

**National Civil Society and Business Sector
Consultations to inform the Second Action Plan of
the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against
Women and their Children 2010-2022***

Independent scribe's report

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Background

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children (the National Plan) was endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and released in early 2011. It 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 civil society, the business sector and the Australian community more broadly to make a sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children.

For further background and information on the National Plan, refer to the Background Paper for National Civil Society and Business Roundtables provided at **Attachment A**.

The Second Action Plan will enable all governments and civil society to embed and build on the work of the First Action Plan. To facilitate the development of the Second Action Plan, the Commonwealth held a series of national Roundtable consultations with national peak bodies, civil society, business leaders and subject matter experts.

Ms Libby Lloyd AM facilitated the Roundtables. Libby Lloyd is former chair of both the National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children and the Violence against Women Advisory Group.

The Adelaide Roundtables were chaired by Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women. The Canberra Roundtables were chaired by Senator the Hon Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services. The agenda for the Roundtable discussions is provided at **Attachment B**. A list of Attendees at the four Roundtables is provided at **Attachment C**.

The focus of the Roundtable discussions was to reflect on achievements under the First Action Plan and to identify practical national initiatives and priorities for the Second Action Plan.

Stakeholders were also given the opportunity to provide written submissions to the Department of Social Services for further consideration in the development of the Second Action Plan.

The aim of these consultation mechanisms was to provide an opportunity to hear a broad range of ideas from diverse stakeholders. This would provide the raw material from which the content of the Second Action Plan could be developed, prioritised and refined.

This report provides an analysis of the feedback received from the four Roundtables. Whilst there were a number of common themes which emerged across all the Roundtable discussions, in order to canvas a diversity of views and perspectives, each Roundtable was different in terms of participants and sector representation.

Participants noted a number of significant achievements in jurisdictions which were acknowledged but are not individually reflected in this report. This of itself reflects the broad scope of the National Plan and the range of individual sectors involved in the consultations.

Key Achievements under the First Action Plan

There were six key areas consistently identified where participants considered significant progress had been made and a level of success achieved:

1. National engagement on the issue of violence against women and their children
2. Establishing the National Centre of Excellence (NCE)
3. Establishing the Foundation to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children (Foundation)
4. Establishing 1800RESPECT
5. Primary prevention strategies
6. Stop the Violence Project for women with disability

1. National engagement on the issue of violence against women and their children

There was agreement at all four Roundtables that a significant achievement and strength of the First Action Plan was Commonwealth, state and territory jurisdictions working together to share insights, experience, best practice, innovation and evidence based developments. This has been achieved through taking a collaborative and inclusive approach to policy design with civil society and across different levels of government. Participants believe that there is now a broad national acknowledgement that violence against women is a problem in Australia that needs a collaborative effort to address.

There was widespread acknowledgement that the National Plan has provided a platform for action and a pathway for issues to be taken up nationally. Several participants, particularly at the Canberra Roundtables, noted that the Outcomes reflect the established agreement that to address violence there is a need to proceed on all fronts including the need to address gender inequality more broadly.

Having a national vehicle to bring together stakeholders and the broader community under a common goal to reduce violence against women and their children was noted as a significant achievement in itself.

Several participants at the Canberra Roundtable commented that internationally the Plan is seen to reflect good practice and has received significant international support, including at the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee.

2. Establishing the NCE

An analysis of feedback from the Roundtables indicates that there have been important moves made towards building an evidence base and prevalence data, including through the establishment of the NCE.

The role of the NCE is to build a strong and lasting evidence base that will drive reform and inform policy and practice to reduce violence against women and their children. It will provide a research hub for policy makers, practitioners and

researchers to link up evidence based responses, as well as serve as a meeting point for strategic partnerships with a wide range of organisations, academics and key government and non-government stakeholders. The NCE began operational work in early 2013 and is an initiative of the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments.

3. Establishing the Foundation

The role of the Foundation is to drive cultural and attitudinal change to prevent violence against women and their children from the ground up through community engagement and advocacy.

The Commonwealth and Victorian Governments partnered to establish the Foundation, which was launched in July 2013. National consultations were held in August and September 2013, to inform the establishment and ongoing work of the Foundation.

Participants noted the positive steps that had been taken to develop a national primary prevention framework and to build networks and partnerships across a range of sectors and between the Victorian and Commonwealth governments.

Participants were positive about the role the Foundation could play in raising awareness of violence against women and primary prevention activities and that it would be critical to continue to give the Foundation time to establish and to develop strategies and actions to change attitudes and behaviours. Participants at the Adelaide Roundtable commented on the excellent work the Foundation has commenced working on primary prevention for CALD communities.

