

**Consultation on the Second Action Plan (National Plan to
End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032)**



Australian Government – Department of Social Services

August 2026

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Introduction & Overview

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) commends the Second Action Plan (The Plan) as taking an important step forward in acknowledging women with disability and the prevalence of domestic and family violence that women with disability are exposed to as well as sources of that violence in the 'caring industry', such as carers and support workers.

However, QDN also proposes further work needs to be undertaken, as detailed in the 9 key recommendations listed below, in terms of improving services for women with disability as well as for children with disability and people with disability who may be violent or considering violence. As part of the effort to refocus priorities of the Plan, QDN encourages greater focus on women and children with disability, incorporating them into responses to violence instead of considering them as a separate cohort.

QDN's submission responds to proposed priority areas in the Plan as well as listing 9 key recommendations on how to incorporate women and children with disability into the Plan through increased education across all community stakeholders interested in domestic and family violence as well as incorporating people with disability with lived experience of disability into the development of programs and services designed to help those escape domestic and family violence, or recognise the signs of domestic and family violence.

QDN throughout this submission also highlight the gaps in services due to limited understanding of disability by the workforce, the problems caused by a lack of data which limits understanding of the issues faced by women with disability, the lack of holistic services which often means that women with disability are stopped from accessing key resources when they attempt to leave a relationship that is violent or abusive and the lack of flexibility in services that makes it hard for women with disability and often leaves victim-survivors unable to access the resources they need.

QDN also calls on the need for more attention to data collection on people with disability and the prevalence of domestic and family violence in this cohort.

QDN's overall feedback is informed primarily via the lived experience feedback of our members, other key sector stakeholders connected to domestic and family violence services and attendees of a forum held in partnership with DVConnect on 26 March 2026, which focused on domestic and family violence and disability.

In particular, QDN welcomes the focus on technological forms of abuse in the Plan and the impacts these have on women with disability as well as the need to promote healthy uses of technology that don't cause harm to women and children with disability. QDN also welcomes the need to promote understanding of what is and isn't violence and abuse early and the need to engage with those who use violence or could potentially use violence early.

As noted in our recommendations there is much that needs to be done to incorporate women with disability and their lived experience as part of this process.

Recommendations

QDN notes that implementation needs to incorporate disability into the holistic discussion, not just as a periphery issue. The 9 recommendations highlighted below are designed to highlight the actions that need to be taken over the next stage of implementation of the Plan.

1. Incorporate women with lived experience of disability and experience as victim-survivors into policy, program and services development. Currently there is a lack of survivor voice, particularly from women with disability and incorporating this cohort will have a positive impact on the ability to develop services that support women with disability.

2. Fund a national data collection program to better understand the forms of violence against women and children with disability and also to understand the prevalence of violence used by people with disability.
3. Improve engagement across relevant stakeholder groups to improve service delivery for women and children with disability who are victim-survivors. Remove the formulaic structure of service delivery and begin to focus on flexible systems that have 'no wrong door' points of entry.
4. Improve engagement across stakeholders to avoid the need for victim-survivors to retell their experiences repeatedly when they attempt to access services related to domestic and family violence.
5. Ensure that services and programs designed to assist women and children escaping domestic and family violence, and programs and services designed to educate on early signs of violence are accessible in terms of navigating them through online delivery as well as physically accessible in terms of infrastructure of crisis accommodation.
6. Review successful pilots and programs with the goal of creating national programs to focus on the following areas:
 - a. Understanding what is violence and abuse, with a focus on new technologies and assistive technologies.
 - b. The safe use of technology for children and young people with disability.
 - c. Also important to be included are carers, support workers and any other person in a position where they have responsibility for someone with disability

This is to help identify what has worked so that it can be incorporated into the response to the key priority areas highlighted in the terms of reference.

7. Build workforce capacity through specialised training that focuses on the different types of disability, how people with disability experience their disability and understanding that not all people with the same disability experience it in the same way.

8. Incorporate disability into the whole of Plan so that a disability lens is incorporated into key action items across the Plan. This will help focus the needs of women and children with disability across the broader sector.
9. Increase education around the use of strangulation, particularly with young people with a particular focus on there being no safe form of strangulation and the risks of acquired brain injury due to strangulation and the permanent impact that this may have on the victim and the perpetrator.

Priority Area 1: Violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence

Service and System Responses

From the forum held in conjunction with DVConnect on 26 March 2026, to more recent comments from members and key stakeholders as part of QDNs response to this consultation we have heard that system and service responses to women with disability are considered fragmented and lacking coordination between different services. These issues are exacerbated across different regions and organisations creating situations where people, particularly women with disability with complex issues fall through cracks in the system and do not have the support that they need when trying to leave situations where they are victims of violence.

QDN heard from members about the need for a “no wrong door” approach to services, to have systems that have the flexibility to accommodate the needs of women with disability who are facing domestic and family violence. The need for flexible services is not new and was identified as a must in the First Action Plan released in 2010 [2]. For women with disability flexible services extend across a wide range of needs including safe, accessible and affordable housing, counselling, legal support and financial assistance.

Understanding these needs for victim-survivors who are women with disability is key to the success of the second plan. It is not simply a matter of having available supports through the justice and social service systems there are a broader range of requirements that need to be considered in order to ensure sufficient services are available for women with disability.

Barriers and Accessing Support Earlier

Women with disability who have experienced domestic and family violence often face more barriers to accessing services that delays the leaving of relationships where domestic and family violence is taking place. QDN has conducted work which has shown that women accessing the justice system experienced changes in how they were treated when they talked about having a disability.

It was noted that not all disabilities are visible and that the lack of understanding of this caused misunderstandings for women with disability and in some cases the disclosure of their disability led to the disability being used as an argument against their competence in a court hearing. These instances create instant barriers to accessing relevant supports. Apart from the court system, police, hospitals, crisis workers and even domestic, family and sexual violence staff themselves often lacked training related to disability.

It was noted in these circumstances that capacity building of staff to understand the types of domestic and family violence that can take place against women and children with disability is a must. These concerns were also raised at the joint forum hosted by QDN and DVConnect on 26 March where attendees highlighted that broadly speaking, there was a lack of disability awareness across a number of different services for domestic and family violence.

Without improvements in this space there will continue to be misunderstandings that will lead to longer timeframes for women with disability to reach out to services when they need them.

Current and Emerging Issues – Including Coercive Control and Technology-Facilitated Abuse

The increasing use of technology is a key concern for QDN due to the impact it can have on women with disability who have been victims of domestic and family violence. Data from the 2025 Voices of Queenslanders with Disability Survey noted that over 55% of women with disability noted they experience some degree of financial strain [3]. When many people with disability are reliant on carers and support workers, the risk of manipulation through control of finances can leave women and children with disability vulnerable to abuse, particularly if their access to finances is controlled through online banking or other mechanisms.

Feedback for this submission also highlighted the risks of abuse through mobile phones, social media, GPS tracking, smart home technology, and financial apps that can be used to monitor, manipulate and control women with disability.

Understanding the risks of abuse from these technologies is important, particularly for frontline workers who may interact with women with disability as part of their everyday life.

Feedback also highlighted the importance of being able to untangle and remove threats from technology once someone has left a violent relationship. Once a woman with disability has left an abusive relationship, assistance will be needed to help ensure safe use of any access to assistive technology, communication devices and/or medication and supports that they might rely on every day. This is because if the abuser has been in a support or carer role, it is likely they will still have some degree of control over the person, making it harder to untangle themselves from the abuser due to being tied to the technology.

Previously QDN has undertaken workshops to improve digital literacy for people with disability to help them understand technology. These workshops consisted of the following modules:

- Module 1 – Learning the basics
- Module 2 – Being online and staying connected
- Module 3 – Staying informed online
- Module 4 – Accessing essential services
- Module 5 – Staying safe online
- Module 6 – Data and affordability

As the use of technology for day-to-day tasks continues to increase broader programs such as the one undertaken by QDN are examples of what can be done to help women with disability, to learn about technology and understand the potential risks of technology and its use in conjunction with anyone who may be in a position to use that technology in an abusive or manipulative way.

Gaps for Diverse Communities – Including First Nations People

Understanding the different needs of women with disability across diverse communities is still a major issue. For the consideration of this consultation, diverse communities should also consider those living in rural, regional and remote areas where a women looking to leave an abusive or violent relationship has fewer options.

The 26 March forum highlighted a shortage of specialist workers which also led to high levels of burnout for the existing workforce. The forum also highlighted that other services such as crisis accommodation were also limited and led to increased difficulties for women with disabilities in these areas who wished to escape from domestic and family violence situations.

These gaps in regional, rural and remote communities mirror the gaps that exist for First Nations People and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds who often need specialist services that do not exist. The gaps in these communities are heightened by a lack of support services that come from within these communities and the overly formulaic structure of the services that currently

exist which often discount or are not aware of, different alternatives to providing services for women, and women with disability from these communities.

The Plan acknowledges the issue for women with disability from these backgrounds and the barriers they face in service delivery [1]. Improving the flexibility of service delivery options for women with disability across these communities is a key priority. Though given the issue of gaps, the first steps might involve understanding what culturally relevant methods of support and care exist and integrating those as viable options for women with disability in these cohorts.

Priority Area 2: Prevention and early intervention

Preventing and Ending Violence

The biggest change identified by QDN members and stakeholders as part of this consultation was the need to change the culture around what is and isn't violence. For women with disability this can be extended to understanding what is and isn't violent or abusive behaviour towards women with disability.

Historically there has been limited understanding of violence and abuse towards women with disability and this lack of understanding has led to the ongoing prevalence of violence against women and children. Recent surveys have attempted to highlight the issues of violence against women with disability [4] but gaps still remain in understanding what violence against women with disability looks like across the broader community.

Attendees at the 26 March forum, highlighted that there were few prevention programs tailored for people with disability. This reinforces the gaps in prevention and education in violence are exacerbated by the lack of programs for people with disability.

In response to this gap, attendees at the forum highlighted that there should be more focused programs for people with disability, co-designed and led by people with disability, building on lived experience and role modelling to achieve prevention-focused approaches. Investing in these types of programs was seen as vitally important and an opportunity to move away from the crisis response model.

Strengthening Efforts to Prevent Violence

Investment in prevention and incorporating lived experience leadership will be vitally important in terms of strengthening efforts to prevent violence against women with disability.

There also needs to be improvements to how different services interact and engage with each other. Attendees of the 26 March forum as well as other members have highlighted the importance of services being better connected to help give women with disability more options if they are attempting to leave a situation that involves domestic and family violence.

The need for more flexibility of options is important. Without flexible services that support the different needs of women with disability the efforts to prevent violence will be limited, creating ongoing risk for women with disability looking to leave situations where they are victims of domestic and family violence.

Queensland Independent Disability Advocacy Network (QIDAN) in their 2026 study on domestic, family and sexual violence highlighted the need to strengthen disability inclusion across DFSV services as well as the need for increased co-design with people with disability and improved accessibility expectations for any infrastructure designed for women escaping domestic and family violence [5].

As noted by the Red Rose Foundation in their submission, the growing use of strangulation is also a growing concern, particularly as non-fatal strangulation can cause permanent disability to victim-survivors. Acquired brain injury can lead to

victims suffering life-long disability and impact the lives of the victim-survivor as well as the perpetrator who may need to become a carer for the victim. Education on the risks and impacts needs to be considered so that those who consider strangulation understand the risks.

Incorporating these recommendations ties in with the need to work across individual, community, organisational, institutional and societal levels by incorporating the lived experience of women with disability as victim-survivors into the programs and support services that are being designed, to ensure they are 'user-friendly', fit for purpose programs that resonate with women with disability and support their leaving violent and abusive relationships.

Recognising and Responding to Harmful Attitudes and Behaviours

Tied to the need to ensure that victim-survivors are heard and that systems in place recognise the need for flexible engagement options exists a greater need for recognition of women with disability and the role they can play in improving education across governments, communities, schools, workplaces and online platforms.

As noted earlier, many programs designed to highlight harmful behaviours are focused more on domestic and family violence involving women without disability. Therefore, community understanding of the different types of abuse that can occur to women with disability is still not well known [5]. In response to this priority, there needs to be improved education and acknowledgement of the violence and abuse that women with disability can face. In response to this priority, there needs to be improved education and acknowledgement of the violence and abuse that women with disability can face. At the same time there also needs improvements in data collection and understanding the prevalence of domestic and family violence against women with disability.

