



Evaluation of the Fourth Action Plan

Under the National Plan to Reduce
Violence Against Women and Their
Children (2010-2022)

Prepared for the Department of Social Services

FINAL REPORT

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Glossary

Terminology	Definition
4AP	Fourth Action Plan under the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCO	Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ANROWS	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
COVID-19	The coronavirus pandemic
The Department	Department of Social Services (Australian Government)
DFV	Domestic and family violence
DSS	Department of Social Services (Australian Government)
FDSV	Family, domestic and sexual violence
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer
The National Council	National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children
The National Plan	The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022
NCAS	National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women
NIAA	National Indigenous Australians Agency
NIP	National Implementation Plan (for the Fourth Action Plan)
PMR	Performance monitoring and reporting framework (for the Fourth Action Plan)
PSS	Personal Safety Survey

Disclaimer

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This report has been prepared as outlined in the Project and Objectives section of the contract dated 22 June 2020. The services provided in connection with this engagement comprise an advisory engagement, which is not subject to assurance or other standards issued by the Australian Auditing and Assurance Standards Board and, consequently no opinions or conclusions intended to convey assurance have been expressed.

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KPMG have indicated within this report the sources of the information provided. We have not sought to independently verify those sources unless otherwise noted within the report.

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Executive Summary

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan) was implemented through four, three-year action plans; each with its own priority:

- The First Action Plan (2010-2013) laid the foundations for longer-term change
- The Second Action Plan (2013-2016) established a strong research and prevention agenda
- The Third Action Plan (2016-2019) further strengthened the evidence base and provided greater support for women and children in Australia living with or trying to leave violence.

With the Fourth Action Plan (4AP), Commonwealth, state, and territory government agencies have continued to dedicate significant investments of time, effort, and resources towards preventing and reducing violence against women and children. The scale of work that has occurred over the life of National Plan, culminating in the 4AP, is to be commended.

However, the 4AP was hampered by its implementation overlapping with the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), impacting on implementation timeframes, redirected government and non-government workforces to support pandemic efforts, limited opportunities for consultation due to social distancing requirements, and delayed data collection mechanisms. In addition, significant data limitations and the multitude of initiatives occurring at the national and state levels has meant that the ability to understand the attributable impact of the 4AP is limited.

Despite these challenges, there are some key takeaways from this evaluation of the 4AP.

Implementation of initiatives under the 4AP

Enablers of successful implementation included collaboration and engagement (across governments, between sectors, with target communities, and with experts), and co-locating services or leveraging existing service structures.

The primary barrier for implementation was COVID-19, which impacted on delivery timeframes, redirected workforces to support pandemic efforts, and limited opportunities for consultation due to social distancing requirements.

Implementation of the 4AP has been broadly successful

The 4AP was delivered through over 160 initiatives, with responsibility shared between Commonwealth, state, and territory agencies.

Of the **45 initiatives** under **Priority One** → **80%** are complete or in progress and on track

Of the **30 initiatives** under **Priority Two** → **63%** are complete or in progress and on track

Of the **34 initiatives** under **Priority Three** → **85%** are complete or in progress and on track

Of the **29 initiatives** under **Priority Four** → **79%** are complete or in progress

Of the **87 initiatives** under **Priority Five** → **88%** are complete or in progress.



Impact of the 4AP

It is difficult to determine the true impact of the 4AP due to a lack of appropriate and timely data. While the performance, monitoring, and reporting (PMR) framework identified a number of data sources to measure short- and medium-term outcomes, data development to address these gaps has been delayed due to COVID-19.

However, assessment of available evidence found:

- While progress had been made in some areas – such as community attitudes, available service responses, and more engagement with target communities – more can be done
- While the 4AP explicit actions relating to sexual harassment, there were mixed responses concerning whether this has translated into amended and improved practice
- Rates of reported sexual assault increased over the life of the 4AP, however there was also an

increased awareness of sexual violence in this time due to a number of high-profile cases being reported in the media

- Significant service gaps still exist, such as affordable housing, service access in rural and remote areas, and co-designed responses with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that address intergenerational trauma.

Conclusions and recommended next steps

This evaluation has identified a number of opportunities for improvement as the new successor policy to the National Plan and its associated plans are implemented:

Embed flexibility into service responses

- Flexibility in service delivery – demonstrated as services adapted to service deliver under COVID-19 – is important for initiatives now and in the future.
- Longer term funding arrangements with service providers will enable funding and delivery agencies to better understand local areas, develop strong working relationships with communities, and deliver more appropriate services.

Prioritise data development activities to understand future impact

- Evaluations of initiatives under the 4AP are at varying levels of completeness, with some currently being undertaken and not yet finalised. It is recommended that future analysis of these evaluations be undertaken to determine what lessons can be incorporated into work under the new National Plan.
- Any future outcomes framework and performance monitoring and reporting mechanism should be developed in close consultation with states and territories

- Where data gaps are identified, funding should be made available for data collection and development
- Any future PMR mechanisms for Action Plans should be developed in line with the outcomes framework and evaluation plan of the new National Plan
- Robust performance monitoring and evaluation needs to be adequately funded.

Ensure better understanding, funding, and measurement of responses to support diverse groups

- There remain gaps in appropriate service provision for diverse population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+); people with disability; and people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities. In some instances, specific service provision would be beneficial, however – in order to ensure an intersectional approach – mainstream service providers also need to be better equipped to support people from these communities
- There should be targeted interventions for rural and remote communities experiencing family, domestic, and sexual violence
- Partnerships and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be prioritised in order to develop culturally safe supports
- Data availability is an ongoing issue. This is particularly apparent when considering specific population groups disproportionately affected by family, domestic, and sexual violence, such as people who identify as LGBTIQ+, people with disability, and people from CALD communities. Any data development activities should explicitly address these cohorts.

These evaluation findings have informed the development of the next National Plan, due for finalisation in mid-2022, with the evidence and suggested future directions being taken into account in the drafting of the successor policy.

INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction

1.1 The National Plan

In May 2008, the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the National Council) was established to develop an evidence-based plan for reducing violence against women and their children. The National Council report, *Time for Action: The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009–2021*, recommended that all Australian governments agree to a long-term plan to reduce violence, with the Commonwealth Government taking a leadership role. In response to this recommendation, the Commonwealth, state, and territory governments developed the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan). The National Plan was released by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2011, and the Department of Social Services (the Department or DSS) is the lead agency responsible for administering the National Plan.

1.2 The Fourth Action Plan

The National Plan was implemented via four action plans that each spanned a three-year period to drive change and respond to emerging priorities. The First Action Plan (2010–2013) laid the foundations for longer-term change while the Second Action Plan (2013–2016) established a strong research and prevention agenda. The Third Action Plan (2016–2019) further strengthened the evidence base and provided greater support for women and children in Australia living with or trying to leave violence.

The Fourth Action Plan (4AP) was the final Action Plan under the National Plan and was endorsed by COAG in August 2019.

It set out a range of initiatives to reduce violence against women and their children based around five priority areas:

- | | |
|----|---|
| 01 | Primary prevention is key |
| 02 | Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children |
| 03 | Respect, listen and respond to the diverse lived experiences and knowledge of women and their children affected by violence |
| 04 | Respond to sexual violence and harassment |
| 05 | Improve support and service system responses |

The priorities were further defined by eight guiding principles:

- 1) Reducing violence against women and their children is everyone's business and we all have a role to play
- 2) We must address gender inequality to stop violence – women will never be safe if they are not equal
- 3) The voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must inform responses to the family and sexual violence experienced in their communities
- 4) We must address the diversity and lived experiences of women and their children affected by violence
- 5) Where children are involved, responses must be age appropriate, child-centred, and tailored to their specific needs and stages of development
- 6) Actions must be evidence-based and help build an understanding of what works to respond effectively to, and prevent, violence against women and their children
- 7) System and service responses must work to end the cycle of violence, keep people safe and prevent family, domestic, and sexual violence (FDSV)

- 8) A holistic approach to working with perpetrators of FDSV is needed across all actions – prevention, deterrence, rehabilitation, and ensuring accountability.

1.3 Overview of the Fourth Action Plan evaluation

The National Plan included a commitment to conducting an evaluation over the 12-year lifespan, as well as three-year evaluations throughout to evaluate each Action Plan. As the National Plan and 4AP are due to end in June 2022, the Department engaged KPMG to conduct an evaluation to assess the implementation of the National Plan, its impact and its effectiveness in meeting its objectives. This included an evaluation of the 4AP.

For the evaluation of the 4AP, a mixed methods design was used to provide insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of the 4AP. The evaluation comprised two core components:

- **Implementation (process) evaluation:** This considered the extent to which the 4AP has been implemented as planned, with a focus on the initiatives of the National Implementation Plan (NIP). This component identified barriers and enablers to successful implementation and areas for improvement as well as lessons learnt. The context in which the 4AP was implemented was also acknowledged, particularly with reference to the broader National Plan activities and any parallel developments, and jurisdiction specific considerations.
- **Outcomes evaluation:** This considered the outcomes achieved throughout the three-year span of the 4AP. The analysis considered the potential impact of the 4AP, on short, medium and longer-term outcomes. Outcomes of flagship initiatives were also considered.

The methods used for the evaluation of the 4AP are similar to those utilised for the National Plan evaluation, however, were undertaken independently to separate findings related to the 4AP from the broader National Plan. Specific methods included:

- Desktop research
- Interviews and focus groups with the national implementation group and other government stakeholders, as well as peak bodies – particularly those working with diverse and vulnerable cohorts
- Interviews and focus groups with data custodians and key research organisations (for example, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW))
- Analysis of reporting from states and territories as part of the development and finalisation of the progress reports under the 4AP, and updated to the NIP
- Analysis of data from the performance monitoring and reporting (PMR) framework developed specifically for the 4AP
- Consideration of separate evaluations of key initiatives funded across jurisdictions under the 4AP.

Evaluation questions guiding this work can be found in Appendix A and more detail on the data collection methods is available in Appendix B.

1.3.1 Limitations

Despite the wide ranging and multi-tiered approach to the evaluation of the 4AP, there are several methodological limitations that need to be considered:

- **Attribution:** Due to the complex policy landscape in place nationally, it is not possible to attribute changes that may have occurred since 2019 directly to the 4AP. Each state and territory governments are concurrently driving reform at the local level through respective strategies and plans, and initiatives have also been rolled out by non-government and corporate sector agencies. While we will observe and analyse changes over the period of the 4AP, causal links were not able to be made.
- **Consultation fatigue:** The consultations for the evaluation for the 4AP occurred amidst a congested stakeholder engagement landscape, at the Commonwealth and state level. For instance, consultations for the new

National Plan took place in a similar timeframe, as did the National Summit for Women's Safety roundtables. This can have a real impact on stakeholders, particularly those from frontline services who may be drawn away from service delivery to provide their time to the range of consultation activities.

Similarly, Commonwealth, state, and territory agencies provided final updates and approvals for the second 4AP progress reports and the NIP multiple times from August 2021 to January 2022. As such, a final update on the status of initiatives closer to May 2022 was not sought.

- **National Plan versus the 4AP:** In an effort to minimise consultation fatigue, it was determined that the consultations assessing the effectiveness of the National Plan and the 4AP would occur concurrently in combined sessions. While facilitators directed participants specifically to the 4AP where that was the subject of inquiry, participants may not have been able to disentangle views towards one or the other. Recency bias may also have favoured discourse in relation to the 4AP, or at least activities that occurred at the same time, due to the proximity, knowledge, and familiarity of this period.
- **Inclusiveness:** The list of stakeholders was carefully curated and checked, with government contacts in each jurisdiction given the opportunity to suggest additional or alternative individuals or groups for inclusion, in both the frontline worker survey and the stakeholder focus groups. However, this may have excluded

providers that were not well known to government stakeholders.

- **Victims and survivors, and people with lived experiences:** From the outset of the evaluation activities, it was determined that consultation with victims and survivors, perpetrators, and people with lived experience of FDSV was out of scope. Instead, the focus of the stakeholder engagement activities was on the impact of policy and program decisions associated with the National Plan and the 4AP, and system level understandings and shifts in attitude and behaviour, not the experiences of individuals within the community. Feedback received as part of consultations and more broadly indicated that inclusion of the voices of people with lived experiences in future evaluation and monitoring activities for the new National Plan would be crucial.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** During the stakeholder engagement period, large parts of Australia were subject to lockdown restrictions which had the potential to impact on participation rates due to the need to work from home, while also having to care for young, elderly, and other relatives, including supervising remote learning. In some jurisdictions there was a pause on service delivery, limiting access to services. Further, some services saw an increase in demand for supports, reallocating their workforce to respond to more immediate needs. While this impacted service delivery, it also impacted on agencies' ability to undertake data collection and analysis.

Implementation of the Fourth Action Plan

2 Implementation of the Fourth Action Plan

Key Findings

- Implementation of the 4AP has been broadly successful. While a number of initiatives remain delayed at the time of reporting, primarily as a result of impacts from COVID-19, all initiatives have commenced and are progressing.
- A number of barriers and enablers were identified, either supporting or impacting on implementation of initiatives under the 4AP.
 - Enablers for successful implementation included collaboration and engagement (across governments, between sectors, with target communities, and with experts), and co-locating services or leveraging existing service structures.

The primary barrier for implementation was COVID-19, which impacted on delivery timeframes, redirected workforces to support pandemic efforts, and limited opportunities for consultation due to social distancing requirements.

2.1 Context

The 4AP is the final action plan of the Nation Plan, and built on three previous action plans that were delivered since 2010. To support the work being undertaken across Australia, a NIP was developed for the 4AP, outlining Commonwealth, State and Territory government initiatives, intended outcomes, funding and milestones in connection to the 4AP.

The National Plan's website includes the Implementation plan and provides information on over 160 initiatives under the 4AP across all jurisdictions.¹ Commonwealth, state, and territory agencies have developed localised strategies, laying a foundation for work in addressing FDSV. Jurisdictions provided

updated details on their initiatives as part of annual progress reporting, providing information on implementation status and report on progress towards achieving priorities. In 2019, there were 164 initiatives detailed in the NIP. The NIP has undergone three updates. In 2020, there were 166 initiatives detailed. In 2021 a second update was undertaken, with 167 initiatives outlined. The NIP was updated for a third and final time in November 2021 and now contains 170 initiatives.

Encouragingly, emerging evaluations of initiatives under the 4AP are demonstrating positive results.

¹ National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Implementation plan. Available at: [Implementation Plan – National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children \(dss.gov.au\)](https://dss.gov.au/implementation-plan)

Table 1: Priorities and Actions under the 4AP

PRIORITY 1: Primary prevention	PRIORITY 2: Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children	PRIORITY 3: Respecting and responding to the diverse lived experience and knowledge of women and their children affected by violence	PRIORITY 4: Responding to sexual violence and sexual harassment	PRIORITY 5: Improving support and service system responses
Action 1: Advance gender equality and respect for women through effective primary prevention initiatives	Action 6: Value and engage the expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men, communities and organisations to lead in the creation and implementation of community-led solutions to build and manage change	Action 10: Implement community-led and tailored initiatives to address the unique experiences and needs of communities affected by multiple forms of discrimination or inequality	Action 13: Prevent sexual violence and sexual harassment before it happens through national and targeted initiatives that promote informed consent, bodily autonomy and respectful relationships	Action 16: Enable workforces to provide trauma-informed support with a focus on safety and recovery to victims and survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence
Action 2: Improve coordination across primary prevention activities to maximise their impact on community attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence		Action 11: Deliver policies and services to address the disproportionate impact of violence on particular groups		
Action 3: Implement targeted primary prevention activities designed by, and tailored for, the specific communities they are intended to support		Action 12: Better equip the service system and communities to address complex forms of violence and harmful cultural practices including early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/ cutting, dowry abuse and human trafficking	Action 14: Deliver client-centred, trauma-informed, specialised and consistent support to victims and survivors of sexual violence	
Action 4: Address intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through primary prevention, including holistic healing strategies, and by strengthening connections to culture, language, knowledge and identity		Action 15: Strengthen the capacity of all sectors to address sexual harassment to ensure women are safe at work, while studying and online		
Action 5: Promote healthy and safe relationships and build gender equitable values through initiatives for children and young people				
	Action 7: Build the workforce capability to ensure delivery of high quality, holistic, trauma-informed and culturally safe supports that respond to the complex needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children			Action 17: Collaborate across services, sectors and workforces to ensure responses to women affected by domestic, family and sexual violence are coordinated, meet women’s needs, avoid women having to retell their story and promote their recovery
	Action 8: Develop innovative and alternative models for victim and perpetrator support that contribute to safe healing and sustainable behaviour change			Action 18: Improve access to and embed trauma-informed support for perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence to prevent reoffending and promote rehabilitation and treatment
	Action 9: Address both the immediate impacts and deep underlying drivers of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through collective action with governments, service providers and communities			Action 19: Build the evidence base to inform responses to domestic, family and sexual violence by strengthening the focus on what works to reduce violence, improving data and supporting the Fourth Action Plan priorities
				Action 20: Improve access to suitable and safe accommodation within their communities for women who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence

Source: Fourth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (2019)

This section of the report will consider the extent to which the 4AP was implemented as planned, with a focus on the initiatives of the NIP. The information in this section has been drawn from Commonwealth, state, and territory inputs that were used to inform the first² and second³ 4AP progress reports, as well as updates to the NIP found on the National Plan website. In order to better understand the implementation activities undertaken, and whether they differed from what was originally intended, a comparison between these data points has been undertaken where possible. Findings from consultations which occurred as part of the evaluation of the National Plan and 4AP have also been provided where relevant. Where possible, evaluations of initiatives delivered under the 4AP have been included, however, it should be noted that these are limited given the timeframe of the 4AP and the impact of COVID-19 on data collection and research activities. Barriers and enablers to successful implementation are also identified, along with areas for improvement and lessons learnt.

A traffic light system has been developed to assist in identifying whether implementation has been successful and to what extent implementation has occurred. A rating has been aligned to each action area which have been informed by the progress indicator provided by jurisdictions in the second 4AP progress report:

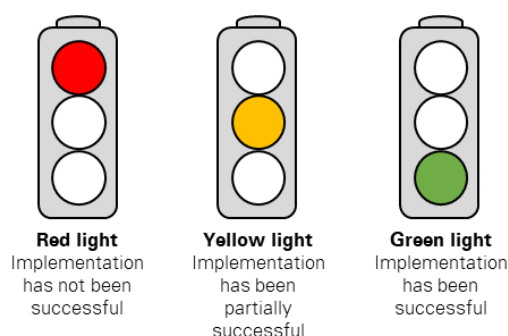
- Red indicates that implementation has not been successful, with initiatives not being implemented or stopped
- Yellow indicates that implementation of that action has been partially successful, with the majority of initiatives aligned to that action being in progress and on track, however some remain delayed at the time of reporting
- Green indicates that the majority of initiatives aligned to that action have been implemented and are completed or in

progress with no initiatives being delayed at the time of reporting.

As will be detailed in the sub-sections below, implementation of the 4AP has been broadly successful. While a number of initiatives remain delayed at the time of reporting, primarily as a result of impacts from COVID-19, all initiatives have commenced and are progressing.

Encouragingly, emerging evaluations of initiatives under the 4AP are demonstrating positive results.

Figure 1: Traffic light indicators for implementation of the 4AP



Source: KPMG

² First Progress Report for the Fourth Action Plan 2019-2022. Available at: [First Progress Report for the Fourth Action Plan 2019-2022 – National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children/progress-reports)

³ The second progress report for the 4AP is still being finalised at the time of reporting.

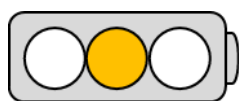
2.2 Assessment of implementation

Priority One: Primary prevention is key

Priority one focuses on whole-of-population initiatives that address the underlying drivers of violence. Primary prevention is stopping violence before it occurs and aims to change behaviours and norms in all areas of society that excuse, justify and promote violence against women and their children. Primary prevention activities have the potential to make the largest impact on reducing violence and must move beyond being the key focus of specialist services to being a core priority for all sectors, industries and sections of government.⁴

There were 45 initiatives that align to priority one at the time of reporting. Eighty per cent of these initiatives were completed or in progress and on track, indicating that the majority of initiatives have been implemented. This positive outcome has been supported by a flexible nature to service delivery and the establishment of working groups or partnerships. The remaining 20 per cent of initiatives were delayed. This has mostly been due to COVID-19, including implementation delays due to reallocation of workloads in light of changes to workforce priorities, restrictions on gatherings due to social distancing measures or lockdowns, or the re-working of policies and frameworks to incorporate the impacts of COVID-19. Service providers have taken a flexible approach to support the continuation of services, with strong progress being made against the delivery of early intervention and prevention activities that were delayed due to the pandemic. Ongoing monitoring and community consultation have provided opportunities for reflection and the development of tailor-made initiatives responding to community need.

There are five actions under priority one that range from primary prevention activities, community consultation to healthy relationship education for children and young people. Actions also address specific cohorts, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Action 1 - Advance gender equality and respect for women through effective primary prevention initiatives

Action 1 has aimed to promote positive attitudes and behaviour towards women, with initiatives supporting the development of respect and to advance gender equality for women. Programs under this action have been initiated, and are delivered through a number of activities including:

- Media campaigns
- Establishment of legislation and strategies
- Adapting teaching curricula
- Establishment of programs for the workplace
- Piloting, testing and adapting materials on content for media campaigns, training programs and respectful relationship programs.

Examples of progress under Action 1

Some initiatives have delivered beyond what they initially intended. In 2020, under the Commonwealth's *Community and awareness and outreach prevention activities initiative*, Our Watch launched new content for the No Excuse for Abuse and Doing Nothing Does Harm campaigns. Our Watch continued to develop and test new content for the Doing Nothing Does Harm campaign, with a secondary burst delivered in the first half of 2021. Updates to the No Excuse for Abuse campaign were developed due to the impact of COVID-19 and a reported increase in online searches for crisis support services for FDSV.⁵ Additionally, Our Watch has

⁴ Department of Social Services, 2019. Fourth Action Plan. Available at: https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2019/fourth_action-plan.pdf

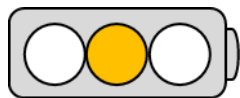
⁵ 'Coronavirus does not justify violence': Our Watch launches updated 'No Excuse for Abuse' campaign - Our Watch

undertaken research and consultation with key stakeholders to better develop and enhance online materials for young people. Concepts for a new campaign aiming to raise awareness of gender inequality and violence is currently being tested and further refined.

An interim evaluation of Our Watch's Doing Nothing Does Harm was conducted in 2021, with the campaign achieving 33 million impressions across multiple media channels by December 2021.⁶ An interim market research report for the same initiative also found that, despite low advertisement awareness, the campaign was broadly well-received and almost all respondents took away a constructive message.⁷

The overarching framework underpinning the work of Our Watch, Change the Story, has also undergone some change. The framework was originally developed as a priority under the Second Action Plan and has since been adopted as a national policy framework for prevention by all Australian Governments under the Third Action Plan. The second edition of Change the Story has been updated to incorporate evidence regarding drivers of violence against women and prevention, with further revisions being made to clarify, expand or improve the framework's coverage of specific topics.⁸

The Western Australian *Respectful Relationships Teaching Support Program* is a priority under the WA Path to Safety strategy. This pilot program commenced in 2019 and has delivered the Respectful Relationships program into schools across Western Australia.



Action 2 – Improve coordination across primary prevention activities to maximise their impact on community attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence

Action 2's initiatives focused on preventing violence and maximising impacts on community attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence through improved inter-agency

The program had been implemented in 21 schools by the start of 2022, with the Western Australian Government committing to continuing the program and expanding the program into more schools, as well as local sport and recreational centres and organisations. Respectful Relationships is also being delivered in Victorian schools. More than 1,950 government, Catholic and independent schools (inclusive of all government schools) are implementing the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, as recommended by the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.

A number of high-level strategies, action plans and legislation have been developed to support action 1. These include Western Australia's *Stronger Together: WA's Plan for Gender Equality*, the Australian Capital Territory's Government *Domestic and Family Violence Training Strategy*, Victoria's *Gender Equality Act 2020* and the Northern Territory's *Development of a Gender Equality Framework*. The Northern Territory released the Gender Equality Statement of Commitment in July 2020, focusing on community engagement, health and wellbeing, safety, economic security, and leadership and participation. The statement was informed by consultation with over 300 men, women, and people from diverse backgrounds, along with targeted consultation with peak organisations and key service providers.

coordination. The majority of the initiatives under this action number are completed or in progress, however, a small number were delayed, due to work being updated in light of

⁶ OurWatch Doing Nothing Does Harm. Supplement Document to the Campaign evaluation. 2021.

⁷ Quantum Market Research. Our Watch's Doing Nothing Does Hard Campaign evaluation. 2021.

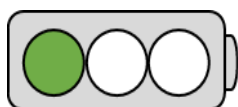
⁸ Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed.). (ourwatch.org.au)

the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses and community partners. For those on track, the following activities have supported the action to be implemented as intended:

- Collaboration with stakeholders across sectors, sharing evidence and lessons
- Coordination of program delivery
- Development of sector wide frameworks, partnership models and action plans
- Collation of data from diverse sources.

Examples of progress under Action 2

An interim evaluation of the National Primary Prevention Hub conducted by Our Watch in 2021 found that the project audience had grown substantially, with the initiative having good reach in terms of geography, setting and roles of attendees, and high levels of engagement in event content being observed. Ongoing adaptation supported the effectiveness of the Hub. Rapid feedback from events revealed key components for successful events, webinars and forums, with lessons including the importance of diverse and engaging speakers. The interim evaluation also found that close engagement with the Hub Stakeholder Group members resulted in the Hub being able to establish relationships in communities where the project had less reach. The Stakeholder Group was also found to be a critical component of the project,



Action 3 – Implement targeted primary prevention activities designed by, and tailored for, the specific communities they are intended to support.

Action 3 intended to implement targeted primary prevention activities designed for and tailored to specific population groups. All initiatives aligned to Action 3 have been implemented and are either completed or are in progress and on track, with none being delayed. The implementation of Action 3 has been supported by a number of initiatives, including:

- Community-led and community-based initiatives

actively supporting the work being undertaken.⁹

One example that highlighted how improved coordination has been achieved is the Victorian Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform. The platform was released in 2021, and draws on data from surveys, administrative data collections, longitudinal studies and published research reports, and one-off smaller data sets. It draws on primary prevention focused data against a common framework to enable the tracking of Victoria's progress towards prevention of family violence and gender-based violence.

Initiatives under this action also developed frameworks, roles, groups, and strategies to encourage collaboration, including the Northern Territory Development of a primary prevention model and community of prevention practice, Queensland's Corporate and Community Engagement Framework, South Australia's working group through the Primary Prevention Plan initiative, Tasmania's Our Watch Primary Prevention Officer, and the sector forums through the Commonwealth funded National Primary Prevention Hub. These models encouraged collaboration between government agencies, as well as businesses and communities, with stakeholders providing advice, experience and expertise in the design and development of initiatives relating to primary prevention.

- Community consultation, informing the development and delivery of initiatives
- Targeted media campaigns
- Establishment of specific prevention officers
- Establishment of state-specific action plans and legislation.

Examples of progress under Action 3

All initiatives under this action have commenced, with none being delayed. A

⁹ Our Watch. 2021. National Primary Prevention Hub Interim Evaluation Report.

number of initiatives aligned to action 3 have utilised community consultation to develop activities. For example, the South Australia Aboriginal Affairs Action Plan 2019-20 supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children to create their own community-led solutions by engaging their expertise.

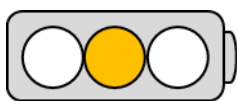
In some instances, additional funding has been provided by state and territory governments, allowing a number of programs to continue or expand. For example, New South Wales' Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund initially funded 20 innovative projects responding to domestic and family violence (DFV), including 14 focusing on prevention and early intervention, having commenced over two rounds. Additional funding for the continuation of 12 innovation fund programs into 2022 was provided by the New South Wales Government. Ten of these projects were extended to March 2022, enabling service providers to consider whether their programs have had significant positive outcomes and how they will be embedded into service delivery. One project has been extended for a further 12 months to June 2022, while another has been extended for up to two years, allowing for it to be tested into additional geographic locations. Increased and extended funding indicates there is a need for these programs to continue and that they have been successful in achieving outcomes.

The Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020 came into effect in 2021. The Act seeks to address gender inequality in the Victorian public sector, local councils and universities by

requiring them to provide data against a range of workplace gender equality indicators and develop and implement a Gender Equality Action Plan every four years. Defined entities under the Act must also consider and promote gender equality, and take action to achieve gender equality, when developing policies and programs, and delivering services, that have a direct and significant impact on the public. Defined entities are also required to report on their progress in relation to workplace gender equality every two years.

There had been some change to the requirements outlined in the Act. Due to COVID-19, the Commissioner extended reporting obligation deadlines in 2021, with the first round of workplace gender audit data due to the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner in late 2021, and Gender Equality Action Plans including strategies and measures due in early 2022.

A key activity under this action was the delivery of community-based initiatives. These involved the use of media to raise awareness, as well as events and forums. The Northern Territory's NO MORE Campaign reached 14,000 Territorians in a six-month period in 2020 through face-to-face engagement and FDSV awareness raising activities. These activities include educational sessions and events, marches, information sessions, and presentations to communities. NO MORE has partnered with over 180 government and non-government agencies and groups to support delivery.



Action 4 – Address intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through primary prevention including holistic healing strategies, and by strengthening connections to culture, language, knowledge, and identity

There are only a small number of initiatives that align to Action 4. The majority of initiatives were delayed attributing this to COVID-19 and its associated impacts. However, all initiatives have commenced and continue to make progress, with the following activities supporting implementation of this action:

- Co-design and community engagement in the development and delivery of programs
- Establishment of state-specific strategies
- Alignment of policies and programs with the refreshed Closing the Gap commitments.

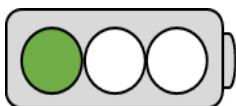
Examples of progress under Action 4

Community consultation and co-design has supported implementation of Action 4 by providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the opportunity to shape primary prevention strategies. This has enabled culturally appropriate and trauma-informed initiatives to be developed. The Commonwealth's initiatives *Greater support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in remote areas of high need* and *Practical intervention programs to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people* and the *Stage 2 of Wiyi Yani U Thangani (Women's Voices) project* are examples of co-design, while the Victorian *Dhelk Dja* project provided funding to Aboriginal organisations to deliver culturally appropriate, Aboriginal-led tailored responses.

On a higher level, some states and territories developed overarching strategies and action plans that underpin specific activities relating to primary prevention and other appropriate supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For example, the Western Australian Government's *Path to Safety strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030* established a whole of

government and community plan for reducing and responding to FDSV beyond the 4AP and National Plan over the coming decade. In 2021, further funding was provided under this strategy focusing on, among other things, breaking the intergenerational cycles of trauma, inequality, and disrespect that can lead to FDSV for future generations. The first action plan associated with this strategy is responding to COVID-19 and its impacts and is a key part of the WA Recovery Plan for COVID-19. This initiative was not part of the initial NIP, and highlights government's flexibility in responding to community needs as they arise.

The New South Wales Government has rolled out Multisystemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (known as MST-CAN), an in-home early intervention program that works with families to ensure their children are safe from abuse and neglect. An initial independent outcome evaluation was completed in late 2020 and found that, although the programs are in the early stages, entries to care are substantially lower for families who have successfully completed programs, a significant cohort of which are Aboriginal.



Action 5 – Promote healthy and safe relationships and build gender equitable values through initiatives for children and young people.

A number of initiatives under Action 5 focused on early intervention and primary prevention targeting young people. All initiatives that align to Action 5 are in progress and on track or are completed and none are delayed. The following activities were undertaken, supporting the implementation of Action 5:

- Development of resources and materials for school-aged children
- Media campaigns
- Adapting teaching curricula
- Training for parents
- Establishment of state-specific strategies.

Examples of progress under Action 5

Initiatives under Action 5 target young people and children through media campaigns, such as the Tasmanian New National Sexual Violence Campaign. Initiatives also targeted young people and children through activities provided in schools, such as Queensland's compulsory Respectful Relationships Education Program in state schools. The program's pilot was delivered in partnership with Our Watch, with an Advisory Group also being established to ensure Respectful Relationships was appropriate for the Queensland context. Another example is the New South Wales child protection education in schools, which has seen a new syllabus including progressive learning across child protection concepts, implemented across New South Wales' schools. Having programs

implemented into existing curriculum at schools, and making it mandatory, supports its usage and overall implementation.

Another innovative program is the Black Box Parenting project funded through New South Wales' Domestic and Family Violence Innovation Fund. This project provides professional training for parents with a history of FDSV. Programs targeting parents complements the education children and young people are receiving through schools, supporting early intervention and primary prevention in a holistic, whole of family manner.

One initiative aligned to Action 5 will continue to be delivered beyond the National Plan. The Northern Territory's Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Grants program is aligned to the first action plan of the Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018- 2028 Safe, respected and free from violence. The program commenced in 2018, with 36 violence prevention projects being supported through the grants program including community-developed and community-led projects, social media campaigns, workshops, focus groups, pilot programs, and informational resources targeted at community members and young people across the Territory. This program continues beyond the National Plan, and in future will fund projects over three years, highlighting the Territory's long-term commitment to supporting young people and their communities through primary prevention.

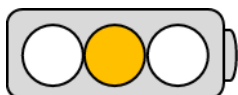
Priority Two: Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children

Priority two focuses on initiatives that are specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as national initiatives which include First Nations-specific components. The 4AP recognised that individual, family, and community strengths are required to address, prevent, and respond to DFSV. Additionally, the 4AP aims to provide better support for the work that is already being undertaken in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

There were 30 initiatives relating to the second priority at the end of 2021. At the time of reporting, 63 per cent of initiatives under this priority were either completed, or in progress, or on track. This outcome has been supported by a number of factors, including the formation of reference or working groups to support initiatives, program review and evaluation and an increase in funding to allow for the expansion

of services. There are four actions under priority two focused on engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to lead in the creation of community-led solutions, building workforce capability, development of innovative models for victim and perpetrator supports, and addressing deep underlying drivers of DFSV as well as immediate impacts.

Of the initiatives under this priority, 36 per cent were delayed. COVID-19, as discussed previously, has impacted on the delivery of initiatives such as through increased demand on the service system. For example, the South Australian Culturally Appropriate Women's Safety Contact Program has experienced significant delays as services involved in delivery of FDSV responses have been responding to an increase in demand. Additionally, the Northern Territory's Workforce and Sector Development Strategy and the Development of a primary prevention model and community of prevention practice were delayed, as COVID-19 impacted on staffing levels, workforces' workload, and prioritisation of tasks.



Action 6 - Value and engage the expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men, communities and organisations to lead in the creation and implementation of community-led solutions to build and manage change.

Initiatives under Action 6 involved Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design and delivery of initiatives, creating community led solutions to build and manage change. The majority of initiatives under Action 6 are either in progress or delayed. This is primarily due to the impacts of COVID-19, including restrictions on social gathering, lack of access to communities for consultation or service delivery, and redeployment of workforces. Work relating to all initiatives, however continues to progress, with the following activities supporting implementation of Action 6:

- Co-design and consultation with community members
- Supporting communities to redesign services
- Trauma-informed, holistic, community-led and community-based service delivery
- Development of state specific action plans.

Examples of progress under Action 6

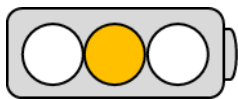
Initiatives under Action 6 use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's experience and expertise in the creation and implementation of community-led solutions. This has been supported through community consultation, along with engaging communities and community-based and led organisations in the development and delivery of initiatives. For example, the Western Australian *Valuing and*

engaging the expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people initiative focuses on working with Aboriginal people and their communities to co-design and implement a dedicated Aboriginal Family Safety Strategy. This strategy is a key part of the Western Australian Government's primary response to Closing the Gap target 13. This initiative highlights the Western Australian Government's commitment to collaborating with Aboriginal people, supporting locally led responses that are based on strengths, culture and local solutions. In June 2021, an Aboriginal-led consulting firm was engaged to draft the strategy. Community consultation supported the development of this strategy, with 350 Aboriginal community members and stakeholders engaged.

Another example is the Australian Capital Territory's *Co-Design of family-centred responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families*. This initiative recognised that community-led responses enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to lead decision-making and provide responses to ongoing intergenerational trauma, discrimination, and racism. The Australian Capital Territory Government is continuing to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the development and implementation of community-led and family-centred responses to FDSV.

These factors have supported the implementation of Action 6, despite the impact of COVID-19. However, it should be

noted that there is a lack of qualitative data available relating to the experiences of those involved in co-design and whether these communities feel appropriately engaged.



Action 7 - Build the workforce capability to ensure delivery of high quality, holistic, trauma-informed, and culturally safe supports that respond to the complex needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.

Action 7 aimed to support cultural competency training initiatives. While only a small number of initiatives are aligned to Action 7, the majority of them are in progress and on track. The following activities have supported the implementation of Action 7:

- Providing culturally appropriate training to frontline staff
- Sector consultation
- Engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, focusing on collaboration and knowledge building
- Supporting community-based organisations to provide culturally appropriate responses.

Examples of progress under Action 7

The focus of Action 7 is to build workforce capability and ensure that supports provided are culturally safe and respond to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. This has been done through the provision of accredited training, increasing the existing capacity of services to respond to clients with complex needs, as well as building the capacity of community leaders and elders in recognising and responding to FDSV in their communities. Additional efforts have focused on the development of high-level workforce and sector development plans to support the FDSV workforce and sector.

For example, the Commonwealth's *DV-alert*, which has been delivered by Lifeline since 2007, provides accredited training courses frontline, non-specialist staff on how to

recognise DFV, including an Indigenous-specific stream. An evaluation of DV-alert conducted in 2021 found that participants had reported improved confidence and practice skills, with 92 per cent (n=1,925) stating that they were better equipped to recognise, respond and refer in relation to FDSV as a result of attending the training. Participants noted the Lifeline brand was an important deciding factor for participants in deciding to pursue DV-alert, with the brand seen as an added 'stamp of approval', signalling quality.¹⁰

Additionally, Queensland's *Workforce Capacity and Capability Building Service* initiative through the Queensland WorkUp program has hosted a series of knowledge circles with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, sharing knowledge across professional development, self-care, workforce planning and responding to COVID-19. They have also hosted inclusion forums, focusing on building the capability of inclusive service delivery for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

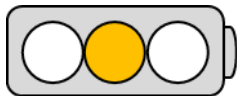
The Western Australian Government has provided funding for two community-based agencies to improve service pathways and reduce barriers to the access of support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD women and children. The funding will also provide training to increase the capability of service providers who come into contact with CALD victims and survivors, as well as build the capacity of community leaders and elders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities to address FDSV.

¹⁰ Where to. 2021. Report: Evaluation of DV-alert.

NSW Health has developed a new program model, Safe Wayz, for children under the age of criminal responsibility (currently 10 years of age in NSW) with problematic or harmful sexual behaviours and their families. The model was developed through a co-design process that embedded principles of cultural safety in each of the elements of the program including prevention, early support, and specialist counselling. Safe Wayz is supported by a centralised team of clinical and cultural advisors. All Local Health Districts have

developed Safe Wayz Program Implementation Plans and begun to conduct readiness activities prior to the program launch in 2022.

These examples highlight initiatives that aim to strengthen workforce capacity in responding to FDSV, ensuring it is culturally appropriate and responds to the complex needs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities.



Action 8 - Develop innovative and alternative models for victim and perpetrator support that contribute to safe healing and sustainable behaviour change.

Action 8 focused on innovative initiatives specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Again, there is only a small number of initiatives aligned to Action 8, however, the majority of initiatives under Action 8 have either been completed or are in progress, on track. The following activities have supported the implementation of Action 8:

- Utilising evidence-based services and intervention
- Establishment of specialist workforce positions
- Establishment of targeted programs
- Program review.

Examples of progress under Action 8

A number of the programs under Action 8 developed specialist positions that support both victims and survivors, and perpetrators. These positions are often embedded in other services accessed by the community, such as child and family wellbeing services.

For example, the Queensland *DFV specialist positions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services* initiative includes a number of specialist positions, which are embedded in community-controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing services. A similar program in Tasmania, the

Support Aboriginal families through the Aboriginal Family Safety Workers in Child and Family Centres initiative bases these positions in services that interact with families, supporting access to culturally appropriate, safe FDSV support.

Another example is the Northern Territory's *Men's Behaviour Change Program* which includes the Partner Contact Support Program. Recognising that FDSV does not occur in isolation, this initiative focused on providing a holistic, wrap around responses to both victims and survivors, and perpetrators. The Men's Behaviour Change Program, which focuses on assessing and managing risk to victims and survivors, operates alongside safety planning and intensive support for female partners through a Partner Contact Worker, provided by a women's service.¹¹

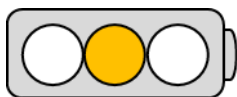
The Northern Territory is also undertaking a review of FDSV services in Greater Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek, with recommendations relating to improving service coordination and delivery of integrated services currently being considered for implementation.

An example of a targeted program is the Western Australian *Kimberley Family Violence Service*. This initiative is linked to the Western Australian Government's *Path to Safety*, which includes prioritisation to strengthen the role of Aboriginal Community Controlled

¹¹ Inquiry into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence - NTCOSS - Northern Territory Council of Social Service

Organisations (ACCOs) and communities to design and deliver culturally appropriate responses for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This initiative has seen partnerships between community-based service providers and ACCOs to provide localised programs for FDSV prevention and

support. Adaptation of programs under this initiative aims to develop integrated supports; increase education and awareness of FDSV; and deliver locally tailored, culturally secure, trauma informed, evidence-based men's behaviour change programs.



Action 9 - Address both the immediate impacts and deep underlying drivers of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through collective action with governments, service providers, and communities.

Action 9 focused on addressing immediate impacts and deep underlying causes of FDSV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This was to be done through consultation and inter-agency governance structures, involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Again, there is only a small number of initiatives relating to Action 9. Just over half are in progress delayed, with COVID-19 impacting on implementation of these initiatives. Despite delays, the initiatives under this Action continue to be delivered, with the following activities supporting the implementation of Action 9:

- Co-design and consultation with community members
- Establishment of state-specific strategies, action plans, and frameworks
- Alignment of policies and programs to the refreshed Closing the Gap commitments.

Examples of progress under Action 9

Queensland's *Reshaping our Approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence* was released in 2019 and is a framework that establishes the Queensland Government's commitment to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The framework is the result of targeted consultation and research with stakeholders including the former Domestic and Family Violence Implementation Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, and the Queensland First Children and Families Board. While some activities under this initiative were revised due to COVID-19, work is progressing to engage two remote and

discrete communities to develop their own DFV action plans, aligning to the development of the Local Thriving Communities Plans, and community safety plans. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Group has also been established, driving the framework and ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are actively engaged in providing oversight and advice in the design and development of future actions.

An example of an initiative that takes a community centred approach is the South Australian *Tiraapendi Wodli Port Adelaide justice reinvestment project*. This program will not only support Aboriginal families by providing them with the confidence and ability to access culturally safe services but will also support young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander South Australians to avoid contact with the youth justice system.

Initiatives under this priority have also been renewed, following advancement in policy on a national level. For example, Tasmania's *Resetting the Relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Agenda* was announced in 2016. Initially, this initiative had key priority areas and practical activities such as early childhood engagement through schools, supporting emerging Aboriginal enterprise and investing in recruiting Aboriginal people into the Tasmania State Service. The initiative has since been renewed following the new National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which came into effect in 2020. The Tasmanian Government has released a Closing the Gap implementation plan, which was finalised in August 2021, recognising a new way of working in genuine partnership with Aboriginal communities. The

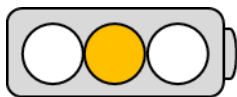
Tasmanian Government will continue to develop and deliver activities under the original initiative, working alongside Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, however, will now include the new National Agreement in its delivery. The Tasmanian Government will continue to partner with ACCOs, along with other key stakeholders, to deliver the Closing the Gap outcomes.¹²

Though implementation has broadly been delayed, the initiatives under Action 9 demonstrate Commonwealth, state and territory government's commitment to engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities in decision making, empowering them to develop their own responses, addressing immediate impacts and deep underlying drivers of FDSV.

Priority Three: Respect, listen and respond to the diverse lived experiences and knowledge of women and their children affected by violence

Priority three under the 4AP highlighted the need to learn from the diverse experiences of victims and survivors. Supports included the prioritisation of needs and voices of victims and survivors to understand different experiences of trauma and take into account community needs.

Of the 34 initiatives under priority three at the end of 2021, 85 per cent are either completed or in progress and on track. The progress that has been made under priority three has been supported by a number of factors, specifically the contribution of community members, experts, and those with lived experience.



Action 10 - Implement community-led and tailored initiatives to address the unique experiences and needs of communities affected by multiple forms of discrimination or inequality.

Action 10 ensures the needs of communities are met, through the utilisation of community consultation and engagement, and the development of tailored initiatives. The initiatives are to be designed by people affected by multiple forms of discrimination or inequality. The majority of initiatives aligned to Action 10 are in progress and on track. This action item has been successfully implemented, through the following activities:

- Working closely with frontline staff and specialist support teams to build capacity and capability to work with diverse cohorts
- Community consultation and co-design
- Working closely with experts to ensure programs are informed by best-practice and evidence
- Supporting community-led activities and projects

- Tailored responses
- State-specific strategies.

Examples of progress under Action 10

The Commonwealth's Community Led Prevention Projects initiative funded 16 organisations to deliver community-led projects preventing violence against women and children as well as the Men as Role Models project. Our Watch's expertise had been engaged, to ensure design, implementation and monitoring of these activities was evidence-based.

The Commonwealth's Greater support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in remote areas of high need and Practical intervention programs to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people project was informed by co-design. Every effort was made to ensure the participants'

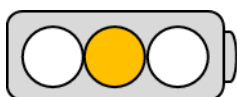
¹² [Resetting the Relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community Agenda – National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children \(dss.gov.au\)](#)

experience was inclusive, safe and supportive, engaging and as 'real' as possible. The service delivery models developed as part of this work were locally tailored, culturally safe, trauma-informed and met the intent of the First Nations-specific measures.

The Commonwealth's Continuation of Indigenous specific Third Action Plan projects is continuing to fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led solutions funded under the Third Action Plan. Funding has provided for an extension of services for 11 providers to build on previous successes. Some service providers, in response to COVID-19, have introduced innovative methods of delivery including conducting activities virtually and continuing to provide

supports that address the unique needs of the communities within which they operate.

New South Wales' Improving services working with LGBTIQ communities is a good example of how an initiative has provided a tailored response, addressing unique needs of communities affected by discrimination or inequality. ACON worked closely with frontline staff to build their capacity and improve policies and practices to better support the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) community. ACON have also implemented support groups for LGBTIQ+ victims and survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner and/or family violence



Action 11 - Deliver policies and services to address the disproportionate impact of violence on particular groups.

Action 11 looked at the delivery of initiatives, activities, programs, policies and services that addressed the impact of violence amongst particular groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, CALD people and people from the LGBTIQ+ community. This has included the following activities:

- Engaging community-based organisations to deliver programs in their communities
- Engaging those with lived experience to develop materials
- Training and resource development to build capacity of workforces
- Development of media campaigns and websites
- Embedding FDSV support roles into existing services
- Providing targeted responses to support diverse cohorts
- Development of state-specific action plans and frameworks.

Examples of progress under Action 11

The Victorian Everyone Matters: Inclusion and Equity Statement was informed by significant community engagement, applying an intersectional framework. This initiative has built the capacity of organisations and the

family violence system to become safer and more inclusive to all Victorians, including the CALD and LGBTIQ+ communities. As part of the implementation process, The Orange Door will connect with the Victorian Multicultural Commission Regional Advisory Councils and the Multi Faith Advisory Group as well as local settlement services and ethno-specific and multicultural agencies and programs with a focus on building trust with local communities to enable referral and outreach pathways.

Ensuring initiatives that are delivered will address the impact of violence on specific cohorts requires engagement of those with lived experience. Queensland's plan to respond to DFV against people with disability, for example, developed a Consultative Working Group, including people with lived experience of disability, DFV, or both, as well as people who advocate on behalf of, or work closely with, people with lived experience. This group provided input to government agencies, supporting actions under the plan.

New South Wales' Youth Justice Domestic and Family Violence Strategy and support programs has successfully implemented its first strategy. A range of programs and activities are being delivered under this new strategy, supporting children and young people involved in violence at home, and the

wider justice system, through multidisciplinary court-based pilots, the Youth on Track program and the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy at Reiby Youth Justice Centre.

A further example is the Australian Capital Territory's Health Justice Partnership which, through the Family Safety Hub, began delivering early intervention for pregnant women and new parents experiencing, or at

risk of FDSV in 2019. The pilot embedded lawyers into health care sites across Canberra to provide free access to legal information. The success of this pilot can be seen in reports of strong partnerships between health care professionals and legal staff, and through the number of women helped by the partnership who otherwise may not have accessed supports for the violence they were experiencing.



Action 12 - Better equip the service system and communities to address complex forms of violence and harmful cultural practices including early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, dowry abuse, and human trafficking.

Action 12 aims to support CALD communities by better equipping the service system and communities through training or initiatives that respond to complex forms of violence. Only a small number of initiatives align to Action 12, however implementation was successful with no initiatives being delayed. The following activities were undertaken:

- Establishing working relationships with diverse cultural communities
- Ensuring materials are culturally appropriate and published in language
- Capacity building with providers to support their recognition and responses to FDSV amongst diverse groups
- Development of legislation.

Examples of progress under Action 12

The South Australian Government developed a network of faith and community leaders, under the Building partnerships with faith and community leader's initiative. The network's aim was to discuss primary prevention, and women's experiences of FDSV in the community. An information package, which was developed in conjunction with specialist FDSV services and the Multicultural Communities Council of SA was translated into 25 community languages and is now available on the Break the Cycle website, supporting diverse communities to access supports and resources.

Tasmania's Develop and deliver training across identified Tasmanian Government services to respond to family and sexual violence initiative focused on updating information on responses to FDSV, ensuring service providers and practitioners were well equipped to respond. A training manual and FDSV package was developed, and is now freely available for Child Safety, and State Emergency Services. Further training has been provided to translators, ensuring they are equipped to meet the needs of CALD clients, including conveying of themes of FDSV in professional settings. This has supported service providers, practitioners and those that engage with people from diverse communities to provide appropriate and accessible support.

A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of CALD grants offered under both the Third and Fourth Action Plan was conducted in late 2021. The evaluation was informed by extensive consultation with service providers from across Australia that provide supports and services for CALD communities. The evaluation found that the short-term funding cycles that provide these grants to support providers did not meet service needs and did not enable certain service providers to make their programs sustainable. The evaluation recommended adaptation of future funding, to ensure a better reach of programs.

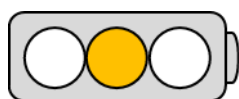
Western Australia's Family Violence Legislation Reform Act 2020 saw the amendment of nine statutes across six

ministerial portfolios, representing the largest suite of FDSV reforms in the state's history. Changes included the creation of a new offence for breaches of family violence restraining orders, introduction of a new

'persistent family violence' offence, and the introduction of the new 'suffocation and strangulation' offence.

Priority Four: Response to sexual assault and harassment

This priority responds to reports of rates of sexual violence continuing to rise, despite many experiences of sexual assault not being reported. At the time of reporting, there were 29 initiatives under this priority, with 79 per cent being completed or in progress, and 21 per cent being delayed. Despite changes to legislation, a number of barriers to reporting sexual assault and accessing services still exist, including victims and survivors not being believed or not trusting the justice system. Some cohorts experience additional barriers, including people with disability, sex workers and CALD women. This priority aimed to prevent sexual violence and sexual harassment, deliver client-centred and trauma-informed specialised and consistent supports, and strengthen the capacity of sectors to address sexual harassment. There are three actions that sit under this priority.



Action 13 – Prevent sexual violence and sexual harassment before it happens through national and targeted initiatives that promote informed consent, bodily autonomy, and respectful relationships.

Action 13 focused on preventing sexual violence and sexual harassment. This was to be achieved through initiatives aimed at assisting perpetrators of sexual violence to change their behaviours and become accountable, as well as initiatives to assist in the reduction of sexual harassment. The majority of initiatives under Action 13 are in progress and on track. The following activities have supported the implementation of activities aligned to action 13:

- Research to strengthen the evidence-base
- Establishment of state-specific strategies, action plans and frameworks
- Review of state legislation
- Development of educational programs and media campaigns
- Establishment of working groups.

Examples of progress under Action 13

Initiatives under Action 13 aimed to prevent sexual harassment and violence through strategies, frameworks and Memoranda of Understanding, as well as working groups and roundtables. Working groups, encompassing key stakeholders across government agencies, non-government organisations,

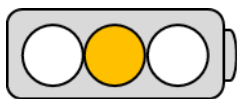
community stakeholders and the wider sector, were established, supporting the identification of evidence and development of appropriate strategies focusing on prevention of sexual violence. Additionally, some state governments launched social media campaigns in order to raise awareness of sexual consent, violence and harassment in the wider community.

The development of action plans and frameworks provided a foundational support for government.

The Northern Territory developed the *Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework* which was informed by consultations across the Northern Territory with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women within government, ACCOs, specialist sexual assault government and non-government agencies, and specialist DFV service providers and networks as well as online public consultation. The framework sets out the Northern Territory government's progress and priorities for action to respond to sexual violence.

Research is a key activity under Action 13 and has supported its implementation. The Commonwealth engaged external experts to identify effective primary prevention and sexual violence and harassment interventions.

Additionally, under the New South Wales *Sexual Assault Strategy 2018-2021*, research to better understand experiences of complainants of sexual offences within the justice system will be conducted. This,



coupled with the information shared and collated through working groups, has supported the development of appropriate initiatives.

Action 14 – Deliver client-centred, trauma-informed, specialised, and consistent support to victims and survivors of sexual violence.

Action 14 related to initiatives that specialise in supporting victims and survivors of sexual violence. Activities aligned to Action 14 are progressing, with the majority either completed or in progress and on track. The following activities have supported Action 14's implementation:

- Development of training for frontline workers and building the capacity of sector staff
- Development and review of practice manuals and programs
- Establishment of state-specific strategies, action plans and frameworks
- Establishment of working groups
- Integrated service responses to sexual assault, ensuring services are coordinated
- Media campaigns
- Co-design with key stakeholders.

Examples of progress under Action 14

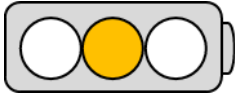
Initiatives aligned to Action 14 aimed to improve the workforce response to sexual harassment and assault, ensuring responses were client centred, trauma informed, and specialised. Initiatives focused on supporting victims and survivors, along with younger people and children. For example, Queensland's *Youth Sexual Violence Response* included the implementation of three place-based trials, working with young people to co-design and implement local action plans and client-centred supports.

The engagement of consumers and those with lived experience, or who may be exposed to sexual harassment and violence, supports the delivery of client-centred, trauma informed supports. For example, New South Wales' developed the Safe Wayz program for children under the age of criminal

responsibility with problematic and harmful sexual behaviours. The program was co-designed by key stakeholders, including an Aboriginal Expert Group, embedding principles of cultural safety throughout the program's components. Additionally, the Aboriginal Expert Group has provided leadership on the implementation of key initiatives that will improve the cultural safety of New South Wales Sexual Assault Services. Further to this, NSW Health is implementing a *NSW Health Sexual Assault Services and New Street Services Access Strategy for People with Disability 2021-2025*. This is accompanied by a Disability Co-design Framework developed by the NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence in partnership with the University of NSW and Flinders University. The Centre has established a Co-Design Advisory Committee to support and provide strategic guidance on implementation of the Strategy.

Initiatives also aimed to support appropriate and safe collation and use of evidence in sexual assault. For example, the New South Wales *Child Sexual Offence Evidence Program* and the South Australian *Access to Forensic Sexual Violence Services* provided avenues for the collation of evidence (such as forensic evidence collated by health care practitioners or evidence given by the victim) in a safer, more appropriate manner to avoid re-traumatisation of the victim.

A new initiative that was recently included in the NIP is the Australian Capital Territory's *Sexual Assault Prevention and Response*. A steering committee was established to listen to local experts, survivors and advocates to set key priorities for future government action. A report to the Australian Capital Territory Government was handed down in late 2021 with key recommendations informing a whole of territory response to sexual assault.



