



Settlement
Council
of Australia

Submission to the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022 - 2032

**Settlement Council of Australia Member
Consultations**

July 2026

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About SCOA

The Settlement Council of Australia is the national peak body for settlement services. SCOA represents settlement and multicultural organisations across Australia that support migrants and refugees to build safe, connected and participating lives. These organisations work across metropolitan, regional and remote communities, providing support with housing, English language learning, employment, education, health, family functioning, legal and institutional navigation, social connection and community participation.

SCOA's members are often the first trusted point of contact for newly arrived communities. Their work reaches into households, schools, workplaces, faith communities, neighbourhoods and regional settlement locations. This places the sector in a distinctive position; close enough to see risk before it becomes visible to crisis systems, and trusted enough to support disclosure, rights awareness, safety planning and referral.

SCOA's recent policy position on family, domestic and sexual violence was informed by national consultations with more than 60 member organisations and extensive frontline and lived-experience expertise across the sector.

Executive Summary

The Settlement Council of Australia welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Second Action Plan under the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032. This submission draws on SCOA's national policy position on family, domestic and sexual violence; the joint SCOA and Australian Multicultural Women's Alliance consultation with Minister Tanya Plibersek MP; contributions from settlement and multicultural women's organisations; the expertise of frontline practitioners; insights from Australian Red Cross; and discussions with national policy leaders, including the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner.

The central proposition of this submission is that **settlement is prevention infrastructure**. Settlement services are not specialist family violence services, nor should they be required to substitute for specialist systems. They are, however, among the earliest and most trusted institutional relationships for migrant and refugee women, children, families and communities. When properly resourced, connected and recognised, settlement organisations can identify risk earlier, support rights awareness, reduce isolation, strengthen social connection, foster healing and empowerment, and create trusted pathways to safety.

Settlement should not be understood simply as an entry service for newly arrived people. It builds protective factors known to reduce vulnerability to violence, including trusted relationships, social connection, community belonging, economic participation, systems navigation and the early identification of emerging risk. These outcomes should be recognised and funded as core violence prevention investments rather than treated as incidental benefits of settlement programs.

Settlement supports safety not only by improving access to services, but by fostering belonging, trusted relationships and community participation that strengthen healing, resilience and long-term recovery. For many migrant and refugee women, healing is strengthened through community, belonging, cultural identity and trusted relationships. These are not peripheral to recovery, they are foundational to safety, healing and long-term recovery.

SCOA's policy position argues that, for migrant and refugee women and children, family, domestic and sexual violence is shaped by intersecting factors including visa insecurity, language barriers, systemic racism, disability, sexuality and gender identity, social isolation, transnational family dynamics, and unequal access to services and justice. It further argues that settlement is not ancillary to safety but a form of structural prevention and early intervention, and that Commonwealth settlement and migration settings are not peripheral to safety. They can either reduce risk or, when exploited by perpetrators or reinforced through fragmented systems, become mechanisms through which coercive control is maintained.

The consultation reinforced these findings. Participants consistently described structural racism and discrimination as determinants of vulnerability, help-seeking and recovery, not simply barriers to accessing services. They also challenged traditional understandings of prevention and recovery, emphasising that healing often begins through community connection, belonging and empowerment, and that trusted settlement relationships frequently create the conditions in which women first recognise violence and seek support.

The Second Action Plan provides an opportunity to correct a persistent policy gap. While the National Plan rightly adopts a whole-of-society approach, settlement has not been adequately recognised as a core site of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery. This gap leaves migrant and refugee women navigating fragmented systems at the very point when trust, language access, legal information, housing, income and community connection may determine whether violence is disclosed early or allowed to deepen in silence.

During the SCOA–AMWA consultation, Minister Plibersek affirmed this proposition directly, observing that *‘prevention begins with settlement’* when women understand the law, have trusted friends to call, enjoy economic security and feel able to seek help. She also acknowledged that settlement organisations are already undertaking prevention and response work because they are the organisations that people know and trust.

Importantly, consultation participants also challenged how success is measured. Current systems largely measure crisis responses, such as police reports, intervention orders and service demand, but tell us little about whether women achieve long-term safety and recovery. SCOA argues that settlement outcomes, including secure housing, employment, financial independence, social participation, belonging and wellbeing, are also critical indicators of recovery and should form part of the national implementation and accountability framework.

This submission recommends that the Second Action Plan:

1. Explicitly recognise settlement as national prevention and early intervention infrastructure;
2. Fund settlement and multicultural organisations to undertake safe early identification, supported referral, navigation and prevention work;
3. Address visa insecurity, migration-related coercive control and exclusion from supports as safety issues;
4. Embed forced marriage, human trafficking, servitude, exit trafficking and other modern slavery practices within the broader gender-based violence architecture;

5. Invest in community-led prevention with migrant and refugee men, families, children and young people;
6. Establish nationally consistent ethnicity, visa status and migration pathway data collection across family violence, justice, housing, health and settlement systems;
7. Recognise multicultural family violence practice as specialist workforce capability and strengthen capability across both settlement and specialist family violence systems;
8. Mandate warm referral pathways, secondary consultation and local service integration;
9. Address technology-facilitated and transnational abuse as core dynamics of coercive control;
10. Ensure children and young people in migrant and refugee families are recognised as victim-survivors in their own right;
11. Invest in economic participation, skills recognition and social enterprise pathways as violence prevention and recovery infrastructure; and
12. Build an implementation and accountability framework that measures prevention, early intervention and long-term recovery, not simply crisis responses.

1. Settlement as Prevention Infrastructure: A National Policy Proposition

The Second Action Plan must move beyond viewing settlement solely as a service system for newly arrived migrants and refugees. Settlement is also essential social infrastructure that creates the conditions in which prevention, early intervention, safety and long-term recovery become possible. It helps women, children and families build agency, understand their rights, establish trusted relationships, participate in community life and access institutions with confidence. These are not peripheral to violence prevention; they are fundamental to it.

Trust is a critical component of this infrastructure. The trusted relationships developed by settlement organisations, bicultural workers, multicultural women's organisations and community leaders are not incidental outcomes of service delivery; they are a core public asset that enables prevention, early disclosure, healing, safety planning and recovery. Consultation participants consistently emphasised that, for many migrant and refugee women, healing is strengthened through community, belonging, cultural identity and trusted relationships. These are not peripheral to recovery, they are foundational to safety, healing and long-term recovery. This trust is built through years of sustained engagement and cannot be replicated through short-term projects, translated information alone or newly established services. The Second Action Plan should therefore recognise trust and community connection as essential prevention infrastructure and invest in them accordingly.

The consultation paper for the Second Action Plan identifies prevention and early intervention as a priority area, emphasising the need to act where people *live, work, learn and connect*, and to build community and cross-sector capability to recognise and respond to harmful attitudes and behaviours. For migrant and refugee communities, settlement organisations are already embedded in these places. They work at the intersection of family life, community trust and institutional access, often becoming the first trusted point of contact long before women engage with specialist family violence services.

Settlement organisations strengthen prevention and early intervention by:

- fostering belonging, social connection and trusted relationships that reduce isolation and support healing;
- strengthening women's agency through economic participation, rights awareness and confidence in navigating Australian institutions;
- identifying risks early, including coercive control, family violence, forced marriage, exploitation, human trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence;
- providing culturally responsive information, supported navigation and trusted pathways into specialist services;
- building community capability through prevention initiatives with women, men, families, children and young people; and
- supporting long-term recovery by strengthening participation, employment, community connection and social inclusion.

Recognising settlement as prevention infrastructure does not mean settlement organisations should become specialist family violence services. Rather, it acknowledges that prevention and early intervention occur well before a woman enters a refuge, contacts police, attends court, calls a crisis line or accesses a specialist service. Settlement organisations occupy a distinct but complementary role within Australia's broader family, domestic and sexual violence system by creating the conditions in which women can recognise violence, seek support earlier and remain engaged in recovery.

Consultation participants also challenged how success is understood and measured. They argued that recovery should not be defined solely by crisis responses or service utilisation, but by whether women achieve long-term safety, secure housing, economic independence, wellbeing, community participation and confidence. These are also core settlement outcomes. Recognising settlement as prevention infrastructure therefore requires recognising settlement outcomes as indicators of both prevention and recovery and embedding these outcomes within the implementation and accountability framework of the Second Action Plan.

Accordingly, SCOA proposes a nationally consistent, settlement-informed framework for preventing and responding to family, domestic and sexual violence. This framework recognises settlement as critical prevention infrastructure, strengthens partnerships between settlement and specialist services, embeds culturally responsive and specialist multicultural practice across the service system, addresses migration-related and digital risks, invests in community-led prevention and establishes accountability measures that make prevention, early intervention and long-term recovery visible.

2. What we heard from the national consultation

The joint SCOA–AMWA consultation identified a consistent and urgent message: the settlement sector is already undertaking a significant component of Australia's prevention, early intervention and recovery effort, yet this role remains insufficiently recognised, funded and integrated within the broader family, domestic and sexual violence system.

Participants described a service system in which settlement, family violence, housing, justice, migration, health, education and child and family services often operate in parallel rather than as a coordinated response. This fragmentation was consistently identified as the central structural failure. Rather than experiencing a seamless system, victim-survivors and frontline workers are frequently required to navigate disconnected services, duplicate information and coordinate responses themselves. Participants described this not simply as a coordination problem but as a structural design failure that shifts the burden of navigation onto those least able to carry it.