4. 1800RESPECT

The achievements and impact of 1800 RESPECT were noted at every Roundtable discussion. There was overwhelming acknowledgement of the success of 1800 RESPECT - Australia's national 24/7 sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling, advice, information and referral service. In particular participants noted the support provided to remote and rural communities and to isolated workers, particularly through the debrief facility. The expansion of 1800 RESPECT and broader awareness of the service as well as translation into different languages was also highlighted.

5. Primary prevention strategies

A key achievement of the First Action Plan was building primary prevention capacity and a strong recognition of the power of a primary prevention approach. Many of the successful primary prevention activities have had national leadership as well as jurisdiction and sector leadership and/or engagement. Participants considered that a number of advances have been made in the primary prevention actions. There is still a need for ongoing focus and commitment.

Having a focus in the First Action Plan on Respectful Relationships education and gender equality was identified as critical to its success. It was noted that the concept of Respectful Relationships is culturally appropriate and something all

communities aspire to. The piloting of Respectful Relationships in schools was noted as being particularly important and a number of participants commented on the need to maintain and build on the pilot programmes. Participants saw the review of the National Curriculum as a very important opportunity to influence the inclusion of Respectful Relationships programs in all schools.

Many of the primary prevention initiatives focused on gender inequality as the cause of violence against women and their children. It was acknowledged that the Community Action Grants initiative enabled some of these initiatives to be implemented.

6. Stop the Violence Project for women with disability

It was noted that the increased focus on the needs of women with disability in relation to domestic violence and their increased vulnerability to violence was an important outcome from the First Action Plan. There have been a number of specific measures targeted at women with disability that have been successful. The Stop the Violence Project (STVP) in particular has highlighted the high incidence of women with disability who have experienced violence and in particular identified the significant and numerous barriers to effective responses.

Other significant achievements noted by participants at the Roundtables included:

- the value and importance of bringing together sexual assault and domestic violence
- the success of social marketing initiative 'The Line'
- a major increase in the uptake of Domestic Violence Alert programmes by allied health workers and the quality and expansion of training provided to health and allied workers
- the adoption of domestic violence clauses in enterprise agreements
- the focus of the 'Stand Up' conference by Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AMaRWA) on forced marriage, FGM, trafficking and other issues for CALD women.

What Challenges and Gaps have been identified?

An analysis of the feedback from the Roundtables identified seven key areas where participants consistently agreed there remains a need to develop targeted strategies and actions in the next Action Plan. Among the continuing need to widen the engagement on and understanding of the National Plan, participants noted other key challenges and gaps:

1. Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Indigenous women and communities
2. Service and systems integration and coordination
3. Building the Evidence Base
4. Justice system
5. Perpetrator Interventions
6. Resourcing and engagement
7. Considering the needs of children

1. Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Indigenous women and communities

Participants spoke positively about strategies that have commenced under the First Action Plan but raised concerns that many issues impacting CALD women have not been fully addressed and that CALD women were not identified as a key focus group under the First Action Plan.

Participants highlighted the following areas where there were still significant challenges ahead:

- supporting and expanding engagement of Muslim communities who have stepped up and want to be part of the national initiative
- expanding and targeting the support that has been provided to refugees and migrant women and their children
- building and sustaining programmes such as the Partner and Prospective Marriage Visa programme, which provide support to both sponsors and partners about services and laws in Australia, the Complex Case Support (CSS) and Visa changes that protect women and their children whose visa status is linked to that of their spouse
- addressing a range of issues arising from the ALRC Review and the Senate Inquiry into Forced Marriage.

Whilst a number of achievements were noted in relation to strengthening Indigenous communities to better tackle domestic and family violence and sexual assault, it was noted that a continued emphasis and priority for this sector needs to be sustained.

The work of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA) to get Indigenous voices heard, the successful engagement by Indigenous communities wanting domestic violence alert training and the National Civil Society and Business Sector Consultations on the Second Action Plan Roundtables Report

engagement with community elders ahead of training were seen as positive outcomes which need to be sustained and built upon.

Proposed areas for future focus for reducing violence against Indigenous women are outlined in the section on 'Vulnerable Groups'.

2. Service and systems integration and coordination

The need to improve service and systems integration and coordination across services, jurisdictions, levels of government and the community sector was a consistent theme across all Roundtables. This same theme was noted across domestic and family violence and sexual assault. It was acknowledged that this is an ongoing and significant challenge. Participants highlighted the most significant challenges as the need to:

- strengthen information sharing
- continue to address the need for consistent national data collection
- capture and disseminate good practice across all jurisdictions
- ensure consistency in standards, terminology and definitions across jurisdictions
- develop a central database to ensure local actions are known nationally
- further evaluate outcomes so we know what works.

3. Evidence base

As noted earlier in this report participants spoke very positively about establishment of the NCE and the success that has been achieved in a relatively short space of time. The importance of continuing to build the evidence base was emphasised and the continuing need to translate this into policy and practice, particularly in the area of primary prevention.

Gaps identified by participants include the need:

- to address the ongoing need for nationally consistent data collection and application
- to collect, evaluate and disseminate evidence about 'what works' in reducing violence against women and their children
- for national research on impacts on children of direct and indirect violence
- for additional longitudinal research studies particularly in relation to the long term effects of violence against women on women's economic well-being and security
- to increase the understanding of determinants of health and well-being across the life course of women and their children
- to research poverty as a barrier to leaving and re-partnering because of poverty
- for research on perpetrator interventions and what works.

4. Justice System

Participants raised concerns that there was a need to obtain greater coherence with the National Plan objectives across the justice and regulatory sectors and to connect secondary interventions with prevention interventions.

Several participants noted the following gaps and/or challenges in the current approach:

- the need for universal/national recognition of Domestic Violence Orders and Apprehended Violence Orders (DVOs/AVOs)
- the implementation of a Domestic Family Violence and Sexual Assault register
- the need for greater consistency across the law and justice sectors
- the need to improve Family Court and police responses
- the need for Child Protection systems to address domestic and family violence and not just remove children
- the need for a child centred approach to be adopted across the justice system.

5. Perpetrator interventions

A significant number of participants identified that more work needed to progress to ensure perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account.

Participants noted the complexity of perpetrator issues and the lack of programme support for perpetrators as key gaps in the current action plan. There were comments about the diversity of programmes and the need to know what worked and what did not. Other gaps and/or challenges identified by participants included:

- Violence experienced by women with a disability in institutions or where violence is perpetrated by a carer
- Sending perpetrators to prison is not the same as holding them to account for their violence
- Perpetrator programmes only work if men are in the system.
- Longitudinal research into the effectiveness of perpetrator programmes.

6. Resourcing and Engagement

The challenge to obtain the balance between delivering services to those in most need whilst at the same time supporting long term preventative measures was identified by participants as an issue to be addressed in the Second Action Plan.

The need to develop more precise targets and measures for the Second Action Plan was also noted and many participants believe that this would not only improve services and programmes but would in turn improve transparency and accountability.

Participants questioned the future government arrangements now that the Select Council on Women's Issues (SCWI) term had come to an end. Minister Cash noted that in future the approach would be for Women's Ministers to meet on an as-needs basis to address key issues. This was well-received by Roundtables.

Participants emphasised the importance of continuing to link strategies under the Second Action Plan with the broader COAG national agenda. It was noted that the National Plan focuses on children of women who experience domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

7. Considering the needs of children

A number of participants expressed concern that the First Action Plan could have benefited from a stronger focus on violence against children.

It was noted that the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 (the National Framework), endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments in April 2009, is a long-term approach to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Australia's children and aims to deliver a substantial and sustained reduction in the levels of child abuse and neglect over time. The National Framework has been supported by high levels of collaboration between Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and non-government organisations. Feedback from participants suggested there could be increased communication about the links and synergies between the National Plan and the National Framework.

Participants also raised the need for more research and data collection around the impact of violence on children particularly in the early childhood years.

What initiatives from the First Action Plan will be critical to continue?

There was unanimous agreement that in building the Second Action Plan it would be essential to continue to sustain and build on many of the achievements outlined earlier in this report. Participants consistently raised the critical need to continue to build and expand on the work that has begun to increase community awareness and understanding of the issues associated with violence against women and their children. Making violence against women an issue for every person in the community is the ultimate goal and will in turn underpin and support many, if not all, of the other strategies and initiatives in the National Plan.

An analysis of feedback indicates the following areas where there was strong agreement on initiatives which it would be critical to continue:

- 1800RESPECT
- Embedding the work of the NCE
- Embedding the work of the Foundation
- Stop the Violence project
- Perpetrator interventions and national outcome standards
- Primary prevention and Respectful Relationships education
- PSS and NCAS and building the evidence base
- Community engagement and fostering leadership at all levels
- Initiatives where the survivor remains safe in the home

Further information on suggested strategies and areas for a more targeted approach is provided in the section on '*Proposed key features of the Second Action Plan*'.

1. 1800RESPECT

The success of the 1800 RESPECT initiative was highlighted at all Roundtables. It was clear that there is overwhelming support for this initiative to continue and to be expanded.

2. Embedding the work of the NCE

There was unanimous support for the NCE and the importance of embedding the work that has commenced into the Second Action Plan. The NCE's first priority is to develop a National Research Agenda to improve policy and service delivery to prevent violence and respond to women and their families across Australia. The research agenda will also include a dedicated perpetrator intervention research stream.

3. Embedding the work of the Foundation

There was unanimous support for the Foundation and the importance of embedding the work that has commenced into the Second Action Plan. Some participants at the Adelaide Roundtable suggested that expanding this initiative

and involving other jurisdictions would be beneficial to the longer term outcomes of the National Plan.

