

Safe and Free From Violence

*National Plan to Reduce Violence against
Women and their Children 2010-2022*

*Progress Report to the Council of
Australian Governments 2010-2012*



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*Progress Report to the Council of Australian Governments
2010–2012*

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*National Plan to Reduce
Violence against Women and
their Children 2010–2022*

An Initiative of the Council of Australian Governments

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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I submit this report to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Australian community. This report details progress that has been made in implementing the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan).

The overarching target of the National Plan is to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children. Under the National Plan, we are committed to reporting on our progress to make sure we stay on track and learn from each other's successes. This report discusses progress made against the National Outcomes under the First Action Plan and the National Priorities under the National Implementation Plan of the First Action Plan.

The National Plan is underpinned by the belief that involving all governments and the wider community is necessary to reducing violence in the short and long term. No government or group can tackle this problem alone.

This report brings together input received from all jurisdictions and draws on the work across different parts of the sector to demonstrate that our efforts extend beyond those of governments. This report demonstrates the importance of cross-sectoral responses and actions. It shows that extensive efforts are being made, focusing on short-term and long-term gains. Much is still to be done, and the National Plan will continue to guide us in the right direction.

This report does not compare the activities of different governments. Rather, it seeks to highlight the diverse range of achievements across our nation, recognising that only a combined effort to reduce violence against women and their children will have an impact. We must continue to learn from each other and work together in order to move forward.

Reporting to COAG is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of governments and the non-government sector under the National Plan. This report highlights engagement, collaborative efforts and progress across all jurisdictions and the non-government sector. This report also serves to acknowledge the vital role of the non-government sector in reducing violence against women and their children, and to communicate with the community more broadly about commitment and progress under the National Plan.

Violence against women does not occur in isolation from other issues faced by individuals and communities. There are strong links between the National Plan and other significant COAG reforms, such as the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, efforts to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage, and the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*. We acknowledge those who contribute to these efforts,

knowing that we need to work across the whole service system, including justice, health, housing, disability, employment, children and education, in order to reduce and ultimately stop violence against women.

This and future reports to COAG will feed into the evaluation of the National Plan. The evaluation strategy to measure the effectiveness of the National Plan will include synthesising and analysing the reports to COAG over the life of the National Plan.

Contributions to this report were made by Commonwealth and state and territory governments and the non-government sector. I thank Ministers who have responsibility for implementing actions under the National Plan for their contributions and their cooperation in compiling the information in this report. I also thank the National Plan Implementation Panel for their valued contributions to the report. I acknowledge and thank the non-government organisations who work tirelessly in this area; your ongoing commitment to reducing violence against women and their children and your willingness to work collaboratively with governments add an important dimension to this work.

We are resolved to continue to work in partnership to achieve our vital objectives and to ensure Australian women and their children are able to live their lives free from violence.

List of Shortened Forms

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACARA	Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ALRC	Australian Law Reform Commission
AMaRWA	Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance
APY	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
ASCA	Adults Surviving Child Abuse
AWAVA	Australian Women Against Violence Alliance
BCBB	Building Capacity Building Bridges
CAA	Courts Administration Authority
CCS	Complex Case Support
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CMCS	Case Management and Coordination Services
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CVSU	Crime Victims Services Unit
DAP	Domestic Abuse Program
DCP	Department of Child Protection
DCS	Department for Correctional Services
DCSI	Department for Communities and Social Inclusion
DHS	Department of Human Services
DVICM	Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model
DVPASS	Domestic Violence Proactive Support System
ERA	Equality Rights Alliance
FaHCSIA	Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FDVAG	Family and Domestic Violence Advisory Group

FLPN	Family Law Pathways Networks
FMP	Financial Management Program
FSP	Family Support Program
FVIP	Family Violence Intervention Program
FVIR	Family Violence Incident Review
FVMS	Family Violence Management System
FVSN	Family Violence Safety Notices
HSS	Humanitarian Settlement Services
IWG	Indigenous Women's Grants
KWY	KornarWinmilYunti
LAC	Local Area Coordination
LSAVH	Longitudinal Study of Australians Vulnerable to Homelessness
MDC	Multidisciplinary centre
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAPCAN	National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
NATSIWA	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance
NCAS	National Community Attitudes Survey
NCE	National Centre of Excellence
NPIP	National Plan Implementation Panel
NPY	Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme
NSW	New South Wales
OPP	Office of Public Prosecutions
PPL	Paid Parental Leave
PSS	Personal Safety Survey
QPS	Queensland Police Service
RAMP	Risk Assessment and Management Panel
RYJS	Regional Youth Justice Services

SASS	Sexual Assault Support Service
SHLV	Staying Home Leaving Violence
SOCIT	Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
VAWAG	Violence Against Women Advisory Group
VGT	Virtual Global Taskforce
VRO	Violence Restraining Orders
WA	Western Australia
WAS	Witness Assistance Service
WDVCAP	Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program
WRC	Workplace Research Centre
WSC	Women's Safety Contact
WWDA	Women With Disabilities Australia



Executive summary

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan) is a 12-year strategy which aims to bring together Commonwealth, state and territory government efforts, as well as the important work being done by the non-government sector, to make a sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women.

We are in the early stages of the National Plan, and these are crucial years. As well as acting on immediate priorities to challenge attitudes that promote violence and to build greater equality and respect between men and women, we are setting foundations for future work and evolving the way we work together across governments and sectors. The outcomes of the work we are doing now may not be seen tomorrow but, over time, they will build a platform for change across the community.

The National Plan sets out a framework for action until 2022. It has been built from an evidence base of research and extensive consultation with experts and the community. It is the first plan addressing violence to coordinate action across jurisdictions and the first to focus strongly on prevention. It is the first to look to the long term, building respectful relationships and working to increase gender equality to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. It is the first to focus on holding perpetrators accountable and encouraging behaviour change.

The National Plan sets out six National Outcomes for all governments to deliver during the next 12 years:

1. Communities are safe and free from violence.
2. Relationships are respectful.
3. Indigenous communities are strengthened.
4. Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence.
5. Justice responses are effective.
6. Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

The Outcomes will be delivered through four three-year Action Plans, the first of which, *Building a Strong Foundation*, runs from 2010 to 2013. Action Plans will support governments to work together to develop, implement and report progress within a coordinated national framework. The first three-year Action Plan identifies 68 Immediate National Initiatives the Commonwealth Government has agreed to progress, as well as a number of related actions for jurisdictions to take forward in a way that best meets the needs of their local communities.

We know that violence against women does not occur in isolation from other issues faced by individuals and communities. That is why the National Plan has such strong links with other reforms, including the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*, Closing the Gap, and the housing and homelessness agenda. Together with the National Plan, these reforms will contribute to the reduction of violence against women and help to successfully address the effects of violence when it occurs.

The National Implementation Plan for the *First Action Plan: Building a Strong Foundation* was released in September 2012. The first National Implementation Plan is about laying the foundation for future change to reduce violence against women and their children, with a focus on primary prevention, improving service delivery and building an evidence base. The National Implementation Plan outlines how Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the community will work together to do this, identifying 17 actions all Australian governments have agreed to prioritise. Alongside the National Implementation Plan, each state and territory is developing its own jurisdictional implementation plan, outlining what it is doing locally.

This report sets out our progress—what we have accomplished under the National Plan so far—and what we intend to do next to reduce violence against women and their children. We have made a promising start, but we know that there is much more to be done. There are many examples in this report of the work that state and territory governments, the non-government sector and the Commonwealth Government have been doing over the past two years. Some highlights, which will lay the foundation for a real and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children, include:

- establishment of a tripartite **National Plan Implementation Panel**, in April 2012, to work together in a new way with all Australian governments and the non-government sector to reduce violence against women and their children;
- agreement to establish the **National Centre of Excellence** in New South Wales from early 2013. The Commonwealth is providing initial funding of up to \$1 million for the National Centre of Excellence. From the middle of 2013, it will receive annual funding of \$3 million, with the Commonwealth providing \$1.5 million annually and the remaining \$1.5 million to be provided by states and territories on a cost-shared basis;
- implementation of social marketing primary prevention campaigns such as ***The Line***, which includes educational resources specifically designed for the Indigenous community, and Queensland's **Act as 1 campaign**;
- primary prevention responses such as the **respectful relationships education projects across the country** and the **Youth Say No** resources and website being developed in Western Australia;
- improving and influencing community awareness and attitudes towards violence through campaigns such as the Australian Capital Territory's **Summer of Respect** and New South Wales' **Rugby League Tackling Violence**;

- **grants programs that support community organisations** to engage with the community about reducing violence against women, which are being undertaken across different communities, including a number of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Indigenous communities, older women, women with disability and gay and lesbian communities;
- **supporting Indigenous communities** to develop local solutions to prevent and respond to violence;
- establishment of **1800RESPECT**, the National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service;
- provision of collaborative, integrated support services to women who have experienced violence, such as the **multidisciplinary centres** established in Victoria;
- the variety of programs across Australia that support women who experience violence to stay in their homes while the perpetrator leaves, such as **Staying Home, Leaving Violence** in New South Wales and **Safe at Home** in Tasmania;
- work to enhance service responses for key groups, through projects like the Commonwealth Government's \$5.7 million **Child Aware Approaches** funding round, to promote a better understanding of the relationship between child abuse and neglect and issues such as domestic and family violence, mental illness, sexual abuse and substance abuse. These grants aim to support community organisations across a range of locations to build service capacity, support culturally appropriate responses and improve service delivery;
- assisting perpetrators to change their behaviour and take responsibility for their violence, such as the **perpetrator intervention programs** run in the Northern Territory, New South Wales and South Australia;
- ongoing work to build the evidence base around the prevalence of violence against women, and community attitudes towards violence against women, through funding four-yearly cycles of the **Personal Safety Survey** and the **National Community Attitudes Survey**; and
- building awareness of the National Plan through **community events** such as those held by the Violence Against Women Advisory Group and the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance throughout 2011.

Into the future, governments will keep working in collaboration with the non-government sector to understand and address the diverse needs of women and to tailor responses based on these needs.

We recognise that violence against women and their children is complex and multifaceted. There are issues and ways of working together that governments and the non-government sector are continuing to explore. So that we can regularly assess the impacts of our efforts, we will be developing an evaluation framework and a national data and reporting

framework to implement robust ways to measure our progress and generate nationally consistent data. Reducing violence is a long-term goal.

Reports such as this demonstrate our commitment to working together and to learning from our collective experiences in implementing the National Plan.



1.1 The problem of violence against women and their children

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan) targets two main types of violence: domestic and family violence and sexual assault. These crimes are gendered crimes; that is, they have an unequal impact on women. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Personal Safety Survey (PSS) (2006), women's and men's experience of violence is different: men are more likely to be the victims of violence from strangers and in public, whereas women are more likely to be the victims of violence in their homes at the hands of men they know. The statistics are unacceptably high, with one in three women having experienced physical violence since the age of 15 and almost one in five having experienced sexual violence. In addition, Indigenous women and girls are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence related assaults than other Australian women and girls (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2002).

The personal, social and economic costs of violence against women are high. A study commissioned by the Commonwealth Government in 2009 shows the enormous economic cost of violence: domestic and family violence and sexual assault perpetrated against women costs the nation \$13.6 billion each year. By 2021, if extra steps are not taken, the figure is likely to rise to \$15.6 billion (KPMG, 2009).

Research shows that key predictors of violence against women relate to how individuals, communities and society as a whole view the roles of men and women. Some of the strongest predictors for holding violence-supportive attitudes at the individual level are low levels of support for gender equality and following traditional gender stereotypes (VicHealth, 2009). Building greater equality and respect between men and women can reduce the development of attitudes that support or justify violence, as can broader social policy initiatives that address gender inequality and improve the status of women.

1.2 What is the purpose of this report?

The National Plan, which was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and released in early 2011, brings together the efforts of governments and communities across the nation to drive a real and sustained reduction in levels of violence against women.

The National Plan includes the first three-year Action Plan—*Building a Strong Foundation 2010–2013*. The National Implementation Plan for this First Action Plan was released in September 2012. The National Implementation Plan outlines how Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the community will work together to lay the foundations for

reducing violence against women, through identifying 17 actions all Australian governments have agreed to prioritise. The first three-year Action Plan identifies 68 Immediate National Initiatives the Commonwealth Government has agreed to progress, as well as a number of related actions for jurisdictions to take forward in a way that best meets the needs of their local communities. The First Action Plan lays the foundation for future efforts and allows us to explore the best ways to work together across jurisdictions and sectors.

Considerable work is being done by Australian governments, the non-government sector and the community to implement our ambitious agenda to reduce violence against women and their children. While everyone recognises that there is still a lot to do, and challenges remain, progress has been highly positive, with all actions implemented or underway. The focus of this report is on exploring and highlighting the progress that has been made against actions and initiatives over the past two years, but we know that there is more to reducing violence than delivering on initiatives. The National Plan provides a framework for action that prioritises not just what we do but how we do it; by sharing information and best practice, we can work together more effectively to address violence.

The National Plan commits all Australian governments to report on the progress of the first three-year Action Plan to COAG and the Australian public. Reporting on progress is central to assessing whether or not the National Plan is on the right track to reduce violence against women in the longer term. This assessment of our progress so far will help to shape future Action Plans. Reporting also provides an opportunity for jurisdictions to share information and learn from each other, as well as celebrate the progress the National Plan has already started to make.

1.3 Structure of report

This report adopts the following structure:

- introduction to the key elements of the National Plan;
- overview of the First Action Plan, first National Implementation Plan and jurisdictional implementation plans;
- overview of actions under the first National Implementation Plan;
- overview of Immediate National Initiatives and related actions under the National Outcomes of the National Plan;
- discussion on how progress is going to be measured across the life of the National Plan; and
- setting the direction for future work.

This report is not an exhaustive list of all efforts to reduce violence against women and their children that align with the aims of the National Plan. It provides some key examples of work that has been done across and within all jurisdictions and the non-government sector under the National Plan. This report should be read alongside the National Plan and the

National Implementation Plan.

1.4 Background to the National Plan

Recognising that more needed to be done to reduce violence against women and their children, the Commonwealth Government established the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the National Council) in May 2008. The National Council's role was to provide advice on measures to reduce the incidence and impact of violence against women and their children. In preparing their report, the National Council engaged with over 2,000 community stakeholders via interviews, community meetings and online surveys in all state and territory capital cities and some regional and remote centres. They also reviewed 370 public submissions and convened six expert roundtable forums. The National Council presented its recommendations in *Time for Action: the National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009–2021*(Time for Action)(a summary is at [Time for Action: the National Council's Plan for Australia to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2009-2021](#)).

The Commonwealth's 2009 response, *Immediate Government Actions*, supported the direction and focus of Time for Action and laid the groundwork for the development of the National Plan (see [Immediate Government Actions](#)).

The Violence Against Women Advisory Group was then appointed for a two-year period, from September 2009 to September 2011, to provide independent and expert advice to governments in developing the National Plan.

The COAG-endorsed *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022*(the National Plan) was released in February 2011 (see [National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022](#)). The National Plan is a long-term, 12-year strategy that provides the framework for action by Commonwealth, state and territory governments to achieve a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. This will take time, which is why the National Plan sets a framework for action over 12 years.

The National Plan is underpinned by the belief that no government or group can address this problem alone. Involving all governments, the non-government sector and the wider community is essential to making real and sustained progress in reducing violence in the short and longer terms.

Governments across Australia have made considerable investments in reducing violence against women. For example, the Commonwealth Government has committed \$86 million towards initiatives under the National Plan. As this report demonstrates, this investment,

alongside that of state and territory governments and the efforts of the non-government sector, makes a significant contribution to the important goal of ensuring that women and their children can live free from violence in safe communities.

1.5 Vision of the National Plan

The vision of the National Plan is:

Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities.

To measure the success of this vision, governments have set the following target:

A significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children during the next 12 years, from 2010 to 2022.

Values and principles guiding the National Plan

The National Plan recognises that policy solutions to address domestic violence and sexual assault must take into account the diverse backgrounds and needs of women and their children. The values and principles that guide the National Plan are:

- Domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault crosses all ages, races and cultures, socioeconomic and demographic barriers, although some women are at higher risk.
- Everyone regardless of their age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, race, culture, disability, religious belief, faith, linguistic background or location, has a right to be safe and live in an environment that is free from violence.
- Domestic violence, family violence and sexual assault are unacceptable and against the law.
- Governments and other organisations will provide holistic services and supports that prioritise the needs of victims and survivors of violence.
- Sustainable change must be built on community participation by men and women taking responsibility for the problems and solutions.
- Everyone has a right to access and to participate in justice processes that enable them to achieve fair and just outcomes.
- Governments acknowledge the legacy of past failures and the need for new collaborative approaches to preventing violence against Indigenous women.
- Responses to children exposed to violence prioritise the safety and long-term wellbeing of children.

1.6 Structure of the National Plan

The National Plan sets out six National Outcomes for all governments to deliver during the next 12 years:

1. Communities are safe and free from violence.
2. Relationships are respectful.
3. Indigenous communities are strengthened.
4. Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence.
5. Justice responses are effective.
6. Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

These outcomes will be delivered through four three-year Action Plans, the first of which runs from 2010 to 2013. Action Plans will support governments to work together to develop, implement and report progress within a coordinated national framework.

The Action Plans have been designed in three-year cycles to enable governments to review the strategies and actions once they are implemented and so make sure that future work under the National Plan is as effective as possible. Governments will respond to emerging priorities as new evidence becomes available and circumstances change.

1.7 Governance

The National Plan requires integrated governance arrangements that cut across traditional government boundaries and engage the non-government and private sectors. As will be evident throughout this report, work under the National Plan engages diverse government portfolios and services, as well as the non-government and private sectors. All of these groups have a vital role to play in reducing violence against women and their children.

COAG has tasked the Select Council on Women's Issues (the Select Council) with overarching responsibility for the implementation of the National Plan. The National Plan Implementation Panel (NPIP), which comprises government officials and independent, non-government experts, such as academics and professionals from relevant sectors, advises the Select Council through senior government officials.

NPIP brings together officials from all governments with the non-government sector and other experts in a formal way. This represents a new way of engagement that leverages the valuable experiences and expertise of different groups. The first years of the National Plan have provided us with the opportunity to learn how to better work together to achieve the shared goal of reducing domestic and family violence and sexual assault. NPIP builds the foundation for future collaboration and engagement, and is also working together to set up advisory groups, which will offer opportunities to harness further expertise and energy from an even wider group of people.

1.8 The National Plan's connection with other COAG reforms and the international context

Violence against women does not occur in isolation from other challenges faced by individuals and communities. A range of issues, including child safety and wellbeing, housing and homelessness, and mental and physical health, influence and intersect with domestic and family violence and sexual assault in complex ways. There are also some communities where women are more vulnerable to violence or have diverse experiences of violence.

Through the National Plan, governments have been strengthening the work being done in tandem with other national and COAG reforms, such as the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020* (the National Framework), the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, Stronger Futures and the National Disability Strategy. Working across these reforms enables us to take a holistic and integrated approach to addressing violence against women.

The National Plan is also part of Australia's meeting its international obligations under human rights instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and contributes to global efforts to reduce violence against women.

The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020

Strengthening families so children and young people grow up in safe households, free from domestic and family violence, mutually supports the objectives of the National Plan and the National Framework.

Growing up in a family experiencing domestic and family violence can have a profound effect on a child, impacting on future relationships, health and emotional wellbeing and engagement in work and community life. There is a strong link between domestic and family violence and child abuse and neglect, and research is increasingly recognising exposure to domestic and family violence as a form of child abuse.

The National Framework's Second Action Plan 2012–2015, which was released in August 2012, identifies domestic and family violence as a new priority. Under the National Framework's Second Action Plan, opportunities for strengthening joint work between the child safety and wellbeing agenda and the domestic and family violence agenda are being explored.

Housing and homelessness

Domestic and family violence continues to be a major cause of homelessness, with escaping violence being the most common reason provided by people who seek help from Specialist Homelessness Services (AIHW, 2012). Specialist Homelessness Services targeting women and children escaping domestic and family violence are a significant part of service system responses to domestic and family violence. Women with children escaping domestic and

family violence, who are able to find accommodation in a crisis service, then often struggle to find long-term housing, due to a lack of supply of suitable housing stock, discrimination, low income as a result of women's poorer labour market opportunities, the need to care for small children, and the substantial cost of private rental accommodation.

In December 2008, the Commonwealth Government released *The Road Home: the Australian Government White Paper on Homelessness*. Women and children who have been victims of violence are a key target group of the White Paper. To address homelessness, the Commonwealth is working with states and territories to increase spending on homelessness services and the supply of affordable housing under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness.

Existing initiatives under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, such as 'safe at home' models where the perpetrator of violence is removed and women and children can remain in their homes, contribute directly to improving outcomes for women and children experiencing violence, as does continuing to increase access to social and affordable housing options and building systems integration. Under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments are jointly investing \$1.1 billion to reduce the rate of homelessness. Over 180 initiatives are being delivered under the Agreement, with 30 specifically targeting domestic and family violence in 2010–11.

In relation to longer-term housing, the Commonwealth Government has provided funding for new housing programs to assist first home buyers, build more affordable rental properties and improve the efficiency of the housing market. The Government has also taken action to improve Indigenous housing, particularly in remote communities. Key measures include:

- \$5.6 billion under the Social Housing Initiative, which is delivering an enormous boost to public and not-for-profit community housing and is assisting around 19,700 low income households who are homeless or struggling in the private rental market;
- \$6.2 billion over five years under the National Affordable Housing Specific Purpose Payment to improve housing affordability, reduce homelessness and reduce Indigenous housing disadvantage; and
- \$7 billion to particularly disadvantaged Australians through agreements connected to the National Affordable Housing Agreement. These include \$5.5 billion over 10 years to improve housing conditions in remote Indigenous communities and \$400 million for social housing.

Commonwealth, state and territory governments have also partnered to invest \$6 billion in the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). The NRAS will provide 50,000 new rental homes, increasing the supply of more affordable private rental housing and reducing rental

costs for low and moderate income households by encouraging private investment in innovative, affordable housing. The NRAS offers financial incentives to the business sector and community organisations to build and rent homes to low and moderate income households at a rate that is at least 20 per cent below the prevailing market rate. Tenants may also be eligible for Rent Assistance—making homes even more affordable. As at 31 October 2012, 10,671 dwellings have been built under the NRAS, with around 29,000 in the pipeline.

Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory

The Commonwealth Government has made a \$3.4 billion commitment over 10 years to work with Indigenous people in the Northern Territory to assist them to build strong, independent lives, where communities, families and children are safe and healthy.

Keeping people safe, especially vulnerable women and children, is the Commonwealth Government's highest priority in the Northern Territory. Supporting women's safe houses and providing continued support for remote Aboriginal family and community workers who help prevent child abuse and neglect is part of the Commonwealth's commitment, as is allocating \$75.6 million over 10 years to measures to tackle alcohol abuse in Indigenous communities.

As part of Stronger Futures, the Commonwealth Government is providing \$427.4 million over 10 years to help strengthen communities and support the delivery of services through:

- increasing the number of Indigenous Engagement Officers;
- supporting Indigenous Engagement Officers to become more involved in engaging with local people, including working in a more joined-up way at the regional level;
- continuing support for the Northern Territory Aboriginal Interpreter Service, so local community members can get equitable access to the services they need;
- involving communities in planning and measuring what is happening in those communities;
- building the capacity of local Indigenous organisations to be involved in the delivery of services; and
- providing increased opportunities to develop personal, family and community leadership.

National Disability Strategy

Launched by the Commonwealth Government in March 2011, the *National Disability Strategy 2010–2020* (the Strategy) outlines a 10-year national policy framework to improve the lives of people with disability, promote participation and create a more inclusive society. It will guide public policy across governments and aims to bring about change in all disability-specific and mainstream services and programs, as well as community infrastructure. The Strategy will also be an important mechanism to ensure that the principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities are incorporated into policies, services and programs affecting people with disability, their families and carers.

An important policy direction within the Strategy is to ensure that people with disability are safe from violence, exploitation and neglect. This is of particular significance to women with disability, given that not only are people with disability more likely to be victims of crime, research indicates that women with disability face an even greater risk. Under the Strategy, a key action area designed to reduce violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability is to ensure that the National Plan and the National Framework have priority actions to improve the safety and wellbeing of women and children with disability.

International efforts

Australia's National Plan is part of the global effort to reduce violence against women and their children. The National Plan has been praised internationally and recognised as a best practice policy framework for responding to violence against women and their children. Examples of Australia's international engagement and work that aligns with and complements the National Plan include:

- Australia was one of the first countries to ratify the CEDAW in 1983. The National Plan is part of Australia's efforts to implement the CEDAW Committee's recommendations on addressing violence against women and the disadvantages faced by Indigenous women.
- The Commonwealth Government leads the Australian delegation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) each year. Uniquely, this delegation includes non-government delegates. The 57th meeting of CSW in March 2013 has the priority theme of the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls.
- The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) recognises the disproportionate impact of conflict on women and girls and seeks to include women as full participants in post-conflict peace building and reconstruction efforts. The Commonwealth Government strongly supports UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions and, on International Women's Day in 2012, released the *Australian National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2012–2018* as a next step in implementing the women, peace and security agenda.
- Australia was also one of the first countries to pledge multi-year core funding for UN Women, which works to advance global efforts to promote gender equality and empower women. Australia is providing \$14.5 million to UN Women over two years from 2011. Australia took its place on the UN Women's Executive Board in January 2013.
- Australia supported the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Ms Rashida Manjoo, to undertake a study tour in April 2012. This tour was an opportunity for

Ms Manjoo to learn about the practices and partnerships that are in place in Australia and to talk about her work and the ways violence against women is being addressed internationally. While Ms Manjoo recognised that there was more work to be done, she noted that violence against women was receiving greater recognition as a human rights issue in Australia and was pleased to see that it was becoming more visible on the national agenda.

1.9 Building Awareness about the National Plan

Efforts to build awareness about the National Plan are vital in order to engage and encourage all Australians to become involved in reducing violence.

An Easy English version of the National Plan has been developed to help people with low literacy levels to understand the intent of the National Plan (see [Easy English version](#)).

Six information sheets have also been prepared on the National Plan:

- Indigenous Women;
- Women with Disability;
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women;
- Rural and Remote Women;
- Older Women; and
- Primary Prevention.