Action 15 – Strengthen the capacity of all sectors to address sexual harassment to ensure women are safe at work, while studying, in public, and online

Initiatives under Action 15 focused on addressing sexual harassment. There were only a small number of initiatives aligned to Action 15, however the majority of them are in progress and on track, or are completed. The following activities supported implementation of Action 15:

- Allocation of grants for community-based organisations
- Research into experiences of sexual harassment
- Establishment of state legislation
- Development of practice manuals, toolkits, standards and resources to support sector workforce.

Examples of progress under Action 15

Under this action, there was a focus on supporting workplaces to build their capacity to respond to sexual harassment. For example, the Victorian *Workplace Equality and Respect in the public sector*, Tasmania's *Establish an Our Watch Primary Prevention Officer*, and the Commonwealth's *Accredited training for sexual violence responses* have aimed to develop training for frontline workers and health professionals to build capacity to recognise and respond to experiences of

sexual violence, embed best practice workplace programs and standards that promote respect and gender equality in the public sector and promoting training opportunities for staff across diverse sectors. Universities Australia is developing a package of harassment and sexual violence prevention materials to distribute to its member universities to target university students.

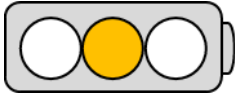
There was also a focus on technology facilitated abuse. Both the Commonwealth and Tasmania established initiatives relating to technology facilitated abuse, including research into experiences of technology facilitated abuse, and how best to protect against it.

An initiative that goes beyond the sectors identified for support was South Australia's Ask for Angela program, which is an example of an initiative aiming to protect women in public. Information sheets were circulated and awareness raising for staff in hospitality venues was conducted, providing them with tools to respond to patrons who 'ask for Angela'. The initiative is looking to be expanded, with a refresh of materials and another push for venues to be included in the program, along with engagement of new sites as COVID-19 restrictions continue to ease.

Priority Five: Improve support and service system responses

There are 87 initiatives that sit within priority five at the time of reporting. Eighty-eight per cent of these are either completed or in progress, with only 12 per cent being delayed.

This priority focused on improving the support and service system responses to FDSV. The service system can be hard to navigate and complex, with people seeking support from a variety of places. Service system collaboration was identified as key to ensuring service system responses were appropriate and that women and their children had access to supports when needed. It was also identified that this collaboration would improve how violence is identified and reported, and reduce stigma associated with seeking support. There are five actions under priority five.



Action 16 – Enable workforces to provide trauma-informed support with a focus on safety and recovery to victims and survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence.

A number of initiatives under Action 16 target workforces that interact with those seeking support from FDSV, providing trauma-informed support and resources on how best to respond to FDSV, while also providing safe pathways to recovery. There are a large number of initiatives aligned to Action 16, with the majority being completed or in progress. The following activities were conducted through initiatives aligned to Action 16, supporting its implementation:

- Establishing integrated models of family violence response and referral
- Accredited training for workforces identifying and responding to FDSV
- Providing access to DFV leave for employees
- Establishing phone lines for people experiencing FDSV
- Engaging people with lived experience through co-design and consultation
- Developing and updating practical guidelines, tools, frameworks and resources for workforces.

Examples of progress under Action 16

While many initiatives targeted workforces that engage with those seeking support from FDSV, initiatives have also targeted sectors that intersect with the FDSV sector. For example, the South Australian Government worked to raise awareness in other sectors, such as childcare, education and emergency services. The *Awareness raising for health and education professionals in recognising domestic and family violence* was expanded in response to COVID-19, undertaking activities to increase the capacity for non-specialist services to recognise FDSV and provide referral, targeting essential services that provide unique touch points and gateways to specialist services and supports. The Commonwealth's *Expansion of the Recognise, Respond and Refer Pilot and National Training for the Primary care Workforce* has supported the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners to update the

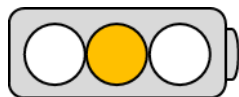
training resource titled *Abuse and Violence – Working with our patients in general practice*, as well as provide trauma informed training for general practitioners and primary care workers, aiming to strengthen the response to family violence. This initiative has also seen the pilot expand into five additional Primary Health Networks, trialling new locally integrated models of family violence identification, response, and referral activities to better support people experiencing domestic and family violence. An evaluation of the pilot activities is being undertaken by the Sax Institute and ANROWS, with final evaluation findings set to be released in 2023.

The Australian Capital Territory's *Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework* was drafted and trialled in a health setting, providing training and testing of a common domestic violence screening tool, while also being reviewed across the drug and alcohol sector for useability and consistency with sector processes. Feedback from the trials and from the community is currently being considered alongside findings from a review. The Northern Territory has also developed a risk assessment and management framework, contracting ANROWS and a consulting firm to undertake stakeholder consultation to inform the development of the risk assessment and management framework and a common risk assessment tool.

Longer term initiatives have undergone change, shifting their delivery focus to ensure new research and knowledge is incorporated into their activities. The Victorian *Building from Strength: 10-Year Industry Plan for Family Violence Prevention and Response* was released in 2017 and set out the Victorian Government's long-term vision for workforces that intersect with FDSV. A key activity under the plan was a workforce research project, which categorises and assesses job roles across different parts of the sector. This aims to support future workforce to provide appropriate supports to those in need, as well as its staff through professional development and remuneration. As this plan continues to

be developed, and as the workforces and sectors that intersect with FDSV are expanded (due to continuous research, knowledge building and evaluation) new programs of work will be undertaken. The Victorian Government is supporting a new

family violence and sexual assault traineeship program, supporting the coordination of up to 240 traineeships across Victoria.



Action 17 – Collaboration across services, sectors and workforces to ensure that responses to women affected by domestic, family and sexual violence are coordinated, meet women’s needs, avoid women having to re-tell their story, and promote their recovery.

Key to priority number five is the collaboration of services, sectors and workforces, supporting system navigation and access to services in an appropriate and timely manner. The largest number of initiatives are aligned to Action 17 and continue to be established and developed. The following activities found within these initiatives supports the implementation of Action 17:

- Providing access to domestic violence leave for employees
- Co-location of roles for an integrated service response
- Enabling services to be provided in different languages
- Establishing telephone counselling service
- Provision of information and reports to support risk assessment and management, and information sharing
- Trialling body-worn video for police
- Development of frameworks, strategies and legislative reform to enable information sharing
- Establishment of infrastructure for the co-location of services and safe accommodation.

Examples of progress under Action 17

The co-location of supports and services was a key activity under initiatives aligned to Action 17. This included providing wrap-around supports, such as housing, health care, mental health and wellbeing supports, legal support or referral to specialist services. These supports can be accessed through other services or may intersect with individuals in other sectors, such as the

Courts (the Commonwealth’s *Co-location of State and Territory child protection and other officials in Family Law Court Registries*), the justice system (New South Wales’ *Counselling in Prison Program*), child protection and family safety (Victoria’s *Specialist Family Violence Courts and Contact Centre*), health care (Australian Capital Territory’s *Health Justice Partnerships*) and through housing (Queensland’s *New DFV Shelters* or South Australia’s *First or crisis response reform*).

A number of initiatives also provided opportunities for information sharing (including the Northern Territory’s *Information sharing scheme* and Victoria’s *Central Information Point*) supporting the coordination and sharing of appropriate information to inform risk assessment, safety planning and management of those at risk of DFV. Victoria has also established the Family Violence Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework, which aims to ensure professionals and services across the system have a shared understanding of family violence, and provide consistent and collaborative practice.

Of the initiatives that had been evaluated (the New South Wales *Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program* and the *Safer Pathway* program, Victoria’s *Therapeutic Responses*, Queensland’s *Integrated Service Responses* and the Commonwealth’s *Co-location of State and Territory child protection and other officials in Family Law Court Registries*), findings were positive, with improvements in information sharing, clients being connected to local services and with workers expertise and knowledge of domestic family violence improving, resulting in clients’

needs being better understood. Some of these initiatives were expanded, refined or enhanced, following the evaluation's findings.

The New South Wales Safer Pathway evaluation found that the program had been implemented largely as intended and was generally meeting its intended objectives of ensuring a consistent, effective and timely response to victims and survivors across New South Wales. All five components (Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool, Central Referral Point, Local Coordination Points, Safety Action Meeting and Information Sharing Provisions) of the initiative were implemented and work together. While each agency has policy and program materials to support the implementation of their program, the overall framing of the initiative has not been undertaken. Safer Pathway did not have an explicit theory of change, and documentation does not address re-referral.¹³

An audit of the Victorian Support and Safety Hubs (also known as the Orange Door) was conducted in 2020. At the time of reporting, the Hubs were newly implemented, requiring a new service model, locating and fitting out

premises, and development of new IT infrastructure. The audit found that the Hubs will play a key role in supporting children, increasing information sharing between agencies and will improve the lives of people affected by FDSV needing support with their children. The report noted that a number of areas for future focus, including staffing, infrastructure and processes to support clients, are required for the initiative to meet its full potential.¹⁴

The Victorian *Supporting the specialist family violence service system* is currently in progress. This initiative will provide coordinated, best practice service responses for victim survivors experiencing family violence. A range of initiatives are being delivered, including strengthening case management and crisis responses, increasing system capacity due to greater service demand during the pandemic, and expanding the Personal Safety Initiative to provide access to safety and security responses so victim survivors can remain safe in their own homes and communities.



Action 18 – Improve access to and embed trauma-informed support for perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence to prevent offending and promote rehabilitation and treatment.

Action 18 focused specifically on trauma-informed support for perpetrators of FDSV. No initiatives aligned to Action 18 were delayed, signalling successful implementation. The following activities were undertaken:

- Co-location of services to enable an integrated service response
- Provision of specific and targeted offender programs, or referral to programs
- Establishment of Expert Advisory Committees on perpetrator interventions
- Delivery of men's behaviour change programs
- Accommodation for perpetrators.

Examples of progress under Action 18

A number of initiatives aligned to Action 18 offered targeted services to perpetrators, including men's behaviour change programs. An evaluation of men's behaviour change programs conducted in New South Wales in 2019 found that they adopted a trauma-informed and feminist theory approach to practice, which aimed to address the issues of gender inequality. The programs were run through open groups, with new men joining a group who had already experienced the group dynamics and from whom they could learn that it was safe to be emotionally vulnerable. This enabled greater engagement in the

¹³ NSW Government. 2019. *Safer Pathway Evaluation. Final Report*.

¹⁴ VAGO. 2020. *Managing Support and Safety hubs*. Available at: [Managing Support and Safety Hubs | Victorian Auditor-General's Office](#)

program, with 69 per cent of participants strongly agreeing that they behave less threateningly and/or violently towards their ex/current partner, 78 per cent of participants rating their progress as 7 or 8 out of 10 (where 0 is “no progress” and 10 is “complete progress”) on their reduction or cessation of violence and abuse, and 89 per cent of facilitators reporting a perceived reduction in physical and sexual violence among participants.¹⁵

Examples more closely linked to the 4AP include Western Australia’s *Develop a second Communicare Breathing Space Residential Men’s Behaviour Change* program which provides men with six months of accommodation while undertaking intensive therapeutic programs, including counselling and case management. Positive results from an evaluation were identified, highlighting the positive difference this program can have in improving target behaviours.

Another initiative, the Tasmanian *Strengthen the Defendant Health Liaison Service*, provided early intervention to offenders to determine their health and welfare needs and their motivation for change, and was developed under the previous Tasmanian Action Plan (*Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania’s Family Violence Action Plan 2015-2020*), however, continues to be funded, with services expanding to the north of Tasmania.

Additionally, collaboration and the co-location of supports was pursued under this action. For example, the Queensland *DFV Perpetrator Program Innovation* saw Queensland Corrective Services provide community-based perpetrator interventions, including men’s behaviour change programs, across three correctional facilities. The program aimed to address needs of this group prior to re-entering the community. An evaluation of the trial was ongoing at the time of reporting.

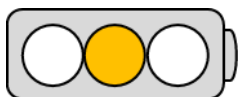
An evaluation of the New South Wales Sentencing Reforms (linked to the *Premier’s Priority to Reduce Domestic Violence Reoffending* initiative) found that the reforms had streamlined the process to obtain Sentence Assessment Reports. These reports are prepared by Community Corrections and are intended to provide an evidentiary basis for choosing community-based sentencing options, as well as support the Court in determining conditions which may address criminogenic needs. Judicial officers believed the new penalty regime has increased the opportunity for offenders to serve supervised community-based orders, with 57 per cent agreeing that the new community-based options provided more flexibility in sentencing decisions and 47 per cent agreeing that the new penalty options increased the opportunity for offenders to participate in rehabilitation programs.¹⁶

Victoria’s *Strengthened Perpetrator Intervention* initiative aims to provide significant support for interventions that seek to challenge and change violent behaviour and hold perpetrators to account for their behaviour. This is done through behavioural change programs and intensive engagement of those perpetrators with complex needs. Specific activities delivered under this initiative include case management and tailored service responses through coordination of specialist services, a Caring Dads program and the Medium-term Perpetrator Accommodation Service, which aims to keep victims and survivors safe at home and remove housing instability as a barrier to change for people using violence. The service provides up to six months of accommodation to people who have used family violence on the condition that they remain engaged with programs to change their behaviours and attitudes.

¹⁵ Men’s Behavioural Change Programs Evaluation Summary 2019. [MBCP-Evaluation-Summary-Report.pdf](#)

¹⁶ NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. 2020. NSW Sentencing reforms: results for a survey of judicial officers. Available at:

[New South Wales sentencing reforms: results from a survey of judicial officers \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)



Action 19 – Build the evidence base to inform responses to domestic, family and sexual violence by strengthening the focus on what works to reduce violence, improving data, and supporting the Fourth Action Plan priorities.

Action 19 focused on building the evidence base through the evaluation of initiatives, as well as improving data supporting 4AP priorities. Only one initiative aligned to Action 19 was delayed, with the remaining being completed or in progress and on track. The following activities were undertaken supporting the implementation of Action 19:

- Mixed method evaluations of initiatives
- Engaging external experts to conduct research on FDSV, the National Plan, and the 4AP
- Trialling and piloting specific service offerings
- Developing new workforce positions specific to data collection.

Examples of progress under Action 19

Evaluation of initiatives under the 4AP are currently limited at the time of drafting this report. While a number are underway, evaluations are at varying levels of completeness. These have not been referenced in this report, however future analysis of these evaluations should be undertaken.

Research relating to the 4AP has been progressed, with ANROWS continuing to conduct research on the priorities of the 4AP. Research topics have included pathways to intimate partner homicide, technology-facilitated abuse, an exploration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs that respond to DFV and assault, and the impact of COVID-19.

Some data improvement initiatives are continuing beyond the life of the 4AP:

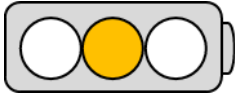
- The Commonwealth Government has engaged ABS and AIHW on a range of data and research projects. Work on FDSV crime data, extensive investigation into

the experience of violence for those with disability, and the production of research papers identifying data and analysis gaps, and collection limitations has contributed to enhancing the FDSV evidence base. This includes the AIHW initiative which explored how linked hospital and deaths data, from multiple jurisdictions, can be used to examine service use and outcomes for people experiencing DFV.

- Tasmania's Strengthen the Safe Families Coordination Unit continues to be delivered, having recently engaged a Department of Education Investigator and a data analyst, highlighting a commitment to collation and collection of data to inform policies, programs and service responses.

The Australian Capital Territory undertook work relating to data systems, with funding provided to develop a data system for a *Family Violence Death Review*. The Death Review, which was established through legislation in 2021, will be able to consider matters that result in death or serious harm (including self-harm and suicide) in connection with DFV. It will also be able to provide coordination powers to gather information from agencies for biennial reporting for Ministerial Offices. The Family Violence Death Review intends to make system-wide improvements across policy, systems and services, data collection, and legislation to prevent future deaths related to DFV.

Action 19 and its associated initiatives are important activities to be undertaken, as they not only identify current successes or areas for improvement, but they will assist in the development of the future National Plan, and its associated activities. This research and data collection will also contribute to the development of a robust and timely evidence base, one that can be utilised by numerous stakeholders and sectors in future supports for FDSV.



Action 20 – Improve access to suitable and safe accommodation within their communities for women who have experiences domestic, family and sexual violence.

Action 20 relates to women who have experienced or are experiencing FDSV and is aimed to support them through refuges, shelters, and other accommodation options as well as referral protocols through these accommodation types. Only one initiative is delayed under Action 20. The following initiatives have supported implementation:

- Programs to keep women and their children in their own home
- Provision of safe housing, including building infrastructure, refuges, subleasing arrangements through private rentals, transitional accommodation
- Brokerage assistance for victims and survivors.

Examples of progress under Action 20

The Commonwealth Department of Social Services continues to deliver the *Safe Places Emergency Accommodation* program. 40 of 41 funded projects have a funding agreement in place (with the remaining project in negotiation) and six projects have commenced assisting women and children escaping DFV. An additional \$12.6 million was announced in the 2021-22 budget to extend Safe Places. The Department is continuing to work with successful applicants to ensure the safe places projects are in operation by 2024, going beyond the remit of the 4AP and the National Plan.

The impact of COVID-19 on housing in general has been challenging. At least eight initiatives

aligned to Action 20 received additional funding for their programs. One such example is the New South Wales *Rent Choice Start Safety* program, which received a further \$3.6 million in COVID financial assistance, supporting victims and survivors to access stable housing in New South Wales. The Commonwealth's *Keeping Women Safe in their Homes* program also received additional funding, as part of the Government's Coronavirus Domestic Violence Support Package.

Western Australia has also developed two new women's refuges in the Kwinana and the Peel region, which officially opened in 2020. A comprehensive stakeholder engagement and co-design process was undertaken from late 2019 to March 2020 to develop the therapeutic service model. The Peel refuge, 'Warlang Bidi – Supporting Women and Children', is the state's first therapeutic women's refuge and is tailored to provide specialist, person-centred responses for women escaping DFV, presenting with or without children, who also have mental health concerns and/or harm from alcohol and other drugs. The second refuge is the 'Andrea Mia', which is a purpose-built facility designed to offer greater flexibility to meet the needs of women with disability, older women, women from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and CALD communities, and women with larger families, including older boys.

2.3 Barriers to and enablers for implementation

A number of barriers and enablers were identified, either supporting or impacting on implementation of initiatives under the 4AP.

Enablers

Cross-sector collaboration

The establishment of mechanisms that support partnerships and collaboration between government agencies, not-for-profit

organisations, business, community-based organisations, and community members enabled implementation of initiatives. Consultation revealed that stakeholders found the action plans had brought different parts of government together, however noted that there was an increased need for continued collaboration. The utilisation of partnerships has supported implementation of a number of actions found in the 4AP, including strengthening the capacity of the sector, improving collaboration across services and the implementation of community-led and tailored initiatives.

For example, the Queensland Government has supported the establishment of a reference group under *the DFV specialist positions in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services* initiative. This reference group meets on a regular basis, and comprises of five family wellbeing service providers, the Queensland Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection peak. The reference group enables effective ongoing co-design of the model, including refining program reporting to capture information on achievements enabling further evaluation, capturing learnings to inform rollout of similar positions in other locations and giving effect to the agreed initiatives intentions, and clarifying outcomes for service delivery.

Community consultation and co-design

Community consultation and co-design enabled the development and implementation of community-led solutions. Across all jurisdictions, there were examples of community consultation, engagement with key community stakeholders, including those with lived experience in the design and delivery of programs and activities. This produced programs that are tailored to community needs and are also appropriate for the people that live in those communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, or CALD communities.

For example:

- The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) undertook a number of co-design activities in the design of service

delivery models. NIAA worked closely with service providers and relevant stakeholders to implement violence reduction activities meeting the 4AP's First Nations-specific measures. This co-design ensured that the service delivery models were tailored, culturally safe and trauma-informed, meeting the intent of First Nations-specific measures.

- In South Australia, where a network of faith and community leaders was developed to discuss women's experiences of FDSV in the community, along with primary prevention and feedback on initiatives and resources best placed to support individual communities.
- The Queensland Disability Action Plan was supported by a Consultative Working Group, consisting of people with lived experience of disability, FDSV or both, providing informed input to government agencies to support the implementation of actions under the Disability Action Plan.

These examples highlight governments' commitment to engaging diverse stakeholders in the development and design of initiatives. This engagement supported implementation of a number of actions found in the 4AP, including those relating to the implementation of community-led, targeted and tailored initiatives, providing holistic strategies that address intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and valuing and engaging their expertise, and those that respond to the diverse lived experience and knowledge of women and children affected by violence.

Working with external agencies to build the evidence

Working with external agencies, or independent bodies, provided opportunities to harness expertise from diverse stakeholders, ensuring programs are evidence-based, while also providing an opportunity to learn from others' experiences. For example, Respect Victoria has successfully developed and delivered the Prevention of Family Violence Data Platform, working closely with the Crime Statistics Agency in the development of the platform. The Commonwealth engaged academic experts in conducting research to better understand FDSV, service gaps, the National Plan and the Fourth Action Plan, along with conducting evaluations. Engaging experts to support activities under the 4AP

supported implementation of actions relating to the use of effective primary prevention initiatives and building the evidence base to inform responses to FDSV. Harnessing the information gathered during these exercises could further support the creation of an evidence base which could be used in the development of future initiatives.

Whole-of-government responses

In order to support the implementation of initiatives, some jurisdictions have taken a high-level approach, either reviewing or developing legislation, strategies, framework and action plans. This has shown a level of commitment by those governments to the implementation of activities responding to FDSV, as well as providing service providers, government agencies and other stakeholders with government foundations and frameworks, supporting the work they undertake.

For example, New South Wales *Sexual Assault Strategy 2018-2021*, Victoria's *Gender Equality Act*, Queensland's *Disability Action Plan*, Western Australia's *Family Violence Legislative Reform Act*, the Australian Capital Territory's *Domestic and Family Violence Risk Assessment and Management Framework*, the Northern Territory's *Development of a Gender Equality Framework* and South Australia's *Aboriginal Affairs Action Plan 2019-20* have provided opportunity for improvement of foundational, whole of government mechanisms. Consultation revealed that some jurisdictions timed the development of these state-specific initiatives or strategies to coincide with the National Plan and the 4AP.

This has supported the implementation of a number of Actions under the 4AP, including the development of innovative and alternative models of support, the delivery of policies and services addressing violence and better equipping not just the service system, but government, as a whole in responding to FDSV.

Flexible approach to service delivery

Service providers have had a flexible approach to their programs and initiatives, adapting their service delivery in response to COVID-19. Service providers adapted by delivering their services online, utilising virtual formats or via

telehealth. For example, the Australian Capital Territory's Government engaged e-learning to support the continuation of their *Domestic and Family Violence Training Strategy*, with training continuing to be provided to staff. This has provided an opportunity for continued service delivery particularly when there has been a noted increase in demand.

Additionally, the utilisation of online service delivery supported continued implementation and delivery of supports. Initiatives that utilised online service delivery prior to COVID-19 saw an increase in demand for their services in light of COVID-19. 1800RESPECT saw changes in how people sought support, such as contacting the service later at night, or by web chat.

Co-location of services and leveraging existing service structures

A number of initiatives utilised existing service structures to provide opportunities for delivery of support services. Initiatives were delivered through schools, shelters, child and family services, health and legal support services, prisons, specialised accommodation, as well as the Courts. This provided an opportunity for those who may not have access to, or who do not feel comfortable accessing FDSV supports, a safe, soft entry point to targeted services. The supports could encompass primary prevention and early intervention (adjusting existing syllabus in schools), sexual assault support and evidence gathering (forensic services provided in a health care response), perpetrator support services (Men's Behavioural Change Programs or counselling in prison) and advocacy (Court Advocacy program). Evaluation of the Family Advocacy Support Services in 2018 found that placement of social support workers alongside duty lawyers in the family law courts had clear benefits, including the timely and satisfactory resolution of legal matters, reduced risk, and support for holistic legal outcomes.

These activities have supported a number of actions, including the provision of safe and suitable accommodation, embedding trauma informed support for perpetrators as well as advancing gender equality and primary prevention initiatives.

Barriers

COVID-19

The most prolific barrier to implementation of the 4AP was COVID-19, with its impacts being felt across all jurisdictions. All states and territories were subject to extended lockdowns of varying lengths, with Victoria subject to six lockdowns between March 2020 and October 2021.

Initiatives that were intended to be delivered face to face through community events, forums or workshops were delayed due to social distancing requirements. For example, the South Australian Government has hosted a number of roundtables to inform the *Women's Employment and Leadership Strategy*, including representatives from the construction, engineering, horticulture, accounting, housing and education sectors, as well as SMEs and not-for-profit organisations and peak bodies. The roundtables however were delayed, due to COVID-19 and social distancing requirements, thus delaying the development of content for the strategy. Barriers were also experienced in the Northern Territory due to an extension of biosecurity measures which restricted staff from being able to travel to remote communities to deliver projects.

A number of initiatives shifted to online delivery. New South Wales' Ageing and Disability Commissioner bolstered its online service delivery, as COVID-19 adversely affected the Commissioner's community engagement activities and events. The number of calls and reports to the Commissioner was stable during the 2020 lockdown in Sydney, however there was a significant increase following the lifting of restrictions.

Some initiatives however were unable to shift to online, with lockdowns and restriction on movement delaying engagement with certain communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. For example, the building of a multi-agency facility in Umuwa in South Australia was delayed, due to restrictions on entering the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. Additionally, some services were unable to be provided during lockdowns, such as the safety hubs in South Australia, which were shut during periods of state lockdown.

Activities have also been delayed due to changes in prioritisation, shifting staff's workloads and task allocation to focus on responses to COVID-19. For example, the implementation of the Northern Territory's *Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Framework* was delayed due to staffing changes, resulting from a re-prioritisation of workloads. There has also been an impact on staff recruitment. For example, the Northern Territory's *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Grants* program has experienced delays in implementation of funded prevention grant projects, due to COVID-19 and its impact on availability to recruit skilled staff. The New South Wales *Violence, Abuse and Neglect Health Redesign program* was also delayed. The COVID-19 response had an impact on the progress of both statewide initiatives and local implementation of VAN Redesign as many NSW Health staff were either deployed to the COVID-19 response or those in VAN Services adapted service delivery in response to the pandemic. This had a small impact on Phase 1 implementation (which had already commenced prior to the pandemic) however had had a larger impact on Phase 2.

Increased demand has also seen increased pressure on service systems, such as housing. It was noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a level of unprecedented demand for housing in Queensland. While the Queensland *Enhanced Domestic and Family Violence Housing Response* only experienced moderate delays, the Queensland Government shifted focus on respond to housing needs of people impacted by COVID-19, providing rapid responses to women and children experiencing FDSV. An emergency response team was established, which provided supported crisis accommodation as well as longer term housing.

However, COVID-19 also enabled new governance arrangements and whole-of-government responses to FDSV. This included the National Partnerships (National Partnership on COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Responses and National Partnership on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses. While not part of the 4AP, funding and activity that occurred under these mechanisms overlapped with the 4AP implementation period.

Funding

Funding was outlined by stakeholders as a challenge of implementation, specifically for services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Longer-term engagement is needed to build trust and collaboration, rather than the typical 12-month funding cycle provided. Funding cycles that are short-term can impact on providers' ability to develop relationships with local communities and deliver programs longer term. A similar outcome was seen in the evaluation of CALD grants under the Third

Action Plan and 4AP, with short-term funding cycles impacting on their ability to form relationships within communities, deliver long term supports, and retain staff.

Programs that are delivered in rural and remote communities face additional challenges for implementation including geographic distances from other supports, challenges in accessing locations (as seen above with COVID-19 and its restriction on visitation to certain communities) as well as the attraction and retention of skilled staff.

Impact of the Fourth Action Plan

3 Impact of the Fourth Action Plan

Key Findings

- The PMR was developed in September 2019 as a starting point to support the identification of interim outcomes, indicators and measures that can assess performance against the 4AP.
- It is difficult to determine the true impact of the 4AP due to a lack of appropriate and timely data. The PMR identifies a number of data sources to measure short- and medium-term outcomes. Data development to address these gaps has been delayed due to COVID-19. A number of initiatives that were rolled out under the 4AP are currently undergoing evaluation and are not appropriate to be utilised in this report.

