

Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Group

A submission to inform the Second Action Plan 2027–2031 of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*

Acknowledgements

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Group acknowledges and pays respect to Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Queensland, and to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands, waters and seas on which we live, work, gather and care for community. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and acknowledge the strength, leadership, lore, culture and knowledge that sustain our people, families and communities.

Members of the Prevention Group provide advice grounded in lived experience, cultural authority, professional expertise and community connection. This submission reflects the Group's continuing call for self-determination, shared decision-making and investment in community-controlled responses to end domestic, family and sexual violence.

Dedication

This submission is dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence across Queensland, including children, young people, families and communities living with the impacts of violence, trauma and loss.

We honour their strength, resistance, survival and healing, and mourn those whose lives have been taken. We also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, Elders, leaders, advocates, organisations and allies who continue this work with wisdom, persistence and commitment to safer, accountable and culturally grounded systems in Queensland.

Executive Summary

This submission is offered by the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Group to inform the Second Action Plan 2027–2031 under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032* (National Plan). It is grounded in our voices, our ways of knowing, being and doing, and the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families, communities, workers, Elders and leaders across Queensland.

Our message is clear: real safety will not be achieved while systems continue to operate without our input. The Second Action Plan must honour the standalone national commitment in *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036* (Our Ways) and place Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, cultural authority, community control and healing at the centre of every decision, investment and accountability mechanism.

In Queensland, women, children, young people, families and communities continue to carry the heavy impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence. These harms are not separate from colonisation, dispossession, intergenerational trauma, structural racism, poverty, housing insecurity, child protection intervention, justice system contact and service systems that too often fail to listen, respond or be accountable.

The Second Action Plan must move from principle to practice. It must not rely on consultation alone. It must embed shared decision-making where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advice is documented, responded to, incorporated where appropriate and publicly reported. Communities must be able to see how their voices have shaped action.

Our priorities are woven together: safety for victim-survivors; community-led prevention and early intervention; support for children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right; accountable, healing-informed responses for people who use violence; and a strong, culturally safe workforce and connected service system.

A strong weave needs strong infrastructure. Queensland does not currently have an independent, funded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, domestic and sexual violence industry body. Without this, our sector lacks the statewide structure needed to coordinate leadership, support workers, strengthen prevention, connect regional knowledge, inform policy and hold systems accountable.

1. Introduction

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Group is a funded advisory body to the Queensland Government's Minister for Families, Seniors, Disability Services, Child Safety, and Domestic and Family Violence. The Prevention Group brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, practitioners and community-connected expertise from across Queensland. Members carry cultural authority, lived experience, professional knowledge and deep commitment to ending violence against our women, children, families and communities.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Second Action Plan 2027–2031. This submission speaks to what must be included so national commitments become practical, funded and accountable action in Queensland. It is written in the spirit of Our Ways: our solutions must be led by us, grounded in culture, shaped by lived and living experience, and supported by governments and systems that walk with us in genuine partnership.

2. Queensland context

2.1 Disproportionate impact and workforce need

In Queensland, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent approximately 4.6 per cent of the population¹. From 2013 to 2022, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples accounted for 37 per cent of domestic and family violence admissions to Queensland hospitals². These figures demonstrate the continuing and disproportionate impact of domestic and family violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities.

These harms are compounded by intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, housing insecurity, poverty, child protection involvement, justice system contact and limited access to culturally safe services. For too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors, the systems that should create safety can instead feel unsafe, fragmented, punitive or hard to trust. This can silence help-seeking, deepen risk and leave families without the support they need.

A strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce is a necessary safety intervention. Our workers bring cultural authority, trust, relational practice, local knowledge, language, accountability to community and the ability to build pathways that people can believe in. A 2025 Queensland sector workforce survey identified that only six per cent³ of the state's domestic and family violence workforce identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Strengthening this workforce is not optional; it is central to the safety and healing of our people.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022, July 1). Queensland: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population summary. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/queensland-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-population-summary>.

² Longbottom, M., & Mills, K. (2025). *Exploring family and domestic violence through hospital admission data in regional and remote Queensland, Australia*. Current Issues in Criminal Justice, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10345329.2025.2507438>

³ WorkUP Queensland. (2025). *2025 Workforce Survey: A capable and courageous workforce*. <https://workup.org.au/what-we-offer/workforce-planning/workforce-data/>

2.2 Policy environment

The Second Action Plan will be implemented in a different Queensland policy environment to that of the First Action Plan. In May 2026, the Queensland Government released *Safer Families, Safer Communities – A domestic and family violence reform strategy for Queensland*, which identifies four priority domains: prevention, early intervention, responses to persons using violence, and recovery and healing. The strategy is to be delivered through three phases: reset, amplify and sustain. It also identifies system enablers including accessible, accountable and collaborative service responses, DFSV capability, strong laws, and meaningful data and monitoring.

The Queensland Government has also committed to *Our Ways – Strong Ways – Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence 2026–2036*, and to the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*. These frameworks require governments to centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination, shared decision-making, data sovereignty, culturally safe service systems and a strong community-controlled sector. Also of note is the first objective of the Queensland Human Rights Commission's current strategic plan¹, which is "promoting self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples".

The Prevention Group was consulted during development of Queensland's new reform strategy and provided comprehensive advice. Members are concerned that this advice is not visible in the released strategy or Phase 1 implementation paper. When our voices are sought but not clearly reflected, trust is weakened and the promise of shared decision-making is not fulfilled.

The Second Action Plan should close this gap by requiring Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advice and contributions to be documented, responded to, incorporated where appropriate and publicly reported. This is how governments show respect for our voices and how communities can see that partnership is real.

2.3 Funding and sector representation

According to the Queensland Government's project plan summary for implementation of the *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2025–30 Federation Funding Agreement*, \$151.69 million in combined state and federal funding will be allocated across two phases. Phase 1 supports six programs, including continuation of specialist domestic and family violence workers embedded within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services. The latter requires more specification and clarification in relation to the scale and scope of frontline workers, with details of Phase 2 not yet publicly available.

While a mainstream peak body, the Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Alliance, has been established, there is no equivalent independent state-level body representing and solely platforming the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic and family violence

¹ Queensland Human Rights Commission. (30 April 2025). *Strategic plan 2025-2027*. Queensland Government. <https://www.qhrc.qld.gov.au/about-us/strategic-plan>

sector in Queensland. The Prevention Group has consistently called for this infrastructure. In May 2026, members were advised that an independent industry body would not be funded by the current Government. This risks weakening Queensland's ability to implement national commitments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

Leading academic Dr Marlene Longbottom writes it is vital that Indigenous women are empowered to speak with authority about their experiences. Dr Longbottom argues "narrative controls" silence Indigenous women's voices, despite the work of past advocates².

The Queensland Council of Social Service (QCROSS) also supports the establishment of a First Nations peak body for DFSV in Queensland. QCROSS's recent submission to the national inquiry into racism stated:

"Recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples experience violence with unique social, political and historical contexts, and their human right to self-determination, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander domestic, family and sexual violence peak body is needed in Queensland. Community led solutions are crucial to properly address the challenges faced by individual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland³."

Indigenous ways of being and doing should be recognised, uplifted and built into practice. A Queensland network of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander DFV specialists would advocate for and facilitate the delivery of tangible change, also linking with the Our Ways Strong Together national peak. Any actions to reform DFV prevention, response and healing must be culturally informed and reflective of frontline practices delivered for and by communities. This can only happen if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Voices are heard and actioned.

3. The Prevention Group's position

The Prevention Group's position is that the Second Action Plan must centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice, self-determination and agency. It must move beyond consultation and embed shared decision-making, community-controlled leadership and measurable investment in our family, domestic and sexual violence responses.

We support reform that is designed, delivered, implemented and evaluated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations, peoples and communities. Reform must align with the Priority Reforms of Closing the Gap and with the threads of Our Ways: voice and self-determination; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions; systems reform; Indigenous Data Sovereignty; and housing and financial security.

² Longbottom, M. (2026). *Defiant resistance: Shattering the silence on violence against Indigenous women*. Aboriginal Studies Press.

³ McVeigh, A. (2026) QCROSS submission letter to the Inquiry into racism, hate and violence directed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 29 May 2026. <https://www.qcross.org.au/publication/racism-against-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples-2026/>

4. Recommended priorities for the Second Action Plan

4.1 Priority One: victim-survivors

Victim-survivors must be met with safety, dignity, cultural respect and practical support. The Second Action Plan should require all jurisdictions to strengthen culturally safe, healing-informed and trauma-responsive supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors. These responses must be grounded in culture, connection to Country, kinship, family safety, community-defined healing and the right of victim-survivors to reclaim agency and control.

- Expand funding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled organisations to deliver specialist domestic and family violence responses for victim-survivors, including crisis, outreach, court support, recovery and healing supports.
- Upskill specialist and mainstream services to provide culturally safe responses, including recognition of coercive control, systems abuse, misidentification, cultural abuse and the impact of child protection fear on help-seeking.
- Support frontline workers through supervision, communities of practice, cultural governance, wellbeing supports and professional development.
- Improve coordination between specialist domestic and family violence services, health, police, housing, child protection, justice, legal assistance, family wellbeing and healing services to reduce fragmentation and repeated storytelling.

4.2 Priority Two: prevention and early intervention

Prevention and early intervention must be led by community and grounded in truth. It must address the gendered drivers of violence and the structural drivers of harm, including colonisation, racism, intergenerational trauma, poverty, housing stress, alcohol and other drug use, gambling harm, mental health distress and service system failure. Our communities know what is needed to stop violence before crisis. Governments must resource that knowledge.

- Invest in community-led primary prevention initiatives designed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including local campaigns, cultural strengthening, family strengthening and healing-informed activities.
- Explore and fund culturally grounded programs that address contributing factors such as alcohol, other drugs, gambling harm, mental health, poverty, housing stress and social isolation.
- Develop specialist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety and DFV capability training for mainstream services, with ongoing coaching rather than one-off awareness sessions.
- Support early intervention models that engage families before crisis, including through Family Wellbeing Services, schools, health settings, youth services and community-controlled organisations.

4.3 Priority Three: children and young people

Children and young people are not witnesses on the edge of violence; they are victim-survivors in their own right. The Second Action Plan should ensure responses are developmentally appropriate, culturally safe, family-centred and healing-informed. Children and young people must be supported to stay connected to culture, family, kin, Country, education and community wherever it is safe to do so.

- Fund culturally safe, age-appropriate therapeutic and healing supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people who experience or are exposed to domestic and family violence.
- Develop engaging, community-designed education and prevention resources for children and young people that strengthen identity, respectful relationships, safety, help-seeking and connection to culture.
- Support integrated responses for children, young people and non-offending caregivers so that healing and safety planning occur together.
- Ensure child protection, education, youth justice and family support systems are accountable for culturally safe domestic and family violence identification, referral and response.

4.4 Priority Four: people who use violence

Responses to people who use violence must keep victim-survivor and children's safety at the centre. They must combine accountability, behaviour change, healing, cultural connection and responsibility. Programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and boys must be community-informed, evidence-based and locally adapted, recognising that restoration and accountability must walk together to create safer futures.

- Develop culturally safe opportunities for connection, accountability and healing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and boys, informed by local community needs and circumstances.
- Develop specific interventions for young men at risk of using violence.
- Pilot initiatives that communities are recommending (e.g. Hope Vale Men's Health Centre).
- Recruit safe male role models to the community domestic, family and sexual violence space.
- Identify, tailor and evaluate evidence-based behaviour change and early intervention programs for men and boys, working with and for community.
- Ensure perpetrator intervention responses are connected to victim-survivor safety planning and are not delivered in isolation from specialist domestic and family violence expertise.
- Support workforce development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners working with men who use violence, including supervision, risk practice, cultural governance and wellbeing supports.

4.5 Priority Five: system integration and workforce

The Second Action Plan must strengthen the whole weave of the service system. Families should not have to move between disconnected doors, repeat their stories or carry the burden of navigating systems that do not speak to each other. Workforce development, regional coordination and service integration must be treated as core safety work.

- Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander DFV service providers, specialists and workers across Queensland, including specialists embedded in mainstream services.
- Map service gaps, workforce needs, regional demand, training needs and areas where investment is required.
- Enhance the legal and justice system's capability to support and represent women and children through the domestic and family violence process including related child protection jurisdictions.
- Facilitate local employment pathways, traineeships, mentoring, leadership development and retention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.
- Develop partnerships with learning institutions to formalise pathways and qualification processes.
- Develop practice resources, training products, communities of practice and ongoing support for specialist and mainstream workforces.
- Support and resource Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community-Controlled Organisations (ATSICCO) to take on leadership roles and create Centres of Excellence.
- Support Queensland participation in the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family, domestic and sexual violence community-controlled network.
- Strengthen relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialists, mainstream peaks, government agencies, research bodies and local communities.

5. What the Second Action Plan should deliver to Queensland

The Prevention Group asks governments to ensure the Second Action Plan delivers more than broad commitments. It must include practical, funded and measurable actions that improve safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors, children, young people, families and communities in Queensland.

The issue is critical in Queensland, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience disproportionate domestic and family violence harm, including high rates of health system admissions, and where the specialist workforce remains small relative to community need.

The Second Action Plan must also respond to the current policy environment, including commitments under *Our Ways*, the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, and the *Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses 2025–30 Federation Funding Agreement*.

Without a funded, independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led industry body a dedicated mandate for family, domestic and sexual violence, Queensland lacks the statewide infrastructure needed to coordinate sector leadership, support the workforce, strengthen prevention, inform policy and hold systems accountable. The requested responses below identify the minimum commitments needed to give effect to self-determination, community-controlled leadership, workforce capability and culturally safe prevention, response, recovery and healing in Queensland.

1. **Embed shared decision-making, not consultation alone.** Governments should be required to document, respond to and report on advice provided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory bodies, community-controlled organisations and sector leaders, including where advice is accepted, amended or not adopted.
2. **Invest in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander DFSV workforce.** The Second Action Plan should fund workforce development such as traineeships, mentoring, supervision, communities of practice, leadership development and retention strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practitioners across specialist and mainstream settings.
3. **Resource community-led prevention and early intervention.** Governments should invest in prevention initiatives designed and delivered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, including place-based programs that strengthen culture, family safety, healing, respectful relationships and early help-seeking.
4. **Support and resource healing programs for workers who are experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence at home.**
5. **Guarantee culturally safe responses for victim-survivors, children and young people.** The Second Action Plan should require funded services and systems to demonstrate culturally safe, trauma-informed and healing-informed practice, including mechanisms to address misidentification, systems abuse, child protection fear and repeated storytelling.
6. **Enhance resourcing for embedding legal advocacy supports into existing domestic, family and sexual violence specialist and therapeutic healing services.**
7. **Develop culturally safe responses for people who use violence.** Governments should support locally adapted, evidence-informed education and awareness programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and boys that combine accountability, behaviour change, healing, cultural connection and victim-survivor safety planning.
8. **Strengthen service integration and regional coordination.** The Second Action Plan should require mapping of service gaps, workforce needs and regional demand, and support coordinated pathways across DFSV, health, housing, legal assistance,

child protection, justice, family wellbeing and healing services (e.g. enhanced resourcing for the design and implementation of system navigation models across DFSV programs and services for victim-survivors).

9. **Make funding and accountability transparent.** Governments should report annually on investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled DFSV responses, workforce growth, service access, prevention activity, outcomes for victim-survivors and children, and progress towards Closing the Gap Target 13.
10. **Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty.** Monitoring and evaluation should be co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and include culturally governed measures of safety, healing, trust, cultural connection, workforce wellbeing and community-defined success.

6. Accountability, monitoring and reporting

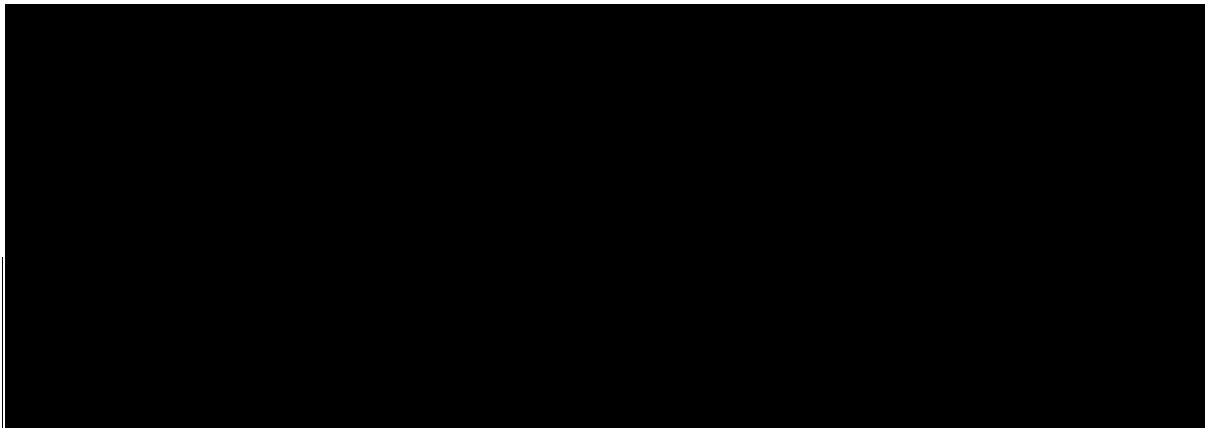
Accountability must be visible. The Second Action Plan should require governments to report annually on investment in non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and ATSICCO family, domestic and sexual violence responses, prevention initiatives, workforce growth, service access, partnership processes, outcomes for victim-survivors and children, and progress toward Closing the Gap Target 13.

Monitoring must be developed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and must value what our communities value: safety, healing, trust, cultural connection, service accessibility, workforce wellbeing and community-defined success. Data collection must be culturally safe, minimise re-traumatisation, protect privacy and uphold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data sovereignty.

7. Conclusion

The members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Group are trusted leaders, practitioners and community members. We carry deep connections to culture, families, communities and the work of ending domestic, family and sexual violence. We know that safety will not be delivered by systems acting alone. It will be built when governments listen, share power, resource community-controlled leadership and remain accountable to our people.

The Second Action Plan 2027–2031 is an opportunity to strengthen the weave: voice and self-determination, healing, systems reform, Indigenous Data Sovereignty, housing and financial security, and strong community-controlled leadership. If governments walk with us in genuine partnership, the Second Action Plan can help create safer, stronger futures where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children, families and communities live free from violence, with dignity, culture and healing at the centre.



Date:	24 July 2026
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