



Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission

Corporate Plan 2023–27



Australian Government

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission



Contents

Commissioner’s Foreword	4
Our Purpose	6
Our story	6
Government Expectations for the Commission	6
Our role	7
Key activities	8
Principles for action	8
Australian community context	10
Government policy context	11
People	12
Collaboration and partnership	12
Wellbeing	12
Risk management	13
Strategic risks	13
Risk governance	13

Letter of Preparation

I, Micaela Cronin as the accountable authority of the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission present the 2023–24 Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Corporate Plan (the Plan), which covers the reporting period financial years 2023–24 to 2026–27, as required under paragraph 35(1)(b) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act). The Plan is prepared in accordance with the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 (PGPA Rule). This Plan has been compiled for the 2023–24 financial year.

Micaela Cronin
Commissioner

COMMISSIONER'S FOREWORD



It is with great pleasure that I present the Commission's first corporate plan.



It is with great pleasure that I present the Commission's first corporate plan, covering the reporting period 2023–24 to 2026–27, as required under paragraph 35(1) (b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

The Commission's Corporate Plan outlines our functions, key activities and outcomes to be achieved against performance expectations that contribute to driving systems reforms to end violence against women and children and shape policies and services that support people experiencing or who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence.

The Commission was established on 1 July 2022 and I was appointed Commissioner on 1 November 2022. The Commission's core function is to promote and support the achievement of the objectives of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 (National Plan) to end violence against women and children. It is our number one priority to ensure that people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence are central to all that we do. This approach takes time. It must be approached from a trauma-informed perspective and undertaken in a methodical, meaningful way, with people with lived experience taking the lead wherever possible.

That's why, with this Corporate Plan, we take the first step in establishing how the Commission will operate, as we all collectively move towards ending violence against women and children in Australia. We are establishing the Lived Experience Advisory Council, and they, along with government, the sector and the community more broadly, will inform our pathway to change.

People who have experience of gender-based violence can lead the way to deeper understanding of what prevention, early intervention, response and healing justice can and need to look like.

Recognising and acknowledging hidden wrongs, and beginning to repair and heal at individual, family and community levels is a shared responsibility. Ensuring

that those with deep knowledge of the harm caused by gender-based violence, and who are most directly affected by relevant policies and systems are actively listened to is vital. This drives our work and informs our priorities and actions.

The Commission will build on this ethos in its approach to engagement, recognising the importance of taking time to build trusted relationships with people who are or have experienced family, domestic and sexual violence, frontline workers, sector leaders and policy makers. In my short time as Commissioner, I have met with many people who have long been dedicated to preventing, responding to and ending gender-based violence and I acknowledge their ongoing efforts. The Commission is committed to building on our close working relationship with First Nations leaders and communities to ensure our work is informed by guidance. We will work with communities including culturally and linguistically diverse people, LGBTQIA+ and women with disability, raising their voices and perspectives in our representations to policy makers.

The Commission has refined its strategic focus, drawing on the priorities outlined in the National Plan, the Executive Order establishing the Commission, and insights from engagements.

It is a critical task for the Commission to provide a national focus and alignment of these efforts, bringing together the significant expertise, across governments, the community, academia and business sectors, to increase our collective impact.

We will foster connection and collaboration with relevant government and non-government organisations for these national conversations to ensure people are able to access the support they need no matter who they are, or where they live – and to work together to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence in all its forms.

Micaela Cronin
Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner



Acknowledgment of Country

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (the Commission) acknowledges the traditional country throughout Australia on which we gather, live, work and stand. We acknowledge all traditional custodians, their Elders past, present and wpay our respects to their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

Acknowledgment of people with lived experience

The Commission acknowledges the individual and collective expertise of those with a living or lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence. We recognise their vital contribution at all levels and value the courage of those who share this unique perspective for the purpose of learning and growing together to achieve better outcomes for all.

The Commission also values the unique experiences, protective factors and strengths of children and young people and acknowledge that they are affected by domestic, family and sexual violence in their own right.

Note on terminology

The language we use when we talk about domestic, family and sexual violence matters.

Terminology used to discuss domestic, family and sexual violence, gender-based violence, and violence against women and children highlights the ongoing complexity of working in the space, as definitions vary within and across jurisdictions. We recognise that not all terminology will reflect the lived experience of all people and we will seek to use the most inclusive language possible.

The Commission will always remain open to learning and updating its language as it grows, and welcomes advice from people with lived experience.

Gendered violence

The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022 –32 (the National Plan) uses the terminology ‘violence against women and children’ in acknowledgment of the high prevalence of men’s violence against women and children.