Consultation participants consistently described settlement organisations, multicultural organisations, bicultural workers and trusted community leaders as the first point of disclosure for many migrant and refugee women experiencing violence. Long before women engage specialist family violence services, they often seek support from organisations and individuals with whom they have established trusted relationships. Participants emphasised that these organisations routinely provide crisis support, safety planning, interpretation, community education, systems navigation, court support, child protection liaison and culturally responsive advocacy well beyond the scope of existing funding agreements. As one participant observed:

"We are doing work off the side of our contracts."

Participants reinforced the central role of trusted settlement relationships in enabling earlier disclosure, strengthening community confidence and supporting women to seek help before violence escalates.

Participants described increasing pressure on settlement and multicultural organisations as they respond to growing demand alongside more complex client needs. Organisations reported supporting women experiencing intersecting issues including family, domestic and sexual violence, housing insecurity, migration-related vulnerability, mental ill-health, disability and financial hardship while managing workforce shortages, staff burnout, vicarious trauma, short-term funding arrangements and increasing reporting and administrative requirements. They emphasised that sustaining prevention and early intervention requires investment not only in programs but also in organisational capability, workforce wellbeing, professional supervision and long-term funding certainty.

The consultation also challenged conventional understandings of prevention and recovery. Participants argued that prevention often begins through community connection, belonging,

empowerment and trusted relationships, rather than only through formal service responses. For many migrant and refugee women, healing and recovery were described as being strengthened through community, cultural identity and participation. Participants further argued that success should be measured not only through crisis indicators such as police reports or service demand, but also through long-term outcomes including secure housing, employment, financial independence, wellbeing, community participation and sustained safety.

The consultation identified several priorities for strengthening Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence system, including:

- recognising multicultural family violence practice as a specialist area of workforce capability;
- improving integration across settlement, family violence, justice, migration, housing and health systems;
- strengthening culturally responsive prevention with women, men, children and young people;
- recognising migration settings, structural racism and discrimination as factors that shape vulnerability and access to safety;
- investing in long-term, community-led prevention rather than short-term pilot programs; and
- strengthening implementation and accountability frameworks so that prevention, early intervention and long-term recovery become visible alongside crisis responses.

Recognition of Multicultural DFV Service Providers

Consultation participants consistently highlighted that multicultural and settlement organisations are increasingly delivering specialist and early intervention family and domestic violence responses alongside their broader settlement functions. These organisations provide culturally responsive risk assessment, safety planning, case management, community education, behaviour change initiatives, peer support and systems navigation that are specifically designed for migrant and refugee communities.

Participants argued that multicultural family violence practice should be recognised as a specialist area of professional capability within Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence workforce. Effective practice requires far more than language capability or cultural background. It demands specialist knowledge of migration systems, settlement experiences, coercive control in multicultural contexts, transnational abuse, forced marriage, interpreter practice, structural racism, trauma-informed practice and culturally responsive risk assessment. Recognition of this specialist expertise should be reflected in workforce development, practice guidance, career pathways and future investment.

3. Priority Area 1: Victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence

The consultation paper asks what service or system responses would make the biggest difference to victim-survivors' safety, wellbeing, healing and recovery, what helps people access support earlier, what barriers prevent people from seeking help, and what emerging issues should be addressed, including coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse.

For migrant and refugee women, access to support is shaped by more than the availability of services. It is shaped by trust, language, migration status, knowledge of rights, prior experiences of state violence, racism, visa dependency, fear of child removal, economic insecurity, transnational pressure, community stigma, and the availability of culturally responsive pathways.

3.1 Earlier access depends on trusted relationships

For many migrant and refugee women, the first disclosure of violence may not occur in a specialist family violence setting. It may occur in an English class, a settlement casework meeting, a social enterprise workplace, a parenting program, a community group, a youth service, a faith setting or through a bicultural worker. These are often the places where trusted relationships are established long before women engage with formal crisis services.

A woman may not describe her experience as *family violence*. She may speak of fear, control, debt, visa threats, shame, surveillance, family pressure, children being taken overseas, being prevented from working, being monitored through WhatsApp, or being told she will lose her visa if she discloses. If the system only recognises violence once it enters formal crisis pathways, it will continue to miss the earliest, and most preventable, opportunities for intervention.

Multicultural organisations are uniquely positioned to support these early disclosures because of their established community trust, language capability and understanding of migration-related risks. They provide intensive case management, crisis response, safety planning, warm referrals, housing and legal support, systems navigation and recovery pathways while addressing barriers associated with language, culture and migration experiences.

These trusted relationships represent critical social infrastructure that enables early disclosure, earlier intervention and sustained engagement with support. They should be recognised as a core component of Australia's prevention architecture rather than being viewed as an informal or incidental feature of settlement services.

Safe, affordable and culturally responsive housing should also be recognised as essential safety infrastructure. Housing is not simply a recovery outcome following violence; it is a

prerequisite for prevention, safe disclosure, effective safety planning and long-term recovery. Without access to secure housing, many women remain trapped in violent relationships or face significant barriers to leaving safely.

The Second Action Plan should explicitly recognise settlement and multicultural organisations as legitimate and essential access points for prevention, early intervention and safe pathways into specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services.

3.2 Migration status must be treated as a safety issue

Visa insecurity is not incidental to family, domestic and sexual violence. It can be weaponised by perpetrators, misunderstood by services and reinforced through policy settings. Consultation participants consistently identified migration status as a core safety issue, emphasising that women cannot access protection equally across all visa categories and that eligibility for safety and support should be determined by need rather than migration pathway.

Participants described migration settings as more than a backdrop to violence. Perpetrators frequently exploit visa dependency, sponsorship arrangements, migration uncertainty, financial dependence and threats of deportation as deliberate mechanisms of coercive control. Women may remain in violent relationships because they fear losing their lawful status, being separated from their children or being unable to support themselves if they leave.

Participants also highlighted migration-related systems abuse, where complex eligibility requirements, prolonged uncertainty and repeated evidentiary burdens can unintentionally reinforce perpetrators' control and create additional barriers to safety. These structural barriers compound the effects of violence and can delay access to protection, legal assistance, financial support and recovery.

For migrant and refugee women, migration status is not simply an administrative matter, it is a determinant of safety.

The Second Action Plan should adopt a safety-first approach across migration, family violence and social support systems. No woman should be left without protection because her pathway to Australia does not fit neatly within existing eligibility settings. Migration policy should be recognised as an integral component of Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence response rather than as a separate policy domain.

This requires:

- improved access to specialist legal advice on migration and family violence;
- nationally consistent guidance on recognising and responding to visa-related coercive control;
- stronger protections for temporary visa holders;

- clear service pathways for women on bridging visas, partner visas, student visas, temporary work visas and women without lawful status, together with equitable access to financial assistance and essential healthcare regardless of visa status;
- specialist secondary consultation between settlement, migration and family violence practitioners;
- cross-sector capability building across Home Affairs, family violence, legal assistance and settlement systems; and
- recognition of migration-related systems abuse as a form of coercive control within policy, practice and workforce guidance.

3.3 Multicultural LGBTQI+ women require intersectional responses

Multicultural LGBTQI+ women, including those from newly arrived, refugee and humanitarian backgrounds, experience distinct forms of gender-based violence shaped by the intersection of gender, sexuality, migration status, culture, racism and, for many, disability. These experiences cannot be understood through a single-axis lens.

Violence may include family and community violence linked to actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, coercive attempts to conceal or change identity, forced marriage, threats of being 'outed' within close-knit communities, housing insecurity, economic control, migration-related coercion and social exclusion. For some women, persecution experienced before arrival continues through transnational family pressure, community surveillance or ongoing fear of rejection and violence.

These risks are often compounded by insecure visa status, limited English proficiency, financial dependence, trauma associated with displacement and understandable concerns about engaging with services that may not feel culturally safe or inclusive.

The current evidence base remains limited, and multicultural LGBTQI+ women are frequently rendered invisible within both family violence and settlement policy frameworks. The Second Action Plan should strengthen the evidence base, improve data collection and invest in culturally responsive prevention, early intervention and specialist responses that reflect the realities of multicultural LGBTQI+ communities.

Meaningful policy development must occur in partnership with specialist organisations led by and for LGBTQI+ communities, multicultural communities, refugee communities and people with disability to ensure that prevention and response initiatives are genuinely intersectional and community-led.

3.4 Increasing the visibility of older migrant and refugee women in family violence responses

Consultation participants highlighted that older migrant and refugee women remain largely invisible within family, domestic and sexual violence policy despite experiencing distinct forms of abuse. These include elder abuse, economic abuse, coercive control within

caregiving relationships and violence perpetrated by adult children or extended family members. Participants emphasised that responses must recognise the intersection of age, gender, migration, language and social isolation when designing prevention, early intervention and support services.

Consultation participants also highlighted the important role of older women as trusted community leaders, mentors and cultural knowledge holders. Engaging older women in prevention initiatives, community education and early intervention can strengthen community capacity and support earlier identification of family violence.

3.5 Justice responses must be made safer

Participants repeatedly identified legal and justice systems as sites where migrant and refugee women may be re-traumatised. They explicitly called for magistrates to receive training in family violence, cultural safety and trauma-informed approaches, particularly in adversarial cases where perpetrators may exploit legal processes to continue control and abuse.

SCOA recommends that the Second Action Plan include a dedicated justice reform component for migrant and refugee victim-survivors, including:

- training for magistrates, registrars, police, duty lawyers and court staff on migration-related coercive control, interpreter safety, transnational abuse, forced marriage and multi-perpetrator family violence;
- nationally consistent safeguards against perpetrators acting as interpreters;
- specialist legal navigation for women dealing simultaneously with family violence, family law, migration, child protection, tenancy and employment issues;
- mechanisms to reduce systems abuse in family law and protection order proceedings; and
- data collection on ethnicity, migration pathway and interpreter use across policing and court systems.

3.6 Technology-facilitated and transnational abuse must be central, not peripheral

The consultation paper identifies technology-facilitated abuse as an emerging issue requiring stronger responses. For migrant and refugee women, technology-facilitated abuse often has transnational dimensions. Perpetrators may use messaging platforms, family networks overseas, social media, location tracking, image-based abuse, financial surveillance, immigration threats and threats to family members abroad.

The Second Action Plan should fund culturally responsive digital safety initiatives through settlement and multicultural organisations, including practical resources on WhatsApp, social media, location tracking, AI-enabled fraud and image-based abuse, with tailored approaches for women with limited English and limited digital literacy.

4. Priority Area 2: Prevention and early intervention

The consultation paper frames prevention and early intervention as requiring action across the places people live, work, learn and connect, and calls for stronger community capability to recognise and respond safely before violence escalates.

For SCOA, this is where settlement must be explicitly located in the Second Action Plan.

4.1 Settlement outcomes are prevention outcomes

Participation reduces isolation. Economic independence expands choice. Knowledge of rights increases agency. Community connection strengthens safety. Institutional literacy improves access to support. These are conventional settlement outcomes, but they are also prevention outcomes.

The policy architecture must therefore recognise that settlement services are not simply delivering migration support. They are helping to build the social conditions that prevent violence from becoming hidden, normalised or entrenched.

Settlement services are uniquely positioned to engage newly arrived families during the earliest stages of settlement, when people are learning about Australian laws, gender equality, parenting, respectful relationships and community expectations. This period represents a critical window for primary prevention, creating opportunities to build knowledge, strengthen protective factors and support safe help-seeking before violence becomes entrenched.

Prevention should not be viewed as occurring only through specialist family violence programs. Parenting programs, playgroups, youth activities, English language classes, employment services, community leadership initiatives and social connection activities all provide opportunities to promote respectful relationships, gender equality, knowledge of rights, healthy family relationships and pathways to support. Embedding prevention across the full settlement system reflects a whole-of-settlement approach in which safety is recognised as a core settlement outcome.

4.2 Healing and empowerment are prevention infrastructure – Before Disclosure

Consultation participants challenged the assumption that healing occurs only after disclosure and crisis intervention. They described many women as first needing opportunities to build confidence, restore social connection, understand their rights and make sense of their experiences before they are able to recognise coercive control or identify their experiences as violence.

For some migrant and refugee women, coercive control may have been normalised through longstanding family dynamics, migration experiences or cultural expectations. Others may fear the consequences of disclosure because of visa insecurity, economic dependence, family separation or community repercussions. In these contexts, community connection, empowerment and healing are not simply recovery activities, they are often prerequisites for recognition, help-seeking and safety.

The Second Action Plan should recognise empowerment, confidence-building and trusted community relationships as core components of prevention and early intervention. For many migrant and refugee women, these are the conditions that enable recognition of violence, safe disclosure and timely help-seeking before violence escalates.

4.3 Healing occurs through community and belonging – After Disclosure

Consultation participants also challenged the assumption that healing occurs primarily as an individual process following crisis intervention. Instead, they described healing as something that is often experienced through relationships, belonging, cultural identity and meaningful participation in community. For many migrant and refugee women, rebuilding trust, reconnecting with culture, strengthening supportive social networks and participating in community life are integral to recovery and long-term safety.

This understanding aligns closely with settlement policy, which recognises belonging, participation and social connection as foundational conditions for long-term wellbeing and inclusion. Consultation participants consistently described these settlement outcomes as critical to sustaining recovery, rebuilding confidence and supporting women to remain safe over time.

Recognising community as central to healing has important implications for the Second Action Plan. Community should be recognised not only as a setting for prevention but also as a critical environment for recovery. This reinforces the role of settlement organisations, multicultural services and community-led initiatives as essential partners in helping women recover from violence, rebuild confidence and sustain long-term safety.

4.4 Community-led prevention must be funded beyond pilots

Consultation participants consistently called for sustained investment in community-led prevention delivered through settlement and multicultural organisations, recognising these organisations as a core component of Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence prevention system. The consultation identified settlement and multicultural organisations, including ethno-specific organisations, as critical prevention infrastructure because of the trusted relationships they hold within migrant and refugee communities.

Participants emphasised that these trusted relationships are already relied upon by governments and specialist services but are not matched by sustained investment. Funding models should recognise the full continuum of work undertaken by settlement and multicultural organisations. These organisations are not simply referral agencies. They provide prevention, early intervention, crisis response, recovery support, systems navigation and community accountability through relationships that have often been built over many years. Sustainable investment should recognise this broader role rather than assuming multicultural organisations exist primarily to connect people to other services.

Community-led prevention delivered by bicultural workers, multicultural organisations and community educators creates opportunities for earlier conversations about family violence, gender equality, respectful relationships, rights and help-seeking. These approaches are particularly effective within newly arrived and emerging communities where trust, language capability and cultural understanding are essential to meaningful engagement. Programs that recruit, train and mentor community members to educate and support their own communities have demonstrated strong engagement and provide effective pathways for increasing awareness of family, domestic and sexual violence, available supports and safe help-seeking.

Some consultation participants highlighted the important contribution that trusted faith leaders and faith-based organisations can make in preventing violence, promoting respectful relationships, increasing awareness of rights and encouraging safe help-seeking. Where appropriately supported, faith-informed approaches can strengthen community trust and complement specialist family violence responses while reinforcing gender equality, safety and accountability.

Participants also challenged the way prevention is currently funded and measured. They argued that community-led prevention is frequently undervalued because funding and reporting frameworks privilege short-term service outputs over longer-term prevention outcomes. Parenting programs, women's leadership initiatives, community conversations, faith leader engagement, work with men and boys, youth leadership and intergenerational dialogue all contribute to violence prevention, yet their impact is rarely reflected in conventional reporting systems. Participants observed that these initiatives frequently create the trusted relationships through which women later recognise violence, disclose abuse and remain engaged with support.

Participants consistently argued that short-term pilot funding undermines the very outcomes it seeks to achieve. Organisations described losing skilled staff, disrupting trusted community relationships and repeatedly rebuilding programs that had already demonstrated their value. They emphasised that the challenge is no longer identifying promising approaches but sustaining those that communities already know are effective. Long-term investment is therefore essential not only to maintain workforce capability but also to preserve community trust, evaluate long-term outcomes and achieve meaningful prevention impact.

The Second Action Plan should commit to sustained investment in community-led prevention within migrant and refugee communities through funding that supports:

- bicultural prevention workers;
- peer education;
- women's leadership programs;
- family and intergenerational dialogue;
- culturally responsive engagement with men and boys;
- legal literacy and rights education;
- digital safety initiatives;
- culturally grounded respectful relationships education that promotes gender equality and challenges harmful gender norms; and
- partnerships between settlement organisations, multicultural women's organisations and specialist family violence services.

4.5 Prevention must include economic participation

Economic participation is a form of protective infrastructure. Secure employment, fair work, recognition of overseas skills and qualifications, financial independence and knowledge of workplace rights strengthen women's agency, reduce dependence on people using violence and expand the choices available to leave unsafe relationships. For migrant and refugee women, employment and financial independence are therefore both settlement outcomes and violence prevention and recovery strategies.

Employment vulnerability has been a consistent theme across consultation, with many clients working in low-paid and insecure sectors including agriculture, food processing, meat processing, hospitality, cleaning, care and support services. People on temporary visas, bridging visas and undocumented people face heightened risks of exploitation, underpayment, unsafe work and labour hire dependency, with fear of visa consequences and employer retaliation contributing to under-reporting.

SCOA recommends that the Second Action Plan recognise economic participation, workplace rights, skills recognition and social enterprise pathways as part of prevention and recovery.

4.6 Language access is prevention and safety infrastructure

Language access should be recognised as a fundamental component of prevention, early intervention, safety and recovery under the Second Action Plan. For many migrant and

refugee women, the ability to understand their rights, recognise abusive behaviour, access support and safely navigate legal, health, housing, migration and family violence systems depends on receiving information in a language and format they understand.

Language barriers can delay recognition and disclosure of violence, increase isolation, restrict access to justice and make victim-survivors more dependent on family members or other people who may be connected to the person using violence. A lack of accessible information can be particularly harmful for newly arrived women who may have limited knowledge of Australian laws, available protections, support services and legal remedies. Language access extends beyond the provision of an interpreter at the point of service delivery. It includes access to translated and culturally adapted information, multilingual rights education, community language outreach, accessible digital communications and prevention messages delivered through trusted community networks. These supports should be recognised and funded as essential services rather than discretionary additions to mainstream programs.

Effective prevention also requires more than translating English-language materials. Concepts such as coercive control, economic abuse, technology-facilitated abuse, migration-related coercion and legal remedies may not translate directly across languages or cultural contexts. Prevention messaging should therefore be culturally responsive, community informed and designed with the communities it is intended to reach.

