

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2010-11 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 6

Question No: 208

Topic: Reducing Violence Against Women and their Children Report

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Cash asked:

I refer to the report of The National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children, 2009-2021 published in March 2009:

- a) In relation to Recommendation 1 (Vision and commitment): That the Australian Government commit to a vision for Australia where "*women and their children live free from violence, within respectful relationships, and in safe communities*". What new programs has the Government initiated to address the issues raised in Recommendation 1, since the tabling of this recommendation? What was the financial commitment in respect of those new programs?
- b) In relation to Recommendation 2: *That the Australian Government supports the realisation of this vision for Australia's women and children through a long-term, strategic and sustained commitment. This commitment would be effected through a series of three-year implementation plans to 2021 to be developed in partnership with government, business and the community, built on research and evaluation, and that will incorporate the outcomes of measures already implemented.* What specific action has been taken to achieve this objective? What outcomes have been achieved to date?
- c) The National Council raised a number of issues in recommendation 3 which states: (Clear outcomes, strategies and actions): *That the Australian Government agree that realising this vision requires that: Communities are safe and free from violence; Relationships are respectful; Services meet the needs of women and their children; Responses are just; Perpetrators stop their violence; Systems work together effectively.* What specific action has been taken to achieve this objective? What outcomes have been achieved to date?
- d) In relation to Recommendation 5 (Clear outcomes, strategies and actions): *That the Australian Government note that the Council has identified a set of actions for the next 12 years aimed at achieving the Plan of Action's outcomes and executing its strategies, and agree to: urgently implement the priority actions that the Council considers represent the minimum investment to effect change; start work on the other early actions identified in the first three-year implementation plan; review actions in developing the second and subsequent three-year implementation plans.*
 - I. What action has the Government taken since the tabling of the Report to urgently implement the priority actions that the Council considers represents the minimum investment to effect change?
 - II. What action has the Government taken since the tabling of the Report to start work on the other early actions identified in the first three-year implementation plan?
 - III. Does the Government agree to review actions in developing the second and subsequent three-year implementation plans?

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- IV. What specific action has been taken to achieve this objective?
V. What outcomes have been achieved to date?

Answer:

- a) Since receiving the Time for Action report, the Government has committed over \$86 million for new initiatives, including:
- \$9.1 million for Respectful Relationships education projects
 - a \$17 million social marketing campaign, 'The Line', aimed at encouraging young people to develop healthy, respectful relationships
 - a \$3.75 million grants program to support local community action to prevent violence against women
 - \$12.5 million for the new *1800 RESPECT: National Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line*
 - \$8.8 million for telephone support for frontline workers;
 - \$0.75 million for counselling services for male victims of violence through Mensline;
 - \$4.8 million for Reform Projects to improve service delivery for victims of domestic violence
 - \$3 million for research into perpetrator interventions, and \$4.6 million for a reward/incentive payment to states and territories to promote best practice perpetrator interventions
 - \$6.9 million to establish a National Centre of Excellence for research into sexual assault and family and domestic violence
 - \$14.5 million to repeat of the Personal Safety Survey and National Community Attitudes Survey.
- b) The *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children* is a 12-year, strategic plan supported by four three-year Action Plans.
- c) The draft *National Plan* identifies six outcomes, supported by strategies and actions. The six outcome areas reflect those proposed by the National Council, with an additional outcome to focus on strengthening Indigenous communities.
- d) I. See table below on the Government's response to Council's priority actions.
- II. See table below on the Government's response to Council's priority actions.
- III. Yes.
- IV. The Government has made considerable effort to respond to the priority actions recommended by the Council (see table below). The Government is also working with states and territories to finalise the first three-year Action Plan to be released with the *National Plan*.

