



Change for Sam.

Closing the Safety Gap

*A Practical Roadmap for Strengthening Australia's Response to
Family and Domestic Violence*

Submission to inform Australia's Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End
Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

Submitted by

Change For Sam



July 2026

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Executive Summary

There is a safety gap.

Australia has made significant progress in preventing and responding to family and domestic violence.

Governments, specialist services, researchers, advocates and people with lived experience have worked tirelessly to strengthen prevention, improve responses, increase perpetrator accountability and better support victim-survivors at every stage of their journey.

This progress matters, and it must continue.

However, through lived experience, years of frontline service delivery and close collaboration with specialist family violence organisations across Victoria, one consistent lesson has emerged.

The Safety Gap is the period between recognising that someone is at serious risk and making sure they have access to practical safety supports that could help keep them safe while prevention, justice and recovery systems continue their work.

Too often, victim-survivors navigate this period with limited practical safety options, despite being engaged with services and actively working towards safety.

This gap is also reflected in government evidence. The Victorian Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) Review found that 36.9% of practitioners reported being unable to obtain a personal safety device when they believed one was needed.¹ This highlights that barriers to accessing practical safety supports can remain even when practitioners identify a clear need.

Safety is Foundational

Everything else starts with safety.

Without safety, it becomes significantly harder for victim-survivors to engage in recovery, maintain employment, care for their children, participate in legal processes or rebuild their lives.

As one frontline family violence practitioner observed:

"If women and children do not feel safe, they are unable to fully rebuild, recover or heal."⁶

- WRISC Family Violence Service

Prevention is essential, but it takes time.

Justice processes are vital, but they can be lengthy.

Recovery services are invaluable, but they often begin after significant harm has already occurred.

In the meantime, people experiencing family violence also need practical safety supports that could help them stay safe today.

The Second Action Plan presents an opportunity to strengthen Australia's response by recognising practical safety as an important part of an integrated, victim-survivor-centred system.

Practical safety supports may include monitored personal safety devices, wearable safety technology, GPS-enabled emergency response, home security improvements, technology-assisted safety

planning, rapid referral pathways and other practical interventions that help reduce opportunities for violence to escalate.

A Practical Roadmap

These supports do not replace prevention.

They do not replace specialist family violence services.

They do not replace police.

They strengthen the systems already working to keep victim-survivors safe.

This submission presents a practical roadmap for Closing the Safety Gap by strengthening existing systems, supporting informed victim-survivor choice and improving access to practical safety supports during periods of heightened risk.

Five Principles for Closing the Safety Gap

1. Close the Safety Gap

Victim-survivors should not have to wait until violence escalates before practical safety supports become available.

Australia has made significant investments in prevention, response and recovery.

The next step is making sure victim-survivors have practical safety options while prevention, justice and recovery systems continue their work.

2. Safety is Foundational

Safety is the foundation that allows every other intervention to succeed.

When people feel safer, they are better able to engage with counselling, legal processes, parenting, employment, housing, education and long-term recovery.

Safety creates the conditions for healing.

3. Safety should be proactive, not just reactive

Too often, practical safety measures are introduced only after violence has escalated or serious harm has already occurred.

The Second Action Plan provides an opportunity to strengthen proactive approaches by ensuring victim-survivors have timely access to practical safety supports before a crisis develops.

Reducing opportunities for violence to escalate is just as important as responding effectively once violence has occurred.

4. Victim-survivors should be active partners in their own safety

Professional risk assessment remains essential.

Practitioners bring expertise, experience and access to services.

Victim-survivors bring something equally important.

They understand the patterns of abuse.

They know the perpetrator's behaviour.

They recognise the warning signs.

They know what helps them feel safer.

Safety planning should combine professional expertise with the lived expertise of the person experiencing the violence.

Victim-survivors should be informed about the practical safety supports available to them and supported to choose the combination of interventions that best reflects their individual needs, circumstances and priorities.

Empowering people to make informed decisions about their own safety is itself a protective intervention.

5. Practical safety supports strengthen existing systems

Practical safety supports are not a replacement for prevention, specialist services, police or the justice system.

They complement them.

They strengthen them.

When integrated into existing service systems through trusted community partnerships, practical safety supports can strengthen safety planning, improve engagement with services, increase victim-survivor confidence and reduce opportunities for violence to escalate during periods of heightened risk.

The goal isn't to create another system.

The goal is to strengthen the systems that already exist.

Because every improvement to the system is another opportunity to help keep someone safe.

Why Change For Sam Exists

Change For Sam was founded following the murder of Samantha (Sam) Fraser on Phillip Island in July 2018.

Sam had endured years of coercive control and family violence. She was murdered by her former husband the day after her 38th birthday, shortly before she was due to give evidence against him in court.³

Sam wasn't just another statistic.

She was my best friend.

After Sam's murder, I found myself asking one simple question.

What if there had been one more practical option that could have helped keep Sam safe?

I couldn't change what happened to Sam.

But I hoped I could help prevent someone else from losing their best friend.

That question became the driving force behind Change For Sam.

From the beginning, our purpose has been simple:

To work alongside specialist family violence organisations by making practical safety supports more accessible to victim-survivors during periods of heightened risk.

Our monitored personal safety device program was developed in partnership with frontline services and continues to complement - not replace - their expertise, professional risk assessment and ongoing support.

By the time the findings into Sam's death were handed down, our monitored personal safety device program was already operating.

The Coroner's findings reinforced the importance of recognising risk early, strengthening system responses and continuing to identify opportunities to better protect victim-survivors.³

Those findings reinforced what we were already learning through practice: practical safety supports can make a meaningful difference when they are integrated into broader safety planning.

Since then, Change For Sam has grown into a statewide network of partnerships with specialist family violence organisations and community services working together to improve victim-survivor safety.

Together, we have gained valuable insights into how victim-survivors experience risk, the barriers they face in accessing practical safety supports, and the opportunities to strengthen Australia's response to family and domestic violence.

This submission is not simply based on lived experience.

It is informed by years of listening to victim-survivors, learning from frontline practitioners, collaborating with governments and specialist organisations, and improving access to practical safety supports across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria.

These experiences have shaped the recommendations that follow.

What We've Learned

Working alongside specialist family violence organisations, community services, frontline practitioners, victim-survivors and government has provided valuable insights into what helps improve victim-survivor safety.⁷

- Every victim-survivor's experience is different.
- Every community is different.
- Every service operates within its own context.

Yet despite those differences, the same lessons have been reinforced time and time again.

These lessons have shaped not only the way Change For Sam operates, but also the recommendations presented throughout this submission.

Safety is the Foundation for Everything Else

One of the most important lessons we have learned is that safety is not simply another support service - it is the foundation that allows every other intervention to succeed.

When people feel safer, they are better able to engage with counselling, legal processes, parenting, employment, education, housing and long-term recovery.

Without safety, every other step becomes harder.

Investing in practical safety is therefore not separate from recovery - it helps make recovery possible.

Practical Safety Supports Help Close the Safety Gap

Australia has made significant progress in prevention, early intervention, crisis response and recovery.

However, many victim-survivors continue to face significant risk while navigating complex systems, legal processes and major life changes.

Practical safety supports help close the Safety Gap.

They are not designed to replace specialist services or police responses.

They strengthen those responses by providing an additional layer of protection during periods of heightened risk.

The Australian Institute of Criminology has reported that studies found rapid alert devices provided to victim-survivors with protection orders were associated with a 40 - 70% reduction in the prevalence of domestic violence victimisation.²

The review also recognised that supplementary measures, such as GPS tracking, duress alarms, and proactive police surveillance and enforcement, may be required alongside protection orders in some circumstances.²

There Is No Single Solution

No two victim-survivors experience risk in exactly the same way.

Some may benefit from a monitored personal safety device.

Others may benefit from improved home security, technology-assisted safety planning, outreach support or other practical interventions.

The strongest safety plans recognise that different people need different supports at different times.

Victim-survivors should be informed about the practical safety options available to them and supported to choose the combination of interventions that best reflects their individual needs, circumstances and priorities.

Choice is empowering.

As the Victorian Government's Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) Review observed:

“Beyond their practical safety function, personal safety devices can also enhance a victim-survivor's sense of control and confidence during an often overwhelming and uncertain time.”¹

Victim-Survivors Are Experts in Their Own Safety

Professional risk assessment remains essential.

Practitioners bring expertise, experience and access to services.

Victim-survivors bring equally important expertise.

They know the patterns of abuse.

They recognise changes in behaviour.

They understand what increases their fear and what helps them feel safer.

The most effective safety planning combines professional expertise with lived expertise.

Safety planning should be done with victim-survivors, not simply for them.

Empowering people to make informed decisions about their own safety is itself a protective intervention.

Strong Partnerships Produce Stronger Outcomes

One of the greatest strengths of the Change For Sam model has been partnership.

Trusted frontline organisations identify need, undertake professional risk assessment, provide ongoing case management and deliver specialist support.

Change For Sam contributes one practical piece of a much larger response.

Together, these partnerships ensure practical safety supports are embedded within professional risk assessment, safety planning and ongoing specialist support, creating a stronger safety network than any organisation could achieve alone.

No single organisation will end family violence.

But by working together, we can strengthen the systems that already exist and reduce opportunities for violence to escalate.

Practical Safety Should Be Sustainable

One of the most valuable lessons we have learned is that practical safety supports can continue improving safety long after they have helped the first victim-survivor.

Through Change For Sam's reuse model, monitored personal safety devices are returned, cleaned, cleared and prepared to help the next person when they are no longer needed.

Every returned device creates another opportunity to improve someone's safety. Rather than helping just one person, each device has the potential to assist many victim-survivors over its lifetime.

Sustainable models maximise both social impact and the value of every investment, allowing practical safety supports to reach more people over time.⁷

Innovation Should Strengthen - Not Replace - Existing Systems

Technology will continue to evolve.

So too will the opportunities to improve victim-survivor safety.

As new practical safety technologies emerge, they should be viewed as tools that strengthen existing services rather than compete with them. Innovation works best when it is embedded within trusted relationships, informed by practitioner expertise and guided by the needs, choices and lived experience of victim-survivors.

The best innovations don't replace people - they give practitioners better tools to help keep victim-survivors safe.

These lessons have not been learned in isolation.

They have emerged through years of listening to victim-survivors, working alongside frontline practitioners and continually adapting our approach as new challenges and opportunities have arisen.

Together, they have shaped the recommendations that follow and reflect our belief that strengthening practical safety is one of the greatest opportunities to further strengthen Australia's response to family and domestic violence.

Closing the Safety Gap: A Practical Framework for Strengthening Australia's Response

The National Plan recognises the importance of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.

These pillars provide a strong foundation for Australia's efforts to end violence against women and children.

This submission does not seek to replace or redefine those priorities.

Instead, it proposes a practical framework that builds on them by recognising the important role practical safety can play in helping victim-survivors navigate periods of heightened risk.

Closing the Safety Gap is about making sure victim-survivors have practical safety options while prevention, justice and recovery systems continue their work.

It is about strengthening the existing system - not creating a new one.

The framework that follows outlines five practical principles for Closing the Safety Gap.



Figure 1. Closing the Safety Gap: A Practical Framework

The Closing the Safety Gap Framework

1. Recognise

Recognise that victim-survivors often experience a period of heightened risk between being identified as at risk and being able to safely rebuild their lives.

This is the Safety Gap.

Recognising the Safety Gap is the first step towards ensuring practical safety supports are available when they are needed most - not only after violence has escalated.

2. Listen

Listen to victim-survivors as active partners in their own safety.

Professional risk assessment remains essential, but it should be informed and strengthened by the lived knowledge of the person experiencing the violence.

Victim-survivors understand the patterns of abuse.

They recognise the warning signs.

They know what helps them feel safer.

The strongest safety plans combine professional expertise with the lived expertise of victim-survivors.

3. Offer

Offer a range of practical safety options.

Every victim-survivor's circumstances are different.

Rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach, victim-survivors should be informed about the practical safety supports available to them and supported to make informed choices about what best reflects their individual needs, circumstances and priorities.

Providing practical safety options empowers victim-survivors to actively participate in their own safety planning.

4. Support

Support victim-survivors through strong partnerships.

Practical safety supports work best when they are embedded within trusted frontline services.

Governments, specialist family violence organisations, community organisations, police, technology providers and other partners all have an important role to play.

No one organisation can end family violence.

By working together, we can strengthen the systems that already exist and build stronger safety networks around victim-survivors.

5.Strengthen

Strengthen what already exists.

Australia should continue investing in innovation, evaluation and continuous improvement.

As technology evolves and new approaches emerge, practical safety supports should continue to strengthen- not replace - the excellent work already being undertaken across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery.

Innovation should always be guided by evidence, partnership and the voices of victim-survivors.

The strongest systems are those that continue to learn, adapt and improve.

Bringing the Framework Together

- Recognise.
- Listen.
- Offer.
- Support.
- Strengthen.

These five principles provide a practical framework for Closing the Safety Gap by making sure victim-survivors have practical safety options while strengthening the systems already working to prevent violence, respond to risk and support recovery.

Practical safety isn't another system to build. It's one more way to strengthen the systems we already have.

Every victim-survivor deserves the opportunity to have one more practical option that could help keep them safe.

What is the Safety Gap?

The Safety Gap is the period between recognising that a victim-survivor is at risk and ensuring they have access to the practical safety supports that could help reduce opportunities for violence to escalate.

Closing the Safety Gap means making sure victim-survivors have timely access to practical safety supports, informed choice, trusted partnerships and integrated safety planning while prevention, justice and recovery systems continue their work.

It is about making sure practical safety is available when it is needed most - not only after violence has escalated.

Practical Safety Supports

What Are Practical Safety Supports?

Practical safety supports are measures that improve a victim-survivor's immediate safety and help reduce opportunities for violence to escalate.

They strengthen the services already supporting victim-survivors rather than replacing them.

They might include:

- monitored personal safety devices
- wearable safety technology
- GPS-enabled emergency response
- home security improvements
- technology-assisted safety planning
- rapid referral pathways
- other practical innovations that improve immediate safety

The purpose isn't to promote one solution.

It's to make sure victim-survivors understand the practical safety options available to them so they can make informed choices about what best meets their individual needs and circumstances.

Closing the Safety Gap in Practice

Safety is rarely created by one thing alone.

It comes from trusted relationships, professional expertise, informed choice, practical safety supports and timely access to services all working together.

Closing the Safety Gap means bringing these elements together so victim-survivors are supported before violence escalates - not only after harm has already occurred.

Practical safety supports do not replace prevention.

They do not replace specialist family violence services.

They do not replace police or the justice system.

They strengthen the systems already working to keep victim-survivors safe.

Practical Safety Supports in Action

This isn't just an idea.

It's something we've been putting into practice alongside specialist family violence organisations across Victoria.

From the beginning, our goal has never been to replace existing services.

It's always been to strengthen the incredible work they're already doing.

Every monitored personal safety device is provided through a trusted partner organisation.

Frontline practitioners identify who may benefit from additional practical safety support, undertake professional risk assessment, develop personalised safety plans and continue working alongside the victim-survivor.

Change For Sam provides one more practical safety option that can be incorporated into that broader safety plan.

We've learned that practical safety supports work best when they're offered through people and organisations that victim-survivors already know and trust, and when they become part of a person's existing safety plan - not something separate from it.

As one practitioner from The Salvation Army Alexis Family Violence Response Model observed:

"While they are not a substitute for comprehensive risk management and support, they can form an important component of a broader safety plan and contribute to improved safety outcomes for women and children experiencing family violence." ⁵

Why It Works

- Built on Partnership
- Everything we've achieved has been built on partnership.
- Specialist family violence organisations know their communities.
- They know the people they support.
- They bring years of experience in risk assessment, safety planning and ongoing support.
- We bring one more practical safety option that can be added to that response.
- By working together, practical safety supports can be introduced quickly, safely and at the right time.
- We don't need to build a whole new system to improve safety.
- We simply need to keep strengthening the systems we already have.

Sustainable by Design

One of the things we're most proud of is that our model is built to keep helping people.

Monitored personal safety devices are provided free of charge through trusted partner organisations.

When someone no longer needs their device, it's returned, cleaned, cleared and prepared to help the next person who needs it.

Instead of helping just one victim-survivor, each device has the potential to help many victim-survivors over its lifetime.

That means every dollar goes further, more people can access support and fewer devices end up in landfill.

It's a simple idea that makes practical safety more financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.

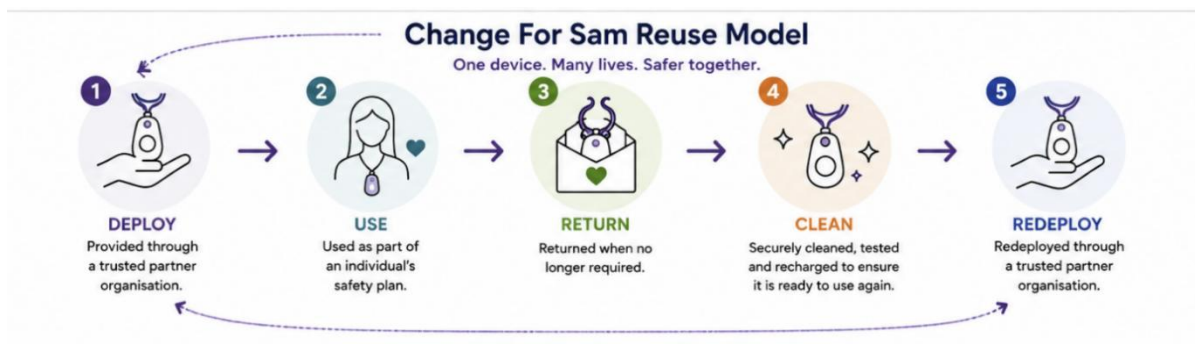


Figure 2. Change For Sam's monitored personal safety device reuse model.

Growing Access

Working alongside specialist organisations has allowed practical safety supports to reach metropolitan, regional and rural communities across Victoria.

By the time this submission is considered, Change For Sam expects to have approximately 310 monitored personal safety devices supporting victim-survivors through trusted partner organisations.

Together, those devices will have supported more than 800 victim-survivors, with many being reused multiple times through our sustainable model.⁷

Behind every monitored personal safety device is:

- a trusted practitioner;
- a personalised safety plan;
- a strong partnership; and
- a person taking another step towards safety.
- Success isn't measured by how many devices we distribute.
- Success is measured by how many people have one more practical safety option that could help keep them safe.

Looking Beyond Change For Sam

This submission isn't about promoting one organisation.

It's about showing what's possible when practical safety becomes part of the broader family violence response.

When practical safety supports become embedded within existing family violence services, everyone is stronger.

The ideas in this submission aren't limited to one organisation or one type of technology.

They are practical principles that could help strengthen Australia's response to family and domestic violence by recognising practical safety as an important part of the support already available to victim-survivors.

As new ideas and technologies emerge, we should keep asking one simple question:

Will this give victim-survivors one more practical safety option that could help keep them safe?

Priority Area 1: Victim-survivors

Recommendations for Strengthening Victim-Survivor Safety

The recommendations below are practical, achievable and designed to strengthen - not replace - Australia's existing response to family and domestic violence.

They build on the excellent work already happening across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery by recognising the important role practical safety can play alongside existing efforts.

Together, they aim to help Close the Safety Gap by ensuring more victim-survivors have access to practical safety options when they need them most.

Recommendation 1 Recognise Safety as Foundational

Recognise that immediate safety is the foundation upon which healing, recovery, justice, independence and long-term wellbeing are built.

Safety is not simply an outcome of the system.

It is what makes every other part of the system possible.

The Second Action Plan should recognise practical safety as a fundamental part of supporting victim-survivors and strengthening Australia's response to family and domestic violence.

Recommendation 2 Recognise and Close the Safety Gap

Recognise that many victim-survivors experience a period of heightened risk between recognising that a victim-survivor is at risk and ensuring they have access to practical safety supports.

The Second Action Plan should recognise the Safety Gap and support practical approaches that help reduce opportunities for violence to escalate during this period.

Closing the Safety Gap means making sure victim-survivors have access to practical safety options while prevention, justice and recovery systems continue their work.

Recommendation 3 Recognise Practical Safety Supports

Recognise practical safety supports as an important part of Australia's integrated response to family and domestic violence.

Practical safety supports strengthen - not replace - prevention, early intervention, specialist family violence services, police and the justice system.

The Second Action Plan should encourage practical safety supports to be considered as part of existing safety planning.

Examples may include monitored personal safety devices, wearable safety technology, GPS-enabled emergency response, home security improvements, technology-assisted safety planning, rapid referral pathways and future innovations that improve immediate safety.

Recommendation 4 Empower Victim-Survivors Through Choice

Support safety planning that recognises victim-survivors as active partners in their own safety.

Alongside professional risk assessment, victim-survivors should be informed about the practical safety options available to them and supported to make informed choices about what best reflects their individual needs, circumstances and priorities.

The Second Action Plan should promote safety planning that combines professional expertise with the lived expertise of victim-survivors.

Empowering people to make informed decisions about their own safety is itself a protective intervention.

Recommendation 5 Strengthen Partnerships

Continue supporting partnerships between governments, specialist family violence organisations, community organisations, researchers, industry and technology providers.

Practical safety supports work best when they are embedded within existing safety planning and ongoing support, rather than delivered as stand-alone interventions.

The Second Action Plan should encourage collaborative approaches that build on the strengths of existing services and improve access to practical safety supports.

No one organisation can end family violence. By working together, we can strengthen the systems that already exist, complement professional expertise and give victim-survivors one more practical option that could help keep them safe.

Recommendation 6 Improve Access

Reduce barriers that prevent victim-survivors from accessing practical safety supports during periods of heightened risk.

Government reviews, practitioner feedback and operational experience continue to identify barriers including eligibility criteria, waitlists, referral pathways and inconsistent access to practical safety supports.

The Second Action Plan should support practical approaches that improve timely access to practical safety supports, helping more victim-survivors receive the right support at the right time.

Recommendation 7 Keep Learning and Improving

Support the ongoing development, evaluation and continuous improvement of practical safety supports that strengthen Australia's response to family and domestic violence.

As new ideas, technologies and approaches emerge, they should continue to be informed by evidence, practitioner expertise and, most importantly, the voices and lived experience of victim-survivors.

The Second Action Plan should encourage innovation that strengthens existing systems while remaining responsive to emerging evidence and the changing needs of victim-survivors.

Priority Area 2: Prevention and Early Intervention

Prevention Takes Time

Prevention is essential, but it takes time.

Too often, practical safety measures are introduced only after violence has escalated or serious harm has already occurred.

The Second Action Plan provides an opportunity to strengthen proactive approaches by ensuring victim-survivors have timely access to practical safety supports before a crisis develops.

Reducing opportunities for violence to escalate is just as important as responding effectively once violence has occurred.

Australia has made significant progress in prevention, early intervention, crisis response and recovery. However, many victim-survivors continue to face significant risk while navigating complex systems, legal processes and major life changes.

Practical safety supports provide one way of strengthening prevention and early intervention by helping reduce opportunities for violence to escalate during periods of heightened risk.

Practical Safety Supports Strengthen Prevention

Practical safety supports may include monitored personal safety devices, wearable safety technology, GPS-enabled emergency response, home security improvements, technology-assisted safety planning, rapid referral pathways and other practical interventions that help reduce opportunities for violence to escalate.

These supports do not replace prevention. They strengthen the systems already working to keep victim-survivors safe.

Practical safety supports help close the Safety Gap. They are not designed to replace specialist services or police responses. They strengthen those responses by providing an additional layer of protection during periods of heightened risk.

Innovation Strengthens Existing Systems

Innovation should strengthen - not replace - existing systems.

Technology will continue to evolve. So too will the opportunities to improve victim-survivor safety.

As new practical safety technologies emerge, they should be viewed as tools that strengthen existing services rather than compete with them.

Innovation works best when it is embedded within trusted relationships, informed by practitioner expertise and guided by the needs, choices and lived experience of victim-survivors.

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

Safety Creates the Foundation for Recovery

Safety is the foundation that allows every other intervention to succeed.

When children and young people are living with family violence, their recovery is closely linked to the safety and stability of the non-offending parent or caregiver. When people feel safer, they are better able to engage with counselling, legal processes, parenting, employment, housing, education and long-term recovery.

As one frontline family violence practitioner observed:

"If women and children do not feel safe, they are unable to fully rebuild, recover or heal."⁶

Supporting Safer Futures for Children and Young People

Practical safety supports can form an important component of a broader safety plan and contribute to improved safety outcomes for women and children experiencing family violence.

The Second Action Plan should recognise practical safety as a fundamental part of supporting children and young people affected by family violence, alongside victim-survivors, ensuring families have the security needed to recover, rebuild and move forward.

Priority Area 4: People Who Use Violence

Strengthening Accountability

People who use family violence must be held accountable for their actions.

Family violence often occurs behind closed doors, without independent witnesses, and within ongoing patterns of coercive control that can be difficult to identify or respond to before significant harm occurs.

While monitored personal safety devices are designed first and foremost to improve the safety of victim-survivors, they can also strengthen the broader response to people who use violence. By providing a direct pathway to immediate support during high-risk situations, they create opportunities for earlier intervention while reducing reliance on victim-survivors to report incidents after they have occurred.

Supporting Earlier Intervention

As monitored personal safety technologies become more widely recognised and available, they may also have the potential to act as a deterrent in some circumstances. Knowing that a person has immediate access to a monitored response may discourage some opportunistic acts of violence or escalation, while increasing the likelihood that harmful behaviour will be interrupted or responded to quickly.

While further research is needed, this potential preventative benefit should not be overlooked.

Family violence is often accompanied by other complex issues, including substance use, mental distress, overdose and suicide. In some circumstances, these issues may be used as part of a broader pattern of coercion and control. While monitored personal safety devices cannot prevent every circumstance, they can reduce isolation, provide another pathway to immediate support, and create additional opportunities for timely intervention when someone is at significant risk.

Complementing Existing Systems

Practical safety technologies are not a replacement for police, courts, behaviour change programs or professional risk assessment. They are another tool that can strengthen Australia's response to family and domestic violence by supporting earlier intervention, improving victim-survivor safety, and reinforcing accountability for people who use violence.

Priority Area 5: System Integration and Workforce

Strong Partnerships Produce Stronger Outcomes

One of the greatest strengths of the Change For Sam model has been partnership.

Trusted frontline organisations know their clients. They identify need, undertake professional risk assessments, provide ongoing case management and deliver specialist support. Change For Sam contributes one practical piece of a much larger response.

Together, these partnerships ensure practical safety supports are embedded within professional risk assessment, safety planning and ongoing specialist support, creating a stronger safety network than any organisation could achieve alone.

No single organisation will end family violence. By working together, we can strengthen the systems that already exist and reduce opportunities for violence to escalate.

Supporting the Workforce and System Integration

Frontline practitioners are central to the success of practical safety initiatives. Their expertise, trusted relationships and professional judgement ensure victim-survivors receive the right support at the right time.

Continued investment in specialist family violence services, workforce capability and training will help ensure practical safety technologies are used effectively as part of broader safety planning and ongoing support.

Practical safety supports work best when they are embedded within trusted frontline and community services that already support victim-survivors. Governments, specialist family violence organisations, community organisations, police, researchers, technology providers and other partners all have an important role to play.

The goal isn't to create another system. The goal is to strengthen the systems that already exist.

The Second Action Plan should continue supporting partnerships that build on the strengths of existing services, improve collaboration across sectors, and increase access to practical safety supports.

Continuing to Learn and Improve

The ongoing evaluation, continuous improvement and evidence base for practical safety supports should continue to strengthen Australia's response to family and domestic violence.

As new ideas, technologies and approaches emerge, they should continue to be informed by evidence, practitioner expertise and, most importantly, the voices and lived experience of victim-survivors.

Other areas of action

Strengthening Australia's Response Together

Australia has already built strong foundations to prevent and respond to family and domestic violence. The National Plan, specialist services, frontline practitioners, police, courts, community organisations and governments are all working towards the same goal - keeping people safe and ending family violence.

The opportunity isn't to build another system; it's to strengthen the one we already have.

This submission is not about replacing the excellent work already being done. It is about recognising one more opportunity to strengthen Australia's response by embedding practical safety supports within existing systems and services.

The ideas presented in this submission are grounded in lived experience, shaped by trusted frontline partnerships and strengthened through years of practical service delivery across Victoria.

They are offered in the spirit of collaboration, with a shared commitment to continually improving Australia's response to family and domestic violence.

By closing the safety gap and recognising the role of practical safety supports, Australia can help ensure more victim-survivors have access to practical safety options when they need them most.

Every victim-survivor deserves the opportunity to have one more practical safety option that could help keep them safe.

About Change For Sam

Change For Sam is an Australian registered charity founded in memory of Samantha (Sam) Fraser, who was murdered in 2018.

We work alongside trusted family violence organisations to improve access to practical safety supports for victim-survivors across Victoria.

As at July 2026, Change For Sam has distributed approximately 310 monitored personal safety devices across Victoria through specialist family violence organisations. Through our sustainable reuse model, those devices have supported more than 800 victim-survivors, with many devices helping multiple people over their lifetime.⁷

Everything we do is built on partnership, practical action and the belief that every victim-survivor deserves the opportunity to have one more practical safety option that could help keep them safe.

Our model demonstrates how practical safety supports can strengthen existing services through collaboration, innovation and sustainable reuse, creating lasting impact for victim-survivors and the organisations that support them.

Evidence Base

This submission is informed by multiple forms of evidence.

It reflects not only lived experience, but years of operational delivery, collaboration with specialist family violence organisations, engagement with government and practical experience improving access to practical safety supports across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria.

The recommendations presented throughout this submission draw upon:

- lived experience following the murder of Samantha (Sam) Fraser in 2018;
- operational experience establishing and delivering Change For Sam's monitored personal safety device program through trusted frontline organisations across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria;
- feedback and operational insights from specialist family violence practitioners across Victoria;
- the findings of State Coroner Judge John Cain following the death of Samantha Fraser, including observations regarding monitored personal safety devices;
- the Victorian Government's Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) Review and associated practitioner feedback;
- evidence presented to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence;
- parliamentary recognition of Change For Sam's work and ongoing engagement with policymakers;
- Australian research relating to practical safety, victim-survivor safety planning and family violence responses; and
- ongoing collaboration with governments, specialist family violence organisations, community organisations and other services working to improve victim-survivor safety.

These recommendations are not intended to replace existing evidence, research or policy.

They are intended to build on the strengths of Australia's existing response by recognising the important role practical safety can play in supporting victim-survivors during periods of heightened risk.

References

¹ Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Victoria). Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) Review and associated practitioner consultation findings.

² Dowling, C. (2018). Protection orders for domestic violence: A systematic review. Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice. Australian Institute of Criminology.

³ Coroners Court of Victoria. State Coroner Judge John Cain. Finding into the death of Samantha (Sam) Fraser (COR 2018 003600).

⁴ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs. Inquiry into Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence. Evidence provided by Change For Sam. Parliament of Australia.

⁵ The Salvation Army – Alexis Family Violence Response Model. Practitioner feedback provided to Change For Sam (used with permission).

⁶ WRISC Family Violence Service. Practitioner feedback provided to Change For Sam (used with permission).

⁷ Change For Sam Ltd. Operational program data, monitored personal safety device program outcomes and practitioner feedback (internal records, 2024–2026).