



Amplify Alliance Australia Response to the Second Action Plan Consultation National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032

Introduction

Amplify Alliance Australia welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

Amplify Alliance Australia is a Member-led peak body representing over 1,000 Not for Profit organisations delivering human and social services across Australia. Our Members deliver essential services in every community across Australia, often at the point where policy meets lived experience. We provide sector leadership, policy insight and advocacy to support stronger organisations, more effective systems and improved outcomes for communities. As a trusted advisor to government and representative of the Not for Profit sector, we ensure policy and investment decisions reflect the realities and impact of human and social services delivery.

The Members who engaged in this consultation deliver frontline services across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia, supporting women, children, young people and families experiencing violence, disadvantage and social exclusion. They also work alongside people at risk of using violence through prevention, education and early intervention initiatives. This submission draws together their experience, their expertise and their vision about what will end violence against women and children in Australian society.

This submission reflects the collective experience and expertise of Members who support women, children, young people and families experiencing violence, disadvantage and social exclusion. Their work spans prevention, early intervention, crisis response and recovery, while also engaging people at risk of using violence through education and behaviour change initiatives. Together, they offer practical insights into both the strengths of the current system and the reforms needed to achieve the National Plan's vision.

The consultation highlights that, while important policy progress has been made, victim-survivors continue to encounter fragmented systems, inconsistent access to services and increasing workforce pressures. These challenges are particularly evident where disadvantage intersects with geography, culture, disability, housing insecurity or financial hardship and employment.

Members were clear that fragmentation is not limited to service delivery. Silos have developed across policy, programs and people: policy settings are often designed within separate portfolios; programs are frequently commissioned through disconnected funding streams; and victim-survivors, children and families are left to navigate multiple systems without shared planning, accountability or continuity of support. The Second Action Plan should explicitly address these



silos by aligning policy objectives, funding arrangements, data systems, governance mechanisms and workforce capability across prevention, early intervention, crisis response and recovery.

This requires governments to work across the whole ecosystem of prevention, early intervention, crisis response, recovery, housing, health, justice, education, child and family services, employment, digital safety and community development, rather than treating these systems as separate reform streams.

Our Members consistently emphasised that violence cannot be understood solely as an individual or criminal justice issue. It is shaped by broader social, cultural and structural factors, including gender inequality, discrimination, harmful social norms, racism, poverty and social exclusion. Addressing these underlying conditions is therefore as important as responding effectively when violence occurs.

The National Plan provides a strong strategic foundation. However, achieving its ambitions will require sustained investment, genuine partnership and trust between governments and communities, and a stronger emphasis on prevention, early intervention and community-led solutions.

Across the consultation, Members consistently identified that ending violence demands coordinated action across housing, education, health, justice, employment, child and family services, digital environments and community development. Preventing violence is not the responsibility of any one system or sector; it requires a coordinated, whole-of-community response built on shared accountability, collaboration and long-term commitment.

Key Messages

1. Build a sustainable service system capable of meeting demand

The strongest message arising from the consultation is that demand for services continues to exceed capacity. This experience is reflected in national and jurisdictional evidence. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare¹ has identified significant workforce shortages, recruitment and retention challenges, and increasing pressure across the specialist family, domestic and sexual violence workforce. Recent sector data also demonstrates the impact on victim-survivors: 94% of specialist domestic and family violence services in New South Wales reported increased demand, with an average wait of two months for critical support and some services carrying waitlists of up to 180 people. Referrals increased by 22% while the specialist workforce declined by 12%, leaving around two-thirds of new referrals unable to be allocated to a caseworker immediately.² Across Australia, specialist domestic and family violence services, legal assistance, counselling, housing support, child and family services and community organisations

¹ [FDSV workforce - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)

² <https://www.dvns.w.gov.au/press/new-data-reveals-nsw-domestic-violence-services-at-breaking-point-soaring-demand-and-lengthy-wait-times/>



are operating under sustained pressure. Long waiting lists, workforce shortages and funding uncertainty are reducing the ability of organisations to provide timely support.

Short-term funding arrangements continue to undermine workforce stability, organisational capability and long-term planning.

Members also highlighted the importance of system accountability. While increasing service capacity is essential, improving the quality and consistency of responses across policing, justice, housing, child protection, health and community services is equally critical. Victim-survivors should be able to expect trauma-informed, culturally safe and coordinated responses regardless of where they first seek assistance. The Second Action Plan should strengthen mechanisms for continuous learning, quality improvement, independent oversight and shared accountability across the service system to reduce re-traumatisation and build confidence in institutional responses.

Members consistently called for long-term investment that enables organisations to move beyond crisis management towards prevention, innovation and community partnerships.

The Second Action Plan should commit to:

- long-term, recurrent funding for specialist and community services
- funding models and commissioning processes that support collaboration rather than competition
- investment in organisational capability and workforce development
- funding contracts that allow services to respond to changing community needs
- sustainable indexation recognising increasing delivery costs
- investment in partnership and systems infrastructure that enables local organisations to work together around shared outcomes.

A resilient service system is essential if Australia is to achieve the ambitions of the National Plan.

2. Place prevention at the centre of reform

The consultation demonstrates broad agreement that Australia cannot achieve the objectives of the National Plan through crisis or custodial interventions alone.

While investment in response services remains essential, equal attention must be given to changing the social norms, structures and conditions that enable violence to occur. Primary prevention should be understood as a whole-of-community responsibility that begins long before violence is experienced. It requires sustained action across education, workplaces, sporting organisations, digital environments, families and communities to promote equality, respect, inclusion and healthy relationships.

Members consistently supported greater investment in:

- respectful relationships education
- consent education
- healthy masculinity initiatives
- mentoring for boys and young men



- parenting support
- trauma-informed family programs
- community education campaigns
- digital literacy and online safety initiatives.

Programs should be sustained over time rather than delivered as isolated initiatives if they are to shift attitudes, behaviours and community norms. Members also recognised that prevention requires addressing the broader social determinants that increase vulnerability, including housing insecurity, financial stress, discrimination, social isolation and intergenerational trauma.

3. Adopt an explicitly intersectional approach

The consultation demonstrates that women and children do not experience violence in the same way. Experiences are shaped by intersecting factors including Aboriginality, disability, age, migration experience, culture, language, faith, sexuality, gender identity, socioeconomic disadvantage and geographic location. These intersecting identities influence both exposure to violence and access to support. Policy and commissioning should therefore move beyond treating communities as separate cohorts and instead recognise the cumulative impacts of overlapping forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Embedding intersectionality across policy design, implementation, workforce capability and evaluation will improve both equity and effectiveness.

4. Strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island leadership and self-determination

There was overwhelming support for expanding Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and ensuring First Nations communities lead the design and delivery of responses affecting their communities. Members recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women and children experience disproportionately high rates of violence while often facing additional barriers in accessing culturally safe services.

Implementation of the Second Action Plan should strengthen commitments under Closing the Gap by:

- increasing direct investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- supporting culturally safe healing and prevention initiatives
- strengthening First Nations workforce development
- embedding shared decision-making and community governance
- recognising self-determination as a core principle of implementation.

5. Strengthen culturally responsive prevention and response for multicultural communities

Australia's cultural diversity is a strength. Preventing violence against women and children requires culturally responsive, community-led approaches grounded in inclusion and trust.

Women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including migrant and refugee backgrounds, may face additional barriers when seeking support. These include language



barriers, limited awareness of services, visa dependency, social isolation, coercive control, racism and discrimination, fear of government systems, financial insecurity, and concerns about stigma. These factors can delay help-seeking and increase vulnerability.

Policy must avoid framing multicultural communities as inherently at greater risk. Violence occurs across all communities. Effective prevention builds on community strengths, including family networks, faith leaders, bicultural workers and community organisations.

6. Recognise children as victim-survivors in their own right

Children experience profound trauma when exposed to domestic and family violence, even where they are not the direct target of abuse. Members strongly support recognising children as victim-survivors in their own right.

The Second Action Plan should:

- expand specialist therapeutic services
- strengthen school-based responses
- improve coordination across education, health and child protection
- ensure children's perspectives inform policy and program design
- support recovery alongside safety.

Early intervention with children represents one of Australia's greatest opportunities to interrupt future cycles of violence. Members also called for nationally consistent, evidence-informed practice frameworks to guide responses to children affected by domestic and family violence. These should strengthen assessment, advocacy, therapeutic intervention and cross-sector collaboration so that children receive consistent, developmentally appropriate support regardless of where they enter the service system.

7. Invest in healthy masculinities and engaging boys and young men

Members consistently highlighted the importance of working with boys and young men before harmful attitudes become entrenched. Programs should move beyond behaviour management to support young men to critically examine and respond to harmful gender stereotypes, develop respectful relationships, build emotional literacy and engage positively with diverse identities and communities. Members also highlighted growing concern regarding online and offline misogyny, extremist narratives and digital environments that reinforce violence-supportive attitudes. Supporting healthy masculinities should remain a central prevention priority.

8. Address digital environments as a prevention priority

Technology is increasingly shaping the way violence is experienced, normalised and amplified. Respondents raised concerns regarding:

- technology-facilitated coercive control
- image-based abuse
- online misogyny
- algorithm-driven radicalisation



- online hate
- harmful digital content targeting young people.

The Second Action Plan should recognise digital environments as a primary prevention setting and strengthen collaboration between governments, education systems, regulators, technology companies and community organisations.

This should include:

- improved digital literacy
- critical understanding of algorithms
- online safety education
- stronger accountability for digital platforms
- approaches that prioritise user safety through design
- Stronger regulation for online platforms.

9. Improve access across rural, regional and remote Australia

Geographic inequality remains one of the most significant barriers to safety.

Respondents described communities where specialist services are unavailable, outreach is limited and victim-survivors travel significant distances to access support.

Flexible commissioning, outreach models, local workforce investment and innovative service delivery should remain priorities to ensure equitable access regardless of postcode.

10. Strengthen integrated service responses

Members consistently described systems that remain fragmented and difficult to navigate. Victim-survivors often engage with multiple agencies without coordinated planning or information sharing.

Governments should take a whole-of-ecosystem approach to implementation, aligning policy, funding, commissioning, data and accountability across all systems that shape safety and recovery. This includes prevention, specialist family violence services, housing, health, justice, education, child and family services, employment, income support, digital safety and community-led supports.

Future reform should strengthen:

- integrated local partnerships
- shared referral pathways
- collaborative case management
- place-based governance
- cross-sector accountability
- shared outcomes across government portfolios.



Integrated responses should also strengthen local governance and community leadership. Members supported place-based partnerships that bring together community organisations, specialist services, schools, local government, health providers, police, sporting organisations and community leaders to identify emerging risks, coordinate prevention activity and develop locally responsive solutions. Such collaborative governance builds shared ownership of prevention while improving service coordination and accountability.

Ending violence requires genuine collaboration across housing, education, justice, health, employment, child and family services, community organisations and local government.

11. Build workforce capability alongside workforce capacity

Members identified persistent workforce shortages alongside increasing complexity of service delivery. Building a sustainable workforce requires investment not only in recruitment and retention, but also capability.

Priority areas include:

- trauma-informed practice
- culturally safe practice
- intersectional approaches
- engaging men and boys
- responding to children
- digital harms
- collaborative practice
- inclusive practice for diverse communities.

A skilled and supported workforce is fundamental to successful implementation of the National Plan. Members emphasised that workforce development should extend beyond specialist domestic and family violence services. Trusted community members—including bicultural workers, settlement practitioners, volunteers, educators, coaches, youth workers and faith leaders—are often the first people to whom women and children disclose violence. Building their capability through training, referral pathways and ongoing support will strengthen earlier identification, safer responses and community confidence.

Members also identified advocacy as a core professional capability. Practitioners require the authority, skills and organisational support to advocate effectively across housing, health, education, justice and child protection systems, ensuring women and children receive coordinated support rather than being left to navigate fragmented services independently.

Sustainable workforce reform should also address remuneration, career pathways and workforce parity across specialist domestic and family violence, homelessness, community and government-funded services to improve recruitment, retention and continuity of care.

12. Support community leadership and lived experience



Members consistently recognised that effective prevention is strongest when communities help design solutions. Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, lived experience organisations and representative community bodies possess expertise that should be embedded throughout policy development, implementation and evaluation. Long-term investment in community leadership strengthens trust, legitimacy and prevention capability while ensuring responses remain responsive to local contexts.

13. Improve responses to people who use violence

Member organisations support stronger investment in evidence-based interventions that combine accountability with opportunities for behaviour change. Early intervention, men's behaviour change programs, culturally appropriate responses and integrated approaches addressing mental health and alcohol and other drug issues should form part of a comprehensive prevention continuum.

14. Implementation of the Second Action Plan should be guided by the following principles:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Self-Determination:** Recognise and uphold the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to lead the design, delivery, governance and evaluation of policies, programs and services that affect their communities, supported by sustained investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and genuine shared decision-making.
- **Women and children:** Place the lived experience, safety, dignity and agency of women, children and diverse communities at the centre of reform.
- **Multicultural Communities:** Embedding cultural responsiveness across policy, funding, workforce development and service design is essential to achieving equitable outcomes and ensuring that no community is left behind.
- **Prevention:** Address the underlying drivers of violence through sustained investment in equality, respect, inclusion and healthy relationships.
- **Whole of ecosystem partnership:** Recognise that preventing and responding to violence is a shared responsibility requiring coordinated action across governments, community organisations, specialist services, education, justice, health, housing, employment, child and family services, employers, sporting organisations and digital platforms, supported by shared governance, funding alignment and accountability.
- **System Accountability:** Build a service system that is accountable for both access and quality by strengthening trauma-informed practice, culturally safe responses, continuous learning, quality improvement and shared accountability across policing, justice, health, housing, education, child protection and community services. Victim-survivors should experience coordinated, respectful and consistent responses regardless of where they first seek help.
- **Community Leadership:** Embed community-led organisations and lived experience expertise in policy design, implementation, governance and evaluation.
- **Equity:** Ensure policy and funding decisions recognise the intersecting experiences of disadvantage that influence vulnerability to violence and access to support.



- **Funding:** Provide sustainable, long-term and appropriately indexed funding that enables prevention, early intervention, crisis response and recovery services to build workforce capability, strengthen collaboration, innovate and deliver person-centred, place-based and culturally safe supports.

Conclusion

This submission demonstrates broad consensus that Australia has established a strong strategic foundation through the National Plan, but implementation now requires greater investment, stronger collaboration and a deeper commitment to prevention.

Violence against women and children cannot be addressed through crisis responses alone. Sustainable progress depends upon changing the social conditions that enable violence, strengthening community capability and investing in long-term prevention.

The Second Action Plan presents an opportunity to move beyond fragmented, reactive systems towards an integrated, evidence-informed approach that prevents violence before it occurs, supports recovery when it does, and builds communities where all people are safe, equal, respected and able to thrive.

Achieving this vision will require governments to invest in sustainable community infrastructure, strengthen First Nations leadership, recognise children as victim-survivors, support healthy masculinities, improve digital safety, embed intersectional practice and ensure prevention becomes everyone's responsibility rather than the responsibility of specialist services alone.

Amplify Alliance Australia welcomes the opportunity to work alongside Australian governments at all levels, to implement strategies that are place-based, culturally safe, and centred in all levels of intervention.

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30 June 2026