3.1 Context

This section focuses on the impact of the 4AP and whether it has met its intended outcomes. Outcomes were identified during the development of a Performance Monitoring and Reporting framework (PMR) and were further refined in consultation with the Department.

This section of the report outlines short-term and medium-term outcomes against each priority area. Where possible, recent and appropriate data to inform these findings has been included, however it should be noted that there is a significant lack of data available for the period of the 4AP. Where there is limited data available, alternative data have been utilised such as:

- Data which pre-dates the 4AP to indicate broader trends leading up to the point of implementation
- Consultation and stakeholder survey findings, with 124 participants in consultation sessions and 690 responses to the stakeholder survey
- Evaluations of initiatives under the 4AP
- Broader literature.

3.1.1 Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework

The PMR was developed in September 2019 as a starting point to support the identification of interim outcomes, indicators and measures that can assess performance against the 4AP, and any progress in achieving a reduction in violence against women and their children.

The objectives of the monitoring and reporting framework were:

- Map the priorities and actions in the 4AP with the outcomes in the National Plan
- Support an assessment of progress in relation to the priorities and actions outlined in the Fourth Action Plan
- Contribute to the evidence base for responses dealing with sexual assault and DFV
- Enable monitoring of a diverse range of initiatives funded under the Fourth Action Plan including large scale prevention campaigns and direct service provision
- Facilitate a consistent approach to the collection, monitoring and analysis of reporting data.

Across each of the five priority areas and 20 action items under the 4AP, program logics were developed. These were intended to signal observable change that is expected over both the short and longer term. It was assumed that progressing each of the 20 actions would lead to delivery of the identified outputs and progress against the interim outcomes which in turn would lead to contribution against the national outcomes. The program logics initially developed for the PMR were further refined through consultation and review with the Department.

A total of 70 indicators and measures were identified across the Fourth Action Plan. As many of the activities under the 4AP overlap with those under the National Plan, there is an added layer of complexity when selecting indicators and measures, with some

indicators having reached beyond the FDSV sector.

The indicators that were developed have also identified a range of measures. The process for identifying the appropriate indicators for monitoring each of the actions aligned to the 4AP did not consider the limitations of the current evidence base and data collection practices. Initially, the indicators and corresponding measures were chosen based on their appropriateness, with the intention of expanding and improving the evidence base to inform effective monitoring and evaluation of the 4AP and, where relevant, future initiatives for reducing DFV against women and their children. However, there is a lack of recent and appropriate data available, so where possible, alternative data sources were utilised to the assessment of impact.

To support analysis of the impact of the 4AP, a number of data sources were identified, including:

- Reporting from Commonwealth, state, and territory agencies undertaken in the development of the 4AP progress reports
- Consultation findings with Commonwealth, state, and territory government agencies and service providers from across Australia
- Findings from a survey rolled out to frontline workers and service managers who respond to FDSV
- Data from the ABS, including Crime Victimisation and FDSV data
- National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women (NCAS) (from 2017)
- University of New South Wales (UNSW), Social Policy Research Centre, National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors (2018)
- Desktop research, including research reports and evaluations.

As noted above, a major limitation is the lack of appropriate and timely data. The PMR identifies a number of data sources to measure short- and medium-term outcomes. Critical evidence bases such as the ABS' Personal Safety Survey (PSS) and the NCAS have not been updated recently and as such

only provide data from a time period previous to the Fourth Action Plan (that is, prior to 2019). Where appropriate, these data sources were used to inform a wider picture of the impact of the National Plan, however they have also been supported with alternative data sources where appropriate. However, in some instances, data was not collected consistently across all jurisdictions and time periods (these limitations are noted against the relevant figures).

Data development to address these gaps (such as data gaps in the PMR framework) has been delayed, primarily due to COVID-19. Workforces were reassigned to more immediate tasks to manage the impact of COVID-19, which had flow-on effects to data collection and analysis in the areas of violence against women and children. In some circumstances, there was a pause or delay on service delivery, further delaying the workforce's ability to collate data.

A number of initiatives that were rolled out under the 4AP are currently undergoing evaluation and are not appropriate to be utilised in this report. Initiatives under the 4AP have had varying levels of implementation or maturity across jurisdictions, limiting the ability to take a national perspective on whether outcomes were met.

While assessment against medium-term outcomes has been included in this section (as the 4AP is three years into its implementation), it is noted that progress against outputs and short-term outcomes are more likely to be demonstrated over this period.

3.2 Assessment of impact

Priority One: Primary prevention is key

The following program logic is aligned to priority one under the 4AP, and short-term and medium-term outcomes.

Table 2: Priority One Program Logic

Priority 1: Primary prevention			
PRIORITY 1 ACTIONS	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES
Action 1: Advance gender equality and respect for women through effective primary prevention initiatives	Initiatives promoting positive attitudes and behaviour toward women Initiatives supporting the development of respect	Australians have an increased awareness that lack of gender equality and respect for women are drivers of violence	Australians change their attitudes and behaviour to model gender equality and respect for women
Action 2: Improve coordination across primary prevention activities to maximise their impact on community attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence	Initiatives focused on preventing violence Inter-agency coordination structures	Primary prevention initiatives are coordinated and culturally safe* Communities have an awareness of attitudes and the behaviours that lead to violence	Australians have reduced tolerance for domestic and family violence within communities
Action 3: Implement targeted primary prevention activities designed by, and tailored for, the specific communities they are intended to support	Initiatives that involve community members in design and delivery	Australians understand the societal norms that contribute to gender inequality*	Primary prevention activities meet the needs of the specific communities for which they are designed* New societal norms begin to be modelled in specific communities *
Action 4: Address intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through primary prevention, including holistic healing strategies, and by strengthening connections to culture, language, knowledge and identity	Initiatives focused on healing and cultural strengthening	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities feel supported and start the healing journey to reduce the ongoing impact of trauma*	Victims begin to heal from the impact of intergenerational trauma Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations recognise the impact of intergenerational trauma and embed decolonising practice in primary prevention activities
Action 5: Promote healthy and safe relationships and build gender equitable values through initiatives for children and young people	Initiatives promoting primary prevention among young people	Young people have an awareness of the need for respectful relationships	Increased number of young people who feel their relationships are equal and respectful

Source: Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework

Short-term Outcomes

The short-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Australians have an increased awareness that a lack of gender equality and respect for women are drivers of violence
- Primary prevention initiatives are coordinated and culturally safe
- Communities have an awareness of attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence
- Australians understand the societal norms that contribute to gender inequality
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities feel supported and start the healing journey to reduce the ongoing impact of trauma

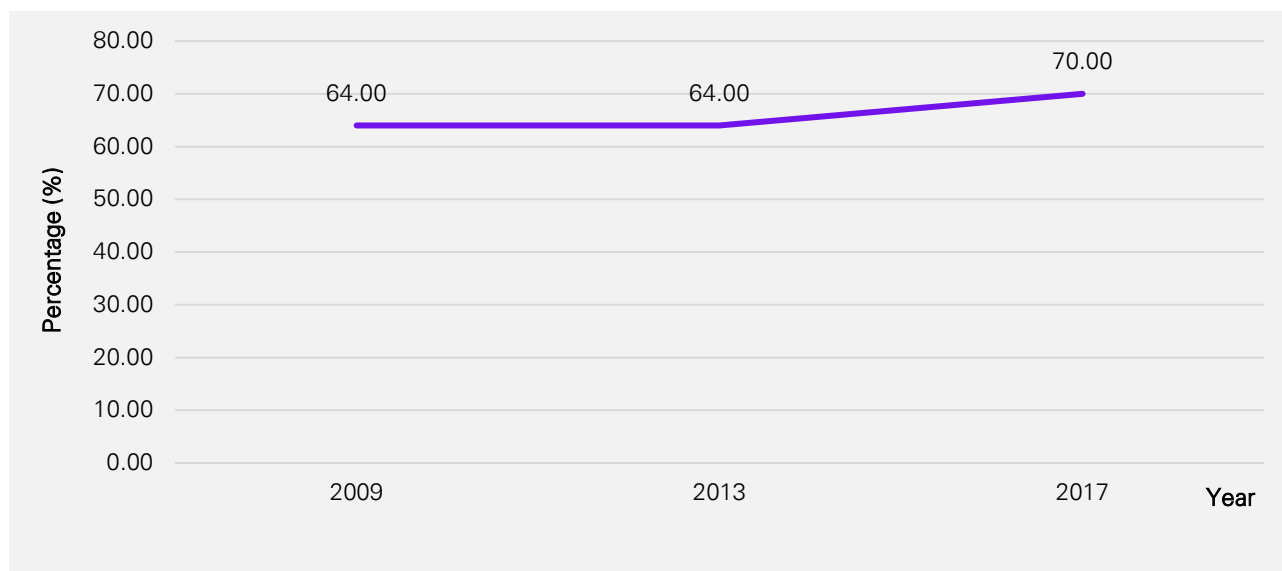
- Young people have an awareness of the need for respectful relationships.

Identifying whether there has been an increase in awareness that a lack of gender equality and respect for women being drivers of violence is difficult to ascertain from available data, as are outcomes relating to understanding societal norms and whether communities have awareness of attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence. The National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS) is a long running community survey which collects data relating to how people understand violence, their attitudes towards it, what influences these attitudes, and if there has been a change over time. The most recent NCAS

was published in 2017, pre-dating the 4AP. However, tracking previous NCAS results provides an indication of the trend leading up to the implementation of the 4AP.

The 2017 NCAS states that promoting gender equality is pivotal in reducing violence against women. The 2017 NCAS found that between 2013 and 2017, the score for attitudinal support for gender equality increased from 64 to 66 (with 100 indicating the highest level of endorsement). As outlined in the figure below, the average score for Australians on the measure of understanding of violence against women increased from 64 in 2009 to 70 in 2017 (100 indicates the highest level of understanding).¹⁷

Figure 2: Changes in understanding of violence against women over time 2009, 2013 and 2017



Source: NCAS 2017

As more recent NCAS data is unavailable, alternative data sources provide some indication about impact against community recognition of FDSV. A recent survey of 690 frontline workers conducted as part of this evaluation found that 62 per cent of participants believed that people were able to recognise FDSV to some extent. Forty-eight per cent believed to some extent, the understanding of consent and what constitutes a respectful relationship had improved. This would indicate a level of understanding of what constitutes FDSV and awareness of attitudes and behaviours can

lead to violence. However, this survey is from a frontline worker perspective and does not reflect general community sentiment.

Consultations undertaken as part of this evaluation indicated that progress still needs to be made regarding attitudes towards violence and gendered attitudes that are drivers of violence. There is a recognition that the rates of violence are still high, with stakeholders suggesting that the embedding of awareness outside of the women's safety sector still needs to occur, and that primary prevention would benefit from commencing

¹⁷ ANROWS. 2017. Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community

Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey. Available at: [anr001-NCAS-report-WEB-1019.pdf \(netdna-ssl.com\)](https://www.netdna-ssl.com/anr001-NCAS-report-WEB-1019.pdf)

earlier with families, and young people, across sectors.

There is a lack of data available relating to whether primary prevention initiatives are coordinated and culturally safe. The 2018 UNSW National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors discussed collaboration, with respondents being asked about how confident they felt regarding four aspects of collaboration (information sharing, referring clients, developing relationships with other organisations, and working with other parts of their organisation). Relatively high proportions (over 50 per cent) of respondents felt very confident with each aspect of collaboration, with the exception of sharing information with other services.¹⁸ This data, while revealing that workers did feel confident, pre-dates the 4AP and is not specific to workers that may have been involved with initiatives under the 4AP.

A number of initiatives under the 4AP targeted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Initiatives encouraged community consultation and co-design in their design and delivery, to ensure supports were trauma informed, holistic and locally led. It is difficult to ascertain whether these initiatives have resulted in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities feeling safe and supported, and whether they have commenced their healing journeys, as there is a lack of qualitative, attitudinal data documenting the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

A recent report by ANROWS focusing on what works in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs responding to FDSV found that there is little focus on healing programs and 'what works'.¹⁹ ANROWS is undertaking further research to identify evidence in relation to what factors support healing programs focusing on FDSV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. At the time of writing this report, ANROWS published three overview reviews, developed to collate findings from literature assessing a range of interventions designed to prevent and respond to FDSV. Evaluation of programs undertaken in the 4AP that support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should be reviewed in line with the evidence identified in the ANROWS reports, to ascertain whether communities did indeed feel safe, supported, and started their healing journey.

While it is acknowledged that states and territories are rolling out respectful relationships education in schools, there is limited recent data available to inform an understanding that young people have an awareness of the need for respectful relationships. Data from the 2017 NCAS (below) shows a positive change within young Australians in their understanding of violence against women, however this data pre-dates the 4AP.²⁰

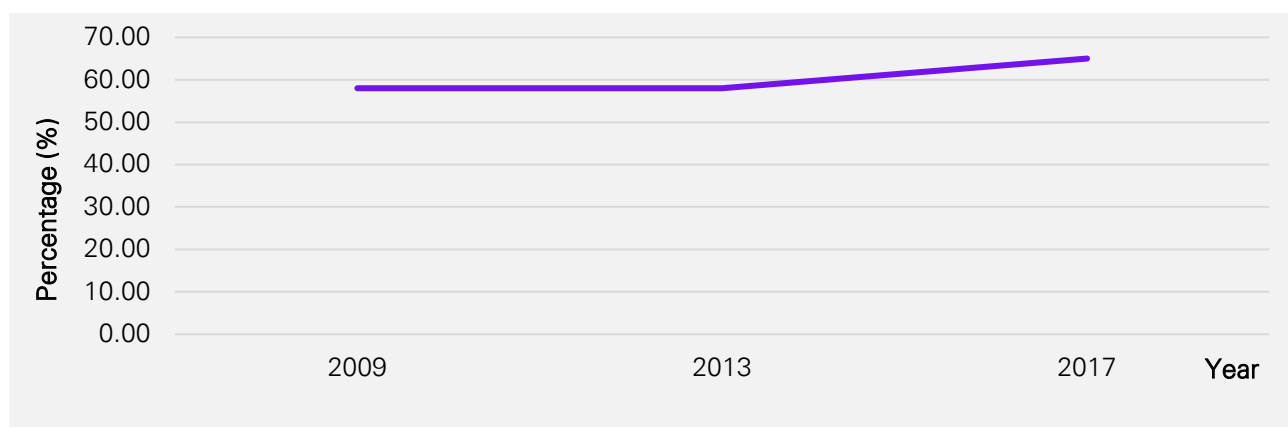
¹⁸ UNSW. 2018. National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors. Available at: [National Survey of Workers in the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Sectors.pdf \(unsw.edu.au\)](https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/centres/sexual-violence-sectors/pdf)

¹⁹ ANROWS. 2021. What Works? Exploring the literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing programs that respond to family

violence. Available at: [4AP5-Calrson-et-al-Healing-Programs-Lit-Review.2.pdf \(netdna-ssl.com\)](https://www.anrows.gov.au/publications/4AP5-Calrson-et-al-Healing-Programs-Lit-Review.2.pdf)

²⁰ ANROWS. 2017. Young Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards violence against Women Survey. Available at: [2017NCAS-Youth-SubReport.pdf \(netdna-ssl.com\)](https://www.anrows.gov.au/publications/2017NCAS-Youth-SubReport.pdf)

Figure 3: Young Australians changes in understanding of violence against women over time, 2009, 2013 and 2017



Source: NCAS 2017

Medium-term outcomes

It is worth noting that embedding prevention activities takes time, and despite investment in prevention, it is not expected that there will be significant changes in the rates of violence at this stage of the 4AP's implementation.

The medium-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Australians change their attitudes and behaviour to model gender equality and respect for women
- Australians have reduced tolerance for DFV within communities
- Primary prevention activities meet the needs of the specific communities for which they are designed
- New societal norms begin to be modelled in specific communities
- Victims begin to heal from the impact of intergenerational trauma
- First Nations and non-First Nations organisations recognise the impact of intergenerational trauma and embed

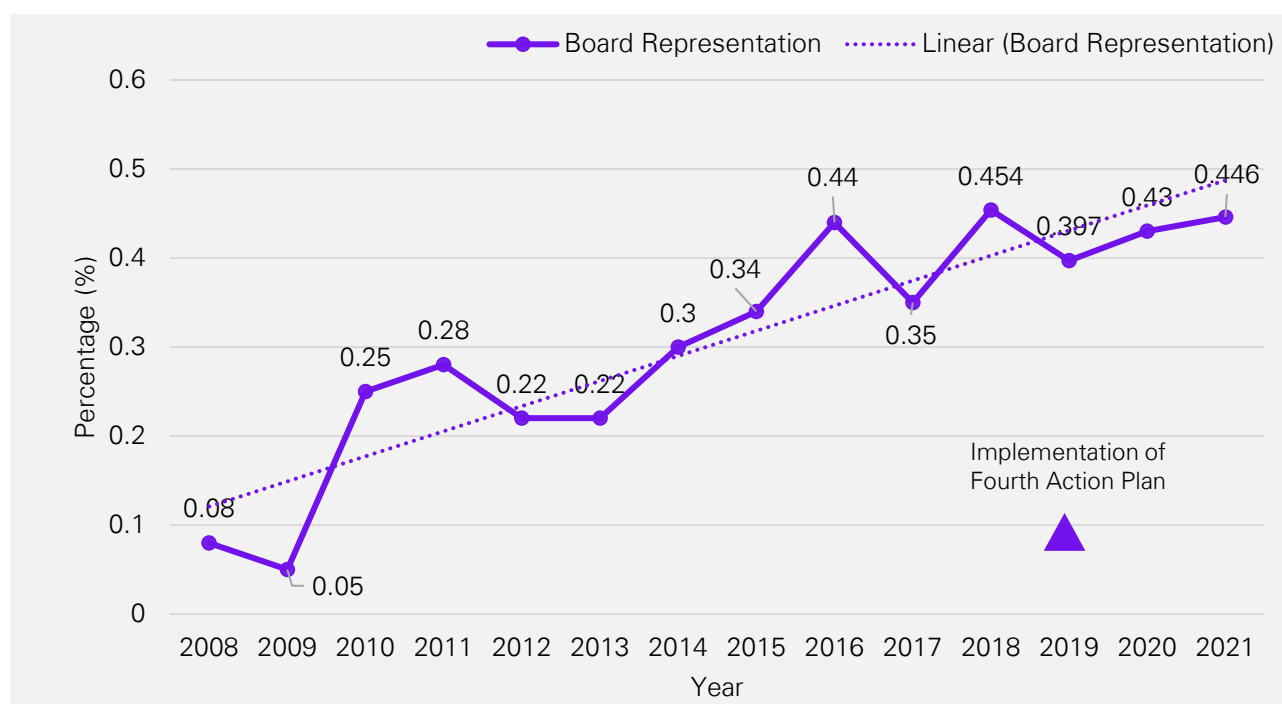
decolonising practice in primary prevention activities

- Increased number of young people who feel their relationships are equal and respectful.

Data relating to the medium-term outcomes were difficult to identify, as there are a number initiatives under the 4AP still underway (as outlined in Section 2). Where possible, alternative data and evidence has been identified, however most outcomes are unable to be quantitatively supported.

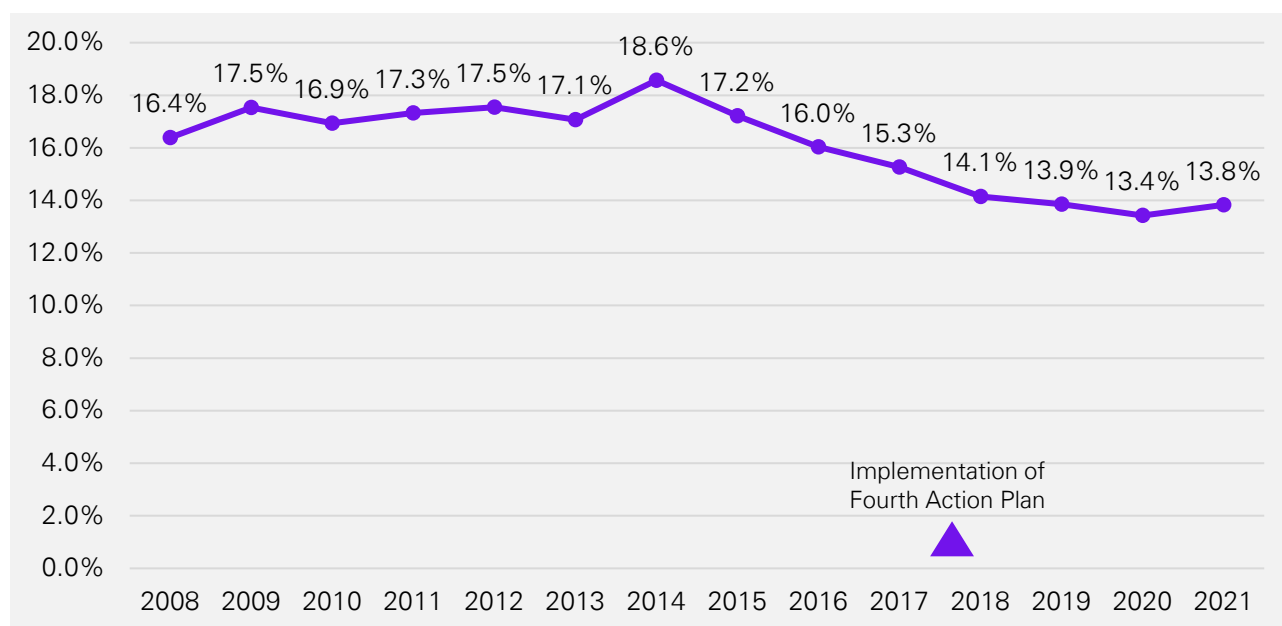
Data relating to female board appointments and gender pay gaps may inform the medium-term outcome relating to gender equality and respect for women, and new societal norms. There has been an increase in the proportion of women comprising of new board appointments over the past 10 years, as well as over the time period of the 4AP (Figure 4). Additionally, the gender pay gap has consistently decreased since 2014/15, with a minimal increase between 2020 and 2021 from 13.4 per cent to 13.8 per cent (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Proportion of women comprising new Board appointments in ASX200 companies



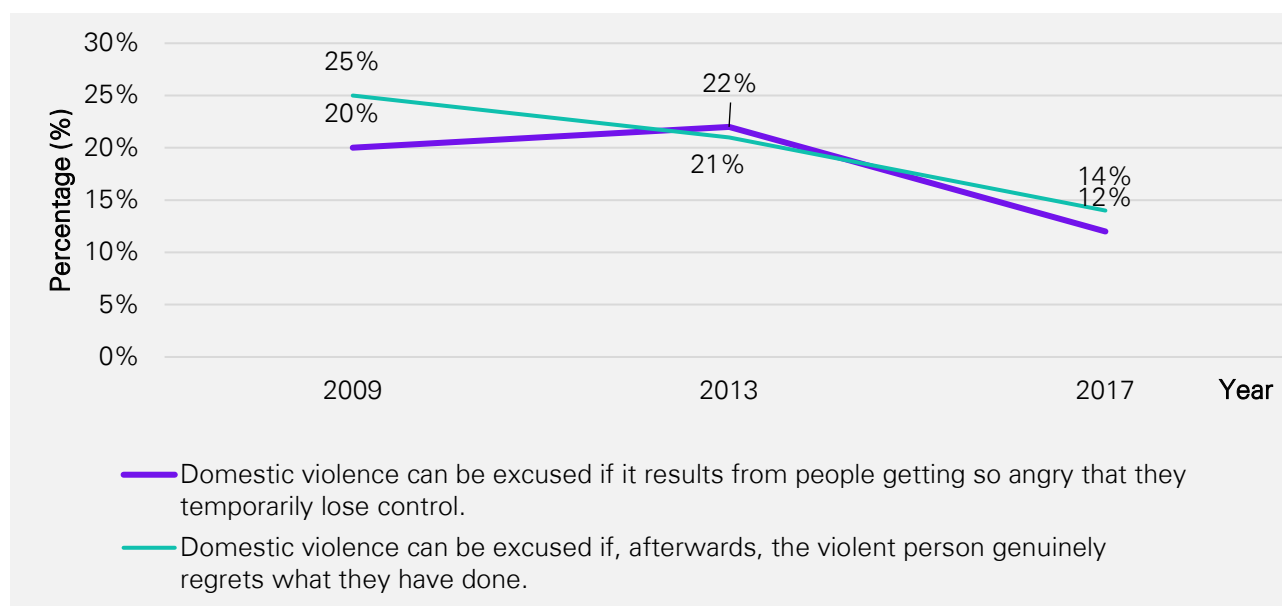
Source: Australian Institute of Company Directors Board Diversity Statistics, 2021.

Figure 5: Gender pay gap based on full time adult ordinary time earnings (to November 2021)



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, 2021.

Figure 6: Attitudes to violence against women (% agree)



Source: NCAS 2017

It is unclear whether there has been a recent reduction in tolerance for FDSV within communities. For example, between 2009 and 2017, the 2017 NCAS found that there was a decline in the understanding that FDSV can be excused if the perpetrator is angry or regrets what they have done (Figure 6). While this is promising, it should be noted that these data points do not correspond with the implementation of the 4AP.

The survey of frontline workers from across Australia found that the majority of participants believed initiatives delivered under the National Plan (including the 4AP) had met the needs of women and their children to some extent. Forty-two per cent of respondents believed that to a moderate extent, the number of initiatives relating to FDSV operating in Australia has increased since implementation of the National Plan in 2010. However, this information does not specify whether those initiatives are targeted at primary prevention.

There is a lack of data relating to whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have begun to heal from the impact of intergenerational trauma. Indeed, available evidence indicates that the incidence and prevalence of violence continues to be an issue disproportionately affecting Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people. As of 2019, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reported that family violence occurred at higher rates in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities than in the general population.²¹ In a 2021 report, AIHW states that, "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are particularly at risk and have much higher rates of hospitalisation because of family violence."²²

Collating data to evidence that both First Nations and non-First Nations organisations have recognised intergenerational trauma and embedded decolonising practices was challenging. The Northern Territory's *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence Prevention Grants* program initiative, established under the 4AP, states that the grants program funded the Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation to develop the Mums Can, Dads Can project in 2018. This program follows a grow model, with three stages of change, one of which being implementation, which is underpinned by the acknowledgment of ongoing colonisation. This theory acknowledges ongoing colonisation while also valuing Aboriginal culture and knowledge, which is also known as decolonising

²¹ AIHW. 2019. Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story. Available at: [Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019 \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/10/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence-in-australia-continuing-the-national-story-2019)

²² AIHW. 2021. Family, domestic and sexual violence. Available at: [Family, domestic and sexual violence - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/10/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence)

practice.²³ However, there is no further information relating to this theory's application in the program. Additionally, there is a lack of information available that explicitly outlines whether there has been a decolonising approach to program development and delivery within the 4AP.

