

No to Violence

*2023-24 Commonwealth Pre-Budget Submission
Funding Perpetrator Accountability*



Acknowledgment of Country

No to Violence acknowledges First Nations Peoples across these lands; the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters. We pay respect to all Elders, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge a deep connection with country which has existed over 60,000 years. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded, and this was and always will be First Nation's land.



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Letter from the CEO

Dear Treasurer,

No to Violence knows that ending family and domestic violence must be seen as core business for government. We are leading the change to end male family violence in Australia and have spent the past 30 years developing safe and effective interventions for men who use family violence. We specialise in targeted interventions to support men to change their behaviour, but our primary concern is the safety and wellbeing of women and children. Always.

As the peak body that deals with the men who perpetrate violence, we represent a range of specialist organisations delivering interventions to keep women and children safe. It is our aim to ensure that these specialist organisations work collaboratively and effectively on a national basis, and to see long-lasting systemic reforms that hold perpetrators of family and domestic violence to account.

Each year, the estimated cost to the economy of gender-based violence is \$22 billion and the majority of that is borne by victim survivors.¹ No to Violence believes that it is time to shift that burden onto the men who choose to use family and domestic violence and ensure that our systems and services can get that job done.

The 2022-2032 National Plan sets out a clear intention to address the use of family violence, and Australia is now on a stronger perpetrator intervention path than ever before.

Investment in change is urgent.

In this Budget submission, No to Violence recommends:

1. Sustainable funding through a National Partnership Agreement to meet the ambitious objective to end violence against women and children in a generation.
2. Peak body funding for No to Violence's national specialist advisory and advocacy functions to ensure all States and Territories are adequately serviced to affect change.
3. A multi-year, high level public awareness campaign for the Men's Referral Service (MRS). MRS should be listed alongside 1800 Respect to shift the burden of response onto men who use violence.
4. Workforce capability building for the specialist men's family violence sector.
5. Automatic police referrals to be extended to all jurisdictions to reduce the risk of men's use of family violence.
6. National compliance standards to ensure high quality, best practice and measurable outcomes for men's family violence interventions.
7. Developing the evidence base for perpetrator interventions, by undertaking a national perpetrator study.

We would be pleased to brief you further on the content of our submission and look forward to meeting with you in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



Jacqui Watt
Chief Executive Officer

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¹ PwC 2015, 4

About No to Violence

No to Violence (NTV) is Australia's largest national peak body representing organisations and individuals working with men to end family violence. We are guided by the values of accountability, gender equity, leadership, and change.

NTV provides support and advocacy for the work of specialist men's family violence interventions carried out by organisations and individuals. The work undertaken by specialist men's family violence services is diverse and includes but is not limited to Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCP), case management, individual counselling, policy development and advocacy, research and evaluation, training, workforce development and capability building.

NTV also provides a range of training for the specialist men's family violence workforce including a Graduate Certificate in partnership with Swinburne University, as well as professional development for all workforces who come into contact, directly and indirectly, with men using family violence. NTV is a leading national voice and plays a central role in the development of evidence, policy, and advocacy to support the work of specialist men's family violence nationally.

About Our Members

NTV represents 186 members Australia-wide. Our membership structure is inclusive of individuals and organisations ranging from specialist services to individuals and others who have an interest in preventing and responding to men's family violence.

Summary of recommendations

No to Violence recommends that:

1. \$15 million over five years be invested in No to Violence to fund our vital, evidence-based work as a national peak body.
2. The Commonwealth provide sustainable funding for critical intervention services:
 - \$8.75 million over five years to fund a post-participation follow-up pilot program.
 - \$3 million over three years in additional funding to ensure Men's Referral Service and Brief Intervention Services (BIS) continue to be accessible nation-wide with a focus on under resourced communities.
 - \$35 million over five years to invest in perpetrator interventions led by and for First Nations communities to support people who use family violence to change their behaviour.
 - \$40 million over five years to support mandated police referral pathways between all state and territory police services and MRS (Men's Referral Service)
 - \$8 million over three years to fund a nationwide MRS (Men's Referral Service) awareness raising and communications campaign.
 - \$35 million over five years to:
 - i. Develop state-and-territory specific models of the Men's Accommodation and Counselling Service (MACS) in the NT, NSW, WA, SA, Qld, and Tasmania
 - ii. Fund on-going monitoring and evaluation programs to assess the efficacy and social and economic impact of MACS.
3. \$5 million over five years to fund the development and implementation of a compliance framework for MBCPs, including compliance for practitioners.
4. \$10 million over five years to ensure that high-quality specialist training programs are available in all states and territories to support workforce capacity and capability expansion.
5. \$5 million over five years to develop and implement, in collaboration between academic institutions and the perpetrator intervention sector, a national perpetrator research agenda.
6. \$7 million over five years to develop and implement, in partnership with the men's family violence sector and key research sector, a national perpetration study in parallel with NCAS and PSS.

No to Violence submission to the Treasurer

As No to Violence prepares this submission, we are reminded of how much work remains to reduce and end family violence. At the end of the calendar year 2022, 55 women were murdered by their partner or former partner and within the first weeks of 2023, two women have already been killed.² The murder of every single woman is a tragedy and has ripple effects across families, workplaces, and communities.

Without working with the people who choose to use violence, the rates of domestic and family violence will continue to rise, as will the tragic consequences of homicides.

Our members and colleagues across the human services sector work directly with men who use violence. They operate collaboratively with victim services to uphold the safety of women and children, this being the sector's overarching objective.

