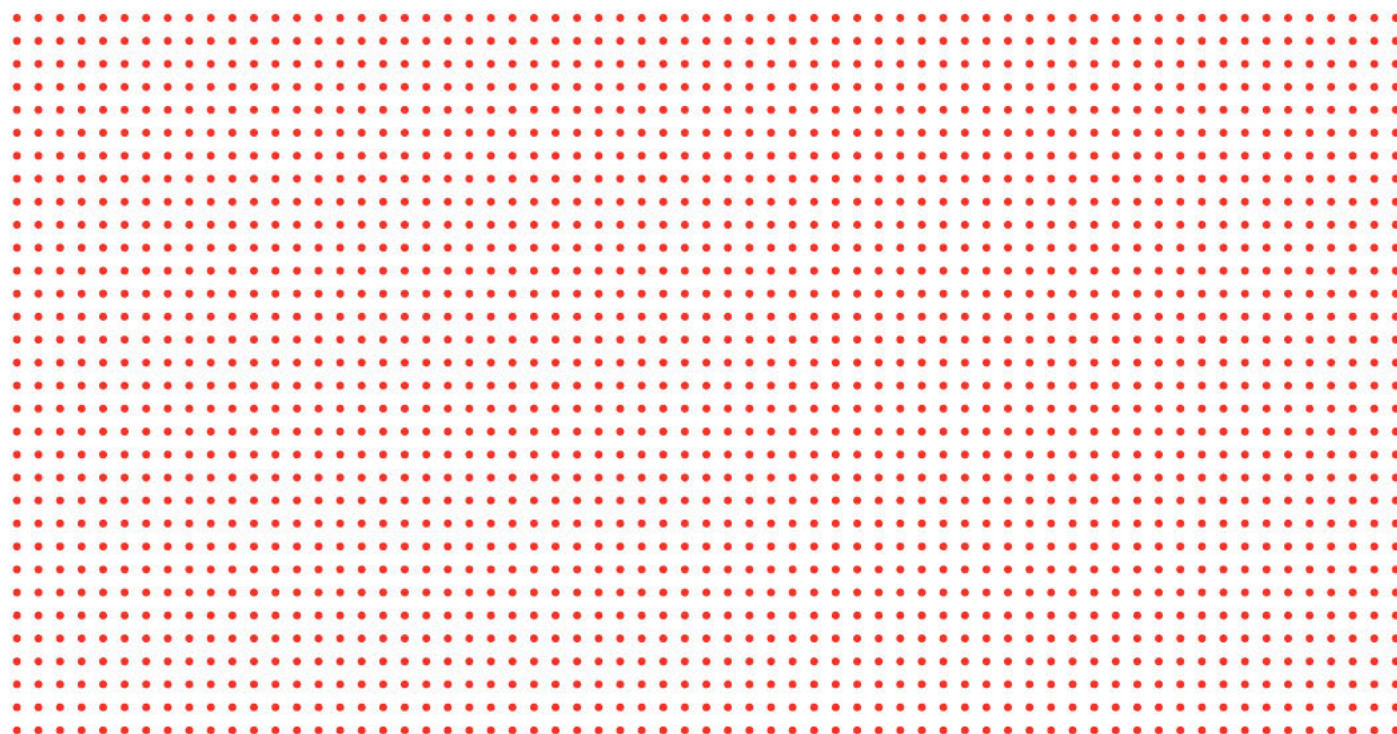


Submission to the Consultation on the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022– 2032

Submission by Infoxchange | 31 July 2026

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1 Executive Summary

Infoxchange welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

For more than 35 years, Infoxchange has partnered with governments and the community sector to use technology to improve outcomes for people experiencing disadvantage. Through Ask Izzy and Australia's largest community service directory, we support millions of connections each year between people in crisis and the services that can assist them. Our platforms are used directly by the public as well as by frontline workers across government, family violence services, homelessness services, health providers and community organisations.

This gives us a unique perspective on one critical part of the service system that is often overlooked: **how people find help.**

While Australia has made significant investments in expanding specialist family violence services, many victim-survivors continue to experience difficulty navigating a fragmented service landscape. The challenge is no longer simply whether services exist, but whether people can discover, trust and access them safely at the moment they are needed.

Our experience suggests five priorities for the Second Action Plan:

1. Recognise service navigation as an essential part of early intervention.
2. Support innovation through dedicated investment in evidence-based digital approaches.
3. Treat high-quality service information as critical national infrastructure.
4. Harness data and technology to improve system planning and responsiveness.
5. Establish a nationally consistent approach to the safe use of Artificial Intelligence within the family, domestic and sexual violence sector.

These recommendations are intended to complement - not replace - the important investments already being made in frontline services.

2 The Opportunity

Family violence rarely presents as a single issue.

People experiencing violence frequently seek assistance for housing, food, financial hardship, mental health, legal support or parenting before identifying family violence as the primary issue. This reflects the complex reality of people's lives and reinforces the importance of providing multiple safe pathways into support.

This insight has consistently emerged through the design and operation of Ask Izzy, which was co-designed with people with lived experience of family violence and homelessness. Research undertaken during its development demonstrated that many users first sought broader support before engaging with specialist family violence services.

This has important policy implications.

Early intervention should include helping people recognise their circumstances, understand available supports and confidently connect with appropriate services before crisis escalates.

The Second Action Plan provides an opportunity to recognise digital service navigation as a core component of Australia's early intervention response.

Recommendation 1: Recognise service navigation as a core element of early intervention

Through the development and operation of Ask Izzy, Australia's leading digital service navigation platform, Infoxchange has observed that accessing support is often not the primary challenge, knowing where to begin is. Supporting more than 8.5 million searches each year, Ask Izzy provides a unique window into how people experiencing vulnerability seek help and the barriers they encounter before engaging with specialist services.

Our experience demonstrates that many people experiencing family violence do not initially search for specialist family violence services. Instead, they often seek assistance with housing, financial hardship, food, legal support or mental health before they are ready to disclose violence or engage with specialist services.

This highlights an important policy opportunity. Early intervention should include helping people recognise their circumstances, understand the support available and confidently connect with the right services before crisis escalates.

Digital navigation platforms provide safe, anonymous and accessible pathways into support by:

- enabling people to seek information privately;
- connecting people with local services based on their circumstances;
- reducing the time required to find appropriate support; and
- empowering people to take the first step when they are ready.

The Second Action Plan should explicitly recognise digital service navigation as an important component of Australia's early intervention response. These platforms complement specialist services by improving access to them, reducing barriers to help-seeking and supporting earlier engagement with support.

Recommendation 2: Support an Innovation Stream within the National Plan

The First Action Plan recognised the importance of innovation in improving responses to family violence.

As technology continues to evolve, innovation is becoming increasingly important.

Artificial Intelligence, digital service delivery, predictive analytics and integrated referral pathways all have the potential to improve outcomes for victim-survivors when implemented responsibly.



The Second Action Plan should include a dedicated innovation stream that enables governments, researchers, technology providers and community organisations to:

- trial new approaches;
- rigorously evaluate outcomes;
- scale successful initiatives; and
- share learnings nationally.

Innovation funding should complement frontline investment by improving how the broader system operates rather than creating parallel services.

Recommendation 3: Recognise service information as national social infrastructure

Effective referrals depend on accurate service information.

Maintaining current information about thousands of community organisations, eligibility requirements, opening hours and referral pathways requires ongoing investment and governance.

Increasingly this information supports far more than websites.

It underpins:

- digital assistants;
- AI-enabled referral tools;
- government service delivery;
- community sector referral systems; and
- frontline workers across multiple portfolios.

Without trusted service information, even the most sophisticated digital tools cannot provide safe or reliable guidance.

The Second Action Plan should recognise that nationally maintained service information is foundational infrastructure supporting family violence responses across Australia.

Recommendation 4: Use aggregated service demand data to strengthen policy and planning

Governments require timely information to understand changing patterns of need.

Traditional reporting often reflects activity after people have already entered the service system.

Anonymous service search behavior provides an additional source of insight that can help identify emerging demand earlier, particularly during periods of crisis or rapid social change.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, Ask Izzy demonstrated how aggregated search data could provide valuable insights into changing demand for services across geography and service types, including family violence, emergency relief and mental health. This capability continues to offer opportunities to support service planning, funding decisions and emergency responses.

The Second Action Plan should encourage greater use of appropriately governed, de-identified service demand data to complement existing evidence sources.

Recommendation 5: Develop a national framework for safe AI in the family violence sector

Artificial Intelligence is already changing how people search for information and access services.

Used appropriately, AI has significant potential to:

- improve access to information;
- reduce administrative burden on frontline workers;
- provide more personalised navigation; and
- help identify appropriate referral pathways.

However, family violence represents one of the highest-risk environments for AI deployment.

Systems must be built on trusted service information, operate transparently, protect privacy, incorporate human oversight and be evaluated for safety and effectiveness.

The Second Action Plan should support nationally consistent governance principles for AI-enabled family violence services, ensuring innovation improves safety, equity and trust.

3 Enabling infrastructure - Ask Izzy

The recommendations outlined in this submission are already being demonstrated through Ask Izzy, Australia's leading digital service navigation platform.

Developed by Infoxchange in partnership with people with lived experience of family violence and homelessness, Ask Izzy provides free, anonymous access to housing, family violence, legal, financial, health and community services across Australia. Today it supports more than 8.5 million searches each year and is used by both members of the public and frontline workers across government and the community sector.

Our experience demonstrates three practical lessons that have broader relevance to the Second Action Plan.

Early intervention begins with helping people find the right support

Ask Izzy was co-designed with people who have lived experience of family violence. One of the strongest insights from that work was that many people do not begin by searching for specialist family violence services. Instead, they often seek help with immediate issues such as financial assistance, housing, food, mental health or even support for their pets before they are ready to disclose violence or engage with specialist services.

By enabling people to explore support safely, privately and at their own pace, Ask Izzy helps build confidence, understanding and agency. As one participant with lived experience explained:

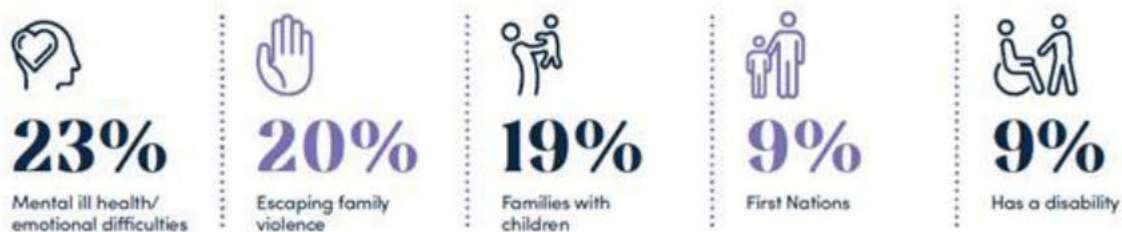
"As a person who has experienced family violence, independence and freedom is the most important to me. Ask Izzy puts the power in your hands – you make the calls."



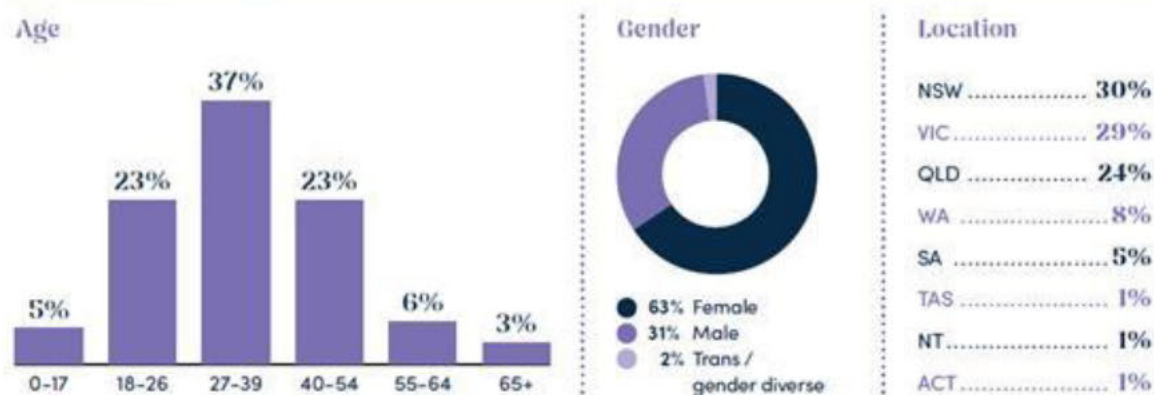
Top 5 category searches



Breakdown of users seeking housing support via Ask Izzy



Demographic snapshot



Searches for family violence support on Ask Izzy are currently at record levels, increasing by more than 30 per cent over the last 12 months, reinforcing both the ongoing need for accessible pathways into support and the growing role digital navigation can play in early intervention.

Data can strengthen policy and service planning

Beyond supporting individuals, Ask Izzy generates valuable, de-identified insights into service demand.

With more than 8.5 million searches annually, location-based search activity provides a leading indicator of changing community need at national, regional and local levels. These insights have been used by governments and service providers to better understand patterns of demand, inform policy development, support funding decisions, improve service planning and assist disaster response and recovery. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this capability provided governments with near real-time visibility of changing demand for family violence, emergency relief and other essential services.

Trusted digital infrastructure enables innovation

Ask Izzy also demonstrates the importance of investing in the enabling infrastructure that sits behind frontline services. Accurate, governed and nationally consistent service information provides the foundation for safe digital referrals, AI-assisted navigation, government service delivery and coordinated responses across the family, domestic and sexual violence sector.

The experience of Ask Izzy shows that digital innovation is most effective when it is co-designed with people who have lived experience, complements specialist services rather than replacing them, and is built on trusted national infrastructure. These principles should underpin future investment through the Second Action Plan.

4 Conclusion

The Second Action Plan presents an opportunity to strengthen Australia's response by improving not only the services available to victim-survivors, but also how people discover, access and navigate those services.

Infoxchange encourages governments to complement continued investment in frontline responses with investment in the enabling systems that support them.

By recognising service navigation, supporting innovation, strengthening national service information, using data more effectively and establishing safe approaches to AI, Australia can build a more connected, responsive and person-centred service system that better supports victim-survivors and those at risk of violence.

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