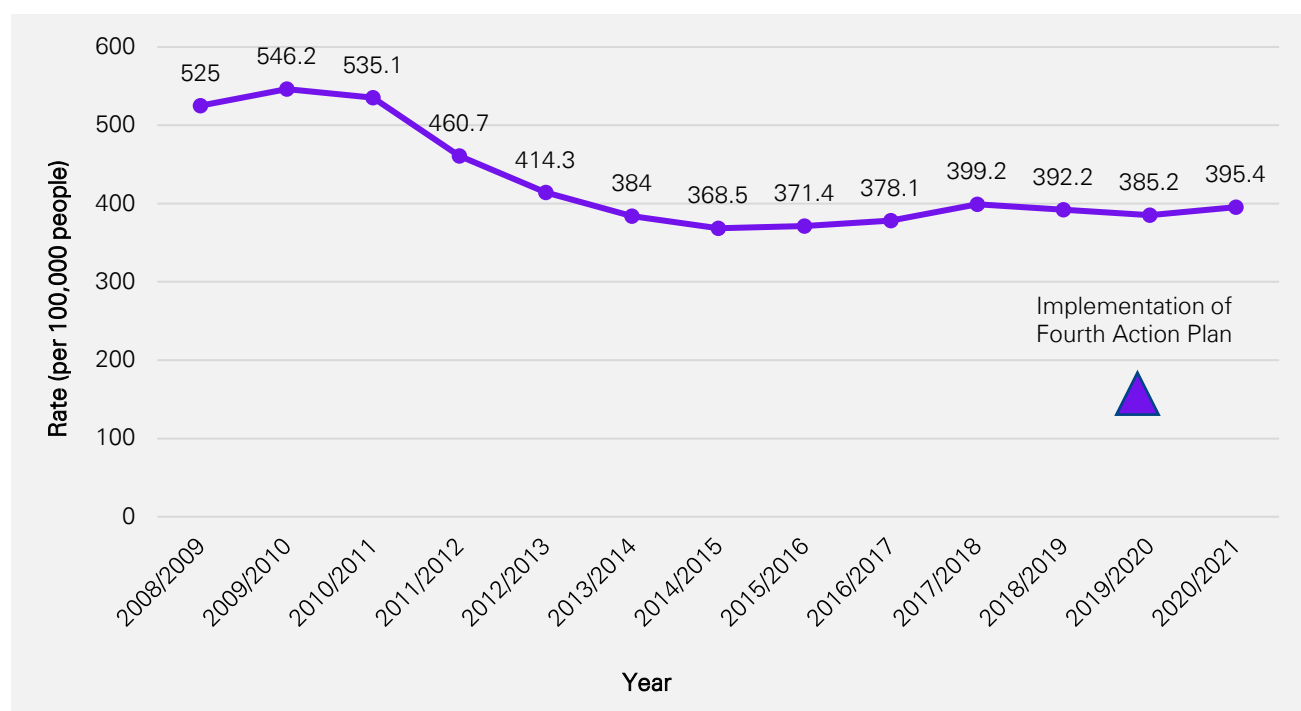
Data relating to an increased number of young people who feel their relationships are equal and respectful is lacking. Data from 2015 relating to the Line Campaign found that one in three young people didn't think controlling someone was a form of violence.²⁴ Recent data relating to young people (aged 10-17) who have committed abduction/harassment or acts intending to cause injury has been published by the ABS. Figure 7 shows a decrease in the number of youth offenders committing acts intending to cause injury between 2018/19 to 2020/21. There was a

slight increase between 2019/20 and 2020/21, however this is still below the 2017 rate.

Additionally, Figure 8 shows an overall decline in the rate of young people committing harassment or abduction over the past 10 years, with a slight increase between 2018/19 to 2019/20, however, this is still significantly lower than the rate in 2009/10 when the National Plan commenced.

These graphs indicate that there has been a decline in harassment and violent acts amongst young people, which is a promising result for the period of the 4AP. However, the data does not provide information on who the acts were committed against (another young person) or whether the act was committed in the context of FDSV.

Figure 7: Offenders aged 10 to 17 years who have committed acts intended to cause injury (rate per 100,000 population)

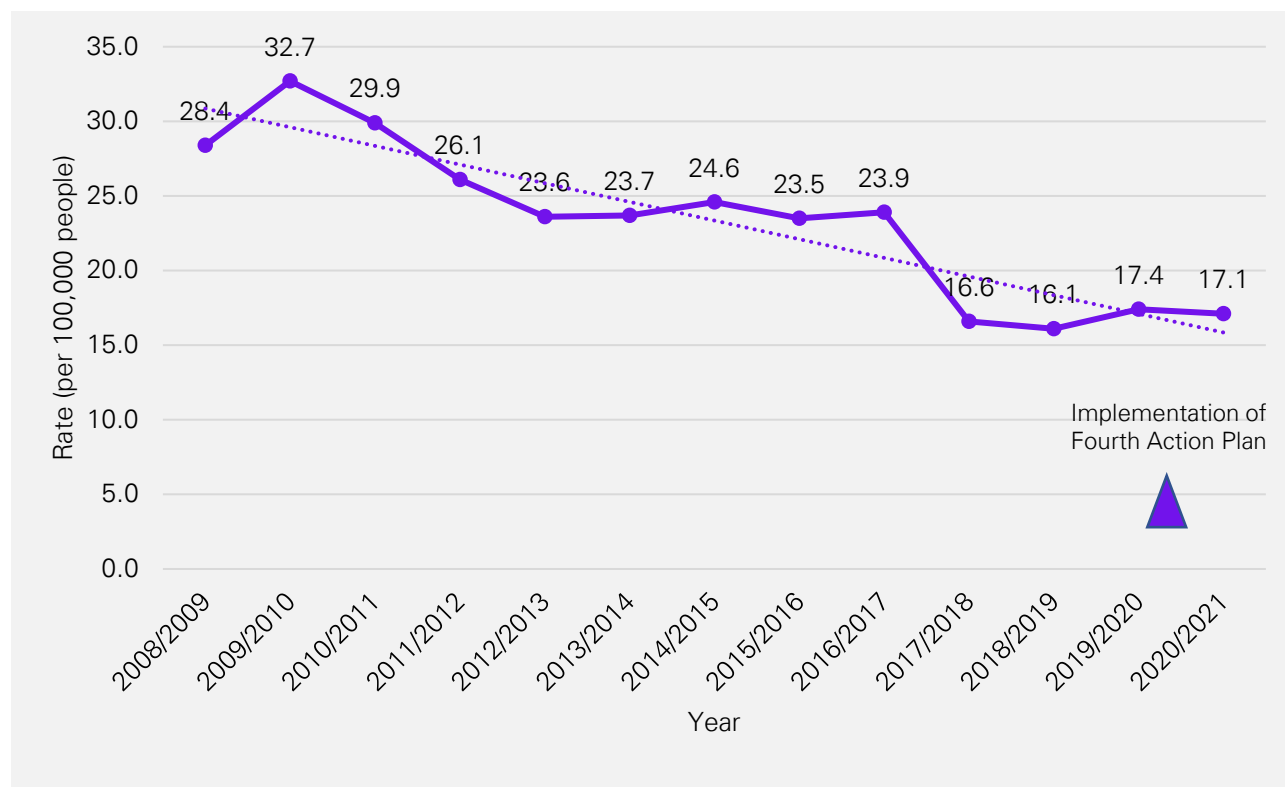


Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Offenders, 2022

²³ Tangentyere Council. 2019. The Grow Model of family violence primary prevention. Available at: [Grow-Model-Documents-Full-Version.pdf](https://tangfamilyviolenceprevention.com.au/Grow-Model-Documents-Full-Version.pdf) (tangfamilyviolenceprevention.com.au)

²⁴ White Ribbon Australia. Children and Young People. Available at: [Children & Young People - White Ribbon Australia](https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/children-and-young-people)

Figure 8: Offenders aged 10 to 17 years who have committed abduction/harassment (rate per 100,000 population)



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Offenders, 2022

Priority Two: Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children

The following program logic relates to the second priority aligned to the 4AP, highlighting short-term and medium-term outcomes.

Table 3: Priority two program logic

Priority 2: Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children			
PRIORITY 1 ACTIONS	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES
Action 6: Value and engage the expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men, communities and organisations to lead in the creation and implementation of community-led solutions to build and manage change	Initiatives that involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in design and delivery	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel engaged and participate in the development of in community-led solutions*	Reduction in domestic and family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-led solutions to build and manage change	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are leaders in the development of solutions*	Strong partnerships and collaboration exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal family violence services to share expertise and co-design culturally safe service
Action 7: Build the workforce capability to ensure delivery of high quality, holistic, trauma-informed and culturally safe supports that respond to the complex needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children	Cultural competency training initiatives	Service providers feel confident providing holistic, trauma-informed and culturally safe supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*	All initiatives accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children offer culturally safe support
		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children have greater access to culturally responsive, holistic service*	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged in and benefiting from Indigenous-led initiatives that strengthen connection to culture, Country and community
Action 8: Develop innovative and alternative models for victim and perpetrator support that contribute to safe healing and sustainable behaviour change	Innovative initiatives specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and perpetrators are aware of where they can go to access supports for safe healing and behaviour change*	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims feel supported and perpetrators demonstrate behaviour change and contribution to community life and begin the healing process
Action 9: Address both the immediate impacts and deep underlying drivers of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through collective action with governments, service providers and communities	Collective action initiatives	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are central to the design and delivery of services for their own communities*	There is systemic change which embeds prevention of domestic and family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
	Co-located services		
	Inter-agency governance structures involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	There is collective action with government and service providers to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*	

Source: Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework

Short-term outcomes

The short-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel engaged and participate in the development of community-led solutions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are leaders in the development of solutions
- Service providers feel confident providing holistic, trauma-informed and culturally safe supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children have greater access to culturally responsive, holistic services
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims and perpetrators are aware of where they can go to access supports for safe healing and behaviour change
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are central to the design and delivery of services for their own communities

- There is collective action with government and service providers to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Advances in the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the design of community-led solutions under the 4AP can be seen in the two progress reports (detailed in Section 2), however, there is a lack of data available relating to whether this has resulted in this cohort feeling engaged.

Consultation conducted for this evaluation found that there was a need for increased co-design and community-led services. This indicates that currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are not being involved enough in the design and delivery of services or their involvement in co-design is not translating to service delivery. One consultation participant stated that there was a feeling of consultation fatigue amongst Aboriginal case workers through both national and state processes. Consultations also found that there is a need for tailored services rather than mainstream services and that there needs to be consideration for the inclusion of healing-focused approaches rather than the typical justice-based approach. This would indicate that there has been a lack of healing focused approaches and tailored supports being delivered under the 4AP.

An evaluation of the Third Action Plan and its corresponding priority two stated that holistic approaches to treatment provided positive results, with storytelling and narrative therapeutic approaches being effective.²⁵ Additionally, the report found that programs that were able to engage informal and formal institutions in communities, from law enforcement to local clubs, created extended systems of support for program clients that had positive impacts on program goals. Staff from sites consulted during the evaluation expressed a desire for more meaningful contact with other sites, not just at the beginning of program design but throughout the implementation process. Finally, the study notes that communities stated that they had seen many programs come and go, with government agencies unable to address local

problems, creating challenges to establishing trust in these communities.

In regard to understanding whether service providers feel confident to provide holistic, trauma-informed and culturally safe supports to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, there is again a lack of data. In the 2018 National Survey of Workers in the FDSV sectors, many workers felt they needed additional training to support specific client groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.²⁶ More recently, an evaluation of DV-alert was conducted in 2021, providing some insight into whether this outcome has been achieved. The evaluation involved consultation with both DV-alert training participants and facilitators, peak bodies and state and territory government agencies. In relation to the Indigenous stream of training, participants provided positive experiences. People who had undertaken the Indigenous stream were more likely to have recognised and provided practical support to victims and survivors. It was noted that the facilitators responsible for the Indigenous stream had put in additional efforts for pre and post engagement, with content in some circumstances being adapted to align to participants' backgrounds. Participants who attended workshops tailored for specific communities also reported better understanding of prevalence and issues for those communities, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It should be noted however that the evaluation also found that some content in the Indigenous stream needed to be refreshed.²⁷

While there may be improvements in culturally safe training for service providers, it is difficult to ascertain whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children, victims and survivors, and perpetrators have greater access to culturally responsive, holistic services or are aware of where they can access culturally safe supports. Under the 4AP, there are a total of 30 initiatives that target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, however there is a lack of recent data relating to access of services undertaken by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

²⁵ RAND Australia. Australia's Third action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce violence against Women and their Children, Priority Area 2. Final Report.

²⁶ UNSW. 2018. National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors. Available at:

[National Survey of Workers in the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Sectors.pdf \(unsw.edu.au\)](https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/centres/sexual-violence-sectors/pdf)

²⁷ Where to. Evaluation of DV-alert. 2021.

Consultations revealed a number of unique factors impacting on remote and rural communities, resulting in limited supports provided. This includes a lack of infrastructure, accommodation, challenges around workforce attraction and retention and long travel distances. Challenges relating to obtaining appropriate staff to run programs for Aboriginal women were highlighted, resulting in a lack of services for these women, and limited numbers of supports available. One example that was noted was that engagement is often crisis driven, and once a crisis had settled down, people disengage from services. Additionally, some people turned down supports due to negative or mistrustful experiences with other organisations.

A research report conducted by ANROWS discusses the availability, accessibility and acceptability of family violence, legal and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria and New South Wales. The research describes how services in these states are experienced by those using them, finding that the presence of Aboriginal service providers was critical to the success of service providers making initial contact with often highly reluctant victims and survivors of violence. Failure to have these Aboriginal service providers was a major risk to not only the provider but to the victims and survivors as well, who were less likely to seek support at times of high risk.²⁸ While these points do not explain in detail whether victims and survivors, and perpetrators are aware of services and supports, it outlines the challenges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can have in accessing culturally safe support.

A number of mechanisms supporting collective action and collaboration between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, government and service providers were developed under the 4AP. However, consultations revealed mixed responses relating to supporting collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. While it was noted that the 4AP had measures focusing on co-design with

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities which was seen to be positive progress, it was also noted that the level of engagement around First Nations-specific matters from a policy perspective was not at a sufficient enough level. Additionally, the frontline worker survey highlighted that the sector believes service responses are not designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

Medium-term outcomes

The medium-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Reduction in domestic and family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Strong partnerships and collaboration exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal family violence services to share expertise and co-design culturally safe services
- All initiatives accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children offer culturally safe support
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are engaged in and are benefiting from Indigenous-led initiatives that strengthen connection to culture, Country and community
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims feel supported, and perpetrators demonstrate behaviour change and contribution to community life, and begin the healing process
- There is a systemic change which embeds prevention of DFV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Data from 2020 relating to the prevalence of FDSV offences in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has been identified. This data shows an overall decline in the rate of homicide and related offences (including murder, attempted murder, and manslaughter) between 2014 and 2020 (Figure 9). There has been, however, an increase in assault of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims (Figure 10).²⁹ It should

²⁸ ANROWS. 2020. Improving family violence legal and support services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Available at: [AT.19.03_Langton_RR-FVsupport-Women.pdf \(netdna-ssl.com\)](#)

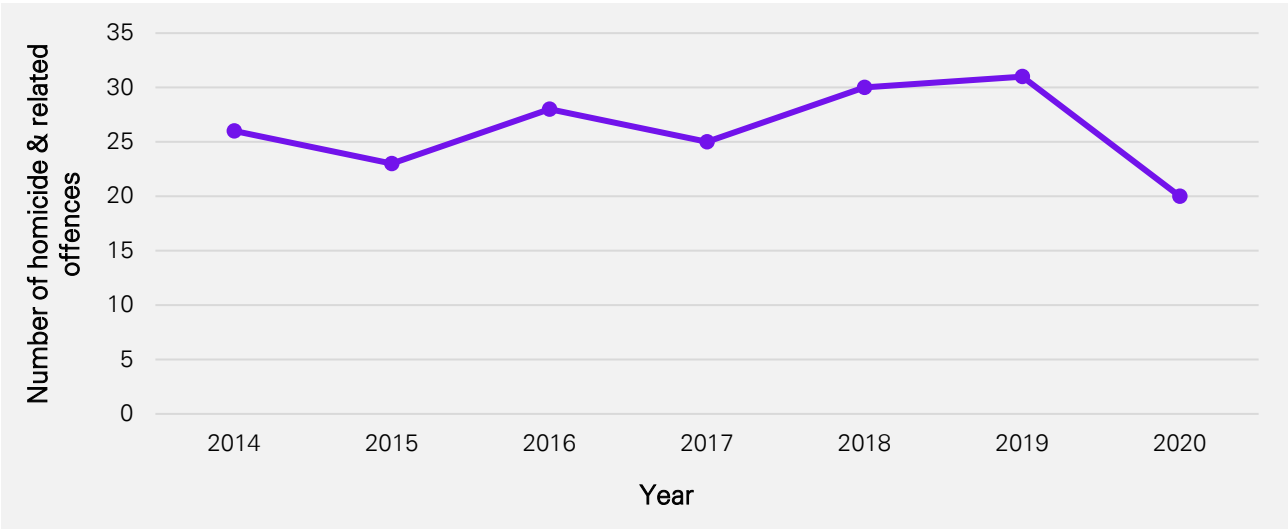
²⁹ The data compiled from the ABS (Recorded Crime, Victims 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of assault) is collected by select states, including New South Wales, South Australia and the

Northern Territory. There is no data available from Queensland relating to assault.

be noted that the data in these graphs is from selected states and does not include national data. There has also been a reported increase in sexual assault for Aboriginal and Torres

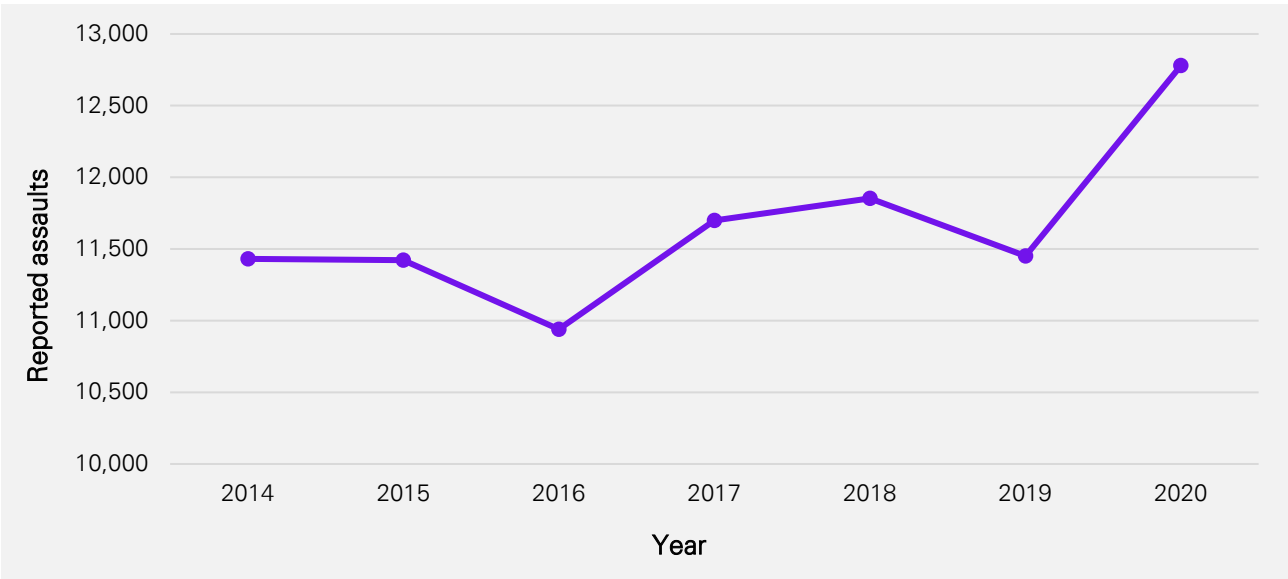
Strait Islander victims across selected states.³⁰

Figure 9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims - Homicide and related offences, selected states



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Victims 2020

Figure 10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims - Assault, selected states



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Victims 2020

Data relating to victims is recorded by police and is not designed to provide a total count of unique victims nor the total number of individual offences that came to the attention of the police. More information on the methodology can be found here: Recorded Crime -

Victims methodology, 2020 | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
³⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics. Recorded Crime – Victims. Available at: [Recorded Crime - Victims, 2020 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/Recorded-Crime-Victims-2020)

Alternatively, ANROWS recently evaluated one of the funded projects under the *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence* initiative, which was a primary prevention project carried out in the Northern Territory with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The evaluation found that 52 per cent of endline respondents (those who answered attitudinal surveys and were engaged in the projects) still found violence to be justifiable in one situation or another, with respondents more likely to justify violence in cases associated with “jealousing”.³¹

The most positive shifts were found in the baseline and endline attitudinal surveys, including responses relating to gender roles, i.e., what girls and women can do that boys and men cannot do and vice versa. Positive results were reflective of the messaging found in the program, that girls and boys can do, and like, the same activities. These results were encouraging, and show that the program was having a positive impact on changing people’s understandings and their attitudes.³²

There is a lack of evidence relating to the partnerships and collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal family violence services, as well as whether all initiatives accessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children offer culturally safe supports. 4AP progress reports indicate that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children can access DFV support

through a number of soft-entry points, as well as being provided targeted supports through referral pathways. However, it is difficult to ascertain which services provide culturally safe support. An opportunity for service mapping across Australia could support the identification of these relationships and supports.

There is a significant lack of qualitative data relating to whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel engaged and are benefitting from First Nations-led initiatives. From the available data, it is also challenging to understand whether victims and survivors feel supported by current responses.

The data collated regarding perpetrators demonstrating behavioural change is limited. The ABS has compiled data relating to offenders of domestic and family violence, however this information is only reported for selected states, not nationally. While the graph below shows an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders of FDSV, this may not represent a true increase as more state data was available in later years.³³

It is also difficult at this point in time to understand whether there has been a systemic change which embeds prevention of DFV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Future examination of programs post-4AP would be beneficial.

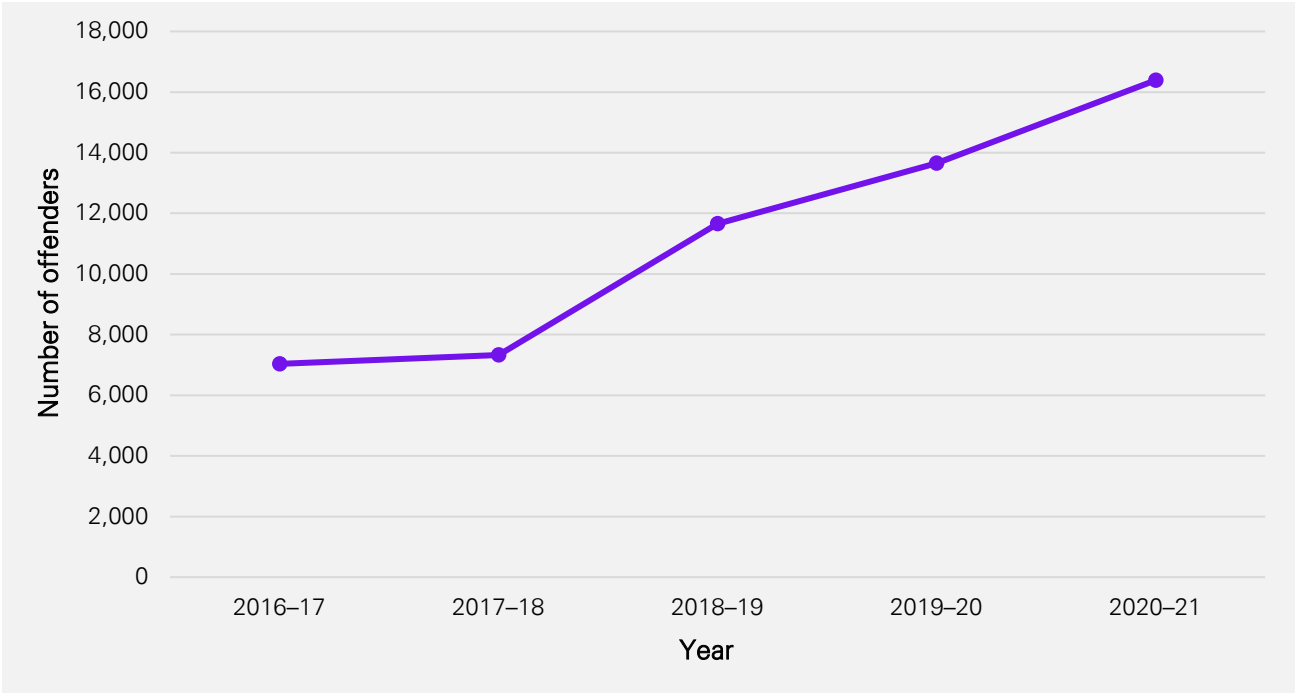
³¹ In some Central Australian contexts, jealousing is a verb used to describe controlling behaviours that are often performed publicly to sanction real or imagined sexually inappropriate behaviour.

³² Rante-rante ampe Marle and Urreye. *Safe, Respected and Free from Violence* Projects Evaluation. ANROWS. 2021. Available at: [apo-nid315037.pdf](#)

³³ The data compiled from the ABS (Recorded Crime, Offenders 2021, Family and Domestic Violence, Indigenous Status) is collated by select states, including New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory. Queensland data is

only available from 2018-19 onwards, and South Australian data is only available from 2019-20 onwards. The Recorded Crime Offenders Family and Domestic Violence data collated by the ABS is experimental, with the ABS noting that further work is required to improve the comparability and quality of the data. More information on the methodology can be found here: [Recorded Crime - Offenders methodology, 2020-21 financial year | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#).

Figure 11: Indigenous offenders of family and domestic violence



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Offenders

Priority Three: Respect, listen and respond to the diverse lived experiences and knowledge of women and their children affected by violence

The following program logic is aligned to priority three under the 4AP, and short-term and medium-term outcomes.

Table 4: Priority three program logic

Priority 3: Respect, listen and respond to the diverse lived experience and knowledge of women and their children affected by violence			
PRIORITY 1 ACTIONS	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES
Action 10: Implement community-led and tailored initiatives to address the unique experiences and needs of communities affected by multiple forms of discrimination or inequality	Initiatives designed by people affected by multiple forms of discrimination or inequality Initiatives developed by people affected by multiple forms of discrimination or inequality	Victims from communities affected by multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. LGBTIQ+ communities, women with disabilities, women from remote communities, amongst many others) can access culturally safe support	People from communities affected by multiple forms of violence are empowered to lead and develop their own initiatives to prevent and address domestic and family violence in their own community
Action 11: Deliver policies and services to address the disproportionate impact of violence on particular groups	Policies supporting culturally safe and appropriate services for communities affected by multiple forms of discrimination or inequality	Responses are tailored for groups that currently are disproportionately impacted by violence and face intersectional challenges	People from communities that are currently disproportionately impacted by violence can access culturally safe support
Action 12: Better equip the service system and communities to address complex forms of violence and harmful cultural practices including early and forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, dowry abuse and human trafficking	Training initiatives relating to complex forms of violence and harmful cultural practices Initiatives responding to complex forms of violence and harmful cultural practices.	Service providers feel confident identifying and responding to complex forms of violence and harmful cultural practices in a culturally appropriate way	

Source: Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework

Short-term outcomes

The short-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Victims from communities affected by multiple forms of discrimination (e.g. LGBTIQ+ communities, women with disabilities, women from remote communities, amongst many others) can access culturally safe support
- Responses are tailored for groups that currently are disproportionality impacted by violence and face intersectional challenges
- Service providers feel confident identifying and responding to complex forms of violence and harmful cultural practices in a culturally appropriate way.

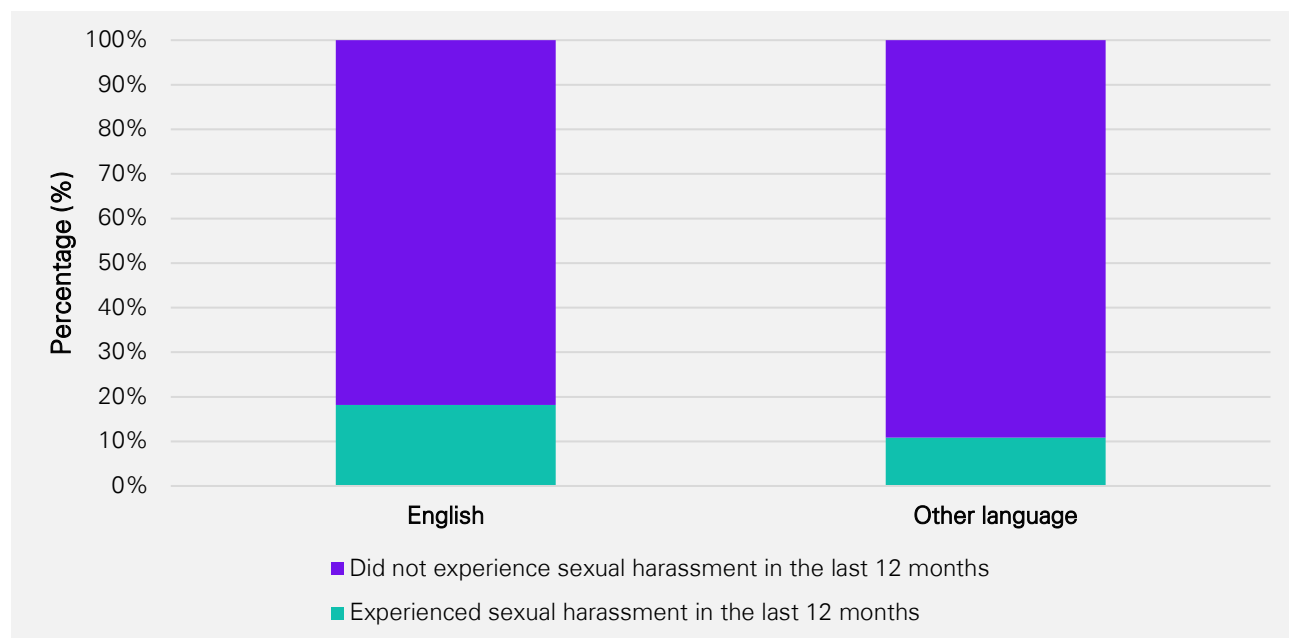
The 2019 AIHW report on family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia identified eight vulnerable population groups, along with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as experiencing higher rates of family violence or more complex forms of violence. This included children, young women, people with disability, people from CALD backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ people. Data from the Australian Human Rights Commission in 2018 found that 92 per cent of women who identified as LGBTIQ+ had experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime, and that 9 out of 10 women with disability had been sexually harassed.³⁴ Data relating to the prevalence of FDSV amongst people from CALD

³⁴ Australian Human Rights Commission. 2018. Everyone's Business: Fourth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces. Available at: [AHRC_WORKPLACE_SH_2018.pdf](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/ahrc-workplace-sh-2018.pdf) (humanrights.gov.au)

backgrounds is limited³⁵, however, the below graph shows the experiences of sexual harassment for those who speak English at home, compared to those who do not, with those that speak English experiencing more sexual harassment in the last 12 months than

those that spoke other languages. However, it should be noted that English speaking persons may be more likely to report sexual harassment as they experience fewer cultural or language barriers.