These information sheets can be found at [National Plan information sheets](#).

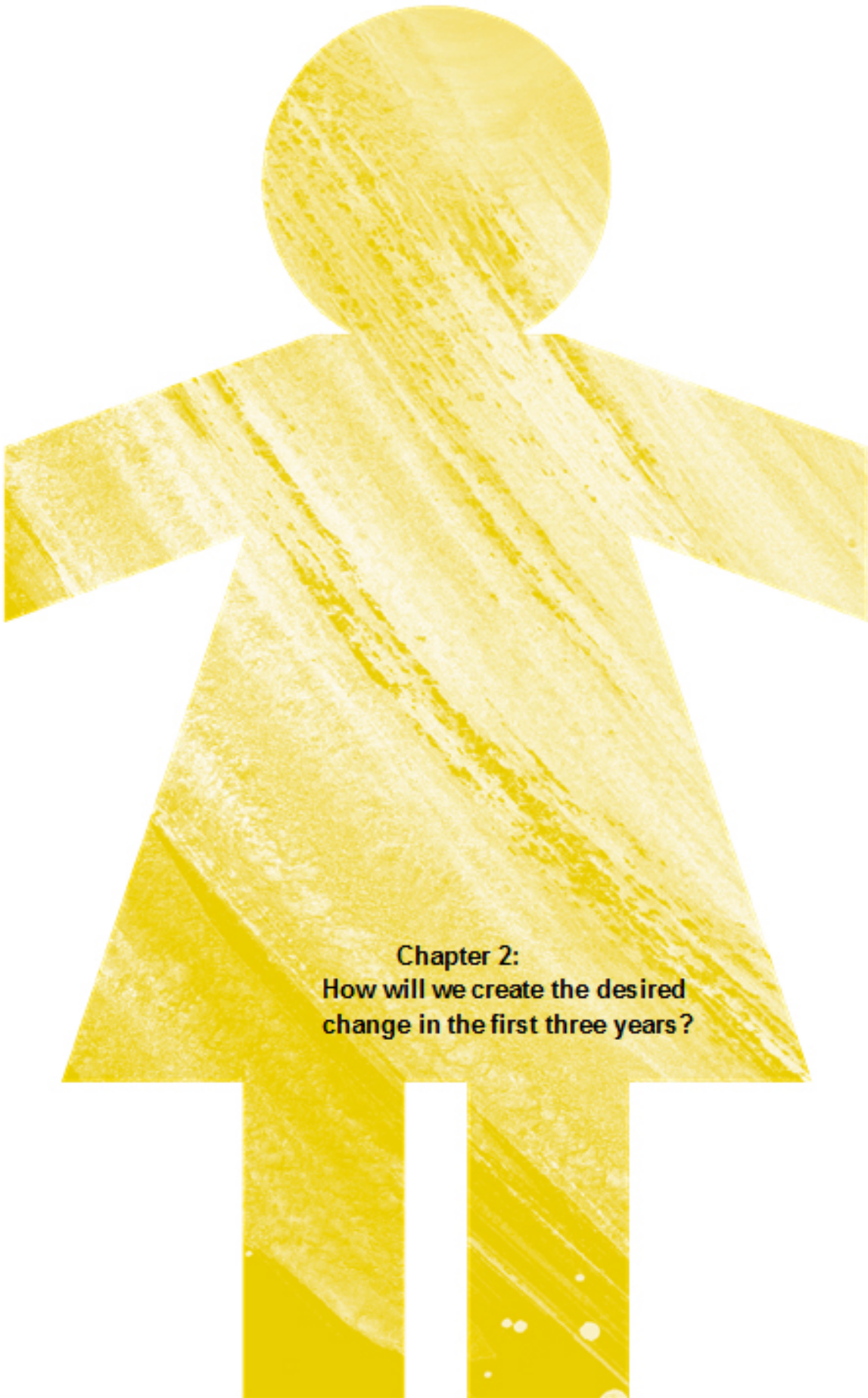
The non-government sector has taken an active role in promoting the National Plan and has led many events, conferences and workshops over the past two years. Summaries of some of these conferences are included throughout this report.

The Violence Against Women Advisory Group (VAWAG) and the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) have also both done important work across the country to build awareness about the National Plan:

- VAWAG was originally created to provide independent and expert advice to the Commonwealth Government in developing the National Plan with states and territories. After the National Plan was endorsed, VAWAG was tasked with focusing on engaging the community in reducing violence against women and on the National Plan. From March to December 2011, VAWAG actively engaged with the community and promoted the National Plan at a variety of events in Queensland, Tasmania, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Western Australia and Victoria.
- The Commonwealth Government funded AWAVA to develop and deliver a series of community events in regional and remote locations to promote the National Plan and discuss how community organisations can take action at a local level. In 2011, five

community engagement events were held in Katherine, Bendigo, Broome, Launceston and Wilcannia. These events were about providing an overview of the National Plan, facilitating discussion to support the local community to develop plans to implement their own community responses and celebrating achievements in eliminating violence against women and their children.

The National Plan has also been promoted through *Parity*, the national homelessness publication of the Council to Homeless Persons. The Commonwealth Government funded the December 2010 edition, in which the National Plan was introduced, and the September 2011 edition, in which those working in domestic and family violence and homelessness services had an opportunity to discuss, and respond to, the National Plan. The September 2011 edition included contributions from Commonwealth, state and territory governments, academics, service providers and organisations such as AWAVA, AIHW and the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse.



2.1 First three-year Action Plan

The 12-year National Plan reflects a long-term approach, involving all Australians to bring about tangible and positive change when it comes to violence against women. Four three-year Action Plans provide a layered strategy to achieve a reduction in violence.

The First Action Plan was released with the National Plan in February 2011 and is focused on building a strong foundation for future work. It presents a series of strategies, key actions and Immediate National Initiatives under each of the National Plan's six National Outcomes.

Action Plans are being delivered in three-year cycles, so governments can review the strategies and actions once they are implemented and design future government efforts to be as effective as possible. Governments will respond to emerging priorities as new evidence becomes available and circumstances change.

Action Plans will address all National Outcomes, while allowing states and territories to act in locally relevant and responsive ways. They will also help to build the skills, systems and data for governments to improve policy making and service delivery.

Each Action Plan will be supported by the following 'foundations for change', which will be assessed in the longer term through evaluation of the National Plan:

- strengthen the workforce;
- integrate systems and share information;
- improve the evidence base; and
- track performance.

There are 68 Immediate National Initiatives to address violence against women under the First Action Plan. The Commonwealth has been advancing these over the past two years, in collaboration with jurisdictions. A number of key actions are also being implemented by all jurisdictions at a local level.

Chapter 4 shows how we have progressed under each National Outcome, including the Immediate National Initiatives, and highlights further work to be done.

2.2 The First National Implementation Plan

Each Action Plan will be supported by a National Implementation Plan and jurisdictional implementation plans.

The National Implementation Plan for the *First Action Plan: Building a Strong Foundation 2010–2013* (the National Implementation Plan) outlines how all Australian governments and the community will work together to lay the groundwork for the future and sets the scene

for the life of the National Plan. The National Implementation Plan, released in September 2012, can be found at [the National Implementation Plan](#).

The National Implementation Plan outlines four National Priorities, which are key areas of joint work for the Commonwealth, state and territory governments over the first three years of the National Plan. These National Priorities are:

1. Building primary prevention capacity.
2. Enhancing service delivery.
3. Strengthening justice responses.
4. Building the evidence base.

The National Priorities are broken into 17 actions, drawn from the First Action Plan. These are actions which, governments agreed, needed collaborative effort in order to maximise success.

These actions lay the foundation to drive long-term results. A focus on primary prevention and building the evidence base, for example, will help us in the long term to achieve our vision of a real and sustained reduction in violence against women. Enhancing service delivery will ensure that those women and children who have experienced, or been exposed to, domestic and family violence and sexual assault receive the services they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

Preventing violence before it occurs

International evidence suggests that primary prevention strategies that work across many levels (such as the attitudes and behaviours of individuals, the way people operate in relationships and families, the way they engage as communities, and how social structures and institutions are regulated) and across many settings (such as education, workplaces, community, sport, arts, media and local government) are the most effective.

The Crime Research Centre (University of Western Australia), in its 2001 report, *Young Australians and Domestic Violence*, found that a consistent and large body of research into young people and domestic and family violence suggests that intervention during adolescence, to challenge traditional gender roles and prevent violent behaviours from becoming normalised, is pivotal in the overall task of domestic and family violence prevention.

The National Priorities are a major focus of work across Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the non-government sector in the first three years. They will also involve working jointly with relevant COAG councils, such as the Standing Council on Community and Disability Services, to improve protections for children exposed to violence and responses for women with disability.

Delivering these National Priorities requires a strong commitment from all partners and the ability to work in new ways across jurisdictions and the non-government sector. If we are successful, these priorities will set us on a firm path towards improving the safety of Australian women and their children.

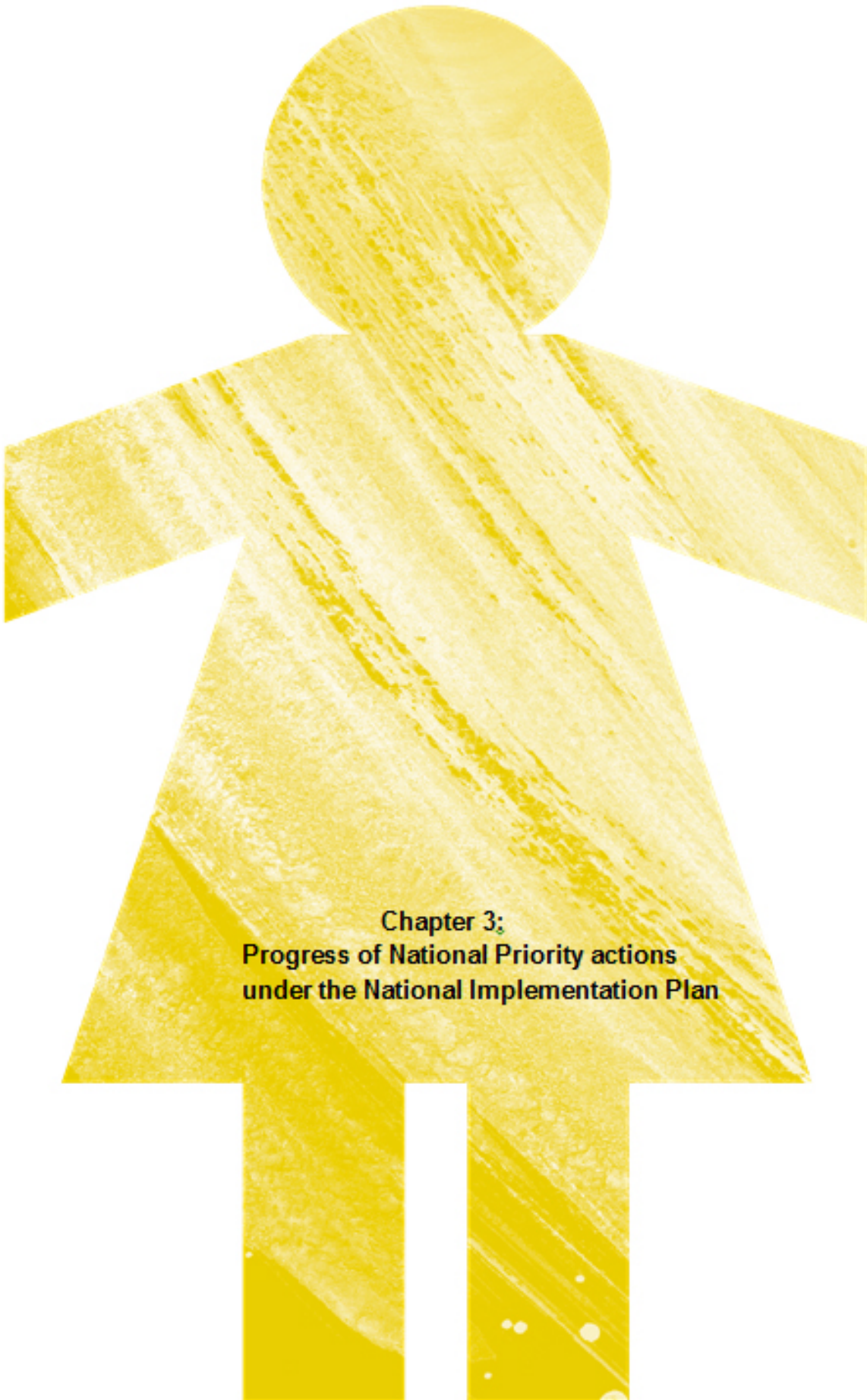
Chapter 3 outlines the progress that has been made against National Priority actions under the National Implementation Plan and the further work that will be done.

2.3 Jurisdictional Implementation Plans

The National Plan recognises that each state and territory has its own initiatives and activities that contribute to delivering on outcomes under the National Plan. This approach ensures jurisdictions can respond to local needs, at the same time sharing learning and resources to enhance the national response to violence against women and their children.

Alongside the National Implementation Plan, each state and territory is developing its own jurisdictional implementation plan, outlining what it is doing locally. These implementation plans reflect best practice reforms already underway or new initiatives that are tailored and responsive to local needs. In addition, the jurisdictional implementation plans reflect on the initiatives being undertaken by states and territories that support National Priorities.

States and territories are at a variety of points in the development of their implementation plans. When implementation plans are finalised, they will be available through the relevant departments' websites. Over time, the actions identified in these plans will form part of the reporting against the National Plan as a whole.



3.1 National Priority One: Building primary prevention capacity

Positive and respectful community attitudes are critical to ensuring Australian women and their children live free from violence in safe communities. As part of this, governments are supporting people to develop respectful relationships. Broader social policy initiatives to advance gender equality are also critical to changing attitudes and reducing violence against women.

This National Priority links with three National Outcomes: Outcome One—Communities are safe and free from violence; Outcome Two—Relationships are respectful; and Outcome Three—Indigenous communities are strengthened.

The National Implementation Plan identifies the following actions under the Building Primary Prevention Capacity National Priority:

1. *Encourage the community to prevent, respond to and speak out against violence by implementing social marketing and awareness campaigns to encourage young people to develop healthy and respectful relationships, with the aim of changing attitudes that support violence.*
2. *Embed evidence-based best practice respectful relationships education in schools by working through the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, to support the inclusion of respectful relationships in phase three of the Australian Curriculum.*
3. *Promote positive media representations of women and develop media codes of practice for reporting sexual assault and domestic violence.*
4. *Advance gender equality through the development and utilisation of gender equality indicators.*

Individual jurisdictions are also implementing broader primary prevention initiatives, in line with this National Priority, under the first National Implementation Plan.

ACTION: Encourage the community to prevent, respond to and speak out against violence by implementing social marketing and awareness campaigns to encourage young people to develop healthy and respectful relationships, with the aim of changing attitudes that support violence.

The Line Campaign—Commonwealth

The Line is an innovative social marketing campaign that is all about encouraging young people to think about what is acceptable in a relationship and what crosses the line. At the centre of *The Line* is its website ([The Line](#)) and Facebook page ([The Line Facebook](#)). The

Commonwealth Government has invested \$17 million in this highly successful campaign, which was launched in June 2010.

The campaign provides a space for young people, through its website and Facebook page, to discuss and consider their relationship experiences and actions. The campaign uses a range of ways to engage young people, including interactive videos, Facebook polls, blogs and online forums, an online quarterly magazine, *Between the Lines*, and a partnership with the Australian Recording Industry Association through a Music Ambassador program.

Since its launch, *The Line's* Facebook page has evolved from having people waiting to comment on the blog and poll topics, to having fans create their own content and generate their own peer discussion:

- As at October 2012, there were over 70,000 Facebook fans.
- Around 90 per cent of the active Facebook fans are in the campaign's target audience.
- Around 1,200 Facebook fans are actively participating on the Facebook page per month, which indicates an ongoing level of engagement.
- There have been over 600,000 unique visitors to the website, and they have viewed over 1.9 million pages.

Regular tracking research conducted for *The Line* every six months indicates that the campaign is having a positive impact on those it has reached. The latest wave of tracking research (Wave 5), conducted in May 2012, showed that:

- 84 per cent of people who recognised *The Line* campaign claim it has improved their understanding of behaviour that could be 'crossing the line';
- 81 per cent of people changed their behaviour as a result of the campaign;
- 78 per cent of people intend to change their behaviour in the next six months; and
- 84 per cent of 12 to 24 year olds intend to change their behaviour in the next six months as a result of the campaign.

The Line campaign approach received international recognition in February 2012 as a finalist in the innovation category of the Avon Communications Awards, as part of the second World Conference of Women's Shelters.

The Line—Respect Each Other—Commonwealth

Educational resources specifically designed for the Indigenous community are rare. *The Line – Respect Each Other*, a part of the successful *The Line* social marketing campaign, released the *Serpent Tales* resources in May 2011 to engage Indigenous children, teachers and communities to discuss and promote healthy, respectful relationships.

The free resources have been designed with curriculum in mind and are based on extensive research. Feedback from schools indicates that the flexibility of the *Serpent Tales* resources

has seen them used in Health, Drama, English and Pastoral Care classes, as well as encouraging discussion at the grassroots level.

In response to feedback from Indigenous communities who used the *Serpent Tales* resources, a set of resources around the issue of *Jealousy* was developed and launched in July 2012. All the materials developed for *The Line—Respect Each Other* are available on the website [The Line - Respect Each Other](#).

‘We are acting as 1 against domestic and family violence’—Queensland

The *Act as 1* social marketing campaign was introduced in 2010 for a three-year period to mobilise community support to reduce domestic and family violence. The campaign sought to empower community members to identify and respond to domestic and family violence and to create a climate of zero tolerance to the issue.

Act as 1 has been supported by a social media strategy, production and distribution of information resources, and grants to community organisations to hold localised awareness-raising events and activities supported by the statewide campaign framework.

Youth Say No Resources and Website—Western Australia

The Department for Child Protection has redeveloped a website and resources for young people experiencing domestic and family violence in their family or personal relationships. The *Youth Say No* campaign targets three areas:

- trouble at home;
- dating violence; and
- being worried about someone.

The campaign website and resources were launched at a White Ribbon Day event in November 2012.

Yarrow Place Hospitality Industry Project—South Australia

In July 2011, Yarrow Place Rape and Sexual Assault Service commenced the *Violence Against Women Awareness and Prevention in the Hotel Industry Project*. As part of the *Don’t Cross the Line Community Anti-Violence* campaign, the project focuses on awareness and prevention of violence against women, specifically rape and sexual assault.

The initiative seeks to empower people working in the hospitality industry to feel able to intervene in a situation or possible situation of sexual violence. Yarrow Place is working with the Australian Hotels Association so that hotels have employees with the values and principles to stand up and intervene. The project includes encouraging the hotel industry to

promote the idea that industry employees should pay attention to incidents of sexual violence, not turn a blind eye and pretend it is not happening.

Primary Prevention Community Action Grants—Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Government has invested \$3.75 million over three years to build primary prevention into the work of schools, community and sporting groups, local government agencies and business groups. *Community Action Grants* have been provided to 17 community and national sporting organisations to implement a range of activities.

Projects are being undertaken across different communities, including a number of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Indigenous communities, older women, women with disability and gay and lesbian communities. All projects aim to engage with people at the local level, to support leaders within communities to speak out against violence and to educate people about issues of violence against women.

Projects are in the early stages of implementation and delivery. As at October 2012, approximately 1,500 people have attended focus groups or training or participated in workshops, and approximately 125 trainers/mentors have been engaged across the projects. Over 9,000 hardcopy resources have been distributed in New South Wales to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people through ACON.

Rugby League Tackling Violence—New South Wales

The *Tackling Violence* program provides a good example of an innovative primary prevention initiative in New South Wales. Implemented by the New South Wales Department of Education and Communities, *Tackling Violence* is an anti-domestic violence program delivered through rugby league in regional locations in New South Wales. Its focus is on preventing domestic and family violence in communities with significant Indigenous populations, high rates of domestic and family violence and few, if any, other preventative programs.

The program involves local New South Wales rugby league teams delivering messages about the unacceptability of violence against women. It encourages men to be leaders and role models in the campaign against domestic and family violence in their communities. Players sign a code of conduct which provides for penalties should they commit a domestic or family violence related offence. These penalties include suspension from a team, in addition to the action taken by police and the courts. In 2011, 740 men signed the code of conduct. Another feature of the program is community service announcements, featuring former National Rugby League players and *Tackling Violence* teams delivering an anti-domestic violence message, which are played at peak times for rugby league viewing.

Community Crime Prevention: Reducing Violence against Women and their Children—Victoria

The *Community Crime Prevention: Reducing Violence against Women and their Children* grant program (managed in the Victorian Department of Justice) aims to support primary prevention and early intervention-focused partnership projects across community service organisations and local government at the regional level.

As announced in February 2012, the Victorian Government will spend an extra \$7.2 million on the program over a three-year period. Applications for single grants of up to \$600,000 were sought for one project in each Victorian Department of Justice region that:

- supports interventions to prevent violence before it occurs and early intervention initiatives;
- enhances integrated and collaborative work; and
- encourages the development of approaches that will continue to build the evidence base for prevention and early intervention methods.

Domestic and Family Violence Funding Program—New South Wales

The New South Wales Government announced a three-year domestic and family violence funding program of \$9.8 million that will focus on integrated prevention and early intervention actions through four funding streams:

- **Prevention Partnerships**—there will be two streams of funding:
 - for ‘exemplar’ projects that demonstrate effective approaches in prevention and early intervention; and
 - for Local Domestic and Family Violence Committees for community-based initiatives.
- **Improving the research and evidence base:** This will focus on effective prevention and early intervention strategies and on the most effective responses to domestic and family violence.
- **Men’s behaviour change:** The Government will fill a gap in early intervention by investing in a new men’s telephone counselling and referral service to support men who are not yet actively required through the justice system to change their behaviour.
- **Sector capacity building:** Training and materials will be provided to increase the capacity of the sector to design and deliver innovative and integrated early intervention and prevention strategies.

The new funding program is a component of a long-term and strategic approach to domestic and family violence, which will be articulated in the new Domestic and Family Violence Reforms.

White Ribbon Workplaces—Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Government has provided funding of \$1 million over four years to June 2014 for the White Ribbon Workplaces initiative. The program aims to support workplaces to prevent, and respond to, violence against women. Employers will be encouraged to promote safe workplaces by adapting workplace culture, practices and procedures.

An accreditation framework was launched in July 2012 and will be piloted and evaluated over 16 months. The framework consists of three steps in which organisations participating in the pilot will be involved:

- **Recognition**—organisation is involved in the White Ribbon Ambassador program and commits to engage in the program.
- **Accreditation**—organisations working to bring about cultural change to prevent violence against women will self-assess against three standards: leadership and commitment; communication and training; practices and procedures.
- **White Ribbon Workplaces leader**—organisations are recognised as doing outstanding work to stop violence against women, in the organisation and the community.

White Ribbon Australia has established a reference group of industry and sector experts, tested the accreditation framework with focus groups and an advisory group, and engaged with organisations and industry to encourage participation in the project.

In September 2012, White Ribbon announced that an initial 18 organisations had committed to participating in the accreditation pilot. More information about the project can be found at [White Ribbon](#).

Employment-Related Policies and Guidelines—Collaborative

Since July 2010, the Commonwealth Government has provided funding to the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse for the *Safe at Home, Safe at Work?* project to improve the knowledge and capacity of unions, employers and employer organisations to support employees experiencing domestic or family violence.

This project aims to engage with Australian employers and unions to:

- inform them directly about domestic and family violence issues and the impacts for both workers and the workplace;
- build their capacity to support workers affected by domestic and family violence through the provision of training and resources; and
- examine ways to address this through collective bargaining.

Key areas of work are to:

- develop a range of workplace provisions and practices to help people who have experienced domestic and family violence to remain in the workplace. This may include the negotiation of clauses in enterprise agreements which cover leave options, advance pay or loan options, privacy provisions, safety measures, or policy development and training for management and key staff;
- develop resources to inform unions and employer organisations about domestic and family violence issues, for example, fact sheets, training modules and an online training tool; and
- develop strategies to encourage the uptake of domestic and family violence provisions and the uptake of training and policy development to support the implementation of the provisions.

To date, positive engagement with unions and employers means that about seven per cent of the national workforce are now covered by this world-first workplace initiative, with the New South Wales public service, more than 20 Victorian councils and Queensland Rail agreeing to paid family violence leave. As of February 2012, all Queensland Government employees have had access to special leave for family violence. In October 2012, the Commissioner for Public Employment in the Northern Territory approved the use of miscellaneous leave granted by the Chief Executive Officer for employees dealing with matters arising from domestic, family and sexual violence. Some Commonwealth agencies and departments also have similar arrangements, and the Australian Public Service Commission released a circular in November 2012 to raise awareness within Commonwealth agencies of the possible impact of domestic and family violence on employees and the workplace. The circular encouraged agencies to think about, and provide support to, employees affected by domestic or family violence, including through using existing extensive leave provisions available through enterprise agreements.

Provisions typically allow access to flexible hours, paid days off and, for those who have experienced domestic and family violence, having their email address or phone number changed to escape harassment.

The project is consistent with the recommendations in the Australian Law Reform Commission's (ALRC) report into Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws, tabled in Parliament in February 2012.

ACTION: Embed evidence-based best practice respectful relationships education in schools by working through the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, to support the inclusion of respectful relationships in phase three of the Australian Curriculum.

Input to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority—Collaborative

All governments have committed to providing input to the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to support Respectful Relationships education. Phase One of the national curriculum redevelopment commenced in 2009 (English, Mathematics, Science and History). Respectful Relationships is being included in the Health and Physical Education curriculum (Phase Three). Work on this phase started in February 2011.

Input was provided to ACARA in February and March 2012 on the *Draft Shape of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum*, during the consultation process for that document, drawing on existing best practice information, discussions between jurisdictions and early advice from the Respectful Relationships evaluation.

Governments will provide further input into the *National Curriculum: Health and Physical Education* during the development phase of the curriculum and through national consultations from February to April 2013. The curriculum is expected to be published at the end of 2013.

