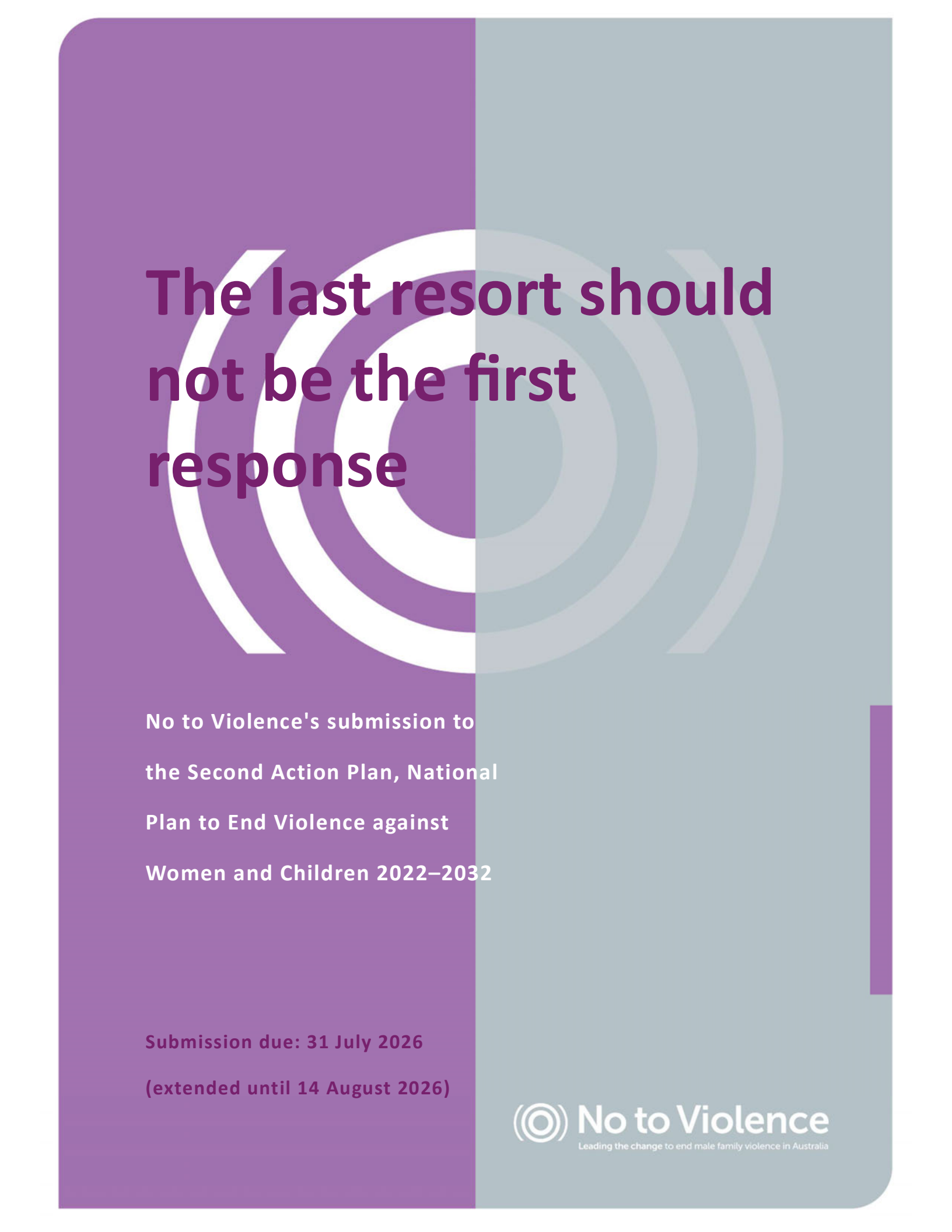




The last resort should not be the first response

No to Violence's submission to
the Second Action Plan, National
Plan to End Violence against
Women and Children 2022–2032

Submission due: 31 July 2026
(extended until 14 August 2026)

Acknowledgement of Country

No to Violence acknowledges First Nations Peoples across these lands; the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters. We pay respect to all Elders, past and present. We acknowledge a deep connection with Country which has existed over 60,000 years. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and that this was and always will be First Nations' land.

Victim-survivor acknowledgement

No to Violence acknowledges the bravery of victim-survivors who have dared to come forward and share their experiences, as well as those who have not been able to. We acknowledge the absolute centrality of their safety and freedom in the work we do.

About No to Violence

No to Violence works to bring about the changes our communities need to eliminate men's use of domestic and family violence. The safety of women and children is the primary purpose of everything we do.

It is by ending men's violence that families can have happier, safer and more fulfilled lives. For 30 years, we have been working directly with men who use family violence to support them to change.

Our expertise in their beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and choices has enabled us to develop standards, programs and training; lead policy development; and fulfil our role as the national peak body for people and organisations committed to ending men's use of family violence.

No to Violence has 187 members across all Australian states and territories. Our members comprise organisations and individuals committed to ending men's use of domestic and family violence. We are proud to partner with our members and appreciate their contributions and leadership in the sector.

Contact

No to Violence head office

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Coverage summary

How this submission addresses the Second Action Plan's five priority areas:

Priority area	Addressed	Primarily in
1. Victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence	Yes — through dedicated, ring-fenced funding for family safety contact and advocacy work, and through systems and accountability mechanisms that determine whether men using violence are identified and stopped	Sections 1, 4
2. Prevention and early intervention	Yes — core focus	Introduction, Sections 1, 2
3. Children and young people	Yes	Section 2
4. People who use violence	Yes — core focus, NTV's mandate	Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
5. System integration and workforce	Yes	Sections 3, 4

Notes

On framing

This submission affirms that gender inequality is a primary driver of violence against women and children, and that primary prevention work addressing gendered attitudes, norms and structures remains essential and must continue to be resourced. The Introduction argues for something additional, not alternative: that early intervention and behaviour-change work with individual men also requires attention to the specific, co-occurring factors—harmful substance use, trauma history, relationship dynamics—that shape *why this man, in this relationship, at this time*. Both are necessary.

On language

Gendered language: This submission uses gendered language—referring to "men who use violence" and "women and children" as victim-survivors—to reflect the well-established prevalence data on domestic and family violence in Australia: most of this violence is perpetrated by men against women and children. No to Violence's core mandate is to work with men who use violence, and this language reflects that focus.

This is not to deny or diminish the experiences of victim-survivors of all genders, including men, or the dynamics of violence within LGBTQIA+ relationships, both of which No to Violence's member organisations also respond to. Nor does it suggest that gender is the only factor relevant to why an individual uses violence—the Introduction of this submission argues explicitly for a fuller understanding of the drivers of violence alongside its gendered dimensions. We also recognise children as victim-survivors of family violence in their own right, not merely as bystanders to violence between adults.

No to Violence is committed to inclusive, intersectional practice and to services that are accessible and responsive to people of all genders, sexualities, cultural backgrounds and abilities. The language used throughout this submission reflects the population-level evidence base and No to Violence's mandate, while our practice and advocacy remain grounded in that broader commitment.

Domestic and family violence (DFV): An umbrella term encompassing intimate partner violence, as implied by domestic violence, and violence between family members, as indicated by family violence. Family violence can include intimate partner violence and acts of violence between a parent and a child, between siblings, and across extended family and kinship networks. Sexual violence is a distinct tactic of family violence that often co-occurs with other forms of abuse.¹ It is a high-risk indicator of escalating family violence that signals an increased likelihood of severe injury or death for victim-survivors.² This report uses domestic and family violence as the primary term. However, it recognises that in many contexts, particularly those involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and community-controlled organisations, family violence alone is preferred, because it better reflects the broader relational dimensions of DFV across extended family and kinship systems. Where this

report quotes or references practitioners of communities using family violence in this way, that usage is preserved.

Executive summary

Australia has built genuine consensus that violence against women and children must end—and has developed a funded prevention infrastructure and a national policy framework unmatched by most comparable countries. Yet we did not just underfund the response to men's violence; we underestimated its scale.³ Against that scale, No to Violence estimates that fewer than 3% of the nation's domestic and family violence offenders are receiving any form of behaviour change intervention (see pages 12-13). The last resort—police, courts, prisons—remains the first response. This is not a failure of individuals or services; it is a structural failure of scale and design, and the Second Action Plan is the mechanism to correct it.

This submission argues that the system was built for a problem roughly half the size of the one Australia actually has, and that a second, equally necessary tier—reaching men and supporting women and children before crisis, not only after it—was never built alongside the first.

A response commensurate to the size of the problem. Government investment is concentrated in late-stage, crisis-focused responses, and the consequences of that imbalance are no longer contained within the domestic and family violence system. Police, schools, hospitals, *all* public services, are absorbing a problem without the training or resourcing to carry it—not through any failure of the people doing that work, but because every part of the public sector is not, in practice, a family violence service, whether it was funded to be one or not. We urgently need new investment at a scale that matches the population it must reach, not incremental top-ups to a system built for a fraction of the true need—a key area for investment in early intervention. Currently, only 3.6% of National Plan funding is allocated to early intervention—nowhere near the amount needed to relieve that pressure at its source (see pages 10-11).

A genuine framework for early intervention. The Theory of Change for the National Plan⁴ names a social-ecological model. But its individual and relationship levels remain populated almost entirely by attitudes and gender inequality—individual factors such as childhood abuse, harmful substance use, trauma, gambling and relationship dynamics are treated as unfunded "reinforcing factors" rather than pathways requiring their own practice frameworks. As a result, early intervention has no theory of change or framework to work from. Building this out is the precondition for everything else in this submission: population-level prevention and after-the-fact crisis response both already have frameworks; the space between them does not.

A continuum of person-centred, relational and community-led responses—not a checklist.

Practitioners are unambiguous that expansion of responses to men using DFV is needed. But we must move beyond the current highly fragmented and disconnected service system. Growth must be built as an interconnected continuum governed by shared principles: men need to move between levels of intervention as engagement, risk and behaviour change are non-linear, and victim-survivor safety must never depend on a man's willingness to participate. Responses must be relational rather than punitive, community-led and coordinated—including First Nations responses grounded in self-determination—and reflect the context of men's actual lives (family, culture, faith, disadvantage). This is what the

evidence shows works, from Meli's retention rates rising from 12% to over 80% under relational redesign to international evidence on behaviour-change and gender-transformative programs.⁵

Coordinated and integrated, not fragmented. No single program or jurisdiction can deliver this. It requires a whole-of-government "web of accountability" spanning at least the eighteen federal departments and agencies whose systems already touch this issue, backed by transparent, program-level fiscal reporting so government can see, and adjust, what it is actually funding, in real time, rather than reconstructing the picture retrospectively five years later. Government cannot fix what it cannot see: Sheppard et al.'s review of long-term funding for reducing violence against women in Australia and the Government's own joint investment report on investment under the National Plan cannot reconcile government's investment "in a future free from gender-based violence" with its separate headline claim of over \$4 billion invested— this is a live illustration of exactly the transparency gap this submission's accountability recommendations are designed to close.^{6, 7}

The case for change is also a fiscal one—and a rare case where the right thing and the cheap thing are the same. New modelling commissioned by No to Violence estimates the value of preventing first-time DFV offences and the reoffending they cascade into, at approximately \$8.3 billion a year—against a National Plan in which early intervention currently receives only a tiny portion of identifiable funding (see pages 25-26). Acting earlier is not only more humane; it is dramatically cheaper than the status quo of late-stage responses, like child protection, police, courts and corrections.

What we ask. This submission sets out 21 specific recommendations across the Introduction and five sections—spanning funding rebalancing, a national workforce strategy, a broadened conceptual framework, whole-of-government accountability, and the data infrastructure needed to know whether any of it is working. Many of these asks are not new commitments outside what government has already agreed to in principle through the Rapid Review and National Cabinet. What is missing is not agreement—it is funding, timetabling, and delivery at the scale this evidence demands.

Introduction

More than fifteen years after the first National Plan established ending gender-based violence as a national priority, rates of domestic and family violence (DFV) and intimate partner homicide in Australia remain a serious reminder of how much work remains. Nearly 1 in 4 (or 23%) of women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime.⁸ Just under half (or 40%) of children are exposed to domestic violence.⁹ Since July 1989, there have been 1,773 female victims of intimate partner homicide in Australia, and 586 children have been killed by a parent.^{10, 11} Intimate partner violence is the leading preventable contributor to death, disability and illness for Australian women aged 18 to 44, and violence against women and children also costs the economy \$26 billion each year, with victim-survivors bearing approximately 50% of that cost.^{12, 13} The majority of this violence is perpetrated by men (i.e. around 4 in 5 DFV offenders are male).^{14, 15}

These figures likely understate the true scale of the problem. The Australian Child Maltreatment Study found that 62.2% of the Australian population had experienced at least one type of child maltreatment, with domestic violence the most common single form, at 39.6%. Among young Australians specifically—the generation currently coming of age—that exposure rate climbs to 43.8%, higher than any older generation surveyed, with 1 in 4 having experienced three to five different types of maltreatment.¹⁶ It is the generation now entering adulthood carrying the highest exposure rate on record.¹⁷ What's more, it's not a marginal correction to what Australia already knew about the scale of DFV; it is evidence that the response systems in place were built for a problem far smaller than the one that actually exists.

Problems of this size do not stay contained within the systems designed to respond to them. They spill into every adjacent system that comes into contact with children and families (i.e. health, education, housing, child protection, disability and aged care services), none of which were built to carry this load, and all of which are now absorbing it by default. Childhood exposure to family violence is itself associated with substantially increased risk of using or experiencing violence in later relationships, a compounding pathway this submission returns to below. A late-stage response system, however well-resourced, cannot be the principal mechanism for a population of this size; for children and their mothers, and for the men whose use of violence is this submission's central focus mechanism

An expanded framework for early intervention

Part of why the middle ground remains overlooked appears to be conceptual, not only financial. Our Watch's *Change the Story* primary prevention framework has played a key role in shaping Australia's second decade-long National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, as well as other key state and territory strategies.¹⁸ Underpinning the first edition of *Change the Story*¹⁹ was Professor Lori Heise's 1998 integrated ecological model—but only part of it. Heise's framework sought to conceptualise violence against women "*as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in an interplay among personal, situational, and sociocultural factors.*"²⁰ *Change the Story* foregrounds the macrosocial gendered drivers of that interplay — condoning of violence, men's control of decision-making, rigid gender stereotyping, male peer relations — and treats individual-level experience (prior

exposure to violence, factors that weaken prosocial behaviour) as a secondary, "reinforcing" layer sitting underneath them, rather than interconnected pathways to the use and experience of violence.²¹

This is a narrower reading of the ecological approach than the international evidence base it draws on. Heise's original model and her own 2011 revision (Appendix C) place individual- and relationship-level factors—childhood exposure to violence, harmful substance use, mental health, learned relationship dynamics—alongside community and societal drivers as constituent parts of the same explanatory model, not as effects of it.²² This is also the norm elsewhere: the WHO's ecological model for violence prevention,²³ the WHO/UN Women RESPECT framework,²⁴ and the European Commission's own violence-prevention model²⁵ each build in individual and relationship-level risk factors as standard, alongside the gendered and structural drivers *Change the Story* foregrounds, rather than treating them as a residual category. These models, in turn, commonly place poverty, discrimination and other structural inequalities alongside gender inequality as drivers in their own right—an intersectional reading Our Watch's own companion resources (*Changing the picture*, on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women;²⁶ *Changing the landscape*, on women with disability)²⁷ already apply, but which sits adjacent to, rather than inside, the core architecture that shapes national investment. Australia is something of an outlier in how thinly populated this level of its own adopted model is.

The government's own 2023 Theory of Change follows the same broad architecture as these frameworks, in name: it explicitly spans individual/relationship, organisation/community, systems/institutional and societal levels.²⁸ But in practice, it populates the individual and relationship level almost entirely with awareness, attitudes and gender inequality. The architecture is already named; what it lacks is the fuller causal detail — the individual and relationship-level factors that sit alongside gender inequality internationally — that early intervention, risk assessment and behaviour-change work depend on.

To be clear, no framework prevents violence on its own, and this submission does not argue that a better diagram will close a funding gap. But a system cannot design, target or evaluate work it has no theory of change for, and that is precisely the position early intervention is in.

The consequence falls hardest on early intervention specifically, since prevention and response each already have a framework to work from, *Change the Story* for prevention, and the statutory system for crisis.²⁹ Early intervention has neither. This is reflected in where funding actually goes.

A comprehensive retrospective review of long-term violence-against-women funding across federal and state/territory budgets, by Sheppard et al. (2025) found that response-focused activity accounted for 55.9% of identifiable funding nationally, compared with just 3.6% for early intervention (see Figure 1: "Where DFV-related funding actually goes"). Primary prevention accounted for 8.6% and recovery 9.4%.³⁰ Work with people who use violence does not appear anywhere as its own budget category in this analysis; where it can be found at all, it sits folded inside the early intervention line. This is not an argument for shrinking the 55.9% invested in response; those services must remain fully funded, but for growing the overall funding pool so that early intervention and work with men who use violence, two of the most under-resourced tiers of the system, receive investment at a scale that matches the size of the problem.

Internationally, taking the fuller model seriously already has a track record:

The international evidence shows what it looks like to take the fuller model seriously. Rwanda's Bandedereho program, meaning "role model", works with fathers and mothers of young children over seventeen sessions, applying a gender-transformative approach to caregiving, communication and non-violent relationships. A randomised controlled trial with nearly 1,200 couples found sustained reductions, lasting up to six years, in intimate partner violence across all its forms, and in violent discipline of children; it has now reached more than 60,000 parents through Rwanda's national health system. A recent global mapping by UNICEF, the Prevention Collaborative and Equimundo identified 69 similar programs across 43 countries.³¹

Fathers are mentioned only once in Australia's National Plan and are absent from the First Action Plan—a direct consequence of the gap already described: without a populated individual- and relationship-level, Australia's theory of change has no basis for identifying fathers and parents as an intervention population. The Second Action Plan is the first opportunity to correct this.

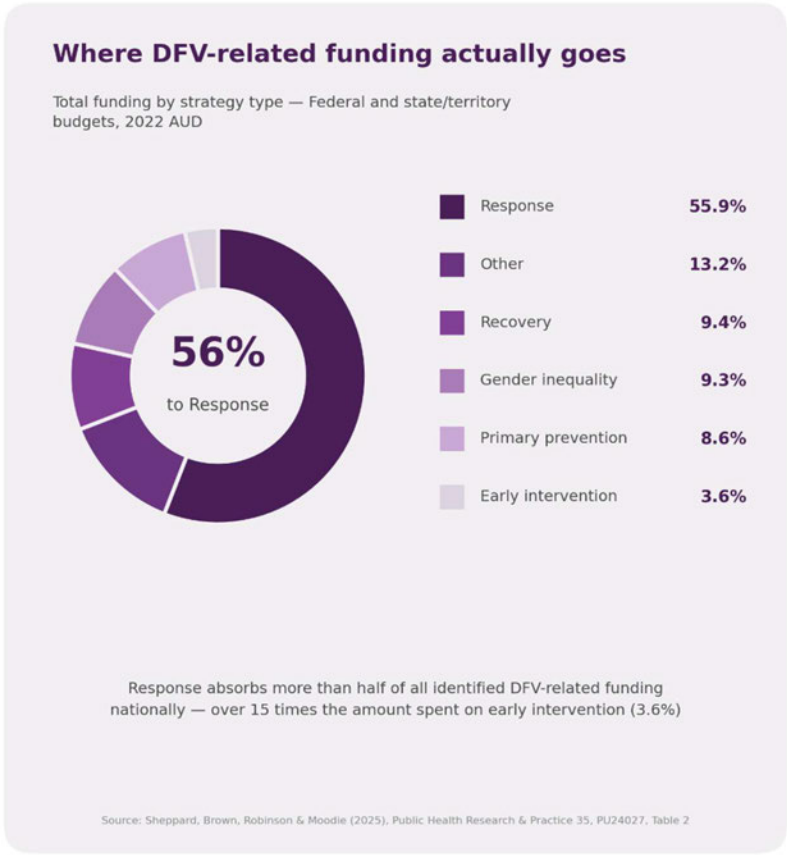


Figure 1. Where DFV-related funding actually goes.

Description: Doughnut chart of total DFV-related funding by strategy type (Response 55.9%; Other 13.2%; Recovery 9.4%; Gender inequality 9.3%; Primary prevention 8.6%; Early intervention 3.6%), federal and state/territory budgets, 2022 AUD. Source: Sheppard, Brown, Robinson & Moodie (2025), Public Health Research & Practice 35, PU24027, Table 2.

Populating the ecological model properly, and funding it at the scale the evidence requires, are not two separate asks. No to Violence recommends the Second Action Plan build out the individual and relationship level of its own Theory of Change, drawing on the international evidence above, starting with fathers and parents — a life-stage the model already implies but does not yet fund:

No to Violence recommends the Second Action Plan commit to:

1. **Build out the ecological model the Theory of Change already names.** The 2023 Theory of Change explicitly adopts a social-ecological model but populates its individual and relationship level almost entirely with attitudes, awareness and gender inequality. The Second Action Plan needs to advance a framework that enables interventions to account for and engage with the complexities of the clients they work with that shape their experiences and use of violence.
2. **Test and scale gender-transformative programs for the life-stages this model identifies as under-served,** starting with fathers and parents, who do not appear in the National Plan or First Action Plan despite strong international evidence.³²

None of this is inevitable.

Australia has built something genuinely impressive: a national consensus that this violence must end, a funded prevention infrastructure, and a policy framework unmatched in scale by almost any comparable country. And yet too many women and children are still being harmed. The men responsible are still, in the overwhelming majority of cases, not reached by any system response until years of violent and controlling behaviour have already caused substantial, accumulating harm to victim-survivors. What typically changes at that point is not that his violence has reached some internal threshold; it is that police, courts or other statutory systems have become involved, often for the first time, introducing a new dynamic into a pattern that has been present for years. Devastatingly, the last resort remains the first response.

This is the structural paradox at the centre of Australia's response: government investment overwhelmingly flows to late-stage interventions—police, courts and prisons—that respond only once the system itself becomes involved, typically long after violence has begun. As a result, what should be the last resort is, for far too many victim-survivors, the first system response they receive, leaving them to endure ongoing and often escalating violence without support. There is also limited evidence that the criminal legal system is an effective mechanism to reduce or end violence in the first place.³³ Reliance on these late-stage responses does not fall evenly; it exacerbates the inequitable and devastating impacts of this system on First Nations peoples and other marginalised communities, who are already disproportionately failed by policing, courts and child protection systems built around crisis rather than prevention.

As a result, we find ourselves in the position where between the National Plan's prevention framework and the service system's late-stage response lies the largely uncharted territory of early intervention: the very domain where the evidence shows the greatest opportunity to disrupt trajectories toward DFV before they become entrenched, and where investment has been most consistently absent. The men sitting across from men's behaviour change practitioners right now did not arrive out of nowhere.

They passed through schools, workplaces, health services, relationships and communities where earlier intervention was possible and did not occur.

The scale of the problem dwarfs our response, and piecemeal funding is not the answer.

No to Violence estimates that fewer than 3% of the nation's domestic and family violence offenders are receiving any form of behaviour change intervention (see Figure 2). New South Wales's Men's Behaviour Change Programs support approximately 900 men per year.³⁴ As NSW represents roughly 31% of Australia's population, extrapolating its per-capita program provision nationally suggests an estimated 2,900 MBCP places per year across Australia. Against this, the ABS recorded 97,800 family and domestic violence offenders proceeded against by police nationally in 2024–25, of whom approximately 78% (around 76,000) were men — giving a national coverage rate of approximately 3.8%.³⁵

We report this conservatively as under 3%, for two reasons. First, this calculation assumes every state and territory matches NSW's per-capita program funding; NSW is generally better resourced than other jurisdictions, so true national capacity and the true per centage are likely lower than 3.8%. Second, the denominator counts only police-recorded offenders, which understates the true number of men using domestic and family violence; the real per centage receiving intervention is likely lower still.³⁶



Figure 2. Less than 3% of the nation's domestic and family violence offenders receive any form of behaviour change intervention.

Description: Dot-matrix infographic (100 dots, 3 highlighted) showing the estimated national MBCP coverage rate. Source: No to Violence analysis, NSW MBCP participation data & ABS Recorded Crime — Offenders, 2024–25.

This is not a failure of the individuals and organisations working in this system. It is a structural problem. The predictable consequence of a system designed to respond after harm has occurred, not to intervene before it escalates. The Second Action Plan is the opportunity to turn this around.

To help outline what an expanded, earlier response should look like, this submission draws on emerging Australian and international evidence and practitioners' insights from our soon-to-be-released Pathways Project, based on interviews with 150 practitioners working directly with men who use domestic and family violence across Australia, gathered through a 12-month national research project guided by an expert steering committee. It is also based on findings from recent NTV member surveys (in 2025 and 2026),³⁷ numerous member consultations, and broader consultations—for example our Victorian Government-funded OPEN Expansion youth intimate partner violence (IPV) work, and Workforce Capability Building project (report forthcoming)—alongside No to Violence's thirty years of direct practice experience as the national peak body for organisations and individuals committed to ending men's use of family violence. This is not a submission built on assumption or advocacy alone: it is grounded in practitioner insights and in NTV's own frontline expertise in the beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and choices of men who use violence and what it will take to reduce and end DFV. Together, this evidence base—reflecting the perspectives of NTV's 187 members across every state and territory, alongside research findings—grounds this submission in both the practitioner and lived reality of ending men's use of family violence. This is further reinforced by the NTV National Conference Declaration, unanimously endorsed by 382 delegates from across the sector at the 2026 national conference to end men's use of domestic and family violence (see Appendix B), which reflects the same priorities from a far broader base than NTV alone.

To reduce and end men's use of DFV in Australia requires three things:

1. **Earlier responses to prevent harm.** The last resort should not be the first response: late-stage, crisis-dominated systems are failing victim-survivors and enabling men who use violence. Correcting this demands a genuine early intervention system, not marginal adjustments to the current one. This is not a case for diverting resources from late-stage and legal-system responses that remain essential and must stay fully funded—it is a case for building, alongside them, the earlier tier of the system that was never funded in the first place.
2. **Transformational ambition to match transformational need.** The foundations built over the past fifteen years are solid. But the scale of the problem is enormous, and the next five years of the National Plan must build on the foundations we already have with the comprehensive, evidence-based frameworks, cross-government architecture, and investment in earlier intervention that the evidence now demands.
3. **A whole-of-government, sustainable funding approach.** This is essential to delivering on the objectives of the National Plan: DFV impacts the work of at least eighteen federal departments, and no amount of program-level innovation can substitute for system-level accountability. This funding approach must also expand the scope and scale of responses to

men who use DFV, so that a genuine continuum of earlier interventions can be built—guided by shared principles, and with victim-survivor safety and family safety advocacy funded as a core part of the system, not as a nice-to-have add-on.

This submission sets out what that entails across five sections, building on the broader conceptual framework for early intervention set out above. Section 1 sets out how to grow the scope and scale of responses to men who use violence — funding a genuine continuum of interventions, governed by a principle-based framework, with victim-survivor safety and family safety advocacy built in as a core, funded function rather than an add-on. Section 2 makes the economic and human case for earlier intervention across the whole system, quantifying the cost of continued inaction and identifying the critical life junctures—parenthood, job loss, disaster, injury—where earlier intervention has the strongest evidence for reducing and ending DFV, before turning to young people specifically: a three-tier investment that trains the workforce already in contact with young people now, while building dedicated, evaluated pathways for adolescents using violence in the home, and using and experiencing intimate partner violence. That section includes an infographic (Figure 5) setting the scale of that cost against current investment: the estimated annual \$8.3 billion economic benefit of intervening earlier, next to the 8% share of identifiable National Plan funding early intervention currently receives.³⁸ Section 3 sets out the National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy needed to build, retain and properly recognise the specialist practitioners this entire system depends on — without whom none of the above is deliverable. Section 4 sets out the whole-of-government architecture needed to coordinate and fund this response across the eighteen departments it touches. Lastly, Section 5 sets out the evidence infrastructure Australia needs to keep improving this system, from a national perpetration prevalence study to a funded Criminal Justice Data Asset.

This submission is not, for the most part, asking government to open new conversations. There have been enough commissions, inquiries and reviews—what's missing across most of what follows is ambition, will and delivery. National Cabinet has already agreed to respond progressively to all 21 recommendations of the *Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches*, through the National Plan and its action plans—and the Second Action Plan is the next instalment of that response. Where relevant, this submission names the specific Rapid Review recommendation each of our asks would help deliver.

One piece of this is genuinely new ground. Australia does not currently have a functioning system for responding to men who use domestic and family violence—only a set of disconnected programs, operating at a fraction of the scale required, with no shared framework connecting them. Building that system is not the advancement of an existing commitment; it is this submission naming what a real response actually requires. Everything else we ask for is advancing what government's existing commitments look like once funded, timetabled and put into practice.

We have spent fifteen years building the case. This submission furthers what acting on it actually requires.

Section 1: Growing the scope and scale of responses

The asks

No to Violence recommends the Second Action Plan commit to three interlocking actions:

3. **Increase investment in earlier intervention and** fund a continuum of responses to men using domestic and family violence (DFV) at a scale that matches the size of the problem. This includes strengthening what Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) themselves can offer—funding the individual case management and therapeutic counselling alongside group work that evaluations consistently call for—as well as building the earlier entry points and additional program types that do not yet exist alongside them, rather than concentrating all new investment in the criminal-legal system's late-stage, crisis-point response.^{39, 40}
4. **Adopt a principle-based framework** as the basis for commissioning/funding and evaluating responses to men who use violence, so that expansion of the sector is deliberate and safety-focused.⁴¹
5. **Resource an interconnected system, not standalone, disconnected programs**, so that men can move between different levels of intervention over time and ensure risk management and victim-survivor safety never depend on a man's willingness to engage.⁴²

These priorities were independently and unanimously affirmed by the sector at large in the 2026 National Conference Declaration (Appendix B), which called on government to 'invest in broadening the scale and breadth of responses' and to 'establish a dedicated and appropriately resourced national strategy to end men's use of family violence.'

Why now

This submission draws on findings from The Pathways Project: the largest practitioner-based research project of its kind conducted in Australia. A 12-month study, with philanthropic funding from the Snow Foundation, the project was guided by an expert steering committee and gathered insights from 150 practitioners working directly with men who use DFV through a national survey and extensive consultations and interviews. *'From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence'* (2026 forthcoming) has created a body of frontline evidence, arriving at the exact moment the Government is asking what an expanded response to men using violence should look like.

There is now an unprecedented level of government and community agreement that stopping DFV requires working with the men perpetrating it. What has been missing is not the will, but a tested model for how expansion should happen safely. This research answers that question. The Second Action Plan is the mechanism to embed integrated responses to men using DFV before another five-year cycle locks in the same underfunded, disconnected settings.

Context and problem statement

The scale of the problem continues to outstrip the scale of the response. NTV's national member consultation (June 2026) confirmed this from those on the ground: asked to name the single biggest gap between prevention and crisis response in one or two words, "funding" was the most common response, with members separately identifying "silos in the system," "sector cohesion" and workforce skills gaps as compounding factors.

None of this is inevitable. Yet outside the criminal legal system—for which there is limited evidence of effectiveness in reducing or ending violence—the main service response available to men using violence has been specialist, group-based Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs).⁴³ These programs are vital, but they are under-resourced for what evaluations consistently say they need to work: intensive case management and individual therapeutic counselling alongside group work, funding for which has not followed the evidence.⁴⁴ Strengthening MBCPs is necessary, but not sufficient on its own—Australia also needs additional program types and earlier entry points operating alongside them, at a far greater scale, so that men can be reached before repeat contact with police or courts, not only after it.