Figure 12: Main language spoken at home, experience of sexual harassment in the last 12 months



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Personal Safety Survey, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016

A recent evaluation of the effectiveness of CALD grants provided under the Third Action Plan and 4AP found that the funded organisations (n=26) offered targeted services, including translation of resources and services into diverse languages, training and capability building for specific cultural groups, and support and education regarding complex cultural challenges such as dowry abuse. Additionally, these organisations reached a total of 45 diverse groups across Australia. While almost all of the organisations funded under these grants filled a service need, the evaluation found that more targeted services for CALD men would support prevention of FDSV. Positive investment had been made by the Commonwealth, however service offerings were limited in their reach to the full breadth of CALD communities across Australia. Some cultural groups were under-represented, and the need for services to be delivered in multiple languages and by trusted educators was highlighted by stakeholders.³⁶

Consultations conducted for this evaluation reported that, while there is general positive feedback regarding community-led responses and improved representation of diverse groups in the 4AP, work still needs to be undertaken to better understand if the current services and programs being provided are suited for communities with complex challenges. The concept of intersectionality was highlighted, with services increasing their understanding of this while also aware of its translation into policy and practice. Consultation also noted that there was a need to translate services into community languages that represents the diverse nature of Australian communities. For example, the term 'complex forms of violence' may not be appropriate to describe DFV in diverse communities.

Figure 13 shows the perceived level of ability of workers when meeting the needs of specific client groups from UNSW's 2018 survey of FDSV workers. 71.4 per cent of workers reported feeling very well and well

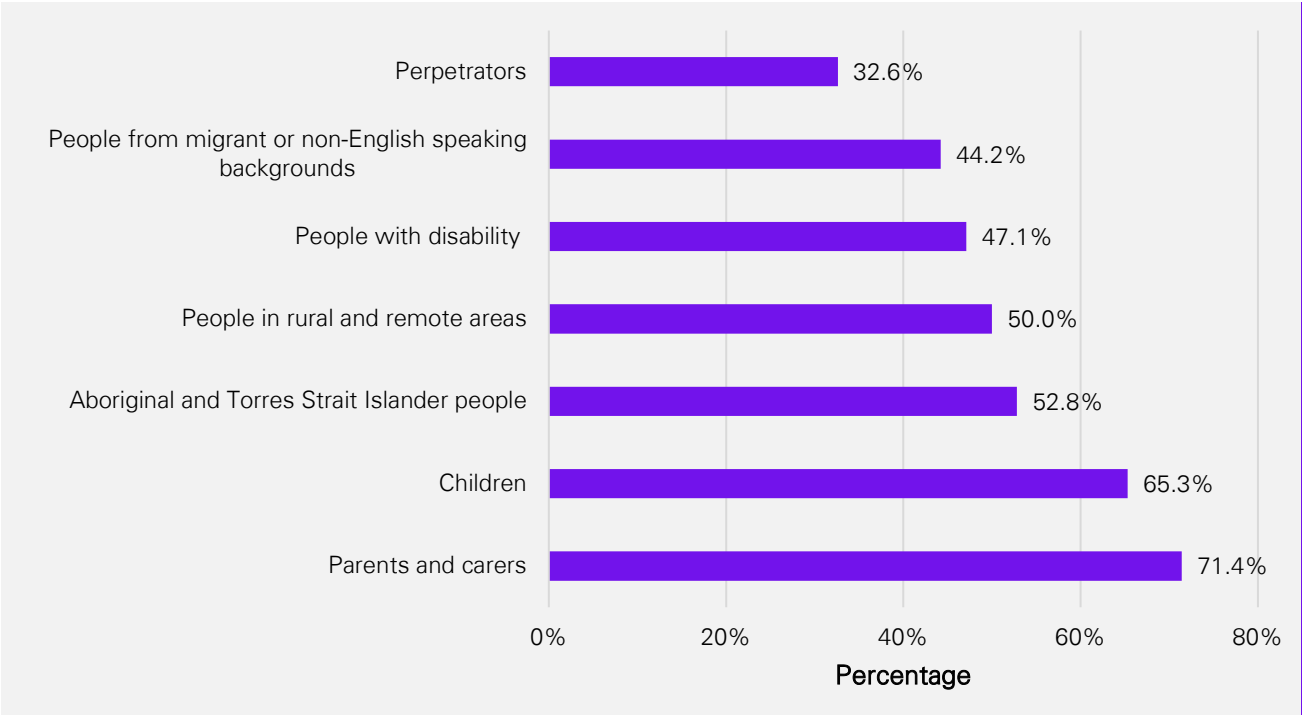
³⁵ AIHW. 2019. Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story. Available at: [Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019 \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/10/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence-in-australia-continuing-the-national-story-2019)

³⁶ KPMG. 2021. Review of Effectiveness of CALD Grants.

equipped to meeting the needs of parents and carers, while only 44.2 per cent of workers reported feeling very well and well equipped to meet the needs of people from migrant or non-English speaking backgrounds. Additionally, many workers felt they needed

training to support specific client groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, LGBTIQ+ people affected by violence, asylum seekers and people with experiences of homelessness. More recent data was not available for analysis at the time of reporting.³⁷

Figure 13: Proportion of workers in FDSV support services who felt well equipped or very well equipped to meet the needs of particular client groups



Source: UNSW, Social Policy Research Centre, 2018, National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors

Medium-term outcomes

The medium-term outcomes for this priority are:

- People from communities affected by multiple forms of violence are empowered to lead the development of their own initiatives to prevent and address DFV in their own community
- People from communities that are currently disproportionately impacted by violence can access culturally safe support.

There is a significant lack of information available relating to these outcomes. In regard to people from communities being

empowered, consultations revealed that there has been improved representation of cohorts such as the LGBTIQ+ community in the 4AP, however, some groups, such as women with disability, were still largely absent. Additionally, there is limited evidence available relating to whether communities that are disproportionately impacted by violence can access culturally safe support. The evaluation of the grant programs under the Third Action Plan and 4AP provides detail on this, however additional data collation and evaluation relating to initiatives under the 4AP needs to be taken once the 4AP has concluded, to better understand impacts against the medium-term outcomes.

³⁷ UNSW. 2018. National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors. Available at:

[National Survey of Workers in the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Sectors.pdf \(unsw.edu.au\)](#)

Priority Four: Response to sexual assault and harassment

The following program logic is aligned to priority four under the 4AP, and short-term and medium-term outcomes

Table 5: Priority four program logic

Priority 4: Responding to sexual violence and sexual harassment			
PRIORITY 1 ACTIONS	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES
Action 13: Prevent sexual violence and sexual harassment before it happens through national and targeted initiatives that promote informed consent, bodily autonomy and respectful relationships	Initiatives aimed at assisting perpetrators of sexual violence to change their behaviour and be accountable to victims	Australians have an increased awareness of the attitudes and behaviours that lead to sexual violence and sexual harassment and the need for change	In target populations, there are changes in attitudes that contribute to gender inequality, sexual violence and harassment
	Initiatives aimed at assisting reducing sexual harassment		Australians change their behaviour by adopting new societal norms
Action 14: Deliver client centred, trauma-informed, specialised and consistent support to victims and survivors of sexual violence	Initiatives specialising in supporting victims of sexual violence	Service providers feel confident responding to the unique needs of victims and survivors of sexual violence	Through timely, appropriate and consistent support services, victims and survivors of sexual violence have increased empowerment
Action 15: Strengthen the capacity of all sectors to address sexual harassment to ensure women are safe at work, while studying, in public and online	Initiatives focused on addressing sexual harassment	Increased awareness amongst organisations and service providers of how sexual harassment can occur in a range of settings (e.g. online, in public, at work, at school)	There is demonstrated behavioural change in sectors to reduce sexual harassment in a range of settings (e.g. online, in public, at work, at school)

Source: Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework

Short-term outcomes

The short-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Australians have an increased awareness of the attitudes and behaviours that lead to sexual violence and sexual harassment and the need for change
- Service providers feel confident responding to the unique needs of victims and survivors of sexual violence
- Increase awareness amongst organisations and service providers of how sexual harassment can occur in a range of settings (e.g. online, in public, at work or school).

There is a lack of recent data relating to attitudes towards sexual assault in Australia. A more recent version of the NCAS is due to

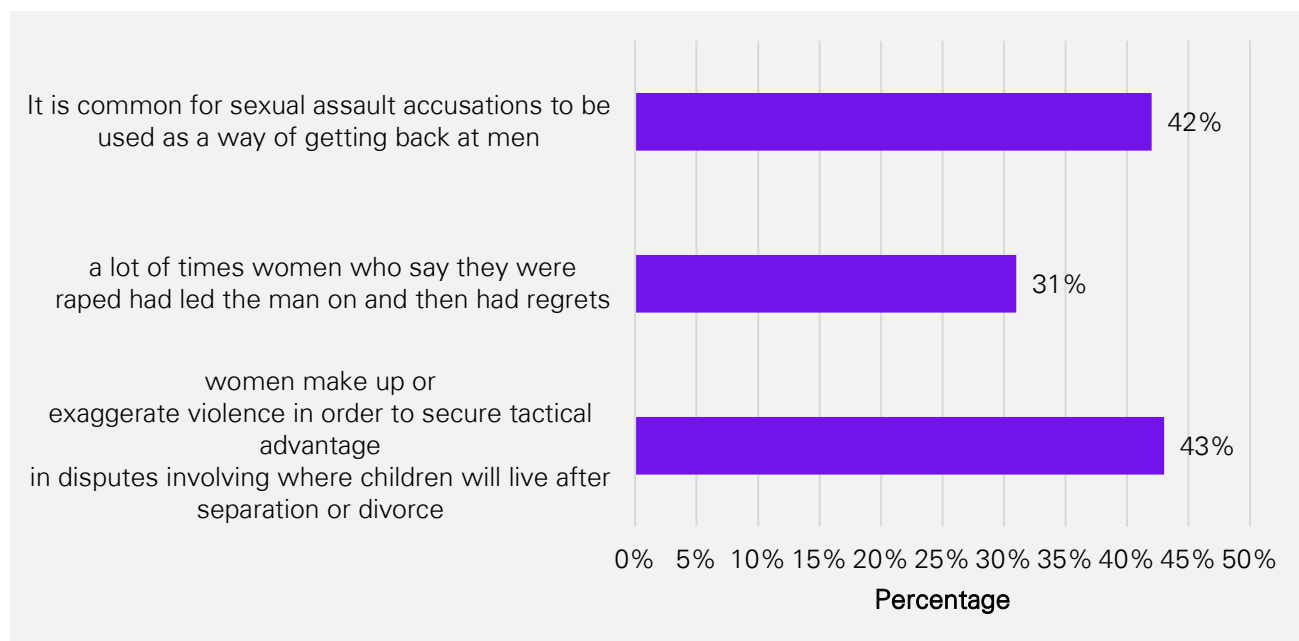
be released in late 2022, which will inform an understanding of whether the 4AP had improved attitudes towards sexual assault and harassment.

The 2017 NCAS revealed community attitudes mistrusting reports of violence (Figure 14). Contrary to evidence, close to half of all those surveyed agreed that women make up or exaggerate violence in order to secure tactical advantage in disputes involving where children will live after separation or divorce. Forty-two per cent agreed that it is common for sexual assault accusations to be used as a way of getting back at men and women. A further one in three Australians agree that a lot of times women who say they were raped had led the man on and then had regrets.³⁸

³⁸ ANROWS. 2017. Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community

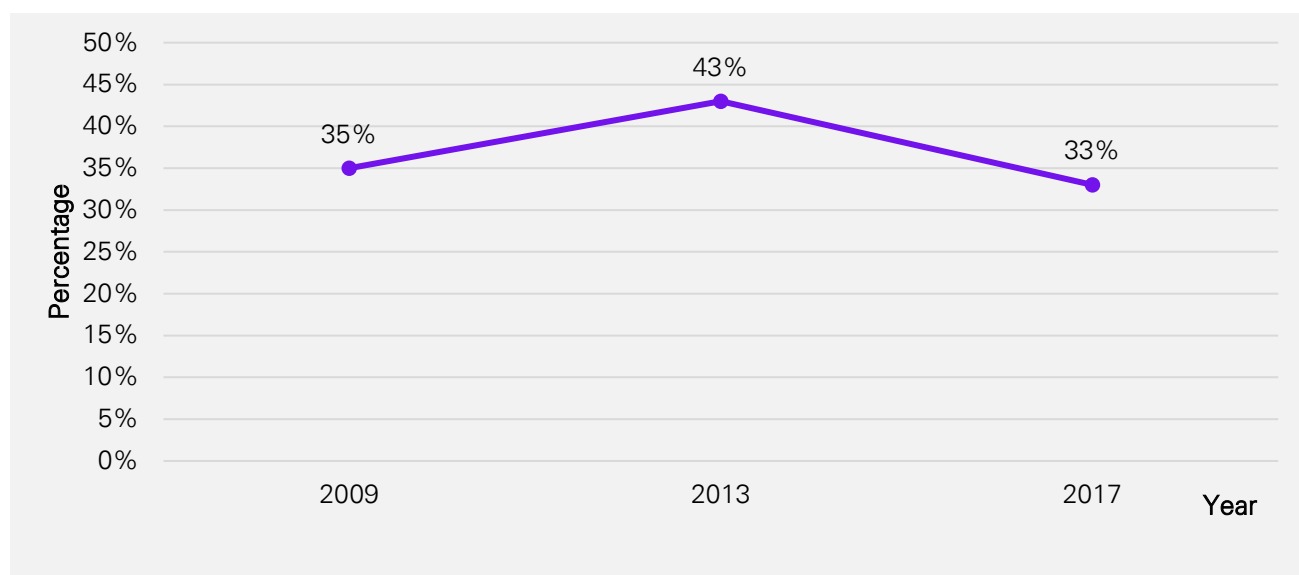
Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey. Available at: [anr001-NCAS-report-WEB-1019.pdf](https://www.anr001-NCAS-report-WEB-1019.pdf) ([netdna-ssl.com](https://www.netdna-ssl.com))

Figure 14: Attitudes mistrusting women's reports of violence



Source: 2017 NCAS

Figure 15: Percentage of people who believe that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex



Source: 2017 NCAS

Additionally, while outside the period of the 4AP, the 2017 NCAS shows a decline between 2013 and 2017 in those that believe that rape results from men not being able to control their need for sex (Figure 15). The 2017 NCAS also revealed a decline in those that agreed that if a woman is raped while she is drunk or affected by drugs, she is at least partly responsible (19 per cent in 2013 to 13 per cent in 2017).

A report published by ANROWS in 2021 utilised a mixed method design to investigate attitudes of mistrust against women's reports

of sexual assault. The report aimed to examine how trust and mistrust in women's reports of sexual assault victimisation was influenced by understandings, attitudes and methods about the nature of sexual assault and sexual consent, and the nature of false allegations. The study, which included online focus groups with 40 men and 35 women, found that the results were similar to those found in the 2017 NCAS, with participants mistrusting women's reports of sexual assault. Understandings of sexual consent were misaligned to current legal definitions in Australian jurisdictions and participants

perceived women's reports of sexual assault from a default position of scepticism and suspicion, informed by a range of myths relating to rape, sexual assault and other problematic stereotypes of women. Focus groups found that women's actions and suspected motives for lying were the most influential factors for mistrust in women's reports of sexual assault and were frequently informed by rape myths and gender stereotypes. The study found that people are hesitant to believe women's allegations without proof, however at the same time are hesitant to flatly disbelieve sexual assault allegations or label women as liars.³⁹

Central to the prevention of sexual violence and harassment is an experienced and knowledgeable workforce that can recognise and respond to sexual abuse. The 2018 UNSW sector survey revealed that, across respondents, there were varying degrees of confidence in recognising signs of sexual abuse. For those working in community services, 70 per cent were very confident or quite confident, whereas 82 per cent of those with a psychology background were very confident or quite confident.⁴⁰ This was supported by the 2021 evaluation of DV-alert, which found that frontline workers were less confident when noticing signs of sexual abuse.⁴¹

Consultation indicated mixed responses in relation to the 4AP and priority four, with some participants stating that while the 4AP has put a focus on sexual violence, others thought it had 'gone backwards'. Some consultation participants indicated that sexual violence and harassment had taken a 'back seat' in relation to DFV. Significant public events, such as the MeToo movement along with public appearances by Brittany Higgins and Grace Tame, made an impact through their own personal disclosures to the media, raising awareness of sexual violence and harassment.

Consultation participants had also noted improvements in understandings of image-based abuse, associated legislation, systems and processes, along with potential

improvements in people reporting sexual assault and harassment, however, participants noted that system responses were not yet set up to support this. Supports in court and legal responses for victims and survivors, along with services for perpetrators, were identified as limited.

Medium-term outcomes

The medium-term outcomes for this priority are:

- In target populations there are changes in attitudes that contribute to gender inequality, sexual violence and harassment
- Australians change their behaviour by adopting new societal norms
- Through timely, appropriate and consistent support services, victims and survivors have increased empowerment
- There is demonstrated behavioural change in sectors to reduce sexual harassment in a range of settings (e.g. online, in public, at work or school).

There is a lack appropriate data available relating to attitudes that contribute to gender inequality, sexual violence and harassment. The 2017 NCAS measures attitudinal support for gender equality as well as support for violence against women, along with sexual harassment. The NCAS asks whether women who are sexually harassed should sort it out themselves rather than report it, and shows that since 1995, there has been a decrease in those that agree with this statement amongst the community. There has also been a decrease in the sentiment of women often say 'no' when they mean 'yes', between 2013 and 2017.⁴² Future analysis of the 2022 NCAS will further inform this outcome.

To better understand if there has been a change in behaviour by adopting new societal norms, the rates of sexual assault have been considered. The ABS compiled data relating to DFV-related sexual assault as recorded by police. It found that 34 per cent of sexual assault victims recorded by police between 2014 and 2019 were related to DFV, with 67

³⁹ Minter, Carlisle & Coumarelos. 2021. "Chuck her on a lie detector" Investigating Australians' mistrust in women's reports of sexual assault.

⁴⁰ UNSW. 2018. National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors. Available at: [National Survey of Workers in the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Sectors.pdf](https://www.unsw.edu.au/research/centres/dfv-centre/publications/national-survey-of-workers-in-the-domestic-family-and-sexual-violence-sectors.pdf) (unsw.edu.au)

⁴¹ Where to. Evaluation of DV-alert. 2021

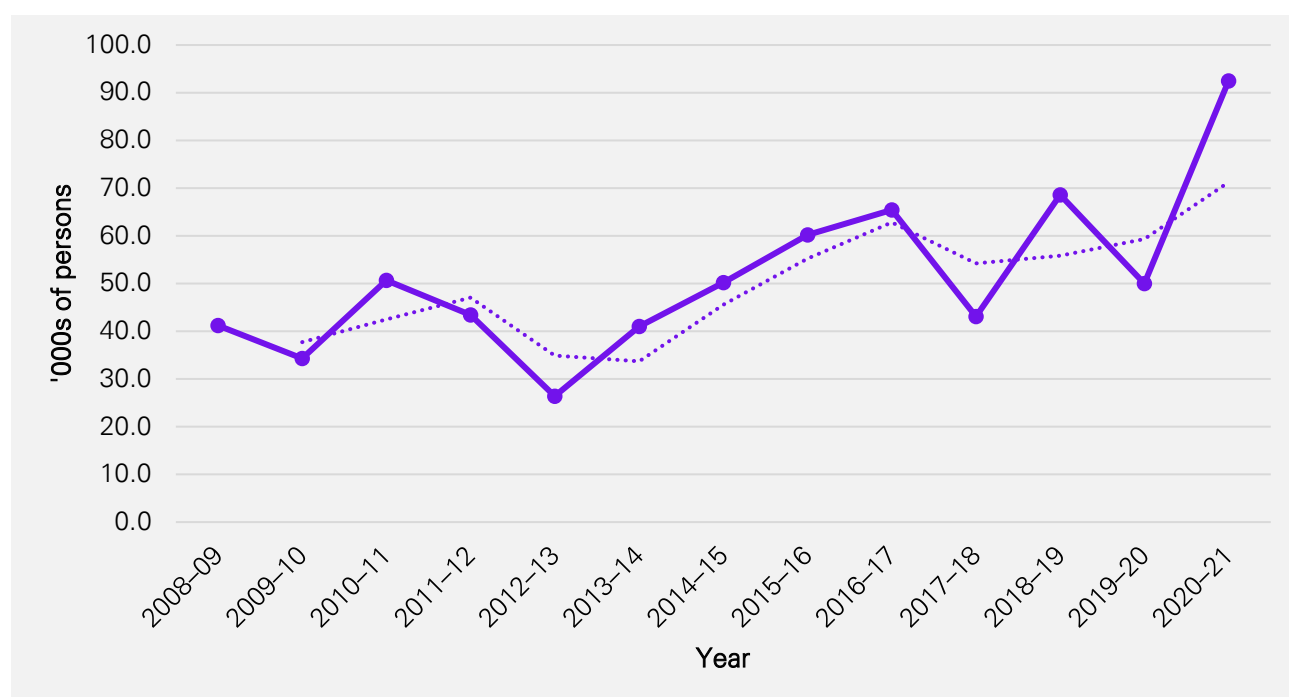
⁴² ANROWS. 2017. Australians' attitudes to violence against women and gender equality. Findings from the 2017 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey. Available at: [anr001-NCAS-report-WEB-1019.pdf](https://www.anr001-NCAS-report-WEB-1019.pdf) (netdna-ssl.com)

per cent of female victims of DFV-related sexual assault were under the age of 18 at the date of incident.⁴³

Recent data from the ABS has revealed that sexual assault rates between 2008 to 2018 for all females has periodically increased (Figure 16, with the moving average indicated by the dotted line). During the 4AP, this declined over 2018-19 to 2019-20, however continued to increase into 2021. The data revealed in this graph should be interpreted in light of a number of caveats described by the ABS. This includes changes in 12-month victimisation rate of sexual assault being influenced by real work changes in the prevalence of sexual

assault, as well as changes in attitude and awareness of FDSV more broadly: “These changes can impact on people’s ability to recognise sexual assault when it occurs, and their willingness to disclose their experiences to a survey interviewer.”⁴⁴ Similar rates have been identified below, relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims, with rates of sexual assault increasing since 2016 to 2020. This data however is from selected states across differing time periods and does not include national statistics; as such, this may not be depicting a true increase in rates.⁴⁵

Figure 16: Sexual assault, female aged 18+('000 of persons)



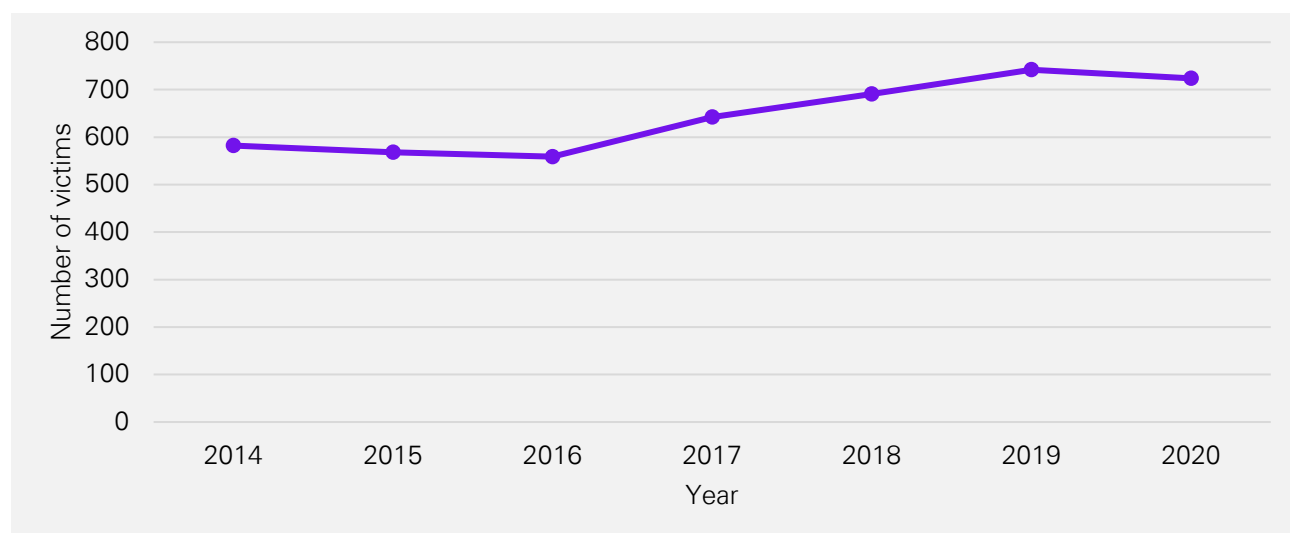
Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Crime Victimisation, Australia 2021

⁴³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021. Sexual Violence – Victimisation. Available at: [Sexual Violence - Victimisation | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/Statistics/sexual-violence-victimisation)

⁴⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2021. Sexual Violence – Victimisation. Available at: [Sexual Violence - Victimisation | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/Statistics/sexual-violence-victimisation)

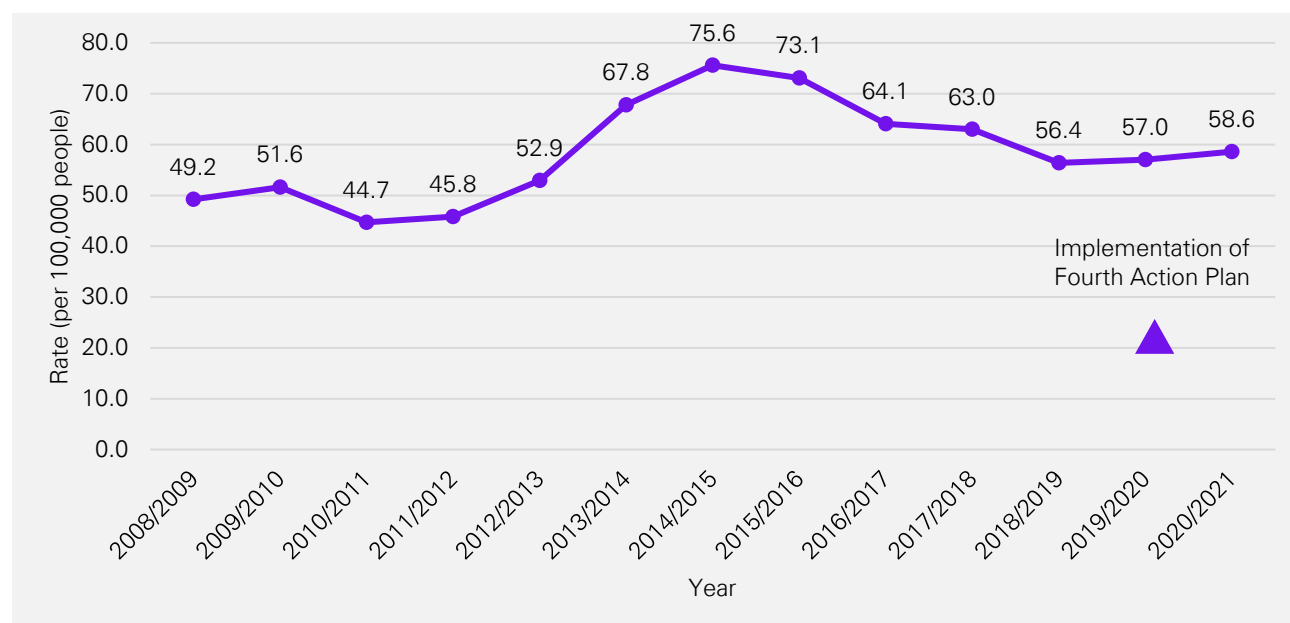
⁴⁵ For this figure, data from New South Wales, Northern Territory, and Australian Capital Territory covers the entire period, data from Queensland is included from 2018/19 onwards, and data from South Australia is included from 2019/20 onwards.

