



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children

Our Plan for 2022–2032

Part 2 – Why do we need our Plan?



Easy Read version



How to use this Plan



The Australian Government worked with the state and territory governments to write this Plan.

When you see the word 'we', it means all of these governments.



We wrote our Plan in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.



This Easy Read document is a summary of our Plan.

This means it includes the most important ideas.

Bold

Not bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 39.



You can ask for help to read our Plan.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of our land – Australia.



They were the first people to live on and use the:

- land
- rivers
- seas.



We recognise the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who helped us write our Plan.

2



We split our Plan into different parts.

This is Part 2 – Why we need our Plan.



You can find the rest of our Plan on our website.

This includes where you can get help and support.

www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence

What's in Part 2?

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What is our Plan about?



This is Part 2 of our National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

We call it our Plan.



Many women and children experience violence at some point in their lives.



It will take a lot of work to end violence against women and children.



We need everyone in Australia to help us stop violence:

- before it starts
- from getting worse or happening again.



We also need everyone in Australia to help us support women and children:

- who experience violence
- to recover and heal after violence.



Most of the violence we want to end is the violence men use against women and children.

We use the words ‘violence against women’ to talk about this problem.



But other people also experience this violence.

And they experience this violence in different ways.

We explain this in more detail on page 23.



You can also find out more about how we will deliver our Plan in Part 3.

You can find it on our website.

www.dss.gov.au/ending-violence

Why do we need our Plan?



We had a National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022.

It ended in 2022.



We achieved a lot with our old Plan.

But we must do more work to end violence against women and children.



Our new Plan includes our goals for the next 10 years.

We want everyone to be:



- safe
- respected
- valued.



We don't want anyone to live with violence or fear.

What is violence?

Violence includes when someone:



- hurts you
- scares you
- controls you.

It can also be called abuse.



There are different types of violence.

Every person's experience of violence is different.



Violence can be physical.

For example, someone might hurt your body.

Violence can be emotional.

For example, someone might:



- say things that make you feel bad or scared
- control what you do.

Violence can be sexual.



For example, someone might:

- make you do sexual things you don't want to do
- do something sexual to you that you don't want them to do.

Violence can be financial.



For example, someone might:

- control your money
- take your money.

Violence can be online.



For example, someone might use technology – like a mobile phone or Facebook.

They might use technology to know where you are or control you.

Or someone might send you threatening messages.

Anyone can use violence against women and children.



This includes someone close to you, like:

- a partner
- a family member
- someone who supports you
- someone who lives with you.

And violence can happen anywhere.



This includes:

- where you live
- at work or school
- in the community.



Violence can happen to people who live:

- in big cities or towns
- far away from cities and towns.

Why does violence happen?



A lot of violence against women happens because women are not treated equally to men.



Different **attitudes** can lead to violence against women.

Attitudes are what you think, feel and believe.



Men and boys might:

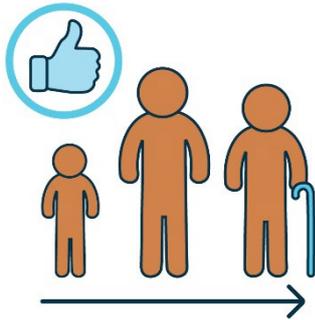
- accept violence against women
- not do anything to stop it.



Men and boys might think it's good to:

- control women
- not treat women with respect.

How can violence affect women and children?



Violence can affect women and children across their whole lives.

It can affect their:



- physical health
- mental health
- wellbeing.

It can affect their relationships with:



- partners
- family and friends
- people they work with.



Violence can also affect how they:

- find and keep a job
- study and learn.

How does violence affect different communities?



Women in Australia are all different.

And they can experience violence in many ways.



We must think about how different people experience violence.

And what each person needs.



We explain how some groups of people experience violence on the following pages.

Women of different ages



Women can experience different types of violence across their life.

People can use violence against girls and young women to:



- force them to get married



- take away their choice about having children



- harm their private body parts.



Young women are also more likely to experience partner violence.



Older women can also experience violence.

Older women might experience:



- financial abuse
- abuse from a family member, including their adult children
- abuse from people who support them, including carers.



Older women are also more at risk of being **homeless**.

People who are homeless do not have a home.

They must find a place to sleep each night.

Women with disability



Women with disability can experience violence:

- more often
- over a longer time
- in more places.



They can also experience violence from many different people, including:

- carers
- support workers.



Women with disability can experience violence when other people make decisions for them.

For example, decisions to stop them from:

- having children
- doing what they want.



They are also more at risk of **technology-facilitated abuse** when their disability affects how they:

- communicate
- do things on their own.



We call it technology-facilitated abuse when people use technology as part of their violence.

They might use a device, like a phone or computer.

Or they might use social media, like Facebook or Snapchat.



Some people in Australia have bad attitudes towards people with disability.



Because of this, some people think it's okay to:

- use violence against people with disability
- control people with disability
- not let them take part in the community.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience:

- more violence than other women
- different types of violence.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are much more likely to:

- go to hospital because of violence
- be killed by someone using violence.

They also face other challenges.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are often kept away from their:



- land
- family
- **culture.**

Your culture is:

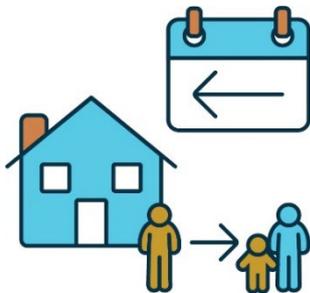


- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.



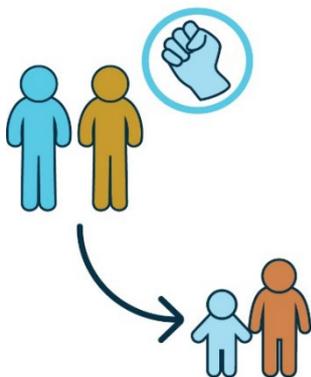
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience violence from men of all backgrounds.

Not just Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men.



Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are afraid people will take their children away.

This happened a lot in the past.



This is something that can still happen.

Too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are taken away from their family if they experience violence.



Because of this, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are scared to report violence.

Or get help when they need it.



The **justice system** often doesn't understand how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience violence.

The justice system can blame them for violence when they try to get help.

The justice system helps to make people who use violence responsible for their behaviour.



This includes:

- police
- courts
- the law
- prisons.

Culturally and linguistically diverse women

Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

people:



- come from different cultures and backgrounds
- speak languages other than English.



Violence can affect CALD women who have:

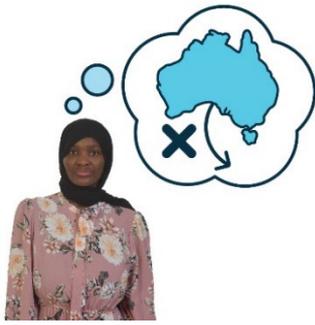
- lived in Australia for most of their life
- just arrived in Australia.



Sometimes CALD women might be visiting Australia for a short time to travel, work or live.



These women might not have friends and family in Australia to support them.



Some CALD women might experience violence from a person they rely on to stay in Australia – like a partner.

They might not ask for help because they worry about having to leave Australia.



CALD women might also not get help with violence because supports and services don't:

- speak their language
- understand their culture.



Other CALD people in Australia can also include:

- students from other countries
- people on a working holiday.



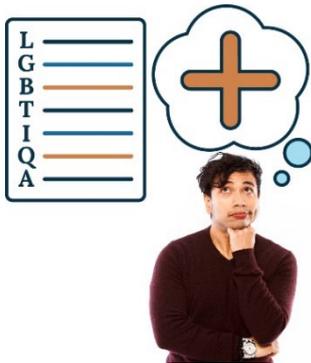
They can be at risk of violence because:

- they might not have somewhere to live
- it might be hard for them to earn money.

LGBTIQA+ people



The letters **LGBTIQA+** stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer or questioning and asexual.



The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTIQA+ community but don't talk about themselves using a word from this list.



LGBTIQA+ people can experience violence because of:

- who they are attracted to
- their **gender**.



Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

It isn't about whether your body looks male or female.



LGBTIQA+ people experience the same kinds of violence that other people experience.

But they also experience different kinds of violence.



For example, people might:

- try to change their mind about their gender
- make them change their body.

People might also:



- threaten to tell other people that they are LGBTIQA+
- stop talking to them because they are LGBTIQA+.



Or people might force LGBTIQA+ people to do sexual acts they don't want to do.

Children and young people



Children can experience violence when:

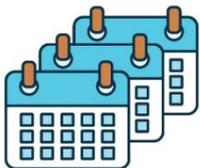
- it happens to them
- they see it happen to someone else.



When children experience violence, it can affect:

- how they grow and develop
- their physical health
- their mental health and wellbeing.

The effects on children who experience violence can last for a long time.



And it can affect:

- their relationships
- their education
- how they find and keep jobs.



Children who experience violence are more likely than other children to use violence when they are adults.

So it's important to stop this by supporting children when they are young.

How can we stop other barriers people face?



A **barrier** stops you from doing something you:

- need to do
- want to do.



There are many barriers that women and children face when they try to:

- get away from violence
- find and use supports.



We need to remove barriers that women and children face so they can get the support they want and need.



We explain some of the barriers that people face on the following pages.

Services and support



Different services need to work together to help end violence against women and children.



People who work for these services need to:

- understand why violence happens
- have the right skills to support people who experience violence.



Everyone needs to have the right training so they can support people who experience violence.



Often there aren't enough:

- people working in these services
- services in different areas – like areas far away from cities and towns.



So it's also important to:

- hire more people who have the right skills
- provide services all around Australia.

Government services



The justice system helps to make people who use violence responsible for their behaviour.

The **health care system** supports people who experience violence.



This includes:

- hospitals
- doctors and nurses
- health care services.



People who work in the justice and health systems don't all get the same training about how to:

- understand why violence happens
- support people who experience violence.



This means they might not have the right skills to help people who experience violence.

Other organisations



People who work in other organisations also need training about how to support people who experience violence.

Including people who work in:

- schools
- the **media**.

Media is a way of getting information.



Parts of the media include:

- TV
- radio
- newspapers
- social media, like Facebook.



The media can change how the community thinks and talks about violence against women.

They can tell the community that violence against women and children is not okay.



The media can also tell the community about services that support people.

And tell them that people who use violence are responsible for their behaviour.

Support at work



People should also feel safe in their **workplace**.

A workplace is any place you might work, such as an office, factory or shop.



Every workplace should:

- treat women and men the same
- believe people when they say they experience violence
- help people who experience violence to get support.

Housing



Violence is one of the main reasons that women and children become homeless.



When women and children want to leave a violent relationship, they need to find a new place to live.

And this can cost a lot of money.



This means they might:

- decide they can't leave
- leave but then go back.



Sometimes women and children have to move very far away to find somewhere to live.

This means they don't see their family and friends or have support.



Getting a house can also be a barrier for women who:

- have a physical disability
- are visiting Australia for a short time.



And getting a house can be a barrier for women who rely on the person using violence:

- for support
- to stay in Australia.



Women and children from different communities need housing that is safe for their culture.

This includes:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women
- CALD women.



Women and children need more support to find somewhere to live when they experience violence.

There should also be support for women and children who want to stay in their own home.



There need to be more places for people to live after they leave their home.

Government payments



The Australian Government supports people who experience violence to:

- stay safe in their home
- leave their home
- start a new, safe life.



There are different payments that can help people who:

- experience violence
- need to find a new place to live
- need support while they find a job.



These payments can help people be in control of their own lives.

Services Australia is in charge of most of these payments.



And their staff are trained to:

- know when someone may be experiencing violence
- provide support.

The justice system



The justice system can be a big part of helping someone who has experienced violence.



But some people who experience violence don't want to use the justice system.



They might not feel safe.

Or they might have had a bad experience in the past.



They might also find it hard to:

- understand how the justice system works
- communicate with people who work in the justice system.



They might not want to say bad things about the person who used violence.

Or want people to know they experience violence.



The justice system needs to:

- be easy to use
- meet the needs of different people.

It also needs to be safe for everyone, including people from different cultures.



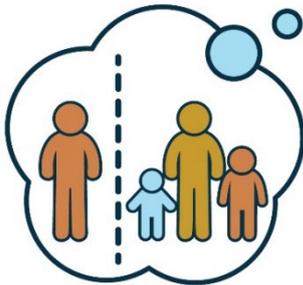
The justice system must get better at protecting all people who experience violence.

Protecting families and children



The **family law system** is part of the justice system.

It protects families and children.



Sometimes when violence happens, a family will decide to separate.



The family need to make plans about:

- who the children will live with
- money and the things they own.



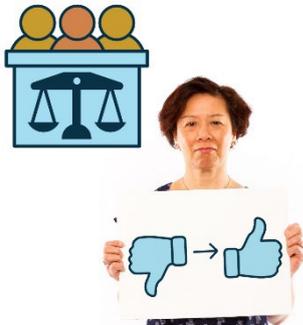
It is important for the family law system to help families:

- make these plans in a safe way
- keep children who have experienced violence safe.



There are services that can help families to make these plans.

But if the family can't agree, they might go to court.



Family courts have done a lot of work to understand violence against women and children.

But they must do more to make family courts:

- easy to use
- safe for women and children.

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Attitudes

Attitudes are what you think, feel and believe.



Barrier

A barrier stops you from doing something you:

- need to do
- want to do.

Culture

Your culture is:



- how you think or act now because of how you grew up
- your beliefs
- what is important to you.



Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)

CALD people:

- come from different cultures and backgrounds
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Family law system

The family law system is part of the justice system.

It protects families and children.



Gender

Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

It isn't about whether your body looks male or female.

Health care system

The health care system includes:



- hospitals
- doctors and nurses
- health care services.



Homeless

People who are homeless do not have a home.

They must find a place to sleep each night.



Justice system

The justice system helps to make people who use violence responsible for their behaviour.

The justice system includes police, courts, the law and prisons.



LGBTIQA+

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Media

The media includes TV, radio, newspapers and social media, like Facebook.

Technology-facilitated abuse



We call it technology-facilitated abuse when people use technology as part of their violence.

They might use a device, like a phone or computer.

Or they might use social media, like Facebook or Snapchat.



Workplace

A workplace is any place you might work, such as an office, factory or shop.



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