Where possible, the Commission adopts the terms ‘gender-based violence’ or ‘gendered violence’ to acknowledge the gendered drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence. The Commission also uses ‘gender-based violence’ as it is a more inclusive term that recognise the impact of domestic, family and sexual violence on people of all ages, genders, sex characteristics and sexualities.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Our Purpose

The Commission’s core purpose is to amplify the voices of people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, providing evidence-informed policy advice, and promoting coordination and accountability towards ending gender-based violence.

Our story

The Commission was established on 1 July 2022 through an Executive Order (C2022G00246 refers). Instituting the Commission as an agency dedicated to addressing and ending violence against women and children in all its forms provides a significant opportunity to provide independent advice and support to the Australian Government. It positions us to improve coordination on matters that affect people who have experience of domestic, family and sexual violence.

We are taking this opportunity to do things differently, and seek to amplify the voices of people with lived experience, as well as improving the coordination of policy and services. This will help ensure policy and services reflect and respond to the needs of people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence, so they can access the support they need no matter who they are, or where they live.

Government Expectations for the Commission

The Government has provided direct guidance to the Commission by detailing priorities and expectations in a Ministerial Statement of Expectations. The expectations are:

Strategic policy advice

Provide advice relevant to the Government’s strategic priorities in women’s safety and broader portfolio, identifying where there is a priority need or emerging issue, and to target specific areas for Government focus.

Promoting and enhancing coordination

Foster enhanced collaboration and coordination across government and community in relation to women’s safety. This is to assist all governments to develop person-centred, coordinated and integrated family, domestic and sexual violence service system, in line with the principles of the National Plan.

Consistent monitoring and evaluation

Work with Commonwealth and state and territory Governments to develop consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks to effectively measure impact. This is to ensure progress against the National Plan can be tracked accurately.

Victim-survivor engagement

Amplify the voices of people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence and support government to draw upon this knowledge in shaping policy design and service delivery.

Promoting the National Plan

Promote the objectives of the National Plan through all activities to ensure this information is shared to all parts of the Australian society. This will require ongoing participation in public forums, media and engagements to ensure the objectives of the National Plan remain on the national agenda.

Engagement with Commonwealth agencies

The Department of Social Services (the department) has primary responsibility for the National Plan, including national women’s safety policy development, program and service design and liaison with other Commonwealth agencies with and programs that support the National Plan.

The Commission and the department will develop practical mechanisms for collaboration with the Department of Social Services (the department) that assists the Commission to inform the department of relevant issues and information affecting women’s safety or the broader portfolio without compromising the independent role of the Commission. This will ensure the department can provide the Government with well-developed and informed policy advice.

The Commission will execute its functions based on the principles of open communication and information sharing, and the understanding that the Commission will provide feedback to the department through appropriate channels.

In addition to engaging in cross-portfolio mechanisms, the Commission will also engage relevant departments across the Commonwealth in a similar fashion.

Engagement with state and territory governments and other stakeholders

Develop productive relationships with state and territory governments and stakeholders in the sector to execute the Commission’s functions and to support the implementation of the National Plan. The Commission is expected to build and maintain relationships with state and territory Commissioners, or equivalent, with responsibilities aimed at ending gender-based violence.

Our role

In delivering the Government’s expectations, the Commission will work to ensure people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence are able to have opportunities to be at the centre of decisions made about them, their lives and their experience.

The Commission will do this through its four objectives, which form the basis for our key activities:

- promoting the National Plan objectives to end gender-based violence and monitoring impact
- amplifying the voices of people with lived and living experience for meaningful engagement in shaping policy design and service delivery
- fostering collaboration and coordination across government and community to enhance connection and reduce fragmentation and improve outcomes for people with lived or living experience of domestic, family or sexual violence
- providing strategic advice to inform strengthened policy and practice, and improved outcomes.

We will take action responsibly and collaboratively while ensuring the dignity of individuals is upheld. We seek to influence community and governments to prevent and respond to gender based violence.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is at epidemic levels in Australia. We know urgent action is needed.

We also know the system is large and complex; there are many governments, agencies, bodies, and organisations working to make change. Our aim is to add value and an independent perspective.

That is why, after conversations, feedback and listening since our establishment, the Commission will focus on six priority areas:

- amplifying lived experiences
- children and young people
- healthy and diverse masculinity
- systemic and institutional racism
- healing justice
- housing

Underpinning our approach will be ensuring people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence are meaningfully engaged in policy development and implementation. We know the best people to help and improve the system, are those who have needed it most in the past.



Key activities

The Commission is at an early stage of establishment. Its key activities are determined through the functions outlined in the Order to Establish the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission as an Executive Agency (C2022G00246 refers) and the expectations set out for it by the Government.

During 2023–24, the Commission will focus on the following strategic objectives:

1. **Promoting the National Plan objectives to end gender-based violence and monitoring impact.**

2. **Amplifying the voices of people with lived and living experience for meaningful engagement in shaping policy design and service delivery.**

3. **Fostering collaboration and coordination across government and community to enhance connection, reduce fragmentation to improve outcomes.**

4. **Providing strategic advice to inform strengthened policy and practice and improved outcomes.**

Principles for action

The Commission has five principles that underpin our philosophy and approach:

Inquiring: we will approach challenges with curiosity and openness, and use insights, evidence and expertise to inform strategic advice.

Collaborative: we will facilitate coordination and connection across communities, sectors and governments.

Responsive: we will maintain flexibility to respond to emerging issues and needs.

Dignity: we recognise our actions contribute to people with lived experience being heard, understood, safe and supported.

Influence: we will influence positive change and inform priorities for policy, research and data collection.

OPERATING CONTEXT

In 4 June 2020, the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (Committee) adopted an Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence (Inquiry).

The Committee's final report was published on 1 April 2021 and it made 88 recommendations, which sought to inform the development of the National Plan.

Recommendation 23 was that the Australian Government establish as an independent statutory office, a National Commissioner for the prevention of family, domestic and sexual violence.

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (the Commission) commenced as an Executive Agency for the purposes of the Public Service Act 1999 (PS Act) on 1 July 2022, and as a listed non-corporate Commonwealth entity on 1 November 2022 (C2022G00246).

Commissioner Cronin also commenced in the role on 1 November 2022.

The Executive Order establishing the Commission sets out the following functions:

- provide strategic policy advice to the Minister for Women's Safety
- promote and enhance coordination across Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the not-for-profit and private sectors
- promote coordinated and consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks by all governments for the National Plan
- develop and maintain a supportive and structured approach to victim-survivor engagement
- inform priorities for policy, research and data collection in cooperation with jurisdictions and relevant organisations and agencies
- promote the objectives of the National Plan across all parts of Australian society.

The Commission is not a statutory office. It is an executive agency that reports to the Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, as set out in the 'Order to Identify the Minister Responsible for the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission' (C2022G00452).

As an executive agency, the Commission is independent from the Department of Social Services. This allows the Commission to fulfil its function in monitoring the progress of the National Plan.

The National Plan, released on 17 October 2022, articulates the role of Commission as follows:

“The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission will work with Commonwealth, state and territory governments and community organisations to promote coordinated and consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks and will provide annual reports to the Parliament measuring progress against the National Plan”.

The Commission is focused on practical and meaningful ways to measure progress towards the objectives outlined in the National Plan, informed by what is important to people with lived and living experience, and what the research and data, and front line workforce is telling us.

As an independent body within the Social Services portfolio, the Commission will hold governments accountable for the delivery of effective policy and service delivery.

We will work in partnership with relevant government and non-government actors to hold space for an ongoing national conversation. The Commission's approach will be to amplify and identify emerging opportunities.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission is part of a significant national reform program in which all jurisdictions acknowledge the importance of addressing the challenges of domestic, family and sexual violence in a concerted and visible manner.

The Commission undertakes this work in a complex strategic and operating environment that requires coordination among and within jurisdictions and across sectors.

Australian community context

On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.¹ One in 5 women and one in 16 men have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15.² Intimate partner violence (including physical and/or sexual violence by cohabiting partners) is experienced by approximately one in 4 women and one in 8 men.³

Experiences of gender based violence are even higher for certain groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and many in diverse communities, such as for LGBTQIA+ individuals, refugees or those with disability, face significant challenges in accessing help.

Australians' understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality have improved significantly albeit slowly over time. Between 2013 and 2021, there were substantial improvements according to all National Community Attitudes Survey scales (NCAS) measuring understanding and attitudes.

Even as understanding of the nature of different forms of domestic family and sexual violence grow to include aspects of financial, social and emotional control and methods such as technologically facilitated abuse, major misconceptions about gender based violence persist.

The 2021 NCAS demonstrates the complexity in how most Australians understand gender based violence. Even though 91 per cent of people now agree violence against women is a problem in Australia, only 47 per cent think it is a problem in their own suburb or town.⁴

Almost every Australian knows someone who has lived or living experience of domestic family and sexual violence. We need to recognise and acknowledge this to make the change we need.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is a major public health issue. It has significant personal, social and economic impacts⁵. Reducing and ending gender-based violence and violence against children and young people has substantial benefits to improving community wellbeing and economic productivity.⁶

Unfortunately, domestic, family and sexual violence is widespread in our society. While data suggests attitudes are shifting, progress is too slow for women and children who are experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence in our community right now.

Government policy context

The creation of the First National Plan 2010–2022 was ground-breaking; shining a national light on domestic family and sexual violence, established several important platforms and frameworks including the establishment of 1800 RESPECT, ANROWS, Our Watch, the NCAS, the Personal Safety Survey and the Change the Story campaign.

These are substantial achievements that have made a definitive impact on the way Australian governments and Australian people consider and respond to domestic family and sexual violence.

The National Plan was released on 17 October 2022 and commits to ten years of sustained action, effort and partnership across sectors and levels of government towards the vision of ending gendered violence in one generation. It provides a national policy framework to guide the work of governments, communities, businesses, policy makers, and frontline organisations.

The National Plan will be realised through 2, 5-year Action Plans, including a standalone Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Action Plan, with specific actions and investment by government across the 4 domains of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery and healing.

The Commission has been tasked with providing a Yearly Report to Parliament on progress against the National Plan, to help hold Government accountable. The Commission is committed to ensuring the efforts across sectors and all levels of government are progressing towards ending violence against women and children in Australia in one generation.

The policy landscape in Australia is complex. There are more than 15 National Plans and Strategies in areas of policy that directly affect our collective ability to achieve the National Plan objectives. At state and territory level there are many, many more.

Commonwealth, state and territory governments are integral to improving outcomes for those with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, influencing societal attitudes and improving data and reporting processes.

Across Australia there are hundreds of community organisations, not-for-profit organisations, service providers, advocacy groups, researchers and research organisations and government agencies working to prevent, and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence.

As a body created to provide a national momentum, the Commission recognises the existing knowledge and expertise held across community and government, and seeks to collaborate and harness those efforts.

Through partnerships, collaboration and support of existing initiatives, the Commission will work to bring together, share and amplify this work to accelerate efforts to end gender-based violence.

¹ Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). 2018. Violence against women: Accurate use of key statistics (ANROWS Insights 05/2018). Sydney, NSW: ANROWS.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). March 2023. Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2021–2022 reporting year. Canberra, ACT: ABS.

³ Bricknell, S. (2023). Homicide in Australia 2020–21. Statistical Report no. 42. Canberra: Australia Institute of Criminology.

⁴ Coumarelos, C., Weeks, N., Bernstein, S., Roberts, N., Honey, N., Minter, K., & Carlisle, E. (2023). Attitudes matter: The 2021 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS), Findings for Australia. (Research report 02/2023). ANROWS.

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: Continuing the National Story in 2019. Canberra, ACT: AIHW.

⁶ Ouedraogo, R. and Stenzel, D. (2021). How Domestic Violence is a Threat to Economic Development: Stopping violence against women is not only a moral imperative, new evidence shows that it can help the economy. International Monetary Fund Blog November 24.; Our Watch, VicHealth and PwC. (2015). High Price to Pay: The economic case for preventing violence against women.

CAPABILITIES

People

The Commission is a small agile team that includes highly-skilled staff with a range of experience in government and across the domestic, family and sexual violence sector. Our staff have expertise in public sector governance, policy and data analytics, engagement and communications skills. We have a deep understanding of the key themes associated with domestic, family and sexual violence, cultural awareness, and a commitment to the principles for action of the Commission, and the APS values.

Wellbeing

The Commission is committed to trauma informed, shame sensitive practice. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our staff and our duty of care to people with lived experience is at the core of how the Commission operates. Domestic, family and sexual violence awareness and a trauma informed training framework is in place to ensure ongoing development of staff skills and capabilities, and to protect and prepare staff when liaising with stakeholders.

Collaboration and partnership

The Commission recognises that deep knowledge, experience and expertise on domestic family and sexual violence lies outside of government, in peak bodies, service organisations, community groups, the academia and research institutions. Through our partnerships, commissioned activities, and collaboration we will draw upon this knowledge base to add value, amplify this understanding and achieve our purpose.



RISK OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT

Our risk management

The Commission operates in an ever-changing environment of strategic, operational, shared and emerging risks in order to deliver on our purpose. Risk management is embedded across the Commission, supports evidence-based decision-making, and is managed in accordance with the nine elements of the Commonwealth Risk Management Policy.

Our strategic risks

The Commission has identified five strategic risks that have the potential to impact on the Commission's objectives. Our strategic risks and associated risk mitigations are detailed on page 14

Our risk governance

The Commissioner and the Governance and Corporate Coordination team oversee our risk management, control and compliance requirements.