Figure 17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of sexual assault, Selected states and territories(a), 2014–2020



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime, Victims 2020

Figure 18: Offenders aged 10 to 17 years who have committed sexual assault and related offences (rate per 100,000 population)



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime, Offenders 2020/21

Additionally, an increase in the rate of younger offenders committing sexual assault and related offences (including sexual assault, sexual touching, and sexual acts) can be seen between 2010/11, with this rate then dropping between 2014/15 to 2018/19. A slight incline can be seen between 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

There is a lack of data available to inform the outcome relating to victims and survivors having increased empowerment. In lieu of timely evidence, data from the 2016 PSS has been identified, finding that:

- In the last 10 years, 50 per cent of women sought advice or support from one or more sources after the most recent incident of sexual assault perpetrated by a male:
 - Seven in 10 sought advice or support from a friend or family member
 - Four in 10 sought advice or support from a general practitioner or health professional
 - More than one in four sought advice or support from a counsellor, support worker or a telephone helpline.

These statistics may indicate a level of awareness of (and empowerment to access) available supports for women during the National Plan, however the PSS also found that 87 per cent of women who experienced aggravated sexual assault by a male in the last 10 years did not contact the police about the most recent incident. Common reasons for not reporting to police included that they felt like they could deal with the issue themselves (34 per cent) or not regarding it as serious enough (34 per cent).⁴⁶

Consultation undertaken for this evaluation indicated that it can be difficult for victims and survivors to access support, and that there is a need to increase resources and available supports. While the 4AP has highlighted sexual harassment and violence, there were mixed responses concerning whether this has translated into improved practice.

There is a lack of data relating to demonstrated behaviour change across sectors. As such, alternative data and evidence have been used to indicate the current state:

- Since 2003, the Australian Human Rights Commission has periodically conducted a survey that examines the experiences of workplace sexual harassment in Australia. The most recent report was released in 2020 and identified that “workplace sexual harassment is prevalent and pervasive: it occurs in every industry, in every location and at every level, in Australian workplaces. Australians, across the country, are suffering the financial, social, emotional, physical and psychological harm associated with sexual harassment. This is particularly so for women.”

- The survey revealed that 39 per cent of women and 26 per cent of men experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past five years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were more likely to have experienced workplace sexual harassment than people who are not First Nations people. As a victim, bystander or both, 51 per cent of Australians (52 per cent of women and 50 per cent of men) in the workforce in the last five years were exposed to some form of workplace sexual harassment.⁴⁷
- A study conducted in 2021 found that, out of the 43,819 students who participated in the survey, 16 per cent had experienced sexual harassment and 4.5 per cent had experienced sexual assault since starting university. Of these, 1 in 30 made a formal complaint to their university for sexual harassment and 1 in 20 for sexual assault. While a direct comparison is not possible with the 2016 National University Student Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment, the 2021 study found that there was a lower prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault in the 12 months preceding the survey, as compared to the prevalence in the 2016 calendar year. Similarly, fewer students had witnessed or observed sexual harassment or sexual assault in an Australian university context in the past 12 months when compared with the 2016 calendar year. The report notes several factors complicate these findings such as COVID-19 impacting students studying on campus, as well as changes to the wording of the survey.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ AIHW. 2020. Sexual assault in Australia. Available at: [Sexual assault in Australia \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/sexual-assault-in-australia)

⁴⁷ Australian Human Rights Commission. 2020. Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces. Available at: [Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report \(2020\) | Australian Human Rights Commission](https://www.hrc.org.au/publications-reports/reports/respect-at-work-national-inquiry-into-sexual-harassment-in-australian-workplaces)

⁴⁸ Social Research Centre. 2021. National Student Safety Survey. Report on the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault among university students in 2021. Available at: [2021 National Student Safety Survey – Universities Australia](https://www.socresocentre.com.au/research/national-student-safety-survey-2021)

Priority Five: Improve support and service system responses

The following program logic is aligned to priority five under the 4AP, and short-term and medium-term outcomes

Table 6: Priority five program logic

Priority 5: Improving support and service system responses			
PRIORITY 1 ACTIONS	OUTPUTS	SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES
Action 16: Action 16: Enable workforces to provide trauma-informed support with a focus on safety and recovery to victims and survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence	Training initiatives relating to trauma-informed support	Service providers feel confident about their ability to provide trauma-informed support with a focus on safety and recovery*	Workforce deliver trauma-informed support with a safety and recovery focus
Action 17: Collaborate across services, sectors and workforces to ensure responses to women affected by domestic, family and sexual violence are coordinated, meet women's needs, avoid women having to retell their story and promote their recovery	Information sharing guidelines, processes and inter-agency referral pathways to reduce the need for victims to retell their story	Service providers have an awareness of how collaboration and information sharing reduces the need for victims to retell their story Service providers have access to timely and relevant information about family violence risks*	Women, children (and men) affected by domestic, family and sexual violence are safe, have their needs met, and their recovery is promoted
Action 18: Improve access to and embed trauma-informed support for perpetrators of domestic, family and sexual violence to prevent reoffending and promote rehabilitation and treatment	Training initiatives relating to trauma-informed support Trauma-informed support initiatives	Service providers have an awareness of how trauma-informed support for perpetrators can prevent reoffending and promote rehabilitation*	Perpetrators have timely access to rehabilitation services and trauma informed support
Action 19: Build the evidence base to inform responses to domestic, family and sexual violence by strengthening the focus on what works to reduce violence, improving data and supporting the Fourth Action Plan priorities	Evaluation of initiatives Initiatives to improve data collection and reporting	Increased number of rigorous evaluations of domestic and family violence services*	An evidence base underpins the policy, planning and delivery of responses to domestic, family and sexual violence
Action 20: Improve access to suitable and safe accommodation within their communities for women who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence	Refuges and shelters Referral protocols for refuges and shelters	Women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence have access to suitable and safe accommodation	Women who have experienced or are experiencing domestic, family or sexual violence are safely housed within their communities

Source: Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework

Short term outcomes

The short-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Service providers feel confident about their ability to provide trauma-informed support with a focus on safety and recovery
- Service providers have an awareness of how collaboration and information sharing reduces the need for victims to retell their story
- Service providers have access to timely and relevant information about family violence risks

- Service providers have an awareness of how trauma-informed support for perpetrators can prevent reoffending and promote rehabilitation
- Increased number of rigorous evaluations of DFV services
- Women who have experiences or are experiencing FDSV have access to suitable and safe accommodation.

There is a lack of comprehensive information available relating to how service providers feel in relation to their ability to provide trauma-

informed support with a focus on safety and recovery. The evaluation of DV-alert found that at least seven in ten frontline workers reported that, as a result of attending the training their practical skills had improved moderately or significantly, including those relating to safety planning, assessing risk, responding to perpetrators and using a strengths-based approach to respond.⁴⁹

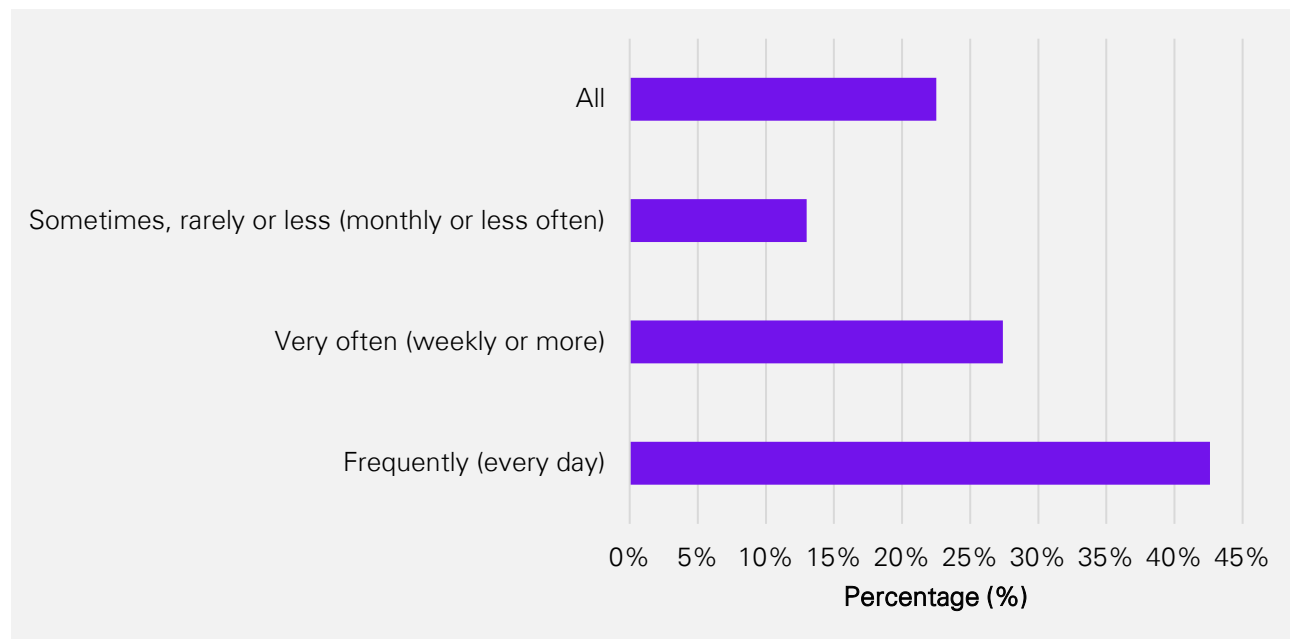
There is limited information relating to service providers' awareness of how collaboration and information sharing reduces the need for victims and survivors to retell their story. A number of initiatives under the 4AP were developed to encourage information sharing, including frameworks and data information mechanisms. While many initiatives under the 4AP are undergoing evaluation, an evaluation of the New South Wales Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services program was conducted in 2018, finding that clients of the program were connected with local services.⁵⁰ ANROWS conducted a meta-evaluation of existing interagency partnerships, collaboration and coordination

across interventions and service responses to FDSV, however this was conducted before the 4AP.

In relation to service providers having access to timely and relevant information, the 2018 UNSW sector survey found that 74 per cent of those surveyed agreed that staff in this service receive enough relevant training and development to do their jobs well. There is no further information available on what this training includes.⁵¹

There is a lack of data available in relation to service providers having an awareness of how trauma-informed support for perpetrators can prevent reoffending and promote rehabilitation. However, the 2018 UNSW sector survey reveals that of those providers surveyed, over 40 per cent felt somewhat equipped to work with perpetrators who were resistant to intervention frequently (Figure 19), and over 50 per cent felt somewhat equipped to frequently work with perpetrators to support them in achieving behavioural change (Figure 20).

Figure 19: Respondents feeling well equipped or very well equipped to work with perpetrators who are resistant to intervention, by their frequency of contact with perpetrators



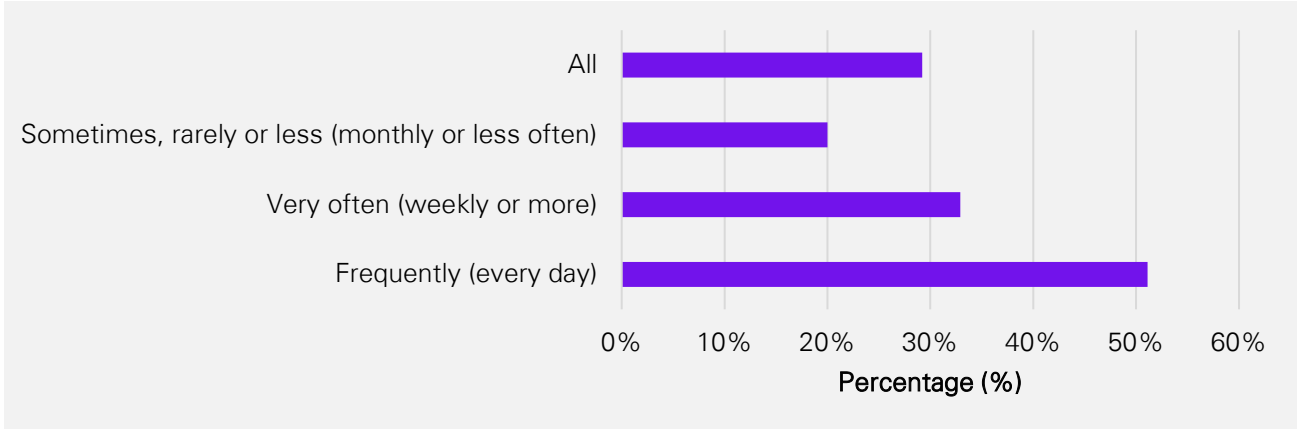
Source: UNSW, Social Policy Research Centre, National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors

⁴⁹ Where to. 2021. Evaluation of DV-alert

⁵⁰ National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service Program. Available at: [Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program – National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children \(dss.gov.au\)](https://www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children)

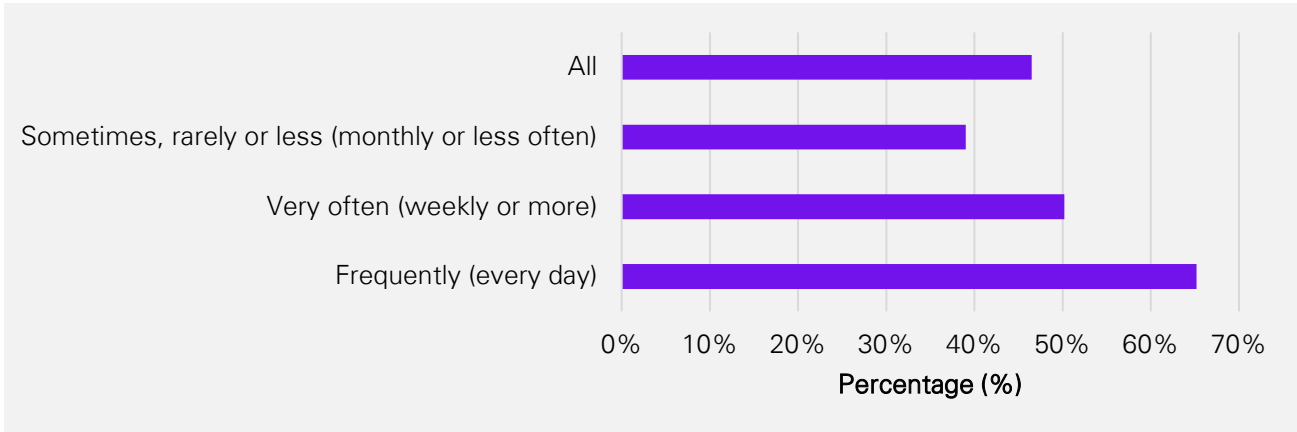
⁵¹ UNSW. 2018. National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors. Available at: [National Survey of Workers in the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Sectors.pdf \(unsw.edu.au\)](https://www.unsw.edu.au/national-survey-of-workers-in-the-domestic-family-and-sexual-violence-sectors.pdf)

Figure 20: Respondents feeling well equipped or very well equipped to work with perpetrators to support them in achieving behavioural change, by their frequency of contact with perpetrators



Source: UNSW, Social Policy Research Centre, National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors

Figure 21: Respondents feeling well equipped or very well equipped to gather information from other sources about perpetrators behaviours and risk, by their frequency of contact with perpetrators



Source: UNSW, Social Policy Research Centre, National Survey of Workers in the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Sectors

Additionally, the UNSW survey revealed that over 60 per cent of providers felt equipped to gather information from other sources relating to perpetrators’ behaviours and risks frequently (Figure 21). Only 30 per cent of those surveyed who gather information from other sources relating to perpetrators’ behaviours and risks frequently (daily) felt very well equipped to conduct this aspect of their role.

There are a number of evaluations of initiatives aligned to the 4AP currently underway or soon to be finalised. At the time of reporting, only a small number of evaluations were currently available relating to initiatives under the 4AP. Those that were available included evaluations of flagship initiatives, such as Our Watch, along with state-specific initiatives such as the Victorian Orange Door or the New South Wales’

Domestic Violence Suspect targeting Management Plan under the Premier’s Priority to Reduce Domestic Violence Reoffending.

Consultations conducted for this evaluation found the work undertaken by ANROWS and Our Watch to be helpful for service providers. Consultation also identified that an increase in evaluation is needed to assess service system improvements. One participant noted that evaluation needs to be built into services, along with a consistent evaluation framework as part of the NP. A lack of evaluation has hampered understanding whether service system responses have improved.

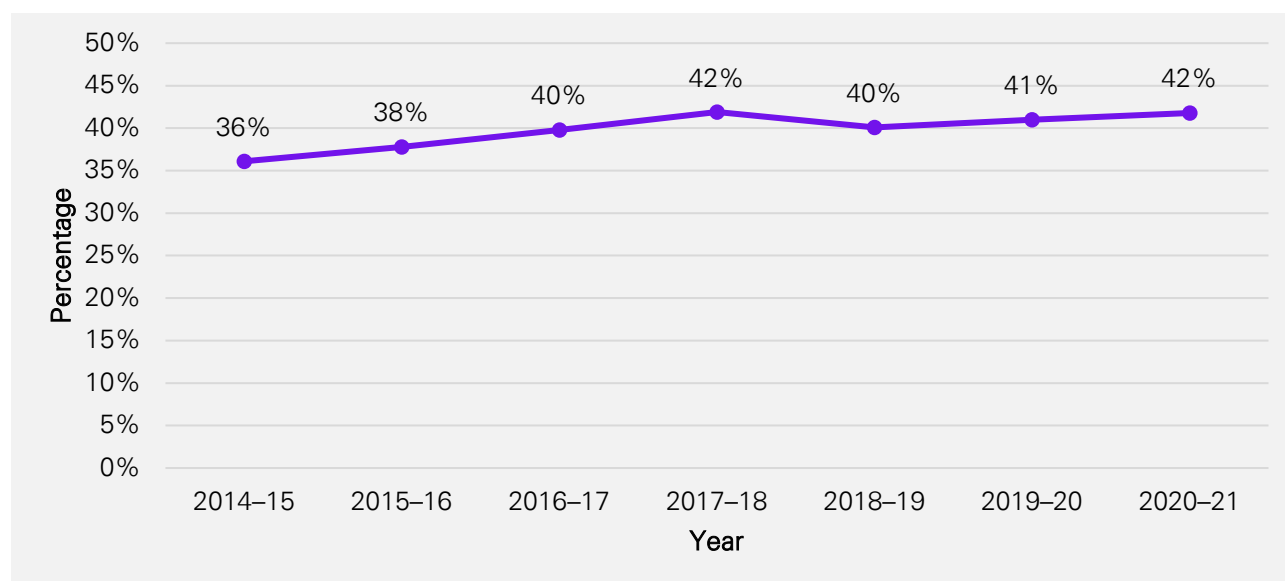
Data in relation to women who have experienced or are experiencing FDSV in accessing housing is limited. The AIHW notes in their 2019 report that victims of FDSV are at a higher risk of homelessness. The AIHW has collated data on specialist homelessness

services (SHS) and found that over 2017 – 18, 121,000 clients of SHS agencies experienced FDSV. Of these, 78 per cent were women, 39 per cent were homeless at the time of seeking assistance, 22 per cent were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and 76 per cent needed specific assistance with FDSV.⁵²

The graph below shows the percentage of SHS clients who had experienced family and domestic violence. The percentage has

increased by two percentage points each year from 2014/15 to 2017/18, where it reached a high of 42 per cent and then dropped to 40 per cent in 2018/19. In consultations, stakeholders noted that affordable housing was an issue for people affected by FDSV. Stakeholders highlighted not just a need for non-specialist services to support victims and survivors, such as increased housing but the need for safer housing for women as well.

Figure 22: Percentage of Specialist Homelessness Service clients who had experienced family and domestic violence



Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). Specialist Homelessness Services annual report 2018–19.

Medium-term outcomes

The medium-term outcomes for this priority are:

- Workforces deliver trauma-informed support with a safety and recovery focus
- Women, children (and men) affected by FDSV are safe, have their needs met, and their recovery is promoted
- Perpetrators have timely access to rehabilitation services and trauma informed support
- An evidence base underpins the policy planning and delivery of responses to domestic, family and sexual violence

- Women who have experiences or are experiencing FDSV are safely housed within their communities.

Data relating to whether the workforce delivers trauma-informed support with a safety and recovery focus is limited. As stated previously, the evaluation of DV-alert highlights confidence in the workforce post DV-alter training, as well as improvements in practical skills and using a strengths-based approach to respond. Consultation participants did note that there was an increase in support for the workforce, however, capability and workforce development needed to continue,

⁵² AIHW. 2019. Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story. Available at: [Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019 \(aihw.gov.au\)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/fdsv)

with one stakeholder noting that DV-alert was not specifically for specialist frontline workers and was not meeting the needs for remote participants.

There is limited data in relation to perpetrators having timely access to rehabilitation services and trauma-informed support. Under the 4AP, a small number of initiatives were developed aimed to reach perpetrators in a wide range of communities. These included the Commonwealth's Men's Line program which provides access to specialist counsellors to work with men to identify and work towards their goals, New South Wales' Counselling in Prison program which facilitates access for women in custody to free counselling to assist them to recover from psychological and emotional impacts of crime and Western Australia's CommuniCare's Program, which delivers a residential program to work with the perpetrator to be a safer partner and father through an intensive intervention program. While there are initiatives being established to support perpetrators, consultations revealed that there was a need for more supports and services for perpetrators including prevention as well as rehabilitation.

An evaluation of the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service Program (a multi-agency, integrated and coordinated response to FDSV) found that the program guidelines provided flexibility around working with perpetrators, in that they can refer perpetrators to behavioural change programs as required, or work directly with them if willing. One service provider described referring perpetrators to local men's behavioural change programs, while also working with corrective services. This was seen to be a good example of integrated responses at the system level.⁵³

There is a lack of data regarding whether there is an evidence-base that underpins the policy planning and delivery of responses to FDSV. As stated previously, consultations noted the work being undertaken by ANROWS and Our Watch as positive and helpful for service providers to guide service delivery. The 'what works' database, currently being developed by ANROWS, was seen to be of value to service providers as it uses rigorous research methods to assess the merits of relevant intervention and prevention initiatives in the violence against women field. Service providers also noted that, with the onset of COVID-19, more research and evidence was available through online learning, as well as increased access to seminars and webinars. Further analysis of the ANROWS database when it is produced should be undertaken, along with other research from the 4AP. Findings should be applied to policy and practice to ensure responses to FDSV are informed and evidence based. Additionally, it should be noted that the 4AP is only in its final year at the time of reporting, with some work still being undertaken by jurisdictions. This has influenced the lack of evaluation and data available on initiatives.

There is a lack of recent data available in relation to women who have experienced or are experiencing FDSV being safely housed within their communities. Consultation noted that a current challenge in some communities is the lack of accommodation services available. One stakeholder spoke of what little being available is often recognised by the community, which can in turn put women at risk.

3.3 How has the 4AP contributed to the overall target of the National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children?

The National Plan aimed to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. Since the

4AP was endorsed in August 2019, a number of initiatives were developed and delivered throughout Australia, with some initiatives

⁵³ UNSW. Evaluation of the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service program. 2018. Available at: [Evaluation of the Integrated](#)

[Domestic and Family Violence Service Program | Social Policy Research Centre – UNSW Sydney](#)

from previous action plans continuing to be implemented. To understand if this final action plan has contributed to the overall target of the National Plan, data relating to homicide and victimisation has been utilised.

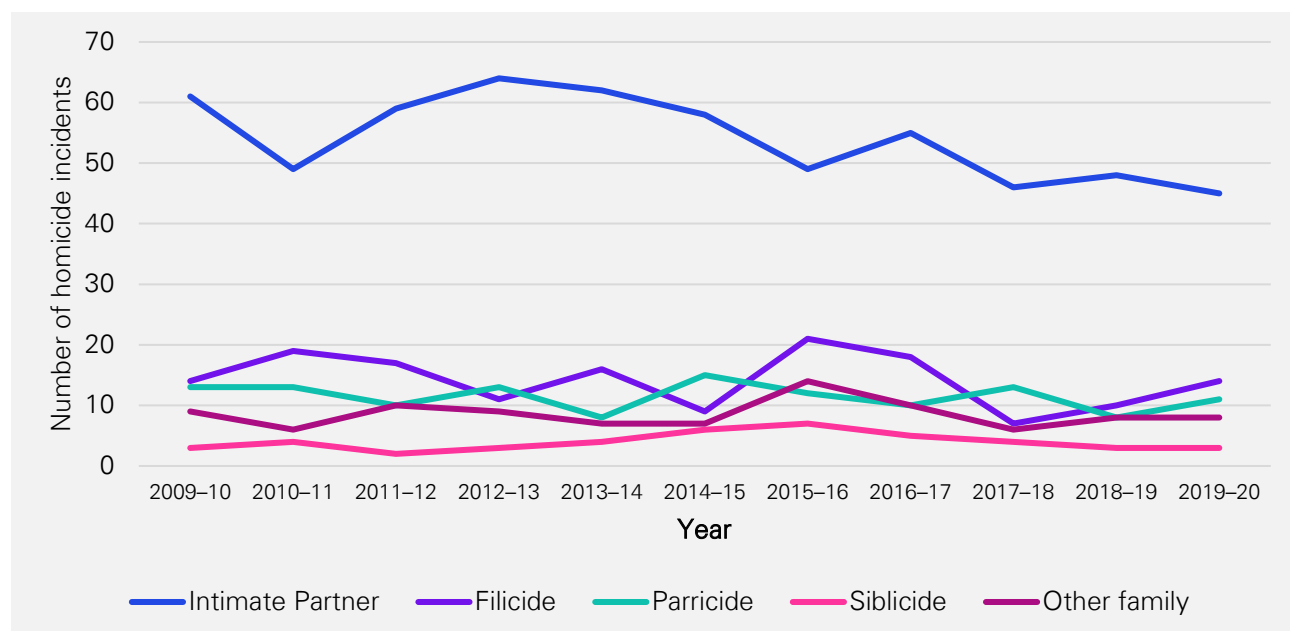
There has been a decrease in the rate of domestic homicide (intimate partner) between 2018-19 and 2019-20.⁵⁴ The data provided in Figure 23 has been informed by the National Homicide Monitoring Program, recording homicide incidents from Australian state and territory police. Overall, this rate has dropped since 2009-10, when the National Plan was first implemented, and this trend has continued over the life of the 4AP. However, these results should be regarded with caution; it is worth noting the time lag that may occur

between a death and outcomes through courts and the coroner, and as such, there may be delays in homicides being classified correctly as a domestic homicide.

Additionally, rates for homicide and related offences (including murder, attempted murder and manslaughter), with the relationship to the offender being that of a family member, has had an overall decrease since 2014 (Figure 24).

Figure 25 shows a conflicting trend in the number of victims and survivors of DFV, with this number periodically increasing since 2014. It should be noted that these figures do not include data from Victoria or Queensland, as Family, Domestic Violence related assault data was not available in these states.