In contrast to the critical importance and necessity of this work, family and domestic violence has historically attracted low levels of investment and resourcing. This is in part connected to the lack of public attention paid to gendered based violence, the reluctance of victims to report, and our reticence to speak about the men who choose to use violence and for them to take responsibility for their own behaviour. However, in the last decade, through the first National Plan to reduce violence against women and their children, public awareness and attention about the impact of domestic and family violence has increased. The second National Plan to end violence against women and children, and its ambitious objective to end family violence in a generation, gives us renewed opportunity to invest the significant resources to raise awareness about the impact of family violence on victim survivors, children, and communities and better focus on the responsibility and centrality of perpetrators in their use of family violence.

As the National Plan clearly articulates, better interconnectivity and availability of services across the Australian human services and other systems will drive the change, together with improved and collaborative effort between government, academia, civil society, and business in this collective effort.

The National Plan should be funded under the Intergovernmental Agreement of Federal Financial Relations, acknowledging, as we do with services including health, housing, and education, the importance of setting a national agenda to tackle family violence while simultaneously noting, for the most part, its state-based service delivery footprint.

No to Violence highlights the following as central to achieving the ambitious aims of the National Plan:

- The Commonwealth has an important role to play in mitigating increased family violence risks in portfolios including technology and communications, financial services, migration, and the Family Court.
- The states have vital roles to play in the delivery of services including health, community services, child protection, police, and criminal courts.
- Research into men's family violence shows promising trends toward responsive, tailored programs, with an emphasis on early intervention and engagement.
- Development of national standards and an evaluation framework for perpetrator interventions.

² 'Counting Dead Women / Facebook' 2023 (2 women @ 17 January 2023)

- Expanding the capacity and capability of those who work with men who use violence. This is highly specialised, nuanced, complex work, with a highly feminised workforce.
- Expanding the suite of evidence-based perpetrator interventions to shift the burden from victims to perpetrators.
- Improved national data collection to improve systemic responses to family and domestic violence through ongoing national coronial death reviews, supported by insights from the specialist perpetrator intervention sector and a national study on perpetration.
- Embed the additional resources and service adjustments made by the sector during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure ongoing and much-needed service delivery to vulnerable and marginalised communities, especially those in regional and remote areas, those who continue to experience the effects of COVID-19, and natural disasters including drought, fire, and flood (which themselves exacerbate domestic and family violence).

Shifting the Burden: Funding a collaborative, connected sector

Everything No to Violence does is guided by the principle of keeping women and children safe by shifting the burden. Shifting the burden means taking the responsibility for change and action from victim-survivors and placing it squarely with the men who choose to use violence and abuse.

Shifting the burden means that staying safe—and staying alive—should no longer be the sole responsibility of victim-survivors. No to Violence envisions a world where a safety plan is not one of the only tangible actions a victim-survivor can take, but one where perpetrators are required to undertake deep change work to stop themselves from using violence. Using family violence is a choice.

Shifting the burden is about the future we want to create, where all Australians recognise that family violence is always unacceptable and addressing it requires systemic change.

Systemic change in the face of family violence can feel overwhelming. It requires us to re-think our societal foundations. The way our criminal justice systems work; the way our courts operate; the way we think about gender in every facet of our lives; the role models we look to and the responsibility we expect men to take.

NTV is already engaged in systems change work. For instance, NTV is currently working alongside the NT Government to develop an Aboriginal Family Violence Circle Court. Building on the successful implementation of the Barndimalgu in Geraldton, Western Australia, this model enables Aboriginal men who have pleaded guilty to a family violence offence to take part in a 20-week program to address their violent behaviour *before* the sentence is delivered with the goal of enabling behaviour change while keeping Aboriginal people in the community and out of prison.³ This is emblematic of the kind of change required to shift the burden.

Ending family violence in one generation is a bold and ambitious agenda, and it is one that is predicated on systemic change. Systemic change takes time and resources. NTV endorses the vision.

³ Department of Corrective Services, WA 2021

Funding No to Violence's national peak body work: \$15 million over five years

No to Violence can establish an effective national approach to perpetrator intervention if it is resourced in its role as a peak. We play a unique role in providing strategic advice and working with multiple stakeholders, including those from the not-for-profit sector, academia, business and government. With increased investment in our effort, we could achieve much more. The social change required to improve systems responses to domestic violence, decrease the prevalence and reduce the incidents of domestic homicide, will not be possible unless we coordinate a multisector effort and effective partnerships to achieve outcomes. All sectors of the economy and society have a role to play in addressing violence against women through long-term and multi-sectoral commitment and collaboration.

No to Violence has a strong track record in the development and implementation of the legislative, policy and regulatory approaches to address the drivers of violence against women and hold perpetrators accountable, and to keep them in view of services and the civil and criminal justice systems.

In the 2022 calendar year, this included the following (not-exhaustive) record of actions:

- our membership of the National Plan Advisory Group;
- our specialist advice in the development of national principles of coercive control;
- an evidence-based response from the perspective of the perpetrator intervention sector to the introduction of coercive control legislation in NSW;
- provision of specialist advice to the Victorian Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor;
- responses to legislative and systemic reform proposals in the Northern Territory;
- responses to sexual violence legislative reform in Victoria and Tasmania;
- contribution to all states and territories strategic plans for responding to family and domestic violence, coercive control and women's safety;
- undertaking a number of research projects in partnership with Monash, La Trobe, and Western Sydney universities to build the evidence base about the impact and outcomes from a range of perpetrator interventions.
- No to Violence convenes an annual national conference which draws together specialist researchers, practitioners and observers to share information, collaborate on reform, and address the societal challenges of family and domestic violence that continue to confront us.

Investment in our expertise would allow us to enter into new areas of policy reform and building the evidence base. We are currently focused on achieving results within the sector, focussing on service provision for the men who choose to use violence, and on the training, skills, and qualifications of the people who work with them. This focus is a direct consequence of our limited resourcing. Our ambitions to impact and confront the consequences of family violence extend well beyond the confines of the family and domestic violence specialist sector.

