

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

Executive Summary

The Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia (MCCSA) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032.

As South Australia's peak multicultural organisation, representing 130-member organisations, MCCSA believes prevention must begin before people enter the crisis response system.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse communities may face social isolation, language barriers, financial insecurity, limited understanding of Australian systems, discrimination and concerns about stigma or confidentiality. These factors can increase vulnerability and delay help-seeking.

Multicultural organisations help address these barriers by building trust, strengthening community connections, improving access to information and creating culturally safe pathways to support.

The Second Action Plan should recognise multicultural organisations as essential partners in prevention and early intervention, alongside specialist family violence services.

MCCSA Recommendations

MCCSA recommends that the Second Action Plan:

- recognise multicultural organisations as essential prevention infrastructure;
- invest in long-term, community-led prevention and community development;
- support community and faith leaders as trusted prevention partners;
- strengthen women's leadership and economic participation;
- invest in culturally responsive initiatives that engage men and boys;
- support multicultural youth leadership and civic participation;
- improve intercultural capability across mainstream services;
- recognise healthy ageing, social connection and elder abuse prevention;
- address racism and discrimination as barriers to safety and service access;
- provide sustainable, long-term funding for multicultural organisations; and
- adopt a whole-of-government approach to violence prevention.
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About MCCA

Established in 1975, MCCA is South Australia's peak multicultural organisation. It represents 130-member organisations and works with 58 multicultural communities.

Each year, MCCA facilitates approximately 2,500 community bookings and welcomes around 35,000 visits to its community hub.

Its work includes community development, leadership, health promotion, women's and men's initiatives, youth development, healthy ageing, disability inclusion, intercultural capability, economic participation, emergency preparedness and advocacy.

MCCA's Policy Position

Preventing family, domestic and sexual violence requires more than an effective crisis response.

For multicultural communities, prevention includes strengthening social connection, trusted leadership, economic participation, health and wellbeing, access to culturally responsive information and confidence in Australian laws, services and institutions.

Multicultural organisations contribute by reducing isolation, building community capacity and connecting people with appropriate services.

For many people, the first conversation about family or domestic violence may be with a community leader, faith leader, volunteer or multicultural organisation. These trusted people must have the knowledge, boundaries and referral pathways required to respond safely.

The Second Action Plan should recognise trust, community connection and culturally safe access to support as part of Australia's prevention framework.

Community Development in Action

MCCA builds protective factors across different stages of life.

Through the MCCA Men's Council and multicultural men's health initiatives, men discuss respectful relationships, positive fatherhood, mental health, gender equality, changing family roles and Australian laws in culturally safe settings.

MCCA supports young people through leadership development, volunteering, civic participation and community engagement. These activities build confidence and support respectful relationships, inclusion and equality.

MCCA also works with faith leaders to strengthen their understanding of family violence, coercive control, Australian law, professional boundaries and referral pathways.

Faith leaders should not replace specialist practitioners. Their role is to listen safely, avoid judgement, provide accurate information and connect people with appropriate support.

MCCSA's work with leaders from diverse faith traditions has also addressed confidentiality, immediate safety, the misuse of religion to justify abuse and the limits of a faith leader's role.

This approach strengthens relationships between faith communities, multicultural organisations and specialist services.

Social Connection, Health and Independence

Older people from multicultural communities may face elder abuse, financial abuse and coercive control, compounded by language barriers, isolation and dependence on family members.

MCCSA's Ageing Well initiatives and the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme promote social connection, independence and community participation. They also create trusted relationships that may support earlier identification of abuse.

MCCSA delivers culturally responsive health promotion across men's health, women's health, mental health, healthy ageing, disability inclusion, carers' wellbeing and preventive health.

These initiatives improve health literacy, strengthen links with mainstream services and encourage earlier help-seeking.

Economic participation is also part of prevention. Financial insecurity can limit a person's ability to leave an unsafe relationship or make independent decisions.

MCCSA supports employment pathways, recognition of overseas qualifications, volunteering, workforce participation and leadership opportunities.

The Second Action Plan should recognise social connection, health, ageing and economic independence as connected parts of violence prevention.

Intercultural Capability and Social Cohesion

Mainstream services must be able to work effectively with people from diverse cultural, linguistic and faith backgrounds.

This includes working appropriately with interpreters, communicating across different literacy levels, understanding migration and settlement experiences, avoiding stereotypes and responding to concerns about stigma and confidentiality.

Racism and discrimination can increase isolation, reduce confidence in institutions and discourage people from seeking support.

The Second Action Plan should improve intercultural capability across specialist services, health, education, police, justice, housing and other relevant sectors.

Multicultural organisations should be involved in designing and delivering this work.

Sustainable and Coordinated Prevention

Short-term funding limits the ability of multicultural organisations to maintain relationships, retain skilled staff, respond to emerging needs and provide consistent prevention work.

Trust develops over time. Prevention therefore requires stable funding that supports community engagement, leadership development, culturally appropriate resources, referral partnerships and evaluation.

Violence prevention also requires action across health, education, employment, housing, multicultural affairs, justice, ageing, disability and community services.

The Second Action Plan should establish clear mechanisms for multicultural organisations to participate in prevention planning, implementation and evaluation across government.

Conclusion

Preventing family, domestic and sexual violence requires effective crisis services and sustained action before violence reaches crisis point.

For multicultural communities, this means addressing isolation, financial insecurity, discrimination, service barriers and limited confidence in Australian systems.

The Second Action Plan should formally recognise and fund multicultural organisations as long-term partners in prevention and early intervention.

Warm regards,

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