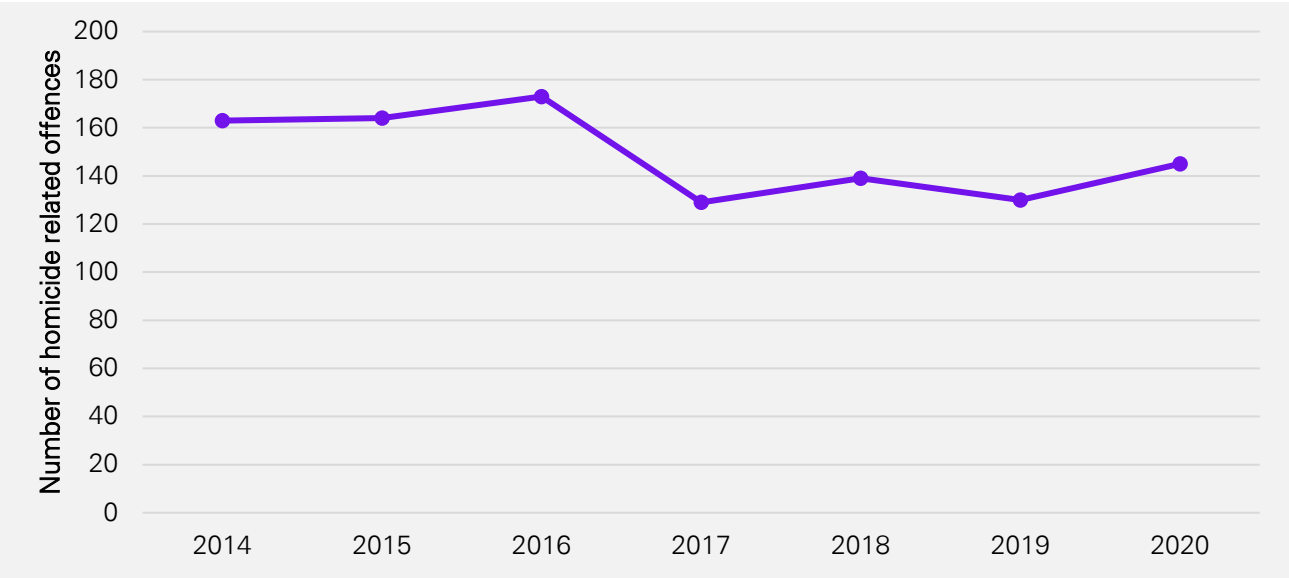
Figure 23: Domestic homicide incidents by year and homicide type, 1989–90 to 2019–20



⁵⁴ [Homicide in Australia 2019-20 | Australian Institute of Criminology \(aic.gov.au\)](https://aic.gov.au)

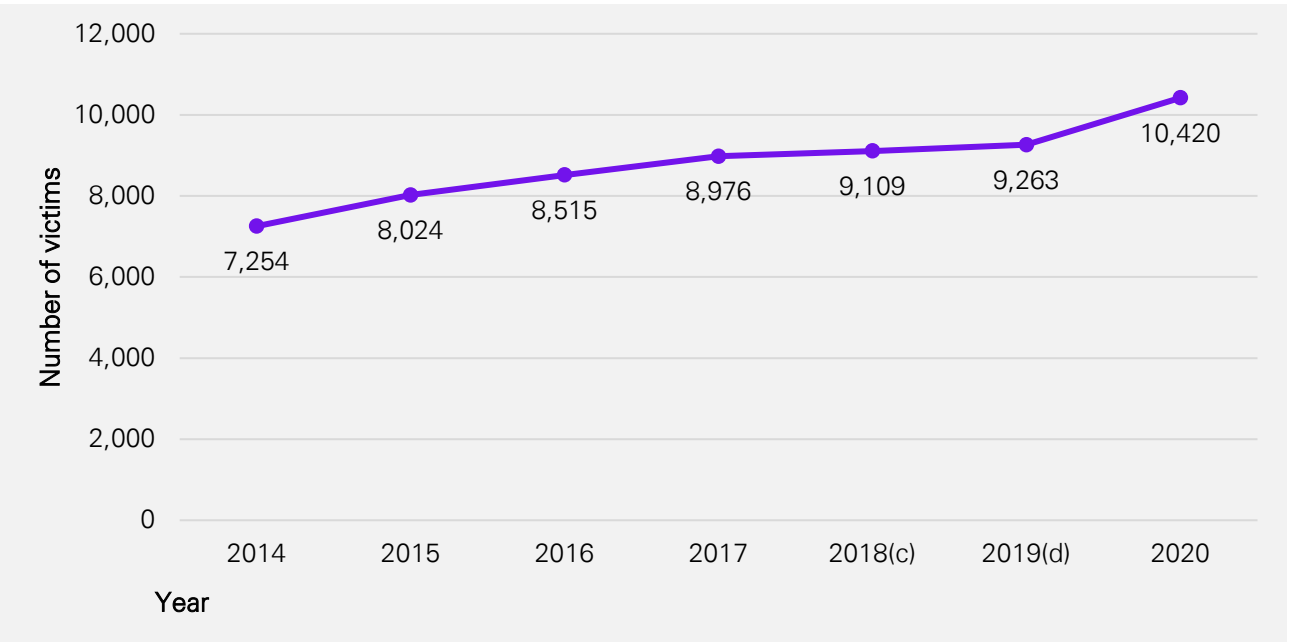
Source: Australian Institute of Criminology, Homicide in Australia 2019-20

Figure 24: Relationship of offender to victim by offence, family member



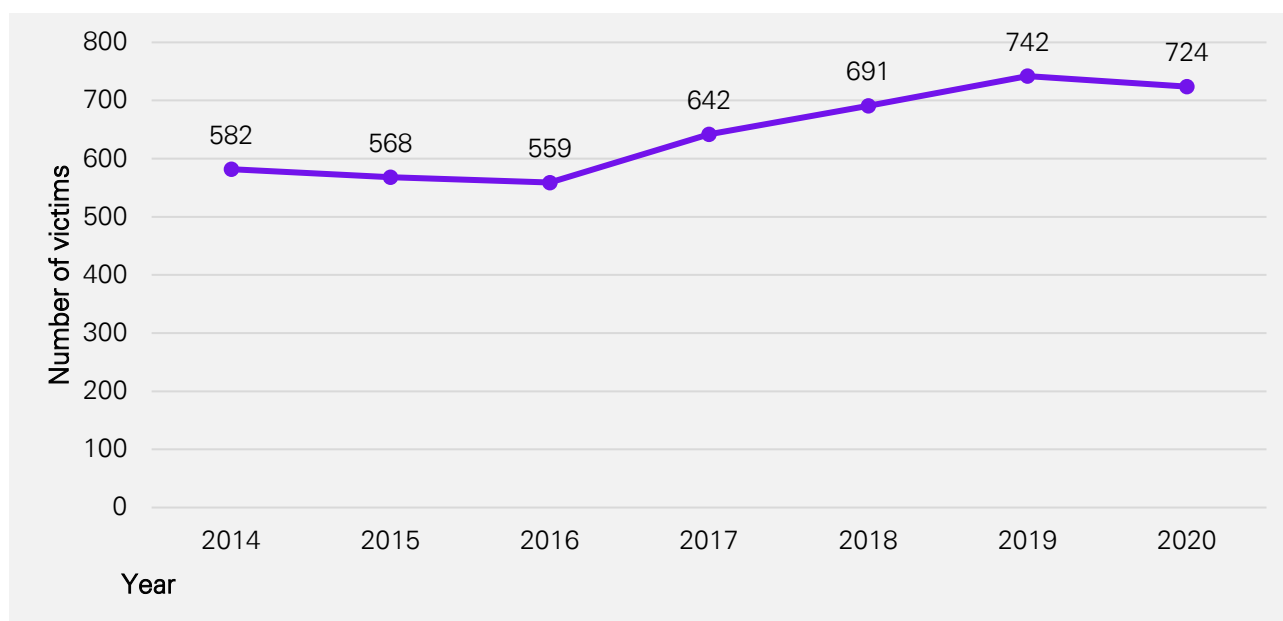
Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Victims, 2020

Figure 25: Victims of family and domestic violence-related offences, Australia, 2014–2020



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Victims, 2020

Figure 26: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims of sexual assault – reported cases, Selected states and territories, 2014–2020

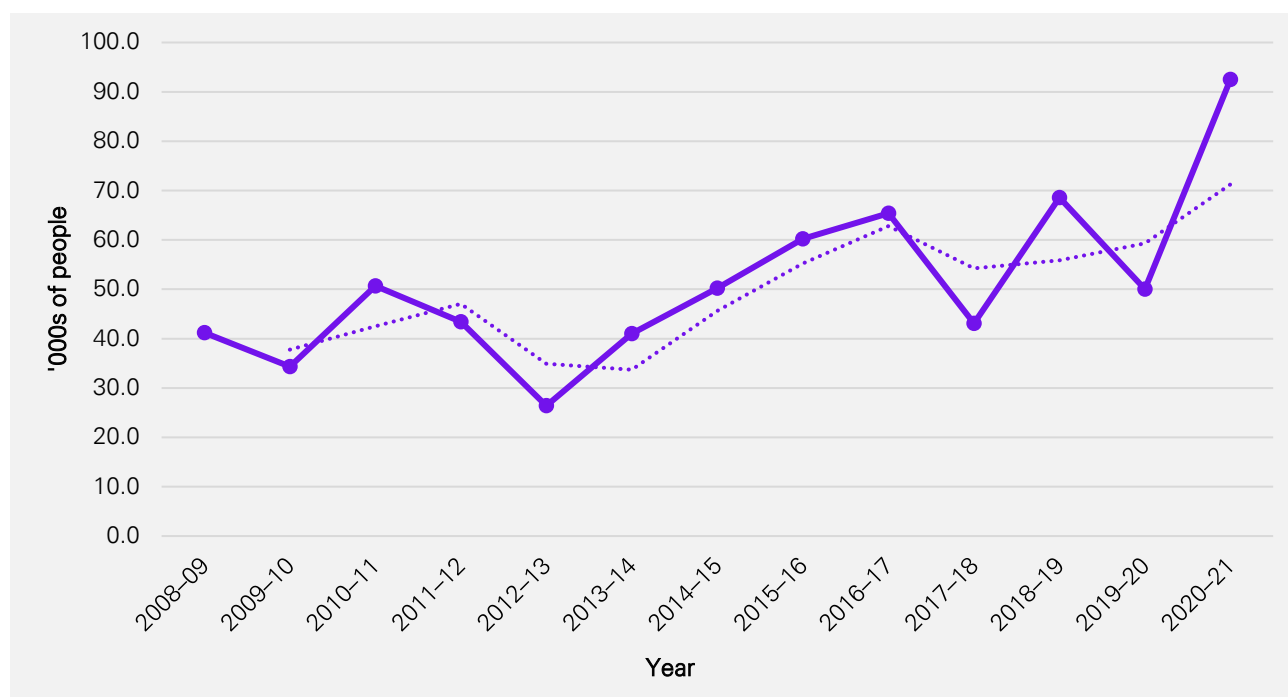


Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Recorded Crime Victims, 2021

Data for sexual assault also shows concerning trends. The rate of sexual assault amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims has consistently increased between 2016 and 2020 (Figure 26), as has the rate of sexual assault across all women (Figure 27, with the

moving average indicated by the dotted line). However, it is worth noting that there were some high-profile sexual assault incidents reported in the media during implementation of the 4AP which can impact on reporting rates.

Figure 27: Sexual assault, female (all ages)



Source: Based on Australian Bureau of Statistics data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Crime Victimization, Australia 2021

The graphs provided in this section of the report while providing some positive results, with decreases in domestic homicide, and homicide and related offences committed by a family member. There have been, however, an increase in victims of DFV and sexual assault across all women, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims. The data that has been gathered for graphs needs to be considered in light of inconsistent data collection between jurisdictions, date ranges as well as data only being provided for certain states.

In the context of the 4AP, it can be seen that the final action plan has contributed to the outcome of the National Plan in varying levels. The data in this report, along with findings relating to implementation, should be considered in the context that the 4AP is still ongoing, with data collection and analysis (through 4AP initiatives' evaluation as well as other sources such as the PSS or NSAC) undergoing further collation.

3.4 Data gaps and data developments

Throughout this section of the report, data relating to a number of outcomes has not been identified. This has impacted on the ability to report on whether short-term and medium-term outcomes as identified in the PMR have been met. The list below includes data gaps that have been discovered during reporting for the impact section.

- Lack of evaluation and review of current initiatives under 4AP
- Lack of national data relating to:
 - Crime victimisation and incarceration with an intersectional lens
 - Rate of access to services both within, and outside of the FDSV sector
 - Perpetrators and people who use violence, including data on risk factors and demographics
 - DFSV-related housing and homelessness
 - FDSV prevalence and impact on cohorts such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - FDSV prevalence and impact on CALD, and LGBTIQ+ communities
 - Programs being developed and delivered both within and outside of the 4AP and National Plan
 - How cohorts have engaged with the 4AP and initiatives, and how they may feel these programs support them and their communities
 - Mapping across the service sector on how initiatives interact, compliment or overlap/duplicate
- Lack of timely data to support the evaluation in relation to:

- Prevalence of DFV, and sexual assault and harassment
- Community attitudes towards DFV, and sexual assault and harassment, gender equality and respect for women
- Delays in relevant national surveys including the:
 - PSS
 - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
 - UNSW's FDSV sector survey
 - The National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey.

It is recommended that the development of a national dataset be undertaken. This may take the form of:

- Development of a nationally consistent data collection system that can be utilised by both government and non-government
- Agreeing a national approach to addressing data gaps in priority areas
- Drawing on existing data infrastructure and integrating data collections in a systematic way.

3.5 Overall findings

It is difficult to determine the true impact of the 4AP due to a lack of appropriate and timely data. While the PMR identified a number of data sources to measure short- and medium-term outcomes, data development to address these gaps has been delayed due to COVID-19. However, assessment of available evidence found:

- While progress had been made in some areas – such as community attitudes, available service responses, and more engagement with target communities – more can be done
- While the 4AP contained explicit actions relating to sexual harassment, there were mixed responses concerning whether this has translated into amended and improved practice
- Rates of reported sexual assault increased over the life of the 4AP,

however there was also an increased awareness of sexual violence in this time due to a number of high-profile cases being reported in the media.

Significant service gaps still exist, such as in affordable housing, service access in rural and remote areas, and co-designed responses with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that address intergenerational trauma.

Conclusion

4 Conclusion

Overall, this evaluation found that the 4AP has been broadly implemented as intended. All initiatives have commenced, and the majority are either complete or continuing beyond the life of the 4AP. While a number of initiatives being delivered under the 4AP have been delayed, this is predominantly as a result of COVID-19, with workforce priorities shifting, staff being redeployed, and social distancing disrupting community run activities and interaction due to the pandemic. This progress should be commended considering the volatile nature of policy implementation and service delivery since the release of the 4AP in 2019.

While COVID-19 and its impacts have been challenging, there have been some positive elements that have emerged as a direct result of organisations adapting to the pandemic. Service providers adopted a flexible approach to their programs and initiatives, adapting their service delivery to virtual environments in response to COVID-19. This has provided an opportunity for continued service delivery particularly when there has been a noted increase in demand. Additionally, the utilisation of online service delivery supported continued implementation and delivery of supports. Some initiatives that utilised online service delivery prior to COVID-19 saw an increase in demand for their services in light of COVID-19.

COVID-19 also had a significant impact on the evidence available to determine the impact of the 4AP on achieving its priorities and the overall targets of the National Plan. While a PMR was developed to help track measurement of impact against the 4AP's short- and medium-term outcomes, key data sources (such as the ABS' PSS and the NCAS) were last conducted prior to the introduction of the 4AP in 2019. As such, this evaluation has had to use these data sources to inform a wider picture of the impact of the National Plan, and have been supplemented with other data sources such as consultation findings and broader literature. The assessment of available evidence found:

- While progress had been made in some areas – such as community attitudes, available service responses, and more

engagement with target communities – more can be done

- While the 4AP contained explicit actions relating to sexual harassment, there were mixed responses concerning whether this has translated into improved practice
- Rates of reported sexual assault increased over the life of the 4AP, however there was also an increased awareness of sexual violence in this time due to a number of high-profile cases being reported in the media
- Significant service gaps still exist, such as in affordable housing, service access in rural and remote areas, and co-designed responses with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that address intergenerational trauma.

The 4AP is the final action plan under the National Plan, with the successor policy currently under development. This evaluation has identified a number of opportunities for improvement as the new policy and plans are implemented:

- **Embed flexibility into service responses:**
 - Flexibility in service delivery is important for initiatives now and in the future. Having the infrastructure and knowledge to shift to online delivery will see the continued support of communities, in light of potential future outbreaks of COVID-19.
 - Longer term funding arrangements will enable agencies to better understand local areas, develop strong working relationships with communities, and deliver more appropriate services.
- **Prioritise data development activities to understand future impact:**
 - Evaluations of initiatives under the 4AP are at varying levels of completeness, with some currently being undertaken and not yet finalised. These have not been referenced in this report, and as such future analysis of these evaluations should be undertaken to determine what lessons can be incorporated into work under the new National Plan.

- Any future outcomes framework and PMR mechanism should be developed in close consultation with states and territories, with funding made available for data collection and development where gaps are identified. This will ensure that impact of future policies can be measured by Commonwealth, state, and territory agencies accurately, consistently, and with little burden on agency workloads.
 - Any future PMR mechanisms for Action Plans should be developed in line with the outcomes framework and evaluation plan of the new National Plan.
 - Robust performance monitoring and evaluation needs to be adequately funded.
- **Ensure better understanding, funding, and measurement of responses to support diverse groups:**
 - There remain gaps in appropriate service provision for diverse population groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, people with disability, and people from CALD communities. In some instances,

specific service provision would be beneficial, however – in order to ensure an intersectional approach – mainstream service providers also need to be better equipped to support people from these communities. An intersectional approach will also be beneficial as people rarely sit within one community and therefore will have unique and intersecting experiences and barriers that will impact their risk of FDSV and ability to access support.

- Partnerships and collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be prioritised in order to develop culturally safe supports.
- There should be targeted interventions for rural and remote communities experiencing DFSV.
- As noted above, data availability is an ongoing issue. This is particularly apparent when considering specific population groups disproportionately affected by FDSV, such as people who identify as LGBTIQ+, people with disability, and people from CALD communities. Any data development activities should explicitly address these cohorts.

Appendix

Appendix A: Evaluation Questions – Fourth Action Plan

Table 7: Evaluation questions for the Fourth Action Plan

Data Collection methods	PMR	NIP	Desktop Research	Prior research/evaluation	Interviews and focus groups
Evaluation questions					
How has the 4AP contributed to the overall target of the National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children?	X				X
Primary prevention is key					
Have initiatives promoting positive attitudes towards women and gender equality been successfully implemented?		X		X	X
To what extent have initiatives under the 4AP contributed to improved coordination across primary prevention activities?		X			X
Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children					
To what extent have responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family violence prioritised cultural healing and strengthening cultural identity?		X		X	X
To what extent are services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people community-led and co-designed?				X	X
Respect, listen and respond to the diverse lived experiences and knowledge of women and their children affected by violence					
How has the 4AP facilitated improved service responses for victims from all backgrounds, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, women with a disability, older women, and women living in rural and regional areas?		X		X	X
To what extent are responses to FDSV where children are involved age appropriate, child-centric and tailored to their specific needs and stages of development?		X	X	X	X
Response to sexual assault and harassment					
To what extent have specialist and generalist service workforces been developed to enhance their role in responding to sexual assault and harassment?		X		X	X

Data Collection methods	PMR	NIP	Desktop Research	Prior research/evaluation	Interviews and focus groups
Evaluation questions					
How has the 4AP contributed to the overall target of the National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children?	X				X
To what extent have community attitudes in relation to gender equality, consent and healthy sexual relationships (particularly for young people) changed over time?	X	X			X
Improve support and service system responses					
To what extent has evidence been translated into more effective responses to FDSV?		X	X	X	
How has the 4AP contributed to addressing key data gaps, and contributed to data development activities?			X	X	X

Source: KPMG 2021

Appendix B: Data Collection Methods

B.1 Quantitative assessment of outcomes

PMR frameworks are key to promoting transparency and accountability for the expenditure of public funds on services and programs provided to the general community. A PMR framework was developed for the 4AP to:

- Support an assessment of progress in a public annual progress report in relation to the priorities and actions outlined in the 4AP
- Enable monitoring of a diverse range of initiatives funded under the 4AP including large scale prevention campaigns and direct service provision
- Report the development of the evidence base for response to sexual assault and violence against women and their children and specific evaluations that are underway to inform the evidence
- Facilitate a consistent approach to the collection, monitoring and analysis of reporting data
- Report on outcomes under the National Plan.

The PMR framework has been developed to provide a more comprehensive view of the various contributions of specific activities to achieving the objectives set out in the 4AP. It clearly sets out the outputs associated with each action, allowing an assessment to be made as to whether something has been implemented. In addition, for the first time, the Framework steps through the short-term and medium-term outcomes that are associated with each action, articulating the results that are expected if the action is successfully achieved. The categories include:

- Priorities, which set out broad objectives of the 4AP
- Actions, which are the processes, tools and events that are used to bring about a program's identified changes, which are mapped to priorities
- Outputs which are the direct product of actions and may include types, levels, and

targets of services to be delivered by the program

- Outcomes which relate to the intended achievements of a program, with this Framework setting out short-term (one- to three-year period) and medium-term outcomes (three- to five-year period).

B.2 Prior research and evaluation

Findings and key lessons from prior research were analysed, including the 4AP; all 4AP progress reports; prior evaluations of relevant Commonwealth, state, and territory initiatives.

B.3 Stakeholder engagement

A series of stakeholder consultations took place to consider the impact and effectiveness of the Fourth Action Plan. To minimise imposition on stakeholders, consultations for the 4AP were consolidated as part of the broader consultations for the National Plan.

All consultations were facilitated in a virtual environment due to ongoing restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Consultations took place between July and September 2021. Interviews were conducted by a skilled and experienced facilitator who was supported by a scribe, who documented all discussions. Focus groups (and the interview with the National Indigenous Australians Agency) were co-facilitated by a First Nations facilitator to ensure that a cultural lens was applied to all discussions.

A total of 124 people participated in these stakeholder engagement activities, with group sizes ranging from one to 18 participants. The list and schedule of stakeholder engagements is outlined in the table below.

Table 8: Stakeholder interviews and focus groups

Interviews	Consultation date	Focus groups	Consultation date
Australian Capital Territory Government representatives	3 August 2021	Australian Capital Territory NGOs	19 August 2021
New South Wales Government representatives	12 August 2021	New South Wales NGOs	20 August 2021
Northern Territory Government representatives	27 July & 11 August 2021	Northern Territory NGOs	30 August 2021
Queensland Government representatives	10 August 2021	Queensland NGOs	26 August 2021
South Australian Government representatives	22 July 2021	South Australia NGOs	24 August 2021
Tasmanian Government representatives	11 August 2021	Tasmania NGOs	31 August 2021
Victorian Government representatives	17 September	Victoria NGOs	14 September 2021
Western Australian Government representatives	27 July 2021	Western Australia NGOs	24 August 2021
National Indigenous Australians Agency	20 July 2021	National NGOs	9 September 2021
Commonwealth central agencies	29 July & 6 August 2021	All state and territory government agencies	23 August 2021
Flagship initiatives	27 July, 28 July & 18 August		
Data custodians	3 August 2021		

Source: KPMG, 2021

B.4 Stakeholder survey

KPMG developed a national online survey to measure stakeholder perspectives regarding the effectiveness of the National Plan. This was distributed to numerous stakeholders across government, non-government, and community sectors involved in responding to violence against women and their children. The survey comprised 20 questions – primarily closed style questions (e.g. radio or multiple tick box options) with two free text questions – and used clear and simple language to avoid ambiguity and facilitate ease and accuracy of response.

The survey included primary evaluation questions aimed at assessing the high-level success of the National Plan and secondary evaluation questions aimed at assessing the delivery of key actions under the 4AP. In addition to understanding stakeholder views on effectiveness of the

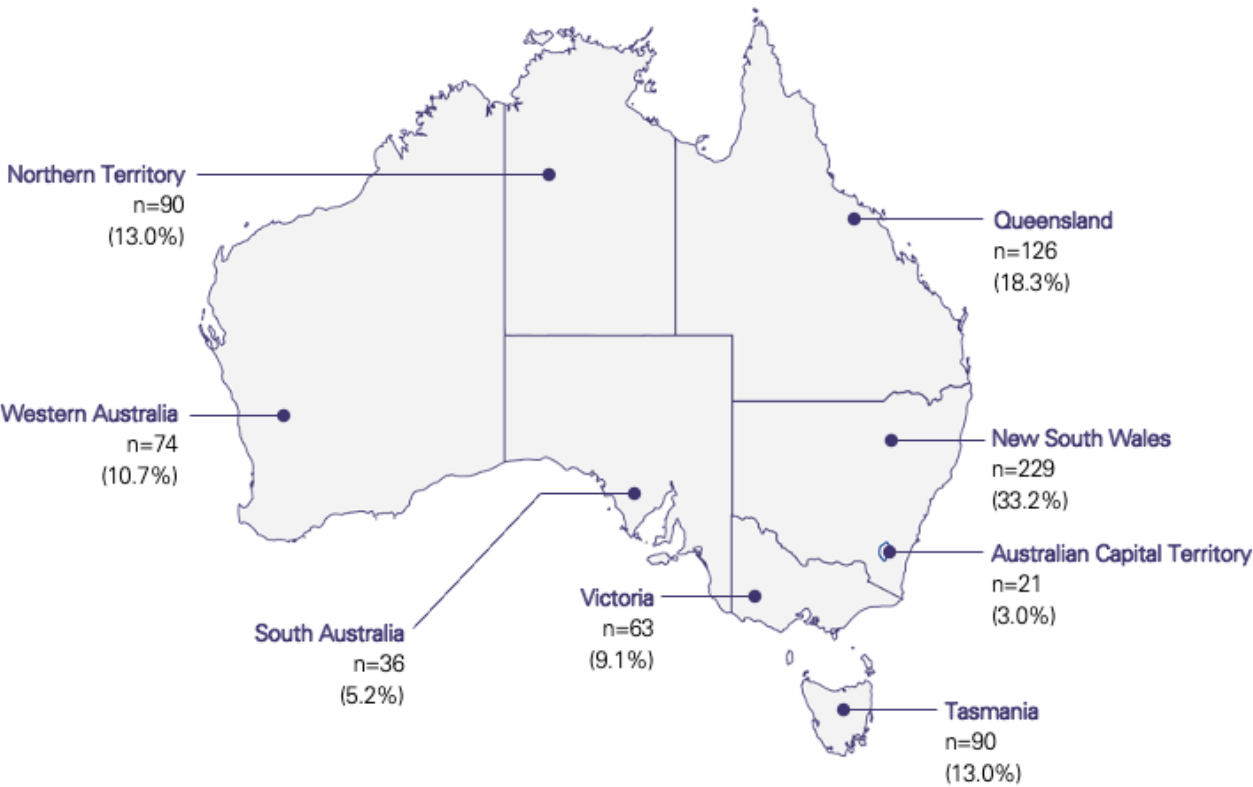
National Plan, the survey sought to determine how well the relationships between government and the non-government sector are working on delivering on the National Plan and identify the extent of collaboration across different sectors. It also aimed to identify opportunities to improve service responses and focus areas for future policies.

A total of 690 frontline workers from across Australia completed the survey. The geographic breakdown is outlined in Figure 28. The most responses were received from stakeholders in New South Wales and Queensland. The comparatively low number of responses from Victoria was reportedly due to ‘consultation fatigue’ as service providers were subjected to a variety of consultation activities around this time for national and state-based initiatives.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ X Analysis of incomplete survey responses revealed a similar geographical distribution. State or territory was reported for 123 of 183 incomplete responses (67.2%). Incomplete survey rates were reported for: Australian Capital Territory (n=5, 4.1%), New South Wales (n=47,

38.2%), Northern Territory (n=11, 8.9%), Queensland (n=12, 9.8%), South Australia (n=5, 4.1%), Tasmania (n=19, 15.4%), Victoria (n=11, 8.9%), and Western Australia (n=13, 10.6%).

Figure 28: Survey responses by geographical breakdown (n=690)



Source: KPMG, Stakeholder Survey 2021



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