



Submission to the Department of Social Services

Consultation on the Second Action Plan to the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

**Submission on behalf of the Bayside Peninsula Integrated
Family Violence Partnership**

31st July 2026



Our Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country: We acknowledge the people of the Boonwurrung, Bunurong and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation who are the traditional owners and custodians of the Aboriginal land of our region. We recognise their continued connection to the land and waters and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

We embrace diversity in all its forms, and respect everyone's strengths and contributions irrespective of gender, ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and political views.

Recognition of Victim Survivors: We recognise the strength and resilience of victim/survivors of family violence, their voices, bravery and experiences continue to inform the work we do. We also honour those who are prevented from coming forward and those whose voices can no longer be heard.



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Executive Summary

This submission by the Victorian Bayside Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership (BPIFVP) informs the Second Action Plan of the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*. Drawing on local area-based expertise across the Victorian Bayside Peninsula Area (BPA), this submission highlights critical systemic priorities, emerging risks, and regional best-practice models across the five designated consultation areas.

Key Strategic Recommendations

Shared Understanding & Shared Risk Management

A shared understanding of family violence needs to underpin any sector and community reform. Enabling the use of common language can create better opportunities for conversation, identification of family violence and ease entry into service systems. A nationally implemented risk assessment and risk management framework and associated information sharing schemes would enable consistent and evidenced based assessment and management of domestic, family and sexual violence (DFS) risk.

System Integration & Collaboration

The Second Action Plan must drive structural integration between DFS services and mainstream systems. Implementing embedded specialist cross-sector roles and "no wrong door" entry models is critical to identifying and responding to co-occurring risks early. The BPIFVP's Family Violence Regional Integration Committee (FVRIC) model demonstrates the power of multi-sector networks in building workforce capability across both specialist and non-specialist workforces. The implementation of a regional integration committee model across Australia would enable identified areas of need to be addressed:

- Better coordination across services and sectors
- Improved information sharing between sectors
- Embedding a whole-of-system approach to family violence from prevention through to response and recovery



Regional initiatives and innovation can also provide scalable frameworks for achieving the National Plan's vision of ending gender-based violence.

Culturally Safe & Diverse Responses

Addressing justice system barriers, distrust, and systemic misidentification requires culturally safe, trauma-informed, and culturally led responses. Targeted research and tailored programs must be expanded for First Nations communities, LGBTIQ+ cohorts, newly arrived migrants, people with disability, and older women.

Children and Young People as Victim-Survivors

Children must be recognised as victim-survivors in their own right, with dedicated funding for child-specific services, workforce training on hearing the voice of the child, and therapeutic, non-punitive early interventions for young people displaying harmful behaviours.

Emerging Forms of Abuse & Housing Security

Policy and funding must rapidly adapt to tech-facilitated abuse (including cyberstalking, AI-generated deepfakes, and digital financial abuse) while expanding emergency and long-term affordable housing to break the structural link between violence and homelessness.

Accountability for People Who Use Violence

Sustained investment is needed for evidence-informed perpetrator interventions that address complex co-occurring needs (such as alcohol and other drug (AOD) and mental health) while maintaining victim-survivor safety as the paramount focus.

For questions or for further information regarding this submission please contact:

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About the BPIFVP

Established in 2006, the Bayside Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership (BPIFVP) is one of 14 Family Violence Regional Integration Committees (FVRICs) in Victoria. Formed initially to improve the coordination of family violence services, FVRICs are now key in the rollout of the Victorian Government's Family Violence reforms. Since its inception, the BPIFVP has evolved into a platform for collaborative action. The BPIFVP provides leadership, advocacy, and specialist expertise to strengthen, integrate and improve the family violence system, including supporting workforces and building family violence literacy across different service sectors.

The FVRICs are funded by the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to support their operation, the role of the Principal Strategic Advisor (PSA) who leads the FVRIC, and area-based projects. The PSA provides leadership in the development, implementation, and monitoring of the integrated approach to family violence in their specific DFFH Area. Further information about the BPIFVP is available on our website, SouthSafe:

<https://southsafe.org.au/about-2/about/>

Membership

The BPIFVP membership cross multiple sectors and Bayside Peninsula Area (BPA) based organisations. The BPIFVP represents government and non-government agencies, family violence services, children and family services, Victoria Police, justice and legal services, housing, community, and health services. A full list of BPIFVP members can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Strategic Focus

Safety and inclusivity are at the core of everything the BPIFVP does, with the Partnership prioritising the physical, emotional, cultural, and psychological safety of all people with lived and living experience, persons using violence, children and young people, communities, and practitioners. Our approach recognises that sustainable change is only possible when those impacted by family violence can contribute and lead through their lived realities and when it is grounded in the belief that a truly inclusive, just, and safe system must recognise and respond to the diverse communities we serve.



Our current Strategic Plan¹ focuses on five pillars:

1. Partnership for systems impact
2. Lived/Living Experience leadership
3. Strengthening our workforce
4. Prevention/early intervention
5. Evidence-informed strategy

Local Government Areas



The BPIFVP encompasses the Victorian LGAs of Port Phillip City Council, Bayside City Council, Glen Eira City Council, Stonnington City Council, Kingston City Council, Frankston City Council and Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

¹ https://southsafe.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/BPIFVP_Strategic-Plan_2025-to-2028_FINAL.pdf



BPIFVP Submission: Consultation on the Second Action Plan

Overview

The Second Action Plan must prioritise deeper integration between domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) services and mainstream systems. While co-occurring intersections are frequent, service responses remain largely siloed. Priorities must focus on expanding evidence-informed interventions for people who use violence, strengthening non-specialist workforce capabilities across universal entry points via a national model for risk assessment and management and information sharing, and securing sustainable funding long-term capability and capacity building across the spectrum of family violence, from prevention through to response and healing.

Priority Area 1: Victim-Survivors of Violence Against Women and Children and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence

Addressing Gaps for Diverse Communities & First Nations People

Systemic barriers in the justice system, including distrust of government institutions, fear of child removal, and discriminatory treatment, continue to deter victim-survivors from reporting gender-based violence or engaging with formal help-seeking pathways. To address these gaps, responses must be culturally safe, trauma-informed, and culturally led.

As an example of area-based innovation, current Victoria Police engagement through the BPIFVP enables cross-sector knowledge sharing. This multi-sector collaboration allows police to access specialised training on improving responses to First Nations people, reducing misidentification, and addressing unsafe or inconsistent practice.



Key Needs & Emerging Trends

Targeted research, evidence gathering, and tailored service models must be expanded for priority cohorts, including:

- First Nations people, LGBTIQ+ communities, and newly arrived migrants.
- People with disability, individuals living in institutions or insecure housing, older women, and people with English as a second language (ESL).

Cross-sector data across the BPA highlights critical trends requiring coordinated action:

- tech-facilitated abuse
- stalking
- coercive control
- sexual violence
- substance coercion
- non-fatal strangulation

Local Best Practice & Multi-Sector Collaboration

The FVRIC model demonstrates how area-based partnerships build cross-sector capability, for example in the BPA:

- Victorian Department of Education Respectful Relationships Education (RRE)² staff collaborate with BPIFVP members to share multi-sector expertise with school leaders and wellbeing staff, elevating DFSV capability across education settings.
- Participation in BPIFVP by Victoria Police in cross-sector training can inform and improve frontline police practice, translating multi-sector insights back into organisational training and coaching.

² Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) program; Victorian Government. (2026). *Respectful Relationships*. <https://www.vic.gov.au/respectful-relationships>



Priority Area 2: Prevention and Early Intervention

Effective Approaches & System Capabilities

Primary prevention and early intervention rely on challenging harmful social norms and identifying risk within mainstream settings before it escalates.

- Tailored public education campaigns are essential to challenge rigid gender roles, address the drivers of gender-based violence, promote respectful relationships, and enable active bystander intervention across diverse cultural and age cohorts.
- Early intervention must be embedded across non-specialist workforces, including health, AOD, and mental health sectors. Equipping non-specialist practitioners to recognise, respond to, and safely refer individuals experiencing or using violence requires sustained investment in specialist secondary consultation, integrated practice models, and workforce development.

Organisational and Institutional Level Actions

Institutions must embed policies driving gender equality, inclusion, and zero tolerance for harassment. Workplaces require regular workforce training, confidential support pathways, flexible working arrangements for victim-survivors, and structured cross-agency collaboration.

Area-Based Innovation: Non-Fatal Strangulation

The BPIFVP has leveraged the FVRIC network to address non-fatal strangulation as a critical community-wide risk. Following a BPIFVP forum, the BPIFVP now leads a statewide working group on non-fatal strangulation, illustrating how local area-based mechanisms can drive systemic, state-level practice improvements.

Priority Area 3: Children and Young People in Their Own Right

Systemic Responses to Children Experiencing Violence

Children and young people must be recognised as victim-survivors in their own right, rather than solely as dependents of an adult parent:



- Dedicated child-specific services across DFSV and homelessness sectors must be expanded.
- Non-specialist and specialist workforces require dedicated capability building to hear and interpret the voices of children, including infants and toddlers.
- Long-term, sustainable funding is required for specialist child and family services, with dedicated investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and multicultural organisations. Consistent national risk assessment frameworks, information-sharing standards, and service metrics must be maintained.

Children and Young People Using Violence

Responses for young people using violence or displaying harmful sexual behaviours must be developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, and therapeutic. Effective models must balance accountability with underlying behavioural drivers through early intervention and coordinated support across DFSV, mental health, AOD, education, and child protection sectors.

Priority Area 4: People Who Use Violence

Promising Practices & Community Safety

Interventions for people who use violence must prioritise victim-survivor safety while fostering meaningful accountability. Culturally safe responses must be designed, led, and delivered by the specific communities and cohorts they serve. Best-practice examples operating within the BPA include:

- windana's U-Turn Men's Behaviour Change program integrates behaviour change interventions with AOD treatment, individual counselling, and ongoing risk assessments. Victim-survivor safety is embedded through parallel family safety contact and partner service collaboration.



- The Changing Ways Pilot³ (Frankston Hospital) delivers intensive, longer-term support for high-risk, high-harm individuals using violence who present with complex mental health or substance use issues. Independent evaluation confirms this pilot fills a vital gap for cohorts unable to engage with standard Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs).
- Local Government initiatives across the BPA provide tailored, area-based programs responsive to localised community needs.

Priority Area 5: System Integration and Workforce

Creating a Coordinated System Response

Achieving a seamless service landscape requires embedded cross-sector expertise and structural integration. A national approach to a risk assessment and management, supported by information sharing legislation and funded local partnership committees tasked with working on projects that will support whole-of systems approaches to coordination, will lead to a greater connected system's response.

The BPIFVP recommends:

- Creating a national, shared understanding of family violence, enabled by community-wide and cross-sector education and training
- Implementation of a national model for risk assessment and management and information sharing
- Establishment of area-based governance structures that provide the backbone to reform, enabling cross-sector, multi-agency collaboration to address siloed service provision

A shared understanding of family violence needs to underpin any sector and community reform. Enabling the use of common language can create better opportunities for conversation, identification of family violence and ease entry into service systems. The design and delivery of a risk assessment and risk management framework and associated information sharing schemes for

³ Refer to national Department of Social Services. (2025). *Changing Ways pilot program - intensive, coordinated responses to adults using violence*. <https://www.dss.gov.au/national-plan-end-violence-against-women-and-children/progress/first-action-plan-progress/first-action-plan-activities-addendum/changing-ways-pilot-program-intensive-coordinated-responses-adults-using-violence>



a national, consistent and evidenced based assessment and management of family violence risk. Implementing regional integration committee models across Australia, identified areas of need can be addressed:

- Better coordination across services and sectors
- Improved information sharing between sectors
- Embedding a whole-of-system approach to family violence from prevention through to response and recovery

Highlighting Regional Best Practice in the BPA

The BPIFVP highlights several innovative, replicable practice models:

- Targeted Education Pathways: Chisholm Institute's *Working with Men* course⁴ creates specialist career pathways into perpetrator intervention roles.
- First Nations Risk Assessment Training: Co-designed with a First Nations practitioner and the Southern Melbourne FVRIC to build workforce capability in partnering with First Nations people during DFSV risk assessments.
- The Alexis Family Violence Response Model⁵ operating across Prahran and Bayside police stations pairs police with social workers to deliver assertive outreach to high-risk, recidivist cases. This joint response significantly reduces risk for adult victim-survivors, enhances police investigation capacity, and fosters mutual understanding between police and community sector workforces.

Workforce Capabilities and Conditions

Investment in skilled and coordinated cross-sector and multi-jurisdiction workforces. This investment is critical for the following key reasons:

- Supporting victim survivors' safety in our communities requires organisations to manage intersecting needs in a timely and appropriate way. Levels of risk and complexity is often beyond the scope of what one service can manage alone

⁴ <https://www.chisholm.edu.au/courses/graduate-certificate/family-violence-working-with-men>

⁵ Premier of Victoria. (2026). *More Support For Victorians Experiencing Family Violence*. <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/more-support-victorians-experiencing-family-violence>; Hamilton, G., Gerryts, D., Chesser, B., & Ridgway, A. (2024). *Updated Evaluation of the Alexis Family Violence Response Model*. RMIT University, Melbourne. <https://apo.org.au/node/330185>



- Integrated, collaborative systems and services deliver better outcomes for victim survivors, and reduces the burden on systems and victim survivors
- If family violence can be identified earlier we may give our collective responses a greater chance of success.
- Investing in the capability our workforces, we are also investing in the capability of our community to support victim survivors.

Strengthening capability across both specialist and non-specialist workforces to work effectively with First Nations peoples, multicultural communities, LGBTIQ+ cohorts, people with disability, and older women is also crucial. This includes expanding access to interpreters, bicultural workers, and partnering directly with ACCOs and multicultural agencies.

The BPIFVP's Distinctive Contribution

The members of the BPIFVP represent numerous sectors and professions that focus on DFSV whether as prevention or response specialists, or because their services and programs engage with people who are also experiencing or use DFSV. With its large and diverse membership, the BPIFVP is positioned as an excellent source of experience, insights and expertise, inclusive of lived and living experience (LLE) of DFSV, to provide a meaningful submission to the National Plan's second action plan.

Further, as an Area based partnership, the BPIFVP can bring our own communities' perceptions and assumptions of DFSV to the context of our submission. The Consultation Paper⁶ regards such perspectives as critical to guiding education and response.

Perhaps most importantly, members of the BPIFVP design, run and evaluate unique and innovative services and programs that seek to address the key priorities and challenges discussed in the Consultation Paper. That makes us incredibly well placed to provide examples of successful

⁶ <https://engage.dss.gov.au/second-action-plan/consultation-paper/>



services and programs and also to share our expertise on where these could be scaled up to a national level.

Alignment to our Strategic Plan

The BPIFVP Strategic Plan's five strategic pillars align closely with the priority areas of the Consultation Paper. While our Plan focuses on the BPA, the importance of our role in advocacy and collaboration cannot be understated, making a submission to a National Plan essential.

Our submission to DSS is grounded in knowing what works, from the voices of those implementing policy and practice to the voices of lived and living experience. We believe that the fundamental models and frameworks of collective practice can be scaled across Australia.



Appendix

BPIFVP Members

Member Organisation	Community Services Sector/s
Alfred Health	Health Services Mental Health & Alcohol & Other Drug Services
Anglicare	Perpetrator Services (Men's specialist family violence services)
Bayside Peninsula Area Child & Family Services Alliance	Child & Family Services Alliances
Berry Street	Child & family services
Better Health Network	Perpetrator Services (Men's specialist family violence services)
Better Place	Elder abuse services
Department of Education	Education
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Child Protection
Department of Health	Maternal and child health services
Department of Justice and Community Safety	Court services
Dhelk Dja	Dhelk Dja Regional Action Group for Southern Metro Region
Emerge	Specialist family violence services
Family Life	Child and family services Perpetrator Services (Men's specialist family violence services)
Good Shepherd	Specialist family violence services Risk assessment and management panels



Member Organisation	Community Services Sector/s
inTouch	Multicultural services
JewishCare	Multicultural services
Ngwala Willumbong	Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisation
Peninsula Community Legal Centre	Community legal centres
Peninsula Health	Perpetrator Services (Men's specialist family violence services) Mental Health & Alcohol & Other Drug Services
Relationship Matters	Counselling, mental health, family mediation
Sacred Heart Mission	Housing and homelessness services
South East Centre Against Sexual Assault & Family Violence (SECASA)	Sexual assault services
South Port Community Housing Group	Housing and homelessness services
Southern Homelessness Services Network	Local area service networks (homelessness)
Southside Justice	Community legal centres
The Orange Door	Family violence intake hub
The Salvation Army	Specialist family violence services
Thorne Harbour Health	Specialist family violence services
Uniting Vic.Tas	Child and family services
Victoria Police	Policing and public safety
windana	Mental Health & Alcohol & Other Drug Services



Member Organisation	Community Services Sector/s
Women's Health in the South East (WHISE)	Community and women's health services