Data collection is something that has been highlighted by members and stakeholders as something that needs to be improved and without a concerted effort, particularly at the government level to drive greater knowledge around data then the recognition of violence against women with disability will be reliant on anecdotal evidence from members of the community who are willing to speak to their experience as victim-survivors. Having more data available will help inform program and service responses across community stakeholders and help inform focused policies to improve programs and services for people with disability.

Strangulation and its use in particular, also needs to be recognised early as a harmful activity that can lead to lifelong disability. As noted by the Red Rose Foundation, there is no safe way to strangle and reforming education on strangulation needs to be undertaken across the broader community and stakeholders across health, justice and specialist recovery.

Promising Prevention and Early Intervention Approaches

Attendees at the 26 March forum highlighted that prevention and early intervention approaches that incorporated leadership from victim-survivors as well as culturally sensitive practices when appropriate helped educate the broader community about prevention and early intervention of domestic and family violence against women. Attendees noted that these programs need to focus on systems engagement from navigating services and programs to the fluidity of delivery and accessibility of onsite infrastructure.

However, these types of programs are not universal which can lead to them being conducted in isolated pockets without broader engagement. The challenge is to promote and invest in these community programs, co-designed by victim-survivors with disability to a broader audience across other locations so that they can highlight the risks of abuse and violence faced by women with disability.

Like program design, these types of programs need to have a flexible approach that gives women with disability as well as the broader community who might engage with prevention programs the opportunity to engage and learn in the best way for them.

It is not enough to develop programs for prevention and early intervention that rely on pre-existing modes of delivery. These are often not accessible for women with disability due to the fact they are not designed for people with disability in general. Without greater consideration of navigation and design, the programs that are good will remain limited in their range because they will not be considered adequate options for women with disability attempting to leave domestic and family violence.

Other Emerging Issues that need to be addressed

As highlighted, QDN has done work in improving digital literacy for people with disability and a similar programs could be undertaken to assist with understanding primary and early intervention and understanding the early signs of abuse through the use of technology.

QDN undertook these programs because of the growing recognition amongst our members of the emerging risks of technology being used as a tool of abuse.

Investing in similar programs nationally, could also be of assistance to women and children with disability, carers, family members and support workers to assist them in understanding the early signs of abuse through the use of technology. Undertaking work similar to the project conducted by QDN would be a good starting point in addressing the issue of technology use.

Additionally, the use of strangulation is an emerging issue that needs particular attention, especially the impacts of non-fatal strangulation that can lead to life changing impairment and disability. Education needs to be given to highlight that

there is no safe way to strangle, the risks of life-long disability, and the impact this will have on the quality of life of the victim-survivor as well as the perpetrator.

Priority Area 3: Children and young people in their own right

Improving safety, recovery and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people

Attendees at the 26 March forum noted that there needed to be consideration of support for children in safe and accessible ways. As highlighted in Priority Areas 1 and 2, there is a need for services to be flexible and avoid formulaic models that are geared towards children without disability.

Services such as counselling, safe and stable housing, and services that work together support long-term recovery and integration into schooling, health services and community organisations must be prioritised. Determining how to involve the voices of children and young people with disability and/or the peak bodies who represent them as part of codesigning and delivering programs is also a consideration that must be had when looking to improve safety and wellbeing outcomes for this cohort.

Governments, services, education settings, families, communities and others

Safe spaces for children and young people with disability to open up about their experiences concerning violence and abuse is the main requirement for improving recognition.

Similar to the issues facing services for women with disability there is also a gap in workforce knowledge across the community that impacts the delivery of services and supports across all sectors. These gaps can lead to inappropriate risk assessments and strategies for children and young people with disability that leave them at greater risk to harm as they move between different systems [7].

Being able to develop a cross-sector workforce plan across these key areas is vital to improved recognition and responses to children and young people experiencing violence or harm. Queensland's Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety's Disability Service Plan 2026-2029 provides examples of how to respond to children and young people with disability across government services [8].

This plan is an example of approaches that can be used to improve capacity and understanding of children and young people with disability. While this plan is broad, consideration should be given to adapting it to other sectors that have services for children and young people with disability who have been impacted by abusive and violent relationships.

Effective approaches to support children and young people using violence and displaying early signs of using violence

Systems need to be in place that can recognise these behaviours in children and young people and help ensure that supports are culturally relevant to the child as well as capable of being delivered consistently over a period of time to ensure that trust can be built.

Members noted that responses and approaches should be trauma-informed and tailored to suit the learning abilities of children and young people who may require this type of support.

This aligns closely with Action 8 of the Disability Lens on the First Action Plan 2023-2027 which highlights the need to address violent supportive behaviours [9].

Accessibility of the support is also important and must be easy to access, inclusive and age appropriate. Otherwise, programs designed to assist children and young people in understanding accountability, changing behaviours and harm reduction will have inconsistent rollout and impact if they are not accessible to this cohort. A key priority in the Plan should be to incorporate the experiences of children and

young people into these programs so that their voice and experiences are part of a holistic prevention strategy.

Response to current and emerging forms of harm affecting children and young people

As with women who have experienced harm and the need to be proactive in understanding new ways that women can experience harm, so it is with children and young people. As technology use becomes more prevalent there is more opportunity for technology-facilitated abuse, exposure to harmful online content, cyberbullying and violence in peer and dating relationships.

Developing education for children and young people about respectful relationships, consent and online safety and clear pathways on how to get help is important. In particular these programs are vital to protect children and young people with a disability who may not understand what is and isn't harmful content and may access content that could impact on their behaviour without realising they are viewing harmful content.

Therefore, support for children and young people should be easy to access, inclusive and age appropriate to ensure that children and young people with disability are safe, supported and listened to.

Addressing the lack of data concerning the extent and nature of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children and young people with disability must be a focus in the next stages of the Plan. Currently, this lack of data hampers efforts to prevent and respond to the problem of harm against children and young people [4].

Without significant improvements to data understanding the risks faced by children and young people there will be ongoing gaps in the response to the harms they face.

Involving children and young people in policy, programs and service creation

Children and young people and/or peak bodies that represent their interests should be involved in policy, programs and service creation from the very beginning, particularly children and young people with disability and/or peak bodies that represent their interests. Without their input and feedback the opportunity to provide then these potential policy, programs and services will not be accessible or appropriate for children and young people with disability.

This also carries over to ensuring that policies, programs and services are culturally appropriate for children and young people from diverse backgrounds such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and children and young people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

Another improvement that could be made is improving data collection. Data collection for children and young people with disability has historically been considered poor, as noted previously, and this is partially due to the fact that data collection was not designed to estimate population prevalence of violence and abuse against children and young people with disability [4].

Improving data collection methodologies and ensuring that children and young people will help improve opportunities for involving children and young people with disability in policy, programs and service creation because it will help improve understanding of the prevalence of violence and harm against children and young people with disability and the importance of involving them in shaping policy, programs and services designed to help them.

Priority Area 4: People who use violence

Preventing and Responding Earlier to the use of Violence

As highlighted in the disability lens in practice document early intervention initiatives are important and require a disability-informed approach [9]. This document

highlights an approach that targets education for carers, healthcare professionals, and law enforcement to identify early warning signs before violence escalates [9].

Programs such as the Violence prevention and early intervention for mothers and children with disability: Building promising practice and the Supporting Adolescent Boys Trial are examples of programs that have been developed to assist in early intervention and prevention [9].

Like the feedback on services for women with disability who are looking to access support to escape domestic and family violence, these services need to be expanded to ensure that there is a holistic offering of programs that can assist with early intervention and not just focused on isolated trials.

Another consideration for this priority is the need for improved understanding and data on people with disability who use violence. As was highlighted in a discussion with a key stakeholder, there is still a lack of understanding of the prevalence of people with disability who use violence and programs that can support people with disability who use violence.

Understanding the prevalence of the use of violence by people with disability is an important next step towards working with and developing programs that will assist people with disability who use violence.

