



Keeping Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence on the National Agenda

Strategic Plan 2023–26



Australian Government

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission



We are diverse but galvanised by a common cause.

We know what needs to change.

No meaningful solutions can be made about us without us.

Stopping our suffering depends on all of us choosing to do something differently. We cannot repeat more of the same and expect to achieve change...

We must be willing to sit in discomfort.

It is time to be brave.

Excerpts from 'A statement from victim-survivors' in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.

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We value the courage of those who share their perspectives for the purpose of learning and growing together

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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia, who are the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters and of the oldest continuous living culture on Earth.

The Commission acknowledges and honours the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to end family violence and is committed to partnership with First Nations communities in this work.

Acknowledgement of people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence

The Commission acknowledges the individual and collective expertise of people with experience of domestic, family and sexual violence.

We value the courage of those who share their perspectives for the purpose of learning and growing together and recognise their vital contribution to achieving better outcomes for all.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER



It is with great pleasure that I present the Commission's first Strategic Plan.



Australia's first Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 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, and to hold governments accountable to it. 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 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.

This Strategic Plan outlines how the Commission will operate, and what our priorities are as we collectively move towards ending violence against women and children in Australia. The strategy was developed drawing on the priorities outlined in the National Plan, the Executive Order establishing the Commission, insights and evidence from several forms of consultation with people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, and women's safety sector stakeholders from government, academia, peak bodies and frontline services.

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

As a community, we must recognise and acknowledge the impact of domestic, family and sexual violence, and repair and heal at individual, family and community levels. 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 will inform 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 experiencing, or have experienced, family, domestic and sexual violence, frontline workers, sector leaders and policy makers.

In my short time as Commissioner, and across my career working in this sector, 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 that our work is informed and led by their input and guidance. We will work with diverse communities including culturally and linguistically diverse people, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, women with disability, and older women, raising their voices and perspectives to be heard by policy makers.

I see it as a critical task for the Commission to provide a national focus and alignment of our efforts, bringing together the significant expertise across governments, the community, academic, union and business sectors to increase our collective impact.

We will foster connection and collaboration for these national conversations to bring people together across existing silos, and ensure people are able to access the support they need no matter who they are, or where they live. Together, we will work to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence in all its forms.

Micaela Cronin
Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner
August 2023

TERMINOLOGY

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

The 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 across and within jurisdictions. We recognise that not all terminology will reflect the lived experience of all people but will seek to use the most inclusive language possible.

The Commission will always remain open to learning and changing our language as we grow based on the knowledge and advice from people with lived experience.

Domestic or family violence?

Domestic violence, sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence, refers to physical, sexual, psychological, economic or emotional abuse by a current or former intimate partner to gain and maintain power and control over the other.

Family violence refers to violent or intimidating behaviours used by a family member, including a current or previous spouse, domestic partner, extended family or kinship relationship, to gain and maintain power and control over another.

Sexual violence refers to the occurrence, attempt or threat of sexual assault by a current or former intimate partner, known person or stranger, experienced by a person over the age of 16 who does not or cannot give consent. Child sexual abuse refers to sexual violence experienced by a person under the age of 16.

Wherever possible, the Commission will use both domestic and family violence together to be inclusive of national differences in terminology.

Gender-based violence or violence against women and children?

The National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022–2032 (the National Plan) uses the terminology ‘violence against women and children’ to acknowledge the high prevalence of men’s violence against women and children. Wherever possible, the Commission adopts the terms ‘gender-based violence’ or ‘gendered violence’ to acknowledge the gendered drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence.

Wherever possible, the Commission uses the terminology ‘gender-based violence’ to recognise the impact of domestic, family and sexual violence on people of all ages, genders, sex characteristics and sexualities.

People with lived experience or victim-survivors?

We recognise and respect the terminology used by people who identify as victims and/or survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence. This language acknowledges the strength and resilience of people experiencing violence and is a powerful tool for advocacy. Where people are comfortable being described in such terms, we will do so.

We also recognise that there are many people who may have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence but do not identify with the terminology of victim-survivors.

The Commission recognises that there are many perspectives of the experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, and in using the term ‘people with lived experience’ we seek to be inclusive of the breadth of experiences.

