

September 2023



Roundtable on

Measuring Impact on the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*

Summary Report

Background

On 15 September 2023 the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission (the Commission) with Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) co-convened a roundtable on the role of the Commission in measuring the impact of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 (National Plan).

The roundtable was the first event hosted by the new Commission to bring stakeholders together as part of the Commission's ongoing strategic objective to foster collaboration and coordination across government and communities to enhance connection and reduce fragmentation.

The Roundtable brought together participants from across key parts of the community including people with lived experience, the social sector, government, academia and business. The discussion focused on how to measure the impact of the National Plan and the mechanisms for ongoing reflection the Commission can establish to ensure that we can learn and adapt to achieve impact.

The Commission and ANROWS are grateful for the expertise and contribution of all of the speakers and participants who took part in the roundtable. The Measuring the Impact of the National Plan Roundtable was hosted by the Paul Ramsay Foundation at Yirranma Place in Sydney.

This summary report is an overview of the conversation at the roundtable for participants to reflect on and consider as a part of ongoing collaboration with the Commission.

Opening Statements

There were a number of opening statements made:

- Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, Justine Elliot, framed the roundtable discussion, highlighting the progress achieved so far on the development of the National Plan, First Action Plan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan, and Outcomes Framework. She also signalled work still to come on the performance measurement plan and outcomes methodology that are being developed by the Department of Social Services.
- A member of the Commission's Lived Experience Advisory Council provided a powerful opening statement. They called for genuine engagement with survivors in developing, deploying and measuring initiatives, recognising the diversity and divergence of experience and views among victim-survivors.
- Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner Micaela Cronin provided an overview of the commission's role and the purpose of this roundtable. She affirmed that it is vital that the conversation is about measuring what matters, not just focussing on actions completed.

Presentations

International Context from New Zealand

Emma Powell, CEO of Te Puna Aonui, shared the approach the New Zealand government is taking to Te Aorerekura: National Strategy to Eliminate Family Violence and Sexual Violence (National Strategy).

Ms Powell provided an overview of the mechanisms for accountability that have been developed to drive implementation of the National Strategy. An executive board was established with collective responsibility to oversee implementation of Te AorereKura. A Ministerial advisory group of Maori leaders has been appointed and funded to work on projects to support healing and workforce development.

Ms Powell also introduced her colleague Rosalind Houghton, Principal Advisor for monitoring and evaluation. Ms Houghton provided an overview of the mechanisms for accountability and monitoring of the National Strategy. New Zealand has undergone an eight-month consultation strategy for building the impact measurement approach. The approach includes a Data Development Plan and evaluation at important intervals. Consistency is critical across the system and agencies are expected to ensure the National Strategy's objectives are included in their own agency's long-term outcomes.

Cultural approaches are central to an annual event to review the Strategy's progress. An annual Hui (a gathering where people come together to learn from each other) is held with community and government leaders. Each government agency presents their activities, and there are in depth and collaborative discussions about key questions: how we are doing, what we need to do more of, and are we on the right track? The events are open attendance after the government received feedback that more community members needed to be at the table.

Department of Social Services (DSS), Performance Measurement Planning

Greta Doherty and Amber Shuhyta of DSS outlined the work underway to develop a performance measurement framework for the National Plan. Once delivered, the Performance Measurement Plan (PMP) will begin to drive the collective national focus for measurement.

Accountability for monitoring progress of the National Plan will occur through a governance structure and leadership will be enabled by ministers and the several committees formed in the Commonwealth and across jurisdictions.

A Data Development Plan will complement the PMP and will consider things such as the burden to the sector and how to make best use of the proliferation of data collection across commissioning bodies.

Data mapping will occur in partnership with the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare (AIHW). The Department is working with AIHW to consider how to tell the integrated data story. This includes consideration of existing infrastructure and other complimentary policy areas, such as disability. The aim is to reduce burdens on sector whilst working with AIHW on capturing evidence that is not currently gathered including evidence of unmet demand.

People with lived experience will be invited to help conceptualise the way data is used to understand progress. A commitment has been made with jurisdictions to expand the current targets..

Discussion panels

Measuring what matters in people's lives: How can we hold ourselves and government accountable to the goal of ending gender-based violence in a generation?

Padma Raman with Professor Maggie Walter, University of Tasmania and Professor Anne Summers, University Technology

Professor Maggie Walter provided an overview of her work on Indigenous data sovereignty.

- Indigenous data is all data that relates to or refer to Indigenous people, therefore is a human artifact.
- Data explains how people see the world and often Indigenous people have data collected about them, but they are not leading the data collection. This is problematic because the way data is collected can demonise and do harm.
- Sovereignty emphasises the right to govern the collection of data relating to them; this is more than the right to be consulted.
- Agencies need to keep an open perspective on what is Indigenous data and avoid BADDR data. BADDR data is data that Blames, Aggregates, Decontextualises, is Deficit based, and Reflects only government priorities, and where access is restricted. A better approach is to focus on “lifeworld data”; that is contextualised, disaggregated, and focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' priorities and agendas. This includes knowledge that relates to the collective, not just the individual.
- National data reports can be unhelpful given the knowledge is decontextualized and does not reflect people’s actual experience. It generally avoids looking at the “why” and is usually deficit based.
- Data comparisons between non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal women do not reflect the identity of the non-Aboriginal people who are also diverse.

Professor Anne Summers provided an overview of her research *The Choice: Violence or Poverty*. Previous reports show women fell into poverty after making the choice to escape violence in the home. She said that the obvious solution to avoiding poverty is money, and that the current Centrelink benefits help alleviate the impact of poverty, but they do not address poverty. Professor Summers stressed the importance that research should be used to inform policy change, focussing not just on what is interesting, but what will be useful in making the case for and informing the direction for reform.

How do the four domains of the National Plan intersect, how do they all contribute to achieving the objective of ending gender-based violence?

Commissioner Micaela Cronin with Associate Professor Michael Salter, UNSW; Moo Baulch, Chair, Our Watch; Lula Dembele, Director Lived Expertise and Advocacy, Women's Trauma Recovery Centre

A summary of the panel’s discussion is provided below:

- Lula Dembele reflected that the domains translate a public health framework into the context of violence prevention, noting there is a need to encompass all domains of the public health approach, including prevention, early intervention, response, and healing and recovery. She noted this process is cyclical and interconnected, not linear. We need to do all of this together, in a way that is person centred - ie, each person will need prevention, early intervention, response, healing and recovery. The healing and recovery process is not linear and therefore requiring our collective effort across primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.
- Moo Baulch reflected that it doesn't matter how many domains the National Plan has, the problem is the institutions and structures. She asked how we can get on the same page locally,

and how we can flip the systems that are doing harm now. Ms Baulch reflected that we struggle to define trauma informed practice, and we also need to talk about “shame sensitive practice”.

- Michael Salter reflected that we created pillars to organise our thoughts, but they have become categories we have to fit programs into.
- The Commissioner noted we need to invest in building the workforce capability to support the change we want to see.. We need to build capability across all aspects of the service system to engage people we are not currently talking to about domestic, family and sexual violence – include men who are violent.

Key Themes from Discussions

Throughout the day, small groups discussions allowed groups of stakeholders who would not ordinarily connect to build on conversations over the course of the day.

What mechanisms should we be building for ongoing reflection on progress over the next 10 years to accelerate change?

Suggestions and areas for focus that emerged from the discussions include:

Regular review:

- Annual review of actions, challenges, achievements and what is yet to be achieved. Such analysis would inform what work is required next.
- Quarterly monitoring or pulse checks, in collaboration with community, government, research and health, similar to public health approaches.
- Establishment of a Community of Practice for collective reflection on progress.
- Share what is working across systems and jurisdictions. For example, legislation and regulation varies across jurisdictions so it is important to understand what works best.
- Track implementation across federally funded projects.
- A single Clearinghouse that brings together intersectional evidence could provide greater potential for data to be collected in context, and at scale.
- Governance mechanisms that reflect the intersections with violence. These include poverty, mental health, alcohol and other drugs, gambling and pornography.
- Place based review of progress is critical for understanding local impact as well as population level impact.

Measurement of progress:

- Measurement should also “follow the money”. That is, starting with data and measurement collected as part of funding arrangements is an important part of the picture. It is important for understanding where services are succeeding and where they may be causing harm, and whether funding levels reflect the scale of the issue in that place.
- Measuring across agencies with a strengths-based approach focussing on wellbeing and health indicators.
- Measure for survivor impact as opposed to measuring for funders or for government.
- Embed cultural safety within structures to safeguard data sovereignty for First Nations people.

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- Include mechanisms that measure bias regarding violence, including with Police and child protection workforces.

Mapping and doing more with existing data sources:

- Map what exists currently, including qualitative and quantitative data, as well as evaluation activity. The data mapping will determine where the existing data is held and will form the basis for collaboration and the creation of a future dataset.
- Data relating to elder abuse is relevant and could provide insights into prevention opportunities.
- Diagonal meta-evaluation is helpful.
- Evaluation that includes data from common risk assessment frameworks can be helpful if the evidence is complemented with survivor voice.

Understanding the service system experience:

- Build a victim satisfaction survey into the Personal Safety Survey.
- Mechanisms need to go beyond reflection and accelerate change. A greater focus is needed on people's experience of crisis and police response.

Opportunities for research:

- There are existing resources and investment in community strengthening and community-led prevention initiatives. There is no coherent understanding of the impact of this on DFSV prevention.
- Longitudinal studies will help develop an understanding of the perversity of violence across generations.
- Journey mapping could provide evidence on points of systems that are working well and points that need change.
- Consider research into the intersections of homicide, suicide, and violence.

Where are the opportunities for collaboration to improve impact measurement?

- Workforce capability development is required for effective implementation of impact measurement.
- Peak bodies could use common measurement tools to monitor service satisfaction and people's experience of having their needs met.
- Develop national protocols for data ownership. A good analysis of this will help reveal the known gaps such as
 - appropriate identification of DV in child protection reports that otherwise appear to be primarily about neglect, and
 - understanding perpetration better

What will make a difference in people's lives and help us achieve the objective of ending gender-based violence?

Bridging the gap between policy intention and reality by putting people at the centre:

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- Human experience underpins all domains of the National Plan and should be our central focus.
 - One participant stated that “There is a chasm between our policy intention and what's practically happening.” Bridging the gap means:
 - Believing people.
 - Acknowledging institutional racism
 - Preventing systemic harms and addressing the complexity of systems that people impacted by violence need to navigate.
 - Reducing poverty and increasing economic empowerment particularly for victim survivors,
 - Addressing silos

Using data to understand people's experiences, and make sure policy and services actually change to improve people's lives:

- Involve people in the collection of measurement including Indigenous women and those with lived experience.
- Use data to understand different aspects of survival and recovery.
- More understanding is needed about the costs of surviving (financial and time), and about the impact on survivors' access to employment and other economic opportunities. We should use this to make systemic changes to take women out of poverty.
- Avoid measuring the activity rather than the outcome.
- Use death reviews and other lived experience to understand what could have prevented homicide.

Join up data across systems to trace the impact on family lives, and barriers to support:

- Child protection data should be linked with family violence data
- Data needs to indicate the experiences of multicultural communities
- Data must illustrate the experiences of family law, policing, and other support systems

Considering more open access to data to support collaboration:

- There is a need to reduce the power imbalance to access the data, with a reliance on data requests being attached to a research institution. This is a barrier to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or culturally and linguistically diverse people who might not have the academic accolades to access data.
- Allow people with lived experience to frame the problem to inform the design of data collection and reporting.
- Consider opportunities to partner across disciplines, cultures and agencies.

Next Steps

This inaugural roundtable was the first in an ongoing program of engagement for the Commission ahead of its first report to parliament in August 2024. It is the Commission's intention that these be ongoing conversations that mature over the coming years into shared collaborative work and projects to accelerate change.

Next steps for roundtable participants

- Consider the findings in this summary report in light of your own work. Where are there opportunities for you to partner and collaborate, learn and share?
- Consider your role in strengthening the measurement of impact of the work to end violence being done across Australia. How can you ensure that in your work you are focussed not only on measuring 'what have we done', but 'has it made a difference?'
- Continue to engage and work with the Commission as it is established and grows, sharing your work, knowledge and insights with Commission will allow us to be able to report to Parliament on progress of the National Plan.