



National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032

Submission to the
Second Action Plan

Acknowledgment of Country

Melbourne City Mission acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the culture, dreams, and aspirations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are the true custodians of the land upon which we live and work.

We recognise that the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people – many of whom have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence – is in part a devastating consequence of colonisation, intergenerational trauma and ongoing experiences of systemic racism.

We pay our respects to the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures and recognise their unceded sovereignty.

Contributors

This submission has been prepared by [REDACTED] (Melbourne City Mission).

We would like to acknowledge all young people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, whose leadership has helped create the conditions for this conversation and informed key research underpinning of this submission. Their experiences, alongside their ongoing advocacy to bring family violence into sharper focus within policy discourse, has been integral to shaping this work.

We would like to recognise the children and young people who have lost their lives to family violence and systemic failure, and those who continue to live with this experience every day.

We would like to acknowledge the lead author of *Unsafe and Unseen: Spotlighting the needs and experiences of unaccompanied young people seeking shelter*, Riley Ellard, and her co-authors, Samara Young, Eva Lazzaro, Nicola Hard, Katherine Olgivie, Douschka Dobson and Elena Campbell. We would also like to acknowledge the authors of *Missing Figures*: Silke Meter, Maria Atienzar-Prieto, Kate Fitz-Gibbon and Shorna Moore. Their work forms the foundation from which we have built this submission and has been critical in bringing the links between domestic, family and sexual violence and suicide to light.

About Melbourne City Mission (MCM)

Established in 1854, the Melbourne City Mission (MCM) Group is one of Victoria's oldest, largest and most diverse community service organisations. Today, the MCM Group, comprising MCM Services, Hester Hornbrook Academy, Quantum Support Services and MCM Housing, works alongside people and communities to create positive pathways and address disadvantage across Victoria.

The MCM Group delivers a broad range of services spanning family violence, homelessness, housing, disability, mental health, early childhood, education, child and family services and home-based palliative care. Through these services, MCM works with people across all stages of life and supports individuals, families and communities experiencing complex and intersecting forms of disadvantage.

As Victoria's largest provider of youth homelessness services, family violence is a common thread underpinning much of MCM's work. Every year, MCM works with thousands of children and young people whose experiences of homelessness, housing insecurity, mental ill-health, disengagement from education and other challenges are directly connected to experiences of family violence. These experiences inform both our service delivery and our policy and advocacy work.

MCM delivers a range of specialist responses that support children and young people experiencing family violence and its impacts, including:

- **Amplify**, a specialist family violence case management response for unaccompanied young people aged 15 to 19 experiencing high risk family violence and homelessness.
- **Frontyard Youth Services**, which provides a range of integrated supports to young people aged 12 to 24 experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including support with housing, health, mental health, legal issues, Centrelink, employment and living skills. Frontyard also operates Victoria's statewide specialist homelessness access point for young people aged 16 to 24.
- **Youth refuge programs** across Victoria that provide short-term accommodation and support to young people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.
- **Youth Foyer and Housing First programs**, which provide fully furnished medium-term accommodation linked with intensive case management, education and employment supports.
- **Early intervention programs** that support young people to remain connected to family, education, housing and community and prevent escalation into homelessness and crisis service systems.
- **Restart**, delivered in partnership with the Centre for Multicultural Youth, a therapeutic response for young people aged 12 to 17 who are using violence in the home. Restart works with young people in flexible and responsive ways to promote behaviour change, support healing and strengthen family relationships.

Drawing on this service delivery experience, MCM is also committed to advancing policy reform that improves safety, wellbeing and opportunity for children and young people. Through research partnerships, lived experience engagement and advocacy, MCM works to identify and address systemic barriers, strengthen service responses and promote more equitable outcomes for children and young people affected by family, domestic and sexual violence.

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Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032.

We commend the Australian Government for maintaining the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence and the safety and wellbeing of children as national priorities. The National Plan, and the sustained investment and reform agenda that has accompanied it, has helped elevate the experiences of victim-survivors within policy, public discourse and service system reform. Importantly, it has also supported growing recognition that children and young people are not merely witnesses to violence or extensions of an adult victim-survivor's experience, but victims and survivors in their own right who require dedicated responses to support their safety, recovery and wellbeing.

Children and young people experience family, domestic and sexual violence at significant rates in Australia. The impacts of this violence are profound and far-reaching, shaping safety, health, wellbeing, engagement in education, housing security, social participation and long-term life outcomes. Family violence is also a leading driver of youth homelessness, poor mental health, self-harm and suicide, with overwhelming evidence demonstrating the significant and enduring consequences of violence experienced during childhood and adolescence.

Over the past decade, there has been significant growth in the evidence base relating to children and young people's experiences of family violence. Important work undertaken by researchers, governments, service providers and people with lived experience has strengthened understanding of the distinct ways children and young people experience violence and the impacts it has on their lives. The National Plan itself represents an important milestone through its recognition of children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right, while a growing body of research has highlighted the need for child-centred and developmentally appropriate responses across prevention, early intervention, crisis response, recovery and healing.

...the reality experienced by many children and young people affected by family violence has changed far less than the policy and research landscape around them.

Despite these advances, the reality experienced by many children and young people affected by family violence has changed far less than the policy and research landscape around them.

Across Australia, children and young people continue to encounter service systems that are primarily designed around adult victim-survivors and adult understandings of violence. Young people who seek support independently, particularly those without a protective parent or guardian, continue to face significant barriers to safety, support and recovery. They remain overrepresented in youth homelessness services, mental health systems, justice and child protection systems and data relating to serious psychological distress and suicide. Yet dedicated responses for this cohort remain limited and unevenly distributed.

Importantly, children and young people should not be understood as a single or homogenous group with a common set of experiences, risks or support needs. Some children experience family violence alongside a protective parent and engage with services as part of a broader family response. Others are involved with statutory systems such as Child Protection or out-of-home care and require responses that reflect those additional complexities. Many older adolescents and young adults seek help independently, including young people who have left a violent home and those who do not have a parent willing or able to act protectively. For some of these young people, the person using violence is their mother, a reality that can sit uncomfortably alongside dominant understandings of family violence and contribute to their experiences being minimised,

misunderstood or overlooked by systems designed primarily around adult intimate partner violence. Effective responses must therefore recognise the diversity of children's and young people's experiences and adopt an intersectional approach that acknowledges the multiple ways power, control, age, gender, culture, disability, sexuality, family relationships and system involvement shape experiences of violence and access to support.

The available data highlights both the scale of the issue and the urgency of reform. The *Australian Child Maltreatment Study*¹ found that 40% of Australians were exposed to family violence during childhood. The 2026 Victorian Youth Homelessness Snapshot found that 84% of young people experiencing homelessness had grown up experiencing family violence. Suicide remains the leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 24 years, while over the past decade 520 unaccompanied children aged 12 to 17 died following contact with homelessness services, with suicide identified as the leading cause of death. Together, these findings reinforce the need for stronger and more coordinated responses to children and young people affected by family violence.

Importantly, while the consultation identifies victim-survivors and children and young people in their own right as separate priority areas, many children and young people are themselves victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence. They experience violence directly, are affected by its immediate and long-term consequences and require dedicated safety, recovery and healing responses in their own right. Accordingly, this submission responds to both Priority Area 1 (Victim-Survivors) and Priority Area 3 (Children and Young People in Their Own Right) through a child and youth lens, recognising that these priorities are deeply interconnected for children and young people affected by violence.

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This submission also recognises the distinct experiences of children and young people who use violence, including adolescent family violence in the home and violence in young people's intimate relationships. Effective responses must be capable of promoting safety and accountability while also supporting healing, development and recovery, recognising that many young people who use violence have their own experiences of trauma, family violence and disadvantage.

Importantly, Australia is not starting from scratch. Across the country there are emerging examples of effective policy, service and practice responses that are demonstrating positive outcomes for children and young people affected by family

violence. Evidence-based initiatives such as Amplify (Vic)'s youth-specific family violence case management programs, recovery-focused programs and therapeutic interventions for young people using violence are providing important lessons about what works. While these responses are often limited in scale and geography, they demonstrate that meaningful change is possible when systems are designed around the realities of children's and young people's lives. The Second Action Plan should prioritise the expansion and scaling of these proven approaches so that effective responses become the norm rather than isolated examples of good practice.

A central theme of this submission is that recognition must now be matched by implementation. The Second Action Plan presents an important opportunity to move beyond acknowledging children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right and towards creating meaningful change in their daily lives. This requires targeted investment in dedicated service responses, long-term healing and recovery supports, youth housing, financial security, data and accountability mechanisms,

¹ Haslam, D., Matthews, B., Pacella, R., Scott, J. G., Finkelhor, D., Higgins, D. J., Meinck, F., Erskine, H. E., Thomas, H. J., Lawrence, D., & Malacova, E. (2023). The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study: Brief Report. Queensland University of Technology. <https://www.acms.au/resources/the-prevalence-and-impact-of-child-maltreatment-in-australia-findings-from-the-australian-child-maltreatment-study-2023-brief-report/>.

and legislative and policy reforms that address the barriers children and young people continue to face when seeking safety and support. The reforms outlined in this submission are intended to help ensure that the growing understanding of children's and young people's experiences of family violence is reflected not only in research and policy frameworks, but in the services, systems and supports they encounter every day.

Consistent with MCM's commitment to self-determination, we recognise that responses affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, families and communities must be led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge that the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in experiences of family violence, homelessness, child protection involvement and suicide is inseparable from the ongoing impacts of colonisation and systemic inequity. We support Aboriginal-led solutions, sustained investment in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and the submissions and advocacy of Aboriginal-led organisations contributing to the Second Action Plan.

The reforms outlined in this submission are intended to help ensure that the growing understanding of children's and young people's experiences of family violence is reflected not only in research and policy frameworks, but in the services, systems and supports they encounter every day.

This submission should be read alongside MCM's broader program of research, advocacy and policy reform, developed in partnership with people with lived experience, universities, specialist services and community organisations:

- Evaluation of Melbourne City Mission's Amplify Program: Final Report (2025)²
- Unsafe & Unseen: Spotlighting the needs and experiences of unaccompanied young people seeking shelter (2025)³
- Missing figures: The hidden role of domestic and family violence in youth suicide (2023)⁴
- Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Relationship Between Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence and Suicide 2026 (Melbourne City Mission, Centre for Innovative Justice, Monash University, Griffith University)⁵
- Pave the Way: Investing in the Safety and Futures of the Next Generation (2024)⁶
- Amplify: Turning Up the Volume on Young People and Family Violence (2021)⁷

Note: We would be happy to provide the Committee and secretariat with electronic or hard copies of these reports upon request.

2 Centre for Innovative Justice. (2025). We kept changing; they kept changing with us: Evaluation of Melbourne City Mission's Amplify program. Centre for Innovative Justice, RMIT University. <https://www.mcm.org.au/news/amplify-evaluation-confirms-family-violence-program-is-changing-lives>.

3 Ellard, R., Young, S., Lazzaro, E., Hard, N., Ogilvie, K., Dobson, D., & Campbell, E. (2025) Unsafe and Unseen: Spotlighting the needs and experiences of unaccompanied young people seeking shelter. RMIT University. <https://cij.org.au/cms/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/uu-1.pdf>

4 Meyer, S., Atienzar-Prieto, M., Fitz-Gibbon, K., & Moore, S. (2023). Missing Figures: The role of domestic and family violence in youth suicide: Current state of knowledge report. Griffith University. <https://www.mcm.org.au/-/media/mcm/content-repository-files/missing-figures-the-hidden-role-of-domestic-and-family-violence-in-youth-suicide.pdf>.

5 Adsett, M., Moore, S., Campell, E., Fitz-Gibbon, K., Meyer, S., Pall, C., Anderson, T., & Cataldo, M. (2026). Submission to the inquiry into the relationship between Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence and Suicide. Melbourne City Mission with Centre for Innovative Justice (RMIT University), Monash University, Griffith University and Berry Street Y-Change.

6 Moore, S., Campbell, E., Pall, C., Demant, L., Fox, A., & Bryant, S. (2024). Pave the way: Investing in the safety and futures of the next generation. Melbourne City Mission, Centre for Innovative Justice, Youth Affairs Council and Y-Change, Berry Street. https://www.mcm.org.au/-/media/mcm/content-repository-files/pavetheway_feb24_v3.pdf.

