

Progress Review of the

First Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*

May 2014

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Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to 'take stock' of progress against the First Action Plan: Building a Strong Foundation (2010-2013) of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan). This Progress Review describes what the First Action Plan set out to achieve, and analyses progress made by governments to implement the First Action Plan. This analysis has informed the development of the Second Action Plan: Moving Ahead (2013-2016).

The National Plan is a long-term, 12-year strategy for achieving a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. It focuses strongly on stopping violence from happening in the first place through long-term cultural change, ensuring women who experience violence receive the services and support they need to recover and rebuild their lives, holding perpetrators to account, and building the evidence base to inform improved policy and service responses to domestic and family violence and sexual assault in the future.

The National Plan set four high-level Indicators of Change to show progress across the twelve years:

- 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
- Reduced proportion of children exposed to their mother's or carer's experience of domestic violence.

These are long-term indicators, which will only be achieved over time. It is anticipated that changes may be observed by 2016 – 2019, when it is expected that reporting of violence to police will have increased, due to community attitudes starting to change. In the meantime, progress under the First Action Plan can be measured against what the First Action Plan was expected to deliver. As the National Plan progresses, some of the data that is currently available on violence against women and their children (at **Appendix 1**) can be used as a baseline for measurement.

The First Action Plan was designed to build a strong foundation for change by setting up national infrastructure, bringing stakeholders together under a common goal and providing the pathway for issues to be taken up nationally.

The First Action Plan identified four National Priorities:

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

Actions undertaken between 2010 and 2012 by governments were reported in the first Progress Report to the Council of Australian Governments, which was published in 2013 and can be accessed at www.dss.gov.au/NationalPlan.

Achievements reported in this Progress Report included *The Line* social marketing campaign, national services such as 1800RESPECT, work towards the establishment of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (formerly the National Centre of Excellence), national surveys being undertaken, and ground work to improve perpetrator interventions.

To assess the First Action Plan as a whole and inform the development of the Second Action Plan, consultations were undertaken in February and March 2014. These included national roundtables, a written submission process and state and territory-level engagement. This process sought input from a broad range of community sector organisations, academics, individuals and stakeholders from the business sector. These consultations affirmed progress to date, highlighted gaps and challenges, and identified critical initiatives that should be continued in the Second Action Plan.

Background – the development and release of the national plan:

National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

Recognising that more needed to be done to reduce violence against women and their children, the Australian 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 domestic and family violence and sexual assault on women and their children. In preparing their report, the National Council engaged with over 2,000 community stakeholders, 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 (Time for Action)*.

National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

Following the release of *Time for Action*, and subsequent work by the independent and expert Violence Against Women Advisory Group, the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan) was developed, in consultation with all states and territories. The National Plan was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments and released in February 2011.

The National Plan has support across governments. It sets a long-term platform for action until 2022, bringing together the efforts of Commonwealth, state and territory governments and civil society across Australia to make a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children.

The National Plan is being delivered through a series of four three-year Action Plans. It sets out six National Outcomes for all governments to deliver during its 12-year term:

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.

Each National Outcome has an accompanying ‘measure of success,’ which sets out how the outcome will be measured over the life of the National Plan:

OUTCOMES	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
1. Communities are safe and free from violence	Increased intolerance of violence against women
2. Relationships are respectful	Improved knowledge, skills and behaviour of respectful relationships by young people
3. 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
	Increased proportions of Indigenous women are able to have their say within community on important issues including violence
4. Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence	Increased access to and responsiveness of services for victims of domestic/family violence and sexual assault
5. Justice responses are effective	Increased rates of women reporting domestic violence and sexual assault to police
6. Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account	A decrease in repeated partner victimisation

Like the Indicators of Change, which are higher-level measures of the success of the National Plan as a whole, Measures of Success are long term indicators that will take time to yield results.

Progress against the First Action Plan National Priorities

To make a start towards achieving these six National Outcomes, governments agreed four National Priorities for the First Action Plan:

1. Building the evidence base (underpins all Outcomes in the National Plan)
2. Building primary prevention capacity (related to Outcome 1, Outcome 2, and Outcome 3)
3. Enhancing service delivery (related to Outcome 3 and Outcome 4)
4. Strengthening justice responses (related to Outcome 3, Outcome 5 and Outcome 6).

NATIONAL PRIORITY 1: progress on Building the Evidence Base

The National Council identified that in order to guide effective policy, legislation and programmes there was a pressing need to gain a better understanding of trends in sexual assault and domestic and family violence and to further develop the evidence base. In *Time for Action*, the National Council noted that considerable work needed to be done to improve the collection and availability of data and to fill a number of gaps in research on violence against women and their children. As a result, this National Priority underpins all six National Outcomes of the National Plan.

The First Action Plan sought to put in place the data collection and research mechanisms required to develop a rigorous evidence base on violence against women and their children. The work undertaken in the First Action Plan will enable governments to measure the success of the National Plan in reducing violence against women and their children over the long-term, and inform ongoing improvements to policy and programme responses to domestic and family violence and sexual assault as the National Plan evolves.

This National Priority underpins all of the National Outcomes outlined in the National Plan.