With sustainable and long-term funding, we could extend our provision of strategic advice and response and recovery program design in the areas of health and human service delivery, the family court, financial services, immigration and human rights and workplace equality agencies. We are ambitious in improving the ability of the business sector to respond to both the perpetration and experience of domestic violence amongst their employees (especially with family and domestic leave now in the National Employment Standards).

No to Violence is also keenly interested in assisting uniformed services, particularly defence, veteran's affairs, and policing agencies to better respond to the use of violence amongst their employees and to support the development of healthier workplaces.

No to Violence recognises the importance of evidence-led policy and legislative reform and we possess a singular and uniquely rich source of data. Our MRS service is a rich source of data, directly from the coalface, about the men who use violence. We wish to extend our collaboration with ANROWS (and other specialist researchers) and Our Watch to improve Australia's understanding about their characteristics, to frame more appropriate and contemporary interventions.

A five-year funding arrangement will allow us to develop and share new perpetrator knowledge, policy, practice and campaigns, which will enable us to reach more people directly and to further collaborate with all sectors of our society to extend community reach and impact.

Ongoing multi-partisan commitment is critical to support the sustained long-term work necessary to prevent violence against women by working with the men who use violence. Social change is more likely to be realised by focusing on the start of the problem: to stop the men who choose to use family violence.

Provide \$15 million over five years for No to Violence to operate as a national peak body, complete with physical presence in every state and territory to provide critical sector development and coordination, and policy and advocacy functionality.

Sustainable funding for critical intervention services

Men's family violence is an epidemic. In 2022 alone, 55 women were murdered by their current or former partner. One woman is murdered by her current or former partner on average, every week.⁴ Police across all jurisdictions collectively respond to a family violence incident every two minutes.⁵

The National Plan identified sustainable funding for specialist services as critical to the delivery of a people-centred service system.⁶ No to Violence continuously advocates for a sustainable funding model for the specialist men's intervention system, including for providers of Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs), the delivery of the nation-wide Men's Referral Service (MRS) and Brief Intervention Service (BIS) and other critical components of perpetrator interventions.⁷

MRS is a nationally coordinated and funded telephone counselling service for men who are concerned about their behaviour and men who have been identified by police as respondents in a domestic violence incident. MRS offers single phone counselling sessions and refers men into the services they need to change their behaviour. This can include referrals into MBCPs, alcohol and other drug (AOD) programs, or NTV's other service areas, including BIS and MACS.

The Brief Intervention Services (BIS) is a nationally funded multi-session phone counselling service run by NTV. BIS was originally designed as an alternative to face-to-face groupwork, to support men who were enrolled in or on waitlists for programs that were put on hold as a consequence of the

⁴ Cassidy and Convery 2022

⁵ Blumer 2016

⁶ Department of Social Services 2022, 71

⁷ No to Violence 2022c; 2022a; 2022i; 2022f; 2022e; 2020

public health measures introduced in response to COVID-19. As public health restrictions lifted, it became clear that BIS filled an important gap in the perpetrator intervention system. However, waitlists for groupwork continue to be a challenge for the perpetrator intervention sector due to workforce capacity and capability constraints. Because BIS operates as a bridge for men who are on waitlists it keeps perpetrators in view, manages risk, and supports men on their change journey before they start an MBCP.

NTV also operates the Men's Accommodation and Counselling Service (MACS) in Victoria. MACS is an important part of Victoria's family violence intervention sector. Originally funded as a pilot, MACS was designed to enable men who have been legally excluded from their home to find stable accommodation and counselling support. An Ernst and Young evaluation found that MACS fills an important gap in the service delivery system.⁸ MACS keeps these men in view while offering them a safe alternative to breaching their court orders allowing victim-survivors to safely remain in their homes, while perpetrators access the support they need to address their violent and abusive behaviours.

MRS and BIS are critical services for men who want to change their behaviour. Both services provide highly specialised phone counselling and serve as important ways for men to be supported to take responsibility for their behaviour.

As detailed in [NTV's submission](#) to the House Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs Inquiry into Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence (2020), a nationally coordinated, fortified and sustainable funding model is required to better meet the needs of victim-survivors but also more importantly, to enhance the national effort of working with perpetrators to end their use of violence.⁹

Resourcing the National Plan

No to Violence understands that the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations outlines the objectives, principles and institutional arrangements governing financial relations between the Commonwealth and the states and territory governments, recognising that the states have primary responsibility for many areas of service delivery, but that coordinated action is necessary to address Australia's economic and social challenges.¹⁰

Federal funding agreements contain significant policy content and act as sources of ongoing funding and have described terms and conditions. No to Violence understands that there are federal agreements for the delivery of health care, education and skills, infrastructure, environment affordable housing, disability, community services and Indigenous reform (Closing the Gap).

Given the complexity of the policy and legislative architecture that supports the family, domestic and sexual assault services sector, and as detailed in the National Plan, No to Violence recommends that a Federal Funding Agreement be established to frame the funding of activity to be realised by the Plan's first five-year Action Plan. This will provide funding certainty, ensure measurable economic and social benefits, identify priority areas for enabling systemic reform and provide transparency and accountability measures between funders and the non-government services sector.

⁸ EY 2021

⁹ No to Violence 2020

¹⁰ Federal Financial Relations 2023

Allocate new and additional funding for perpetrator interventions

There are insufficient perpetrator interventions to meet demand. Many MBCP providers consistently have waitlists that are weeks or months long because they simply do not have the resources to meet demand.¹¹

This budget, and its anticipated National Partnership Agreement, are opportunities to work with state and territory governments to increase the overall funding available to operate evidence-based perpetrator interventions including MBCPs.

Post-MBCP participation support and follow-up: \$8.75 million over five years

Completing an MBCP does not guarantee long-term behaviour change. Perpetrators require ongoing support to ensure that the behavioural changes they may have internalised during an MBCP are maintained for months and years to come. This type of work requires post-participation support and follow-up. We require \$8.75 million to fund a nationwide pilot over five years to pilot and evaluate post-participation support. This post-participation support would operate in tandem with an established MBCP. We anticipate that 320 men would be supported through this pilot program each year. This will fill a significant research gap to provide the evidence required to demonstrate the utility and efficacy of MBCPs.

Allocate \$8.75 million over five years to invest in post-participation support and follow-up for men who have completed Men's Behaviour Change Programs

Five-year contracts for all perpetrator intervention service providers

Procurement rules should be amended to provide for five-year contracts in order to enable providers to attract and retain qualified staff to enable service providers to undertake critical program monitoring and program improvement delivering on the sustainably agenda of the National Plan.

Short-term contracts create an environment of high staff turnover and undermine professional capability building making it challenging for service providers to offer certainty to their clients and promote their clinical outcomes. Supporting service providers with longer-term contracts means we will be able to embed important outcomes in improved service delivery, engage in quality improvement, and dedicate more resources to high-quality service provision to better serve people most in need of support.

Solidifying the resourcing of MRS and BIS to reflect growing need: \$3 million over three years

NTV is seeking to influence broadcast media outlets and those with an online presence to list the Men's Referral Service simultaneously and always when they list the 1800 Respect number when covering domestic violence news stories. This is to support both victim-survivors and to ensure that men who wish to seek help (and who might identify themselves in those stories) are able to receive the support they need when they need it, to take responsibility for, and address their own behaviour. This is anticipated to have a significant social impact. Further, it will build awareness about the MRS and highlight the importance of perpetrator intervention. As awareness about these services grows, and as more men become aware of these important resources, opportunities for perpetrator intervention is expected to increase.

For example, on 3 April 2020, the Commonwealth announced a range of public health measures to keep Australians safe from COVID-19 and immediately, the Men's Referral Service received a 94%

¹¹ No to Violence 2021

increase in inbound calls from men in Victoria, NSW, and Tasmania (the then three sites operating the MRS) who were worried about their behaviour during the first of the lockdown periods. No to Violence received a \$2.4 million funding supplement from the Commonwealth to expand both the MRS and to introduce the Brief Intervention Service as nationwide services in anticipation of increased need and demand.

Since then, MRS has spoken with more than 20,000 men, and BIS has supported more than 1,000 men, with hundreds staying actively engaged while awaiting their respective group programs. In 2022, MRS made nearly 12,000 calls and BIS supported more than 570 men. This demonstrates the vital role of MRS and BIS in supporting men to take the first step on their change journeys.

The COVID-19 supplement supported MRS's national expansion and provided for the regular delivery of No to Violence's Five Essential Discussion Tools training to specialist men's counsellors. The additional resources and service expansion made from the COVID-19 supplements should be embedded and continued into all contracted services – so as to ensure the work continues. As public awareness increases, so too will ongoing demand for service.

No to Violence requests an additional \$3 million over three years on top of our existing funding arrangements to ensure MRS and BIS can continue to be delivered nationwide

Marginalised and priority communities identified in the National Plan

While MRS and BIS counselling services are available to men in any state and territory, awareness and uptake of these services is lower in jurisdictions where NTV does not have a physical presence. This means that many of the marginalised and priority communities identified through the National Plan, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, especially in remote areas, and Australians living in regional areas, are less likely to be aware of, and get the support they need.¹²

MRS connects with more than 500 men each year who self-identify as culturally and linguistically diverse. NTV is committed to building stronger relationships across all communities. With increased funding NTV would be able to better able to attract, train, and retain MRS counsellors from diverse communities; enhance our cultural awareness and safety training for new and existing MRS counsellors; and regularly engage directly with the diverse communities to better understand their service needs. Expanding our capacity will enable us to expand and build relationships with other national peaks interested but not currently engaged in our work, including for example, FECCA (Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia), the National Council of Churches, UN Women and others to strengthen alliances and opportunities for systemic reform.

Through the National Partnership Agreement, the Commonwealth can provide the incentives and resources required for an overall expansion of funding for perpetrator interventions with targeted investment in priority and marginalised communities.

Investing in interventions led by and for First Nations communities: \$35 million over five years

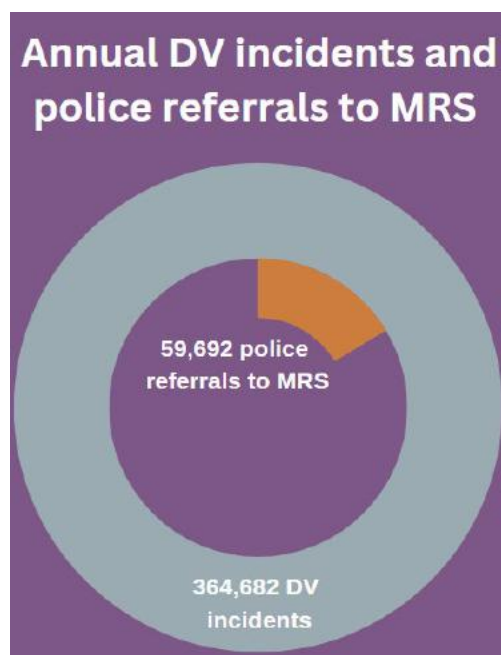
Through No to Violence's First Nations Drop-In, Aboriginal Controlled Community Organisations (ACCOS) have strongly advocated for increased resourcing for ACCOs to enable them to engage in culturally relevant, meaningful work and to ensure that they are culturally responsive to First Nations communities. This involves working with ACCOs to develop culturally relevant MBCPs. However, additional investment needs to resource ACCOs to develop, deliver and evaluate First Nation's specific

¹² Department of Social Services 2022

MBCPs that are community developed and led. This aims to reduce recidivism and prevalence and ensure that all Aboriginal MBC attendees’ families are supported by training Aboriginal family support workers. Supporting Aboriginal women in this way is urgently required to address systems responses. Aboriginal women’s fear about losing their children, their fear of reprisal or shame about having experienced violence, their unfamiliarity of legal processes, disillusionment with the system, fear perpetrators will be sent to prison and a general lack of support services all contribute to high levels of violence against women in Aboriginal communities and a reluctance to report abuse to authorities. This needs urgent redress.

Mandated police referrals: \$40 million over five years

In Victoria, NSW, and Tasmania, No to Violence operates referral pathway with state police forces.



Police refer men who have been named as the respondent in a domestic violence incident to the MRS. This referral pathway ensures men are efficiently connected with our specialist men’s telephone counsellors and are able to access the support they need to avoid using violence.

In 2022, NTV received nearly 60,000 referrals from Tasmanian, Victoria, and NSW police forces through our automatic referral pathways.¹³ This was a 2.8% increase in police referrals across jurisdictions from 2020-2021. In 2022, Australia’s police forces responded to nearly 400,000 domestic violence incidents—and nearly 115,000 incidents in NSW alone.¹⁴ This means that less than 16% of family violence incidents resulted in a referral to MRS—and that none of the 138,804 incidents recorded in NT, ACT, Qld, or WA were referred to MRS. This is a significant gap that must be urgently filled.

Resourcing police referrals in all states and territories aligns with the policy architecture of the National Plan. Ensuring automatic referral pathways are universally available and effectively utilised would enable more men to access the critical support they need at the time they need it —which ultimately supports the safety of victim-survivors everywhere.

Allocation of \$40 million over five years to resource police referrals to the Men’s Referral Service in all states and territories

Enhancing Public Awareness and Shifting the Burden of Responsibility: \$8 million over three years

The National Plan commits to improving access to support services and strengthening accountability for people who choose to use violence.¹⁵ Significant effort is required to raising public awareness

¹³ No to Violence 2022g, 10

¹⁴ It is important to note that family violence related incidents are not reported uniformly across all jurisdictions. Some states report domestic violence incidents, while some record domestic violence related assault, criminal domestic violence, and non-criminal domestic violence. While these statistics are not directly comparable, they do provide a general idea of the scope of family violence as part of police response. Crime Statistics Agency Victoria 2022; BOCSAR 2020; WA Police 2022; NT Police, Fire & Emergency Services 2022; AFP 2022; Smee 2021; Tasmania Police 2022

¹⁵ Department of Social Services 2022, 20

about the importance of offering support and services for perpetrators to end their use of family violence and establishing equivalence between the Men’s Referral Service and 1800 Respect. To contribute favourably to the objective of ending family violence in a generation, equal service provision must be made available to victim survivors in their time of crisis and to the men who seek to minimise the risk of their using family violence.

Importantly too, the Men’s Referral Service should be appropriately resourced to provide culturally safe support and service referrals, noting in particular, the challenges with telephone service delivery in regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. To integrate the objectives of the Closing the Gap and the National Plan’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander plan, NTV will work collaboratively with ACCOs and community-led organisations to codesign pathways to support access to MRS; we will also continue to develop relationships to ensure MRS is able to refer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients as well as clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to safe, informed, and where possible, community-led services.

Increasing awareness of MRS will enable more men to reach-out for and receive help. This increases the likelihood of that we connect men with the services they need *before* they come into contact with the criminal justice system. Early intervention in family violence is an important part of the reform architecture.

As part of accountability, public awareness raising and social change, wherever the 1800 Respect number is listed to support victim-survivors, the MRS 1300 766 491 should be listed.

\$8 million over three years is required for NTV to develop and have broadcast a national, multi-year public awareness campaign to increase the profile of the MRS to focus on perpetrator behaviour and accountability to shift the burden from victim-survivors to the men who choose to use family violence. Alongside Our Watch’s primary prevention campaigns and general awareness raising about the nature and pervasiveness of family violence, NTV’s unique and specific reference to perpetrators helps confront all cultural aspects of family violence.

Resource NTV with an additional \$8 million over three years to provide a nationwide awareness raising and communications campaign, for general and targeted communities.

Support for innovative programs for perpetrators, including programs that enable victim-survivors to stay safe in their homes

The National Plan notes that, in order to enhance accountability, we need evidence-based programs to work with men using violence.¹⁶ A key priority under Early Intervention is to ‘support the establishment and expansion of evidence-based programs to work with people using violence’, making such programs available to people who self-refer, not only to those who have already been identified by the criminal justice system.

Providing perpetrators with short-term crisis accommodation and connecting them with evidence-based services has been a successful intervention pilot in Victoria and with proven results should be extended to all states and territories. Making MACS a national service would enable NTV to work in collaboration with local organisations to understand the specific issues relevant in their communities.

We know, for instance, that for remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, housing stock is a critical issue.¹⁷ Establishing MACS in these communities—where housing is needed most—

¹⁶ Department of Social Services 2022, 112

¹⁷ No to Violence 2022f; 2022e

would therefore require a specialist approach. Forcing women and children to ‘flee violence’ rather than enabling them to stay in residence means they carry the burden of economic security, safety, disruption, police and legal interventions. In all respects, a victim-survivor pays for the perpetrator’s use of violence. Removing men from the home shifts that burden of responsibility and is an important part of systemic change.

Allocate \$35 million over five years for NTV to:

- Develop state-and-territory specific models for the Men’s Accommodation and Counselling Service (MACS) in the NT, NSW, WA, SA, Qld, and Tasmania
- Embed monitoring and evaluation of all MACS programs to assess their social impact

Development of National Standards and Compliance Frameworks for MBCPs

The National Plan highlights the importance of nationally coordinated and cohesive approaches to family violence and confirms a commitment to high-quality, context-specific service delivery. The Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission will work with governments and community organisations to promote coordinated and consistent monitoring and evaluation frameworks to support the delivery of such services.¹⁸ No to Violence looks forward to working with the Commissioner to ensure perpetrator intervention programs are supported with monitoring and evaluation and that the standards established for all new perpetrator interventions accord with the high quality standards NTV has developed in partnership with several state governments.

National Standards for MBCPs

The National Plan recognises the need to ‘explore the need for national minimum standards for MBCPs’.¹⁹ Evidence-based standards for perpetrator interventions are an important part of responding to and ending men’s family violence.²⁰ The first set of MBCP standards was developed by NTV in 1996. Since then, similar standards have been adopted in NSW, Central Australia and versions adopted in Tasmania and the ACT. A version has also been adopted in the United Kingdom.

The UK Home Office recently launched *Standards for domestic abuse perpetrator interventions* which articulate a cohesive national approach to perpetrator intervention based on best practice.²¹ Australia’s effort at developing national standards began with the National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions (NOSPI) but this program lapsed some time ago. NTV encourages the recommencement of this agenda, and note the sound principles upon which it was based:

1. Women and their children’s safety is the core priority of all perpetrator interventions
2. Perpetrators get the right interventions at the right time
3. Perpetrators face justice and legal consequences when they commit violence
4. Perpetrators participate in programmes and services that enable them to change their violent behaviours and attitudes
5. Perpetrator interventions are driven by credible evidence to continuously improve

¹⁸ Department of Social Services 2022, 28

¹⁹ Department of Social Services 2022, 115

²⁰ UK Home Office 2023

²¹ UK Home Office 2023

6. People working in perpetrator intervention systems are skilled in responding to the dynamics and impacts of domestic, family and sexual violence.²²

National performance indicators should be developed to guide and measure the actions taken by governments, community partners and systems to intervene with men who use family violence.²³

No to Violence has a demonstrable track record in supporting the development of minimum standards for MBCPs in different jurisdictions. No to Violence's expertise underpins the Victorian Minimum Standards for Men's Behaviour Change, informed the NSW Practice Standards and Compliance Framework, and informed risk assessments in several jurisdictions from a perpetrator risk perspective. Our unique experience in working with men to end their use of family violence strengthens our expertise in the development of national standards for perpetrator interventions, using NSW and Victoria as instructive benchmarks.

Establishing a national compliance framework in line with the national standards: \$5 million over five years

The National Plan recognises that effective responses to people who use family violence must be built on 'the evidence base on the effectiveness of men's behaviour change programs and other perpetrator interventions'.²⁴ Compliance standards are also an important mechanism for quality assurance. Contracted services should be contingent upon an organisation's ability to meet and adhere to such compliance standards.

The NSW Practice Standards and Compliance Framework for MBCPs provide a useful blueprint.²⁵ No to Violence provided expert advice through an iterative development process for the NSW Compliance Framework.

Developing a national evaluation and compliance framework will provide the perpetrator intervention sector with the resources it needs to build capacity to ensure programs and services deliver on the clinical or policy objectives for which they are established. Evaluations are an important means by which we can judge the economic and social benefit over time of the National Plan itself.

Develop consistent standards for perpetrator intervention workforce

Under Pillar Two, Early Intervention, the National Plan commits to 'build the capability of those who work with men and boys to address and change their behaviours in recognition of the highly specialised nature of this work, including through consistent standards'.²⁶ Working with perpetrators is, as the National Plan points out, highly specialised work. There are many entry points to the perpetrator intervention sector, but it is critical that practitioners have the necessary technical and theoretical qualifications they need to deliver safe, high-quality services. The introduction of consistent standards for practitioner qualifications embeds the capability necessary to meet emerging and changing needs of clients.

The 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit recommended that all levels of government work together to ensure social services are well-planned to meet the needs of a growing population.²⁷ The Summit reflected

²² COAG 2016, 5

²³ COAG 2015, 2

²⁴ Department of Social Services 2022, 116

²⁵ Department of Justice 2018

²⁶ Department of Social Services 2022, 112

²⁷ Australian Government 2022, 5

the need to reimagine the future of work to ensure that marginalised people have secure employment choices.²⁸

The specialist men’s intervention sector must be incorporated into the future planning of our nations’ human service delivery workforces. Developing nation-wide standards for the specialist men’s intervention sector will not only provide clear pathways for new workers to enter the sector but will also establish a mandate for accredited and non-accredited training across all jurisdictions.

As part of the National Plan’s commitment to the delivery of high-quality services, \$5 million over five years is required to address the development and implementation of a compliance framework for MBCPs, including compliance for practitioners. As the national peak body representing those who work with men to end their use of violence, No to Violence is uniquely qualified to support the implementation and monitoring of service provider compliance.

Supporting a strong, cohesive, and capable workforce

In order to meet demand and work towards Australia’s vision of ending gender-based violence in one generation, the sector needs a strong capability and capacity building agenda to ensure that victim-survivors and perpetrators can access the support they need, no matter where they live.²⁹

Under Pillar Three, Response, the National Plan has identified investment ‘in the development and sustainability of a specialist workforce to work with men using violence, including in men’s behaviour change programs and other perpetrator interventions’ as a key priority.³⁰

This requires significant and sustained investment in the perpetrator intervention service workforce. Our sector has consistently asked for the support we need to make our highly skilled workforce sustainable.³¹ While NTV welcomes the \$169.4 million committed in the 2022-23 budget to provide an additional 500 frontline service and community workers across Australia to support victim-survivors, the men’s family violence sector is not explicitly supported through this allocation.³²

Attracting and retaining quality staff in the men’s family violence sector requires pathways for workers to grow and develop in their roles and across their careers. This requires an investment in improving access to training and accreditation for the men’s family violence sector, including opportunities for entry-level, intermediate and advanced training that provide specialist workers appropriate career progression. It is important that our workforce reflect the communities we serve, and more must be done to achieve this.

²⁸ Australian Government 2022, 2

²⁹ Department of Social Services 2022, 56

³⁰ Department of Social Services 2022, 115

³¹ No to Violence 2022b; 2022a; 2022h; 2022f; 2022e; 2022d; 2022c

³² Commonwealth of Australia 2022, 187

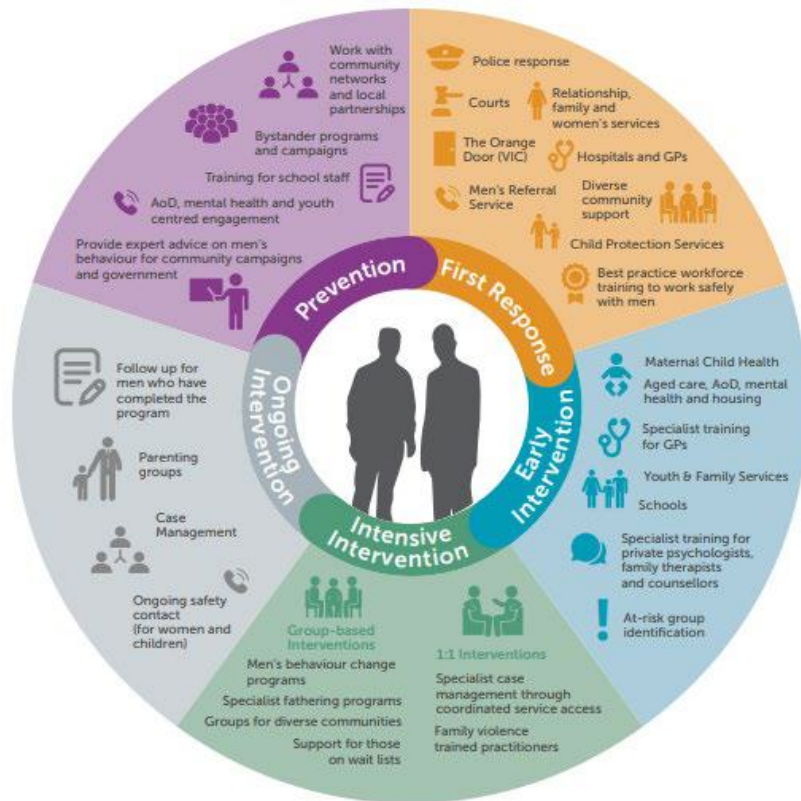


Figure 2: Perpetrator intervention sector service response as a whole. NTV Annual Report 2018

Training in perpetrator identification and response must extend beyond the family violence sector. NTV knows that we all have a role to play in ending men’s family violence. Private and universal services, such as healthcare providers, educators, mental health workers, uniformed officers including police, and courts, all come into contact with men who use family violence. All of these professions need the training to understand perpetrator identification, risk assessments that are appropriate for their workplace, and referral pathways.

NTV’s vision is one where all Australians are able to access specialised training in identifying and appropriately responding to men’s family violence.

Improving access to training for the men’s family violence sector: \$10 million over five years

In line with the National Plan’s objective to ‘ensure frontline services provided by states and territories are coordinated, integrated and appropriately resourced with a skilled and qualified workforce,’ the specialist men’s family violence sector must grow.³³ Our sector faces specific challenges in recruitment and retention.

Training is a critical part of early intervention and response. Training more people across more sectors in identifying family violence and supporting them so they know where to refer men who are using or are suspected of using family violence will support earlier intervention—before men come into contact with the criminal justice system. As our work across Australia demonstrates, training must extend beyond the family violence sector, and support universal services to better identify and respond to family violence.

³³ Department of Social Services 2022, 85

No to Violence provides accredited and non-accredited training to Victoria and South Australia in particular, as well as in other jurisdictions. NTV's workforce development programs are designed to provide development opportunities across the career span of a men's family violence practitioner.

Between 2021-2022, a total of 1,978 Australian workers completed one of NTV's training programs, an 11.4% increase from the previous year (1,757 participants completed). Our accredited and non-accredited training is available publicly and privately. We offer training on everything from case management and case notes to advanced family safety contact work, working with fathers who use family violence, and our Five Essential Discussion Tools.

The Department of Social Services funds No to Violence to deliver The Five Essential Discussion Tools nationwide. This training provides specialist engagement and de-escalation techniques for working with men using violence, including how to apply strategies in face-to-face, telephone, and online settings. Since 2020, more than 1,200 workers have completed this training. The program has received positive feedback from attendees, who have reported an improved understanding of men's family violence, greater confidence in engaging with men who use violence, and the application of tools for working with men who use violence.

Accredited training to support entry into and participation in the perpetrator intervention workforce requires all states and territories to accredit training to provide workers with the specialist skills they need to work with people who use family violence. NTV has a proven, successful track record of working with First Nations communities across a range of projects. With additional funding, we would have the capacity to continue this work to ensure interventions are co-designed and delivered in partnership with Indigenous communities across Australia.

For instance, in 2018, NTV received funding through the Department of Social Services' *Regional and Remote Perpetrators Innovation Fund* to develop the skills of First Nations community members and service providers and mainstream community service providers to work more effectively with people who use family violence.³⁴ Many men in regional and remote areas of Australia, and especially in regional and remote First Nations communities, will engage with universal services such as health, social wellbeing, criminal justice, and family services before they come into contact with or are aware of specialist family violence interventions. No to Violence held community consultations and trainings in WA, Qld, and the NT. By working closely with First Nations communities across Australia, No to Violence successfully delivered a series of training workshops in relation to working with perpetrators of family violence.³⁵ We need to cease pilot programs and one-off 'innovation' grants and embed these types of programs as a permanent service in Aboriginal communities to enable longer term and favourable outcomes.

Ensuring evidence-based and expert-informed training is universally available should be a priority in the National Plan. Expanding the availability of accredited and non-accredited training would support the capacity and sustainability of the national perpetrator intervention sector.

\$10 million over five years to ensure that high-quality training programs are available in all states and territories.

³⁴ No to Violence 2019

³⁵ No to Violence 2019

Building the evidence base on perpetrators and perpetration

No to Violence is committed to collaborative research and evidence-based programs. We know first-hand that collaborative research projects between peak bodies, service providers, and academic and research institutions are key in developing evidence-based practice. The combined expertise of NTV as a national peak body, the research skills and resources made available to research and academic institutions, and the on-the-ground expertise of service providers are powerful tools to end men's family violence.

National Research Agenda - Perpetrators and Early Intervention: \$5 million over five years

The National Plan identifies the need to 'build the data and research base to understand the factors correlated with men perpetrating violence'³⁶ and its next national research agenda should be developed in partnership with the family violence sector, and specifically the specialist men's intervention sector will increase the usability and accessibility of cutting-edge research in the development of ongoing systemic reform.

No to Violence recommends that the family violence sector, and specialist men's intervention sector, is a partner in co-designing and determining the shape of the next national research agenda with research institutions including ANROWS and Our Watch. The next national research agenda should prioritise collaborations between academic institutions, the sector, ANROWS and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the conduct of surveys, research and data analysis.

The Australian Domestic and Family Violence Review Network (the Network), established under the first National Plan in 2011, is an important systemic review process. The Network's periodical reviews of family violence related deaths provide critical insight into all domestic violence related death data and the strengths, weaknesses, and systemic failures that create an environment where intimate partner homicide occurs. All closed cases of domestic violence homicides are reviewed by state and territory death review teams, together with sentencing remarks and other sources of important data on the factors leading to a domestic violence homicide. The critical work of the Network highlights the systemic change required to address domestic violence homicide in Australia.

Since its establishment, the Network has produced two data reports: one in 2018 that provided an overview of all intimate partner homicides between 2010-2014, and a collaborative report with ANROWS to update the report for the period 2010-2018.³⁷ Regular reports of the Network are required to support the identification of, and to improve systemic responses to family and domestic violence. We welcome the opportunity to contribute our knowledge and a perpetrator behaviour perspective to this important body of work.

Invest \$5 million over five years to develop and implement a national perpetrator research agenda in collaboration between academic institutions and the perpetrator intervention sector.

³⁶ Department of Social Services 2022, 111

³⁷ Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network 2022

National Study on Perpetration: \$7 million over five years

The National Plan notes Australia's 'limited data collection on perpetration' and that this gap is a challenge for addressing perpetrator accountability.³⁸ Understanding people who choose to use family violence—their life experiences, the ways they use violence, their contexts—is critical across prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery. The National Plan notes that building a strong evidence base is central to reducing the prevalence of family violence. Building the evidence base on perpetrators and 'the factors correlated with men perpetrating violence, including the role of their own lived experience of violence and trauma and the impact of alcohol and other drug use' will support perpetrator interventions.³⁹

In her National Press Club speech, Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Amanda Rishworth MP, stated that 'to ensure we develop evidence-based solutions, we need a national research project on perpetrator behaviour.'⁴⁰ Data on perpetration is scant. Much of the available data comes through proxy sources, such as the number of domestic violence orders that are awarded or breached, the number of domestic violence court matters where domestic and family violence cases are heard or prosecuted, or the number of 'incidents' police attend on any given shift or day. Data tracking and collection differs across jurisdictions, and much effort is required to develop a rigorous picture of family violence perpetration in Australia.

The Commonwealth Government has demonstrated a commitment to the National Community Attitudes Survey (NCAS). The survey provides an overall understanding of how Australian attitudes towards gender equity and gender-based violence are changing, and the extent to which Australians feel and are safe is reported through the Personal Safety Survey (PSS). These surveys are a critical component of understanding family violence in Australia. The National Plan is committed to 'continuing support for key national survey collections...[and] implementing new data collections and data development projects.'⁴¹ A national study on perpetration should be a priority under this commitment.

Understanding prevalence of perpetration will support us to close the gap between the number of perpetrators, and the number of men connected into services. We do not currently have the data necessary to understand the proportion of Australians who use family violence. A national survey would enable our sector to better understand this and to anticipate service need. Critical information on demographics, including geographic location, age range, cultural background and sexual orientation, as well as other factors, would enable the specialist men's family violence sector to tailor our programs to the men who need them most. A national survey, in collaboration with ANROWS or the ABS, on perpetration is an important step towards increasing the availability of evidence-based interventions.

A nationally representative survey on perpetration would provide invaluable data to inform interventions and enable a framing of family violence in terms of the number and proportion of Australians who choose to use it, rather than framing it just in terms of the number of women and children who are victimised.

\$7 million over five years is required to develop and implement, in partnership with NTV and key research organisations, a national perpetration study in parallel with NCAS and PSS.

³⁸ Department of Social Services 2022, 27

³⁹ Department of Social Services 2022, 19

⁴⁰ Hon Amanda Rishworth MP 2022

⁴¹ Department of Social Services 2022, 27

Conclusion

Ending violence against women in one generation is an ambitious goal that requires ambitious resourcing. Perpetrator accountability is an inextricable part of a vision of a violence-free Australia.

The task cannot be underestimated.

This budget submission provides a number of areas where strategic resourcing will deliver on objectives of the 2022-2032 National Plan to end violence against women and children, including raising public awareness to confront the cultural myths about the men who use violence; capturing better data about the true nature of the prevalence and attitudes of family violence, using it to frame future systems reforms; building the capacity of the specialist workforce; and ultimately diminishing the use of family violence in our community to uphold the human rights, dignity and safety of all women and children.

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