People who use violence or perpetrators?

The phrase ‘people who use violence’ refers to the individual who uses domestic, family and sexual violence to cause harm to another. People who use violence are sometimes referred to as a ‘perpetrator’ at legal and policy levels.

The term perpetrator aims to hold people who use violence accountable for their behaviour, and we respect the broad use of this term in the sector. The term can also be alienating and a barrier to healing and recovery for some people who use violence.

The Commission chooses to use the term ‘people who use violence’ where possible.

About the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission

The Australian Government established the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (the Commission) and appointed a Commissioner to provide national leadership and promote national coordination across a range of domestic, family and sexual violence policies and system interactions.

The Commission is an independent, accountable and transparent agency that amplifies the voices of people with experience of domestic, family and sexual violence and promotes the coordination and consistency of data and evidence on best practice.

The Commission also provides a national approach to engagement with people with lived experience, ensuring their diverse perspectives and experiences inform policies and solutions.

Establishment of the Commission

On 4 June 2020, the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs (the Committee) adopted an Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence (the Inquiry). The Committee's final report was published on 1 April 2021 and it made 88 recommendations that 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 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. The Commissioner commenced in her role on 1 November 2023.

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 the Australian, 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.

As an executive agency that is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity, the Commission is legally and financially part of the Commonwealth. The Commissioner reports to the Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence.

As an executive agency, the Commission is independent of the Department of Social Services. This allows us to fulfil our role in monitoring the progress of 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, data and frontline workers tell us.

We will work in partnership with relevant government and non-government organisations to facilitate these national conversations and the Commission's approach will be to amplify and collaborate with existing work that is already underway.

National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032

The National Plan was launched in October 2022 with the endorsement of all state and territory governments.

It is the product of extensive consultation and input from across the sector, including through a National Plan Advisory Council, to build a shared approach across the Australian, state and territory governments to end gender-based violence.

Since the launch of the National Plan, the Commonwealth Department of Social Services has worked with states and territories to develop a 5-year Action Plan and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan to be launched in mid-2023. These Action Plans identify the activities and actions all governments will take to achieve the objectives of the National Plan.

The Commonwealth Department of Social Services 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 policies and programs that support the National Plan.

Further work on the National Plan will be done by the Department of Social Services, which will develop an Outcomes Framework, Performance Measurement Plan, Evaluation Framework and Data Development Plan. These documents will guide the Australian Government's monitoring and measurement of the actions and investments over the 10 years of the National Plan.

This additional work will be critical for measuring the progress of the National Plan and the Commission's role in independently and transparently holding the Australian Government to its commitment to end gender-based violence in a generation.




NATIONAL PLAN TO END
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
AND CHILDREN 2022–2032



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.

2 About domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia



 <p>On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.¹</p>	<p>Almost every Australian knows someone who has lived or living experience with domestic, family and sexual violence.</p> 
<p>Since the age of fifteen:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div data-bbox="281 1591 400 1780"> <p>1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence.²</p> </div> <div data-bbox="608 1598 795 1780"> <p>1 in 16 men have experienced sexual violence.²</p> </div> </div>	<p>Rates of domestic, family and sexual violence are even higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.</p> 

On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner.¹ One in five women and one in sixteen men have experienced sexual violence since the age of fifteen.² Intimate partner violence (including physical and/or sexual violence by cohabiting partners) is experienced by approximately one in four women and one in eight men.³

Australia's first National Plan (2010–2022) shone a light on domestic, family and sexual violence and established several important platforms and frameworks including the establishment of 1800 Respect, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS), Our Watch, the National Community Attitudes Survey,

Rates of domestic, family and sexual violence are even higher, and the violence is often more severe, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Many people within our community experience significant challenges when seeking and receiving the support they need, including members of the LGBTIQ+ community, migrants and refugees, and people with a disability.

the Personal Safety Survey, and the Change the Story campaign.

Australians' understanding and attitudes regarding violence against women and gender inequality have improved slowly over time. Between 2013 and 2021, there were significant improvements according to all National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS) scales measuring understanding and attitudes.⁴

These substantial achievements significantly impacted the way Australian governments and Australian people consider and respond to domestic, family and sexual violence.

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

The 2022–2032 National Plan builds upon that foundation and articulates an ambitious aspiration for the future – to end violence against women and children in a generation. The Commission is part of the movement to drive social change in Australia and ensure that ending domestic, family and sexual violence stays on the national agenda. Domestic, family and sexual violence is far too prevalent in our society and while data suggests that attitudes are shifting, we need to accelerate that progress to protect women and children who are victims of domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia right now.

The 2021 NCAS demonstrates the complexity of how most Australians understand gender-based violence. Even though 91% of people now agree that violence against women is a problem in Australia, only 47% think it is a problem in their own suburb or town.⁵

Almost every Australian knows someone who has lived or living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence. We need to recognise and acknowledge the prevalence of violence, and that it occurs across the social spectrum – not just in someone else's community – to be able to make the changes we need to prevent, respond to and recover from domestic, family and sexual 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 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.

3 About this Strategic Plan



This Strategic Plan provides a roadmap that outlines the approach the Commission will take in our first three years. Like any new organisation, we recognise that the Commission will undergo significant growth and change as it is established, and the work we do may also grow and change.

The Strategic Plan outlines 4 overarching objectives for the Commission's work, derived from:

- The functions outlined in the Executive Order establishing the Commission.
- The Commission's role as described in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.
- Consultation and engagement undertaken by the Commissioner with over 130 stakeholders in the initial establishment phase.
- Independent consultation with over 100 people through in-depth interviews and small-group discussions, conducted by WhereTo between March and June 2023 to support the development of the Commission's communication and engagement approach.

These consultations included people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, and women's safety sector stakeholders from government, academia, peak bodies and frontline services. People with lived and living experience included young people, people with disability, people with experience of incarceration, people who identified as LGBTIQ+, multicultural communities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

How we will implement this Strategic Plan

Working together

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

All states and territories have strategies and priorities when it comes to domestic, family and sexual violence.

Ending gender-based violence is complex and challenging. The deep understanding of the problems, knowledge of what works and the impact of how laws, policy and services are implemented are not held

by one person, organisation or government. This knowledge is held by many people, in various places around the country, in different organisations and with varying levels of access to decision-makers.

It will take all of this knowledge and expertise to address such a complex challenge.

As a new body created to provide a new national momentum, the Commission recognises this knowledge and expertise and seeks to amplify existing efforts. Through partnerships, collaboration and support of existing initiatives, the Commission will work to bring together, share and shine a light on this work to accelerate efforts to end gender-based violence.



(Adapted from the 'knowledge diamond' in the work of Professor Cathy Humphreys and colleagues on accessing historical out-of-home care records.⁶)

⁶ Melissa Downing, Michael Jones, Cathy Humphreys, Gavan McCarthy, Cate O'Neill & Rachel Tropea (2013) 'An educative intervention: assisting in the self-assessment of archival practice in 12 community service organisations', *Archives and Manuscripts*, 41:2, 116-128.

Empowering people with lived and living experience

Underpinning our approach will be ensuring that people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence are centred in policy development and implementation decisions – because we know that the people best placed to inform change and improve system reform, are those that have needed it most in the past.

This approach takes time.

By upholding the dignity of people with lived and living experiences, we strive to ensure that everyone who engages with the Commission feels supported, safe and empowered to contribute in the most effective way possible.

Everyone's story is different. When we talk about statistics, we are talking about individuals who each have uniquely intersecting experiences, needs and perspectives. We need to hear these perspectives to make the best decisions and drive change.

Alignment with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms

The Commission is committed to the 4 Priority Reforms outlined in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap (the Agreement).

1. **Formal partnerships and shared decision-making**
2. **Building the community-controlled sector**
3. **Transforming government organisations**
4. **Shared access to data and information at a regional level**

The Commission will work to support the Australian Government's commitment to reduce by at least 50% the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, as progress towards zero. (Outcome 13, Target 13 of the Agreement.)

As a part of the National Plan, the Australian Government committed to delivering a standalone First Nations National Plan to address the complex and sensitive factors contributing to violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, children and communities. The Commission will be led by, and work in partnership with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure the Australian Government delivers on its commitment.

Principles for Action

Five Principles for Action underpin the Commission's approach to everything we do. We know from people's experiences of Royal Commissions and Inquiries in Australia that the approach taken can make a fundamental difference to people providing testimony and advice.⁷ The Principles for Action reflect the complexity of the challenges the Commission faces, and the approaches necessary to tackle them across our diverse country.

Enquiring

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 that our actions contribute to people with lived experience being heard, understood, and feeling safe and supported.

Influence

We will influence positive change and inform priorities for policy, research and data collection.

Get in Touch

You can get involved in our work to implement this Strategic Plan in several ways:

Stay informed about the Commission's work via our website dfsvc.gov.au

Contact the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission. We are happy to share details of our work, receive your feedback and answer your questions. There may be opportunities for you to get involved directly in our projects. You can reach us on enquiries@dfsvc.gov.au



Take part
in forums,
roundtables and
events with the
Commission

⁷ Michael Salter. (2020). 'The transitional space of public inquiries: The case of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse'. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 53(2), 213–230.

OUR OBJECTIVES

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 communities to enhance connection and reduce fragmentation to improve outcomes

Providing strategic advice to inform strengthened policy and practice, and improved outcomes



OUR ACTIONS

- Public engagement across community, business and civil society
- Promoting high-quality evaluation, and the sharing of knowledge

- Establishing a Lived Experience Advisory Council
- Working with existing lived experience bodies and groups
- Making the case for lived experience expertise in policy design and delivery

- Creating national dialogues to build shared action
- Supporting and building mechanisms for collaboration across government

- Working with government departments and agencies
- Reporting to Parliament on the progress towards the objectives of the National Plan



OUR PRIORITIES FOR FOCUS

Systemic and institutional racism

Healthy and diverse masculinity

Children and young people

Healing justice

Housing



OUR OUTCOME

Amplify voices of people with lived experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, provide evidence-informed policy advice, and promote coordination and accountability towards ending gender-based violence.



TOWARD THE GOAL OF THE NATIONAL PLAN

End gender-based violence in a generation

HOW WE WORK

Enquiring

Approaching challenges and issues with curiosity and openness and using insights, evidence, expertise and knowledge to inform strategic advice

Collaborative

Partnering and facilitating coordination and connection across community, sectors and government

Responsive

Maintaining flexibility to emerging issues and needs

Dignity

Recognising our actions contribute to people being heard, listened to and treated fairly; to being understood and feeling safe

Influence

Influencing positive change and informing priorities for policy, research and data collection

4 Our Objectives



OBJECTIVE 1

Promoting the National Plan to end gender-based violence in one generation

Promoting the objectives of the National Plan across all parts of Australian society is a central part of the Commissioner's role. Our shared vision is to end gender-based violence in one generation, and to achieve it we will require active engagement from every aspect of our society. Our role is to encourage all governments and communities to maintain a clear focus on that vision and build momentum for change.

Our Actions

Public engagement across communities, businesses and civil society

The Commissioner will raise awareness of domestic, family and sexual violence in public engagements throughout her term.

This will include regular attendance at national and international conferences to promote the objectives of the National Plan, the work being undertaken and to share knowledge and practices across communities and sectors.

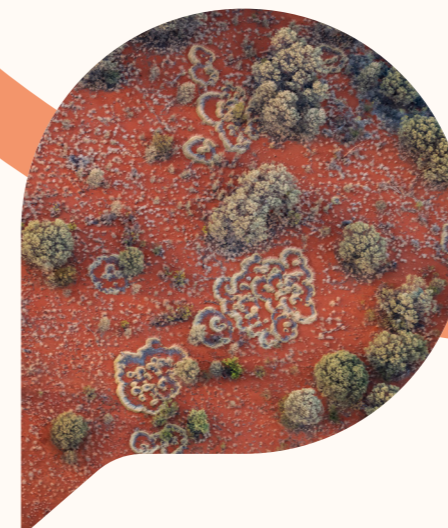
The Commission will engage with community leaders and media to strengthen knowledge of domestic, family and sexual violence, the drivers of violence and the role we can all play in prevention.

We will encourage a trauma-informed approach to reporting and communication about domestic, family and sexual violence that treats people with dignity and respect.

Promoting high-quality evaluation and the sharing of knowledge

The Commission will promote high-quality evaluation of the Action Plans, with a focus on monitoring and measuring the impact of what matters most to our community.

The National Plan emphasises that building evidence is critical to achieving success. Timely and replicable data is essential to understanding the problem, measuring progress and informing decisions about funding, service design and delivery.



Across government, sector and community organisations, a wealth of data is beginning to be collected on the prevalence and impact of domestic, family and sexual violence. This data also highlights the activities that are most successful for prevention, early intervention, response, and healing and recovery.

Fragmentation and silos often prevent governments and sector organisations from sharing and translating information across people and places. Collectively, we need to connect these systems to understand how people are affected by domestic, family and sexual violence, improve system responses, and prevent gender-based violence.

The Commission will focus on bringing together the knowledge and data that we already have about what is working and share it across different parts of the system. This includes working with governments to share the findings of program and intervention evaluations and monitoring.

Where there are data gaps and opportunities to improve our understanding of the impacts and drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence, we will work with researchers and data custodians to build our knowledge and improve our systems.

HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL
POLICY AND LEGAL AFFAIRS INQUIRY INTO
FAMILY, DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE,
REPORT MARCH 2021

The stark reality is that all Australian governments have much more work to do in preventing FDSV.

But governments cannot eliminate FDSV on their own... [T]here is an important role for business, community groups, and other non-government bodies in preventing and responding to FDSV in our community. A whole-of-society response is vital.



OBJECTIVE 2

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

A key role for the Commission is working to amplify the voices of people who have experience of domestic, family and sexual violence to support the Australian Government to meaningfully engage with their expert knowledge.

This work will begin with the establishment of a Lived Experience Advisory Council (the Advisory Council), which will be a foundational, ongoing focus to help the Commission improve policy design and service delivery across all the domains of the National Plan.

Our Actions

Establishing a Lived Experience Advisory Council

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032 commits the Australian Government to working with people who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence and recognises the value of this experience in informing appropriate and effective initiatives.

The Commission will establish an Advisory Council to amplify the views of people with experience of domestic, family and sexual violence at the national level, partnering with the Advisory Council to design and co-produce the ways it will work with the Commission and the Australian Government.

The Advisory Council will share advice with the Commission to report on the implementation and progress towards the objectives of the National Plan. The Advisory Council will provide advice to the Commission to support the Australian Government to create and improve domestic, family and sexual violence policy, systems and services.

Working with existing lived experience groups

The Advisory Council will play a critical role in the Commission's work. However, we do not expect the members of this group to represent the diversity of experience across the country. The Commission will work in collaboration with researchers, state and territory bodies, existing bodies in the non-government and not-for-profit sectors, and community organisations to ensure that the breadth of experiences of people with lived and living experience of domestic, family and sexual violence, and of the programs and services designed to support them are listened to.

The Commission will work to amplify the voices of people who are often disproportionately impacted by gender-based violence and whose voices are often not heard. This will include: children and young people, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, women with disability, older women, women with limited access to resources, including those living in regional and remote areas, women from culturally and racially marginalised groups, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Making the case for lived experience expertise in policy design and delivery

The Commission will make the case for governments to work with experts with lived experience in their policy design and delivery and build the capacity of governments to do so. This goes beyond the traditional methods of government consultation. Lived experience experts and groups are not like other government advisory groups – we are asking people to reflect upon and share their own personal experiences in the hope of a better outcome for others in the future.

Successful co-design requires a more open and collaborative approach to policy development than has been used in the past. Governments must be willing to share power with people with lived experience to achieve policy and system changes that will improve outcomes for people experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Through the Commission's work with the Lived Experience Advisory Council, we plan to model good practice in working with people with lived experience. The Commission will work with the Lived Experience Advisory Council to share our knowledge and advice so it can be drawn upon across all governments.

JUDITH HERMAN
*TRUTH AND REPAIR: HOW TRAUMA
SURVIVORS ENVISION JUSTICE,*
2023

If trauma is truly a social problem, and indeed it is, then recovery cannot simply be a private, individual matter...If trauma originates in a fundamental injustice, then full healing must require repair through some measure of justice from the larger society.



OBJECTIVE 3

Fostering collaboration and coordination across government and communities to enhance connection, reduce fragmentation and improve outcomes

There are more than 15 national plans and strategies across a range of portfolios that directly affect our collective ability to achieve the National Plan objectives.⁸ At state and territory level there are many, many more.

Collaboration and coordination are a critical need for all governments and sector, to share knowledge and work together to achieve collective impact. We know that the gaps and disconnects between parts of the system can cause great harm to people's lives.

The Commission's role is to bring together these streams of work through partnerships, collaboration and supporting existing initiatives and organisations to align and accelerate efforts to end gender-based violence.

Our Actions

Creating national dialogues that build shared action

The Commission will encourage and lead national dialogues that bring people together across existing silos to create a greater national focus on shared priorities.

We aim to ensure that all Australian jurisdictions are learning from each other and we will bring together knowledge and expertise from different sectors, in the key priority areas for the Commission and in partnership with national leaders.

The first forum in September 2023 will bring together expertise from across Australia to focus on measuring the impact of the National Plan and the mechanisms for reflection on progress to ensure that we learn and adapt to achieve impact over the 10-year life of the National Plan.

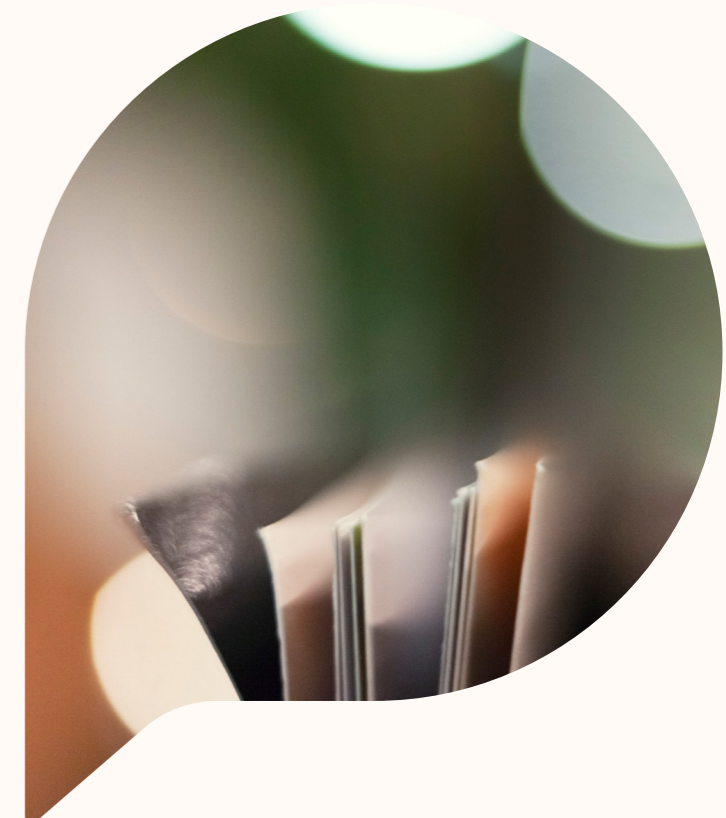
Supporting and building mechanisms for collaboration across government

A range of governance mechanisms across and within government have been created to oversee and support the delivery of actions and investments under the National Plan.

National Cabinet established the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council, a regular forum for governments, to drive national progress on gender equality and women's safety.

The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner is an ex-officio observer and will collaborate with the Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council and attend other regular forums designed to drive national progress on gender equality and women's safety.

The Commission will work with government to identify corresponding opportunities for improvement in whole-of-government governance arrangements that ensure all governments are working together to achieve impact.



⁸ National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032, First Action Plan 2023-2027.



OBJECTIVE 4

Providing strategic advice to inform strengthened policy and practice, and improved outcomes

The Commission will provide advice to the Australian Government in relation to areas of policy that impact domestic, family and sexual violence, identifying where there are priority needs or emerging issues, and targeting specific areas for Government focus and attention.

This advice will be informed by the Commission's work with people who have experience of domestic, family and sexual violence as well as our activities engaging, collaborating and coordinating across government and community.

Our Actions

Working with government departments and agencies

Our ability to achieve our objectives and respond effectively to domestic, family and sexual violence and prevent gender-based violence is dependent on connection across many areas of social policy including, housing, welfare, child safety, inclusion and equity, police and justice, health, education and immigration.

The Commission will work to build productive relationships with government departments and agencies at all levels to provide avenues of sharing knowledge and promoting lived experience during policy development processes and program implementation.

Reporting to Parliament

The Commission will provide an annual report to Parliament outlining the progress towards the objectives of the National Plan. This report will combine critical forms of knowledge, including the voices of people with lived experience, the advice and expertise of frontline workers, and data and evidence to help decision-makers understand the impact that the National Plan is having on domestic, family and sexual violence in Australia.

The Commission will highlight the impact of government actions to implement the National Plan, and opportunities to learn and adapt over the life of the National Plan. This includes:

- opportunities for the improvement of evaluation and monitoring mechanisms
- highlighting practice where opportunities for improvement are emerging
- advice to Parliament on policy and practice that can create greater impact.



5 Priority areas for focus



Informed by everything we have heard and the consultation undertaken to inform the National Plan, the Commission has identified five initial focus areas.

These areas are national challenges affecting people across Australia. They are complex challenges that will need both system and social change. They will require the cooperation and coordination of different parts of the service system, and across organisational and government silos to build greater understanding of the issues and explore ways to achieve impacts.

amplifying that work. In these first focus areas, the Commission will build collaborative partnerships and we expect that these priorities for focus will develop with time and based on the advice of partners and collaborators about what is most needed.

There are many dedicated people and organisations already working on these issues, and we see a positive role for the Commission to play in connecting and

The first steps for the Commission will be exploring these priorities through forums and roundtables and other avenues that bring expertise together.



Systemic and institutional racism

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to identify where systemic and institutional racism continues to perpetuate harm and working to end it in line with the Closing the Gap priority reform areas.

Working to address the impact of systemic and institutional racism on people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities and people who experience significant barriers to accessing and receiving support and justice.



Children and young people

Redesigning our policies and practices to recognise children and young people as having their own experience of domestic, family and sexual violence. Acknowledging that the impact and trauma of those experiences can be life changing and the importance of interrupting cycles of intergenerational trauma and violence in preventing domestic, family and sexual violence.

Addressing the impact of the siloed nature of our system responses to family safety, child protection and justice, that often do not adequately address the needs of children and young people and are exacerbating and at times causing harm for some people.



Men and healthy and diverse masculinity

Engaging with men in efforts to end gender-based violence, and recognising that undoing unhealthy gender binaries is a critical part of ending violence now, and preventing it in the future.

Ensuring that men who use violence are kept visible in service system responses to keep women and children safe, and that they are held accountable.



Healing justice

Finding mechanisms for truth, healing and recovery that meet the needs of people who experience domestic, family and sexual violence.

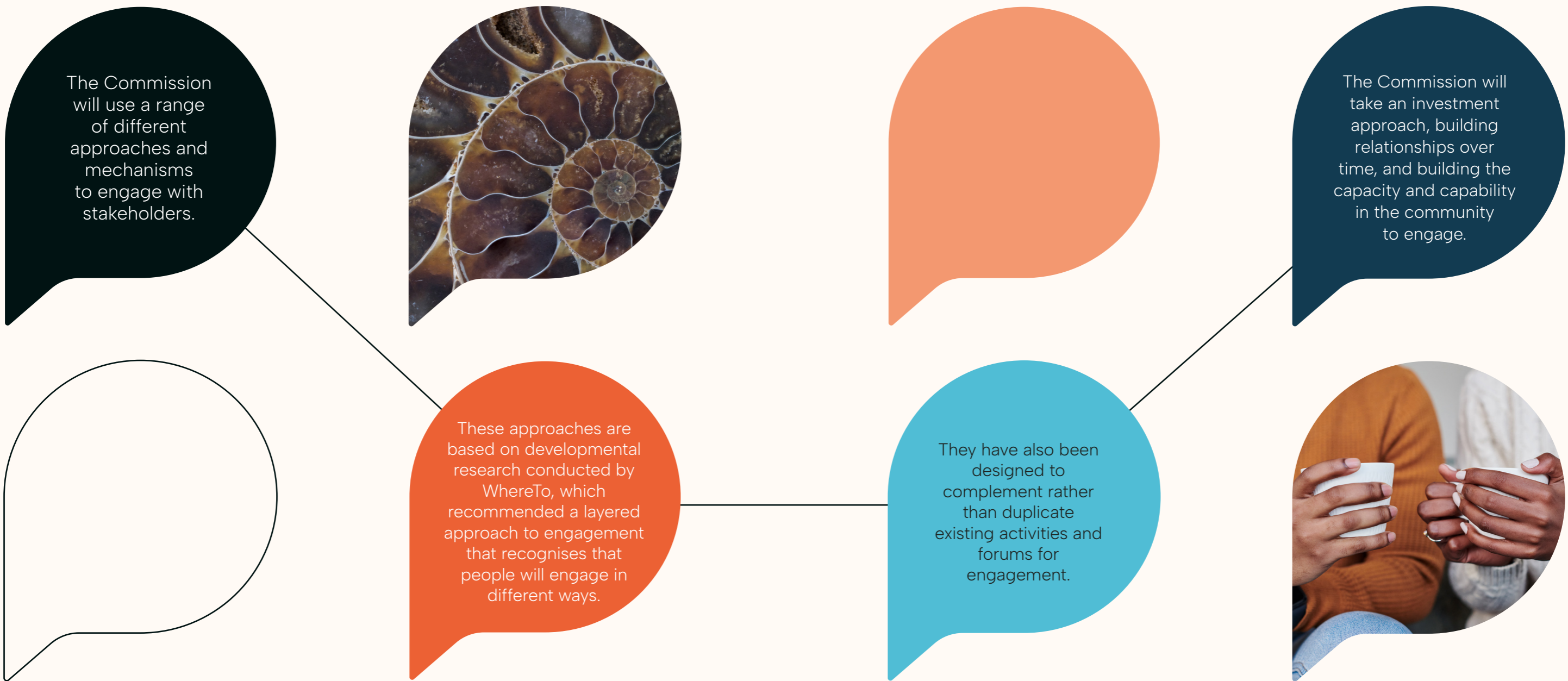
Focusing on supporting policing and justice systems to improve their responses to people who experience domestic, family and sexual violence. Ensuring that our systems do not exacerbate trauma and cannot be used as further tools of violence.



Housing

Access to secure housing is key to ending violence against women and children. Stable and appropriate housing is central to a holistic approach to prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing for people experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.

6 Stakeholder engagement





STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ENGAGEMENT MECHANISMS	OUTPUTS
People with experience of domestic, family and sexual violence	Lived Experience Advisory Council	Reporting to Parliament
	Media engagement	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Direct consultation via surveys and interviews, calls for submissions	
	Engagement with existing advisory groups at state, territory and organisational levels	
	Public engagement including media, Commission website, telephone and email	
	Forums and roundtable consultations	
Australian Government departments and agencies with responsibility for policy design and service delivery that intersect with the objectives of the National Plan including:	Inter-departmental committees, working groups and communities of practice	Reporting to Parliament
	National Plan governance structures and processes	Ministerial and Government briefings and advice
	Women's Safety Ministerial Council and other ministerial councils where relevant	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Forums and roundtable consultations	
	Conference presentations and participation	
State and Territory Government departments and agencies responsible for delivering actions and investments under the National Plan	Inter-departmental committees, working groups and communities of practice	Reporting to Parliament
	National Plan governance structures and processes	Ministerial and Government briefings and advice
	Forums and roundtable consultations	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Inter-jurisdictional working groups and committees	
Domestic, family and sexual violence sector including:	Conference presentations and participation	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Forums and roundtable consultations	
	Public engagement including media, Commission website, telephone and email	
Research organisations and researchers	Media engagement	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Conference presentations and participation	
	Forums and roundtable consultations	
	Direct consultations	

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ENGAGEMENT MECHANISMS	OUTPUTS
Businesses and community	Forums and roundtable consultations	Reporting to Parliament
	Conference presentations and participation	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Public engagement including media, Commission website, telephone and email	
Other oversight bodies and Commissions	Regular meetings and information sharing	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Forums and roundtable consultations	
International organisations and bodies with a domestic, family and sexual violence focus	Conference presentations and participation	Collaborative and partnered projects focused on shared priority areas
	Direct consultation via surveys and interviews, calls for submissions	
	Engagement with existing advisory groups and advocates	



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Australian Government

Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission