

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

July 2026



30 July 2026

Department of Social Services

Electronic submission

Re: Second Action Plan Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

We are pleased to provide this submission to the consultation to inform the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 (the National Plan).

This submission is provided jointly by a collaboration between Multicultural Australia, South Community Hub and experienced practitioners in the field across the service spectrum. We are experienced multicultural agencies, working in deep partnership with diverse multicultural communities in Queensland (including, communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, migrant, refugee and humanitarian entrant communities). Our services work to support family violence prevention and response and undertake transformative work in addressing the drivers of gender-based violence, including rigid beliefs around gender norms and roles, and inequality.

Our agencies support the ambitious agenda of the National Plan – to see the elimination of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV) within a generation. We support its vision and direction for preventing violence, supporting victim-survivors, holding people who use violence to account, and helping people recover and heal.

The Action Plans under the National Plan provide practical steps to the achievement of this vision and direction. The opportunity presented under the development of the Second Action Plan invites consideration of ways to accentuate the achievements under the First Action Plan and address critical areas of concern or areas where harm persists or is growing.

Our collective is deeply concerned to note that sexual violence has increased since 2012 and the emerging threats from new forms of technology-facilitated abuse and online communities promoting misogyny. With respect to our systemic responses, we note emerging evidence that services are not always able to recognise financial and sexual abuse and a lack of connection or coordination between FDSV services.

These findings have deep implications individuals and communities in Australia. For our services, these are highly pertinent, given the unique, intersectional experiences of diverse, multicultural communities with FDSV and their experiences within the FDSV systems responses.

Our organisations have significant experience working with diverse multicultural communities in DFV education and prevention– and we are keen to share our reflections and learnings towards

the development of the Second Action Plan. Our services have collaboratively developed a Community Leadership Model (Family Peace Building) to respond to DFV. The program seeks to raise awareness and develop skills and confidence to prevent family violence, non-violent conflict resolution, and promote individual and community transformation.

Our collective work provides us with learnings and insights towards the development of the Second Action Plan. Our Family Peace Building model demonstrates that when we invest in co-design with local cultural communities, partner with them respectfully, ethically, and in culturally appropriate and trauma-informed ways - they engage deeply with issues implicated in FDSV. Community members who engage, want to learn more about the issues and start seeing it as a priority. These community members then go on to become the peacebuilders.

Our collective experience is that there is immense strength in delivering local community responses. Our services are committed to assist in meaningfully embedding the Second Action Plan into locally effective action for refugee, migrant and CALD communities. Our contribution and commitment extend to all priority areas under the Second Action Plan.

It is our strong recommendation to embed diverse multicultural community perspectives across all five priority areas under the National Plan, rather than treating them as separate or secondary issues. Importantly, we share our submission in the hope that our model of culturally safe, trauma-informed, co-design model of community education and capacity building with local cultural communities finds reflection and application in Second Action Plan to address the root causes and impacts of FDSV.

For any queries in relation to this submission, please contact [REDACTED], Multicultural Australia's Chief Development Officer, on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

CEO
Multicultural Australia



Submission – Second Action Plan under the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-32*

Introduction

The current submission is jointly provided by Multicultural Australia, Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) and South Community Hub – and informed by our collective experience in developing and delivering a community-led collaboration model to support family violence prevention and response and undertake transformative work in addressing the drivers of gender-based violence, including rigid beliefs around gender norms and roles, and inequality.

Our services believe that our model offers a significant way forward to deliver under the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-32. This submission provides details on our Family Peace Building (FPB) model and our collective learning in delivering FPB. These learnings help identify key areas of need under the five priority areas of the Second Action Plan.

Following this, we identify the potential of working through a model such as the FPB. We note the ways that the FPB model currently (already) delivers on priority areas identified under the Second Action Plan. This is followed by a discussion on further areas of need, and the way forward.

Family Peace Building

‘Family Peace Building’ is an evolving community-led collaboration which promotes family and community peace-building through dialogue and an action plan approach, focussing on cultural strengths.

Family Peace Building emerged out of a deep listening community project with diverse communities in 2017, and a call from community leaders for action around family violence. It builds on many years of work done with culturally diverse communities by the key partner agencies Multicultural Australia, South Community Hub and RAILS (Refugee and immigration Legal Service) along with other experienced practitioners, agencies and leading research.

The Family Peace Building program includes:

- *Community leaders training and resources* Co-designing training for community leaders to be ‘Family Peace-builders’ in their communities. Co-designed Leader’s Peace-Building Toolkit¹ and Peace Building Pledge² resources have been developed.
- *Bi-cultural worker training and resources:* Co-designing and training settlement agency bi-cultural workers to be ‘family peace builders’ in their work with new arrivals and in their

¹ [Peace-building Leader's Toolkit.pdf](#)

² [Peace-building Pledge.pdf](#)

communities. Key resources have been developed with workers for use in settlement work.