National Council Priority Action	Priority Action Description	Australian Government Response
Priority Action 1.1.1.	Develop a national primary prevention framework.	<p>The Government has committed \$29.75 million for primary prevention activities which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$9 million for Respectful Relationships Programs • \$17 million for social marketing campaign <i>'The Line'</i>. • \$3.75 million for local community action grants.
Priority Action 1.1.2.	Establish a National Centre of Excellence.	In August 2010 the Australian Government committed \$6.9 million to establish the National Centre of Excellence with states and territories.
Priority Action 1.1.3.	Reduce overcrowding in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities.	The Australian Government is working on this action through the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing.
Priority Action 1.3.1.	Support men who oppose violence against women.	The Australian Government provided \$1 million over four years, with \$250,000 in 2010-11, to the White Ribbon Day Foundation to expand their activities in rural and regional areas.
Priority Action 1.5.1.	Include violence against women as a goal in the National Research Priorities.	Research on violence against women issues is consistent with the current National Research Priority, <i>'Promoting and Maintaining Good Health'</i> : Priority Goal 4: 'strengthening Australia's social and economic fabric'.
Priority Action 2.1.1.	Build capacity of the prevention education field.	The Australian Government has invested \$9 million for Respectful Relationships Programs.
Priority Action 2.2.1.	Implement and evaluate educational programs that encourage respectful relationships.	The Australian Government has begun work on implementing and evaluating the Respectful Relationships Programs.
Priority Action 3.2.1.	Implement reforms as put forward in <i>The Road Home: A National Approach to Reducing Homelessness</i> .	To address homelessness, the Australian Government is spending \$4.9 billion over four years, with an additional \$400 million from the states and territories. This includes the \$1.2 billion committed at the time of the release of the Homelessness White Paper.

Priority Action 3.2.2.	Audit crisis accommodation services for their accessibility for all women.	The Australian Government will make funding available to groups who work with women with disabilities through the \$3.75 million Local Community Action grants Program. Additionally, Australian Government will undertake a Reform Project to improve service delivery for women with disabilities.
Priority Action 3.3.1.	Establish a professional national telephone and online crisis support service.	The Australian Government has invested \$12.5 million for the new 1800 RESPECT: Sexual Assault, Family & Domestic Violence Counselling Line, which was launched in October 2010.
Priority Action 3.3.2.	Fund healing centres for Indigenous communities.	The Australian Government has committed \$26.6 million over four years to establish the Healing Foundation.
Priority Action 3.3.4.	Ensure children exposed to violence do not have their safety or wellbeing compromised.	The Attorney General has released draft amendments to the Family Law Act for consultation to strengthen responses to children exposed to violence.
Priority Action 4.1.1	Contribute to the development of the proposed draft Convention on Justice and Support for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power.	The Australian Government regularly contributes to international negotiations on conventions through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
Priority Action 4.2.1.	Make a reference to the Australian Law Reform Commission to examine the integration of domestic violence, children protection and federal family law.	The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) report was tabled in Parliament on 11 November 2010 and the Government will consider recommendations of the final report.
Priority Action 4.3.1.	Establish a national registration scheme for domestic and family violence protection orders.	The Australian Government has committed to developing a national scheme for domestic and family violence orders through the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General.
Priority Action 4.3.2.	Establish or build on emerging domestic homicide/fatality review processes.	The National Homicide Monitoring Program has collected and analysed information on all homicides in Australia since 1990. The <i>Time for Action</i> recommendation refers to states and territories. We understand some states have established review processes.
Priority Action 5.1.1.	Fund and develop a correctional-facility specific domestic violence program to be tested in Australian prisons.	The Australian Government is investing \$3 million for perpetrator research.

Priority Action 5.2.1.	Establish cooling-off places for men in remote communities.	The Australian Government is providing \$32.9 million over three years to support 22 'safe places', including 14 women's safe houses and eight men's places.
Priority Action 5.4.1.	Fund and deliver a perpetrator research agenda.	The Australian Government is investing \$3 million for perpetrator research.
Priority Action 6.1.1.	Ensure Commonwealth, State, Territory and Local government agencies work together to respond to violence against women and establish reporting measures that encourage collaboration.	The draft <i>National Plan</i> includes a number of high level indicators to measure progress over the life of the plan. The Commonwealth Government has committed \$14.9 million to repeat the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes Survey.