7 Corrie, T., & Moore, S. (2021). Amplify: Turning up the volume on young people and family violence (Research Report). Melbourne City Mission. https://www.mcm.org.au/-/media/mcm/content-repository-files/amplify_turning-up-the-volume-on-young-people-and-family-violence.pdf.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Invest in a national data, research and policy agenda on the relationship between family violence, mental ill-health, self-harm and suicide among children and young people, including improved identification of family violence in suicide reporting and stronger evidence to inform prevention and early intervention responses.

Recommendation 2

Invest in dedicated, age-appropriate and culturally safe family violence case management responses for children and young people of all genders, including young people seeking help independently without a protective parent or guardian. These responses should be recognised as a core safety intervention, equivalent to the specialist family violence case management responses routinely funded for adult victim-survivors escaping violent relationships. This includes investment in and scaling of evidence-based youth-specific family violence models, such as *Amplify*, while maintaining their specialist and youth-centred focus.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen the capacity of mainstream and universal services that commonly encounter children and young people experiencing family violence to identify, assess and respond in developmentally appropriate ways, including through stronger workforce capability and pathways into specialist support. This should complement, not replace, investment in dedicated specialist family violence case management responses for children and young people.

Recommendation 4

Strengthen access to support for children and young people experiencing family violence by addressing barriers created by parental consent requirements and other systems that assume family dependence. This should include nationally consistent guidance on engaging with mature minors, and reforms that enable children and young people to safely access services, financial supports and family violence responses without requiring the consent or involvement of a parent who may be using violence.

Recommendation 5

Increase investment in healing and recovery supports for children and young people affected by family violence, including therapeutic supports, peer programs, family violence recovery services and other developmentally appropriate interventions. This should include improved access to Medicare-funded mental health care for young victim-survivors, particularly in regional and remote communities.

Recommendation 6

Increase investment in dedicated youth housing and support responses for children and young people affected by family violence, including through continued investment in housing supply initiatives such as Housing Australia Future Fund including the NHIF-CT. Investment should contribute to the development of a national pool of 15,000 dedicated youth housing tenancies, linked with funded support services that enable safety, recovery and transitions to independence for young people unable to live safely at home.

Recommendation 7

Strengthen financial safety and independence for young people escaping family violence by:

- a. increasing the base rate of Youth Allowance (Unreasonable to Live at Home) to better align with income support payments available to adults in comparable circumstances, recognising that young people escaping violence face the same housing and cost-of-living pressures as other victim-survivors;
- b. reform social security and administrative processes that enable systems abuse by perpetrators.
- c. expanding access to family violence-related financial assistance measures, including the Leaving Violence Program and other safety-focused financial supports, to ensure eligibility reflects the diverse ways children and young people experience family violence, including violence perpetrated by parents, carers and other family members.

Recommendation 8

Embed intersectionality, cultural safety and accessibility across all youth-specific family violence responses and mainstream service reforms.

Recommendation 9

Ensure all Commonwealth-funded responses to adolescent family violence in the home are grounded in a child-centred healing and recovery framework that promotes safety, accountability, behaviour change and wellbeing, and measures success through outcomes for young people and families, not solely future perpetration.

Recommendation 10

Ensure children and young people are actively involved in shaping, implementing and monitoring reforms under the National Plan through dedicated lived experience governance structures, funded participation mechanisms and transparent accountability measures.

Children and Young People Experience Violence in Distinct Ways

While family violence policy and service responses have historically focused on intimate partner violence, children and young people often experience violence differently. Many experience violence directly from parents, carers, siblings and other family members. Others experience family violence through ongoing exposure to abuse and violence occurring between adults within the home. These experiences are often compounded by age-based power imbalances that leave children and young people with limited avenues to seek safety, exercise autonomy or access support independently.

Children and young people also experience intimate partner violence in their own relationships. As children move into adolescence and young adulthood, experiences of violence often become more complex and can span multiple relationships simultaneously. Many young people seeking support have experienced violence in their family of origin while also experiencing violence in intimate relationships. In circumstances where violence has been a consistent feature of childhood, violence and abuse can become normalised, making it more difficult for young people to identify unhealthy relationships or seek support.

The pathways through which young people seek safety can also expose them to further victimisation. Young people leaving violent homes have limited financial resources, housing options or supportive adults to turn to. As a result, some seek refuge with intimate partners, including older partners, or move into living arrangements that appear safer than the violence they are escaping but nonetheless expose them to exploitation, coercion and/or further violence. Research with unaccompanied young people identified trajectories in which family violence in the home was followed by experiences of intimate partner violence, housing insecurity, sexual exploitation or other forms of interpersonal harm. Understanding children and young people's experiences of violence therefore requires an appreciation of the cumulative and intersecting nature of victimisation across different relationships and stages of life.

Importantly, the risks experienced by children and young people as victim-survivors of family violence are no less significant than those experienced by adult victim-survivors. However, the harms they experience can manifest differently. While public and policy attention is often focused on intimate partner homicide and other forms of lethal violence experienced by adults, growing evidence demonstrates that family violence is a significant contributor to self-harm and youth suicide. Suicide remains the leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24 years, yet the role of family violence in these deaths remains largely absent from family violence narratives, practice frameworks and data collection systems. As a result, many young people continue to die from the impacts of family violence in ways that remain largely invisible within family violence policy and reform discussions.

Suicide remains the leading cause of death for young people aged 15 to 24 years, yet the role of family violence in these deaths remains largely absent from family violence narratives, practice frameworks and data collection systems.

As a result, many young people continue to die from the impacts of family violence in ways that remain largely invisible within family violence policy and reform discussions.

The parliamentary inquiry into the relationship between domestic, family and sexual violence

and suicide highlighted that young people's deaths by suicide too often sit outside family violence narratives despite evidence demonstrating a strong relationship between childhood experiences of family violence, homelessness, mental ill-health and suicide. Research cited in *Missing Figures* found that young people who experience childhood sexual abuse are three times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers, while emotional and physical abuse significantly increase suicide risk. Despite this, youth suicides connected to experiences of family violence are often understood primarily through a mental health lens rather than recognised as part of the broader spectrum of family violence-related harm.

