



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

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to contribute towards the development of the Second Action Plan.

This submission brings together work led by researchers who are members and affiliates of the Gender, Borders, Violence Research Hub.

It specifically focuses on sharing key data and research outputs that can offer important additional insights into the planning and lays the ground for a dedicated focus on migrant and refugee women broadly and specifically temporary migrants experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence. We have organised this in response to the five priority areas outlined in the Consultation Paper.

We welcome all opportunities to engage with the development of this process.

We submit this also alongside the recently released Blueprint for Reform 2026, which is the policy setting agenda developed by the National Advocacy Group for Women on Temporary Visas experiencing violence of which we are active members.

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FOCUS ONE. Victim-survivors of violence against women and children and other forms of gender-based violence: strengthening a whole of society and life-course approach to prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing with a focus on victim-survivors from all communities and backgrounds.

We led the groundbreaking Migrant and refugee women's safety and security study (in partnership with the then National Alliance for Migrant and Refugee Women, Harmony Alliance). Key findings include:

- **1 in 3, 33% of respondents had experienced some form of DFV.** This was the most common form of victimisation experienced by participants.
- **Co-occurrence of forms of violence was most common**
- **Predominance of other family members/in-laws as perpetrators of violence: 35%** indicated that the main perpetrator of DFV was a family member, while 23% reported that it was a member of their family in-law.
- **Temporary visa holders consistently reported proportionately higher levels of DFV,** including controlling behaviours.
- **This was the first national survey to capture migration-related controlling behaviours.** The overwhelming majority of temporary visa holders reported much higher levels of migration-related abuse and threats, though importantly this form of harm was not exclusive to this group.
- **Help-seeking and disclosure of experiences of violence: just over half (52%)** of those who had experienced DFV told someone, most often family and friends. Notably, while our sample was largely religious, and reported that religion was important in their daily life, very few participants identified a religious leader as someone they confided in regarding domestic and family violence. When we asked those who did not disclose or report why they had chosen not to share their experience, the most common reason given was that it was a family matter, and that they feared making the situation worse.

This data lays the ground for recognising the complexity and diversity of DFV experiences in particular, and highlights that the experiences of violence for temporary visa holders is enabled via the migration system.

This data affirmed previous large-scale research led by Segrave (2017) focused on case study analysis of 300 temporary migrants seeking support from InTouch Multicultural Centre for Family Violence over a single year. This study was reproduced in 2020, capturing the impact of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders on temporary migrants experiencing DFV and seeking support from InTouch. Both studies detail the very specific ways in which migration status has flow on impacts for access to support (for those who have access to the Family Violence Provisions and those who don't) as well as the consistency of perpetrators leveraging and weaponizing migration status to control and abuse women. Other small-scale studies with victim-survivors, such as research led by Dr Stefani Vasil, has more recently documented the continued impact of temporary migration status on experiences of DFV and access to support.

It is essential that national data collection that is focused on key populations is supported in the future, that enables nuanced and informed understandings of the ways in which gendered violence is experienced and how to address this in the most impactful way. Specifically, capturing the impact of temporary migration status remains critical to understanding how system settings are impacting women's safety. This should be a key focus of the next National Action Plan.

In 2025/2026, Segrave & Vasil led the first Victorian study focused on temporary migrant and access to DFV refuge. The findings of this study make clear that temporary migration status forms the basis for refuge decisions regarding access: including documenting services that do not accept temporary visa holders at all and those who only accept a limited number. This is a major impediment to women's safety determined because of the impact of temporary visa status on the refuge sector. This requires urgent attention.

Key data sources

- Segrave, M; Wickes, R; Keel, C (2021). Migrant and refugee women in Australia: The safety and security study. Monash University. Report. <https://doi.org/10.26180/14863872>
- Segrave, M; Wickes, R; Keel, C (2021). Migrant and refugee women in Australia: The safety and security study. Monash University. Report. <https://doi.org/10.26180/14863872>
- Segrave, M (2017) Temporary migration and family violence: An analysis of victimisation, vulnerability and support. Melbourne: School of Social Sciences, Monash University. [Online](#)
- Segrave, M; Pfitzner, N (2020). Family violence and temporary visa holders during COVID-19. Monash University. Online resource. <https://doi.org/10.26180/5f6b1218b1435>
- Segrave, Marie; Vasil, Stefani (2026). The Impact of Temporary Migration Status on Access to Refuge in Victoria: Barriers to Safety and Support. The University of Melbourne. Report. <https://doi.org/10.26188/31865380.v2>
- Vasil, S. (2024). "I came here, and it got worse day by day": Examining the intersections between migrant precarity and family violence among women with insecure migration status in Australia. *Violence against women*, 30(10), 2482-2510. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231159414>
- Vasil, S. (2023, November). 'I felt I had no-one to depend on but myself': Examining how women with insecure migration status respond to domestic and family violence in Australia. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 101, p. 102823). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2023.102823>

See also

- Segrave M & Vasil S (2024) [Expanding family violence provisions is not enough to make temporary migrants safe](#), *Women's Agenda*, 21 October 2024.

FOCUS TWO. Prevention and early intervention: embedding initiatives where people live, work, learn and connect to address the gendered drivers of this violence; address substantive influences on perpetration and risk such as harmful substance use, gambling, and adverse childhood experience; support attitudinal and behavioural change to prevent harm before it occurs; and to prevent escalation. It also requires collaboration and integration across sectors to strengthen primary prevention and early intervention approaches.

For migrant and refugee women who come to Australia, early intervention is the clear focus. Our research detailed above makes clear that major system reform within the migration system would be a key factor in early intervention: it is made clear that temporary migration status continues to limit rather than enable women to access safety at key early stages.

Key data source

Segrave, M & Vasil S (2025) The borders of violence: temporary migration and domestic and family violence. London: Taylor & Francis. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003416159>

FOCUS THREE. Children and young people in their own right: centring children and young people's voices, rights, and safety across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery, and providing tailored, age and developmentally appropriate support for children and young people. This priority includes young people who use violence (in the home and/or in intimate partner relationships, including the use of sexual violence).

Our research has detailed the ways in which children are often used as pawns in the context of migration and citizenship matters. In Segrave's 2017 report on temporary migration and family violence, the specific impacts on children are detailed and the following recommendations made (p26-27):

Recommendation 2: Risk assessment

b. Risk assessment for children and young people: For risk assessment related to children, information should be gathered pertaining to:

- i. child's migration status
- ii. parent/guardian's migration status
- iii. use of migration status and/or deportation of child/parent as threat via diverse media and communication platforms.

Recommendation 4: Legislative responses

a. Migration Act 1958 and Migration Regulations 1994: COAG to consider the following amendments or inclusions should be made:

- i. Appeal process: potentially on the basis of evidence of family violence, to enable relevant migration processes (such as passport applications) where parent is refusing to sign to move forward.

It remains the case the migration status and risk has not been factored into considerations of children's risk, this is an important opportunity.

Key data sources

Segrave, M (2017) Temporary migration and family violence: An analysis of victimisation, vulnerability and support. Melbourne: School of Social Sciences, Monash University. [Online](#)

FOCUS FOUR. People who use violence: advancing prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing throughout the life course on both family and domestic violence and sexual violence, supporting earlier identification, and multi-sector approaches to accountability and behaviour change, for example (but not limited to) strengthening policing and justice sector responses.

In Segrave, Tan & Vasil's 2024 submission to Victorian Inquiry into capturing data on family violence perpetrators in Victoria we made the following recommendations that are pertinent for the Second Action Plan in order to understand that there is a significant group of perpetrators unseen and unaddressed through current settings.

We note that risk assessment is not undertaken primarily to create a profile of perpetrators, however work that has focused on deep and close analysis of case files has demonstrated this information offers important insights into who perpetrators are (see Segrave 2017; Segrave & Pfitzner 2020). Currently it remains a significant challenge for specialist or other services to extract data from case management for the purpose of better understanding the dynamics of domestic and family violence, including perpetrator profiles and behaviours which of course can change over the course of women's involvement with support services. This requires careful attention.

1. One opportunity is a whole-scale investment in the tools used nationally for case management: the current systems are not fit-for-purpose for a range of reasons, but this includes challenges in extracting data.

Recognising the role and impact of additional family members is critical: our research (see Segrave et al. 2021; Segrave 2017; Segrave & Pfitzner 2020) has captured the full range of family members involved in perpetrating domestic and family violence and/or keeping victim survivors trapped in those situations. This is critical to contributing to a more nuanced conversation in relation to prevention and intervention. In the case of forced marriage, which has recently been recognised as a form of family violence in Victoria, better data on the role and impact of family members can be valuable in advancing understandings of what can be done better so that seeking support and protection would not result in alienation from family (Tan & Vidal 2023).

2. There is an opportunity to improve national data sets and their relevance and potential utility in the state and territory setting: for example, our research on temporary migrants who experience domestic and family violence has revealed there is no data kept on the perpetrators of violence in these cases: there is no effort nationally to recognise that this group of perpetrators seek to exercise considerable control and to abuse women and to weaponise the migration system and women's migration status.

This data monitoring could include sponsors (Australian citizens or permanent residents) whose partners have applied for and been granted residency status under the family violence provisions. In recent years, the Department of Home Affairs has made available data on the number of temporary migrants who have applied for and been granted residency under the provisions. However, it is not known whether perpetrator-specific data is collected. This is concerning given that Australian citizens and permanent residents have the entitlement to sponsor up to two overseas-born partners in their lifetime (see Segrave & Vasil 2025) and family violence provisions can be accessed without any engagement with the criminal justice system, such that visa sponsorship may be granted to someone who has previously abused a temporary migrant as there will be no criminal record that shows up in the character assessment process regarding their sponsorship application (see Segrave & Vasil 2025).

Key sources

Segrave, M & Vasil S (2025) The borders of violence: temporary migration and domestic and family violence (chapter six). London: Taylor & Francis. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/reader/download/174a16b5-40b4-4ebc-8001-e821db097df0/chapter/pdf?context=ubx>

FOCUS FIVE. System integration and workforce: safe and effective prevention, early intervention, response and long-term recovery including justice and health-sector responses, drawing on an integrated system and a connected and capable workforce that utilises trauma and violence-informed approaches across multi-sector services and programs.

There is an important opportunity to recognise the connection between modern slavery (specifically offences under the Commonwealth Criminal Code) and domestic and family violence and reconsider the current system settings.

Our key concerns in relation to both the identification of these offences, the response settings make clear there are significant concerns around these intersections and the current siloed response settings.

Key considerations include:

- The focus on exit trafficking as undermining a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the conditions of gendered violence
- Persistent concerns around the trafficking and slavery support settings as fit-for-purpose for victim survivors of domestic and family violence
- Limited engagement with the extent to which conditions of forced labour and servitude are present in situations of domestic and family violence and when and where such charged should be laid/cooperation across Federal, state and territory police operations.
- How does the DFSV system intersect with the MS system and how can we improve this.

We strongly recommend the establishment of an expert working group to support this work.

Key data sources

Segrave, M & Vasil S (2025) The borders of violence: temporary migration and domestic and family violence (chapter six). London: Taylor & Francis. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/reader/download/174a16b5-40b4-4ebc-8001-e821db097df0/chapter/pdf?context=ubx>

See also

Segrave M (2025) [How 'exit trafficking' hides the complex realities of cross border family violence](#), *Women's Agenda*, 13 June 2025.

Vidal L & Segrave M (2024) [Is Australia's first forced marriage conviction a win for modern slavery efforts?](#), *Women's Agenda*, 28 May 2024.

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