The need to build community awareness and change attitudes was identified as an important aspect to be continued in the Second Action Plan. The need to prioritise and understand the complexity of domestic and family violence and sexual assault was also raised as an important issue to continue. It was noted the Foundation would have a key role in this type of work.

4. Stop the Violence project

Participants at the Canberra Roundtables stressed the importance of maintaining and progressing the momentum that has begun with the Stop the Violence Project. In doing this it will be important to consider implement the recommendations and suggested strategies and actions from project report on the Stop the Violence Project. Participants noted the importance of progressing this work through a virtual centre for prevention of violence against women and children with disabilities.

5. Perpetrator interventions and national outcome standards

As outlined earlier in this report there was a high degree of consensus that the work commenced under the First Action Plan to address perpetrator issues needs to be progressed further. There was strong endorsement to continue to drive the strategies identified under National Outcome 6 with a renewed focus.

6. Primary prevention and Respectful Relationships education

Feedback across all Roundtables reinforced the critical need to continue to work within the primary prevention space and that this must remain a priority in the Second Action Plan. Participants noted the Respectful Relationships programmes and Community Action Grants as two areas which significantly contributed to the success of the National Plan.

The review of the National Curriculum was noted by participants as an opportunity to influence the sustainability of the programme by including it in the national curriculum.

7. PSS and NCAS and building the evidence base

Participants noted the essential role that evidence development has in progressing the outcomes for the National Plan and the importance of ensuring that this translates back into policy and practice, particularly in relation to primary prevention. Several participants commented that this step has now started to take place as a result of the work from the National Plan; however there is a need for long term investment and leadership on this issue.

Several participants commented on the need to continue to progress national data collections and to ensure consistency through sharing of information. It was noted that the PSS and NCAS have been particularly successful in this regard and there was strong support expressed for these to be continued in the Second Action Plan, as well as the National Data Collection and Reporting Framework. Some participants at the Canberra Roundtable suggested that there is a need for the PSS to include more data on women with disability.

8. Community engagement and fostering leadership at all levels

Whilst the majority of participants agreed that many of the strategies outlined in the First Action Plan to build community engagement had started to have an impact there was a strong message that continuing to build community engagement across a broader range of sectors and building leadership at all levels was critical.

There was strong feedback particularly at the Adelaide Roundtables that local government could be a key mechanism for engaging with local communities more broadly.

A number of participants also noted that there was a need in the Second Action Plan to continue to broaden the stakeholder base. This could include increased engagement with the sporting, police and health sectors as well as civil society.

Participants noted the need to continue to have engagement with high level leaders such as the Prime Minister and other ministers so they are confident to speak freely on this issue. In particular participants noted the need to continue to foster male leadership, especially in Indigenous and CALD communities, and to identify more male champions who are willing to take a leadership role in driving prevention and in bringing about behavioural change. In doing so it was noted that it is important to provide support to men to undertake leadership roles and to speak out against violence against women and children. It would also be important to continue to encourage these champions and to provide them with the necessary tools to take action.

A number of participants noted that the Second Action Plan should focus on working more effectively with business and employers. This could include:

- progressing workplace recognition of Domestic Violence Leave and the adoption of domestic violence clauses in enterprise agreements
- building skills and capabilities across the workforce to recognise and effectively manage trauma and
- developing a pathway and language for men to talk about masculinity.

9. Initiatives where women and their children remain safe in the home

There was support to continue in the Second Action Plan initiatives where the victim/survivor is supported by removing the perpetrator and where the victim/survivor stays safely in the home. It was stressed these initiatives need to be accompanied by effective perpetrator interventions and legislation. Participants at the Adelaide Roundtables noted such programmes have been evaluated and found to be successful.

Participants also emphasised the importance of developing holistic responses in the Second Action plan - for example coupling perpetrator programmes with legislation and with the Safe at Home programmes. It was also suggested that these initiatives should be expanded into CALD and Indigenous communities and should also include sexual assault.

Proposed Key Features of the Second Action Plan

Feedback from participants indicated the following areas could feature in the Second Action Plan:

- Building on the infrastructure of the First Action Plan
- Integration and coordination of systems and services
- Sharing good practice and information at all levels
- Primary prevention
- Responding to 'intersectionality' through a focused engagement with vulnerable groups
- Media
- Children
- Perpetrator interventions
- Law and justice

1. Build on the infrastructure of the First Action Plan

The National Plan has resulted in the successful establishment of critical national-level infrastructure to inform future policy and service delivery and to engage the community in reducing violence, in order to create cultural and attitudinal change over the long-term. National services have also been strengthened to support women who have experienced violence. There was unanimous agreement that in building the Second Action Plan it would be essential to continue to sustain and build on many of the achievements outlined earlier in this report.

2. Integration and coordination of systems and services

A strong theme that consistently emerged across all discussions was the need to maintain a focus on developing and improving systems integration across initiatives in all states and territories and at Commonwealth level.

In developing the Second Action Plan participants noted that it would be important to address the need to have a 'one-stop-shop' approach for victims seeking assistance – i.e. the first door is the right door. Participants also noted that systems integration strategies could be complemented by a national framework that defines terminology and what primary prevention actually is, as well as establishing national data, systems and standards and that these would need to be agreed between all jurisdictions.

3. Sharing good practice and information at all levels

A key factor to ensure the effectiveness of systems and service integration strategies will be to capture, coordinate and provide a platform for national sharing of good practice. This could facilitate the development of national communities of practice and/or a platform to capture and build on learnings.

4. Primary Prevention

As identified earlier in this report primary prevention is integral to the range of strategies which have been identified under the National Plan to address violence against women and their children and participants agreed this should be emphasised as a key feature of the Second Action Plan.

Participants noted the need to develop more models of prevention and intervention that work across specific groups such as CALD, women with a disability, Indigenous and rural and remote women. There was great emphasis that CALD women are not a homogenous community. It must be recognised that there is enormous complexity in this group that includes language, country of origin, connectedness to community, length of residence in Australia and more.

There was a strong response across all Roundtable discussions in relation to gender equality. Whilst some good progress on this issue has been made participants agreed that there is still not a broad acceptance of gender inequality as a driver of domestic and family violence and sexual assault.

Participants considered there is a need to focus on cultural and attitudinal change in children at a range of ages. It was suggested that the Second Action Plan could benefit from a close look at the language used in the plan to reinforce gender equality from a strengths based approach rather than a deficit position.

There was strong endorsement to broaden the scope of the primary prevention agenda to include looking at early brain development, what happens during pregnancy, impacts on mental health etc.

5. Responding to 'intersectionality' with a focused engagement with vulnerable groups

It was evident across all Roundtable discussions that there was strong support for the Second Action Plan to feature support for groups that can be more vulnerable to violence and have different experiences of violence. In particular participants noted the needs of CALD women, Indigenous women, women with a disability and women living in rural, regional and remote parts of Australia. Participants also highlighted the need for mainstream programmes to be inclusive of all vulnerable groups, as well as having separate targeted programmes for those groups and the need to look closely at population groups that are especially vulnerable. See 'Vulnerable Groups' for more detail.

6. Media

Participants strongly supported the need for the media to play a key role in increasing the engagement of the broader community. It was suggested working more effectively with the media to address violence against women and their children should be a feature of the Second Action Plan. Proposed strategies included the need to:

- develop a comprehensive National Communications Strategy
- continue with an emphasis on more accurate and respectful reporting

- educate the media and develop key messages around violence against women and their children, as a prevention strategy
- ensure key messages are grounded in gender equality as a key driver for ending violence against women
- better understand how to communicate effectively with young people especially young men

7. Children

There was support, particularly at the Canberra Roundtables, for the Second Action Plan to give visibility to children who are part of violent families. The need to increase community understanding of the impact of violence on children, particularly in the early childhood years, was consistently raised.

Participants recommended that in developing the Second Action Plan there be an increased focus on developing interventions and analysis of child sexual assault and its long term consequences across a life span. Participants also noted that there is a need for closer involvement with child protection agencies on a number of fronts.

Participants noted the role of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children and the importance of linking this Framework with the Second Action Plan.

8. Perpetrator Interventions

As outlined earlier in this report there was consistent acknowledgement across all Roundtables of the need to revisit and strengthen strategies around perpetrator interventions in the Second Action Plan. Participants noted that perpetrator interventions require not just programme development but active policy development and legislation.

Some participants noted that holding men to account for their actions has only marginally improved and that there are very few effective behaviour change programmes in the community.

Other suggestions put forward by participants for consideration in the Second Action Plan included:

- the critical need for evaluation data from men's programmes to know what works
- the need to develop specific perpetrator programmes for sexual assault and sexualised behaviour
- working with perpetrators but also 'pre-perpetrators' to avoid violent behaviour

9. Law and Justice

There was considerable agreement across the Roundtables for the need to continue to more actively engage with the law and justice sectors. Participants noted the following three areas which they believe should feature in developing the Second Action Plan:

- Reforms at all levels of the judiciary
- Capacity building for justice sector to better respond to and meet the needs of victims/survivors
- Universal recognition of DVOs.

What type of work could benefit most from a national focus?

Participants identified the following areas which they consider could benefit from a national focus:

- Cross-jurisdictional systems being less fragmented and working better together, through:
 - good practice sharing database and ongoing commitment to good practice
 - consistent definitions and language
 - consistent data and building a national minimum dataset
 - universal recognition of protection orders and developing a register of domestic and family violence and sexual assault perpetrators
 - information sharing
 - risk assessment frameworks
 - develop a national training and workforce development strategy
 - nationally accredited training for workers
 - coordinating primary prevention activities
- Developing a comprehensive National Plan Communications Strategy to build a more effective approach to communications and the media. This will ensure that there is a better understanding in the mainstream media and assist media in better reporting of violence against women to encourage attitudinal change.
- The 'Eliminating Violence Against Women' media awards
- Respectful Relationships education and review of the national curriculum
- Longitudinal studies
- Building on the recommendations of the Stop the Violence project
- Establishing a national expert panel/advisory group for women with disability
- National standards for telephone and online counselling
- Gender equality across a range of spheres (Foundation)

Reducing duplication between Commonwealth, state and territory work to ensure initiatives are as effective as possible

The following suggestions were identified as areas where there was scope to reduce duplication:

- developing and improving system and service integration at the local, state, territory and Commonwealth level
- establishing working groups with women's alliances and/or other specialist services and organisations
- evaluation, synthesis and promotion of good practice
- sharing excellence and good practice as well as data and information sharing
- universal recognition of protection orders.

Which vulnerable groups and communities need a strengthened focus under the National Plan?

Participants agreed that there is not enough information available on vulnerable groups and there is a need for primary prevention models to be developed and tailored for use with vulnerable groups.

Three key areas were identified as needing a strong focus in developing the Second Action Plan:

- Indigenous women
- Women with a disability
- CALD women, including women on temporary visas and newly arrived migrants

Other vulnerable groups identified across all four Roundtables were:

- Older women, including those vulnerable to financial abuse
- Families with complex problems
- Women living in rural, regional and remote areas
- Women living in poverty and homeless women
- Children
- GLBTIQ women in violent relationships

Indigenous women

There was unanimous acknowledgement of the critical need to strengthen strategies to support Indigenous communities to develop local solutions and to address violence in their communities. Participants identified the following areas where they consider a more focused approach is needed:

- continue to consult and work effectively with Indigenous communities
- continue to build the skills, capabilities and leadership of Indigenous women
- provide increased targeted support and assistance to Indigenous women and build the capacity of Indigenous health workers and community workers at the primary care level
- strengthen partnerships and engagement with other Indigenous organisations and peak bodies i.e. health, drug and alcohol, mental health and child safety
- compile existing local strategies in Indigenous communities to gain a greater understanding of best practice and of what works

Women with a disability

Participants at all Roundtable discussions noted the need to focus on women with disability across all areas of the Second Action Plan. The following suggestions were put forward for consideration in developing the Second Action Plan:

- increase the scope of projects to include the unique and varied forms of violence experienced by women with disability such violence in institutions
- increase the recognition of women with a disability in the legal frameworks and improve access to justice for women with a disability, especially women with a cognitive disability and where sexual assault occurs
- continue to address areas identified in the First Action plan to support women with disability in institutions such as disability residential, mental health facilities and prisons. Structural and legislative silos were noted as a significant challenge in recognising and responding to this group
- look for ways to empower women with a disability
- establish a national expert panel/advisory group for women with disability.

CALD women and children

Participants stressed the need to ensure that the Second Action Plan is inclusive of all CALD women and children noting that CALD definitions of violence can be rather broader than is currently outlined in the National Plan and can include polygamy, refusal of divorce, and denial of learning English.

Participants supported the strategy to reduce violence in CALD communities by building respectful relationships and noted the need to better understand the differences between cultural and religious practices.

How, through the Second Action Plan, can we make reducing violence against women and their children a whole of community issue?

As reflected throughout this Report, there was consistent acknowledgement at all Roundtable discussions of the need to expand the engagement of communities at all levels in reducing violence against women and their children and to encourage everyone to take action. Participants noted the importance of building sustainability into the National Plan so it can be continued on and be owned by the community and civil society into the future. A comment was made that the 12 year National Plan was good but there would be a need for a second generation of the Plan.

There were five broad categories which consistently emerged in response to the question on 'how the Second Action Plan could more effectively broaden the engagement of communities in this issue'.

- Engagement with and education of the media
- Better reach to vulnerable groups
- Encourage male engagement by way of champions, building male leadership and reaching out to young people
- Develop leadership across all levels
- Work more effectively with business and employers

Further information on each of these strategies is provided in this report.

Purpose of National Roundtables

The Commonwealth Government is hosting national roundtables to take stock of what has been achieved under the First Action Plan of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022* (the National Plan) and to support the development of a Second Action Plan, from a national perspective.

Leaders from national peak bodies, civil society and business sectors and subject matter experts will be invited to attend these discussions.

This is an important opportunity to engage key stakeholders across sectors, as well as subject matter experts, on the issue of violence against women and their children, and to help to shape next steps under the National Plan.

Violence against Women

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Personal Safety Survey (2012), 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 around one in three women having experienced physical violence since the age of 15 and around one in five having experienced sexual violence. Around one in five 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.

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) 2006).

In 2009, it was estimated that domestic and family violence and sexual assault perpetrated against women costs the nation \$13.6 billion each year. By 2021, the figure is likely to rise to \$15.6 billion if extra steps are not taken to address violence against women.

The emotional and personal costs of violence against women cannot be measured: the effects reach all levels of society. Violence against women not only affects the victims themselves, but the children who are exposed to it, their extended family, their friends, their work colleagues and ultimately the broader community.

National Plan

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 civil society, the business sector and the Australian community more broadly to make a sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women and their children.

Living free from violence is everyone's right and reducing violence is everyone's responsibility.

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.

The National Plan is the first plan to address domestic and family violence and sexual assault that:

- coordinates actions across jurisdictions,
- focuses strongly on stopping violence from happening in the first place through primary prevention,
- looks to the long term through building respectful relationships and working to increase gender equality to prevent violence from occurring in the first place, and
- focuses on holding perpetrators accountable and encouraging their behavioural change.

The National Plan sets out six National Outcomes for all governments to deliver during the term of the Plan:

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 are being delivered through four three-year Action Plans. The Action Plans are intended to support governments to work together to develop, implement and report progress within a coordinated national framework.

First Action Plan (2010-2013) – Building a strong foundation

The First Action Plan has been about laying a foundation for long-term change in achieving a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children.

This has involved the establishment of some critical, national-level infrastructure to inform future policy and service delivery and to engage the community in reducing violence, in order to create cultural and attitudinal change over the long-term. National services have also been set up to support women who have experienced violence.

This work has taken place across the four National Priorities of:

- (1) Building Primary Prevention Capacity
- (2) Enhancing Service Delivery

- (3) Strengthening Justice Responses
- (4) Building the Evidence Base

Examples of long-term national infrastructure to create cultural and attitudinal change

- The establishment of the **Foundation to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children** (the Foundation): the role of the Foundation is to drive cultural and attitudinal change to prevent violence against women and their children from the ground up through community engagement and advocacy.
- The establishment of the **National Centre of Excellence to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children** (the NCE): the role of the NCE 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. The NCE will provide a research hub for policy makers, practitioners and researchers to link up evidence based responses, as well as serve as a meeting point for strategic partnerships with a wide range of organisations, academics and key government and non-government stakeholders. The first priority of the NCE is to develop a national research agenda.
- Funding for a dedicated research stream on **perpetrator interventions**, to be undertaken by the NCE. This will support the implementation of national outcome standards for perpetrator interventions, which are currently being developed.
- Conducting **national data collections** through the Personal Safety Survey and the National Community Attitudes Survey, and working across jurisdictions to develop a national data collection and reporting framework.

Examples of national services established

- **1800RESPECT**, which is a national telephone and online counselling service, staffed by professional counsellors, that supports women who have experienced, or are at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault. It also offers support to staff in services in isolated and remote areas, as well as frontline workers who may encounter, in the line of their work, victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- **DV-alert**, which is free accredited training for health and allied health workers which focuses on equipping participants with the skills to recognise, respond and refer people experiencing domestic or family violence to relevant support services. The training is prioritised in rural and remote areas and has culturally appropriate courses for health and allied health workers in Indigenous communities.

A Progress Report on the status of the implementation of the First Action Plan was released in May 2013 and is available on the DSS website (see further information).

Further details on the First Action Plan will also be provided at the roundtables.

Second Action Plan (2013-2016) – Moving Ahead

The National Plan recognises that achieving a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women is a long-term endeavour. The Second Action Plan enables governments and civil society to embed and build on the work of the First Action Plan.

The Second Action Plan is an opportunity to take stock, reflect on gaps, develop new actions and strengthen implementation, with an ongoing focus on critical priorities such as primary prevention. It will be about building and introducing practical national initiatives to reduce violence against women and their children.

During the Second Action Plan, it is expected that cultural change will advance; women will feel more comfortable reporting their experiences of domestic and family violence and sexual assault; and more members of the Australian community, across sectors and at all levels, will actively reject violence. This second phase of the National Plan represents a crucial next step for a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children in the long-term.

Key questions for consideration at Roundtables

1. What have been the achievements/gaps under the First Action Plan?
2. What are the opportunities for consolidating and building upon the actions undertaken under the National Priorities of the First Action Plan?
3. What types of other initiatives could benefit from a national focus?
4. In order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in addressing violence against women, where is there scope to reduce duplication of programmes and services provided by the Commonwealth and the states and territories, as part of the Second Action Plan?
5. Which vulnerable groups and communities would benefit from an increased focus under the Second Action Plan?
6. How can we better engage our leaders and broader civil society to address the attitudinal and cultural change required to reduce violence against women and their children?

Further Information

Further information is available on:

- *The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*
- *First Action Plan 2010-2013, and*

- *Progress Report 2010-2012* at: <http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/programmeme-services/reducing-violence/the-national-plan-to-reduce-violence-against-women-and-their-children>
- *The Foundation* at <http://www.preventviolence.org.au>
- *National Centre of Excellence* at <http://www.nce.org.au>
- *1800RESPECT* at <https://www.1800respect.org.au>

References

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

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2006, *Family Violence among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*, Cat. No. IHW 17, Canberra.

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

ATTACHMENT B
Roundtables Agenda

Item No.	Time	Item Details
1.	9:00/9:10am or 1:30/1:40pm (10min)	Welcome
2	9:10/10:00am or 1:40/2:30pm (50min)	Setting the Scene and Taking Stock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What have been the key achievements under the First Action Plan? What were the challenges? • What initiatives from the First Action Plan will be critical to continue?
3	10:00/11:15am or 2:30/3:45pm (1hr 15min)	Priorities for the Second Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What characteristics or features would you like to see in a Second Action Plan? • What type of work could benefit most from a national focus? • Where is there scope to reduce duplication between Commonwealth, state and territory work to ensure initiatives are as effective as possible? • Which vulnerable groups and communities need a strengthened focus under the National Plan? • How, through the Second Action Plan, can we make reducing violence against women and their children a whole of community issue/"everyone's business"?
4	11:15/11:45am or 3:45/4:15pm	Morning/afternoon tea
5	11:45-12:30pm or 4:15/5:00pm (45min)	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of feedback from roundtable discussions • Taking forward the development and release of the Second Action Plan

ATTACHMENT C
Roundtables Attendees

Adelaide AM	Adelaide PM	Canberra AM	Canberra PM
Government Ministers	Government Officials	Government Officials	Government Ministers
Hon Gail Gago MLC	Wren Chadwick	Karl Alderson	The Hon John Elferink MLA
Government Officials	Rachael Green	Victor Martin	The Hon Bess Price MLA
Sue Clarke	Fiona Mort	Helen McDermott	Government Officials
Rachael Green	Danny McAteer	Sally Moyle	Fiona Baker
Linda Matthews	Ms Louise Smith	Sue Cochrane	Michelle Callan
Vanessa Swan	Vanessa Swan	Community	Sue Chapman
Sherrilee Mitchell	Community	Ngairé Brown	Deb Colliver
Community	Bruce Bolam	Mark Burgess	Joanne Sangster
Maryum Chaudhry	Samantha Bowden	Professor Rosemary Calder	Suzanne Everingham
Maria Hagias	Antoinette Braybrooke	Frances Crimmins	Community
Angela Hartwig	Margie Charlesworth	Helen Dalley-Fisher	Maha Abdo OAM
Dr Rae Kaspiew	Nadine Cohen	Libby Davies	Ms Alison Aggarwal
Annette Korzeba	Margherita Coppolina	Maria Dimopoulos	Amanda Alford
Chelsea Lewis	Dorinda Cox	Leanne Dowse	Tara Ashford
Paul Linossier	Sandra Dann	Tricia Elarde	Brian Babington
Rob Manwaring	Katrina Dee	Joumanah El Matrah	Dea Delaney-Thiele
Sandra Miller	Emeritus Professor Anne Edwards AO	Emeritus Professor Reg Graycar	Lara Fergus

ATTACHMENT C
Roundtables Attendees

Adelaide AM	Adelaide PM	Canberra AM	Canberra PM
Jodie Sloan	Terese Edwards	Virginia Haussegger	Keran Howe
Mary Stathopoulos	Leigh Gassner	Jane Hayden	Dr Cathy Humphreys
Natasha Stott-Despoja AM	Charlie King	Anne Hollonds	Di Mangan
Monique Toohey	Vicki Lachlan	Tracy Howe	Julie McKay
	Liz Little (telecon)	Vivi Koutsounandis	Sharan Nicholson-Rogers
	Fliss Lord	Margaret Piper AM	Julie Oberin
	Irene Mills (telecon)	Therese Sands	Clare Oppy
	Megan Mitchell	Chrystina Stanford	Ms Rhonda Payget
	Daniel Moss (proxy for Lin Hatfield Dodds)	Karen Willis	Wendy Reid
	Graeme Pearce	Fiona McCormack	Troy Roderick
	Ms Dale Wakefield	Thelma Weston	Sue Salthouse
	Carmel Guerra		Shirley Slann
			Jacky Sutton
			Vanessa Vanderhoek
			Pauline Woodbridge