Recommendation 1

Invest in a national data, research and policy agenda on the relationship between family violence, mental ill-health, self-harm and suicide among children and young people, including improved identification of family violence in suicide reporting and stronger evidence to inform prevention and early intervention responses.

It is also important that children and young people are not conceptualised as a minority cohort within family violence policy and service responses. Childhood, adolescence and young adulthood are stages of life that all people move through, including many of the women who later experience violence as adults. The experiences of violence during these formative years can shape trajectories across health, wellbeing, housing, education, relationships and economic participation over the life course. Investment in responses for children and young people should therefore not be viewed as separate to broader efforts to prevent and respond to family violence, but as fundamental to achieving the long-term objectives of the National Plan.

Equally, children and young people should not be understood as a single or homogenous group with a common set of experiences, needs or pathways through the service system. Some children and young people experience violence alongside a protective parent and engage with services as part of a broader family response. Others are involved with statutory systems such as Child Protection or out-of-home care and may experience additional layers of system involvement and intervention. Many young people, particularly older adolescents and young adults, seek help independently and without the support or protection of a parent or guardian. These differing circumstances create distinct risks and support needs, underscoring the importance of flexible and tailored responses that recognise the diversity of children's and young people's experiences of violence.

The experiences of young people seeking help independently can also challenge some of the assumptions that underpin dominant family violence narratives. While family violence remains a highly gendered issue in Australia, young people may experience violence from fathers, mothers, siblings, intimate partners and other family members, sometimes simultaneously or at different points across their lives. Research with unaccompanied young people demonstrates that some seek support because of violence perpetrated by their mother, or because neither parent is willing or able to act protectively. These experiences can sit uncomfortably alongside traditional understandings of family violence and may contribute to young people's experiences being minimised, misunderstood or overlooked by systems designed primarily around adult intimate partner violence. Effective responses therefore require an intersectional understanding of family violence that recognises the complexity of young people's family relationships, experiences of victimisation and pathways to safety.

Many children and young people do not initially recognise their experiences as family violence. Dominant public narratives often present family violence through an adult lens, focusing on intimate partner relationships and adult victim-survivors. As a result, children and young people may

understand violence perpetrated by parents, carers or siblings as discipline, conflict or simply part of family life. The *Amplify Evaluation's Final Report* has found that many young people only came to identify their experiences as family violence after receiving support or engaging with services capable of helping them make sense of what they had experienced.

The ways in which coercive control manifests for children and young people also require greater attention. Young people may experience coercive control through restrictions on movement, education, social participation, finances, communication and access to support. Identity-based abuse, including abuse targeting sexuality, gender identity, disability, cultural identity or faith, can also form part of their experiences. Technology-facilitated abuse further expands opportunities for surveillance, monitoring and control, extending family violence beyond the physical home and into digital spaces.

These experiences occur during key developmental periods. Family violence can interrupt education, undermine relationships, damage mental health, affect identity formation and limit young people's ability to establish independence. Consequently, responses must be tailored not only to the violence being experienced, but also to the developmental realities of childhood and adolescence.

Recognition Must Be Matched by Dedicated Safety Responses

Although policy frameworks increasingly recognise children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right, that recognition has not yet translated into a dedicated service infrastructure. While governments have invested in specialist family violence responses for adult victim-survivors and expanded responses to adolescent family violence in the home, there remain very few dedicated specialist family violence services designed specifically to support children and young people who are experiencing violence and seeking safety. In many jurisdictions, children and young people continue to rely on youth homelessness, mental health or generalist youth services to respond to high-risk family violence, despite these services not being designed as specialist family violence responses.

It is important to note, that therapeutic, recovery and healing supports play a critical role in helping children and young people recover from violence, and investment in these responses remains essential. Similarly, dedicated responses to adolescent family violence in the home are an important part of the broader family violence system. However, neither should be seen as a substitute for specialist family violence safety responses for children and young people who are seeking support unaccompanied by a parent or guardian. Across Australia, there remains a significant gap in dedicated family violence case management, risk assessment, safety planning and advocacy responses for children and young people experiencing violence in their own right. Where it does exist, it is often provided to children and young people who accompany a protective parent to an adult family violence service.

Although policy frameworks increasingly recognise children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right, that recognition has not yet translated into a dedicated service infrastructure.

A growing body of evidence across Australia, identifies that young people frequently present to multiple services with overlapping experiences of family violence, homelessness, mental ill-health and social exclusion, yet continue to encounter fragmented responses across service systems. Findings from *Unsafe & Unseen* demonstrate that this fragmentation creates significant barriers to safety and support. Young people commonly describe being referred from one service to another, repeatedly recounting traumatic experiences, and struggling to access coordinated support during periods of crisis. Many report feeling disbelieved, minimised or treated as an extension of their parent's experience rather than as victim-survivors in their own right. These experiences can erode trust in services and reduce future help-seeking.

Many systems continue to operate on the assumption that children and young people will access support through a protective parent or caregiver.

Where this assumption does not hold, young people frequently encounter significant service gaps.

Research from *Unsafe & Unseen* also highlights the challenges faced by young people seeking help independently. Many systems continue to operate on the assumption that children and young people will access support through a protective parent or caregiver. Where this assumption does not hold, young people frequently encounter significant service gaps. Parental consent requirements, uncertainty regarding young people's decision-making capacity and a lack of youth-specific pathways can delay or prevent access to safety and support.

A further barrier to safety is the extent to which service systems continue to rely on parental consent and involvement, even where a parent or caregiver is the person using violence. Findings from *Unsafe & Unseen* and the independent *Evaluation of MCM's Amplify Program* demonstrate that consent requirements, verification processes and broader assumptions regarding parental authority can prevent young people from accessing support, financial assistance and safety interventions. Practitioners reported examples of services seeking consent from, or attempting to verify disclosures with, the very person alleged to be using violence. In some instances, this enabled perpetrators to gate keep access to support, challenge young people's disclosures or continue exercising control through systems abuse. Rather than operating as a safeguard, parental consent requirements can inadvertently escalate risk and undermine a young person's ability to access safety. For unaccompanied young people in particular, clearer guidance regarding decision-making capacity and pathways to access support without parental involvement are critical components of an effective family violence response.

The findings of *Unsafe & Unseen* and the independent *Evaluation of MCM's Amplify Program* all point to the need for dedicated and age-appropriate family violence responses designed specifically for children and young people. These responses must recognise young people's developmental needs, understand the distinct ways they experience violence, and be capable of responding to multiple and changing forms of risk, including family violence, homelessness, mental ill-health, self-harm and suicide risk. Unlike many mainstream services, specialist family violence case management provides a single point of accountability for safety planning, risk assessment, advocacy, system navigation and coordination across systems.

Spotlight: Amplify Program

MCM's Amplify Program is Australia's first dedicated family violence case management response for unaccompanied children and young people experiencing high-risk family violence and homelessness, or at risk of homelessness. Jointly funded by Family Safety Victoria and the Commonwealth under the National Partnership Agreement, Amplify was established in response to longstanding evidence that young people experiencing family violence were falling through the gaps between the family violence and child protection systems. Working with young people aged 15 to 19 of all genders, the program responds to family violence perpetrated by parents, carers, siblings, intimate partners and other family members, recognising the diverse ways children and young people experience violence.

Delivered through MCM's state-wide youth homelessness access point, Frontyard Youth Services, the program combines specialist family violence practitioners and youth peer workers with lived experience of family violence, combining family violence practice and youth engagement frameworks. Amplify provides intensive family violence case management over a six-month period, alongside secondary consultation, workforce development and capacity-building support to practitioners across MCM and the broader family violence, homelessness and youth sectors in Victoria. The model supports young people to understand and name their experiences of family violence, often for the first time, and assists them to navigate complex systems while planning for their immediate and longer-term safety.

Amplify supports young people to access housing, remain engaged in education, strengthen financial safety, connect with mental health supports and obtain legal assistance, including support relating to intervention orders and other protective mechanisms. A distinctive feature of the program is its use of peer workers with lived experience, who provide practical support, validation and guidance to young people navigating systems that can often feel overwhelming and inaccessible.

The independent Evaluation of MCM's Amplify Program undertaken by RMIT University's Centre for Innovative Justice found that the program is addressing a critical gap in the family violence system and delivering significant outcomes for young people. The evaluation found that almost four in five young people experienced a measurable reduction in family violence risk through their engagement with the program. Housing outcomes improved for 62% of young people, with more than one-third progressing into longer-term or sustainable housing. Among those supported to engage with education or employment, 60% improved their participation, while a further quarter maintained existing engagement despite experiencing family violence and homelessness.

Importantly, the evaluation also found that Amplify was creating opportunities for young people to safely disclose experiences of trauma, self-harm and suicidality, enabling practitioners to respond holistically to family violence and mental health risks simultaneously. The evaluation concluded that, without Amplify, many of these young people would have remained unseen by the service system and at ongoing risk of serious harm. It recommended not only the continuation of the program but its expansion, highlighting the absence of comparable specialist family violence responses for unaccompanied young people elsewhere in Australia.

Amplify demonstrates that when children and young people are recognised as victim-survivors in their own right and provided with dedicated family violence expertise, meaningful improvements in safety, housing, education, wellbeing and recovery can be achieved.

Importantly, scaling youth-specific family violence case management does not mean replicating a single service model nationally or establishing a centralised state-wide response. The success of Amplify lies not only in its specialist family violence expertise, but in its ability to work alongside young people within the communities and service systems they already access. Expansion should therefore focus on establishing dedicated youth family violence case management responses across every state and territory, while enabling local implementation models that reflect community need, existing service infrastructure and local partnerships.

Governments have rightly invested in specialist case management responses for women experiencing family violence and, increasingly, in dedicated programs for young people who use violence. A comparable level of investment is now needed for children and young people experiencing family violence in their own right. Across Australia, programs for young people who enact harm are growing, while specialist responses for children and young people seeking safety from harm remain limited. As a result, a young person using violence may be more likely to access a dedicated specialist response than a young person attempting to escape violence. This disparity should be addressed as a priority.

Dedicated youth family violence case management should provide specialist risk assessment, safety planning, advocacy and system navigation, and be embedded within the places where children and young people already seek help, including schools, homelessness access points, youth mental health services, hospitals and emergency departments, youth justice settings, youth housing services and community-based youth services. Embedding specialist support within these settings would improve identification of family violence, reduce barriers to access and create opportunities for earlier intervention before experiences of violence escalate.

The success of Amplify lies not only in its specialist family violence expertise, but in its ability to work alongside young people within the communities and service systems they already access.

Consistent with broader family violence service delivery models, these responses should be delivered through local community-based organisations rather than a single government-operated or centralised service. Findings from *MCM's Amplify Evaluation* highlight the value of flexible, relational and community-based approaches that can respond to local needs and build strong partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, culturally responsive services and specialist youth providers.

There is strong evidence demonstrating that youth-specific family violence case management improves safety, strengthens engagement with housing, education and mental health supports, reduces the risk of self-harm and suicide, and disrupts trajectories of ongoing harm. The challenge is no longer demonstrating whether these models work, but ensuring that every child and young person experiencing family violence can access a dedicated specialist response, regardless of their gender, where they live or where they first seek help.

Recommendation 2

Invest in dedicated, age-appropriate and culturally safe family violence case management responses for children and young people of all genders, including young people seeking help independently without a protective parent or guardian. These responses should be recognised as a core safety intervention, equivalent to the specialist family violence case management responses routinely funded for adult victim-survivors escaping violent relationships. This includes investment in and scaling of evidence-based youth-specific family violence models, such as Amplify, while maintaining their specialist and youth-centred focus.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen the capacity of mainstream and universal services that commonly encounter children and young people experiencing family violence to identify, assess and respond in developmentally appropriate ways, including through stronger workforce capability and pathways into specialist support. This should complement, not replace, investment in dedicated specialist family violence case management responses for children and young people.

Recommendation 4

Strengthen access to support for children and young people experiencing family violence by addressing barriers created by parental consent requirements and other systems that assume family dependence. This should include nationally consistent guidance on engaging with mature minors, and reforms that enable children and young people to safely access services, financial supports and family violence responses without requiring the consent or involvement of a parent who may be using violence.

Supporting Safety, Healing and Recovery

While governments have made important investments in recovery and healing responses for children and young people affected by family violence, access remains limited and demand continues to outstrip supply. Programs such as specialist children's counselling services play a critical role in supporting recovery and should continue to be expanded. However, these investments do not yet come close to meeting current need, with children and young people in many locations facing lengthy wait times to access support. As a result, opportunities for early intervention, healing and recovery are often missed.

While governments have made important investments in recovery and healing responses for children and young people affected by family violence, access remains limited and demand continues to outstrip supply.

Much of the current service system also assumes a relatively linear pathway from crisis to recovery. In practice, many therapeutic and recovery-oriented programs require children and young people to have achieved a degree of stability before they can engage meaningfully with counselling and healing supports. This assumption can create a significant barrier for unaccompanied young people escaping violence on their own. Unlike children accompanied by a protective parent, many unaccompanied young

people spend years navigating homelessness, housing insecurity, financial hardship and ongoing safety concerns before reaching stability. As a result, they may be considered “too complex” or “too much in crisis” for recovery programs, while at the same time receiving little specialist support to address the family violence driving that crisis.

Research from *Unsafe & Unseen* and MCM's service delivery experience highlights that current systems are still largely built around the assumption that children are dependants being supported by a parent or guardian. Yet at least 40,000 unaccompanied young people present to specialist homelessness services each year⁸ without a parent willing or able to act protectively. Their experiences do not fit neatly within either child-focused or adult-focused service models, creating significant gaps in access to both safety and recovery supports.

Children and young people who experience family violence often continue to live with its impacts long after their immediate safety needs have been addressed. Trauma, grief, disrupted relationships, educational disengagement, mental health concerns and housing instability can persist for many years. Recovery therefore cannot be understood solely as access to counselling, nor can it be separated from housing, financial security, connection to education, community and relationships. Children and young people require integrated healing and recovery responses that recognise the realities of their lives and remain available even while periods of crisis continue.

This is particularly important given the strong relationship between experiences of family violence and adverse mental health outcomes. Research synthesised in *Missing Figures* found that young people who experience sexual abuse are three times more likely to attempt suicide, while experiences of physical and emotional abuse significantly increase suicide risk. The *Australian Child Maltreatment Study* similarly identified strong associations between childhood experiences of violence, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, self-harm and suicide attempts. Strengthening access to recovery and healing supports is therefore an important family violence response, a mental health response and a suicide prevention response.

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW): Specialist Homelessness Services Annual Report

The Second Action Plan should therefore include increased investment in long-term healing and recovery infrastructure for children and young people. This should include expanded therapeutic supports, improved access to Medicare-funded mental health services, peer and lived experience supports, and recovery responses that are accessible to young people experiencing ongoing housing instability and other forms of disadvantage.

Recommendation 5

Increase investment in healing and recovery supports for children and young people affected by family violence, including therapeutic supports, peer programs, family violence recovery services and other developmentally appropriate interventions. This should include improved access to Medicare-funded mental health care for young victim-survivors, particularly in regional and remote communities.

Housing, Financial Security and the Foundations of Recovery

Housing is a Family Violence Response

Family violence remains one of the leading drivers of youth homelessness in Australia. MCM's 2026 Victorian Youth Homelessness Snapshot found that 84% of unaccompanied children and young people accessing homelessness services had grown up experiencing family violence, highlighting the strong relationship between violence in the home and housing insecurity among young people.

For many children and young people escaping violence, there is no clear pathway to both safety and stable housing. In the absence of safe, affordable and dedicated youth housing options, many are forced to weigh the risks of remaining in a violent home against the prospect of homelessness and housing insecurity. This is a choice that no child or young person should have to make.

MCM's 2026 Victorian Youth Homelessness Snapshot found that 84% of unaccompanied children and young people accessing homelessness services had grown up experiencing family violence...

Once young people leave violence, many experience extended periods of housing instability, moving between refuges, couch surfing arrangements, temporary accommodation and homelessness. Research from *Unsafe & Unseen* found that many young people remain trapped in a cycle of crisis because housing options are scarce, fragmented and often unsuitable for their age and circumstances. Housing instability disrupts education, employment, community connection and recovery, while increasing exposure to further harm.

These circumstances can leave young people vulnerable to further victimisation and exploitation. Young women may seek safety with older partners or adults who can provide accommodation, financial support or basic necessities. While these arrangements may initially appear safer than the violence they are escaping, they can expose young people to coercive control, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence and ongoing dependency. For some young people, family violence becomes the starting point of a broader trajectory of homelessness, exploitation and repeated victimisation across multiple relationships.

The absence of dedicated youth housing pathways compounds these risks. Housing systems continue to assume a pathway to independence supported by family resources and stability, assumptions that rarely reflect the realities of young people escaping violence. Housing should therefore be understood as a core family violence response. Investment in dedicated youth housing, including medium- and long-term housing linked with support, is critical to creating the conditions necessary for safety, recovery, educational engagement, employment and long-term wellbeing.

The disparity between responses available to adult and young victim-survivors is also reflected in broader housing policy settings. The Australian Government has rightly prioritised housing responses for women escaping family violence, including through dedicated investment and housing targets. However, there are currently no equivalent national housing targets for children and young people escaping family violence. This reflects a longstanding assumption that children leave violence alongside a protective parent, most commonly their mother. The reality is that tens of thousands of children and young people seek help independently each year because they do not have a parent willing or able to act protectively. Without dedicated youth housing targets and investment, this cohort remains largely invisible within family violence and housing policy despite experiencing some of the most significant barriers to safety.

There is also a significant opportunity to ensure that children and young people escaping family violence benefit from the Australian Government's broader housing reform agenda, including investment through the Housing Australia Future Fund. Young people escaping violence face many of the same barriers to housing as other victim-survivors, yet often remain invisible within housing policy and investment frameworks. Future funding rounds and housing initiatives should explicitly recognise children and young people escaping family violence as a priority cohort and support the development of housing responses that reflect their distinct needs and pathways to safety.