The Second Action Plan should support:

- multilingual public awareness and prevention campaigns delivered through trusted community networks;
- community language workshops and information sessions delivered by bilingual and bicultural community connectors, settlement organisations, multicultural organisations, multicultural women's organisations and other trusted community organisations;
- multilingual digital resources, including videos, audio resources, podcasts, social media content and community radio programming;
- plain-language and culturally adapted rights education materials using accessible formats, including visual information and infographics;
- targeted prevention and rights education for newly arrived communities; and
- co-design involving bicultural workers, professional interpreters and translators, faith leaders, specialist family violence practitioners and community representatives.

Multilingual prevention campaigns should be recognised as an essential component of Australia's prevention architecture. They provide communities with the knowledge needed to recognise violence, understand rights and protections, identify available support and seek assistance before violence escalates.

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

The consultation paper recognises that children and young people are not merely witnesses to violence experienced by adults but victim-survivors in their own right, with distinct needs, rights and insights.

This is particularly important in settlement contexts. Children and young people in migrant and refugee families often act as language brokers, cultural navigators, digital intermediaries and emotional witnesses to adult stress. They may be exposed to violence, coercive control, racism, intergenerational trauma, migration stress, family separation, housing insecurity, poverty and the lingering effects of conflict or displacement.

5.1 Children and Young People in Settlement Contexts Require Independent Recognition and Support

Consultation participants consistently called for greater recognition of children and young people within Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence response, particularly in the context of migration and settlement. Participants emphasised that children experience violence in their own right and require support that is not solely delivered through services provided to their parents.

They identified children and young people as an under-served group, with strong support for trauma-informed counselling that is independent of support provided to their mothers. Participants emphasised that children and young people require timely access to culturally responsive, trauma-informed counselling and recovery supports that recognise the intersecting impacts of family violence, migration, displacement, racism and settlement experiences.

Participants also highlighted the distinct experiences of multicultural children and young people, noting that violence may occur across multiple settings, including within families, intimate relationships, schools and online environments. Particular concern was raised about the limited visibility of adolescent intimate partner violence and the need for developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive prevention and support responses that recognise the unique experiences of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

Children and young people in settlement contexts may also experience harms associated with transnational family separation, migration-related uncertainty, coercive control, forced marriage, human trafficking and technology-facilitated abuse. These intersecting experiences reinforce the need for responses that are both child-centred and culturally responsive, while recognising the broader family and settlement context in which violence occurs.

The Second Action Plan should strengthen prevention, early intervention and recovery for multicultural children and young people by supporting:

- independent trauma-informed counselling for children and young people in migrant and refugee families;
- age-appropriate legal and rights information;
- school-based pathways to prevention and support;
- youth-specific collaboration between settlement, education and specialist family violence services;
- culturally responsive responses to young people using violence in the home; and
- developmentally appropriate responses to adolescent intimate partner violence, together with support for children affected by transnational family separation, forced marriage, human trafficking, coercive control and technology-facilitated abuse.

5.2 Dependants of modern slavery survivors must be recognised

Australian Red Cross has observed challenges arising when children are treated as dependants rather than victim-survivors in their own right. Red Cross notes that at least a third of their support program clients have dependants and that when dependants are not assessed as victim-survivors themselves, their psychological and developmental needs may go unmet.

SCOA recommends that the Second Action Plan address this gap explicitly and ensure that children affected by modern slavery, forced marriage, trafficking and family violence are recognised in their own right, not only through the status of the adult victim-survivor.

6. Priority Area 4: People who use violence

The consultation paper identifies the need to strengthen approaches to people who use violence, including earlier identification, accountability, culturally appropriate responses and a continuum of behaviour change interventions.

The settlement sector sees men and families during periods of profound transition. Migration can bring shifts in gender roles, economic identity, family authority, parenting expectations, legal obligations, social networks and community status. These transitions do not cause violence. Violence is a choice and must be held within an accountability framework. However, the settlement period provides opportunities for early intervention with men and boys before harmful behaviours escalate.

6.1 Community-led engagement with men and boys

Consultation participants consistently supported continued investment in men's behaviour change and perpetrator accountability. However, they also highlighted that many existing approaches are not readily accessible for multicultural communities because they are delivered primarily in English, rely on culturally unfamiliar models of engagement or fail to build on existing community strengths.

Participants identified opportunities to strengthen prevention through culturally responsive approaches that engage men as fathers, community members and leaders. Community-led initiatives, peer leadership, culturally specific men's groups and fatherhood programs were identified as promising ways of encouraging respectful relationships, challenging harmful attitudes and supporting earlier engagement before violence escalates.

These approaches should complement, not replace, specialist perpetrator interventions and should be developed in partnership with multicultural communities.

6.2 Invest in culturally grounded work with men and boys

Consultation participants consistently identified significant gaps in prevention and early intervention initiatives for men and boys from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. The consultation highlighted intergenerational prevention as a structural gap within current policy, identifying limited investment in culturally responsive programs for men, school-based initiatives for boys and young men, and support for families navigating changing social, cultural and economic norms during settlement.

Participants emphasised that prevention initiatives for men from migrant and refugee backgrounds should recognise the realities of settlement while maintaining a strong accountability framework. Programs should address settlement-related challenges such as changing family dynamics, shifting gender expectations, social isolation, intergenerational

conflict and migration stress, while reinforcing that these factors do not excuse or justify the use of violence.

Community-based programs that create safe spaces for men to explore respectful relationships, positive fatherhood, communication, gender equality and Australian legal and child protection systems can encourage earlier engagement and help prevent the escalation of harmful behaviours. Consultation participants emphasised that these initiatives complement, rather than replace, specialist perpetrator intervention and men's behaviour change programs by engaging men earlier and strengthening pathways into more intensive responses where required.

The Second Action Plan should strengthen culturally responsive prevention and early intervention by investing in:

- culturally grounded, accountability-focused programs for men;
- early intervention programs for fathers during settlement;
- youth-specific work with boys and young men;
- programs addressing coercive control, gender equality, respectful relationships, positive parenting and Australian law;
- partnerships between settlement organisations, specialist family violence services and perpetrator intervention providers; and
- evaluation of culturally responsive prevention, early intervention and men's behaviour change models.

6.3 Accountability must not be displaced onto women or communities

Community-led work with men must not become an excuse to shift responsibility away from men who use violence or from the systems required to hold them accountable. Programs must be survivor-centred, safety-led and connected to specialist expertise. SCOA's policy position states that engagement with men who use violence must include accountability and monitoring and be embedded within coordinated, culturally informed responses.

The Second Action Plan should ensure that prevention with men and boys is adequately funded but not at the expense of women's safety, specialist services or victim-survivor recovery.

7. Priority Area 5: System integration and workforce

The consultation paper identifies system integration and workforce as a priority area, calling for safe and effective prevention, early intervention, response and recovery through an integrated system and connected workforce.

This was the strongest theme in SCOA and AMWA's consultation.

7.1 Integration failure is a structural safety failure

Consultation participants consistently identified fragmented service systems as one of the greatest barriers to safety for migrant and refugee women experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence. Women are frequently required to navigate multiple services with different eligibility rules, risk assessment frameworks, language access arrangements and accountability mechanisms. Settlement workers may identify significant safety risks but lack clear pathways into specialist family violence services, while specialist services may refer women back to settlement organisations because they lack cultural, language or migration expertise. Housing, health, justice, migration and income support systems often respond to individual aspects of a woman's circumstances while no single service is able to coordinate a holistic response.

Participants emphasised that fragmentation is not merely inefficient. It can itself become a source of harm. Women may be required to repeatedly recount their experiences to police, courts, housing providers, health services, child protection, migration advisers, Centrelink and specialist services, often while managing children's safety, housing instability and ongoing abuse. This repeated retelling, combined with the burden of navigating disconnected systems, was consistently described as compounding trauma, delaying recovery and creating additional barriers to seeking help.

The consultation highlighted practical integration mechanisms that would improve both safety and service accessibility. Participants called for funded warm referrals, shared local referral pathways, interpreter access, bicultural support, two-way capability building between sectors, practical service mapping, named contacts across organisations and shared escalation processes. Collectively, these measures recognise that effective integration depends not only on stronger relationships between organisations but also on clearer accountability for how women move safely through the service system.

Participants cautioned that referral should not be mistaken for integration. A referral that leaves a victim-survivor to contact, explain her circumstances to and coordinate multiple disconnected services merely transfers responsibility back to the person seeking safety. Genuine integration requires shared relationships, clear responsibility, continuity of support,

mutual understanding between sectors and accountability for what happens after a referral is made.

Consultation participants also observed that fragmentation is reinforced by funding arrangements. Narrowly defined contracts may require organisations to respond only to the issue or activity for which they are funded, even when a woman presents with interconnected needs involving violence, housing, migration, income, health, disability and children. This can prevent services from responding to the whole person and discourage the collaborative work required for effective early intervention.

The Second Action Plan should strengthen system integration by investing in four complementary reforms:

1. stronger referral and navigation pathways;
2. stronger local partnerships and coordinated responses;
3. improved cross-sector capability; and
4. greater accountability for integrated practice.

This should include:

1. Stronger referral and navigation pathways

- warm referral standards;
- coordinated case navigation that minimises unnecessary retelling of traumatic experiences across service systems;
- named escalation contacts across key service systems; and
- flexible responses to intersecting needs.

2. Stronger local partnerships and coordinated responses

- local partnership protocols between settlement and specialist family violence services;
- recognition of specialist multicultural family violence providers within regional and local referral pathways so that culturally responsive services are included as core partners in coordinated responses;
- regional service mapping and coordinated referral pathways;
- relational and place-based service models; and
- appropriate information-sharing arrangements with strong privacy safeguards.

3. Improved cross-sector capability

- funded secondary consultation across sectors;
- timely access to accredited interpreters;
- cross-sector workforce capability development; and
- funded coordination and secondary consultation.

4. Greater accountability for integrated practice

- accountability mechanisms for failed or inappropriate referrals;
- shared outcomes across participating systems; and

- incentives for sustained cross-sector collaboration.

7.2 Community navigation is core safety infrastructure

Community navigators play a critical role in keeping victim-survivors connected while they move through complex and fragmented systems. Their role extends beyond providing information or making a referral. Navigators explain unfamiliar systems, coordinate appointments, maintain trusted relationships, support communication between services, reduce the burden of repeated disclosure and help prevent people from disengaging or disappearing between agencies.

For migrant and refugee women, this continuity can be particularly important when navigating family violence, migration, housing, income support, legal, health and child protection systems simultaneously. Navigation should therefore be recognised as core safety infrastructure rather than an optional or short-term program activity.

The Second Action Plan should invest in culturally responsive community navigation models that:

- maintain continuity of support across services;
- provide supported and warm referral;
- assist women to understand systems, rights and available options;
- coordinate appointments and communication between services;
- reduce unnecessary retelling of traumatic experiences; and
- remain involved until responsibility for support has been clearly transferred.

7.3 Workforce reform must work in both directions

Consistent with the consultation findings outlined earlier, multicultural family violence practice should be recognised as a specialist area of workforce capability. This recognition should be reflected through nationally consistent practice guidance, professional development, workforce pathways and future investment.

SCOA's policy position supports nationally consistent training and practice guidance for settlement workers on family, domestic and sexual violence, including technology-facilitated abuse, transnational abuse and migration-related coercive control, together with access to specialist secondary consultation to strengthen practice and decision-making.

Consultation participants also argued that multicultural family violence practice should be recognised as a specialist area of professional expertise within Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence workforce. Effective practice requires far more than language capability or cultural background. It demands specialist knowledge of migration systems, settlement experiences, coercive control in multicultural contexts, transnational abuse, forced marriage, interpreter practice, structural racism, trauma, community dynamics and culturally

responsive risk assessment. Participants consistently emphasised that speaking another language alone does not constitute specialist multicultural family violence practice.

Participants further highlighted the importance of investing in bicultural practitioners, community educators and multilingual family violence workers whose lived experience, language capability and cultural expertise strengthen engagement, improve safety and support culturally responsive service delivery. They emphasised that these roles should be recognised as part of a broader specialist workforce rather than viewed solely as cultural brokers or interpreters.

Professional interpreters and translators should also be recognised as part of the family, domestic and sexual violence workforce. Working effectively in family violence contexts requires specialist capability that extends beyond language proficiency. Interpreters and translators may support conversations involving trauma, coercive control, immediate safety risks, forced marriage, modern slavery, child protection, migration matters and legal proceedings. They may also encounter situations in which a person using violence attempts to influence, monitor or control the interpretation process.

Consultation participants noted that women may first disclose violence to small community organisations, volunteer-led associations or informal community groups that are trusted within multicultural communities but are not always equipped with consistent safeguarding, record-keeping, referral or risk management processes. Strengthening community capability should therefore include practical guidance, referral protocols and safeguarding standards for organisations likely to receive disclosures of family, domestic and sexual violence, while recognising the important role these organisations play in supporting community trust and connection.

The Second Action Plan should strengthen workforce capability through investment in:

- nationally consistent settlement-informed family, domestic and sexual violence practice guidance;
- training on forced marriage, trafficking, servitude, exit trafficking, transnational abuse and migration-related coercive control;
- interpreter capability for family, domestic and sexual violence contexts;
- guidance on identifying and responding to perpetrator-controlled interpretation;
- trauma-informed, anti-racist and culturally responsive practice;
- disability-inclusive and LGBTQIA+-inclusive practice that recognises the intersection of disability, sexuality, gender identity, migration and settlement experiences;
- workforce pathways and career development for bicultural practitioners;
- funding to enable smaller multicultural and community organisations to participate in workforce development, partnerships and secondary consultation; and
- recognition of multicultural family violence practice as a specialist area of workforce capability, supported through dedicated professional development, practice guidance and career pathways.

The Second Action Plan should also invest in specialised family violence training and practice guidance for interpreters and translators, covering:

- family, domestic and sexual violence dynamics;
- trauma-informed communication;
- forced marriage and modern slavery indicators;
- migration-related coercive control;
- technology-facilitated abuse;
- ethical, confidentiality and safety considerations;
- identifying and responding to perpetrator interference in interpretation; and professional supervision, wellbeing and management of vicarious trauma.

Investment is also required to recruit and retain qualified interpreters in emerging and low-volume languages. Access to safety should not depend on whether a person speaks a language for which services can readily secure an appropriately qualified interpreter.

7.4 Regional settlement locations require specific investment

Regional areas were repeatedly identified as under-served. Settlement, family violence and mainstream services are thinner, coordination is more fragile, and women may have fewer options for anonymous or culturally responsive support.

The Second Action Plan should include a regional settlement safety strategy that supports:

- local coordination;
- outreach models;
- digital referral tools;
- interpreter access;
- transport and brokerage;
- training for mainstream regional services; and
- partnership with local multicultural and settlement organisations.

The Second Action Plan should move beyond a model in which responsibility for prevention and response sits primarily with specialist family violence services. Specialist expertise remains essential, but effective prevention and early intervention for migrant and refugee communities require an ecosystem approach involving settlement, multicultural and multicultural women's organisations, housing, health, education, employment, legal services, social enterprises, neighbourhood houses, aged care, faith communities and other trusted local institutions.

The purpose of an ecosystem approach is not to make every organisation a specialist family violence service. It is to ensure that the broader systems and relationships through which women live their lives can recognise risk, respond within appropriate role boundaries and connect people safely with specialist support.

The reforms outlined above are intended to strengthen Australia's overall family, domestic and sexual violence system. That system must also recognise forms of gender-based violence that have too often been addressed through separate policy and service responses.

Consultation participants consistently emphasised that forced marriage, modern slavery, trafficking and related forms of exploitation are not peripheral issues. They involve the same dynamics of gendered power, coercive control, migration-related vulnerability and system fragmentation discussed throughout this submission and should therefore be embedded within the broader National Plan response.

8. Modern slavery, forced marriage and anti-slavery must be embedded within the gender-based violence framework

SCOA strongly recommends that the Second Action Plan address modern slavery, forced marriage, trafficking, servitude and exit trafficking as integral forms of gender-based violence, rather than adjacent or exceptional issues.

The risk of treating forced marriage and modern slavery as culturally specific, marginal or separate from family violence is that systems fail to recognise the gendered, coercive and familial dynamics through which these harms often occur. Forced marriage may involve family and community pressure, threats, migration-related coercion, financial control, surveillance, violence, emotional abuse, religious pressure, shame and transnational control. It is not peripheral to the National Plan; it belongs within it and specialist services should be required to develop their capacity in this area

8.1 Evidence from Australian Red Cross

Australian Red Cross delivers the Support for Trafficked People Program, providing trauma-informed case management support to people who have experienced modern slavery, including human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices. The Red Cross notes increased rates of people identified as having experienced modern slavery since the introduction of the Additional Referral Pathway in August 2024, with approximately 70 per cent of current referrals being women and one-third having dependants.

Red Cross also observes that structural gender inequality significantly increases vulnerability to modern slavery and reinforces gender-based harm. Women comprise the majority of people identified and referred for support in cases of forced marriage, exit trafficking, servitude and trafficking for sexual exploitation, and experiences of modern slavery are shaped by migration status, race, socioeconomic circumstances, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Red Cross brief identifies critical gaps, including:

- limited access to STPP where exploitation occurred offshore without a nexus to Australia;
- barriers for people without visa status;
- lack of specialist trauma-informed support;
- difficulties obtaining legal representation in family law matters;
- lack of holistic legal services;
- interpreter barriers for crisis calls;
- barriers to obtaining or renewing protection orders;

- weaponisation of children through international separation or abduction;
- tracking of clients by alleged perpetrators; and
- victim-blaming responses to disclosures of coercive control and abuse.

8.2 Reform the Human Trafficking Visa Framework

Red Cross identifies the need to reform the Human Trafficking Visa Framework to afford survivors access to support, increase transparency and fairness, and minimise precarity, family separation and instability. SCOA supports this recommendation and urges the Second Action Plan to include modern slavery visa reform as part of its safety agenda.

8.3 Forced marriage and settlement

SCOA's forced marriage webinar series with Anti-Slavery Australia and sector partners demonstrated strong demand across the settlement sector for improved identification, response and referral capability. Settlement workers are increasingly encountering forced marriage risk, migration-related coercion, family pressure, threats of overseas removal, and young people seeking confidential advice.

The Second Action Plan should:

- embed forced marriage within FDSV workforce training;
- fund settlement-specific forced marriage identification and response resources;
- support confidential advice pathways for young people;
- improve collaboration between schools, settlement services, legal services, child protection, family violence services and anti-slavery specialists;
- ensure forced marriage is not framed through racialised or culturalised stereotypes; and
- recognise forced marriage as a manifestation of gendered power, coercive control and structural inequality.

9. Structural racism and data invisibility

9.1 Structural racism must be recognised as a safety issue

The Second Action Plan cannot be genuinely intersectional unless it addresses structural racism. Racism is not a background condition. It shapes whether victim-survivors are believed, whether they are misidentified, whether interpreters are provided, whether police are trusted, whether children are removed, whether women are treated as credible, whether communities are consulted in sustained ways or only episodically, and whether services receive funding proportionate to need.

Consultation participants consistently described racism and systemic discrimination as factors that do more than reduce access to services. They increase vulnerability to violence by contributing to social exclusion, economic insecurity, employment barriers, housing disadvantage, mistrust of institutions and reluctance to seek help. Participants emphasised that racism should be recognised as a structural determinant of safety rather than solely as a barrier to culturally responsive service delivery.

Participants also cautioned against responses that treat culture itself as the problem. They observed that cultural identity is sometimes ‘weaponised’ within public discourse or service responses, reinforcing stereotypes and obscuring the responsibility of people who use violence. Effective responses recognise culture, community connection and identity as strengths while addressing the structural racism and discrimination that undermine safety.

9.2 Data invisibility is an accountability failure

Consultation participants consistently identified the absence of reliable ethnicity, visa status and migration pathway data as a major accountability failure. The consultation highlighted, for example, that many police jurisdictions do not collect perpetrator data by culturally and linguistically diverse background, limiting the evidence available to inform policy and system accountability.

Participants argued that Australia's current evidence base substantially underestimates the prevalence and nature of family, domestic and sexual violence experienced by migrant and refugee communities. Many victim-survivors never engage with formal service systems, while existing administrative datasets often fail to capture temporary visa holders, migration-related coercive control, extended family and in-law abuse, systems abuse, or culturally specific forms of coercion. Participants consistently observed that multicultural communities remain ‘invisible in the data’, limiting governments’ ability to design evidence-informed policy, target investment and evaluate outcomes.

The Second Action Plan should establish nationally consistent data standards across family violence, policing, courts, housing, health, child protection, legal assistance and settlement systems. These should include:

- country of birth;
- language spoken at home;
- need for an interpreter;
- visa status or migration pathway, where safe and appropriate;
- temporary or permanent visa category;
- indicators of visa-related coercive control, where safe and appropriate;
- year of arrival;
- ethnicity or ancestry;
- refugee or humanitarian background;
- disability;
- the primary relationship of the person using violence (including intimate partner, extended family member or in-law where relevant); and
- gender identity and sexuality, collected safely and voluntarily.

Data collection should also include measures that improve understanding of migration-related coercive control, systems abuse, recovery outcomes and interactions with community-led organisations that often provide the earliest points of disclosure and support.

Data collection alone, however, will not improve accountability. It must be accompanied by community trust, transparency and workforce capability. Communities need to understand why information is being collected, how it will be protected and how it will be used to improve equity. The purpose is not surveillance, it is accountability.

Consultation participants emphasised that improved data collection must be accompanied by safeguards that prevent the stereotyping, stigmatisation or unfair targeting of particular communities. Data should be interpreted within its broader social and structural context and used to improve equity, service planning and accountability rather than reinforce harmful assumptions or deficit-based narratives. Appropriate governance, community engagement and transparent reporting mechanisms should ensure that data strengthens trust and informs better policy without isolating or labelling particular cultural or migrant communities.

9.3 Measuring recovery, not simply system activity

Consultation participants challenged the way success is currently measured. Existing reporting frameworks primarily measure system activity rather than recovery. Indicators such as police reports, intervention orders, crisis accommodation and service utilisation provide important information about service demand but reveal little about whether women have achieved long-term safety and recovery.

Participants argued that national monitoring should also measure outcomes such as stable housing, employment, financial independence, wellbeing, community participation,

confidence and sustained safety. These outcomes align closely with settlement outcomes and provide a more complete understanding of whether women are rebuilding their lives after violence. Measuring recovery alongside crisis responses would give governments a more accurate understanding of what works, where investment is needed and whether the Second Action Plan is achieving meaningful long-term outcomes.

10. Case studies and Practice Spotlights

Victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence

Improving Family Violence Responses for CALD Women through the Working Together Project, Migrant Information Centre Eastern Melbourne Case Studies – Migrant Information Centre

Through the Working Together Project, the Migrant Information Centre has strengthened its ability to identify and respond to family violence experienced by culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) women before situations escalate into crisis. During a community engagement activity, a young woman confidentially approached a staff member to disclose that she feared her family intended to force her into marriage and send her overseas against her will. She was extremely anxious about her safety and requested information only, expressing fears of family retaliation, cultural shame, community judgement, and involvement from authorities. She was not an existing client and had never previously accessed specialist family violence services.

Thanks to training and capability developed through the Working Together Project, staff recognised that forced marriage is a form of family violence and responded with confidence and sensitivity, despite there being no immediate physical assault. A specialist family violence consultation pathway was activated, enabling staff to undertake a MARAM-aligned risk assessment using de-identified information while maintaining the woman's confidentiality. A culturally safe, trauma-informed approach ensured that her autonomy remained central to all decision-making. Staff worked with her to develop a practical safety plan, focusing on preparedness, understanding warning signs, protecting her privacy, and identifying safe support options.

The woman received accurate information about her legal rights and available specialist services, including forced marriage and family violence support, allowing her to make informed decisions at her own pace. As a result, she reported feeling empowered, reassured and better informed about her options. The case highlights how the Working Together Project enables early intervention, builds trust with CALD communities, and strengthens workforce capability to provide culturally responsive, MARAM-aligned family violence responses that prevent harm before it occurs.

Safe and Supported, SSI

Safe and supported: addressing domestic, family and sexual violence in multicultural communities in Australia

Safe and Supported argues that while domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) occurs across all cultures and communities, there are specific complexities and structural barriers for victim-survivors from multicultural communities that require tailored, culturally responsive approaches to promote community safety and wellbeing. An intersectional approach that identifies and responds to the multiple forms of structural oppression and discrimination, that can create barriers to support for victim-survivors of abuse/ violence, is required.

The brief draws on a range of SSI initiatives that show in practice how embedding culturally responsive approaches in addressing domestic, family and sexual violence can build on initiatives that have already been implemented. Furthermore, for prevention and early intervention to improve safety and drive change, we need to invest in partnerships with communities and social responders to build and maintain capability. Early intervention accordingly needs to shift to places and settings already accessed by refugee and migrant women such as settlement services. From the outset, prevention and early intervention initiatives must be tailored to, and accessible for migrant and refugee communities. At the policy and programs level, barriers such as visa status that enable and can further exacerbate DFSV must be reformed.

Prevention and early intervention

Improving Family Violence Responses for CALD Women through the Working Together Project, Migrant Information Centre Eastern Melbourne

Case Studies – Migrant Information Centre

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woman's confidentiality. A culturally safe, trauma-informed approach ensured that her autonomy remained central to all decision-making. Staff worked with her to develop a practical safety plan, focusing on preparedness, understanding warning signs, protecting her privacy, and identifying safe support options.

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Community-led women's economic participation

SisterWorks, The Social Outfit and similar social enterprises demonstrate how economic participation can operate as safety and recovery infrastructure. These models create income, confidence, social connection, skills recognition and trusted spaces where women may disclose violence and access support.

SisterWorks is women-led social enterprise supporting migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women through work, entrepreneurship, community connection and financial independence. The model demonstrates how economic participation can create conditions for disclosure, confidence, social connection and recovery.

[Economic Empowerment for Migrant Women | SisterWorks](#)

The Social Outfit is fashion-based social enterprise supporting refugee and new migrant women through ethical employment, training and community connection. The model offers practical evidence of how workplace participation, creativity, income and belonging can operate as recovery infrastructure.

[The Social Outfit: Ethical Fashion, Sustainable Fashion, Community.](#)

Community for Change, Australian Refugee Association

Communities for Change is a community-led primary prevention initiative delivered by the Australian Refugee Association (ARA) that aims to prevent family, domestic and sexual violence within refugee communities.

The program recruits, trains and mentors volunteer Community Educators from refugee backgrounds to design and deliver family, domestic and sexual violence awareness sessions within their own communities. Drawing on their lived experience, language capability and trusted community relationships, Community Educators facilitate culturally relevant conversations about gender equality, respectful relationships, rights, available supports and pathways to help-seeking.

The initiative demonstrates how community ownership and peer-led education can strengthen violence prevention by increasing awareness, improving understanding of rights and services, challenging harmful gender norms and creating trusted pathways for earlier disclosure and support.

During 2024–25, the program recruited 15 Community Educators representing 10 cultural backgrounds and speaking 12 languages. Together, they delivered 18 community education sessions attended by 420 participants from 32 cultural backgrounds, demonstrating the reach and value of culturally grounded, community-led prevention.

Communities for Change illustrates how sustained investment in community-led prevention can build trusted relationships, strengthen community capability and create earlier pathways to safety for migrant and refugee women and their families.

Good Dads: Engaging young migrant and refugee fathers as a prevention strategy, Settlement Services International (SSI)

<https://www.ssi.org.au/our-services/families-children-and-youth/good-dads/>

SSI is implementing a project that brings together and facilitates a group of fathers from migrant and refugee communities in the Greater Brisbane area to explore and articulate what works and resonates in supporting young migrant and refugee men, particularly in the context of becoming fathers, to foster respectful, gender-equal relationships and challenge rigid ideas of masculinity.

Young migrant and refugee men from diverse cultural backgrounds, connected by the shared experience of transitioning into fatherhood, engage in facilitated peer conversations about gender roles and cultural expectations, respectful relationships and what it means to be a man, a partner and a father. Further, this facilitated group is supported to develop effective approaches—including tailored language, priority issues identification and means of communication—to effectively engage and support other young migrant men and fathers to participate in similarly transformative conversations.

This initiative is the first of its kind, offering a fundamentally innovative approach to partnering with young migrant and refugee men and fathers to collectively explore how this cohort can be supported to expand and transform their understanding of masculinity, gender and relationships.

Sew Good, Cultura

Community Development Programs - Cultura

Sew Good Cultura is a pilot social enterprise that provides a safe space for women to explore their potential for economic participation in self-employment or direct employment. These women are often not identified in data and statistics, are often carers and evidence low English literacy, poor physical and mental health.

Despite barriers they have significant skills developed in their home countries and a desire to contribute to their family income and to their adopted country. Through engagement and increase in confidence, the women have shared levels of family violence from coercion, financial control through to highly volatile family situations and visa abuse. As Sew Good Cultura operates within a Settlement Services setting, the women are provided with confidential and discrete wraparound service and the necessary referrals to specialist family violence intervention.

Many Voices, One Future, AMES Australia

Stop Violence Against Women Leadership Course | AMES Australia

For nearly a decade, AMES Australia has delivered a unique Prevention of Violence Against Women Leadership Program for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities. AMES has delivered multiple programs in metropolitan and regional Victoria, graduating 245 community members from 19 language communities who now lead workshops, influence policy, and launch prevention initiatives.

In 2025, AMES launched Many Voices, One Future, an expanded national roll-out of their primary prevention model which entrenches gender equity and prevention messaging into all aspects of AMES work with newly arrived and migrant communities through the Settlement, Education, Employment and Social Participation services. AMES recognise that, as a trusted organisation, it has a unique and unparalleled opportunity to embed safety and respect as core principles of successful settlement in Australia.

By incorporating primary prevention messaging into service delivery, the Many Voices, One Future model supports leadership, fosters inclusion, and equips communities to challenge harmful norms and promote gender equality.

Modern slavery, forced marriage and anti-slavery

Support for Trafficked People Program (STPP), Australian Red Cross

[Modern slavery resources | Australian Red Cross](#)

The Australian Red Cross Support for Trafficked People Program (STPP) provides a compelling example of the intersection between settlement, modern slavery, family, domestic and sexual violence, migration status, legal systems and trauma recovery. The program demonstrates the importance of integrated, trauma-informed, culturally responsive and victim-centred support for people whose experiences do not fit neatly within traditional service or funding boundaries.

The STPP delivers comprehensive case management to people who have experienced modern slavery, including human trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices. Through tailored, person-centred support, the program assists victim-survivors to achieve safety, recover from trauma and rebuild their lives. Consistent with its program objectives, the STPP provides holistic, gender-sensitive, culturally responsive, trauma-informed and victim-centred protection and support to people affected by modern slavery.

Importantly, the program illustrates that recovery extends beyond immediate crisis intervention. Participants often require coordinated support across migration, legal, health, housing, financial, employment and settlement systems over an extended period. The program highlights the importance of integrated service responses that recognise the complex interaction between migration status, trauma, exploitation and long-term recovery.

The STPP also highlights broader policy challenges identified throughout this submission, including gaps in visa pathways, eligibility for support, assistance for dependants and cross-system coordination. It demonstrates the importance of ensuring that safety and recovery are not determined by migration status or constrained by fragmented service systems.

National Forced Marriage Capability Building for Settlement Workers, Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) & Anti-Slavery Australia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1EMMIX5DCM&t=3s>

https://youtu.be/VpDQg_Lx6gU

This three-part webinar series demonstrated how targeted workforce capability building can strengthen the settlement sector's capacity to identify, prevent and respond to forced marriage as part of Australia's broader family, domestic and sexual violence response.

The series recognised that settlement workers are often trusted first points of contact for migrant and refugee communities and may be among the first professionals to observe indicators of forced marriage or receive disclosures. Rather than focusing solely on crisis response, the program built capability across the continuum of prevention, early identification, safe intervention and coordinated referral.

The **first webinar**, *Forced Marriage Identification, Response and Support*, provided foundational knowledge on recognising and responding to forced marriage in Australia. It equipped settlement workers to identify common indicators of risk, respond safely to disclosures, understand the dynamics of forced marriage, and connect victim-survivors with appropriate specialist support and referral pathways.

The **second webinar**, *Forced Marriage Community Engagement and Awareness-Raising*, shifted the focus to prevention. It developed participants' skills to engage communities in culturally sensitive, trauma-informed conversations about forced marriage, while exploring practical approaches to raising awareness, addressing barriers to disclosure and supporting community-led prevention initiatives.

The **third webinar**, *Forced Marriage and Migration: Intersections with Other Forms of Control*, adopted an intersectional and systems-based approach. It examined how forced marriage frequently intersects with migration issues, domestic and family violence, coercive control, exit trafficking and visa-related vulnerabilities. The webinar reinforced the importance of coordinated, multi-agency responses that recognise the complex interaction between migration status, family violence and exploitation.

Collectively, the webinar series demonstrated the value of investing in workforce capability that extends beyond awareness raising to include prevention, early intervention, culturally responsive practice and cross-sector collaboration. It provided a practical example of how settlement workers can be equipped to recognise complex forms of family violence, engage communities safely, and strengthen pathways into specialist support through trauma-informed and culturally responsive practice.

Systems Integration and Workforce

Scoping the Gap: Unfunded Support and Unmet Needs in DFSV Response for Migrant and Refugee Women and Families, SSI

[Scoping the Gap research report.pdf](#)

Settlement Services International's (SSI) 2026 *Scoping the Gap* research found that settlement and multicultural organisations play a critical but largely unrecognised role in responding to family, domestic and sexual violence experienced by migrant and refugee women and families.

The research documented extensive unfunded prevention, early intervention, case management and systems navigation work undertaken through trusted community relationships, while identifying significant unmet demand for counselling, housing, legal and migration support. It concluded that settlement organisations function as an unfunded backbone of Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence response and called for greater recognition, sustainable investment, improved cross-sector partnerships and reforms to address visa-related barriers to safety.

11. Recommendations

Consultation participants consistently reminded us that safety is not achieved solely through crisis responses or legal interventions. For many migrant and refugee women, prevention, healing and long-term safety are strengthened through community, belonging, cultural identity and trusted relationships. These are not peripheral to recovery—they are foundational to preventing violence, supporting healing and sustaining long-term safety.

The Second Action Plan provides an opportunity to move beyond episodic recognition of migrant and refugee women's experiences towards genuine structural inclusion. The settlement sector does not seek to replace specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services. Rather, it calls for the National Plan to recognise, invest in and strengthen the places where prevention, early intervention and recovery already occur: through trusted relationships, everyday conversations, community organisations, settlement pathways, workplaces, schools and local networks that support women and families as they rebuild their lives.

For too long, migrant and refugee women have been required to navigate systems that were not designed around the realities of migration, structural racism, language barriers, visa insecurity, transnational family dynamics and community trust. The Second Action Plan can address these systemic gaps by recognising settlement as essential prevention, early intervention and recovery infrastructure and ensuring that safety is supported across the full continuum of prevention, early intervention, crisis response and long-term recovery.

Achieving this will require policy reform, sustained investment, integrated service systems, community capability, evidence-informed decision-making and accountability frameworks that recognise prevention, early intervention, healing and long-term recovery; not simply crisis responses or service activity. It will also require investment in the trusted community relationships through which women first disclose violence, remain engaged with support and rebuild safe and connected lives.

The work ahead is not simply to include migrant and refugee women within an existing framework. It is to build a National Plan that is capable of recognising the realities of migration, responding equitably to diverse experiences of violence, partnering with communities as part of the solution, and measuring whether women and children are truly safe.

The following recommendations provide a practical reform agenda to strengthen the National Plan across four interconnected areas: **Policy and System Reform; Service System and Workforce Capability; Prevention and Community Capability; and Evidence, Accountability and Leadership**. Together, they seek to ensure that Australia's response to family, domestic and sexual violence better reflects the realities of migrant and refugee women's lives and supports safety across the full continuum of prevention, early intervention, crisis response, recovery and long-term wellbeing.

A FOUR PILLAR FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGE



Pillar 1: Policy and System Reform

Recommendation 1

Recognise settlement as a core component of Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence prevention, early intervention and recovery architecture by establishing a dedicated settlement-informed implementation framework under the National Plan, jointly led by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Home Affairs, the Attorney-General's Department and state and territory governments.

This framework should:

- embed settlement as prevention, early intervention and recovery infrastructure throughout implementation of the National Plan;
- strengthen cross-government coordination across settlement, migration, justice and family, domestic and sexual violence systems;
- align Commonwealth, state and territory policy settings affecting migrant and refugee victim-survivors; and
- support nationally consistent implementation, governance and accountability across jurisdictions.

Recommendation 2

Reform migration, visa and legislative settings so that Australia's migration framework supports safety, justice and recovery for all migrant and refugee victim-survivors regardless of migration pathway, while embedding migration-related forms of gender-based violence within the National Plan.

This should include:

- reform of visa eligibility and access to income support, housing, legal assistance and recovery services;
- recognition of migration-related systems abuse, including the misuse of visa dependency, sponsorship arrangements and migration processes, as mechanisms of coercive control requiring coordinated policy responses;
- reform of the Human Trafficking Visa Framework;
- improved access to protection and support for survivors whose exploitation occurred offshore or falls outside existing eligibility thresholds;
- recognition of forced marriage, human trafficking, servitude, exit trafficking and other modern slavery practices as integral forms of gender-based violence within the National Plan; and
- recognition of children and young people, including dependants of modern slavery and forced marriage survivors, as victim-survivors in their own right.

Recommendation 3

Develop nationally consistent policy, practice and implementation guidance to strengthen identification and responses to migration-related forms of family, domestic and sexual violence across settlement, migration, justice, health and specialist family violence systems.

This should include nationally consistent guidance on:

- migration-related coercive control;
- visa insecurity and migration-related vulnerability;
- forced marriage;
- human trafficking, servitude, exit trafficking and other modern slavery practices;
- transnational abuse;
- technology-facilitated abuse;
- anti-racist, culturally responsive and intersectional practice across justice, settlement and specialist family violence sectors; and
- coordinated cross-sector responses that strengthen consistency, collaboration and safe pathways to support.

Pillar 2: Service System and Workforce Capability

Recommendation 4

Invest in settlement and multicultural organisations as essential prevention, early intervention and recovery infrastructure, recognising that trusted community relationships are a critical component of Australia's family, domestic and sexual violence system.

Investment should support:

- culturally responsive community navigation and outreach;
- bicultural practice and multilingual workforce capability;
- interpreter engagement and language access;
- warm referral, supported navigation and follow-up support;
- culturally responsive safety planning and recovery support;
- court, migration and statutory systems navigation where appropriate;
- community-based initiatives that strengthen belonging, cultural identity and social participation as protective factors for healing and long-term recovery;
- partnerships that improve access to safe, affordable and culturally responsive housing as a foundation for prevention, recovery and long-term safety;
- multilingual prevention campaigns and community language outreach;
- initiatives that strengthen culturally responsive responses to elder abuse and family violence affecting older women; and
- long-term funding models that replace short-term pilot funding and support workforce stability, sustained community trust and meaningful evaluation.

Recommendation 5

Strengthen integrated service responses through nationally consistent referral pathways, shared accountability, workforce capability and coordinated service delivery across settlement, family violence and related systems.

This should include:

- nationally consistent warm referral standards across settlement, family violence, housing, health, legal, migration, policing and child and family systems;
- funded secondary consultation pathways between settlement organisations, multicultural women's organisations, specialist family violence services, legal services and anti-slavery specialists;
- integrated case coordination and culturally responsive navigation models that minimise repeated disclosure and improve continuity of support across services;
- recognition and development of specialist multicultural family violence practice across settlement, multicultural and specialist family violence sectors;
- nationally consistent workforce capability development that strengthens:
 - family, domestic and sexual violence capability within the settlement workforce; and

- settlement, migration, anti-racist practice, interpreter engagement and language-access capability across specialist and mainstream services;
- practical guidance and supported referral pathways for first-contact settings, including education, employment, legal assistance and workplace settings where violence is often first disclosed;
- clear accountability for outcomes following referral;
- flexible and relational commissioning models that support holistic responses to intersecting needs; and
- shared outcomes and performance frameworks that strengthen collaboration across settlement, family violence, housing, health, legal, migration, employment and child and family systems.

Recommendation 6

Strengthen culturally responsive justice responses for migrant and refugee victim-survivors through nationally consistent workforce capability, interpreter safety and migration-informed justice practice.

This should include:

- nationally consistent training for magistrates, police, lawyers, court staff, child protection practitioners and other frontline justice professionals;
- guidance on recognising and responding to migration-related coercive control, visa insecurity, transnational abuse, forced marriage and modern slavery;
- culturally responsive, trauma-informed and anti-racist justice practice;
- safe and appropriate engagement of accredited interpreters in family, domestic and sexual violence matters, including safeguards against perpetrator-controlled interpretation;
- strengthened legal navigation for victim-survivors experiencing intersecting migration, family violence, family law, child protection, tenancy and employment issues; and
- nationally consistent justice responses that reduce systems abuse and improve equitable access to protection and legal remedies.

Recommendation 7

Strengthen integrated, child-centred responses that recognise multicultural children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right and provide culturally responsive prevention, early intervention and recovery.

The Second Action Plan should:

- recognise children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right;
- strengthen collaboration between family violence, child protection, education, health and settlement services;
- improve access to culturally responsive, trauma-informed counselling and recovery support for children affected by family violence;

- strengthen culturally responsive prevention and early intervention for multicultural children and young people, including developmentally appropriate responses to adolescent intimate partner violence;
- support culturally responsive, youth-specific prevention, counselling and recovery pathways; and
- recognise the impacts of migration, displacement, transnational family separation, forced marriage, technology-facilitated abuse and other intersecting forms of violence on children's safety and wellbeing.

Recommendation 8

Develop and fund a dedicated Regional Settlement Safety Strategy that addresses the unique challenges facing migrant and refugee communities in regional and rural Australia and strengthens access to culturally responsive prevention, early intervention and recovery.

This should include:

- locally coordinated, place-based service partnerships;
- outreach and mobile service delivery models;
- culturally responsive community navigation and referral pathways;
- improved access to accredited interpreters and multilingual information;
- transport, brokerage and practical supports that improve access to services;
- workforce capability development for mainstream regional services;
- strengthened partnerships with settlement organisations, multicultural organisations and specialist family violence services; and
- innovative digital and hybrid service models that improve access while maintaining culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice.

Pillar 3: Prevention and Community Capability

Recommendation 9

Invest in culturally grounded, community-led prevention and early intervention that strengthens safety, gender equality, belonging and community capability across migrant and refugee communities.

Investment should support:

- long-term, community-led prevention initiatives delivered through settlement, multicultural and multicultural women's organisations;
- culturally responsive prevention and early intervention with migrant and refugee men, fathers, boys and young people that promotes gender equality, respectful relationships and accountability;
- community leadership, peer education and bicultural prevention initiatives that build trusted pathways to support and strengthen community capability;

- community-based healing, empowerment and confidence-building initiatives that strengthen agency, social connection and help-seeking before crisis occurs;
- culturally responsive engagement with faith leaders, community leaders and other trusted community institutions that reinforce safety, gender equality and accountability;
- sustained investment that replaces short-term pilot funding and enables community-led initiatives to build trust, strengthen capability and demonstrate long-term outcomes; and
- mechanisms to scale successful community-led initiatives while maintaining community ownership, cultural integrity and local leadership.

Recommendation 10

Recognise economic participation as a core component of violence prevention, recovery and long-term safety by investing in pathways that strengthen the economic security, independence and agency of migrant and refugee women.

Investment should support:

- employment pathways that improve workforce participation and financial independence;
- recognition of overseas qualifications, skills and prior learning;
- workplace rights education and culturally responsive employment support;
- social enterprise and community-based employment models that strengthen confidence, social connection and trusted pathways to disclosure, safety and recovery;
- initiatives that improve financial capability and economic inclusion;
- partnerships that strengthen employment opportunities for migrant and refugee women; and
- evaluation of economic participation initiatives as contributors to prevention, recovery and long-term safety.

Pillar 4: Evidence, Accountability and Leadership

Recommendation 11

Develop nationally consistent evidence, data, monitoring and evaluation systems that strengthen understanding of family, domestic and sexual violence experienced by migrant and refugee communities and support evidence-informed policy, practice and accountability under the National Plan.

This should include:

- nationally consistent collection of data relating to ethnicity, language, interpreter use, migration pathway, visa status and relevant settlement indicators;

- indicators that measure prevention, early intervention, recovery and long-term safety outcomes, rather than crisis responses alone;
- measures of early disclosure, trusted referral pathways, culturally responsive service engagement and reduced misidentification;
- indicators of migration-related coercive control, migration systems abuse and other migration-related forms of family, domestic and sexual violence;
- collection of information about the relationship of the person using violence, including extended family and in-law abuse where relevant;
- measures of recovery outcomes, including stable housing, employment, financial security, social participation, wellbeing and sustained safety;
- evaluation of community-led prevention initiatives, trusted community pathways and culturally responsive service models to strengthen the evidence base for future investment;
- nationally coordinated research that addresses evidence gaps relating to multicultural communities and informs continuous policy and service improvement; and
- governance and reporting arrangements that ensure data is interpreted responsibly, protects community trust and avoids stereotyping or stigmatising particular cultural or migrant communities.

Recommendation 12

Embed migrant and refugee leadership within the governance, implementation and accountability arrangements of the National Plan to ensure reforms are informed by lived experience, community expertise and sustained partnership.

This should include:

- structural representation of migrant and refugee women within governance and decision-making bodies established under the National Plan;
- meaningful participation of women with lived experience in implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- ongoing partnership with settlement organisations, multicultural organisations, multicultural women's organisations and migrant and refugee communities in policy development and system reform;
- representation that reflects the diversity of migrant and refugee communities, including women from a broad range of cultural, linguistic, faith and migration backgrounds;
- practical participation supports, including interpreting and translation, childcare, transport assistance and reimbursement, to remove barriers to meaningful participation; and
- transparent accountability mechanisms that demonstrate how community expertise and lived experience have informed policy decisions, implementation and continuous improvement.