Under the First Action Plan, governments agreed to begin building the evidence base by:

- establishing a **National Centre of Excellence to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (now ANROWS)** to drive research efforts over the life of the National Plan
- commencing work to develop nationally consistent data definitions and collection methods as part of a **National Data Collection and Reporting Framework**, to be operational by 2022
- conducting the **Personal Safety Survey (PSS)** and the **National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS)** on a four-yearly rolling basis
- establishing an **evaluation plan** for the life of the National Plan.

Progress under the First Action Plan

- **Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) (formerly the National Centre of Excellence)**

In early 2013, Commonwealth, state and territory governments partnered to establish a national research body to bring together, for the first time, research on domestic and family violence and sexual assault. The role of ANROWS is to build a strong and lasting evidence base that will drive reform and inform policy and practice in reducing violence against women and their children. ANROWS' first priority was to develop a National Research Agenda to shape and guide national research. The National Research Agenda was endorsed by Commonwealth, state and territory Ministers and released in May 2014.

- **National Data Collection and Reporting Framework**

To support the generation of data around domestic and family violence and sexual assault that is nationally consistent and enables the pathway of individuals to be tracked across systems, all jurisdictions have agreed to work collaboratively to develop and agree a comprehensive National Data Collection and Reporting Framework, to be in place by 2022. This will assist in tracking progress against the National Plan over time and build a better understanding of the incidence and experience of violence against women and their children. Under the First Action Plan, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) worked with governments in the early stages of developing the National Data and Collection Framework. The ABS has released two documents: *Defining the data challenge for family, domestic and sexual violence*, which defines and describes family, domestic and sexual violence and aims to put it into a statistically measurable context; and *Bridging the Data Gaps for Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence* to analyse existing data to identify possible data gaps, definitions and priorities.

- **Personal Safety Survey (PSS)**

Under the First Action Plan, it was agreed that the ABS would conduct the PSS every four years to provide data about the prevalence of violence against women in Australia. This represents a significant contribution to building the evidence base. This information is essential in understanding the ongoing scale of violence against women and, over the life of the National Plan, whether or not rates of violence are decreasing. The PSS 2012 was released in December 2013.

- **National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS)**

Under the First Action Plan, it was agreed that VicHealth would conduct the NCAS every four years to provide data about community attitudes towards violence against women. Understanding community attitudes is important for shaping and influencing future initiatives to prevent violence against women. The NCAS will enable the tracking of progress around this issue, and continue to inform primary prevention efforts under the National Plan. The next NCAS will be released in 2014.

- **Evaluation Plan**

Under the First Action Plan, governments have worked with key stakeholders and experts to scope and develop an evaluation plan. The evaluation plan will set out a structured approach to evaluate the National Plan over time. Based on this evaluation plan, evaluation activities will assess the effectiveness of the National Plan as a policy framework for reducing violence against women and their children every three years and across its 12-year lifespan. These evaluations will help to build the evidence base.

Findings from the national consultation process

During the national consultation process to inform the development of the Second Action Plan, it was acknowledged that important gains had been made under the First Action Plan in improving the evidence base. The establishment of ANROWS was considered a highlight of the First Action Plan. The Commonwealth's commitments to fund two national surveys was also noted. The importance of continuing to build the evidence base was emphasised, along with the ongoing need for nationally consistent data collection and application. The continued need to translate evidence into policy and practice was also stressed. Collecting, evaluating and disseminating evidence about 'what works' was seen as critical to improving policy and programme responses to violence, as was further national research on a range of associated issues. The importance of collecting data on diverse groups of women, including Indigenous women, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women, and women with disability, was also consistently raised.

NATIONAL PRIORITY 2: progress on Building Primary Prevention Capacity

The National Council highlighted the importance of primary prevention – stopping violence from happening in the first place – including by working with communities to acknowledge and reject violence, and by delivering high quality respectful relationships education. *Time for Action* acknowledged that work needed to be done to build primary prevention education capacity in Australia.

As a result, the National Plan has a strong focus on preventing violence by raising awareness and building respectful relationships in the next generation.

This National Priority relates to Outcome 1, Outcome 2 and Outcome 3 of the National Plan. The 'Measures of Success' for each of these Outcomes are:

Outcome 1 – *increase in the community's intolerance of violence against women*

Outcome 2 – *improved knowledge of, and the skills and behaviour for, respectful relationships by young people*

Outcome 3 – *reduction in the proportion of Indigenous women who consider that family violence, assault and sexual assault are problems for their communities and neighbourhoods and an increase in the proportion of Indigenous women who are able to have their say within their communities on important issues, including violence.*

These Measures of Success were not expected to change greatly over the course of the First Action Plan – they are long term measures that, depending on success, will change over the life of the National Plan. Baseline data has been established for a number of the Measures of Success and data for comparison will become available as the National Plan progresses. The goal in the First Action Plan was to set a platform of initiatives that will drive primary prevention over the life the National Plan. The focus has been on systematic and strategic investments that build knowledge and establish infrastructure to support long term change.

Under the First Action Plan, governments committed to:

- 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
- embed evidence-based **respectful relationships education** in schools
- promote positive **media representations** of women
- advance gender equality through the development and utilisation of **Australian Gender Indicators**.

Progress under the First Action Plan

- **The Line**

The Line, launched in 2010, is an innovative social marketing campaign aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours that contribute to violence. *The Line* targets the 12 to 20-year-old age group and aims to encourage young people to discuss and debate relationship issues and form their own conclusions about what sort of behaviour is crossing the line, and what is not. As at June 2014, the campaign had around 76,000 Facebook fans and there had been around 850,000 visits to the website with over 2.2 million pages viewed. A separate campaign aimed primarily at Indigenous youth, *The Line – Respect Each Other*, incorporates a strong community approach in encouraging and promoting respectful relationships.

The Line campaign is supported by extensive research and has been subject to ongoing evaluation since it began. This research has found that *The Line* has already delivered positive outcomes in terms of the impact it has on those it reaches. Tracking research has found that:

- 87% of people who recognised the campaign claimed it has improved their understanding of behaviour that could be 'crossing the line'
- 83% of people changed their behaviour as a result of the campaign
- 88% of people intend to change their behaviour in the next six months
- 84% of 12 to 24 year olds intend to change their behaviour in the next 6 months as a result of the campaign.

The Line has been internationally recognised as an innovative and best practice campaign engaging young people on the topic of respectful relationships.

- **Respectful relationships**

A number of jurisdictions funded and delivered respectful relationships projects in school and non-school based settings during the First Action Plan. To supplement the work already under way in states and territories and build the evidence base around good practice respectful relationships education, the Commonwealth funded three rounds of respectful relationships projects around the country. As at November 2013, around 63,000 young people had participated in respectful relationships education through these projects. The Institute for Social Science Research, University of Queensland has been contracted to undertake an evaluation of the Respectful Relationships initiative, with a final report due for release in mid 2014. The evaluation aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Respectful Relationships projects funded; consider how the Respectful Relationships projects are delivering against the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence National Standards for Effective Sexual Assault Prevention Education; and develop a set of good practice principles which could be promoted among educators to support the delivery of respectful relationships education.

- **Media work**

Under the First Action Plan, in May 2013, governments agreed to a national approach for engaging with the media to improve reporting of violence against women and children. This national approach involved the development of media guides and national resources, drawing on successful work under way in states and territories.

- **Australian Gender Indicators**

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. The first release of the Australian Gender Indicators was published in August 2011 and is released, with updated information, every six months. The Australian Gender Indicators provide a valuable evidence base for informing policy development to improve gender equality and report on key data sources that are critical to measuring the success of the National Plan, including the Personal Safety Survey.

- **Workplaces**

Under the First Action Plan, a range of jurisdictions undertook work with employers to support workplaces to prevent and respond to violence against women. Employers have an important role to play in reducing violence against women, in the sense that workplaces provide economic security for women; are important settings for encouraging the development of attitudes that reject violence; and can provide the support that women who experience violence need to heal and rebuild their lives.

The White Ribbon Workplaces pilot project was funded under the First Action Plan. This is a primary prevention initiative that aims to change attitudes towards violence against women and their children through workplaces. Twenty seven organisations from across the corporate, community and government sectors are involved in the White Ribbon Workplaces pilot project, including Telstra, Suzanne Grae and the Royal Australian Navy.

The *Safe at Work, Safe at Home* Project aimed to improve the knowledge and capacity of employee organisations, employers and employer organisations to support employees experiencing domestic or family violence. This project was far-reaching with, by 2013, over one million workers across the country being protected by domestic violence clauses in workplace agreements, including employees in the New South Wales public service, Queensland Government employees, and employees of some Commonwealth departments and agencies.

In 2014, the ACT public service also introduced leave for domestic violence purposes.

- **The Foundation**

The Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children (the Foundation) was established as a partnership between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments in July 2013. The role of the Foundation is to drive long-term cultural and attitudinal change from the ground up through community engagement and advocacy. It is a key piece of national infrastructure that has been established as an independent company to foster innovation, enable effective community engagement, and provide a platform for collaboration with and between existing best practice primary prevention and other community organisations.

The Foundation consulted with over 250 organisations in late 2013 to inform its future directions. The most frequently raised issue during these consultations was the importance of addressing underlying gender inequality in order to stem the prevalence of violence against women. The Northern Territory recently joined the Foundation as a member, seeking to increase the focus on Indigenous communities.

Findings from the national consultation process

The national consultations recognised a number of key achievements in relation to building primary prevention capacity under the First Action Plan. These included respectful relationships education, community action grants and broader work to improve gender equality. There was also strong acknowledgement of the increased attention on violence against women and their children over recent years, and of the role that the National Plan has played as a platform for action, bringing a growing group of stakeholders together under a common goal.

There was agreement that, into the future, the work of the Foundation needed to be embedded into the Second Action Plan and expanded to involve all jurisdictions in ongoing initiatives to raise community awareness and change attitudes. Participants also noted the review of the Australian Curriculum. The potential to work with local government, rural and regional communities and sporting groups was also discussed. Participants believed that targeted primary prevention initiatives for communities where women have diverse experiences of violence, or can be more vulnerable, including Indigenous women, CALD women and women with disability was an important area of work in the Second Action Plan.

The consultation highlighted the need to engage broader groups in the implementation of the National Plan and on the issue of violence against women, including the media, larger numbers of men and businesses. The importance of engaging with groups of women who have diverse experiences of violence, or who can be more vulnerable to violence was raised consistently, to ensure their voices are heard and that they have access to information and resources. The proposal to develop a National Communication Strategy for the National Plan was well-received by participants.

Participants were also very keen to ensure that gender equality continued to underpin primary prevention efforts under the National Plan.

NATIONAL PRIORITY 3: progress on Enhancing Service Delivery

The National Council found that considerable work was needed to build the capacity of services to meet the needs of women. This was both in terms of resourcing and in addressing the difficulties services face in recruiting and retaining appropriately skilled workers. *Time for Action* also stressed the importance of the 'first door being the right door' for women and their children who have experienced violence, so that assistance given is professional, compassionate and meets needs that may be complex.

This National Priority relates to Outcome 3 and Outcome 4 of the National Plan. The 'Measures of Success' for each of these outcomes are:

Outcome 3 – *reduction in the proportion of Indigenous women who consider that family violence, assault and sexual assault are problems for their communities and neighbourhoods and an increase in the proportion of Indigenous women who are able to have their say within their communities on important issues, including violence.*

Outcome 4 - *Increase in the access to, and responsiveness of, services for victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault*

These Measures of Success were not expected to change greatly over the course of the First Action Plan – they are long term measures that, depending on success, will change over the life of the National Plan. Baseline data has been established for a number of the Measures of Success and data for comparison will become available as the National Plan progresses. Under the First Action Plan, work to enhance service delivery was focused on introducing key national services and initiatives to support and supplement services being delivered at a state and territory level. A number of key national projects were also undertaken to learn more about improving service responses, particularly in meeting the needs of particular groups of women and children.

To enhance service delivery under the First Action Plan, governments agreed to:

- **deliver high quality telephone and online support services**, which meet nationally consistent standards
- expand the availability of professional support and advice to **frontline workers**
- develop **community safety plans**, including in 29 Remote Service Delivery sites
- continue to support work in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory on cross **border issues**
- undertake **key projects to drive further reforms across governments and sectors** to support better service delivery for women with disability, children and Indigenous women.

Progress under the First Action Plan

- **1800RESPECT**

Under the First Action Plan, the Commonwealth Government funded the establishment of 1800RESPECT, the first national domestic and family violence and sexual assault counselling service. As at June 2014, 1800RESPECT has recorded around 100,000 contacts since it began on 10 October 2010.

1800RESPECT provides:

- professional telephone and innovative online counselling and support to people who have experienced or are at risk of violence, their family members and friends
- referrals to people who have experienced or are at risk of violence, their family members and friends
- support to isolated workers in domestic and family violence and sexual assault services who did not previously receive the support they required
- support to frontline workers who encounter women who have experienced violence, including workers in the drug and alcohol and mental health sectors.

The providers of the counselling service, Rape and Domestic Violence Services, 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 and ensure resources are up to date and relevant.

- **DV-alert**

The innovative Domestic Violence Response Training program (DV-alert) was expanded under the First Action Plan, to offer free accredited training to all health and allied health workers. DV-alert is also offered online. DV-alert focuses on equipping participants with the skills to recognise, respond and refer people experiencing domestic or family violence to relevant support services. DV-alert training includes culturally appropriate training for people working

with Indigenous women, and will be expanding to include developing training to support people who work with women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- **Development of Community Safety Plans**

Community safety plans are locally led initiatives that include 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. Throughout the First Action Plan, a number of communities across Australia implemented or started to develop community safety plans.

- **Women with disability**

Under the First Action Plan, Women with Disabilities Australia was funded to investigate and promote ways to improve access and responses by services for women and girls with disability experiencing or at risk of violence. The *Stop the Violence* project was overseen by a project steering group chaired by Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick with membership from across jurisdictions. The project involved a broad reaching online national survey, which sought feedback from over 350 organisations. A national *Stop the Violence* symposium was then held in late 2013. *Stop the Violence* has created a greater understanding about women with disabilities' experience of violence, and will help to shape future reforms to ensure that the needs of women with disability are better met.

The National Plan also has strong links with the National Disability Strategy. Under this Strategy, which was released in 2010, 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 for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020* have priority actions to improve the safety and wellbeing of women and children with disability.

- **Child Aware Approaches**

Child Aware Approaches was a joint project under the National Plan's First Action Plan and the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*, aimed at securing better outcomes for children. In 2012, 43 Child Aware Approaches projects were funded to promote better understanding of the relationship between child abuse and neglect and domestic/family violence, mental illness, and sexual abuse, and to improve services for children and young people who are exposed to these issues. Projects ran at national, state and local level and supported Indigenous community organisations, culturally and linguistically diverse community organisations, people with disability and their families and those experiencing, or at risk of, mental illness.

- **Cross Border Family Violence Information and Intelligence Unit**

The Commonwealth Government provided funding 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.