MCM strongly supports the Australian Government's decision to prioritise young people through the National Housing Infrastructure Facility - Crisis and Transitional Housing (NHIF-CT) program. This investment is beginning to build the pipeline of dedicated youth housing that has long been missing from Australia's housing system and represents an important step towards addressing the critical shortage of medium-term housing options for young people escaping violence and homelessness. However, addressing decades of underinvestment will require a sustained pipeline of funding opportunities and capital grants over multiple funding rounds. Long-term investment certainty will be essential to enable the delivery of the 15,000 dedicated youth housing tenancies identified by the Home Time campaign and ensure that children and young people escaping family violence have access to safe, affordable and developmentally appropriate housing linked with support.

Recommendation 6

Increase investment in dedicated youth housing and support responses for children and young people affected by family violence, including through continued investment in housing supply initiatives such as Housing Australia Future Fund including the NHIF-CT. Investment should contribute to the development of a national pool of 15,000 dedicated youth housing tenancies, linked with funded support services that enable safety, recovery and transitions to independence for young people unable to live safely at home.

Financial Security is a Family Violence Response

Financial security is not only critical to recovery from family violence; it is also critical to preventing ongoing victimisation. Children and young people cannot leave violence if they do not have the financial means to do so. While the family violence sector invests significant effort in safety planning and risk management, these interventions are limited in their effectiveness when the practical realities of housing affordability, income adequacy and financial independence make it impossible for a young person to safely establish a life away from violence.

Like adult victim-survivors escaping violent relationships, children and young people escaping family violence require access to financial resources that enable them to establish and maintain safety. Yet the current system provides young people with significantly lower levels of financial support than other victim-survivors.

A young person receiving Youth Allowance under the Unreasonable to Live at Home receives substantially less support than other people escaping violence. By comparison, a single parent receiving Parenting Payment receives approximately 54.65% more income, while a person receiving JobSeeker receives around 25% more income, despite facing many of the same housing and living costs associated with escaping violence and establishing independence.

These settings can unintentionally entrench family violence risk. Young people may have a safety plan, support from a specialist service or access to temporary accommodation, but still be unable to leave or remain safely away from violence because they cannot afford housing, transport, food and other

basic necessities. As a result, some remain in violent homes, some return to unsafe environments after leaving, and others enter exploitative living arrangements to meet their basic needs. Improving income support settings for young people escaping violence should therefore be understood not only as a response to family violence, but as an important family violence prevention measure.

These challenges are compounded by social security settings that continue to assume family dependence. Research has identified barriers associated with parental verification requirements, lower payment rates and administrative processes that can create opportunities for perpetrators to continue exercising control over young people attempting to escape violence.

A further inequity exists in relation to the Commonwealth's Leaving Violence Program. While the program represents an important investment in supporting victim-survivors to leave violence, many children and young people are excluded because eligibility is focused on adults experiencing intimate partner violence. Yet more than 40,000 children and young people aged 15 to 24 years present alone to homelessness services each year, many after escaping violence perpetrated by parents, carers or other family members.

Leaving Violence Payment must be accessible to children and young people escaping family violence alone - exclusion from the Leaving Violence Program means many young people miss out on practical supports that are often essential to achieving safety. This includes transport from violent homes, emergency accommodation, replacement identification documents, mobile phones, school supplies, laptops, food, clothing, medication and other necessities required to establish independence. These are the same practical supports that help adult victim-survivors establish and maintain safety after leaving violence.

This creates a situation where children and young people escaping family violence can face greater barriers to accessing financial safety supports than adults escaping violent intimate partner relationships. Their exclusion not only diminishes their agency but can force them to choose between remaining in a violent family home, homelessness, poverty or exploitation.

Strengthening financial supports for young people escaping violence must therefore be viewed as a family violence reform as much as a social security reform. Housing and financial security are foundational family violence responses. Increasing the adequacy of Youth Allowance (Unreasonable to Live at Home), expanding access to the Leaving Violence Program and creating stronger pathways to financial independence would not only improve recovery outcomes but would also enable more children and young people to leave violence safely in the first place. Without these reforms, many will remain unable to escape violence, secure housing or engage in the healing and recovery supports necessary to rebuild their lives.

Recommendation 7

Strengthen financial safety and independence for young people escaping family violence by:

- a. increasing the base rate of Youth Allowance (Unreasonable to Live at Home) to better align with income support payments available to adults in comparable circumstances, recognising that young people escaping violence face the same housing and cost-of-living pressures as other victim-survivors;
- b. reform social security and administrative processes that enable systems abuse by perpetrators.
- c. expanding access to family violence-related financial assistance measures, including the Leaving Violence Program and other safety-focused financial supports, to ensure eligibility reflects the diverse ways children and young people experience family violence, including violence perpetrated by parents, carers and other family members.

Responding to Diversity and Intersectionality

Children and young people's experiences of family violence are shaped by identity, culture, place and circumstance. While all young people deserve access to safety and support, experiences of violence, help-seeking and recovery are not experienced equally. Research consistently demonstrates that some groups of young people face additional barriers to recognition, safety and support because of the intersecting forms of discrimination, exclusion and disadvantage they experience.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people continue to experience disproportionate rates of family violence, homelessness, child protection involvement and suicide. Responses must be grounded in self-determination, cultural safety and community leadership. Findings from *Unsafe & Unseen* highlight the importance of cultural connection, community and place as protective factors for Aboriginal young people, while also recognising the ongoing impacts of colonisation, child removal and over-incarceration on families and communities. The expertise of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations remains critical to improving outcomes for children and young people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people continue to experience disproportionate rates of family violence, homelessness, child protection involvement and suicide. Responses must be grounded in self-determination, cultural safety and community leadership.

Young people with diverse gender and sexual identities can experience identity-based abuse, family rejection, exclusion from housing and barriers to accessing affirming support. *Unsafe & Unseen* documented experiences ranging from pressure to conform to gender norms through to family rejection and conversion practices. Research also highlighted the importance of access to affirming, inclusive services where young people feel safe to express their identity without fear of judgement.

Young people from multicultural and multifaith communities may encounter additional barriers relating to language, visa status, migration pathways, community expectations and cultural stigma. The research identified examples of visa-based abuse being used to control young people and prevent them from seeking help, alongside barriers to accessing culturally responsive and language-accessible support. For some young people, escaping violence can also mean losing connection to community, cultural practices and family networks that would otherwise act as important protective factors.

Young people with disability can experience unique forms of family violence, including coercion, systems abuse, financial abuse and exploitation of disability supports and income. Research highlighted examples of young people having Centrelink and disability-related entitlements controlled by family members, while also facing barriers to having their experiences recognised and believed. Disability-informed family violence responses remain essential to ensuring safety and access to support.

Young men and boys can also experience significant barriers to support. Both *Unsafe & Unseen* and the *MCM's Amplify Evaluation* identified examples of boys and young men having their experiences minimised, disbelieved or being misidentified as perpetrators when they sought help. As a result, many young male victim-survivors remain unsupported for extended periods despite experiencing serious family violence risk. Responses must recognise that young men and boys can be victim-survivors in their own right and require access to dedicated safety and recovery supports.

Young people in regional and remote communities face additional barriers created by limited-service availability, transport challenges, housing shortages and concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality. Many are required to leave their community altogether to access appropriate support, often resulting in disconnection from important cultural, social and community networks.

These experiences highlight the importance of moving beyond one-size-fits-all approaches. The Second Action Plan should continue to invest in culturally safe, accessible and inclusive responses that recognise the diversity of children's and young people's experiences and ensure that specialist family violence, housing, healing and recovery responses are designed to meet the needs of all young people, including those facing multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage.

Recommendation 8

Embed intersectionality, cultural safety and accessibility across all youth-specific family violence responses and mainstream service reforms.

Children and Young People Who Use Violence Require Child-Centred Responses

The Second Action Plan presents an important opportunity to strengthen responses for children and young people who use violence, including adolescent family violence in the home. While increasing attention has rightly been paid to this issue in recent years, there remains a risk that policy and service responses replicate adult-focused understandings of violence that do not adequately reflect the developmental realities of childhood and adolescence.

The evidence consistently demonstrates that many children and young people who use violence have themselves experienced significant adversity, including family violence, trauma, abuse, neglect, homelessness, mental ill-health and disrupted attachment. Their use of violence often occurs within broader contexts of harm, disadvantage and unmet support needs. This does not diminish the seriousness of the violence being experienced by family members, nor the need to ensure safety and accountability. Rather, it highlights the importance of responses that recognise the complexity of young people's circumstances and address the drivers of harm alongside the behaviours themselves.

Too often, children and young people who use violence are positioned solely through a future perpetrator lens. Such approaches risk overlooking their experiences as children and young people and can result in responses that prioritise risk management without creating meaningful opportunities for healing, development and long-term behaviour change. By contrast, emerging evidence suggests that responses are most effective when they recognise children and young people as being in a distinct developmental stage, capable of change, and requiring support to understand, take responsibility for and change their behaviour.

Importantly, children and young people who use violence are not a homogenous group. Their experiences, motivations, developmental stages and support needs vary considerably. Some young people are using violence in the context of their own experiences of family violence victimisation. Others may be responding to trauma, mental ill-health, neurodiversity, family breakdown or other forms of adversity. Effective responses therefore require careful assessment and a tailored approach that recognises both the behaviour and the circumstances in which it occurs.

Services supporting this cohort should be equipped to hold multiple objectives simultaneously: promoting safety for family members, supporting accountability, addressing underlying drivers of behaviour and creating opportunities for healing and behaviour change. Framing children and young people solely through criminalising or punitive responses risks entrenching disadvantage and can further disconnect young people from the protective relationships and supports that facilitate positive change.

The experience of programs such as MCM's Restart highlights the importance of therapeutic and developmentally appropriate approaches. Working alongside young people and their families, these responses recognise that sustainable change requires more than behaviour management alone. It requires investment in therapeutic support, family relationships, emotional regulation, connection and future pathways. Such approaches are consistent with the broader objectives of the National Plan and with growing recognition that children and young people should be understood first and foremost as children and young people, rather than through adult frameworks of violence and offending.

As Commonwealth investment in responses to adolescent family violence in the home continues to grow, the Second Action Plan should ensure that all funded initiatives are grounded in a child-centred healing and recovery framework. Safety, accountability and behaviour change remain essential objectives. However, success should also be measured through improvements in wellbeing, recovery, family relationships, developmental outcomes and reduced experiences of harm. Such an approach is more consistent with the evidence base and better reflects the complex realities of children and young people's lives.

Recommendation 9

Ensure all Commonwealth-funded responses to adolescent family violence in the home are grounded in a child-centred healing and recovery framework that promotes safety, accountability, behaviour change and wellbeing, and measures success through outcomes for young people and families, not solely future perpetration.

Young People Must Be Partners in Reform

Children and young people are experts in their own experiences and have a unique understanding of how family violence, homelessness, housing, education, mental health and service systems intersect in their lives. Research consistently demonstrates that young people can identify practical solutions, highlight service gaps and contribute meaningfully to policy and program design.

Meaningful participation is not simply a consultation exercise. It leads to more effective policy, improves service design and helps ensure reform efforts remain grounded in the realities of children and young people experiencing violence. The lived experience insights underpinning initiatives such as Amplify and Unsafe & Unseen demonstrate the value of partnering with young people to develop responses that are relevant, accessible and effective.

The Second Action Plan presents an opportunity to move beyond ad hoc consultation and embed children and young people as partners in reform. This should include investment in lived experience leadership and governance mechanisms, ongoing support for youth participation, and recognition of lived experience expertise as a critical component of policy development, service design, implementation and evaluation. By creating enduring structures for participation, governments can strengthen accountability and ensure reforms continue to reflect the needs and priorities of the children and young people they are intended to support.

Recommendation 10

Ensure children and young people are actively involved in shaping, implementing and monitoring reforms under the National Plan through dedicated lived experience governance structures, funded participation mechanisms and transparent accountability measures.

Conclusion

The National Plan has established an important foundation through its recognition of children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right. The Second Action Plan now presents an opportunity to translate that recognition into meaningful action.

Achieving this will require dedicated investment in youth-specific family violence responses, long-term healing and recovery supports, safe and affordable housing, financial security, early intervention and meaningful participation. It will also require a continued commitment to designing systems that reflect the realities of children's and young people's lives rather than expecting young people to adapt to systems that were never designed for them.

The Second Action Plan provides an opportunity to strengthen Australia's efforts to prevent and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence for the next generation.