Respectful Relationships Programs—Collaborative

Helping young people to be able to have respectful relationships is vital to preventing violence in the long term. The Commonwealth Government has invested \$9.1 million over five years to 2013 in Respectful Relationships education projects. In total, 32 projects have been funded across three funding rounds. As at October 2012, 32,000 participants have attended Respectful Relationships education sessions, including 60 young people with intellectual disability and over 8,100 young people from Indigenous backgrounds.

The Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland, was engaged in August 2011 to undertake the evaluation of the Commonwealth Government's Respectful Relationships initiative. Good practice guidelines for implementation of respectful relationship projects will be developed as part of the evaluation. Early advice from the evaluators helped to inform the Respectful Relationships Round Three selection process in December 2011, as well as the input to ACARA on the draft shape of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum. The final evaluation report is on target for completion in April 2014.

States and territories have also developed and implemented a range of approaches through schools and local communities to support education on issues of respectful relationships, as outlined below.

Western Australia

The Western Australian Department of Health's Sexual Assault Resource Centre has an Education and Training Coordinator (Respectful Relationships) to develop sustainability for

the Respectful Relationships program and contact schools, universities and professional groups to offer Respectful Relationships training programs.

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (Western Australia) is also delivering a schools-based Respectful Relationships program. They will work intensively with Kent St Senior High School to develop and pilot a new model of school engagement that promotes respectful relationships through the creation of supportive, school-based networks that contribute to attitudinal and behavioural change. The project will include classroom presentations, classroom teaching modules, teacher training and peer education training and will conclude with a peer educator-led White Ribbon Day event in 2013.

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory Government provided funding to support the initial rollout of the White Ribbon *Breaking the Silence* program to ACT schools. The program works to inspire principals to strengthen the culture of respect in their schools, in ways that are age-appropriate for their students, and to engage all parts of the school community.

Northern Territory

The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) has been funded to deliver its LOVE BiTES program in the Northern Territory. To date, LOVE BiTES has been conducted in 16 schools across the Northern Territory and in other non-school settings, including the Education Unit in the Don Dale Juvenile Detention Centre and through YWCA's Navigate Program for 'at-risk' youth. One component of the Alice Springs Integrated Response to Family Violence project focuses on respectful relationships education for young people. This includes the delivery of the LOVE BiTES program in the Alice Springs Juvenile Detention Centre, as well as the expansion of NAPCAN's *Growing Respect* program, which will take a 'whole-of-school' approach and target 5–17 year olds.

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government launched the *Relationships and Sexuality Education in Tasmanian Government Schools Strategy 2012–2014* in October 2012. Developing respectful relationships is a key component of the strategy.

There are also several programs such as LOVE BiTES in place in a number of Tasmanian schools, assisting children and young people to develop healthy and respectful relationships.

New South Wales

A number of school-based programs are in place across New South Wales. In 2010–11, Juvenile Justice began co-delivering the LOVE BiTES program with NAPCAN. Since then, Juvenile Justice has continued to implement the initiative through the training of staff, delivery of the program and ensuring that personal safety and protective behaviours information and course content are available for young people admitted to juvenile justice centres and those on community-based orders.

ACTION: Promote positive media representations of women and develop media codes of practice for reporting sexual assault and domestic violence.

Media—Collaborative

The media has a powerful and influential role in shaping community attitudes, awareness and perceptions around violence against women and their children.

In November 2011, the New South Wales Department of Attorney General and Justice launched the *Respectful Reporting: Victims of Violent Crime Media Strategy 2011–2012*, which is about reporting on, and dealing with, victims of violent crime, namely murder, domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

The Standing Council on Law and Justice has agreed to progress the work at the national level and to work with individual media agencies and industries and encourage them to include references to victims of violent crime within their own media codes of practice.

The New South Wales Department of Attorney General and Justice is also developing, with the Journalist Education Association, a draft curriculum on victims' issues and a series of fact sheets around matters such as domestic violence and sexual assault, robbery, trafficking and assault, for distribution to media outlets. The fact sheets will include statistics and information about the impact of these crimes on victims. Fact sheets will be adaptable for other jurisdictions.

Governments will continue to work together on broader issues relating to the portrayal of women in the media. Engagement with media stakeholders will help to expand this work to the national level, as will work with individual media agencies and industries.

Eliminating Violence Against Women Media Awards—Victoria

The *Eliminating Violence Against Women (EVA) Media Awards* are funded by the Victorian Government to acknowledge excellence in the reporting of violence against women in print, television, radio and online media and to celebrate media contributions to the prevention of violence against women. Entries are judged by a panel of family violence and sexual assault sector experts, based on journalistic merit, promotion of community awareness and understanding and inspiring community interest and action.

The third EVA Media Award presentations were held in July 2012. Fourteen winners were honoured on the night, including two Highly Commended award recipients. The 2012 Gold EVA for Best Media Across Categories went to Clem Bastow for her 'Singled Out' Music Review in *Inpress Magazine*, Brian McFadden—'Just The Way You Are'.

ACTION: Advance gender equality through the development and utilisation of gender equality indicators.

Australian Gender Indicators—Collaborative

The value of gender equality indicators as a means of benchmarking women's progress has been recognised by a range of government and non-government organisations around the world. To provide tangible measures of progress and move Australia towards international best practice in reporting on and monitoring gender equality, the ABS developed the Australian Gender Indicators. This work was initiated by the former Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women. Under the new COAG system, the Select Council on Women's Issues will use the Australian Gender Indicators to inform and support its work.

The first release of the Australian Gender Indicators, published in August 2011, can be accessed through the [ABS website](#).

The Australian Gender Indicators are a six-monthly ABS product. The Indicators draw on a wide range of ABS statistics, along with statistics from other official sources, to explore the differences between men and women and how their economic and social conditions are changing over time. The indicators are organised into six domains representing major areas of social concern for gender equality: economic security; education; health; work and family balance; safety and justice; and democracy, governance and citizenship.

ACTION: Other initiatives for building primary prevention capacity.

ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2010–2017—Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2010–17, *Our Responsibility: Ending Violence against Women and Children (Our Responsibility)*, was launched on 22 August 2011. *Our Responsibility* is a joint initiative of the Community Services Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and is the first of its kind in the Australian Capital Territory.

The long-term goals of *Our Responsibility* are consistent with the goals of the National Plan. *Our Responsibility* provides overarching principles to guide violence prevention activities across government and support the ability of key service providers (government and non-government) to provide flexible and targeted responses to women and children experiencing violence, including support to enable men using violence to change their behaviour.

The *ACT Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Implementation Plan Phase One 2011–2014* was released in August 2012. It outlines actions to be undertaken in the first three years, focusing on building strong foundations for the work that lies ahead over the life of *Our Responsibility* and over the life of the National Plan. Longer-term actions will be re-assessed and informed by progress and findings over the first three years.

Taking Action: Tasmania's Primary Prevention Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children 2012–2022—Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government is currently finalising *Taking Action: Tasmania's Primary Prevention Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children 2012–2022*. *Taking Action* will consolidate a range of primary prevention activities undertaken in Tasmania as well as introducing new initiatives.

Taking Action is a major component of Tasmania's response to the National Plan—*Tasmanian Implementation Plan: Building a Strong Foundation 2010–2013*. The Tasmanian Implementation Plan is being overseen by an Interdepartmental Advisory Committee and a Consultative Group which comprises representatives of peak non-government organisations.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Plan—New South Wales

The New South Wales Government is currently developing a New South Wales Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda to reform the approach to domestic and family violence in New South Wales. The Reform Agenda will provide a whole-of-government approach across the full spectrum of interventions needed to reduce domestic and family violence in the state. For the first time, New South Wales will deliver a comprehensive *Domestic Violence Prevention Plan* as a part of the Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda.

Stopping Violence Against Women Before it Happens: A Practical Toolkit for Communities—Community led

The *Stopping Violence Against Women Before it Happens* toolkit was inspired by two community consultations held at Emerald, in central Queensland, and Broken Hill, in western New South Wales, and was developed through a partnership between the National Rural Women's Coalition, AWAVA and Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research. The toolkit was launched by Federal Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Julie Collins MP, in August 2012.

The toolkit contains 15 easy-to-understand factsheets which support the National Plan and explain the concept of primary prevention of violence against women.

The Commonwealth Government invested \$50,000 in the development of the toolkit.

The toolkit is available free online through the National Rural Women's Network at [toolkit](#), or hard copies can be ordered through the National Rural Women's Coalition webpage [here](#).

3.2 National Priority Two: Enhancing service delivery

Specialist and mainstream services play essential roles in meeting the needs of women and their children rebuilding their lives following violence. Domestic and family violence and sexual assault services need to be well supported and funded to deliver specialist responses. Mainstream service providers need to be well trained and supported to deliver services to best meet the diverse needs of all women, including where they have experience of, or are at risk of, violence.

This National Priority links to two National Outcomes: Outcome Three—Indigenous communities are strengthened, and Outcome Four—Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence.

The National Implementation Plan identifies the following actions under the Enhancing Service Delivery National Priority:

1. *Deliver high quality telephone and online support services which meet nationally consistent standards through:*
 - a. *Effective integration of new and existing services; and*
 - b. *The development of national standards.*
2. *Expand the availability of professional support and advice to front line workers.*
3. *Develop Community Safety Plans including in 29 Remote Service Delivery sites with a specific focus on violence against women.*
4. *Continue to work with Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory on cross border issues.*
5. *Undertake key projects to drive further reforms across governments and sectors to:*
 - a. *improve responses to children exposed to domestic violence, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as a priority;*
 - b. *enhance service responses to help women reach more stable circumstances when they are seeking to leave violence;*
 - c. *improve service delivery for women with a disability who may have experienced, or are at risk of, violence;*
 - d. *undertake effective risk assessment across the health sector; and*
 - e. *develop a National Workforce Agenda.*

Individual jurisdictions are also making further enhancements to service delivery for women and children who have experienced violence, in line with this National Priority under the first National Implementation Plan.

ACTION: Deliver high quality telephone and online support services which meet nationally consistent standards.

1800RESPECT—Commonwealth

1800RESPECT, the *National Sexual Assault, Domestic and Family Violence Counselling Service*, provides best practice professional counselling, information, advice and referral services for individuals and their families and friends who have experienced, or are at risk of, family and domestic violence and sexual assault. Support is also provided to other professionals working with victims of violence.

The Commonwealth Government is investing \$12.5 million over four years in 1800RESPECT. 1800RESPECT started taking calls on 1 October 2010, and its online interactive counselling service commenced on 1 July 2011. During the 2011–12 financial year, 1800RESPECT registered 20,465 contacts between the service and individuals, which included multiple contacts with some individuals. Eighty-six per cent of people receiving ongoing support, and who had contacted 1800RESPECT for the first time in 2011–12, were women.

Since commencing operations, 1800RESPECT has made 15,955 referrals to appropriate providers, including warm referrals.

The providers of the counselling service, New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre, continue to liaise with service providers in all states and territories to discuss and strengthen linkages between the national service and state and territory services.

Development of national standards for online and telephone counselling services—Collaborative

The development of national standards for online and telephone counselling services will assist governments to deliver high-quality integrated support services, reduce the need for victims to retell their story, through improved information sharing, and extend the use of best practice risk assessment and management frameworks to identify and respond to violence against women.

Initial work has been undertaken to identify:

- existing industry standards for domestic and family violence and sexual assault telephone and online counselling services;
- the extent to which existing standards have been adopted; and
- any perceived gaps in existing standards.

This work was undertaken after extensive consultation, both with providers and with state and territory governments. A number of formal standards documents have been identified. However, these standards focus on either domestic and family violence or sexual assault, not both. They also have a strong operational focus, as opposed to focusing on outcomes for

women using the service. Work will continue on developing national standards during 2012–13.

ACTION: Expand the availability of professional support and advice to front line workers.

1800RESPECT expansion—Commonwealth

1800RESPECT is being expanded to provide support for frontline workers who may encounter, in the line of their work, people who have experienced sexual assault and domestic and family violence. These frontline workers may include people working in (but not limited to) areas such as allied health, childcare, mental health and homelessness services. The expansion of 1800RESPECT is focusing on supporting workers to respond effectively, as well as assisting the workers with any vicarious trauma they may experience. Following detailed consultation with stakeholders, including state and territory officials and non-government service providers, it was clear that a major gap in support for these workers is the lack of availability and promotion of online resources for both individuals and organisations.

A web-based resource portal is currently being developed to:

- build awareness of sexual assault and domestic and family violence amongst workers and professionals;
- educate workers and professionals about how to respond in an appropriate and timely manner;
- provide integrated support for workers, professionals and their organisations, to help manage the psychological impacts associated with identifying and responding to sexual assault and domestic and family violence situations; and
- provide good practice resources to assist organisations in developing and implementing relevant policies and procedures.

Frontline workers are also able to call 1800RESPECT for information and advice. State and territory representatives and other organisations, such as non-government organisations, peak employer bodies and unions, are being consulted in the development of resources and priority sectors to target support. A working group consisting of representatives from peak bodies has been convened to support this work.

Initial resources targeted to workers in the alcohol and drug sectors were made available from November 2012, with additional resources being added. Other sectors to be targeted for worker support include family and community services, disability, mental health and homelessness.

Queensland Police Service—Queensland

Queensland Police Service (QPS) has implemented a suite of projects to enhance service delivery for people experiencing domestic and family violence. These initiatives include:

- providing frontline officers with a contemporary conceptual understanding of domestic and family violence, to assist them to respond to and manage situations involving domestic and family violence;
- developing service policy and training to assist first response officers to identify the person most in need of protection, where there are conflicting allegations or indications of violence by both parties;
- the QPS Domestic Violence Protective Assessment Framework, which is used at all domestic and family violence incidents. A defined set of risk factors is used to provide an informed and consistent approach to assessing future risk and informing decision making;
- providing frontline police officers with additional resources, tools and professional support; and
- the SupportLink statewide referral system, which enables officers to make appropriate referrals to support agencies for a range of social issues, including domestic and family violence.

Forensic Nurse Training Program—Western Australia

The Department of Health has developed a *Forensic Nurse Training package*, to be rolled out statewide, which will allow trained nurses to collect forensic specimens from victims of sexual assault; this is a particularly relevant and important initiative for regional and remote Western Australia.

The first training course was completed in March 2011. Further implementation of the program will involve further courses, engagement with general practitioners and hospital doctors, and a review of the program.

DV-alert—Commonwealth

The *Domestic Violence Response Training (DV-alert) project* commenced as a partnership between the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Department of Health and Ageing in 2007, with FaHCSIA assuming sole responsibility for the project from July 2011.

The original aim of the program was to provide training for practice nurses and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers in rural and remote locations, with financial assistance to support their participation. From July 2011, DV-alert was expanded to include all health and allied health professionals.

The training is designed to help participants to better understand and identify domestic and family violence, and to improve their referral and support skills. It primarily has a rural and remote focus but is also being run in metropolitan areas to improve access options for rural and remote participants, as well as providing access to the training for urban participants.

Lifeline Australia delivered training in 32 locations in all states and territories, between July 2011 and August 2012, to a total of 472 participants. Training is also available online. Following a review of cultural appropriateness of the training for Indigenous workers, a new Indigenous program has been developed. This was trialled in Kempsey (May 2012), Mt Isa (June 2012) and Doomadgee (June 2012). These sessions were very successful, with a total of 49 participants completing the course.

Following the successful trials, the Indigenous program was officially launched in Broome in July 2012, with the first Indigenous training session held for 24 participants. Further Indigenous training sessions have since occurred in Bourke, New South Wales (NSW) (August 2012, with 16 participants) and in Smithton, Tasmania (September 2012, with 21 participants).

The new Indigenous program is grounded in community engagement, to build support prior to any course's commencement.

DV-alert is the only nationally accredited and nationally delivered training program for health and allied health professionals focused exclusively on domestic and family violence.

ACTION: Develop Community Safety Plans including in 29 Remote Service Delivery sites with a specific focus on violence against women.

Community safety planning—Collaborative

Community safety planning is a locally led initiative that includes extensive community engagement to ensure local knowledge guides actions and assists police, service providers and communities to tackle the causes and consequences of violence together.

The National Partnership Agreement on Remote Service Delivery (2009–2014) is working to improve government service delivery in 29 remote Indigenous locations. It is part of governments' efforts to tackle disadvantage in remote Indigenous communities.

Under the National Partnership Agreement, communities have committed to community safety plans through local planning processes and Local Implementation Plans. The development of community safety plans includes extensive community engagement to ensure local knowledge guides actions.

Agreed community Local Implementation Plans detail a range of commitments to address local community safety priorities and include commitments to reduce alcohol and substance

abuse, improve policing, support young people and improve physical safety. Safe houses are located in 16 of the 29 Remote Service Delivery sites.

Two communities, located at Beagle Bay in Western Australia and Wilcannia in New South Wales, have already developed community safety plans.

Learnings from community safety planning across Remote Service Delivery sites are being used to inform community safety plans across other Indigenous communities, including those in regional and urban locations.

ACTION: Continue to work with Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory on cross border issues.

Cross Border Family Violence Information and Intelligence Unit— Collaborative

Through the *Indigenous Family Safety Program*, the Commonwealth Government has provided \$600,000 over two years to support the Northern Territory, South Australian and Western Australian Governments to establish the Cross Border Family Violence Information and Intelligence Unit in Alice Springs. The Unit will facilitate and encourage lawful exchange of information between police, agencies and service providers, to enable timely and appropriate victim and offender management to tackle domestic and family violence and improve the safety, health and wellbeing of families and children in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands.

ACTION: Undertake key projects to drive further reforms across governments and sectors.

Improve responses to children exposed to domestic violence, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children as a priority— Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Government has invested \$5.7 million in the *Child Aware Approaches* initiative, which aims to secure better outcomes for children. It focuses on holistic prevention and early intervention strategies to reduce the impact of the experience of, exposure to, or risk of exposure to, domestic or family violence, mental illness, and sexual abuse, recognising that substance abuse issues may intersect with these risks to children and young people.

As well as being a part of the National Plan, the *Child Aware Approaches* grants build on the *National Mental Health Reform* and the National Framework.

In 2012, 43 organisations received one-off grants of up to \$200,000 to:

- build the capacity of domestic and family violence services to respond to the needs of children and young people exposed to domestic and family violence;
- support culturally appropriate responses for vulnerable children and young people impacted by the experience of family violence; and
- support better service delivery and outcomes for children and young people through the development of new, evidence-based approaches.

The projects are running at national, state and local level and also support Indigenous community organisations, culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations, people with disability and their families and those experiencing, or at risk of, mental illness.

Families Australia will host a national conference in Melbourne in April 2013 to highlight promising practice in integrated, child-inclusive family services and to promote understandings of the relationship between the risk factors for child abuse and neglect.

Data Interface—Western Australia

The Department for Child Protection and Western Australia Police are working together to interface databases to enable timely and efficient information exchange of all domestic violence and mandatory child abuse reports between agencies. The project is due to be rolled out in November 2013.

Service Reform—Western Australia

The Department for Child Protection, Western Australian Police and not-for-profit organisations are working in partnership to streamline and strengthen current coordination mechanisms in the domestic and family violence sector, specifically the Family and Domestic Violence—Co-location Model (Co-location) and the Family and Domestic Violence Case Management and Coordination Services (CMCS).

The CMCS is a non-government service whose role is to bring together agencies and organisations to manage high-risk cases of domestic and family violence and to identify and document issues and barriers affecting victim safety and perpetrator accountability. Co-location and CMCS are being integrated to create a formalised partnership, focused on coordinating responses to Domestic Violence Incident Reports, and will develop joint assessment processes, triage of responses and shared responsibility for instigating and coordinating multi-agency case management. The new service response will commence in February 2013.

Acute sexual assault services pilot—Queensland

A pilot project is being conducted at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, introducing a single entry point for the provision of acute sexual assault services in a 'hub and spoke' model in the Greater Brisbane Metropolitan region through the Sexual Assault Response Team Model of Care. Its objectives are to:

- improve access for all victims of sexual assault to a coordinated, 24-hour acute service;
- provide integrated forensic medical, counselling and legal responses;
- develop new, evidence-based responses to all victims at one site; and
- develop pathways to post-acute, community-based responses.

The outcomes of this pilot will be useful in informing future service delivery.

Enhance service responses to help women reach more stable circumstances when they are seeking to leave violence—Collaborative

Under the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*, the Commonwealth, state and territory governments are jointly investing \$1.1 billion to reduce the rate of homelessness. Over 180 initiatives are being delivered under the Agreement, with 30 of these targeting domestic and family violence in 2010–11. Services supported under the Agreement in 2011–12 include:

- The Adelaide Domestic Violence Crisis Accommodation—Bramwell House delivers support based on an understanding that violence against women is a violation of human rights and has significant consequences for the health and wellbeing of women and their children. Bramwell House provides crisis accommodation and support through a core and cluster model, comprising six units, with a further three units off-site. In 2011–12, Bramwell House assisted 79 per cent of clients to move into medium-term housing.
- In Victoria, eleven agencies across the state are delivering after-hours family violence case management support to women and children who are experiencing family violence, under the *Family Violence After Hours Response* initiative. The agencies work closely with Victoria Police to support women to take out an intervention order, to provide short-term accommodation prior to women returning to their homes or seeking longer-term, alternative accommodation. Women are provided with an understanding of the police and court processes and linked in with support services. These services assisted over 800 women in 2011–2012.
- The *Safe at Home* program in Western Australia is supporting women and children experiencing domestic and family violence to stay in their present housing when it is safe to do so, when they are at risk of homelessness due to domestic and family violence. The service diverts women and children from entering the traditional crisis accommodation system and facing a prolonged experience of homelessness. In 2011–12, 2,058 clients were assisted. Twelve per cent of the clients were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and a further 17 per cent of clients were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

- In NSW in 2011–12, 717 women who experienced domestic or family violence received the Start Safely rental subsidy, and 416 received additional support services to sustain their tenancies.

Safe at Home—Tasmania

The *Family Violence Act 2004* and supporting *Safe at Home* integrated criminal justice response system have established a solid service response to women who have experienced violence and also to perpetrators of family violence. Central to *Safe at Home* is the primacy of safety of those who have experienced violence, and a key feature of the program is weekly Interagency Case-coordination Committees to manage risk and safety for participants.

In addition to the *Safe at Home* criminal justice response system, non-government organisations deliver a range of services to family violence victims and offenders. Service delivery is enhanced by regular regional Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee meetings. Many of these services are also proactive in sourcing grant funding to carry out a range of activities, including primary prevention initiatives.

In 2011, the Tasmanian Sexual Assault Interagency Steering Committee was convened to develop a statewide sexual assault response framework which will establish a statewide forensic response system for victims of sexual assault. Three dedicated sexual assault organisations, funded through the Department of Health and Human Services, respond to both recent and historical adult and child victims of sexual assault:

1. Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS) Inc. (South);
2. Laurel House Sexual Assault and Rape Crisis Service (North); and
3. Centre Against Sexual Assault (West Coast and North-west).

A review of existing support systems for adults, children and young people who are affected by family violence and who have the potential to become homeless will also be undertaken as part of the implementation of the *Tasmanian Homelessness Plan*.

Staying Home Leaving Violence—New South Wales

A successful, integrated service delivery initiative implemented in New South Wales in 2010–12 has been *Staying Home Leaving Violence* (SHLV). SHLV is an innovative, specialised service for women and children who are victims of domestic and family violence. The program has successfully assisted clients to stay in their homes rather than having to leave after a violent incident. SHLV works with police to have the perpetrator removed and kept away, so that women can remain connected to their local networks, and children can stay at the same school. One of the aims of SHLV is to prevent women and children from becoming homeless as a result of domestic and family violence.

The SHLV service model is based on intensive case management which is long-term, needs based and integrated with Police, Housing, Department of Attorney General and Justice, Health, local courts and other domestic and family violence providers. Clients receive assistance with physical security, financial management, employment and emotional wellbeing.

The program expanded from 10 to 18 locations during 2010–2011. The New South Wales Government has committed an additional \$2.5 million to expand SHLV to a further five locations. In 2011–12, a total of 655 clients received this package of services, which has meant that many women and their children have been able to remain safely in their homes, connected to their local support networks.

Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach Services—Western Australia

The Department for Child Protection, in partnership with the Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services, implemented the *Safe at Home and Domestic Violence Outreach* program across the state. This program provides the option for women and children to be supported to remain in their homes following a domestic and family violence incident, where it is safe for them to do so.

Stay at Home Program—Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory *Stay at Home* Program supports women and children to transfer a public housing lease to their own tenancy following domestic violence. The program is underpinned by the Domestic Violence Policy Manual, which outlines the commitments and principles that inform the work of Housing ACT, including security upgrades on houses, transfers and prioritising applications for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Improve service delivery for women with a disability who may have experienced, or are at risk of, violence—Commonwealth

Women with disability are not only more vulnerable to violence; they often have fewer options for escaping violence and face difficulties in accessing appropriate information, support and services. A focus on people with disability is important, as women with disability experience higher levels of domestic and family violence and sexual assault, compared to other women.

The Commonwealth Government has provided over \$500,000 to Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), the peak body for women with disability, to investigate and promote ways to improve access to, and responses by, services for women and girls with disability experiencing, or at risk of, violence. WWDA will consult relevant stakeholders to analyse

service delivery gaps and barriers and identify key areas where services have adopted or could adopt new or promising practices.

The project includes examination of service delivery models (including practical information and resources) that focus on the role of domestic and family violence and sexual assault and disability service providers, along with identification of possible areas of broader, longer-term systemic reform.

The findings will inform discussion at a national symposium, expected to take place in late 2013, on identifying good policy and practice to address violence against women with disability. WWDA will also develop a 'good policy and practice' compendium to address violence against women with disability.

Domestic Violence and Disability Project—South Australia

The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion's *Strategic Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Women and their Children (2010–2013)* recognises that women with disability are at a high risk of experiencing domestic and family violence. The Plan outlines a number of strategies and actions to promote consistent good practice responses to women and their children who are experiencing or escaping violence and includes a specific target relating to women with disability.

The Plan will enable ongoing work with community disability services and domestic and family violence services to strengthen their capability for combined service delivery based on good practice standards.

A working group of community disability providers, disability advocates and domestic and Indigenous family violence services from across South Australia was formed to look at what can be done to improve services for women with disability experiencing domestic and family violence. It was identified that the staff members at both domestic and family violence and disability services could be up-skilled to better service these communities and that, although workers in these fields are highly skilled in their specialised area, there may be additional training that would benefit clients. For example, domestic and family violence staff receive training in responding to women with disability appropriately, and disability staff receive training in identifying domestic and family violence, rape and sexual assault. It was also recommended that partnerships between domestic and family violence and disability support providers be strengthened and include the capacity for joint case work.

Courses that allow cross-training of staff members have now been included in the National Affordable Housing Agreement training calendar. These courses include:

- disability-specific programs for workers in the Specialist Homelessness Services sector, to increase their knowledge of disabilities and their ability to interact appropriately with people with disability; and
- specific, joint training workshops for the disability and domestic and family violence services, to allow the services to learn from each other, as well as creating networks for participants.

Undertake effective risk assessment across the health sector— Collaborative

The links between domestic and family violence and sexual assault and women's physical and mental health put the health system in a unique position to identify and respond to victims of domestic and family violence. Researchers advocate routine domestic and family violence screening in health care settings frequented by women, for a number of reasons:

- health professionals are often the primary group to whom women talk about abuse;
- health professionals are usually the only group to whom victims have access in rural and remote areas; and
- perpetrators are less likely to question victims' use of health services.

The objective of this reform project is both to improve early identification of violence against women and to explore the development of a national risk assessment framework to help health professionals identify and respond to women experiencing, or at risk of, domestic and family violence.

In consultation with states and territories, it was decided that the focus of the project would be on general practitioners as a key health sector group, and that the work would consider the existing responses in place across Australia. This project will be advanced in 2013.

Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework—Western Australia

The Department for Child Protection has developed and is implementing the *Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework* across the state. This establishes a minimum requirement for screening and the assessment, management and monitoring of risk across the entire service system. The first three-year implementation plan includes a comprehensive rollout of training to both specialist and mainstream service providers, for implementation of the minimum standards into their policies and procedures. A Train the Trainer manual has been developed and is being delivered to service groups. A robust evaluation strategy has been developed, to monitor the uptake of the minimum standards within the service system.

Family and Domestic Violence Responses In the Health Sector—Western Australia

In response to the National Plan, the Department of Health has formed a Family and Domestic Violence Advisory Group (FDVAG). This group has representatives from health and community-based services, as well as academics and members from the Department of Child Protection (DCP). The chair of this group is from the Women's Health Clinical Care Unit of Women and Newborn Health Service, and is also the WA Health representative on the Family and Domestic Violence Senior Officers Group, being the advisory body across government and community sector to DCP.

Representatives from the FDVAG will carry out domestic and family violence initiatives and seek feedback on the initiatives from staff within their workplace. They will also be implementing training and education programs across Health to support the implementation of the Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework.

FDVAG have been involved in awareness-raising activities, such as setting up White Ribbon Day stands at their health services.

GP family violence peer education pilot—Community led

General practitioner (GP) 'champions' are delivering a *GP family violence peer education pilot* program across Victoria which seeks to: increase GP understanding of women's experience of domestic or family violence; examine the barriers and facilitators to GP discussion with patients about violence; explore ways of identifying those women and children who have experienced abuse; and discuss how to respond to abused women and their children.

National workforce agenda—Collaborative

The domestic and family violence and sexual assault workforce is becoming an increasingly more professionally qualified sector. This has created workforce issues around retention and recruitment, limitations in career pathways and access to training and development.

To clarify priorities for national action and reform, we need to better understand the dynamics of the changing domestic and family violence and sexual assault workforce. More holistic information and analysis of trends, gaps and workforce priorities are essential to support any workforce agenda. Developing a stronger understanding of the current workforce of specialists in domestic and family violence and sexual assault sectors will help to bring about positive change for women and children who experience violence.

The Workplace Research Centre (WRC) of Sydney University has been contracted to undertake a national analysis of key workforce trends and approaches for the domestic and

family violence and sexual assault workforces, to inform priorities for national action and reform.

The analysis will take account of workforce issues affecting the domestic and family violence and sexual assault sectors (including recruitment and retention) and workforce issues at state, territory and national levels; it will clarify priorities for national action and reform; and it will recommend options for a possible national workforce agenda.

A review of current data, policy and practice will be supported by communications from key informants in the domestic and family violence, sexual assault and related workforce sectors, to provide the basis of initial findings. Subsequent case studies and further consultation will explore new and innovative strategies to support and improve workforces. A final report is due in June 2013.

Other initiatives to enhance service delivery for women and children who have experienced violence.

Reform of Service Delivery—New South Wales

Enhancing service delivery is a cornerstone of the New South Wales Government's commitment to improving responses to domestic violence and will be articulated in the new *Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda*. The Government is committed to improving the response to women who have experienced violence and holding perpetrators accountable, by ensuring effective integration of government and non-government service responses.

The *Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda* will be underpinned by evidence of best practice in service delivery responses and will include:

- a strong governance model to ensure accountability, coordination and responsiveness across all relevant state government agencies;
- improved performance accountability mechanisms and practice standards for government and community agencies;
- accessible entry for victims to support services; and
- common methods for assessing and managing risks to people subjected to domestic and family violence.

New South Wales is also developing a common risk assessment and management system to ensure that agencies have a shared understanding of risk and an agreed approach to managing risks to victims and their children over time.

Continued rollout of the Family Safety Framework—South Australia

The *Family Safety Framework*, an initiative of the Women's Safety Strategy, seeks to ensure that services to the families most at risk of violence are dealt with in a more structured and systematic way, through agencies sharing information about high-risk families and taking responsibility for supporting these families to navigate the services system. The Family Safety Framework includes Family Safety Meetings held at the local level to focus on individual high-risk cases, and common risk assessment, to ensure consistency in the assessment of high-risk cases.

Initially trialled in the Holden Hill, Noarlunga and Port Augusta policing boundaries in 2007, Family Safety Meetings are now being held in 13 regions throughout South Australia on an ongoing basis, including:

- Elizabeth, Port Adelaide, Sturt and Adelaide Eastern across the metropolitan area; and
- Port Pirie, Limestone Coast, Murray Bridge, Berri, Port Lincoln and Coober Pedy.

The Family Safety Framework will be rolled out to the remaining local police areas across South Australia during 2012 and 2013. In addition, investigation of a model suitable for implementation on the APY Lands commenced in May 2012.

Strengthening Risk Management Demonstration projects—Victoria

The *Strengthening Risk Management* demonstration projects were established in mid-2011 in the Cities of Hume and Greater Geelong in Victoria to test the delivery of coordinated multi-agency approaches to strengthening family violence risk management. The justice system is an active participant in the projects. A key feature of the project model is Risk Assessment and Management Panel (RAMP) meetings, designed to coordinate risk management strategies which ensure the safety of women and children who are identified as being at heightened risk of lethality or further harm from family violence. Sixteen RAMP meetings have been held across both project sites since November 2011, assisting 47 women and 145 children.

3.3 National Priority Three: Strengthening justice responses

Along with aiming to reduce violence, the First Action Plan will also drive more effective justice responses where violence has occurred. Under the National Plan, work will be done to improve links between criminal justice processes, services for victims and prevention programs. Perpetrator interventions are now recognised as an essential part of an effective plan to reduce violence against women and their children. Research into effective perpetrator interventions is crucial and will guide work in future action plans.

The National Implementation Plan identifies the following actions under the Strengthening Justice Responses National Priority:

1. *Through the pooling of knowledge, governments will improve the library of perpetrator interventions, identify gaps and create best practice.*
2. *Set and monitor national minimum standards for domestic violence perpetrator programs and ensure programs for sex offenders continue to adhere to evidence-based best practice.*
3. *Improve cross-jurisdictional mechanisms for the protection of women and children through reforming how family and domestic violence orders are recognised and enforced across borders.*
4. *Improve the levels of understanding about the dynamics of family violence and the handling of family violence cases through the development of a multidisciplinary training package which targets professionals working in the family law system.*

Individual jurisdictions are also undertaking further initiatives to strengthen justice responses, in line with this National Priority under the first National Implementation Plan.

ACTION: Through the pooling of knowledge, governments will improve the library of perpetrator interventions, identify gaps and create best practice.

and

ACTION: Set and monitor national minimum standards for domestic violence perpetrator programs and ensure programs for sex offenders continue to adhere to evidence-based best practice.

Perpetrator interventions evidence base and minimum standards for perpetrator intervention—Collaborative

The National Plan recognises the need to strengthen the evidence base for perpetrator intervention responses by conducting research and developing national standards.

A working group made up of a number of jurisdictions—Western Australia, Victoria, Northern Territory and South Australia—has been formed to contribute to, and provide input into, the development of standards for perpetrator interventions.

The Commonwealth Government engaged Urbis in 2011 to identify current perpetrator interventions, guidelines for best practice approaches and the key steps involved in developing the perpetrator research agenda in the longer term.

During 2013, we will build on this work and engage further with jurisdictions and service providers.

Following the development of standards for perpetrator interventions, governments will work together to determine eligibility criteria for once-off reward payments by the

Commonwealth to states and territories to expand the number and standard of perpetrator interventions.

Minimum Standards for Domestic Violence Behaviour Change Programs—New South Wales

The New South Wales Department of Attorney General and Justice is introducing minimum standards for domestic violence behaviour change programs in New South Wales. These require government and non-government providers to comply with standards of service.

The principles enacted by the standards are:

- The safety of women and children must be given the highest priority.
- Victim safety and offender accountability are best achieved through an integrated, systemic response that ensures that all relevant agencies work together.
- Challenging domestic and family violence requires a sustained commitment to professional and evidence-based practice.
- Perpetrators of domestic and family violence must be held accountable for their behaviour.
- Programs should respond to the diverse needs of the participants and partners.

The No to Violence 2012 Australasian Conference on Responses to Men's Domestic and Family Violence: Experience, Innovations and Emerging Directions—Community led

This conference was held in November 2012 in Melbourne. It was about working with men who use domestic and family violence, and supporting those (primarily women and children) affected by this violence. While the main focus was domestic and family violence, this was contextualised within broader struggles to reduce men's violence against women and their children and to transform gendered structural power relations within our societies.

The conference was sponsored by the Victorian Departments of Human Services and Justice and FaHCSIA.

ACTION: Improve cross-jurisdictional mechanisms for the protection of women and children through reforming how family and domestic violence orders are recognised and enforced across borders.

National Domestic Violence Order Scheme—Collaborative

In March 2011, the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General (now the Standing Council on Law and Justice) agreed to a *National Domestic Violence Order Scheme*, consisting of two parts: state and territory mutual recognition legislation and, subject to Police Ministers' agreement, an information-sharing capability to facilitate protection and enforcement.

A technical working group, consisting of representatives of state and territory justice departments, police and courts as well as the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and CrimTrac, has been considering implementation issues, including:

- ensuring that the legislation is able to be implemented effectively by police and courts; and
- options for an information-sharing capability to support the Scheme, including the use of CrimTrac's National Police Reference System.

National Justice CEOs considered the issue in October 2012 and agreed that Victoria will develop a further options paper, to be considered at a future meeting.

ACTION: Improve the levels of understanding about the dynamics of family violence and the handling of family violence cases through the development of a multidisciplinary training package which targets professionals working in the family law system.

AVERT—Commonwealth

In March 2011, the Commonwealth Government launched the multidisciplinary *AVERT Family Violence Training Package*. AVERT targets lawyers, judicial officers, counsellors and other professionals working in the family law system, to improve levels of understanding about the dynamics of family violence and the handling of family violence cases. Over 1,000 copies of the training package have been distributed to key stakeholders, training organisations and professionals within the family law system.

There is an online component of the training package, which not only allows professionals to access AVERT free of charge as a refresher resource, but also provides an effective way to update materials and potentially provide educators with the opportunity to share modifications and suggestions about the materials. It also allows professionals to access their training flexibly, without needing to complete all aspects of the training.

Other work to strengthen justice responses.

Enhanced Family Violence Service Delivery Model—Victoria

In November 2011, Victoria Police launched the Enhanced Family Violence Service Delivery Model for responding to family violence incidents more effectively. Key commitments in the model include the introduction of:

- Court Liaison Officers at major Magistrates Courts and dedicated Family Violence Teams in most divisions;
- tailored education and training for Victoria Police members; and
- enhancing the investigative, case coordination and prosecution responses.

The model includes three tiers of responses, each with a clear focus and function. The first of these is a comprehensive frontline response, which includes mandatory risk assessment, initial action and referral and which is outlined clearly in the Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence. The second tier response involves the development of risk management strategies and escalated police intervention, including a recidivist offender strategy and case management and a repeat victims' strategy. Both of these will be informed by better intelligence products, produced by the Divisional Intelligence Units, and oversight through the tasking and coordination process.

Victoria Police is also implementing a more targeted and coordinated process for victims and perpetrators considered high risk and with complex needs. This includes increased support and collaboration with other service providers.

Domestic Violence Justice Strategy—New South Wales

New South Wales will implement a new *Domestic Violence Justice Strategy* (the Strategy) to make victims safer, hold perpetrators accountable and prevent re-offending. It is a core component of the New South Wales *Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda*.

The Strategy is an operational framework that outlines the approaches and standards justice agencies in NSW will adopt to improve the criminal justice system's response to domestic violence. It commits all justice agencies and victims support services to work together to provide an effective and integrated response. It sets out six justice outcomes agencies will aspire to achieve, to ensure victims and perpetrators experience high standards of service across the New South Wales justice system.

The Strategy also identifies areas where reform is needed to ensure effective implementation. Throughout its term, these key areas will be addressed through research, policy and legislative reform. The strategy will incorporate many aspects of the Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model, a successful pilot program that has been operating in Wagga Wagga and Campbelltown.

Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012—Queensland

The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (the Act) was passed in February 2012 after extensive public consultation. The Act increases the ability of the court to focus on the safety and wellbeing of victims and places greater responsibility on perpetrators of violence. Key features of the new Act include:

- the addition of a preamble and principles to guide the administration of the legislation;
- a new definition for domestic and family violence, aligned with contemporary understandings, which includes behaviour such as economic, emotional and psychological abuse, physical or sexual abuse or other behaviour which controls or dominates another person;

- increased penalties—up to three years' imprisonment for breaches of domestic violence orders;
- the introduction of short-term police protection notices which allow police to issue a protection notice to provide immediate safety to the victim;
- an express requirement for the court to consider naming a child on a domestic violence order wherever a child is present in the home;
- expanding the jurisdiction of the Childrens Court to make domestic violence orders during child protection proceedings;
- providing for a system of Voluntary Intervention Orders, under which perpetrators agree to attend behaviour change programs and/or counselling; and
- increased guidance about the matters to be taken into consideration in deciding whether to remove a perpetrator from the family home.

The Queensland Government will monitor implementation of the Act to ensure that it affords the appropriate level of protection for victims of domestic and family violence.

Implementation of the Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009 including the Intervention Orders Response Model—South Australia

The *Women's Safety Contact Program* is a dedicated support for women experiencing domestic and family violence who have sought a legal intervention order under the *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009* (the Act). The position forms part of a broader risk management and intervention response model working in conjunction with the Courts Administration Authority (CAA) and the Department for Correctional Services (DCS).

The Intervention Orders Response Model is:

- a holistic service delivery response to women and children experiencing violence, which is delivered by metropolitan Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence services;
- a therapeutic perpetrator programmatic response, funded by the CAA and delivered by the DCS; and
- an Indigenous-specific perpetrator response which is delivered by Koorneel Winmil Yunti (KWY). KWY receives referrals via community and criminal justice pathways.

This service model was developed in conjunction with the CAA, DCS and Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) and is receiving ongoing monitoring and evaluation by the Office for Crime Statistics and Research. It is intended that this model be shared in other regions across the state.

KWY provides a culturally appropriate perpetrator Intervention Order Response to Indigenous men in Adelaide. KWY is not part of the criminal justice system but receives referrals through DCS and community pathways. The Courts Assessment Officers refer men to the program after they have been assessed to determine their suitability for the program.

KWY provides a 24-week group program to challenge men's attitudes and behaviours that allow the violence and abuse to occur, and to develop a capacity for them to accept responsibility for the violence committed and strategies to cease the violent behaviours. To date, a total of 18 men have been referred to the program, and there are currently 10 group participants.

An Aboriginal women's worker operates across the metropolitan Adelaide region through Nunga Mimir Aboriginal Family Violence Service and Ninko Kurtangga Patpangga Aboriginal Family Service. The worker is based at Ninko Kurtangga Patpangga and supports the women partners and the children of the men on the perpetrator program by providing regular safety contact and case management support when required. The safety of the women and children is the priority; it requires regular contact between the Women's Aboriginal Family Violence service and KWY, so that the man's situation is known in order to help keep the women and children safe. The Aboriginal women's worker also undertakes community engagement programs to increase awareness and education about family violence.

Evaluation is currently underway for the implementation of the *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009*, including the Intervention Orders Response Model. This evaluation will inform further development of systems responses.

Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model—New South Wales

The *Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model* (DVICM) is a successful, integrated criminal justice and social welfare response to domestic and family violence, implemented in New South Wales in 2010–2012. The program involves the Department of Attorney General and Justice (Attorney General's Division is lead agency), Corrective Services NSW, Legal Aid (NSW), NSW Police Force and the Department of Family and Community Services (Housing NSW and Community Services). The aims of the DVICM are to improve the criminal justice response to domestic and family violence by improving the safety of victims in contact with the criminal justice system and ensuring domestic and family violence offenders are held accountable.

Expansion of Regional Youth Justice Services—Western Australia

Department of Corrective Services has undertaken an expansion of Regional Youth Justice Services (RYJS). RYJS provides a range of prevention, intervention, diversion, and statutory services for children and young people at risk of entering, or already in, the youth justice system. RYJS has operated in the Goldfields and Mid-West Gascoyne since 2008 and has now been expanded to the West Kimberley, East Kimberley and the Pilbara regions.

Family Violence Act 2004 and Safe at Home—Tasmania

The *Family Violence Act 2004* and supporting *Safe at Home* response system have ensured that Tasmania has one of the strongest criminal justice responses to family violence in Australia.

The *Safe at Home* system is a whole-of-government criminal justice response to family violence, which includes both secondary and tertiary intervention strategies administered through the following services:

- Family Violence Response and Referral Line Victim Safety Response Teams;
- Police Prosecutors;
- Court Support and Liaison Service (including the Child Witness Service), Department of Justice;
- legal support;
- Family Violence Offender Intervention Program;
- Family Violence Counselling and Support Service (including the Children and Young Persons Program); and
- Defendant Health Liaison Service.

The Departments of Police and Emergency Management, Health and Human Services and Justice, who deliver *Safe at Home*, have all had access to the Family Violence Management System (FVMS) to ensure all services have up-to-date information on family violence cases.

Governance structures for the *Safe at Home* system are well established and include:

- Safe at Home Steering Committee—provides strategic advice to the Tasmanian Government and the Interdepartmental Committee on the direction of Safe at Home;
- Interdepartmental Committee—identifies, develops and oversees the implementation of Safe at Home policies and procedures; and
- Regional Coordinating Committees—identify and resolve regional service delivery and coordination issues and build and maintain networks and linkages in each region.

Best practice for preparing and prosecuting family violence matters—Victoria

The Office of Public Prosecutions (OPP) Director's Policy provides instructions for OPP solicitors and counsel about best practice for preparing and prosecuting family violence matters on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Victoria. It outlines a number of priorities and principles to ensure consistency and fairness in the preparation and management of family violence prosecutions. In addition, the Witness Assistance Service will be notified of each family violence matter so that they can determine the level of assistance required. OPP solicitors and prosecutors have undertaken training to help them to better understand the unique dynamics involved in family violence matters.

Domestic Violence Incident Report 1–9—Western Australia

Western Australian Police has developed and implemented the Domestic Violence Incident Report 1–9 (DVIR 1–9). DVIR 1–9 was created to standardise information captured by attending officers in order to improve risk identification, assessment and management for families involved in domestic and family violence. This was implemented in November 2010 and is monitored daily through a quality assurance process of all domestic and family violence incident report submissions. DVIR 1–9 is utilised in referrals to government and non-government agencies and assists in assessment at all stages, in conjunction with the Family and Domestic Violence Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework. In May 2013, DVIR 1–9 will be incorporated into the WA Police Incident Management System. This will expand and enhance the quality of information recorded, to assist in comprehensive risk assessments and ensure early and appropriate intervention. The additional data will be able to be extracted to assist with identifying crime trends and intelligence-led policing.

3.4 National Priority Four: Building the evidence base

To improve outcomes for women and their children, it is important that governments work collaboratively to develop a holistic picture about domestic and family violence and sexual assault in Australia. This is why a priority of the National Plan is to build a strong and lasting evidence base. While established in the First Action plan, these projects will be ongoing across the life of the 12-year National Plan.

The National Implementation Plan identifies the following actions under the Building the Evidence Base National Priority:

- 1. Establish a National Centre of Excellence (NCE) to bring together existing research, as well as undertake new research under an agreed National Research Agenda that will reflect the research priorities of the Commonwealth, states and territories. The NCE will also play a key role in influencing the broader research agenda.*
- 2. Commence work on developing nationally consistent data definitions and collection methods as part of a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework to be operational by 2022, including mapping how data on violence against women and their children can be improved.*
- 3. Continue to build the evidence base through conducting the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes Survey on a four-yearly rolling basis.*
- 4. Establish an evaluation framework for the life of the National Plan.*

Individual jurisdictions are also undertaking further initiatives to build the evidence base, in line with this National Priority under the National Implementation Plan.

ACTION: Establish a National Centre of Excellence (NCE) to bring together existing research, as well as undertake new research under an agreed National Research Agenda that will reflect the research priorities of the Commonwealth, states and territories. The NCE will also play a key role in influencing the broader research agenda.

Establishment of the National Centre of Excellence—Collaborative

In November 2012, Commonwealth, state and territory governments announced that an NCE would be established in New South Wales from early 2013.

The NCE will develop a national research agenda to improve policy and service delivery in preventing, and responding to, violence against women and their children across Australia. Researchers, policy makers and practitioners will be able to linkup through the NCE and provide evidence-based responses to reduce domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

The Commonwealth will provide initial funding of up to \$1 million to establish the NCE. From mid-2013, the Centre will receive annual funding of \$3 million, with the Commonwealth providing \$1.5 million annually and the states and territories providing \$1.5 million on a cost-shared basis.

The establishment of the NCE has been informed by extensive consultations across all jurisdictions with a wide variety of stakeholders, from academics within universities and other research bodies, to government policy makers, to on-the-ground victim service providers. Consultations were also extended beyond the domestic and family violence and sexual assault sectors to areas such as health workers, police, the judiciary, corrections workers and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to reflect the cross-sectoral nature of violence against women and their children.

ACTION: Commence work on developing nationally consistent data definitions and collection methods as part of a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework to be operational by 2022, including mapping how data on violence against women and their children can be improved.

National Data Collection and Reporting Framework—Collaborative

All Australian governments have committed to the development of a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework for domestic and family violence and sexual assault, to improve the information available to support research, policy development, operational decision making, education and community awareness activities into the future.

The ABS National Centre of Crime and Justice Statistics is working with all governments to help identify the work needed to build a solid basis for undertaking this work across the life of the National Plan.

The ABS has developed a document called *Defining the data challenge for family, domestic and sexual violence*, which brings together two previously published ABS documents—the *Conceptual Framework on Family and Domestic Violence* and the *Sexual Assault Information Development Framework*. The ABS consulted across a range of portfolios in Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and with the non-government sector, to inform the development of *Defining the data challenge for family, domestic and sexual violence*.

This document provides an agreed starting point and common language to support further work to identify data requirements to support research and policy priorities, undertaking of an environmental scan and a gap analysis.

The National Data Collection and Reporting Framework is a critical element of the National Plan because it can contribute significant data and evidence to support policy, service and research decisions in the future.

ACTION: Continue to build the evidence base through conducting the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes Survey on a four-yearly rolling basis.

Personal Safety Survey and National Community Attitudes Survey— Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Government has committed to fund a four-year cycle of national surveys under the National Plan. The PSS will provide data about the rates of violence against women in Australia, and the *National Community Attitudes Survey* (NCAS) will report on community attitudes around violence against women.

The information that both the PSS and the NCAS will provide will be essential in understanding the ongoing scale of violence against women and whether rates of violence are decreasing, and it will shine a light on whether or not community attitudes around violence against women are changing. This will be a key to identifying areas for future action under the National Plan.

Personal Safety Survey

The Commonwealth Government has invested over \$10 million in the upcoming PSS, with data expected to be available in 2013.

The last PSS was conducted in 2005. The 2012 PSS will provide data that can be compared with the 2005 PSS. The 2012 PSS will also contain new content that will enable an expanded picture of violence, including:

- information about harassment via messages such as SMS and the internet;
- information about emotional abuse by a current and/or previous partner;

- help-seeking behaviours and assistance sought, police involvement, fear and anxiety experienced, and where people go when leaving a violent relationship; and
- a number of broad national measures, including disability status, social connectedness and self-assessed health status.

National Community Attitudes Survey

The Commonwealth Government is investing around \$3 million in the next NCAS survey, which is being conducted by VicHealth. Reporting is expected in 2014.

The NCAS established a benchmark against which changes in attitudes towards violence against women can be closely monitored over time. The last NCAS survey was conducted in 2009. Major findings from the 2009 survey on community attitudes and beliefs and changes since 1995 included:

- Most people in the community have a broad understanding of domestic and sexual violence and its impacts, and do not condone it.
- The majority of respondents considered violence against women to be a serious issue.
- Community perceptions of what constitutes domestic violence have broadened significantly since 1995.
- The vast majority of the community agreed that physical and sexual assault, and threats, was domestic violence.
- Overall, non-physical behaviours (such as emotional, psychological, verbal and economic abuses) were still less likely to be considered domestic violence than physical types of abuse.
- In comparison with the 1995 survey, there was a significant increase in the proportion of the population who believed that domestic violence is a crime.
- Community understanding of violence against women with disability was very poor, with few respondents recognising the greater vulnerability to violence of women with disability.

The results from the NCAS will continue to guide the development and targeting of interventions that build cultures of non-violence and equal and respectful relationships between men and women.

ACTION: Establish an evaluation framework for the life of the National Plan.

Bearing in mind the considerable work that is being done to build and consolidate the evidence base on violence against women, we also need to turn our attention to the development of an evaluation framework for individual action plans and across the lifespan of the National Plan. This framework will be developed over the next 12 months, in consultation with NPIP, and will be underpinned by data such as that collected through the PSS and the NCAS.

Other work to build the evidence base.

New South Wales

- *Women in NSW 2012*: A major achievement in 2012 was the publication of the first annual report on the status of women in New South Wales. The *Women in NSW 2012* report includes comprehensive data and analysis on domestic, family and sexual violence. This pioneering publication addressed the historical lack of capacity within government to ensure a robust evidence base in women's policy and domestic and family violence. This gap has been addressed by the *Women in NSW 2012* report, which provides concrete data to inform policy and program delivery.
- *Domestic and Family Violence Service Mapping and Gap Analysis*: A mapping and gap analysis of domestic and family violence services was recently completed in New South Wales. It will provide much-needed information on the identification of gaps in domestic and family violence service provision in New South Wales and will also contain recommendations and options for service system reform. These recommendations are being considered in the development of the new Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda.
- *Research on under-reporting*: The New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research is currently undertaking, over a 12-month period, a research project on under-reporting, which aims to identify factors related to whether or not victims of domestic violence report incidents to the police, and to assess barriers to domestic violence service provision across New South Wales. This research will provide recommendations on ways the government, police and other stakeholders can overcome these barriers and support women to seek assistance from the police and other providers.
- *Analysis on the identification of the primary victim and aggressor*: There has been an increase in the number of women being charged with domestic violence offences, including assaults against New South Wales Police. It is recognised that this needs further detailed analysis. New South Wales Police has entered into a partnership with the University of New South Wales to undertake research to determine whether there is a systemic problem identifying the primary victim and aggressor and whether, subsequently, there is a need for a change in practice or legislation. There previously has been no research of this kind, or on this scale, anywhere in Australia.

Over the next three years, the New South Wales government has committed additional funding to build a strong evidence base to ensure efforts are based on evidence. This will include evaluation of the projects funded under the new Domestic and Family Violence Funding Program.

Queensland

The *Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research* is funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services to conduct research, professional development, education and community engagement activities with respect to domestic and family violence in Queensland.

Tasmania

The implementation of the *Safe at Home Information Management System* will be a major step towards building the Tasmanian evidence base. The aim of this project is to improve information sharing on family violence cases between key Safe at Home Agencies, to reduce the risk to safety of victims and provide a seamless coordinated service response. Moreover, the Australian Institute of Criminology, Sentencing Advisory Council and Department of Health and Human Services Kids Come First Project are poised to conduct research into patterns of offending, sentencing outcomes in family violence matters and the proportion of Indigenous children exposed to family violence, respectively, using this database.

The *Safe at Home Information Management System* is due to come online in 2012 and will further improve information sharing on family violence cases, resulting in a seamless, coordinated service response.

South Australia

Coronial Inquests into domestic violence-related deaths: In 2010, the South Australian Office for Women established a Senior Research Officer (Domestic Violence) position, in partnership with the Coroner's Office, to research and investigate open and closed deaths related to domestic violence. The position identifies domestic violence issues and relevant service systems and investigates the adequacy of system responses. This advice forms part of the Coronial brief and builds the capacity of the Coronial Inquest to explore domestic violence deaths and recommend improvements with a preventative focus.

Northern Territory

Domestic and Family Violence Data Scoping Project: A project officer from the ABS was based in the previous Department of Health and Families from March to September 2010, undertaking a project examining existing domestic and family violence data collection in the Northern Territory. The project's final report maps existing data sources and makes several recommendations on a strategy to improve the quality, consistency and reliability of data.

Northern Territory Government Data systems enhancement and Domestic and Family Violence Data Scoping Project: Two data enhancement initiatives have been undertaken to increase the capacity of existing data systems used in all Northern Territory hospitals and

Northern Territory Police to collect and report on domestic and family violence incidents and service responses. The collection and analysis of the additional data from these systems will make significant contributions to evidence-based interventions.

Western Australia

Data Working Group: The Department for Child Protection has established a State Data Working Group to analyse existing data collections, in order to identify gaps and work towards more consistent data collection across the state.

Breaching Safety: The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (Western Australia) received \$55,405 from Lotterywest to undertake qualitative research about breaches of Violence Restraining Orders. The project seeks to interview 30 men who have breached a Violence Restraining Order, to investigate why these breaches occurred and to identify options or solutions to reduce the incidence of this crime and, therefore, to improve safety for women and children. The research team consists of Chief Investigator, Winthrop Professor Donna Chung, from Population Health at the University of Western Australia, Damian Green from Communicare, and the Department for Child Protection. The final report is expected to be available in December 2013.

Victoria

The Victorian *Family Violence Database* is an important tool for government and stakeholders developing evidence-based policy for family violence in the state. Data sources and analysis in the database include family violence incidents reported through police, courts, human services, health and housing agencies. The fifth volume of the database was released in the first half of 2012, presenting eleven years' worth of Victorian data. It has been commended by the ALRC in its report, *Family Violence—A National Legal Response*, as the most comprehensive of its kind.

Commonwealth

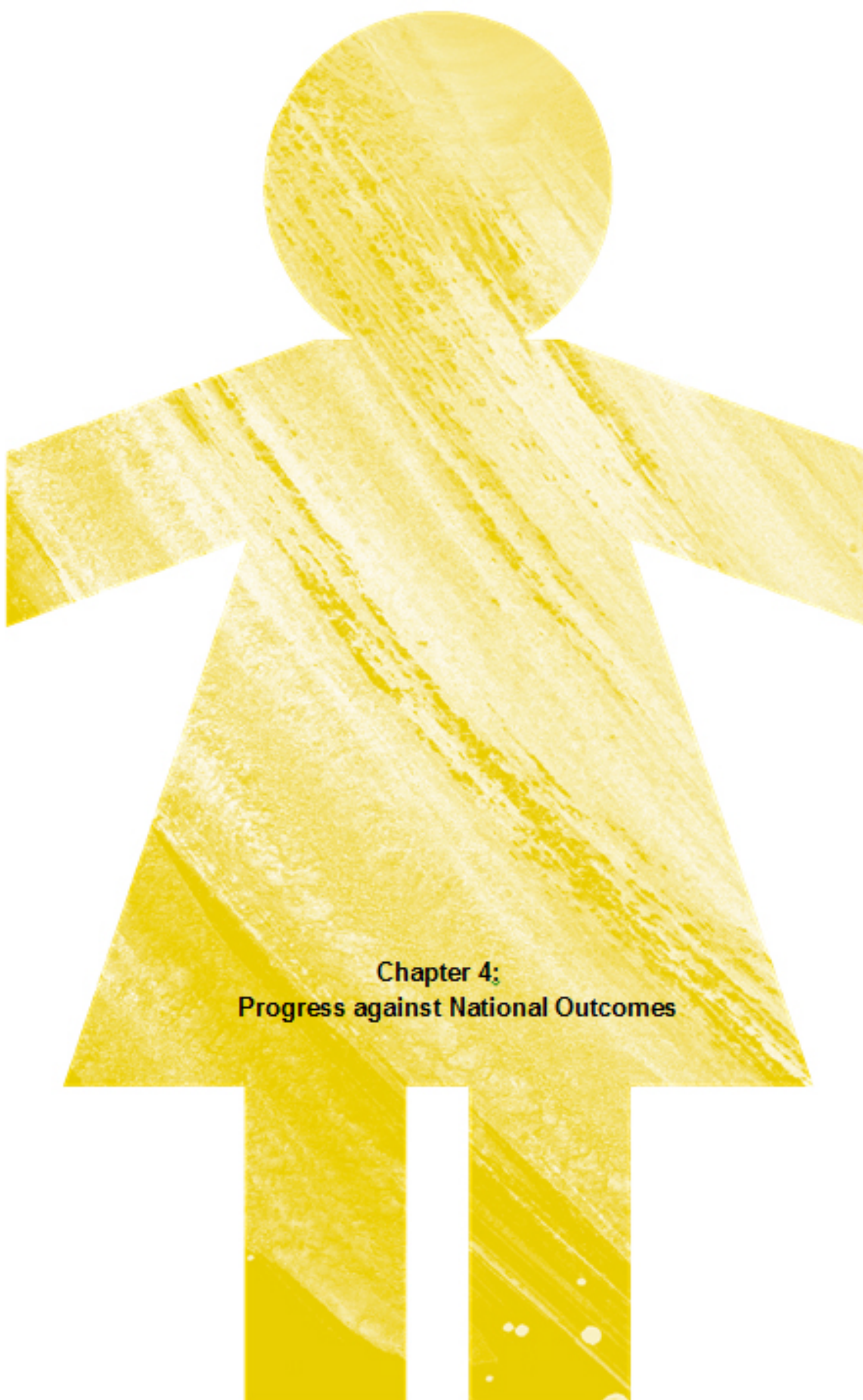
In January 2011, the Commonwealth Government announced a \$5 million *Longitudinal Study of Australians Vulnerable to Homelessness* (LSAVH), which is being conducted by the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research. LSAHV will provide crucial information about pathways into and out of homelessness and outcomes of homelessness. It is the first study of homelessness of its kind and will follow 1,500 people across Australia, interviewing them every six months over two years. LSAHV will inform future policy directions in areas such as:

- the nature of, and reasons for, homelessness;
- trajectories and tipping points of moving into and out of homelessness; and
- use of support services.

Violence Against Women Queensland Conference—Community led

In August 2012, an alliance of seven domestic violence and sexual assault networks coordinated by the Brisbane Domestic Violence Advocacy Service hosted a conference to share best practice methods for supporting, and providing services to, women affected by sexual assault and domestic violence across Queensland. The conference aimed to enhance connectedness within the domestic violence and sexual assault sectors and to inform workers of directions in service provision, policy and practice. The conference was funded by the Queensland government and supported by the Commonwealth government. Alliance members were:

- Queensland Sexual Assault Network
- South East Queensland Combined Women's Network
- Queensland Domestic Violence Service Network
- North Queensland Women's Service Network
- Service and Practitioners for the Elimination of Abuse Queensland
- Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Network.



This chapter discusses progress of the **Immediate National Initiatives**, which the Commonwealth Government agreed to implement, and the **related actions** that all Australian governments are undertaking under each of the six National Outcomes under the National Plan.

A number of Immediate National Initiatives have also been identified as National Priorities under the National Implementation Plan for the First Action Plan. They are:

- Implement social marketing and awareness campaigns to encourage young people to develop healthy and respectful relationships.
- Examine and develop media codes of practice for reporting sexual assault and domestic violence.
- Fund White Ribbon's Initiative for Workplaces project to involve workplaces in reducing violence against women.
- Fund the Australian Domestic Violence Clearinghouse Domestic Violence Workplace Rights and Entitlements Project.
- Work through the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to support the inclusion of respectful relationships education in phase three of the Australian Curriculum.
- Continue to implement and evaluate the national respectful relationships program.
- Develop and trial new models and approaches to improve police responses and community planning for Indigenous family safety.
- Develop community safety plans in 29 Remote Service Delivery sites.
- Through the Indigenous Family Safety Program, fund initiatives that create better links and information sharing between local police and service providers focused on preventing and protecting families against violence; and research on appropriate tools for the states and territories to use when allocating police resources.
- Expand the 1800RESPECT: Domestic and Sexual Violence Counselling Service.
- Develop national standards and integrate 1800RESPECT with state and territory services.
- Support better service delivery for children, Indigenous women and women with disabilities.
- Develop a National Workforce Agenda to support and improve workforces involved in reducing violence against women.
- Implement a multi-disciplinary training package for police, lawyers, judicial officers, counsellors and other professionals working in the family law system.
- Develop options for a national scheme for domestic and family violence orders.
- Conduct research into perpetrator interventions, and use this to develop best practice guidelines and national standards.
- Develop and trial new models and approaches to improve police responses to Indigenous family safety.

As these are key areas of work for all Australian governments over the first three years of the National Plan, they have been discussed in **Chapter 3** and are not included in this chapter.

4.1 National Outcome One—Communities are safe and free from violence

Positive and respectful community attitudes are critical to Australian women and their children living free from violence in safe communities.

Under National Outcome 1, three strategies have been identified to improve the safety of Australian communities:

- Strategy 1.1: Promoting community involvement.
- Strategy 1.2: Focusing on primary prevention.
- Strategy 1.3: Advancing gender equality.

Strategy 1.1: Promoting community involvement

This strategy focuses on encouraging people throughout Australia to take a role in preventing and reducing violence against women, including supporting men to discourage violent behaviour and challenge discrimination and gender stereotyping.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Continue the National Binge Drinking Strategy

The 2010–11 Federal Budget included:

- \$25 million over four years for a Community Sponsorship Fund to work in partnership with key National Sporting Organisations to provide sporting environments, from national through to community level, that are alcohol-promotion free;
- \$20 million over four years for Community Level Initiatives; and
- \$5 million over four years for the enhancement of Telephone Counselling Helplines and possible extension of the social marketing campaign that commenced in October 2012.

Support local Indigenous communities to take action against alcohol supply where it is leading to high levels of violence through the new Indigenous Family Safety Program

The Indigenous Family Safety Agenda, supported in part by the Indigenous Family Safety Program, funds innovative initiatives focused on: addressing alcohol problems; more effective police protection; working with local community leaders to strengthen social norms against violence; and coordinating support services to aid recovery by people who have experienced violence.

In 2011–12, the Indigenous Family Safety Program provided approximately \$7 million for 32 projects to deliver a broad range of services targeted for Indigenous people across urban, regional and remote Australia. Of the 32 projects:

- All have a role in changing negative attitudes and behaviours.
- Seventeen play a role in addressing alcohol problems.

- Seventeen play a role in achieving more effective referral and local service coordination.
- Seven play a role in more effective policing and offending responses.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Northern Territory

The *Everybody's Business* Subcommittee has developed a collaborative approach to the planning, provision and evaluation of sexual and reproductive health, community education and service delivery in migrant and refugee communities. The Subcommittee, comprising government, non-government and community representatives, developed a strategic approach to providing a specialist service to small populations with complex, high support needs, including a pilot program in Darwin with the Somali community.

The Northern Territory Police funded Ruby Gaea Darwin Centre Against Rape Inc to work in partnership with Bima Wear Association Inc to produce two animations. The first to promote the Child Abuse Taskforce hotline number and a second to describe the consequences of sexting for young people. The animations will screen nationally and throughout remote NT.

The characters in the animation are Tiwi women from Bima Wear and Wurrumiyanga community members from Bathurst Island, Tiwi Islands.

Queensland

Education Queensland chairs the national Safe and Supportive School Communities working party, which manages the annual *National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence*. The National Day calls on all students and school communities to '*Take a Stand Together*' against bullying and violence. Schools are supported to run local activities and raise awareness of anti-bullying initiatives.

Australian Capital Territory

Summer of Respect, an anti-violence campaign that seeks to change community values in the ACT by improving community awareness of sexual assault and violence against women and children, was held in 2011 with funding assistance from the Australian Capital Territory Government. The campaign is organised by the ACT Women's Services Network and brings together community organisations to direct and host activities and events that contribute to educating the community on the continued impact of violence against women and children. Summer of Respect events were held again in 2012.

The inaugural *Australian Capital Territory Partners in Prevention* function held in November 2012 brought together leaders from key corporate and industry areas in the Australian Capital Territory to work together to identify ways to prevent violence against women,

individually, in the workplace and organisationally, over the next 12 months. The event is a collaboration between community, government, business and media agencies and will be held annually.

The Australian Capital Territory has developed the *Women's Safety Assessments Toolkit* to assist organisations to identify and address women's personal safety issues when planning public events. Australian Capital Territory Government agencies have committed to undertaking women's safety assessments as standard practice for public events.

Western Australia

Western Australia Police's *Operation Reset* is a collaborative initiative between the Child Abuse Squad/Child Assessment and Interview Team, the Department for Child Protection and various agencies and schools to provide education in response to child abuse in regional Western Australia. In 2011–2012, this initiative was rolled out in Kalumburu in the Kimberley region and in the Goldfields-Esperance region (*Operation Deagon*).

Western Australia Police, with the Australian Hotels Association, have developed and implemented a sexual assault awareness campaign, *No Means No*. Posters promoting the campaign will be displayed in hotel toilets and bottle shops.

In conjunction with Western Australia Police, the Department for Child Protection and Rio Tinto, the Strong Women's Group has developed *SEX and the LAW* talking posters that aim to provide education relating to the law on sexual/physical abuse. Posters will be distributed in remote Aboriginal communities.

South Australia

To date, there are 13 active Homelessness and/or Violence Against Women collaborations across South Australia. These collaborations aim to influence workers in regions to collaborate in the prevention of homelessness and violence against women. Some highlights include:

- Partnerships have recently been developed in the Coober Pedy region to support the Wellbeing Centre about to be implemented in the town and to develop a holistic service model that will support women, children and men in this region.
- The Western Adelaide region previously had limited collaborations, and many services in the area were unaware of the work being undertaken with mutual clients by other services. This region now has an active Violence Against Women Collaboration.
- The Riverland region has implemented a Community Services Alliance, for services in the area to collaborate on issues of homelessness and violence against women.

A Regionalisation project has been implemented to highlight best practice for Homelessness and Violence Against Women collaborations, with a DVD being produced to help educate the community about them.

New South Wales

In 2011, Women NSW provided around \$80,000 to local Domestic Violence Committees to undertake a wide range of community activities as part of the *16 Days of Activism to Stop Violence Against Women* campaign.

Strategy 1.2: Focus on primary prevention

This strategy focuses on building positive attitudes, beliefs, social norms and ways for organisations to confront violent behaviour.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Develop best practice benchmarks for work in primary prevention

The National Plan identifies the need to promote community involvement in primary prevention, including encouraging schools, community, sporting and business groups to prevent, respond to, and speak out against, violence. The expansion of existing standards and best practice information into national best practice benchmarks will support stronger understanding of primary prevention across stakeholder groups and the implementation of high-quality prevention activities.

Background on the issues for building primary prevention capacity was provided to NPIP at their first meeting in April 2012.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Victoria

The Victorian Local Government *Preventing Violence Against Women in Our Community* program aims to develop and implement prevention programs in Victoria. This initiative, announced in June 2011, supports three clusters of three adjacent local governments to drive attitudinal and behavioural change across a range of settings and services in communities. Through work with community organisations, schools, workplaces, sporting clubs and local media, a 'whole of community model' will be delivered to prevent violence against women.

New South Wales

In 2012, the New South Wales Government announced a new three-year *Domestic and Family Violence Funding Program* which will make strategic investments in prevention and building the evidence. It includes a Prevention Partnerships program that will invest in innovative and effective practice in New South Wales through the design and delivery of carefully selected exemplar models.

Tasmania

Play by the Rules is a resource that offers online training, information and resources for clubs and sporting organisations to ensure everyone involved in sport can participate in enjoyable, safe environments, free from discrimination or harassment. Sport and Recreation Tasmania has been promoting this program to sporting organisations and high schools to promote respectful relationships in all sporting activities.

Funding has also been provided, over two years, to the Australian Drug Foundation to reintroduce the *Good Sports Program* in Tasmania. The program aims to change the behaviour of players, supporters and members of community sporting clubs, particularly in respect to alcohol-related problems such as violence and assault.

Australian Capital Territory

The Domestic Violence Prevention Council of the Australian Capital Territory is an independent statutory body appointed by the ACT Attorney General to advise on matters relating to domestic violence and to promote interagency collaboration to prevent domestic violence. It comprises government and non-government representatives, including a designated Indigenous position.

National conference for members of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities—Community led

In April 2013, the Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AMaRWA) and AWAVA are partnering to host a national conference for members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, experts and service providers. This conference will foster the development and implementation of competent and appropriate policy and service delivery models for immigrant and refugee women experiencing family violence.

Strategy 1.3: Advance gender equality

At every level of society, gender inequality has a profound influence on violence against women and their children. This strategy aims to build greater equality and respect in order to reduce attitudes that support or justify violence against women.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Develop and implement measures to increase women's economic security, including:

- the introduction of paid parental leave;
- superannuation reform; and
- increased support for pensioners.

Paid Parental Leave

Australia's first national *Paid Parental Leave* (PPL) scheme, introduced on 1 January 2011, provides eligible working mothers with up to 18 weeks of Parental Leave Pay. From 1 January 2013, the scheme will include a dedicated two-week payment for fathers and other partners. The scheme promotes child and maternal health, encourages women's labour force participation and advances broad social objectives, such as achieving greater gender equity and balance between paid work and family life. By 30 September 2012, more than 226,000 expectant and new parents had claimed Parental Leave Pay and, of these, more than 200,000 had received all or part of their payment. The scheme has extended coverage of paid parental leave, with around 95 per cent of working women now having access to employer-funded leave or the Government scheme, compared with 51 per cent previously.

Superannuation reform

In May 2010, the Commonwealth Government announced a suite of superannuation measures as part of the *Stronger, Fairer, Simpler* tax reforms. Measures under this reform include the Low Income Superannuation Contribution, which provides an annual superannuation contribution of up to \$500 to those earning under \$37,000 from 1 July 2012, boosting the retirement savings of an estimated 2.1 million women. The Concessional Contributions Cap has also been permanently extended from 1 July 2012 for individuals aged 50 or over with a total superannuation balance of less than \$500,000, enabling women with broken work patterns to make additional 'catch-up' contributions close to retirement.

From 2013–14, the superannuation guarantee rate will rise to 9.25 per cent from the current 9 per cent and then rise incrementally to 12 per cent by 2019–20. The superannuation guarantee age limit has also been raised from 70 to 75, providing an incentive for mature-age workers to remain in the workforce while boosting their retirement savings. With these changes, a 30-year-old woman with average weekly earnings and a broken work pattern will have an extra \$85,000 in retirement.

Increased support for pensioners

On 20 September 2009, the Commonwealth Government delivered the *Secure and Sustainable Pension Reforms* that improved the financial security of recipients, particularly women, who form the majority of single age pensioners. From 20 September 2012, single people receiving the maximum rate of Age Pension, Carer Payment and adult Disability Support Pension, as well as veteran income support recipients, are receiving an extra \$17.10 a fortnight, and couples combined on maximum rate are receiving an extra \$25.80 a fortnight. Of the 3.5 million Australian pensioners who are benefiting from increases delivered by the pension reforms, around 1.8 million are women.

Other measures

The strategies above complement other key Commonwealth initiatives to improve women's economic security, including:

- passage of the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Amendment Bill 2012*, which aims to improve gender equality in Australian workplaces, in 2012;
- a record \$22.4 billion investment over four years in early childhood education and care;
- the *Fair Work Act 2009*, which contains reformed equal remuneration provisions that have made it possible for the Australian Services Union to run a claim for equal pay for community service workers before Fair Work Australia; and
- the Financial Management Program (FMP) to build financial resilience and wellbeing among those most at risk of financial and social exclusion and disadvantage.

Commonwealth Financial Counselling, one of the strategies under FMP, helps people in personal financial difficulty to address their financial problems and make informed choices. Fifty-eight per cent of people who accessed Commonwealth Financial Counselling in 2011–2012 were women.

For more information about what the Commonwealth Government has done to advance gender equality since 2007, with a focus on women's economic and social wellbeing, see the Women's Statement 2012 at [Women's Statement 2012](#).

Develop and implement measures to increase women's leadership opportunities including:

- **funding National Women's Alliances;**
- **delivering gender targets on government boards; and**
- **funding scholarships to support more women on private sector boards.**

Funding National Women's Alliances

The Commonwealth provides core funding of \$3.6 million over three years for six National Women's Alliances. The six Alliances, announced in March 2010, are an equal mix of issues-based and stakeholder-based representative groups and represent over 180 women's organisations. The role of the Alliances is to engage with and represent the views of all women, advocate on behalf of women, and influence policy making to deliver improved gender equality. The National Women's Alliances are:

- Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA);
- Economic Security for Women (eS4W);
- Equality Rights Alliance (ERA);
- National Rural Women's Coalition (NRWC);
- Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AMaRWA); and
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA).

Delivering gender targets on government boards

The Commonwealth Government has committed to achieve a target of a minimum of 40 per cent women and 40 per cent men on Australian Government boards by 2015. The remaining 20 per cent can be either women or men. As at 30 June 2012, women held 38.4 per cent of Government board positions—an all-time high for the Commonwealth Government.

Scholarships to support more women on private sector boards

The Australian Government has provided funding for two rounds of the Board Diversity Scholarship program offered by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. The program aims to support an increase in the representation of women on Australian boards.

Almost 2,000 applications were received for the first round of scholarships in 2011, and 70 full fee scholarships were awarded to board-ready women to undertake the Australian Institute of Company Directors' *Company Directors Course* or *Mastering the Boardroom* program. In June 2012, the Prime Minister announced that the Commonwealth Government would provide \$225,000 towards a further 70 scholarships. Recipients of this second round of scholarships were announced in December 2012. There are six Indigenous Australians and 12 people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds among the recipients.

Protections for women who experience violence in Australia offered to newly arrived migrants and refugees

The Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship administers the Humanitarian Settlement Services (HSS) program to assist eligible humanitarian clients, including those who have experienced domestic and family violence, to start their new lives in Australia. HSS is designed to equip clients with the knowledge and skills to participate in the social and economic life of Australia. In the event of domestic and family violence incidents, clients are connected to relevant and appropriate specialist and mainstream support mechanisms, including emergency accommodation and counselling. The HSS program aims to deliver critical and important messages early about personal safety, respectful relationships and child protection. Information regarding child protection and domestic violence is a key component of the Australian Law module.

Local Area Coordination

HSS service providers develop links and networks to domestic and family violence and other crisis service agencies. Individual case management is supported by regular Local Area Coordination (LAC) meetings. The objective of LAC meetings is to improve service coordination and cooperation between key service delivery agencies, including representatives and practitioners from the following services:

- refugee, child and mental health;
- domestic and family violence and other crisis services;

- employment and education;
- accommodation providers;
- police and emergency services; and
- Centrelink (Department of Human Services).

Complex Case Support

The Complex Case Support (CCS) program delivers specialised and intensive case management services to humanitarian entrants with exceptional needs and is specifically targeted at supporting clients whose needs extend beyond the scope of other settlement services. CCS clients usually have several intense or critical needs that require access to multiple services, such as: mental health (including torture and trauma services); physical health; domestic and family violence intervention; counselling; special services for children or youth; and support to manage accommodation.

Family Stream Migration

From November 2012, the Australian Government improved the operation and accessibility of family violence provisions under migration law. These improvements are a partial response to the ALRC's report into family violence and Commonwealth law. Changes include streamlining the process for applicants to provide evidence to make a claim of family violence. Amendments to the family violence provisions in migration law were developed in consultation with over 60 stakeholders across state and territory governments, migration agents and legal services, women's refuges and family violence support organisations.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Northern Territory

In 2011, the Northern Territory Government established a Gender Equality Panel. The Panel is tasked with an audit and review of current gender equality measures across all portfolios and agencies, with a mandate to progress gender equality concurrently with the national reform agenda.

South Australia

In 2004, the South Australian Government was the first jurisdiction to set gender-balance targets in their Strategic Plan.

- The first leadership target is to achieve a 50 per cent representation of women on State Government boards and committees. As at June 2012, 45.7 per cent of members of government boards and committees were women.
- The second target is to increase the number of women chairing these boards and committees to 50 per cent. As at June 2012, 37 per cent of chairs on government boards and committees were women.

- The third leadership target is to increase the number of women in executive positions within government to 50 per cent by 2014. As at June 2011, 43 per cent of executives were women.
- The final leadership target is to increase the number of women nominating for election to local, state and federal government. This target seeks to ensure that women are given the opportunity to be part of leadership decisions at the highest level. In 2010 (the baseline year), approximately three in 10 candidates in local, state and federal government elections were women.

Victoria

The Victorian Government provided \$200,000 funding over three years to the Victorian Local Government Association for the *Think Women for Local Government 2012* project. The project aims to increase the numbers and diversity of women candidates in Victoria's 79 local government elections in 2012 and 2016. This will be achieved by working with rural, regional and metropolitan local councils, as well as with peak local government organisations, to provide information sessions, workshops, resources and mentoring to raise women's awareness of local government candidacy and to encourage them to run for the 2012 local government elections. Ten regional forums for potential candidates and supporters were held across Victoria in 2011–12.

The Victorian Women's Register is a statewide register of board-ready women managed by the Victorian Government. The register aims to increase the representation of women as leaders and is an initiative to support achieving the Victorian Government's target that women make up 50 per cent of new appointments to government boards. Over 2,200 women were on the register in June 2012.

Announced in November 2011 and awarded in May 2012, the Victorian Government and the Australian Institute of Company Directors jointly funded scholarships for 34 women on not-for-profit boards to attend the highly acclaimed Company Directors Course. The training provided practical tools and experience in corporate governance for women on a broad range of boards, including in the disability, environment, health and ageing sectors.

Western Australia

The draft *Western Australian Women's Health Strategy 2013–2017* works towards the achievement of real life, beneficial health outcomes for women. Gender equality recognises the different challenges that women and men face in managing their health, including their different health requirements and the different barriers they face in accessing services. The strategic areas for reform are in education and training, decision-making processes, promoting best practice and intervention with attention to the impact of gender in order to determine service effectiveness and inform service planning. The strategy is due for release in 2013.

New South Wales

In 2012, the New South Wales Government has:

Developed and implemented measures to increase women's economic security, including:

- establishing the NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity, which provides specialist advice on opportunities to enhance women's economic development and financial security;
- drafting the *Women in Trades Strategy*, which outlines a four-point model for increasing the proportion of women employed in male-dominated trades; and
- completing eight women in trades projects—partnering with industry, non-government organisations, local government and the training and education sector to encourage and support girls and women entering male-dominated trades.

Developed and implemented measures to increase women's leadership opportunities, including:

- designing a range of strategies to increase the number of women on New South Wales Government boards and committees.

Tasmania

The *Micro-credit Program* supports women on low incomes to develop micro-enterprises, and the *Social Enterprise Loan Fund* has been established to assist social enterprises as pathways for women's economic participation. Both programs are open to all Tasmanian women.

Australian Capital Territory

The ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Women provides strategic advice to the Australian Capital Territory Government on issues affecting women in the Australian Capital Territory. It also provides a link between the Minister for Women and women in the Australian Capital Territory community. The work of the Council reflects the objectives of the ACT Women's Plan. Through consultation with women, women's groups and community organisations in the Australian Capital Territory, the Council monitors progress of achievements towards the objectives of the Plan, which includes *strategies to prevent violence against women and their children and instil an anti-violence culture in the community*.

Brilliant Idea, launched in March 2010, provides Australian Capital Territory women on low incomes with access to interest-free loans of up to \$3,000 to help them establish or further develop a business. The Program is administered through the Lighthouse Innovation Business Centre, which provides women with access to mentoring, training and networking opportunities.

The *ACT Women's Return to Work Grants Program* is an Australian Capital Territory Government initiative providing women returning to the paid workforce with financial

assistance, information and resources to help them to reach this goal. Individual grants of up to \$1,000 are available to women on low incomes who have been absent from the workforce for more than 12 months due to caring responsibilities, and who meet the program criteria.

Commonwealth and NAB—Collaborative

No Interest Loan Scheme

Many Australians in financial hardship cannot buy essentials such as refrigerators or washing machines because they do not have a credit rating or the savings. As at September 2012, affordable loan schemes passed the milestone of helping 50,000 Australians under financial stress get back on their feet.

The Commonwealth Government partners with the NAB and Good Shepherd Microfinance to deliver these loans and is investing a further \$58.3 million over four years to expand the scheme. These schemes increase economic independence by helping low-income individuals and families to buy essential household items without having to commit to high-cost alternative credit.

4.2 National Outcome Two—Relationships are respectful

Changing and shaping attitudes and behaviours of young people is critical to preventing domestic and family violence and sexual assault in the future.

Under National Outcome 2, three strategies have been identified to encourage respectful relationships:

- Strategy 2.1: Build on young people's capacity to develop respectful relationships.
- Strategy 2.2: Support adults to model respectful relationships.
- Strategy 2.3: Promote positive male attitudes and behaviours.

Strategy 2.1: Build on young people's capacity to develop respectful relationships

This strategy acknowledges that education plays a key role in equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to develop and maintain non-violent, respectful and equitable relationships.

This strategy's **Immediate National Initiatives** were discussed in **Chapter 3**.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory Government provided seed funding for the development of a primary prevention, anti-violence, respectful relationships program. *Respect, Communicate, Choose*, for 8–12 year olds, builds the knowledge and skills of young people to support the development of relationships based on respect, equality and safety. The funding enabled the YWCA of Canberra to develop a program manual for educators and trainers and an information resource booklet about respectful relationships for 8–12 year olds.

In February 2012, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, with funding from the Australian Capital Territory Government, commenced the *Prevention of Violence on Campus* program. The program includes resources designed to address the causes and consequences of sexual violence. The development of the program was informed by local student focus groups and by the findings of the National Union of Students' *Talk About It* survey.

South Australia

The Legal Services Commission received funding under the *Don't Cross the Line Community Anti-Violence Awareness Campaign* to undertake the *Expect Respect* project. This highly successful program was a finalist in the Building Communities Category of the 2011 Premier's Awards. *Expect Respect* is a drama-based legal education project that aims to promote safe and respectful relationships among young people by raising awareness of sexual offences. *Expect Respect* was delivered in schools and alternative learning centres in Adelaide and regional areas, including five workshops at the Magill Training Centre. An estimated 4,000 young people participated in the workshops.

Victoria

The Victorian Government has a range of programs to support young people's capacity to develop respectful relationships, including:

- development of respectful relationships curriculum for students in years eight and nine;
- \$10.5 million to deliver *eSmart* to every Victorian government school and 300 Victorian Catholic and independent schools, in partnership with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation. *eSmart* is an initiative to help schools create a cultural norm of smart, safe and responsible use of communications technologies. Almost 60 per cent of eligible schools have registered and commenced their *eSmart* journey;
- \$4 million to build an online toolkit to support schools and their communities to understand the risks and strategies needed to address bullying and cyber-safety, report and respond to incidents and stand up and make a difference; and
- collaboration between child and adolescent mental health services and *Schools Early Action Program* for a multilevel prevention and early intervention program developed by The Royal Children's Hospital to reduce the incidence and impact of conduct disorders and antisocial behaviour.

Queensland

The Department of Education, Training and Employment has developed a *Learning and Wellbeing Framework* that guides Queensland state schools to develop a whole school approach to supporting wellbeing that is tailored to the specific needs of their school community. Schools are supported to create, enhance and maintain positive cultures and embed student wellbeing in all aspects of school life by:

- acknowledging the importance of wellbeing;
- developing a rich school culture to create a sense of belonging and self-responsibility; and
- embedding social and emotional capabilities within the general curriculum.

Northern Territory

The *Sexual Assault Prevention Program in Secondary Schools* takes a whole school, long-term approach to reducing the incidence and impacts of sexual assault. The program addresses the underlying causes of violence and promotes respectful behaviours. Ruby Gaea was funded to deliver the program from 2010–2013. Over 900 students have participated in the program, with expansion to additional schools being explored.

Connect, Respect, Protect: the National Centre Against Bullying Conference—Community led

In June 2012, the National Centre Against Bullying hosted a conference to explore the ways young people use social media for connecting, learning and creating, as well as ways social media can be used to support vulnerable young people. The conference recognised that bullying is a relationship issue and requires relationship solutions and integrated, whole-of-community responses. The conference was sponsored by the Victorian Government and NAB.

Strategy 2.2 Support adults to model respectful relationships

This strategy is about supporting adults to model positive, respectful relationships.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Support workshops for adult survivors of sexual abuse, parents and spouses through the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children

The Commonwealth provided funding of \$126,000 for Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA) to deliver 13 *Creating New Possibilities* workshops in 2013. *Creating New Possibilities* is a program of workshops aimed at adult survivors of all forms of child abuse and neglect, male and female, and their supporters. Workshops on safety, building effective coping strategies, the importance of support and re-visiting one's story, understanding how childhood abuse

can impact on current or past behaviours, feelings and/or physical and psychological health, and the various stages of the healing process, are included.

The Commonwealth Government also provided funding of over \$100,000 to Heartfelt House to deliver their program *Taking the First Steps* to support adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Taking the First Steps* is a non-residential group program using a range of approaches, including psycho-educational, feminist and cognitive behavioural theory. The objective of the seminars is to educate families and communities about keeping children safe, and to provide support for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Heartfelt House is conducting the *Taking the First Steps* program on the north coast of New South Wales between July 2012 and June 2013.

Fund the Family Support Program to support vulnerable and disadvantaged families, and separating parents and their children

On 1 July 2011, the Commonwealth Government launched the new *Family Support Program* (FSP) with funding of \$1.061 billion over three years. A major focus of the reforms to the FSP has been to increase targeting of resources to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families and children in the community.

FSP supports two core streams: *Families and Children's Services* and *Family Law Services*. As part of the *Families and Children's Services* stream, around 85 non-government organisations receive funding to offer Family and Relationship Services. These include counselling for individuals and couples experiencing relationship difficulties, mediation, information and referral. During 2011–12, nearly 176,000 clients accessed these services.

There is also a range of specialist services for families impacted by domestic and family violence. Activities aim to support behavioural change for both men and women through group work, anger management, counselling, dispute resolution services and individual therapeutic responses. During 2011–12, 10,573 clients were provided with more intensive support through Specialised Family Violence Services.

The *Family Law Services* stream provides support to families with relationship difficulties and who are in the process of separating or have separated. The stream also includes initiatives aimed at providing intensive support for children in families with high levels of conflict. During 2011–2012:

- 22,361 clients accessed *Family Dispute Resolution* services;
- nearly 6,000 children from high-conflict families were assisted through the *Supporting Children After Separation Program*;
- 14,619 clients from high-conflict, separating families received help through the *Parenting Orders Programs* and *Post Separating Cooperative Parenting* services, which aim to help parents agree on parenting arrangements that meet the best interests of their children; and

- nearly 40,000 clients were assisted through *Children's Contact Services*. These services enable children of separated parents in situations of high conflict to have safe contact with the parent they do not live with.

Extend work in the detection, investigation and prosecution of online sexual exploitation—Combating Online Child Sex Exploitation

The Australian Government is committed to taking all necessary action to protect children in Australia and internationally from sexual exploitation. The Australian Federal Police High Tech Crime Operations portfolio works closely with national and international partners to investigate offences committed through the use of the internet to facilitate the sexual exploitation of children.

For the financial years 2005–06 to 2011–12, there have been 463 offenders charged with 1,221 online child sex exploitation offences.

The Australian Federal Police participates in a range of international initiatives to combat online child sexual abuse, including:

- contributing to the Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse, an initiative of the United States and European Union which seeks to unite all countries around the world to better identify and assist victims of online child sexual abuse and prosecute perpetrators;
- chairing the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT), from December 2009 to December 2012, and continuing as an active member. The VGT is an international collaboration of law enforcement and private industry partners working to help protect children from online child abuse and related contact offending; and
- actively participating in the Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency Child Protection Working Group. This is a collaborative approach taken by all Australian law enforcement agencies (supported by CrimTrac) in child protection endeavours.

The *ThinkUKnow* cyber-safety program delivers awareness-raising sessions for parents, carers and teachers across Australia to bridge the knowledge gap between adults and young people about the internet and mobile technologies and to encourage more open dialogue between them. The presentation covers cyber bullying, sexting, online grooming, scams, identity theft and other issues and is supported by online resources through

Think U Know. *ThinkUKnow* is a partnership between the Australian Federal Police and Microsoft and is supported by ninemsn and Datacom. In the financial year 2011–12, *ThinkUKnow* delivered 222 presentations to parents, carers and teachers, with 6,855 people participating in these presentations.

Australian Federal Police cyber-safety presentations are delivered to young people aged primarily between 11 and 18. These presentations seek to educate children on the risks they can encounter online, exploring issues such as sexting, cyber bullying, social

networking, digital footprints and the importance of protecting their reputations. Importantly, young people develop ideas for what they can do to protect themselves and what to do if things go wrong. In the financial year 2011–12, there were 281 cyber-safety presentations delivered to primary and secondary school students, with 37,184 people participating in these presentations.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Northern Territory

The *Alternative to Violence* project, funded by the Northern Territory Government, is a training program enabling participants to deal with potentially violent situations in new and creative ways. In 2011–12, Melaleuca Refugee Centre piloted the project, which adapts an internationally recognised model of building peace for emerging communities from refugee backgrounds in Darwin. The workshops aim to build the capacity of community members to meet individual and family needs, maintain harmony and foster non-violence within the home and community.

A Northern Territory-wide telephone counselling service provides evidence-based support, referral and information, including facilitation of the *Triple P Parenting Program*. The service is available for parents and for services supporting parents and families. This service is delivered by Boystown, operators of Kids Helpline.

Tasmania

The *Crime Stoppers Youth Challenge* examines crime in the community and engages a significant number of Tasmanian students. Cyber-crime has been a focal point of the challenge. The Tasmanian Police Service also provides ongoing support to programs such as *Cyber-smart Detective/Hero*, which encourages respectful relationships.

Queensland

The *Transitions Program* provides offenders preparing for release from Queensland Corrective Service centres with specific modules on re-establishing relationships and parenting.

Western Australia

The Western Australia Police Online Child Exploitation Squad is working to support the Australian Communication and Media Authority Cyber-detectives program by providing referrals to their cyber-safety outreach program and referrals to the Australian Federal Police *ThinkUKnow* program.

Through Corrective Services, Western Australia actively promotes respect in all relationships with the use of posters, flyers and, during offender interviews, with the concept of building respectful relationships as opposed to perpetrating domestic and family violence.

Victoria

In March 2012, Victoria Police established *Taskforce Astraea*, which is dedicated to detecting, investigating and prosecuting online child exploitation offences. *Taskforce Astraea* encompasses the former Internet Child Exploitation Team. *Taskforce Astraea* is committed to working with other policing jurisdictions in Victoria as well as government and non-government partners to develop prevention and disruption strategies to curb this growing crime theme of online child exploitation.

Strategy 2.3: Promote positive male attitudes and behaviours

This strategy is about supporting men to speak out in opposition to violence against women.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Fund the White Ribbon Day campaign to promote male intolerance of violence against women to expand to rural and regional areas

The Commonwealth Government provided \$1 million in funding over four years, to June 2011, to the White Ribbon Foundation to expand their reach and influence into rural and regional communities.

Through this funding, White Ribbon:

- boosted the number of White Ribbon Day activities held in rural and regional communities, which saw rapid growth in the number and proportion of Ambassadors coming from regional and rural areas;
- raised awareness of violence through a national *My Oath* campaign aimed at highlighting violence against women and educating men. At June 2011, there were over 12,000 men who had sworn an oath not to remain silent about violence against women;
- developed and distributed over 3,000 schools kits to over 300 schools; and
- increased the number of White Ribbon Ambassadors from 97 in 2005 to over 1,400 in 2011.

Boost funding to the national MensLine to assist callers with issues such as separation, family violence and fathering

The Commonwealth Government provided \$10.6 million of funding for MensLine over three years from 2011–12. MensLine Australia (MensLine) provides an Australia-wide, 24-hour a day, seven days a week, family relationship telephone counselling, information and referral service for men with relationship and family concerns, including men affected by family violence. MensLine uses a range of service responses to meet a range of client needs, including: a call back service and a website for men and professionals working with men; online text-based counselling; moderated website forums; video face-to-face counselling via

Skype for men in rural and remote Australia; and culturally appropriate ongoing support for Australia's Arabic community through its Arabic call back service.

Over the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, a total of 33,890 calls were answered, and 114,075 visits were made to the website.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Queensland

Queensland Police Service assist young Indigenous males aged 15 to 18 years to dream a new future without alcohol misuse and violence, by facilitating a 10-day course with a mentor from their community to model appropriate non-violent behaviour and instil leadership qualities.

4.3 National Outcome Three—Indigenous communities are strengthened

Statistics indicate that Indigenous women experience much higher levels of family violence than non-Indigenous women. Australian governments acknowledge the need for new collaborative approaches to preventing violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The National Plan is focused on supporting Indigenous communities to develop local solutions to preventing violence. This includes encouraging Indigenous women to have a strong voice as community leaders and supporting Indigenous men to reject violence. Improving economic outcomes and opportunities for Indigenous women is critical to reducing violence.

This outcome is designed to work in parallel with other government efforts to strengthen Indigenous communities.

Under National Outcome 3, three strategies have been identified to strengthen Indigenous communities:

- Strategy 3.1: Foster the leadership of Indigenous women within communities and broader Australian society.
- Strategy 3.2: Build community capacity at the local level.
- Strategy 3.3: Improve access to appropriate services.

Strategy 3.1: Foster the leadership of Indigenous women within communities and broader Australian society

This strategy is about recognising and communicating the successes achieved by Indigenous women in their communities.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Fund the Commonwealth Indigenous Women's Program to enhance Indigenous Women's leadership, representation, safety, wellbeing and economic status

The Commonwealth Government's *Indigenous Women's Grants* (IWG) aim to enhance the leadership skills of Indigenous women in a range of areas that contribute to improving outcomes for overcoming Indigenous disadvantage, in line with identified local needs and priorities. The key objectives of IWG are to provide opportunities that improve, increase, promote, encourage and strengthen Indigenous women's leadership within Indigenous communities and organisations. Across the 2010–2011 and 2011–2012 financial years, the Commonwealth Government invested around \$9.2 million in IWG.

Support establishment of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples with 50% representation of women

The Commonwealth Government committed \$29.2 million over five years to December 2013 to the setting up and initial operation of the *National Congress of Australia's First Peoples*.

Women make up 50 per cent of elected positions on the National Congress Board, including a female co-Chair, and over 50 per cent of the individual members are women. Gender balance is considered when delegates are selected for the Annual General Meeting of Congress and in the National Congress Ethics Council.

Support Indigenous women to identify issues and develop their own solutions through funding for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance

In March 2010, the Commonwealth Government announced funding of \$600,000 over three years for NATSIWA, one of six National Women's Alliances. NATSIWA is made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their organisations from across Australia. It provides an unprecedented opportunity for Indigenous women to be heard and to influence policies that affect them and their communities. The ongoing work of NATSIWA means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are better able to share information, identify issues from their own communities and raise their concerns to government, in their own words, and with their own solutions.

Fund initiatives to Close the Gap in Indigenous housing, health, early childhood, economic participation and remote service delivery and develop new targets to hold governments to account

Closing the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage is a goal shared by all Australian governments. This is why, in 2008, all governments in Australia agreed to establish the *Closing the Gap* framework and committed to six ambitious Closing the Gap targets relating to life expectancy, infant mortality, education and employment.

The targets are ambitious, and the Commonwealth Government is working hard to address decades of underinvestment in services and infrastructure. In the 2012 Federal Budget, the Government committed more than \$5.2 billion in funding for employment, education, health services, community development and community safety. This includes a comprehensive \$3.4 billion package over 10 years to support Aboriginal people living in regional and remote areas of the Northern Territory to live strong and independent lives. It also includes a new \$1.5 billion *Remote Jobs and Communities Program* to improve participation and employment services for people living in remote areas of Australia.

In addition to this effort, the Commonwealth Government is already working to Close the Gap on Indigenous disadvantage in a range of important areas. This includes: building 4,200 new houses and refurbishing 4,800 existing houses; tackling chronic disease; expanding health services for Indigenous people and strengthening the Indigenous health workforce; improving the health of mothers, babies and young children; helping Indigenous families and supporting early learning; helping Indigenous people into jobs; helping Indigenous businesses; and creating jobs in government service delivery.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

South Australia

Since 2002, the three-day *State Aboriginal Women's Gathering* has enabled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to share their issues and experiences and to meet and network with each other. The Gathering also helps to ensure that their voices are heard at all levels of Government, helps to further develop their leadership skills, and helps them to acknowledge and celebrate achievements. The 2012 Gathering, held in October, marked its tenth year.

Australian Capital Territory

The *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body* was established to enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the ACT to have a strong, democratically elected voice. Established under the *ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Act 2008*, it consists of seven people representing the interests and aspirations of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. The Elected Body provides direct advice to the Australian Capital Territory Government.

Strategy 3.2: Build community capacity at the local level

This strategy is about supporting communities to develop and implement local actions that reduce violence against women and their children.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Establish the Healing Foundation to address trauma and aid healing in Indigenous communities, with a particular focus on the Stolen Generation

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation* is an independent, national, Indigenous-run, not-for-profit organisation that has been established with funding of \$26.6 million over four years from 2009–10 to support community-based healing initiatives. The Healing Foundation is currently funding 97 projects.

Invest in initiatives under the Indigenous Family Safety Program to work with communities to develop local skills and life-skills education to prevent violence, train local leaders as community change agents and strengthen local governance

Local people are most able to change community attitudes and enforce the view that violence is not normal or acceptable. The Commonwealth Government has invested \$14 million to help more than 100 communities across Australia to reduce family violence and build safer communities. Funding will continue over two years for 32 projects, including:

- The South Australian DCS is receiving more than \$1.3 million to continue its *Cross Borders Program* across the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (NPY) lands of Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. This award-winning program delivers culturally appropriate early intervention programs to perpetrators of family violence and has proven to help participants change their behaviour.
- Wuchopperen Health Service is receiving over \$800,000 to deliver the *Healthy Happy Families* project across Cairns, Yarrabah, Kuranda and Atherton. This project aims to bring about increased awareness of family violence and better access to Indigenous family violence services.

Provide a flexible funding pool for quick and flexible responses to high priority needs identified by communities in the 29 Remote Service Delivery priority areas

A \$46 million Indigenous Remote Service Delivery Special Account supports the Closing the Gap policy framework and objectives agreed by COAG. Around 150 projects have been funded to date, including activities to build local community governance and capacity and to address community safety.

Support community-led solutions for addressing alcohol and substance abuse

Breaking the Cycle

The Commonwealth Government is providing \$20 million over three years (2011–12 to 2013–14) to support new community-led solutions to tackle alcohol and substance abuse in Indigenous communities. Under this initiative, interested Indigenous communities will be supported to develop alcohol and substance abuse management plans.

Tackling Alcohol Abuse

The Commonwealth Government's fundamental concern around alcohol management is the protection of vulnerable women and children. The Commonwealth Government has allocated \$75.6 million over 10 years to the *Tackling Alcohol Abuse* measure, to continue to work with Aboriginal communities and the Northern Territory Government to reduce alcohol-related harm.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Northern Territory

Throughout 2010 and 2011, the Strong Men's Council brought together male leaders from over 14 Indigenous communities across the Northern Territory to address issues of domestic and family violence and to develop strategies to effect positive behavioural change. Such changes were aimed at developing healthy and respectful relationships, as well as protecting the emotional wellbeing of children.

Funding was provided to Akeyulerre Inc. from 2009 to 2012 to deliver *Community Wellbeing Courses* to men, women and youth, with the aim of reducing the incidence and impact of domestic and family violence.

Tasmania

An *Aboriginal Healing Project* commenced in Tasmania in 2009 and included financial support for healing projects and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Healing Circle; it also established a scholarship program with Southern Cross University for Tasmanian Aboriginal students to undertake a Diploma of Community Recovery.

Victoria

Victoria Police, in partnership with key community stakeholders, has implemented the *Indigenous Family Violence and Sexual Awareness Campaign* in Bairnsdale, Warrnambool, Shepparton and the Grampians. Campaign objectives included increasing community awareness and understanding of family violence and sexual assault; increasing reporting of family violence and sexual assault in targeted communities; and reducing family violence and sexual assault in targeted communities.

Queensland

The *Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research* (funded by the Queensland Government) hosts an annual Indigenous Family Violence forum in Mackay. The Centre consults broadly to ensure that the forum is created by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in various locations across the state to address domestic and family violence.

Strategy 3.3: Improve access to appropriate services

This strategy is about improving access to culturally appropriate services in Indigenous communities.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Provide 22 safe houses, a mobile child protection team and remote family and community support workers in the Northern Territory as part of Closing the Gap

In 2012, the Commonwealth announced more than \$443 million over a 10-year period as part of the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory - Child, Youth, Family and Community Wellbeing Package* to help strengthen and protect Indigenous families and children, particularly in remote communities. This will continue funding for:

- two Mobile Child Protection Teams;
- 16 women's safe houses;
- Intensive Family Support Services and Playgroups; and
- provision of the Youth in Communities program in more than 30 communities.

