

**Department of Social Services submission to the Finance and Public Administration
References Committee Inquiry into Domestic Violence and Gender Inequality**

1. The Australian Government works with state and territory governments to develop and deliver *the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan). The National Plan aims to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children and has a particular focus on domestic and family violence and sexual assault.
2. The National Plan has a strong focus on primary prevention. It recognises the importance of driving long-term cultural and attitudinal change around violence against women and gender equality more broadly. Violence against women exists on a continuum that begins with gender inequality and negative attitudes about women and their place in society. It is internationally recognised as a key underpinning driver of violence against women.
3. The National Plan was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments and released in February 2011. It is based on extensive evidence and was informed by advice from the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. This Council consulted with over 2000 people across Australia, interviewed victims and perpetrators, considered over 350 submissions and held six expert roundtables.
4. The National Plan has been internationally recognised as a best practice policy framework for addressing violence against women. It is a long-term approach, which acknowledges that achieving gender equality is required to stop violence from happening in the first place.
5. The National Plan is being delivered through four three-year Action Plans. This enables a long-term approach that builds over time, develops and takes account of new evidence, with the flexibility to respond to emerging issues.
6. The First Action Plan operated from 2010-2013 and set foundations for future work to reduce violence, including through the establishment of organisations like OurWatch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, and national services like 1800RESPECT and DV-alert.
7. The Second Action Plan: *Moving Ahead 2013-2016* was agreed by Commonwealth, state and territory governments and released in June 2014. It is an important next step in the National Plan's long term approach, building on the First Action Plan.

It was informed by national roundtables, attended by over 100 individuals and organisations, over 50 written submissions, and state and territory engagement.

8. The Second Action Plan has a strong focus on engaging the whole community in reducing violence, in order to drive a change in attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence against women. It identifies five national priorities:
 - Driving whole of community action to prevent violence
 - Understanding diverse experiences of violence
 - Supporting innovative services and integrated systems
 - Improving perpetrator interventions
 - Continuing to build the evidence base.
9. Under the Second Action Plan, the Government is:
 - supporting OurWatch to deliver a range of primary prevention activities to drive cultural and attitudinal change which includes: The Line; a National Media Engagement Project and the Sports Grants Bank
 - funding White Ribbon Australia to increase their engagement with culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous communities
 - conducting the National Survey on Community Attitudes to Violence against Women every four years to measure changes in attitudes towards violence against women over time.
10. Gender equality has been advanced under the Second Action Plan through:
 - national schemes to improve women's economic independence, such as paid parental leave and access to child care
 - national and local efforts to support women's leadership in government, business and the community
 - male champions and leaders speaking out against domestic and family violence and sexual assault, and promoting the broader principles of gender equality.
11. In December 2015, KPMG was engaged to undertake an independent evaluation of the Second Action Plan and to review ANROWS as part of the overall evaluation of the National Plan. The evaluation will consider the effectiveness of actions made by all governments against the five National Priorities under the Second Action Plan and the extent to which national 'flagship' programmes have contributed to the improvement of service responses for women who have experienced violence.
12. The final evaluation report of the Second Action Plan, including the review of ANROWS, is due in late April 2016.

13. The Commonwealth Government has committed more than \$200 million to fund initiatives under the First and Second Action Plans of the National Plan.
This funding has:
 - built critical national infrastructure to assist in the response to victims of violence, including 1800RESPECT and DV-alert
 - funded research, including the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey and Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS)
 - developed primary prevention initiatives to stop the violence before it happens
 - identified better ways to respond to perpetrators.
14. On 24 September 2015, the Australian Government announced increased funding to address domestic and family violence through the Women's Safety Package. This \$100 million package contains a set of practical measures to help keep women and children safe. This includes delivering better frontline services, leveraging innovative technologies and providing education resources to help change community attitudes to violence.
15. In addition, a \$30 million national campaign, jointly funded with the states and territories, to reduce violence against women and their children is expected to be launched in 2016. The campaign will focus on galvanising the people (such as parents, other family members and peers) and communities (such as schools, sporting and community groups) that surround young people to positively influence their attitudes to violence and gender inequality.
16. The issue of domestic violence in Australia was elevated to the highest political level and reducing violence against women remains a priority for the Council of Australian Government's (COAG). An Advisory Panel was established to support COAG, with full membership announced on 14 May 2015. The COAG Advisory Panel is providing expert advice on how all Australian governments can address violence against women and their children most effectively.
17. Work is underway to develop the Third Action Plan, which is planned for release in mid-2016. The Third Action Plan marks the half-way point for the National Plan and will progress activities commenced during the First and Second Action Plans. The Third Action Plan will continue to focus on the drivers of violence, including gender inequality.
18. The development of the Third Action Plan will be informed by:
 - recommendations from the COAG Advisory Panel
 - national consultations which includes state and territory governments engaging with their own advisory bodies
 - the evaluation of the National Plan's Second Action Plan

- Governments drawing on the many national, state and territory inquiries and consultation processes.

Key documents

The following documents are attached to this submission:

- The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022
- The First National Implementation Plan
- Progress review of the First Action Plan
- National Plan Evaluation Plan
- The Second Action Plan
- Three Second Action Plan fact sheets – Indigenous women, culturally and linguistically diverse women and women with disability

Further information can be found at:

<http://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/>

[www.anrows.org.au`](http://www.anrows.org.au)

www.ourwatch.org.au

www.1800RESPECT.org.au

www.theline.org.au

www.dvalert.org.au

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4906.0>