Findings from the national consultation process

The achievements and impact of 1800RESPECT were widely acknowledged through the national consultation process. In particular, participants noted the support it provided to remote and rural communities and to isolated workers. There was consistent recognition of one of the key reform projects undertaken during the First Action Plan – the *Stop the Violence Project* for women with disability. The importance of building on the *Stop the Violence Project* was also highlighted.

There was strong support of initiatives that support victims of domestic and family violence and sexual assault to stay safely in the home, while the perpetrator is removed. The importance of developing and building on holistic and integrated service responses for women and their children who have experienced violence was raised consistently. This included providing women and their children with wrap around support, and better integrating programmes for victims and perpetrators of violence.

The importance of tailoring appropriate and sensitive responses to groups of women who have diverse experiences of violence or can be more vulnerable, including Indigenous women, CALD women and women with disability, was consistently raised.

NATIONAL PRIORITY 4: progress on Strengthening Justice Responses

The National Council noted that legal responses were often unsuccessful in adequately protecting and ensuring the safety of Australian women. Issues that were highlighted in *Time for Action* include ensuring accessible and equitable justice for women and their children; protection orders, particularly in terms of cross-jurisdictional application; and the need to ensure professionals within the legal system have appropriate knowledge and expertise.

The National Council also emphasised the importance of ensuring that perpetrators are held to account and stop their violence. *Time for Action* noted there was very little evidence around the effectiveness of different types of interventions and how different sectors and professions involved with perpetrators can work together most effectively, nor was there a nationally consistent approach to perpetrator interventions. In its response to *Time for Action*, all jurisdictions agreed to develop national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions and the Commonwealth Government committed to investing \$3 million over three years to support research into perpetrator interventions.

This National Priority relates to Outcome 3, Outcome 5 and Outcome 6 of the National Plan. The 'Measures of Success' for each of these outcomes are:

Outcome 3 – *reduction in the proportion of Indigenous women who consider that family violence, assault and sexual assault are problems for their communities and neighbourhoods and an increase in the proportion of Indigenous women who are able to have their say within their communities on important issues, including violence.*

Outcome 5 - *increase in the rate of women reporting domestic violence and sexual assault*

Outcome 6 - *decrease in repeated partner victimisation*

These measures will take time to show change. Baseline data has been established for a number of the Measures of Success and data for comparison will become available as the National Plan progresses. Depending on the success of new measures, changes may start to be seen during the Third Action Plan (2016 – 2019). In recognition of the considerable, long term programme of work that needs to be done to improve the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions, given the gaps in knowledge and the diversity of approaches, the First Action Plan had a strong focus on setting the groundwork to improve the evidence and develop consistency around perpetrator interventions. Work to protect women and their children and enhance levels of understanding about violence in the family law system was also progressed.

Under the First Action Plan, to lay the foundations in strengthening justice responses, governments agreed to initiatives including the following:

- bring together and improve **evidence around perpetrator interventions**
- develop **national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions**
- improve cross-jurisdictional mechanisms for the protection of women and their children, through work towards a **National Family and Domestic Violence Order (DVO) scheme**
- develop a **multidisciplinary training package that targets professionals working in the family law system**

Progress under the First Action Plan

- **Perpetrator interventions research stream**

A review of domestic and international literature on perpetrators and perpetrator intervention programmes in the areas of family and domestic violence and sexual assault was undertaken in 2011 along with consultations with experts from state and territory governments, the community and justice fields to advise on priorities for further research. Following this work, the Commonwealth Government provided \$3 million to create a dedicated perpetrator research stream within the ANROWS.

The work done by ANROWS will support governments to improve their current perpetrator interventions.

- **National outcome standards for perpetrator interventions**

With the aim to improve the quality and quantity of perpetrator interventions across Australia during the First Action Plan, all governments agreed to develop national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions. To inform this work, a major national consultation was undertaken in 2013, involving over 200 experts in workshops across Australia. This was complemented by more than 120 interviews and online surveys.

- **Family and domestic violence orders (DVOs)**

In March 2011, the Standing Committee of Attorneys General (now the COAG Council on Law, Justice and Community Safety) agreed to the development and implementation of a National DVO scheme. In November 2011, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the scheme and agreed that draft legislation should be settled as soon as possible that will provide automatic recognition of interstate domestic and family violence orders.

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.

- **AVERT training package**

The AVERT training package, targeting lawyers, judges, counsellors, and other professionals in the family law system, was released in March 2011.

AVERT was developed to provide a multi-disciplinary training package in family violence that encourages collaboration between professionals who are working in the family law system. The aim of the training package is to provide workers at all levels within the family law system with a sound and practical understanding of family violence, its impact and the appropriate strategies for responding which promotes safety for all involved. Over 1000 AVERT training packages have been distributed free to stakeholders.

- **DOORS – Detection of Overall Risk Screen**

In March 2013, a common screening and risk assessment framework and tool called the DOORS - Detection of Overall Risk Screen was released. The DOORS is an evidence based framework that helps family law professionals detect risks to the safety and wellbeing of people they work with. It is particularly geared to risks to those families exposed to family violence and child abuse. It helps professionals develop client safety plans, refer clients to other appropriate services, and make decisions about which people need to go straight to the family law courts to determine parenting issues. Over 2980 copies of the DOORS have been distributed.

Findings from the national consultation process

The national consultations recognised that work had been initiated as part of the First Action Plan to strengthen justice responses, particularly in relation to perpetrator interventions. Participants wanted to see this work progressed further. Consultations highlighted the critical need for the implementation of a National DVO Scheme, and asked for this to be given priority in the Second Action Plan.

Next steps

This Progress Review of the First Action Plan and feedback provided through the consultations on the Second Action Plan highlight initiatives that are important to continue or build on, as well as some gaps and areas that would benefit from an increased focus into the future under the National Plan. These include:

- An ongoing focus on primary prevention, building on work that was initiated under the First Action Plan, through the Foundation, respectful relationships education, and broadening the focus through the community, including sports, local governments and workplaces.
- A continuation and enhancement of national services established under the First Action Plan, including 1800RESPECT.
- Better meeting the needs of diverse groups of women, including those who can be more vulnerable to violence. This includes Indigenous women, women with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse women.
- Strengthening work around children who experience or witness violence.
- Ensuring services and systems work together effectively to keep women and their children safe, provide wrap around services, and respond to perpetrators.
- A stronger focus on justice responses, particularly in integrating responses to perpetrators.
- Ongoing work to build the evidence base, both in terms of more nationally consistent data and greater research, including through ANROWS.

- Broadening engagement with the National Plan, including through engaging with the media, businesses and local communities.

Conclusion

As reflected throughout this Progress Review, the First Action Plan was about laying the foundations for change. It focused on implementing initiatives, systems and infrastructure to gain national efficiencies and form the basis for effective future work to reduce violence against women and their children.

Initiatives to build the evidence base and primary prevention capacity, undertaken during the First Action Plan, provide a platform for work to drive change across the life of the National Plan and for future generations. These included: establishing ANROWS to bring together and undertake a national programme of practical research; funding national data work; trialling and learning about best practise respectful relationships education in different settings; seeing early inroads from social marketing campaigns in shaping behaviour and attitudinal change; and establishing an organisation specifically focused on engaging with the community to prevent violence.

Targeted actions to enhance service delivery and strengthen justice responses, initiated during the First Action Plan, were early key steps in the journey to ensure that women and their children are protected from violence and receive the support they need. These included: setting up national services like 1800RESPECT to support and supplement state and territory services; learning more about how services can better respond to a range of women and their children impacted by violence; taking early steps to protect women through work with justice systems; and undertaking considerable groundwork to make sure that perpetrators stop their violence in the long term.

While there are clear signs of progress against actions outlined in the First Action Plan, it will be some time yet before a reduction in prevalence of violence against women and their children can be seen. This will require a greater, sustained effort from communities, working with in partnership with governments, civil society and business leaders committed to reducing violence against women and their children.

Work under the First Action Plan is not sufficient to reduce violence without further commitment from all parties. Continuing this work is necessary to avoid risk of wasted investment, loss of momentum in the broader community and missed opportunities to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The significance of foundation actions, delivered in partnership between governments and the broader community, needs to be recognised. The first three years of the National Plan have formed a strong and effective basis for future work.

This needs to be built on by prioritising those activities that have greatest potential to make a difference in the medium to long term. It is through this future work, to be taken forward as part of the Second Action Plan and beyond, that Australia will see change towards a reduction in violence against woman and their children.

APPENDIX 1

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – KEY STATISTICS

APRIL 2014

Introduction

The number of women who have experienced violence is unacceptably high. Around one in three women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 and around one in five have experienced sexual violence. Around 17 per cent of women have experienced violence at the hands of a partner since the age of 15, and an estimated 25 per cent have experienced emotional abuse by a partner.¹ Surveys commissioned as part of The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan) First Action Plan are contributing to our knowledge and understanding of violence against women in Australia. Two surveys, the National Community Survey on Attitudes towards Violence against Women and the Personal Safety Survey establish a benchmark from which progress on implementing the National Plan can be measured. The results also guide the development and targeting of interventions aimed at building cultures of non-violent and respectful relationships between men and women.² Key results from these surveys and other studies are summarised below:

Community Attitudes

The 2009 National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women (NCAS) highlights contemporary attitudes held about violence against women and seeks to understand factors leading to the formation of contemporary community attitudes about violence against women.

Overall, the NCAS showed that community perceptions of what constitutes domestic violence have broadened significantly since 1995, to include physical and sexual assault, threats of harm to family members, and psychological, verbal and economic abuse. The vast majority of the respondents agreed that physical and sexual assault, and threats, was domestic violence (**98% in 2009** compared with **93% in 1995**).

However, while the vast majority of people surveyed did not believe that any physical force against a current or former wife, partner or girlfriend could be justified under any circumstances, **34%** of people believed that 'rape results from men being unable to control their need for sex' and roughly **one in six** agreed that a woman 'is partly responsible if she is raped when drunk or drug-affected.'

There is a strong link between violence against women and how individuals, communities and society as a whole view the roles of men and women. Promoting respect between women and men and advancing gender equality are essential in preventing violence against women and their children.

