

# Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women and the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children

Cultural values and immigration status contribute to the challenges Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women face when experiencing domestic violence.

Women from CALD backgrounds are less likely than other groups of women to report violence.

## WHAT IS THE NATIONAL PLAN TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN (THE NATIONAL PLAN)?

The *National Plan* is an agreement by all Australian governments to work together to reduce violence against women and their children.

The *National Plan's* vision is for Australian women and their children to live free from violence in safe communities.

## HOW WILL THE NATIONAL PLAN ASSIST CALD WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN?

Women from CALD backgrounds arrive in Australia under various circumstances, including as migrants, refugees, international students or unaccompanied minors. CALD women face many challenges in addressing violence and can be presented with several barriers when seeking help. Barriers include a lack of support networks, socio-economic disadvantage, community pressure and lack of knowledge about their rights.

The *National Plan* recognises and acknowledges the different experiences facing CALD women and their children, and ensures that responses will be flexible enough to respond to their individual needs.

The *National Plan* recognises that CALD women may have difficulties accessing the paid workforce or higher education. These factors can contribute to gender inequality and need to be addressed to achieve better outcomes for CALD women who experience violence.

## HOW IS THE NATIONAL PLAN DIFFERENT TO OTHER GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES?

For the first time all Australian governments will work together to reduce violence against women and their children. Governments have agreed to do the following:

- **Deliver advertising and innovative online marketing initiatives** to help reduce the incidence of relationship violence in CALD communities as part of *The Line* social marketing campaign. Materials are adapted and translated for different communities and language groups.
- **Funding a national telephone counselling service** for any Australian that has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault. 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732) is an inclusive, free and confidential 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, professional counselling service that will give CALD women and children access to immediate and ongoing assistance. A full translation service is also available.

- **Provide information to newly arrived migrants and refugees** about the protections available to women who experience violence.
- **Enhance the response of ‘first point of contact’ services** to ensure the identification of domestic and sexual violence occurs and that appropriate responses to CALD women’s needs are met.
- **Encourage sexual assault and domestic violence services to work with other agencies** to provide flexible, innovative, inclusive and integrated services that recognise diversity.
- **Improve women’s economic participation and independence** through paid parental leave, increased pension rates and increasing leadership opportunities through government boards.
- **Build and support legal literacy** among migrants and refugees on Australian law.
- **Fund the Family Support Program** to support vulnerable and disadvantaged families.
- **Establish an Australian Law Reform Commission inquiry** into the impact of Commonwealth laws on those experiencing family violence, including immigration law.
- **Funding Community Action Grants** to support communities to reduce violence against women by working with community organisations and sporting codes to engage community in a range of primary preventions activities.

## HOW WILL THE NATIONAL PLAN ENSURE THAT THESE CHANGES ARE SUSTAINABLE IN THE FUTURE?

The *National Plan* has a long term vision to make a significant and sustained reduction in violence against CALD women and children. These long term measures will be achieved by improving the evidence base, identifying and promoting what measures work well in CALD communities, improving how we work with perpetrators and by enhancing the way services respond to victims.

## WHAT ELSE IS THE GOVERNMENT DOING TO HELP CALD WOMEN?

The Australian Government established the Australian Immigrant and Refugee Women’s Alliance to engage with and advocate on behalf of immigrant and refugee women, with a particular focus on building immigrant and refugee women’s leadership and advocacy skills.

## WOULD YOU LIKE A COPY OF THE NATIONAL PLAN?

The *National Plan* is available online at:

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/women/progserv/violence/nationalplan/Pages/default.aspx>

Or you can order hard copies by calling 1800 050 009

## IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE CALL:

- 1800 RESPECT -1800 737 732
- Local services in your state or territory.
- Relationships Australia – 1300 364 277
- Mensline - 1300 789 978

**If you require urgent assistance contact the police on 000.**

