A., Stubbs, J., & Ward, A. (2018). Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) (Research report, 03/2018). Sydney, NSW: ANROWS. Accessible at: <https://20ian81kynqg38bl3l3eh8bf-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/anr001-NCAS-report-WEB-1019.pdf>

APPENDIX A: PANELLIST SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

Catherine Fitzpatrick, Director of Customer Vulnerability & Financial Resilience at Westpac. Prior to joining Westpac, Catherine spent seven years at Commonwealth Bank in various positions leading the community and customer vulnerability, complaints and government and industry affairs teams. Catherine has a passion for giving a voice to the voiceless, taking action and catalysing systemic change to improve customer and community outcomes. She is a current member of the NSW Attorney-General's Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Corporate Leadership Group. She has previously held roles as Member of the NSW Advisory Committee of CEDA, Deputy Chair of the NSW Ministerial Council for Women's Economic Opportunity and Director, Diversity Council of Australia. In 2018 she was recognised as an AFR Qantas 100 Women of Influence for leadership of Commonwealth Bank's domestic violence program. In 2020 she received her fourth CBA CEO award, this time for discovering and leading the industry response to abuse in banking transactions.

Marcus Crudden, Executive Director, Price Monitoring and Regulation, Essential Services Commission. Marcus is responsible for leading the commission's pricing and regulatory work program across local government, transport and water sectors, and retail energy pricing. Marcus was responsible for leading the commission's response to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Julie Kun, CEO, WIRE and a white settler of migrant refugee parentage. Julie lives on the unceded land of the Kulin Nation is a feminist, social worker and social justice campaigner. Julie has over twenty years of leadership experience working in a diverse ranging of settings within the not-for-profit sector. Being able to lead an organisation like WIRE is a privilege that enables Julie to live out her values and aspirations for the community she lives in, in her daily work.

Gulanra Abbasova, Executive Officer, Harmony Alliance—the national migrant and refugee women's alliance—and head of strategy at Migration Council Australia. Gulnara has a significant track record in civil society leadership across social policy, gender equality and human rights nationally and internationally. Previously, Gulnara was Executive Director of the national peak body representing Australia's multicultural communities and led programs at two UN agencies on the rights and issues of Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities. Gulnara serves on a number of boards and committees focusing on women's leadership and safety, and public health.

Larisha V Jerome, a Jarowair, Wakka Wakka & Wulli Wulli woman with strong family ties to South East Queensland who grew up on Dharug Country in Western Sydney. Larisha currently works at First

Nations Foundation as the project lead for the Indigenous Women's Financial Wellness Project. Her aim to redress the economic injustice that First Nations people face and to empower women to achieve Financial Wellness and Economic Independence. Larisha has an extensive background working in Banking, Health and Government (Indigenous Affairs) and Non-for-Profit sector (Women's Health & Women's Community Legal Service in the Financial Abuse Prevention Unit).

Michal Morris, CEO of InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (Vic). Michal is on the Board of Domestic Violence Victoria and is a Council Member of the Harmony Alliance. Michal is also on the Advisory Group of The Australian Women Against Violence Alliance, and the governance group of the Western Integrated Family Violence Committee. Michal has worked for over 20 years advocating for and supporting diverse communities across government and the third sector. She has developed innovation and service responses for multicultural communities since the late 1990s.

Heidi la Paglia, Director of Policy and Programs at Women with Disabilities Australia. Heidi is a woman with disability who has worked at Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) for a number of years. In this time Heidi has worked on various initiatives, including developing WWDA's Our Site website in collaboration with over 100 women and girls with disability and coordinating WWDA's Youth Network. Heidi currently manages WWDA's policy and project work, and represents WWDA on a number of advisory groups with sector stakeholders. Heidi has a strong interest in ensuring that efforts to support the safety and reproductive rights of women are inclusive of people with disability. During her studies, Heidi became connected with the feminist and disability rights movements through a number of roles and initiatives. In 2016, Heidi held the role of National Women's Officer for the National Union of Students (NUS) and worked with the Australian Human Rights Commission to implement the first ever national survey into sexual violence on university campuses.

Eloise Layard, ACON Program Coordinator for Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence. Eloise leads ACON's NSW based Sexual Domestic and Family Violence work. Eloise works with community, researchers, and other domestic and family violence organisations to increase community knowledge and awareness of SDFV in LGBTQ communities and to support inclusive practice and access to services. In her role at ACON, Eloise undertakes research looking at sexual, domestic and family violence in LGBTQ communities, and delivers training, programs and campaigns in the space. Eloise is also the co-convenor of the NSW LGBTQ Domestic and Family Violence Interagency.

Professor Kay Cook, Research Director in the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities at Swinburne University (Victoria). Kay has extensive experience conducting large scale projects that begin from and respond to the financial needs of and the experiences of women who have fled domestic violence. She has significant expertise in conducting quantitative research projects and working in cross-disciplinary teams. Kay is a member of the Treating Families Fairly Committee of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, alongside Good Shepherd ANZ and the peak body for Financial Counsellors Victoria. Kay will manage the overall Safety by Design Principles and self-assessment tool project, liaising with the Office for Women and working alongside the Design Team and managing the Content team.

Further information

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