- *‘Good-Life’ learning*: Family peace and family violence prevention education integrated into language learning delivered to TAFE English language classes, and mentoring leaders and bi-cultural workers to deliver further training. Teaching resources have been developed with TAFE.
- *‘Community Healing and Accountability’ (CHAA)* Family Peace Building has partnered with Inala Community House in CHAA³, a pilot program based on a community hub and pods model of creative intervention, centring survivors and the community in family violence prevention, response and healing. A skilled community hub supports facilitators and natural leaders within small community groups to work with survivors towards safety and healing.
- *Community Peace Building*: Co-design with Domestic and Family Violence sector and community leaders focused on enhancing the cultural capability of the DFV sector and expanding culturally safe spaces for people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- *Men Managing Change*: A series of four micro-videos⁴ in nine languages to assist migrant men to move through changes in gender roles and relationship complexities that often occur in settlement into a new country.
- *Other projects*: Family Peace Building works with other groups and agencies where capacity allows.

The ‘Family Peacebuilding’ program:

The program was co-designed with community leaders and is based on principles of human rights, cultural humility and strengths, is trauma informed, and addresses intersectional frameworks that cover:

- Understanding and communicating about conflict, conflict resolution, domestic and family violence and the law
- The extent and causes of family violence
- Ways to prevent domestic and family violence
- Getting to know and work more effectively with key services, such as: domestic violence services, legal professionals and the Police
- Strengthening knowledge in working with abusers to promote change and accountability
- Resolution and restoration of the community.

Family Peace Building training:

The training is a rich culture-informed and trauma-informed dialogue around family conflict resolution, family violence prevention, early intervention and response.

It covers healthy relationships, dealing with conflict, recognising and responding to domestic and

³ [CHAA - Inala Community House](#)

⁴ [Men Managing Change - Family peace building - YouTube](#)

family violence, overcoming barriers to mainstream systems, and developing stronger community supports for survivors of family violence and for people using violence. The program is continually co-designed with community and provides a forum for dialogue and skills sharing for community leaders, bi-cultural settlement workers, new arrivals, language students, community groups and agencies.

Our collective learning delivering Family Peace Building

Our collective service experience and in-depth communication with multicultural community representatives informs us that the drivers of domestic and family violence (and FDSV) are complex – ranging from community attitudes and social norms about gender and violence, as well as structural gender inequality.

- Migration and resettlement can be a complex process for many individuals and families. Changing family roles and expectations in the context of resettlement in a new country can imply complex acculturation processes. Understanding this, leads us to understand that there are critical transition points when DFV is likely to emerge or escalate.
- FDSV service systems and their operation through mainstream crisis services (police, legal courts, emergency housing) and specialist support programs (counselling, financial relief) are not easily accessible or available to diverse communities. Some are not adequately culturally-informed and empathetic regarding diverse refugee and migrant communities.
- Equally, there are very limited options available for people who use violence, that address issues specific to culturally and linguistically diverse and/or refugee background individuals and offending of this nature, including early intervention programs.
- Children, adolescent and young people who may witness or experience family violence (within migrant/ refugee background families), can have differing support trajectories. For example, when a victim-survivor leaves the family home, young children can usually accompany into a shelter or refuge. Adolescent boys and young men do not have this option and can often remain in the family home with the person using violence. Young people negotiating their own settlement and identity formation through critical transition points in life, need stable supports and positive role models to shape their attitudes and understanding of gender equality. There are currently no services or resources (or service specialisation) that can work with migrant/refugee adolescent boys and youth. However, community and faith leaders educated in types and impacts of DFV may offer a first soft-landing spot and provide the positive male role-modelling needed for such young males to break the cycle of intergenerational DFV.
- Overwhelmingly, migrant and refugee families desire to address DFV, while retaining the integrity of the family. Most victim-survivors seek an end to the violence, without the family separation. People who use violence (from refugee backgrounds) require an understanding of violence in the context of refugee trauma and settlement challenges and need to be supported while working within family and community structures.
- Opportunities exist for effective, early intervention for refugee and migrant communities.

These are through:

- Addressing resettlement needs of victim-survivors of DFV post-separation (provision of tailored and structured resettlement support). Currently, there are not many avenues for such support under our current systems.
- Working with migrant and refugee adolescent youth (when attitudes and behaviours on relationships are forming). Friction between traditional norms (home or culture) and the prevalent norms in community has deep and profound bearing on attitudes and behaviours regarding family, peers, and broader gender norms (and expressions through interpersonal or online domains)
- Locating and implementing early intervention measures within diverse communities
- Integrating community co-design, cultural strength and cultural humility along with trauma-informed, restorative and transformational approaches.
- Appropriate messaging in community is essential to change trajectory for some families where violence may be prevalent.
- Equally, appropriate messaging in community is essential to shift change around gender equality and behaviours.
- Our Family Peace Building model and work, point to the importance of community members (both men and women) becoming voices for change. For example, men undergoing Family Peace Building Training are in community delivering 1:1 prevention work, with a deeper understanding and ability to safely and skilfully challenge abusive gender norms.
- However, this work is not resourced appropriately (if at all). Specialist services and larger organisations can provide overarching support and sometimes, culturally specific support. Often these are pilot models of support that are time-limited without investing in long-term sustainability or benefit to communities.
 - FDSV responses are necessarily long-term. Healing and recovery do not happen within a few weeks (when a victim-survivor may be located with a support service).
 - This recovery takes place over time and happens in our communities. Necessarily, resourcing needs to flow into communities, to small community organisations and groups (especially for culturally diverse migrant communities).
- Appropriate resourcing of this work would look like:
 - Resourcing community – working *with* and *through* community.
 - Building capacity within communities, local spaces and networks where victim-survivors can find healing
 - Building capacity within our communities where people who use violence can learn, take responsibility and accountability for their actions.
 - Building alliances of community support.

- Resourcing individuals and champions within communities who lead transformative work around FDSV (often voluntarily or with very little/limited resourcing). This resourcing considers:
 - Appropriate remuneration and acknowledgement for support in community, and
 - Appropriate investment in their further learning, credentialling and skills development. Many of our community leaders and champions work in high-risk environments and support victim-survivors and work with people who use violence. It is critical to invest in them – so they can in turn, continue to deliver this important work.

Potential offered through Family Peace Building

Our community-led, collaborative ‘Family Peace Building’ is an example of a strong and effective community leadership model to respond to FDSV.

Our collective recognises that behaviour change is more likely to happen when governments, the broader service system, community and society are working together to prevent violence from happening and intervene early when it does.

We consider Family Peace Building model provides a blueprint for community-led and held programs of education and behaviour change particularly for culturally diverse communities.

This is pertinent in the context of the current work to develop the Second Action Plan and its rollout. It provides an opportunity for the development of a culturally safe, trauma-informed, model of community education and capacity building that can effectively address root causes of FDSV and promote family violence prevention, community safety and transformation.

Our model integrating community co-design, cultural humility and strength, along with trauma-informed, restorative and transformational approaches provides some key insights and opportunities in the design of approaches to inform the development of the Second Action Plan and relevant programs within the context of cultural communities.

Family Peace Building and its Intersect with priority areas identified under the Second Action Plan:

The Family Peace Building collective currently delivers in ways that intersect with the priority areas identified under the Second Action Plan. We deliver on these through:

1. Acting as a bridge between communities and systems:
 - a. We build trust with communities that may not approach mainstream services
 - b. Identify emerging risks and service gaps early through community feedback
 - c. We engage with community members to open safe pathways into specialist DFV, legal, housing, health, police and court supports.
2. Leading community-led prevention:
 - a. We co-design prevention initiatives with women, elders, faith leaders, men, community leaders and bicultural workers

- b. These initiatives challenge harmful gender norms, misogyny and violence-supportive attitudes in culturally relevant ways.
3. Strengthening early intervention:
 - a. We train in community, settlement, education, faith-based settings
 - b. We support individuals, families and communities to understand harmful behaviour, recognise signs and respond in ways that do not further harm victim-survivors.
4. Improving access and safety for victim-survivors
 - a. We support communities understand the nature and impact of DFV to support victim-survivors within their local and cultural communities
 - b. We advocate for professional interpreters, accessible resources and bicultural support to be built into every stage of service delivery
5. Responding to people who use violence
 - a. We work with men, families, faith leaders, and community organisations to identify harmful behaviour.
 - b. Ensure behaviour change approaches do not excuse violence through culture, religion, migration stress or trauma, while still responding to the context in which violence occurs.
6. Building an integrated and capable workforce
 - a. We support joint training across specialist DFV, multicultural, settlement, legal, health, housing, justice and child protection services.
 - b. Highlight the experience and support provided by bicultural and bilingual workers, community navigators and peer educators.

What is needed – the way forward under the Second Action Plan

Our collective strongly recommends that CALD, refugee and migrant community perspectives are embedded across all five priority areas of the Second Action Plan:

Victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence

- Ensure a “no wrong door” approach so CALD, refugee and migrant victim-survivors can access support through any trusted service, including settlement, multicultural, community organisations, local community associations, neighbourhood centres, health, legal or housing services.
- Recognise and adequately resource the centrality of community in response, prevention, healing and recovery (such as the CHAA approach mentioned in page 5) because it is in the community that people connect and where real longer-term healing and recovery can grow.
- Provide professional interpreters and translated information at every stage of support (crisis, justice system – police and courts, service systems – health and housing, as well as recovery services).
- Strengthen culturally safe responses that recognise and can skilfully and safely respond to barriers such as visa insecurity, refugee and settlement trauma, fear of authorities, racism, social isolation, financial dependence, language barriers and limited knowledge of rights.

- Improve responses to technology-facilitated abuse, including abuse that occurs across borders or through family/community networks overseas.
- Ensure police, courts and financial systems understand and respond adequately to how migration status, dowry pressures, family relationships or immigration processes can be used to control victim-survivors. These forms of control can be exercised by multiple actors.

Prevention and early intervention

- Fund prevention programs designed with and led by refugee and migrant communities, including faith, cultural, youth and community leaders.
- Support actions to challenge harmful gender norms, stereotypes, misogyny and violence-supportive attitudes - those designed to operate in culturally sensitive ways, without stigmatising communities.
- Build community awareness of Australian laws, rights and available supports, build understanding of coercive control, sexual violence, financial abuse and technology-facilitated abuse.
- Fully recognise the strength and value of community influence in limiting violence and invest more in positive-focussed programs that reach into firmly established community activities (such as the Family Peace-Building 'Good Life Learning' which integrates family violence and prevention into TAFE Adult Migrant English program but may have to end due to lack of funds).
- Support schools, workplaces, settlement services, English language programs and community organisations to recognise early signs of violence and refer safely.
- Address risk factors such as settlement stress, housing insecurity, unemployment, racism, trauma, social isolation and barriers to income support.

Children and young people in their own right

- Recognise CALD refugee and migrant children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right with distinct cultural, developmental and language needs.
- Provide trauma-informed, age-appropriate and culturally safe support in schools, early childhood services, youth services and health settings.
- Involve young people from diverse backgrounds in designing policies, respectful relationships education and online safety initiatives.
- Respond to emerging harms such as online exploitation, image-based abuse, deepfakes and harmful sexual behaviours, including where shame, family reputation or community pressure may stop young people seeking help.
- Support young people who use violence with culturally informed behaviour change and accountability pathways.
- Specialised support for older boys/young men who have been exposed to DFV.

People who use violence

- Create culturally safe early intervention and behaviour change pathways for men and others who use violence, including through multicultural, faith, settlement, health, justice and workplace settings.
- Strengthen accountability while keeping victim-survivor safety central, including where perpetrators use culture, religion, migration status, family pressure or community standing to justify abuse.

- Equip families, communities and workplaces to identify harmful behaviour and respond safely without increasing risk to victim-survivors.
- Ensure perpetrator interventions are available in appropriate languages and are adapted for people with refugee experiences, trauma histories or limited understanding of Australian legal systems.
- Improve coordination between men's behaviour change programs, specialist DFV services, courts, police, child protection and multicultural services.

System integration and workforce

- Improve coordination between specialist DFV services and multicultural, settlement, legal, health, housing, education, child protection and justice systems.
- Build workforce capability across all sectors to respond to CALD, refugee and migrant experiences of DFV, including coercive control, migration-related abuse, forced marriage, financial abuse and transnational abuse.
- Invest in bicultural and bilingual workers, community navigators and peer-led models that reflect the diversity of communities served.
- Support workers with training, supervision and vicarious trauma supports, including bicultural workers who may face additional emotional and community pressures.

Summary and recommendations

Our collective strongly believes that work under the five priority areas of the Second Action Plan can be progressed through community support models, such as the Family Peace Building model.

However, a culturally safe, trauma-informed and therapeutic model of community education and capacity building must be **long-term, community-led** and **properly resourced**. It should work **with and through** CALD, refugee and migrant communities to build local knowledge, leadership, healing, prevention and accountability.

This work requires investment in bicultural and bilingual workers, working with professional interpreters, safe referral pathways, specialist DFV partnerships, therapeutic community group spaces, workforce development and sustained investment beyond short-term pilots.

This work should support victim-survivors, children and young people, families, communities and people who use violence, while strengthening system integration across settlement, multicultural, legal, health, housing, education, justice and DFV services.

Important, transformative work of addressing gender norms and the drivers of gender-based violence are best located in local communities and led by trusted community leaders and representatives. In our experience, community elders, leaders and representatives are generous with their time and effort in supporting individuals, families and communities through these challenging issues. This is a significant impost on community members, and there is no remuneration available for such roles. We strongly recommend that the Second Action Plan consultation focus on how community efforts, roles and capacities are reflected appropriately across all priority areas – to better meet the needs of diverse communities.