It also provides funding for:

- the establishment of fifteen new remote *Communities for Children and Young People* sites which will be phased in over the next five years, building on the four existing Communities for Children sites. The Government will engage with communities to determine their suitability and readiness for the implementation of the Communities for Children and Young People model in the first two years; and
- an increase in Remote Aboriginal Child and Family Workers from 35 to 47.

The Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments are continuing to work together to identify alternative options for men's programs.

Another important Commonwealth initiative helping to support Indigenous families to access appropriate services is *Indigenous Community Links*. The Commonwealth Government is investing \$42 million over three years to June 2015 in *Indigenous Community Links*, which operates at a grassroots level to deliver a personalised and appropriate service model to support and encourage Indigenous clients living in urban and regional areas to access and use mainstream and Indigenous services and programs—for example, connecting women at risk of domestic violence with support services in their local area.

In 2011–12, over 16,000 women were linked to a range of support services such as welfare and social support, family violence, safe houses, health (including drug and alcohol services), education and legal services. *Indigenous Community Links* currently operates through a network of 65 not-for-profit organisations in 88 urban or regional locations, representing more than 140 Indigenous communities across Australia.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Victoria

The *Koori Family Violence Court Support Service* is a free service available at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court. It was piloted in July 2011 and supported 45 clients, predominantly female, between then and April 2012. The program offers safe waiting areas for victims of family violence as well as support, information, safety planning and referral. The program includes a Koori Men's and Koori Women's Support Worker.

Under the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*, the Victorian Government established the *Family Violence—Support for Indigenous Women and Children* initiative, which connects Aboriginal women and their children to their community following family violence. In 2010–11, 900 clients were provided with support under this initiative.

Victoria has also developed two purpose-built services (in the regional Victorian locations of Mildura and Morwell) to address the specific needs of Aboriginal women and children experiencing family violence. Using an individualised case management response, women accessing the service will be supported to find long-term, safe accommodation options and to access a range of community and legal services. The Mildura and Morwell services are actions under Victoria's *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families* plan, the Indigenous 10-year plan which identified a need for culturally appropriate services and responses in specific locations.

Tasmania

The *Tasmanian Homelessness Plan 2010–2013* has an action to develop an eight-bed *Employment Related Accommodation Facility* in Launceston for Aboriginal people needing to access education, training and employment. This will be particularly for Aboriginal people from remote communities.

The *Safe at Home Court Support and Liaison Service* employs a full-time Aboriginal Court Support Liaison.

Northern Territory

The *Ponki Victim Offender Mediation Program* is a recent Tiwi Islands program used to train community mediators in the skills to manage conflict through mediation. The mediators are able to bring together the individuals involved in criminal offences with the wider community who may be affected. This program is culturally specific for Indigenous people and particularly to the Tiwi people. Training has now expanded to Lajamanu, Gunbalanya and Katherine.

Queensland

The Queensland Government has strengthened the service delivery model for three *Indigenous Family Violence Services* in high need areas to include intervention with men, in addition to support for women and their children.

New South Wales

The *Safe Houses Program* provides housing to women and children escaping domestic and family violence. This program is unique in providing not only crisis accommodation, but also transitional housing and exit housing. This gives Aboriginal women the opportunity and support they need to move from emergency-style accommodation, to medium-term accommodation with integrated support, through to safe, affordable long-term housing.

In 2011–12, new Safe House complexes have been purpose built in Walgett, Wilcannia and Lightning Ridge. The Safe Houses completed have involved close consultation with community, local councils and service providers, from the initial planning to construction, to ensure each complex is best suited to the needs of local Aboriginal women.

4.4 National Outcome Four—Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence

Specialist and mainstream services are critical to helping women rebuild their lives following violence. Services must be flexible in meeting the diverse needs of their clients, including Indigenous women, older women, young women, women with disabilities, same-sex attracted women and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Under National Outcome 4, three strategies have been identified to ensure that services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence:

- Strategy 4.1: Enhance the first point of contact to identify and respond to needs.
- Strategy 4.2: Support specialist domestic violence and sexual assault services to deliver responses that meet needs.
- Strategy 4.3: Support mainstream services to identify and respond to needs.

Strategy 4.1: Enhance the first point of contact to identify and respond to needs

This strategy recognises that access to high-quality, accessible and responsive services is vital for victims of violence, and that services need to work collaboratively so that victims do not need to tell their story multiple times to multiple services.

This strategy's **Immediate National Initiatives** were discussed in **Chapter 3**.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Western Australia

The Department for Child Protection and Western Australia Police are hosting a conference in November 2013, *Children: A resource most precious—‘Tell me more about that’*, to strengthen cross-disciplinary and cross-thematic ties across the diversity of disciplines that come into contact with child abuse and neglect.

Tasmania

Tasmania’s *Safe at Home* program provides a number of supports to victims of violence, including a Family Violence Response and Referral Line, Victim Safety Response Teams, a Court Support and Liaison Service, a Child Witness Service and a Family Violence Counselling and Support Service. These services provide counselling, referral, support and guidance to victims of violence.

Victoria

Training in the *Family Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework* was expanded to incorporate delivery to a range of universal services such as counselling, mental health, and drug and alcohol services. Specific training sessions have targeted returning and newly qualified maternal and child health nurses.

New South Wales

The *Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program* is a multi-agency, integrated and coordinated response to prevent the escalation of domestic and family violence among high-risk target groups and in targeted communities. The program aims to improve outcomes for those affected by domestic and family violence, including children, through an increased and more coordinated response, coordination and integration of service systems and increased priority and dedicated effort by key partner agencies. Six services operate in 10 locations across New South Wales. From July to December 2011, there were 544 case-managed clients supported by the program.

To support an integrated delivery of services, each program service operates in partnership with other services such as crisis support and information, case management, referral pathways to evidence-based perpetrator or men’s education programs and raising awareness within the community and local service networks.

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory *Sexual Assault Reform Program Wraparound* approach is a coordinated response to victims of sexual assault reporting, or considering reporting, to the Australian Capital Territory Police. Uptake of the service has been high, with an estimated

80 per cent of victims presenting at the police station consenting to participate in the program.

Northern Territory

The *Healthy Under 5 Kids Program* is delivered across the Northern Territory to provide anticipatory guidance and prompts to primary health care practitioners unfamiliar with well-child health, through a thorough assessment of the child and family. The purpose of the program is to:

- assess physical growth and development;
- assess the social and emotional context of the child and primary carer;
- assess the physical and economic environment of the family; and
- identify risk factors that may impact adversely on a child and mother as well as identification and treatment pathways for illness.

Strategy 4.2: Support specialist domestic violence and sexual assault services to deliver responses that meet needs

This strategy is about acknowledging that women may require specialised support based on individual needs.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Implement the Building Capacity Building Bridges project to deliver accredited ‘child focus’ training to workers in adult-focused services

The Commonwealth Government has provided funding of \$2.2 million from 2009–10 to 2012–13 to the Australian Centre for Child Protection to deliver the *Building Capacity Building Bridges* (BCBB) project across 12 sites nationally. BCBB aims to improve outcomes for children whose parents come into contact with adult services, such as mental health, drug and alcohol, or family violence services.

Collaboration workshops, which have been held in all trial sites across Australia, focused on assisting local practitioners to develop collaboration action plans and provided a forum for practitioners, across a broad range of sectors, to network. Curricula for accredited Child and Family Sensitive Practice training have also been developed. The registered training authority delivering the training as part of the Certificate IV in Community Services is the Community Welfare Training organisation, which is the training arm for the Association of Children’s Welfare Agencies.

The BCBB project is due to finish in June 2013, with the evaluation report due in July.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Tasmania

The *Sexual Assault Response Framework* commenced in 2011 and aims to meet the needs of sexual assault victims.

The *Sexual Assault Counselling Support for Prisoners* project provides counselling support to prisoners who have been the victim of sexual assault. Staff working in therapeutic prison services have undertaken professional development to deliver this service in house.

Victoria

In 2011–12, Victoria commenced work to establish a third multidisciplinary centre in Geelong, which co-locates specialist responders such as police, sexual assault support services and child protection in order to provide collaborative and integrated responses to sexual assault. The model also supports the introduction of nurses to provide specialised health services, responding to immediate and long-term needs arising from experiences of sexual assault.

Australian Capital Territory

The *ACT Family Violence Intervention Program* (FVIP) provides an interagency response to family violence matters that have come to the attention of police and then proceeded to prosecution. Core components of the FVIP include pro-arrest, pro-charge and presumption against bail, early provision of victim support, pro-prosecution, coordination and case management and rehabilitation of offenders.

In October 2012, Australian Capital Territory Policing agreed to establish a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Australian Capital Territory Domestic Violence Crisis Service to encompass and strengthen the Family Violence Incident Review (FVIR) originally adopted in 2009. The new MoU builds on many years of close collaboration between these agencies in the collection of information on high-risk family violence incidents to support appropriate future responses. The FVIR is now an agreed means for identifying and addressing training and systems improvement opportunities for both agencies.

Western Australia

The Western Australian Government, in partnership with the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services and West Coast Institute for Training, is working on a skills recognition project for domestic and family violence service providers. This workforce development project has resulted in 50 workers receiving formal qualifications in Community Service Work through recognition of prior learning.

Northern Territory

Through the Sexual Assault Referral Centres, the Northern Territory Government is funding the provision of sexual assault counsellors in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Domestic and family violence counsellors have also been employed in Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Darwin, Alice Springs and Jabiru, through a variety of government agencies and non-government organisations.

Between 2009 and 2012, funding was provided to women's shelters and crisis accommodation for service quality enhancement, staff training, professional development, client brokerage and the development of client resources. This funding was designed to increase the sector's knowledge through professional development of staff, and to purchase specialised services such as counselling and play therapy to assist women and children to recover from trauma.

Between 2010 and 2012, funding was also provided to establish and maintain networks for the development of coordinated government and community sector action-based responses to domestic and family violence issues in the Barkly region.

The *Alice Springs Family Safety Framework* is one component of the *Alice Springs Integrated Response to Family and Domestic Violence* project. The framework seeks to enable an action-based, integrated response to women and children who are at high risk of injury or death in Alice Springs due to domestic and family violence. It includes a common risk assessment tool, interagency referral processes, interagency information-sharing protocols and fortnightly interagency meetings.

New South Wales

The New South Wales Government currently supports a range of services and service models which aim to meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence. This includes specialist services such as the *Domestic Violence Line* and the *New South Wales Rape Crisis Centre*, which provide 24/7 telephone crisis counselling. The New South Wales Government also provides funding and support to a range of crisis accommodation and counselling services. Several major reform programs also being implemented, such as *SHLV* and the *Integrated Domestic and Family Services Program*, aim to provide a coordinated, cross-agency response to victims of violence.

Strategy 4.3: Support mainstream services to identify and respond to needs

This strategy acknowledges that services need assistance to provide the holistic support that victims of violence often need.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Implement homelessness services under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness to improve housing options for women victims of violence

Significant work has been done across Australia to tackle homelessness and make housing more affordable. As at September 2012, the *Nation Building Jobs Plan – Social Housing Initiative* had delivered 19,100 dwellings, well above the original target of 17,460. The *Social Housing Initiative* will deliver around 19,700 dwellings in total. Similarly, in September 2012, the *National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing* had completed almost 97 per cent of the target of 1,950 dwellings.

Under the *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*, in the 2010–11 financial year, 30 projects specifically targeted to support women and children experiencing domestic and family violence were implemented across all states and territories. This equated to over 16,000 instances of assistance. As an example, the Northern Territory Government constructed 18 new units, 12 of which are in place to provide supported transitional accommodation for families, including women and children escaping violence.

In November 2012, Commonwealth, state and territory governments agreed, subject to Cabinet processes, to enter into negotiations for a new *National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness*, with the current partnership due to expire on 30 June 2013. Governments also agreed, subject to Cabinet processes, to work on a one-year transition partnership agreement for 2013–14 while the new long-term agreement is negotiated.

Fund income support and family assistance payments, including the Crisis Payment for women experiencing violence

Crisis Payment is a one-off payment designed to help people who are experiencing severe financial hardship. The payment is equivalent to one week's worth of the pension, benefit or allowance for which the person is eligible. There are two categories of Crisis Payment under which a person experiencing domestic or family violence may be paid:

- *extreme circumstance forcing departure from home*, including domestic violence, and the person has established or intends to establish a new home; and
- *remaining in the home after removal of family member* due to domestic or family violence.

In 2011–2012, there were 14,340 Crisis Payments paid under the *Domestic Violence—establish new home* category and 1,506 Crisis Payments paid under the *Domestic Violence—remain in home* category.

Provide social work services to victims experiencing domestic violence through Centrelink's Domestic and Family Violence Strategy

Social workers are available in Centrelink offices and via the call centre to assist especially vulnerable or at-risk clients, including women who have experienced family and domestic violence or sexual assault.

The Commonwealth Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed a strategy which sets out the rationale and framework for a whole-of-department approach to family and domestic violence. Research and preparation for the strategy commenced in early 2011, taking into account the integration of the department and activity across government as well as relevant work undertaken to improve approaches to family violence in child support services. The development of the *DHS Family and Domestic Violence Strategy* has also been informed by the ALRC's report, *Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws—Improving Legal Frameworks*, released in February 2012.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Northern Territory

A project involving specialist Office of Children and Families staff based in Northern Territory public hospital emergency departments has provided services and support and referrals to clients, as well as training in domestic and family violence to medical, nursing and allied health staff.

The Northern Territory Government provides funding to Dawn House (Darwin) and Alice Springs Women's Shelter for domestic violence educator positions. These educators deliver training to community organisations, government and non-government agencies and individuals to increase awareness of domestic and family violence in the Northern Territory and to enable enhanced service delivery to those experiencing domestic and family violence.

New South Wales

The *New South Wales Domestic Violence Proactive Support System* (DVPASS) proactively brings services to victims who, in the past, had to seek out services themselves. The aim is to break the cycle of violence and minimise the opportunity for violence to escalate. Under the system, police get consent from domestic violence victims to give their details to a specialist domestic violence support service. The service then follows up the referral within 72 hours. DVPASS is being evaluated, which will assist with identifying best practice for police referral of domestic violence victims and offenders of both genders to support services. The DVPASS program has recently expanded to 11 locations across New South Wales.

South Australia

Work is currently underway in South Australia to expand the *Information Sharing Guidelines for Promoting the Safety and Wellbeing of Children, Young People and their Families* for use with all vulnerable population groups, including women who experience violence and sexual assault and who do not have children.

Additionally, work has commenced to develop 'recognise and respond' guidelines for use by mainstream agencies (including general practitioners). The guidelines will support professionals to recognise domestic and family violence and sexual assault in an early intervention context. A key consideration will be to provide information about what can be offered by first contact (mainstream) services in response to early identification of violence against women.

Queensland

The *Helping Out Families* project has established intensive family support services in three locations, for families at risk of entering the statutory child protection system. The project is supported by partnerships with domestic and family violence services.

Queensland Hospital and Health Services has implemented the *Universal Post Natal Contact Service Initiative* which supports an integrated approach to maternity care, including screening for domestic and family violence.

Identifying the Hidden Disaster: The First Australian Conference on Natural Disaster and Family Violence—Community led

This Australia-first conference, convened by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, Women's Health Goulburn North East and Women's Health in the North, aimed to generate dialogue across the diverse sectors that need to work closely together to ensure women's safety. It was held in March 2012. A highlight of the conference was the firsthand and heartrending accounts from two women whose relationships suffered in the aftermath of Black Saturday fires. The day concluded with five Action Planning Workshops to give delegates the opportunity to discuss the implications of the conference learning and identify achievable actions.

4.5 National Outcome Five—Justice responses are effective

Domestic and family violence and sexual assault are crimes. A range of civil and criminal measures exist to protect women and children in Australia who have experienced violence and to prevent further violence. While aiming to reduce violence, the First Action Plan will also drive more effective legal responses to domestic and family violence and sexual assault and promote justice responses when violence has occurred.

Under the National Plan, three strategies have been identified to ensure that justice responses are effective:

- Strategy 5.1: Improve access to justice for women and their children.
- Strategy 5.2: Strengthen leadership across justice systems.
- Strategy 5.3: Justice systems work better together and with other systems.

Strategy 5.1: Improve access to justice for women and their children

This strategy is about ensuring that civil and criminal justice systems are accessible and responsive to victims of violence.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Increase funding for legal assistance programs, including for services to assist victims of domestic violence

In May 2010, the Commonwealth Government announced an additional \$154 million over four years for legal assistance services, of which \$26.8 million was directed towards the *Community Legal Services Program*. As a result, 16 Community Legal Centres were allocated funding to increase assistance for victims of family violence and raise awareness of victims' rights. Funding for the period 2010–2014 totals \$3,634,400 (not including indexation on 2013–14 funds).

Support victims of family violence to access the legal system through the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services program

The *Family Violence Prevention Legal Services* program provides culturally appropriate legal services and assistance to victims/survivors of domestic and family violence or sexual assault to prevent, respond to and reduce the incidence of domestic and family violence and sexual assault. The program currently funds 14 organisations which provide services from 31 outlets. The funding is used to provide:

- legal assistance, advice and court support;
- counselling, information and referral services; and
- community engagement and family violence prevention activities.

As communities in rural, regional and remote locations are less able to access legal support, services funded under this program are targeted to these areas. Placement of services is based on research undertaken by the Crime Research Centre of the University of Western Australia in 2004.

Improve sexual assault victims' access to justice through the evaluation of the impacts of 'victim-focused' court practice reforms around Australia

The Commonwealth Government has funded the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault to conduct research to explore how particular reforms, such as legislative reform, have improved sexual assault victims' experience of justice within the courts. This research will help to identify the most promising victim-focused approaches that enable the justice needs of the victim to be met, and also the implications of reform within the conventional justice system. The research is due to be completed in September 2013.

Pilot dispute resolution models to improve the family law system's response to violence

The pilot of *Coordinated Family Dispute Resolution* in family violence cases commenced in March 2011. In families where there is past or current family violence, and the family is assessed as suitable to participate, *Coordinated Family Dispute Resolution* aims to achieve safe and sustainable post-separation parenting outcomes.

Coordinated Family Dispute Resolution uses a distinct new model of family dispute resolution that builds on and enhances family dispute resolution practice by involving a wide range of professionals working collaboratively, such as legal and support services for victims and perpetrators. The model used in the pilots was developed by Women's Legal Service Brisbane. The Australian Institute of Family Studies was commissioned to evaluate the pilot and provided its final report in December 2012. The Commonwealth Government is considering the report.

Expand Family Law Pathways Networks and expand coverage of the networks with a greater focus on family violence and child protection services

In April 2010, the Commonwealth Government announced \$2.8 million in additional funding for new and enhanced *Family Law Pathways Networks* (FLPN) across Australia. Eleven new FLPNs have been created, increasing coverage from 25 to 36 networks across the country and expanding existing networks to improve membership and coverage of agencies working in family violence and child protection. Larger networks are able to undertake regional coordination and to support their smaller counterparts. A recently completed independent review of the networks broadly concluded the FLPN initiative was considered by some to be the 'most significant initiative in family law'.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Tasmania

The Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania received ongoing funding through *Safe at Home* to ensure women and their children receive legal support as needed.

Australian Capital Territory

The Women's Legal Centre is a community legal centre for women, run by women to improve women's access to justice. The Centre also provides an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Justice Support program to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to access the legal system. The Centre provides advice to women on a wide range of legal problems, including:

- domestic violence;
- divorce and separation;
- disputes over children;
- discrimination;
- unfair dismissal and other employment rights; and
- compensation for criminal injuries.

In December 2012, with funding from the Australian Capital Territory Government, the Centre published *Your Court Your Safety—a guide to going to court and getting help with domestic violence*. The guide provides victims of domestic violence with comprehensive information about the legal process for domestic violence and the range of support services available in the Australian Capital Territory.

Queensland

The *Victim Assist Queensland* financial assistance scheme and information and referral service *Victims LinkUp* is now available to assist victims of domestic and family violence, who have been injured as a result of an act of domestic or family violence, to access and pay for services required to assist in their recovery. In 2011–12, Victim Assist received 208 applications from primary victims of domestic and family violence (a 57 per cent increase on the number received in 2010–11).

Queensland Police Service officers are trained to identify the person who is most in need of protection from domestic and family violence where there are conflicting allegations or indications of violence by both parties.

Northern Territory

The *Northern Territory Crime Victims Services Unit* (CVSU) continues to provide financial assistance in certain circumstances to victims of crime who have suffered financial loss or injury as a result of a violent act that occurred in the Northern Territory. The CVSU also manages a victim register to provide victims and other persons with certain information about offenders who are sentenced to a term of imprisonment in the Northern Territory. Information includes notification of parole applications, hearings and release dates.

In 2010–2011, a vulnerable person waiting area was provided in the Darwin Magistrates Court. New videoconferencing facilities were installed into the Darwin Supreme Court, Darwin Magistrates Court, Katherine Court House and Alice Springs Law Courts. The new equipment will enable evidence to be taken and recorded remotely from each of the courts, and recording from the witness box is available in the Darwin and Alice Springs Supreme Courts. This allows evidence from vulnerable witnesses to be used at subsequent hearings, reducing the need for witnesses to repeat their evidence.

The *Witness Assistance Service* (WAS) continues to offer services to witnesses and victims of crime. In 2010–11, WAS assisted approximately 1,500 clients.

Victoria

In September 2012, the Victorian Government committed a \$16 million funding boost over four years to provide expanded services to help the increasing numbers of victims who are reporting family violence incidents to police. This includes:

- an extra \$9.25 million for additional family violence counselling and case management, which will support an additional 1,200 women and children a year;
- an extra \$3.75 million for sexual assault counselling, which is expected to decrease overall waiting times from an average of six weeks to approximately three weeks and allow virtually all victims of recent assaults to be seen at the time of reporting or soon afterwards; and
- an extra \$3 million for men's behaviour change programs, to nearly double the number of places in court-directed programs and to pilot new schemes for teenagers who are violent in their homes and offenders in prison or on community-based orders.

New South Wales

The New South Wales Government is implementing a new *Domestic Violence Justice Strategy* which focuses on achieving six outcomes:

1. Victims' safety is achieved immediately and risk of further violence is reduced.
2. Victims have confidence in the justice system and are empowered to participate.
3. Victims have the support they need.
4. The court process for domestic violence matters is efficient, fair and accessible.
5. Abusive behaviour is stopped and perpetrators are held to account.
6. Perpetrators change their behaviour and re-offending is reduced or eliminated.

The strategy sets time standards and performance measures which will enable the police, the courts and other justice agencies to monitor their responses to domestic violence cases, identify any problems and improve services.

The Strategy will incorporate many aspects of the Domestic Violence Intervention Court Model, a successful integrated criminal justice and social welfare response to domestic and family violence. The model involves the Department of Attorney General and Justice (Attorney General's Division - lead agency) Corrective Services NSW, Legal Aid NSW, NSW Police, and the Department of Family and Community Services (Housing NSW and Community Services).

New South Wales is assisting women and their children experiencing domestic violence to obtain legal protection through an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order, under the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP). WDVCAP funds 28 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, servicing 108 local courts in NSW. The program facilitates access to a network of locally-based, independent professional services that can assist women with their legal and social/welfare needs. Partnerships established across individual services assist in building the capacity of local services to respond effectively to domestic violence.

Western Australia

The *Family Court Amendment (Family Violence and other measures) Bill 2012* is before parliament and seeks to amend the *WA Family Court Act 1997* in line with recent family violence amendments to the *Family Law Act 1975*. The changes expand the definition of family violence, explicitly linking family violence to child abuse. The changes also place the best interests of children at the centre of decision making.

Participatory Justice Conference: Achieving Justice for Victims at Local, National and International Settings—Community led

The Participatory Justice Conference, run in partnership between Victim Support Australia, the ANU College of Law and the Australian Capital Territory Victims of Crime Commissioner, was a ground-breaking conference exploring the practices and politics of participation in justice processes by individuals and communities victimised by violence. The conference challenged the boundaries between local, national and international spheres of justice and emphasised participation and the forms it takes, the contexts, the opportunities and challenges, and the politics. The conference was sponsored by the Commonwealth, Victim Support Australia, ANU Gender Institute and the Australasian Society of Victimology.

Truth, Testimony and Relevance: a two-day Symposium on Improving the Quality of Evidence in Sexual Assault Offence Cases—Collaborative

The Australian Institute of Criminology, the Australian Institute of Family Studies and Victoria Police held a national symposium in May 2012 to increase understanding of the nature of sexual offending and the use of evidence provided by sexual assault and abuse victims for court. The symposium explored options for enhancing the relevance and meaning of evidence in judicial processes that deal with sexual offences against both adults and children.

Strategy 5.2: Strengthen leadership across justice systems

This strategy is about recognising the important role that justice systems have in reducing violence against women, and encouraging all elements of the system to work together.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Monitor domestic violence-related homicide issues to inform ongoing policy development, including the Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program to research domestic violence-related homicides, risk factors and interventions

The *National Homicide Monitoring Program* has collected and analysed information on all homicides (murder and manslaughter, excluding driving causing death) in Australia since 1990. The Program aims to identify as precisely as possible the characteristics of individuals that place them at risk of homicide victimisation, and of offending, and the circumstances that contribute to the likelihood of a homicide's occurring. This provides a basis for implementing public policy on the prevention and control of violence. Establishment of the program was recommended by the National Committee on Violence and has been made possible by the cooperation and continued support of all Australian police services.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Western Australia

The Department for Child Protection chairs a training consortium to promote, develop and deliver professional development workshops about family and domestic violence for members of the judiciary. The training consortium includes representatives from Legal Aid, Department of the Attorney General, Communicare, Centrecare, Anglicare, Relationships Australia and the Aboriginal Family Law Service. Where possible and appropriate, the consortium draws on AVERT—a family and domestic violence training package developed for the judiciary and stakeholders working in the family law sector.

A *Family and Domestic Violence Fatality Review* process became operational in Western Australia in July 2012. The Ombudsman Western Australia manages the review process, working closely with government departments and the non-government sector.

Victoria

In November 2012, the State Coroner released his *First Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths* report. The Review looked at family violence-related deaths from 2000 to 2010. At a broad level, the Report's findings around the incidence of family violence, risk factors and service sector implications are consistent with Victoria's current understanding and are recognised in Victoria's *Action Plan to Address Violence Against Women & Children 2012–2015*. The findings provide further evidence and support for the government's Action Plan commitment to:

- expand the use of the Common Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework—in particular into the health system;
- strengthen hospital responses to family violence; and
- enhance police and court processes, so that family violence matters can be dealt with more expeditiously.

The *Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams* (SOCIT) model has seen the creation of specialist units comprising detectives who are highly trained to investigate the complex crimes of sexual assault and child abuse professionally, but also respond to victims with the appropriate dignity and respect. Commencing in 2009, the statewide transition to the SOCIT model was completed in February 2012. Victoria Police now have 27 specialist units statewide. Three of these units are housed within multidisciplinary centres (MDCs) located in Geelong, Frankston and Mildura. The model's success led the Victorian Government to support the establishment of three new MDCs in the 2012–13 State Budget.

Queensland

SupportLink, engaged by Queensland Police Service, provides a statewide e-referral system to support agencies providing assistance with a number of social issues, including domestic and family violence.

The *Victims Register Service* provides victims of violent or sexual crime with information about their offender's sentence to enable informed decisions about their own and their families' lives.

Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network—Collaborative

Domestic and family violence death review processes have been established in Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. These processes involve the comprehensive review of domestic violence homicides, to investigate the circumstances leading up to and surrounding these deaths, in order to: establish the domestic violence context; identify risk factors which may be present; and assist in the formulation of recommendations across sectors. The broad aim of these reviews is to improve systemic responses to enhance future opportunities for violence intervention and prevention.

These four jurisdictions have formed the Australian Family and Domestic Violence Death Review Network. The goals of this network are to: improve knowledge and share practice issues to assist in identifying practice processes and system changes that may assist in reducing deaths; identify risks at a national level; identify and report on national data; and align findings to programs at a national level.

Strategy 5.3: Justice systems work better together and with other systems

This strategy supports the systems with which victims of violence may come into contact to work together effectively and provide appropriate responses.

The Commonwealth has undertaken the following **Immediate National Initiatives**:

Consider the recommendations of the ALRC 2010 Inquiry *Family Violence—A National Legal Response*

The Commonwealth Government is currently considering the recommendations in the ALRC and New South Wales Law Reform Commission Report No 114, *Family Violence—A National Legal Response*, which was released on 11 November 2010.

The Report made 186 recommendations, which call for:

- a more seamless and integrated legal framework for people engaged in it;
- ensuring that victims have better access to legal and other responses to family violence;
- fair and just legal responses to family violence; and
- effective interventions and support in circumstances of family violence.

The recommendations can be split into two types: those that affect each jurisdiction individually and those that jointly affect the Commonwealth, states and territories.

At the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General meeting on 22 July 2011, Ministers agreed to develop a national response to the Report for the recommendations that

jointly affect the Commonwealth and states and territories. A working group has been formed under the Standing Council on Law and Justice to develop a national response.

At the Standing Council on Law and Justice meeting in October 2012, Ministers agreed that further work should be done on a national response, with the item to return to Standing Council's first meeting in 2013 with proposed outcomes for addressing the recommendations made by the ALRC and the New South Wales Law Reform Commission.

Establish the ALRC inquiry into the impact of Commonwealth laws on those experiencing family violence

The ALRC has completed its inquiry, *Family Violence and Commonwealth Laws—Improving Legal Frameworks* (2011 Report). The 2011 report was tabled in Parliament in February 2012. The 2011 report continues the Commission's work following its first report on family violence in 2010, *Family Violence—A National Legal Response*. The 2011 report contains 102 recommendations for reform across government, including reforms to Commonwealth laws relating to child support and family assistance, immigration, employment, social security and superannuation. The Commonwealth Government is currently considering the recommendations in the 2011 report.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

South Australia

The *Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009* (the Act) came into effect in December 2011. The new legislation is intended to improve the system of restraint and intervention for domestic violence and to give police more power to intervene at the time of an incident. The reforms make it easier for victims to remain in the family home, when safe to do so, while the perpetrator leaves. They also ensure police can impose restraint conditions quickly, without having to wait for a court listing. Under the reforms, men who have intervention orders placed on them must complete an Abuse Prevention Program run by the DCS.

As part of the implementation of the Act, an across-Government intervention response model has been developed. The model provides the basis for intervention responses within the context of intimate partner relationships, consistent with the Act. The model also includes the establishment of the *Women's Safety Contact* (WSC) Program. The WSC Program aims to increase the safety of female protected persons who have experienced domestic or Aboriginal family violence and who are not otherwise engaged with a domestic violence service. It is available to women living in the metropolitan area who have a partner referred to an Abuse Prevention Program.

Victoria

As part of Victoria's *Integrated Family Violence System*, the Victorian Department of Human Services and Victoria Police have established a referral protocol for family violence referrals. This protocol covers referrals for women and children who are the victims of family violence and men who are the perpetrators of family violence.

The *Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence* further articulates these protocols as the mechanism for responses from the community services sector to family violence incidents attended by police.

Northern Territory

Amendments to the *Care and Protection of Children Act*, which commenced in July 2012, enable specific individuals such as teachers, foster carers, doctors and nurses and some organisations to share information relating to the safety and wellbeing of a child or group of children. A person acting in good faith in giving information is not civilly or criminally liable, or in breach of any professional code of conduct.

The Northern Territory Police Violent Crime Reduction Strategy facilitates engagement between service providers and the community to address the underlying causes of violence.

Australian Capital Territory

The *Crimes Legislation Amendment Bill 2012* was presented in the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly in November 2012. The Bill proposes a number of amendments in relation to sexual offences, including:

- creating new offences of sexual intercourse and act of indecency with a young person under special care; and
- bringing important definitions for sexual offences into line with other jurisdictions.

The Bill also continues the work of the Sexual Assault Reform Program by strengthening provisions for victims and certain witnesses who give evidence in sexual and violent offences. Victims who wish to read a victim impact statement aloud, either in court or, in certain cases, by audio visual link, will be given a right to do so.

Western Australia

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Department (Adult Community Corrections), Western Australia Police, Department of the Attorney General and the Department for Child Protection facilitates information sharing for the purpose of providing effective services to victims of domestic and family violence and managing perpetrators subject to the Barndimalgu Court criminal case management process.

Community representatives attend the Kalgoorlie Community Court and provide advice and guidance to the Magistrate in relation to the sentencing of an offender. The court deals with a range of offences, including domestic and family violence.

4.6 National Outcome Six—Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account

Preventing and reducing violence against women requires strong laws that are effectively administered and hold perpetrators to account. This outcome promotes a zero tolerance approach to violence, supported by stronger policing leading to arrest, consistent sentencing of perpetrators, and serious consequences for perpetrators if they breach orders.

Under the National Plan, three strategies have been identified to ensure that perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account:

- Strategy 6.1: Hold perpetrators accountable.
- Strategy 6.2: Reduce the risk of recidivism.
- Strategy 6.3: Intervene early to prevent violence.

Strategy 6.1: Hold perpetrators accountable

This strategy recognises that the most effective way to deliver an immediate reduction in violence and enhance community safety is to hold perpetrators of violence to account for their behaviour. All Australian governments recognise that violence against women is a crime and have strengthened legislation to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

This strategy's **Immediate National Initiatives** were discussed in **Chapter 3**.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Queensland

The *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* includes increased penalties for breaches of domestic violence orders and introduces Voluntary Intervention Orders to encourage perpetrators to access behaviour change programs and/or counselling.

Northern Territory

The Darwin Aboriginal and Islander Women's Shelter has developed an *Outreach Men's Family Violence behaviour change program* for Indigenous males identifying as using violence in their domestic/family relationships. This Darwin-based program provides family violence education to adult Indigenous men in group and individual settings, to enable them

to improve their relationship skills and develop skills to manage their anger and improve their communication skills. The program also includes healing sessions for men who are themselves victims of family violence.

Victoria

The Victorian Government passed legislation in May 2011 as part of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* to ensure that police powers through the use of Family Violence Safety Notices (FVSNs) were an ongoing tool available to police members. FVSNs enable police to provide immediate safety for victims and their children for 72 hours, including the options of excluding the perpetrator from the home and acting as an application to the Magistrates' Court of Victoria for a Family Violence Intervention Order.

In September 2012, the Victorian Government further announced that the FVSNs will be extended from 72 hours to 120 hours. This will better protect women and children by extending the immediate protection police can provide to victims before a case can be heard by a court. The announcement also included the introduction of new offences and penalties for breaches of Family Violence Intervention Orders, including the introduction of an indictable offence with a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment.

Western Australia

Amendments to the *Restraining Orders Act 1997 (WA)* became operational in May 2012 and strengthened Violence Restraining Orders (VROs) to enhance protection for victims. Breaches of VROs are criminal offences, and the third breach now attracts a sentence of imprisonment.

The Department of Corrective Services is establishing a Public Protection Unit, located within Adult Community Corrections. It is proposed that dedicated domestic violence officers will be included in this initiative.

New South Wales

The new NSW Domestic Violence Justice Strategy has as its primary objectives ensuring that victims and their families are safe and that perpetrators are held to account and do not reoffend. To ensure key outcomes of stopping abusive behaviour and ensuring perpetrators are held to account, strategies include: proactive investigation of all alleged breaches of Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders, prompt service of briefs of evidence by NSW Police; timely legal services for defendants; monitoring of repeat offenders to reduce re-offending; and prompt reporting of breaches of court ordered programs to courts.

Strategy 6.2: Reduce the risk of recidivism

This strategy seeks to improve responses to perpetrators to help reduce rates of re-offending.

This strategy's **Immediate National Initiatives** were discussed in **Chapter 3**.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

New South Wales

The New South Wales Government has been working to expand the range of perpetrator interventions as part of an overall approach to reducing violence against women and their children. The *Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda* will further articulate the Government's approach, to hold perpetrators to account and to provide assistance needed for them to bring about behavioural change.

The *Domestic Abuse Program* (DAP) has been developed by Corrective Services New South Wales to specifically reduce perpetrator re-offending. The DAP is a 20-session rehabilitative group intervention program for offenders serving community-based orders or custodial sentences for domestic and family violence related offences. Participants of the program receive an individualised case management plan that is used to determine the appropriate level of supervision, support and intervention. At the end of June 2011, 2,555 offenders across New South Wales had commenced a DAP. Close to 80 per cent of participants completed their treatment.

Queensland

The *Offender Reintegration Support Service* provides intensive reintegration planning and aftercare case management support for offenders in Queensland. It is able to provide linkages for participants to community support to address key reintegration issues, including maintaining positive and respectful relationships and parenting. Non-government organisations contracted by the Queensland Government deliver these services.

Victoria

In 2010–11, Victoria's regionally based intake services for men's behaviour change programs became fully operational. These services, in 17 regional locations, receive direct referrals from police after attendance at a family violence incident. The initiative includes the weekend service provided by the statewide Men's Referral Service, *After Hours*. These services engage men in conversations around their use of violence, the context of that violence and the effect it has on their partners and children.

In November 2011, Victoria Police introduced the *Enhanced Family Violence Service Delivery Model* to further improve responses to victims of family violence and hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. One of the key priorities of this strategy is a focus on recidivist perpetrators and repeat victims and on working effectively with service providers to reduce further victimisation. As part of this model, Victoria Police has also expanded the number of family violence teams operating across the state from nine in November 2011 to 22 in November 2012.

Tasmania

Tasmania has implemented *the Family Violence Offender Intervention Program (Safe at Home)* to reduce family violence offender recidivism rates. The aim of the court-mandated perpetrator intervention program is to change the way offenders think and the choices they make.

An emergency accommodation program for perpetrators of family violence who are excluded from the family home due to an unacceptable level of risk of ongoing family violence will be developed as part of the *Tasmanian Homelessness Plan 2010–2013*.

Community Corrections in Tasmania enforces mandatory attendance at the *Family Violence Offender Intervention Program*. Offenders who do not attend are issued with formal warnings prior to returning their Order to court on breach/review.

Northern Territory

Integrated responses to domestic and family violence include perpetrator intervention programs designed to help men who use family and domestic violence to change their behaviour. These programs are being enhanced to ensure that they meet best practice standards, particularly in relation to ensuring the safety of women and children. They will also be expanded to enable access through referral by Corrections, courts, and other agencies, including police or via self-referral.

Funding was provided in 2010–2012 and 2012–2013 to run a course in Darwin and Alice Springs, to assist men who have perpetrated abuse in their intimate relationships. The voluntary course encourages participants to engage in experiential workshops to explore and develop non-violent alternatives to conflict resolution and to develop respectful relationships. Course facilitators also work with the partners and children of participants, to discuss any safety concerns and to provide counselling.

The *Indigenous Family Violence Offenders Program* is delivered in all regional and major centres in the Northern Territory with the support of Indigenous co-facilitators. The program has been expanded since 2011 to include more remote Territory communities. This program is also delivered in the South Australia/Western Australia/Northern Territory Border region. Participants are referred from court and Northern Territory Corrections as well as being voluntary referrals.

The *Stop the Hurting, Start the Healing* community education campaign ran from April to September 2011, to encourage men using violence in their relationships to change their behaviour and to engage in help-seeking processes. The campaign was designed using research conducted with men self-identifying as using violence in their domestic and family relationships. The campaign utilised television, radio and cinema advertising, and newspaper advertorials, in urban and remote and regional areas. Elements of the campaign

also featured translations into languages other than English, including a number of Aboriginal languages. A dedicated campaign website was established for the duration of the campaign, providing information and resources for men who used violence in their domestic and family relationships.

Partnership strategies have been created with service providers to deliver targeted interventions with high-risk recidivist offenders. One of these partnership strategies is the *Reportable Offender Management Unit* working with Correctional Services to manage reportable offenders under the *Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Registration) Act 2004*.

Strategy 6.3: Intervene early to prevent violence

Some men are more likely than others to act violently towards women, due to health, behavioural or other complex risk factors. This strategy seeks to support them, as children and young teenagers, to develop appropriate behaviours and be protected from the damaging effects of exposure to violence.

This strategy's **Immediate National Initiatives** were discussed in **Chapter 3**.

States and territories have undertaken the following **related actions**:

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian Capital Territory Government provided new funding for a specialist intensive supported accommodation, case management and counselling intervention program for men who use violence against women and children. The program works with other support services to assist program participants to achieve long-term behavioural change and reduce re-offending.

Tasmania

Tasmania's *Interagency Support Team* Program is a collaborative, multi-agency, early intervention program that takes a case management approach to young people identified as being at risk of offending.

Queensland

Queensland Corrective Services continues to deliver programs designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offenders. The *Ending Family Violence Program* is available in rural and regional Indigenous communities and addresses violence within Indigenous families by developing culturally appropriate solutions to protect adults and children from the effects of family violence. The *Indigenous Ending Offending Program*, delivered in rural and regional communities, is designed to help offenders address aspects of their criminogenic behaviour

relating to alcohol abuse. Both programs are delivered in partnership with the Family Responsibilities Commission, as a part of the Cape York Welfare Reform Program being undertaken in the regional communities of Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge, as well as all other communities in Far North Queensland.

Victoria

Research indicates that approximately 30–60 per cent of childhood sexual assault and sexual abuse is perpetrated by other children and young people. Early intervention can interrupt such behaviours and prevent them from becoming more entrenched, intrusive and serious.

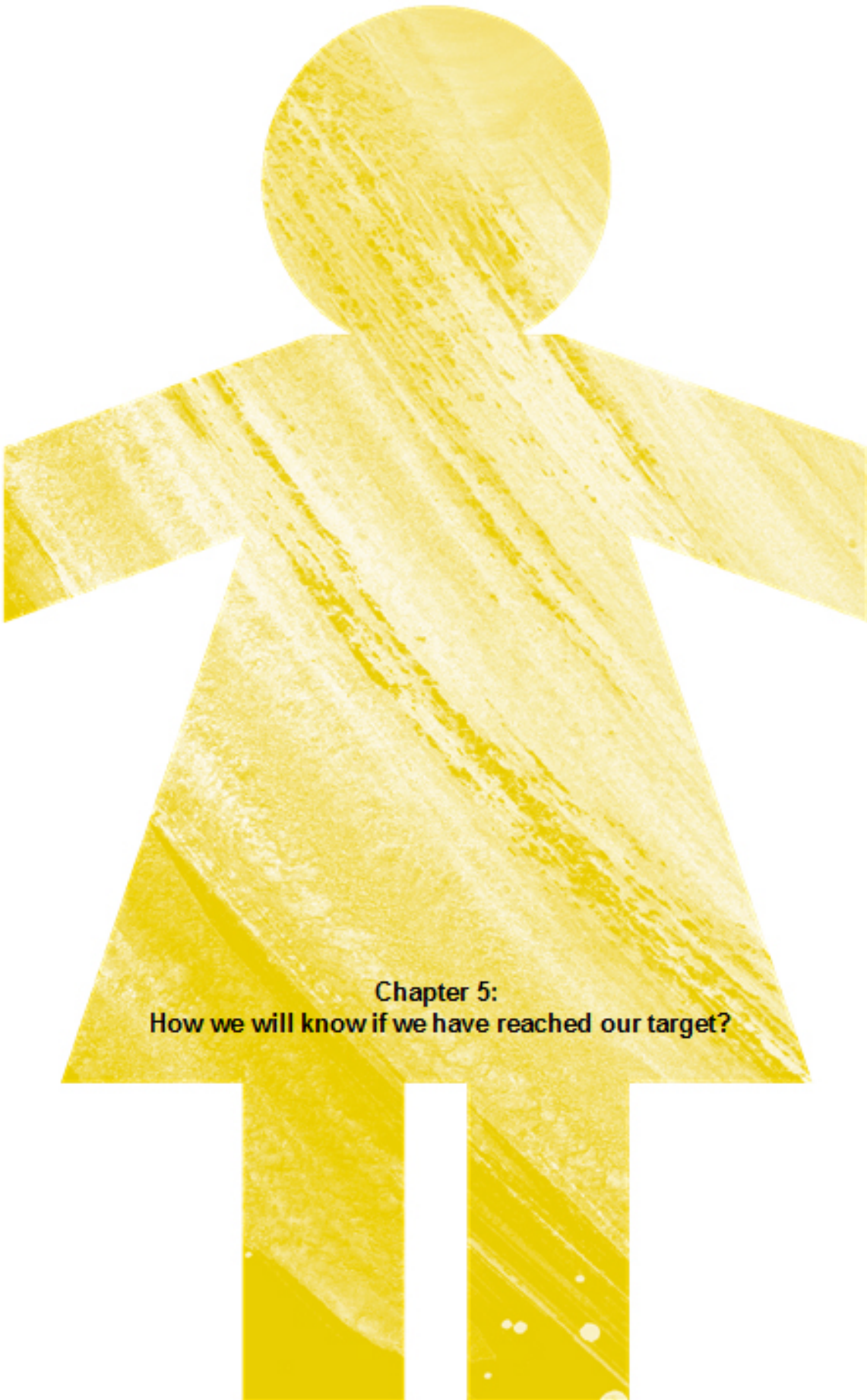
The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (the Act) sought to respond to the issue. Based on a long consultation process with police, sexual assault services, child protection and the legal fraternity, the best interest principles seek to ensure that the entire service system works collaboratively to respond to children, young people and their families in a way that promotes the safety, rights and development of children and young people. In accordance with the Act, a child may be placed on a Therapeutic Treatment Order or Therapeutic Treatment Placement Order by the Family Division of the Children's Court.

To support the legislation, a statewide therapeutic treatment service was established in October 2007 via agencies located throughout Victoria. Access to these services may be voluntary or, where necessary, via one of the orders outlined above to ensure the child's access to, and attendance at, a treatment service. Approximately 2,000 children and young people and their families have accessed these services since they became available statewide.

In September 2012, the Victorian Government announced funding of \$3 million to expand the number of places in court-directed men's behaviour change programs and to pilot new schemes for teenagers.

New South Wales

The Domestic and Family Violence Reform Agenda emphasises the New South Wales Government's commitment to holding perpetrators to account, and to promoting men's behavioural change to reduce and prevent domestic and family violence. One of the funding streams under the new NSW Domestic and Family Violence Funding Program will invest in supporting men who have inflicted violence or are at risk of inflicting violence to change their behaviour. The initial focus is to establish a state-wide Men's Referral Service providing telephone counselling and a central referral service to prevent and minimise the harm of male domestic and family violence by supporting men to change their attitudes and behaviour and use non-violent ways of relating to women and their children. The service will also fill a gap in early intervention by providing a counselling and referral service for men who are at risk of using violence, or who are seeking help to change.



5.1 Measuring progress

Measuring the progress of the National Plan in a meaningful and valid way is a long-term process. The National Plan contains longer-term 'high level indicators of change' and shorter-term 'measures of success.' Over the short term, progress will be measured by reporting against actions and initiatives. Over the longer term, initiatives such as the four-yearly cycle of the PSS and the NCAS, and the development of the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework, will allow a more nuanced assessment of attitudinal change and shifts in women and children's experience and reporting of violence. This data will be included in future reports as it becomes available.

The high level indicators of change, which will show us whether or not a 'significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children' is being achieved, are:

- reduced prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault;
- increased proportion of women who feel safe in their communities;
- reduced deaths related to domestic violence and sexual assault; and
- reduced proportion of children exposed to their mother's or carer's experience of domestic violence.

As can be seen in the following table, each National Outcome in the National Plan also includes at least one 'measure of success'. As data become available, these measures of success will give an early indication of whether the change we are aiming for in the high level indicators is on track.

NATIONAL OUTCOME	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Communities are safe and free from violence	Increased intolerance in the community of violence against women.
Relationships are respectful	Improved knowledge of, and the skills and behaviour for, respectful relationships by young people.
Indigenous communities are strengthened	Reduction in the proportion of Indigenous women who consider that family violence, assault and sexual assault are problems for their communities and neighbourhoods.
	Increase in the proportion of Indigenous women who are able to have their say within their communities on important issues, including violence.
Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence	Increase in the access to, and responsiveness of, services for victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault.
Justice responses are	Increase in the rate of women reporting domestic violence and

effective	sexual assault to police.
Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account	A decrease in repeated partner victimisation.

5.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

Bearing in mind the considerable work that is being done to build and consolidate the evidence base on violence against women, we also need to turn our attention to the development of an evaluation framework for individual action plans and across the lifespan of the National Plan. Over the next 12 months, this framework will be developed in consultation with NPIP and underpinned by data such as that collected through the PSS and the NCAS.



6.1 The story so far

This COAG progress report on the National Plan describes some of the key work that has been done over the past two years by Commonwealth, state and territory governments and the non-government sector to lay the foundations for reducing violence against women and their children in a real and sustained way.

This work has been considerable and demonstrates the commitment of governments to work together, and with the non-government sector and the Australian community, to improve the safety of women and children.

The first National Implementation Plan National Priority actions are progressing strongly. There is a broad suite of both collaborative and locally based projects to build primary prevention capacity, enhance service delivery, strengthen justice responses and build the evidence base, implemented or underway. Progress on implementing the First Action Plan Immediate National Initiatives and related actions, under each of the six National Outcomes, is equally as positive.

Governments recognise, however, that there is still a lot more to be done. Effectively addressing violence requires a long-term commitment and ongoing efforts. The National Plan sets the framework for change over a 12-year period. This is why the First Action Plan is about *Building a Strong Foundation*.

We have one more year to finalise and consolidate work under the First Action Plan. This will both ensure that identified improvements to programs and services are delivered in the short term and build the foundation for the long-term change needed to reduce violence against women.

Strategic projects such as the development of a National Data Collection and Reporting Framework for family and domestic violence and sexual assault, an action under the National Priority 'Building the Evidence Base', continues until 2022. The National Research Agenda, to be developed through the NCE, is another action which will be considered over successive Action Plans.

Careful consideration will be given to ensuring that these strategic, long-term projects establish the groundwork for the 12-year life of the National Plan.

6.2 What we have learnt and challenging and emerging issues

Governments and the non-government sector have come a long way in the first two years of the National Plan. The National Plan requires all Australian governments and the

non-government sector to work together in a much more collaborative way than ever before to address domestic and family violence and sexual assault. Establishing this tripartite relationship and making sure it is effective takes time and is an important part of building a strong foundation. It relies on ongoing communication between governments, the non-government sector, the private sector and the broader Australian community about the National Plan. Not only will this communication inform the Australian community about progress with the National Plan, it will also provide opportunities for the community to become more involved.

Recognising the vast and diverse expertise that non-government organisations, academics and policymakers have to offer, we have come a long way in bringing governments and the community together to work openly and productively. This effort will continue because we need to keep looking for effective ways to stay engaged, and broaden our engagement. We all have the same goal: to ensure that women and their children are safe from violence. In order to achieve this goal, it is vital that we work together.

Violence against women is a complex and multifaceted problem. Governments and services are continuing to learn about, and sometimes grapple with, a number of issues, including the interplay between domestic and family violence and child abuse and neglect, the long term health implications of violence against women and the different experiences of women from diverse or vulnerable groups. We cannot lose sight of these issues, even though they might be challenging.

Similarly, new issues are constantly emerging. For example, forced and servile marriage is an ongoing concern, around the world, of which the Australian community is becoming increasingly aware. While the incidence of forced and servile marriage is considered to be lower in Australia than in other countries, we do not know its full extent.

The National Plan is a living document. This means that we can continuously improve on the work we are doing together to reduce violence against women and best respond to challenging and emerging issues.

6.3 Into the future

Each three-year Action Plan is built around a key theme which, over time, will drive the changes needed to achieve the target of a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children.

The foundations are currently being laid through the first Action Plan.

The second Action Plan, on which work will start in 2013, will take stock of what has worked well in the first three years and consolidate the evidence base for the effectiveness of strategies and actions implemented to date.

The third Action Plan will deliver solid and continuing progress in best practice policies, with governments using data of far greater detail, accuracy and depth due to the improvements made in data collection and analysis.

The fourth Action Plan is expected to see the delivery of tangible results in terms of reduced prevalence of domestic and family violence and sexual assault, reduced proportions of children witnessing violence, and an increased proportion of women who feel safe in their communities.

Each Action Plan builds on the last and considers what worked well and areas for improvement. Each Action Plan will have its own implementation plan which will identify key National Priorities and align with one or more of the National Outcomes of the National Plan. This framework allows us the freedom to work together on consistent themes while, at the same time, remaining responsive to emerging priorities.

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