



**DART
INSTITUTE**

Domestic Abuse
Resource and Training

DOMESTIC ABUSE RESOURCE AND TRAINING INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA INC.

Submission to the Second Action Plan

National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–
2032

*In response to: ANROWS Consultation Paper, Evidence to action: informing direction for the
Second Action Plan (Submission: July 2026)*

Executive Summary

Australia has invested heavily in policy, legislation and reform to address domestic, family and sexual violence. Yet reform alone cannot improve outcomes unless it is translated into consistent practice. The next stage of implementation depends on workforce capability: practitioners who have the knowledge, professional judgement and organisational support to apply evidence, legislation and policy safely and consistently across sectors.

The Domestic Abuse Resource and Training Institute Australia Inc. (DART Institute) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Second Action Plan¹, responding to the priority areas set out in ANROWS' *Evidence to Action* consultation paper², read alongside the DFSVC's Monitoring and Reporting Framework³. This submission responds most directly to

Priority Area 2 (Prevention and early intervention) and,

Priority Area 5 (System integration and workforce) with additional relevance to

Priority Area 4 (People who use violence).

DART Institute is a national harm prevention charity and training institute building workforce capacity and capability across the whole-of-system response to family, domestic and sexual violence. Our national experience delivering accredited education and workforce capability across specialist, prevention and non-specialist workforces, including policing, justice, health, education, child protection and community services, informs the recommendations and evidence presented in this submission.

DART Institute's central position is that the Second Action Plan should prioritise:

- (1)** a nationally coordinated prevention education architecture;
- (2)** recognition and investment in national workforce capability infrastructure supporting consistent implementation across prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing, with a focus on coercive control, systems abuse and perpetrator accountability;
- (3)** nationally agreed minimum DFSV capability expectations for specialist, prevention and non-specialist workforce professions; and
- (4)** capability infrastructure that reinforces, rather than replaces, community-controlled leadership.

Without corresponding investment in workforce capability and implementation readiness, substantial policy and legislative reform risks not translating consistently into improved outcomes⁴.

¹Australian Government, National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032, Department of Social Services, 2022.

²Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Evidence to action: informing direction for the Second Action Plan, Consultation Paper, May 2026.

³Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (DFSVC), Monitoring and Reporting Framework: National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032, May 2026.

⁴DFSVC, Monitoring and Reporting Framework.

DART Institute: Our Position of Expertise

DART Institute's position on this consultation paper is informed by national coverage building capacity and capability across both *specialist and non-specialist* services, including mainstream sectors. Such services include education, health, government, child protection, housing, mental health, alcohol and other drugs (AOD), Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs), women's refuges and the corporate sector. This breadth of reach across prevention, specialist and universal workforces is offered as one example of existing national capability infrastructure the Second Action Plan can build on to accelerate consistent, evidence-informed practice across systems⁵.

The Implementation Gap

DART Institute supports the intent of the National Plan to end violence against women and children within a generation⁶. Considerable progress has been achieved through legislative reform, national policy development and increased public awareness⁷. Yet, as both the DFSVC's Monitoring and Reporting Framework and ANROWS' evidence assessment confirm, implementation outcomes remain variable across systems and jurisdictions, with significant data and evaluation gaps in measuring whether activity is translating into outcomes^{8 9}.

National reviews, most recently the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches¹⁰, have repeatedly identified challenges relating to workforce capability, practice consistency, supervision and implementation readiness.

“Workforce capability should be recognised as essential national social infrastructure that underpins every investment made through the National Plan.” Jolene, CEO, DART

Just as governments invest in research and digital and data infrastructure to support reform, sustained investment in workforce capability is required to ensure policy, legislation and service reforms are implemented consistently. Without this enabling infrastructure, improvements in policy and funding cannot reliably translate into improved outcomes for victim-survivors, families and communities.

The evidence suggests that sustainable practice change requires more than the dissemination of information or one-off training; it depends on leadership, organisational readiness, reflective supervision, ongoing professional development and continuous evaluation. Australia has invested significantly in national principles and frameworks, including the National Plan's own Outcomes Framework¹¹; however, no equivalent nationally agreed, *compliance-regulated minimum capability expectations* currently exist for the specialist, prevention and non-

⁵Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches Expert Panel, Unlocking the Prevention Potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, August 2024. The report made 21 recommendations across six action areas and informed the \$4.7 billion National Cabinet package announced 6 September 2024.

⁶National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032, above n 1.

⁷Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023). Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia (Research report 02/2023). ANROWS.

⁸DFSVC, Monitoring and Reporting Framework.

⁹ANROWS, Evidence to action.

¹⁰Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches, Unlocking the Prevention Potential.

¹¹DFSVC, Monitoring and Reporting Framework.

specialist professions that regularly intersect with victim-survivors and people who use violence. This leaves practice consistency dependent on individual employer or jurisdictional choices, rather than a shared national benchmark¹².

Recommendation: Develop **nationally agreed minimum domestic, family and sexual violence capability expectations** for specialist, prevention and non-specialist workforce professions, supported through accredited education pathways, continuing professional development and reflective FDV-informed practice supervision¹³. This would complement existing national principles and frameworks by establishing a consistent practice floor beneath them, rather than leaving minimum expectations to vary by employer, sector or jurisdiction without compliance regulation.

The Second Action Plan presents an opportunity to invest not only in policy reform but in implementation infrastructure that enables evidence to become everyday practice.

DART Institute's Response to the Consultation Priority Areas

DART Institute's national expertise sits most directly within two of the five priority areas proposed for consultation. The sections below respond to the relevant consultation questions raised under each.

Priority Area 2: Prevention and Early Intervention

The ANROWS consultation paper identifies a need for long-term, sustained prevention approaches that begin early, noting that one-off or insufficiently contextualised awareness-raising can produce backlash effects among boys and young men¹⁴. This is consistent with DART Institute's own practice evidence, developed in partnership with Queensland University of Technology¹⁵, and with Our Watch's *Change the Story* framework.¹⁶ Both demonstrate effective prevention requires structured, curriculum-based education embedded within organisational and workforce systems, rather than delivered as isolated interventions. These findings align with Rapid Review recommendations on prevention infrastructure and engagement of men and boys¹⁷, and with the National Plan's cross-cutting principles on intersectional, culturally safe approaches¹⁸.

In response to the consultation questions on strengthening prevention efforts, DART Institute recommends:

Recommendation:

- Development of a **national violence prevention education architecture** embedding evidence-informed, curriculum-based prevention models across education, justice,

¹²ANROWS, Evidence to action.

¹³Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches, Unlocking the Prevention Potential.

¹⁴ANROWS, Evidence to action.

¹⁵DART Institute and Queensland University of Technology, Violence Prevention Education, available at: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/251170/2/ViolencePreventionEducation.pdf>

¹⁶Our Watch, *Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia* (2021).

¹⁷Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches, Unlocking the Prevention Potential.

¹⁸National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

health, workplace and community settings, addressing gender, power, coercive control and structural drivers of violence.

- Sustained, long-term investment starting early and reinforced over time, rather than single-session awareness activities, consistent with evidence that insufficiently contextualised programs can inadvertently increase support for violence among some boys¹⁹.

Priority Area 5: System Integration and Workforce

ANROWS notes that practitioners outside DFSV-specialist services are increasingly confident recognising physical and emotional abuse but require further support to identify more insidious forms of coercive control, such as financial and sexual violence and abuse, and identify cross-sector collaboration and information-sharing as the most valuable additional support²⁰.

The Rapid Review went further, recommending a DFSV National Workforce Development Strategy²¹. DART Institute supports this and suggests that consideration of implementation should extend to an enduring national workforce capability infrastructure spanning accredited education, implementation support, reflective and FDV-informed supervision, professional development, capability evaluation and cross-sector collaboration, across specialist, prevention and non-specialist workforces, including the perpetrator-facing and men's behaviour change workforce discussed further under Priority Area 4.

DART Institute recognises the central role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) in delivering culturally safe, community-led responses. Workforce capability initiatives should complement, not replace, community-controlled leadership, reinforcing self-determination while strengthening culturally safe practice and genuine partnership pathways across specialist, prevention and non-specialist workforces.

Capability should be understood as a developmental continuum rather than a single training intervention. It includes awareness-raising, accredited education, reflective supervision, professional development, leadership and evaluation, practitioner wellbeing and trauma-informed leadership to support workforce capability, reduce burnout and improve retention. DART Institute's national experience demonstrates how this capability continuum can be implemented in practice through:

- Delivery of nationally accredited CHCDFV skillsets²² — CHCDFV001, CHCDFV002 and CHCDFV009 alongside a legal practitioners' 10-point CPD-approved training pathway and an Australian Counselling Association-nationally-approved FDV-informed Practice Supervision accreditation for supervisors.
- Extensive, nationally consistent training reach across frontline services, including police — a cohort specifically identified in the Rapid Review as requiring capability uplift²³.

¹⁹ANROWS, Evidence to action.

²⁰ANROWS, Evidence to action.

²¹Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches, Unlocking the Prevention Potential.

²²Australian Skills Quality Authority; CHC Community Services Training Package — CHCDFV001 Recognise and Respond to Domestic and Family Violence, CHCDFV002 Support Children Affected by Domestic and Family Violence, CHCDFV009 Establish Change Promoting Relationships with Users of Domestic and Family Violence.

²³Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches, Unlocking the Prevention Potential.

- Application of violence prevention frameworks developed in partnership with QUT²⁴ to translate effective prevention approaches for engaging young men and boys.

In response to the consultation questions on workforce capabilities and cross-sector collaboration, DART Institute recommends:

Recommendation:

- A **national workforce capability strategy** focused on coercive control and systems abuse, building shared definitions and consistent professional judgement across sectors that have traditionally operated independently.
- Recognise and invest in **national workforce capability infrastructure** as an essential component of implementation under the National Plan, supported through accredited education, continuing professional development, reflective supervision and implementation support.
- Embedding scenario-based and reflective FDV-informed learning, and **consistent national evaluation of workforce capability outcomes**, measuring practitioner confidence, decision-making, referral quality and victim-survivor outcomes.

Priority Area 4: People Who Use Violence

Australia does not yet have nationally consistent governance standards for the men's behaviour change (MBC) workforce. The Rapid Review recommended that governments build the capability of intersecting DFSV workforces, specifically including the MBC sector²⁵, and work has since commenced on national MBC Program standards and an accompanying quality assurance framework²⁶. As the Commission has itself noted, behaviour change programs cannot work in isolation and depend on a skilled, trauma-informed workforce integrated across health, housing, justice and DFSV services.²⁷ Yet no compliance-regulated national capability benchmark for that workforce currently exists, the same gap identified above under Priority Area 5.

This is compounded by an early-identification and referral gap: most people who use violence never reach formal behaviour change programs, due to shame, stigma or limited access to trusted entry points²⁸. The workforce best placed to recognise and refer sits well beyond the specialist MBC sector, in health, education, justice, financial counselling and other non-specialist services, reinforcing the case for consistent capability across these touchpoints.

In response to the consultation question on supporting accountability and behaviour change, DART Institute recommends:

Recommendation:

- Accelerating the establishment of **national MBC Program standards** and an accompanying quality assurance and workforce capability framework, building on work already underway across government.

²⁴DART Institute and QUT, Violence Prevention Education.

²⁵Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches, Unlocking the Prevention Potential.

²⁶Office for Women, Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches: Australian Government Implementation Update — 20 February 2026, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Recommendation 25.

²⁷Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission, Yearly Report to Parliament 2025.

²⁸ANROWS, Evidence to action.

- Strengthening **early-identification and referral capability** across specialist, prevention and non-specialist services, recognising this broader workforce as the most consistent point of contact with people who use violence before escalation²⁹.

DART Institute's own nationally accredited CHCDFV009 skillset — Establish Change Promoting Relationships with Users of Domestic and Family Violence³⁰ is offered as one example of existing training infrastructure relevant to this capability uplift across the sector.

Supporting the Commission's Monitoring and Reporting Framework

The DFSVC Framework identifies significant data gaps in measuring implementation and outcomes, with 68 per cent of measures in the Outcomes Framework's Performance Measurement Plan currently lacking data³¹. DART Institute's national workforce capability footprint, spanning specialist, justice, health, policing, education and community sectors, represents a substantial source of implementation data that could help close this gap. DART Institute welcomes the opportunity to contribute de-identified workforce capability and training reach data to the Commission's National Funding Mapping Framework and broader evidence-building activities³².

Conclusion

DART Institute strongly supports the National Plan's vision of ending violence against women and children within a generation³³. Achieving this vision requires recognising workforce capability as essential national implementation infrastructure, including movement toward nationally agreed minimum capability expectations for specialist, prevention and non-specialist professions, consistent with the approach already taken through national principles and frameworks elsewhere in the National Plan³⁴. Policy reform, legislation and investment alone cannot deliver consistent outcomes unless practitioners across Australia's prevention, early intervention, response and recovery systems are supported through nationally coordinated capability development, professional education, implementation support and reflective practice.

DART Institute welcomes continued engagement with the Department of Social Services, ANROWS and the Commission as the Second Action Plan is developed, and, as one example of existing accredited training infrastructure, is glad to make its practice experience available, alongside that of other sector providers, to inform a national prevention education and workforce capability architecture capable of delivering meaningful, sustained system-level change.

²⁹ANROWS, Evidence to action.

³⁰ASQA; CHC Community Services Training Package.

³¹DFSVC, Monitoring and Reporting Framework.

³²DFSVC, Monitoring and Reporting Framework.

³³National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

³⁴DFSVC, Monitoring and Reporting Framework.



Thank you

DART Institute thanks the Department of Social Services, ANROWS and the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission for the opportunity to contribute to the Second Action Plan, and looks forward to continued engagement as this work progresses.



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