Practitioners report direct evidence of this under-resourcing in their day-to-day work: demand grows as does the complexity of presentation of the men engaging with programs, and waitlists for existing programs continue to grow even as the number of men referred into any intervention remains a small fraction of those using violence—not a contradiction, but two sides of the same fragmentation: the few entry points that exist are both oversubscribed and too narrow to reach most men who need them. And—in Victoria at least—police data show a substantial share of family violence callouts involve men with multiple prior police risk reports, indicating repeat, unaddressed risk rather than first contact.⁴⁵

The result is not simply an under-resourced service, but a fragmented one. NTV estimates that fewer than 3% of the country's DFV offenders are receiving any form of behaviour change intervention. The failure to provide effective and meaningful responses to reduce and end men's use of DFV increases risk for victim-survivors by enabling the escalation of violence. This incredibly low figure reflects not only a lack of scale but also the absence of an integrated system for men to move through. What exists is a series of disconnected touchpoints, most concentrated in the justice system and most arriving late, rather than a continuum men can be identified into, moved through, and supported by at the point they need it:

*"As one practitioner put it: 'if a man's told that men's behaviour change groups is not right for them, or they're not ready for it... the impact of that decision, the system's response to that, it is actually women and children [who] are coping the consequences of that. Because the service wasn't available for him.'"*⁴⁶

The case for action

Practitioners consulted through The Pathways Project strongly supported further expansion of responses to men using DFV, and want to identify, strengthen and learn from what is already working, while continuing to build new models where gaps remain. But they were equally clear that expansion carries real safety risks if it is not done well and identified two conditions that must govern how it proceeds.

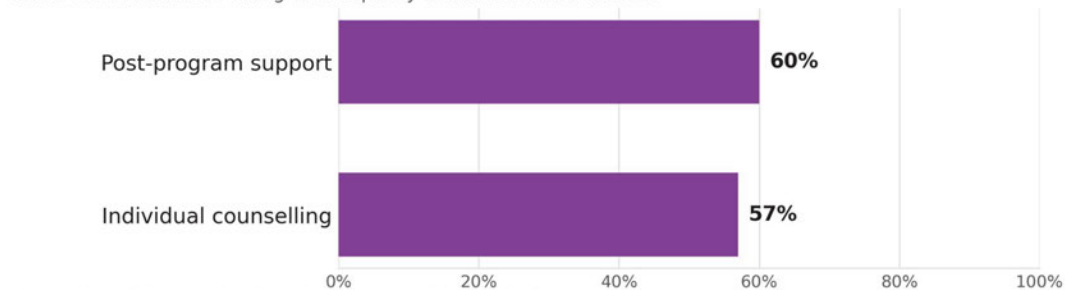
Firstly, the expansion must be built as an interconnected continuum, not cherry-picked from a list of discrete program offerings. How practitioners and programs work with men matters more than what a given program is called. Because behaviour change is ongoing and non-linear, men need to be able to move between different interventions at different points in the process. For men not yet ready or willing to engage—including those who engage only in ways designed to manipulate systems and processes to avoid accountability—the priority must shift to risk management, monitoring and ensuring victim-survivor safety in ways that do not depend on the man's participation in behaviour change programs.

A skilled LGBTQ+ practitioner interviewed for NTV's Pathways Project put this directly:

*"I think we're focusing on who the guy is in the room versus how we work with him... Even if you have a group that is a solely homogenised group — which it isn't, right? Men aren't homogenisable."*⁴⁷

Where the continuum breaks down

Share of NTV members rating their capacity as limited or non-existent



Source: No to Violence national member survey, 2026 (Appendix A). n=92.

Figure 3. Where the continuum breaks down.

Description: Horizontal bar chart showing the share of NTV members rating their service capacity as limited or non-existent (Post-program support 60%; Individual counselling 57%). Source: No to Violence national member survey, 2026 (Appendix A), n=92.

NTV's own national member survey data highlights significant gaps in the current service system and within programs themselves. Sixty per cent of members surveyed rated their capacity to deliver post-program support as limited or non-existent, and 57% said the same of individual counselling, even as roughly half rated their capacity for intake, risk assessment and group program delivery as strong or full (see Figure 3: "Where the continuum breaks down" and Appendix A). This is precisely the sort of continuum failure this submission seeks to have addressed: services can bring men in the door and run a group program, but the follow-through that turns program completion into sustained behaviour change and ongoing risk management—for example, individual counselling for complex presentations, and post-program support to consolidate change and monitor risk—are the pieces

current funding does not cover. A man who exits a group program without post-program support has, in practice, left the continuum altogether, regardless of what happened while he was in the room. Tellingly, when the same members were asked what they would prioritise with increased funding, their clearest answer was not more of the same: 62% wanted to see greater diversity of intervention types, including whole-of-family work—direct evidence that practitioners themselves are asking for the breadth of continuum this submission recommends, not simply more capacity within the current model.

Second, a principle-based framework must guide expansion, so growth in the sector is integrated, deliberate and safety-focused. The Pathway Project research identified seven interconnected principles that should underpin building an effective response system for men who use violence:

1. Child and adult victim-survivors are at the centre of all work with men using violence.
2. Responses are community-led and place-based, including First Nations responses built on self-determination and community control.
3. Engagement with men using violence is relational/person-centred and non-punitive to increase meaningful accountability and safety for victim-survivors.
4. Responses reflect and engage the context of men's lives, including family, culture, faith, disability, age and etc.
5. Engagement is long-term and flexible, meeting men using violence and their families where they are at over time.
6. Practice is trauma and DFV-informed (grounded in intersectional feminist principles).
7. Practice is collaborative and integrated across organisations, sectors and systems.⁴⁸

These principles are mutually reinforcing and are intended to function as the foundation of a single interconnected system, not as options to be adopted selectively. NTV also supports the recommendations made in ACON's submission to the Second Action Plan, including its call to fund the four existing LGBTQ+-tailored behaviour change programs currently operating in Australia—ACON's Proud Partners, Thorne Harbour's program, ARC Rainbow in Lismore, and Diverse Voices' Diverse Choices—as exactly the kind of community-led, population-specific response this principle describes, currently operating at a fraction of the scale the community needs.⁴⁹ An effective ecosystem requires responses at every level—universal (community and social norms), targeted (men at risk or in the early stages of using violence) and intensive (men already using violence, including serious risk) — with shared risk assessment tools, shared language and shared accountability connecting them, not simply referral pathways between separately funded programs.⁵⁰

NTV's member organisations are already delivering across this continuum. What they lack is the policy, cross-jurisdictional integration and funding architecture to do it at the scale the evidence now shows is needed. Building that architecture is a task for government, not for services to solve on their own, and specifically for governments acting cross-jurisdictionally, since no single state or territory can build the shared risk assessment tools, shared language and shared accountability this ecosystem requires in isolation.

Centring victim-survivor safety in behaviour change work with men using violence

The ask

No to Violence recommends the Second Action Plan require:

6. **Dedicated, ring-fenced funding for family safety contact and advocacy work** as a mandatory component of all Commonwealth and state funding for programs working with men who use family violence — not folded into general program budgets.⁵¹

Problem

Victim-survivors deserve genuine choice about their pathway to safety, whether that means leaving a relationship with someone using violence or remaining in it. As a victim-survivor practitioner interviewed for NTV's Pathways Project research put it:

*"Lots of survivors don't want to leave their partners. They just want the violence to stop... [They say] 'I'd like somebody to talk to him.'"*⁵²

Current systems too often assume victim-survivors must leave to access support, without building adequate protection against escalating pre- and post-separation violence into pathways for those who stay, including when staying is, for that victim-survivor, the safer option.

There are two dominant national pathways through which victim-survivors access support: the women's safety/shelter system, and support delivered through work with men who use violence. Interventions with men who use violence, where victim-survivor support is built in, are one of the few pathways available to victim-survivors who are not ready, or do not want, to leave the relationship.

This work, properly funded and done well, supports partners and former partners, children, parents and other family members affected by violence. It is critical to the success of interventions with men who use violence and provides a baseline measure of accountability and change. Without the perspectives of victim-survivors, work toward lasting behaviour change is compromised—risk-related information may be missing, with no other means to source it. NTV members report this work is neither properly understood nor valued, and can be treated as an afterthought, creating gaps in advocacy that put victim-survivor safety and dignity at risk.

Family safety contact work and advocacy are often used interchangeably but perform distinct functions, and whether either operates effectively depends directly on funding. Family safety contact workers collect and share critical risk-related information; family safety advocates are the victim-survivor's voice in spaces they cannot safely enter themselves. Contact work is significantly under-funded nationally, and as a result the advocacy function, critical to recovery and healing, is largely invisible across Australia's family violence service system.

The sector has already said as much collectively: the 2026 National Conference Declaration commits delegates to 'recognise and invest in building and retaining the specialised workforce that delivers prevention, early intervention and responses to men using family violence, including its crucial support for victim-survivors through family safety contact work' (Appendix B).

The case for action

Effective support for victim-survivors requires sustained focus on the person using violence. Earlier, better-resourced engagement with men who use violence reduces harm to victim-survivors, strengthens accountability, and improves safeguards supporting earlier and safer pathways out of violence — while preserving genuine, meaningful choice for victim-survivors about the pathway that is right for them. As one practitioner described the balance this work requires:

"...the ways that we engage men in that space, but also monitoring safety and risk, and doing that at the same time so that mum's not held accountable for someone else's behaviours, but also is the driver of what's going to be safe for her and the children as well. It's a bit of a balance. It's a dance."⁵³

For many victim-survivors, support delivered alongside a Men's Behaviour Change Program is the first dedicated family violence support they receive. This pathway gives victim-survivors, including children, current and former partners, parents and other affected family members, access to support to manage their safety. It also gives practitioners critical insight, enabling them to more effectively challenge the narratives and justifications men use to explain their violence.

Family safety contact and advocacy work should be recognised nationally as a core service function for achieving victim-survivor safety and dignity, not an adjunct to general program delivery, and funded and measured in line with demand.

Conclusion

The evidence base for expansion is no longer the missing piece: 150 practitioners across every jurisdiction have now told government what safe, effective growth looks like. What remains is a funding and policy commitment matched to that evidence: expansion built around a continuum, not around an expanding list of disconnected programs. Without it, growth in this sector risks repeating the fragmentation practitioners have already identified as the problem and doing so on a greater scale. The Second Action Plan is the opportunity to fund the system this evidence describes.

Section 2: The economic and human case for earlier intervention, and engaging earlier with young people

This section brings together two connected arguments for earlier intervention: the broader economic and human case for shifting national investment earlier across the whole of the system, and the case for engaging earlier with young people at risk of beginning to use, or already using, domestic and family violence. Read together, they make one argument: the earlier government reaches men and boys, in whichever cohort, the more it saves in both human and fiscal terms.

The asks

We recommend the Government increase investment under the Second Action Plan toward earlier intervention with men using DFV, and away from the current concentration in late-stage crisis and statutory response, including:

7. **A substantial, specified increase in funding for early intervention programs for people beginning to use, or at risk of escalating DFV.**⁵⁴
8. **Identify investment at critical life junctures** as high-yield points to intervene before escalation, including first-time fatherhood, job loss and economic insecurity, disaster contexts, and permanent injury or cognitive decline.⁵⁵

Applied specifically to young people at risk of beginning to use, or already using, DFV, the same logic points to a three-tier investment: No to Violence recommends the Second Action Plan commit to a three-tier investment in engaging earlier with young people at risk of beginning to use DFV or using DFV:

9. **Deliver universal workforce training at scale, paired with embedded specialist capacity**—equipping youth, early parenting, health, mental health, AOD, homelessness and youth justice workers to safely recognise youth intimate partner violence (IPV), respond to immediate disclosure and safety needs, and make a warm, active referral, while embedding or making accessible youth IPV specialists within the same services for in-depth intervention work. This is the fastest, lowest cost first step available. These workers are already the first point of contact for young people using or experiencing IPV yet currently lack the training and referral pathways to respond safely and confidently. Any national model must be built around the evidence that young people want support from adults they already trust; meaning the trusted worker remains the entry point and the safe hands, while specialist depth is built alongside them, not instead of them, and formal referral pathways between generalist and specialist services, currently identified as a critical gap, are properly resourced rather than left informal.⁵⁶
10. **Identify and sustainably fund the programs already piloted and shown to work for young men at risk of using, or beginning to use, AVITH and youth IPV** — rather than continuing to fund

this work through sporadic, self-initiated or intermittent arrangements. Programs already operating with promising results include Caring Dads (for young fathers), Home Base's *Merge* and *Flo* programs delivered in Tasmanian schools, and Meli's Young Men's Behaviour Change Group in Geelong. The National Youth IPV Network's own submission to this consultation identifies this as a critical gap: young men using youth IPV are frequently offered "a referral with no hope," with existing responses "provided on a sporadic pilot basis, lack[ing] longitudinal evaluation" and reliant on services self-funding the work⁵⁷ What's missing is not evidence of what works, but a funding commitment that enables proven models to operate continuously rather than on a program-to-program basis.⁵⁸

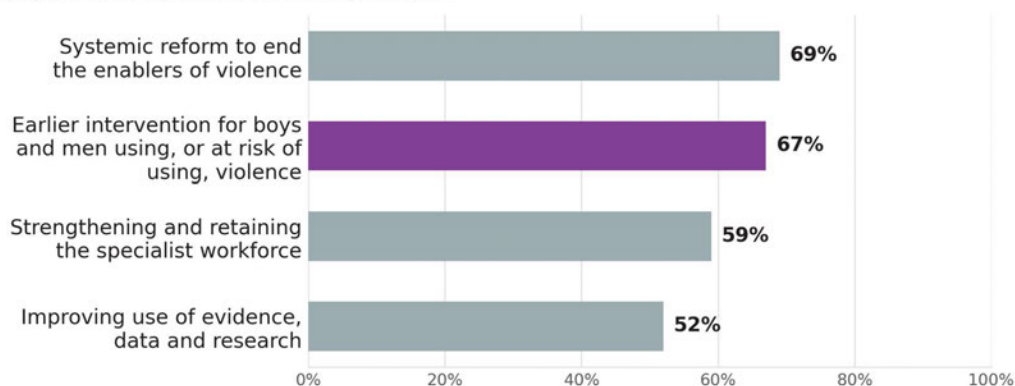
11. **Resource accommodation pathways that enable behaviour change engagement, not just crisis housing.** Unstable accommodation removes any stable base from which behaviour change work can occur, and residence in a household where DFV/IPV is occurring can undermine both victim-survivor safety and a young man's capacity to engage in behaviour change. This is not a general call for youth housing investment; sister organisations working with children and young people as victim-survivors have already made that case at length. It is a specific, practical barrier to NTV's members' core work. NTV's 2026 national member survey identified residential and accommodation options as one of members' key asks for improving service capacity, reflecting how consistently this barrier is raised directly by the practitioners delivering behaviour change work.⁵⁹

Why now

Sector consensus points the same way. In No to Violence's 2026 national member survey, earlier intervention for boys and men using, or at risk of using, violence ranked as the second-highest system reform priority identified by members (67%), behind only systemic reform to end the enablers of violence itself (69%) — ahead of workforce retention (59%) and evidence and data (52%) (see Figure 4: "What NTV members say the sector needs most").

What NTV members say the sector needs most

Top system reform priorities identified by members



Source: No to Violence national member survey, 2026 (Appendix A). n=90.

Figure 4. What NTV members say the sector needs most.

Description: Horizontal bar chart of top system reform priorities identified by members (systemic reform 69%; earlier intervention for boys/men 67%; workforce 59%; evidence/data/research 52%). Source: No to Violence national member survey, 2026 (Appendix A), n=90.

Early intervention is the most underdeveloped domain of the National Plan, alongside recovery and healing. The Second Action Plan is the mechanism currently open to correct that imbalance before it is locked in for another five years.

"That early intervention space is a space that can actually create quite a lot of change. It's whether we have the governments who want to actually financially assist people to be able to work in that space."
Practitioner⁶⁰

New economic modelling (Figure 5: "The economic case for earlier intervention") puts a concrete, current figure on the cost of inaction, giving government a fresh, directly relevant evidence base to act on within this consultation window.

That urgency is sharpest at the youngest end of the cohort:

The gap this section addresses is no longer simply a service gap—it's a fast-moving and growing chasm. Around three in ten Australian 18–19-year-olds report experiencing some form of IPV in the past year,⁶¹ and in a national longitudinal study, close to 120,000 men each year reported starting to use violence within their relationships.⁶² This is compounded by a structural age gap independently identified by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare: child-specific family violence therapeutic services typically end at 16 or 17. In contrast, adult family violence and homelessness services are built around adult risk profiles and are frequently unable to support a minor appropriately—leaving 16–18-year-olds poorly served by both systems at precisely the age this section's evidence shows IPV risk is highest.⁶³

The case for action

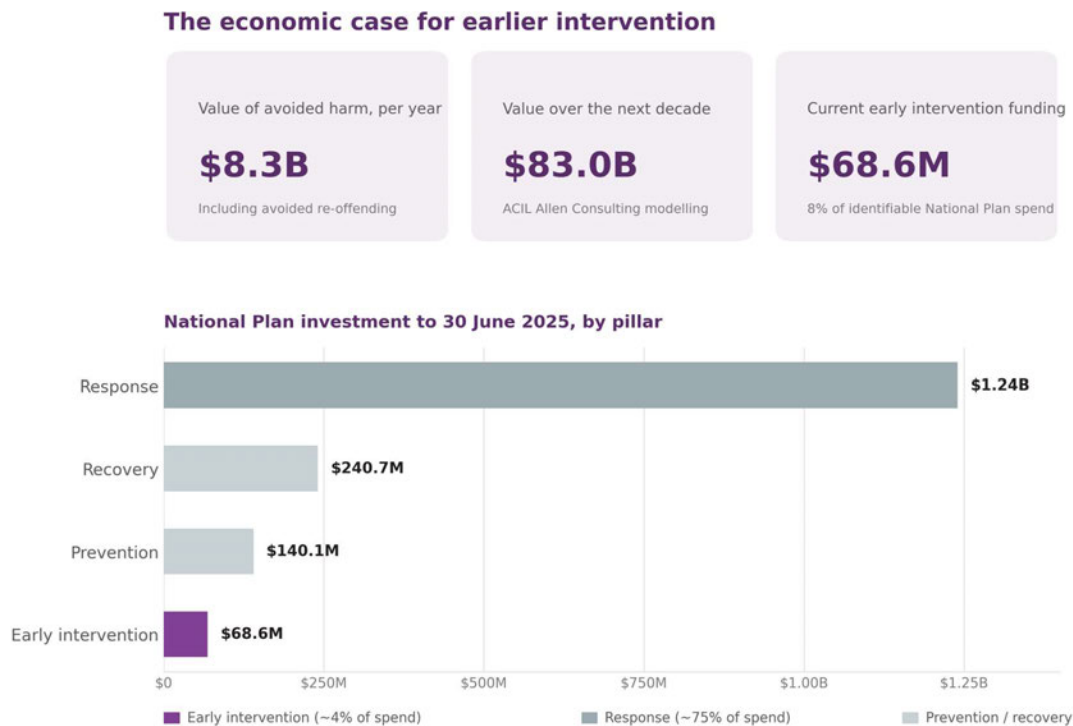


Figure 5. The economic case for earlier intervention. Description: Combined stat panel and bar chart — value of avoided harm (\$8.3B/year, \$83.0B over the decade, ACIL Allen Consulting modelling) alongside a bar chart of National Plan investment to 30 June 2025 by pillar (Response \$1.24B; Recovery \$240.7M; Prevention \$140.1M; Early intervention \$68.6M). Source: value of avoided harm, ACIL Allen Consulting (forthcoming); National Plan investment by pillar, Department of Social Services (2025).⁶⁴

The economic case is now quantified. New modelling commissioned by No to Violence from ACIL Allen Consulting, currently in preparation for publication, estimates the value of preventing first-time DFV offences alone at \$2.05–\$2.66 billion per year over the next decade.⁶⁵ Including the cascading effect of avoided re-offending, the combined value rises to approximately \$83.0 billion over the decade — around \$8.3 billion per year — against current early intervention investment of just \$68.6 million, or roughly 4% of identifiable National Plan spend (See Figure 5: “The economic case for earlier intervention”).⁶⁶ These estimates exclude prosecution, legal aid, courts administration and corrections costs, meaning they likely understate the true value of earlier intervention.

Modelling can provide an estimate of the cost of continued inaction. What government actually spends is harder to establish: Sheppard et al.'s review required a targeted search of separate federal, state and territory budget repositories spanning twelve years, since no single published source consolidates this information.⁶⁷ The Commonwealth reports "over \$4 billion" invested in the National Plan from October 2022 to 30 June 2025 — but its own itemised breakdown of that spending, published by DSS, sums to just \$1.69 billion.⁶⁸ A further \$554.7 million in identifiable Federation Funding Agreement payments over the same period does not close the gap: even combined, verifiable itemised investment accounts for barely half the government's own headline figure, with more than \$1.7 billion unaccounted for in public reporting. Nor does the government's own consolidated

reporting resolve this. DSS's joint national investment report presents the Commonwealth's spending against the National Plan's four domains — but each state and territory's contribution follows in a separate section, reported against a different time period, with no shared categorisation linking it back to those domains. Victoria and the Northern Territory list itemised initiatives without a cumulative total; Western Australia cites two different totals, each covering a different start date in the same paragraph.⁶⁹ A reader cannot derive a single, reconciled national investment figure from the one government document designed to provide it. Government cannot be held accountable for a funding commitment it has not transparently and completely itemised — underscoring the case set out in Section 5 for the funded national data infrastructure this submission recommends.

The behavioural evidence supports it. A systematic review and meta-analysis of 26 preventive intimate partner violence interventions found a significant protective pooled effect — and that interventions engaging men directly were more effective than those targeting women only.⁷⁰

The opportunity is large and identifiable. Almost 300,000 men become first-time fathers each year,⁷¹ and more than 600,000 lost or left a job in the past year⁷² — both established risk points for escalation, and both moments where a targeted intervention response could reach men before violence begins or entrenches. As one practitioner put it:

*'Is it giving men a space and confidence to come and say hey, I'm feeling this way and I want to do something about it before something happens?'*⁷³

Context and problem statement

Intervention orders illustrate what that reactive pattern looks like in practice. They are the most common response once a man using violence is formally identified. However, they are not a behaviour-change mechanism, and most men receive no further intervention until they breach one. Breaches account for 40% of principal domestic and family violence offences charged in court, and the true number of breaches likely far exceeds the number of men charged last year.⁷⁴

Box 1. Case study — [REDACTED]: an intervention order that didn't stop escalation.

- [REDACTED] had a long history of family violence against [REDACTED] and served multiple sentences for DFV crimes. [REDACTED] held a protection order, and [REDACTED] was subject to bail conditions for violating that order when he killed her in [REDACTED].
- In sentencing, the judge noted [REDACTED]'s own account: he blamed [REDACTED] and police for "trying to protect her." He expressed anger that she was living independently of him — grievances over finances and contempt for the court system and did not acknowledge any of the harm caused.⁷⁵
- [REDACTED] should still be here. Her intervention order did not keep her safe — despite [REDACTED] being one of the rare men who faced accountability through the criminal legal system at all.

This is not an isolated failure. A recent coronial inquest found a person using violence was able to breach a non-contact order 149 times while remanded in custody. Intervention orders on a 'set and

forget' basis once issued—the gap can embolden continued use of violence rather than closing it down.⁷⁶

Description: Narrative case-study text box illustrating the limits of intervention orders as a standalone response.



Figure 6a. Cover of *Meli Young Men's Behaviour Change Group* — case study, No to Violence, OPEN Expansion Project, 2026. Figure 6b. Cover of *Evidence Review: Addressing Young Men's Use of Intimate Partner Violence*, No to Violence, July 2026

The same reactive pattern is visible earliest, and most correctable, among young people:

NTV's extensive review of the evidence on youth IPV, undertaken as part of the Victorian Government-funded Open Expansion project, found young men's use of violence is less entrenched than adults, with greater capacity for change: providing a genuine window for disruption, not simply a smaller version of the adult problem. The review found programs grounded in relational, person-centred practice — treating housing, mental health and trauma as core to the work, not adjacent to it — produce the strongest outcomes.⁷⁷

Meli's Young Men's Behaviour Change Group in Geelong for men aged 18-25— currently the only program of its kind in Victoria — demonstrates what this looks like when properly designed and resourced. Its hybrid model of fourteen group sessions paired with ten individual sessions, rather than the standard twenty-seven-week group-only format, saw retention rates rise from 12% to over 80% under youth-tailored redesign.⁷⁸ The mechanism is relational, not procedural: the same worker who conducts pre-group case management facilitates the group itself, and that continuity — not efficiency — is what makes accountability work possible for young men who have rarely had a stable relationship

with a trusted adult. It is worth noting that the young men actually reaching this service are not the radicalised "manosphere" cohort often assumed; they are overwhelmingly young men from low socioeconomic backgrounds carrying significant trauma, with extensive histories in child protection, corrections and out-of-home care. This does not mean online misogyny is not a real and growing driver of attitudes at the population level; it is, and this submission's introduction addresses it directly. Still, it means service design for the young men currently in contact with the system must be tailored appropriately to enable service providers to help meet additional needs from the impacts of structural disadvantage and trauma first, not assumed radicalisation.

Evidence indicates that young people's use of violence is less entrenched than adults', with greater capacity for change; this is a genuine window for disruption, not simply a smaller version of the adult problem approach (i.e. treating housing, mental health and trauma as core to the work, not adjacent to it) produce the strongest outcomes; a young man cannot meaningfully address his use of IPV if he is homeless, in crisis, or without a trusted adult in his life.⁷⁹ This is not a marginal finding: research shows supportive friendships during adolescence reduce the risk of later emotional abuse victimisation by 36%, and high trust and good communication with parents reduce the risk of emotional abuse victimisation by 39% and sexual abuse victimisation by 77%.⁸⁰ Relational investment is evidence-based prevention, not soft infrastructure.

This is the model the asks above are designed to fund at scale: a trusted worker as the entry point, with specialist depth and referral pathways built in alongside them, not instead of them.

"This is a journey where we have to invest in that early intervention...with the young fellows, young people that are perpetrating violence. But that's not going to be quick — we're not going to see quick turnarounds in that area. That's going to be a long-term thing." Practitioner ⁸¹

Conclusion

The current system is structured to intervene only once the system becomes involved, typically well after violence has escalated and caused harm—an approach that is both more costly and less effective than acting earlier. The Second Action Plan is the opportunity to correct this by directing new investment to early intervention, particularly at known critical life junctures, backed by economic modelling that makes the cost of continued inaction explicit.

That logic is sharpest, and most actionable now, for young people specifically.

Young men using or experiencing IPV are not simply small adults awaiting an adult service system built for their needs later. They need age-appropriate, trauma-informed, sustained engagement now, before patterns entrench and before the current gaps in service, data and workforce training cost more young people their safety. The three-tier investment set out here — fast, low-cost workforce capability building, sustained funding for the models already proven to work, and accommodation that removes the single biggest practical barrier to engagement — is achievable within the life of the Second Action Plan, and directly extends this submission's broader case for growing the scope and scale of responses to men who use violence into the life-stage where earlier intervention has the greatest evidence of working.

Section 3: A national domestic, family and sexual workforce strategy

The asks

12. We recommend the Australian Government, through the Second Action Plan, commit to a **National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy** by the release of the Federal Budget 2027-28, in partnership with the specialist sector that works with men who have used DFV, with six priorities:
 - **Build and retain** the specialist workforce, including fair compensation, robust supervision, leadership development and psychologically safe workplaces.
 - **Formally recognise** specialist practice with men who have perpetrated DFV as a distinct, highly skilled profession.
 - Establish a national workforce architecture to sustain changes.
 - **Strengthen recruitment pathways** from universities, vocational education and feeder professions (health, mental health, AOD, justice, housing, child protection).
 - **Build system-wide capability**, with targeted investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforces, multicultural organisations, and regional/rural practitioners.
 - **Empower States and Territories** to prioritise workforce through National Partnership Agreements.⁵¹

The National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Workforce Strategy and associated funding agreements should be in place and begin implementation in mid-2028.

Why now

Government commissioned the first national DFSV workforce survey since 2018 specifically to build the evidence base for future workforce investment decisions. It closed on 28 February 2026, making a national workforce strategy the natural next step, rather than a proposal that needs to wait for further evidence. No National Workforce Development Strategy has been established, and no timeline for one has been provided. By contrast, the most recent Rapid Review Implementation update reports a \$4.7 billion package agreed at National Cabinet within weeks of the Rapid Review's release, funding measures across risk assessment, information sharing, and frontline and legal services.⁸² The workforce recommendation, the one the panel positioned as foundational to delivering all the others, has so far produced a survey. It has not yet produced a strategy, nor funding proportionate to what the government's own response to every other recommendation demonstrates it is capable of committing.

Given the crisis this submission describes, that step is also urgent: shortages, turnover and burnout are compounding now, and the Second Action Plan is the mechanism currently open to commit to it.

Context and problem statement

The national DFSV workforce is facing an urgent and unsustainable crisis. Specialist practitioners working with men who have perpetrated DFV are the front line in stopping violence at its source: engaging directly with people who use violence to help mitigate risk, drive accountability and behaviour change, and in doing so, protecting children, women and families. This is highly specialised, evidence-informed and rights-based work requiring a nuanced understanding of the gendered dynamics that drive violence. It is not routine case management. Despite this, the specialisation remains poorly understood—both in general community attitudes and in how workforce policy currently treats it—a recognition gap that the National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy recommended in this submission is designed to close.

Disappointingly, the 500 Workers Initiative — funded at \$165 million over five years, with 557 workers (498.4 FTE) recruited nationally as of June 2026 — is scoped specifically to *"Community organisations to employ more frontline workers to support victim-survivors of family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV)."*⁶⁵ As a result, it does not extend to perpetrator intervention and Men's Behaviour Change roles, leaving this segment of the workforce without access to a dedicated national funding stream.

In NTV's latest 2026 national survey:

- No to Violence's members shared the urgency of the workforce crisis that continues to be ignored: 59% of respondents ranked strengthening and retaining the specialist workforce among their top sector priorities, third only to systemic reform and early intervention.
- 41% cited recruitment and development of team members as one of the five biggest daily challenges they face — evidence that workforce shortages are already limiting service delivery, not simply an internal HR problem for individual organisations to manage.
- Practitioners reported they cannot deliver core best-practice components without more capacity: 60% say post-program support is "not at all" or only "limited," 57% say the same of individual counselling, and 52% of brokerage support, meaning victim-survivors and men using DFV alike are missing interventions because teams are under-resourced.
- One respondent described a high-risk perpetrator program that had to turn away referrals because it was "operating on two staff members at that time."

This pattern is consistent with sector-reported experiences gathered through NTV's member network: high rates of work-related stress and job insecurity; workforce attrition driven primarily by the psychological toll of the work rather than by pay alone; and practitioners reporting that their initial training left them underprepared for the demands of the work. Retention in this specialist workforce cannot be treated as a routine HR challenge — it is a direct constraint on service capacity.

The result is a workforce under sustained pressure, with burnout that is not incidental but a direct consequence of insufficient organisational and systemic support. This threatens both worker safety and the safety of the families these services protect.

The case for action

The sector has already collectively endorsed this. Through NTV's 2026 National Conference Declaration, delegates stressed the need to 'recognise and invest in building and retaining the specialised workforce' (Appendix B). This section sets out what that commitment requires in practice.

Build and retain the workforce. Sustainable conditions require fair compensation that reflects the risk practitioners take on, robust supervision, leadership development, manageable workloads and psychologically safe workplaces. Retention of experienced practitioners should be treated as essential infrastructure. Employing agencies have a responsibility to build cultures grounded in the intersectional feminist, grassroots history of the feminist movement.

Recognise the practice. Specialist work with men who have perpetrated DFV is poorly understood within the sector and across society, which fuels stigma, blocks career progression and leaves individual practitioners carrying disproportionate risk without commensurate authority or recognition. Universities, TAFE, vocational education and training, and sector bodies have a role in building understanding of this work and dismantling the "monster" myth — recognising that people who use violence are part of families, workplaces and communities, not a separate, uniformly irredeemable category, while accepting that behaviour change may be achievable for some and not others.

Establish a national capability, qualification and remuneration framework specific to working with men who have perpetrated DFV. In Victoria, there is a stark and recurring mismatch between what these roles require (often dual advanced qualifications and years of embedded experience) and what they are paid—frequently at low SCHADS levels—thereby undermining both morale and the field's legitimacy. Qualification and remuneration structures vary considerably across jurisdictions, and whether this mismatch holds to the same degree nationally has not yet been established. The national standards process the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council agreed to accelerate in August 2025 is the appropriate mechanism to determine this: any resulting standards should include an explicit assessment of whether qualification requirements are matched by commensurate remuneration and regrade roles where pay does not currently reflect their complexity and risk.

Strengthen pathways. Coordinated recruitment should run through universities, vocational education and feeder professions — victim-survivor support work, health, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, justice, housing and child protection. How these pathways should operate in practice, however, requires cross-jurisdictional mapping that has not yet been done: qualification requirements, curriculum content and placement structures vary by jurisdiction, and practitioners working with men who have used DFV are employed under markedly different arrangements depending on sector — including within Corrections and other government settings, whose employment structures, recruitment pathways and industrial conditions differ substantially from the specialist community sector and are outside this submission's direct knowledge. A national workforce strategy should commission this mapping work as a first step, rather than assume a single recruitment or curriculum model can be applied uniformly across jurisdictions and employment settings.

Build capability system-wide, with attention to equity of access. Investment should be equitably distributed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforces, LGBTQIA+ and multicultural organisations and those working with and for other marginalised people and communities, drawing on knowledge held through community connection. Regionally and rurally located practitioners face

distinct barriers, thinner infrastructure for travel, online work and professional development, compounded by cost-of-living pressures, alongside acute privacy and confidentiality risks from working in small, close-knit communities. These require deliberate, place-based safeguards rather than uniformly applied metropolitan-designed solutions.

Through the **National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses**, empower states to fund:

Mandated specialist external supervision, the mechanism through which practitioners share the risk they would otherwise carry alone. Internal, line-manager-only supervision reinforces workplace power dynamics that discourage honest disclosure of collusion or dropped risk. Supervision should be a funded condition of program delivery, not something left to individual organisational capacity.

Secure, ongoing employment in place of casual and short-term contracts. Individual workers cannot continue to carry risk in this sector; it must be held collectively, by systems that trickle down to agency teams, and casual or transient staff are structurally excluded from that collective function. Organisations that offered ongoing contracts reported no retention problems at all. Workforce funding should be linked to secure employment models, with fixed-term contracts reserved for genuine short-term backfill.

Structured secondments, shadowing and mobility pathways across the sector. Practitioners describe a genuine and recurring need to "refresh" without leaving the sector altogether, and highly specialised roles are at greatest risk of losing workers precisely because there is no way to step sideways without stepping out. A national strategy should formalise and resource cross-agency secondments and co-located placements as standard sector infrastructure, rather than leaving them to informal goodwill between organisations.

Conclusion

A National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy is a necessary response to a workforce crisis that directly threatens the safety of children, women and families. With fewer than 3% of the nation's DFV offenders currently receiving any behaviour-change intervention, and up to one in six specialist practitioners on track to leave the sector within a year, the workforce needed to close that gap is shrinking at the very moment it needs to grow. We urge the Government to commit to a National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy as soon as possible, recognising specialist men perpetrating DFV practitioners as indispensable to the national DFV response.

Section 4: A sustainable whole-of-Government response

The scope of men's use of violence is not simply a matter of individual choice: it is shaped by whether the systems around him are visibly accountable. Where accountability is inconsistent, unenforced or absent across the system as a whole, that absence is itself emboldening: it signals, before any individual man is ever identified or held to account, that using violence carries limited consequence. This holds even more starkly once a man is identified. Whether he is then held to account and supported to change depends on whether police, courts, housing, child protection and other services are resourced, coordinated and required to act. Where those systems are fragmented and unfunded, it can embolden men using violence: fragmentation does not just enable the continued use of violence, it escalates it, creating new pathways to cause harm by weaponising the gaps between services.

Every public service is now a family violence service, whether it was funded to be one or not. Police, schools, hospitals and more are absorbing this problem without the training or resourcing to carry it, through no fault of the people doing that work. The specialist services actually built for this, Men's Behaviour Change services foremost among them, are under-resourced too. This isn't a contest between service types; it is evidence that the whole system, generalist and specialist alike, was sized for a much smaller problem than the one Australia actually has.

This section makes that case in two connected parts: first, that Australia has a workable model for whole-of-government accountability but lacks the coordinated federal architecture to deliver it; second, that the funding system above that architecture is currently too opaque to know what is working — a gap this section returns to directly: you can't fix what you can't see.

The asks

We recommend the Second Action Plan commit, with timelines and accountability mechanisms rather than as aspiration, to:

13. A whole-of-government "web of accountability" model, adapted from Victoria's Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan, with named cross-portfolio responsibility across all 18 relevant federal departments and agencies, a clear Commonwealth role in coordinating this with state and territory efforts—recognising that violence does not respect jurisdictional boundaries even when funding and service systems do—and shared progress measures so implementation, not just commitment, can be tracked.⁸³
14. A program-level fiscal strategy that supports planning, monitoring and evaluation of the whole-of-government response, spanning the life of the plan, mapping all government-funded programs relevant to ending violence, including in non-traditional portfolios, and publicly reporting investment against actual programs rather than the four-pillar (prevention/early intervention/response/recovery) structure, with dedicated funding lines in each relevant department made publicly visible. This is a request for visibility over where funding goes and

what it is achieving at a program level, not for activity-level monitoring of individual services' day-to-day operations. Given the Commonwealth's unique position to coordinate this across state and territory boundaries, a shared reporting framework should be established so implementation, not just commitment, can be tracked. The need for this is not abstract: this submission has already shown that government does not currently reconcile its own headline investment figures against its own itemised reporting, nor derive a single national total from its own consolidated report, a transparency gap this ask is designed to close.⁶⁶

15. **DFV-proofing of major policy decisions**, modelled on existing gender impact assessment requirements, for housing, social security, immigration, employment and family law.⁸⁴
16. **Close the gaps that let systems be weaponised against victim-survivors**, by funding and timetabling full implementation of the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme's real-time information-sharing capability; working with states and territories to harmonise legal definitions of DFV and related order access, application and enforcement processes — closing gaps such as Tasmania's restriction of family violence protections to intimate-partner relationships meeting a 'significant relationship' threshold — leaving those outside it, including many young people in dating relationships, without access to the same protective order framework available in other jurisdictions;⁸⁵ and extending the current Commonwealth systems-abuse audit and Safety by Design principles beyond their initial child support, social security and tax focus, paired with universal training for police and frontline decision-makers to recognise and avoid misidentifying victim-survivors as primary perpetrators.⁸⁶

Neither part of these asks stands alone. An accountability model without a transparent funding picture behind it is a description of intent; a funding strategy without a coordinating architecture to act on what it reveals is an accounting exercise.

Why now

The diagnostic work behind both asks has already been done. This is a case for acting on evidence government already holds, not for commissioning more of it. A federal systems-abuse audit spanning 18 departments and agencies already exists under the National Plan's governance arrangements, so the coordination gaps are already known. Separately, a comprehensive retrospective review of National Plan funding, by Sheppard et al. (2025), confirms that the government does not currently hold funding data in a form that could support planning, monitoring or evaluating a response of this scale—the diagnostic foundation this section builds on.⁸⁷ The Second Action Plan is now open as a mechanism to convert both pieces of evidence into an architecture, before another five-year cycle locks in the same invisibility.

Governance architecture is not only a machinery-of-government question; it also depends on the specialist sector's own capacity to be consistently and accountably heard within it, not through ad hoc consultations convened at the government's discretion.

The problem

On accountability, the problem is not a lack of consequences — it is a lack of coordination. Australia's response to men who use violence has, for the most part, been built around the criminal legal system:

intervention orders, charges, sentencing and, increasingly, incarceration. That system plays a role, but it was never designed to carry the whole weight of accountability, and the evidence suggests it often doesn't. System contact is not simply the point at which years of violence are finally addressed—it is itself a new event, capable of making things better or worse, for victim-survivors and for the man alike, depending entirely on how well the systems around that contact are coordinated. Men exiting custody or criminal proceedings frequently emerge more convinced their use of violence was justified, not less—a dynamic that reflects everything that happens (or doesn't) around a person before, during and after contact with the legal system, not the sentencing decision alone. Where that contact is coordinated—where courts, health, housing and behaviour change services act on a shared, accurate picture—it can be the moment accountability and safety planning genuinely begin. Where it isn't, system involvement can compound the harm it was meant to interrupt.

As a practitioner working in a restorative justice program explained:

"For people to be fully able to understand the harm they've caused, why they caused it, and the feelings around that — fully, openly and honestly — it's such a distinction from the criminal system."⁸⁸

The family court system illustrates the gap: it does not apply a DFV and trauma-informed approach to the majority of matters before it, and there are documented cases of men who have used violence retaining access to children they've abused. These read less as failures of individual judgement than as failures of a system never built to connect what different parts of government already know. National Community Attitudes data suggests why this matters beyond individual cases — 41% of Australians believe family violence is committed roughly equally by men and women, and 37% believe women commonly exaggerate violence claims in custody disputes. These attitudes exist inside government systems as much as outside them; a system that doesn't actively correct for them will tend to reproduce them.

The family violence order system itself remains a further avenue for systems abuse, not despite growing national attention to the issue, but because of a set of specific, uncorrected gaps within it. Family violence orders are not defined or enforced consistently across jurisdictions: Tasmania's current framework, for example, does not recognise intimate partner violence as family violence in the same terms as most other states and territories, creating a gap a perpetrator can exploit simply by crossing a border. The National Domestic Violence Order Scheme (NDVOS) was built to make orders visible nationally, but does not yet enable or require real-time updating of orders, conditions and breaches — a gap directly implicated in cases such as the coronial inquest, discussed in Section 2, that found a person subject to a non-contact order breached it 149 times while in custody. The Australian Government's own response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee's Inquiry into Family Violence Orders (2025) agrees these are real gaps: it commits to a national review of DVO frameworks including NDVOS (Recommendation 1: Agree in part), to harmonised legal definitions and consistent FVO access, application and enforcement processes (Recommendation 3: Agree in principle), and to a Commonwealth systems-abuse audit applying Safety by Design principles (Recommendation 10: Agree in part) — currently scoped only to child support, social security and tax systems. What is missing across all three is not agreement. It is funding and a delivery timeline.

On funding, the problem is that government cannot currently plan, monitor or evaluate a response it cannot see. The introduction set out what this looks like in practice: response-focused activity absorbing roughly 56% of identifiable National Plan funding, compared with 3.6% for early intervention, evidence of chronic under-investment at exactly the level the fuller ecological model depends on. That imbalance is only visible because it could be reconstructed from years of data after the fact. The reporting architecture behind the National Plan was never built to track activity against implementation in real time; it was built to report against four broad pillars, which is not the same thing. Part of this is structural. Responsibility for ending violence has been located primarily within the Department of Social Services and specialist DFV services — a sensible starting point for a portfolio, but a poor fit for a problem that runs through nearly every domain of social policy. The evidence bears this out: a recent review by the Prevention Collaborative—a global network on violence-against-women prevention—found that policy change can reduce violence at scale by addressing deep structural drivers, identifying nine policy domains — education, housing, social protection, alcohol regulation, infrastructure, health services, family law, labour market policy and civic leadership — where government already holds levers with demonstrated pathways to reducing intimate partner violence.⁸⁹ Most of that activity falls outside any violence-specific budget line, meaning it is neither counted as part of the response nor coordinated as such, and neither the government nor the sector can track whether a whole-of-government response is actually being delivered as it unfolds.

This is precisely the information gap a web-of-accountability model cannot function without. An accountability architecture that names cross-portfolio responsibility is only as useful as the ability to check, over time, whether that responsibility is being met, and to adjust course where it isn't. Fiscal visibility, in this context, is not disclosure for its own sake; it is the monitoring and evaluation infrastructure the accountability model itself depends on.

The case for action

Victoria has sought to address this through its web of accountability model to treat the person using violence as the fixed point around which a wide network of workforces — police, courts, health, education, housing, employment services, community organisations — are expected to share risk information and reinforce consistent messages, with victim-survivor safety held at the centre throughout.



Figure 7. The web of accountability model.

Description: Diagram showing the person using violence at the centre of a wide network of workforces and services, with victim-survivor safety and wellbeing held at the centre by specialist services. Source: Victorian Government (2020), *Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023*.

NSW and Queensland have built comparable state models. However, none of them, by design, can reach across state borders or into Commonwealth systems — family law, social security, immigration, Home Affairs — creating significant risk and undermining attempts to reduce and end violence. A person using violence does not experience these systems as separate; there is little reason government's response should.

International evidence points the same way, with a distinction worth preserving. The UK's Project Mirabal found that the effectiveness of perpetrator program depended on being part of a wider, coordinated community response, not on program content alone.⁹⁰ The Drive project found that coordination works best when it is actively built through ongoing collaboration with victim-survivor-focused organisations, rather than assumed to be a byproduct of information-sharing.⁹¹ The Duluth model, which underpins most Australian behaviour-change programs, was conceived as a community response from the outset, though Australian implementation has often drifted toward a standalone service model. Together, these findings suggest accountability is an emergent property of a coordinated system, not a feature that can be added to a single intervention afterwards, which is precisely what a federal web of accountability would formalise.

Systems abuse makes the cost of the current gap concrete: the deliberate use of financial, legal, migration and child protection systems as tools of ongoing control exploits the seams between

departments by design and cannot be addressed by any one of them acting alone. Several jurisdictions have now legislated for coercive control—but the law changes mean little if the departments whose systems are being weaponised have no shared mechanism to detect patterns of behaviour/perpetration.

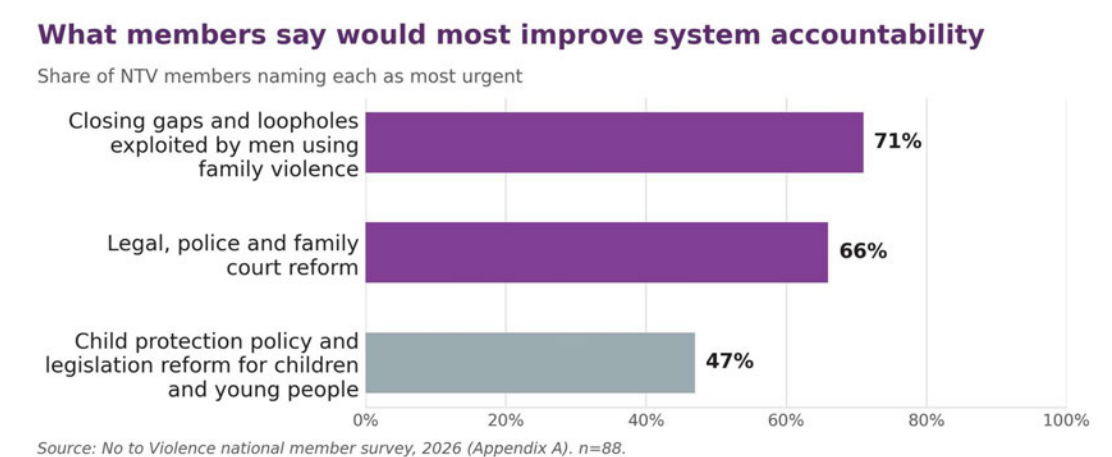


Figure 8. What members say would most improve system accountability.

Description: Horizontal bar chart of member priorities for improving system accountability (closing gaps/loopholes 71%; legal/police/family court reform 66%; child protection reform 47%). Source: No to Violence national member survey, 2026 (Appendix A), n=88.

Closing accountability gaps across legal, policing, and child protection systems is critical to preventing DFV. NTV's own membership identifies this as the most urgent accountability gap to close. When asked what would most improve system accountability, members pointed overwhelmingly to closing the gaps and loopholes exploited by men using family violence (71%) and to legal, police and family court reform (66%), with reform of child protection policy and legislation for children and young people also prominent (47%, see Appendix A). Likewise, NTV's 2026 National Conference Declaration representing a broader range of stakeholders emphasised the need to 'drive structural reforms to stop violence at the source... [with] key areas includ[ing] family court, legal systems, and child protection' (Appendix B). These are not separate issues; they are the same issue, named in different ways by frontline practitioners watching men move between legal, policing and child protection systems that hold no shared, integrated picture of risk. A federal web of accountability is the mechanism built to close exactly the gaps this membership has identified as most urgent.

Conclusion

Neither half of this ask works without the other. Together, an accountability model with the authority to act across departments and a funding architecture transparent enough to show whether that action is happening would let the Second Action Plan be evaluated against its own ambition rather than taken on faith.

Section 5: Building the evidence base

The asks

No to Violence recommends the Second Action Plan commit to five actions to close Australia's data infrastructure gap:

17. **Fund a National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative**, coordinated by NTV and developed in partnership with ANROWS, to capture, synthesise and translate practice knowledge into research and policy, and to translate research and policy knowledge back into practice. The Collaborative would develop a national outcomes framework to help the specialist sector move from reporting blunt output measures—attendance, completion and recidivism—towards meaningful outcome measures centred on victim-survivors' own assessments of change, closing a gap starkly illustrated by a recent scoping review which found that research on men's participation in behaviour change treatment represents just 0.2% of domestic violence literature internationally.⁹² It would also support national reporting on the total number of men receiving behaviour change interventions and the nature of those interventions. The Collaborative would recognise practitioner- and lived-experience-generated evidence, including NTV's own national member surveys and Men's Referral Service practice data and the practice knowledge held by Aboriginal community-controlled, LGBTQIA+, culturally and racially marginalised, and disability services, as a legitimate and currently underutilised component of the national evidence base.^{93, 94}
18. **Fund a dedicated, cross-sectional national perpetration prevalence study**, analogous to the Personal Safety Survey, building on the methodology developed through the current NSW trial, including codesign with intersectional lived experience, as a named and regularly repeated initiative.⁹⁵
19. **Fund the Criminal Justice Data Asset (CJDA) as a priority investment**, so it can be made accessible to researchers and policy analysts in 2026–27, and work with the ABS to incorporate diversion and court-mandated program data into it over time.⁹⁶
20. **Mandate consistent national protection order reporting** through the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme, with the Australian Institute for Health and Wellbeing as the national collation body and a clear implementation timeline.⁹⁷
21. **Government should commit to publishing all evaluations, including those undertaken of projects funded under the Innovative Perpetrator Response Fund** (due to the Commonwealth in August 2026), and mandate consistent national data standards for program participation and outcomes reporting as a condition of future jurisdictional funding, so that lessons can be shared, progress compared across jurisdictions, and projects continually developed and improved.⁹⁸

Why now

The government's consultation paper, *Evidence to action: informing direction for the Second Action Plan*, acknowledges that Australia does not yet have a national measure of the prevalence of the

violence perpetration.⁹⁹ Three of the five actions above are not proposals to commission new work — they are proposals to fund infrastructure that already exists in proof-of-concept or pilot form (the CJDA, the NSW perpetration prevalence trial, the Innovative Perpetrator Response evaluations) and is awaiting a funding decision. The Second Action Plan is a crucial vehicle to bring this to life.

The 2026 NTV National Conference Declaration commits the sector to 'the ongoing integration of evidence and research into policy and practice, respecting data sovereignty' (Appendix B), a principle that the CJDA and national data standards proposed here should reflect, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data.

Context and problem statement

Without reliable national data on who uses violence, how often, under what circumstances, and whether our responses are working, it is impossible to design systems at the right scale, target investment effectively, or demonstrate impact. This is not a single gap but four compounding ones.

First, Australia has no national prevalence measure of perpetration. The ANROWS-funded domestic, family and sexual violence perpetration prevalence study, initiated by lived experience advocate [REDACTED] and currently underway in New South Wales, is a welcome first step. But a single-jurisdiction trial cannot substitute for a national measure. Australia measures victimisation nationally through the Personal Safety Survey; it has no equivalent instrument for perpetration.

Second, the data needed to understand the scale and shape of this problem does not exist in usable form. Australia cannot currently answer basic questions about repeat offending: how often men return to using violence after contact with police, courts or corrective services, or how long that takes. The ABS has already built the tool to answer this — a de-identified, person-level linked data asset, the Criminal Justice Data Asset (CJDA), drawing on police, courts and corrective services data nationally. The proof of concept is complete; the asset itself remains unfunded.

Third, protection order data — the clearest available signal of where risk is concentrating — is itself fragmented. Only four states and territories currently publish consistent protection and intervention order data, meaning breach rates and active order numbers, both National Plan performance measures, cannot be calculated nationally at all. The mechanism to fix this already exists — the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme — and the DFSV Commissioner has already recommended the first step: agreed national definitions.

This gap is compounded by a deeper one: even where evaluation exists, it measures the wrong things. NTV's 2025 national practitioner survey found that practitioners experience research as focused on describing the problem of men's violence rather than evaluating what helps stop it — a distortion reflected starkly in the finding that research examining men's participation in behaviour change treatment constitutes just 0.2% of domestic violence literature internationally.^{100, 101} Where evaluation does exist, it typically measures attendance, completion and recidivism: instruments practitioners surveyed described as too blunt to show whether violence has actually stopped, shifted form, or whether victim-survivors feel genuinely safer.¹⁰²

"20 weeks is not enough time to make any calls on [the] likelihood of change," one practitioner surveyed by NTV noted, reflecting on the standard Men's Behaviour Change Program window.¹⁰³

This data gap has a structural cause. The legal system — intervention orders, bail conditions, court mandates — is most often the first, not the last, response men using violence receive, meaning Australia's data infrastructure, like its service system, is built around late-stage, crisis-point contact rather than earlier intervention. Practitioners surveyed observed that this shapes both what gets measured and what gets delivered: court-mandated engagement can produce compliance rather than change.

"When men are mandated, they will seek to say the 'right' thing and present themselves in a certain way to appease the system, without actually engaging," as one survey respondent put it.¹⁰⁴

A national outcomes picture that only counts legal-system contact and program completion will systematically miss the earlier intervention points — voluntary help-seeking, family-initiated engagement, community and cultural pathways — that this submission and the Rapid Review agree Australia must build towards. Closing this gap requires two things working together, not one following automatically from the other: (1.) a nationally consistent reporting architecture that government does not yet have, and (2.) a mechanism for capturing the practice-level detail (participation, retention, and safety outcomes assessed against victim-survivors' own accounts of change) that sits with providers, not with funders. Neither is sufficient alone.

The case for action

Each of these four gaps has a concrete, fundable fix available now, not a research agenda requiring years of design work.

A national perpetration prevalence study should be commissioned as a named, regularly repeated initiative, forming part of the population-level survey infrastructure alongside the NCAS and PSS, and should build directly on the methodology and lived-experience codesign already developed through the NSW trial rather than starting from scratch.

Program participation and outcomes data have a natural first step already scheduled: the Innovative Perpetrator Response fund evaluations due to the Commonwealth in August 2026 should be published and made available across jurisdictions (as should all evaluations), rather than remaining siloed within individual programs. But publication alone will not produce a national picture unless it rests on two further foundations, and unless what is evaluated changes: NTV's national practitioner survey found that, even where evaluation exists, it measures attendance, completion and recidivism — outputs practitioners consistently identified as too blunt to show whether violence has stopped, shifted form, or whether victim-survivors feel genuinely safer.¹⁰⁵ Future evaluation and reporting standards should build in outcome measures centred on victim-survivors' own assessments of change, not participation counts alone."

The CJDA is the single most significant near-term data investment available to government for understanding who uses violence, how patterns develop over time, and what interrupts them — and it requires a funding decision, not further development, to become usable by 2026–27.

National protection order reporting can be achieved through the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme, with AIHW as the collation body, by acting on the DFSV Commissioner's existing recommendation on agreed definitions and categories.

Funding the CJDA and standardising protection order reporting are not two separate asks; they are the same gap seen from two angles. Together, they are what would let government and the sector finally see the points of contact practitioners already know matter most — the moment a man first comes into contact with police, courts, or a protection order. Right now, no one can say with national confidence how much harm is avoided when intervention occurs at first contact rather than at the fifth, or which men re-offend regardless of intervention and require sustained risk management rather than behaviour-change programming alone. Practitioners have told NTV directly that this earlier point of contact is where they most want the capacity to engage.

Agreeing national definitions is not a formality, either. Protection and intervention orders do not currently share a common legal basis across jurisdictions: some are issued at a threshold of threatened harm, others only once harm has actually occurred — a difference that shapes not only how many orders are made but also who they are made against. Emerging analysis of misidentification in Victoria and NSW suggests these differing thresholds may themselves affect how often victim-survivors are wrongly identified as the predominant aggressor. Without agreed national definitions, any future national reporting risks aggregating figures that are not actually measuring the same thing — compounding a completeness problem with a comparability one."

First, national data standards are required. This is where the fiscal architecture proposed in Section 4 does double duty: a program-level fiscal strategy that tracks government-funded activity against actual programs, rather than the current four-pillar structure, is also the minimum infrastructure a national outcomes picture depends on. Government cannot report outcomes against programs it cannot first identify. The two asks are complementary, not sequential: the fiscal strategy makes visible what is funded; consistent outcomes reporting makes visible what it achieves.

Second, government does not need to build this capability from nothing. No to Violence, as the national peak body for 187 member organisations delivering these programs in every state and territory, already collects program- and practitioner-level data at a scale no single jurisdiction currently matches; most recently through national practitioner surveys (2025, 2026).

NTV's 2025-member survey showed why this matters: research gaps are most acute where the need is greatest—among Aboriginal community-controlled, LGBTQIA+ and culturally and racially marginalised-community-led services, whose practice knowledge mainstream research has been slowest to engage with, and who consistently offered the most sophisticated analyses of how structural and interpersonal violence intersect.¹⁰⁶

This is a genuine national asset for building the outcomes picture that Australia currently lacks, provided it is properly resourced and connected to government reporting requirements, rather than left running in parallel with a system the government doesn't draw on. The National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative proposed below is the natural home for this function: a standing, funded mechanism through which sector-collected participation and outcomes data is aggregated,

standardised and fed into national reporting, alongside its role synthesising practice knowledge for policy.

Engaged with evidence, but not served by it

NTV national member survey, 2026

65%

access research
often or always

30%

say available research doesn't
reflect the communities or
contexts they work in

Source: No to Violence national member survey, 2026 (Appendix A). n=73-80.

Figure 9. Engaged with evidence, but not served by it.

Description: Two-statistic infographic: 65% of members access research often or always; 30% say available research doesn't reflect the communities or contexts they work in. Source: No to Violence national member survey, 2026 (Appendix A), n=73-80.

This gap is not abstract to the practitioners this submission represents. Almost a third (30%) of NTV members surveyed said the research currently available to them does not reflect the communities or contexts they work in—a finding that sits uncomfortably alongside 56% of members reporting they access research often, and a further 9% always doing so (see Appendix A). Practitioners are engaging with the evidence base at a high rate and still finding it does not speak to their practice. As one practitioner from an Aboriginal-controlled service put it, effective work with men requires understanding the *"link between healing Country and healing our men"* — knowledge that Aboriginal-controlled services already hold, and were never waiting on a national dataset to identify.¹⁰⁷ The gap is not that this knowledge is uncaptured; it is that evidence of its impact currently has no pathway to inform funding decisions because national evidence infrastructure treats only what sits within mainstream administrative systems as fundable evidence. That is a data sovereignty issue, not a data collection gap: closing it means resourcing community-controlled evidence generation and recognising its authority on its own terms, not retrofitting it into datasets designed to hold something else. Adding more administrative datasets to the national evidence infrastructure will not close this particular gap; recognising and funding this evidence on its own terms will.

The gap this closes is not abstract to the practitioners it would serve. As one sector CEO described the status quo:

'We actually don't even have consistent data collection across the various state and territory programs... at best, we collect widgets. We collect numbers of people attending programs, which tells us nothing. There's very little data linking into the experience of victim-survivors and children... around impact.' [REDACTED] CEO, Centre for Non-Violence.¹⁰⁸

This is the outcomes-measurement problem described above, in the words of someone who lives it daily.

The National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative ask is not about developing a new institution. It would be designed specifically to avoid duplicating research infrastructure ANROWS already provides: ANROWS would lead research synthesis and evidence quality, NTV would lead practitioner engagement and translation into practice, with joint governance between them. Its core functions are practical rather than aspirational — closing the three-to-five-year lag between academic publication and frontline practice, building a national outcomes framework on validated measurement tools rather than attendance counts, and funding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTIQ+, culturally and racially marginalised, and disability-led organisations to document their own innovations on their own terms, with governance built around Indigenous data sovereignty throughout.

NTV is not only a consumer of evidence but also a contributor to it: our national member surveys in 2025 and 2026 are among the few systematic sources of practitioner knowledge about what is working and where the system is failing. A National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative, developed with ANROWS, would give this practitioner evidence a permanent, funded mechanism to reach policy. NTV's full proposal for the Collaborative — governance, operating model, functions and costing — is detailed in NTV's 2026 Federal Budget Submission.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion

Australia is not short of ideas for how to close its family violence data gap—it is short of funding decisions on infrastructure that, in three of the four cases above, already exists in near-deployable form. The Second Action Plan is the mechanism now open to fund the national perpetration prevalence study, the CJDA, consistent protection order reporting, and a practitioner-connected Learning Collaborative—the evidence infrastructure that everything else in this submission depends on being able to measure.

Conclusion

There is a particular kind of failure that is hard to see, because it doesn't look like failure. It looks like activity. Programs are funded, frameworks are cited, plans are launched on schedule. Somewhere inside all that motion, though, the man who used violence last night is still, this morning, more likely to encounter a courtroom than a practitioner who might change his trajectory. Somewhere inside that same motion, so are the police officers, teachers and emergency clinicians absorbing the consequences of his violence without the training or funding to do anything but respond to it—because in practice, if not by design, every part of the public sector has become a DFV service, whether it was resourced to be one or not. That gap—between the system's motion and its reach—is what this submission has tried to describe.

It is not a story about neglect. Nobody designed a system to under-fund men's behaviour change work, or to leave protection order data unlinked across four states, or to let a workforce absorb burnout as the cost of doing its job. Each of those outcomes is the cumulative result of reasonable decisions made one budget cycle at a time, without anyone positioned to see the whole picture. That is precisely why it will not correct itself. Fixing it requires someone to hold the whole picture—which is what a National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy, a web of accountability spanning eighteen departments, and a transparent, program-level funding picture are actually for. Not more programs. A system able to see itself clearly enough to know whether it is working.

We began this submission with a number that should sit uncomfortably with anyone who reads it:

fewer than three per cent of Australia's domestic and family violence offenders are receiving any form of behaviour change intervention.

This is the clearest evidence available that Australia's response to men who use violence remains, structurally, an afterthought to its response to the crises that violence produces. It is also, on new early intervention economic modelling, an afterthought Australia cannot afford. Preventing first-time offending and the reoffending it cascades into is worth some \$8.3 billion a year—against a fraction of that currently spent on early intervention. Every recommendation in this submission is an attempt to close that gap—not by abandoning the crisis response system, which is necessary, but by finally building the earlier one alongside it.

None of this is a technical problem waiting on the right program design. Practitioners already recognise what works: continuum, not checklist; relationship, not referral; community-led, not centrally imposed; a workforce that is resourced to excel rather than expected to endure. For most of what this submission asks, what has been missing is not practice knowledge—it is the government architecture prepared to fund, at the scale that the evidence demands, and the accountability to know whether that funding is achieving its purpose. One thing is genuinely new: a functioning system for responding to men who use violence does not yet exist in Australia, only a set of disconnected programs operating at a fraction of the scale required. Naming and building that system is the one piece of this submission that breaks new ground.

We have spent fifteen years making the case that violence against women is serious, gendered and preventable. We were right. Three hundred and eighty-two delegates from across the sector said as much themselves in March this year: this violence is not inevitable, it is preventable (Appendix B). What this submission asks of the Second Action Plan is not incremental—it is the courage to set a genuinely new path. The case for it has never been stronger, or better evidenced, than it is now. The choice is government's to make.

Summary of recommendations

Introduction — A broader framework for early intervention

1. Direct that the Theory of Change's individual/relationship level be populated with the fuller set of causal factors in Heise's original ecological framework (harmful substance use, gambling, childhood trauma, relationship dynamics) as co-equal pathways, not secondary "reinforcing factors."
2. Test and scale gender-transformative programs for under-served life-stages identified by this model, starting with fathers and parents.

Section 1 — Growing the scope and scale of responses

3. Increase investment in earlier intervention, funding a continuum of responses to men using domestic and family violence (DFV) at a scale that matches the size of the problem, rather than concentrating investment in late-stage responses.
4. Adopt a principle-based framework, not a checklist of program types, as the basis for commissioning, funding and evaluating responses to men who use violence.
5. Resource an interconnected system, not standalone programs, so men can move between different levels of intervention over time and victim-survivor safety never depends on a man's willingness to engage.
6. Mandate dedicated, ring-fenced funding for family safety contact and advocacy work as a mandatory component of all Commonwealth and state funding for programs working with men who use family violence.

Section 2 — The economic and human case for earlier intervention, and engaging earlier with young people

7. Deliver a substantial, specified increase in funding for early intervention programs for people beginning to use, or at risk of escalating, family violence.
8. Identify and direct investment at critical life junctures as high-yield points to intervene before escalation — first-time fatherhood, job loss and economic insecurity, disaster contexts, and permanent injury or cognitive decline.
9. Deliver universal workforce training at scale, paired with embedded specialist capacity, for youth, early parenting, health, mental health, alcohol and other drug, homelessness and youth justice workers to recognise and respond to youth intimate partner violence (IPV).
10. Identify and sustainably fund the programs already piloted and shown to work for young men at risk of using, or beginning to use, AVITH and youth IPV — including Caring Dads, Home Base's Merge and Flo, and Meli's Young Men's Behaviour Change Group — rather than continuing to fund this work through sporadic, self-initiated or intermittent arrangements.
11. Resource accommodation pathways that enable behaviour change engagement for young men at risk of using, or beginning to use, IPV — not just crisis housing.

Section 3 — A National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy

12. Commit to a National Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Workforce Strategy by the release of the Federal Budget 2027–28, developed with the specialist sector, covering: workforce build and retention; formal recognition of specialist practice; national workforce architecture; strengthened recruitment pathways from universities, VET and feeder professions; targeted capability building for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, multicultural and regional/rural workforces; and NPA-enabled state investment in supervision, secure employment and secondment pathways — with the Strategy and associated funding agreements in place and beginning implementation by mid-2028.

Section 4 — A sustainable whole-of-government response

13. Adopt a whole-of-government "web of accountability" model, adapted from Victoria's Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan, with named cross-portfolio responsibility across all 18 relevant federal departments and agencies and shared progress measures.
14. Develop a program-level fiscal strategy that maps all government-funded programs relevant to ending violence — including non-traditional portfolios — and publicly reports against actual programs rather than the four-pillar structure, with dedicated funding lines in each relevant department made publicly visible and shared performance frameworks established across Commonwealth, state and territory governments.
15. Introduce DFV-proofing of major policy decisions in housing, social security, immigration, employment and family law, modelled on existing gender impact assessment requirements.
16. Close the gaps that let systems be weaponised against victim-survivors, by funding and timetabling full national real-time FVO visibility through the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme, harmonising legal definitions and FVO processes across jurisdictions, and extending the current Commonwealth systems-abuse audit and Safety by Design principles beyond their initial scope, paired with universal misidentification training for police and frontline decision-makers.

Section 5 — Building the evidence base

17. Fund a National Violence Intervention Learning Collaborative, coordinated by NTV and developed in partnership with ANROWS, to capture, synthesise and translate practice knowledge into policy, and to aggregate and standardise national program participation and outcomes data — recognising practitioner- and lived-experience-generated evidence, including NTV's national member surveys and Men's Referral Service practice data, as a legitimate component of the national evidence base.
18. Fund a dedicated, cross-sectional national perpetration prevalence study, analogous to the Personal Safety Survey, building on the methodology developed through the current NSW trial, including codesign with intersectional lived experience, as a named and regularly repeated initiative.
19. Fund the Criminal Justice Data Asset (CJDA) as a priority investment, so it can be made accessible to researchers and policy analysts in 2026–27, and incorporate diversion and court-mandated program data over time.

20. Mandate consistent national protection order reporting through the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme, with AIHW as the national collation body and a clear implementation timeline.
21. Commit to publishing all evaluations, including those under the Innovative Perpetrator Response Fund (due to the Commonwealth in August 2026), and mandate consistent national data standards for program participation and outcomes reporting as a condition of future jurisdictional funding.

Appendices

Appendix A: NTV member survey summary

No to Violence sent out a survey to its 187 members on 7 April 2026 to ascertain their priorities for advocacy, research and sector development. 92 members responded. Percentages are of respondents who answered each question, not of all 92 members; multi-select questions do not sum to 100%.

No to Violence's national member survey received 92 responses (a response rate of 49%), predominantly from Victoria (68%) and New South Wales (16%), with the remainder spread across the ACT, NT, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia; respondents held a mix of frontline practitioner, team leader/manager and executive/CEO roles across men's behaviour change and related family violence services.

A significant finding from the survey was that service delivery capacity under current funding is uneven: **60% of respondents rated their capacity to deliver post-program support as limited or non-existent**, and 57% said the same of individual counselling, compared with roughly half rating intake, risk assessment and group program delivery as strong or full capacity (n≈50).

Day-to-day, the biggest challenges reported were a lack of system coordination and a lack of housing options for men using family violence (58% each), and insufficient referral options for complex cases such as young men or those with an acquired brain injury (50%, n=74).

Workforce needs centred on new starters (67%) and practitioners working directly with men (63%, n=72), with **cost (73%) and time (60%) the leading barriers to accessing training** (n=78).

On evidence use, 56% of members access research often and a further 9% always do so (n=80), but 58% cited a lack of time as the main barrier, and **30% said available research doesn't reflect the communities or contexts they work in** (n=73); short, practical formats were preferred for future research, led by evidence summaries or snapshots (69%) and short practice briefs (68%, n=81).

On system reform, members' clearest priorities were driving systemic reform to end the enablers of men's use of family violence (69%) and investing in earlier intervention for boys and men who use, or are at risk of using, violence (67%), followed by strengthening and retaining the specialist workforce (59%) and improving the use of evidence, data and research (52%, n=90).

Asked what is most urgent to improve system accountability, respondents pointed overwhelmingly to closing gaps and loopholes exploited by men using family violence (71%) and to legal, police and family court reform (66%), with reform of child protection policy and legislation for children and young people also prominent (47%, n=88).

Partnership priorities centred on the alcohol and other drugs sector and child protection/family services (59% each), courts (58%) and police (56%, n=86), and **with increased funding members most wanted to see greater diversity of intervention types, including whole-of-family work (62%), and**

investment in both early intervention before violence starts and responses to children and young people using violence (59% each, n=90).

Appendix B: Conference declaration

The following declaration, unanimously endorsed by 382 delegates at NTV's 2026 national conference, is referenced throughout this submission as evidence of sector-wide consensus behind the recommendations above.

National Conference Declaration: Thursday 12 March 2026

This Conference Declaration was created in collaboration with the 382 attendees of the 2026 Australian national conference to end men's use of family violence.

In the face of global and national political challenges to the work to end gender-based violence, Australia is at a critical juncture. Far too little is being done far too late to intervene with men using and at risk of using family violence. Instead, there is an over-reliance on late-stage criminal legal responses that enables violence to escalate, leaves victim-survivors facing increased risk and heightened levels of abuse and fails to meaningfully prevent harm.

As a result, approximately a quarter of women over the age of 15 have experienced Intimate Partner Violence and 39% of children have experienced family violence. Over the past decade, at least 362 women have been murdered by an intimate partner and 123 children killed by a parent. The impact of this violence is disproportionate and gendered with First Nations women and children, often at the hands of non-Indigenous men, and women and children with disabilities among those most impacted.

Together, the cost of this violence is more than \$26 billion per year, yet, comparably, Australia invests a fraction of this to stop family violence at its source. Governments and communities across the continent must act now to address the scale and devastating impacts of family violence.

This violence is not inevitable, it is preventable.

At the halfway mark of the second National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children (2022-2032), Australia has five years to radically change course if it is to reach its goal of ending gender-based violence in a generation.

To do this, we need to disrupt hierarchies of power that sustain the status quo. We need to act in solidarity to strengthen our social fabric and build communities, institutions and families on the values of respect, safety, dignity, diversity, freedom, justice and free from violence.

Throughout this conference, victim-survivors, advocates, practitioners, researchers and policymakers have shared what is needed to end family violence. Delegates committed to work in solidarity to:

1. Establish a dedicated and appropriately resourced national strategy to end men's use of family violence.
2. Prioritise victim-survivor knowledge – including that of children and young people, practitioner insights and intersectionality in practice improvements, policy reform and research.

3. Centre First Nations relational ways of understanding and responding to family violence for community-controlled, self-determined solutions as a foundation for all-of-government and all-of-community responses.
4. Invest in early intervention. Identifying and engaging boys and men who use, or are at risk of using, family violence much earlier to prevent and stop it.
5. Stop the online promotion of misogyny and denigration of women and children. Hold the tech industry accountable for profiting from violent and harmful algorithms and content that encourages and enables men's use of violence.
6. Invest in broadening the scale and breadth of responses to ensure men and their families get appropriate, effective services to increase safety, accountability and change.
7. Challenge narratives that make men's use of violence an individual's problem. Attempts to end it must address the way gender, misogyny, colonisation, racism, classism, ableism, homophobia and transphobia – collectively and intersectionally – shape the use and experience of violence.
8. Recognise and invest in building and retaining the specialised workforce that delivers prevention, early intervention and responses to men using family violence, including its crucial support for victim-survivors through family safety contact work.
9. Replace criminalisation of children and young people using family violence with early trauma and family violence informed, strength-based support, and surrounding environmental changes, to create long-term safety and positive life pathways.
10. Drive structural reforms to stop violence at the source and end systemic enablers of men's use of family violence. Key areas include family court, legal systems and child protection, especially in relation to children and young people.
11. Build and share evidence-base from practice and research knowledge on pathways into and out of using violence to shape policy and practice.
12. Commit to the ongoing integration of evidence and research into policy and practice, respecting data sovereignty, supporting the sharing of evaluations and insights as the basis for funding decision-making.

This declaration was put to the 2026 National Conference on Thursday 12 March by [REDACTED] from Stopping Family Violence, seconded by [REDACTED] from SPEAQ and endorsed unanimously by conference delegates.

Appendix C: Heise Ecological Framework

Figure 1.2 Revised Conceptual Framework for Partner Violence

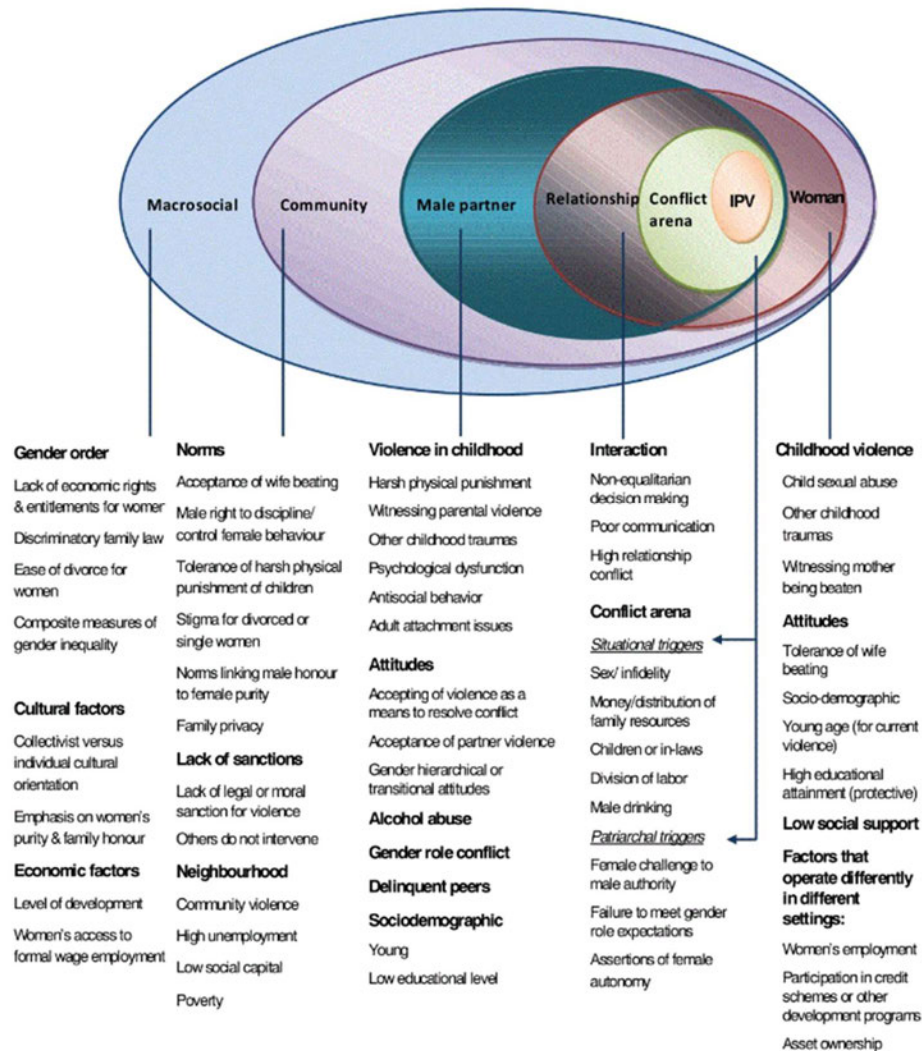


Figure 10. Revised Conceptual Framework for Partner Violence.¹¹⁰

Description: A nested-ellipse diagram (Heise's revised social-ecological model of intimate partner violence) showing five concentric levels of influence — Macrosocial, Community, Male partner, Relationship, and a small central zone containing "Conflict arena" and "IPV" (intimate partner violence) — with "Woman" positioned as a separate ellipse overlapping the innermost levels. Beneath the diagram, factors are listed under each level:

- **Macrosocial:** gender order (lack of economic rights and entitlements for women, discriminatory family law, ease of divorce for women, composite measures of gender inequality); cultural factors (collectivist versus individual cultural orientation, emphasis on women's purity and family honour); economic factors (level of development, women's access to formal wage employment).
- **Community:** norms (acceptance of wife beating, male right to discipline/control female behaviour, tolerance of harsh physical punishment of children, stigma for divorced or single women, norms linking male honour to female purity, family privacy); lack of sanctions (lack of legal or moral sanction for violence, others do not intervene); neighbourhood (community violence, high unemployment, low social capital, poverty).

- **Male partner:** violence in childhood (harsh physical punishment, witnessing parental violence, other childhood traumas, psychological dysfunction, antisocial behaviour, adult attachment issues); attitudes (accepting of violence as a means to resolve conflict, acceptance of partner violence, gender hierarchical or transitional attitudes); lack of sanctions; alcohol abuse; gender role conflict; delinquent peers; sociodemographic (young, low educational level).
- **Relationship:** interaction (non-equalitarian decision making, poor communication, high relationship conflict).
- **Conflict arena:** situational triggers (sex/infidelity, money/distribution of family resources, children or in-laws, division of labour, male drinking) and patriarchal triggers (female challenge to male authority, failure to meet gender role expectations, assertions of female autonomy).
- **Woman:** childhood violence (child sexual abuse, other childhood traumas, witnessing mother being beaten); attitudes (tolerance of wife beating, socio-demographic factors, young age as a factor for current violence, high educational attainment as protective); low social support; and factors that operate differently in different settings (women's employment, participation in credit schemes or other development programs, asset ownership).

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- ² Toivonen, C., & Backhouse, C. (2018). *National Risk Assessment Principles for domestic and family violence* [ANROWS Insights]. ANROWS. https://anrows-2019.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/19030421/ANROWS_NR_AP_National-Risk-Assessment-Principles.1.pdf p. 10
- ³ Haslam, D., Mathews, 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. Australian Child Maltreatment Study, Queensland University of Technology. https://eprints.qut.edu.au/239397/8/3846.1_ACMS_A4Report_V2.1_Digital_20230627.pdf
- ⁴ Commonwealth of Australia 2023 [Theory of Change 2022-2032: Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032](#)
- ⁵ No to Violence, & Meli. (2026). Meli Young Men's Behaviour Change Group: A specialist behaviour change program for men aged 18-25 who use intimate partner violence [Case Study]. No to Violence. <https://outcomes.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Meli-Young-Mens-Group.pdf>
- ⁶ Sheppard, L., Brown, V., Robinson, K., & Moodie, M. (2025). A critical review of long-term funding for reducing violence against women in Australia. *Public Health Research and Practice*, 35(3). <https://doi.org/10.1071/PU24027>
- ⁷ Department of Social Services (2025), [Investing in a future free from gender-based violence in Australia Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 A joint Australian, state and territory government investment report as at 30 June 2025](#)
- ⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021-22). *Personal Safety, Australia*. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>.
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- ¹² Webster, K. (2016) [A preventable burden: Measuring and addressing the prevalence and health impacts of intimate partner violence in Australian women.](#)
- ¹³ KPMG (2016) [The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia- external site opens in new window](#), Australian Women's Health Alliance website.
- ¹⁴ The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network & Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, (2022) [Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network Data Report: Intimate partner violence homicides 2010-2018](#) showed that nearly 80% of all intimate partner homicides involve a male perpetrator killing a current or former female partner.
- ¹⁵ AIHW 2025 [Family, domestic and sexual violence, Understanding FDSV, Who uses violence? In 2023-](#)

24, around 4 in 5 (79%) FDV offenders proceeded against by police were male.

¹⁶ Mathews B, Pacella R, Scott JG, Finkelhor D, Meinck F, Higgins DJ, Erskine HE, Thomas HJ, Lawrence DM, Haslam DM, Malacova E, Dunne MP. [The prevalence of child maltreatment in Australia: findings from a national survey](#). Med J Aust. 2023 Apr 3;218 Suppl 6(Suppl 6):S13-S18. doi: 10.5694/mja2.51873. PMID: 37004184; PMCID: PMC10953347.

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²¹ Heise, L. L. (1998). Violence Against Women: An Integrated, Ecological Framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4(3), 262–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801298004003002>

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²⁶ Our Watch (2018), *Changing the picture: A national resource to support the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children*, Our Watch, Melbourne.

²⁷ Our Watch (2022), *Changing the landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls with disabilities*, Our Watch, Melbourne.

²⁸ Australian Government, Department of Social Services (2023) *Theory of Change 2022–2032 Under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*. P. 11

²⁹ Our Watch. (2021). *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia* (2nd ed.). (p. 168). Our Watch. <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/change-the-story-framework>

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³¹ UNICEF Office of Strategy and Evidence – Innocenti, Prevention Collaborative, Equimundo and Parenting For Lifelong Health, [Parenting Programmes to Prevent Violence and Advance Gender Equality. Findings from a Global Mapping](#). UNICEF Innocenti, Florence, 2026.

³² Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 18. These recommendations respond to Recommendation 4 of the Rapid Review, which calls for "an independent review and expansion of Change the Story beyond primary prevention, with a focus on accommodating the evolving global evidence base" applied here specifically to the individual/relationship level of the existing model.

³³ See, for example, Garner, J., Maxwell, C., & Lee, J. (2021). [The Specific Deterrent Effects of Criminal Sanctions for Intimate Partner Violence: A Meta-Analysis](#). *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 111(1), 227. And Fitzgerald, R., & Douglas, H. (2025). [Domestic violence and the role of imprisonment as a response: Men's post-conviction talk about strangling women](#). *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 1–21.

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<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-offenders/latest-release>. And NSW MBCP participation data.

³⁶ [ABS Recorded Crime – Offenders, 2024–25](#); NSW MBCP participation data. This figure likely overestimates true national coverage, as police-recorded offenders undercount the true number of men using DV.

³⁷ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia](#). No to Violence.

³⁸ ACIL Allen and NTV (forthcoming)

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⁴⁰ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 22. This recommendation gives practical effect to Recommendation 4 of the Rapid Review, which called on governments to expand their approach to prevention "to leverage all prevention touchpoints more effectively" across early intervention, response and recovery.

⁴¹ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 22. This complements Recommendation 12 of the Rapid Review, which called for improvement of "the national evidence base, quality, capability and supply" of men's behaviour change programs through continuous improvement; a principle-based commissioning framework is the mechanism by which that improvement can be consistently applied and evaluated.

⁴² Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) pp. 22-23. This reflects the coordination logic of Recommendation 12(b)(i) of the Rapid Review, which specifies that behaviour change programs should "be part of a community-coordinated response," and of Recommendation 13, which calls for stronger multi-agency approaches to managing risk.

⁴³ Garner, J., Maxwell, C., & Lee, J. (2021). [The Specific Deterrent Effects of Criminal Sanctions for Intimate Partner Violence: A Meta-Analysis](#). *Journal*

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of Criminal Law and Criminology, 111(1), 227., & Fitzgerald, R., & Douglas, H. (2025). [Domestic violence and the role of imprisonment as a response: Men's post-conviction talk about strangling women](#). *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, 1–21.

⁴⁴ Meyer, S., & Atienzar-Prieto, M. (2024). [Evaluation of the Responsible Men program – current service delivery and future directions \(Summary report\)](#). Griffith University.

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⁴⁶ NTV (forthcoming) From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence

⁴⁷ NTV (forthcoming) From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence

⁴⁸ These principles align with the sector's own 2026 National Conference Declaration, which commits to 'centre First Nations relational ways of understanding and responding to family violence' and to 'challenge narratives that make men's use of violence an individual's problem' (Appendix B).

⁴⁹ ACON (2026) Second Action Plan Submission

⁵⁰ NTV (forthcoming) From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence

⁵¹ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) pp. 22-23. This recommendation directly operationalises Recommendation 12(b)(iii) of the Rapid Review, which specifies that behaviour change programs should "emphasise the value of associated support to victim-survivors through partner and family safety contact." National Cabinet has already agreed to progress this; ring-fenced funding is what turns the principle into practice.

⁵² NTV (forthcoming) From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence

⁵³ NTV (forthcoming) From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence

⁵⁴ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 18. This recommendation responds directly to Recommendation 4 of the Rapid Review, including its call to establish "a five-year co-funded

Prevention Innovation Fund." NTV recommends this Fund's design explicitly include people beginning to use, or at risk of escalating, family violence as a funded cohort.

⁵⁵ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 19. This recommendation is closely aligned with Recommendation 6(c) of the Rapid Review, which calls for DFSV-informed program responses "throughout men's life transitions, including school leavers, new fathers, separation/relationship breakdown, recent migration and recent unemployment.

⁵⁶ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 19. This supports Recommendation 5(b) of the Rapid Review, which calls for "tailored and developmentally appropriate, as well as youth-specific and informed, service responses" including for young people using violence in intimate relationships.

⁵⁷ National Youth IPV Network, Submission to the Second Action Plan, August 2026, Recommendation 6

⁵⁸ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 19. This recommendation is consistent with Recommendation 6 of the Rapid Review, which calls for a national, coordinated approach to engaging with men and boys across "men's life transitions"

⁵⁹ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 19. This supports Recommendation 5(c) of the Rapid Review, which calls for "an appropriate and tailored response to young people escaping violence and seeking financial support and safe housing".

⁶⁰ No to Violence (forthcoming) *From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence*

⁶¹ O'Donnell, K., Rioseco, P., Vittiglia, A., Rowland, B., & Mundy, L. (2023). [Intimate partner violence among Australian 18–19 year olds](#) (Growing Up in Australia Snapshot Series Issue 11). Australian Institute of Family Studies.

⁶² O'Donnell, K., Woldegiorgis, M., Gasser, C., Scurrah, K., Andersson, C., McKay, H., Hegarty, K., Seidler, Z., & Martin, S. (2025). *The use of intimate partner violence among Australian men* (Insights #3 Chapter 1; Ten to Men: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Male Health). Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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<https://aifs.gov.au/tentomen/insights-report/use-intimate-partner-violence-among-australian-men>

⁶³ Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (2026), [Informing Australia's Second Action Plan...](#), Priority Area 3: Children and young people in their own right.

⁶⁴ Department of Social Services (2025), [Investing in a future free from gender-based violence in Australia under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032: A joint Australian, state and territory government investment report as at 30 June 2025](#).

⁶⁵ ACIL Allen Consulting, modelling commissioned by No to Violence (forthcoming).

⁶⁶ Department of Social Services (2025), [Investing in a future free from gender-based violence in Australia under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032: A joint Australian, state and territory government investment report as at 30 June 2025](#).

⁶⁷ Sheppard, L., Brown, V., Robinson, K., & Moodie, M. (2025). A critical review of long-term funding for reducing violence against women in Australia. *Public Health Research and Practice*, 35(3), PU24027. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PU24027>

⁶⁸ Department of Social Services (2025), [Investing in a future free from gender-based violence in Australia under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032: A joint Australian, state and territory government investment report as at 30 June 2025](#).

⁶⁹ Department of Social Services (2025), [Investing in a future free from gender-based violence in Australia under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032: A joint Australian, state and territory government investment report as at 30 June 2025](#).

⁷⁰ Alsina et al. (2024) [Interventions to Prevent Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#).

⁷¹ Gasser et al. (2025) [Ten to Men: Health outcomes and health service usage among first-time fathers in Australia](#).

⁷² Calculated by combining the number of males who lost a job last year and the number of males who were not employed since leaving a job in last year. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025) [Job mobility- Table 1. Labour mobility, retrenchments and duration of employment](#).

⁷³ No to Violence (forthcoming) *From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence*

⁷⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2024–25). *Criminal Courts, Australia*. ABS.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/criminal-courts-australia/latest-release>.

⁷⁵ Silva, K. (2026). *Jessie James Tumaliuan sentenced to 26 years' jail for estranged wife's murder*. Retrieved August 13, 2026, from <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-06-24/jessie-james-tumaliuan-family-violence-murder-sentencing/106836080>

⁷⁶ Coroners Court of South Australia (2026) [Inquest into the Deaths of Kobi Anastasia Isobel Shepherdson and Henry David Shepherdson](#).

⁷⁷ No to Violence. (2026). *Evidence Review: Addressing young men's use of intimate partner violence*. No to Violence.

⁷⁸ Meli & No to Violence (2026) [Meli Young Men's Behaviour Change Group: A specialist behaviour change program for men aged 18-25 who use intimate partner violence](#)

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⁸⁰ O'Donnell, K., Woldegiorgis, M., Gasser, C., Scurrah, K., Andersson, C., McKay, H., Hegarty, K., Seidler, Z., & Martin, S. (2025). [The use of intimate partner violence among Australian men \(Insights #3 Chapter 1; Ten to Men: The Australian Longitudinal Study on Male Health\)](#). Australian Institute of Family Studies.

⁸¹ No to Violence (forthcoming). *From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence*

⁸² Campbell, E., Fernando, T., Gassner, L., Hill, J., Seidler, Z., & Summers, A. (2024). [Unlocking the Prevention Potential: Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) (p. 148) [Report of the Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches]. Australian Government.

⁸³ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 22. *This recommendation aligns with Recommendation 13 or the Rapid Review: "The Commonwealth and state and territory governments to work together to strengthen multi agency approaches and better manage risk, with a lens on harm and safety, for victim-survivors of DFSV, including risk of homicide and suicide."*

⁸⁴ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 24. This recommendation is the preventive counterpart to Recommendation 16 of the Rapid Review, which called for "an immediate audit of how DFSV

No to Violence The last resort should not be the first response

perpetrators are weaponising government systems" "including family law, immigration and taxation" informed by Safety by Design principles. DFV-proofing would stop new instances of the harm Recommendation 16 asks government to audit and remediate.

⁸⁵ Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance (2026), [Submission to the Consultation on the Second Action Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032](#), p.1.

⁸⁶ Australian Government, Australian Government Response to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Report: Inquiry into Family Violence Orders, 2025. This ask aligns with three Agree in principle / Agree in part commitments in the Government's response to the House Standing Committee's Inquiry into Family Violence Orders (2025) — Recommendations 1, 3 and 10.

⁸⁷ Sheppard L, Brown V, Robinson K, Moodie M. (2025) A critical review of long-term funding for reducing violence against women in Australia. *Public Health Research & Practice* 35, PU24027. <https://doi.org/10.1071/PU24027>

⁸⁸ NTV (forthcoming) *From Fragmentation to Framework: Building an Ecosystem of Responses to End Men's Use of Domestic and Family Violence*

⁸⁹ Prevention Collaborative (2026), 2026–2029 Strategic Plan (internal document, not publicly available).

⁹⁰ Kelly, L., & Westmarland, N. (2015). *Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programmes: Steps Towards Change*. Project Mirabal Final Report. London Metropolitan University and Durham University. <https://repository.londonmet.ac.uk/1458/1/ProjectMirabalfinalreport.pdf>

⁹¹ Hester, M., Ortega-Avila, A. G., Eisenstadt, N., & Walker, S.-J. (2025). Evaluation of the Drive Intervention for High-Harm Domestic Abuse Perpetrators in England and Wales Using a Quasi-Experimental Approach. *Social Sciences*, 14(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14020055>

⁹² Arrigo, J.-L., Taheri, M., Fitzpatrick, S., & McCormack, L. (2025). Domestic violence, behavior change programs, positive and negative outcomes: A scoping review. *Psychology of Violence*, 15(2), 164–180. <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000540>

⁹³ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence](#) p. 25. This recommendation offers an institutional vehicle to support the clearinghouse function proposed in Recommendation 19 of the Rapid Review, translating practice knowledge into the kind of national evidence synthesis that function anticipates.

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- ⁹⁴ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ⁹⁵ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [*Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence*](#) p. 25. This recommendation is a direct implementation of Recommendation 20(c) of the Rapid Review, which calls for "establishing a national data set focusing on the extent and nature of perpetration to inform and improve response." National Cabinet has already committed to progressing this; this submission supports that decision.
- ⁹⁶ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [*Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence*](#) p. 22 & 25. This recommendation supports the data and information-sharing agenda of Recommendation 13(b) of the Rapid Review (strengthening information sharing, including through the National Criminal Intelligence System) and the broader data-strengthening call in Recommendation 20.
- ⁹⁷ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [*Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence*](#) p. 25. This recommendation would help deliver Recommendation 20 of the Rapid Review, which calls on governments to "further strengthen data collection" and prioritise "enhancements to the measurements framework for the National Plan."
- ⁹⁸ Rapid Review Expert Panel (2024) [*Unlocking the Prevention Potential Accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence*](#) p. 22 & 25. This recommendation supports the evidence-quality agenda of Recommendation 12(b) of the Rapid Review and the data-strengthening agenda of Recommendation 20.
- ⁹⁹ ANROWS/DSS, May 2026
- ¹⁰⁰ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve*](#)

- [*responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ¹⁰¹ Arrigo, J.-L., Taheri, M., Fitzpatrick, S., & McCormack, L. (2025). Domestic violence, behavior change programs, positive and negative outcomes: A scoping review. *Psychology of Violence*, 15(2), 164–180. <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000540>
- ¹⁰² Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ¹⁰³ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ¹⁰⁴ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ¹⁰⁵ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ¹⁰⁶ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ¹⁰⁷ Wheildon, L., Castle, M., & Buys, R. (2026). [*Practitioner insights: What's needed to improve responses to men using domestic and family violence in Australia*](#). No to Violence.
- ¹⁰⁸ Margaret Augerninos, CEO, Centre for Non-Violence, quoted in [*No to Violence, 2026-27 Federal Budget Submission*](#), p.16
- ¹⁰⁹ No to Violence, [*2026-27 Federal Budget Submission*](#)
- ¹¹⁰ Heise, L. (2011). *What Works to Prevent Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview*. [Working Paper]. STRIVE Research Consortium, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. <https://strive.lshtm.ac.uk/resources/what-works-prevent-partner-violence-evidence-overview/>