Recognising and Responding Safely to People Using Violence or at Risk of Using Violence

Tying in with the answer above, developing programs with people with disability who may be at risk of using violence and having viable data to understand the numbers of people with disability who use violence, or could potentially use violence is important in being able to connect the different services, family, community, workplace, institutions and other stakeholders.

As noted by attendees of the 26 March forum programs that highlight early identification through pattern-based risk assessment frameworks are important as are the need to close education gaps around prevention and early intervention. As noted at the 26 March forum violence, and risk of using violence, is often identified too late.

There have been programs, identified in this submission, that provide the tools to recognise and respond to people who use violence or at risk of using violence [9]. These programs offer a way forward to incorporate different stakeholders across those recognised in this section and highlight what can be done when these stakeholders are part of the process with people with disability.

Similar to programs and services designed to support women with disability attempting to leave domestic and family violence situations, programs need to be adapted and suited to different communication needs, learning styles and cognitive capacities to help understand the impact of violent behaviour. Keeping in mind the wellbeing of victim-survivors is of tantamount importance.

Effective Approaches in Supporting People who use Violence take Accountability

Approaches should be focused on understanding the impact of violent behaviour, and taking responsibility for their actions whilst supporting them to make lasting changes to their violent behaviour.

As noted previously, programs should be evidence-based, trauma-informed and accessible to everyone and the respective needs and requirements they may need depending on their disability.

More broadly, the approach needs to be focused on moving beyond isolated pilots and programs that are only available in specific areas. Taking a larger nationwide approach is a must and it must go beyond the development of this Action Plan.

There have been approaches that have worked or been put in place [9] but there needs to be more focused effort. Part of the next steps for this priority area must be working across communities, identifying programs that have had success, including those that have incorporated feedback from people with disability who have either used, or are at risk of using violence.

Until approaches are connected at a national level with appropriate mechanisms for feedback from the community there will continue to be an issue of isolated delivery of programs that fail to support the broader group of people at risk of using violence or are using violence.

Strengthening Culturally Safe, Accessible and Evidence-Informed Responses

Governments and service providers need to work alongside people with disability and the community and avoid making decisions for them. Stakeholders who provide services, do so with the best intentions of the cohort they are working for, but often the delivery ends up falling short due to a lack of buy-in from the cohort the response to the issue is supposed to capture.

As identified by attendees of the 26 March forum, these efforts require investment across a wide range of sectors and community groups, not just connected directly to government. Government can support these response efforts by being supportive but interaction across the diverse range of communities that make up the disability community, as well as communities from First Nations and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

Another key component of this is the need to improve employment education and workforce gaps. Due to the varied nature of the disability community, improving workforce understanding of disability and the community as a whole must also be a starting point. Attendees at the 26 March forum noted that for the workforce there needed to be more work done to ensure that resources are shared and that siloing of

government departments, agencies, as well as service providers doesn't take place. Shared learning should be the key focus of the proposed changes.

Priority Area 5: System integration and workforce

Biggest Difference in Creating a Coordinated and Connected System Response

QDN members and attendees of the 26 March forum identified the need to make services more accessible for and easier to navigate a system that is often complicated. As highlighted previously, there needs to be a "no door wrong" approach to help people are connected to the right support instead of being denied support because the system was too formulaic.

Attendees of the 26 March forum highlighted that crisis response was often not designed with disability in mind. Therefore, as has been identified throughout this submission there needs to be improved understanding of people with disability who require the use of these services. In some cases, even improving access to services through Auslan and Easy Read resources would improve the current level of access for people with disability who need them.

Addressing the workforce gaps that have been identified is also important. From lack of specialist workforce, to lack of crisis accommodation centres that are suitable for women with disability who may be leaving domestic and family violence there is a shortage of support for many people with disability that adds to the difficulty of trying to leave an environment where domestic and family violence is being perpetrated.

Being able to improve coordination of these services is a priority, otherwise there will continue to be gaps in services provided for women with disability who have been impacted by violence or abuse. If one of the service options is not accessible for a

women with disability, then the process of trying to leave an environment of abuse becomes more difficult.

What Workforce Capabilities, Supports or Conditions are most needed

Across the board attendees of the 26 March forum and members have identified that workforce capabilities need to be improved through the entire process. At the core of these changes there needs to be an improved understanding of disability, of the variances of disability that can be experienced from person to person and that not all people who have one type of disability experience that disability in the same way.

Poor coordination of services, lack of training and experience, lack of acknowledgement of lived experience of disability as experience are some of the key problems facing workforce capability, support and conditions. Combined with already high and increasing demand for services [5] there is an increasing strain on the workforce which then translates to how services can be delivered to women with disability. Without acknowledging this, there will be a continued lack of improvement in this space which will impact support and service delivery.

Incorporating people with lived experience of disability and victim-survivors into building training capability and supports is a key component. Understanding the experiences of women with disability would be great to help build workforces that are both professional knowledge and real-life experience.

Most Effective Approaches or Models in Improving Collaboration, Coordination and Information

Focusing on developing a fluid, 'no wrong door' approach or model to services is something that must be considered as part of this priority. This type of approach would require clear referral pathways, coordinated case management and safe information sharing to help the right people get support.

Moving away from systems that have stepped processes is a key priority opportunity for this Action Plan, particularly for women with disability and the focus should be on ensuring that services have a flexible approach that can be understood and used by all women with disability regardless of the disability that they have.

The approach has to avoid situations where victim-survivors are required to tell their story repeatedly. Members, as well as attendees of the 26 March forum identified this as an issue that needs to be addressed. Removing information-sharing barriers is vital to ensuring that any approach or model is successful.

Supports for Specialist and Universal Services

Specialist and universal services need the right training to ensure they can support victim-survivors who are women with disability. As highlighted this involves engaging women with lived experience of disability and of being a victim-survivor but it also needs to incorporate support to make services accessible, for example, ensuring service information and resources are in accessible formats.

One of the key components of the feedback from the 26 March forum was that specialist and universal services need to avoid having barriers to entry. This ties in with the “no wrong door” approach that has been described earlier. These services need to be provided in a way that is accessible, or, as highlighted previously, these services will not be accessible to women with disability.

In this section, supports for accommodation services are included because they need to be accessible and appropriate for the needs of women with disability who are leaving domestic and family violence. This is part of a wider discussion around the need for affordable and accessible housing for women with disability who are looking to leave domestic and family violence.

Priorities for Evidence, Workforce or System Gaps

Lived experience of victim-survivors who have a disability should be prioritised as part of the Second Action Plan. It has been noted that Governments have tried to provide services, but they need to be supporting the work and engaging the cohort of women with lived experience of disability and of domestic and family violence as part of implementation and improved outcomes.

Some of this will improve data collection and understanding both the prevalence of women with disability who are victim-survivors of domestic and family violence as well as understanding how many people with disability use, or are at risk of using, violence [9]. Understanding the evidence is the first step to improving the workforce and system gaps that exist.

As noted by members, disability should be incorporated across all priority areas not treated as a separate entity. Acknowledging disability in the Second Action Plan is a good start but decisions and processes will only improve if a disability lens is part of the process. Without understanding that accessible services and accommodation and improved training and development of the workforce there will continue to be minimal or isolated improvements depending on where particular programs or pilots are undertaken.

Conclusion

QDN appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the Second Action Plan and how the key priorities of the Plan can incorporate women and children with disability escaping violence as well as the risk of people with disability who use violence or are at risk of using violence.

QDN welcomes the opportunity for further engagement on the Second Action Plan. If the Department of Social Services would like to discuss this submission further please contact [REDACTED]

About Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN)

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) is a state-wide, not-for-profit organisation led by and for people with diverse disability and we are focused on advancing disability rights, inclusion and systemic advocacy in Queensland. QDN is the Executive Peak Body for people with disability in Queensland, providing overarching leadership and coordination across disability peak and representative organisations funded by Queensland Government. QDN operates a state-wide network of over 3,000 members and supporters all over Queensland. Guided by our motto "nothing about us without us,"

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Appendix One: Background

Despite the ongoing recognition from all forms of government and policymakers, Australia is still grappling with domestic and family violence, particularly against women and children. The Second National Action Plan highlighted concerning data relating to the experiences of women with disability and domestic and family violence. The Second National Action Plan showed that [1]:

- 64% of people with disability report experiencing physical violence, sexual violence, intimate partner violence, emotional abuse or stalking from the age of 15, compared to 45% of people without disability.
- People with disability are at nearly twice the risk of all types of violence in comparison to people without disability
- Women with an intellectual or psychological disability are nearly three times more likely than women with a physical disability to experience violence.

The Second National Action Plan also notes that violence against women with disability can occur from a wider net of people in this case, carers, guardians and support workers and not just in the home but also in the home and institutional settings [1].

The Second National Action Plan is important because it has highlighted the impacts of domestic and family violence on women with disability and the challenges they face with accessing services as well as finding services that can support their needs and the added difficulty of attempting to leave relationships where the abuser is responsible for all or parts of their care [1].

While this is welcome, QDN will highlight that more needs to be done in the priority areas identified in this consultation to close key service and accessibility gaps that women with disability face when leaving domestic and family violence situations. Without a concerted effort across different government levels and industry and non-

industry stakeholders there will be a continued gap between recognition of the issues facing women with domestic and family violence and practical actions that would improve outcomes for women and children with disability who are facing domestic and family violence.

Previous work by QDN

AbilityConnect Forum

On 26 March 2026, QDN along with DVConnect held a joint forum at the Brisbane Convention and Entertainment Centre to discuss domestic and family violence for people with disability. Attendees included people with lived experience of disability and domestic and family violence as well as stakeholders across the disability, domestic and family violence and community sectors, as well as attendees from relevant State Department representatives.

Queensland State Minister for Domestic and Family Violence, the Hon. [REDACTED] [REDACTED] MP spoke at the event.

Attendees at the forum discussed the issues facing people with disability who have been victims of domestic and family violence and some of the issues that need to be addressed. Issues identified by attendees at the forum included:

- System fragmentation and poor coordination
- Inaccessibility of services and information
- Insufficient disability capability across the DFSV
- Workforce gaps and resource constraints
- Gaps in crisis responses and safe housing
- NDIS barriers and misalignment with safety needs
- Lack of survivor voice, agency, and lived experience leadership
- Prevention, early intervention and education gaps
- Justice system barriers

- Need for clear, practical “small changes” to drive reform

The issues raised by attendees were connected to both State-based and Federal issues concerning domestic and family violence.

Previous National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children

QDN also wrote a submission to the Development of the next National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children which was conducted in July 2021.

When asked in the submission what the main issues were for women with disability were experiencing domestic and family violence faced, they responded with:

- Lack of support with police and justice
- Difficult access
- Not being believed

When asked what the major issues were for services in providing support to people with disability experiencing family, domestic, and sexual violence, members identified:

- Access needed to go beyond physical access and needed to consider access to information for people with disability
- Consideration needed to be given to the longer time it can take for women with disability to access resources when leaving a domestic and family violence situation
- Dependence on and control of the person who is often also the perpetrator of violence including the sharing of supports

When asked what can be done to support people with disability who are experiencing family, sexual and domestic violence, members identified:

- Allowing access to services as part of a plan to leave a violent relationship

- Considering the implications for the person with the disability to leave the environment where all their supports exist
- Include women with disability in the conversation about what they need and what the changes may look like for them
- Avoid unhelpful pedagogies about women with disability and violence
- Improve access to temporary and long term affordable and accessible housing

The submission concluded with the following guiding principles for the Next National Plan:

- Underpinning the next plan with a comprehensive human rights framework
- Widening definitions of violence to include all types of violence experienced by all women
- Ensuring the principles of the Next Plan are consistent with a human rights framework
- Improving the evidence base

QDN acknowledges that the 2022-2032 Action Plan highlighted the issues that women with disability face, as well as the over-representation of women with disability who have been victims of domestic and family violence.

Similarities

While recognition of the issues women with disability who are victims of domestic and family violence is highlighted in the 2022-2032 Action Plan. It is clear that many of the issues that were highlighted in QDNs 2021 submission still exist for women with disability in 2026. In particular, the following issues were identified strongly in 2021 and 2026:

- Inaccessible services
- Time it takes to access resources for women with disability

- Lack of survivor voice and learning from women with disability who have lived experience as victims of domestic and family violence.

The ongoing prevalence of these same issues are concerning and should be a key point of consideration for the next action plan.