Prevalence

The Personal Safety Survey (PSS) conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2005 and 2012, collected information about the nature and extent of violence experienced by men and women since the age of 15, including men's and women's experience of current and previous partner violence. The table below details women's experience of violence since the age of 15, as indicated by the 2012 PSS.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *Personal Safety Survey*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Canberra.

² VicHealth, 2009, *National Survey on Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women 2009, Changing cultures, changing attitudes – preventing violence against women*, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, Carlton.

Note: Results from the 2013 NCAS will be released in 2014.

Type of violence experienced by women since the age of 15, 2012 ³	Estimated % of women
Physical assault	29.8%
Physical threat	12.8%
Experienced any physical violence (a)	34.4%
Sexual assault	17.1%
Sexual threat	4.4%
Experienced any sexual violence (a)	19.4%
Experienced any violence (b)	40.8%
Emotional abuse by a partner	24.5
(a) Where a woman has experienced both assault and threat, they are counted separately for each type of violence they experienced but are counted only once in the aggregated totals	
(b) Where a woman has experienced both physical and sexual assault or threat, they are counted separately for each type of violence they experienced but are counted only once in the aggregated total	

The table and graph below compare women's experience of violence by any perpetrator, and women's experience of emotional abuse by a partner, in the 12 months prior to the survey from the 2005 PSS and 2012 PSS. These changes are not statistically significant.

Type of violence experienced by women during the previous 12 months 2005 and 2012⁴ and the estimated percentage of women experiencing this violence who are 18 years and over

	2005	2012
Physical assault	3.1	3.0
Physical threat	2.1	2.2
Experienced any physical violence (a)	4.7	4.6
Sexual assault		1.3 1.0
Sexual threat	0.5	0.2*
Experienced any sexual violence (a)	1.6	1.2
Experienced any violence (b)	5.8	5.3
Emotional abuse by a partner	-	4.7

(a) Where a woman has experienced both assault and threat, they are counted separately for each type of violence they experienced but are counted only once in the aggregated totals

(b) Where a woman has experienced both physical and sexual assault or threat, they are counted separately for each type of violence they experienced but are counted only once in the aggregated total

* estimate has a relative standard error of 25% to 50% and should be used with caution

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *Personal Safety Survey*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Canberra.

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *Personal Safety Survey*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Canberra.

Type of violence experienced by women in 12 months prior to survey

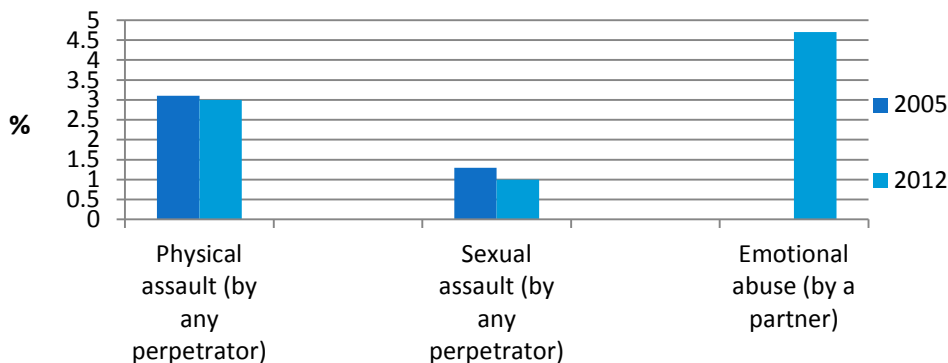


Table: Type of violence experience by women in 12 months prior to survey

Physical assault by any perpetrator in 2005 was experienced by approximately 3.1% of respondents. Physical assault by any perpetrator in 2012 was experienced by approximately 2.8% of respondents. Sexual assault by any perpetrator in 2005 was experienced by approximately 1.3% of respondents. Sexual assault by any perpetrator in 2012 was experienced by approximately 1.0% of respondents. Emotional abuse by a partner was experienced by approximately 4.7% of respondents in 2012. There was no data for 2005.

Note: ‘Emotional abuse’ was not measured in a comparable manner in 2005. Emotional abuse is defined as certain behaviours by a current and/or previous partner that is aimed at preventing or controlling a person’s behaviour with the intent to cause them emotional harm or fear.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

The rate of violence in Indigenous communities is a long-term problem and changes are expected in the medium to long term. Data on hospitalisation for family violence related assaults has found that, in 2008-2009, the rate for Indigenous women and girls was **31 times** the rate for other Australian women and girls.⁵ In 2012-13, when self-reporting personal and/or family stressors in the last 12 months, 8% of Indigenous females reported witnessing violence, 10% reported abuse or violent crime (significantly higher than Indigenous males – 4%), and 10% reported feeling unsafe (significantly higher than Indigenous males – 5%).⁶

The 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS)⁷ found that an estimated **25%** of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women had experienced **one or more incidents of physical violence** in the previous 12 months and:

- almost all knew the perpetrator of their most recent incident (**94%**);
- were significantly more likely to identify a current or previous partner (**32%**) and/or a family member (**28%**) as the perpetrator of their most recent incident of physical assault than any other relationship to perpetrator type; and

⁵ Productivity Commission, 2011, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage: Key Indicators 2011*, Canberra.

⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013, *Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey: First Results 2012-13*, Cat. No. 4727.0.55.001, Canberra

⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*, Cat. No. 4714.0, Canberra

Note: The NATSISS is conducted every six years. The next NATSISS will be conducted in 2014.

- were more likely than those who had not experienced violence to have also experienced poorer health (including a disability or long term health condition or to have experienced higher levels of psychological stress), or live in a household that ran out of money for basic living expenses.

Women with Disability

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) released a Stop the Violence discussion paper in 2013, which outlines initial findings of the Stop the Violence project, aimed at engaging with key stakeholders to identify structural issues to improve service responses to women and girls with disabilities experiencing or at risk of domestic and family violence. Of the 367 respondents to the online survey, it is noted that 22% of women and girls with disabilities who presented themselves to various services had been affected by violence in the past year.

Women and Work

The Safe at Home, Safe at Work survey, conducted by the Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse in 2011, detailed the impact of domestic violence on work. The majority of the respondents in the survey were women (**81%**), two-thirds were in fulltime employment and nearly two thirds (**64%**) of the respondents were aged 45 and older. Key findings reflect that:

- **30%** of respondents had personally experienced domestic violence;
- nearly half those who had experienced domestic violence reported that the violence affected their capacity to get to work; the major reason was physical injury or restraint (**67%**), followed by hiding keys and failure to care for children; and
- negative effect on work performance was the main reported result, with **16%** reporting being distracted, tired or unwell, **10%** needing to take time off, and **7%** being late for work.

Early findings from a research partnership between the University of South Australia and Curtin University⁸ show that, as a result of domestic violence:

- more than **50%** of the women surveyed had to change their jobs, hours of work or job type;
- more than **30%** of the women surveyed had to make a significant geographical move; and
- the majority of women surveyed reported that their mental health had suffered.

Children

The 2012 PSS indicated that:⁹

- Of the estimated 128,500 women (**54%** of women who had experienced current partner violence) who had children in their care when the violence occurred, 31% of these stated that children had seen or heard the violence.
- Of the estimated 733,900 women (**61%** of women who had experienced violence while living with their most recently violent previous partner) who had children in their care when the violence occurred, **48%** who experienced violence while living with their most recently violent previous partner stated that children had seen or heard the violence.

This exposure to intimate partner violence has been linked to a wide range of physical and mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, behaviour problems and increased incidence of chronic illness. There is also evidence to suggest that children living in homes

⁸ Franzway, S, Wendt, S, Moulding, N, Zufferey, C, and Chung, D, 2014, *Gendered Violence and Citizenship: The complex effects of intimate partner violence on mental health, housing and employment*, University of South Australia

⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *Personal Safety Survey*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Canberra.

where intimate partner violence is present are at greater risk for exposure to other types of trauma, such as child abuse and neglect.¹⁰

Reporting to police

The 2012 PSS indicated that:¹¹

Current partner violence

- An estimated 47,000 women (**20%** of the 237,100 women who had experienced current partner violence since the age of 15) had contacted the police about the violence by their current partner.

Previous partner violence

- An estimated 536,900 women (**42%** of the 1.3 million women who had experienced previous partner violence since the age of 15) had contacted the police about the violence by their most recently violent previous partner.
 - Approximately **34%** of these women who had contacted the police about the violence by their most recently violent previous partner reported that their partner had been charged, and **86%** of women whose partner had been charged reported that their partner had gone to court.
 - Approximately **50%** of the women who had contacted the police about the violence by their most recently violent previous partner also had a restraining order issued against their partner. Of those women who had a restraining order issued against their partner, an estimated **58%** experienced further violence.

Access to services and support

The 2012 PSS indicated that:¹²

Current partner violence

- An estimated 144,600 women (**61%** of women who had experienced current partner violence since the age of 15) sought advice or support about the violence by their current partner.
- **43%** of these women who sought advice or support about the violence by their current partner, sought advice or support from a friend or family member.

Previous partner violence

- An estimated 964,100 women (**76%** of women who had experienced previous partner violence since the age of 15) sought advice or support about the violence by their most recently violent previous partner.
- **56%** of these women who sought advice or support about the violence by their most recently violent previous partner, sought advice or support from a friend or family member.

Recidivism

The 2012 PSS indicated that:

- an estimated 154,500 women (**65%** of women who had experienced current partner violence since the age of 15) had experienced more than one incident of violence by their current partner.

¹⁰ Herrenkohl, Sousa, Tajima, Herrenkohl & Moylan, 2008, *Intersection of child abuse and children's exposure to domestic violence*, Washington

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *Personal Safety Survey*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Canberra.

¹² Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012, *Personal Safety Survey*, Cat. No. 4906.0, Canberra.

- an estimated 925,100 women (**73%** of women who had experienced previous partner violence since the age of 15) had experienced more than one incident of violence by their most recently violent previous partner.

A study commissioned by the Australian Government in 2009 found that violence against women and their children was estimated to cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion in 2008-09. Without appropriate action to address the issue, an estimated three quarters of a million Australian women will experience and report violence in 2021-22, costing the Australian economy an estimated \$15.6 billion.¹³

¹³ KPMG, 2009, *The Cost of Violence against Women and their children*, Safety Taskforce, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Australian Government.