They are supported by an Audit and Risk Committee, which works independently to ensure the appropriateness of the Commission's financial and performance reporting, system of risk oversight and management, and system of internal controls.

STAKEHOLDER RISK	DESCRIPTION	RISK MITIGATIONS
People with experience of domestic, family and sexual violence	There is a risk the Commission will not fulfil the functions as outlined in the Executive Order.	<p>Engage with people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence and their support networks, all levels of government and the non-government sector to identify prioritisation of policy and service systems reforms.</p> <p>Engage with policy experts in the academic sector to understand public policy impacts at a systems level.</p> <p>Promote the National Plan objectives and engagement activities that drive national consistency and better coordination of policy, services and supports.</p> <p>Foster collaboration and coordination across government and community to enhance connection and reduce fragmentation to improve outcomes.</p>
Collaboration and Partnerships	There is a risk the Commission will not foster collaboration and coordination across government and community to enhance connection and reduce fragmentation to improve outcomes.	<p>Continue to expand the Stakeholder Database to ensure consistency in messaging and consultation with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Implement regular assessments on effectiveness of stakeholder engagement plans and redesign as needed.</p>
Integrity	There is a risk to the Commission maintaining the highest standards of integrity, public service values and professionalism in the work we do.	<p>Adopt and implement DSS processes that meet the requirements of the National Anti-Corruption Commission.</p> <p>Continue educating staff on their responsibilities for maintaining integrity through the delivery of mandatory training on APS values, code of conduct, fraud awareness and corruption, employment principles and expectations.</p>
Workforce Capability and Safety	There is a risk to the Commission having the workforce capability needed, including managing the safety, wellbeing and development of staff and people with lived experience.	<p>Develop and implement the Commission’s Workforce Strategy to ensure we become an employer of choice with a focus on staff development and retention.</p> <p>Continue to support health and wellbeing initiatives in the Commission.</p> <p>The Commission will utilise Department of Social Services seconded staff where skills cannot be directly engaged.</p>
Data integrity	There is a risk to maintaining and protecting data held by the Commission and using data and information effectively to support our outcomes.	Continue to embed a data control plan, data governance framework (incoming standard operating procedures), data insights library and the appointment of a senior data steward that provides help to the Commission in navigating complex data challenges and provide strategic data guidance.

ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The activities and performance measures outlined below indicate the first steps to be taken by the Commission.

As our approach is informed by people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, community and government, the Commission’s performance measures will evolve to more fully reflect those voices and realise its purpose.

ACTIVITY	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	2023–24 TARGET	2024–25 TARGET AND BEYOND
<p>Activity 1</p> <p>Amplifying the voices of people with lived experience.</p>	<p>A supportive and structured approach to engagement with people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence is implemented.</p>	<p>The Lived Experience Advisory Council is established.</p>	<p>The Lived Experience Advisory Council is operating effectively and sustainably, holding quarterly meetings.</p> <p>The Lived Experience Advisory Council’s strategic focus and ways of working with government are co-designed and established.</p>
<p>Activity 2</p> <p>Promote and enhance coordination across Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the not-for-profit and private sectors.</p>	<p>Engagement and communication activities that support collaboration and the sharing of policy, knowledge and practice across jurisdictions and silos are delivered.</p>	<p>The Commission’s website is published, to support accessible and trauma-informed communication mechanisms and the provision of information about the function and work of the Commission.</p>	<p>Key mechanisms are in place to bring together Government, not-for-profit and private sectors actors to enhance collaboration and coordination.</p>
<p>Activity 3</p> <p>Inform priorities for policy, research and data collection in cooperation with jurisdictions and relevant organisations and agencies.</p>	<p>Coordination across Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the not-for-profit and private sectors is promoted.</p>	<p>Initial engagement occurs with Commonwealth, state and territory governments, and the not-for-profit and private sectors.</p>	<p>Collaborative partnerships are established with key organisations and agencies and shared priorities are agreed upon.</p>
<p>Activity 4</p> <p>Promote the objectives of the National Plan, and undertake reporting towards the actions and targets of the National Plan.</p>	<p>The annual progress report promoting and informing government on the progress towards achieving the National Plan targets.</p>	<p>Promotion of the objectives of the National Plan through Commissioner participation in public forums and engagements.</p> <p>Delivery of a report to Parliament on the progress towards the objectives of the National Plan.</p>	<p>Promotion of the objectives of the National Plan through Commissioner participation in public forums and engagements.</p> <p>Delivery of a report to Parliament on the progress towards the objectives of the National Plan.</p>



Enquiries@dfsvc.gov.au
dfsvc.gov.au



Australian Government

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission